

Tillsonburg POST



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Flag Day passes without local event

JEFF HELSDON
Editor

A day of national importance came and went with little fanfare, and many Canadians didn't even know it existed. Feb. 15 was National Flag Day. The day marks the anniversary of the day the maple leaf flag became Canada's national flag.

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna encouraged residents to display the flag.

"As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of our national flag, it is time to unite under the red and white," he said in a news release. "Regardless of your political beliefs, I encourage everyone to display our flag, whether on a pole, in a window or pinned to a jacket. Let's proudly show off our maple leaf!"

He also talked of what the flag means.

"As we mark 60 years of the maple leaf, we must also express our deep gratitude to those who have worked, sacrificed, and even given their lives to defend the freedoms we hold dear and to build the country we call home. Their legacy is our responsibility, and like them, I pledge always to put Canada first," he said. "As we reflect on what it means to be Canadian, let us cherish the unity that the flag represents and look to the future with optimism, knowing that the maple leaf will always inspire and unite us."

There were no ceremonies in Tillsonburg to mark the 60th anniversary, but that wasn't the case in 1965.

On Feb. 15, 1965, an official ceremony was held at Annandale High School to raise the new Canadian flag for the first time. The mayor, Oxford County warden, and Legion officials took part. The first flag was raised in Tillsonburg at 11:56 a.m. A ceremony was also held at Rolph Street Public School, but there are few details about it.

At confederation, the Royal Union Flag (commonly

CONTINUED TO PAGE 4



A TASTE OF CARNAVAL COMES TO TILLSONBURG

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Students at Monsignor O'Neil had eight different activities, both inside and out, to celebrate the start of Carnaval in Quebec City, have fun and learn about French culture. From left to right on the long skis, TJ Hornyak, Amelia Mitchell and Jorja Thomson, learned about team work while racing other students in this event. Bonhomme, the official Carnaval mascot, watched the competition.

Town council supports community pantry

JEFF HELSDON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tillsonburg is one step closer to another option for those who have food insecurity.

At the Feb. 10 meeting, town council heard a presentation from members of the Rotary Club and Tabatha Verbuyst, executive director of the Station Arts Centre. The Rotary Club is behind the proposal for a community pantry and is proposing to locate it behind the Station Arts Centre.

"It's not intended to take the place of any of the existing food insecurity programs in place in town today," said Rotary member Jason Weiler.

He said the Helping Hand Food Bank, Salvation Army,

and groups running community tables run great programs.

"There are great sources of support, but this program is intended to provide some flexibility," Weiler said. "There is some (flexibility) in existing programs, but there are gaps. I think a good illustration is something called working poor, where people may have obligations to be at work during particular times of the day and can't get access to some of these services when they need them. This type of program is meant to provide that type of assistance."

Rotarian Laura McFarland proposed the concept more than a year ago. Club members have researched how community pantries work elsewhere, talked to other organizers, and are now looking for approval of a location.

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Town council supports community pantry

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The club jumped on board because nearly 25 per cent of homes experience some sort of food insecurity. Weiler defined this as not having enough money to purchase food. Seven per cent of people have severe food insecurity, which is when a decision must be made to pay rent or skip meals. They also looked at the 35 per cent increase in the number of people using the food bank in 2023, and are waiting for 2024 numbers.

Weiler told council he is not looking for funding, but for endorsement of the location. He said the club and volunteers will look after the project.

Verbuyst said Rotary members approached her about the concept. They liked the idea the Station Arts Centre is near downtown, but not downtown, and has an existing concrete pad on which to build a four-foot by four-foot structure for the pantry.

"We work with a lot of families in the community and know there is a lot of food insecurity," she said.

The Station Arts Centre is looking for approval for use of the exterior of the building, as per the approved motion from the Station Arts Centre board.

"We could build what we are looking for without touching the side of the building," she said. "That is one of the big things because, obviously, it's a historical building. There won't be anything adhered to the building."

Verbuyst did add they wanted to do something creative and fun for the pantry design, since it's part of the Station Arts Centre. She also said there have been discussions about security.

Coun. Kelly Spencer praised the initiative but said her only concern is the proximity to the nearby child care facility. She asked if the church has been approached about the concept.

"We intend to have conversations with the neighbours but to this point we haven't," Weiler said, explaining they didn't want to jump the gun before council approval.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres asked if there

would be an expansion of services into clothing in the future. McFarland said that is not the intention, as the pantry won't be staffed.

Coun. Chris Rosehart questioned the need for the pantry in town with the existing programs already in town.

"There isn't an organization that isn't out there," she said. "Even after 9 or 10 o'clock at night, there is service to people."

Responding to Rosehart's question about how the program works, Weiler said there is an opportunity for individuals to make contributions. Donations won't be made directly available but will be taken in, evaluated, and put out if the requirements of Southwestern Public Health are met.

Noting she is out there every night checking that people are okay, Rosehart said a lot of effort has been put into cleaning up the downtown.

"I just feel we have invited them back. We have a daycare right there," she said.

Weiler said the focus is on people with food insecurity, not one segment of those dealing with food shortages, and he would hate to see service denied because of one group.

Answering Mayor Deb Gilvesy's question about whether the pantry will have 24-hour access, Weiler said that decision hasn't been made yet. Saying she had seen community pantries inside, in a library, for instance, Gilvesy asked why the pantry would be outside.

McFarland answered that the pantries inside are typically town-funded. By being outside, she said it allows longer hours.

Addressing a question from the mayor if there are issues with vandalism at existing pantries, McFarland said, "Rarely, I talked to a lot of pantries going all across the country to B.C. Almost all of their feedback is positive. The one negative thing they had was trying to find volunteers and trying to find enough food because there's so much food insecurity out there."

Council passed a resolution supporting the community pantry and its proposed location at the Station Arts Centre, provided all town requirements are met.

Canadian landscapes the latest gallery exhibit



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Sue Goossens stands in front of a panel in the Station Arts Centre with both her and Cathy Groulx's paintings. The exhibit Canadian Landscapes runs from Feb. 14 to March 14.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Two area artists are featuring Canadian landscapes in the latest exhibit at the Station Arts Centre.

Sue Goossens of Otterville and Cathy Groulx of Woodstock are both names familiar to the Station Arts Centre as both have exhibited there several times in the past. The two artists often exhibit together, and are teaming up for Canadian Landscapes at the Station Arts Centre.

"We used to do the art exhibit in Toronto, we've done galleries together and art in the parks together," Goossens said. "We have a similar style. She's oils, I'm watercolours. I think we complement each other."

Both artists have been painting for more than 30 years. Groulx takes part in juried shows and has received several awards for her art.

Although Goossens paints watercolours, part of her works are on a canvas similar to oils.

"Back in the day, I wanted to go larger, and for larger art you could only get mats so big and the glass gets prohibitively heavy," she said.

Goossens started researching and found a technique where a surface preparation can be applied to canvas to make it similar

to paper for the paint. Then when the art is done, an archival varnish spray is applied to protect it.

The landscapes Goossens included in the show are from "B.C. to Newfoundland and everywhere in between". That 'in-between' includes some scenes from the Otterville area and along the Otter Creek.

Groulx's landscapes in the show are all from Ontario.

"I like to paint 'what I know', something I was taught to do years ago, since familiarity with a subject usually results in a better result," she said. "I use photo references, most of which I take myself, setting up the composition with my camera."

Groulx likes painting peaceful scenes. "Inspiration for my landscapes or what draws me to a scene to paint is generally quiet, peaceful locations," she said. "I enjoy the challenge of painting water and rocks, reflections in water, all of nature. Most of my paintings are devoid of a human presence, though I paint portraits too. As an avid gardener colour, texture and form are important considerations."

Asked about her inspiration for a particular scene, Goossens answered, I have tons of photos. Oi pick and choose things where I can accent the shadows and project some sense of movement."

Canadian Landscapes opened Feb. 14 and runs until March 14.

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Canadians missed out on Flag Day anniversary

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

known as the Union Jack) was flown on Canadian buildings. The Canadian Red Ensign, a flag similar to the current Ontario flag, except the crest had representation from all provinces, was approved for Canada's use at sea by the

British Admiralty. It never received any official designation on land and both it and the Union Jack were used across the country.

With the centennial of the Confederation approaching in 1964, Prime Minister of the day Lester B. Pearson

wanted the country to have a national flag, and a committee was struck. It was down to three finalists: a flag similar to the present design but with blue stripes on each end and three red maple leaves in the centre, a flag based on the red ensign but with a fleur-de-lis and Union Jack, and the present design with stripes on both ends and a single maple leaf.

The debate about the flag design wasn't just on Parliament Hill. Former Tillsonburg News editor Bill Pratt recalls initially being in the camp wanting some blue on the flag as a historical tribute.

"There was considerable conversation and several designs for a new Canadian flag at the time," he said. "Many, like me, wanted some of our country's past maintained in the flag. But, once decided, we accepted the new design. It became our flag, waving over our country.

The flag design, chosen



(ANNANDALE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE PHOTO)

This photo from 1965 shows a ceremony held at Rolph Street Public School when Canada's national flag was raised for the first time. The Union Jack is being removed in the photo.

by Dr. George Stanley, incorporates much Canadian history. Red and white were on the General Service Medal issued by Queen Victoria and were proclaimed Canada's national colours

by King George V in 1921. A single red maple leaf on a white field has been worn by Canadian Olympic athletes since 1904.

The new design was approved by a resolution in

the House of Commons on Dec. 15, 1964, and then proclaimed by Queen Elizabeth II to take effect on Feb. 15, 1965.

Tillsonburg resident charged in connection to Norwich retirement home fraud

The Oxford Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have arrested and charged an individual after a fraud investigation which stemmed from multiple incidents at a retirement home in Norwich that were reported to police.

On August 21, 2024, members of the OPP Oxford detachment were notified of

a reported fraud at a retirement home in Norwich.

The initial investigation has determined there are multiple victims with an estimated loss of over \$50,000. The amount is now over \$190,000. The investigation remains on-going.

A 50-year-old individual from Tillsonburg, has been

charged with one count of Fraud Over \$5000. The name of the charged party is not being released due to concerns for their wellbeing.

The accused has been released from custody and is scheduled to appear before an Ontario Court of Justice on a later date.

If you suspect someone

you know may be a victim of these frauds, please contact Oxford OPP.

Should you wish to remain anonymous, you may call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or submit an online tip at www.oxfordcrimestoppers.com where you may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$2000.





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New art installation in Tillsonburg Town Centre



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

With the new circular art on permanent display in the Tillsonburg Town Centre behind them, participants in the official unveiling pose with originals of the pieces that are part of the display. Left to right are Rhonda Franks, artist; Tabatha Verbuyst, executive director Station Arts Centre; Nicole Hancox, property manager Salt Hill Capital; Mary Chaisson, senior administrator Salt Hill Capital and Saumya Verma, assistant marketing manager Salt Hill Capital.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

A new art display in the Tillsonburg Town Centre adds an interesting flare to the mall's centre court.

In partnership with the Station Arts Centre, nine plexiglass discs with the work of local artists were hung recently in the mall's centre court. And in this case, hung means hung from the ceiling, so look up to catch a glimpse of the art. Three of the translucent discs are a four-foot diameter and six are three feet across.

Nicole Hancox, property manager with Salt Hill Cap-

ital which owns the mall, described the art, saying it adds "vibrancy" to the mall.

The process to the official unveiling that took place on Feb. 12 started over a year ago. Roselyn D'Ascanio, senior director of marketing with Salt Hill, had an idea for a permanent art installation. Discussing her ideas with Station Arts Centre Executive Director Tabatha Verbuyst, the concept for the hanging discs was born.

Verbuyst said a call out to artists was done last September under the theme "What does Tillsonburg mean to you". Each artist submitted three works, which were chosen by

a juried process. The winning artists – Megan McKiernan, Stella Jurgen and Rhonda Franks – will have their works permanently on display. The selected works encompass many different aspects of Tillsonburg, from a turtle for Turtlefest to the Harvards.

"Their works not only encompasses the community aspect, they include the cultural aspects," Verbuyst said. "There are a lot of amazing things that make us want to celebrate the town."

The originals of the paintings will be permanently installed within the Tillsonburg Town Centre.

Chamber and Post to host candidates event on Feb. 24

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg and area residents will have an opportunity to meet candidates running in the provincial election in an event on Feb. 24

The Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce and the Tillsonburg Post are co-hosting Meet the Provincial Election Candidates at the Spot in the Tillsonburg Town Centre from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. The public is invited to drop in and talk to the candidates in a meet-and-greet format.

"At the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce, we believe an informed voter base is essential to a thriving business community," said chamber CEO Ashley Edwards. "Our role is to highlight key business concerns and ensure candidates address the issues that matter most. Elected officials who prioritize economic growth and understand local challenges play a crucial role in our region's success. We encourage all members of our community to engage in meaningful discussions with candidates and make their voices heard."

"This a great opportunity for citizens to engage one-on-one with the candidates running for election," said Post publisher Stewart Grant. "We look

forward to a well-attended event on February 24."

There are seven candidates running for the position of Member of Provincial Parliament in Oxford County. On the ballot in Oxford will be: Peter Beimers, New Blue Party; Khadijah Haliru, NDP; Ernie Hardeman, PC Party of Ontario; Grace Hopper, Ontario Party; Colton Kafufan, Green Party of Ontario; Bernia Martin, On-

tario Liberal Party; and Henryk Szymczyszyn, Libertarian.

At press time, all candidates hadn't confirmed attendance.

The Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce is a non-partisan organization and the voice of business, committed to sharing the information our community needs to make the best decisions for themselves and their businesses.

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EDITORIAL

Celebrating our nation's flag

With Canadian patriotism and buy-Canadian bursting at the seams, one would have thought that Flag Day this year would have drawn more fanfare. Sixty years ago, on Feb. 15, 1965, what we now fondly call the Maple Leaf became Canada's first official flag.

It's not that Canada didn't have a flag prior to that day, but it was not an official flag. Often the Union Jack was flown, but the unofficial flag is the now-nearly-forgotten Canadian ensign. This flag was reminiscent of today's Ontario flag, except it had the crests of all provinces where Ontario's crest sits on its flag.

Sixty years ago, the new flag was celebrated with much fanfare. The first flag flew following a ceremony at Annandale School. At least one other school held a similar ceremony, and likely more. On Sunday, there were no ceremonies, and in fact, the event would have slipped by except for media stories and Facebook posts.

No one would have thought in that day in 1965 that Canadian patriotism would reach the low levels it has in recent years, or that

the prime ministers would be taken off our paper currency and statues of the nation's first prime minister removed. Sir John A. MacDonald had many faults, but the irrefutable truth is there wouldn't be a country without him. We need to learn both the good and bad about our history.

And certainly no one would have dreamt an American president would revive Canadian spirit to levels not seen in years.

This isn't the first time the Canadian identity has been aloof. It is said that the young country of Canada became a nation when our country's soldiers fought together for the first time and succeeded where others had failed before at Vimy Ridge. Even this victory, and that Canadian soldiers became feared by their First World War foes, has been cast in a negative light by some recently.

Moving forward, at some time tariffs with our southern neighbour will be a bad memory. But the sense of Canadianism that rose out of this adversity will hopefully persevere, bringing with it a renewed sense of nationhood that will not fade again.



A February moon rising brings with it hope that spring is looming. (JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Love, faith and gratitude became the bridge to a creative new life



**EVERYONE
HAS A
STORY
TO TELL**

ROBIN KRAFFT

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Born in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, Megan McKiernan moved around a lot with her family before settling in Tillsonburg in her teens. She dealt with much adversity in her early years, and she remembers being a daydreamer and craving solitude at times. When they lived in Port Burwell she recalls being drawn to the shore, "walking on the rocks and the sound of the waves crashing, it felt necessary to be there," and she would come away feeling restored.

Still, she struggled emotionally, and at 17, she suffered a terrible accident when she was hit by a car. The result was a broken tibia, severe abrasions and deafness in her left ear. It was a year-long recovery, and she was unable to walk for eight months and had rigorous physical therapy. During this vulnerable time, she ended up in a controlling, difficult relationship, which she eventually fled from.

Fast forward a few years and Megan began to find her footing. Her spiritual life, a supportive and loving boyfriend, her beloved cats and her art practice slowly helped her to reshape her life. Robbie proposed as they walked their favorite forest trail near a lake. They had an intimate, family-only ceremony at The Lavender Farm in Ayr. Megan's unique fairy-tale dress was made from vintage fabric scraps, and she spent hours designing and making all of the decor herself. Her flower arrangements included pink cherry blossoms and white roses, and she created a wicker heart sculpture with suspended lights as the perfect accents for their special day.

As gifts, she selected a unique ring for each guest and placed them in decorative treasure chests lined with moss. She created little trees to hold the name cards that marked their places at the table

for a meal she had prepared. Before the formal ceremony began, Robbie and Megan exchanged private vows they had written. The couple had practiced for a month for their first dance as husband and wife, glowing as the music surrounded them.

Planning their future together, Robbie and Megan started their own residential cleaning business, focused on high end properties in London, Thamesford, and Dorchester. Grateful to move forward from her past and having found hope for the future, Megan turned her attention to her lifelong love of art.

She recalls her childhood creativity, "I loved to draw everything. I still have the big plastic ice cream tub full of crayons that I had as a child and when I open it, it evokes memories of visits with my papa."

She also recalls watching her father, Maurice Wideman, working at incredibly detailed pieces for hours. Famous for his sculptures of various structures, from quaint cottages to castles, he worked for John Hine Studios in the U.S. and travelled a lot.

Megan recalls, "Dad being very impressed by the early sculptures I made when I was about 12 years old," and those words of praise had a tremendous impact on her. "Art kept on pulling me in, like the beach, it was a part of me."

Megan also enjoys writing poetry and avidly documents her observations of nature and life in various journals; she's currently working on an illustrated poetry collection. She also credits faith, prayer and gratitude for her transformation: "It has changed me to be the woman I am today. I was a wild child, rebellious, but my spiritual life has enabled me to be myself."

Megan is a self-taught Metis watercolour artist. Devoted to her practice and continuing her exploration and unconventional approach, she has logged about 3,000 hours towards her ultimate goal of 10,000 hours to master the medium. She has created her own website, online portfolio, shop and blog. Cats have been constant companions throughout her life, and are favorite subjects, but her work is varied. She has done illustrations for stories, accepts commissions and was recently one of three artists chosen for a permanent installation at the Tillsonburg Town Centre. Her beautiful, evocative paintings on display feature local bridges, an appropriate metaphor for her life story thus far.

"I'm really putting myself into it," Megan said, "and this feels like a wonderful beginning."

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One of the prominent examples of that community support is The Ed DeSutter Satellite Dialysis Unit, which opened officially on December 15, 2005. Beginning three years before the opening, the DeSutter family was part of a group who formed the Tri-County Dialysis Committee, raising well above their target for the unit.

Ed DeSutter was named Tillsonburg's Citizen of the Year in 2005 because of his long record of community involvement, including his efforts to secure the dialysis unit, with total funds raised of over \$800,000 (surpassing the target of \$625,000).

To this day, the dialysis unit provides routine hemodialysis

treatments, initiated and managed by dialysis assistants and registered nurses with specialized training. Currently, there are approximately 36 patients dialyzed three times per week at TDMH.

The continued generosity of our community has allowed TDMH to stay up-to-date with technology, and excellent equipment to best serve our community through programs like the dialysis unit, for the past 100 years. Thank you for your ongoing support!

TDMH is excited to celebrate all our successes within the community and looks forward to another 100 years of caring for you! If you're feeling the spirit of generosity, you can reach out to the TDMH Foundation to donate. Or ask about becoming a sponsor for "A Century of Caring: An Evening of Storytelling" Gala happening May 10th.

Remember, you can share your memories of the last 100 years - TDMH100years@tdmh.on.ca #TDMH100years #TDMHvolunteers100years



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**THE
STAGE
IS THE
WORLD**

LAUREL A. BEECHEY

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

We are going back to this month 110 years ago, when in February 1915, the University of Toronto offered to provide a 1,000-bed base hospital to assist in a new front of the First World War.

The #4CGH [Canadian General Hospital] arrived in England at Shorncliffe, and after a few months, set sail for Salonika in northern Greece. This was at the request of the Serbian government, who were involved in heavy trench warfare against the Germans.

The #4CGH was originally manned by 38 male doctors, one woman doctor - Harriet Cockburn - and 73 nurses, who were almost all drawn from the Toronto hospitals connected with the university. There were also 200 soldiers, many of whom were Toronto undergraduates who worked in the hospital, including Lester B. Person. The hospital grew to 2,000 beds and was supported not only by the military, but fundraising in Canada. Most nursing sisters mentioned in this article were from Tillsonburg, or close by, and include Matilda Oatman, Grace Gray, and Emma Elliot at the #4CGH.

The British Empire set out to destroy the centuries-old Ottoman Empire and secure a sea/supply route to Russia, and force Germany's ally, Turkey, out of the war. It began as a naval campaign, with British battleships sent to attack Constantinople (now Istanbul). It was the first time an amphibious operation was used in modern warfare. It failed when the warships were unable to force a way through the Dardanelles straits at the Gallipoli Peninsula. A third of the decrepit battleships were sunk or disabled on a single day, March 18, 1915.

The new plan was to eliminate the Turkish land and shore defenses and open the straights for the navy. British troops were to capture the tip of the peninsula on April 25; then advance northwards, while the Anzacs [Australian, New Zealand army corps which included French and Indian troops) would land on the western coast, north of Gaba Tepe, at a narrow point on the peninsula. This too failed and only afforded them a toehold on the peninsula.

After eight months, with little progress, the Anzacs were evacuated in December, and in January 1916 the last British troops were withdrawn. There were no Canadian soldiers, although the Newfoundland Regiment was there, along with five Canadian army medical units to serve the Allies.

Our nurses, Matilda and Grace, arrived Nov. 11th, 1915, on the HMHS Carisbrooke Castle. Emma Elliot was there at the same time. Annie Bowlby, a Queen Alexandria nurse, and Bertha MacIntosh joined the Red Cross nurses and arrived together in Malta in 1915 aboard the SS Mongolia. Laurel Misner, sister Minnie and Annie Collins also served in Malta.

Salonika, 40 miles from southern border of Serbia, was the only port through which Serbia could receive aid. The first Canadian medical unit was #4 CGH from University of Toronto. Wounded were brought to Salonika, then shipped out to Malta.

Matilda Oatman worked on the hospital ship at the Dardanelles in 1916. The girls were at either place most of the time, but occasionally spent short periods of time in Alexandria or other ports where there were medical units.

The weather was hotter there, and the heat caused a major problem in treating the wounded because of the flies. By summer, everyone was crawling with vermin, although a good kerosene hair wash did wonders killing the bugs.

They also dealt with dysentery from the terrible sanitary conditions at Gallipoli, which soon affected even the staff. On Dec. 28,, Sister Elliot was granted two weeks leave in England and on Dec. 31 Sister Oatman was invalided to England on the Lanfranc.

Later floods were so bad the nurses walked from patient to patient on their beds. Winter was not good either - blizzards and hurricanes killed more than some battles.... 200 men drowned or froze in Sulva Valley. Of 16,000 casualties in nine days, 12,000 were due to the weather but the cold did get rid of flies and dysentery.

Finally, after two years, the Allies controlled the area and many of the hospital units left Salonika, including the #4 CGH, which moved en masse to Basingstoke, England.

Canadian singer John McDermott sings the poignant song about the slaughter of Australian troops during the battle of Gallipoli called "And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda". This video and music are worth the time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VK6rZ--DhZM>

If you are interested in more information on the nurses, or my research, please get in touch at 519 842 9416.



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Paczki season continues at Courtland Bakery until March 4

CHRIS ABBOTT

Post Contributor

First introduced in Courtland as a way to boost sales during two of the slowest – and coldest – months of the year, the paczki season continues this year at Courtland Bakery until March 4.

The annual tradition starts at the bakery in January and ends the day before Ash Wednesday, the first day of the 40-day Lenten season leading up to Easter. This year Shrove Tuesday – also known as Pancake Tuesday, Fat Tuesday, or Paczki Day – is the fast-approaching March 4.

Emigrants from Poland pronounce the large, pie-filling donuts ‘poonch-key’ or ‘pooch-key’, which they use at Courtland Bak-

ery.

“We’ve been doing this since 2000,” said Courtland Bakery co-owner John Peazel, noting their first paczki season was celebrated along with twin grandsons, who just had their 26th birthdays on Feb. 16.

The bakery itself celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2014 with Mary and John Peazel owning it 37 of those 75 years. The original owners had it 27 years, and there were six other owners in between, all at the same Courtland location, which has been rebuilt and greatly expanded over the years. With an eye on eventually retiring, the bakery has been listed for sale more than 10 years – at a fair price.

Its name is known up and down Highway 3 from

Windsor to Fort Erie.

“Highway 3, this is a very good location,” said John. “When we first bought the bakery, the highway count was about 23,000 cars a day. It’s probably 30,000 cars now. That’s why we invested money in that big LED sign outside. I read an article saying that sign should help you increase sales by 10-45% and it does help us.”

People will drive up to several hours to get their paczkis, baked fresh Tuesday-Saturday during the 6-8 week season. You can call the day before your visit to get the ones you like (519-688-2023).

“I’ve talked to so many bakers, January and February is a very slow time and if you need something to bring people in, you need to put up something special. Do this! Last year, I think we sold 28,000 paczkis... which is a lot of paczkis,” John added with a laugh. “It gives your sales at that particular time such a boost.”

“I have seen it where we make 200 dozen paczki in a night – that’s a lot of paczkis.”

John said most paczkis sold at grocery stores use ‘donut filling’, which is water, flavour, sugar, and



(CHRIS ABBOTT PHOTO)

Staff at Courtland Bakery includes from left Kennedy Neville, Rayne Sales, Sherri Rowland, Rachel Robinson, and Madison Altwassen.

colour.

At Courtland Bakery, they use good quality pie filling.

“We buy the very best pie filling,” he said, “and we make sure there is a lot of pie filling in there. I want to see a dozen paczki weigh at least five (pounds), but I don’t want to see them weigh seven.”

“So we want to put lots of filling in them, and we have about 12 different kinds.”

This year they are actually offering 13 fillings – apple, apricot, banana,

blueberry, cherry, chocolate, Holstein, lemon, Nutella, plum, raspberry, strawberry, Venetian – with four different toppings, plain, glazed, sugar and powdered sugar.

Baking is a science, said John, and making the paczki is no different. Machines are used to form the dough, ensuring consistency. The rest is ‘let it rise, fry it, and then fill it.’ It keeps the staff of 29 (six in production), including full and part-time, busy.

Over the years, customers have asked for recipes,

and Peazel is happy to oblige... with a condition.

“I say, ‘I sure will!’ We give away all of our recipes, whether you are a customer or another baker. But I’m kind of a funny guy. If someone asks for the cream cheese recipe for cheese crowns, I give them my recipe. It starts off with a 44-pound block of cream cheese. You want to know how to make croissants? The recipe starts with 200 pounds of... I don’t break it down,” he smiled.

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Tillsonburg Legion extends the veteran banner program

Applications are now being accepted for Banners of Remembrance to be displayed on Quarter Town Line.

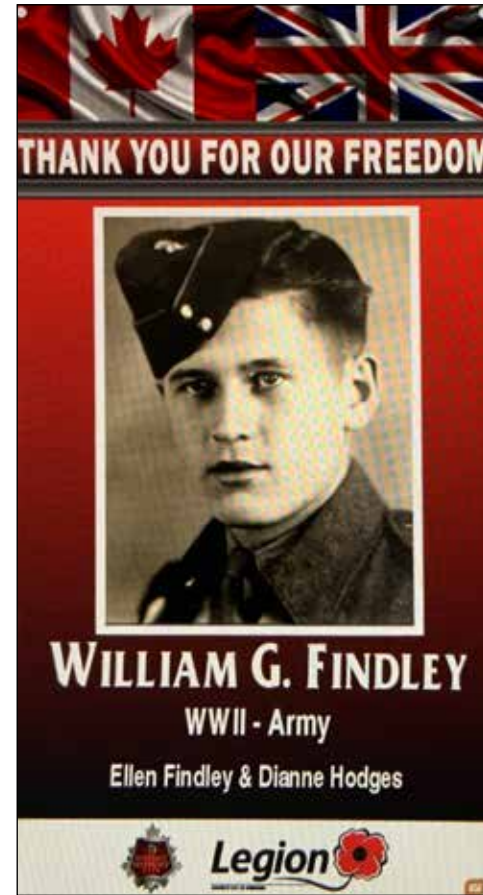
Since the introduction of the program in 2023, 89 Banners of Remembrance have been displayed on Veteran's Parkway(Quarter Town Line).

The banners recognize and honour deceased veterans and active service members or veterans who have served or are currently serving in the Canadian, Allied or Commonwealth forces. The program is open to all veteran families who wish to honour their family members. The banners will be displayed in the Town of Tillsonburg commencing Legion week. (mid-September) up until Nov. 12.

Applications are now available from the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 153, 16 Durham St. Tillsonburg.

Sponsorship fees will be held at \$275 per banner, which include taxes and shipping costs. The deadline for submissions is May31 to guarantee inclusion in this year's programme. Submissions after this date will be done on a best effort basis.

For enquires please contact Dianne Hodges at veteranbannerprogram@gmail.com or 519-709-5777.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

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Peavey Mart seeks creditor protection, local store to close

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The Tillsonburg Peavey Mart locations will be among the dozens that close as the company seeks creditor protection.

The initial announcement from the company suggested it was only 22 Peavey Mart stores in Ontario and Nova Scotia that would close, and the Simcoe and Tillsonburg stores weren't on the list. However, a follow-up announcement said the company would complete a full wind down of all 90 Peavey Mart stores and six MainStreet Hardware stores across the country.

"We are sure that it will affect some farmers more than others," said Norfolk Federation of Agriculture president Tyler Townsend. "It's really unfortunate that this has happened."

Oxford County Federation of Agriculture (OCFA) president Joe Wilson lamented about the end of a relationship with Peavey Mart and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Part of this was a discount members received at the store.

"Although rural communities and our members will be impacted by the loss of a retailer specializing in rural and farm products, the OCFA would like to remind everyone to look to local retailers in their area," he said. "Many local stores provide essential items that farmers rely on to maintain their operations. Shopping locally for these goods fosters community relationships and contributes to the economic growth and sustainability of their communities."

He gave examples of Parion Animal Nutrition in Hickson, Ingersoll Country Mills, Norwich Country Mills and Corner Farm Market in Woodstock.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

The company that runs 90 Peavey Mart locations across the country is seeking creditor protection and closing all its stores, including Tillsonburg.

Delhi-area cattle and crop farmer Larry Chanda found Peavey Mart had many things farmers needed that weren't available elsewhere.

"With cattle, Peavey Mart would stock fencing supplies or the odd medication you could get over the counter that you didn't need a prescription for," he said. "They just seemed to have a real variety of things you wouldn't pick up at a different store."

There are options for former Peavey Mart shoppers for some farm supplies in Norfolk, but they might have to drive further for other items, and to multiple retailers. Doerksen Country Store in Port Rowan carries livestock and pet feed, fencing supplies, automotive lubricants and country home and garden items. Simcoe's Golden Belt Feeds carries more than just pet food, having livestock feed, and some smaller items for livestock.

"I really can't say at this point how many farm-

ers it will affect or how badly it will affect the farmers that heavily rely on it, but in saying that, maybe it creates opportunity for something else to take its place," Townsend said.

The implications in Tillsonburg may go further than just the loss of a shopping option.

"As a former farmer, Peavey Mart represented that go to staple store for local agriculture," said Mayor Deb Gilvesy. "Not only is there a loss of jobs, but also a loss of economic spin-off as it drew the surrounding farmers into our community."

Peavey details

It's not known yet the closing date of the Simcoe and Tillsonburg stores, and Peavey is saying little except through a press release.

"This was a profoundly difficult decision, but

one that allows us to explore the best possible alternatives for the future of the company," said Doug Anderson, president and CEO of Peavey Industries LP. "For nearly six decades, our customers' loyalty, employees' dedication, and the resilience of the communities we serve have been the cornerstone of our business. We remain focused on working with our partners and stakeholders to preserve the Peavey brand and the value it represents."

The announcement suggested overall challenges facing the Canadian retail industry were among the factors that led to the decision to seek creditor protection. Those include record low consumer confidence, inflationary pressures, rising operating costs, ongoing supply disruptions and a difficult regulatory environment.

"The company's immediate priority is to generate liquidity through the closure process while continuing to work with funders, partners, and stakeholders to explore potential opportunities to preserve the brand," the announcement said.

Locally, the locations were operated as TSC stores until 2021 when they moved under the Peavey Mart banner. Peavey Mart acquired the London-based TSC Store brand in 2017, spending the next four years converting the stores to Peavey Marts.

Peavey Mart began in 1967 as a "chain of 'super farm markets' whose first location opened in Dawson Creek, B.C.," according to the company's website. In 1975 it became known as Peavey Mart and was a subsidiary of Minneapolis-based Peavey Company. Nine years later it returned to full Canadian ownership, which it maintained to the present day.

- With files from Luke Edwards

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Woodstock resident running for New Blue Party of Ontario

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Peter Beimers has been given the nod to run as the Oxford candidate for the New Blue Party of Ontario in the Feb. 27 provincial election.

Beimers has been married for 30 years, has four children, and welcomed his first grandchild in December.

“We have been a part of the Oxford community for 17 years, living the last 13 years here in Woodstock. I have been a truck driver for 20 years working for a business in Oxford. Before getting into trucking, I went to school to become a minister, but I was not able to find a full-time job in a church, I worked at various jobs before getting my AZ license. I still preach occasionally, but not as much as I did pre-COVID.”

He explained frustration is what motivated him to get into politics, namely how the government was running things and the seeming nonsense that was being imposed on Ontario residents.

“I wanted to be part of a better way and I found that better way was within the policies of the New Blue Party of Ontario. Rather than begrudgingly going through the motions of daily life, I want to be part of the solution.”

Beimers said there are three main issues he wants to bring to the election, first and foremost, taxes.

“Reducing the HST from 13 to 10 per cent as well as the elimination of the Carbon Tax. Everyday items are becoming more and more expensive and incomes are not matching the rate of increased costs. Reducing the HST and eliminating the Carbon Tax will mean more money in our wallets to invest in our family's needs.”

He added the lingering effects of the COVID era still live on needlessly in 2025.

“There are regulations still in place that need to be permanently removed. There are those seeking work, but are unable to be hired, despite being quite qualified for the position because they do not meet an arbitrary standard set by outdated COVID regulations.”

He added his party would like to offer jobs back those who were unceremoniously fired for a personal choice of not wanting to take an experimental drug that had zero long term studies attached to it.

“This would include, but not limited to, doctors, nurses, and postal workers. These people also deserve an apology from the provincial government for being treated so poorly when they were in reality needed most.”

Beimers also said he is pro-life and doesn't understand how abortion is an allowable choice for any pregnant woman.

“There are zero abortion restrictions in Ontario and I believe this must change.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

On the other end of the life spectrum, we now have this anti-life option called MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying). I find it incredibly sad that a provincial health system would offer the option of suicide under a ‘doctor's care’ to seniors or those suffering with mental health issues. We have a great example in Oxford of palliative care with Sakura House. Ontario would be much better off investing tax dollars into more end-of-life care facilities than it currently does with MAID.”

The New Blue Party Candidate also wants to make sure Oxford County never becomes a home for safe injection sites, something Southwest Public Health favours.

“A specific issue to our community is the so-called Safe Injections Sites. How can a government or any extension of the government be enablers of drug use and call that safe? This is an oxymoron, like ordering a vegan steak. How can a government say they want to fight drugs in our streets and yet provide these injection sites? It doesn't work. Drug rehab clinics are far superior.”

Beimers added the growing trend of parents sending their children to private schools or home schooling is on the rise, something he understands.

“Even though our children are finished school, I can hardly blame these parents for their school choice. Even in the last years of our youngest, the woke ideology of Liberals has become commonplace in public schools. Most recently, Bill 67 introduced Critical Race Theory (CRT). New Blue believes that CRT and woke ideology have no place in our schools. Children go to school to learn math, geography, science, and learn to read and write and express ideas.”

He explained his party wants a school voucher or credit to be given to families who do not send their children to the public school system.

Ingersoll town councillor running in Oxford riding

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Khadijah Haliru is serving her first term as a councillor for the town of Ingersoll and has thrown her hat in the ring to serve as Oxford County's Member of Provincial Parliament.

Haliru described herself as a community leader and business owner in addition to her role as a member of council.

“Since immigrating to the USA in 2003 and Canada in 2006, I have worked to bring people together through business, local governance, or grassroots initiatives to create real opportunities for families and workers anywhere I am. Strong communities are built when people feel supported, their concerns are heard, and when leadership is focused on real solutions that improve everyday lives.”

She has lived in smaller communities like Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Mission, BC, as well as major cities like Toronto, Brampton, and Vancouver.

“I've seen firsthand the disparities in funding, services, and opportunities. Rural areas and smaller towns often carry the burden of growth without receiving the same level of investment as bigger cities. This perspective allows me to recognize what's missing in our approach to development and advocate for solutions that ensure Oxford County gets its fair share. I believe in leadership that listens, takes action, and fights for real change that uplifts families, workers, and businesses alike.”

Haliru said her interest in politics comes from a belief that leadership is about standing up when it matters most.

“Over the years, I've watched as critical services like education, healthcare, and social support, were eroded by funding cuts. I saw how my children's friends were affected when the first round of Ford's cuts hit education and disability programs. Families struggled to find adequate care for their children with special needs, while others had to make impossible choices between work and caregiving.”

She said the pandemic resulted in the loss of nurses, doctors, and frontline staff because they were exhausted and unappreciated.

“Now, we face a healthcare system stretched too thin, with wait times growing and fewer professionals to rely on. Meanwhile, students who once dreamed of a better future have had to walk away from post-secondary education because they couldn't afford the costs, even when financial aid existed. A generation of young people was lost simply because they lacked access to opportunity.”

There are four main issues in her campaign, starting with education and opportunities for youth.

“We need to restore funding to schools, invest in disability programs, and ensure post-secondary education is accessible to all. Every child deserves a fair shot at success, no matter their background or financial situation.”

She added it is also time to properly invest in healthcare by retaining doctors and nurses, addressing burnout and expand healthcare access in rural communities like Oxford County. Building affordable and inclusive communities is also top of mind.

“Oxford is growing, but without smart housing solutions, proper childcare support, and job security, many families are struggling to keep up. We need bold action to ensure that our region remains a place where people can thrive.”

Haliru added she wants to bring back real support for working families.

“That means investing in affordable childcare, especially for children with disabilities, so that parents aren't forced to choose between work and caregiving. It means ensuring healthcare workers get the wages and respect they deserve, so we don't lose more nurses and doctors. And it means making sure our schools have the resources to give every child a quality education.”

Haliru was asked if there were any issues specific to local communities, and while she had some for Woodstock, Ingersoll and Tavistock, she didn't for Tillsonburg.

“This election is about more than party loyalty. It's about choosing leadership that understands what families are going through. I encourage everyone, no matter their political background, to think about what kind of future we want for Oxford. Do we want to keep struggling with underfunded schools, an overstretched healthcare system, and a lack of real economic opportunity? Or do we want leadership that will fight for solutions that truly make a difference?”

She added voters can't afford four more years of Doug Ford.

“I believe we can do better. We need fresh ideas. It's been 30 years since the last NDP government. The party has changed, the priorities have changed and the people have changed. I know we can build a stronger Oxford with current policies that will drive growth, where every person—no matter their background—has access to the services, education, and opportunities they need to succeed. I am ready to step up and fight for that vision.”

MEET THE OXFORD COUNTY CANDIDATES

Hardeman looking for ninth consecutive term as Oxford MPP

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Ernie Hardeman was first elected MPP for Oxford in 1995 and has served the residents and the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario ever since.

He has held many positions in the provincial Legislature including Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs (Rural), Chair of the Legislative Committee on Public Accounts, and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs from 1999 to 2001 and 2018 to 2021. He has also passed several Private Member's Bills.

Hardeman said there are three key issues included in his party's plan to build the economy and keep Ontario competitive in the face of Trump's tariff threats.

"We've already attracted billions in investment at CAMI, Toyota in Woodstock and our local suppliers. We will do what it takes to help our employers retain their workers and find new customers. We also have a plan to invest in education to keep up with our growing community here in Oxford."

He added his party is creating over

1,500 brand new school spaces in Oxford, including building a new school in Woodstock and another in Thamesford.

"I've also heard the concerns of our community that we need to do more to help those struggling with addiction. That's why we recently announced that we're building a new homelessness and addictions recovery hub in downtown Woodstock. It will provide mental health support and supportive housing to those who need it in our community. Addressing all of these issues will help make life better for residents of Oxford."

Prior to 1995, Hardeman was elected to the Township of South-West Oxford Council and served as Mayor from 1988 to 1994. He also served as Warden of Oxford County council, chair of the Warden's Association of Ontario, chair of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) and on the board of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Until 1995, Hardeman ran his own business and served as a volunteer firefighter, retiring as Captain of the South-West Oxford Fire Department. He and his wife, Reta, have three sons and a daughter.



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Despite having nine campaigns under his belt, Oxford PC candidate Ernie Hardeman was still hands on, working on putting up signs and banners at his Tillsonburg campaign office. The office is open Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 a.m. to noon at 671 Broadway.

Weekend Quiz

by Jake Grant

1. What is the world's oldest known currency that is still in use today?
2. What is the tallest building in the world?
3. What tool is used to measure angles?
4. The Brooklyn Bridge spans which river?
5. What was a "garderobe" in a medieval castle?
6. A mule is a cross between which two animals?
7. Who wrote Alice's Adventures in Wonderland?
8. What country has the most pyramids in the world?
9. What ingredient makes bread rise?
10. Who founded the technology company Microsoft?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

Local municipal politician earns Oxford Liberal nod in upcoming provincial election

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A familiar face in Oxford County has been acclaimed as the Liberal nominee for the Feb. 27 provincial election.

Bernia Martin's campaign will be her first foray into provincial politics after successfully earning a seat as a city/county councillor in Woodstock in 2022.

"I have always believed people deserve a credible candidate to choose from, that's the first point. Secondly, I believe Doug Ford and this conservative government really has not been a friend to municipalities or the people of Oxford."

She added county residents should expect more and have a stronger voice at Queen's Park. Martin was asked if she sees the upcoming vote as an election against Doug Ford or the current Oxford MPP, Ernie Hardeman.

"My frustration has been with the Ford government as a whole and its policies. I have never personally had an issue with Ernie, he's a nice guy. For me, this is about the much bigger picture across Ontario and how the Conservatives are treating rural and small municipalities and that's my focus," explained Martin.

Martin said she has issues with not only the funding provided by the current government but also its policies.

"The money is nice, the funding is nice, but the policies live on well beyond and of it. The Ford government has fallen down on homelessness prevention. For me in Oxford County, that's number one. We have a homelessness, mental health and addiction crisis, and access to attainable housing crisis, and those are all linked."

She added the lack of funding is making those problems worse, and continues to grow because of a lack of responsible and dedicated money streams.

"I could point to five different examples of why that is. I think, and this aligns very closely with the Liberal platform, that health care and education are so underfunded and our policies do not meet the needs of real people living in communities like Oxford."

Martin explained there are smaller issues she wanted to point out where the big cities are able to receive big dollars for certain files.

"You mentioned health care what the big ridings get the smaller ridings don't always get, the same goes for me with rural transit. Southwest Community Transit is an established system throughout nine rural counties."

Martin said it was initially funded through the Ministry of Transportation and started back in 2019. That funding is set to cease at the end of March.

"This system connects community to com-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

munity so people can get from one town to the next on a rural system and now the funding is disappearing. We know that the economic impact of that decision will be close to three-quarters of a billion dollars based on the people who ride that to get to work."

She added people also use the transit system to attend health care appointments, college or university, as well as allowing seniors to remain in their homes.

"Seniors have been allowed to stay in their communities and age in place because they don't have to move to a large urban centre to access the things they need because they have been able to do it through the rural transit system. That's an example, one of many, where smaller ridings don't always get the attention some other parts of Ontario get. Transit is essential in the GTA. Why isn't it here?"

One criticism of the Liberals and party leader Bonnie Crombie is she still does not have a seat in the provincial legislature. Martin doesn't see it as an issue.

"Critics could point to any aspect of any campaign and find something to be negative about. Bonnie has been focused on leading the party, developing policies and talking to people. She is doing the work to reestablish a party that needs that energy right now."

She added having a seat or not having a seat in the legislature has not impacted the leader's ability to do her job.

"She'll run in this election and I think she'll win handily. There is the expectation the leader must have a seat but it's not a requirement."

In addition to being on Woodstock City Council, Martin is the board chair of South-west Public Health and had a two-decade career working in the economic development field. She was also raised on a family farm in Southwestern Ontario.

Ice fishing on your own



**SOUTH-
WESTERN
ONTARIO
OUTDOORS**

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

One great thing about ice fishing is it provides access to fishing for many people who don't have a boat. Outfitters are great, but there is a cost involved. Fishing on your own, however, becomes more economical.

Friend John Piovesan and I improvised on this slightly, using the ice taxi at Collin's Harbour Marina to get us started before drilling our own holes and dropping a line in. The taxi takes ice anglers about a kilometre from shore, and then they are their own.

Arriving about 1 p.m., our plan was to capitalize on the afternoon bite.

We were surrounded by a city of ice huts spread across Long Point Bay after reaching the drop-off spot. Many had a quad or snowmobile parked at the door, while others – closer to the drop-off point – were stand-alone huts or people fishing in the open.

Marshall Collins purchased the former Shady Akers in 2020. While past owner John Aker ran ice fishing huts, Collins wasn't sure what he wanted to do during the winter. During the winter of 2021, he offered the public a parking space for a fee and let them walk out. He talked to a customer walking in, huffing and puffing while dragging a portable hut. Collins asked him what would make it easier for him, and the concept of the shuttle service was born. The shuttle has a trailer behind to carry ice anglers gear, and even sleds if they walk out further.

"I ran it through random people and they said it was as good idea," Collins recalled.

Offering the service in year two, Collins found there was huge demand. The \$15 fee includes parking, the shuttle ride and free coffee. The demand was so overwhelming that a second shuttle had to be added.

"I get a lot of people who say they wouldn't go out ice fishing if we didn't have the shuttle," Collins said.

Our plan for the day was to drill a couple of holes, see if there was any action and then set up the portable hut in the area. Our plan quickly went askew – and in a good way. Piovesan had been telling me about his battery-powered auger, and seeing it in action, I was impressed with the speed and quietness compared to a gas-powered auger. He quickly put two holes in.

I was still getting set up when Piovesan pulled a nice perch up. He had three perch on ice before I had my bait in the water. I found out he was using an artificial grub while I was using minnows.

After I had my bait in the water, I felt the familiar tap of perch biting and pulled one up. This was a welcome sign as I have found in the winter perch don't bite as hard as the tapping of a biting fish is often non-existence as the perch grab ahold of the minnow and just hold on it.

The bite was constant for about a half-hour, pulling out fish after fish. Piovesan seemed to get slightly larger fish, although I thought my minnows were of a size to deter smaller perch. When the action slowed, we talked of putting the hut up, when the bites started again on my live bait. We decided against that, wanting to keep bait in the water and keeping the school of fish in the area. About the same time, the perch stopped hitting Piovesan's artificial bait and he made the switch to minnows.

As the afternoon progressed, the intensity of the bite waned and the perch switched to grabbing ahold of the bait. Although we were in the open, it was easy to see what the fish were doing in the clear water. Throughout the afternoon, I found the perch were hitting the bait, but not taking it. Many anglers cut their minnows in half to make it easier to hook perch, but I decided against this, mainly because we were in the open, the



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

John Piovesan pulls in a Long Point Bay perch caught with a grab and jig head. When the first are biting, the artificial baits seemed to work as well as live bait.

constant action meant my gloves were off more than on, and I figured the extra time and with cutting minnows would leave my fingers numb.

We finished the afternoon with more than 50 perch on the ice, and more than that being returned due to small size.

Talking to another pair of anglers on the ride back in, we found they were in a different area and had the same experience. One had a live action camera and reported seeing 40 or more fish around his bait.

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Sip and Pour event a success



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Brenda Jones, left, and Cathy Kovacs pick out their mugs at the Station House Potters' first Sip and Shop event. The fundraiser was the group's way of contributing to the Station Arts Centre.

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

The Station House Potters first fundraising event is the group's way of giving back.

Although the name Station House Potters might conjure up images of something out of the popular Harry Potter books and movies, this has nothing to do with Hogwarts, and is much more practical. Based at the Station Arts Centre, the potters are a

group dedicated to pottery.

Held Feb. 7, the event ran from 5 to 9 p.m. For the \$25 admission fee, attendees could choose a handcrafted mug, fill it with coffee donated by Tim Hortons franchise owners Christina and Mike Gazley, and then purchase pottery or other items from the Station Arts Centre.

"We wanted to give back," said Karen Robinson, communications director for the Station House Potters. "The potters are



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Patrons attending the Sip and Shop also had the opportunity to browse and purchase other pottery items created by Station House Potters members.

grateful for the resources we have here in the centre.

The group has 48 potters. Kelly Ongena, who looked after the kiln, said all members tried to donate five mugs for the Sip and Pour.

The creation of a mug is no small task. To start, the mug must be shaped on the wheel in the basement of the red station. Then it has to dry, which can take one to two weeks. The mug then goes into the

kiln. The potter decides how to decorate the mug, applies the glaze, and the mug goes back in the kiln for a second and final time. It can take three weeks to a month from start to the finished product.

Robinson said the group's members were excited about the event and hope to hold it annually.

"It's nice to bring the community to the Station Arts Centre because then they can see what they have to offer," she said.

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Ward's Automotive U11 Storm captures International Silver Stick title

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

The Ward's Automotive U11 South Oxford Storm's coaching staff was thrilled with a 7-1 International Silver Stick championship victory over the host Sarnia Junior Sting.

The players were pretty happy too.

"The craziest thing is, they didn't realize how big of a tournament that is to win," laughed head coach Devin Homick, allowing he never got out of regionals himself. "To pull it off is a pretty big deal."

The Storm saved its best hockey for last in the Jan. 19 final, leading 3-1 after a period and never looking back.

"Our kids came out and played almost a perfect game," said Homick. "As good as they can play."

Carter Balcomb paced the attack with a hat-trick and two assists, Emerson Adam added two goals and three assists, Clark Whatley and Carter Smith a goal each and Brody Biloski two assists.

The morning's semi-final was a much more closely-contested outing, in which South Oxford found itself trailing 3-0 early.

"We clawed our way back against a good Nebraska team," said Homick.

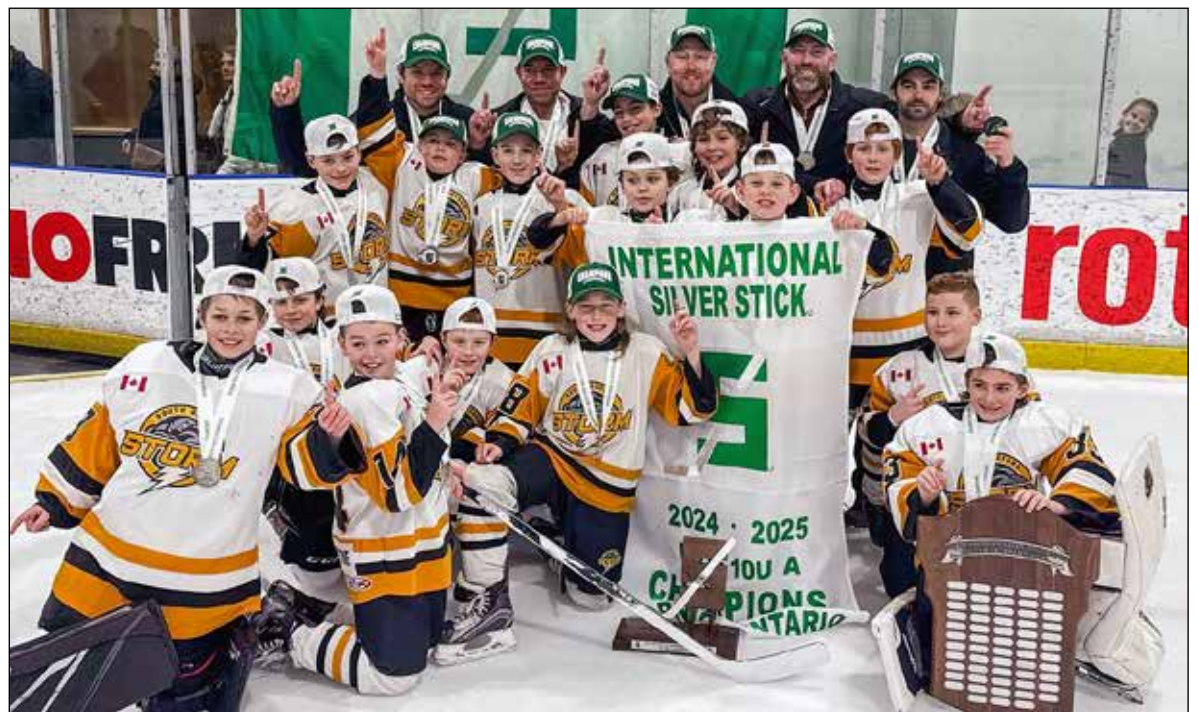
Of interest was the fact Nebraska was coached by two ex-NHL players, head coach Warren Peters of the Calgary Flames, Dallas Stars, Minnesota Wild and Pittsburgh Penguins, and assistant Jed Ortmeyer, who played with the New York Rangers, Nashville Predators, San Jose Sharks and Minnesota Wild.

The Ward's Automotive U11s scored late in the first period, squaring accounts at three before the end of the second. Carter Balcomb scored what would stand as the game-winner in the third, rounding a hat-trick into an empty net.

Adam added a goal and two assists, Owen Sazatzky his team's first goal, and Biloski, Max Prouse and Lincoln Whittington a helper apiece.

"No panic, we just got back into playing our game and clawed our way back," said Homick. "That was our biggest challenge."

The Sarnia A draw featured 15 teams in all, seven American and eight from Canada, more specifically, all from Ontario. They were divided into three pools of five, with the winners of



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

The Ward's Automotive U11 Storm captured the International Silver Stick A title with a 7-1 victory over the host Sarnia Junior Sting.

each pool plus one wild card advancing to the semi-final round.

"To guarantee your spot, you had to win your pool," said Homick. "Every game was important."

The Storm opened against the Vaughan Rangers, scoring 16 seconds into the game en route to a 4-2 win. The game was tied at two after the first period, with South Oxford notching two unanswered markers in the second. "And held them in the third,"

said Homick.

Adam figured in on all his team's scoring with two goals and two assists, Biloski added one of each, Balcomb a goal and Tommy Thomson and Whatley each an assist.

The Ward Automotive U11s had an easier time of it in their second outing, skating to a comfortable 10-3 decision over the Traverse City, Michigan North Stars.

"Lots of scoring from lots of

kids."

Balcomb finished with four goals and an assist, Adam a hat-trick and a helper, Carter Smith a goal, with assists to Whatley (2), Biloski (2), Perry Homick (2), Thomson and Matthew Monsere.

Patrick Marleau's son's presence on the San Jose Junior Sharks did not help turn the tide in the Storm's third round-robin game, a 6-3 win that pushed their won-lost record to 3-0.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 17

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Youthful Gemini girls' hockey team enjoying this season, building for the future

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

A youthful Tillsonburg Gemini girls' hockey team ran out of steam, not spirit through a 9-3 TVRA South East loss to the home-ice Woodstock CI Red Devils Tuesday, Feb. 4 in Woodstock.

"We started off strong, playing both ways," said Gemini coach Ryan Sproul. "Then with a short bench, the girls ran out of gas and we did what we could with who we had."

The first period was Tillsonburg's best, the Gemini answering WCI's offence through its majority. The Red Devils' Emma Holm opened scoring with 6:25 to play, but Tillsonburg's Gabby Ash countered just 31 seconds later, unassisted. The same pattern played out beginning with 3:30 left in the first, WCI's Addison Trepanier scoring, and Gemini Sophia Monsere responding with 47 seconds left on the clock, assisted by Dayna Lester.

"Lots of passing," credited Tillsonburg goalie Asha David for her squad's strong start. "A good forecheck and hard backcheck."

WCI defender Sierra Irwin gave her squad a 3-2 lead just 30 seconds later however, kicking off a four-goal run which essentially decided the outcome.

"They were skating at us hard," said Gemini Kennedy Vandendriessche. "Didn't give us much time."

Vandendriessche broke off the Red Dev-



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Tillsonburg Gemini Lainey West (right) perseveres against a desperation swipe from Woodstock CI's Annika Beaton (left).

ils run, beating the second-period buzzer by 0.3 of a second. She went hard to the Red Devil net to bury an Ash rebound and make the score 6-3 at the time.

"Just skating hard and pressuring," explained Vandendriessche, who also plays with the St. Thomas U15 girls' squad.

Tillsonburg's roster is a 'mixed bag' says coach Sproul, including those playing on girls' hockey units in St. Thomas, London and Tillsonburg, as well as some recruited ringette players.

"We're young," he added, of Grade 9 student-athletes who make up half the team. "We're looking to build off this year and keep going in the future."

"A good mindset" has been important says David, who has enjoyed her high school hockey season.

Some girls are less experienced added Vandendriessche, also pleased with the opportunity for all to build experience and have fun together.

"We celebrate every game," she said. "Stay positive."

The Gemini closed out TVRA South East regular season play with a 1-5-1 record including a 2-2 tie against Ingersoll DCI and a 4-1 win over Woodstock Huron Park. Tillsonburg began Pool B round-robin semi-finals against Ingersoll Thursday, Feb. 13, with additional games scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 18 and Thursday, Feb. 20. The best-of-three winner will face the winner of

a corresponding Aylmer East Elgin versus Huron Park semi-final series in the B Final.

TVRA South East Boys' Hockey

Regular Season Friday, Jan. 10
Gemini 6, Huron Park 1

Wednesday, Feb. 12 Quarter-Final
Gemini 5, East Elgin 0

Thursday, February 20th Semi-Final
TBA at Gemini, Memorial Arena, 12 noon.

TVRA South East Senior Boys' Basketball

Friday, Febr. 7 AA Quarter-Final
Parkside 59, Gemini 39

Thursday, Jan. 16
St. Thomas Parkside 60, Gemini 41

TVRA South East Junior Boys' Basketball

Tuesday, Feb. 11 AA Quarter-Final
Woodstock St. Mary's 60, Gemini 49

Thursday, Jan. 16
Parkside 54, Gemini 46

TVRA South East Senior Girls' Volleyball

Wednesday, Feb. 12 AA Semi-Final
Parkside 25, 26, 25, 25; Gemini 16, 28, 6, 9

Monday, Feb. 10 AA Quarter-Final
Gemini 25, 25, 26, 25; Huron Park 20, 15, 28, 15

Thursday, Jan. 16
Parkside 25, 25, 25; Gemini 11, 21, 15

TVRA South East Junior Girls Volleyball

Monday, Feb. 10 AA Quarter-Final
Lord Dorchester 25, 25, 23, 25; Gemini 11, 15, 25, 12

Thursday, Jan. 16
Parkside 25, 25, 25; Gemini 2, 18, 22

Ward's Automotive U11 Storm captures International Silver Stick title

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Adam finished with a hat-trick and an assist, Carter Smith and Balcomb a goal and assist apiece, Biloski a goal and Sawatzky and Brayden Bartram an assist each.

South Oxford closed out pool play with a perfect 4-0 mark and berth in the semi-final with a 6-2 victory over the Mississippi Thunder Kings from Carleton Place, Ontario. Both teams entered the game undefeated, although the Thunder Kings had a tie in their record. South Oxford built a commanding 6-0 lead before giving up two late goals.

"Overall our kids just played good hockey," Homick summed up.

Adam finished with a hat-trick and an assist, Smith a goal and an assist, Balcomb and Biloski a goal apiece, and Smith, Thomson and Whatley one helper each.

The team got to carry the tournament's namesake around the ice in celebration, each player receiving a representative pin made of sterling silver, as well as a team banner in recognition of

their achievement, and official mention in Hockey Hall of Fame records.

"They were pretty fired up," said Homick, again, almost as much as the coaching staff. "I think we get more worked up than the kids do," he laughed.

The Ward Automotive U11s closed out their regular season undefeated, a 23-0-1 record including a tie against Strathroy in their second-last game. Their 'road to the red hats' (OMHA A tournament April 14-16 in Whitby) will pass through a Shamrock League two-pool round-robin qualifier. South Oxford is in an eight-game home-and-home series with the fourth, fifth, eighth and ninth-place teams, while second, third, sixth and seventh will play a corresponding six-game set. The top two teams from these pools play best-of-three semis, with the two winners advancing to a best-of-three league final for the single OMHA berth.

"You have to run the gauntlet," a cautiously-optimistic Homick concluded. "Hopefully our kids are up to it."



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Gemini goalie Asha David (right) makes the initial save on Woodstock CI's Emma Holm.

Tillsonburg Thunder playoffs start next week



(JEFF HELSDON PHOTO)

Nicolas D'Agostino hit the mesh on this goal to pull the Thunder in front of the Stratford Fighting Irish in a game on Feb. 8. The Thunder are now tied for third with Stratford and Petrolia with a to-be-scheduled game against Stratford this week. Playoffs start this weekend.

MICHAEL HOLLY

Post Contributor

The WOSHL playoffs start next weekend. However, Mother Nature has thrown a twist in the playoffs. Read to the end of this article to get the entire low-down.

The Thunder have started playing playoff hockey last weekend against our nemesis the Stratford Fighting Irish. Stratford came into the game beating the Thunder for the last 10 games over the last couple of seasons. The Thunder were looking to end that streak.

The Irish jumped out to an early 2-0 score. However, the Thunder rallied late in the period with goals from Braden Roberts from Brendan Barletta, and Brandon Couto from Tucker Firth and Sheldon Thomson. The Thunder took over the second period in a feisty 20 minutes with four Irish penalties and five Thunder penalties. A scrap between Cory Mallet and Colin Martin highlighted the affair. Goals were scored by Nicolas D'Agostino from Couto and Thomson, and Kyle Brezinski from D'Agostino and Couto. The third period had each team score two to give Tillsonburg the 6-4 win. Thunder goals were by Thomson from D'Agostino, and Couto from Thomson and Barletta. Matt Sagrott got the win, stopping 27 of 31 shots. Both Couto and Thomson had excellent four-point nights.

In the scoring race, Thomson is tied with James McEwan from the Alvin-

ston Killer bees for the top spot with 49 points. The Bees have completed their schedule while the Thunder have one game remaining. Even an assist will give Sheldon the crown. No Thunder player has ever won this title.

The winter storm last weekend caused major game scheduling issues. As you may know, it was cancelled in Stratford as the roads were simply too dangerous. As of this writing, it has not been re-scheduled due to the Family Day holiday. It must be played before Friday as that is when playoffs start. Please follow the Thunder Facebook page for details. The game will be posted as soon as the Thunder gets the date.

As for who we play... who knows. It all depends on the Stratford game. The Alvinston Killer Bees have locked up first (41 points) and will play the Dunnville Aeros (19 points). The Elora Rocks (31 points) will play the Strathroy Jets (21 points). This is where it gets messy. Tillsonburg, Stratford, and Petrolia all have 27 points. If the Thunder win either in regulation or overtime, the Thunder take third and will play the Tilbury Bluebirds (22 points). If Stratford wins in regulation, they will take third and play Tilbury, Petrolia gets fourth and Tillsonburg fifth. The Thunder will play the Squires without home ice advantage. If Stratford wins in overtime, Stratford gets Tilbury and the Thunder gets Petrolia with home ice advantage.

Got all that? You gotta love playoffs!! Let's go Thunder

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CLUB OXFORD HOCKEY

Playoff battles are heating up in Club Oxford

JEFF GWYN

Post Contributor

Playoff battles are heating up in Club Oxford hockey. In B Division, second to sixth place teams are only separated by four points and A Division has a battle for first.

Feb. 2

Distinct 5, ReMax 4

Distinct was able to answer back to ReMax in the first period and then controlled the flow in the second. A solid effort led to the win in the end. ReMax looked to keep their pressure up all game, matching Distinct on the score-sheet throughout. They pressured at the end, but couldn't get any bounces to go their way. Brian Velthove had four points for Distinct. Ryan Dayman had two goals for ReMax.

Fody's 6, Agrospray 2

Fody's was able to roll lines all night, which led to some new linemates, but an offensive result. Every rush seemed dangerous in this one. Agrospray had a tough time matching the Fody's speed. They also couldn't get much going as Fody's Tommy Lee didn't let a lot of faceoffs happen by playing the puck quickly back out. Shane Balcomb had four points for Fody's. Kelsey and Brady VanYmeren had a goal each for Agrospray.

RND 2, Precision 2

RND had a strong game at

both ends. They were able to get some nice breakouts and chances. They couldn't handle a late push by Precision, but earned the point. Precision has one loss since Christmas and fight for every point. They had chances early in the game, but really pressured the last two minutes for the tie.

Justin Rowles and Caleb Waycott had goals for RND. Matthew Sullivan had two points for Precision.

Royal LePage 4, Airmount 2

Royal LePage found some needed scoring. They used the whole ice to get changes and it paid off in this one. Airmount looked to be chasing the game early, but were able to get some chances in the second. No puck luck in this one kept them from getting close. Colby Jansen had 3 points for Royal LePage. Chad Homick and Tyson Simpson had goals for Airmount.

Carquest 5, B-Line 1

Carquest had their top line working in this one. Every shift was dangerous and their passes were on the money all night. B-Line was a bit frustrated at the break, but couldn't use that energy in the second. A tough loss when they couldn't get second chances.

Brad Henderson had a hat trick for Carquest. Dmitri Carvalho had a goal for B-Line.

Glass 3, Source 3

Glass was so close to another win, but late penalties couldn't be killed off. Still a strong performance in a close game. Source was able to find some pressure late and worked their two-man advantage correctly with the goalie pulled to secure an important point.

Jeff Prouse had two goals for Glass. Mitch Wass and Nate Bisschop had two points each for Source.

Feb. 5

Agrospray 5, ReMax 2

Agrospray came out strong in this one, led by a four-goal performance by Travis Horvath. Agrospray was able to keep ReMax from getting much momentum in this one. ReMax seemed to have trouble stopping Agrospray rushes. They also couldn't get second chances of their own which made for a tough night.

Travis Horvath had four goals and an assist for Agrospray. Landon Thibert and Ryan Dayman had goals for ReMax.

Fody's 10, Distinct 4

Fody's dominated this game. They seemed dangerous every shift and had all lines going. They definitely took Distinct out of the game early. Distinct was caught off guard by Fody's fast start. They did slow them down a bit as the game went on, but it was tough. Distinct did make it kind of close at

one point, but couldn't keep that pressure up.

Devin Homick had a hat trick and Shane Balcomb had four points for Fody's. Evan DeRouck and Derrick Sweazey had two assists each for Distinct.

Source 2, Airmount 2

Source looked to be in control of this one. They had some great breakouts and good chances in close. Airmount was able to get some pressure in the second half of the game and led them to some chances in close. A solid game by both teams to earn the point.

Darryl Wilson and Mike Hedberg had goals for Source. Dustin McElhinney and Greg Onaitis had goals for Airmount.

Feb. 12

B-Line 5, RND 3

B-Line played a very solid game. They found their offence and didn't let RND get much going after their initial push. RND looked to be in control, but seemed a step behind as B-Line found momentum. Pulling the goalie early gave them a chance late. Stephan Coulombe and John Rachar had three-point nights for B-Line. Jason Beard and Peter Burgon had two points each for RND.

Precision 2, Source 2

Precision finds a way to get a point again. They didn't have a great middle of the game, but they played to the end to earn a point. Source looked to have momentum as the

game went on, but a tough Precision team stifled the offence late and broke up some scoring chances.

Devon MacDonald and Christian Devlin had goals for Precision. Nate Bisschop had two goals for Source.

Glass 7, Royal LePage 0

Glass spread out the scoring in this lopsided victory. They seemed to have a rush every shift and just as many scoring chances. Royal LePage chased the game all night as they couldn't match the Glass speed. Their own chances were limited as Glass kept them away from the front of the net.

Brian Beaumont and Stephen Schafer had two goals and an assist each for Glass.

CLUB OXFORD A DIVISION	GP	W	L	T	PTS
DISTINCT EXTERIORS	23	12	8	3	27
FODY'S AUTOMOTIVE	23	10	7	6	26
REMAX REALTY	23	9	11	3	21
AGROSPRAY	23	6	11	6	18

CLUB OXFORD B DIVISION	GP	W	L	T	PTS
TILLSONBURG GLASS	24	21	1	2	44
CALIBRATED PRECISION	24	9	8	7	25
CARQUEST AUTO PARTS	24	9	9	6	24
RND CONSTRUCTION	24	9	9	6	24
SOURCE FOR SPORTS	23	11	11	1	23
ROYAL LEPAGE REALTY	24	8	11	5	21
AIRMOUNT FARMS	23	6	13	4	16
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Development options under consideration for Layton Property in Mount Elgin

DEBBIE KASMAN

Tillsonburg Post Correspondent

The Housing Opportunities Committee of South-West Oxford Township met with Kirby Heckford and Dominic Bradley of Tillsonburg Developments and Daniel Segal of Segal Construction in February to discuss affordable housing solutions on the Layton Property west of Highway 19 in Mount Elgin.

Two development options are under consideration: a townhouse concept with five two-story buildings of five units each and a tiny home community of less than 650 square feet per home.

Ownership is preferred by the township rather than rentals. The township also wants to see small footprint residential development.

The township and county are supportive in-principle

of developing an alternative zoning framework for small footprint development on the property.

If the unit/home sale price is under \$406,000, the developer may enter into an agreement with Oxford County to exempt development charges if it remains affordable for a 25-year period.

It is not yet known if there is capacity for this development in the current wastewater sys-

tem.

Any proposals will require a zoning amendment, along with public notice and circulation, prior to any public meeting before Council.

A discussion also took place regarding the growth in Mount Elgin. It was noted that the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) does not want direct access onto Highway 19, which is challenging for commercial businesses.

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WHEN: Wednesday, March 5, 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

WHERE: Tillsonburg Senior Centre, 45 Hardy Avenue, Tillsonburg

WHAT: Free admission, educational seminars, information booths, free healthy snacks and refreshments courtesy of Lifetimes Living Inc. (Tillsonburg Retirement, Park Place Retirement and Oxford Manor) and Sobeys Tillsonburg, free blood pressure and hearing screening, draw prizes, giveaways and unique interactive opportunities!

WHO: Open to all seniors and those who want to learn about healthy, active living

Hosted by the Tillsonburg Senior Centre in partnership with the Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario and funding support from the Government of Ontario.



Funding provided by:



Scotch Doubles Bonspiel held this weekend



ON THE BROOM

NORA PETERS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

This column I wanted to get back to some of the club history as I know from my 40-plus years as a member. The TCC has been an active part of the community for 70 years and like many clubs and organizations it has experienced its ups and downs in membership and had to change and update according to new trends and lifestyles.

When I first joined the club in '82 the league offerings were different from what is available today. There were three mixed nights – Sunday, Monday and two draws on Friday. These nights were so popular, especially Friday, that people were standing in line to sign up for the next draw on the night the sign-in sheet went up – and you couldn't sign in someone else – no on-line sign-up back then! Tuesday night was Business Ladies Night plus there were two afternoon Ladies Leagues on Tuesday and Thursday. Wednesday nights saw a competitive multi-club draw with men's teams from other clubs. Thursday nights were always men's league.

As times changed, we lost Sunday mixed curling but added a Junior Rockers program in the afternoon which helped our high school curling teams field some very successful teams in both boys and girls divisions over the next 20 years. The club also had a team win their zones in the junior mixed and go on to compete at the provincials.

In the mid-90s, Walt Kleer and Les Peter organized a Wednesday night "choose your own league" to attract more members and generate new revenue for the club. They approached businesses, factories, companies, stores, clubs to form teams and enter the league. The concept had teams of four to eight curlers who played as a team and could rotate in and play whatever position they chose – a social league which allowed team players who worked shift work or needed to miss a game to always have four players available. This recreational league started out with two draws and eventually built to 28 teams in its heyday.

Again, as times changed the mixed leagues were dwindling until around 2005 there was no longer a mixed night but rec league was playing two nights adding Fridays. During this period, our ladies evening and afternoon draws struggled with declining membership. At the same time, the senior men's morning league which ran Monday, Wednesday and Friday came into being – with the Hickory Hills and other senior communities building in the area it answered a need in town for recreational sport for seniors. In 2014, Wendy and Bill Young revived the mixed league running on Monday night which also seemed to answer a need and the club was looking more vibrant with the strong rec league, men's, senior men's, and mixed all running full draws. The ladies were down to just one afternoon and a small draw on Tuesday.

Then COVID hit and dealt a severe blow to our club when many members did not return to the ice after restrictions were eased and clubs were open again – our membership had a lot of seniors and two seasons away from the rink made a difference. Once again, the club had to make changes and this time our current presi-

dent Diane Kleer introduced the game of triples to the club. Different than the traditional game, triples is faster moving, offers more variety for the curlers and it seems to be a hit bringing new curlers and interest to the game.

The club has a Special Olympics section who successfully brought a provincial banner to the club and a growing youth curling program. These new leagues plus the strong men's, senior men's, mixed and the CYO (Rec) leagues have revitalized the club and we're working hard to build our membership and grow interest in the game.

During COVID shutdown Past-President Ken Patterson was busy updating club trophies and plaques and looking through old newspapers and library records of past curling events and he came up with an interesting account from the "Tillsonburg Observer February 19, 1897" which suggests that curling interest has been around in TBurg well before 1954!!

Here is the direct quote:

With the Jolly Curlers of Ingersoll

About 12:30 on Tuesday, two rinks of the Tillsonburg Curling Club started for Ingersoll to enjoy a friendly game with the curlers in that town. On arrival about 3 o'clock the roarin' game was started and playing kept up until six o'clock when the Ingersollites invited the southerners to tea. At the table they distinguished themselves with credit to our town, the Chief of Police in particular, even if unable to do so on the ice. After tea, playing was again indulged until nearly midnight. The party returned home in the wee small hours feeling a little tired but speaking volumes for the hospitality of the Ingersoll curlers and anxiously awaiting the opportunity to return the compliment which will be at no distant date. The home team played a fair game but owing to not having sufficient practice were out played. One of the curlers on being asked by The Observer for the score said it was burned up. Today, Friday, they go to Simcoe to practice with curlers in that town". There was a list of the names of the teams, the two skips were Rev. E.W. Hughes and F. Biattie. Ken was unable to find a follow up article that told of the rematch but obviously there were curlers here 128 years ago!!

This past weekend the second annual Scotch Doubles Bonspiel was held with 36 teams participating. There were three levels of play, competitive, intermediate and recreational. The opening ceremonies featured the traditional bagpiper led march of curlers onto the ice followed by the traditional Scotch toast to curling shared by the piper and club member Walt Kleer. Town of Tillsonburg Councilor Chris Parker welcomed the curlers, and sponsor Tom Klavdianos delivered the ceremonial first rock.

It was a great fun packed weekend with lots of friendly rivalries being settled. Thanks go out to event sponsors Grassmere Construction and the Queen's Café and our local Tim Horton's. Thanks also to the Aylmer Curling Club for hosting several draws and to all the club volunteers working in the kitchen and behind the scenes.

Lastly updating what is happening with Team King – the team played at the Tankard, but did not qualify for playoffs this year. They have one more event in Saskatchewan to try and earn the points needed to qualify for the Olympic trials. Jayden King and his partner Grace Shurr reached the semi-finals in the Ontario Mixed Doubles Curling Championship undefeated but lost the semi-final to the eventual winners. Owen Henry skipped the Brock University team to a bronze medal and advances to the Canadian University Championships in Lethbridge. Jayden King was one of two Curling Canada Scholars honored by Curling Canada in Black History Month for their impact both on and off the ice.

February is an exciting, busy curling month for our club! Curling rocks!

EXPERIENCE SMALL TOWN PERSONAL SERVICE THAT'S SECOND TO NONE!

j.d. lighting a one-stop home decorating source

j.d. lighting is a one-stop source for everything lighting, plus home décor, furniture and more.

The store, located at 216 Tillson Ave., is operated by the mother and daughter team of Deb and Lydia Byl. This year, they hope to celebrate their 18th year of business. The company was started in 2007 on Spruce Street. Deb and her husband John started the business with their son John and his wife Jessica.

They were looking for a larger space when the building on Tillson Ave. became available.

“We were running out of space,” Deb recalled. “There was a real estate customer who connected us with the sellers of this building.”

Further investigation showed the building had high ceilings and lots of wall plugs for electricity – both of which are needed for a lighting store.

“It was a good location for us,” Lydia said.

“It was perfect, and providential.”

Deb added.

After John and Jessica made a decision to move away from the area to follow other interests in 2018, Lydia was developing an interest in the family business and came to work full time in the showroom.

“One sibling out, one sibling in,” she joked.

j.d. lighting is the only store in town that specializes in lighting.

When asked what sets j.d.lighting apart from their competition, Lydia listed off customer service, quality of products and selection.

“The biggest one would be selection. We have 22 different lighting brands from across North America at different price points, qualities and styles.”

Explaining the difference in quality between their products and a line of lesser quality, Lydia said superior finishes, quality of materials, manufacturing, current styles and design are all factors.

j.d.lighting has a close eye on current trends and styles and are constantly updating their showroom to display the lighting that everyone is looking for. They offer customers more selection than what is available to them at large chains.

About six years ago, a move was made to also carry home décor accessories. While it started as an interest in making the lighting displays more visually interesting, a decision was made to see if there was interest from customers in purchasing home décor.

“Over the last couple of years, it’s taken off,” Deb said. “People initially come in for lighting and come back to decorate the rest of their space.”

Today, additional home décor includes couches, tables, tables tops,



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

bedding, textiles, vases, décor, bathroom accessories, mirrors, rugs and runners, vases and baskets and much more.

The store’s visual merchandiser Lindee VanSevenant does the buying and arranging of the accessories in the store.

“She makes the store look beautiful,” Lydia said.

“She does an amazing job,” Deb added.

The one thing that has set j.d.lighting apart for 18 years of business is their customer service. They have a team of excellent salespeople that can assist in choosing lighting and décor for any scale of project

“Lighting selection is a pretty daunting process,” Lydia said. “For some people, it can be overwhelming. That’s why we offer in-home or showroom consultations to walk clients through the process of selecting the final finishes for their home.”

From lighting to décor and furniture, j.d.lighting is a local gem for home renovators, decorators, and lovers of interior design.



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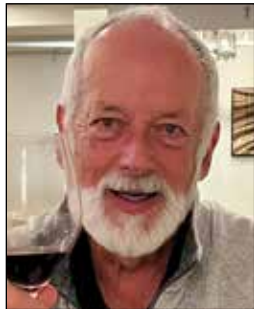
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Little Canada - a miniature Canadian miracle



**OH,
THE
PLACES
WE'LL
GO!**

PAUL KNOWLES

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

This is my 200th consecutive weekly travel feature in the Grant Haven newspapers. It's also appearing near Valentine's Day, so it seems appropriate that, in this milestone week, I am featuring a love story about a place I treasure – our own Canada.

But this is not my love story; it's the story of Jean-Louis Brenninkmeijer and his labour of love: a visitor attraction in Toronto called "Little Canada."

It's not hyperbole to say I was blown away by this amazing destination. To offer a description that does not do justice to the wonder, Little Canada is a collection of miniaturized highlights of our country. You stroll past small versions of Niagara Falls, Québec City, Halifax, Victoria, St. John's, Ottawa and more. All of these destinations are full of accurately replicated buildings and geographic features, as well as moving vehicles, trains and animals. Oh, and there are people, too – about 40,000 of them. All but one of these elements are faithfully reproduced at a 1:87 scale (model-train lovers will know that as HO). The exception is the CN Tower, still too big at that scale, so it's actually scaled at 1:160.

In human terms, that means the miniaturized people are about three-quarters of an inch tall.

The entire facility, located at 10 Dundas St. E in downtown Toronto, covers 45,000 square feet including storage area and space marked for expansion as even more of Canada is miniaturized and put on display. Little Canada is open 364 days a year. In 2024, the

attraction welcomed 130,000 visitors.

The founder and "chief visionary officer" of Little Canada, Brenninkmeijer, came to Canada from The Netherlands in 1999, planning to stay for two years to gain business expertise he could carry back to his family business in Europe.

As we stood surrounded by miniaturized Toronto, he explained that when he and his family arrived in this country, "We knew nothing about Canada." But when his four sons were assigned projects in Grade 4 about Canada, Brenninkmeijer and his wife got involved with the assignments.

His growing interest in the country meshed with his interest in model trains and his fond memories of visiting European attractions like "The Netherlands in Miniature."

The plan to return to The Netherlands was scuttled. Brenninkmeijer had found his passion. In 2011, warehouse space was found in Mississauga, business partners were recruited and a team was assembled to start producing miniaturized versions of Canadian communities.

It took 10 years for Brenninkmeijer's vision to be opened to the public in its downtown Toronto location; that happened in 2021. Today, visitors – officially dubbed Giants – can spend time in seven regions: Little Niagara, Little Toronto, Little Golden Horseshoe, Little Ottawa, Petit Québec, Little East Coast and Little West Coast (opened in 2024). You will want to spend a few hours here; the details are amazing and guests are captivated by individual features including 300 moving vehicles, 22 trains running at any one time, pecking chickens, flopping fish and rolling fog.

Just when you think you have seen everything a particular site has to offer, the sun sets and everything changes. The day-to-night cycle lasts 15 minutes. On Parliament Hill, sunset sets the stage for the popular light show, projected on the Parliament buildings, the same show that is displayed in Ottawa in the evening.

Later this year, a new region will open – Canada's North. Brenninkmeijer told me



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Little Canada founder and chief visionary officer Jean-Louis Brenninkmeijer, a "giant" beside Little Canada's Rogers Centre.

this section of Little Canada was developed through full collaboration with an Indigenous consulting firm "to help us curate the right stories."

And there is still more to come, says the founder. Little Canada will eventually include The Prairies, Montreal and the Rocky Mountains. And when all of these regions are represented, "I would like to do an airport at the end," he said.

All of this raises the question, "Why?" Why take on such a demanding challenge? Brenninkmeijer explains that the fundamental goal is "to introduce people to Canada." These people include Canadians who may never have the chance to see the country from coast to coast to coast. They also include newcomers to Canada; and as an immigrant himself, Brenninkmeijer takes great pleasure in welcoming newcomers to this unique introduction to the vast country that is now his family's home. He is in the process of creating a non-profit organization that will help to fund visits to Little Canada

for newcomers and school groups. A standard visit to Little Canada costs \$36 for an adult, with discounts for students, seniors and children.

A tour of the attraction allows an up-close view of the craftspeople creating Little Canada. To date, over 400,000 hours of work have gone into the project; each region takes 18 months to produce.

Visitors also can experience the "Littlization Station" where – for a fee – a 28-camera unit captures your image, resulting in a miniaturized you! Visitors can take home a tiny figure of themselves or they can have themselves included in the Little Canada display. About 7,000 figures are replicas of visitors. No, wait. Since my visit, 7,001. Look for a tiny, bearded travel writer hanging out at the Yellow Belly pub in St. John's N.L.!

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



Downtown Niagara Falls; the famous Clifton Hill.



A miniature Québec City in amazing detail.

Overnight ice cabins an experience - with fishing benefits



**LOST
TRIBE**

JEFF TRIBE

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Ask not for whom the bell tolls.

Just get there before the fish is gone.

"Tristan!" I hissed as the pole nearest his bunk jangled connection 30 feet below. "Go!"

Lake Nipissing holds a year-round fishery popular as an ice-fishing destination. Introduced during our son's five-year educational sojourn in North Bay, we joined those celebrating rather than suffering through extended winter months.

Anglers venture offshore from regions including North and Calendar Bays and along Nipissing's south shore from Jan. 1st to March 15. Some hike out pulling sleds with pop-up tents and small heaters, others drive ATVs, snow machines and road-legal vehicles to homemade huts of every description. There's also a wide selection of day and overnight rental hut or cabin outfitters providing recreational opportunity for locals and visitors alike.

Amy Craft of Craft's Ice Cabins (249-591-4887, or via their Facebook page) officially joined the latter in January 2024. She, husband Harvey Hughes and Amy's stepson Jesse Hughes - her 'main man' - were involved in the industry years prior to purchasing the Bear Creek Cottages ice-fishing operation from Terra and Shawn Degagne. The newly-branded Craft's Ice Cabins continues from the Bear Creek property as a co-operative family enterprise with additional employees. In broad terms, Amy oversees bookings and the business side, Harvey sources lifelong knowledge of the lake in constantly moving cabins to keep clients on fish, and Jesse takes point on day-to-day operations.

A lot of work goes in that people may not see says Amy, whose goal is for clients to be

comfortable, on fish and have a great experience. Their customers include families and experienced anglers, but are mostly people seeking a peaceful getaway in a beautiful location.

"And if they catch fish, it's a bonus."

Nipissing holds a mixed bag, pickerel topping the list for many, however also featuring pike, muskie, bass, lake herring and growing perch potential. Tactically, Jesse prefers to let live minnows suspended off the bottom do the work.

"I dead-stick (stationary presentation) everything and every once in a while give it a couple jigs."

Freshwater ling or burbot have comparatively recently gained a higher profile in Nipissing. Historically, people considered these fish resembling a large - some very large - smooth-bodied mud puppy a 'trash' species. That is until anglers noticed one person gathering up discards, and discovered flavour akin to lobster.

Jesse suspends bait six inches above bottom, out of the reach of mud puppies when targeting the nocturnal feeders, warning of a tendency to spin when hooked, tangling lines around them, and curling up at the hole.

"You don't know how to get them out because they're slippery and don't have scales."

Smaller burbot fillets are lightly floured, fried with salt and pepper and dipped in butter. Those from fish over five pounds are poached in salt water and then dipped in butter, or alternatively, poached, battered and fried like any other fish.

"It's turned into a big thing," said Jesse.

Our crew was a similarly mixed bag: accomplished angler and nephew Bryan Sweazey, unbridled enthusiasm and hope for 'at least three fish' in grandsons Sebastian and Tristan, and someone intrigued by the overnight cabin concept.

The thought of extending Nipissing's night bite as late as one chose, hitting the morning bite as early as one wished had always been attractive. Doing so within family-friendly heated creature comfort complete with cooking and restroom facilities, without the hassle of dragging, setting up and breaking down gear a mile or two onto the ice and returning in the coldest of cold, sounded like next-level.

And so it would prove. Howie shuttled



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Anglers including, from left, Sebastian and Tristan, come to Lake Nipissing in search of pickerel, but may also catch pike, muskie, lake herring and burbot and perch like this one.

us a trio of kilometres or so out onto 24 inches of frozen Nipissing surface inside an enclosed trailer, depositing us at Cabin 12 around 1 p.m. It featured inside fishing holes with covers for when they weren't in use, six sleeping bunks (Craft's also has eight-person overnight cabins, slightly roomier and more modern), a propane stove, battery-powered electric lights, table, chairs and our own 'ensuite.' Jesse dropped by, introducing himself, freshening and drilling holes for those who wished to try their luck outside the cabin.

Getting lines in the water we lunched, opened with a jumbo perch and from 3 p.m. onward, enjoyed steady action in gentle waves. Tristan latched onto Uncle Bryan's electronics, the two of them working the cabin's interior holes while I happily followed Sebastian outside - space to warm up rather than simply thaw out a few steps away. As darkness descended, we joined ranks in the cabin, a pair of tip-ups with warning bells attached to the poles a popular and productive diversion well past a young person's civilized bedtime.

"If you want a good night's sleep, you'd better reel up your lines and take your bells off," Amy smiled.

As the temperature dropped to minus 20, wind howling, Sebastian complained about

being too hot in his upper bunk. Mother Nature hadn't offered up a classic Nipissing sunset, but North Bay's lights provided a nostalgic tour down memory lane. Wind subsiding, a nearly-full orange moon descending in the north-west as the eastern horizon crimsoned announced a productive morning bite.

We had come for an experience and got every bit of that. We caught some, missed some, lost some, notably Sebastian the biggest fish of the trip that morning right at the hole. But we smashed through the boys' pre-trip projection with a feisty pike, double-digits of jumbo perch and over twice that many pickerel.

Fully respecting Nipissing's slot size, we also enjoyed a delicious late-night fish fry, the morning's planned pancake fest postponed for the simple reason we were too busy fishing to cook.

In the end, Billy or Betty burbot didn't show up. However, rather than a disappointment, clearly, clearly, that represents an undeniable argument to return. Because in closing, the kids had a ton of fun - and Sebastian and Tristan did too.

For a related video, search YouTube for Lost Tribe Ice Cabin Adventure or cut and paste the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdhSpf2OkK4&t=6s>



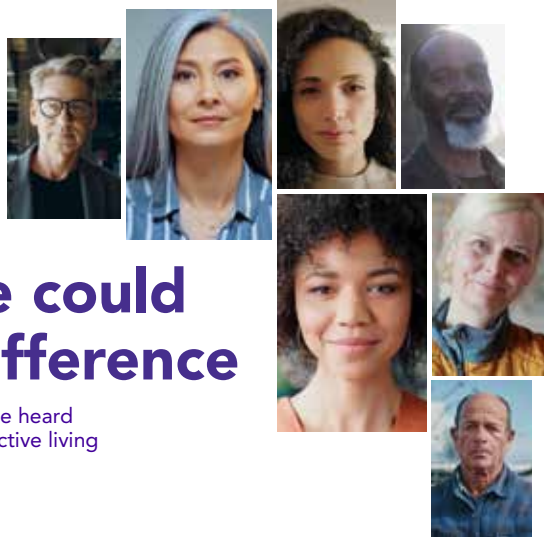
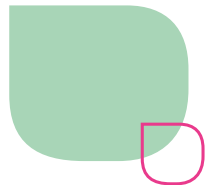
(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

From left, Amy Craft and her 'main man' Jesse Hughes of Craft's Ice Cabins.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Bryan Sweazey checks his electronics while jigging from the comfort of his bunk.



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Rennalls educates public on Black component of Canadian history

JEFF TRIBE

Post Correspondent

It was a chilly, yet cheerfully bright and sunny winter's day at the African Methodist Episcopal Cemetery, at Otterville's northern edge. In the distance, ringing bells signalled the top of the hour, much closer, a red-tailed hawk's shrill cry announced its presence.

"It's always such a peaceful place," mused Oxford County educator and freelance writer Heather Rennalls. "Even though it's a cemetery, it's comforting and peaceful."

It takes a little imagination to envision the site's rich history, hidden in plain sight as the saying goes. Today, a cairn and a metallic sign over the gate stand as silent and lonely sentinels paying respectful homage to the burial place of over 140 Black pioneers - one of the few preserved in Ontario - and the thriving, vibrant community that existed in the surrounding area over 150 years ago.

In Rennalls' mind's eye she can see and hear children laughing and playing, hymns sung in the church that stood a short distance away, related functions and picnics hosted on the nearby lawn.

"People just living their lives like everyone else."

Area Black settlement began around 1829, encouraged by local Quakers whose abolitionist views resulted from a broad-based belief in equality, both in terms of race and sex. The settlers' composition illustrates the nuanced complexity of Canadian history featuring Black persons. Rather than the common misconception all were freedom seekers escaping enslavement - a more common origin story in Ingersoll, which was a terminus for The Underground Railroad - many Black Otterville-area residents were free property owners from Maryland. Their emigration was driven in part by repressive and po-

tentially dangerous fugitive slave laws enacted in 1850 to appease slave-holding states for Ohio's admission to the union as a free state, as well as ongoing racism in various forms.

"They came to get a better life and to get away from persecution," said Rennalls. "They had money and the means to buy property."

A South Norwich Historical Society plaque states settlement numbers exceeded 100 within a few years. Population growth led to a mostly-Black school north of Otterville along Middletown Line servicing the area, and in 1856, the purchase of a half-acre lot and construction of a white-frame church. Its congregation featured a community of farmers, skilled tradesmen and mill operators said Rennalls.

"They were contributing members of society."

Services and camp meetings were held onsite through the turn of the century, although Black population in the area declined by the 1880s for a variety of reasons. Many residents went back 'home' to the United States and their extended families following the Union victory in the U.S. Civil War and related abolition of slavery. Others moved on to larger centres seeking employment, still others stayed on, their descendants living in the area to this day.

Their story was published in Otterville historian Joyce Pettigrew's book 'A Safe Haven', compilation of research she initiated and led, subsequently supported by others in the community including Gail Lewis. Rennalls was intrigued upon her 1992 move to Woodstock to discover the surrounding county's 'very, very rich history,' included significant Black contribution.

Growing understanding ignited her passion for sharing that history, offsetting a general chronic lack in formal Canadian education.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 25

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Authorized by the CFO of the Ernie Hardeman campaign.

Rennalls educates public on Black component of Canadian history

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

A member of the Ontario Black History Society and London Black Heritage Council, Rennalls created a mobile presentation featuring the Otterville settlement, Ingersoll's prominent position at the end of The Underground Railroad, and abolitionist John Brown's visit to this area, during which he reportedly stayed with the sympathetic Tillson family in Tillsonburg. Brown was seeking financial support and soldiers to support his raid on the federal armoury at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia.

Initially successful, Brown's goal of instigating and arming an enslaved persons' rebellion failed, however his subsequent capture and hanging were seen as rallying points for the abolitionist cause.

Rennalls hosts 'Heather's Historicals', a website summarizing her presentation as well as hosting links to related organizations, events, employment opportunities

and contacts. She has been active in Black History Month events (February, due says Rennalls to the fact Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln have their birthdays in that month) throughout Oxford County, including flag-raising ceremonies and related receptions. Rennalls was also present for a lunch and learn session at the Norwich and District Historical Society Museum Wednesday, Feb. 12 featuring legendary dancer Joey Hollingsworth, who retains fond memories of childhood summers spent at grandfather Huskey Henderson's Ingersoll residence.

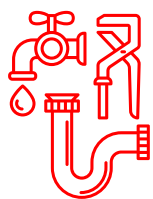
Pleased to help in an education effort she is passionate about, Rennalls does however gently point out one misnomer.

"Black history is Canadian history," she concluded, pointing to diverse contributions from people who have been in this country for a very long time. "It's 365 days of the year, not just the 28 or 29 in February."



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Oxford County educator and freelance writer Heather Rennalls, pictured at Otterville's African Methodist Episcopal Cemetery, is pleased to share significant elements of Canadian history featuring Black persons, which she points out are not limited to a single month.



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MUSIC CORNER

You Should Know Better Comedy brings the laughs to Tillsonburg Legion



BEN ADDRESS

Tillsonburg Post Columnist

Last Summer Dan Brennan and Pete Van Dyk brought their comedy show to the Tillsonburg Legion with rave reviews, and now the duo of comedy veterans come back to town this month with a new feature comedian along for the ride.

"It's not your typical night at the Legion. It transforms into a comedy club." Hamilton, Ontario comedian Dan Brennan explained the dynamics of bringing a comedy show in a space like a Royal Canadian Legion branch. "At You Should Know Better Comedy, the goal is to bring big city quality shows to small towns across Canada"

The Legion's mission statement notes that proceeds raised from events hosted by the branch assist to serve veterans, including serving military and RCMP members and their families, to promote remembrance, and to serve our communities and our country.

"We had such a good time last summer and

sold a lot of tickets," Brennan said. "We had to come back."

Brennan once again is bringing local Pete Van Dyk to host the evening.

Van Dyk is known for his podcast The Dutch Hall based out of Pinegrove, which has nearly 400 published episodes with over 100,000 downloads from all over the globe. The show has been featured on the Apple Podcast Stand Up charts in a number of different countries on multiple occasions.

This time around the pair is joined by a Burgessville laugh-master who is no stranger to Tillsonburg. Tyler Shazma is known in town for his notable sets at Forge Fest 2018 and a 2016 slot when he warmed up the

stage for television icon Spencer Rice from the Canadian comedy series Kenny Vs. Spenny. Last month Tyler performed at The Copper Mug as a part of the Damn Good Comedy Show event while riding the wave of recently-recorded debut comedy album. Shazma recorded a set last February at Levity Comedy Club & Lounge in Hamilton. Hamilton is a city both Tyler and Dan have in common.

While appreciating small-town Oxford County, Brennan gives recognition to his hometown that helped shape his craft.

"Hamilton is a great place to start a comedy career. You don't get to start at the clubs, you have to start at open mics.

There are open mics every night of the week and always fresh faces trying comedy," Brennan spoke of the town where he started his career. "It's got a great energy."

When you're a touring artist, location is everything when deciding where to call home. Brennan also noted more pros to living in a city like Hamilton.

"Within about an hour you can get to Toronto, Niagara Falls and London. It's a great location as well."

After the Tillsonburg You Should Know Better Comedy Show will be bringing the laughs to Brantford, before 2025 swings into full force with gigs across Southern Ontario.

"The goal for 2025 is to

record a 45-minute album and write a new 45-minute act. With a little hard work, I think both are achievable," Brennan grinned as he shared his plans for the new year.

Come enjoy the You Should Know Better Comedy Show on Saturday, Feb. 22nd at The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 153 located at 16 Durham Street with your host Pete Van Dyk, feature comedian Tyler Shazma and headliner Dan Brennan. The event starts at 8 p.m. Tickets for this event are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door.

Anyone wanting more details can visit www.TillLegionComedy.com.

eventbrite.ca or Tillsonburg Legion #153's Facebook page.

UPCOMING SHOWS

FEB. 20 - OPEN MIC NIGHT WITH BILLY GIBBONS
Paddy's Underground
Free - 7:30p.m. (sign up sheet available at 4pm)

FEB. 20 - JACK REDMAN
The Copper Mug
FREE - 8 p.m.

FEB. 22 - THE ANTI-QUEENS, JUNKO DAYDREAM, LITTLE GREEN MEN
Paddy's Underground
\$20 - 8 p.m. - All Ages/
Licensed

FEB. 22 - YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER COMEDY SHOW w/ DAN BRENNAN, TYLER SHAZMA & PETE VAN DYK
Royal Canadian Legion
Branch #153
\$20 - 8 p.m.

FEB. 22 - FILTHY KITTY, CRUSHED SKULLS
The Copper Mug
FREE - 8:30pm

FEB. 23 - MICHEAL WARREN
The Copper Mug
FREE - 5 p.m.

FEB. 27 - OPEN MIC NIGHT WITH BILLY GIBBONS
Paddy's Underground
Free - 7:30p.m. (sign up sheet available at 4 p.m.)

FEB. 27 - ACE OF SWORDS
The Copper Mug
FREE - 8 p.m.

FEB. 28 - FIREFIGHTERS FUNDRAISER w/ ELLE DECLARK, MCINTYRES WISH, PADDY STONES
The Copper Mug
\$35 - 7 p.m.

FEB. 28 - IAN BW, MOORE AVE, DESTINED FOR THE THRONE
Paddy's Underground
\$10 - 8 p.m. - All Ages/
Licensed

MAR. 1 - '63 MONROE, LIMITS OF APPORACH
Paddy's Underground
\$10 - 8 p.m. - All Ages/
Licensed

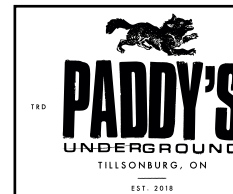
MAR. 1 - FELICIA MCMINN
The Copper Mug
FREE - 8 p.m.



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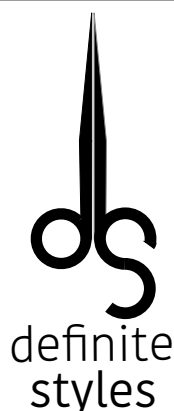
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MAR. 2 - NORTH OF 60
The Copper Mug
FREE - 5 p.m.



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FAMILY DAY

(JEFF HELSDON PHOTOS)

The Tillsonburg Community Centre was busy on Family Day with different activities from one end of the building to the other. Several hundred people went through during the day. Activities ranged from free public skating, a reptile zoo, dancing, to bouncy castles. There was also free popcorn and cotton candy. All activities were no charge, through sponsorship from Tim Hortons, Service Master, Crestwood Landscaping, Thriver Dance Co., Shaw's Ice Cream, Knights of Columbus, Oxford County Library and Loads of Laundry.



Thriver Dance Company gave dancers a chance to bust their moves with introductory instruction.



Magician Peter Mennie wowed young viewers with his magic show that included card and rope tricks, during Family Day.



Aspyn, left, and Paisley pet the ball python that Cassidy Hill of Reptilia London had as part of their display. There were a variety of lizards, snakes and a turtle on display.



Opportunities abounded for youngsters who wanted their faces painted with several face painting stations set up in the auditorium. Volunteer Kate Nesbitt, right, added a little colour to the face of Leia Radev.

Volunteers needed for Coldest Night of the Year

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Volunteers are still needed for the Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser to be held on Feb. 22.

Kelly Gilson, executive director for United Way Oxford, said help is needed for route marshal positions. These are people who will be outside along the route during the event.

"Those are really the cheerleaders along the route to cheer them on and to ensure people are following the route," she said.

Participants in the fundraising walk can choose to either walk the two kilometre or five-kilometre version of the route. Gilson noted most pick the longer route, and said the marshals also ensure everything is okay with the participants.

"We want to ensure everyone is safe and well along the route," she said.

Most of the volunteers are returning from last year, and are covering the inside positions. Besides route marshals, help may also be needed to direct parking. Gilson said outside volunteers will be facing the elements for about 90 minutes.

"Those volunteering outside need to dress warm and we provide toques," she said.

Coldest Night of the Year toques are a hot commodity. Any participants raising more than \$150 will receive this year's toques. The design changes each year and outdoor volunteers receive last year's toques.

Participants can still register, and donations are still being accepted, both through the web site at www.cnoy.org

Proceeds from the event will fund Tillsonburg Light House, a transitional house

in Tillsonburg. Up to seven people can stay at Light House while putting their lives back together. The program supported 22 people last year, who were able to get the support they needed and move forward with their lives.

Last year was the inaugural Coldest Night of the Year, which involved 122 walkers on 23 teams and raised \$42,844.

"It's an opportunity for people in the Tillsonburg community to come together and help those in need," Gilson said. "We know safe affordable housing is the answer and Light House provides that."

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I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. I have no body, but I come alive with the wind.
 An echo.

The more you take, the more you leave behind.
 Footsteps.

What has to be broken before you can use it?
 An egg.

I'm tall when I'm young, and I'm short when I'm old.
 A candle.

I'm always in front of you but can't be seen.
 The future.

What can travel around the world while staying in the same corner?
 A stamp.

I'm not alive, but I can grow. I don't have lungs, but I need air.
 Fire.

I have keys but no locks. I have a space but no room. You can enter, but you can't go outside.
 A keyboard.

SUDOKU

by PeterS 2025

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

Solutions on page 31

Basic (4)

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SUNDAY: 10AM-5PM

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V	Y	G	X	B	S	J	A	K	Y	G	Z	Q	Q	A	E	L	B	F	H
S	G	H	W	T	M	N	P	J	Z	O	F	N	N	M	R	M	Y	S	T
C	E	H	S	A	Y	T	Q	V	N	M	L	W	U	P	O	S	E	U	E
C	L	T	A	O	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R	Z	F	L	P	N	O	W
P	J	N	N	D	I	M	S	Y	C	S	S	E	G	I	P	C	R	R	A
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- Expedition
- Wilderness
- Journey
- Explorer
- Quest
- Summit
- Compass
- Campfire
- Backpack
- Trail
- Discover
- Trekking
- Canyon
- Adventurous
- Escape

COMING EVENTS

OTTERVILLE UNITED CHURCH'S FAMOUS SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER
March 4th, 5pm-7pm
Otterville United Church
231 Main St E, Otterville, ON
 Kids - \$6, Adults - \$10.

THE FRIENDSHIP TABLE - FREE FRIENDSHIP DINNERS
Monday, Mar. 10, Apr. 14, May 12, June 9, 2025;

Doors open at 4:30.

Dinner Served 5:00-6:30

St. Mary's Church Basement, Corner of Rolph St & Venison St, Tillsonburg
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WHEN: 2nd Tuesday of every month

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

TIME: 6:30PM-8:00PM

INGERSOLL

WHEN: 4th Tuesday of every month

WHERE: Ingersoll Public Library 130 Oxford St., Ingersoll

TIME: 10:30AM-12:00Noon

WOODSTOCK

WHEN: 3rd Saturday of every month

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

TIME: 10:30AM-12:00Noon

OTTER VALLEY TAI CHI

New Monday morning classes began Feb. 3:

9:00 - 10:30 am Introduction, 10:30 - 11:30 am Foundations.

Location: St. John's Anglican Church, 46

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TILLSONBURG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The February General Meeting will be held on

Monday, February 24th at 7 pm at Annandale

House NHS. We welcome Dr. Jason Pankratz

who will once again be hosting his always

entertaining Trivia Night. He will be offering a

variety of historical and popular subjects. Don't

miss this free, fun event!! All are welcome!

The March General Meeting will be held on

Monday, March 17th at Annandale House

NHS starting at 5:30 pm. Please join us for a

potluck dinner followed by the Business Meeting at 7 pm. Please bring a main course, salad or dessert, along with your own utensils and dishes.

The Business Meeting schedule includes the election of the Executive for the next year as well as the adoption of the Annual Budget. All are welcome!

INTERESTED IN BRIDGE?

Join us every Friday at the Tillsonburg Duplicate Bridge Club at 1 p.m. at The Senior Centre. Don't have a partner? Come anyway and we will match you up with someone. For more information, visit their Facebook page: [TburgBridge](https://www.facebook.com/TburgBridge).

OPEN JAM

Saturday, February 22nd, starting at 1:00 pm
The Wagner Memorial, Teeterville Legion Branch 526

3890 Teeterville Road, Teeterville, Ontario
 Last Saturday of every month.

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

For More Information call, the Legion at 519-443-5588 or

Check out our website at <https://www.teetervillelegionbranch526.ca>

TILLSONBURG LEGION ROASTED CHICKEN DINNER

Friday February 28 from 5 to 6pm

Serving roasted chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, dessert, tea and coffee for \$18 cash per person. All Welcome! For more info call 519-842-5281.

OPEN MIC JAM AT THE TILLSONBURG LEGION

Saturday March 1 from 1-4pm

\$6 cash at the door. Featuring North of Sixty Band. Jumbo Hot Dogs for \$5 available from noon to 2pm. Cash only. All Welcome! For more info call 519-842-5281.

TILLSONBURG LIONS

The Tillsonburg Lions meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays. You are invited to their dinner meetings in the Lion's Den at the Community Centre. If you are interested in giving back to your Community contact Jim at 519 409 0876 for more information.....all are welcome.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

St. John's Anglican Church Tillsonburg

46 Ridout St. West

March 5th, at 7pm

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BLACK HISTORY HERITAGE EVENT

February 23, 1pm-5pm

Tillsonburg Community Centre

45 Hardy Ave., Tillsonburg

Historical displays, music, gifts, afro-caribbean food, black owned oxford businesses exhibition, spoken word, guest speakers, poetry. Sponsored by ORMHA.

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March 1 - 10am to 12 noon

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Tillsonburg council briefs

Grant allows for crisis worker

Tillsonburg will be adding a crisis worker to the Mobile Crisis Response Team through a provincial program.

The town applied for the Mobile Crisis Response Team Enhancement Grant and was successful. The program will provide \$119,874 to the town in a one-time payment to provide a crisis worker to accompany police on calls.

Tillsonburg accounts for 40 per cent of OPP mental health calls.

Easement granted

An easement to Oxford County for a possible future water main on town lands was granted by council at the Feb. 10 meeting.

A report provided the background, saying during the site plan approval process for Schepp's Bakery new facility, the county identified it may need the easement for a water line in the future if there are no other locations. The easement would be on both property for the bakery and town lands.

Development commissioner Cephas Panschow told council he provided the county with four other options, which weren't satisfactory. He noted this should have been part of the original agreement for the industrial park in 2011 and was caught in the second stage of site plan approval.

Council granted the easement.

Live from Tillsonburg arena . . .

A video-streaming service will be set up in Tillsonburg arena, and provide the town with a portion of revenue from viewers.

Council received a report outlining the re-

quest from LiveBarn Video Streaming to provide streaming of games in Tillsonburg arena. The company will install the necessary video equipment. Subscribers can then pay for access through a subscription to the service. The town will receive 20 per cent of the revenue from subscribers from the Tillsonburg arena.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres said he had family members playing in Barrie several years ago and used the app. At that time, he said the quality was not that high and the price was around \$300.

Julie Dawley, manager of recreation programs and services, said the samples she saw were higher quality, and information about the players is accessible through the app.

Several councillors had questions if this would be available for other sports in the future, but were told it might need to be through a different provider.

Coun. Chris Rosehart asked if people watching from home may negatively impact sales in the concession for the contractor operating it.

"It's more geared to people who aren't in home or in the community," Dawley answered. "When we talked to them, a lot of their clients were grandparents who were down in Florida and couldn't make it to the arena."

She also said the footage could be useful if there was a need for video of what was going on in the arena. Dawley provided an example of an issue with teenagers harassing players, but nothing could be done because there was no video evidence.

Council endorsed signing the six-year contract with LiveBarn.

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Tillsonburg asks for sharing the wealth

JEFF HELSDON

Editor

Tillsonburg joined a number of other municipalities asking for a share of taxes collected on property transactions within its borders.

Deputy Mayor Dave Beres presented council with a motion that originated from Aurora calling on the province to share the

Land Transfer Tax and GST collected on property transactions within its boundaries. The motion said current sources of municipal revenue are no longer sufficient to cover the growing infrastructure needs of municipalities. A letter about the motion was to be sent to the premier and prime minister's offices.

Beres said Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas started the motion and claims 140 munic-

ipalities have already passed it.

"We can't simply handle all these pass-me-downs from the province that they used to fund and aren't funding," Beres said.

He suggested Tillsonburg should jump on board, and noted that municipalities speaking out in the past worked with OPP contracts.

"This is a big step forward for all munic-

ipalities," he said. "I think of the 140 and think we should do our part."

Mayor Deb Gilvesy pointed out since a provincial election is underway, and a letter about the motion should be sent post-election instead of trying to guess the outcome.

Beres agreed with this point.

"It's Tillsonburg people paying for this," he said. "We're just asking to get back the money Tillsonburg people are paying."

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

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. British pound sterling
2. Burj Khalifa, Dubai
3. Protractor
4. East River, New York City
5. A medieval toilet
6. Donkey and a Horse
7. Lewis Carroll
8. Sudan
9. Yeast
10. Bill Gates and Paul Allen

We want to hear from our community!
info@tillsonburgpost.com



WINTER CLEARANCE BLOWOUT

LIMITED QUANTITIES - WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!

MON-WED: 8AM-7PM, THU & FRI: 8AM-8PM, SAT: 8AM-6PM, SUN: 9AM-6PM

ULTIMA AIR FRYER
CLEARANCE
\$37.93



SAVE 78%
 Reg \$169.99
 SKU 499-0020

BREVILLE DUOTEMP ESPRESSO COFFEE MAKER
CLEARANCE
\$399.93



SAVE \$280
 Reg \$679.99
 SKU 43-2282

I-ROBOT BRAAVA M6 FLOOR WASHER ROBOT
CLEARANCE
\$199.93



SAVE \$400
 Reg \$599.99
 SKU 43-8252

GOURMET SALT OR PEPPER GRINDER MILL
CLEARANCE
\$3.93



SAVE 73%
 Reg \$14.99
 SKU 142-7896 & 142-7895

RALEIGH BICYCLE TRAILER
CLEARANCE
\$299.93



SAVE \$220
 Reg \$519.99
 SKU 184-0774

I-ZIP ELECTRIC SCOOTER
CLEARANCE
\$199.93



SAVE \$320
 Reg \$529.99
 SKU 184-1280

RALEIGH DELTA ELECTRIC BIKE
CLEARANCE
\$1249.93



SAVE \$750
 Reg \$1999.99
 SKU 71-2067

BOSE FLEX WIRELESS SPEAKER
CLEARANCE
\$129.93



SAVE \$70
 Reg \$189.99
 SKU 499-1240

CHAMPION 9 TON GAS POWERED LOG SPLITTER
CLEARANCE
\$599.93



HALF PRICE
 Reg \$1199.99
 SKU 60-0568

KETER 6X8 SHED
CLEARANCE
\$899.93



SAVE \$500
 Reg \$1399.99
 SKU 60-0071

HOLD-IT 4FT TOOL STORAGE RAIL
SALE
\$9.93



SAVE 70%
 Reg \$34.99
 SKU 46-8063

JACKERY E550 PORTABLE POWER STATION, 500/1000W
CLEARANCE
\$599.93




SAVE \$250
 Reg \$749.99
 SKU 55-0395

TIMBER RIDGE WOOD STOVE 2400 SQ FT.
CLEARANCE
\$749.93



SAVE \$1000
 Reg \$1749.99
 SKU 64-1922

COLEMAN SOLAR PANEL 175W
CLEARANCE
\$299.93



HALF PRICE
 Reg \$599.99
 SKU 11-2521

COLEMAN SOLAR PANEL 2-PACK, 100W
CLEARANCE
\$199.93



SAVE \$350
 Reg \$649.99
 SKU 299-5777

CRAWFORD GAZEBO 8X8FT
CLEARANCE
\$139.93



HALF PRICE
 Reg \$279.99
 SKU 88-1328

RIEUAU FIRETABLE PATIO DINING SET
CLEARANCE
\$999.93



SAVE \$1000
 Reg \$1999.99
 SKU 88-0538

PAW PATROL DELUXE RESCUE VEHICLE
CLEARANCE
\$29.93



HALF PRICE
 Reg \$59.99
 SKU 150-1057

LEGO STAR WARS SET
CLEARANCE
\$38.93



SAVE 40%
 Reg \$64.99
 SKU 150-0634


PROFORM INTERACTIVE FITNESS MIRROR
CLEARANCE
\$199.93



SAVE 80%
 Reg \$1999.99
 SKU 187-00978

MOTOMASTER HYDRA EDGE ALL SEASON TIRES

SAVE 30%



TESTED

- 98.1 Road Rated
- 100 Wet Traction
- 97.8 Dry Traction
- 88.7 Comfort/Road Noise
- 96.2 Fuel Economy

ON SALE FEB 21ST - 27TH

ALL SIZES AVAILABLE FOR CARS, SUV'S AND TRUCKS

Nationwide Warranty. See our Service Centre Team for a Quotation on your specific size and to book your install appointment.

VISIT OUR STORE OR GO ONLINE FOR OUR FULL FLYER AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER ITEMS ON SALE. ONLINE ORDERS USUALLY READY FOR PICK UP IN 30 MINUTES!

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