

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 21 MARCH 28, 2025 FREE

Crispy Slice Pizza

PICK UP SPECIALS

BIG CRISPY
1 Topping Pizza X-Large
\$9.99

CRISPY SINGLE PIZZA
One - 3 Topping Pizza & Free Dip

Medium	Large	X-Large
\$11.99	\$12.99	\$14.99

519-290-4330



STONETOWN TRAVEL

Travel made easy.

ST. MARYS • NEW HAMBURG

519-284-2332

What is going on in Woodstock high schools – Part 1

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Echo recently ran a story on two disturbing assaults at Woodstock high schools, including one where a victim suffered severe injuries as a result of a beating from a steel pipe at Huron Park. Another incident occurred at College Avenue. In both instances, videos were posted on social media as students recorded the violence.

This reporter was able to talk to a student about her experiences at a high school in the city. For her safety, we will call her Jane, and we will not reveal the name of the school she attends.

“It’s been pretty good overall,” she started with. “But my very first day there, I was walking with one of my friends who went to a different elementary school, and she was getting dirty looks from some random girl. She asked my friend if she wanted to go outside and fight. This was the first day of school.”

Jane added nothing happened and the girls walked away from each other, but she knew of many fights, both on and off school property.

“I have seen lots of videos of them. Two girls were fighting (just off school property) one day, and then two other girls were there the next day. The one girl was at school for a week after she had the fight with a black eye and then she was expelled.”

This reporter was provided with a video of an assault in a hallway at one of the city’s high schools, and it was disturbing to say the least. It showed many students watching, and some videotaping. There was also a teacher present but no one stepped in to help the victim as he lay motionless on the floor.

“I was there, but I didn’t watch the fight. I saw them arguing as I walked by. If you watch, you get in trouble too. Vid-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Carl VanRooyen’s (foreground) father Francis (in the high hoe) works on construction of the Greener Pastures Eco-Farm’s wetland project in January of this year. Read more about the project on page B11 in our 2025 Farm Edition.

Alleged race between two vehicles results in major property damage

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A city man is looking to see traffic safety measures at the intersection where he lives in light of a scary incident involving two cars that police allege were racing.

On March 16 Woodstock Police responded to a collision just after 2:30 a.m. at the intersection of Springbank Avenue and Cree Avenue.

The initial investigation reveals that two vehicles were traveling northbound on Springbank and appeared to be racing as they

crossed the intersection of Devonshire Avenue and Springbank. As the vehicles approached the bend between Conestoga Road and Cree Avenue, they collided with a parked truck and boat on a trailer.

A 27-year-old male from Woodstock has been charged with failing to remain at the scene and dangerous driving causing bodily harm, while another 27-year-old male from Kitchener has been charged with dangerous driving causing bodily harm.

The roadway was shut down for several hours while accident reconstruction specialists conducted their investigation. One of the passengers involved in the collision was transferred to a London Hospital where he remains with serious injuries.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 4

25% OFF

SICO PAINT



ADAMS BUILDING SUPPLY

VISIT US AT:
1000 PARKINSON ROAD, WOODSTOCK, ON

(519) 539-1211 • ADAMSBUILDINGSUPPLY.COM • MON – FRI: 7 AM TO 6 PM, SAT: 8 AM TO 5 PM

Ingersoll and Tillsonburg Hospitals get the green light to proceed with integration



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Ingersoll's Alexandria Hospital and the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital are one step closer to integrating into Rural Roads Health Services.

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has approved the full integration of Ingersoll's Alexandria Hospital and the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital.

The move was approved in December of last year but the province placed the announcement under a strict embargo until recently. While each site will keep its current name, the joint organization will be called Rural Roads Health Services.

CEO Nadia Facca said the new name came out of a board-approved process that lasted several months.

"We had sessions with frontline team members at each of the hospitals. At the start, there was a brainstorming exercise where we had people in person, virtually or did a survey. Those attending in person were given sticky notes and were asked what ideas they thought fit the nature and vision of our integration. We had about 100 options come forward."

A task force team then looked at that list and reduced it down to four possibilities, all of which were put through a legal process.

"When you are applying to the MOH for an integration, you have to make sure your name and acronym are different from other organizations. One of the four names was removed and the three remaining ones were shared with community partners through a confidential survey for input."

Facca added the boards were presented with the three final choices and landed on Rural Road Health Services.

"It was felt it encompassed the feeling and the reality our sites are connected by rural roads. The name evokes a comforting and nostalgic feeling speaking to the sentiment of our hospitals. We are very proud of who we are. We are rural health service providers, and we are proud of the care we deliver to our communities." New integrated branding is in development in partnership with the Oxford County communications team for Rural Roads Health Services.

Over the next year, steps will be taken towards a common board, one professional staff organization and further internal administrative integration, where possible.

The hospitals outlined the key benefits of the integration in a press release. They include the strength of two hospitals coming together voluntarily in a large and complex health care system, improving the sustainability of two small hospitals serving local communities and improving patient care and the patient experience. The move will also integrate computer systems and digital solutions and reduce duplication while standardizing policies and processes.

Not every aspect of the two operations is coming together including each hospital's foundation which will remain separate entities.

"That is because of the role the foundations play in the local communities. That's not unlike other integrations

where foundations have been kept separate. It's important that fundraising stays local," explained Facca.

When asked about the site names of AHI and TDMH staying as is, Facca said "We are keeping the site names as is because there is a strong identity of each within each local community. We don't want to rebrand and change so much that each site loses that individuality," explained Facca.

She added there are many advantages the integration has already resulted in and more will come as the process moves forward.

"My role and the roles of most of our leaders have been integrated across both sites. Many of our teams are also unified and there is a huge advantage to that. At the Board level, we are now one step closer to fully being integrated. There is an advantage to that when it comes to governance. There isn't two of everything which makes things more efficient."

Facca acknowledged getting to this point has been a tremendous amount of work by many people from top to bottom of the organizations.

"I wouldn't want to name names because I would miss people, but this has been talked about and planned for years. There were people with a vision and then leaders who progressed things along so we could get to this point. It is a great partnership that has developed over the years; it has truly been an evolution with a goal in mind."

She added there is a lot of work to

be done before April of next year as finance, human resources and information technology teams have specific work plans to complete.

"Our boards have legal documents and policies they need to work through. There is much to do but we are really happy with where we are at. We have an amazing team of dedicated board members and leaders, both past and present. Anyone who thought this was a possibility over the years can share in this milestone moment."

The news releases also stated that collective bargaining agreements will be respected and changes to staff's working conditions will be negotiated through union leaders. Non-unionized staff will be engaged in ongoing dialogue about their working conditions and changes will not happen without consultation and dialogue.

Other end goals include maintaining or improving quality of care and safety and improving access to care for patients.

"Where we are today is an evolution of many years of strong partnership and intentional planning and engagement with staff, physicians, patients, partners, volunteers, and the community. We are excited about becoming one integrated organization under the name of Rural Roads Health Services with two local sites. Through this, we are strengthening the sustainability of rural small community hospitals in the ever-changing health care landscape," said Facca.

Apology

Grant Haven Media apologizes to Oxford Ontario Party candidate Grace Harper for an oversight which resulted in her profile not being printed prior to the election in the Woodstock/Ingersoll Echo and Tillsonburg Post.

Upon realizing the oversight, the information was immediately posted to the website for both papers.

Echo

Contribute to your local community newspaper! Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to info@theecho.ca

Vehicle theft on the rise in Woodstock Police offering prevention tips

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Woodstock Police Service is warning the public after an increased number of vehicle thefts.

"In 2024 we had 118 stolen vehicles so far in 2025, we have 18 confirmed stolen and seven attempted thefts," according to Inspector Jamie Taylor, who added the up-take in thefts isn't just a Woodstock problem.

"It's much larger than that. There are communities across the province and country going through this. When you mention Woodstock's proximity to the 401 and 403, it certainly adds a layer of complexity with criminals being able to come in and out with quick access, it creates an issue."

Police say several high-end vehicles have been stolen with the help of relay and reprogramming technology in the past month. Reports indicate newer model pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles with keyless entry and push start technology are top of mind for the bad guys. The thefts typically occurred overnight.

"There are two different types of crimes when it comes to auto thefts. There is the crime of opportunity where criminals are out lifting door handles at night looking for whatever they can steal money or other valuables. People still leave sets of keys inside vehicles and the thief will take it for a joyride," said Taylor.

He added the organized crime aspect is when the police see high-end vehicles being taken using technology.

"Those are the more sophisticated thefts. The criminals know

Relay thefts occur once a suspect approaches a residence and uses technology to find a key fob signal from inside a home. It allows the suspects to remain outside the residence to amplify and transfer the key fob signal to unlock, start and steal the vehicle. The theft will typically be undetected until the morning when the owner discovers an empty driveway with a key fob still in their hand.

"The suspects will approach the vehicle and force entry inside. Once inside, an electronic device is used to access the vehicle's diagnostics. The suspects then reprogram a blank key fob so the vehicle can be started and steal it," explained Taylor.

Woodstock Police are offering several theft prevention tips:

- Park your vehicle inside a locked and secure garage.
- Block access to the onboard diagnostic port to prevent thieves from reprogramming the vehicle's key fob. A simple device can be purchased online.
- Use a steering wheel locking device to deter theft.
- Place the vehicle key fob inside a radio frequency shielding bag/pouch, called a Faraday bag, to block cell signals when not in use.
- Consider equipping your vehicle with an aftermarket global positioning system (GPS) tracker. The tracker may assist police in locating the vehicle and/or suspects.
- Ensure all keys are accounted for and never left in the vehicle or unattended.
- Lock your vehicle at all times.
- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended.
- Consider purchasing a surveillance system and ensure the quality and function will capture any suspicious activity.

A Faraday bag is a specialized bag or container designed to block electromagnetic fields, including those used in wireless communication technologies. They protect electronics from radio frequency interference or electromagnetic pulses. They can also be used to shield car keys from electronic communication, preventing thieves from gaining access.

Taylor said they are an affordable and effective way to reduce the chances of becoming a victim of crime.

"For the cost of a bag versus these vehicles? It can also affect insurance rates when they are stolen."

Amazon, for example, sells various versions of the bag, or box, ranging anywhere



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

from \$15 to \$40. Police in Woodstock work closely with neighbouring services as well as those across the province. Taylor said the more information they can share the better chances of making arrests.

"We work collaboratively and we also share training courses. We look at what's going on in our cities and if we see similar patterns then obviously, we distribute that information so we can get ahead and

be proactive."

As always, police encourage residents to call them if something doesn't seem right.

"If you observe suspicious people in your neighborhood, looking into vehicles, we encourage you to report this to police immediately. Doing so will assist investigators to track patterns of criminal behavior and potentially identify suspects," added Taylor.

THE HELP YOU NEED, WHEN YOU NEED IT.



Ask about our trial or respite stays!

Monthly fee starting at \$2,950

If your current situation is not working for you, come take a look at the Gardens. We're a terrific retirement living option!

Call us at (519) 425-9999

Visit us at www.gardensofingersoll.ca



GRANT
HAVEN
MEDIA

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo



BE IN THE KNOW!
Get the Latest
Edition Delivered
Straight to Your
Inbox!

granthaven.com/woodstock-ingersoll-echo

Woodstock man and family mentally shaken, calls for improved traffic safety measures

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Terry Wall lives at the home where the two cars ended up. He admitted it was difficult to talk about the incident and said at first, he thought his daughter broke something.

"I thought she was in the kitchen getting plates out of the cupboard and dropped one. Then I thought the cupboards were falling because it didn't end. We went downstairs to see what was going on and saw red lights in my window and there were cars where my truck used to be."

Both cars wound up in Wall's driveway, badly damaging his pickup truck and boat.

"It's hard to talk about because I am still having nightmares. We saw people getting out of the cars dragging another person around which my daughter and I thought was a dead body. That's what I said when I was on the phone with 911. That image is engrained in my head."

Wall said two people were telling the injured person to wake up but then tried to back the cars up to leave the scene. He decided to stay in his home to make sure he and his family were safe.

"I can't even explain what I was feeling. I was horrified, I couldn't believe it was real and I couldn't go out there. It's not the first time someone has ended up on my front yard but it's the first time I have seen something like that."

Wall said on three occasions this year vehicles have wound up in his front yard.

"There was a pedestrian walk sign. He plowed over that and ended up at my front door, tried backing up but impaled his car on the sign and couldn't get away. The police got him and he was impaired."

Wall explained the intersection is a dangerous one, at least in part because of dangerous driving.

"I put my chair by the front door and watch how stupid people are. They accelerate around the corner so they can go sideways. It's mind-boggling."

An all-way stop warrant analysis was conducted by the City of Woodstock in June 2022. When the data collected was compared to the thresholds outlined in the Ontario Traffic Manual, the warrant for an all-way stop was not met. A statement from the city said another analysis may be completed.

"Additionally, the city is in the process of finalizing a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) which includes the development of a Traffic Calming Policy. Once the TMP is finalized and adopted by council



(WOODSTOCK POLICE PHOTO)

The intersection of Cree and Springbank has been the scene of several dangerous collisions in recent years, the latest of which saw two cars wind up on Terry Wall's front lawn causing severe property damage.

(May 2025 target), engineering staff will review the subject location to determine if there are any applicable measures in the Traffic Calming Policy that may be suitable for implementation at this location."

Wall said he wants to see something down as soon as possible to help keep the neighbourhood, and his family, safe.

"The one thing that keeps me up at night, what if those cars went 20 degrees one way? It would have hit my house and I could have been making funeral arrangements and that scares the crap out of me. I can't live like that. They have to do something. I shouldn't have to move out of the place because of this."

He added every factor that could cause an accident at the intersection, including road conditions, racing, drunk driving and stupidity, comes down to people driving too fast.

"We all know speed signs don't work. People in a 40 will do 60. They will do 50 in a 70. The only way to control speed is a stop sign. I can't think of any other logical solution other than speed bumps."

Walls explained all he really wants is some peace of mind. The material items will be replaced by insurance.

"Not just for my family. For everyone living around here."

Wall isn't the only person looking for change. His landlord, Christine Cooper, has seen it for herself.

"There have been several incidents before, ranging from small to large accidents. It is not uncommon for a car to lose control during

the winter months and slide onto the boulevard and take out the cable box or hydro pole. That has happened numerous times without any reports."

Cooper described some of the events she has seen at the intersection.

"A drunk or high driver drove through the fence and fled the scene. He was found at his house a couple streets over and charged. The fence was replaced. A motorcyclist lost control of his bike and dumped it taking the corner. This was as my sister-in-law was just putting her kids in the car and had her husband's car not been in front she would have been killed. This was reported and we put rocks in the front yard."

Cooper said she contacted the city following an incident in January of 2022 because she was worried for the safety of Wall and his children.

"The intersection is very busy, especially during school time. The crossing guard has to be extremely diligent when crossing the kids. A three-way stop would benefit everyone in the neighborhood. Since this last incident, I got a little mad and posted on Facebook with the city planner's email encouraging people to help me. So many neighbours voiced their concerns including not being able to turn out of the neighbouring streets safely because of how fast people are driving."

Police say the investigation into the latest incident is ongoing.

**GRANT
HAVEN
MEDIA**

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

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Editor

Lee Griffi • leegriffi@rogers.com

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Stacie Eden • info@theecho.ca

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Billing Administrator

Cindy Boakes • boakescindy1576@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant

Wendy Lamond • wendylamond74@gmail.com

Photojournalist

Ron Yuzark • ryuzark@rogers.com

Contributors

Emily Stewart, Paul Knowles, Nancy Abra, Gary West, Doris Weir

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2

info@theecho.ca | 519.655.2341 | granthaven.com



Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Guiding Principles

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GENE HACKMAN ABANDONED BY HIS FAMILY

Recently we heard the sad news that the movie star Gene Hackman age 95 and his wife Betsy age 65 bodies were found by a maintenance worker on their palatial estate.

He had suffered from Alzheimer's disease for years and had a chronic heart condition complicated by his pacemaker not working for weeks.

At the time of Gene's death it was estimated that he was worth eighty million dollars.

No mention of a housekeeper or care givers. No Medically Assistant Death provisions or suicide notes left behind. They were very wealthy elder orphans whose four adult children did not care for their well being. I suspect that the real reason for their death was neglect.

Gene had left his estate to Betsy who upon her death wanted all of the money donated to charity. I have read that the Hack-

man children have hired lawyers to contest her will in a court of law.

With the new nuclear family reality of a mother, spouse and one child there is very little room, time, interest for the elderly grandparents to be taken care of by their children or grandchildren.

I will never forget a time in the hospital that the nurses were helping an emaciated old man who had been abandoned by his family to cut/wash his hair and give him a shave so that he could be reunited with his love in the next room.

Compare the lives of the Amish people in the Aylmer area where the youngest son inherits the farm and the obligations to care for the well-being of his parents.

No retirement old folks homes needed. The seniors are made to feel that they are appreciated and shown the respect, love, care that they deserve for raising their family.

Len Lesser, Dorchester

MEMORIES OF THE PANDEMIC

Saturday March 15, 2025 our Rabbi reminded us that it was the 5th anniversary of the start of the Covid 19 epidemic. Like the story of Moses in the Old Testament who found the Jews praying to the idol of a Golden Calf and broke the tablets with the "Ten Commandments" that he received from God Moses was angry with his people's transgressions.

I found it interesting that our Rabbi, being a religious woman, would also "feel angry" having to live with the virus with the synagogue shuttered for prayer for the members of the congregation.

Jews, Christians, Moslems, Atheists were affected by the virus and millions of innocent people died. Rich, poor, educated no one was immune. It is estimated that five years later 1:9 Canadians are still living with the medical problems after being infected.

What did I learn having to live with the

virus? I will not be angry. I will not hate. I choose to be an optimist happy/content for the what I have.

Like Diogenes, the Greek Oracle with his magic lamp I seek out the truth. Sorry, but praying to God did not save of us from the scourge of the virus but rather the dedicated scientists, doctors and nurses who were our saviors often risking their lives in our time of greatest need to help heal the people.

I remind myself to be kind to others be they friends or strangers. Promise unconditional love/respect to those that I meet regardless of their sexual orientation, race, religion, nationality or ethnic origin.

I am an old man and have learned that my time and my health are my wealth are both limited precious natural resources. They are to be treasured and not to be squandered.

Shalom, Len Lesser, Dorchester

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US!
EMAIL: INFO@THEECHO.CA

Helping Seniors downsize and find the next perfect step with care and expertise

Let us make your transition smooth and stress-free!



Call us today for a free consultation!

Jennifer Webb, Realtor®, SRES®, 519-709-6635
Mario Spina, Broker, 519-615-2201
Marianne Butler, Realtor®, 519-983-5173
 SRES - Senior Real Estate Specialist®



Join CHAA members on this amazing adventure!

Topic: Avalon Waterways 8 day river cruise Paris to Normandy round trip.

Nov 4, 2025 departure with optional land extension to Vimy Ridge

Contact Bill Shaw for details
billshaw@expediacruzises.com or
phone 519-320-1309

Echo

Contribute to your local community newspaper! Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to
info@theecho.ca

Romeo Court
 40 LONG DRIVE

Retire in Style
Exclusive 55+ Adult Lifestyle Community

ROMEEO COURT
 LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES, STRATFORD ON

Walking distance to the Stratford Country Club and Festival Theater!

- One and two bedroom suites available for purchase
- Wide range of amenities that make life at Romeo Court safe, maintenance free, and very social
- Generous underground parking spaces included

ROMEEO COURT
 LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES

For more information:

(519) 271-8166
 romeocourt@rogers.com
 www.romeocourt.com

Chambers hopes third time is a charm running federally in Oxford

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Matthew Chambers is a lifelong Oxford resident and a two-time former federal candidate having run in both the 2019 and 2021 elections for the New Democratic Party.

He is a director at large and regular volunteer at Stich Supper Club in Ingersoll, an active member of the Zorra Caledonian Society and a member of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 119. He also holds a 3rd degree Black Belt in Karate and teaches it in Thamesford.

"I come from a strong working-class family, my dad being a long-distance truck driver and my mom has worked several jobs, including being a home daycare provider. I work as a custodian for the Thames Valley District School Board, and I am a proud member of CUPE Local 4222."

Chambers admitted getting involved in politics wasn't something he envisioned for himself when he was younger, but he developed an interest in the latter part of his high school career when he took civics.

"I joined the NDP in 2017, from there I became a member of the Riding Association executive. For me, being involved in politics is about having the opportunity to serve the community. Public service has always been an important aspect of my life."

There is no shortage of issues in this election and Chambers highlighted three he feels are important.

"Homelessness and access to affordable housing are serious issues for our communities. I believe that all



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Matthew Chambers is running for the NDPs in Oxford for the third time federally.

levels of Government have a responsibility to work collaboratively to find solutions. In Oxford, ensuring

the growth and security of our manufacturing and agriculture sectors is paramount."

He added Canada's public healthcare system needs protection from privatization and Americanization, while continuing to expand Medicare to fully cover dental care, prescriptions, vision and hearing care, and mental health care.

Chambers explained he is concerned about how the illegal trade war started by the US could affect Oxford residents financially.

"I have family members involved in industries affected by CUSMA and we need to implement protections, tax relief and strengthen EI benefits for all affected workers. I would work collaboratively with municipal governments on all issues that crossover into federal jurisdiction and advocate for our communities by proposing or supporting legislation that benefits Oxford."

Chambers explained he isn't coming into the campaign with a degree in law or political science and he isn't running to cross something off his bucket list before he retires.

"What I am bringing to this campaign is the lived experience of someone who has had to work multiple jobs to get by someone who has had to make tough choices like putting off dental work or waiting for sales to get groceries."

He added what he wants is for people to stop accepting things as they are and not accept another Liberal or Conservative government.

"We are worth more, and we deserve better and better is possible, but only when we decide to make it happen."

Missed an issue? View all past issues online anytime:
theecho.ca

Get Winning Results with the #1 Team
The Realty Firm Inc. Brokerage and Real Estate Team 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022

THE REALTY FIRM
B&B
REAL ESTATE TEAM
BROKERAGE
bradandbeckyteam.ca

BRAD VINK
BROKER OF RECORD
519.536.1296

BECKY EDDY
SALES REPRESENTATIVE
519.788.4370

GET A \$250 GIFT CARD OF YOUR CHOICE
UPON COMPLETION OF A FIRM DEAL

BARKS PEDORTHICS
ASSESSMENTS ON WHEELS

In-home appointments, foot pain solutions, custom orthotics
Serving Southwestern Ontario

We can help with foot ankle and knee pain, workplace injuries, plantar fasciitis, swelling and edema, and diabetic ulcers

www.barkspedorthics.ca
519-717-3464
appointments@barkspedorthics.ca

INGERSOLL SERVICES FOR SENIORS

Ingersoll 50+ Activity Centre
Annual Yard Sale

Saturday, April 5th, 2025
8:00 am - 12:00 pm
250 Ingersoll St S

Watson running for CHP in Oxford

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A rookie candidate will have his name on the ballot in Oxford on April 28 as he runs for the Christian Heritage Party (CHP) in the federal election.

Jacob Watson was born and raised in Oxford County, just north of Woodstock, on a 50-acre farm.

"Though I did not do any farming personally, my dad grew up on that same farm, farming pigs and working the fields. I was very active in sports. In my teen years I was overrun by various battles and difficulties."

Watson decided to give his life to the Lord in his early 20s and found his passion serving in church ministries and articulating the principles in the bible.

"For the last seven or eight years, I've served in church and community-based youth ministries, assisting in their development and teachings. More recently, I've moved into evangelism ministries, leading, developing, and teaching. For my nine-to-five, I work at Stubbe's Precast as a forklift operator for the receiving department. My wife currently works at Big Brothers Big Sisters and we have been married for five and a half years and reside in Oxford Centre."

Watson explained the nudge to get into politics came from submitting to the supremacy of God and the lasting transformation it gave him.

"As I have seen and experienced what's been going on in our communities and nation, I realized we need transformation as well. When I found out Canada was founded upon principles that recognized the supremacy of God, the dots connected for me. The further we push God out, the easier our nation topples. I got involved in politics to call Canada back to its firm foundation."

He sees three main issues in this campaign, first and foremost is forming a responsible government.

"We need to make sure we are honouring our word and are meeting our commitments, whether it's at the border, in external relationships or promises made to Canadians. We must be transparent and trustworthy, expose corruption instead of covering it up and be frugal with taxpayers' money."

Watson also believes monetary policy needs to transform, particularly in the areas of restoring the Bank of Canada,

reforming tax policy and rerouting government funding.

"Something I would like to undertake to help make life easier in Oxford is pushing for the federal income tax to be replaced with our fair consumer's tax. Allowing everyone to take home 20 to 30 per cent more of their hard-earned money. It would help stimulate the economy, increase savings and investment, and make life affordable again."

He added the country also needs to find alternative and better solutions to abortion.

"The moral turmoil in our country causes a lot of inward division and fighting. The CHP would aim to end all that so Canada can prosper in unity."

Watson explained the job of an MP is to address the concerns of constituents and make sure their voice is being heard in Ottawa.

"Anything that needs to be tackled for the residents in Oxford, it would be my pleasure to line up for them in Ottawa and sack the issues. I want them to know they are heard and their voices carry authority. If they elect me, they will be putting a true representative for them in the House of Commons. I want to hear from them, so Ottawa can hear them."

Watson added he has talked to a lot of people in Oxford who want to vote CHP but are worried that the Liberals or Conservatives will win the election.

"They feel obligated to vote for one of the two parties to prevent the other. Your vote is a powerful statement if you're voting for what you stand for and believe in. Voting for the CHP can influence all the parties, like the Green Party did when it had a five or six per cent increase in the polls. It caused the other parties to adopt a greener platform as they realized Canadians were starting to lean towards the green."

He is encouraging the residents of Oxford to vote with courage and vote with their conscience.

"This is your country, and you have the right and authority as citizens to stand up and use your voice. You determine how the government does its job, not the other way around. This election, we need more than change - we need transformation. I'd like to call all those who have been voting out of fear to a spot of valor and bravery as they go to the polls late in April and cast their votes with the freedom our democracy entitles them to."



SUMMER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Happy Hills Resort Embrow, Ontario is now accepting applications for Park Maintenance

All applicants must hold the following qualifications:

- Valid driver's license
- Experience driving tractors
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work independently & in a team environment
- The work schedule includes weekends

**If interested, please forward your resume to:
Email: thebakers@happyhills.com
Or call if you have any questions: 519-475-4471**



SUMMER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Happy Hills Resort Embrow, Ontario is now accepting applications for Lifeguard Positions

All applicants must hold the following qualifications:

- Current Certification of National Lifeguard Service (NLS)
- Current Certification in Standard First Aid and C.P.R.
- Experience working with children
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work independently and in a team environment

**If interested, please forward your resume to:
Email: thebakers@happyhills.com
Or call if you have any questions: 519-475-4471**

**Contribute to your local community
newspaper! Send articles, sports or event
recaps, and photos to
info@theecho.ca**

Theatre Woodstock's "A Rock Sails By" brings the early signs of dementia to the forefront

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

The newest Theatre Woodstock production explores discoveries in outer space and life with the early stages of dementia.

Theatre Woodstock's production of *A Rock Sails By* will run from April 3 to 13. The Sean Grennan play centers on astrophysicist Dr. Lynn Cummings, who is misquoted by a journalist in an interview about an unidentified flying object. Grennan got the inspiration to write it after the first interstellar object passing through the solar system, called "Oumuamua" in 2017.

The script also touches on dementia, as Dr. Cummings is diagnosed with early onset of the condition.

"Like any disease, different forms of dementia have likely touched us all. Some of our cast and crew hold this very close to their hearts," co-producer Sally Johnston said to the Echo. "There is much research still needed in this area, and we hope that by bringing these topics to the stage, it will encourage discussion and support."

The Alzheimer's Society will attend the April 6 and 11 shows to host a 10-minute Q and A afterward along with information pamphlets in the lobby. The organi-



(SALLY JOHNSTON PHOTO)

(Left to right) Tina Sterling, Pursod Ramachandran, and Sarah Adam star in *A Rock Sails By* at Theatre Woodstock.

zation also asked Theatre Woodstock to attend an information session on April 9, where actor Sarah Adam and co-producer Janny Hughes will be speaking about the early stages of dementia represented in the production.

The cast and crew of *A Rock Sails By* also had to face some challenges during their early stages of rehearsals such as inclement weather and varying availabilities with some cast members in other productions.

"We have been able to successfully work around everyone's schedules to get in the rehearsal times we need," Johnston said. "Now that we are officially moved into the theatre, we are running full acts with costumes and props and in the coming days, we will have all sound and lighting programmed. There is a timeline process to follow and if you follow the process, you will have a great show."

"The cast and crew have been very flexible in being able to adapt their personal schedules to make up for lost time," director Scott Rooney added.

Along with *A Rock Sails By*, Rooney, Johnston, and stage manager Samantha Muller worked together on other productions such as *On Golden Pond* and Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts' production *Over the River and Through the Woods*. The production team also has Rob Coles of London working on light design, Theatre Woodstock's Pete Dunbar on sound design, and Maria St. Laurant as props manager, along with backstage assistant stage managers and microphone technicians.

"We've assembled a phenomenal cast and crew who have grown together to put on this fantastic show," Rooney said. "We have those with no experience to those with seasoned experience and everything in between. It's been fun to watch everyone grow and learn

from one another."

A Rock Sails By is recommended for viewers 14 years of age and older. The show begins at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays with Sunday matinees starting at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$28 each, \$20 for students, \$18 for youth 12 years old and younger, and all seats are \$20 on Thrifty Thursdays. To purchase tickets, either stop by the box office in person at 22 Reeve St., call 519-537-2582 or visit online via www.theatrewoodstock.com.



(SALLY JOHNSTON PHOTO)

(Left to right) Rob Coles, lighting designer, and Scott Rooney, director, are two forces behind a strong production team in *A Rock Sails By*.

WOODSTOCK'S WATER SHOP
U-FILL WATER | WATER SOFTENERS | WATER TREATMENT | SALTS

196 Springbank Ave North
(Springbank Plaza)
519-290-5678

www.woodstockwatershop.com

OXFORD TAX SERVICE

Need Tax Help?
We're Here for You.

Visit us at our new location:
7A St Andrew St.
Ingersoll
(Please park at the door)

Please call or email us to book an appointment to discuss your tax needs:
Phone: 519-425-5355
Fax: 519-425-2175
info@oxfordtax.ca

Gord Anderson
Automotive Group Inc.

TARA OLIVER Sales Consultant
519-537-2326
Cell 519-535-3016
tarao@andersonsgm.ca
www.andersonsgm.ca

P.O. Box 1696, 1267 Dundas Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 0B1

INGERSOLL SERVICES FOR SENIORS Fundraiser for Ingersoll 50+ Activity Centre

Johnny Cash & George Jones
Tribute
Friday April 25 @ 7:00pm
Doors Open at 6:30pm
Location: Unifor Local 88: 64 Victoria Street Ingersoll
\$35
Purchase Tickets by April 17 at 250 Ingersoll St S.
or call 519-485-3869

Shocking stories of violence from a student

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

otaping will also get in trouble, but I have seen so many videos of it. There was a teacher there and she was screaming for it to stop.”

Jane said the teacher in question was terrified to step in and do anything. She added the student who was beaten up, and didn't appear to attempt to defend himself, was allegedly trash-talking the aggressor for weeks.

“They were in the same phys ed class and I know the one who beat him up slapped him across the face in class and warned him not to (keep trash talking). He told him he had guys watching his brother at another school.”

Jane added the student who took the beating asked the aggressor to hit him numerous times just before the assault occurred. She said the majority of violence at her school is done by girls, and many times there is simply no reason for it.

“There are a lot of girls at our school who will jump other girls just because their friends told them to. They don't even know why. People do it just to do it.”

Jane explained girls aren't fighting over boys.

“They talk bad about each other, they act tough and stay stuff, and they want to fight. Even at the Woodstock (Navy Vets) hockey games, girls get kicked out all the time because they fight. And it's the girls I go to school with who are fighting there.”

Not everything is negative, according to Jane, as she is pleased with the quality of education she receives at her school.

“The teachers are really nice, I am learning a lot, and I have more friends now.”

Both Jane and Jill say they would welcome an increased police presence in high schools, including an on-the-books program in cooperation with the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB).

“I think kids would be intimidated once they know there are police on site and things maybe wouldn't get that far,” said Jill.

Jane added it might prevent assaults from taking place.

“The teachers can't do anything. If there were police officers, they would be able to stop it.”

Jill added there is little to no communication from the high school her daughter attends when an incident occurs. An example is when the school was on lockdown recently due to a police presence in the immediate area.

“My daughter was the first one to text me that day and I was thinking, oh, why is the school locked down? There was no communication. I knew nothing. They need to be more forthright with what's happening in a timely manner, not hours later. I should have been notified within minutes.”

The school is equipped with an auto call system where parents are notified when the power goes out, for example.

“Why can't they do one within five minutes of a lockdown, but they let me know when the hydro is out?”

The (TVDSB) provided the Echo with a statement regarding the two violent assaults.

“Following up on your inquiry to Trustee Beth Mai regarding two separate incidents



Huron Park Secondary School.

(TVDSB PHOTO)

that occurred at College Avenue Secondary School and Huron Park Secondary School in Woodstock last month that necessitated police involvement. As these are both ongoing police investigations, Thames Valley District School Board encourages you to contact Woodstock Police Service for more information and updates regarding the status of their investigation and whether charges have been laid in each of the incidents.”

The board said it is unwavering in its commitment to ensuring safe spaces for students and staff.

“We understand that incidents within a school are very concerning to students, families and staff alike and generate a great deal

of interest and speculation. As you know, we cannot discuss individual students or matters related to ongoing police investigations. However, we can say that we do take any allegation of violence very seriously and follow our Safe Schools Policy and Procedures when handling these allegations, including involving police and other community services when needed. Both of these incidents have been investigated using the Safe Schools Response Policy and Procedures and the Woodstock Police Services to ensure a thorough investigation and response. We thank Woodstock Police Service for their ongoing support and expertise in helping to keep all our staff and students safe.”



Rediscover the life you love



It's the best of both worlds

When you are ready to choose a life with care, we are here for you.

Offering carefree retirement living and comfortable, personalized care in a supportive community that honours your individual goals.

QUEENSVIEW
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

ASK about
SPRING
MOVE-IN
INCENTIVES

Senior Living with Carefree and Personalized Care Options

Visit us

70 King Edward Street, Paris

Ph: 519-332-8793 • life@queensviewrc.ca

Queensviewrc.ca

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo **SPORTS**

Woodstock FC names new GM and president

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

The Woodstock Soccer Club has named a familiar face its new general manager, effective July 1.

“Sharon Docherty has been an instrumental leader in our community, serving as the president of the club for the past eight years. During her tenure, the club has seen remarkable growth, and with that growth comes the need for a dedicated General Manager to oversee daily operations,” according to a statement from the club.

“Sharon's incredible wealth of experience, leadership, and passion for the game will be key to taking the club to the next level,” it added. “As general manager, Sharon will continue to work closely with the executive team and mentor the incoming President to ensure a seamless transition and continued success. Together, they will focus on elevating Woodstock Soccer Club to be one of the top clubs in the region.”

Sharon will begin her role after retiring from her 30-year teaching career, bringing a wealth of experience, dedication, and leadership to this new chapter.

Another well-known figure at the organization is taking over for Docherty as president. Metaxas Makedos said it's an honour.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

“It is a privilege to be part of an organization with such a strong tradition of excellence, community, and player development. I look forward to working closely with our board members, staff, coaches, players, and families to continue building on the success of this great club.”

Metaxas extended his gratitude to Docherty for her dedication and leadership



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

during her tenure as president.

“Her commitment and countless hours of hard work have helped shape this club into what it is today, and we are all grateful for the foundation she has built. Thank you to the outgoing board member, Garfield, for his dedication as the director of referees over the past two years, and thank you to all the returning board members, Tim, Karl and Kevin.

Metaxas was also quick to thank Technical Director and Head Coach, Iain Hume, for his tireless efforts in developing players to ensure Woodstock FC remains a club where athletes can grow and reach their full potential.

“His passion for the game and player development is truly invaluable. Additionally, I want to acknowledge Karen and Wendy, whose work behind the scenes ensures the smooth operation of our club. Their dedication and efficiency allow everything to run seamlessly, and we appreciate all that they do to support our players, coaches, and families.”

He added the club's focus remains on fostering an environment where players of all ages and levels can develop their skills, grow their love for the game, and reach their highest potential.

“Whether in grassroots, competitive, or high-performance soccer, Woodstock FC is committed to providing the best possible experience for every player. I look forward to working with all of our coaches across every age group and level of play, ensuring that our programs continue to thrive and that our players have the best growth opportunities. Together, with the support of our incredible membership, we will continue to strengthen Woodstock FC and make it a place where excellence, development, and community go hand in hand.”

Woodstock FC U14 girls capture indoor title

JAMIE KANLAGNA

Echo Contributor

Woodstock Strikers U14 girls are back-to-back EMDSL indoor league champions, capping off the season with a record of 14-1-2. This achievement was a testament to the team's hard work, dedication and steady commitment to quality and execution. The championship win serves as motivation for the girls to continue pushing themselves to new levels and continual improvement. This success is a direct result of their tireless efforts, both on and off the field. They've demonstrated exceptional teamwork, discipline, and resilience throughout the season.

As we celebrate this milestone, we also reflect on the journey that

brought us here. We're thankful for the dedication of the parents, players and friends who have been with us every step of the way. Coaches Jamie, Andrew, Jonathan and Mitch are incredibly proud of our team's triumphs and how the team has supported each other through all the challenges endured this season.

The team carried their momentum into cup play on March 23, securing a top-class victory in their opening match. Facing a tough Alliance side, the girls battled to a draw of 1-1 at full-time before emerging victorious in a dramatic penalty shootout, winning 4-2. They will continue their journey to the cup finals with their semi-final match this Sunday against another top London Alliance squad.



(WOODSTOCK FC PHOTO)

the U14 Woodstock FC girls' team recently captured first place in the EMDSL indoor league, losing just twice in 17 games.

U10 team has successful indoor season

SEAN MEALAND

Echo Contributor

The team had a lot of dominant games this season but also had some tight ones where the boys needed to show some resilience and work as a

team. Everyone on the team contributed to our success this season, with four players surpassing 20 points each on the year.

The team has shown a great deal of growth over the winter, the commitment and attitude they bring week in

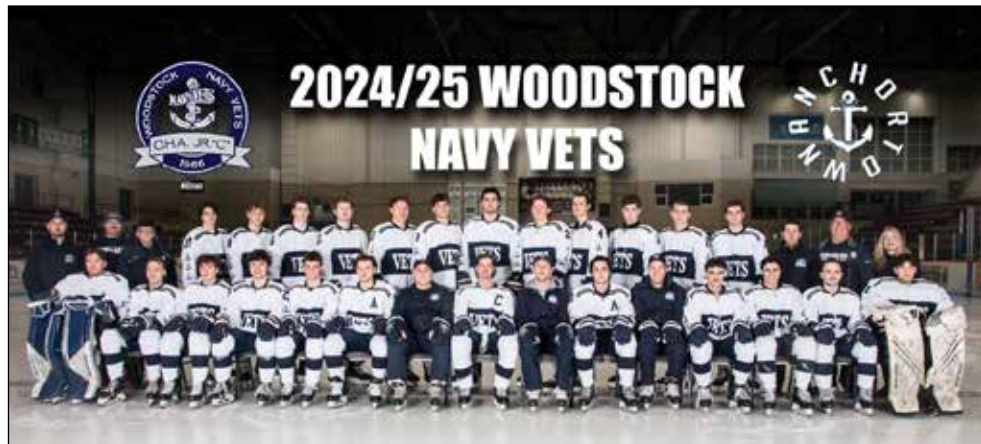
and week out has other teams keeping a close eye. Now, we look forward to the outdoor season and continuing to grow as a team.

Shown in the picture are, back row left to right - assistant coach Josh Howard, Griffin Howard, Brad Wilson,

Landon VanDeLaar, Rowben Vanderpol, Anhad Taggar and head coach Sean Mealand.

Front row left to right - Connor Pomieltarz, Sam Mealand, Carter Privatt, Owen Kuron, Max Routliffe, Remy Johnson and Vimanhi Thompson.

Navy Vets celebrate 2024-25 season



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Front row, left to right: Tyler Bouck, Michael Vermeersch, Aiden Kindurys, Brady Carne, Connor Stanley, Davin Gray, Darren Young (Head Coach), Jordan Thomson, Justin Elms (Assistant Coach), Logan Pace-Roth, Ryan Calbeck (Assistant Coach), Diego Sabino, Lucas Balanca, Braeden Tyler and Scott Rodrigue.

Back row, left to right: Devon Young (president), Robbie Wilson (equip manager), Dan Dukes (assistant equipment manager), Rhylan Warford, Nolan Brett, Brodie Kearns, Chris Coulter, Aaron Bullock, Tate McKenna, Charley Barnes, Thomas Guidolin, Matthew Meyer, Dean Carney, Gavin Birmingham, Riley Panagapka, Matt Fidlin (general manager), Tim Clark (assistant equipment manager) and Vanessa Agar (trainer).

Absent were Kyle Caron, Chad Paton (assistant coach), Keaghan Brett (goalie coach) and Tommy Zufelt (coach).

JIM TAYLOR

Echo Contributor

The Woodstock Navy Vets came together one last time to celebrate the season that was.

The team had a great season in a very tough Doherty Division, finishing third after a battle between the three teams at the top for most of the year. They finished with a record of 27 wins, 11 losses, 2 overtime losses and 2 shootout losses.

Woodstock defeated Paris in the first round in five games, but couldn't get past a tough New Hamburg team, losing in five.

Davin Gray led the team in scoring with 52 points while goalie Tyler Bouck had 18 wins between the pipes. Gray took home Player of the Month awards in September and October while Charley Barnes won Defenceman of Year.

The Vets recorded at least 27 wins for just the tenth time in the team's 58-year history. They also had a 6-game and a 5-game win streak during the season and lost 3 in a row only twice.

They attracted almost 15,000 regular-season and playoff fans for the second straight season.

Several personal milestones were also achieved during the season:

- Tyler Bouck became the Vets career shutouts leader with 10 and became the seventh goalie in team history to record over 50 wins.
- Nolan Brett became the twenty-sixth player in team history to record over 200 career points.
- Darren Young moved into second place all-time for games coached with the team with 289, behind only legendary Vets coach Dave Bogart.
- Seven players made their junior debuts this season with the Vets, including Gavin Birmingham, who became a regular with the team. APs who made appearances with the team were Kingston McPherson, Everett Carne, Aaron Gilbertson, Hunter Sivyver, Austin Doolittle and Colton Thomson.
- Dan Dukes retired at the end of the season after over 50 years with the team as Trainer and Equipment Manager.

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR HOUSE IS

Keep your dollars in Canada to strengthen communities and support local businesses, including your local newspaper.

News Media Canada
Médias d'Info Canada



WE ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION



DOWNTOWN

ALL BUSINESSES OPEN ALL BUSINESSES OPEN

ROAD CLOSED

OPEN

Open for BUSINESS

== We Are == OPEN

SINESSES OPEN ALL BUSINESSES OPEN

LOVE DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK



**SHUTTERS
ON SALE
NOW**

ECLIPSE[®]
SHUTTERS



ALTA WINDOW FASHIONS **ALL
BLINDS
ON SALE!**

Schaus
DECORATING & DESIGN CENTRE

519-539-7870

593 Dundas Street, Woodstock
www.schausdecoratingcentre.com
schausdec@rogers.com

VON Oxford celebrates March for Meals 2025



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

Some of the many Meals on Wheels volunteers posed for a photo at the Ingersoll Ave. location of the VON in Woodstock to celebrate March for Meals.

STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

March for Meals is an annual campaign dedicated to raising awareness of the critical role of the program. Delivered in 181 communities across the province, Meals on Wheels programs ensure vulnerable Ontarians have access to nutritious meals, social connection, and safety checks. The event was celebrated on March 20.

“The need for nutritious and affordable meals is growing amongst the province’s most vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities. Meals on Wheels programs continue to serve those in need, while also battling with the challenges of under-funding and lack of volunteers,” said a press release from the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON).

In 2024, VON Oxford’s Meals on Wheels Program served 11,585 meals to over 280 clients and has been providing meals in the area for 43 years.

“We can’t thank our 180 volunteers enough for giving so generously of

their time to support our clients and families. We are very fortunate to have such incredibly caring volunteers as a part of our VON family,” said Robin Kish, Manager of Home and Community Care.

The VON is always looking for more help, according to Janet Sommers, the group’s volunteer coordinator.

“The great thing about volunteering with Meals on Wheels is that it’s very flexible. You can pick the day best for you. We have roles over lunchtime, delivering hot meals, and in the kitchen, our volunteers heat the food to the proper temperature and make sure the orders are correct. The kitchen is all run by volunteers.”

Peters added people from all walks of life order food because the meals are good, they have the right amount of food, they are nutritious, and they come hot. But it is more than that.

“It’s a bit of a check-in for our clients to say hey, how’s it going, how’s your day? It is twofold, really. Our drivers provide that interaction for the people they are delivering to.”

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

Work with local media to distribute special discounts or offerings. This can help attract new customers and encourage repeat business. Want to learn more?



heather@granthaven.com

226.261.1837

Council Approves 2025 Budget

STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Woodstock City Council has approved the 2025 Revenue Fund Budget. The document funds the delivery of all programs and services and the operation of city facilities.

The budget came in at \$82,381,340, which is an 8.83 per cent increase over 2024. The end result is a residential property tax rate increase of 6.33 per cent, meaning the average home in Woodstock with an assessed value of \$268,870 will see an increase of \$191.18 for the city portion of their property taxes.

“About 70 per cent of the funding used to deliver programs and services offered by the city comes from property taxes. The rest comes from a combination of user fees, grants, licences, permits, fines, gaming revenues, sales of lands and other assets, and contributions from reserve funds and other levels of government,” said a city press release.

“We know times are tough right now and a lot of people are feeling the financial strain,” said Mayor Jerry Acchione. “As our city grows, balancing the need for services with the reality of rising costs isn’t easy. We’ve worked very hard to make sure we’re investing in the things that matter most to our community while also planning ahead for the big projects we’ll need in the future. It’s about finding the right balance — keep-

ing our city strong and prepared while putting minimal burden on the taxpayers.”

The approved budget also includes funding for several new initiatives, including adding an encampment response team to help provide a more efficient and responsive approach to managing the impacts of encampments on public property. The addition to budget includes an assistant supervisor of turf and parks maintenance, two skilled labourers, and related equipment and other costs.

It also increases the annual contribution to the road reconstruction reserve fund to \$800,000 to eliminate the city’s reliance on debt for the annual road reconstruction program. \$27,000 cut from other budget lines was allocated as a one-time contribution to the reserve fund.

“In addition to the three encampment response staff, council approved four additional new full-time positions, one summer student role and converted one part-time position to full-time. These staff additions were needed to support the growth in Woodstock so we can better respond to the needs of the community,” added the release.

The 2025 Capital Budget and 2026-2029 Capital Forecast Plan were approved at the Dec. 12, 2024, council meeting.

For more budget information and background material, visit www.cityofwoodstock.ca/budget

Worship With Us



GRAND RIVER MENNONITE CHURCH

Princeton

We invite you to worship with us.

Sunday School 9:30 am

Sunday Worship Service 10:30 am

Pastor 519.521.3491



Old St. Paul's
Anglican Church

723 Dundas St., Woodstock

NEW

Wednesdays 10 am

Holy Eucharist and Bible Study

BIG EVENT

Saturday, April 5th -1:30 pm

Rob & the Rydells. Tickets just \$25

Historic Old St. Paul's: Celebrating 190 years

CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY
Anglican Church

560 Dundas St. Woodstock

Worship Services

Wednesday 10:30 a.m.

followed by Coffee Hour

Sunday 9:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

followed by Coffee Hour

NEW - Saturday 6:00 p.m.

followed by Coffee Hour

Rev. Richard Hetke

will be offering Communion.

**Visit us online
at theecho.ca**

 **hear right canada**
WOODSTOCK

TEST DRIVE HEARING AIDS

FREE for 14 Days!

Limited Spots Available



**Experience the difference
with no-obligation!**



476 Peel Street. Woodstock ON.

(519) 290 0131

hearrightcanada.ca

PROUDLY 100%
CANADIAN
OWNED & OPERATED

Tom Moore
Hearing Instrument Specialist
Co-Owner

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: 2001 - An enviro-space odyssey



PAUL KNOWLES

Echo Contributor

The year is 2001. Gardening guru Mark Cullen and I are sharing the back seat of a mini-bus, part of a small group of travel and garden writers touring the south of England. Today, our tour is taking us to a dramatic, brand-new attraction dubbed The Eden Project.

And that was my introduction to yet another visionary project spear-headed by Tim Smits. I knew about Smits, the guy behind the most ambitious garden restoration project of all time – the Lost Gardens of Heligan, which had opened to the public in 1992 and which I had already visited a couple of times (and several more since). I've written about Heligan previously in this space; if you love gardens, architecture, history, or utterly mad endeavors, you should check it out.

Well, by the last '90s, Heligan was up and running beautifully and Smits was looking for some-

thing else to do. Other people, like you or me, might then take up golf or knitting, but Smits cast his eye on an unused chalk mining pit, a 20-minute drive through southern Cornwall away. And while others saw an abandoned quarry, Smits saw a spectacular, unique, environmental showcase and the Eden Project was born.

The impossible concept involved constructing a series of linked, geodesic domes, or "biomes," which would house two entire ecosystems – a rainforest and a Mediterranean landscape. There would also be extensive outdoor gardens – the biomes and outdoor gardens cover 30 acres.

The first time I visited the Eden Project, the biomes were complete and full of relatively small plants and relatively big hopes. But would it work? Would this brave new world of artificially created environments survive, and would it attract visitors?

Yes, on all counts, but not without major challenges. In December 2020, torrential rain caused landslides on the chalk cliffs that forced the site to close for five months. But it reopened to enthusiastic crowds of visitors in mid-2021. The latest annual figures show 604,000 visitors in a 12-month period. Since opening, Eden has welcomed more than 19 million guests. It's so popular you need to book timed tickets in advance.

The Eden Project is a tourist attraction with distinct difference. It's a place that definitely

offers a lot of entertainment – even including a zip line – but its first priority is not to entertain, it's to educate.

And there is lots to learn, all presented in an immersive, captivating environment. In my most recent visit to Eden, I was again struck by the drama of walking through a genuine rainforest, albeit in a biome in rural Cornwall. The recommended schedule for a visit is four hours, but if you like, you can spend much longer, checking out the flora and fauna (the latter limited to some birds native to the rainforest), and marvelling at the achievement itself.

Because it's all here – the trees, vines, flowers, replica buildings, waterfalls and more.

One piece of advice – you are visiting a site that occupies an unused quarry and covers a lot of territory. There can be a lot of walking and although the paths are level and comfortable, the climb back up from the biomes to the visitor centre and then again to the parking lot can be a bit tasking. But the Eden Project will provide motorized scooters, preferably booked in advance.

On one visit to Eden, I was leading a group that included a couple of women who felt they should use scooters. This was arranged. They then discovered the joys of scooter racing, and I am surprised they a) survived and b) escaped incarceration. But I digress.

The visionary ambition that inspired first Heligan, and then the Eden Project has not waned. The attraction's website, eden-



(PHOTOS BY PAUL KNOWLES)

The biomes that house Rainforest and Mediterranean ecosystems.

project.com, includes a section called "New Edens." There are plans underway for unique projects in Dundee, Scotland, Lancashire, England, Derry, Northern Ireland, and much farther afield in China, Costa Rica and Australia. In all cases, the focus is on the environment, sustainability and education. And in all cases, the projects employ many local residents, a true boon to struggling economies. The Eden Project itself employs between 300 and 400 people, as well as having a volunteer group of over 100.

Cornwall itself is one of my favourite destinations in the world. Visitors should definitely schedule time to visit The Eden Project, but my itinerary in this part of England's southwest would also always include The Lost Gardens of Heligan; the late-Victorian country mansion,

Lanhydrock; the coastal towns of Fowey (pronounced "Foy") and Mevagissey, all within a few minutes of the Eden Project. That's not to mention the many other fascinating destinations in this westernmost part of the U.K. – St. Michael's Mount, the village of Mousehole ("Mawzle"), Penzance, St. Ives, Tintagel and more. The whole of Cornwall is less two hours from Land's End to Tavistock, so time spent here can involve a minimum of time travelling, and a maximum of time experiencing this unique part of the world, including a lush, indoor rainforest, waterfall and all.

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.



A gigantic bee sculpture in the outdoor gardens illustrates the educational and artistic intentions of the creators of the Eden Project.



Even the architecture and pottery are authentic in the Mediterranean biome.



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTOS)

TEMPO HOLDS FUNDRAISER FOR WOODSTOCK PUBLIC SCHOOL

The Dundas Street restaurant, normally closed on Mondays, held an event to raise money for Northdale Public School's nutrition program on March 24. About 30 guests were treated to an incredible five-course meal with all proceeds going to the organization. The program receives just 50 cents per day in base funding and relies heavily on fundraising to serve 400 healthy snacks daily. Tempo owner and chef Simon Mathias announced near the end of the night, to loud applause, the event had raised \$4000 for the school program. Several silent auction items were also donated, adding to the fundraising total.



Growing stronger together



Public information meeting

Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Ave) reconstruction in Woodstock, 2025

Oxford County is beginning a multi-year reconstruction project to improve Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Avenue) in Woodstock.

Phase 1 and 2, beginning in spring 2025, includes construction between Vansittart Avenue and Victoria Street. This work is expected to finish in December 2025.

Future phases will include a different section of Devonshire Avenue each year, extending east to Oxford Road 4, excluding the area between Lansdowne Avenue and Woodall Way. This final phase of the project is expected to finish in 2028.

Public Information Centre

In follow-up to the Public Information Centre (PIC) held in October 2024 for the design stage of this project, Oxford County will be hosting another PIC for the construction stage. The PIC will allow the public to learn more about Phase 1 of the project (2025), view plans, and discuss the project's construction details with Oxford County staff.

Tuesday, April 1, 2025 | Drop in: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Oxford County Administration Building, Main Lobby
21 Reeve Street, Woodstock

RESIDENTIAL CLEANING

OFFICE CLEANING

CARPET + UPHOLSTERY

WINDOWS

Lavender & Lemon
Cleaning Co.

WWW.LAVENDERANDLEMON.CA

eric@lavenderandlemon.ca | 519-421-6802

For information and updates follow Oxford County on social media or visit www.oxfordcounty.ca



Route to the Past – Local Lad Lived Life of Adventure



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

SCOTT GILLIES

Contributor

The following story is true, even though it reads like a movie script or at the very least will make for a good graphic novel someday. This is the story of a young man from Oxford County who lived a full and daring life filled with adventures.

James Durkin Vance was born in Ingersoll in 1897. His paternal grandfather operated a bakeshop on Thames Street which was later owned by Zurbriggs while his father, James Mackay Vance, practiced law from a main street office further south in what is now a beauty salon. Besides being a local athlete, lawyer Vance was also a backroom politician. He would move the family to Toronto where he became known in the 1901 Canadian census as a “party organizer” for the Liberals. As such he would have been in regular contact with Oxford’s MPP

and provincial premier Oliver Mowat, as well as our MP, Sir Richard Cartwright.

Young Jimmy grew up in Toronto with his sister Ruth and brother Paul before he enlisted with the Royal Flying Corps then training officers in Toronto during the latter years of the Great War.

Jimmy Vance, aka “Buzz”, earned his wings and became a pilot of Handley-Page bombers. With a wingspan of 100 feet, these were the largest aircraft in the Royal Flying Corps. He took part in bombing raids over enemy controlled Ostend Belgium and deep into Germany.

Following the end of the War, these huge bombers were converted to public conveyances and Vance was selected to pilot British dignitaries from England to Paris for meetings and negotiations which would result in the Treaty of Versailles. On another occasion he was named as one of two

pilots to fly a secret mission to Egypt!

In 1919, Jimmy Vance was ordered to fly British diplomat/intelligence officer Harry St. John Philby to Cairo for a special meeting with Arab dignitaries. Philby was a close friend and advisor to King Abdulazziz ibn Saud, founder of Saudia Arabia. Besides being a cousin of Bernard Montgomery, Philby had also been appointed head of British Secret Service in the Middle East. If the name Philby sounds familiar it’s because his son would become the notorious Russian double agent, Kim Philby.

On this particular flight from London to Cairo, Vance had to make several landings at various locations to refuel but still made it in record time. While in Rome, “Buzz” and his co-pilot the son of Sir Robert Borden’s private secretary, met and rescued famed British soldier T.E. Lawrence – best known to the world as Lawrence of Arabia. He too was heading to Cairo for this same secret meeting, but his plane had crashed, killing both pilots. Suffering from a broken shoulder blade and two broken ribs, Lawrence boarded Vance’s plane for the remaining trip to Cairo.

Visibility for their approach to the capital’s airport was hampered so Lawrence, a pilot himself, climbed out onto the wings of the Handley-Page, and guided Vance onto the landing strip!

In the early 1920s, Jimmy Vance’s days of adventure appeared to be over. He had returned to Canada and was working for an abattoir in Toronto. However, he had maintained his pilot’s license and in 1927, the local newspaper reported that our “Ingersoll Boy is Chosen for Ocean Flight”.

That year, Charles Burns, the owner of Carling Breweries, came up with the publicity scheme of flying from

London Ontario to London England. Others had made similar trans-Atlantic flights but none between these locations. Dozens of different aviators vied for the chance. Vance was to be the chief pilot authorized to select his co-pilot.

For a yet unknown reason, he changed his mind, and for our hero, it was the right decision. The two men who did take off in the Sir John Carling aircraft were never seen again.

It appears that Jimmy Vance headed north instead. He found work with Western Canada Airways flying supplies into the far north. In September 1929, he was involved in the search for a missing exploration party which led to yet another adventure. This time, his plane was stranded in snow and ice at Baker Lake, NWT. He and his copilot travelled by foot and sled dog 500 miles to Churchill Manitoba and then another hundred miles to reach the nearest rail line north of The Pas.

His notoriety as a pilot and survivor, one of the hearty modern-day explorers known as bush pilots, earned Vance a place on the roster of aviators working for the Northern Aerial Mineral Exploration Company. With this firm he was credited with exploring 30,000 miles of the high Arctic and flying a route which came to be known as the aerial Northwest Passage.

On one of his flights to Great Bear Lake transporting prospectors hunting for pitchblende (aka radium), the world’s most valuable mineral, Jimmy’s plane – a Fokker Super Universal – crashed and flipped on the surface of the water. Vance was thrown through the windshield and drowned in the deep frigid waters, never to be seen again. His life of adventure had come to an end.

Route2thepast@gmail.com

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

“I know the paper is free, but can I get a subscription anyways?”

Yes. We understand that some people might like the convenience of the Woodstock Ingersoll Echo arriving at their home (located near or far) through Canada Post, so we do have subscriptions available for this purpose.

The price for a subscription is \$52 plus GST = \$54.60.

To subscribe, please e-transfer granthavenmedia@gmail.com and include your full mailing address in the comments, or send a cheque with mailing address to Grant Haven Media, PO Box 2310, St. Marys, ON N4X1A2

Zorra Township News

CONNOR LUCZKA

Echo Correspondent

While Zorra Township Council didn't expressly pass a motion to buy Canadian from here on out, they did pass a motion to give staff more flexibility to do just that.

At a February council meeting, Mayor Marcus Ryan put forward a motion to have staff investigate whether the township could adjust its procurement practices to be in line with directives given by upper levels of government, namely that it ceases to provide contracts to U.S. companies given the tariffs imposed on Canadian goods and energy by U.S. President Donald Trump.

At the time, Ryan suspected that simply not buying American wouldn't be so simple. After investigation, staff confirmed his suspicions.

A report was prepared by Kim Grogan, manager of financial services and treasurer, and presented to council at its most recent meeting on March 19. Staff recommended a number of changes to the purchasing policy to give the municipality more flexibility in purchasing while also being in line with the many federal trade agreements currently enforced.

Before the most recent amendments were approved, senior staff could authorize procurements under \$30,000 without the need for an open competition process (provided they get three formal quotations should expenses exceed \$15,000). In an open competition

process, there are specific guidelines for which tender would ultimately successful, limiting what council or staff could say no to.

By raising the threshold from \$30,000 to \$100,000, as approved by council, staff has more flexibility to buy local and buy Canadian.

"By increasing from 30 to 100, it means that we're not required to go to an open competition, open bidding scenario until we reach the 100," Grogan said. "The \$100,000 was selected in order to align our policy with the lowest legislated threshold in all of our regulated trade agreements, which will provide staff and the municipality with the greatest flexibility in selecting suppliers and closing that gap."

According to Grogan's report, the township has worked directly with 3,533 suppliers since 1999. Only six have had an American address and only two have been utilized in the last two years.

"I'm happy with this," Ryan said about the report. "I would love to be able to say, 'Don't buy American' but the world is simply not that simple. I think that's one of the problems right now. Some people are trying to make things simpler than they actually are and that's causing a lot of problems. But I think this gives us, our staff, the most ability to do that, that we legally can do."

Council approved the amendments, which are listed in full in the agenda package of the council meeting. A further, more comprehensive review of the policy will be reviewed before the end

of 2025.

Three minor variance applications approved

Three minor variance applications, two in the town of Kintore and one in the village of Embro, were approved unanimously by council.

The first, located at 842967 Road 84 in Kintore, was to allow for the construction of an addition onto the existing warehouse on the property, specifically to reduce the minimum interior side yard width from 15 metres to one metre on one side and 2.5 metres on another side.

As Spencer McDonald, development planner with the township, said, the primary factor for setbacks is to maintain drainage, access, and ease of maintenance, should someone need to affix a ladder to the side and get up on the roof, for instance. Since staff are confident that won't be an issue, they recommended its approval.

The second application was located at 125 St. Andrew St. in Embro. The applicant asked to build an attached garage to their dwelling and requested a variance to reduce the minimum interior side yard width from 1.5 metres to 0.6 metres and to reduce the minimum front yard depth from 10 metres to seven metres.

Regarding the front yard depth, 10 me-

tres is "somewhat of an outdated provision," according to McDonald, and staff are satisfied that seven metres is sufficient. As for the side yard width, again there are no issues related to drainage, access, or ease of maintenance expected.

No comments were received from neighbours.

The third application, again in Kintore, was for the construction of a garage that was destroyed in a 2024 fire located at 842969 Road 84. The applicant wanted the new building to be similar to the old one and to be close to Road 84, five and a half metres to be exact, but staff weren't satisfied with that distance. They requested seven, which the applicant agreed to. That change was to make sure no vehicle parked out front would encroach the sidewalk.

A neighbour had earlier phoned McDonald expressing support of the application, which he shared with council.

Likewise, Coun. Paul Mitchell expressed his support and commendation to the applicant for building a better structure for the neighbourhood.

"There's not a whole lot of building activity that goes in around the town of Kintore and to have two minor variances back-to-back ... Things are booming in our part of the town," Mitchell joked.

Visit us online
at theecho.ca

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

The Woodstock Ingersoll Echo is seeking an

**INGERSOLL NEWS
CORRESPONDENT**

We are looking to hire a **part-time journalist**, based out of Ingersoll, to report regularly on a variety of local happenings within our Woodstock Ingersoll Echo newspaper.

Please send resume to the attention of Lee Griffi at info@theecho.ca.



RECORD STORE DAY
APRIL 12, 2025

ONE AMAZING DAY IS APPROACHING...

Starting at 8am on Saturday, April 12th, we will be celebrating international RECORD STORE DAY in downtown Woodstock. Choose from hundreds of beautiful, limited edition VINYL releases on collectible coloured wax.

Along with these collectibles, we'll be having a STOREWIDE SALE on all our quality used music, movies and video games.

We're opening early for this special event and it's first come first served on all the limited releases.

RECORD WORKS
remastered

NEW & USED MUSIC • MOVIES • VIDEO GAMES

399 DUNDAS ST. - DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK
MON - SAT: 10 AM - 8 PM • SUN: 10 AM - 6 PM

**LEARN TO FLY | GROUND SCHOOL
RECREATIONAL PILOT PERMIT
PRIVATE PILOT LICENSE | NIGHT RATING
VFR OVER THE TOP RATING | AIRPLANE RIDES**

**INTRODUCTORY FLIGHT
LESSONS**

Now \$199 (Cessna 150)
\$249 (Cessna 172)

**LONG POINT SCENIC TOURS
NOW \$50 OFF**

Only \$349 for up to 3 people in a
Cessna 172.

A One hour scenic flight over the
Long Point area and along the
shoreline of Lake Erie and Port
Burwell.

**OUR NEXT GROUND
SCHOOL SUMMER SESSION
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN.**

Please contact Don at the
Tillsonburg Flying School for
further details.



Tillsonburg Regional Airport
244411 Airport Road, Tillsonburg, ON
519-688-3968
tillsonburgflyingschool.ca



**Book
FACT:**

This famous author
is celebrated each
March for his many
contributions to
children's literature.

Answer: Dr. Seuss



English: Word
Spanish: Palabra
Italian: Parola
French: Mot
German: Wort

What's the Difference?

Find the four difference between the two pictures.



Answers: 1. Painting is a television on wall 2. Missing image in newspaper 3. Orange juice is larger 4. Plant on shelf back left



1994

The Community of
Arctic Red River,
Northwest
Territories, is
renamed
Tsiigehtchic. This
name translates to
"mouth of the iron
river."



learn by heart;
commit to
memory



The average adult will read
between 200 and 400 words
per minute. Older adults (over
age 65) tend to read more than
young people.



Can you guess what
the bigger picture is?

Answer: Child reading book



**NEW HEARING CLINIC
OPEN!**



**79 Montclair Dr,
Woodstock**
226-232-8122

We understand that your hearing needs are unique, and we take a personalized approach to develop tailored solutions that fit your lifestyle.

Walk-ins are always welcome.

Accepting new patients including but not limited to: WSIB, ODSP, VAC, NHIB, Greenshield.

Fiona Macaulay
Owner and Hearing
Instrument Specialist



Book your free hearing test today!



Locally owned and operated

226-232-8122

**79 Montclair Dr,
Woodstock**
Plenty of parking available

Rethinking “No-Mow May”



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

LESLYE GLOVER

Tri-County Master Gardener

No Mow May is an initiative that was first popularized in the UK and is now widely participated in throughout North America. It urges people to let their lawns grow freely for a month, supposedly to feed early emerging insects, particularly bees. It also serves as an excuse for lazy folks not to bother mowing and is a “band-aid” action, allowing people to rationalize that they are doing something to help the environment.

Possibly, in the UK, where bees evolved in tandem with plants that grow in turf grass there is a benefit to insects. In North America, particularly in lawns maintained with chemicals, no insect-supporting plants grow. The typical lawn is a monoculture of grasses which does not support insect life at all. It provides little pollen or nectar and no habitat. Many ‘lawns’ are filled with invasive species such as Creeping Charlie, Quack Grass, Garlic Mustard and our old friends the Dandelions. If any of these plants have pollen, it is of poor quality for early emerging insects. There is no benefit to letting such plants grow unabated for any length of time.

Bees will forage among dandelions if nothing else is available, but dandelions lack proteins essential to bee health.

No Mow May is not a solution to the worldwide loss and degradation of pollinator habitats.

Let’s look at some better ideas, which

will assist pollinators in May and beyond. Replace part (or all!) of our lawns with a mixture of plants native to our region. Include early flowering shrubs such as Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*), Willows (*Salix* spp.), Serviceberries (*Amelanchier* spp.), Cherries (*Prunus* spp.), especially Choke Cherry (*Prunus virginiana*) and Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatica*).

We can add native perennials such as goldenrods, asters and coneflowers to the beds we already have, remove invasive species (which do not support native insects), and learn to love the ‘mess’ of decaying leaves, dead plant stalks, and tree stumps. The latter provide pollinator habitat. The David Suzuki Foundation has more suggestions. <https://david Suzuki.org/living-green/messy-yards-help-pollinators/>

Here is a link to the ecoregional planting guides from Pollinator Partnerships which detail the plants native to all the areas of Canada. <https://pollinatorpartnership.ca/en/ecoregional-planting-guides>

Together we can nurture the natural communities upon which we all depend.

The Tri-County Master Gardeners will be providing an opportunity for the public to purchase native shrubs and perennial plants on June 14th. The sale will be held from 9 AM until noon at Avondale United Church, in the back parking lot on Huntington Avenue, Stratford. Watch our Face Book page and our website for species and prices. tricountymastergardeners.ca

We hope to see you there!

Weekend Quiz

by Jake Grant

1. What Disney princess wears yellow?
2. What country produces the most peanuts?
3. Which famous artist cut off part of his own ear?
4. In Greek mythology, who is the king of the gods?
5. What gas do cows release?
6. What is the most spoken language?
7. What is the capital city of Nova Scotia?
8. Who was the first Emperor of Rome?
9. What’s the name of Hiccup’s dragon from “How to Train Your Dragon”?
10. What Japanese cities were struck by an atomic bomb?

This week’s answers are found on pg. 23

THE CREATION

An oratorio by Franz Joseph Haydn

JOHANN VAN ITTERSUM, Artistic Director

OCS
OXFORD COLLEGIUM SINGERS
est. 2017

Cantate Iterum Orchestra
Chelsea Van Pelt, Soprano
Steve Surian, Tenor
Aaron Dimoff, Bass-Baritone

7:30 p.m., May 10, 2025
Knox Presbyterian Church
Tickets: \$30
www.oxfordcollegium.ca

STONETOWN TRAVEL

GROUP TRAVEL OPPORTUNITY HOSTED BY STONETOWN TRAVEL

PANAMA CANAL AND BEYOND

ON THE NORWEGIAN JADE

FEBRUARY 10 - 27, 2026

Head Office: 150 Queen Street East, St. Marys, ON N4X 1B4
☎ 519-284-2332 ✉ agent@stonetowntravel.com
TICO #50010159

Branch Office: 210 Mill Street, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1P9
☎ 226-333-9939 ✉ newhamburg@stonetowntravel.com
TICO #50025796

www.stonetowntravel.com

Riddles

I wake you up but have no clock. I have feathers and love to talk. What am I?
Rooster

I have four legs and eat lots of hay. I give you milk every day. What am I?
Cow

I start as a seed, grow tall and sweet, and in the summer, I'm a treat. What am I?
Corn

I have hooves but I'm not a horse. I love to roll in mud, of course! What am I?
Pig

I wear a woolly coat and say "Baa!" Who am I?
Sheep

I dig the dirt, but I'm not a mole. I help the farmer reach his goal. What am I?
Plow

I roll around the farm, golden and round, stacked in piles on the ground. What am I?
Hay bale

I have ears but cannot hear, and people line up when harvest is near. What am I?
Cornfield

I have wheels but I'm not a car. I work on farms both near and far. What am I?
Tractor

Sudoku

by PeterS 2025

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

Solutions on page 23

Basic (5)

PET OF THE WEEK



ZOEY

My name is Zoey, and I love baths! My dad likes to give me baths after I play with my friends at boarding. I love the water, but the hair dryer afterwards.... not as much!

SPONSORED BY:



Barkin Boujee
RAW&MORE

519-761-9798

BARKINBOUJEE.CA

Our selection includes a large variety of raw food & raw meaty bone options, organic & natural supplements, collars, leashes, harnesses, lots of options in our chew bar, eco-friendly toys, and our locally sourced freeze dried treats made by us.

109 THAMES ST. S., INGERSOLL

Mon-Fri 10-6 pm and Sat 10-3 pm

**Nominate your pet to be Pet of the Week by emailing info@theecho.ca
Published pets will get a free goodie bag from Barkin Boujee!**

Word Search

AT THE FARM

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

- TRACTOR
- HARVEST
- BARN
- PLOW
- CATTLE
- FARMER
- WHEAT
- CORNFIELD
- HORSES
- FENCES
- HAYSTACK
- ORCHARD
- POULTRY
- IRRIGATION
- DAIRY

COMING EVENTS

OLD ST PAUL'S CHURCH PRESENTS

MUSIC OF THE 50S AND 60S

with Rob and the Rydells Saturday April 5 at **723 Dundas St., Woodstock. The show begins at 1:30pm.** Tickets only \$25.00 and kids under 12 are free. Please go to www.oldstpauls.com or call 519-537-3912. Complimentary refreshments follow the concert.

TAVISTOCK DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, April 5, 1:30pm

ZioN Hall, Grace United Church

116 Woodstock St. S., Tavistock

Feature Presentation: "The Story of the John Lemp Grandfather Clocks and How We Acquired One" by Donna Dickson. All are welcome!

WOODSTOCK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OPEN MEETING

Cafeteria, Huron Park Secondary School

Use Berwick St door & south parking lot

Tuesday April 8th, 7 – 9 pm

Speaker: Diane Wheler "Hydrangeas"

First meeting free, Annual Membership \$15, Family \$25. All are welcome.

NOAH'S ARK ADVENTURE

July 7 - 11, 9:30am to 12noon

CornerStone Baptist Church

34 Graham Street, Woodstock, ON N4S 6J6

For ages 5-11. Call: 519.537.0125 for more information or go to <https://www.myvbs.org/cornerstonewoodstockvbs/> to register.

APRIL GOLF PACKAGE FUNDRAISER

April 1 to April 30

April golf challenge package, \$25 & secure a spot on the spinner wheel, for your chance to win the \$1290 package. Odds of winning depend on number of names on the wheel, but for certain, if your name is NOT on the wheel, you cannot win it! All proceeds will be donated to my Great Cycle Challenge ride to help the kids fighting cancer! Send your EMT for \$25 per spot on the wheel, to me at omulder@rogers.com or email me at the same address to make other arrangements for payment, to get your chance to win this package! To receive a tax receipt, make your donation directly to: <https://greatcyclechallenge.ca/Riders/HenriettaOlthoffMulder>

GOOD FRIDAY EVENING

April 18

Join the Ingersoll Choral Society Good Friday evening as they perform Mark Hayes' "Requiem", and other selected works. With orchestral accompaniment. Sacred Heart Church, Ingersoll, 8 pm. Free will offering will be received. www.ingersollchoralsociety.ca or find us on Facebook.

DEATH AND DONUTS

SATURDAY APRIL 12TH FROM 10 AM TO 12 PM at "do GOOD Oxford"

21 Wellington Street North, Woodstock

Join us for a free event, guaranteed to spark curiosity and connection around death and dying.

CALL, TEXT OR EMAIL TO REGISTER

519-536-3370

info@caringheartssupportnetwork.com

SACRED HEART PARISH EUCHRE

Henderson Hall 133 John Street Ingersoll.

Tuesday April 8 start at 1:00 pm.

Tuesday April 22 start at 1:00 pm

We invite everyone to join us for a Euchre afternoon. Refreshments provided. For more info call or text Martha 519-320-0785

OUR CLASSIC COUNTRY ROOTS SHOW

Sunday May 4, 2025 at Mt Elgin Community Centre, 333204 Plank Line, Mount Elgin, ON

Celebrating Nashville's Greatest Stars with Roy LeBlanc and Mary Skelton together with the Royal Tribute Band. Tickets are \$35.00 (INCL. HST) and are available at WWW.TICKETSCENE.CA/EVENTS/51159 or by calling Dawne (519)-421-6836 or Joanne (519)-485-1988)

LOOKING FOR FUN, FITNESS, AND FRIENDLY COMPETITION? JOIN US FOR PICKLEBALL!

Whether you're a beginner or an experienced player, there's a spot for you at **Huron Park Baptist Church, 199 Berwick Street held the first Saturday of the every month from 9-11 a.m.** Cost is FREE!

Bring a friend, bring your energy, and let's play!

For more information or to sign up, call 519-421-4722

OXFORD COUNTY BRANCH OF ONTARIO ANCESTORS VIRTUAL MEETING

Monday, April 14, 2025 at 7 pm

"Preachers, Teachers, Entrepreneurs and Rebels" Deward Yates will take us on a virtual field trip of historical plaques, following rural and urban pathways, celebrating Oxford County's History from Embro to Wolverton and multiple places in between. Register for free by visiting our website <https://oxford.ogs.on.ca>.

A PALLIATIVE APPROACH TO CARE

Join us on Tuesday, April 1st, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at St. David's United Church, located at 190 Springbank Ave, Woodstock, ON.

The Caring Hearts Support Network is pleased to present Diane Murray, RN, CHPCN (C), a clinical coach with the Oxford Ontario Health Team. She will discuss how our community can support individuals living with serious illnesses, such as COPD, cancer, heart failure, frailty, dementia, and other conditions. A Q&A session will follow the presentation.

www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com

info@caringheartssupportnetwork.com

THE LIONS CLUB OF WOODSTOCK

The Lions Club of Woodstock has been serving the community and Oxford County with kindness and generosity since 1931. The Lions always place the needs of neighbours and communities first. Through the dedication and hard work of our volunteer members, we are serving those in need together. If you are interested in becoming a member or simply wish to learn more by attending one of our monthly meetings, please email Steve Iorio at steveiorio4@gmail.com for more information.

ARE YOU IN A JAM?

April 4 & 11, May 2 & 23, June 6 & 20 from 1-4p.m.

Masonic Hall, 190 Thames St S, Ingersoll.

Ingersoll's Country Music Jamboree Club is celebrating 40 years. New members wanted. Qualifications - love 50-70's country music. Listen, dance, enjoy! The club welcomes walk-ins at the door.

OPEN HOUSE

April 30th 2-3pm

Edward on the harp. Please bring a nonperishable food item for the food bank. Call Cedarview at 519-602-0282, RSVP with Lisa

TILLSONBURG DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

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.

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF OXFORD COUNTY

The Optimists bring out the best in Youth, Community, and Themselves. If anyone is interested in coming out to meet us and learn more about us please email brenda7621@outlook.com

REPAIR CAFÉ - TOSS IT? NO WAY!

1st Saturday of each month; 9:00 a.m. - Noon

St. John's Church 685860 Oxford Highway 2,

Eastwood, ON N4S 7V9

St. John's, Eastwood, now affiliated with Repair Café International (look for us at repaircafe.org). Meets the first Saturday of every month 9am to noon at St. John's Church 685860 Oxford Highway 2, Eastwood, ON N4S 7V9. Repairs made to clothing, linens, household items, toys, musical instruments etc. Save money, learn how to make your own repairs. Volunteers welcome. Payment by donation.

PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Third Wednesday of each month; 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

21 Wellington St., Woodstock

(Virtual options available)

PCMH is a peer support program providing support to parents and caregivers across Ontario with lived experience raising children and youth with mental health challenges. For more information, please visit family.cmho.org or oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca. We are also on Facebook: Parents for Children's Mental Health ~ Oxford County

LIVING WITH LOSS:

A SIX-WEEK GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Caring Hearts Support Network: St. David's United Church, 190 Springbank Ave., Woodstock ON

A safe and supportive space to explore your grief, with the guidance of trained facilitators. Please contact for upcoming dates. No cost to attend. To register or for more information call or text 519-536-3370.

www.caringheartssupportnetwork.com.

One-on-one grief support is also available.

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR MAID RELATED LOSS

4th Wednesday of the month

from 1 – 2:30 p.m.

at the Thamesford Library,

165 Dundas St., Thamesford

This monthly in-person grief support group for loss related to Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) offers a compassionate, safe space to explore this unique loss. The group will meet the 4th Wednesday of the month from 1 – 2:30 p.m. at the Thamesford Library, 165 Dundas St., Thamesford. The group is free of charge and pre-registration is requested. The next meeting is Wednesday, February 26th. To register or inquire about an evening group, contact Deb McKay at 519-866-3016 or email faye@compassionategriefsupport.ca.

VON OXFORD GRIEF CARE:

FREE MONTHLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Register at: oxford.griefsupport@von.ca or 519-539-1231 Ext 6299 or 6296

TILLSONBURG

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

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS:

642 Dundas Street, Woodstock

SPRING EASTER BAKE SALE-VENDOR

MARKET/CRAFT SALE

April 12th 9am-1pm

HURON PARK BAPTIST CHURCH EVENTS:

199 Berwick St, Woodstock

LADIES EVENT

SENIORS LUNCH

April 24 – Noon

Program – to be announced later

Call the church 519-421-4722 to register.

BASKETBALL POWER CAMP

August 18-22 9 am-12:50 pm

Ages: 5-14

Call the church 519-421-4722 for Registration details.

MEN - BRING YOUR OWN CUT OF MEAT TO BBQ

June 20th @ 6 pm

Location: Huron Park Church

Potato and Caesar Salad, Buns, Dessert provided

+ Jed Lau will demonstrate the preparation of different spice rubs

Contact the church 519-421-4722 no later than June 13th for details and to register.

SUMMER BASKET BALL CAMP

August 8 – 11

More details to follow.

BEACHVILLE LEGION EVENTS:

434852 Zorra Line, Beachville

THAMES VALLEY BLUE GRASS AND OLD TIME COUNTRY PICKERS

Saturday March 29 1-4 pm

Saturday April 5 1-4 pm

Saturday April 19 1-4 pm

Come enjoy the music

GOOD FRIDAY FISH AND CHIP DINNER

Friday April 18, Doors open at 4 pm

KARAOKE

Saturday April 19 7-11 pm

EUCHRE Thursdays 7 pm

DARTS Fridays 8 pm

FREE POOL

OXFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS:

oxhs.ca

info@oxhs.ca or 226-242-4772

SAVING THE TITANIC

Wednesday April 30, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

Thomas Ryerson, Author and grandson of William Edwy Ryerson. A true story about William Edwy Ryerson who survived the sinking of the Titanic.

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK BIA

IMPORTANT DATES:

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK SHOPPING NIGHT

April 24, May 22, June 26, July 17, August 28, September 25, October 23, November 27, December 18 - 5pm-8pm

Our monthly shopping event, Woodstock Shopping Night, typically occurs every 4th Thursday of the month. Participating stores stay open late until 8 pm to facilitate late-night shopping. Enjoy a great night out in downtown Woodstock with extended store hours & exciting specials.

DOWNTOWN HALL

May 7 - 6pm-8pm @Theatre Woodstock

Join us at Theatre Woodstock from 6pm to 8pm for an engaging evening where you can connect with the Downtown Woodstock BIA members and find out more about the exciting things happening in our Downtown area.

MUSIC IN THE SQUARE

June 19 until August 28 Every Thursday

Come to Museum Square for a little lunchtime concert. Music in the Square happens every Thursday from 12 pm to 2 pm during the Summer months.

Grab some lunch from one of the neighbouring businesses or bring your own and enjoy live bands and musicians.

DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK SUMMER

STREETFEST

July 18/19

Summer Streetfest is a two-day celebration happening every July. Formerly known as Sidewalk Sales, Summer Streetfest invites you to discover Downtown Woodstock. With Dundas Street closed off for cars, stroll the street and discover our charming downtown businesses. Enjoy live music, kids' entertainment, exciting sales, yummy eats or take a seat on one of the many patios for a cold drink.

CHRISTMAS IN THE SQUARE

December 12/13 & December 19/20

Get ready for a festive family adventure in Downtown Woodstock! Join us for free festive fun in Museum Square; expect smiles, laughter, and a jolly good time. Bring the kids and snap a free photo with Santa at his house. Take the opportunity to do some last minute shopping for your loved ones at the wonderful downtown businesses.

NOTICE OF STUDY COMMENCEMENT

Oxford County Waste Management Facility - South Fill Area

Environmental Compliance Approval Amendment

Oxford County is preparing to use the South Fill Area in the next three to four years, once the currently operating North Fill Area has reached capacity. This requires amending the Environmental Compliance Approval for the Oxford County Waste Management Facility.

About the study process

The Oxford County Waste Management Facility (OCWMF) consists of the North Fill Area and the South Fill Area. The currently operating North Fill Area may be full as soon as 2029.

The OCWMF's Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) requires an updated Design and Operations (D&O) report before using the South Fill Area. The County is preparing the required D&O report and renewing the Municipal and Private Sewage Works ECA for Ponds C and D. For this, the County will review the OCWMF history, including current approvals and regulatory requirements, complaints, monitoring reports, and future waste management goals.

Public consultation

Consultation with stakeholders is a key component of the study process and input will be sought throughout the study. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list to receive notices and information, or if you wish to provide comments at any time during the study process, you can do so by contacting the project contacts listed below. Project information and updates can be found at www.oxfordcounty.ca/southfill

Project and notice information will be provided in an accessible format upon request in accordance with the *Accessibility Standard for Information and Communication under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Please submit your comments for consideration to the project contacts by **Friday, April 25, 2025**.

Project contacts

Pamela Antonio
Supervisor of Waste Management
Oxford County
pantonio@oxfordcounty.ca
519-539-9800, ext. 3114

James R. Hollingsworth, P. Eng.
Consultant Project Manager
R. J. Burnside & Associates Limited
jamie.hollingsworth@rjburnside.com
289-545-1051

This notice first issued on March 26, 2025

Information collected will be used in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.


Oxford County
Growing stronger together

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

REAL ESTATE

HAROLD MATTHEWS,
Real Estate Broker

Century 21 First Canadian Corp.
519-670-6780

Put over 35 years of experience to work for you.

REAL ESTATE

CARLY BRINTNELL
REALTOR®

Gale Group Realty Brokerage Ltd.
425 Dundas St. Woodstock ON
519-635-8640
carlybrintnell@gmail.com

 GALE GROUP
REALTY BROKERAGE LTD.



E-BIKES AND SCOOTERS



Brite Solutions
ELECTRIC

- E-Bikes • Mobility Scooters
- Sales and Services
- Battery Replacements and Upgrades



britesolutions.ca
Official Daymak Dealer



406 Simcoe St, Woodstock, ON
519-602-7545 • britesolutions@gmail.com

**SHOP LOCAL.
SAVE LOCAL.**

Support the local businesses that support your local newspaper.

 News Media Canada
Médias d'Info Canada

ADVERTISE LOCAL

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR HOUSE IS

Keep your dollars in Canada to strengthen communities and support local businesses, including your local newspaper.

 News Media Canada
Médias d'Info Canada



Lake Erie Perch



Taste of home,
a bite of your childhood.

Taste spring
with Lake Erie Perch.

Get your Lake Erie Perch
right here at
Crispy's Fish & Chips in
Woodstock ON.

Call 519-290-8800

194 Springbank ave.N. Woodstock ON
www.crispysfishandchips.com

CLASSIFIEDS

OBITUARY

DANIEL "DAN" H. MCLEOD (NOVEMBER 26, 1942 - MARCH 28, 2024)



*When I come to the end of the road,
and the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room,
Why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little - but not too long,
And not with your head bowed low,
Remember the love that we once shared,
Miss me - but let me go,
For this is a journey we all must take,
And each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan,
A step on the road to Home,
When you are lonely & sick of heart,
Go to the friends we know,
And bury your sorrow in doing good deeds.
Miss me - but let me go.
Author Unknown*

Your Legacy and kindness endures
Forever Remembered, Forever Loved
Beloved Husband of Gail (Moulton)
Father of Heather (Peter McPherson)
Chris McLeod
Grandfather of Declan & Hamish McPherson

TREES

Shade trees, Fruit trees, Apple, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Sweet and Sour Cherries, Apricot, Nectarines, Blueberry, Haskopp, Black Chokeberry, Grapes etc. Lots of Spruce, Pine, Cedars for windbreaks and privacy hedges, Sizes 1 to 6+. Flowering shrubs and much more. Come check us out Mon-Sat 7:00am - 6:00pm Martin's Nursery, 42661 Orangehill Road, Wroxeter (1 concession north of Wroxeter on Belmore Line)

THANK YOU

The family of Mary Walton extends a big thank you for the generosity and love shared by so many after her passing. Mary loved the community, her Christ Church Huntingford family and all the groups that she was active in. Mary was a kind, generous and empathetic person; she was never happier than when she was doing something for others. This was reflected in the response from the community to her passing. Many thanks to the Health Care Teams that assisted her in the last months of her life at University Hospital London, Stratford General Hospital and the Palliative Care Team. Mary continually praised the timely care she received and was so thankful for all the help and all the visits from friends. Although, she would have liked some salt for her meals at UH (it was the cardiac ward)! Again, thank you all from the Walton Family!

OBITUARY

HAZEL JOANNE ALBION



*Please join us as we
Celebrate the life of
Hazel Joanne Albion,
(October 21, 1942 -
November 23, 2024)
Saturday, April 12,
2025, 2pm - 4pm.
St. David's United
Church,
190 Springbank Ave.
Woodstock, ON.*

*We will begin with a brief ceremony at 2pm, followed
by an opportunity for you to share your memories and
thoughts as we gather with friends and family.*

Coffee/Tea will be served along with a light dessert.

*If you prefer to have us read your thoughts or reflections,
please RSVP to either
Faith Layard, faith.l@live.ca or
Jennifer Harrington, jharrington743@gmail.com*

Hazel Joanne Edwards-Harrington-Albion was born in Chatham, Ontario. She was a proud graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing which led her to pursue a fulfilling career as a dedicated nurse and teacher. Joanne was involved with St. David's United Church, the Diabetes Association, Canadian Cancer Society, the Order of the Eastern Star, the Woodstock Navy Vets team and very generously, she was committed to raising Guide Dog puppies through the Lions Foundation of Canada.

Joanne enjoyed the comradery of the Red Hats, and fellow quilters at the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre

Her warmth, kindness, and generous spirit will be missed by her friends, family, and all who knew her. Joanne leaves behind a legacy of faith, love, and dedication to service.

Her memory will continue to inspire those whose lives she touched.

Keeping in Joanne's wishes, her body has been donated to science.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Diabetes Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, Alzheimer Society, or Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides. Personal condolences may be shared at www.smithleroy.com.

We look forward to Celebrating Joanne's life with you.

OBITUARY

LAUDER JOHN ROBERTSON



John passed away peacefully on Saturday March 15th, 2025, at Sakura House in Woodstock, in his 95th year.

John leaves behind his loving wife Connie (nee Matheson) Lauder, his much-adored daughter Cindy Ratcliffe, step son Keith Lattimer, and son in law Terry Bellamy. John is survived by seven grandchildren, Jennifer (Jody) Timpany, Fred (Faith) Sawchuck, Tammy Vandertuin (Paul), Krista Lattimer (Chris), Thomas Louws (Sondra), Marika Tompkins (Cole), and Mitchell Lattimer (Ashley), and twelve great-grandchildren.

Predeceased by his parents Archibald and Isobell Lauder of Scotland, his daughter Bonnie Bellamy, his sons Robbie Lauder and Jim Lauder, son-in-law Doug Ratcliffe, and step daughter Brenda Lattimer-Louws.

John emigrated to Canada in 1946 with his Grannie and Auntie on a boatload of war brides, 1,000 in number - but as the years passed, he told us 3,000 - we never really knew the true number. Upon arriving in Halifax, they settled in Ottawa area before moving to Woodstock.

In 2016, John found he had two nieces, Morag and Fiona and their families living in Ireland, daughters of the late Norman and Molly Lauder, John's half-brother who he had not seen since emigrating to Canada. This newfound family has brought such joy to our family with our visits back and forth.

John was a runner and competed in many marathons carrying the torch through Woodstock for the 1976 Summer Olympics.

He was a general contractor with many loyal customers. He loved his work and always said after 5 tries at retiring, retirement was the worst job he had; he was still roofing in his 80s. Talk about anyone who whistled while he worked that was John.

John and Connie enjoyed life to the fullest and their travels took them to Australia, New Zealand, Amazon enjoying a tree house vacation, African Safari, Vietnam, Cambodia, Europe and Mexico just to name a few.

A Celebration of the Life of this great man John, or 'Sir John' as he liked to be called, was held on Tuesday March 25, 2025 at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 55, Woodstock Ontario. Memorial donations to VON Sakura House, or the Woodstock Hospital are most appreciated. Wareing Cremation Services, 225 Norwich Ave., Woodstock has been entrusted with Final Arrangements. Your messages of remembrance and condolence may be shared at wareingcremation.ca

Visit us online at theecho.ca

SUDOKU

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

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Belle
2. China
3. Vincent Van Gogh
4. Zeus
5. Methane
6. Mandarin Chinese
7. Halifax
8. Augustus
9. Toothless
10. Hiroshima & Nagasaki

We want to hear from our community! info@theecho.ca

HearingLife

Save up to
\$1,700
on the latest
hearing aids**



This month, in support of **World Hearing Day**, we're excited to make hearing care more affordable.

Keep the sounds you love

Key Features of the Latest Hearing Aids:



Bluetooth® Connectivity



Discreet and Comfortable Wear



Clear Sound

Your hearing needs are unique. Choose the hearing care that isn't one size fits all.

Learn more with a **FREE** consultation*

Proudly providing hearing healthcare to the Woodstock community for over 10 years!

Woodstock Medical Centre
645 Finkle Street, Suite 2200
1-888-789-7561

Ingersoll
120 Thames Street N, Unit 9
1-888-789-7850



Mention code: **NSP-1700-WDECH**

Book online **HearingLife.ca/1700off**

*A comprehensive hearing assessment is provided to adults ages 19 and older at no cost. The results of this assessment will be communicated verbally to you. Depending on the province you're located in, an administrative fee may apply if a copy of an Audiological Report is requested. **This promotion is valid for select premium or advanced hearing aid models and cannot be combined with any other discount. Applies to private sales of premium or advanced hearing aids and discount is applied after any Government funding has been deducted. Some conditions apply, see clinic for details. Offer not valid in Quebec. Offer expires April 30, 2025. Offer not applicable for industrial hearing tests.

Keep being you **Love your ears**



We are close by when you need us the most

Private Family Owned and Operated



- Transfer of Funeral Arrangements & Prearrangements from other establishments at NO COST
- Guaranteed pre-paid price with transfer from other establishments
- Options to pre-plan at NO COST
- Full Service Funeral Home offering Cremation Services, Traditional Services. Memorial Gatherings
- After funeral assistance at NO COST
- We offer a wide selection of: Caskets, Urns, Scattering Tubes, Keepsake Urns, Cremation Jewelry, & Jewelry with your loved ones fingerprint



Owners
Jeff & Michelle
Glendinning

Our Directors
Madison Kraeker
Dave Nancekievill
Jeff Glendinning

**69 Wellington Street North,
Woodstock, ON N4S 6P7**
519-537-3611 www.smithleroy.com



Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

March 28, 2025



FARM EDITION 2025

2024 Oxford Stewardship Award goes to Gord and Lisa Ross

STAFF

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan presented Gord and Lisa Ross with the 2024 Oxford Stewardship Award this morning to recognize their efforts toward land improvement and sustainability.

Gord and Lisa Ross have made tremendous efforts towards land stewardship at their South-West Oxford property. The Ross's have done several stewardship projects over the past 13 years and were honoured with this award thanks to recent efforts to plant over 2,500 trees to create windbreaks along the north and western boundaries. They also created a new woodlot in a 1.3-acre section of land on the corner of the property to link the two windbreaks and create a continuous wildlife path. The new woodlot is adjacent to a meadow and next to a neighbour's woodlot to create a more extensive wildlife habitat.

Three short-listed candidates were finalists for the award, chosen from a pool of projects supported by the Clean Water Program. The program, funded by Oxford County and administered by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Grand River Conservation Authority, promotes water quality improvement and woodland and wetland conservation and enhancement. The finalists undertook various land improvements this year to protect the local environment.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Left to right are April Nix, Oxford County; Rob Davies, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority; award winners Lisa Ross and Gord Ross; and Cher Sprague, Stewardship Oxford.

Oxford County is honouring this year's Oxford Stewardship Award recipient with a \$500 gift certificate to purchase original artwork commissioned from an Oxford County artist of their choice or an experience at a local destination featured through Tourism Oxford. In addition to this prize, Lisa and Gord Ross

have been added to the recognition wall at the Oxford County Administration Building, designed to honour all past and future recipients of the Oxford Stewardship Award.

The winner of the Oxford Stewardship Award is chosen by representatives of local stewardship organizations, with Marinda Gras, Soil and Crop Improvement Association, and Cher Sprague, Stewardship Oxford, leading the judging process.

Also nominated were Debra and Gord Eddy from East-Zorra Tavistock and Joe and Susan Hampson of Norwich Township.

**KELLY'S
ELECTRIC**

**ELECTRICAL
SERVICE**

OUR SERVICE :

- Full Service Electrical Contractor
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Residential
- Municipal
- Electrical System Design
- Installation and Maintenance
- Diesel & Natural Gas Generators
- Electrical Automation

420 Wright Blvd, Stratford, ON N4Z 1H3
 519-273-3893 info@kellyselectric.com
 www.kellyselectric.com

Customers the ultimate judges, but Royal Winter Fair awards also welcome for Gunn's Hill Cheese

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

A company's customers are the ultimate judges.

But a little positive feedback from sanctioned competitions never hurts.

"No matter what, it's always good to hear back," said Gunn's Hill Cheese co-founder and head cheesemaker Shep Ysselstein after victories in the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair's Flavoured Cheese, Not Smoked, and Flavoured Cheese, Smoked categories.

"And the other nice thing is, when you win a competition, it gives people an excuse to try something that may be new to them."

Ysselstein took the latter approach with cheese-making, particularly Swiss cheese-making, becoming interested in the craft through growing up on an Oxford Centre-area family dairy farm that now supplies his operation. He went to the heart of the Alps to learn his craft, spending a memorable summer helping tend and milk a 30-head dairy herd on Swiss mountainsides. Milk was collected in buckets via a mobile tie-stall system, poured into milk cans and then transported to an area cheese-making facility.

Despite a gruelling summer of work, he returned to Canada inspired rather than discouraged.

"That's where it all began."

Ysselstein and partner Colleen Bator combined family dairy experience, season of authentic Swiss cheese-making, subsequent cheese-making instruction, and also importantly, a business degree, into the founding of Gunn's Hill Cheese in 2010. Their original line featured Five Brothers, a hand-crafted washed rind product reminiscent of Gouda and Swiss Appenzeller; Handeck, a version paying homage to the Swiss mountain cheeses he made in Europe; Oxford's Harvest, a milder, creamier offering modelled after Swiss Mutchsli; and highly-popular curds.

All four remain staples in Gunn's Hills current 20-25-variety range of offerings, a lengthy list including flavoured versions of the originals, Brigid's Brie named in honour of Colleen's late Irish mother, Dark Side of the Moo (Mutchsli-style soaked for four days in Dark Side Chocolate Stout from Woodstock's Upper Thames Brewing Company) along with buffalo (Buffalo Bliss) and sheep-milk (Shepherd's Harvest) cheeses they craft for or others. They, and a selection of other local products are available for sale on-site at the cheese shop, located at 445172 Gunn's Hill Road as well as hundreds of other locations around the province.

Admittedly, a competition is not a competition. Some have more entries, some differing numbers of judges, some admittedly more or less



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Gunn's Hill Cheese co-founder and cheesemaker Shep Ysselstein shows off the Five Brothers Smoked (in his right hand) and Topsy (left) cheeses which won their categories at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair this fall.

prestigious. But results can be important, a 2013 category victory for Five Brothers at the high-end 2013 Canadian Cheese Grand Prix competition sponsored by the Dairy Farmers of Canada provided an element of early credibility to Gunn's Hill's products, and every win provides a boost. Cheese is judged on a combination of technical attributes, salinity and texture for example, as well as a technical term which comes down to flavour: 'nice earthy, nutty undertones' compared to, for example, less-attractive 'barny' characteristics.

Gunn's Hill Royal Fair winners included Topsy, Oxford Harvest soaked in Palatine Hills Cabernet Merlot for four days before being aged for three to four months; and also Five Brothers Smoked, as the name indicates, Five Brothers cheese vacuum sealed to age. After eight months, 30 to 40 wheels are cold-smoked with applewood for eight hours.

"It gets that nice natural smoke flavour," said Ysselstein. "Apple tends to go best with cheese - hickory or mesquite can be too intense."

Gunn's Hill also picked up a pair of American Cheese Society awards earlier in the year, Dark Side of the Moo finishing first in its category, and Five Brothers second. Gunn's Hill is judicious with competition entries, limiting numbers and often using the opportunity to get external assessment on new products.

"You always get some feedback on them," Shep explained, which is an important part of the desire for improvement, important whether at the beginning of a company's existence or 14 years in.

"You can't just let it go," said Ysselstein. "We've got to continually focus on doing better, always trying to do a little better."

And while competitions are part of that ongoing challenge, customer appreciation remains the biggest win.

"It's still always fun to see people enjoying our cheese," Ysselstein concluded. "That's what keeps it exciting."

Working together to build a stronger community.



At South Easthope Mutual, our policyholders are our members. That's what keeps us strong!

Your needs and your goals are our priority. So when you succeed, we succeed.

That's why after more than 150 years, South Easthope Mutual is still here for you — today and tomorrow.

FARM HOME AUTO BUSINESS



SOUTH EASTHOPE
MUTUAL INSURANCE

Working together for insurance that works.

1-800-263-9987 | southeasthope.com



Re-Elect Arpan Khanna – Conservative Candidate for Oxford.



ARPAN KHANNA

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT for OXFORD

519-421-7214 • ARPAN.KHANNA@PARL.GC.CA
208 HURON ST #4, WOODSTOCK, ON N4S 7A1
ARPANKHANNAMP.CA



Oxford County farmer ahead of his time receives honour

LEE GRIFFI

Editor

Donald Wallace Hart may not be alive to attend his induction into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame but his memory as someone who pioneered soil management continues to live on.

Hart, who farmed in East Zorra-Tavistock, passed away in 2014 and was a leader in developing conservation tillage systems, leaving a significant and lasting impact on the quality and sustainability of Ontario farmland.

Hart's son Bob said he feels a sense of pride with what his father accomplished and added his pivot into cash cropping couldn't have been a better decision.

"I think it's a tremendous honour and very well deserved. He was a leader in soil conservation and sustainable farming before sustainable farming became a common term. His father, Douglas Hart, is also in the Hall of Fame for his work in the dairy industry. My dad started as a dairy farm and hated it so he went into beef feedlot operator before starting with cash crops."

Hart graduated from the Ontario Agricultural College in 1953 and in the 1960s, observed soil degradation caused by monoculture corn crops and moldboard plow tillage. Driven by this concern, he sought out like-minded individuals to find solutions. This group, informally known as the Oxford Group, became leaders in soil conservation in Oxford County and across the province.

"He was always willing to try new and different things. He recognized that planting corn year after year after year monoculture corn was causing problems and he wanted to do something about it. The group of them were look-



(BOB HART PHOTO)

Former EZT farmer Donald Wallace Hart will be inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Elora in June.

ing for ways to do better," explained Bob.

Recognizing the benefits of leaving crop residue on the surface to reduce soil erosion and build organic matter, he brought the concept back to Ontario, claiming to have performed the province's first chisel plowing on his farm.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Hart was a sought-after speaker at farm meetings across Ontario, con-

sistently encouraging farmers to explore new methods for improving the long-term health and productivity of their soil.

"He hosted a lot of government-type people and talked about what he was doing and why he was doing it. He really enjoyed working with young farmers who had questions and were sincerely interested dad always had time to talk, give different views and put some different options out there."

Bob followed in his father's footsteps and farmed full-time until about 12 years ago.

"My brother and I had started a business called a seed business called Ag-works. We merged with another company to form Sevita International so I ended up working full-time there and Doug carried on farming. His sons farm and my boys work at Sevita."

Hart's farm was located at the current Sevita, north of Woodstock on Highway 59.

"He was a humble guy. He was never one to jump into the limelight but he was always happy to share if somebody was interested. He was very concerned about the long-term viability of cash crop farming in Ontario. I think he absolutely made a difference."

Bob added chisel plowing became one of the main practices for a long time in the province.

"Maybe not so much anymore, it's kind of moved on a little bit. But it was the big thing for a long time and he was largely responsible for getting it going."

Hart and two other deserving farmers will be inducted at a ceremony on Sunday, June 5 at the GrandWay Events Centre in Elora. More information is available at www.oahf.on.ca.

The organization's mission is to acknowledge, record and preserve the contributions made by leaders to the growth and development of Ontario's agriculture and agri-food industry. To date, 262 people have been inducted.



Plan for your future farm needs.



Tim Rau*, CFP®, CLU®
 Advisor, Sun Life
 Tel: 519-271-0740 ext. 2242
 Cell: 519-274-1296
sunlife.ca/tim.rau
tim.rau@sunlife.com
 342 Erie Street, Suite 107
 Stratford, ON N5A 2N4



Farmers Lung can be an often overlooked condition

LUKE EDWARDS

Echo Contributor

Often thought of as the cause of little more than a temporary irritant, the musty air many farmers contend with on a daily basis can lead to issues far more serious than many realize.

Farmer's Lung is a condition that should remain a concern for those in the agriculture community, even if it's taken a backseat in recent years. If ignored, it can worsen over time and lead to a farmer losing lung capacity or even requiring a lung transplant. This winter, Workplace Safety and Prevention Services sent out a post to raise awareness of the risks.

Ryan Dick, a health and safety consultant for WSPS, compiled a resource sheet of information from various sources outlining what farmer's lung is, how it affects people and how to mitigate exposure.

"Take those extra steps to make sure your tomorrows are going to be fine," he said.

Dick grew up on a farm, and still runs a goat operation in eastern Ontario where he lives. Looking

back, he thinks he may have been exposed to it as a child.

"I'm pretty sure I was exposed to this as a kid because I had one year where I couldn't do anything with the hay," he said. Like most, he figured it was just hay fever, but now he's not so sure.

He's become much more aware of it now, however, and not just because his role in the health and safety world, but having seen one of his children experience similar symptoms while working on the farm.

According to a page devoted to the condition on the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety website, "farmer's lung is an allergic disease usually caused by breathing in the dust from mouldy hay. However, dust from any mouldy crop - straw, corn, silage, grain, or even tobacco - can also cause farmer's lung."

While there's a seeming lack of awareness as well as a dearth of recent research into farmer's lung, Dick's resource sheet offered up some information that could help.

Late winter to early spring seems to be when

issues with farmer's lung peak, he said, which is when hay has had time to become mouldy and bottom layers are being fed.

Like many conditions, the early stages of farmer's lung seem relatively innocuous, with symptoms having been described as similar to a nagging cold.

However, if ignored it can eventually cause permanent lung damage. As it worsens, a farmer might begin to notice shortness of breath that makes strenuous work more difficult. It can get to the point where something as simple as getting out of a chair is a challenge.

Other symptoms include: fever, chills, a dripping nose, irritating and harassing cough, blood-streaked sputum, difficult breathing with a tightness in the chest, crackling breathing, muscular pain and depression.

Oftentimes farmers will just assume it's the flu or a cold and let the symptoms run their course. However, even a visit to a doctor may not yield a farmer's lung diagnosis since the farmer might not connect their illness to their work, and the doctor may not think to ask.



(LUKE EDWARDS PHOTO)

Advancements in best practices can reduce the risk of farmer's lung, but operators should still be aware of the risks mouldy hay can present to long term health.

"It's so difficult to diagnose," he said.

Symptoms of an acute farmer's lung attack can linger as long as two weeks, but usually decrease after 12 hours. Severe attacks can last 12 weeks.

If a farmer is continually exposed to large amounts of mouldy dust and has several acute attacks over a period of years, they can

develop a chronic form of farmer's lung. This can lead to increasing shortness of breath with occasional mild fever and usually a significant loss of weight with general lack of energy. This can last for months and is also marked by permanent lung damage.

Dick said there isn't much information on how many people in Canada suffer from farmer's lung, however it is most common in regions with wet weather at harvest time. It's also more common on dairy farms, "especially those not equipped with automated equipment for handling hay or feed," according to the CCOHS.

However, the organization pointed out it can affect a wide variety of people, including: grain handlers, stable employees, poultry workers, attendants of zoo and circus animals and pet shop workers. Even city people who occasionally visit stables can be at risk.

Farmers working with loose hay out in the field have a relatively low risk. However, they can quickly inhale large amounts of dust when working with hay in a confined space.

Fortunately, there are best practices that can reduce risk. And in many cases, these practices fit

in with other efforts to improve the overall operation of the farm.

Avoiding crop spoilage is the first step in reducing the risk, Dick said. Other tips include: drying wet hay, grain and crops at harvest (an effective but often challenging solution, Dick admits), storing hay with a high risk of spoilage in silage instead of bales, ventilating buildings that have a lot of dusty material, mechanizing chores that involve handling hay and feed, wetting down barns and stables before cleaning them to prevent the spores from becoming airborne, and finally, the use of properly fitted respirators.

The natural evolution of farming practices has helped in some ways. Moving to larger bales that are handled primarily by tractors reduces the risk of contact, for instance.

"Overall, we're handling the hay less, we know how to store it better," he said.

Dick encourages farmers and those who work on farms to consider adopting practices to reduce the risk of breathing in those damaging spores. WSPS has a resource hub for farmer's lung on its website, wsps.ca.



**Great Lakes Quality
Exteriors Limited**

Trust us to bring your vision to life

**Chris Lorentz
Owner /
General Manager
(226) 606-6449**

- Windows and Doors
- Vinyl Siding
- Exterior Trim - Soffit and Facia
- Eavestrough and Down Pipes

www.greatlakesqualityexteriors.com

Chris.Lorentz@greatlakesqualityexteriors.com



Tar spot a concern for Ontario corn growers, but there are solutions

LUKE EDWARDS

Echo Contributor

It may be an issue that needs to be on the mind of every corn grower in Ontario now, but fortunately there are ready-made solutions to the widespread arrival of tar spot.

“Really, tar spot is everyone’s problem now,” said Emma Dieleman, an agronomist with Sygenta. Dieleman was one of the presenters at the joint annual general meeting of the Niagara and Haldimand Soil and Crop Improvement Associations. She was one of several in attendance to discuss the fungal disease that has expanded to affect essentially all of the northern corn belt.

While the spread of the disease may seem concerning, Dieleman and others said there’s no need to panic.

“Management fits really well into what we’re already doing,” she said.

Existing fungicides can be quite useful, and timing of application can fit in with spraying for other fungal issues like DON, Dieleman said. And most of the time, one pass is sufficient.

And since growers south of the border have been dealing with tar spot for a decade or so, new genetics are starting to become available that will provide

better resistance. Already, she said certain hybrid varieties show considerably more resistance, and Dieleman encouraged growers to consider tar spot resistance in their annual seed planning.

“Considering tar spot susceptibility is going to be super important going forward,” she said.

The fungus was first confirmed in Ontario in 2020, but has now spread throughout the province. It can look similar to other diseases, but includes raised black lesions on the leaf surface that can’t be rubbed off. It tends to start on the lower canopy and move up.

Cooler temperatures, high relative humidity, lots of dew and saturated soils are other conditions that tar spot loves.

When those conditions are right, farmers will begin to notice symptoms within about two weeks.

“And the cycle continues as long as we have the right conditions,” Dieleman said.

However, farmers are also fortunate in that it seems as though it’s the early part of the growing season is the most worrisome. A late infection offers limited risk, Dieleman said.

In a later Q and A panel, local agronomists said tar spot was one of the sub-



(PIXABAY PHOTO)

Tar spot is now a province-wide concern for corn growers in Ontario. However, there are effective ways to deal with the fungal infection.

jects that often came up during discussions with farmers planning ahead for 2025.

“Tar spot was part of the conversation, but it isn’t the only thing we should

be paying attention to,” said Stephanie Fletcher of Twenty View Farms.

Others agreed, saying tar spot often came up in discussions, but yield continued to lead the charge.

DISCOVER
Rural
Oxford

SAVE THE DATE!

**DISCOVER RURAL OXFORD
WILL BE RETURNING TO
CANADA'S OUTDOOR FARM SHOW
SEPT 9TH - 11TH, 2025**

BECOME A GUARDIAN



**FOR YOUR
FAMILY
NEIGHBOURS
FRIENDS
CLIENTS
CUSTOMERS
& COMMUNITY**

GUARDIANNETWORK.CA



'Buffalo Ben' shares his passion for bison with Thamesford-area wagon tours

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

'Buffalo Ben' Van Hasstert enjoys sharing his passion for bison by offering wagon tours through his Thamesford-area herd's paddock.

Large, powerful animals deeply steeped in Canadian history never fail to impress visitors, an intimate experience typically including up close and personal views. But of all the guests Van Hasstert has hosted, one's appreciation stands out.

Fred Eaglespeaker is a First Nations chief from Saskatchewan, stopped by Van Hasstert's 255395 25th Line, Thamesford farm during a visit to family in Ingersoll.

"He told me, these bison are happy that you were born," Van Hasstert recalled with a smile.

Eaglespeaker's tour included a sacred ritual involving tobacco, the earth and a chant, with growing emotion clear on his face.

"Within a minute, tears were running down his cheeks," said Van Hasstert. "That's how deep that animal lives in their culture."

"For me, that was very special."

Van Hasstert has enjoyed a love affair with bison since receiving a small, plastic toy as a six-year-old child in The Netherlands. North America hosted somewhere between 20 and 50 million bison before European arrival with massive herds providing Indigenous people both sustenance and shelter. A long-time student of the species, Van Hasstert learned of their sub-

sequent slaughter to virtual extinction. Beyond settler hunting for food and sport and the arrival of the railroads, 'the big kill' for buffalo robes happened in the 1870s. By 1900, beyond zoos and farms, only a few were left roaming the prairies, some in Yellowstone National Park and a couple of hundred wood bison on Elk Island in Alberta.

From this perilous precipice, bison numbers have been rebuilt to roughly 700,000 in Canada and the United States. Having studied the species for virtually his entire life, his dream of possessing his own herd was realized a decade ago. After 38 years as a dairy farmer, his retirement property featured lowland pasture, a perfectly framed view from their home's window he could imagine including bison.

"I never thought this could happen," said Van Hasstert, who started with the purchase of 11 bison yearlings from an established producer near Hagersville. Currently, his herd numbers around 40, the majority being cows and calves with one breeding bull. Ninety-nine per cent organic pasture-raised bison meat is for sale through Van Hasstert's on-farm market. He offers government-inspected vacuum-packed ground bison, roasts, steaks and pepperettes, alluding to a flavour slightly sweeter than beef.

Mature cows weigh in between 1,200 and 1,400 pounds, while an older bull can run from 2,000 to 3,000. Despite their large size, bison are extremely quick and agile and able to reach and maintain a speed of 55 kilometres an hour



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

'Buffalo Ben' Van Hasstert's 'retirement project' from 38 years as a dairy farmer is a 40-member bison herd at his 255395 25th Line, Thamesford property. He offers a limited amount of bison meat for sale at an on-farm market as well as wagon tours of the paddock. Those seeking more information on either are invited to call or text 519-608-3020.

with an extremely short runway. They are also unpredictable and can be aggressive, particularly bulls.

"Where is he?" Van Hasstert asked, glancing around as we drove into the paddock to deposit a bale of hay in a feeder. "He stood by the cab door yesterday," he continued, as the bull approached from behind, slowly and regally circling the tractor to the right. "I just waited until he decided to move."

With the bull safely on the other side of the vehicle, we cautiously exited the cab, Ben cutting plastic wrap off the bale while I snapped a few photos of the herd sire. Aware of my presence, heads went up, the group retreating to a copse of trees to the west.

"You're strange," Van Hasstert explained. "They aren't sure about you."

When bringing tour customers in his high, homemade wagon, he approaches the herd extremely slowly and cautiously. Groups ranging from two to 18 riders are instructed to speak only quietly and make no sudden movements.

"I stop the ride and start feeding the bison treats," said Van Hasstert, of animals which typically circle the wagon. "You are almost surrounded, which is a very nice experience. Then

people can take pictures or video."

Bison are unpredictable, often hanging out for 15 or 20 minutes.

"Another time it's only ten minutes," said Van Hasstert, who follows their departure with a history lesson, and then answers riders' questions. He tailors tours to customer appreciation, longer for those retaining interest, moving on when people are satisfied with their experience. Younger guests tend to have a shorter attention span, older children and adults, longer.

"The ride takes up to an hour. It depends on the questions I get."

Bison rides are weather-dependent in the sense too much rain can preclude vehicles entering and cutting deep ruts in the paddock's muddy ground. It's also arguably more fun in the sun, although a little drizzle certainly won't ruin an experience that can include Van Hasstert setting up tables for visitors wishing to bring a picnic.

Those interested in purchasing bison meat or scheduling a tour, most often during July and August when the weather should be at its best and calves are born, are invited to call or text 519-608-3020 for more information.

"It can be a family outing," Van Hasstert concluded. "And coupled with that, a bison ride."

CX

25 HP
SUB-COMPACT TRACTORS

0% UP TO 60 MONTHS FINANCING*

OR \$3350 UP TO CASH BACK* (T-L-B)

OR FREE LOADER*

Purchase a CS, CX, CK, DK, DKSE, NX or NS Series Kioti tractor and receive a FREE Loader*

COLEMAN
EQUIPMENT INC.

www.coleman-equipment.com
Email: sales@coleman-equipment.com

3541 Trussler Road
New Dundee, ON N0B 2E0

P: 519-696-2213
1-800-265-8945

INDUSTRY LEADING

6 YEAR

UNLIMITED HOUR
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY

KIOTI.com

*Offer available March 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025. Rebates and/or financing based on the purchase of eligible equipment defined in promotional program. Pricing and rebates in CAD dollars. Additional fees including, but not limited to, taxes, freight, setup and delivery charges may apply. Financing must be through DLI, or Sheffield using one of the available financing options. Financing is subject to credit approval. Customers must take delivery prior to the end of the program period. Some customers will not qualify. Some restrictions apply. Offer available on new equipment only. Prior purchases are not eligible. Offer valid only at participating Dealers. Offer subject to change without notice. See your dealer for details. 6 Year Warranty for Non-Commercial, residential use only. 6 Year Warranty applies to CX, CK, CK1E, CK2E, CK3E, CK4E, NK and NX model Kioti tractors and must be purchased and registered between September 1, 2019 - June 30, 2025. Offer valid only at participating Dealers. Offer subject to change without notice. See your dealer for details. © 2025 Kioti Tractor Company a Division of Genlilyr CANADA, Inc.

Agent

HOLLY VALLEE

NOVA MUTUAL INSURANCE

Offering **Agribusiness** Insurance in
Oxford County.

289-860-1584

hvallee@novamutual.com

Young Hickson area farmers making a go of it in small-scale poultry and beef production

GALEN SIMMONS

Echo Contributor

For young farmers starting out, navigating the agricultural landscape and building a sustainable commodity production business can be a slow, tricky road to travel.

Just outside of Hickson in East Zorra-Tavistock, two young farmers – Manita and Brandon La Rose – are balancing full-time jobs and their on-farm duties as they work to gain their footing in the poultry and beef production business at Windrose Farm.

“I grew up on a dairy farm, so I’ve always kind of been in farming,” Manita La Rose said. “Then when we got married, we got a place in town, just outside of Woodstock ... right before COVID. We only had two neighbours, no one in the front and no one in the back, but after a couple of years, it’s kind of like you go home and there’s nothing to do. ... It’s like there was something missing.”

Though Brandon La Rose didn’t grow up on a farm, he has farming in his genes and was raised in the country, so the pair quickly decided they wanted to return to their agricultural roots and find a property where they could have animals to take care of in the barn and enough space to grow a big garden and crops to feed them.

It took a while, but after walking away from multiple opportunities to purchase properties within their limited budget a little farther away from home, they settled on their current farm property, just 10-15 minutes down the road from the dairy farm operated by Manita La Rose’s family.

“It’s kind of central to most of the people we know,” Brandon La Rose said. “Her family farms two or three concessions over near Tavistock, so her dad can rent the land that we can’t use or haven’t grown into yet.”

“We share equipment with my dad; if he needs something planted, we’ll hop in the tractor and plant it for him with his equipment,” Manita La Rose added. “And we help out on the home farm, too, when we can, when it’s really busy.”

When they first started looking at farm properties in the area, the vision was to start their own commercial-poultry operation. While there was some support available, Manita La Rose said the startup cost for the chickens was well beyond what they could afford.

“The cost of the startup is just insane. ... Usually, people have a hog operation on the side that helps pay for it to get it going. Once you get the chickens going, once you’re in, once you’ve paid off the quota, it’s a great system to be in, but it’s really hard to get into,” Manita La Rose said. “To buy a farm and build the chicken barn and buy the quota was just a lot.”

Instead, the La Roses set their sights



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Manita and Brandon La Rose operate a combined poultry and beef farm, Windrose Farm, near Hickson in East Zorra-Tavistock.

on the Chicken Farmers of Ontario’s (CFO) artisanal chicken program, which allows small-scale producers like the La Roses to raise larger quantities of meat chickens – between 600 and 3,000 – to sell at farmers’ markets, and to butcher shops and restaurants.

“The first year we were here, we just missed the deadline (for that program) because we closed on the farm in March and that was the due date to get into the program,” Manita La Rose said. “There’s another program called the family food program from CFO (through which) you can raise your own chickens and it’s more for your own personal consumption for family and friends. There’s more limitations to that; you can’t advertise outside of on your farm. ... You can’t post on Facebook or anything like that.”

After operating in their first year under that program, the La Roses were sure poultry farming was the route they wanted to follow. With minimal renovations to the existing barn on the property – which had an insulated equipment-storage area almost perfect for brooding chickens and raising chicks – and a mobile Quonset-style chicken coop behind the barn that allows the couple to rotate where the chickens forage for bugs and other natural food sources, they successfully applied to the artisanal chicken program the following year and vastly increased their production capacity.

In addition to raising chickens, the La Roses also work with Manita La Rose’s father raising beef cattle.

“We butchered a cow not this past Christmas, but the Christmas before,” Manita La Rose said. “We had one lady buy a quarter cow and the rest we just pieced out to people who wanted individual cuts. Steaks and the ground beef went really quick, and then we were left with a lot of roasts. Moving forward, we’ll change gears a little bit and see if we can sell more quarter-cows and half-

cows, and then we’ll try and butcher a cow consistently every year.”

Currently, the Windrose Farm beef herd resides at Manita La Rose’s father’s Holstein dairy farm. When her father has a cow in his herd with genetics he doesn’t want for future generations, he’ll mate that cow with an Angus bull, so the resultant calf will be part Holstein and part Angus, allowing the

couple to raise it and ultimately butcher it for beef.

“He basically loans us a few cows over the summer – helps us keep the pastures – and then, if we sell one cow, two cows, whatever – they’re going to the butcher – we buy them off him at that point and the rest of the cows go back to dad’s farm and he sells them for beef at the stock market,” Manita La Rose said.

The La Rose’s already grow hay at Windrose Farms, which they use to feed their cows, and eventually they hope to have their own herd of beef cows at their farm fulltime.

“It’s nice that way because we can work with family but, at the same time, we can help each other out,” Manita La Rose said.

In looking to the future of their farm, Manita and Brandon La Rose both hope to make farming their fulltime jobs, continuing to promote the importance of buying local, and understanding and connecting to the food we eat.

By caring for the land they’ve purchased and raising their animals with both environmental sustainability and animal welfare in mind, they are doing their part in ensuring the food we eat is safe, healthy, affordable and, most importantly, 100 per-cent Canadian.




<p>Haddock Tenders 8-12 PIECES 454 g</p> <p>save \$6</p>	<p>Sauce included</p> 	<p>save \$11</p> <p>Chicken Nuggets 33-40 PIECES 907 g/2 lb</p> 
<p>save \$9</p> <p>Italian Style Beef Meatballs 89-95 PIECES 907 g</p> 	<h1 style="margin: 0;">GREAT DEALS</h1>	
<p>save \$2</p> <p>Sausage Rolls 26-28 PIECES 500 g</p> 	<p>9.99 each</p>	<p>save \$5</p> <p>Apple Butter Pork Tenderloin 400 g</p> 
<p>save \$2</p> <p>Chicken Quesadillas 4 PIECES 500 g</p> 	<p>save \$5</p> <p>Cinnamon Bun Pull-apart Bread 625 g</p> 	

All discounted prices of products are exclusive to members of the M&M Food Market Rewards program. Simply present your membership card, or sign up for a free membership in store or online, to take advantage of these exclusive offers. M&M Food Market Express and other non-traditional stores offer a limited range of products; therefore special pricing and promotions are not valid there. We reserve the right to correct any errors.
*Trademark of Celiac Canada. Used under license.

FLYER ENDS
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2025

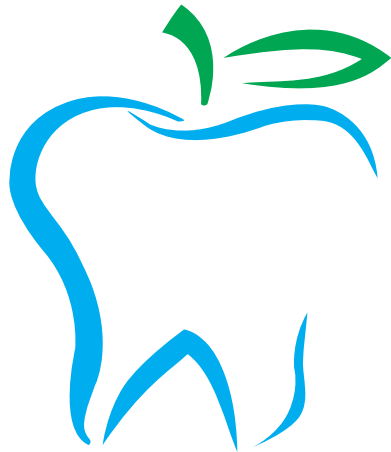


WOODSTOCK
959 Dundas Street
519-539-3313



STRATFORD
852 Ontario St.
519-273-5969

NOW OPEN!



Woodstock DENTURE CLINIC



Smile with
Confidence

Accepting CDCP Patients

We are accepting patients with the Canadian Dental Care Program.

Keeping your smile looking great and feeling happy is the number one priority of the team at the Woodstock Denture Clinic. We specialize in complete, partial, metal-free dentures and implant retained dentures.

Complete Denture Services

- Digital Impressions
- Exams and Free Consultations
- Implant-Supported Dentures
- Standard and Immediate Dentures
- Partial Dentures
- Relines, Rebases and Repairs
- Referrals to Other Specialists

Call
519-320-7080

79 Montclair Drive, Woodstock

Plenty of parking available!

Greener Pastures Eco Farm's project with Ducks Unlimited restoring a pond and a dream

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Carl and Andrea VanRooyen, owners of Greener Pastures Eco Farm, always wanted to create a farm on their property but didn't think it was possible when they first operated.

Now, the farm on 774766 Oxford Road 14, Woodstock, is working with Ducks Unlimited to restore wetlands during the spring. The pond will be part of Greener Pastures' mandate to practice sustainable farming.

"Our farm has always kind of centered around regenerative farming practices, so the idea of consistently improving the land and using those practices of leaving it better than we found it," Andrea said. "Part of that centers around things like biodiversity, native species, pollinator-friendly planting, things like that."

Wetland on the property will conserve water and sequester carbon. Greener Pastures Eco Farm has cows grazing the field to capture carbon, but wetlands are more efficient and effective in the process.

"The aquatic plants will break down in the water, but the absence of oxygen means they're really slow breakdown and will actually put it into the ground



(CARL AND ANDREA VANROOYEN PHOTO)

Greener Pastures Eco Farm is bringing a pond to their property with the help of Ducks Unlimited this spring.

rather than kind of decompose and then go back into the atmosphere again," Carl explained. "The way we graze our cattle does that, but the wetland does it without any work and does it much more efficiently."

Andrea initially reached out to the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) about planting trees to include

more native species. The dream of restoring the drained wetland on Greener Pastures was brought up and Ducks Unlimited became involved.

The GRCA and Ducks Unlimited helped with the grant writing and application process, from finding grants Greener Pastures could qualify for, telling the VanRooyens how much the

grants were worth and their deadlines, as well as clarifying information.

"They just took a lot of the legwork on so that we didn't have to, which was pretty fantastic," Andrea said. "We aren't grant writers. We don't specialize in that, and it can be pretty daunting sometimes when you're busy farming and doing other things to fit that in as well, so it really took all the guesswork out of things."

Ducks Unlimited required the initial earth work to be completed by the end of the month, as that is the last day of its fiscal year. Greener Pastures Eco Farm broke ground in February and the digging was done shortly after. Andrea said they had to wait for the snow to melt and the frost to come out of the ground this winter.

"Now a lot of the cleaning up earth work or the detail things still need to happen, so spreading out the topsoil to a thinner layer and then the next big step will be seeding in some native species, prairie grasses and things like that," she said.

Work to restore the wetland is expected to be completed by May. The final step will be installing a permanent fence around the pond to prevent livestock from accessing it. In a separate project, trees will be planted around the area.



AGRICULTURAL  RESIDENTIAL  COMMERCIAL

Our specialized team offers unmatched service and quality for all your electrical installation needs.



1558 Perth County Line 43, New Hamburg

CALL US TODAY

519-656-2449



ESA/ECRA License # 7003180

Serving Our Community for 25 Years!

Steve Peters is new chair of Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers

JEFF HELSDON

Echo Contributor

A familiar name and face is the new chair of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers. Former Elgin-Middlesex-London MPP and minister of agriculture Steve Peters started in the role on Nov. 1.

Peters' primary responsibility will be as chairman of the board, meaning he will chair the meetings, be responsible for sub-committees, and represent greenhouse growers on Fruit and Veg Growers, and the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance.

"My role is a governance role," Peters said. "It also has a government advocacy role too, working particularly with Richard Lee, the executive director, and following through on directions of the board and to be an advocate."

Peters said the position needs someone with experience dealing with government abilities, who knows how to chair a meeting, and who ensures all board members have a say in any decision, much like a speaker or mayor.

He certainly has those qualifications. Before running for provincial politics, Peters was a St. Thomas councillor and mayor from 1991 to 1999. He was agriculture critic while in opposition from

1999 to 2003. He was appointed Minister of Agriculture and was then chosen by his colleagues as Speaker of the Ontario Legislature until he retired from provincial politics in 2011. Since then, he was the executive director of Food and Beverage Ontario and ran a farm market and bakery that provided opportunities for clients with the Canadian Mental Health Association running and is currently a councillor on St. Thomas city council.

"One of the reasons I applied is it's such a dynamic and growing industry," he said. "The potential for growth is huge. I represent OGVG on behalf of the board, for tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers. We're seeing a lot of those same farmers have moved to strawberries. Lettuce has been another large greenhouse growth sector."

Ontario is home to the largest concentration of greenhouses in North America, with most located in Southwestern Ontario.

"There was a lot of things that excited me about the industry," Peters said. "Part of my role is to deal with the challenges the sector faces as well."

He listed those challenges as carbon pricing, which has been a significant burden on the sector and added substantive costs to greenhouse produc-

tion; municipal issues; ensuring enough electricity; how greenhouses can play a role in co-generation; business risk management; and possible tariffs issued by President Trump.

Richard Lee, executive director of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, said the government's focus on tariffs seems to be on automotive, steel, and electric vehicles, but he questioned whether the government is doing

enough to represent the rights of the agriculture sector.

Overall, Canadian agriculture exports are worth \$40 billion annually. Of that total, the greenhouse sector contributes \$1.8 billion, or 532 million kilograms of exports. The majority of that is from Ontario.

Lee also identified challenges coming from municipal governments impacting the greenhouse sector.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)





RIVERSIDE Obround Fuel/ TANKS Oil Tanks



**We also build
Generator Sub-Base Fuel Tanks,
Fuel Cube Tanks
& custom design Steel Tanks to your specs**

Call or Email for Inquires
519-669-3007
sales@riversideweldingmfg.com



Wallenstein, ON
riversideweldingmfg.com



Right to Repair: Farmers influential in prying open “digital locks” on electronics

DIANE BALTAZ

Echo Contributor

Two federal bills that recently received Royal Assent restore Canadians’ “right to repair” their own equipment, including tractors and combines, along with greater interoperability.

On Nov. 7, Bills C-244 and C-294 – the two bills intended to amend Canada’s Copyright Act -- received Royal Assent. These changes to the act allow circumvention of technological protection measures (TPMs) or “digital locks” in order to allow faster diagnosis, maintenance, repair and interoperability of Canadians’ technological tools, including the right to obtain parts from other companies.

Various lobby groups from across Canada, including the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), laud these bills as a critical step towards Canadian agriculture’s innovation and sustainability.

Bill C-244, introduced in 2022 by Wilson Miao, the Liberal MP for Richmond Centre in BC, allows

consumers and businesses to bypass TPMs such as encryption and password locks to access electronic components without having to travel to a dealership for repairs.

Bill C-294, introduced by Jeremy Patzer, Conservative MP for Saskatchewan’s Cypress Hills-Grasslands, focuses on the interoperability of different computer programs or devices in which they are embedded, including the right to purchase parts from other brands without violating copyright laws.

Simply put, this means that farmers can repair their equipment more easily without being forced to pay authorized dealers to diagnose and repair equipment, often at the additional cost of long waits. Equipment breakdowns became particularly detrimental during harvest periods, resulting in lost productivity.

“This is great,” exclaimed Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk OFA director Larry Davis of Burford. “We (OFA) have been asking the government for legislation that lets people make their own

repairs and run diagnostics without having to travel to a dealership. We want to fix things on our own farms ourselves right now, compared with waiting a week or two for a dealership to fix equipment, especially in the middle of harvest.”

“With interoperability, instead of taking my equipment to one colour machine dealer, I can now take it to another colour. We really need to try to work on repairs ourselves, on our own farms,” added Davis.

Proponents such as Western University’s assistant professor Alissa Centivany lauds the new laws’ benefits, including better longevity and care of equipment, minimized waste, improved farm productivity and Canadian food security.

Centivany has researched technology and copyright issues for decades. She co-founded the Canadian Repair Coalition (CanRepair) and testified on copyright’s impact on right-to-repair at parliamentary committees. She uses what she calls the “Three Cousins” to address systematic



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Right to repair advocate Alissa Centivany of Western University.

issues around consumer products: reparability, interoperability and durability.

While Bills C-244 and C-294 deal with copyright’s impact upon digital encryption on multiple products, Centivany’s advocacy focused on the misuse of copyright to stop repairs that can be done by equipment owners or local mechanics. She stated that she entered her work “through the farmer portal.”

“Farmers kicked it off – they need credit as they pushed this issue forward,” she said. “It began with

the USA farm movement. It went before state and federal legislatures and resulted in memorandums of understanding, and eventually legislation in a few states.”

Centivany explained these initial gains occurred in the United States because that is where the major farm equipment companies are headquartered. Because these companies are multinational in operation, Canadian farmers’ own advocacy gained momentum after the initial U.S. success. This occurred around 2016, she added.

“One must ask, what has copyright to do with farming?” said Centivany. “Computer codes get treated similarly to copyright on books, resulting in a ‘lock’, which farmers are not allowed to break even if the repair has nothing to do with the code.”

“Farmers are really sophisticated about their equipment and modifying it. We should let them keep doing what they’ve always done well,” she added.

Although critics call these bills a good step,

some advocates say that stand alone legislation is still needed for a more comprehensive right to repair. These include reforms in provincial consumer protection laws that require manufacturers to design products with ease of repairs without the fear of infringing upon various intellectual property rights.

“It’s still complicated as farmers need to get the tools,” said Davis. “There are some open dealers and repair shops to get these applications. These repairs aren’t only for farmers but also for other types of equipment.”

Centivany said that Canada remains behind Europe in right to repair issues. However, she said that Quebec passed Bill 29, which protects consumers from planned obsolescence and promotes reparability and durability of goods.

She added that the Ontario Legislature passed first reading on Bill 187, an act intended to protect right to repair items ranging from household appliances, wheel chairs and motorized vehicles, including heavy farming equipment.



COUNTRY MILLS

FEED & FARM STORE

Feed for All

YOUR DESTINATION FOR:

- Dairy Cows
- Goats
- Beef Cows
- Poultry & Fowl
- Horses
- Milk Replacer
- Pigs
- Feed Ingredients
- Sheep
- Specialty Feeds



Many backyard feeds are also available in Non-GMO & Organic

Bird Seed

FOUR CUSTOM BLENDS

Locally manufactured with the finest ingredients



Pet Food & More

FOOD & SUPPLIES

So much in store! Pet food, treats, toys, grooming supplies, collars & leashes, crates, beds & and so much more!



Fencing

GATES, WIRE, POULTRY MESH & MORE!

We carry all you need for fencing! Quality Gallagher electric fence supplies, diamond bar and aluminum gates, posts, welded wire, poultry mesh and more!



Aylmer Country Mills
26 Beech Street West,
Aylmer ON N5H 1A1
226.289.2403

Burford Country Mills
63 Eighth Concession Road,
Burford ON N0E 1A0
519.449.2664

Ingersoll Country Mills
360 Harris Street,
Ingersoll ON N5C 3J8
519.425.0684

Norwich Country Mills
285761 Airport Road,
Norwich ON N0J 1P0
519.863.3905

Thorndale Country Mills
197 King Street,
Thorndale ON N0M 2P0
519.461.1490



ROTH DRAINAGE LTD

Quality Workmanship Since 1948

- * Farm Drainage
- * Excavator & Backhoe Service
- * Municipal Drainage
- * No Obligation Quotes

GERALD 519-895-6367

MICHAEL 519-895-6841

GADS HILL 519-656-2618

1-866-494-2618



A LEGACY OF 60+ YEARS IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Committed to another 60 years with our "State of the Art" 19,000 sq. ft. dealership. Staying Power, Top-Notch Service, Unbeatable Deals!

**2022
M7-172P-
KVT**

Demo Unit
Call for Pricing



**2023
Great Plains
2400TM**

NEW
Call for Pricing



**2021
SSV65**

2210 Hours
\$47,500



**2019
BV5160
SC14
Baler**

3221 Bales –
4x5
\$45,900



**2020
BV5160
SC-14
Baler**

7700 Bales –
4x5



**2018
DMC
63100T**

Triple Mower
\$99,999



**2020
JD 317G
Skidsteer**

344 hours
\$75,900



**2015
Claas 370
Rake**

\$9,500



**2002
JD 1780**

\$49,900



DS D&S DOWNHAM
EQUIPMENT LTD.

519-273-1740 | www.dsdownham.ca
3981 PERTH LINE 26, STRATFORD, ON

D&S Downham Equipment Ltd @dsdownham

Golspie Dairy whole-milk vending machine provides farm-to-family opportunity

JEFF TRIBE

Echo Correspondent

There are likely less and less of us who grew up milking a cow by hand into a pail, pouring its contents through a paper filter, skimming off the cream and drinking the resultant raw milk from a pitcher.

Times change, there are many reasons this happens less. However, whether nostalgia or the rose-coloured glasses one tends to view their youth through, recollections are 'cow milk' compared to 'store bought' as favourably as premium ice cream to frozen ice milk.

Golspie Dairy (www.golspiedairy.ca) is providing a hyper-modern Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) tested and pasteurized alternative to old-school methodology, connecting consumer to cow as directly as possible through a vending machine located on the family farming operation at 455259 45th Line, Woodstock.

"It's a different product," says Golspie Dairy's Marja DeBoer-Marshall. "Something you can't find in the grocery store."

DeBoer-Marshall was taking political science and global affairs when she met her future husband Laurence at The University of Waterloo, he studying biology. Their decision to return to his fifth, now sixth-generation family farm necessitated a career reassessment and financial discussion. Against the cost of expanding beyond its existing 30-cow milking herd, they instead diversified with an on-farm dairy combining award-winning cheese-making and a vending machine dispensing whole milk instead of drinks or snacks.

They had been exposed to the concept during visits to European farms, further research revealing there were 'a few in B.C. and one in Cape Breton.'

"That showed us it was a possibility here in Canada."

Their Brunimat dispenser is manufactured in Switzerland, shipped to Canada through a supplier in the



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Marja DeBoer-Marshall shows off one of the two Golspie Dairy cheeses earning awards at the past year's Royal Winter Fair.

Netherlands. The concept is fairly simple says DeBoer-Marshall, essentially a big refrigerator with pumps and an agitator to regularly mix milk, ensuring consistency throughout, rather than the cream rising to the top. While she considers the Canadian dairy system continues to provide the best milk in the world, the Golspie approach offers a whole milk alternative with associated content, texture and flavour benefits.

"It adds more body to the milk."

The milk is sourced from their own farm, requirements around the transportation of raw product requiring verification and samples for testing and quality assurance through the Dairy Farmers of Ontario milk marketing board.

"It ensures food safety is up to snuff and consum-

ers are protected," says DeBoer-Marshall.

Heated to complete the pasteurization process, milk is then chilled to four degrees Celsius. Golspie's self-serve area is open daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. A payment control on the front of a dispenser accepting coins or tap-enabled debit and credit cards allows customers to make their purchase. A second vending machine which accepts coins, \$20 bills and tap-enabled debit and credit cards contains assorted Golspie Dairy cheeses, extra bottles and caps, and pre-filled bottles of chocolate milk.

Consumers seeking milk place their own reusable container, or one from Golspie, into position, choosing between one quart (946 millilitre) or one gallon (3.78 litre) fills at \$3 and \$10 respectively. Originally, the dispenser was set up for one quart white or chocolate options. However, consumer preferences for all-white in different volumes encouraged a transition in March, 2024.

"We had customers who like to get a large volume of milk at one time," DeBoer-Marshall explained, adding that while having a preliminary business plan is essential, it must also be subject to demand. "You have to be flexible enough to respond to these changes."

After each sale, an automatic wash function cleans up any spillage.

"The dispenser is smart enough to keep itself clean."

Customers come regularly from as far away as London and the Kitchener-Waterloo area says DeBoer-Marshall, although she believes a majority are within a 10 to 15-minute drive.

Golspie Dairy does recognize the value of digital marketing in a modern world.

"We do some online advertising with keywords," she said, an investment pushing them toward the top of the page should someone happen to search 'fresh milk', for example. There is also benefit in producing a unique offering which for those who like it, tend to like it a lot and share their enjoyment through word-of-mouth.

"Honestly, that's the best kind of advertising, when people love your product and want to tell other people about it," said DeBoer-Marshall. "You can't pay for that quality of advertising."

There is no single easily-identifiable demographic among their clientele.

"Surprisingly, no. There is all sorts."

Some may pick up a quart or two a week, others a significantly larger amount. Many drink the milk, but there is also a percentage who prefer this option for making yogurt or cheese.

"It's been really interesting to talk to them and ask what they use the milk for."

Direct customer contact is among the most rewarding aspect of taking their business in a new direction, even on the rare occasions the feedback is negative.

"You can figure out a better product and better ways of doing things."

Overwhelmingly, reaction has been extremely positive. DeBoer-Marshall considers cheese-making awards from this year's Royal Winter Fair among indications they are on the right track, along with customer loyalty, enthusiasm and feedback. The latter has also provided a far-more intimate connection to the far-reaching impact of a single Canadian farm, even from what the dairy industry would consider a small operation.

"Our little farm feeds a lot of people," DeBoer-Marshall concluded. "It's not just for us and the cows, it touches a lot of lives every day."



Jantzi Plumbing Inc.

1426 Hutchison Rd. Wellesley, ON N0B 2T0 • 519 656 3030

**Plumbing • Gas Fitting • Boilers • HVAC • Well Pumps
Water Treatment • Radiant Floor Heating**

Specializing in Agriculture since 2001

www.jantziplumbing.ca

Eleventh annual Canadian Dairy XPO set for another successful year

CONNOR LUCZKA

Echo Correspondent

During its tenth year in existence in 2024, the Canadian Dairy XPO (CDX) had a record-setting 17,000 visitors come through its doors.

This year, founder Jordon Underhill is expecting to crack 18,000, a feat not lost on him.

“This is a really qualified crowd,” Underhill said about the sheer volume of people coming to the XPO. “We’re down to about 15,000 dairy farms in the entire country, not that we’re getting every dairy farm across the country coming to CDX, but it’s a huge percentage of the market share. It would be hard to find another event in the ag industry that brings such a big part of the market share and has this kind of impact on the industry. So that’s something that we’re proud of.”

Located just a stone’s throw away from Oxford County, in the heart of dairy country (Stratford, Ontario), CDX is Canada’s largest dairy showcase and brings the latest in innovation, education, and genetics to the many producers in this region and

abroad.

Underhill, himself a lifelong bovine farmer, told the Echo that in addition to an expected record-year in terms of attendees, they have reached pre-pandemic levels when it comes to exhibitors. Over 350 companies from around the globe are coming to the XPO, representing 30 different countries.

“Half of it is the success and momentum of the show and half of it is the success and momentum of the Canadian dairy industry,” Underhill said.

This is the first year CDX will be running since its acquisition by the German Agricultural Society (DLG), a non-profit organization based in Frankfurt, Germany. Underhill and DLG announced the acquisition in September of last year.

Underhill, who at the time of sale said that they agreed to the purchase because DLG didn’t want to make and “material changes” to the event, recently said that the location, organizing team, culture, planning, and spirit of the event has indeed remained the same.

This year, Underhill said that he is



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

Cows line up in the Cow Coliseum during the 2024 Canadian Dairy XPO (CDX) last year. This year, founder Jordon Underhill expects to crack 18,000 guests coming through its doors.

excited for some returning favourite vendors as well as some new exhibits, such as two hoof trimming showcases

on both days of the XPO, where the latest in hoof trimming technology will be on display.

CONTINUED TO PAGE B19

Homes For Sale

Meeting Your Real Estate Needs with PROFESSIONALISM, HONESTY & EXPERIENCE since 2005

\$1,097,500 MLS# 40709902 5 BED., 3 BATH, FULLY FINISHED, POOL-Plattsville, ON

\$739,900 MLS# 40702706 3 BED., 2 BATH, Plattsville, ON

\$995,700 MLS# 40706504 2 BED., 4 BATH, FULLY FINISHED, END UNIT CONDO TOWNHOME- New Hamburg, ON

\$159,900 MLS# 40702051 2 BED., 1 BATH, Green Acres Park-10 mth living

\$649,999 MLS# 40703311 3 +1 BED., 2 BATH, St. Thomas

\$275,000 MLS# 40683736 2 BED., 1 BATH, Happy Hills Retirement-12 mth living

\$159,900 MLS# 40702051 2 BED., 1 BATH, Green Acres Park-10 mth living

\$159,900 MLS# 40702051 2 BED., 1 BATH, Green Acres Park-10 mth living



ALISON WILLSEY
PROFESSIONAL HONEST

Real Estate Broker
EXPERIENCED

www.peakrealtyltd.com www.willseyrealestate.com willseyalison@gmail.com

WORKING TO SERVE BUYERS AND SELLERS SINCE 2005

RURAL *RESIDENTIAL *COMMERCIAL *AGRICULTURAL-WATERLOO REGION, PERTH & OXFORD COUNTIES



Direct: 519-275-4900
Office: 519-662-4900

It's sugarbush season! Enjoy pure Ontario maple syrup

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

Contributed

The cold, snowy winter that hit Ontario this year can only mean one thing — it's going to be a good year for maple syrup.

As Canada's second-largest maple syrup producing province, Ontario produces approximately 1.7 million litres of maple syrup each year, a carefully handcrafted and delectable natural treat that is an excellent replacement for sugar, a tasty sweetener and an irreplaceable topping.

"The sap is running in the maple trees and sugarbushes are opening across the province, offering tours, sweet maple treats and pancake breakfasts dripping in pure maple syrup," says Steve Brackenridge, maple syrup producer and director with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA). "The start of maple syrup season is a sure sign that spring isn't far away and it's a great opportunity

to visit some local farm businesses and enjoy the Home Grown goodness produced right here on our farms."

The OFA's Home Grown campaign raises awareness of the importance of preserving Ontario farmland to produce local food, fuel, flowers and fibre.

The first step to ensuring the maple syrup you are buying is from Ontario is to look for the "Sweet Ontario" label. This is an assurance that the nectar in the bottle is a true Ontario product reflecting the terroir or unique soils and climate of our province. It also means the sap was collected and boiled using clean, efficient technologies that support forest sustainability.

Buying Ontario maple syrup also preserves the traditional practices and heritage of maple syrup production in the province. Many of Ontario's maple syrup producers are family-owned businesses that have been passed down through generations, maintaining time-honoured methods of tapping

trees and boiling sap into tasty goodness.


"Sweet Ontario maple syrups have zero preservatives or additives, so rest assured, Ontario maple syrup is one of the most pure farm products around, offering a taste of Home Grown goodness that is unmatched by mass-produced alternatives," adds Brackenridge. "By choosing local, you are supporting these small businesses and helping to keep these traditions alive."

Curious to see it for yourself? Maple Syrup producers across Ontario will be welcoming guests on April 5 and 6 as part of Maple Weekend, offering visitors a glimpse behind the scenes of making maple syrup. Enjoy pancake breakfasts, hikes through sugarbush trails, maple sugar-making demonstrations, taffy on snow, and more. Many will also be offering free samples of fresh maple syrup and confections.

Check ontariomaple.com for recipes using pure Ontario maple syrup.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)



CANADA FARM DISTRIBUTORS LTD.
Quality Sales and Trusted Service Since 1972



519.655.2584 | info@canadafd.ca
Patrick Sommers | Tavistock, ON

Pressure Washers, Air Compressors, Generators, Incinerators, Water Treatment Systems and More!



PEACE OF MIND 'TIL THE COWS COME HOME



**Ayr Farmers
Mutual**
Insurance Company

Contact us
(519) 632-7413
ayrmutual.com

Home | Farm | Auto | Commercial



How to stay safe on our farms

ANGELA CAMMAERT

Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Staying safe at work is always important. That's especially true on Ontario's farms, which aren't just a workplace, it's also where those of us who farm live and raise our families.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week was held recently, and as we look forward to the end of winter and start preparing for the busy spring planting season coming up, it's a great time to brush up on farm safety.

I farm with my family near West Lorne between London and Chatham, where we raise beef cattle and grow crops. I'm also a director on the board of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA).

Safety is important on our farm; it's something we've always taken seriously, especially when it comes to making sure our kids know how to stay safe. Some of the most tragic farm accidents every year involve children, and the entire farm community has a shared responsibility to make sure everyone knows how to keep kids safe.

We've taken our kids to farm safety days in our community, where different groups come together to offer training on hydro and lawn mower safety for example, as well as illustrating different ways accidents can happen and be prevented on the farm.

Our kids know to wear safety glasses, stay back from running farm equipment and make sure they can be seen by drivers. Safety boots are also important, and we have taught them to follow the same safety rules on other farms as they do at home.

As well, because we have livestock, we make sure they know how to behave around animals. This means not to be running in and out of pastures where livestock are grazing and to be particularly careful during calving and lambing time.

Baby animals are cute, but they're also likely to be watched over by a very protective cow or ewe who will step in to protect her young if she detects a threat.

Another important thing we've taught them is that grain bins and wagons aren't play places. It's easy for kids – and adults for that matter – to fall or become trapped inside, for example.

First responders aren't always trained or have the proper equipment to handle grain bin rescues, which is why the OFA, together with many of its county and regional federations has supported grain safety and rescue training for rural first responders in many parts of Ontario through its Revive Fund initiative.

Farm safety isn't just about kids, though. As adults, we also have a role to play in keeping ourselves and our farm employees safe.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Right now, before planting gets underway, is a great time of year to inspect and do maintenance on farm equipment to make sure everything is working correctly and safely. And while we're working, it's important to stay alert, avoid working when over-tired, and use proper protective gear like wearing highly visible vests.

Don't wear loose clothing around running equipment, keep long hair tied back, and don't walk around fields in the dark. As well, keep a first aid kit, a charged cell phone and emergency contact numbers handy in case an accident does happen.

To me, the other big part of farm safety involves safety on the roads. Every year, accidents happen involving farm equipment and cars and both farmers and motorists must do their part to keep

roads – and drivers – safe.

There are many initiatives underway across Ontario to improve road safety, including slow moving vehicle signage campaigns to help raise awareness of this important issue. For farmers, road safety means having proper signals and signage on their equipment and knowing the rules of the road.

And for motorists, keep in mind that farm vehicles can't drive as fast as you and sometimes the roads and shoulders aren't wide enough for us to move aside – so please be patient and pass only when it's safe (hills and curves are not safe!).

As we're busy planning for spring, it's important to make farm safety part of that plan. You'll find information and resources that can help on the OFA website.



FROM OUR FARM TO YOUR TABLE



IT'S LOCAL,
IT'S GOUDA,
IT'S GOOD

We also sell Quark, Curds & Homegrown Beef
Gift Baskets and Gift Certificates
Call 519-662-4967 or orders@mountainoakcheese.ca

Join Us For the Oxford County Cheese Trail
BIG CHEESE DAYS
Tours & Tasting Every Saturday in May
Checkout www.mountainoakcheese.ca for more information

Mountainoak Cheese 3165 Huron Road, New Hamburg
HOURS: Monday - Saturday: 9am - 5pm | Closed: Sundays and holidays




People Centered. Community Driven.

Home Auto Commercial Farm



North
Blenheim
Mutual

INSURANCE COMPANY • SINCE 1861

We offer insurance coverage for your beef, dairy, poultry, swine, equine, or cash crop operation..

www.northblenheim.com
11 Baird Street North, Bright, ON N0J 1B0
Phone: (519) 454-8661
Toll Free: 1-800-665-6888

Eleventh annual Canadian Dairy XPO set for another successful year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B16

Additionally, the product of the Canadian dairy industry will once again be prominent throughout. When his team started CDX they didn't know how integral that aspect would be to the show, but now having what the industry is all about front and centre, and the Gaylea/ 4-H Milk Parlour where guests can grab a grilled cheese and lounge throughout the day, is a huge aspect of the XPO.

CDX runs in the Stratford Rotary Complex April 2-3 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Most of the show is geared for those in the industry; however, Chees-FEST, which takes place the first day from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., is a day wherein the public can come and sample Canadian cheese and see what the Canadi-

an dairy industry has to offer.

After that, starting at 7 p.m. the Calves for a Cause live auction takes over the WeCover Cow Coliseum behind the Rotary Complex, with all proceeds in support of the London Children's Hospital.

Returning this year is the second annual Canadian Dairy Business Conference on April 1. It's a one day high-impact training day for dairy producers conveniently scheduled between milking times. As Underhill said, operations are getting larger, innovation is rapidly increasing, and having an event focused on the business side of agriculture was a huge success last year when they first ran it.

Investing in farm safety



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

It's no secret that health and safety practices are crucial for safeguarding everyone on the farm. But did you know that they're also good for business?

Effective and proactive health and safety measures are integral to having a thriving farming operation.

Develop a detailed safety plan that aligns with your farm. Be sure to address all health and safety considerations, including identifying potential new stressors.

Not only will having a safety plan

unique to your farm help keep everyone safe during everyday work, but it is also essential for emergency preparedness so that you have a plan in place if disaster strikes.

Remember an investment in health and safety, is an investment in your farm's future.

This Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, March 16-22, commit to prioritizing farm safety every day. For more information, please visit agsafetyweek.ca.

19 YEARS OF AGRICULTURAL REPAIR

Our Certified Agricultural Equipment Technicians Are On Call

Specializing in agriculture and heavy equipment repair, fleet service, preventative maintenance and mobile service.



AG EQUIPMENT REPAIR

including Diagnostics & Full Service Repair

HEAVY EQUIPMENT

from Drainage Plows to Excavators

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

from maintenance check-lists to recommended repairs

MOBILE FLEET SERVICE

all-inclusive on-site maintenance



1973 SANDHILLS RD. BADEN ON N3A 3B3
pinegrovefarmservice.ca | 519.634.1000

Don't just think about retirement. Plan for it.

Because your farm is more than a business—
it's a legacy.

Secure its future with expert guidance from an
Edward Jones financial advisor.



Contact me today

Amanda Murray, CFP®
Financial Advisor
Woodstock, Ontario
519-539-2816
Amanda.murray@edwardjones.com
Edwardjones.ca/Amanda-murray



**By your side
for a better
future**