

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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JULY 21, 2023

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Embroid Truck and Tractor Pull coming Civic Holiday weekend

The Embroid Truck and Tractor Pull started in 2006 and over the years has grown to a two-day event bringing thousands of people to the town of Embroid.

This year's event will be held August 4th and 5th at 375634 37th Line in Embroid.

Friday night features local farmers bringing their farm stock tractors straight from the fields to compete to see who can pull a weighted sled the farthest distance down the track. The farm stock competition includes everything from small tractors weighing 9,500 lbs right up to the big heavy iron weighing over 60,000 lbs. Gates open at 4:00 p.m., with the action starting at 5:00 p.m.

Saturday features the modified show starting at 3:00 p.m. (gates opening at 2:00 p.m.), with modified trucks and tractors from across Ontario. This includes everything from mini modified tractors to highly tuned pickup trucks to multi-engine tractors.

There's something for everybody at the pull, including the younger fans: SpiderMan will be visiting for two hours each day, there's a kids pedal tractor pull, and face painting for a few hours on Saturday. There are food booths and a beer tent all weekend.

Admission costs are \$20/day (or \$30/weekend) for adults, and \$5/day (or \$10/weekend) for children.

The event is entirely volunteer-run, hosted by Oxford County Junior Farmers, and couldn't run without the help of countless community groups. All money raised by the event stays in the community, and is donated to the community groups who help run the event along with other causes including the food banks and school nutrition programs. This event truly is run by the community, for the community.



PRIDE CELEBRATIONS
 Ryan, Dominick, Lucas, Issac and Melissa Hawdon enjoy a hotdog lunch from Todd's Dogs which was on site at Pride Celebrations on June 23rd. See more photos on page 21.

Former K9 officer shares thoughts on losing a dog in the line of duty

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Tavistock resident Mike McKay may not have lost his police dog while doing his job, but he can certainly empathize with the Woodstock officer who did.

PSD Taz, a K9 with the Woodstock Police Service, responded to a call to help the Stratford Police Service with a drug-related investigation on July 3. While conducting a search, Taz and another dog, PSD Striker, both appeared to ingest drugs. Narcan

was administered to both, and they were rushed to a veterinarian clinic. Taz did not survive while Striker was released and went home shortly after.

McKay was a member of the K9 unit with the Waterloo Regional Police from 2006 to 2014. He said during his time with a police dog fentanyl was just emerging as an issue among drug users. "We were just really careful. There were actually searches we wouldn't do if there was fentanyl involved. At that time there wasn't Narcan, but we did have an injectable just in case the dog ingested something."

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Woodstock Summer Street Fest coming this weekend

DUANE KUMALA-THOMAS

BIA Operations Manager

Woodstock Summer Street Fest is a highly anticipated annual event taking place from Friday, July 21st to Sunday, July 23rd. This beloved festival offers three days of non-stop fun in the heart of downtown Woodstock, Ontario. All weekend long a section of Dundas St is shut down to allow for the community to walk the pavement and experience some of the best Woodstock has to offer.

Families can look forward to an array of exciting and engaging activities suitable for all ages. 3 separate stages packed with captivating musical performances and interactive shows, inflatable games, touch-a-truck, and more, there will be no shortage of family-friendly entertainment.

Shopaholics will delight in the numerous shopping deals, sales, and giveaways available throughout the festival. With a diverse range of local businesses participating, attendees can explore unique offerings and discover hidden treasures.

Food enthusiasts will be thrilled with the delectable eats and delicacies galore. From mouthwatering food trucks to local culinary establishments, there will be a wide variety of tantalizing options to satisfy every palate.

The fun filled weekend caps off with a one of a kind car show put on by Woodstock's South Gate Centre. The main street is lined with cars, trucks, and all sorts of unique vehicles, that are bound to captivate car lovers of all ages.

The Woodstock Summer Street Fest has a rich history and has been a staple in the downtown Woodstock community for decades. Formerly known as Sidewalk Days, this event has evolved over time, showcasing the vibrancy and spirit of the city's 200+ businesses within the BIA.

As the newly appointed Operations Manager of the BIA, I am honored to be at the helm of this incredible event, working alongside a dedicated team of volunteers, supporters, and City staff. Together, we strive to create a memorable experience that brings awareness to the vibrant downtown core and celebrates the diverse offerings of Woodstock's business community.

Join us at the Woodstock Summer Street Fest for a weekend of festivities, community connection, and celebration. We look forward to welcoming you to downtown Woodstock and creating lasting memories at this iconic event.

Former K9 officer shares thoughts on losing a dog in the line of duty

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

McKay had the same canine partner for all of the eight years he was in the K9 unit, something that is very rare by today's standards. "Storm was a Hungarian Shepherd, a working line of dogs. He became part of the family. What people don't understand is a K9 is an attack dog. Shepherds are the closest animal to a wild dog or a wolf. They are very pack oriented and very loyal to their pack." He added Storm would see McKay's family as his pack. "He became very close with us, and he would do anything asked of him. That's why they are such good police dogs, their loyalty. They are also energetic and extremely brave. That's what makes them train well too. Try getting a dog to climb a ladder or run through tubes where they can't see the end. They just trust you." He added that during his time in the unit, he probably spent more time with Storm than he did with his own family. "That's the commitment it requires. People think it's all fun and games, but when you think about it you are relegated to that K9 for the rest of its life, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. So when I was off duty I would have to do something with Storm."

Storm retired because of age, and he ended up with some disc and other health issues, but McKay said he lived to the age of 13, quite old for a Shepherd. "He lived with us until the day he died. The problem is they are trained to bite people. Either the handler has to keep them, or they need to go to another experienced handler who knows what they are getting. You can't just give them to anyone. They are professional biters is what they

are." He said he doesn't know of any handlers who haven't kept their dog after leaving a police service. McKay also left the unit once Storm retired. "It's a young person's thing. If they go over fences, you have to go over fences. If they go through water, you go through water. It's very physical and that is actually what ends many K-9's careers. Workplace injuries."

Woodstock Police have not released the name of the K9 officer who was Taz's handler, but McKay said he can appreciate what a devastating loss it would be. "It would be similar to losing your partner. It will be tough on him for sure. He lost his partner, and he was counting on the dog being around for a while. They usually start training when they are a year old, so it was likely right in its prime. They don't get really good until they are in their third or fourth year."

Taz joined the Woodstock Police Service K9 Unit and began his training in 2021 and was officially deployed in 2022, allowing Striker to begin transitioning into more of a community service-oriented role. A statement from Woodstock Police said "Taz was young but respected throughout the K9 community, as he had developed into an outstanding detection dog. In his short but successful career, Taz assisted with a number of arrests, drug and weapons investigations, missing persons investigations, and community service engagements. Taz was well-loved and cared for and will be greatly missed by his family, the entire Woodstock Police Service, his K9 friends, and all of the groomers, vets, and therapists who worked closely with him."

Ingersoll Pizza Fest

The Ingersoll Downtown BIA is excited to announce their second annual Pizza Fest!

Last year, with so many pizza restaurants located in Ingersoll, the BIA cooked up an idea to host a festival featuring pizza from six pizzerias and it proved to be a resounding success! Thousands flocked in to experience the mouth-watering flavours of their favourite slice, while enjoying an evening full of live music, friendship and activities.

This year two additional pizzerias have joined the fun and will be going head to head vying to win first place for the best pizza in town! Last year's winners, Ingersoll Lanes and Pizza Hut will be back to meet the challenge to retain their first place status of Best Pepperoni Pizza and Best Creative Pizza, respectively.

The main event will take place in Downtown Ingersoll on Thursday, July 27 from 4 – 8p.m.

The festival will feature live music with Rob Cromwell - Unplugged, a local professional acoustic guitar artist, Brant Matthews a.k.a., The Fire Guy Guinness World Record Holder for fire eating, Darren Bedford, stilt walker extraordinaire as our Pizza Chef, and The Ingersoll Pipe Band - Canada's oldest non-military, independent Pipe Band,

Many local businesses will have extended business hours, plus sidewalk displays and display booths by local groups, lots of seating for outdoor dining, children's activities and more.

Proceeds will go to support local not for profit organizations, The Salvation Army, Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre and The Ingersoll Pipe Band.

It will be an amazing evening of family fun!



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Woodstock looks to ban private fireworks sale and purchase

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Woodstock City Council has voted in favour of banning the sale and discharge of consumer fireworks in the city limits. If the new bylaw takes effect, personal fireworks displays will no longer be permitted within city limits. Organized events, like the City's Canada Day celebration, are not impacted by the new bylaw.

Mayor Jerry Achione said he would have liked to see a more subtle approach. "City council changed the firework bylaw last term of council to only allow fireworks on the day of a holiday and not the entire weekend. As I mentioned during the Council meeting, working on more education for residents was my preferred route to go but I've only got one vote like

everyone else and will respect council's decisions." He added that the city does get numerous fireworks complaints every long weekend and there are many locations where city staff need to clean up after remnants have been left on city property.

In March council directed staff to come back with a report that outlined complaints received related to personal fireworks displays and enforcement activities. Staff reported that in 2022, 50 complaints were received by the City's bylaw department, Woodstock Police Service, and Woodstock Fire Department. One warning was issued but no charges were laid. In 2023, 31 complaints have been received to date. The report went on to say that enforcement continues to be an issue, primarily because it's challenging to identify the

person responsible for violating the bylaw.

Councillor Kate Leatherbarrow brought forward the motion to ban the sale and discharge of fireworks and said the negatives just outweigh the positives. "I really don't want anyone to think we wouldn't have fireworks on Canada Day, I just

think there are environmental concerns I have. We are trying to be a bird-friendly city, so I think about birds and pets. And truthfully, all the fires we have seen in other parts of Canada and Ontario, it's very concerning. I wouldn't be surprised

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



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Echo

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

Established 2023

The Woodstock Ingersoll Echo is published monthly on the third Friday of each month and is free to all citizens either in print format or online at www.theecho.ca. The newspaper is owned and published by Grant Haven Media, a local business who also publishes the St. Marys Independent, Stratford Times and Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette.

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Letters to the Editor: Please email to info@theecho.ca, or send to our physical office at the St. Marys Independent, PO Box 2310, 36 Water Street South, St. Marys, ON N4X 1A2.

Circulation Matters!
**This month we will distribute
6,000 printed copies of the
Woodstock Ingersoll Echo.**

Play stupid games, win stupid prizes

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

As a board member of the Ontario Community Newspapers Association, it's been well over a year ago since I first heard of the lobbying taking place to force Facebook and Google to pay Canadian publishers for the news stories that are shared on their platforms.

While "sure, it would be nice" to have some of the extra dollars that these mega companies have lying around, I couldn't get over the fact that the idea of them paying us was... stupid.

Sitting in on this conference call, I remember being the lone person saying to the group, "This doesn't make any sense to me."

"Each week, we share our online newspaper on Facebook, and we also share our top stories. This is our choice. Facebook didn't make us share our news stories here, in fact it's nice for us that Facebook provides this platform for us to connect with a wider audience. Why should they have to pay me for that?"

As you may have heard, this whole issue came up in a big way earlier this month, with the Government of Canada's Bill C-18 being passed into law. The bill, dubbed the Online News Act, required Facebook and Google to pay Canadian publishers for showing links to news. And

not surprisingly, Facebook and Google don't want to do this. And why should they?

Instead, they both came out with strong statements against the Canadian legislation, saying that if they are forced to pay for the links to Canadian news sites... well then, they won't provide those links at all.

Therefore, in roughly six months' time, unless something changes, we will no longer be able to post articles or links to the PDF version of our newspaper on Facebook, nor will our articles be shared through Google News. As a company who is mainly focused on our print product, this really isn't that big of a deal for the Woodstock Ingersoll Echo, but for many other news companies, it is a devastating development.

Again, I don't blame Facebook or Google for this. Instead, I blame lobbyists with unrealistic goals, and I mostly blame the federal government for pushing through bad legislation that they didn't realize the ramifications of.

The best thing that could happen from here is that the Liberals back down, admit that they overstepped, and reverse the law. However, I don't think many politicians have a habit of admitting when they're wrong.

So, what could happen is that, in a country where news organizations are already struggling, a short-sighted government bill managed to make things much worse.

Letters to the Editor

Congratulations on the successful launch of the Echo community newspaper! Ingersoll has been in need of this grassroots journalism for some time. Well done. May you have commercial success as you connect citizens to each other, and create a sense of shared common good in the town and area.

But my main reason to write was to say kudos and thank you to Ingersoll Town Council as they have voted to properly restore the World War One bandshell in Memorial Park. In need of repairs for so long, it is an important link to our local history and to the brave men

and women who went to war in order that we may all live in peace. Memorial Park itself is a great example of a legacy park within a town like Ingersoll. To maintain its structures and grounds, it is money well spent. The park sees so much use by people of all ages.

Again, May the Echo newspaper continue to bring us events and happenings that help build a sense of community.

*Walt Thurtell
Thamesford, ON*

Mr. Stewart Grant:

Wow! The Woodstock Ingersoll Echo is a much-appreciated one-stop source of information. Thank you.

I sincerely hope your new publication remains viable

because I look forward to receiving future editions.

*Best wishes,
Hal Stoyles*

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US!

CALL 519-655-2341 OR EMAIL info@theecho.ca

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

Woodstock Mayor concerned about safe injection sites

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

While not directly involved with the Southwestern Public Health discussions on safe injection sites, Jerry Acchione does have worries. He said his personal thoughts compared to his mayoral thoughts are two different things. "As a person, I have a real problem thinking of making it almost legal, in my mind. As a mayor, I think it is my responsibility to look at all options for everyone's safety. I have been heavily involved in watching the (public health) meetings so I know Woodstock and St. Thomas have been centred. Both cities have the same concerns."



JERRY ACCHIONE

Many Woodstock residents believe there are resources in the city that make it easy for homeless people and drug addicts to get help compared to other cities which is why there is a problem. Safe injection sites are normally placed in downtown areas, something Acchione said is not an ideal location, particularly with a methadone clinic already present on Dundas. "If the province and Southwest Public Health were ever to decide that Woodstock was an ideal spot for it, I can't see how I would ever be in favour of a downtown site, period. That I have been clear about for years even with the methadone clinic." Acchione added everyone has worked so hard to revitalize the downtown and businesses are thriving. "I do not want them thinking I am in support of that. No way."

The mayor said what happens next is cloudy to a certain extent. "My understanding is (public health) needs a letter of support from the city. I have not provided a letter of support. This is something I think we will have to discuss as a council. I think it will have to be sooner than later. The other stumbling block is that they don't have any partners to take this on yet." Acchione said the province is looking to have a community partner to offer a safe injection site and he isn't aware of anybody willing to do it. "Some of the obvious ones would be Operation Sharing, Canadian Mental Health Association, and maybe Salvation Army. I'm not trying to put words in anyone's mouth but that is who comes to mind that already gives a helping hand so much that might be will-

ing to assist with this." He added any safe injection site will likely come with a lot of requirements and liability issues. "If people know they can go and get high in a safe spot then I think the sky is the limit on how high they want to get. They know they have people to watch over them and I am absolutely fearful of that. Their argument is it takes it off the streets and it takes it off our first responders. As mayor, I need to weigh all of that because it is very expensive in terms of services the way it is now." Acchione said the only people in favour of a safe injection site in the city are those who have presented at board of health meetings at Southwest Public Health. "Nobody has come to me to say they are for it. There are organizations that have asked

some questions, but nobody has said they love the idea and want to do it." He added there are two reasons he would even consider the idea for Woodstock, one being the safety of everyone and the other being the cost factor. "We have to look at what makes the most sense when taxpayer's money is involved. I am trying to watch it and be open-minded as much as possible, but I am not convinced."

Public health has tremendous powers as was seen during the pandemic, something Acchione said he is fearful of should council reject a potential safe injection site. He was asked what would happen if a safe injection site happened even if council said no. "I would always rather be a partner and talk about things and figure it out together. I am always fearful about anybody coming in and saying this is what you have to deal with. Is there a fear of that? Of course. I have been in politics long enough to know that." He added all indications are that a municipality needs to provide a letter of support as part of the next steps. "I'm not sure they would get that support here." Acchione added he wants to hear from the public on this issue. "I encourage everyone, for and against, to not only me but all of council, to let us know their opinions and thoughts."

Councillor Mark Schadenberg also put forward a notice of motion asking council to indicate that they will not support the location of a consumption and treatment services site in Woodstock. The motion will be discussed at the August 10 Council meeting.

Woodstock looks to ban private fireworks sale and purchase

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

if in the next decade fireworks and completely gone." Even if Woodstock passes a bylaw banning the sale of personal fireworks, Leatherbarrow realized people can just go out of town to get what they want. "I think the message needs to be that they should be let off at community events to get some kind of handle on the disruption they are causing."

Staff also researched how other municipalities are addressing this issue. They found that there are a wide variety of approaches for consumer fireworks across the province including allowing them for a limited number of days on and around specified holidays, outright bans of personal fireworks, and differences about which departments enforce the bylaw. The one consistent finding was that regardless of the approach, enforcement remains a challenge.

Fire chief Jeff Slager is preparing a bylaw to prohibit the sale and discharge of consumer fireworks and bring it back for council's approval. Staff will also include in the report the proposed timeline for implementation. "Like anything council is considering, I'd strongly recommend residents to reach out and speak to all of council to

ensure they are aware of your thoughts and opinions before they make a decision at Council meetings," added Acchione. Council voted 4 to 3 to proceed with a bylaw but it does require final approval.

Other council news

Councillors voted in favour of a plan to build a new outdoor pool at Cowan Sports Fields and decommission Lions Pool ahead of schedule. Lions Pool did not open this season after staff discovered tears in the liner during their opening inspection this spring. The project is included in the capital budget forecast and the next step, the design work, could start later this year. The estimated cost of this option is \$5,350,000.

Council also enthusiastically endorsed the establishment of a vacant building registry bylaw that would allow the city to better track and monitor vacant properties in Woodstock. Owners will now be required to register vacant buildings and work together to ensure the buildings are secure, appropriately maintained, and monitored on a regular basis. The bylaw aims to encourage the timely redevelopment of vacant buildings and reduce issues associated with derelict properties.

PUBLIC AUCTION

Saturday, July 22, 2023

10 A.M. MARK YOUR CALENDERS!

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Willow Lake Campground - from corporate Toronto to East Zorra-Tavistock

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

The owners of a campground located in East Zorra-Tavistock just north of Woodstock may have taken a different path to Willow Lake, but they have embraced the opportunity after leaving the hustle and bustle of big business life in the GTA.

Mark Jaycock grew up in Burlington and his wife Melanie was raised in Toronto and the pair had been living in the big city for years. Mark said the pair have always enjoyed camping which played into their decision to purchase Willow Lake. "Like a lot of folks who camp we thought wouldn't it be fun to own a campground? And it is. But you go into it a little oblivious and once you finally own one you say wow, this is a lot of work but a lot of fun."

Mark was the director of human resources for Lowes Canada and Melanie was an executive at LinkedIn at their head office in downtown Toronto. He said the pair had always wanted to own a campground, but they don't come up for sale often. "They are often handed down generationally and there are a few major corporate players in the industry who are snapping up campgrounds. This one came up for sale and it was a few years earlier than we planned on in the fall of 2016. At that point, Toronto housing was at one of its highest points, so we said it's available and it's a couple of bucks more than we had but we said maybe we do it now. Let's sell our house, let's do it." Mark added it was a perfect fit for them and it is a labour of love. "We work harder, we work longer hours than we ever did in our corporate lives. We don't take a day off between April and November and we are seven days a week throughout



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

Willow Lake Campground and RV Park owners Mark (left) and Melanie (right) Jaycock proudly hold their new Unity Blaze Certified flag from Black Folks Camp Too.

the season, but we enjoy it. We meet and get great people here. We have a family in from Texas today and a couple who dropped in from Quebec. We aren't experts but we knew the things we liked from our years camping."

In their first year of owning Willow

Lake, the Jaycock's won an award for having the best small campground in the province from the Ontario Private Campground Association and a year later took the honour of having the best customer service. "The fourth year we again won best customer service and the following year won best camp store in Ontario. We probably have one of the smallest stores, but we are very passionate about local. We carry Uncle Dad's pizzas, meat from JTK Farms, spices, and sauces from a variety of local folks. We even sell candles from the lady across the road," added Mark. The awards are voted on by campers and Mark said that makes it even more humbling.

The couple booked food trucks to come to the park every weekend in 2022 but after restrictions started lifting, they all started bailing in order to attend larger events. So, they decided to look around and found a truck for sale online and do it themselves. "I guess we're buying a food truck. We aren't as busy enough as it is," laughed Mark. "It is often Melanie and I or one of our summer students making burgers or poutine." The couple has three seasonal employees to help out during the camping season.

"The park has such a long history. It's been around forever and pretty much everyone we have bumped into has told us they visited here as a kid. We are very fortunate to be able to take over that legacy. It's a pretty little park with great stories."

The very first Unity Blaze Certified

Campground in Canada

Black Folks Camp Too has named Willow Lake as the very first Unity Blaze Certified Campground in Canada. It is a company headed by outdoor industry executives and its mission is to remove fear, add knowledge, and invite "more" Black folks to camp and enjoy the outdoor lifestyle with any and everyone. At the center of their logo is the Unity Blaze, which means "You are Invited and Welcomed." Your race, age, and gender do not matter. "We are changing the world, one campfire at a time."

Mark said the gentleman who founded it, Earl B. Hunter Jr., is from the Carolinas and he traveled across the states with his son and every time he pulled into an RV park there weren't a lot of folks who looked like him. "The issue isn't that black people don't want to camp, but there are two factors he always talks about. One was generational fear because his great-grandmother witnessed lynchings, so she told grandma never to go in the forest. Grandma tells mom and so on." Mark added a lot of times black people didn't feel invited, not that they weren't welcome. "We followed him on Facebook, and I really liked his messaging. He was talking about the idea of everybody camping together regardless of their background, their ethnicity, their heritage. We see more East Asian and Indian folks camping with us. We wanted people to know that everyone is welcome, and they should feel that way. That's why we started talking to him about his program." Mark said Earl does plan on visiting the campground this summer.

Echo

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo is starting out as a monthly newspaper available both in print format and online (theecho.ca).

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Friday, August 18, 2023

Friday, September 15, 2023

Friday, October 21, 2023

Contribute to your local community newspaper!

Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to

info@theecho.ca

Ingersoll looking to improve communication with residents

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Ingersoll Town Council has approved a new communications strategy aiming to improve not only the way the town communicates with the public but also how the public communicates with the town.

A report from staff outlines the rationale for the strategy and includes the two guiding principles of being honest and comprehensive, and open and receptive. Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie said the need for not only a strategy but a communications professional on staff has become very evident. "It was identified during our strategic planning process as a goal we needed to achieve, and this is what has come out of that. During the last council meeting staff brought forward ideas

for council to consider and we decided to hire a full-time person and have that person bring forward what we can better do to communicate with our constituents both back and forth." Petrie added the person hired will be in a better position to decide what is needed in the role than council. "We want to make sure it is in line with council's expectations." A budget of \$75,000 was passed in the report presented to councillors.

Petrie added that everyone is on board with the new strategy to keep the public better informed. "Both from council's perspective and the community and especially with COVID, it highlighted the lack of traditional opportunities to communicate. People wanted to go online, and we weren't doing a good enough job, so we want to step that up."

The town is looking at a number of options to improve communication including the implementation of an app. Some municipalities use it as a means of providing a mobile-friendly and convenient way to communicate important information to residents and visitors. If Council adopts an app as an additional communication method, the initial cost would be roughly \$7,000 with an annual fee of \$5,000. A large number of municipalities have also gone with citizen engagement platforms such as Bang the Table, something utilized by Oxford County in the form of Speak Up Oxford. The platform is a means of seeking public input on important issues. Bang the Table includes a variety of engagement tools including customizable surveys, forums, interactive maps, storytelling, Q

and A sessions, newsletters, and document libraries. It is removed from social media and offers a protected environment for the public to provide feedback. The initial cost for an annual enterprise license is roughly \$14,500 with an annual fee of \$12,000.

New housing develop.m.ent

The town has approved, in principle, a new housing develop.m.ent that is now being sent to Oxford County for a final okay. "It needs an Official Plan amendment, but it is for 20 units in an old school to be converted, so that was an exciting one," said Petrie. The application looks to convert the former Princess Elizabeth Public School to a 20-unit apartment building to be developed in two phases according to the applicant, Royal King Management Corporation from Markham.

Southwestern Public Health gets approval to look for CTS service providers and locations

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Southwestern Public Health will be taking the next steps to provide consumption and treatment sites (CTS) in the region.

A press release from June 22 announced the Board of Health approved further research into service providers and locations for a CTS in the public health region covering Oxford County, Elgin County, and St. Thomas. The decision comes after a study titled "An exploration of the need and feasibility of Consumption and Treatment Services in the Southwestern Public Health region" showed that opioid-related harms such as deaths, ER visits and hospitalizations in the region had a significant increase since 2016.

The report also said opioid-related ER visits were 1.5 times as high as the provin-

cial average and the rate of opioid-related hospitalizations doubled that of Ontario's. The number of opioid-related deaths in the Southwestern Public Health region had the highest increase over time out of all opioid-related harms in the area.

Dr. Nihn Tran, the medical officer of health for Oxford County, St. Thomas, and Elgin County, said the study demonstrated the perceived need for CTS in the region, most of the respondents support bringing one to the region, and the majority prefer an embedded model rather than a standalone model.

A standalone CTS model would be a location for people to bring their own substances with peers and/or medical staff on site.

"If there was an event like an overdose, a response could be provided right away," Dr. Tran said.

The standalone model would also include clean needles and other supplies to prevent infection. An embedded model would include the same services, plus mental health and primary care and/or pathways to treatment.

Dr. Tran also said that the number of deaths from opioid-related overdoses more than doubled from 17 deaths a year to 46 deaths in 2021. However, it does not mean there are more people engaging with opioids.

"This is due to the increase of the toxic supply of drugs," he said. "It's not as if we have twice as many users, it's that the person who is addicted to the opioids is more than twice as likely to die because of it."

The supply of substances is unsafe and unregulated, and some samples of it might have more opioids than others.

"One sample might have hardly any

opioid in it and within the same batch the next amount you're taking might have triple the amount of opioids. An analogy that a doctor had told me was like if you were having chocolate chip cookie dough and you didn't mix it" Dr Tran said. "Some batches, you took a scoop, a spoonful and it had no chocolate chips in it and the next spoonful you had 10 chocolate chips. That's the issue with the supply is that it is so unpredictable with different chemicals being put in there, rapid variations in concentration that's getting to the additional overdoses and deaths."

Along with looking around Woodstock and St. Thomas for CTS service providers and locations, Southwestern Public Health will be speaking to residents, business owners, and other stakeholders.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

Pictured are Mike Amy, Supervisor, Facilities, at Oxford County Marcus Ryan, Warden, Oxford County / Mayor, Township of Zorra, Arpan Khanna, MP, Oxford Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for Federal Economic Develop.m.ent Agency for Southern Ontario, Jerry Acchione, Mayor, City of Woodstock and Cara vanKlaveren, Supervisor of Family and Children Services, Oxford County (who manages the EarlyON program).

EarlyON opening

Oxford EarlyON and Family Centre in Woodstock marked the official opening of its new home at 75 Graham Street today.

Since the building opened to families in September of 2022, the EarlyON team has seen a 1,450% increase in families accessing services.

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan and Woodstock Mayor/ Deputy Warden Jerry Acchione were joined by The Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for Federal Economic Develop.m.ent Agency for Southern Ontario, and Oxford MP Arpan Khanna.

The new Oxford EarlyON Woodstock location is housed in the former Oxford County Land Registry Office, which was revitalized in 2022 with \$745,000 in funding assistance from FedDev Ontario's Canada Community Revitalization Fund. The 75 Graham Street building was a County-owned asset that had been sitting vacant for seven years until its renovation as a safe space for children and families.

In addition to the main centre in Woodstock, Oxford EarlyON operates satellite offices in Tillsonburg and Ingersoll. In 2022, 1,310 families were served by Oxford EarlyON through 10,015 visits to a local EarlyON program or service. For more information visit www.oxfordearlyon.ca

Community Futures celebrates a milestone

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Community Futures Oxford is celebrating 30 years of supporting small businesses and community economic development in the county.

The organization recently held its annual general meeting and since inception it has distributed more than \$24 million in loans and equity to 417 businesses that were starting or growing in the community. This directly impacted 3,294 jobs. Since 1993, 368 grants have been awarded to the tune of \$1.3 million.

General Manager Alan Simm said things have changed over 30 years. "We went from one loan fund to now having three. We went from renting an office of 1600 square feet to owning a 2700 square foot building. We now have a total of four staff and the loan limit went from \$75,000 in year one to \$300,000."

Community Futures Oxford specializes in providing term loans to small business. Entrepreneurs can access an Investment Fund, Sand Plains Community Development Fund, or the Future Oxford Legacy Fund. "All three funds are available to small business clients. They are separate and have different eligibility criteria. Financing in amounts up to \$300,000 is available from two of them and up to \$100,000 is available from the Future Oxford Legacy Fund," added Simm.

Two funds were added in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) and the Oxford Economic Stimulus Fund (OESF). "The RRRF, which is now closed, provided loans of up to \$60 thousand to businesses and not-for-profit



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

Community Futures Oxford presented their annual awards of excellence to three recipients. From left to right, the Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Jessica Eterno of Sew Stylish Wedding Works in Ingersoll; The Entrepreneur of the Year, Jodi Pendry from Terra Nova Nordic Spa; winner of the Community Economic Development Project of the Year, Oxford Invitational Youth Robotics Challenge, represented by Lisa Wells. Photo courtesy of Community Futures Oxford.

organizations affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19. The RRRF was funded by the Government of Canada via FedDev Ontario." The OESF was fully disbursed this past year and is now closed. Simm said it was a partnership with Oxford County, Oxford Connection, and Community Futures Oxford.

In addition to funding streams Simm said the organization can help entrepreneurs with business start-up and business planning questions in one-on-one advisory sessions. "Personalized business

planning advice is provided by a qualified business consultant, and we have businesses seminars. Topics on improving business management skills are presented by guest speakers who are experts in their respective fields." He added a lot of information is available to clients interested in starting business and on their website at www.cfoxford.ca.

As for what is on deck for the future, Simm said the Community Futures board wants to explore an entrepreneurial Hub model, something trending across the

province. "The primary objective will be to explore the feasibility of an entrepreneurship Hub or Hubs. Innovation Guelph was engaged as a consultant to perform this study and they have provided an in-depth report with recommendations." He added the organization must understand and stay connected to the emerging needs of the community. "Our ongoing communication will provide us with the opportunity to reach entrepreneurial individuals and families who have exciting ideas to further strengthen the county through their business ventures."

2023 Award Winners

Community Futures Oxford also presented their annual awards of excellence to three recipients. The Entrepreneur of the Year went to Jodi Pendry from Terra Nova Nordic Spa just south of Hickson. "I am honoured to receive the award. The recognition is humbling. It takes a lot of perseverance, hard work, and support. I can't forget the great staff I have who have created a space like ours. I love the challenge and so far, the outcomes. I suppose this is what entrepreneurship is all about," said Pendry.

The Young Entrepreneur of the Year was won by Jessica Eterno of Sew Stylish Wedding Works in Ingersoll. Eterno said it is great to be a part of Oxford County and the amazing community of Ingersoll. "I really appreciate all the support we have received throughout the years. I am grateful to Community Futures Oxford for allowing me to be able to continue the legacy of Sew Stylish."

The winner of the Community Economic Development Project of the Year is the Oxford Invitational Youth Robotics Challenge.

Hickson Public School bus driver remembered

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Just before 7 a.m. on Monday, May 29, a bus driven by Dave Stewart and an unmarked Ontario Provincial Police vehicle driven by Det. Const. Steven Torangeau collided at the intersection of County Roads 59 and 33. Both perished as the investigation into what happened continues. That day impacted many people, including the teachers, parents, and students at Hickson Public School, where Stewart dropped off children with a smiling face each and every day.

School principal Dolly Fox says she and her vice-principal helped unload buses every day, and Dave was always the last bus to arrive. "We talked to him every day, and he was always wearing a bucket hat, he was smiling and just the nicest guy. He loved the kids, and he was easy to talk to."

Fox added she gave a lot of thought to doing something for the bus drivers who mean so much to the school community. "We do recognize them, and we see what they do every day. I was thinking of a baseball cap but one of my colleagues suggested a bucket hat, so I ordered green since it is the Hickson colour and bucket hats because Dave always wore one, and we had a hawk embroidered on the front of it for the bus drivers." Fox added the last day of school was a special



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Bus drivers from Hickson Public School sport their bucket hats in memory of Dave Stewart, who died in an accident at the intersection of County Roads 59 and 33.

moment to pay tribute to Stewart's memory. "I gave the drivers their hats, and then I got a call from the bus company, and they were all going to come five minutes early on the last day of school and wear their hats so I could get a picture. It was really lovely. It brought a tear to my eye."

Anyone who has children who are bused to school knows how much it can mean to a child and a family to have a connection with the driver, something Fox said is important in many ways. "It makes such a big difference, and our buses are so full, and we had so many junior kindergarteners. We had kids as young as three and a half, and our drivers take such good care of them. They don't let the kids off the bus until they see a family member or babysitter."

Fox added the school community has had a tough time dealing with Stewart's death but wants to do something to remember him. "The community wants to do something like a bench in Hickson Park. Dave's wife also drove the bus for us but has been off now, and his grandkids go to our school. I don't know if anything else has been done yet, but there has been a lot of talk about it." The Thames Valley District School Board sent in a trauma team to support the school following the accident. Fox added the children haven't forgotten Stewart. "The kids skipped the bus at first, but after a while, they came back on. They haven't stopped talking about him, which is lovely."

Stewart's first route in the morning as a driver was picking up high school students,

but thankfully, no children were on his bus at the time of the collision. "When I heard about the location of the accident, I just had a gut feeling it had to be one of ours, and at that hour, it had to be Dave. That was a terrible day," added Fox.

An update on the investigation

The London Police Service is investigating the crash and the intersection was recently closed for half a day for investigators to attend the scene, but no details have been released. The Gazette was able to reach Detective Inspector Ake Krygsman from the London Police Service, who said there is no timeline on results. "It all depends on when the technical examinations are complete, and the reports are submitted to me for my review. A witness told the Gazette the bus and cruiser involved in the accidents were taken back to the scene recently while the intersection was closed to further the investigation, something Krygsman would not comment on. "This is an ongoing investigation, sir. Media inquiries can go through our media office. All of what has occurred in the aftermath of the investigation forms part of the investigation, and when (that) is complete, I will receive all of the material. I will share those results with the families and then will determine the next steps with the families after that."

Oxford Drive-In has a new owner

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

After 14 years at home raising her children and supporting her husband's trucking career, Katherine Hay thought it was time to do something for herself. That something was to buy the Oxford Drive-In, an iconic piece of Oxford County history.

"I didn't expect this to be quite honest. It was just something we did, and it seemed like the perfect little adventure, she said. "I have been a stay-at-home mom for the last 14 years, but I ran my husband's business as an independent trucker. He still drives for Canadian Linen Uniform."

Katherine says the timing was right for her to take on a new adventure and she is ready for the challenge. "I've been home for so long and I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do next. My two youngest are off to high school in September so what am I going to do? I love to cook, love being around people, and I was in the restaurant business before I had the kids. I see this as restaurant work along with pressing a few keys on a computer." She admitted she still has a lot to learn but is looking forward to marketing the business and added her husband has been on her side from day one. "He's been great. Very supportive and backing me just like I've backed him over the years."

The drive-in for the most part was ready

to go when Katherine made the purchase aside from some aesthetic issues. "We had to get the grass cut and we did get some gravel in. We also had to get the food truck ready and throw out some garbage. It took us a week and a half just to cut the grass. There really wasn't a lot to do but we did update the bathrooms."

As for what she would like to see change at the site, Katherine has a few items on her wishlist. "What we want to do is get some playground equipment in there and add a new concession stand. We want to

redo the gravel on the pathways for the cars and get the mounds rebuilt. We haven't done a lot yet and a lot of things may not change this year but to get them done for next year we had to get open and get some income coming in. We want to get the marquis sign redone so we can use that again."

The paying public did miss having an outdoor option to watch movies in the area and so far, Katherine said the feedback has been very encouraging. "They're happy. One lady hugged me. People say they

are proud of me, they tell me to stick it out, it's going to be a rough go for a little bit. It's been all positive."

Katherine has a tangible connection with the drive-in after growing up across the street from long-time owner Al McKay who ran it for 41 years. She spent many nights at the very business she bought. "I grew up around him and his kids. I contacted him to tell him I had bought it and he's been great. I've called him a number of times and he even came on-site to help us. He's been great."

Along with her husband Bob, Katherine is being helped and supported by her two daughters and son and she hoped her foray into business with serve as an inspiration for them. "It means I can show my daughters that if you set your mind to it, you can accomplish it. It's easy to say that to our kids but I had to show them. For me, that's the big thing." She added that in particular her 13-year-old daughter Megan is very proud of her mom and wants to help as much as she can. "She was excited when we were even thinking of buying the drive-in. She's helping me with all the computer stuff, working on the website. She's the one who is my go-to and she's enjoying every minute of it. She can see that she is capable of doing these things." Katherine added the experience her daughter is gaining means she will have the knowledge to one day open her own business or take over the drive-in.



TOWN-WIDE YARD SALE

On July 1, Woodstock held a town-wide yard sale. Participating were neighbours Barb Somerville, Amber and Aaron Kaia and Tonya Payne, with her son Riley (not pictured).

(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Weekend Quiz

- 1) How many triangles are on a backgammon board?
- 2) What geographic term for a bay derives originally from the Greek word kolpos meaning bosom?
- 3) What condiment brand features the Palace of Westminster on its label?
- 4) The Hundred Years War, during the 13th and 14th centuries, was fought between which two countries?
- 5) In 1834 who invented raised point writing using a six dot system enabling the blind to read?
- 6) The archaeological site of the ancient city of Troy is in which country?
- 7) What country's name derives from an Iroquois word for village?
- 8) Which Shakespeare character is known as The Moor of Venice?
- 9) What is the previous and common alternative name of the Indian city Mumbai?
- 10) Which city, home to Coca-Cola HQ, hosted the 1996 Summer Olympic games?

This week's answers are found on pg. 29

SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.

Support businesses that keep your community and its newspaper thriving

Many in attendance at Sollgood Social Market despite weather



Friends Danielle and Lily Klemp, Noah Reyneveld, Shannon Kelly, Cam Young, Mason, Zack and Sawyer Klemp, enjoy dinner from one of the 27 vendors downtown Ingersoll during the first Sollgood Market of 2023.



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)
Alya and Bade Koca with Catherine Lower, study some of the jewellery for sale from Copper Rose Jewellery. The next Sollgood Social Market's will be held July 20th and August 17th.

"Tansy's Bridal" a childhood dream come true

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

Tansy's Bridal is a long-awaited dream come true for owner Tansy Serediak. The doors to the bridal dress shop officially opened on June 17.

Serediak grew up in Innerkip and went to high school in Woodstock, where she lived for many years before settling in Mount Elgin, where she currently resides. For twenty years, she worked in the accounting and payroll department for her family business. Tansy's Bridal is her first business venture, and the idea has been a long time coming.

"When I was around eighteen, my mom asked me, 'If you could do anything, what

would it be?' After dreaming with her and my sisters we all loved the idea of working in weddings," explained Serediak. "We thought, 'wouldn't it be cool' if we started a one-stop wedding shop, where a couple could come and everything they would need for their wedding would be in one location from start to finish. We would name it 'Wedding World!'"

Tansy's Bridal is a launching point into just that, creating an experience for brides and grooms as far as wedding attire goes as well as accessories.

Tansy's Bridal has a growing selection of bridal gowns, mother of the bride/groom dresses, bridesmaid dresses, formal wear and they will have prom gowns next year. They also have tuxedo and suit

rentals for both men and women. The bridal boutique offers four VIP packages for those looking for a special experience to share with their loved ones.

Serediak says it was quite the process transforming the space into what it is now.

"It's been a lot of work," she said. "Many hands helped with the renovations; the building owners have been incredible to work with. They saw the vision and have been instrumental in getting the space to where it is."

"The entire Woodstock community has been so receptive and welcoming, I'm so truly honoured to be a part of the downtown," continued Serediak. "My first week has been great! I've had lots of people come in and check it out, some

have come in for gown fittings already. It's been an absolute pleasure helping everyone!"

Serediak has high hopes for her business success in Woodstock.

"I think Woodstock has the population to handle a bridal boutique," she stated. "Everyone that comes in the door comments that this is exactly what Woodstock needed, which of course makes me very happy! I agree!"

Tansy's Bridal is now open Monday's 11-6, Wednesday's 11-4, Thursday's 11-8, Friday's 11-6, Saturday's 9-5 and Sunday's for private appointments.

Experience packages can be viewed online at tansysbridal.com and on Instagram @tansysbridalwoodstock



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

Mayor Jerry Acchione officially opens "Tansy's Bridal" with owner Tansy Serediak and her husband.



Modelling some of Tansy's dresses were, from left, Amelia Hopf, Makayla Dinn, Victoria Economou, Presley Hopf, Amber Goodall & Abby Goodall.

Wine shop creates space for local businesses to shine

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

After 25 years running the business, Ingersoll Water and Wine is giving other local businesses a boost.

The wine shop on 42 King Street opened the Oak Barrel Boutique, a gift shop featuring local businesses including Anneke's Pottery Design, Dropping Bombs, and Ver Soap Co. New vendors are announced as they become part of the gift shop on Oak Barrel Boutique's social media.

"Ingersoll has always been very supportive to us and we wanted to give back, owner Camilla Evans said in an email interview with the Woodstock Ingersoll Echo.

Evans thought about offering loyalty programs and contests, but wanted to do something more. There was 2,000 sq ft of unused space inside Ingersoll Water and Wine that was transformed into Oak Barrel Boutique as a way to support small businesses and create a welcoming atmosphere for customers as they bottle

and purchase wine.

Both new and returning customers love the idea of the gift shop and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

"We are very happy to hear from our loyal wine customers how much they enjoy the change in atmosphere and how nice it is to look around the boutique at the different vendors when bottling their wine," Evans said. "From our new boutique customers the comments have been 'Ingersoll needs a store like this' and 'I can't wait to spread the word and tell my friends to support this unusual venture.' People have also commented on how great it is for an existing business to connect with all these other small businesses and help them to grow and prosper in this setting."

Some customers thought that Oak and Barrel replaced Ingersoll Water and Wine, but that isn't the case. Rather, the boutique is at the storefront to invite customers before they check out the products at Ingersoll Water and Wine.

Each vendor pays a small fee and the fees are pooled together to support the



artisans and market their products. All of the proceeds from Oak Barrel go right back to the businesses.

"None of the money goes to the wine store," Evans said. "This is our golden principle. The vendors keep 100% of what they make all the while having a long standing store support them."

Evans added that regardless of what business you support, it is more important than ever to shop local and spend money within the community.

"In a time where large on-line busi-

nesses and other big box stores are hurting the small businesses, one has to make a stand," she said. "It is all these local businesses that support and pay taxes and create the community that we all live in. It creates a more personal space for one to enjoy when they actually know the small businesses and artisans they are supporting with their hard earned money."

Follow Oak Barrel Boutique on Facebook and Instagram for more information and announcements on new vendors.



50TH ANNIVERSARY SILENT AUCTION

(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Janet Whittington and Linda Yeoman check out the items up for grabs at the silent auction during the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre 50th anniversary event on June 17th.



Join Big Brothers Big Sisters Oxford County as they Rally for Restaurants

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County (BBBSOC) is excited to launch the fourth annual Rally for Restaurants! It is their way to thank local businesses for supporting our community, while raising crucial funds for their mentoring programs.

Rally for Restaurants formed in 2020, when the agency had to cancel our annual fundraising event, Battle of the hors d'oeuvres. This allowed BBBSOC to continue to raise the crucial funds needed to run our free mentoring services while encouraging people to support, shop, and eat local. This year's book includes 36 participating businesses throughout Oxford County, with 43 coupons in total and a value over \$300. From restaurants to bakeries, cheese, chocolate, ice cream, coffee shops, and even indoor golf, there is something for everyone in this year's

BBBS RALLY
FOR **RESTAURANTS**

book!

Books are \$25 each and are available for purchase on-

line at bbbsoxford.ca or at the Ingersoll and Woodstock offices during our regular business hours; cash, cheque, debit, and credit card are accepted. If you order 20 books or more, you pay \$20 per book! They make an amazing gift for employees, clients, family, and friends (to place a bulk order of 20 or more, contact Nicole Killaire at nicole.killaire@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca).

All coupons are valid July 1, 2023 with a minimum expiry date of September 30, 2023, however a number of participants chose to go longer into the year – an example of the book is available online at <https://oxford.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/event/bbbs-rally-for-restaurants/>.

Join BBBSOC as we Rally for Restaurants, supporting local businesses while igniting the power and potential of young people in Oxford County!

Thamesford News

DORIS WEIR

Echo Contributor

In May/June the **Thamesford Lions Club** was busy around Zorra Township attending the opening of the AJ Baker School, in Kintore, for new playground equipment that the Lions donated \$5,000 towards. The Lions also had their annual Trout Brunch which was all hands on deck to serve the many local residents that attended! Then various Lions members prepared the South Park in Thamesford for paving of the walkway from Seldon Street to the Pavilion that the Lions Club built in 2020.

Catch the Ace is back! Last Catch the Ace went all the way to week 50 and was over \$17,000 for the lucky winner.

The Lions Club do events like the Trout Brunch and Catch the Ace and all the money raised goes back in to community projects, like the ones above. The Lions also are involved with the spring and fall town cleanup and highway clean up and

many, many more local projects in Zorra Township.

Since 2020 I have been wanting to create a memorial in honour of a long time resident and business owner, Harvey Beaty. Starting in 2022 the memorial (which turned in to a memorial garden) in the Lions River Park was created, as it already had a rock there, and Harvey (Cold Springs Farm) owned this property before it became the Lions Park. It was very fitting that the Memorial Garden be placed here. It is so nice to see a project you created coming together. Harvey Beaty was an amazing man and deserves to be remembered for all that he did for Thamesford and area. The memorial Garden has two benches, a rock engraved with a quote from Harvey, a garden around the rock and a large sign with information about Harvey and Cold Springs Farm. Stop by, take a look and enjoy! A walkway, plaques for the benches, two other signs and a bit more landscaping still need to be completed but it is really coming together

(thanks to a plethora of people/businesses who helped along the way). If you haven't been by, take a walk in the Lions River Park in Thamesford. It's a beautiful park maintained by the Lions (spring clean up, tree planting and much more!) and Zorra Township (grass cutting and more). We are blessed to have such a beautiful park like this in Thamesford!

In 2022 Lori McDonald had a dream. A dream of getting the youth together to have a skate park fun day. Lori contacted a major sponsor and did all the advertising for it herself. Over 15 youth skateboarders/scooters/bikers came to have fun. Everyone got a prize! For 2023 she assembled a group to help her with this year's **Thamesford Skatepark Day**. All it took was a dream to become reality and a bit of help! We are hoping this will be attended by more youth in the community! There are posters up for this event around town and on facebook. The Thamesford Lions Club will also be there to offer free rock painting! Mark your calendars! A little about

Lori – She was our very friendly crossing guard on Dundas Street for all the youth in Thamesford attending the Thamesford Public School. In June, it was her final month to do that job as she retired.

The **Thamesford Trojans** coaching staff are busy at work putting together a new hockey team for the 2023-2024 season. They won the Yeck Division Championship in March and hope to do it again this season. Watch for the schedule; it should be out in the next month. They normally play every Friday at the Thamesford Arena. This year the Thamesford Lions will be having a licensed bar and will be also taking care of the Canteen.

The **Multi Use Court Committee** is still hard at work selling shirts and doing events to raise money to build a multi use court in Thamesford. Pickle Ball is played weekly at the Thamesford Arena but a multi use court will certainly be a nice addition to the town! The Thamesford Lions Club has pledged \$50,000 towards this project.



(DORIS WEIR PHOTO)

The Thamesford Lions Club donated money to the new school playground. AJ Baker had a recognition and ribbon cutting for the new playground. They honoured The lions Club and a few other major donors.



(DORIS WEIR PHOTO)

The Harvey Beaty Memorial Garden has been a long dreamed of project, finally coming together this summer in the Lions Park in Thamesford.

Ontario Expanding, Investing in Palliative Care in Oxford

As part of Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care, the Ontario government is expanding access to palliative care services in Oxford. This is part of Ontario's \$147.4 million investment over three years in communities across the province to connect more Ontarians to comfortable and dignified palliative care close to home and loved ones.

"I'm pleased that VON Sakura House is going to receive a portion of this important palliative care funding," said

Ernie Hardeman, MPP for Oxford. "The wonderful services provided by Sakura House support patients and their families with 24/7 nursing and personal support service in a setting that's like being at home."

A portion of this funding will be used to connect people to more palliative and end-of-life services across Ontario including:

Grief and bereavement supports that help families and caregivers who are grieving the loss of a loved one;

Advance care planning to help patients and families prepare for future health care decisions; and

Perinatal palliative care programs that provide specialized grief, bereavement, and peer support that help parents prepare for the loss of their infant.

In addition to expanding palliative care services across the province, this investment will provide existing residential hospice beds in Oxford with over \$473,000 in additional funding over the next two years for nursing, personal

support, and other services delivered to patients at VON Sakura House. Ontario is investing over \$53.8 million over the next two years to increase funding by 45 per cent for all approved hospice beds in Ontario, plus an additional increase for hospice beds in small facilities.

The provincial investment also includes \$10.9 million in multiyear funding to continue operations of 23 additional residential hospice beds through the 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26 fiscal years.

The Sweet Cycle dishes out cool treats with a dash of childhood nostalgia

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

The Sweet Cycle is out and about for its second summer in a row!

Ondrea Threadgould says the idea for the "Sweet Cycle", a bicycle cart with cold treats, was a total fluke.

"I was looking on Facebook marketplace and I saw that there was a refurbished vintage Dickie Dee bike up for sale," she explained. "In a spur of the moment impulse I decided to go to London to test ride it and then I purchased it. I thought it would be something fun to do in town and this really reminded me of my childhood."

This is not Threadgould's first business venture. She says she has always had an entrepreneurial spirit.

"I currently work full-time at home," she began. "Previously, I had a self-esteem program for young girls, ran through the library, and when I first moved to Ingersoll I had a home salon where I did aesthetics. Now we have our Sweet Cycle business that I run with my family. They are always out with me and serving customers!"

Threadgould moved here with her family from London five years ago, seeking a small town that was still close enough to



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Ondrea Threadgould cycles into her second summer with the family business.

London and near Toronto.

"We love it here. It's a wonderful community and a great place to raise children,"

she says.

Threadgould and her family usually venture out on the weekends and in the eve-

nings, and attend many local events, such as street gatherings, retirement homes, birthday parties, markets, soccer games and work events.

"This is our second summer and we have been very well received," she says. "We have attended so many events and met so many local businesses, we really feel the support in town."

"I definitely think it's needed in town, as it really is part of so many folks childhood memories," she began. "Even though the kids today may not know what it is initially, they love the novelty ice cream options!"

The Sweet Cycle has a variety of novelty ice cream such as SpongeBob SquarePants, Sonic the Hedgehog, Freezy's, Bomb Pops, and also have treats geared to the adults like Drumsticks, and Coppa gelato and sherbet cups. Prices range from two dollars to five dollars and they accept debit and credit card as well as cash.

They will be out until it get cold out, usually late September. The Sweet Cycle also books events for birthday parties and still have room this summer. To book, send Ondrea a message over Facebook through the Sweet Cycle page or on Instagram @the-sweetcycle. Group discounts are available.

groove decor opens in Ingersoll



STEWART GRANT

Publisher

June 30th was opening day for groove decor, a unique store full of original art located at 19 King St. West in downtown Ingersoll. The shop is owned by Mark and Marianne Griffiths, who purchased the historic building (former home of Bell Telephone and the Ingersoll Times) during the pandemic.

For Marianne, a former graduate of

Ontario College of Art & Design, it's exciting to have her own retail shop to showcase the many types of original art that she has created over the years, which includes acrylic painting, graffiti art, photography, and much more. The shop also includes original pieces from other artists along with antiques and other collectibles.

For more information, check out their website at groovedecor.ca, call 519-320-6606, or email mj@groovedecor.ca.

Canada Day at Happy Hills Campground



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTOS)

On Friday, June 30th, Happy Hills Resort near Embro held their annual fireworks display in celebration of Canada Day. Well over one thousand people were in attendance, many of whom drove up in golf carts that were decorated in red and white for the occasion.



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Bathroom Design Studio just the latest of upgrades at Ingersoll's Home Hardware Building Centre

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

If you haven't been into Ingersoll's Home Hardware Building Centre in a while, you might be amazed at the array of products that you can find without having to leave town.

"Our team has spent a lot of time in the last year-and-a-half revamping the store" owner Adam Moulton told the Echo.

Not only has each aisle been completely redone, but an exciting new feature has been added to the second floor in the form of the Upper Deck Bathroom Design Centre, headed up by Vanity & Bath Specialist Ann Marie McHale. The design centre features trusted brands such as Stonewood, Classicbrand, and MAAX with products that are made available to Home Building Centre customers without long lead times.

McHale, an Ingersoll resident, worked for Moulton at the Woodstock Home Hardware for a number of years and built up a successful bathroom design studio there. When Adam bought the Ingersoll store, he asked Ann Marie if she'd be willing to set up a bathroom design centre here to



From left to right, Home Hardware Building Centre owner Adam Moulton, store manager Candice Granville, and vanity & bath specialist Ann Marie McHale are on the second level within the new Upper Deck Bathroom Design Centre that opened up in May.

complement the kitchen design studio in Woodstock.

"We had the idea here that we had a space up top that just wasn't being utilized in the manner that it could be," said Moulton. "We ripped it all out, we painted, brought in a new line of vanities that we've had a ton of success with in Woodstock and in some

of our other stores - fully Canadian-made product made in Barrie that is pound-for-pound at a price and quality standpoint that you can't get any better." "We've really leaned on Ann Marie's

expertise," added Adam. "We're big believers in bringing in capable people and utilizing their expertise. Ann Marie came up, saw this space, and said, 'I can work with this', and has completely transformed the area up here."

Store Manager Candice Granville is someone else who has been instrumental in many improvements made to the store in general. Product selection and inventory levels within the 15,000 square foot store are significantly higher than previously, and popular brand names such as M&M Meats and Yeti have been brought in.

"It's been really nice to hit every aspect of customer's needs, so that people can shop local and have the money stay in the community," said Granville. Home Building Centre supports many community events and charities throughout the year, including last month's Kitten Rescue.

Ingersoll Home Hardware Building Centre is located at 15 Samnah Crescent. For more information, stop by the store or give them a call at 519-485-5111. You can also follow them online at www.facebook.com/Ingersoll-HomeHardware/ where they post regular updates.



(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

CARTER'S OSHKOSH RETURNS TO WOODSTOCK

On Thursday, July 13, Carter's Oshkosh opened their doors in Woodstock in the Smart-Centre's complex at Norwich Ave. and Montclair Drive. The store's current location, Unit C-1 (beside First Choice Hair Cutters), is located close to the store's previous location that had shutdown during the pandemic.

Carter's Oshkosh is packed full of quality clothing for babies, toddlers, and kids. The store is open 7 days a week, from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturdays, and 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sundays.

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Southside Park a sea of red for Canada Day



Jordyn Walker-Murray, Tammy Murray and dogs Daisy and Rainbow head off after a morning of fun at Southside Park on Canada Day. (HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

Highland Games in Embro on Canada Day



All musicians on deck; the Highland Games officially opened at noon on July 1, with the massed bands performance. (HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)



Bill and Wilma Skokun, from Princeton enjoyed spending the day in Woodstock.



Dishita, Krisha and Anisha Bains make the tricky decision of where to eat lunch, with plenty of options.



Kelsey Drekcik and Taylor Radley of Kitchener take a minute to warm up before competing in the highland dancing.



Delilah Reid loved getting up-close and personal with a bunny at the petting zoo.



Jayden Simmons waits patiently to see the finished result of his face-painting.



teams from across Canada and America came out to compete in the tug of war competition. Pictured, team Ellis overtakes team Bluewater.



Tammy and Evelyn Wasylyk and Benji Tucker wait for their balloon animals to be made.



dressed in their best Canadian attire were Valerie, Jamie and Todd Bainbridge, and Brooke Reid from Downing, Pennsylvania.



Cassidy Stewart, of Sebringville, disguises as a thistle at one of the many "selfie stations"

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo **SPORTS**



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Navy Vets acquire two veterans

Woodstock Navy Vets General Manager Matt Fidlin has been busy over the past couple of months building the roster for the upcoming 2023-24 PJHL Doherty Division season.

He has acquired two veteran 20-year old London players from the Komoka Kings GOJHL team: defenceman Chris Coulter and forward Owen Lukings. The six-foot Coulter was an Alternate Captain with the Kings last season and played 93 regular season and playoff games with Komoka the last two seasons recording five goals and 24 assists along with 30 penalty minutes. Lukings played in a total of 85 games during his two seasons with the Kings recording nine goals and 14 assists with 36 penalty minutes.

“Chris is a very mobile defenceman who makes quick and responsible decisions in both the offensive and defensive zones,” says Fidlin of Coulter.

When asked about Lukings he said, “Owen is a strong skater which allows him to be hard on the forecheck. He creates offensively as he gets into open ice in the offensive zone and has a quick release.”

Several key players from last season’s Vets team have been re-signed ... and several new local players have been signed.

The Vets are looking forward to further building their roster and will begin to announce their signings and other acquisitions next month as we get closer to training camp.

Training Camp will open at Southwood Arena on Wednesday, August 16 at 7:45 p.m.

Their first exhibition game will be Saturday August 19 at 6:30 p.m. vs Mt. Brydges in Komoka. They will then host Mitchell at Southwood Arena on Sunday, August 20 at 1:45 p.m.

Full Pre-Season Schedule:
 Sat., Aug 19 at 7:45 p.m. – vs Mt. Brydges (in Komoka)
 Sun., Aug 20 at 1:45 p.m. – vs Mitchell
 Fri., Aug 25 at 7:45 p.m. – vs Mt. Brydges
 Sat., Aug 26 at 2:00 p.m. – vs Mitchell (in Stratford)

Fri Sep 08 at 7:30 p.m. – at Grimsby
 Sun Sep 10 at 1:45 p.m. – vs Grimsby
 It is shaping up to be an exciting new season of junior hockey at Southwood Arena.



CHRIS COULTER



OWEN LUKINGS

Send in your sports reports

Coaches and/or parents are invited to send in your sports reports and pictures to the Echo to let Woodstock, Ingersoll and area know how your teams are doing throughout the 2023 season (and to create some great scrapbook material to be reflected upon in future years).
 Game reports should be kept to a maxi-

mum of 100 words. Please include a brief description of what happened during your games, including the names of those who scored and any special efforts made by your players.

Please have all reports and pictures in by the 10th of the month by emailing info@theecho.ca.



2024 BUDGET SURVEY

Have your say

No matter where you live in Oxford County, the 2024 Budget survey is your chance to have a say on which services should be a priority in the coming budget year.

The survey takes only 5-10 minutes to complete. Have your say by August 31, 2023.

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Woodstock Lawn Bowling Club Host Provincial Championship

The Woodstock Lawn Bowling Club hosted the Provincial Men's Pair Championship on June 24 to June 26. There were 25 teams from across Ontario entered in the championship. The 2023 gold metal winners David Anderson

(skip) and Jeff Harding (lead) were presented with the Provincial plaque by the 2022 winners Derek McKie (skip) and Murray Bennewies (lead). The Silver Metal winners were Mark McFadyen (skip) and David DeFoe (lead). The

Bronze Metal winners were Lyall Mix (skip) and Everett Zwiers (lead). The gold and silver metal winners go to the Canadian Championship at Juan de Fuca Lawn Bowling Club from August 22 to August 26 in Victoria B.C.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Above, Gold Metal winners presented by 2022 winners Derek McKie (left) and Murray Bennewies (far right) to Dave Anderson (centre left) and Jeff Harding (centre right) Above right, Silver Metal winners Mark McFadyen (left) David DeFoe (right) Right, Bronze Metal winners Everett Zwiers (left) Lyall Mix (centre) Laurie Roth (right) Ontario Lawn Bowling Association convener.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

YOUTH LAWN BOWLING

The Woodstock Lawn Bowling Club hosted the Youth Provincial tournament on July 15th and 16th. The winners were as follows:

Left, Under 18 Female: Gold - Alexis Fares, Silver- Rebecca Coon.

Bottom right, Under 18 Male: Gold - Isaac Kerr, Silver - Cayden Carter, Bronze - Jacob Hyatt.

Right, Under 25 Female: Gold - Baylee van Steijn, Silver - Annette Marbella, Bronze - Emmalee Smith.

Below, Under 25 Male: Gold - Curtis Wartman, Silver - Ben van Steijn, Bronze - Gannen Stanyer.





WOODSTOCK STALLIONS SOCCER (STEWART GRANT PHOTO)
The Woodstock Stallions D squad (in black and yellow) took on Strathroy during Western Ontario Soccer League play on Sunday, July 16.



WESTERN ONTARIO SOCCER LEAGUE

Premier Division

(standings through July 16, 2023)

| | GP | W | T | L | GF | GA | +/- | PTS |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Jagiellonia | 9 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 29 | 3 | 26 | 20 |
| Woodstock Stallions A | 8 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 28 | 6 | 22 | 20 |
| London Olympians | 9 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 26 | 12 | 14 | 18 |
| Tillsonburg FC A | 9 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 18 | 12 | 6 | 17 |
| London Croatia A | 8 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 21 | 11 | 10 | 14 |
| Taxandria A | 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 16 | 10 | 6 | 13 |
| GCFC Premier | 9 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 19 | -11 | 9 |
| Chatham Express | 8 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 10 | 28 | -18 | 6 |
| St. Thomas A | 8 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 9 | 27 | -18 | 3 |
| Carib Stars | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 5 | 42 | -37 | 0 |

Ingersoll Karate compete at Nationals

Members of the competition team at Ingersoll Karate recently competed at the Karate Canada Nationals in Laval, Quebec from July 7th to 9th with over 700 athletes. Matthew and Yaser competed at this level for the second time and Ziad and Olivia for the first. Great results were accomplished and we are looking forward to improving and getting on the podium next year!

Team Ontario finished with the most gold medals (26) and second most medals overall (56) with the second largest team (189 athletes).

The team continues to fundraise this

summer through Gardening Ninjas. They are happy to cut your grass, weed, etc to help raise funds for the upcoming competition year.

Matthew -75kg Men's Kumite – 9th place (out of 12)

Olivia - +52kg Youth Female Kumite – 9th place (out of 14)

Yaser – Cadet Male Kata – 15th place (out of 30); 52kg Cadet Male Kumite – 7th place (out of 13)

Ziad – Junior Male Kata – 13th place (out of 26); 55kg Junior Male Kumite – 5th place (out of 11)

WESTERN ONTARIO SOCCER LEAGUE

First Division

(standings through July 16, 2023)

| | GP | W | T | L | GF | GA | +/- | PTS |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| LS Croatia A | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 44 | 10 | 34 | 22 |
| Chatham Attack | 9 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 20 | 7 | 13 | 21 |
| Woodstock Stallions B | 8 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 19 | 11 | 8 | 18 |
| African Carib Utd. | 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 4 | 8 | 13 |
| London Scottish | 9 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 12 | 3 | 13 |
| London Thunder A | 8 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 40 | -29 | 6 |
| London Croatia B | 9 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 22 | -13 | 4 |
| Taxandria B | 9 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 33 | -24 | 1 |

WESTERN ONTARIO SOCCER LEAGUE

Third Division

(standings through July 16, 2023)

| | GP | W | T | L | GF | GA | +/- | PTS |
|------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Norfolk Athletics | 9 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 44 | 5 | 39 | 25 |
| Woodstock Stallions C | 9 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 37 | 7 | 30 | 21 |
| Ingersoll Flyers | 9 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 17 | 12 | 5 | 18 |
| GCFC Third | 9 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 21 | 18 | 3 | 12 |
| St. Columban B | 9 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 26 | 22 | 4 | 10 |
| LS Croatia B | 8 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 18 | 26 | -8 | 8 |
| Tillsonburg FC B | 8 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 40 | -31 | 5 |
| Taxandria C | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 43 | -42 | 0 |

WESTERN ONTARIO SOCCER LEAGUE

Fourth Division

(standings through July 16, 2023)

| | GP | W | T | L | GF | GA | +/- | PTS |
|-------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|
| PCL | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 31 | 13 | 18 | 18 |
| Brazukas FC | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 24 | 7 | 17 | 18 |
| Strathroy UFC B | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 14 | 2 | 13 |
| St. Marys Juggernauts B | 8 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 14 | 25 | -11 | 9 |
| London Thunder B | 7 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 19 | 21 | -2 | 7 |
| Woodstock Stallions D | 6 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 14 | -6 | 4 |
| AEL FC | 6 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 24 | -18 | 1 |



Left to right Matthew, Yaser, Ziad, Olivia

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)



Woodstock, Ingersoll share bronze in 11U Ball Tourney

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Cowan Fields in Woodstock was host to talented U11 ball players from throughout the province during the weekend of July 14-16. Two local teams held their own, with the Woodstock Wranglers and Ingersoll Ironbirds each advancing to the tournament semi-finals.

Ingersoll and Woodstock each qualified for the final four by finishing in the top 2 within their respective four-team pools.

The Ironbirds finished with a record of 1-1-1 in pool play. Opening with a 9-9 tie on Friday night against Mississauga South Selects, on Saturday they edged the London West Tincaps 7-6 before dropping a

12-6 decision to a strong team from Martin Grove.

In Pool B, the host Wranglers shared a 1-2-0 record with the Milton Mets and Burlington Bears, but won the tiebreaker based on run differential. Woodstock lost 12-8 to Burlington, 16-1 to Soo Black Sox, and buried the Milton Mets 20-6 in their final pool game.

The well-traveled select teams from Martin Grove (Toronto) and Soo (Sault Ste. Marie) were tough matches in the semi-finals but the local teams put up a good fight. Martin Grove defeated Woodstock 4-2 while the powerful Soo Black Sox downed Ingersoll 12-2.

In the finals, Soo prevailed with an 11-1 win.



(STEWART GRANT PHOTOS)

U11 BASEBALL

Above, Declan Murray of the Ingersoll Ironbirds smacks an RBI double against the Soo Black Sox during Saturday's semi-final action.

The Woodstock Wranglers shared third place with Ingersoll in the recent 11U ball tournament held at Cowan Fields. Top left, Wojtasiak hits a hard groundball through the infield while left, Markus throws a strike against Martin Grove.



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MIDWESTERN ONTARIO SENIOR BASEBALL LEAGUE

(standings through July 15, 2023)

| | GP | W | L | T | RF | RA | +/- | PTS |
|---------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|-----|-----|-----|
| Woodstock Nationals | 9 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 73 | 36 | 37 | 16 |
| Mitchell Astros (JR) | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 91 | 47 | 44 | 14 |
| Listowel Legionnaires | 11 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 87 | 61 | 26 | 14 |
| Kincardine Cubs | 11 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 76 | 76 | 0 | 12 |
| Mitchell Astros (SR) | 9 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 63 | 86 | -23 | 9 |
| Lucan Irish 9 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 74 | 83 | -9 | 8 |
| North London JR Nationals | 13 | 4 | 9 | 0 | 81 | 100 | -19 | 8 |
| Hanover Hitmen | 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 55 | 81 | -26 | 5 |
| Byron Storm | 7 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 35 | 65 | -30 | 2 |

INGERSOLL TUESDAY NIGHT SLO-PITCH LEAGUE

(standings through June 10, 2023)

| | GP | W | L | T | RF | RA | +/- | PTS |
|-------------|----|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|-----|
| Athletics | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 195 | 95 | 100 | 12 |
| Pylons | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 159 | 109 | 50 | 12 |
| Dbacks | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 173 | 121 | 52 | 10 |
| Jagerbombs | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 168 | 122 | 46 | 6 |
| Goodfellas | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 146 | 162 | -16 | 6 |
| Sociables | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 128 | 150 | -22 | 6 |
| Wolves | 7 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 84 | 189 | -105 | 4 |
| Contractors | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 66 | 171 | -105 | 0 |

Woodstock sees large crowd for Pride celebrations



Sharon Feller, Ryder Fouler, Shawn McGinn and Evan Bumpas take a break from all of the fun Pride events to watch the performers.



Friends Ashley Wilcox, Kourtney Grier, Jordan McCormac, Cody Turgeon and Amy Durston met up at Museum Square Park to spend the afternoon together celebrating pride. (HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

"The oldest Mason in the world", Charles McCue, is honoured with rededication ceremony

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

On Saturday, June 24, members of St. John's Lodge, No. 68 gathered at the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery to host a rededication ceremony for Charles McCue, the world's oldest Mason.

They were joined by family members, Masons from other Masonic lodges, Jamie R. Ireland – the current Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, Past Grand Master Dr. Allan Petrisor, other Masonic officials, and Brian Petrie - Mayor of Ingersoll.

The original monument had fallen into a state of disrepair, which prompted members of St. John's Lodge No. 68 to have it rebuilt. Hazen Masonry and Restoration of

Ingersoll are responsible for the work done to the gravesite.

The ceremony was piped in by the Ingersoll Pipe Band, before Duncan Whitelaw shared some opening remarks. Mayor Brian Petrie then introduced himself followed by the Deputy Grand Master, Jamie Ireland.

Ireland went on to unveil the updated plaque. R. W. Brother Joseph Lewis, District Chaplain, Wilson District, led the rededication ceremony, which included a history of McCue's life and services within the brotherhood.

The pipe band led guests out before everyone gathered at the Ingersoll Cheese Museum for a reception and lunch provided by The Old Bakery Cafe.

Charles McCue was born on June 14,

1757 in McGibbery, Parish of Machremesk, County Antrim, Ireland. He was initiated into Masonry in 1775 at Ballanderry Lodge, No. 404. In 1837 he and his family emigrated to Ontario, and settled in Oxford County, where he took up farming. He became affiliated with St. John's Lodge, No. 68, on August 7, 1852. He passed away on May 5, 1870 at the age of 112, making him an active Mason for 95 years.

"It is unlikely that his record will ever be broken," explained Peter Buglass, a local Mason.

"He was active in the community," Buglass continued. "He founded a country school for children, and regularly attended the Anglican church. He retired from farming (at the approximate age of 103) 10 years prior to his death in the year 1870."

"Masons are a fraternal organization dedicated to making good men better," explained Buglass. "They are dedicated to the communities in which they operate. We sponsor several local charities. We support the Shriner Hospitals for children. We provide bursaries to deserving students and graduates of the Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute. We participate in the Adopt a Highway program."

The Masons meet monthly at the Ingersoll Masonic Centre. Any man of good character aged 21 or older who believes in a supreme being may apply to join. Masons come from diverse backgrounds and virtually all walks of life. For further information please feel free to contact Peter Buglass of St. John's Lodge, No. 68 at pbuglass@uwaterloo.ca.



Above, left to right - Scott Gillies, Curator, Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum, Joe Lewis, Wilson District Chaplain, Jamie Ireland, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, Duncan Whitelaw, Worshipful Master, St. John's Lodge, No. 68, Peter Buglass, Junior Warden, St. John's Lodge No. 68, Brian Petrie, Mayor of Ingersoll



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Right, The restored McCue Monument at the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery

Cornman: rise of a young author

DAWN BORND AHL

Contributor

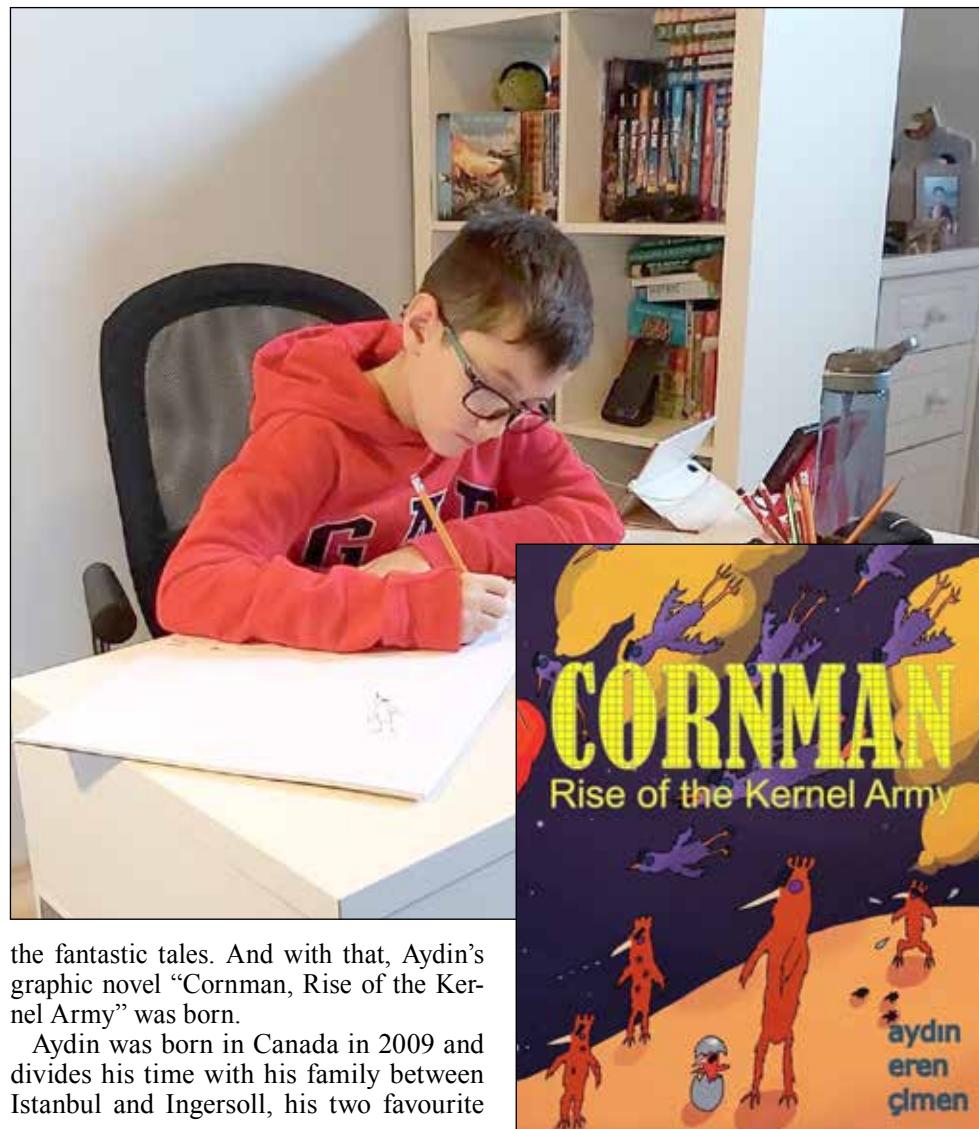
Much like the rest of the world, during the pandemic an 11-year old Aydin Cimen found himself facing a new reality. His classes were suddenly an endless stream of online lectures that began to sound like the teacher from Charlie Brown.

His mind wandered and so did his pencil. Aydin had always doodled, drawing funny cartoon like stick characters who battled each other in crazy landscapes or alien creatures who lined the margins of his school books and oversaw his studies. But throughout the pandemic, his drawings tended to centre on one character, Cornman.

Aydin was drawing versions of a corn husked hero over and over, placing him in outlandish plots and mad scenarios. He would tell his mother about the adventures of this yellow kernelled daredevil, each tale growing wilder and more detailed as Cornman's world expanded to include characters like the King Crow, Nugget Armies, Kernel Sidekicks, Chicken Allies and Alien Forces. The fantastical images were now being enhanced by Aydin's unique description of Cornman and his kernel army battling for world domination against a band of evil crows.

Aydin's dad remembers "the day I asked Aydin about one of his drawings (and was amazed not only by how his depictions reflected his imaginary world but also how his narrative brought the world into vivid life."

His family encouraged him to write down



the fantastic tales. And with that, Aydin's graphic novel "Cornman, Rise of the Kernel Army" was born.

Aydin was born in Canada in 2009 and divides his time with his family between Istanbul and Ingersoll, his two favourite

"I" cities. During the school year, he attends a local school in Turkiye where all his classes are in his second language, Turkish. But summer time is for visiting his grandparents and friends in Oxford County and swimming for the Thamesford Tiger Sharks swim team.

Last summer, Aydin had a booth at the Kiwanis Farmer's Market in the Ingersoll Town Hall parking lot where he sold his book and met "lots of cool people who were interested in Cornman – they had so many great questions!"

Aydin sells his book primarily on Amazon and has had readers and reviewers from Canada, USA, UK and Turkiye. He mentioned that he has an American following because he is a featured author at Wolfgang & Luke, an art gallery and tuck shop in Great Falls, Virginia!

At 13 years old, Aydin is starting a new adventure of his own this autumn: high school. He is full of nerves and excitement and says he could use a little bit of Cornman's courage as he faces this new chapter in his life.

Aydin says he has had a storyline for the second Cornman book floating around his head for quite some time. The new adventure takes place in space and brings back some of Cornman's beloved friends as they find themselves in a new alien centric battle.

He figures if he survives the first few weeks of life in high school, then a space battle with Cornman will be a walk in the park.

The Kiln Room provides hands on art experience

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

The Kiln Room popped up in downtown Woodstock this past May, and has already been leaving its mark in the Oxford County art scene.

The business provides ceramic introduction and skills development to new and not so new students.

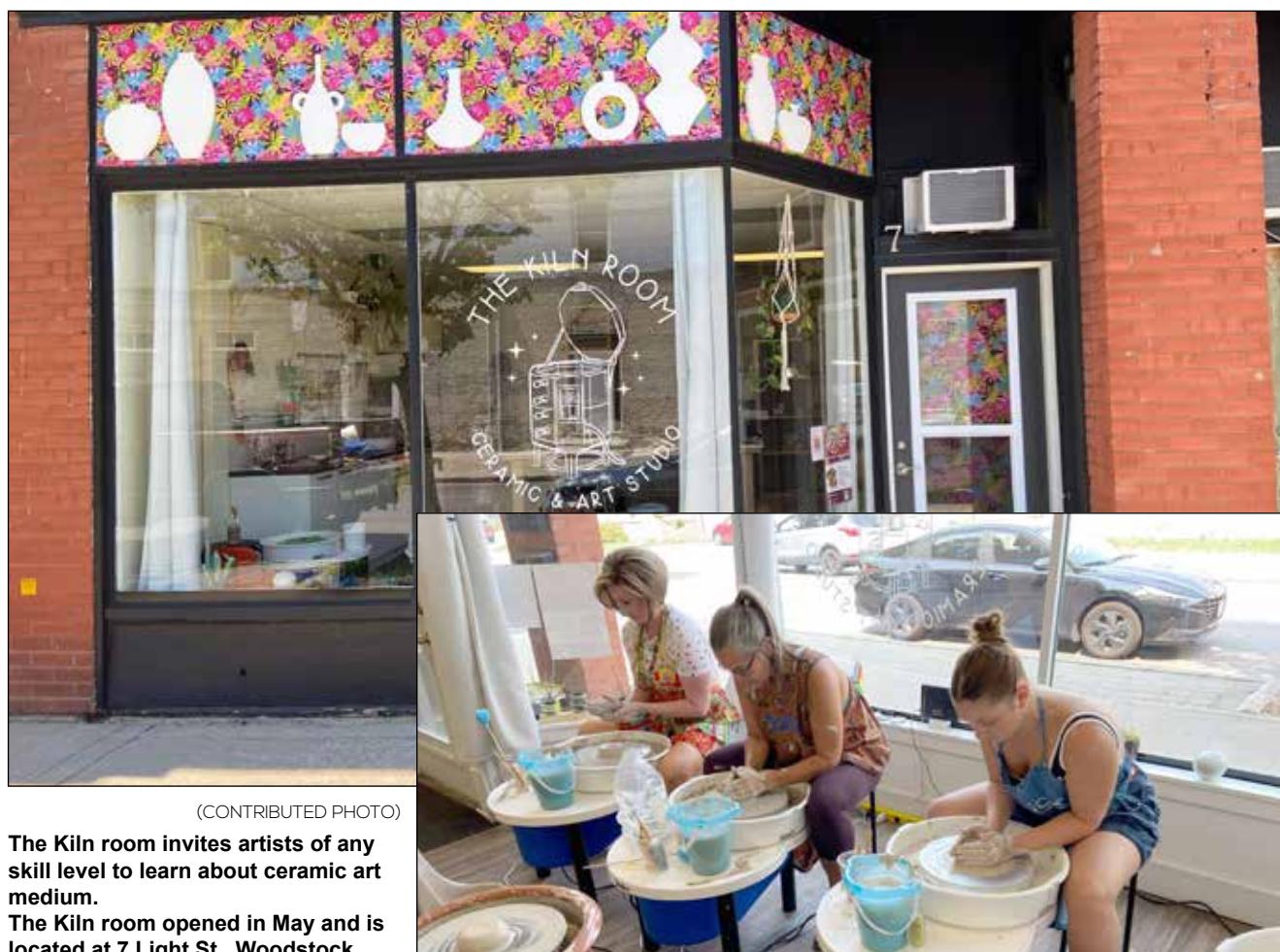
"We also have an on-site boutique where we sell our own handmade wares and soon we will be offering rental space in our kiln for experienced ceramicists who don't have access to a kiln to fire their work," said owner HollyJo. "As we are only a month new, we recognize that there is more potential for the space and our skills that we are excited to unveil when the time is right."

Originally from Toronto, HollyJo moved to Woodstock almost three years ago now, with a vision and a goal to open her first brick and mortar store/studio. She has been independently selling her art for about nine years leading up to this life event.

"It has been one of my dreams to open an art studio space that facilitates the teaching and sharing of creative practices since receiving my art degree in 2020," she explained. "My other dreams are to continue my studies in Art Therapy and begin to make work again for gallery installations and group shows."

HollyJo says that they have had a resounding welcome from the Oxford County community.

"We are learning that experience based art learning is something that this community is drawn to and is yearning for and we are excited to be a part of the broader art culture that we believe is having a growth spurt in Woodstock right now," she concluded.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Kiln room invites artists of any skill level to learn about ceramic art medium.

The Kiln room opened in May and is located at 7 Light St., Woodstock

Berrylicious' 'High Tea with a Country Twist' continues mother's legacy

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

BURGESSVILLE - A trip to Australia inspired Wendy Colcuc to bring a family tradition to Berrylicious Fruit Farm.

Colcuc, owner of Berrylicious Fruit Farm, was visiting her son in Australia when he was on co-op placement in agricultural mechanical engineering. As her brother had been to Australia previously, he was her tour guide.

"We ended up reminiscing an awful lot about my mom and my dad through the 17 days we were together and we talked a lot about what times were like, what were some of our favourite recipes from my mom," she said.

An information packet about Marian's Country Tea sent to the Woodstock Ingersoll Echo said her mother Marian Warren and moved to a dairy farm near Brechin, Ont. in 1951 from Hanover, Ont. Marian served sweets and tea as a way to show hospitality and love to anyone visiting the home, and Colcuc has great memories of her mom serving tea and dessert after every meal.

The day Colcuc and her family were in Korunda, Queensland, Australia, at the train station, it was 38 degrees outside. The train station's menu had hot tea,

scones, preserves, and clotted cream. Colcuc ordered it, remembering her mom said that drinking hot tea can be just as refreshing as cold water.

"Even in this 38 degree temperature, it was the most heavenly thing that I had," she said. "It reminded me a lot of a trip



that my mom and my dad and my sister had taken to Great Britain back in 1985. We also had a lot of those beautiful afternoon teas where you'd have a tray of goodies and of course your tea and it all just came together at one point."

Marian's Country Tea was a collaborative effort between Colcuc and her siblings around the Christmas holidays. Wendy came up with the idea for bringing the high tea to Berrylicious Fruit Farm. Her sister Maribeth, who does all of the baking for the high tea, came up with the name for Marian's Country Tea to honour their mother.

"Even though my mom has been gone for 11 years, there's days where I still grieve over her loss," Colcuc said. "This was very healing for me to do this planning with my sister and brother."

Most of the baked goods featured on the three-tiered high tea tray are her mother's recipes. The bottom tier has quiche, sandwiches her mom liked to make, garnishes, and pickles. The middle layer has lemon blueberry pound cake garnished with fresh berries, scones, and squares. The top tier has cloud biscuits - her mother's recipe - butter, cream, and preserves.

The guests can build their own dessert

tray if they wish and they will have a chance to garnish their trays with fresh berries they picked themselves.

In addition to Marian's Country Tea, Berrylicious Fruit Farm has other activities to enjoy. Berry pickers can practice mindfulness exercises or participate in a scavenger hunt with signs scattered around the patch. There will be a Vintage Day celebration on July 29 to honour Colcuc's father on what would've been his 100th birthday, a Food Day Canada Celebration on August 5, and a collaborative event on August 19 with Gunn's Hill Artisan Cheese, Greener Pastures Eco-Farm, and Wild Comfort.

Visitors can also enjoy a Spontaneous Picnic featuring Gunn's Hill cheeses, locally made crackers, a half pint of raspberries or blueberries, chocolate bark with blueberries, and some drinks.

"They'll be able to stay at one of the picnic tables in front of our yard and they can just enjoy more together time," Colcuc said.

Marian's Country Tea will run through to September and is \$40 per person for a minimum of two people. The high tea will also feature a signature blueberry and elderberry summer tea. Visit berryliciousfruit.ca for more information.

Emerging Oxford County artists celebrated

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

The Woodstock Art Gallery announced the recipients of its annual scholarship and high school exhibition awards at its summer open house on Saturday.

Rachel Williams was awarded the 2023 Friends of the Woodstock Art Gallery Legacy Scholarship and will receive \$1,000 toward her post-secondary education. Williams is a graduate of Woodstock Collegiate Institute where she started a visual

arts club after noticing a lack of art-related clubs and activities. In 2017, she also became one of the youngest vendors at the London Comic Con. Williams will be attending Western University for fine arts in the fall and is pursuing a dual degree in business administration. "I plan to learn to be not just an artist, but an artist that makes a difference," Williams said.

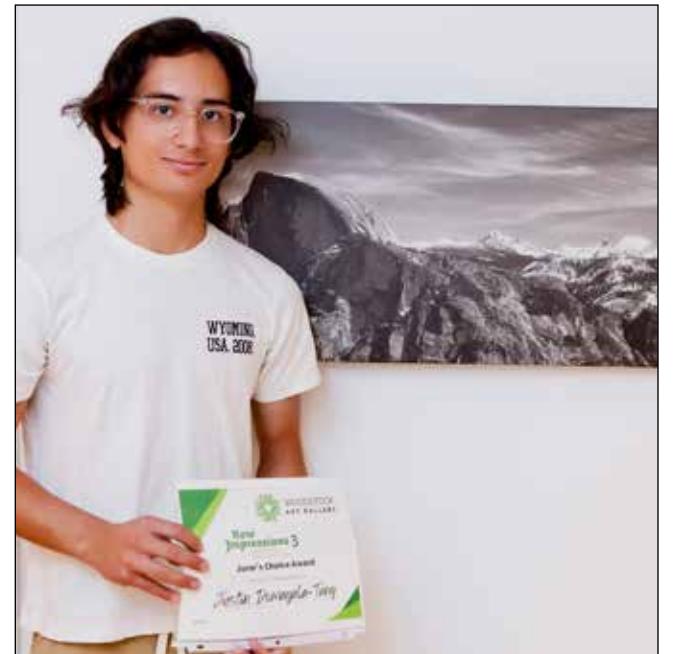
The Gallery's third annual high school juried exhibition award winners were also recognized on Saturday. New Impressions 3 was juried by arts professionals Cole

Swanson and Trish Roberts and features artwork from 13 Oxford County students.

Best in Show was awarded to Standards Reflected, a gouache and coloured pencil portrait by Calista Goetz. The awards for juror's choice were presented to Half Dome and Sisters, a photograph by Justin Domagala-Tang, and Ruptured Euphoria, a mixed media artwork by Goetz. "It takes a huge amount of boldness to freely express yourself and share with others something that is so close to your heart," said Head of Education Stephanie Porter. "Thank you to

these young artists for your inspiring courage and for your important contributions to the arts and the greater community. We are so excited to continue working together to build a stronger, healthier, and more connected community of young artists and innovators."

All three students will have their artwork on display at the gallery in the second-floor hallway until September 23. The virtual exhibition for New Impressions 3: High School Juried Exhibition can be viewed online at www.woodstockartgallery.ca.



CELEBRATING ARTISTS

Left: 2023 Friends of the Woodstock Art Gallery Legacy Scholarship recipient Rachel Williams with Deputy Mayor Connie Lauder. Middle: Right to left: Trish Roberts, Calista Goetz and Cole Swanson.. Right: Justin Domagala-Tang with his photograph Half Dome and Sisters.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

First ever African Experience Festival shines a light on cultural diversity

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

The first ever African Experience Festival was a huge success in the eyes of organizer Khadijah Haliru.

The event was organized by Africans in Oxford County and hosted by Haliru's company, K Business Group Inc., at the Oxford Auditorium in Woodstock, on June 30 and July 1.

Haliru is a proud Nigerian Canadian.

She is from Ingersoll, but originally immigrated from Nigeria 20 years ago.

"African Experience Festival and trade show invites vendors from all backgrounds and is a new initiative to identify the Africans within our county and blend in with all others so we can showcase how they contribute with small business to the economic activities within Oxford," explained Haliru. "For many Africans in Oxford attract visitors every

day for businesses hosted here. It was important to create a more organized event to serve as a cultural element to Canada day celebrations. We had Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia, Congo, Jordan and Canada vendors represented."

The Festival saw a great turnout, with visitors from as far as Toronto, Kitchener/Waterloo, London, Paris and Burlington.

"We had story time and listened to

our special guest Joe and Mary Odumodu honored as first Africans in Oxford county," said Haliru. "Friday was our ribbon cutting and it went well. Saturday we had steady traffic from those who knew and a few from the farmers market. We definitely intend to do it again next year. We had technical difficulties with the music, which affected the dance and so next year we intend to make music a bigger attraction to the event."



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Left, Khadijah Haliru stands with guests Joe and Mary Odumodu. Joe provided a storytime during the weekend festivities. Right, Haliru with help from Mary Odumodu cuts the ribbon, officially opening the doors to the first ever African Experience Festival in Oxford County. Mary and Joe Odumodu are the oldest living African family in Oxford County and have made quite a name for themselves since emigrating here.

KIWANI'S INGERSOLL HARVEST MARKET
WITH THE INGERSOLL CHEESE AND AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM AND INGERSOLL CREATIVE ARTS CENTRE

A DAY FILLED WITH FUN, FAMILY ACTIVITIES

THESE WILL BE NO PARKING ON THE GROUNDS OF THE MUSEUM. A TRACTOR AND WAGON WILL ASSIST IN TRANSPORTATION.
FOR THOSE WISHING TO RIDE THEIR BICYCLE, THERE WILL BE A BIKE VALET PARKING AREA, MANAGED BY THE INGERSOLL BIKE CLUB!

Farmers' Market and Handcrafted Artisan Vendors

Model T Assembly Demonstrations

Children's Obstacle Course and Bouncy Castle

Transition to Less Waste

Grain Threshing Demonstrations

Static Tractor Display

Chainsaw Wood Carver

Live Musical Entertainment

Children's Activities Include:

- Face Painting
- Balloon Artists
- Petting Zoo
- Miniature Train Ride

Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre:

- Try It Series
- Displays and Sales from Local Artists
- Outdoor Children's Activities

NO ENTRY FEE

NO COST FOR KIDS' ACTIVITIES

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26TH
9AM TO 4PM

INGERSOLL CHEESE & AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM
Activities taking place throughout Centennial Park, Centennial Lane, and the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre

FOR MORE INFORMATION

[@KIWANISINGERSOLL](https://www.facebook.com/kiwanisingersoll) [KIWANISINGERSOLL](https://www.instagram.com/kiwanisingersoll) [KIWANISINGERSOLL.COM](https://www.kiwanisingersoll.com)

WE ARE AIMING FOR ZERO WASTE

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo is starting out as a monthly newspaper available both in print format and online (theecho.ca). Published the 3rd Friday of each month,

our next editions are:
Friday, August 18, 2023
Friday, September 15, 2023
Friday, October 21, 2023

Contribute to your local community newspaper! Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to

info@theecho.ca

“The war is not over”

Ingersoll man returns from third visit to Ukraine

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Seventeen months have passed since Russia shocked the world with their full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As Jamie Robb of Ingersoll points out, “Last year, everybody and their grandmother had a Ukrainian flag in their bio or hanging out front. I don’t see that now.”

Robb can tell you first-hand that although the war in Ukraine has somewhat faded from the public view, it is very much still going on. The 38-year-old has just returned from his third visit to Ukraine since March of last year, and is amazed when people ask him, “Jamie, is that still going on over there?”

Jamie’s grandfather, Arthur McCarty, is a name recognized at the Ingersoll Legion for his service in the Navy during WWII. Mr. McCarty is an inspiration to his grandson who has become a dedicated student of military history.

Robb has been closely following the war in Ukraine ever since 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea. He remembers that by 2015, which featured one of the worst battles of the war, worldwide public interest in the conflict had wavered. “Over here in Canada and the United States, you wouldn’t even hear about it. After the initial invasion... they just kind of forgot about Ukraine that way.”

When the main Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, and images of the attacks on Kyiv were broadcast across the television screen, Robb decided quickly that he wanted to help the Ukrainian people. And as a Type 1 diabetic himself, he first thought of helping the diabetics in that country.

“I thought, ‘I’m gonna go’. I saw the long lines of cars waiting at the border, and I worried about people having access to insulin, and being able to test their blood sugar, because maybe in a hurry they forgot their insulin. Maybe they just didn’t have access to a tester.”

Robb is particularly sympathetic to the perils of not properly addressing diabetes. He has developed diabetic neuropathy in his feet, which is nerve damage caused by diabetes. He says that eventually, parts of his feet, starting with his toes, will have to be amputated as a result.

“It’s something that I’ve been fighting since I’ve been 24 because I didn’t take care of my diabetes in my younger days, and that’s what I’m paying for now,” he told the Echo.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Food and, most importantly, water is handed out to the remaining residents of Sivers’k, which is located in the Donbas. This area was under constant Russian bombardment because it was located just 5 km from the front lines.

“For a diabetic, it’s all about routine, and that’s not what I was seeing in Ukraine, because war is nothing near routine at all,” he added.

After making his decision to help, Robb went to London and bought a U.S. Army backpack, and packed only the bare minimum of clothing, so to save as much room as possible for insulin and testers.

“I had a lot of help from the Alexandra Hospital [in Ingersoll]; the diabetic team that I go to. They were kind enough to give me testers, and they gave me glucose pills, which are the sugar pills. It gave me a great source of comfort to see what people are capable of with their giving. I can’t really thank Oxford County enough.”

Jamie’s mother, Sue Robb, spoke to the Echo about her son’s experience.

“I said to him, ‘Are you crazy? There’s a war going on, you’re not going over there!’ I was in shock when he said he wanted to go. But he went and did it. I’m very proud, and it was very terrifying while he was there the three different times, but it’s unbelievable what he’s accomplished. He’s quite the young man.”

Upon arriving in Ukraine, Jamie was indeed able to deliver those much-needed diabetic supplies, and lent a hand wherever he could. He joined others in helping to deliver medical supplies and fresh water to hard-hit areas of the Donbas region.

“It’s destruction on a scale that I’ve never witnessed before in my

entire life. Being in a place like Donbas was very uneasy, because there was Russian artillery all day, every day. The closest that I was able to make it to the front lines was a place called Sivers’k, which is about 5 km from the front, which is well within range of Russian artillery. I look back at it now and it kind of freaks me out where I was. I was sitting in Kramatorsk watching the small city of Chasiv Yar being struck by

artillery and rocket fire and you could see it in the night sky and you could see every round go into this place, it was absolutely every watching that.”

“A lot of people in the Donbas are still living in their cellars because of the fear of Russian artillery. You’re living in the cellar with maybe 15 other people, and you’re now seeing pigeons fly in and out of what was once your apartment because its windows



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Jamie Robb (on left) and a friend pose with unexploded Russian ordnance just outside the village of Krasaty-chi where Jamie has stayed on all three of his trips to Ukraine.

are gone and you cannot live in a multi-storey building because of fear of the Russian artillery.”

Robb noted that particularly outside the Donbas, there has been remarkable reconstruction which has been evident on each of his subsequent trips.

“Bucha and Irpin, going back there now, it’s like night and day,” he said. “I went back in May and wanted to pay my respect, and they’ve built a new monument for the 33 days of occupation and for the people, including children, who lost their lives there. I was able to drop my flowers off and see the absolute change. These places are putting up the bricks... they’re fixing the damage that had been done to a lot of the condos there; you can tell that these people are proud of their community, and they want to make sure that they are getting back to normal. It’s surreal.”

Currently back home resting at his mother’s home in Ingersoll, Jamie plans to return to Ukraine. There is much more that he wants to accomplish there, including helping a friend complete a project to convert an old tractor trailer so that people can have access to washing their clothes, and having a nice fresh shower.

“I saw the difference that this made when I was in the Donbas,” he recalled.

“I want to keep going back until my feet give out.”

How Canadian Foodgrains Bank is making a difference through conservation agriculture

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

Margaret Kageni, a farmer supported by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, who resides in Kenya, has been awarded Conservation Agriculture Farmer of the Year in East Africa, a huge achievement. She benefits from National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK).

On Wednesday, June 21, technical advisor John Mbae, who is based in Kenya and nominated Margaret for the award, visited a number of farmers in Ontario who are supporting this kind of work overseas through the Foodgrains Bank. Mbae has been with the Foodgrains Bank for the past eight years and currently serves alongside three others in Africa as an Agriculture and Livelihood Technical Advisor. He is based in Nairobi, supporting partners in east Africa.

"I nominated Margaret because of her work on her three acre farm, practicing conservation agriculture (CA) and being a clear example of how biodiversity in the fields can convert a farmer from food insecure to food secure," said Mbae. "During my visit, she was growing 27 different types of crops and fruit trees. She has been able to receive visitors from the county and outside the county and takes time to train these farmers on CA."

Foodgrains Bank support NCCCK through the United Church of Canada in a five year project that supports farmers through teaching them how to grow their own crops



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

John Mbae sharing stories of farming in Kenya with the Bluewater Growing Project supporters (John Young pictured).

through adoption of conservation agriculture. Conservation agriculture focuses on training farmers to adopt the three CA principles (minimum tillage, permanent

soil cover, crop rotation and biodiversity).

Additionally, Foodgrains trains farmers on good agronomical practices such as soil health, precision planting, weed manage-

ment, pest and disease control, among others. In this project, farmers have been able to increase production of various crops (example: maize from as low as 270kg/acre to over 1000kg per acre.) The partner is able to train and encourage farmers to aggregate their produce and carry out collective marketing rather than individual. This has helped farmers to not only improve their food security situation but also get better prices for their produce.

"Climate change has been a major setback to crop production in Africa," explained Mbae. "There has been increased cases of drought, late onset of rainfall and poor rainfall distribution."

"This has led to reduced production/yield, thus farmers are not able to feed their families," he continued. "Households have been forced to adopt various strategies mostly by reducing their number of meals per day. This also has led to reduced months of food sufficiency and increased of insufficiency to 8-9 months in some regions."

While in Ontario, Mbae visited several growing projects managed by various churches to share Foodgrains work in Africa and also learned how great farmers are joining hand by donating not only their crop but also their time, input, and machinery to support those that are food insecure across the world with a vision of ending world hunger.

"I learned a lot and will be taking several key learnings to Kenya as we continue to support farmers."

In recognition of service



(WOODSTOCK FIRE DEPARTMENT PHOTO)

Mike Wellman received his Federal Fire Services Exemplary Medal for his 20-years of courageous and dedicated service.

Taste of Art

Taste of Art is returning to the Woodstock Art Gallery on Sept. 23, 2023, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Tickets are on sale now for the event, which includes sampling and tastings from local food and craft beverage producers, music, live performances, art activities and more.

Launched in 2015, the fundraiser supports the gallery's education and exhibition programs. The in-person event has been on hiatus since 2019 due to the pandemic.

"We're excited to welcome our community back for a raucous night of artful experiences, bodacious beverages and local cuisine. Taste of Art is a fantastic opportunity to showcase local arts and culture, while celebrating the businesses that make Woodstock and the

surrounding region a vibrant place to live," said Director/Curator Mary Reid.

This year's event is supported by long-time sponsors Investment Planning Counsel and Heart FM.

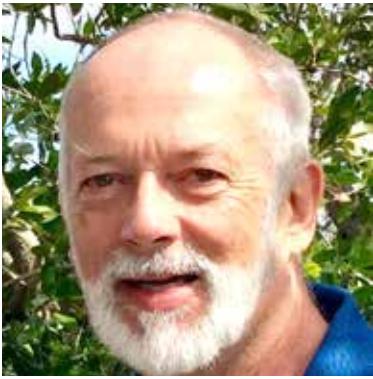
"We are very appreciative for the opportunity to support the arts in our community. Taste of Art has been a highly successful event and a lot of fun to participate in. We are so thrilled to be able to have in-person events again," said Scott Lawrence, certified financial planner at Investment Planning Counsel.

Early bird tickets can be purchased online for \$55 (regular \$60 after Aug. 31).

More details about the event, including vendors and entertainment, will be announced at www.woodstockartgallery.ca throughout the summer.



OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The Florida Keys are "a musician's paradise"



PAUL KNOWLES

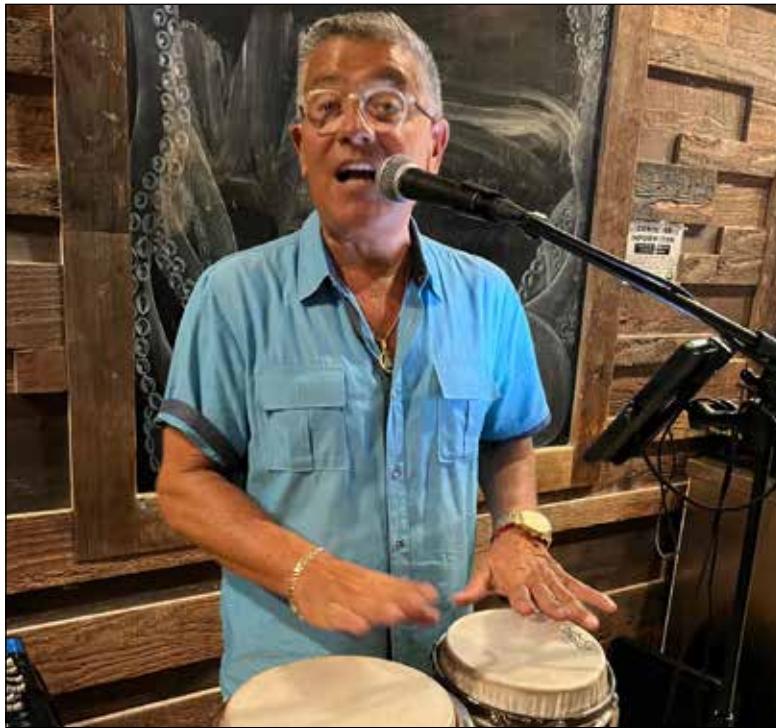
Echo Contributor

Michael McCloud, a 76-year-old roots singer with an acerbic – and often profane – sense of humour, was filling the afternoon slot at the Schooner Wharf Bar, one of my favourite hang-outs on the old Key West harbourfront. Michael has performed in Key West for 45 years. A patron asked him to sing McCloud's favourite song. His response? "That's a very bad idea – after performing for decades, musicians have incredibly bad taste in music." But his true feelings emerged through his actual choice – a soulful rendition of "Somewhere over the rainbow."

And that eclectic combination – dark humour mixed with a true sense of hope and optimism – sums up the prevailing attitude in the Florida Keys.

Key West is known as a party town, and parties require music. But when you talk to the local musicians, you realize their love for their job goes way beyond the parties or the paycheques... and also, way beyond the boundaries of Key West, proper. You will find music, and the people who make it, all the way up the Keys to Key Largo.

Seven years ago, Sheldon Ben-



"Miami Sound" performer Gaby Gabriel.

(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

ton came to Key West from his native South Africa. When I talked to him between ballads at the Hog's Breath Saloon, he made it clear that he has found his happy place: "Key West is my home."

Celtic songstress Eim Grace was in Ireland when, "Somebody told me about this magical place called Key West... Little did I know it was a musician's paradise!" Grace has been plying her craft as a working musician since she moved to Key West six years ago. Her comments might be dismissed as hyperbole... until you hear them again and again, from folks who love their lives as working musicians all over the self-proclaimed "Conch Republic".

Gabriel Wright was doing a spot-on solo version of Aero-

smith's "Dream On" in the fabled Captain Tony's bar when I met him. He told me, "I'm originally born and raised in Ohio, and have lived and worked in Key West for over 10 years... I have the greatest job ever. I play music... and I bring people joy and happiness every day."

Billy Davidson was born in Syracuse, New York. He's been making music for 50 years, but he's been based in Key Largo and Islamorada for most of that time. The Keys, he says, are the ideal landing spots for good musicians: "There are tons and tons of places that do live music." For 33 years, he has played a regular gig at Lorelei Restaurant and Cabana Bar in Islamorada; during Covid, he and his wife, Cindy, also opened the garden of

their Key Largo home for weekly garden party concerts, which now pack the place – admission by donation, and guest musicians usually joining Billy on the small stage that fronts his studio.

That conviviality among Keys' musicians is undoubtedly one of the reasons they love the musical environment. "I help anybody who comes down here to find gigs," Billy says. "That's really good karma." Asked who he especially enjoys, at the top of Billy's faves is flamenco guitarist Dave Feder, who lives with his Canadian wife, Suzie, in their own little bit of paradise on Plantation Key.

Feder not only performs his unique and often improvised masterpieces in person, on international tours, and on social media, he has also founded a non-profit that runs fundraising music festivals. The proceeds supply instruments – to date, by the hundreds – and scholarships to aspiring young musicians from the Keys.

The fundraising concerts operate on an unusual plan: they're free. Donations are welcome, but Feder says they raise most of the money through beer sales. That's because of one man – Canadian Craig McBay, owner, with his wife, Cheryl, and brewmaster at the Florida Keys Brewery in Islamorada. McBay not only provides work to many local musicians at the brewery's popular beer garden, he also donates all the beer to Feder's events, creating a 100% take for the cause.

It's probably surprising that we've come this far in an article about music in the Keys without mentioning the name "Jimmy

Buffet". And Buffet does maintain a large footprint in Key West – he occasionally returns to town to perform, and the original Margaritaville is a popular stop on Duval Street. That's where I met the Baha Brothers, a five-man band from Boston that has backed Buffet in concert. They were thrilled to be back in Key West, after an absence of four Covid-wracked years. Keyboard player Bill Strojny told me, "It was fantastic to be back playing for an enthusiastic crowd each night." He added, "Playing music isn't about money... it's the pure joy of when a song comes together."

Musicians gotta play music – but they all say it only really works when the environment is right. And clearly, the environment is right in the Florida Keys. Gaby Gabriel is another import – he and singer Millie Duran commute from Miami to Sol by the Sea in Key Largo, four times a week. He describes their Cuban-influenced style as "the sound of Miami" – and he should know, as the man who for 20 years fronted the band at the Fontainebleau in Miami Beach. The current gig "is my retirement," he says with a grin. Why make the commute? "I love it here," he says. He's been making the regular trip since 2017, and has no intention to actually retire. He laughs, and with a sweeping gesture toward his congas, the venue, and the audience, he sums it up: "It's great."

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@golden.net.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Veteran Florida Keys singer/songwriter Billy Davidson performs every week in his own backyard, as well as playing local bars and restaurants.

New President at Travel Media Association of Canada

Paul Knowles has been named President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. He assumed office at the conclusion of the annual TMAC conference, held in Sudbury, from June 15-17. Paul is the travel columnist for this newspaper, and all of the Granthaven papers (including St. Marys, Stratford, Wilmot-Tavistock and the new Woodstock-Ingersoll publication), writing a weekly full-page feature about national, international and local destinations. He also contributes regularly to the travel sections of the Toronto Star and vacay.ca, as well as other publications and websites.

Paul succeeds outgoing President Tracy Ford, Director of Public Relations for the Chelsea Hotel in Toronto, who has led the TMAC Board of Directors for the past two years. Knowles' term will extend until the end of the 2025 TMAC conference, in June

of 2025.

TMAC is described as "the trusted organization of choice for accredited travel media and tourism industry professionals in Canada." Its membership includes about 380 Canadian travel media professionals and destination representatives.

Paul heads a 10-person board, which includes directors from across Canada, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia. They include travel writers, content creators, and destination representatives.

During the TMAC convention in Sudbury, TMAC signed a memorandum of understanding creating a working partnership with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada. As well, it was announced during the conference that the 2024 TMAC annual conference will be held in St. John's Newfoundland.

Riddles

What's the perfect cure for dandruff?
Baldness

Why did the king go to the dentist?
To get his teeth crowned

Why did the sick skunk stay in bed for a week?
Doctors odours

Why is an elephant big, grey and wrinkly?
Because if it was small, white and smooth it would be an aspirin

Which thing makes our home safe?
A lock.

What do call a snail on a ship?
A snailor

Take off my skin -- I won't cry, but you will! What am I?
An onion.

What can go up and come down without moving?
The temperature.

The more you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?
Foot steps.

Sudoku

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Solutions on page 29

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BAILEY

This is Bailey the newest member of the Brock and Visser Funeral Home Team who is able to offer wiggles and love to families who need it during their grief journey.



MILO

Milo is a 5 year old Bernedoodle that loves runs, hugs & naps. Milo's favorite part of the day is running around the backyard with his owner. Milo is owned by Emily Serviss

Nominate your Pet of the Month by emailing info@theecho.ca

Word Search

ICE CREAM FLAVOURS

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- VANILLA
- STRAWBERRY
- MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP
- BUTTER PECAN
- COOKIES N CREAM
- ROCKY ROAD
- COFFEE
- CHOCOLATE CHIP
- PISTACHIO
- NEAPOLITAN
- CAKE BATTER
- SALTED CARAMEL
- BUBBLEGUM

FROM THE GARDEN: Another Challenge for Gardener



NANCY ABRA

Echo Contributor

There are many short season and crops that will tolerate cooler temperatures. For instance, I have never had much luck with spinach when I plant it in May. As it grows and the weather heats up it usually bolts into seed. But planting spinach in August, when it is usually cooler, I get a longer season of spinach to harvest.

Lettuce can be grown from early spring to fall. The loose-leaf varieties are best to sow in late July and August and can be harvested within a few weeks and throughout the coming months, until frost. They can also be planted in containers such as window boxes which is easy and convenient to harvest and maintain.

Other nutritious leafy vegetables that can be sown in the summer months is Arugula, and Asian greens. Chicory and endive are other hardy leafy greens that can be grown in August and enjoyed throughout the fall, well into late October or a hard frost. Radishes is another fast-growing crop that can be sown in late July and August.

Beets are easy to grow and are directly sown. Usually beets are seeded in May, but they also can be sown in July. As you thin the row, you can use the tops in salads or as cooked greens mixed with spinach. They are tolerant



of cooler temperatures and hard frosts so therefore be matured for an October harvest. Turnips also can be sown in July for a late fall crop.

Peas are a cool-weather spring cool and usually one of the first things we plant in late April or early May. By mid to late July, they are ready to harvest, and the plants are then pulled to put in our compost bin. You can use

this space to plant some other short season crops or resow for another crop of peas to be harvested in later in September.

Kohlrabi is one of our favourite vegetables. We set out little seedlings in mid May and as they mature in June and early July we harvest them to enjoy raw or cooked. A couple of weeks ago, we started more kohlrabi seeds. After I harvest our garlic, I will

transplant the kohlrabi seedlings in this space. They thrive in cooler temperatures, and we will enjoy the leaves of this brassica as cooked greens and golf-ball size veggie that forms well into the late fall.

So, it is not too late to sow some seeds or plant out seedlings of short season cool crops to harvest well into the fall and beyond to help stretch our food dollar.

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 Rev. Jeffrey Smith
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COMING EVENTS Email to inquire info@theecho.ca

- Pizzafest**
 Thursday, July 27; 4-8 p.m.
 Downtown Ingersoll
 Live music, street performers, vendors: Ingersoll Lanes, Domino's, Gino's, Little Caesars, Miss Ingersoll, Pizza Hut, Titos
- Woodstock Streetfest**
 July 21-23
 Downtown Woodstock
 Live music, inflatable games, touch a truck.
- Streetfest Cruise**
 Sunday, July 23; 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
 Downtown Woodstock

- DJ, prizes, 50/50. \$10 registration fee.
- Embroidery Truck and Tractor Pull**
 August 4-5
 Embroidery
 Heavy farm stock tractors & modified trucks and tractors. Adults \$20/day or \$30 for weekend. Children 5-12 \$5/day or \$10 for weekend. Under 5 free.
- Kiwanis Ingersoll Harvest Market**
 Saturday, August 26; 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
 Ingersoll Cheese & Agricultural Museum
 A day filled with fun, family activities. No entry fee.

- QUIZ ANSWERS**
- 1) Twenty-four
 - 2) Gulf
 - 3) HP Sauce
 - 4) England and France
 - 5) Louis Braille
 - 6) Turkey
 - 7) Canada (from the St Lawrence Iroquoian word kanata)
 - 8) Othello
 - 9) Bombay
 - 10) Atlanta, Georgia, US

SUDOKU

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| 9 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 5 |
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| 3 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 4 |
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Darcroft Family Farm is setting records with their Oxford County Holstein Herd

GARY WEST

Echo Correspondent

Oxford County has been known for many years as the “Dairy Capital of Canada” and it doesn’t get that reputation by standing still.

Darcroft Holsteins is a three time Master Breeder Herd, with 26 classified Excellent, 72 Very Good and 33 Good Plus cows on the 41st line of Zorra township. The family feels, from their experience, that that is probably true.

Their family farm has worked through many ups and downs (like most farms) to get to where they are today.

The Darcroft Farm and the MacLeod family, over the last number of years, has become well known as one of the top Holstein breeders in the country for breeding and selling some of the highest priced purebred holsteins in the business today.

The farm started near Niagara Falls in the late 40’s and early 50’s when Keith and Hilda MacLeod milked Holsteins and eventually relocated their farm with their four sons to Stephenville in the municipality of Niagra South.

The family farmed there until 1983, when sons Paul and Ron made the big decision to leave Stephenville and re-locate to Oxford County, north of Woodstock on highway #59 where they eventually purchased 179 acres. Their other two brothers continued to farm in Stephenville.

They knew if they were going to continue dairy farming, it might as well be on the class 1 fertile land that Oxford County could provide. They also felt the close proximity to highway 401 and 403 would be to their advantage in selling breeding stock to markets in the future.

“If the Government of Ontario wants to expand and build houses outside of Toronto and Niagara, a great place would be



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The MacLeod family in their modern free stall-parlour barn. Left to right, Paul, Ellen, Rebecca, Abigail and Kyle.

in the Stephenville area where the land is hard, dry clay and can’t grow much in the way of crops anyway, instead we decided to build on land in the green belt,” said Paul.

As time went by and their families grew, Ron and his wife Sherry moved to Renfrew County in 2003, and continue to dairy farm with their family members

near Cobden.

Over the years the city of Woodstock has grown and with housing encroachment the MacLeod’s decided it was time to move to a farm north-west from where they were and purchased 387 acres in November 2016.

Their plan included building a new dairy facility that would house their 110

milking dairy cows, along with dry cows and young stock and plans also included remodeling the existing bank barn to house newborn calves and small heifers.

The farm now includes Paul and Ellen along with son and daughter-in-law, Kyle and Rebecca and now two year old Abigail.

With the advent of sexed semen and an over abundance of heifers, the farm sold off some of their excess breeding stock.

One such sale was Darcroft S.C. Ransom, who was sold to Blondin farms in Quebec along with five other breeding age heifers. She eventually became a show winner and was sold by the Jacobs family in one of their production sales for \$80,000. The MacLeods still have many family members in their herd to breed from.

A second headliner from the farm was Darcroft J.C. Unstop Alabama, a red heifer, who was shown at many shows in Quebec and after two years was eventually the top selling price of \$140,000 in the Blondin Elite sale in Quebec.

Paul and Kyle are happy with the results that their Darcroft breeding program has brought to other Holstein Breeders in the country and always wish the buyers of their genetics the best of luck with their purchases.

Paul lead Holstein Canada as it’s president in 2009-2010 and son Kyle is now Vice President of the Ontario Holstein branch.

Ellen has worked with McIntosh Embryo Transfer for the last 31 years, maintaining embryo recovery and export records for the company.

Rebecca continues to work as a therapist while raising their young family.

With very little outside hired help, the Darcroft Family Farm will be one dairy farm that will no doubt, keep Oxford County in the lead as the “Dairy Capital of Canada” for many years to come.

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Haight’s Garden Centre
Tim Hortons
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Tim Hortons

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Best Western Plus
Pharmasave Woodstock General
Hospital
Lobby, Woodstock General
Hospital
Reeves Community Complex
South Gate Centre
Daisy Mart

BEACHVILLE

Beachville Museum

INGERSOLL

Riverside Minimarket
Canadian Tire
Ingersoll Karate
Tim Hortons
Cooperators
McFarland Rowlands
Foodland
Miss Ingersoll
The Olde Bakery Café
Kraft Korner
Hometown Style
Ingersoll Public Library
Town of Ingersoll
Ingersoll 50+ Centre
Tremblett’s Independent Grocer
Tim Hortons
Home Building Centre

Pick Up Locations

Oxford County's Cheesy History

SCOTT GILLIES

Ingersoll Cheese & Agricultural Museum Curator

Oxford County has been the Dairy Capital of Canada for more than 100 years and the reason is quite cheesy. While the county still leads in the production of fluid milk, Oxford can also be considered the cradle of the cheese industry in Canada.

As far back as the 1850s, Salford area farmers Hiram and Lydia Ranney were milking 100 head of dairy cattle daily. That was a huge herd in those days given that most others had fewer than 10. All of the Ranney milk was converted into cheese by Mrs. Ranney and then her husband took it town to town, peddling their products at various markets.

By 1860, Thamesford area farmer John Adams was operating a successful cheese manufacturing business out of his farmhouse by purchasing milk from his neighbours. He sweetened the deal by offering them tin pails as an added incentive, and he hired and dressed men in red tunics to go to their farms to pick up the milk.

In 1864, the first cooperatively



owned commercial cheese factory in all of Canada was started near Norwich by former American cheesemaker Harvey Farrington. While Adams' operation was proprietary (he was the sole owner), Farrington's factory (The Pioneer) was co-owned with the Quaker farmers who had settled that part of Norwich Township.

Two years later there were 6 such factories in operation across Oxford County. In that year, 1866, three of the locals got together to discuss the idea of selling cheese in Great Britain. The Ranneys,

their son-in-law James Harris, and George Galloway came up with an audacious plan to market their cheese to the British. They had done their homework. They learned that the average English worker consumed large amounts of cheese as part of their daily diet. Because of the growing population, the English factories could not fill the demand for more cheese. At the same time, because of the Civil War, no American cheese was being exported to Britain due of trade embargoes. The result? There was a cry for more cheese in the English shops. Our local entrepreneurs saw an opportunity and seized it!

The old adage "go big or stay home" may have originated in Oxford County. These three cheese makers combined their production to fashion a giant wheel that was 7 feet in diameter and 3 feet thick; it weighed 7,300 pounds! This mammoth cheese left Ingersoll for the New York State Fair on a promotional junket before arriving in Liverpool, the main cheese market in the British Isles. The Oxford contin-

gent hired a brass band to parade it through the city streets then put it on display and charged admission to come see and taste it. By the time the cheese was all consumed, James Harris came back with a fistful of orders for more cheese.

Over the next century, Ontario shipped millions of pounds of cheddar cheese to England. Factories began sprouting up all over southern Ontario – there were 98 in operation in Oxford County by the turn of the 20th century.

Having captured the British market, these cheesemakers soon realized that now they had to maintain it. So, in 1867, they formed the Canadian Dairymen's Association in Ingersoll, which held annual meetings of farmers, dairymen, cheesemakers, scientists and businessmen to ensure quality control by teaching the newest advances in the science, packaging, refrigeration, shipping and marketing of cheese.

The success of this one industry led to the emergence of others within Oxford.

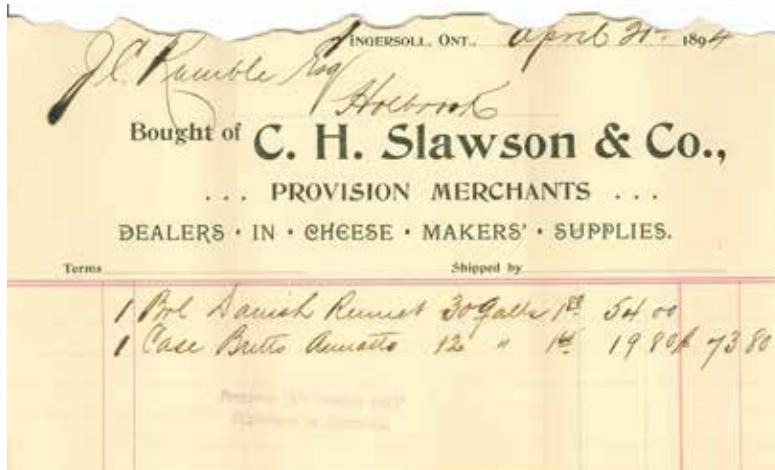
Most of the whey left over from

making cheese was sent back to the farms to feed the pigs, and those dairy-fed beasts were butchered into pork, bacon, ham and yes, even frankfurters that the English craved – the famed lean Wiltshire products. The Ingersoll Pork Packaging Plant was butchering upwards of 4,000 pigs per week, making it the largest slaughterhouse in Canada at the time.

The manufacturing and selling of cheese is only part of the supply chain story. Cheese factories needed not only a regular supply of fresh milk but they also needed rennet to curdle the milk, annatto – a natural food colouring from a tropical plant -- which provides the orange shade to some cheddar cheese, salt to add to the curds, cotton cheesecloth to swaddle those curds into cylinders, and paraffin wax to seal in all the freshness, not to mention all the round wooden cheese boxes that each wheel was shipped in.

The success of both dairy and pork products sold in England encouraged other business folk to start exporting dressed turkeys, fresh and dried evaporated apples to Britain and Europe. Meanwhile the Noxon Company, a manufacturer of agricultural implements in Ingersoll, was shipping machinery all over the world. By the beginning of the 20th century, the small town of Ingersoll ranked 5th in the Dominion of Canada for the volume of exports. And it all started with cheese.

For more information on the cheese history of Oxford County, visit the Ingersoll Cheese & Agricultural Museum, 290 Harris St. Ingersoll 519-485-5510



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Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

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Whether it's: Paid or Volunteer; Regular or Sporadic,

The Woodstock Ingersoll Echo is looking for contributors of many kinds.
After all, a community newspaper is at its best when it is the product of a community's efforts.

Here's some areas we'd love some help with:

- Local school happenings (sports, clubs, drama, academic, etc.)
- Surrounding area updates (i.e. Beachville, Embro, Innerkip, Sweaburg, Thamesford)
- Specific sports updates (karate, lawn bowling, golf, you name it!)

Historical columns

Features on local people doing interesting things

Submissions from local service groups, clubs, etc. Any other local ideas you may have!

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