

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 1

JUNE 16, 2023

FREE

'Practically Hip', fireworks headline Woodstock's Canada Day event



Celebrate Canada Day with the City of Woodstock on Saturday, July 1, 2023 from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. in Southside Park. The event will have fun for all ages, with live music including the headliner Practically Hip, a Canadian Kids' Zone, marketplace and food vendors and a spectacular fireworks show to close out the night.

Bring a lawn chair and enjoy live music starting at 2 p.m. on the main stage featuring performances by Jack Demarest, Leanne Mayer Music, The Sidewalk Crusaders and Blind Dog Joe. STAGES Kids will sing the national anthem at 5 p.m. and Practically Hip take the stage at 8:30 p.m. You can also enjoy a cold beverage and watch the show from the Woodstock Lion's Club Beverage Garden.

Kids can meet and greet some of their favourite characters from 2 – 5 p.m. and challenge themselves on the inflatable activities, get their face painted or take part in the many other activities in the Canadian Kids' Zone which runs 2 – 7 p.m.

Find all the event details at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/canadaday



LOTS OF FUN AT SOUTH SIDE PARK IN WOODSTOCK

(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Bella Magic, Brant Matthews and Dawn Dreams provided entertainment throughout the duration of the parade as well as at the park on Victoria Day weekend.

Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre celebrates 50th anniversary

STUART BLOWER

Echo Contributor

The Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre (ICAC) will be celebrating its 50th anniversary of teaching and providing arts related programming in the community by holding a fundraising gala and live auction this Saturday, June 17 at 2:00 p.m. at the ICAC and Art Gallery at 125 Centennial Lane.

ICAC was formed in 1972 when a small group of artists including Betty Crawford, Phyllis McFarlane, Isabel Ward, Dinnie Mitchell, Jean Hillis, and Jim Revell approached the town to establish an Arts Centre. Conceived as a teaching centre and an exhibition centre, as well as a gift shop that sold member's works, the centre had several homes before settling into the current building once used as the Boy Scout Hall.

Audrianna DeSouza, 50th anniversary chair says, "We chose an Art Auction as a way to celebrate the artistic contributions of members past and present; you will notice some recognizable names such as Lou Palmer, Heather MacIntosh, Jean Hillis, Pat Gibson and many more."

The event is free to members and the public. A cash wine bar and refreshments will be available to all guests. Under the guiding eye of auctioneer Al Lockhart, works of pottery, stone fabrics, jewellery, clothing, water colours and oils will be up for bidding.

Starting at 2:00 p.m., the auction will feature a variety of media, as well as an incredible variety of quality artwork from our members, available at all prices. You will also find works by renowned artists such as Robert Bateman and Lewis Parker as they have been donated by local patrons and art lovers to support our fundraising efforts.

"We want the public to see the centre and appreciate our art gallery, as well as the incredible work our members have produced. So come out Saturday and enjoy a much-deserved celebration of 50 years of achievement!" DeSouza adds.

Contrasting with the excitement of our live auction, we have also prepared a silent auction that will allow the public to conveniently participate in the proceedings by simply adding their bids to a form available next to the artwork, at anytime during the week.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5

Your Invited
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Saturday June 17, 2 pm - 5 pm
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Interesting Items Are Also Available
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June 12 - June 15, Mon - Thur 9 am - 4 pm
Wednesday and Friday Evening 7 pm - 9 pm





(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

Grabbing a bite to eat between rides were Deep Kaur and her mum, Rangdoh, of Woodstock.

Southside Park comes to life on long weekend



Ellie Raney concentrates on the fishing game at the midway in Southside Park.



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Addi Tabor, Evan Bruce, Nolan Tabor and Aidan Bruce wait for the parade to start on Monday, May 22.



Jacob and Violet Loucks enjoy corn dogs the size of their heads after the parade during Woodstocks Victoria Day festivities in Southside Park, on the weekend of May 19.



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Delilah Degraw, from Woodstock, is eager for her first of many rides at the midway in Southside Park.

Oxford County Pride president: "Pride will continue to be a protest"

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Oxford County Pride has lots of events planned for Pride month.

The 2023 pride guide, posted on the Oxford County Pride website, is filled with events such as a Pride Escape Room at the Woodstock Museum, Paint Nite, Open Mic Night, and drag storytime. Oxford County Pride kicked off Pride Month with flag raising in Woodstock, Tillsonburg, and Ingersoll on June 1. The main event, Oxford Pride Family Day, will occur on June 17 at Museum Square.

Pride this year comes after Norwich Town council approved a motion to ban all non-government flags on township property, including Pride flags. There have also been anti-2SLGBTQIA+ protests at events such as Drag Queen Storytime across North America and attacks towards the community.

Tami Murray, president of Oxford County Pride, said that it's important to remember the Pride movement began as a protest and will continue to be a protest. The Pride movement came after the Stonewall riots in 1969.

"The reason we have pride is for this exact very cause. Discrimination, bias, and the infiltration of other people's perspective on ours, so it's kind of ironic. Pride will continue to be a protest, that is what we do every year and this will continue as we move forward in terms of advocating for human rights," Murray said.

She added that it is not the first time she's had to fight against discrimination towards the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

"I had to do this in the 90s already. I've

been here and I've done it," Murray said. "It's absolutely ridiculous that history is repeating itself simply based on issues of maintaining power and control within a society to continue to oppress."

Oxford County residents can show their support and allyship by attending Oxford County Pride events and standing up for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County Executive Director Kristin Ralph said in an open letter on April 28 that the organization stands with the community following the ban of non-civic flags in Norwich Township. Radio station 104.7 Heart FM reported that BBBS Oxford County offered to return funding from Norwich Township, a move Murray applauded.

"We really need to look at how our values congruent in business and in organizations. Supporting us in that way, using your voice, challenging the false narratives, the misinformation, the propaganda, the rhetoric," she said.

Murray also encourages the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to support each other and rally together.

"When we rally together, we're stronger together than we are as individuals."

Since the raising of the Pride flag could not occur in Norwich, Oxford County Pride, Norwich Residents for Love and Acceptance, along with former Norwich councilor Alisha Stubbs, were invited to Toronto to raise the flag with Toronto Police. It was the first time every Toronto Police station would have the Progress Pride flag.

Visit oxfordpride.ca for more information about the organization and events.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

PROGRESS FLAG RAISING

The Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and OPP West Region Commander, Chief Superintendent Dwight Thib, are committed to supporting the 2SLGBTQ+ (two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer + other identities) communities through initiatives that promote equity, inclusion, diversity, and acceptance of all people. On June 1, 2023, members of Oxford OPP took part in raising the Progress Flag, which marks the beginning of the annual Pride Month.

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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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@Woodstock Ingersoll Echo



@woodstockingersollecho

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 5,00 printed copies of the Woodstock Ingersoll Echo.

Introductions

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

I am beyond excited to introduce myself as the first ever Editor for the Woodstock-Ingersoll Echo. I can't wait to document this important period of history while giving the area the representation they deserve in the media.

My name is Hannah, and you'll be seeing a lot of me around the area as I cover all of the exciting events in Oxford County. In a few short months I've already been introduced to so many lovely people and beautiful places; I can't wait to continue discovering my new home all while doing what I love.

I reached out to Stewart at the Tavistock Gazette earlier this year, after making the decision to move to Ingersoll from my hometown of Kincardine. I jumped at the opportunity to build a brand new newspaper with him. I'm so grateful that he shares the same passion for the industry as I do.

I believe my interest in journalism started from a young age, as I followed my mum around to local events as she worked as the reporter at our local newspaper. Years later, I landed a high-school co-op placement at the same paper she had worked for, and immediately realized that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. At the age of 16, one of my local stories caught the eye of CTV's Wei Chen. It was so inspiring to hear my name on her morning show.

After high-school, I moved to Belleville to attend the photojournalism program at Loyalist College. During my summers, I would return home to work for the South-Bruce Weekender. After college I completed my internship at the London Free Press. Following graduation, I

found myself working dead-end jobs in the Kitchener area, and quickly lost my motivation and passion. In 2019, I received a phone call that changed my life. The same newspaper that my mum had worked for, that I'd co-oped for, wanted to hire me on as their full-time journalist for two local newspapers – The Kincardine News and The Lucknow Sentinel. I moved two hours overnight, and found myself thrown right back into the field. Within days I found myself again.

Prior to COVID, I would find myself working 90+ hours a week, and loving every minute of it. Even in the worst of Bruce County's winter storms, I was sure to be present at each hockey game in a 50km distance. I often recall meeting our deadline from my car between weekend events. I never wanted to make headlines for big newspapers, I just wanted a spot on your grandmothers fridge for years to come. Small communities are strong communities, and I want to help bring us all closer together.

I love writing in small towns, because it means I get to establish meaningful connections with every person I write about, and make lasting connections with local organizations and businesses. I hope readers won't hesitate to reach out to me. Tell me who you're proud of – did your grandson win his school talent show? Did your neighbour grow a pumpkin bigger than her head? Does your newborn cow have a marking the shape of Texas? Tell me all about it – these are all stories I've covered before, and they're some of the most heartwarming experiences I've had. I can't wait to meet you and thank you for welcoming me with open arms, Oxford County. Everyone has their place in the community, and mine belongs under big headlines in small towns.



Wendy Lamond Customer Service Rep

We are very excited for the first issue of the Woodstock Ingersoll Echo.

I wanted to introduce myself. I am your customer service representative for the newspaper. You will see below our guiding principles which serves as the foundation on what this newspaper is all about.

Please feel free to reach out to our editor Hannah or myself if you have any story ideas, questions or concerns and we will do our best to help.

We hope you will enjoy reading the local news as much as we enjoy putting it together for you.

I am looking forward to hearing from you and seeing you out in the community soon.

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

Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre Celebrates 50th Anniversary

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Viewing for all works will take place in our art gallery during business hours, Monday, June 12 to Thursday, June 15, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Unfortunately a planned Hydro maintenance event may not allow the centre to be open during Friday June 16th business hours. As a result, the centre will be open Wednesday during "Art-full Evenings" and Friday evening 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., to accommodate auction viewing.

"The Arts Centre is an integral part of the community, providing a place for artists to gather, create and collaborate. I have heard from some members that they chose to live in Ingersoll because of the Arts Centre and it has not disappointed them. Providing classes, children's programming and exhibitions allows for the public to be a part of this great space as well." States Chair Alayne Brisson

Community expansion projects have continued during this year, with art oriented youth programming for P.D. days as well as summer classes and school bus program days. The centre is always evaluating and improving their approach to how they work with members and the community.

"With funding from FedDev in 2022, the Arts Centre has refreshed itself to welcome a new generation of artists and serve our current membership better. In meeting founding and long-time members it is easy to see why the Arts Centre is celebrating



(STUART BLOWER PHOTO)

Quilting members (l-r) Marion, Pat, Julie and Jocelyn examine a member's quilt work.

50 years and how it has flourished for so long." Adds Brisson

"Covid forced us to do some things differently" says quilter Marion Kramer

"We now continue to have a hybrid approach to our meetings, especially in the winter months, when Zoom is more practical due to the weather. The zoom meetings allow us to hear lectures by expert Quilters. We have even been able to listen to a lecture in Australia, that would not have been practical in the past." She adds

New projects and plans for the fall season include a new Raku firing Kiln for

the potters. This project has recently been completed at a remote site, and with a custom built 350,000 BTU furnace promises to meet the needs of the pottery studio for quite some time.

New this fall will be expanded classes in Photography that will provide mentoring workshops designed to help photographers sharpen their skills and apply them to various photography jobs or projects.

The Oxford Quilters guild was established in 1979 to expand the quilting programs and continues to provide mentorship and expert instructional classes today.

The quilters will be introducing a new Thursday afternoon/evening component that will highlight different themes for each week of the month. Weekly meetings will include group work on quilts to be donated to Victoria Quilts, an organization that makes quilts available to cancer patients. A teaching and mentoring night to help members with their own projects and a members choice "Free for All" meeting.

The centre will also be moving into a new artisan media by developing classes in Stone Carving, which is very under represented in the southern Ontario Oxford County area. Our expanded program of Adult and Youth classes will continue in the Fall.

Since that initial realization and acceptance of the need for an arts resource in the community, in 1972, the centre has continued to provide quality arts programming to all ages from adults, seniors and youth. The centre offers its members, studio space as well as classes open to the public in such varied medias as Quilting, Fibre Arts and Rug, Hooking, Pottery, Painting, stone carving and Photography.

They are always looking for new members and families who want to in our arts community. Complete information is available on our website: creativeartscentre.com or by phoning 519-485-4691.

Q&A regarding the new Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Q: A start-up newspaper in 2023. Are you nuts?

A: I prefer to think that I'm unique. And I like a challenge. But honestly, I know that people still want local news, it's just that the quality of local news has deteriorated so much in recent years that people forget that there's still a right way to do it.

Q: So, what's the right way to do it?

A: Like George Constanza realized in that memorable Seinfeld episode, in this case you've got to "do the opposite." That means, do the opposite of what the big conglomerates have done in recent years:

- Instead of selling the newspaper, let's give it away and make it accessible to everyone;
- Instead of including national news that everyone already gets online, let's focus exclusively on local news;
- Instead of moving editorial staff out of the area, let's have people who actually live in the community report on what's going on here;

You get the idea. Also, if you look at our "Guiding Principles" are on page 4, that's also a good summary of what we're all about.

Q: Why is it just a monthly paper?

A: This decision is based on learning from experience. I own three other newspapers: the St. Marys Independent,



(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

IN THE WORKS

Pictured from left, Woodstock Ingersoll Echo team members Hannah MacLeod (editor), Sarah Cairns (graphic designer), Wendy Lamond (customer service), and Stewart Grant (publisher) met on May 2, 2023 at Woodstock's Charles Dickens Pub to discuss the launch of the first edition of the newspaper. Lee Griffi and Emily Stewart are also members of the editorial team that contributed significantly to the first edition, and it is hoped that many more local contributors will be part of future issues of the Echo.

the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette, and the Stratford Times, and I'm on the board of the Ontario Community Newspapers Association. The Stratford Times was started as a monthly in 2021 and people have really taken to it. It provides a nice summary of what's happening in the community, as well as highlights the various things that are coming up that people can get involved in. But it does take a bit of time to change habits, including how businesses and organizations advertise (and advertising is our only source of revenue). Given the high costs of print-

ing and distribution, a monthly newspaper (as opposed to a weekly) keeps my costs at a manageable level so I don't lose too much money during the start-up year. I'm just a regular guy and don't have deep pockets.

Q: Will it always be a monthly?

A: No, the plan is to increase print frequency as revenue allows. Our St. Marys paper, which has been around since 2000, is bigger and better than ever. It is a weekly paper, and most weeks it is either 28 or 32 pages, packed full of local

content and advertisements. If St. Marys, with population 8,000, can have this kind of paper, why can't Ingersoll (population 13,000 or so), or Woodstock (population near 50,000)?

Q: Is it available online too?

A: Yes, we're working on the website right now at www.theecho.ca. There will be a PDF version of the newspaper that will mirror the print edition. That means that a page 1 ad in print will also be a page 1 ad online, and so on. It's the same experience but different medium.

Q: How can people get involved?

A: That's the key to the success of this paper, is people getting involved. There's any number of ways to do that, but here's a few:

- Contact us with a story idea or suggestion about the newspaper
 - We can't be everywhere at once; so send us a contribution (photo, press release, article) about a local happening
 - Submit a Letter to the Editor
 - If you're with a business or organization, help us cover our costs by advertising; we have very reasonable rates!
 - Suggest a place for us to drop off free copies of the paper to make it more accessible
 - Tell people about the new Woodstock Ingersoll Echo to raise awareness
 - Follow us on social media
- To contact us, please email info@theecho.ca or call/text our number at 519-655-2341.

EZT Council Delays Boundary Adjustment Request

City of Woodstock Looks to Proceed Without Cooperation

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

The City of Woodstock's request to enter into boundary adjustment talks with East Zorra-Tavistock seems to be ramping up a notch.

EZT council last week passed a motion that said, "resolved that the Township of East Zorra Tavistock advise the City of Woodstock that it will consider their request to enter into Boundary Adjustment negotiations when the Township's current Secondary Planning project, and Strategic Planning process, is finalized."

Mayor Phil Schaefer said they have some of their own work to get done before they are ready to have an annexation conversation. "I would say council had a good discussion on the matter. The consensus was that we were not giving a hard no to boundary discussions, just that we wanted to complete our Settlement Area/Secondary Plan exercise and Strategic Plan prior to considering their request." He added that as far as timing goes, the township has advised Woodstock that while the exact timeline for completion of these projects is not known at this time, it is anticipated they will take at minimum

12 to 18 months to complete.

"The Settlement Area Boundary Expansion study that we have undertaken started last year. The first public consultation was held September 8 in Hickson. Since then, the consultants have been engaging with staff at the township and county on the next steps, which would identify specific lands in Tavistock and Innerkip that should be added to the settlement areas to handle future growth in these two villages," added Schaefer. "Servicing strategies for water and wastewater are also considered."

The Secondary Plan portion of the exercise would look at establishing specific land uses and official plan policy direction for the identified lands. "The Strategic Plan will allow Council to build some consensus on the direction the township wishes to take as we move forward, and to set long term goals and how we plan to make progress toward those goals. All 3 of these exercises have public input opportunities."

Schaefer said pushing back negotiations with Woodstock makes sense since "these projects are essential for East Zorra-Tavistock to fully understand our own residential and other development requirements,



Woodstock mayor Jerry Acchione. (Photo contributed)

and that they would like to see them concluded before considering Woodstock's request. We understand Woodstock has growth concerns, but so does East Zorra-Tavistock. Council simply felt it prudent to address ours first."

Woodstock Asking for Provincial Help

The Echo reached out to Mayor Jerry Acchione for comment but did not receive a reply by press time. Woodstock Council will discuss next steps to annex land from East Zorra-Tavistock at their regular council meeting today (Thursday, June 15). Councillors will mull over the staff recommendation that "requests the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to establish a Commission for the purposes of developing a proposal for a restructuring of municipalities by annexing a portion of the adjoining Townships to the City of Woodstock."

The report also said "the Township of

Norwich accepted the invitation and established a boundary adjustment committee. The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock declined the invitation. This essentially negates any opportunity for a boundary adjustment to address residential land growth needs for this term of Council because the residential land supply needs cannot be resolved through a boundary adjustment with the Township of Norwich due to preexisting industrial, environmental, and agricultural MDS constraints." The Echo reached out to EZT Mayor Schaefer for comment but was told he would make a statement following Woodstock's meeting.

The earliest effective date for a residential boundary adjustment will be 2028 when secondary planning for new residential land supply could begin. Secondary planning, including all required studies, can take three to five years before actual construction of new dwelling units could begin. Therefore, it will likely be 10 years before additional residential land supply will become ready for new housing construction.

The report goes on to say "Statistics Canada estimated the population of Woodstock at 49,819 as of July 1, 2022, and that Woodstock is experiencing a 3.2% annual growth rate. The City no longer has the luxury of time to allow another term of Council to expire without action on the issue of adequate residential growth land supply. Allowing the vacant residential land supply to slip below a 5 or even 10-year land supply will severely impact housing affordability and have other unfavorable economic outcomes affecting the availability of employees to support a growing and diversified economy."



TIMES PAST

(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

Pictured above, courtesy of the Ingersoll Public Library, is the cover of the last edition of the Ingersoll Times, dated Wednesday, July 11, 2018. The Ingersoll Times had provided news coverage in the community since 1969. Postmedia announced closure of the Ingersoll Times and the Norwich Gazette on June 26, 2018.

Per that final edition of the Times, "Local and regional news will continue to be available through the Woodstock Sentinel-Review".

Echo

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, July 21, 2023

Friday, August 18, 2023

Friday, September 15, 2023

Contribute to your local community newspaper!

Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to

info@theecho.ca

Khanna Running to Retain Federal Oxford Seat for Conservatives

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Arpan Khanna, the Brampton native and now Woodstock resident, is hoping to keep the riding blue and replace the retired Dave Mackenzie.

Khanna, a lawyer, and father of one, said he's talked to many Oxford residents about what ails them. "I have knocked on thousands of doors and met residents from all walks of life. Whether it was the dairy farmer whose family has been in Oxford for generations, the CAMI or Toyota auto workers, or a newly moved-in family looking for a fresh start, we had positive response to my vision for our riding." He added his commitment to the residents of Oxford is that every single day they will see their member of parliament who is working hard to serve them. "Whether it is Tavistock, Thamesford, Woodstock, Tillsonburg, Ingersoll, Norwich or everywhere in between, I will always be easy to reach and be responsive to the needs of our community."

Khanna said he has heard time and time again that people are frustrated with the current Liberal government. "I am concerned about what I have been hearing from hardworking families in Oxford. After eight years of Justin Trudeau, residents are feeling like they are losing control of



Oxford Conservative nominee Arpan Khanna introduced federal leader Pierre Poilievre at a party rally in Woodstock on May 6th as Khanna kicked off his campaign for the upcoming by-election in the riding.

their lives. The cost of living is rising faster than anytime in 40 years. It no longer pays to work and nine out of 10 young people believe they'll never be able to afford

a home." He said one in five Canadians are skipping meals, and people are going to food banks because they cannot afford to eat. "I am concerned about the Liberals

attacking our farmers. We see that with the carbon tax that puts a financial strain on farmers trying to heat their barns, dry their grain and run their operations. We see that with the Liberal nitrogen cap in fertilizer that our farmers use."

Oxford County is largely rural and agricultural, and Khanna said he's also worried about Justin Trudeau going after law-abiding firearms owners. "Sad to see him attack our farmers, hunters, sport shooters while repeat offenders, gangsters, violent criminals get a slap on the wrist and are released on bail." Khanna himself is a licensed firearms owner and says he shoots at a local range in his spare time.

Oxford's economy has been growing for years but Khanna said he wants to renew Oxford's economic prosperity. "We have unique economic advantages and immense potential that many other ridings do not. We are leaders in agriculture and farming. We have a massive automotive industry with CAMI and Toyota. We have highways 401 and 403 intersecting here in Woodstock. We can be that transportation hub and gateway to the world. It's time we champion our economic successes, attract the brightest and best, support our small businesses, make more, grow more, encourage hard work again and unleash Oxford's full potential."

Ingersoll Native Groat will represent the NDP in Oxford By-election

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Cody Groat will be the NDP candidate on the ballot for the June 19 Federal by-election in the riding of Oxford.

The 28-year-old Ingersoll native feels his life journey gives him a different perspective coming into politics. "I grew up in subsidized housing and spent some time in rented farm properties in Foldens and Mt. Elgin. My family background is one that I don't think has necessarily been reflected in our political system." Groat says his parents both had addiction issues but says he has been sober his entire life. "My grandparents were survivors of the Mohawk Institute Residential School, and I am a band member of the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve."

Groat adds despite his young age he does have extensive governance experience. "I have served on a number of local, regional, and national boards of directors and that has really given me a taste of what I hope positive politics can be." He is a member of the joint board of directors for Alexandria Hospital in

Ingersoll and Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital as well as the Stevenson Children's Camp in Dorchester. "That was a camp I attended as a child that caters to lower income families." He is also on the board at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology in London. "A mix of my personal experiences as well as some of my community involvement made me realize that politics is something I was interested in engaging in," he adds.

Groat is an assistant professor in the Department of History and the Indigenous Studies Program at the University of Western Ontario and he sees sustainability as a major election issue. "Oxford County has a rich history in both agriculture and vehicle manufacturing. Sustainability is going to be something we need to take seriously for a lot of issues that shape our community. There is a lot of money out there to shift to sustainable economies and development and I think Oxford can really be a leader in securing those investments." He adds it could be securing energy efficient vehicle manufacturing or further incentivizing sustainability within the ag



Ingersoll native Cody Groat will represent the NDP in the Oxford riding.

sector which he says has always been a forward-thinking enterprise. "You have to think about what your successive generations are going to look like on the farm, so sustainability has always been at the forefront of the thought process.

But assuring policy-wise that we can support sustainable practices on farms is something I want to see."

Groat adds cost of living is also an issue of great importance to him. "My parents did not have much in the way of financial security for most of their lives. Growing up we relied on foodbanks in some cases, and I think recognizing that is a very real experience in our community and trying to assist with that cost of living crisis as best we can." He adds being able to come from that perspective in his own childhood is going to help informed discussions.

Groat defeated former federal NDP candidate Matthew Chambers for the spot on the Oxford ballot following a recent nomination meeting. If elected, Groat would be the first Indigenous person to represent Oxford.

The federal seat opened up after 19-year member of parliament Dave MacKenzie retired in late January due to health reasons. Groat will run against Conservative candidate Arpan Khanna, Liberal David Hilderley, and Wendy Martin who will represent the People's Party of Canada.

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Hilderley Representing Liberals in Oxford By-election

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

One of Woodstock's most familiar faces hopes to be the next Member of Parliament in the riding of Oxford. David Hilderley is running to replace former Conservative MP Dave Mackenzie who retired due to health concerns.

Hilderley came second in Woodstock's mayoral race in November and said he's ready to run again. "I am running as the Liberal Candidate because Oxford County needs a strong voice in Ottawa. I have lived and worked here for nearly my whole life. My wife and I raised our family here and I have served in leadership roles serving our community for over 24 years. I know Oxford, and I am ready to serve the community that I have seen grow and evolve into what it is today."

The real estate agent said if elected he wants to continue the Liberal plan to help residents make ends meet. "Time and time again, I hear about the need to make life more affordable for families – to keep building on Liberal programs like \$10 a day childcare and investments in more affordable housing in our communities. For our farming communities, it's about preserving farmland and protecting the environment to maintain Oxford as a prime, prosperous farming community." He added it will also



David Hilderley is running to replace former Oxford Conservative MP Dave MacKenzie.

be critical to protect and support our growing senior population and ensure everyone has a safe and secure retirement.

The City of Woodstock is attempting to enter into annexation talks with East Zorra-Tavistock, something Hilderley said isn't a federal matter. He added that his focus will be on housing. "Although the boundary adjustments are a local matter between the Townships and the City, I am committed to

bringing more affordable housing options to municipalities while protecting our environment."

The Liberal plan is to make housing more affordable by doubling the rate of home construction over the next 10 years, banning foreign ownership and cracking down on speculation, and supporting renters who are struggling with the costs of housing. "This past April, the Liberal government introduced the tax-free First Home Savings Account to help Canadians save up to \$40,000 towards the purchase of a home. We have a strong plan to make housing more affordable, and as your Member of Parliament, I will be a champion for this issue," he added.

The Liberal party and Justin Trudeau have been slumping in the polls as of late, but Hilderley doesn't think that will be a factor on June 19. "This by-election is about local representation and local issues. We want the kind of practical, positive vision for the future that the Liberal Party offers, and a plan that will put the needs of Oxford residents at the forefront." He added that Pierre Poilievre and the Conservative Party continues to push reckless policies that would roll back positive progress.

On the campaign trail the candidate said he has been getting a lot of support as someone who is homegrown. "The most

important issue in this by-election is local representation. I am very thankful to have received our former Conservative MP Dave MacKenzie's endorsement in this race. Even as a former Conservative, Dave knows that local representation is vital to our community's success, and I'm glad to have earned his trust."

Hilderley has lived and worked in Oxford County for all but two years of his life. He and his wife Patrice have three children and eight grandchildren. "I was an educator for 34 years, working as a teacher, consultant, vice-principal, and principal at several schools throughout Oxford County. I have been a realtor for the past 17 years, helping families settle into homes here."

His community involvement includes Chair of the 2001 Canada Games Committee, and he has co-chaired the Golden Gala, helping to raise \$1.5 million for local charities and the new Woodstock Hospital. "A lifelong resident, I am ready to serve the community that I have seen grow and evolve into what it is today. And as Member of Parliament, I will work with the Liberal team to keep Canada moving forward and continue to make life more affordable, deliver clean air and a strong economy, make housing more affordable, and deliver on the priorities that matter most to the residents of Oxford and all Ontarians."

Martin Running a Third Time for Federal Oxford Seat

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Wendy Martin hopes her third run as Member of Parliament in Oxford will be a charm. After running in 2019 and 2021 she has secured the People's Party of Canada

nomination for the June 19 by-election.

"I am throwing my hat in the ring again as I feel Oxford needs a real voice to be heard in Ottawa. I am not a status quo politician. I am finding solutions to the problems the government is creating for farmers, families, small businesses, and entrepreneurs." She added that inflation is out of control, creating more stress on the average person and family to put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

One of Martin's biggest concerns is the 30 to 35 per cent tariffs on nitrogen. "I was talking with one farmer who paid his bill and then got a bill later for over \$1,100 in tariffs. Trudeau put this tariff on the nitrogen coming in from Russia who supplies 85 to 90 per cent of the imports of fertilizers like nitrogen in Canada. This is why Canada should not be supporting the UN 2030 and 2050 agenda." Martin added she has a solution for recapturing nitrogen for cash farmers. "This is expensive and with the Liberals attacking the basic use to sustain the growing needs our cash farmers have an uphill battle. The PPC will be the only party to pull out of these UN agenda that the Conservatives started by signing on to these."

Martin added she is also concerned about Woodstock's plan to adjust their boundary into East Zor-



Wendy Martin, People's Party of Canada candidate

ra-Tavistock farmland. "I am not in support of taking our farmland away to build housing developments. In 2009 I watched how removing farmland started in what was a tiny town of Milton. It started with a few farms being sold for development and today it has grown so fast there is barely any farmland left." She added that if we continue to take the farmland for development, we start to lose food production.


The PPC has seen improved numbers as of late, even reaching nearly 10 per cent support in some polls.

Martin says it is encouraging. "Last election we received nationally just over five per cent of the vote and locally I received just over 10% in Oxford, tripling my numbers from the previous election. This means people are starting to hear about the PPC. We never stop spreading the word

even between elections. You will always see me flying my PPC flags and talking to people."


Martin's party has gone on record and said they would like changes in abortion laws in Canada, something she said has been a topic of discussion on the campaign trail. "I am from Norwich so there is a lot of talk about many issues affecting our community and questions about abortion. The PPC wants new legislation on abortion because today you can abort legally right up to birth." She is also concerned about the issue of gender ideology. "It is being pushed on children and bill C-4 took away parents' rights and they could go to prison if they do not agree with a child's decision on gender. We need to stop this mutilation and castration of our children. Those who are detransitioning are also not getting the help they need."

Martin said some of the other issues she has been hearing from Oxford residents while door knocking are health care and the lack of accountability. "We all know that this is a provincial issue as the federal government does do health transfers but there is no accountability as the money just goes into a general fund. A PPC government will make sure those funds go directly to healthcare and the citizens of Ontario will be able to hold the provincial government accountable." She added inflation needs to be held in check but the excess spending from the current Liberal/NDP coalition government is not helping. "It will be difficult as it seems both of those parties do not care about inflation. People should know that every five years the Bank of Canada negotiates inflation with the government to set the inflation rate and the PPC will have it set at between zero and two per cent."



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Markus Running in Oxford By-election for CHP

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Longtime Oxford County farmer John Markus is the Christian Heritage Party candidate in the June 19 federal by-election for the highly coveted seat.

Markus and his wife Garma have been married over 50 years and have lived in Oxford County since 1967. "We are still involved in farm operations every day. We are blessed with 4 children and 15 grandchildren, one of which has gone home to be with the Lord. I have been a farmer in the Beachville area for my entire life with three children who are actively involved in farming, and my fourth child is in the Grand Rapids area, with her husband being involved in property management."

Markus has been a chairman and elder many times in his local church and was president of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario from 1993 to 1997. He was appointed by Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman to a 3-year term to the Normal Farm Practices Tribunal and is a member of the Oxford Land Division committee.

"I'm the local farm boy. We are well-connected in Oxford County, we are a household name, and many people have come up to me and thanked me for running because I am a known commodity which has been quite inspiring", said Markus. He told the Echo the carbon tax hurts farmers despite being environmentally friendly for years. "Farmers by nature lower their carbon footprint year over year because if they don't, they go out of business. To demonstrate the reality of that we have gone from 40 bushels a year of corn to 200 and milk we have gone on our own farm from one kilogram per five acres to one per acre." Markus



John Markus, Christian Heritage Party candidate

said if everyone had done what agriculture had done, there wouldn't be a carbon footprint problem. He added climate change is actually helping Canada grow from an agricultural standpoint. "We have had a world increase in temperature of .8 degrees since 1900. A professor from the University of Guelph says that has given us a 14 per cent increase in food production. Because Canada is a northern climate, we only contribute one to two per cent of climate change, it is a win win win for Canada."

The City of Woodstock is trying to enter into boundary adjustment negotiations with East Zorra-Tavistock in the

hopes of creating future housing options for the city. Markus said there are plenty of other lands housing should be built on. "There are lots of other places outside Oxford where poorer land should be investigated. When you look at it objectively, Canada can handle people since we are growing more food, but immigration has to be done in an orderly way in Oxford County. This land is too good to put houses on."

Markus is running for federal office for a third time and while he admitted the CHP is a fringe party in a way, he is getting support from people who historically voted mainstream including Conservative. "People outside of our own circles are calling me and telling me they are completely frustrated with the events in Oxford County. They are concerned about everything happening from parachuting in (Conservative candidate Arpan Khanna) to Justin Trudeau. They are telling me its not so much about the party anymore, they feel comfortable with me because of how I have represented myself and the county over the last 56 years."

Green Party's Baker Running for Oxford Seat

LEE GRIFFI

Echo Correspondent

Cheryle Baker will be the Green Party of Canada's candidate in the upcoming Oxford by-election. Baker is an advocate for social justice, public service, and environmental issues and has a background in law.

Baker's profile on the Green Party website says she has dedicated her life to empowering individuals and businesses. One of her current passions is the Waterloo Region Grassroots Response, a charity she discovered while working with Stephanie Goertz, her fellow Green Party candidate. Through their efforts, the charity has experienced remarkable growth and support, even reaching communities beyond Waterloo Region.

Baker's commitment to advocacy extends to various causes, including cancer, epilepsy, food banks, shelters, housing, schools, and healthcare. Her extensive advocacy work has gained recognition from city officials, news outlets, and even other political parties, such as the PC Party. With a strong connection to her community in Oxford, Cheryle's personal investment in the agriculture sector and her expertise in industries like automotive and aerospace have

allowed her to support local businesses and create employment opportunities.

She is also actively involved in education and mentoring apprentices, while advocating for policy and legislative changes that benefit the wider community. As an Indigenous Hungarian Canadian and a caregiver, Cheryle brings unique perspectives and problem-solving abilities to Parliament, making her a valuable asset in driving positive change and improving society.

"I am pleased to welcome Cheryle Baker as the Green Party candidate in the Oxford by-election. With former Conservative MP Dave MacKenzie endorsing

the Liberal candidate, this is a by-election where anything could happen. Disillusioned supporters of the mainstream parties should consider Cheryl as their next Member of Parliament," said party leader Elizabeth May." Like all Green MPs, Cheryl's number one job is to work for her constituents. Greens do not whip votes. Greens work very hard in the interests of their constituents. Cheryle Baker will be a dedicated and outstanding Member of Parliament."

"Cheryle Baker is committed to her riding and to advancing Green policies needed to address the climate emergency," said the Deputy Leader Jonathan Pednault "I'm thrilled to see Cheryle run again at a time when we all need to double down on this government's failing approach to reducing our emissions and preparing our communities for the devastating impacts of climate change."



Cheryle Baker, Green Party candidate.

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Weekend Quiz

- 1) In what country was Elon Musk born?
- 2) What is the smallest US state by area?
- 3) What is a Beaujolais?
- 4) What height is a regulation NBA basket?
- 5) Who was the first Disney princess?
- 6) Name Fred Astaire's famous red-haired dancing partner.
- 7) Paul Newman ate fifty eggs in which film?
- 8) Who was the first woman pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic?
- 9) Which member of the Beatles married Yoko Ono?
- 10) The name of which African animal means "river horse"?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

Ingersoll ends 2022 with surplus of \$947,977

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Although the amounts are still subject to final audit, it appears as though the Town of Ingersoll operated in the black to the tune of nearly a million dollars for the year ended December 31, 2022. Iryna Koval, Director of Finance / Treasurer, provided the preliminary results to Mayor and Council during the regular Council meeting on Monday, June 12.

The overall surplus occurred despite a shortfall in property tax revenue of \$162,455, or 1.0%, versus the budget of \$15,558,290.

Koval said that the shortfall in property tax revenue related to new growth, which did not meet expectations due to the slower-than-projected construction activity in the year.

A budget vs. actual comparison of major budget categories was provided by Koval, and the Echo has displayed these figures on page 10.

The most significant driver of the 2022 surplus came from positive developments within the Treasury Administration category, which showed a net expense of just \$378,926 versus the budget of \$1,025,494. Offsetting the projected expenses in this category were two significant revenue streams. Firstly, the Town of Ingersoll benefited from the declaration of an approximate \$277,000 dividend declared by ERTH Corporation that was not budgeted for. Secondly, the Town realized significant increases in investment income during 2022 as a result of the Bank of Canada increasing interest rates.

Across various budget areas, Koval explained that the Town of Ingersoll saw savings in wages and salaries versus budget. Largely, this was due to the overall challenges experienced by so many organizations in 2022 of hiring staff. When employees retire or otherwise depart, gaps in these positions can occur due to longer-than-expected time required to fill those jobs.

Koval also shared that COVID continued to impact certain budget areas. For example, Victoria Park Community Centre (VPCC) experienced a revenue shortfall, particularly in the first part of the year, as COVID impacted memberships, aquatics user fees, and youth program revenue. Similarly, Museum operations experienced reduced program and fundraising revenues due to COVID-19 restrictions.

As the 2022 operating surplus of \$947,977 represented one-time funding that cannot be relied on to recur on an ongoing basis, Koval explained that the year-end surplus should not be used to reduce future tax impacts. In other words, the 2023 budget will be unaffected by the 2022 surplus.

	2022 Budget	2022 Actual	Surplus/(Deficit)
REVENUE			
Property Taxes	15,558,290	15,395,835	(162,455)
EXPENSE			
Police	2,859,490	2,789,819	69,671
Engineering	2,445,680	2,415,426	30,254
Public Works	1,857,264	1,755,919	101,345
Parks	1,434,484	1,351,430	83,054
Fire	1,215,075	1,188,739	26,336
VPCC	1,205,771	1,298,890	(93,119)
Treasury Admin	1,025,494	378,926	646,568
Clerks	647,170	621,939	25,231
Fusion Centre	540,486	517,055	23,431
Arena	479,801	474,783	5,018
Economic Development	461,380	335,598	125,782
Information Technology	405,165	384,898	20,267
Chief Administrative Officer	335,445	335,185	260
Council	235,155	223,409	11,746
Museum	200,662	195,647	5,015
Municipal Office	162,078	149,703	12,375
Building Inspections and Property Standards	47,690	30,492	17,198
TOTAL EXPENSE	15,558,290	14,447,858	1,110,432
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	-	947,977	947,977

Highlights from the June 1 Woodstock Council Meeting

Presentation of Student Awards of Excellence

Two of the 2023 Student Civic Awards of Excellence recipients were on hand today to receive their awards from Council. Ricquel Hunter, from College Avenue Secondary School and Aislyn Rooney of École Secondaire Catholique Notre-Dame were presented with a certificate and \$1,000 cheque recognizing their outstanding contributions over the course of their high school careers. The award recipients from Woodstock's other three high schools will be attending a future meeting to receive their awards.

Declaration of Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic

Representatives from Domestic Abuse Services Oxford (DASO) and Ingamo Homes attended Council to request that the City of Woodstock join other communities including Lanark County, Renfrew County and the City of Ottawa in declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic. Council approved a resolution with the declaration and referred the delegation's presentation,

which contained substantial information about the local and province wide impact of this crisis, to the Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee for consideration through the implementation of the Oxford Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

Southgate Centre Renovation Update

Council received an update on the Southgate Centre renovation now that the schematic design and construction estimates are now complete. The proposed design incorporates a 12,700 ft² addition that would include a large hall that could be divided into three multi-purpose rooms, a new main entrance and lobby with lounge area for casual social gatherings, a new office area and new café space and atrium as well as storage space for the new hall. Further, the renovations will include additional accessible washrooms and enhancements to the kitchen area. Based on the identified needs, the construction cost estimate came in at approximately \$9 million, which is nearly \$2 million over the approved capital budget allocation.

Council approved an increase to the

project budget of \$2 million, conditional on Southgate Centre raising 10 per cent of the budget increase to a maximum of \$200,000. The additional funds will be financed through debt.

Future of Outdoor Pools and Splash Pads

During the opening inspections of Lions Pool this year, staff discovered tears in the pool liner. They reached out to service providers to understand what options existed to fix or replace the liner so the pool could be opened for summer operations.

Council voted in favour of keeping Lions Pool closed for the 2023 season to allow for further analysis of what it would cost and what redevelopment would be required to allow the pool to continue to meet the community's needs into the future. In light of this decision, Council also approved making admission to the Spray and Play Wading pool at Southside Park free for the 2023 season.

Staff also provided a report to Council proposing changes to the recreational water needs study and capital plan. In 2019,

Council approved in principle a plan to replace Lions Pool with a new outdoor pool near Southside Aquatic Centre and replace the current Southside Wading Pool with a new splash pad. The intent was to build a new splash pad at Southside Park in 2023, retire the wading pool in 2024 and build the new outdoor pool in 2025.

Council voted in favour of moving the splash pad to the upper soccer field at Reeves Community Complex and undertake stakeholder consultation for this location. However, Council elected to not remove the new outdoor pool construction from the 2025 capital plan so that they could have two options to consider when the project and construction costing analysis comes back this fall.

If you would like more information about the items above, or any of the other topics discussed during the council meeting, visit www.cityofwoodstock.ca/agendasandminutes. Council meetings are live streamed on the City's YouTube channel and recordings of the meetings are also posted online following the meetings.

visit us online at www.thecho.ca

New follow-up program for sexual assault survivors in Oxford County addresses barriers

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

A follow-up care program for sexual assault survivors in Oxford County will help residents who previously faced transportation barriers to access the service in London, ON.

London's St. Joseph's Health Care's Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program (RSADVTP) and the Oxford County Community Health Centre (OCCHC) announced last month in a press release that follow-up care for sexual assault survivors can now be accessed within Oxford County. The partnership is considered the first of its kind in the Province in Ontario.

St. Joseph's RSADVTP offers services such as forensic evidence collection and

follow-up care over a period of several months. Oxford Sexual Assault Services (OSAS), part of the OCCHC will now provide the follow-up care to those in Oxford County.

"When funding for the sexual assault program moved to the OCCHC, Laura McCreery and I knew this was an opportunity time to look at how we serve those living in Oxford County a bit differently and start to break down some of the barriers to care the residents are often facing," Cassandra Fisher, coordinator of the RSADVTP, said in an email interview with the Woodstock Ingersoll Echo.

The program at the OCCHC will eliminate transportation barriers to get to London.

"Folks will be able to access that care in their own community at the health centre

provided by our primary care team at the Oxford County Community Health Care Centre," said Laura McCreery, program coordinator of OSAS and sexual assault therapist.

The main clinic in Woodstock and the point-of-access clinic in Tillsonburg offer follow-up care. The centre also provides assistance to those who face transportation barriers with in Oxford County.

The centre is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. Forensic evidence collection will still be done at St. Joseph's 24/7 due to the time-sensitive nature of the service. The hospital will then refer patients in Oxford County to OCCHC for follow-up care over a six to 12-month-long period.

Follow-up services include STI testing, ongoing treatment, and medical documen-

tation of injuries. Counseling, risk management and safety planning, education and information, and help with navigating systems such as police statements and court systems is also available via OSAS.

"This is an innovative step in the province and we're really hoping this can serve as a model for other rural locations facing similar barriers," McCreery said. "We're really excited to have this in Oxford County and finally address the long-standing barriers for survivors of sexual violence."

Fisher said working with the OCHCC has been a positive experience.

"It is truly amazing what two organizations can accomplish in such a short amount of time when they come together from a place of truly putting the patient at the centre of the care strategy."

Mothers building a strong community in Oxford County

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

Brittany Bratt and Danica Dixon have a few things in common; they are both from Oxford County, and they are both Realtors... but one connection that has brought them the closest together is that of motherhood.

Earlier this year, the duo found themselves really connecting in their roles as mothers, and wondered how many others were out there. On March 20, they made their first Instagram post, having zero followers. Only months later, they are nearing 900 followers.

"We both found motherhood to be quite isolating and felt there was a need for more community," they said. "We knew pretty quickly after meeting each other that we wanted to build something together and as we chatted more about what we felt like we needed in our community for moms we just decided to create it ourselves. Then the Oxford County Moms Club was born."

They hosted their first in person event, a Mom walk, on April 13, and eight peo-



Left, Oxford County moms Danica Dixon and Brittany Bratt recently launched their podcast together, called "No more lonely moms", after the success they saw this year with their Instagram and in-person group, "Oxford County Moms Club".

Above, Oxford County mums gather for a morning walk

ple came out. They now host walks every week and have anywhere from 15-25 moms show up.

Other than their weekly walks throughout Oxford County, this summer they will be hosting Splash Pad days through July

and August and they also have a partnership coming up with The Learning Hive in Woodstock in August. All events can be found on their social media pages.

Outside of their events they also offer a great online community through their

social media accounts, @oxfordcountymomclub. They are currently on Instagram, Facebook, and have a Podcast called "No More Lonely Moms", which launched on Monday, June 5 at 9 a.m.

Oxford County appoints new Chief of Paramedic Services

On June 9, 2023, Oxford County CAO Ben Addley announced the appointment of Ryan Hall as Director/Chief of Paramedic Services.

"I am extremely pleased to announce that Ryan Hall has accepted the permanent position as Director/Chief of Paramedic Services," said Addley. "I have worked closely with Ryan for the last seven years, and I know his passion for excellence in paramedic service operations will impact the lives of countless individuals in Oxford County."

Hall has 23 years of progressive experience in paramedic operations, serving the last 13 years in Oxford County. He began his career with Middlesex-London Paramedic Services and worked as a Tactical Paramedic for the Ontario Provincial Po-

lice (OPP) before joining Oxford County in 2010 as Superintendent – Operations. In 2015, he accepted the role of Deputy Chief – Operations & Performance, and in September 2022, Hall stepped into the role of Acting Chief following former Chief Ben Addley's promotion to CAO.

In assuming the leadership role of Paramedic Services, Hall takes on a \$19 million portfolio overseeing 140 highly-skilled medical professionals. Paramedic Services specialize in pre-hospital care, providing emergency treatment to stabilize a patient's condition, initiating rapid transport to hospitals via ambulance, and facilitating emergency and non-emergency transfers between medical facilities. In 2022, Oxford County Paramedic Services responded to 19,232



calls for service and had 4,097 patient interactions through the Community Paramedicine program.

Hall said of the appointment, "As I step into the role of Chief, my priority is to construct a future-focused strategic blueprint, concentrated on building a robust infrastructure, fortifying resources, optimizing staffing, refining medical directives and creating new models of care, and strengthening community partnerships. Our goal, as we navigate the post-COVID landscape and look towards the future, is to continually adapt and rise to any challenges and opportunities that come our way, thereby ensuring that Oxford County Paramedic Services is always ready to serve our growing and diverse community in the best possible way."

Manson Tattoo hopes to make its mark on Ingersoll

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

Manson Keeler has spent the last month putting the finishing touches on his new space in the Ingersoll downtown, Manson Tattoo.

The artist grew up in Southwestern Ontario, in places such as Thamesford and Stratford. He currently lives on a farm outside of town with his family, where he enjoys his chickens, gardening and the peace and quiet.

Keeler has owned and operated Manson Tattoo in the east end in London for 15 years. He studied Fine Art and History at the University of Windsor, with intentions of being a teacher.

"I ended up quitting school and the rice factory I worked at, and opening up my first shop in Wallaceburg called Virtue Tattoo, many moons ago," he explained. "Opening up in Ingersoll gives me a nostalgic feeling about my first shop, that being, that anything is pos-



Manson Keeler hard at work

sible - not only for the tattoo work, but for my mural painting work as well."

"The last four years have left a huge mark on everyone, and its time to heal from the experience we all shared and

rebuild our lives," Keeler continued. "I believe art can help do that. It inspires us and helps us transcend our fears, both real and imagined. It makes us feel hope, which is the fuel of the human heart. I believe that is why I came to Ingersoll."

Keeler has been tattooing since 1997. He has worked guest spots and tattoo conventions in Canada, Brazil and Italy.

"I'm very happy to be in Ingersoll," he concluded. "The community has been friendly, welcoming and kind and it seems to be just my speed."

Manson Tattoo is now open and taking appointments for tattooing and mural services.

Ingersoll's Memorial Park Bandshell to be reconstructed



Left, Overall view of the gazebo structure. Above, Mortar deterioration and stone loss at step sidewall location (Source: RIMKUS Structural Review of Gazebo, dated April 27, 2023)

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Built in dedication to those who fought in World War I, the bandshell in Ingersoll's Memorial Park at 230 Wellington Street has fallen into considerable disrepair over the years. However, Town of Ingersoll Council took a big step towards rectifying this when they voted unanimously during Monday, June 12th to completely renovate the structure in accordance with the staff report filed by Joe Sym, Manager of Facility Operations and Parks.

The total budget price to design and reconstruct the bandshell is \$168,795, following analysis conducted by MCI Design-Build Corporation. An application for funding under Trillium and the Community War Memorial Funding Program is to be initiated, and failing those options, funds are available within the Parks Facility Reserve.

The bandshell is closed at the present time due to an assessment which deemed the structure unsafe. Problems are several but include noticeable corrosion of the metal roof support post baseplates, cracks in the concrete components of the structure, and undermining of the stone masonry.

During his remarks during the Council

meeting, Mayor Brian Petrie noted that he and Scott Gillies (Museum Curator) had reviewed some old photographs of the bandshell awhile back, looking for clues on what the original roof looked like. Upon finding a photo from 1990, they noted that even back then, there was a chip off the cement. In other words, the bandshell is long overdue for some proper attention.

Councillors unanimously supported the notion of restoring and reconstructing the bandshell as opposed to removing it.

Following comments by Councillors Van Kooten-Bossence and Rick Eus, Councillor Mike Bowman said, "I have to echo the comments that have been around the table so far. Being historically minded, I do know this has big significance to this town and it would really be a shame to see it torn down. I too am in favour of rebuilding and reconstructing it so that people can enjoy it again."

Mayor Petrie added before the unanimous vote, "It was built as a memorial to those who fought in World War I, so really to me there is no choice but to maintain that in perpetuity and restore it back to its former glory."

Petrie also suggested that once restored, efforts should be made to designate the bandshell as a historical landmark so to protect it for future generations.



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

Keeler working on a mural that was located on the second oldest bar in London, on Dundas St. The art has since been covered up and the bar closed.

Operating candy store "Reel Treat" for Peters family

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

A store known for its popcorn, handmade cotton candy and lollipops, and other cinema snacks came out of a family project.

Angila and Adam Peters opened the Oxford Drive-In in 2020, the year the COVID-19 Pandemic began. The drive-in closed for the season in November 2020 and the popcorn maker was left unused. Angila told the Woodstock Ingersoll Echo that she suggested to Adam to deliver popcorn, pop, and candy to customers.

"It went bananas, which was awesome," Peters said.

The movie snack delivery service, known as Reel Treats, operated out of the garage until a retail space was found. Reel Treats Popcorn and Sweets then moved into its new location on 495 Dundas Street within a year. The 4,000 square-foot space fits in food production, a party rental space, a larger retail area, and a place for families to drop in and play from a selection of more than 100 free board games.

"It was really all just out of the drive-in," Peters said. "I never had plans to open a candy store, but it works and it was perfect for our branding and for everything else so that's why it led to this."

There was a mass following on social media as well, with 16,000 followers for the Oxford Drive-In. Woodstock also did not have any other candy stores quite like it.

"We have lots of regulars and lots of new people coming in and it's doing really well," Peters said.

Reel Treats Popcorn and Sweets sells items that usually cannot be found when grocery shopping. The store carries candy popular in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s and



items imported from Britain, Japan, and the United States. The cotton candy and the lollipops are made in-house.

"Popcorn's still our number-one thing," Peters said.

On March 31, The Oxford Drive-In announced on social media that the outdoor

cinema is up for sale. Peters said that with four out of six kids off to university, the success of Reel Treats, and Adam running two accounting firms full-time, it is time for new ownership.

"It started out as a big family project for 2020 and then it did awesome, so we were

like let's do it again," she said. "We lost two kids to university and now we've lost four kids to university so we're like 'It is for someone else's family now.'"

New ownership for the Oxford Drive-In is expected to be announced soon.

Visit reeltreats.ca for more information.

Ingersoll town wide yard sale a success



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

Above, young entrepreneur Chloe Franchetto took advantage of the town wide yard sale to open up her lemonade stand. The beautiful but warm weather made her business a very welcomed road stop.

Right, Edward and Jane King were happy to 'spring clean' and even happier to draw quite a crowd to their front yard during the town wide yard sale.



Thamesford Calithumpian celebrations



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

Participants in the fun run gathered afterwards to find out who won best dressed.



The Thamesford Lions always put on a successful fish fry for the Calithumpian celebrations in Thamesford. Working behind the scenes, from left, were Scott Barr, Bill Durston, Wayne Romphf and Geoff Wallace.

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Louella and Gus Embury, of Thamesford, were out for the fun run in all their best superhero apparel, as per the theme.



Rayna Innes transforms into a beautiful mermaid at the face-painting station during the Thamesford Calithumpian festivities over the weekend of May 19.

30
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Winning best dressed family were the Rivera's; mom and dad Daniel and Amy and sons Danny and Dylan.

Indigenous crosswalk installed in downtown Ingersoll

WOODSTOCK INGERSOLL ECHO STAFF

info@theecho.ca

Over the last year, the Ingersoll Business Improvement Area (BIA) has been instrumental in sprucing up the downtown and supporting local artists and businesses through the installation of several dynamic art installations.

The latest of these, an Indigenous Crosswalk, was installed earlier this month at King Street East.

At 1 p.m., on Tuesday, June 20, the public is invited to take part in a "BIA Celebratory Tour of Art Installations" that will commence at the Downtown Gazebo. The tour will include the new Indigenous Crosswalk, Black History Sculpture, ITO-PA Mural, Ingersoll Lanes Mural, and Fusion Centre Picnic Tables/Art Display. There will also be an opportunity for those in attendance to meet and greet the talented artists who created the various installations.

The BIA gives thanks to the Government of Canada's Tourism Relief Fund through FedDev Ontario and the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation (SWOTC) for financial assistance with this program which is part of the goal towards building back a stronger tourism sector in downtown Ingersoll.

About the Ingersoll Indigenous Crosswalk

The BIA worked closely with Patricia Marshall, Founder and Co-organizer of IISAN (Ingersoll's Indigenous Solidarity and Awareness Network) and local artist, Deb Campbell, Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre, to complete the Indigenous Crosswalk in Downtown Ingersoll. Below is their description of what is symbolized by various aspects of the crosswalk:

This design incorporates seven (7) stripes to represent the seven generational teachings we see in many Indigenous cul-



tures.

The red comes first to symbolize Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit peoples.

This colour is represented first since MMIWG2S+ people were one of the first major issues Indigenous people faced on Turtle Island when colonial peoples landed on these shores. We put them first to make a statement that they are not forgotten and to show the spirits our tribute to them.

The Blue represents the need for clean

water in Indigenous communities and to bring awareness to how Indigenous Canadians are disproportionately affected by a lack of basic needs being met. A lack of clean water is an issue that goes largely unnoticed; however, it has been affecting communities like Nesksantaga First Nations for over a quarter of a century and closer communities like Onieda First Nations also deal with a lack of clean water. There are many other needs such as lack of housing and adequate food resources that affect

Indigenous Canadians daily, both on reserve and even in our major metropolises.

The orange stripes are in tribute to the children and families affected by the horrific legacy left in the wake of residential schools - a legacy that includes 100 years of legalized oppression, abuse, and misuse of powers. Over the last few years, thousands of children have been unearthed who were buried in both marked and unmarked graves. Thousands of families have grieved losses that were continuously denied by both religious and political institutions until now. The unearthing's did spark our nation into action.

The orange and blue stripes are alternating in the centre to represent the interconnectedness of the issues that plague Indigenous people.

The red stripe closes the design to bring to the attention that MMIWG2S+ is an issue that is still affecting Indigenous families to this day.

The symbols floating within the coloured stripes give a tangible example of the issue they represent: a dress in the red for MMIWG2S+, a handprint in the orange for Every Child Matters, and a water drop in the blue for clean water in Indigenous Communities.

The design of this crosswalk was carefully thought out and planned to bring awareness, show solidarity, and represent hope. This crosswalk represents the resilience, dedication and creativity of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples.

The design and original concept of this project was done by local Métis mother Patricia Marshall, founder and co-organizer of IISAN (Ingersoll's Indigenous Solidarity and Awareness Network).

Final digital artwork is done by Deb Campbell of ICAC (Ingersoll Creative Art Centre).

Pilot program to divert agricultural wrap from the landfill

Oxford County is launching a new pilot program for agricultural plastics at the Oxford County Waste Management Facility (OCWMF).

Local farmers can now dispose of agricultural plastics, including silage bags, bunker covers, bale wraps, fertilizer bags, and salt bags (black, blue, and white), for \$50/tonne. All materials must be reasonably clean and free of contamination. Materials must be sorted according to type, packed in appropriate bags, and tied up. Loose and excessively dirty material will not be accepted and categorized as garbage. Unacceptable materials include net wrap and twine mesh.

Oxford County farmers generate approximately 300 tonnes of bale and silage wrap annually. As faithful stewards of the county's valuable agricultural resources, farmers now have an environmentally-conscious and sustainable way to dispose of plastics that would otherwise end up in a burn pile or the landfill.

Oxford County will provide collection bags to area farmers free of charge, which (when full) go into a collection bin at the Waste Management Facility. The plastic material will then go to a regional vendor for end-market processing. Local farmers may request collection bags by contacting the Waste Management Facility at wasteman-

agement@oxfordcounty.ca or 1-800-755-0394. The agricultural wrap pilot program supports Oxford County's Zero Waste Plan and goal of extending the landfill to the year 2100.

For more information, please visit www.wasteline.ca.





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Ingersoll native Davin Gray named Navy Vets' MVP *Annual Awards Banquet held in Woodstock*

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

The Woodstock Navy Vets of the Provincial Junior Hockey League ("PJHL") held their annual awards banquet on Wednesday, April 26 at Fore! Indoor Golf and Clubhouse in Woodstock.

Last season, the Navy Vets finished fifth in the South Doherty Division with a record of 18-21-1-1.

Davin Gray had a wonderful rookie season with Woodstock and was recognized with three awards on the evening. The Ingersoll native, who posted team highs with 26 goals, 27 assists, and 53 points in 41 games played, earned the Most Valuable Player, Top Scorer, and Rookie of the Year Awards.

Ethan Szabo had a remarkable playoff performance and earned the team's playoff MVP and player top scorer awards. After posting 25 goals and 45 points in 38 regular-season games, he averaged nearly two points per game in the playoffs, with 13 points (7 goals) in 7 games.

Kitchener native Jake Phelan was named the club's Top Defenceman for 2022-23. The playmaking rearguard had 31 points in 35 regular season games.

The Most Sportsmanlike Award was

given to forward Sam Barry. The Guelph native was sent to the penalty box just twice during the 39 regular season games that he played.

Rhylan Warford of Ingersoll was recognized as Most Improved Player. As a 2005-born player, Warford has a few more years to continue to make his mark in junior hockey.

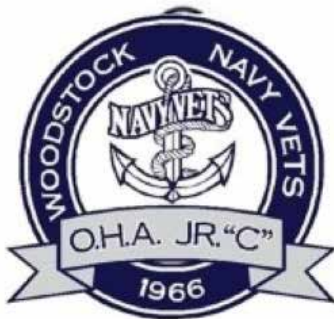
Joey Zhang was named the Most Dedicated Player. The Markham native had a strong playoff performance with 8 points in 7 games.

Also during the evening, framed jerseys were presented to overage players Griffin Sinden and Tommy Zufelt as they concluded their junior hockey years.

Sinden scored at better than a point-per-game pace

during his two seasons with the Navy Vets. The Tillsonburg native's junior career also included time with the Tillsonburg Hurricanes (GMHL Junior A), Dorchester Dolphins (PJHL), Waterloo Siskins, London Nationals, and St. Marys Lincolns (GOJHL).

St. Thomas native Tommy Zufelt also spent the last two seasons with Woodstock, contributing 29 points in 43 regular season games. Prior to his Navy Vets' experience, he played in the PJHL with Port Stanley, Aylmer, and Hespeler.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

At the recent Awards Night for the Woodstock Navy Vets, framed jerseys were presented to players Griffin Sinden and Tommy Zufelt as they concluded their junior hockey years.




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Senior hockey returns to Woodstock

Lakers relocate from Plattsville

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

The news broke in late April, but for those who have missed it, senior hockey is returning to Woodstock this upcoming season. The Lakers organization of the Western Ontario Super Hockey League ("WOSHL") have relocated from Plattsville to Woodstock for the 2023-24 season and will be playing out of the Southwood Arena at the Reeves Community Complex.

Woodstock will become the largest city in the WOSHL by population, and the Lakers will be second team in Oxford County, joining the Tillsonburg Thunder. The WOSHL's other teams are the Stratford Fighting Irish, Tilbury Bluebirds, Elora Rocks, Strathroy Jets, Orangeville Blitz, Alvinston Killer Bees, Delhi Flames, Dunnville Aeros, and Petrolia Squires.

The Woodstock Lakers are the first hockey team above the junior level to call Woodstock home since the Oxford Blues folded in 1999. Players in the league are 20+ years old and have typically come to the WOSHL with experience that includes junior, collegiate, or professional hockey.

Lakers' owner Jeff Zehr spoke recently with the Echo and described what to expect with the new team.

"We want to be known as a communi-

ty-first team. We're going to work hard and roll up our sleeves in the community and we hope people will come out to our games, have a good time, and cheer and support some local players." Zehr shared that the team will comprise several players from Woodstock and surrounding area, along with some top players from farther afield, such as last year's League MVP Kevin Hu, who hails from Mississauga.

"Everybody wants to win so we're going to put out the best team that we can and try and bring some Super League championships to Woodstock," said Jeff.

With the league's teams comprised of men who have previously made their marks in junior, university or pro ranks, Zehr says that the talent level on display will be immediately evident to fans. "There's a big difference between junior hockey and senior (men's) hockey."

A big part of the WOSHL is also entertaining the fans and supporting the community off the ice.

"With the entertainment, we spend a couple extra minutes every intermission so that we can do different events and have crowd involvement. For the three hours that we are at the arena for our games, we do want to build the family atmosphere and for people to be entertained from the minute they arrive to the minute they

leave."

"We do really pride ourselves on being a year-round team, meaning that we'll be in the community doing events here, there and everywhere," he added. "We're very active in the community because at the end of the day, when we do play our home games, we need the community as the sixth man on the ice."

The Lakers will take to the ice in Woodstock for Saturday night games, with a few Friday nights sprinkled into the schedule when the Navy Vets aren't playing. The Western Ontario Super Hockey League has a 24-game regular season schedule, meaning 12 home games for each team followed by playoffs.

Zehr says that the community support thus far has been fantastic, with sponsors stepping up to get their names on the new team sweaters (three sets: black, white, and red). However, there are a variety of ways to get involved and support the team and interested

sponsors are encouraged to reach out at jeffzehr@live.ca.

For more information on the new Woodstock Lakers, follow the team on social media or visit the club's website at www.woodstock.woshl.com.



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Mascot "Woody" (instagram @itsallaboutthewoody) of the new Woodstock Lakers Super League hockey team paid a visit earlier this month to thank Chris Weitzel and Chris Produce & Seafood for signing on as an Ultimate Package team sponsor for this coming season.

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.

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Woodstock Stallions shine in early WOSL play

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Across all divisions, the Woodstock FC (Stallion) teams have had an outstanding start to the Western Ontario Soccer League season, with a combined record of 11 wins, 6 ties, and 1 loss.

In Premier Division play, the Stallions A team sit atop the standings with an undefeated record of four wins and two ties. They have outscored their opponents by a 22-6 count. Payton Krienselokker leads the league with 7 goals in the team's first 6 games, while teammate Jonathan Kam has bulged the twine 6 times. Grant Takacs and Keaghan Brett are also among the top 10 league scorers with 3 goals apiece. Goaltender Connor Dalton has recorded 2 shutouts so far this season in wins over Taxandria and Carib.

The Stallions' upcoming Premier Di-

vision home games are Friday, June 23rd (8:30 p.m.) against London Croatia A, and Sunday, July 16th (6:00 p.m.) when they host the Carib Stars. All Woodstock Stallion home games are at the Cowan - Guarantee field.

In the WOSL's First Division, the Stallions B team joins LS Croatia A in first place with perfect 4-0-0 records. Logan Dunlop, Moses Harry, and Brendan Taylor (call up) have paced the attack with 3 goals each for the Stallions.

Top scorers for the Woodstock Stallions C team (Third Division) are Brenden Taylor (4 goals), Jason Wright (3), and Steve Ramsey (3), while Zac Mann has posted 2 shutouts in goal. For the Ingersoll Flyers, Adam Wojnowski and Jamie York lead the way with 2 goals each.

For more information on the Western Ontario Soccer League including upcoming games, please visit www.wosl.e2esoccer.com.

WESTERN ONTARIO SOCCER LEAGUE

Premier Division

(standings through June 10, 2023)

	GP	W	T	L	GF	GA	+/-	PTS
Woodstock Stallions A	6	4	2	0	22	6	16	14
Jagiellonia	6	3	2	1	16	3	13	11
London Croatia A	4	3	1	0	17	2	15	10
London Olympians	6	2	3	1	15	10	5	9
GCFC Premier	2	2	0	0	4	0	4	6
Taxandria A	5	2	0	3	9	9	0	6
Chatham Express	6	2	0	4	8	21	-13	6
Tillsonburg FC A	4	1	2	1	5	4	1	5
St. Thomas A	4	0	0	4	2	16	-14	0
Carib Stars	5	0	0	5	4	31	-27	0

WESTERN ONTARIO SOCCER LEAGUE

First Division

(standings through June 10, 2023)

	GP	W	T	L	GF	GA	+/-	PTS
LS Croatia A	4	4	0	0	23	4	19	12
Woodstock Stallions B	4	4	0	0	14	4	10	12
Chatham Attack	4	3	1	0	9	2	7	10
London Scottish	5	2	1	2	9	6	3	7
African Carib Utd.	4	2	0	2	6	2	4	6
London Thunder A	4	1	0	3	5	18	-13	3
London Croatia B	4	0	0	4	1	11	-10	0
Taxandria B	5	0	0	5	3	23	-20	0

WESTERN ONTARIO SOCCER LEAGUE

Third Division

(standings through June 10, 2023)

	GP	W	T	L	GF	GA	+/-	PTS
Norfolk Athletics	5	4	1	0	18	4	14	13
St. Columban B	5	3	1	1	24	12	12	10
Woodstock Stallions C	5	2	3	0	14	5	9	9
LS Croatia B	4	2	1	1	12	7	5	7
Ingersoll Flyers	5	2	0	3	8	10	-2	6
Tillsonburg FC B	4	1	1	2	4	18	-14	4
GCFC Third	5	0	3	2	9	12	-3	3
Taxandria C	5	0	0	5	1	22	-21	0

WESTERN ONTARIO SOCCER LEAGUE

Fourth Division

(standings through June 10, 2023)

	GP	W	T	L	GF	GA	+/-	PTS
Strathroy UFC B	5	3	1	1	13	9	4	10
Brazukas FC	4	3	0	1	14	5	9	9
PCL	4	3	0	1	14	10	4	9
St. Marys Juggernauts B	4	2	0	2	8	11	-3	6
Woodstock Stallions D	3	1	1	1	4	3	1	4
AEL FC	3	0	1	2	3	9	-6	1
London Thunder B	5	0	1	4	9	18	-9	1

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Woodstock runner beats personal best in Germany

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

Amanda Nelson, of Woodstock, has turned a pastime into a passion - currently holding national records - in the matter of a few short years.

"I have been running consistently for eight years," said Nelson. "I started running with the jogging stroller and my two beagles when my kids were little and fell in love with it right away."

Currently, Nelson holds the 100 mile national record of 14:45:51 and the twelve hour national record of 135.072k.m., both in 2022. The athlete was the last female standing in the Backyard Ultra World Championships this past October with 55 hours, 6.7k per hour and, more recently, obtained the female Canadian Backyard record again this May in Germany with 56 hours, 6.7k per hour.

This race, which took place in Rettert, Germany, was called the Backyard Masters Race of the Champions. 22 countries world-wide gathered, and the best in the country competed. This race was 6.7k.m., per hour, on the hour, until the last person is standing.

"You can only go one lap farther than your assist, which is the second last person standing," explained Nelson. "In this event, I was the last female standing with 56 hours, 375.5km and 5,600 metres of elevation. The reason this race is 6.7k every hour is

because every 24 hours the distance adds up to 100 miles."

Nelson finished 8th overall out of 34 participants worldwide.

"[Preparation took] a lot of extremely early mornings to do some loops, and a lot of high mileage weeks leading into the race - ramping up to 100 mile weeks which were actually totalling closer to 200k.m., week,s because I walk as well, which is also good backyard ultra training," said Nelson. "I also do about three or four hours of strength training a week."

Nelson has a fews races coming up, a little closer to home. She will participate in another backyard ultra on the Civic Weekend in London, called the Persistence backyard ultra. Following this, also in London, she will be participating in a 24 hour in September called "That Dam Hill."

As for 2024, next February Nelson will be going international again to compete in a 100k trail race called the "Black Canyon Ultra" in Arizona.

Additionally, Nelson participates in a local group run called Run Oxford County, which meets Sundays at 8a.m., at the trailhead that leads to the Pittock dam just off Old Tecumseh St. in Woodstock and Tuesdays at 6:30p.m., at Brickhouse Brewpub in Woodstock.

Nelson is currently an endurance coach. Information on training can be found at her website, nelson-running.ca.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Amanda Nelson, front, with her "crew" which included sister Melissa Arnold and parents (far left and right) Diana and Peter Slager.

Woodstock Lakers roster taking shape for 2023-24

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Woodstock Lakers' Jeff Zehr and his crew have had a very productive month thus far, retaining several top players from last year's roster while making important additions to strengthen the squad.

Heading the list of committed returnees is last year's WOSHL Most Outstanding Player **Kevin Hu**. In 2022-23, the Mississauga native led the Lakers (and the league) with 30 goals and 44 points in just 22 games played. Now 25 years of age, in his junior days he was a standout in the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League (GOJHL), including his final year with St. Thomas where he posted 80 points in just 49 games.

"Bringing Kevin back is not only great for our team, but good for the league as well. Hu is extremely talented but more importantly an amazing human being," said Zehr.

The Lakers' second-leading scorer from last season is also coming back this season. **Hunter Dubecki** finished 8th in WOSHL scoring in 2023-24, posting an impressive 35 points in 21 games played. The 23-year-old Brantford native played

four years of GOJHL hockey before moving to the Senior ranks. In his final season, with the Elmira Sugar Kings, he racked up 79 points in 49 games to finish among the league leaders.

The Lakers' captain this year will be Kitchener native **Mitch Randell**, who finished in the top 5 in defensemen scoring last season, with 18 points in 23 games.

"Mitch is an absolute go-getter off the ice," said Jeff Zehr. "He coaches minor hockey, is the front runner and leader for charity events and public appearances as well as making sure his teammates are ready to go for games."

Creating further offence from the blue-line in 2023-24 will be **Andrew Randozzo**. The 33-year-old native of Hamilton brings with him a wealth of experience. In junior, he was a top defenceman with the Drummondville Voltigeurs of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League, including playing on the championship team during the 2008-09 season. His pro career included three seasons with the Mississippi RiverKings of the Southern Pro Hockey League.

Holding down the fort in goal will be **Ben Edwards**. Just 21 years of age,

the Brantford native recently completed a strong junior career including the last three seasons with the Cambridge RedHawks of the GOJHL. Last year, the 6'2" goaltender posted a strong 2.56 goals against average and .909 save percentage. He was a 30th overall OHL draft pick in 2019.

Zehr expects to announce several more player commitments over the coming

weeks.

"Your best recruiters are your players," he said. "We've built a hockey culture that we try and improve on every day and better and stronger, on ice and off ice."

It should be an exciting season of senior hockey here in Woodstock as the Lakers try and win their first Super League championship.

INGERSOLL TUESDAY NIGHT SLO-PITCH LEAGUE

(standings through June 10, 2023)

	GP	W	L	T	RF	RA	+/-	PTS
Pylons	5	5	0	0	129	78	51	10
Athletics	5	4	1	0	154	75	79	8
Dbacks	5	4	1	0	137	96	41	8
Goodfellas	5	3	2	0	120	121	-1	6
Jagerbombs	5	2	3	0	134	96	38	4
Sociables	5	1	4	0	92	136	-44	2
Wolves	5	1	4	0	55	153	-98	2
Contractors	5	0	5	0	61	127	-66	0



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MIDWESTERN ONTARIO SENIOR BASEBALL LEAGUE

(standings through June 10, 2023)

	GP	W	L	T	RF	RA	+/-	PTS
Woodstock Nationals	4	4	0	0	42	13	29	8
Listowel Legionnaires	6	3	2	1	44	38	6	7
Kincardine Cubs	4	3	1	0	33	24	9	6
Lucan Irish 9	7	3	4	0	43	47	-4	6
Mitchell Astros (JR)	3	2	1	0	22	20	2	4
Hanover Hitmen	4	1	2	1	23	30	-7	3
Mitchell Astros (SR)	2	1	1	0	7	8	-1	2
North London JR Nationals	5	1	4	0	32	43	-11	2
Byron Storm	5	1	4	0	21	44	-23	2



Karate

Members of the Competition Team at Ingersoll Karate have qualified for the 2023 Karate Canada Nationals in Laval, Quebec July 7-9th. The athletes competed in provincial qualifying tournaments organized by Karate Ontario over the past year, including the Ontario Winter Games. Matthew will be competing in Men's -75kg Kumite (sparring), Olivia in the 12-13 Female +52kg Kumite, Yaser in both 14-15 Years Male Kata (forms) and -52kg Kumite, and Ziad in both 16-17 Make Kata and -55kg Kumite. Yaser and Ziad both won gold this past February at the Ontario Winter Games in Renfrew County in the Kumite divisions to secure their qualifying spot at Nationals this summer.

To help cover the costs, the team has organized a fundraiser – Gardening Ninjas! These athletes will come and help with gardening and grass cutting and proceeds will be used to help cover their travel and registration expenses. The team would like to thank all the students at Ingersoll Karate for their support and encouragement. They also want to thank Shauna from Radiant You for the help with meditation and goal setting and Duane from Team Wiafe Fitness for pushing them in strength and conditioning sessions.



Builders Club

The newly formed Builders Club recently raised \$530 from their Bake Sale on Friday, May 26th. The Bake Sale took place outside of the Fusion Youth Centre where the youth meet on Wednesday evenings. The club started in March and this was the first event they organized! In addition to selling baked goods, they also sold raffle tickets and had games like cornhole set up.

The Builders Club is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll. Kiwanis members Becky, Kim, and Scott help to mentor and advise the youth as they develop leadership skills through planning fundraisers and other service projects. Craig Boddy, Manager of the Fusion Centre, also supports the youth in the club. The Builders Club will take a break during summer months, but will come back again in September. New members, ages 10 to 14, are always welcome to join!



IDCI Key Club/Key Putt

Pictured here are members and advisors of the IDCI Key Club, a youth service organization for high school students sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Ingersoll. Key Club members have recently opened the Ingersoll Key Putt (mini golf) for the season. For the month of June, it is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. It will be open during the week in July and August. A new website will soon be available to stay updated on new events happening at Key Putt. Leagues, themed nights, birthday parties, and more are being planned to keep youth active this summer! Key Putt is a youth led initiative to support entrepreneurial skill building and service leadership. Key Putt is also an approved service provider for Act-i-Pass participants! Starting in July grade 5 students will be able to play for free when they show their Act-i-Pass.

Ingersoll families invited to get hooked on fishing



WHAT A CATCH!

Above, Dad, Eric Hedges, watches on as children Charlie and Maggie give fishing a try during the Rotary Clubs fishing event at Smiths Pond on June 10. About 75 families came out to participate and almost everyone left with a fresh catch! Right, Jordan Johnston and dad, Matt, head off from a successful day of fishing at Smiths Pond in Ingersoll on June 10.



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

Talking mental health in the "field"

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

Eleri Morris grew up on her family's dairy farm located in Kintore. She has also worked on other farms in Ontario, Alberta and in the UK. Morris has held various positions in the Ag industry and currently works as a Dairy Nutrition Consultant in Oxford County.

"Agriculture and farming is an incredibly rewarding field to be involved in," she explained. "I have a lot of admiration of the incredibly strong people who farm. It is an industry that offers continuous learning, a chance to care for and connect with the land and an incredible community."

While agriculture is a rewarding industry for many people, it can also offer some extreme challenges for others. External factors such as the weather, pricing, finances, insane debt loads and more personal isolation for those that farm alone can contribute to mental health issues in the field. There are also challenges with the conventional family structure such as quality time with family, strains on the family dynamic, challenges of not being understood by non-farming family/partners/spouses and friends.

"It is extremely difficult to understand the farming mentality, that to farmers, the farm almost always comes before everything," explained Morris. "This contributes to higher divorce rates than the general population. Succession planning is also a massive strain on the family dynamic as the farm is such a high value asset that passing things over to the next generation has become even more difficult."

Despite all of challenges farmers face, the conversation around Mental Health in Agriculture is only just beginning.

"There is kind of this attitude that emotions are viewed as weakness and are not really accepted. If you feel down just work harder," she said. "This can make it exceptionally isolating to struggle with mental



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

From left, Eleri, Isobel and Rhian Morris were all involved in bringing the mental health workshop to life.

health in this community. The conversation and attitude toward mental health is beginning to change, but we still have a ways to go."

Morris says that she has personally experienced the isolation of struggling with mental health in agriculture.

"I started feeling depressed and having suicidal thoughts on and off as a teenager and this only enhanced into my adult years," she explained. "Growing up in a farming family I always felt as though this was a weakness, a failing if you will, of mine. I thought if I just worked harder and achieved more these feelings would shift."

"They didn't, and I felt extremely alone and entirely confused and misunderstood," she continued. "I didn't tell anyone in my family that I was experiencing these feelings until I was in my late twenties and I spent most of my life struggling alone."

These thoughts and feelings reached a

head towards Morris' 29th birthday, when she felt she couldn't cope any longer and began to make plans to end her life.

"A friend called me and for whatever reason I answered, I didn't tell him my intentions but he somehow seemed to know something was off and we spoke for hours," she recalled. "That night I sat awake continuing to deliberate staying or leaving. In the morning I confided to another farmer who had also been struggling with the realities of farming and we began an open dialogue about our struggles."

"Finding this understanding in someone else in the industry made a massive difference and we encouraged each other to seek help, while also having open dialogue about our struggles," she explained. "In agriculture you have to be mentally tough to survive and I feel as though struggling with mental health was viewed as unacceptable and something you were to deal with behind closed doors. There is still a lot of shame and stigma in our culture around struggling and as such an already isolating career, we need this to change."

Morris and her mother decided to become involved in helping care for those in their industry because of her personal struggles as well as her sisters struggles with post partum depression following the birth of her first child.

One day, Morris' mother came across a Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) email stating that DFO was looking to partner with rural communities across Ontario to host a variety of workshops on mental health in agriculture.

"She signed us up and we were selected to host a workshop in Embro," explained Morris. "That was our first time hosting a mental health seminar to try and bring the awareness and open up dialogue in our community."

Morris has also participated in the Ontario Federation of Agriculture programing for In The Know and is a member of the Guardian Network in Ontario, the latter of which is a suicide prevention program for agriculture.

"I also am now very open to anyone I

speak to about my struggles in mental health and the difficulties of this in the agriculture community," said Morris. "My long term intention is to bring more programming to our community and to individual agricultural commodity groups. I also wish to help members of the farming community in their journey to accessing mental health support and understanding."

Morris is currently working towards further education that will allow her to become a resource to members of the Agriculture community who want to speak to someone who understands farming.

"Connect," she advises. "Find someone who can act as a safe ear for you when you need support. Whether that is your neighbour, your partner, a friend, your nutritionist, your vet, whoever you feel the most comfortable talking to. I guarantee that they would rather hear that you are struggling and that you need their support or help, than to lose you."

Morris says that suicide rates in the agriculture community are substantially higher than those of the general population and she firmly believes that this is due to the isolation farmers face.

"Struggling isn't a weakness and although it never seems like there is enough time in the day, you need to take care of yourself," she urged. "Schedule a phone call with someone you care about when you are out planting, or ask a friend to come visit you on the farm, give your favourite cow a good brushing, show your children the industry that you love. Do the things that fill your happy bucket, because this job is too challenging to never take the time to do at least some of the things you enjoy. And if you urgently need help reach out please. Neighbours and family members, keep an eye out for your farmers and please take the time to listen when they need an ear."

Morris says that she is more than happy to listen. She can be found on Facebook at Eleri Morris. Her profile picture is of a cow!

REACH OUT

- Farmer Wellness Initiative
Access to free, professional mental health counselling support by calling the toll-free number 1-866-267-6255
- Locally the Woodstock hospital offers many outpatient services and they offer walk in counselling services on Tuesdays and Wednesdays
- Contact your doctor
- Go to the nearest hospital/ ER
- Find resources at ConnexOntario
- Call 911 or Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000
- The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention
- <https://www.dcontario.org/> this is a distress and crisis helpline for Ontario
- Talk Suicide: 1 833 456-4566 or text 45645
- Assaulted Women's Helpline: 416 863-0511; Toll-free: 1 866 863-0511
- Kids Help Phone: 1 800 668-6868; Languages: English and French



ROTARY CLUB HOSTS FISHING DAY

(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Past president Bob Lenny says "over for over ten years, the Rotary Club has been stocking Smith's Pond as well as providing bait and fishing rods for this annual event. The day has been dedicated to Lawrence Beckett, long-time Rotarian. Above, Scott Smith steps in to help his children, Lucas, Ella and Jordyn land the perfect catch.

Wartime volunteer "Farmerettes" gain recognition through upcoming play

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

On Tuesday, May 9, a good crowd came out to the Beachville Museum to hear Bonnie Sitter and Shirleyan English speak about the "Farmerettes". The Farmerettes were a large group of volunteer teen girls who replaced male farm labour when the men enlisted for military service between 1941 and 1952.

Sitter came to learn about the Farmerettes after discovering an old photo in her husband's collection some years ago. The photo had no names, and only stated "Farmerettes about 1946". Intrigued by the mystery, Sitter went on to learn more about the "Farmerettes" and to this day, with the help of English, continues to collect photos and stories from the high-school aged girls, now in their 90's.

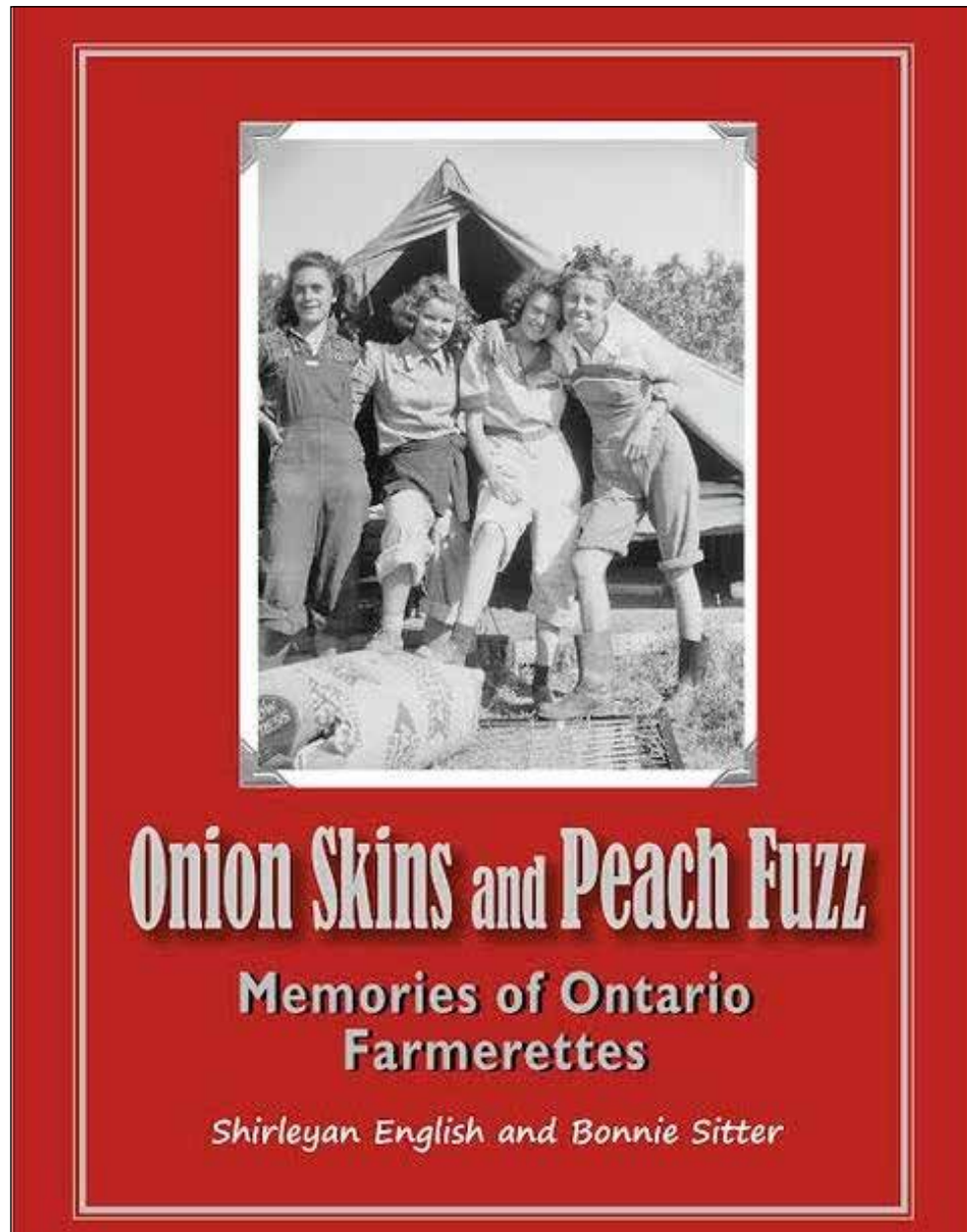
"As I researched, I discovered some interesting stories about The Ontario Farm Service Force and the program designed to deal with the labour shortage caused when men left farm labour to enlist in military service," explained Sitter. "These girls laboured on market garden farms and in orchards in Southwestern Ontario and the Niagara Peninsula. The program was so successful it continued for seven years after the war ended."

The Dept. of Labour, YWCA and Board of Education were also involved in the program as accommodation, transportation, labour secretaries, cooks and housemothers, for example, all had to be considered when the plans were being made.

It is estimated there were between 20 and 30 thousand Farmerettes. They came from all over Ontario, but a few from Quebec and there were war evacuees as well. They volunteered with mar-



Farmerettes lived in this tent at the Lou Schenck Farm, RR 3, St. Catharines in 1941.



A NOVEL SUCCESS

Jeanette West Barbara Murray Muriel Blair and Peggy Burt on the cover of "Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz"

ket gardening vegetables, known then as truck farming, orchards, vineyards, berry picking and canning factories. The girls paid \$4.50 a week for room and board. They handed in their ration books when they arrived at camp. They hoed many different crops and picked all types of fruit and vegetables plus working in the packing sheds and in the canning factories where fruits were canned and soup was made.

"One day a friend asked me what I was 'up to', and I told her I was learning about Farmerettes," explained Sitter. "She asked if I would like to speak with a Farmerette and of course I said yes! She explained her mom had been a Farmerette and was now living in Goderich and she could arrange for me to visit her. That meeting was perfect. The seventeen letters she wrote to her parents and sister in Toronto from Camp in 1946 when she lived in a Nissen hut with three other girls at the Tregunno farm had been saved and returned to her. Best news was that they were available for me to read."

Sitter continued to collect information about the Farmerettes, which

mation.

"She worked for the Sitter family in the onion and peppermint fields and dated their son George. At the time she didn't know that George became my brother in law. What a surprise," said Sitter. "I phoned Shirleyan and we agreed to meet. She had planned to write an article for a magazine about being a Farmerette when she retired in 1995 from the London Free Press and in fact advertised for former Farmerettes to contact her. The newspaper ads garnered many responses, some long detailed letters even, but the article didn't get written."

The article may not have been written, but this did inspire the pair to put together a novel, titled "Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz; Memories of Ontario Farmerettes." The novel took about a year to write and was nominated for a Women's History Award. It is also being developed into a play and should be on stage at Blyth Festival Theatre in Blyth and 4th Line Theatre in Millbrook in the summer of 2024.

"Little did I know that the photo would lead to co-authoring a book and a friendship with a lady who could have been my sister in law," Sitter laughed. "Honouring the Farmerettes and acknowledging the food production by the young ladies who volunteered from cities, towns, villages and rural areas across Ontario is past due. So many girls came from Northern Ontario, many of them having never been further than ten miles from their home and never having seen a field or orchard."

"The camaraderie was special as they worked together, making up songs about their camp, talking about movies, music and boyfriends and where they would hitchhike on the weekend. Girls, whose homes were in the Toronto area, would sometimes spend \$2 for a return ticket on the SS Cayuga and cross Lake Ontario if they were stationed in the St. Catharines or Queenston area. They stepped up to the plate, so to speak, and took the pledge (and motto) to 'lend a hand!'"

eventually led to an article being written for The Rural Voice. This article was then read by a Farmerette herself, who responded via a Letter to the Editor, where she recalled many memories of her summers spent at Thedford Camp in 1952. This Farmerette turned out to be English, who has been working with Sitter since, to gather infor-



Essex Tomato Harvest

Oxford holds majority vote against hospital privatization

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

On May 26 and 27, over 30 ballot boxes could be seen across Oxford County. These stations were set up, in addition to an online voting system, to allow residents to vote for or against the privatization of hospitals in Ontario.

According to Bryan Smith, who took a leadership role in the weekend, privatization would mean that 'routine' surgeries would move out of hospitals to clinics, leaving the surgery suites in our local hospitals empty, yet making the fixed costs of the hospitals higher in comparison with each surgery, so a drain on the hospitals' financial resources.

"The routine surgeries would also mean that local hospitals would have less volume of surgeries among which the complicated ones would then stand out more," he explained. "Clinics generally refuse complex cases, people with multiple health issues – heartlessly called 'co-morbidities' by some. There is no increase in personnel – doctors, nurses, PSW's, technicians – planned by the province so the clinics would drain qualified staff and further disable hospitals' ability to respond to emergency and planned treatments."

Smith went on to explain that the costs in clinics are supposed to be covered by OHIP. However, the Ontario Health Coalition has found instances of higher costs overall being incurred through the introduction of private clinics.

"The province would have us believe that adding private clinics will speed access to surgery," he said. "This is patently false since there is nobody new to do this. Alberta dabbled in it but actually experienced a slow-down in people's access to surgery when private clinics were permitted by the province."

"As for the cost side, Quebec did a study and found that having private

clinics perform surgeries made the costs 150 per-cent of doing them in public hospitals, so draining the province's health budget even faster."

In Oxford County, 4,425 total votes were collected, with 98.6% voting against privatization, with over 400,000 people casting a ballot across the province.

"Typically rural areas have less access to hospitals and emergency services – look at all the announcements of emergency ward closures in rural areas around us – which means longer travel to urban hospitals when minutes count, such as serious accidents, heart attacks and mental health crises," said Smith. "All over the province the votes were like Oxford's, meaning that we can work to have the government roll back its misinformed and disastrous plan."

"Additionally, the government should have done a full public consultation before launching a change of this scale,"



(ALMA MARTIN PHOTO)



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

STOP PRIVATIZATION

Left, Lindsay Wilson and daughter, Violet. Above, Alma Martin with a load of ballot boxes he continued. "Since they didn't, it is the right and duty of every resident of Ontario to make themselves heard on the issue: If the government will not consult the public, then the public needs to do the consultation and inform the government. A failure to consult is really to insult."

"The work was exhausting, but the success in the number of volunteers, the number of willing host businesses, the number of votes and the No percentage of those votes was very rewarding," Smith reflected. "The message is clear and has been heard at Queen's Park, were all the Oxford

paper ballots were taken and delivered in to the Legislature, which recesses for summer this week and doesn't return until September 25, when hopefully the government will back up on this like they did on their threat of the use of the notwithstanding clause against the salary requirements of Educational Assistants helping the most needy students and the Custodial Staffers keeping schools safe and clean."



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

PRIDE MONTH BEGINS

On June 1 to mark the beginning of Pride Month, a good crowd attended the flag raising in downtown Ingersoll.

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Langlois Eco Homes: Pioneering sustainable living in Embro

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

John and Sue Langlois, the visionary owners of Langlois Eco Homes, are transforming the housing landscape in Embro and setting a new standard for sustainable living.

Having migrated to Oxford County in the mid-1960s, the couple has dedicated themselves to farming and contributing to their local community. Today, their deep connection to the land over time have culminated in the establishment of Langlois Eco Homes.

The Village Farm, located on the southern edge of Embro, is the site where the Langlois' dream is taking shape.

"The construction of the first phase, encompassing five acres, is already underway," says Nicole Langlois.

Acting as both developer and builder, Langlois Eco Homes offers six move-in-ready townhomes that have been certified as Passive House - an impressive achievement.

Additionally, Sinclair Homes has completed and sold several net zero and net zero ready single-family homes, with more homes available for quick possession or in the pre-construction stage.

While many homes are already available, the entire construction of the first phase is expected to be completed in 2024. Prospective homeowners can choose from a range of options.

"Starting at \$895,000, they are geared to people across the spectrum: from young families to seniors, and even multi-generational families," states Langlois.

The Eco Homes offer a minimum of



A VISION COMING TO LIFE

Langlois team, from left: Ed Marion, Nicole Langlois, Ian Hartman, Sue Langlois, Devin Gras, Marc Langlois, Glenn Hartman, Paul Hartman, John Langlois, Raymond Hartman, Chris Hartman.

2,200 square feet of living space, featuring three spacious bedrooms and three full bathrooms. Some units even have full walkout basements, providing an additional 1,600 square feet for potential living space. The homes are designed to maximize natural light through strategic placement of windows and boast stunning interior finishes, including contemporary oak flooring, solid wood staircases, quartz countertops, and custom cabinetry throughout. Accessibility features on the main floor, such as low-threshold doors, wide hallways, and a barrier-free shower in the ensuite bathroom, make these

homes inclusive and accommodating.

What makes Langlois Eco Homes truly exceptional is their commitment to eco-conscious living.

"Our townhomes are built differently from most other homes and they perform differently," Langlois says. "Regarding the passive house principles that form the foundation of these homes, differentiating them from traditional builds. The Passive House approach focuses on minimizing heat loss or gain through the building by incorporating high levels of insulation, meticulous air-sealing, triple-glazed windows, and high-performance doors. This

design allows the homes to rely on passive heat sources, such as the sun, appliances, and occupants, while maintaining exceptional energy efficiency."

Additionally, an energy recovery ventilator ensures fresh, filtered air is supplied to every room. The result is a home that not only reduces environmental impact but also offers enhanced comfort and long-term cost savings.

While Langlois eco homes represents their first project, the Langlois family has plans for more high-performance homes and townhomes as part of a larger development in Embro. Parks, trails, and community gardens are also in the works.

"We're excited to think about the many ways that newcomers and current residents of Embro will benefit," adds Langlois.

With John Langlois as CEO, Marc Langlois as project manager, and Nicole Langlois as general manager, the Langlois Eco Homes team brings a wealth of expertise and passion to the project. Collaborating with industry professionals, such as Michael Wilson Architects, ZON Engineering, and Passive House Ontario, ensures the highest standards of design and construction are met.

Local tradespeople and suppliers, including Berger Plumbing, D&D Electric, Harrison Heating and Cooling, and Vetta Windows and Doors, are also involved in the project. Langlois Eco Homes marks the Langlois family's debut project in the area. However, it is just the beginning of a larger development plan for Embro. Future endeavors include the construction of high-performance homes and townhomes, as well as the creation of parks, trails, and community gardens.

WORD ON THE STREET

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE THING TO DO DURING THE SUMMER IN OXFORD COUNTY?



KATHY NAPIER, Tillsonburg
The Taste of Tillsonburg event
ROSE HORTON, Vienna
all the markets



KAREN QUAEGBEUR, Ingersoll
Kayaking. My favourite route is from
Beachville to Woodstock.



PHIL HOWARD, Ingersoll
Walking the nature trails, especially the
Lawson Land Tract



CHARLOTTE PERKINS, Woodstock
Swimming in the pool

Sam Roberts Band to Headline Cowapolooza

The City of Woodstock is thrilled to welcome Sam Roberts Band as the headliner for this year's Cowapolooza festival which takes place Friday, August 18 and Saturday, August 19. The illustrious Canadian rockers will close out the two-day event taking place in Woodstock's beautiful Southside Park.

"Cowapolooza is celebrating its 20th year and this festival is a summer tradition for many people from Woodstock and beyond. Sam Roberts Band are Canadian legends with a legacy of delivering incredible performances," said Kristen Brodhagen, Manager of Special Events for the City of Woodstock. "As always, there is something for everyone to experience at Cowapolooza. Enjoy a blast-from-the-past with Cowapolooza Classics on Friday night, Cowapolooza Kids on Saturday afternoon and wrapping up the two-day festival will be a rocking show Saturday evening."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Classic cars will line Southside Park for the Cowapolooza Car Show on Fri-

day, August 18, from 5 to 8 p.m. Bring your dancing shoes and enjoy musical performances by the Tavares Jazz Band, Blue Suede and tribute artist Elton Rohn Friday from 5 to 9:30 p.m.

There will be lots of activities for both the young and young at heart on Saturday afternoon with Cowapolooza Kids. The main stage will come to life starting at 6:30 p.m. with Toronto rock trio Ferraro before Sam Roberts Band hits the stage at 8:30 p.m.

Admission to the event is free. Food and Marketplace vendors will be on-site throughout the weekend.

Cowapolooza is possible thanks to the support of sponsors such as Zehrs, OLG, Century 21 Heritage House Ltd., Libro Credit Union, Blackmore Media, and Holiday Inn Express and Suites.

Visit cityofwoodstock.ca/cowapolooza for the full event lineup and follow the City of Woodstock on Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram for the latest updates.

Two local artists featured during Oxford Studio Tour

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

The Oxford County Studio Tour has been happening on the first week in May for many years now, Margaret Trapnell, of Woodstock and Tabitha Verbuyst, of Tillsonburg, were two of six artists being featured at the Tillsonburg Station Arts Centre earlier last month.

Trapnell is a retired United Church minister from Woodstock, who has spent her retirement concentrating on art, although it has always been a big part of her life.

She has her BA in visual arts and a community college diploma in Material Arts from Georgian College in Barrie, and completed her Doctor of Ministry with an art project using Orthodox icons.

Trapnell has experience working with painting and pottery, but since retirement five years ago, has been

concentrating on working with coloured pencil, using mainly animals as her subjects.

"This is where my passion is right now in doing the art," she explained. "I've worked in a variety of mediums but right now coloured pencil is easy - its not messy! There's no drying or waiting."

"I like to use my own photos as subjects," said Trapnell. "I take photos of animals at the zoo, and enjoy going to see the swans in Stratford or the donkeys at the Sanctuary outside of Puslinch."

She has taken part in the Studio Tour in other years, as well as being a part of Oxford Creates - Oxford Creative Connections; an art organization based in Woodstock that has an exhibition and sale each November. Three years ago she was a part of the Woodstock Art Gallery Visual Elements.

She is currently working part time at the Dundas St. United Church and

volunteering at the Woodstock Art Gallery, and has plans to participate in some upcoming markets and art shows, while keeping busy with her commission work.

Also at the Tillsonburg Station Arts Centre was Tabitha Verbuyst, of Tillsonburg.

Verbuyst, who has been involved in art since she started highschool around 2006, likes to focus of rainy scenes and pathways, using her own experiences to recreate visual masterpieces using oil on canvas.

"A lot of my paintings are typically rainy nights or scenes, just from driving around while its raining," she explained. "Local landscapes - Woodstock, Ingersoll, Tillsonburg... its the windshield with rain on it, usually. I'm drawn to the way it bounces light all throughout the landscape and distorts the image itself."

"The pathways are usually places I've walked with family," Verbuyst

continued. "I like the contrast of light and dark and how the sun sometimes comes through the trees."

The artist studied at Fanshawe for Fine Art, then studied in Halifax for two more years at Univeristy, where she majored in Painting and minored in Art

Verbuyst is the executive director and curator of thenon-profit gallery in Tillsonburg, and through the gallery is invovled in many BIA and Tourism projects in Oxford.

"Our gallery is fundraising based," she explained. "We're membership based, where members do pay a fee, however, there are lots of benefits, especially for young and new artists... to sell their work or become involved, we have discounts on supplies..."

"We're really trying to push bringing in more youth and we are working towards getting our rainbow certification, as we are a very inclusive space," Verbuyst included.



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Margaret Trapnell, a retired United Church minister from Woodstock, stands with her portrait of donkeys, which was done using coloured pencil.



(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Tabitha Verbuyst, of Tillsonburg, uses oil on canvas to portray scenes of rainy nights from her

Woodstock child actor featured in upcoming CBC kids show

HANNAH MACLEOD

Editor

Luke Dietz, a grade five student at St. Michael's Catholic School, is making a name for himself in the entertainment industry, most recently landing the role as Zachary in Headspinner Productions new sitcom, *Aunty B's House*, which will air on CBC Kids this fall.

The successful child actor grew up watching his sister, Madi Langdon, rise to fame in the industry through commercials and TV shows like *The Next Step*. His brother, Joey Langdon, commentated sports for Rogers.

"I wanted to give it a try," explained Dietz. "I was eight years old when my sister helped me send in a voice audition in response to an open call by animation casting director, Denise Oliver."

"I actually booked my first ever audition and had so much fun voicing the character, Count Jr. in *Happy House of Frightenstein*," he continued.

Dietz signed with a Toronto agency, Vanderwerff Talent, and was soon auditioning for commercials, film, TV and animation.

"I booked an Air Canada commercial and got to fly to Portugal to film it," said Dietz. "It's been pretty busy ever since!"

Since then, Dietz has appeared in both live-action roles and voice-acting roles.

"I had a lot of fun with another animation project, *Gisele's Mashup Adventures*, where I helped create a story with the amazing Gisele Corinthios and they animated me in the story," he says. "I also got to play Pugsley in a super fun Virtual Reality film, directed by Eli Roth called *Trick VR Treat*."

Dietz studies acting at LeBlanc school of acting in Vancouver, B.C., via Zoom.

"It's cool, because I can attend class from anywhere and with kids from all over North America," he said. "I also take private classes with LSA president, Julian Leblanc who has helped me so much with script prep before starting a new project."

This is a big year for the actor, with a lot of his projects hitting the screens. His role as George in an upcoming short film, *Please Eat Organic*, will be hitting the film festivals this summer. Following that, you



Luke Dietz

(HAYLEY ANDOFF PHOTO)

can catch him in the first episode of the new season of *Ruby and the Well* on Family channel.

As for his most recent role, Dietz will be playing Zachary, a leading role as one of three foster children.

The show is about life in foster care and follows Aunty B, Khalilah Brooks, and her foster kids, Kadajah, Nendia Lewars, and Shelley, Claire Poon as well as Dietz.

"The goal of the show is to help kids understand that families come in all different shapes and sizes," he explained. "My character, Zach is a bit of a neat freak, like me, and likes to joke around and have fun. After Zach's parents died, he lived with his grandparents until they were too old to take care of him, so he moved into Aunty B's house. Our show helps kids see that it's okay to be sad or angry, and that someone is always there for you, and loves you."

The series was filmed over seven weeks, three days a week. For Dietz, this meant attending regular school on Mondays and Fridays and filming in Toronto Tuesday to Thursday, from 8 a.m., to 5 p.m., with tutoring on set.

"My teacher, Mrs. Hill, has been so supportive and makes sure I have all the work I need if I'm filming or recording a project," said Dietz. "I am part of the actor's union, ACTRA, so they make sure I have a tutor on set if I'm away from school and we have required school time so I am all caught up when I go back to school."

The first episode will be a surprise for the actor himself.

"We filmed in front of a green screen so it will be so cool seeing the finished product when it airs," said Dietz. "My least favourite part of filming was when I wasn't in a scene because I just love filming so much, I wanted to be on set the entire time. And of course, saying goodbye when we wrapped filming."

"Wrap day was pretty cool though, our Executive Producer, Michelle Melanson arranged to have an ice cream truck on set for us as a surprise," he concluded.

The actor says his favourite thing about acting is being able to play different characters and putting life into a script in his own way.

"I love meeting new people and making new friends on every project," said Dietz. "I am learning so much about the business at such a young age and it's pretty awesome that I already know I want to become a director as well as an actor when I grow up."

Dietz wasn't always as confident in his acting skills as he is now, but encourages other children interested in acting to go for it!

"I would say you should start taking some acting classes, and it's okay to be nervous or shy - I was," he began.

"You also have to remember that you won't get every job you audition for, and that's okay, because even auditioning is fun and you get to learn so much in the process," he continued. "It does take a lot of work, but if you love it then it's so worth it!"

Additionally, the young actor has been keeping a big secret for a while, and is excited to announce that he will be the new voice of Chase on the hit animated series, *Paw Patrol*, beginning on Season 10, episode 3 and onward.

"It has been hard keeping this one a secret because I have been recording the series since August of 2022," he admitted. "I actually had my callback for the show on the last day of school last year and found out last July that I booked the role!"

The cast are finishing up recording the season soon.

"I am so excited to hear my voice say the iconic phrase, 'Chase is on the case', because *Paw Patrol* was my favourite show growing up," he said.

Dietz has also been cast as a lead in another popular cartoon, which he can't share just yet, but he is certainly someone to keep an eye out for!

You can follow Dietz on his journey through his 100% parent-run Instagram account, @itslukedietz



CAST OF AUNTY B'S

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The cast of *Aunty B's House*, from left to right; Nendia Lewars who plays Kadajah, Claire Poon who plays Shelley, Khalilah Brooks who plays Aunty B, and Luke who plays Zachary.

"Don't Smile", Woodstock Museum's newest exhibit

A selection of early photographic portraits from the late 1800s to the early 1900s will be on display in a new exhibit opening at the Woodstock Museum this weekend.

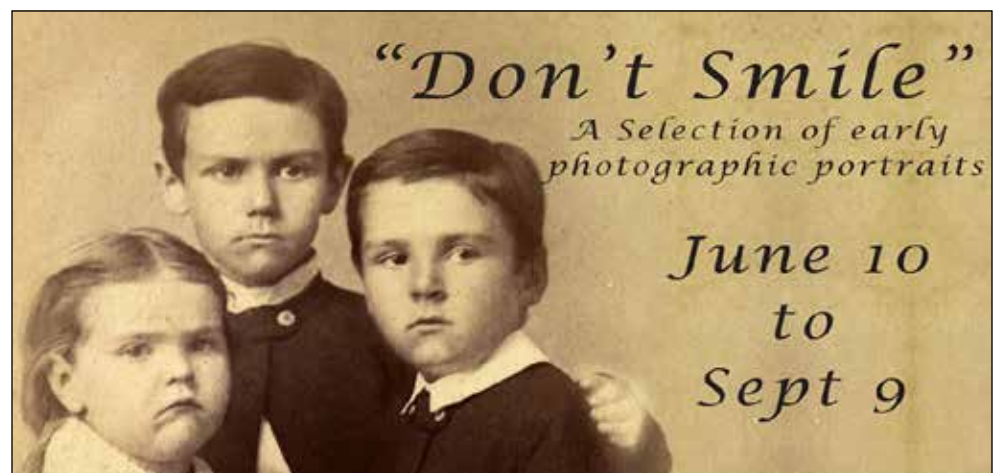
From the average Woodstonian to infamous con artist Cassie Chadwick and local baseball legend Tip O'Neil, *Don't Smile* features portraits from the museum's collection.

Visitors will discover how photography evolved from the use of glass plates and thin sheets of metal to the beginning of rolled film and the first Kodak camera, all featuring the serious expressions that en-

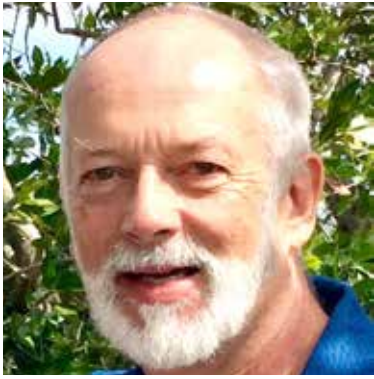
compassed early portraiture.

"The exhibit was born out of the Woodstock Museum's collection of more than 13,000 images and gives us a chance to highlight our stunning early portrait photographic collection. It will take you back to a time when not everyone had a camera in their pocket, and even owning a photograph was extraordinary," said Curator of Collection Adam Pollard.

The exhibit opened to visitors on June 10 and will be available for viewing until Sept. 9, 2023. More information about this and other exhibits can be found online at www.woodstockmuseum.ca.



OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: A love letter to a great British garden



PAUL KNOWLES

Times Contributor

I'm clearly stating the blatantly obvious when I say, England is a country replete with great gardens. Nowhere else in the world, I believe, will you find as many wonderful gardens, each well worth visiting, whether you are a gardener, or simply a lover of creativity, beauty, or heritage.

We saw a few stand-out gardens on our trip through the south of England, last month, from enormous landscape gardens to crammed, bountiful borders. It was a privilege, by the way, to lead this group of 22 companions on a two-week trek arranged through the good folks at Stonetown Travel.

I will write about other gardens, great houses, quirky inns, and other interesting sites in the coming months, but having just returned from the U.K., the place closest to my heart is Sissinghurst Castle Garden.

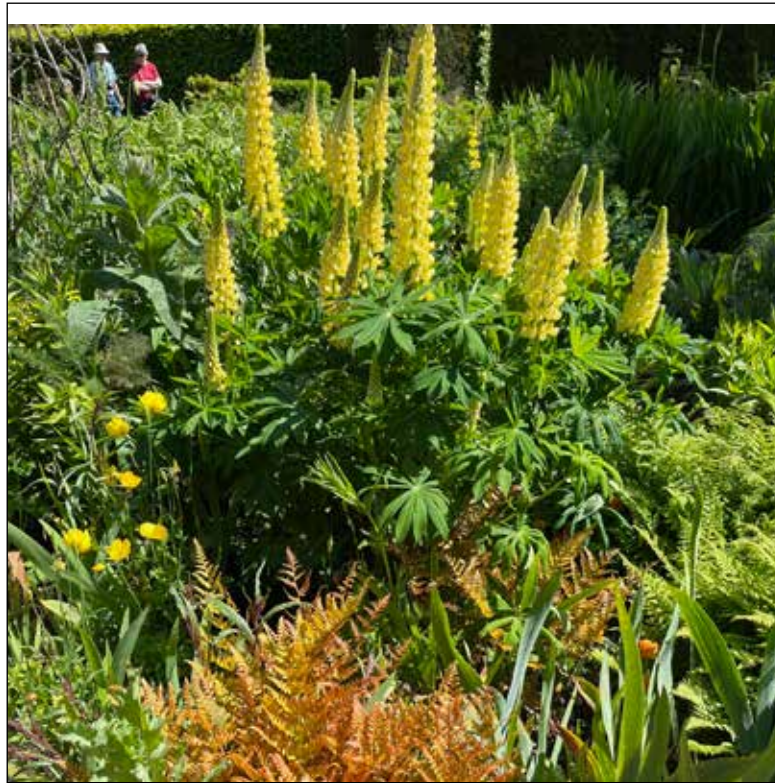
Why? Three reasons, I suppose. First, it's a garden that set some trends that are with us to this day. Vita Sackville-West and

Harold Nicolson, the extraordinary, bohemian couple who founded it, began their labours in 1930. They created or perfected some unique gardening concepts, chief among them the idea of garden "rooms". We have this with us today... different sections of gardens planted in quite different styles. Outstanding at Sissinghurst is the "white garden", where everything is white or pale silver or lightest green. Except for one red flower a member of our group spotted – clearly an invader.

Second, it's a place with a deep history, existing long before Vita and Harold decided to resurrect a ruin as their home and history-making gardening project. The place was once a pig farm; it was "home" – actually a travesty of the word – to 3,000 ill-treated French prisoners of war, between 1756 and 1763. So for someone not passionate about gardens, there is a tower, and a stable block, and the remnants of a moat.

But for me, personally, it's the place where I – an adamant non-gardener – was converted into someone who loves gardening to this day. It's a story I often tell when I speak to gardening groups. In short form – it's where my wife Mary took me in the 1990s – a few years before she passed away – under pretense of visiting a castle, and where, after I got over the annoyance of being conned, I fell in love with the place.

As I do, all over again, every time I get to walk through the



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

A brilliant contrast of colours in the Sissinghurst kitchen garden.

archway into the first of several magnificent gardens.

And once again, they did not disappoint. We climbed the tower and watched the other members of our group as they marveled their way through the rose garden, the kitchen garden, the meadow, the herb garden, the white garden, and more.

They – and we – also visited the garden traditionally known as "Delos", which I have always known as a spring, woodland garden. But today, it's

been transformed into a rather sparse, dry Mediterranean style garden. I came home with no pictures of it, because I didn't like it much.

Later in the day, chatting with a guide in Vita and Harold's preserved living area (in what were once the stables), I mentioned the changes in Delos.

"Do you think Vita would have liked it?" I asked the guide. She smiled, shook her head, and said,

"I think Vita would have hated it."

But there's no doubt Vita would have loved everything else. The rich profusion of plants in the rose garden – which does have roses, but so much more. The rainbow of colour in the first garden you enter, with borders planted to match the sweep of colour in a rainbow, from violet to deep red. The walk under a canopy of nut trees – which reminded me of a solo visit I made to Sissinghurst years ago. There was a shower, and I took shelter, only to have a guide join me and comment, "Is there anything more pleasant than standing under a nut tree in the rain?" At that moment, I had to agree.

It's pretty clear that while this is a travel article – the first written since our return from England – it's also a love letter, a love letter to an eccentric couple of gardeners, a love letter to the woman who tricked me into my first Sissinghurst visit, and a love letter to a place that inspires, delights, comforts and soothes, every time.

Thanks, Harold and Vita. And to you, my reader – if you have not visited Sissinghurst Castle Garden, next week would not be too soon.

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)

The brightest of colours are always on display in the kitchen garden.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The tower, one of two bits remaining from the ancient buildings at Sissinghurst.

Riddles

What is the greatest worldwide use of cowhides?
To cover cows.

What do sea monster eat?
Fish and ships.

What can you catch but not throw?
A cold.

Which word in the dictionary is spelled incorrectly?
Incorrectly.

What time is it when 12 cats chase a mouse?
12 after 1.

What is so fragile even saying its name can break it?
Silence.

What goes up but never goes down?
Your age.

What do lazy dogs do for fun?
They chase parked cars.

What city has no people?
Electricity.

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 29

🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 Pets of the Month 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾



LACEY

Lacey is a 12-year-old chocolate lab who loves stuffed animals, going for truck rides with her grandpa and spending time on the farm that she resides on. She also enjoys sitting around a campfire on weekends. Lacey is owned by Sarah Cairns.



TEDDY

Teddy is a 4-year-old is a Pug/chihuahua. He loves to play ball and take walks. Teddy is owned by Cathy Metcalfe

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

Word Search

SUMMER


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

- LAKE
- SHELL
- BEACH
- HAT
- WAVES
- SUNGLASSES
- SUNSHINE
- TAN
- SURFING
- ICE CREAM
- PICNIC
- CANOEING
- SEASON
- SWIM
- LEMONADE
- TRAVEL
- SUMMER CAMP
- CAMPING
- HUMID
- POPSICLES



INGERSOLL MARKET (HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTOS)

Above left, Ania Nunns, a Kiwanis member and volunteer, fixes one of many bikes at the weekend market. Above right, Deb Hulet purchases fresh produce from one of the fresh produce vendors at the weekly Kiwanis Market. She is assisted by Finleigh Howe. Left, Easton, Holly and Camillia Riddick show off their free balloon animals. Right, Kiwanis members and volunteers Bill Mott and Jim Yates man the barbecue at the weekly Farmers Market on Saturday, June 3. The market is hosted by Kiwanis and runs every Saturday from 8 a.m., to noon from June to October by the Ingersoll Public library.

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Worship With Us



COMING EVENTS

Email to inquire
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Canaday Day Events
Saturday July 1; 2 - 10 p.m.
Southside Park, Woodstock
See article on page 1.

Ingersoll Creative Art Centre Live Auction
Saturday, June 17; 2 - 5 p.m.
125 Centennial Lane, Ingersoll
See article on page 1.

Oxford Pride Family Day
Saturday, June 17
Museum Square, Woodstock
See article on page 3.

Father's Day BBQ and Brunch and Fish Fry
Sunday, June 18
Put on by Vivian's Country Cookin' at 10:30am.
All you can eat Live action BBQ, Fish Fry, and Corn Roast Brunch Buffet. reservations are recommended \$36 per person children \$15

WKNR Cruise Night
Thursday, June 22
WKNR is hosting a cruise night from 4pm-8pm. It is being held at the Ingersoll Home Hardware parking lot on Samnah Cres. Proceeds going to Woodstock Kitten Nursery & Rescue.
BBQ, Raffle table, silent auction and kitten adoptions

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) South Africa
- 2) Rhode Island
- 3) A type of red wine
- 4) 10 feet / 3.02 meters
- 5) Snow White
- 6) Ginger Rogers.
- 7) Cool Hand Luke.
- 8) Amelia Earhart
- 9) John Lennon
- 10) Hippopotamus

SUDOKU

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



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Kiwanis CLUB OF INGERSOLL SAVE THE DATES

FARMERS' MARKET
Saturday Mornings
June 3rd to October 14th
8am-12pm
Ingersoll Library/Town Hall
Parking Lot

3RD ANNUAL CAR SHOW
August 6th
Ingersoll Key Putt

FISH FRY
August 10th
Ingersoll Arena

HARVEST MARKET
August 26th
Ingersoll Cheese and
Agricultural Museum and
Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre

FASHION SHOW
September 13th
Unifor Hall

CHIP IN FORE KIDS GOLF TOURNAMENT
October 3rd
Ingersoll Golf Club

PUMPKINFEST
October 14th
Ingersoll Cheese and
Agricultural Museum

WINTER GALA
November 18th
Elm Hurst Inn

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CROSSWALK, KING ST., E.
BLACK HISTORY SCULPTURE, CHARLES ST., W.,
ITOPA MURAL, INGERSOLL LANES MURAL,
FUSION CENTRE PICNIC TABLES/ART DISPLAY
BOXES

(APPROX. 10 MIN PER LOCATION)

-Light Refreshments at Fusion Centre-

Streetfest July 21 & 22

LOVE DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK

South Gate Car Cruise July 23

www.downtownwoodstock.ca



PRIDE CELEBRATIONS INTERRUPTED

(HANNAH MACLEOD PHOTO)

Demonstrators showed up to protest the Drag Storytime at the Ingersoll Public Library on Saturday, June 4 hosted by Oxford County Pride.



I WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HAPPY CANADA DAY!



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HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED



SEEKING LOCAL CONTRIBUTORS
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!
Contact us at info@theecho.ca or call/text 519-655-2341 to discuss your ideas.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Oxford Road 59 (Wilson Street)

Road Reconstruction

Oxford County is continuing infrastructure improvements to Oxford Road 59 (Wilson Street), with construction of Phase 2 expected to begin in late June and completed in fall 2023.

Phase 2 includes the remainder of Wilson Street south of Dundas Street to the CN railway tracks. Expect delays and follow the posted detours on Henry Street, Wellington Street and Dundas Street.



Legend

- Phase 2
- Project Area
- Detour – Phase 2



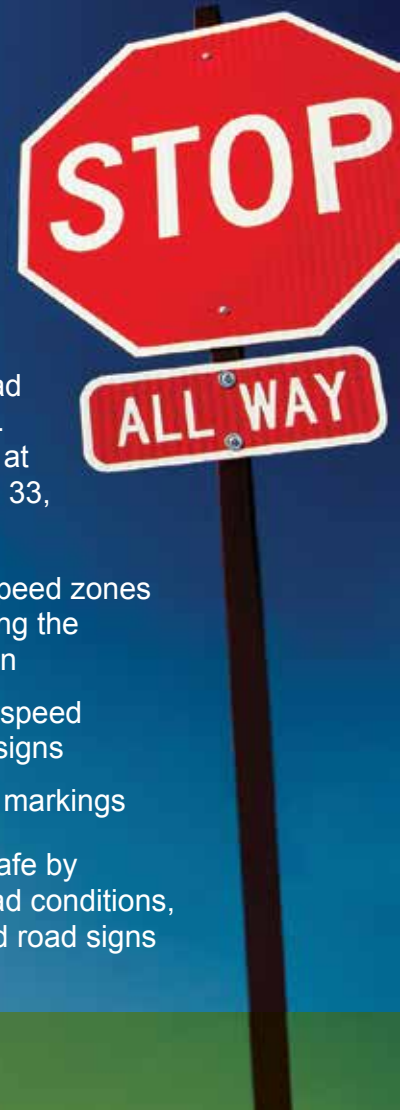
Intersection improvements

Oxford Road 59 & 33

Oxford County is working to improve road safety conditions throughout the County. Please be aware of new safety features at the intersection of Oxford Roads 59 and 33, including:

- new all-way stop with flashing red beacons
- overhead flashing red lights
- rumble strips on all four approaches
- reduced speed zones approaching the intersection
- electronic speed feedback signs
- pavement markings

Please do your part to keep our roads safe by driving according to the weather and road conditions, distraction-free, and following the posted road signs and speed limits.



For project updates visit www.oxfordcounty.ca/2023construction

www.oxfordcounty.ca