

Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 6

NOVEMBER 17, 2023

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In need of help or looking to help this Holiday Season?

WOODSTOCK INGERSOLL ECHO STAFF

info@theecho.ca

Oxford County's annually published Holiday Sharing Guide is now available for county residents to peruse online. According to a press release by Information Oxford, "the Holiday Sharing Guide offers a comprehensive listing of gift and clothing drives, hot meal and food programs, shelters, emergency help, and seasonal community events."

The guide can be used by residents to find,

- ways to help by listing places where residents can either volunteer or donate funds or items, or
- places which offer help by detailing programs from community organizations, charities, and local churches.

Information Oxford is a service of Oxford County in partnership with Ontario 211 and United Way Oxford, that aims to provide "relevant information to Oxford County residents about local businesses and organizations and their services and events," reads the press release sent to the Echo.

The Oxford County Holiday Sharing guide also includes information about local Santa Clause parades in Woodstock and Tillsonburg, where non-perishable food donations will be collected, and which will occur on November 18 at 6:00 p.m., and the same day at 11:00 a.m., respectively, according to the press release.

To see the organizations and events within the recently published Holiday Sharing Guide, please visit informationoxford.ca/index.php/sharing/guide, or call 211 to stay up-to-date with upcoming registration deadlines, donate, help, or seek help.

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(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

POPPY PROJECT

November 11th, a day we remember and honour the men and women who served and sacrificed for our country. Using Park Place Retirement Residence as a backdrop, the local community has worked together to create a beautiful tribute to our heroes. "The Poppy Project touches every generation and brings the entire community together", General Manager, Park Place Retirement Residence welcomed everyone to stop by and enjoy the 2023 Remembrance Day Poppy Project.

Oxford budget deliberations begin

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Oxford County has tabled its draft budget and as it stands now, it has a tax levy hike of over 15 percent. Members of council haven't yet had a chance to offer their thoughts on what or if they would like some items reduced or deleted altogether, but they will soon get their opportunity.

Budget meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, November 15 at 9:30 a.m. (just before the Echo's press

date) along with other sessions on November 29 and then a regular council meeting on December 13 to likely approve it.

Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione said he was surprised when he first saw the budget document's price tag. "To be honest with you, I was shocked. I knew there would be a big ask and for some reason, I thought they were going to come in with 10 percent. I was not expecting 15.3. In today's financial hardships for so many people, there are a lot of things that need to be looked at. Are they really a priority at this time and can people afford to do this?"

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



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Oxford budget deliberations begin

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan admitted there are big things in this budget, partly due to a new strategic plan. “We just had an election a year ago and those councillors heard from many people about the things they want. There are some big things in it.” The budget’s increase over 2023, according to Ryan, can partially be blamed on inflation. “It is a reflection of what everyone is experiencing. Every time we get groceries, pay rent, renew their mortgage, or fill up their vehicle with gas, those prices have all gone up. Municipalities buy those same things to varying degrees.” He added the cost of maintaining roads, bridges, water treatment plants, and ambulances have all risen. On a positive note, the warden does say a soon-to-be-released report on assessment growth should ease some of the budget pain. “We are going to take out

some assessment growth from that 15 per cent. Every new home and new business that adds value to property is a new taxpayer and that reduces the burden on the existing ratepayers. We will get that report later in November. Whatever per cent that is comes right off the 15.”

According to figures sent to the Echo by Lynn Buchner, the County’s Director of Corporate Services, “we expect that the 15.8% year-over-year increase in the county’s levy will be reduced to a 15.2% increase over last year’s levy apportionment. “Please note these are preliminary and subject to change before the budget is approved,” added Buchner.

The draft budget includes the equivalent of 41 new full-time positions ranging from 9.4 in Paramedic Services to 7.9 at Woodingford Lodge and 3.5 in the Oxford County Library system. In addition to more library staff, they are asking for \$5.2 million dollars, an increase of nearly 22 per cent from this year. Southwestern Public Health is also asking for a 19.4 per cent increase totalling \$3.3 million.

Acchione said while he believes county staff used what council has requested in budget discussions to create the document, he said it’s just too much of every-

thing. “I think it’s too many things, way too many people. Again, in this tough financial environment, we really need to be careful and I’m not sure this budget that is being proposed is recognizing the hardships some people are facing.”

He added his job going forward is to figure out what areas can be put in the parking lot for now and what money needs to be spent next year. “I have no doubt every single thing involved in the budget is a priority of council, but I don’t know if it has to be done in 2024. I’ve marked up my pages quite a bit already and I am looking forward to this week’s first sit-down to talk about it publicly with staff. There are definitely more than a few areas where I am ready to say listen, this isn’t the highest priority for next year.”

Ryan said the proposed increase of 41 full-time equivalent staff members is a direct result of what residents of Oxford have been asking for. “That is a driver for a lot of these initiatives. The big spends of a million in housing, a million in long-term care, and \$2.3 million in ambulance, a lot of that money is people to deliver those services. When an ambulance comes to your house because you have a heart attack, first off buying an ambulance costs a lot of money and to put two people in it who are professional and experienced and working a lot of hours, that costs a lot of money as well.” He added that of the 41

proposed new jobs, 11 are partially or fully paid for by grants. Ryan also felt it was important to note that Oxford County ratepayers have had tax increases less than the cost of inflation over the last five years so there is some catching up to do now which is a part of the proposed tax increase.

One thing the mayor of Woodstock and the warden of Oxford County agree on is that taxpayers should be involved in the budget process, something that doesn’t happen generally speaking. “This is their budget. They are the ones who have been making requests of what they want to see, and it’s been clear housing is a big priority. The availability of and affordability of safe appropriate housing is a significant concern for Woodstock residents,” said Acchione. Ryan added he always wants to hear from more people. “I’d encourage people to go to the (Oxford County website). The budget is very long and very detailed, but it starts off at a very high level talking about the priorities that council told staff to build the budget around.”

Acchione said millions of dollars added to the tax burden of Woodstock residents, if the budget is passed as is, is something he is concerned about. “A four million dollar add just from the county alone to the taxpayer of Woodstock is significant and I am definitely uncomfortable with that.”

The City of Woodstock is also tabling its budget this week.

Spirit of Christmas

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10am-2pm

Tickets \$20

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woodstockmuseum.ca

Homes

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145 Delatre St.

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Hosted by the Museum
Advisory Committee

In need of help or looking to help this Holiday Season?

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Interested readers may also wish to learn more about In-gamo Family Homes, VON Sakura hospice, Seniors in Food Crisis – Oxford County, Regional Canadian Legion Branch 55, Oxford County Pride, and Indigenous Solidarity & Awareness Network- Oxford, which have been covered by our reporters in this and prior issues of the Echo, and which also support vulnerable populations within Woodstock, and nearby areas.

Those interested in donating to other religious organizations may also wish to visit the Muslim Association of Woodstock (MAW) at muslimassociationwoodstock.com, and the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Woodstock Sikh temple at gurudwara-

woodstock.com to learn more, and if interested donate toward construction of a community centre, and Sikh temple, respectively.

The MAW community centre is meant to be “a hub for the Muslim and non-Muslim community,” that will also foster “engagement with other faith groups and like-minded organizations across our town and country,” reads their website. The “Sri Guru Singh Sabha Woodstock aims to set a high standard in serving the needs of the Sikh Community in Canada, especially the community members located around Woodstock, Oxford County and South Western Regions of Ontario,” according to the About Us section of the temple’s website.

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US!

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First-time since pandemic 'Lights of Love' to be held in person in Oxford County

MARÍA C. ROSALES GERPE

Echo Correspondent

The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) Sakura House hospice in Oxford County launched an event called "Lights of Love" for palliative care residents and their families to connect during the pandemic and mark the beginning of the festive season on the first Friday of December. The event had to be hosted virtually to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This Friday, December 1, 2023, "Lights of Love" will be held in person. "For the first time, loved ones' family members and friends will be welcomed to the gardens of Sakura House to light lanterns for their loved ones who once resided or currently resided at the hospice," stated Brittany Bratt, Fund Development Coordinator for the Engagement and Philanthropy Team at VON Middlesex – Elgin, VON Oxford, and VON Sakura House.

Bratt also mention the event involves a tribute walk, and commemoration ceremony for loved ones. The lanterns will bear the name of loved ones along with a dedication, or special message.

"People can buy a lantern in remembrance of anyone, not necessarily those who reside

or have resided within Sakura House," Bratt specified. Proceeds from purchased lanterns will go toward supporting VON Sakura House.

About VON Sakura House

Founded in 2009 after a substantial monetary support by Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada (TMMC), Sakura House was set up after recognizing Woodstock was in need of a facility that could provide palliative care, which may include end-of-life care, or sustained care for serious chronic illnesses such as cancer. Named Sakura after the Japanese word for cherry blossom, the house would symbolize celebration and remembrance of the beauty and vulnerability of human life.

According to Bratt, the organization takes pride in cultivating a home-away-from-home feeling with professional healthcare services offered at no cost to the individuals receiving palliative care, or to their families. Oxford County resident Jill Roberts who experienced care at VON Sakura House recognized the organization efforts by saying that she wished people in dire health situations could feel the same "peace provided by Sakura House" she was able to experience.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT



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WHERE TO FIND US

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IN PERSON: 22 Reeve St. Woodstock, Ont. located in the historic Market Centre Building right behind city hall. Mon & Tues 1pm-5pm, Saturday 9am-5pm plus 2hrs before each show.

LOVE DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK

Produced by special arrangement with THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois



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, Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette and Goderich Sun.

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@Woodstock Ingersoll Echo



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

Circulation Matters!

This month we will distribute
**7,000 printed copies of the
Woodstock Ingersoll Echo.**

Proud member of the
Ontario Community
Newspaper Association



Editorial

Local journalism isn't dead

Echo moving to bi-weekly in March

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Beginning in June 2014 when I bought a small independent newspaper in my hometown of St. Marys, it's been nearly ten years that I've been part of the journalism industry. These ten years have undoubtedly been the worse ten years that the industry has ever seen – a decade in which hundreds of newspapers across the country have closed, and in which so many other newspapers' future hang in the balance.

However, I can honestly say that I am very excited about what the next ten years will bring to Canadian journalism.

The reason for my optimism? Because of you, the reader, who have told us time and time again that you want to read about local news and local people. Where the conglomerates have failed Canadians, I believe the independent publishers, over time, will fill the void.

The Woodstock Ingersoll Echo was an experiment that started six months ago as a monthly publication. With a very small staff, we put out our first newspaper in June because we knew the community really needed it. It had

been five years since the Ingersoll Times had closed, and in Woodstock, it was obvious that Postmedia was not allocating many of its resources towards the Sentinel-Review.

With no real sales staff, thanks to the community's support we've managed to increase our advertising sales to the point where the Echo is a going concern.

Six months in, and we've decided to take the next step, by announcing that starting in March 2024, we will graduate from a monthly newspaper to a bi-weekly newspaper – thus going from 12 issues a year to 26 issues a year.

As a bi-weekly newspaper, we will be able to provide more timely information to residents. We will have even more local stories, and they will be released quicker. Our schedule will better fit the needs of those wishing to advertise upcoming events, or families wishing to submit obituary notices or celebrate family milestones such as anniversaries or birthdays.

I'd like to say a sincere thank you to the community for supporting our newspaper over the last six months, and I'd like to emphasize that the best is yet to come for local journalism.

You can still follow us on Facebook!

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

I'm sure that you have all heard that Meta (Facebook) has disabled the Facebook pages of most newspapers, in protest of the passing of Canada's Online News Act, Bill C-18. As a result, we haven't really done a lot on our Facebook page.

However, perhaps because our business is a start-up, it

seems as though Meta has overlooked canceling our page. So, we might as well start using it more often!

We have changed our business description on Facebook from "newspaper" to "local service", so hopefully that'll help us stay out of Meta's crosshairs.

Feel free to like and follow our page on Facebook at "Woodstock Ingersoll Echo" or on Instagram at [woodstockingersollecho](https://www.instagram.com/woodstockingersollecho).

Our next paper, dated December 15th, will be the ECHO'S CHRISTMAS / HOLIDAY EDITION.

Support your community newspaper and your local hospitals at the same time.

For any Christmas or Holiday themed ads in our next edition, the Echo will donate

10% OF AD PROCEEDS
to the Woodstock Hospital Foundation and Alexandra Hospital Foundation.

To place an ad in our next edition, email info@theecho.ca or call 519-655-2341.

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

Fake flyer irks the county's warden

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Oxford County's social media was quick to publish information about a flyer bearing its name and logo late last week. The post distanced the county from the unknown author or authors of the document which welcomed residents to their "15-minute neighbourhood inside SMART City walls." The paper was delivered to a number of homes across Oxford last week. The county was tipped off by several concerned and puzzled citizens.

The flyer said the implementation of a SMART City begins with a massive installation of broadband surveillance technology and infrastructure. Other content included Oxford residents not having any privacy or land ownership, no access to fuel or cash, along with a forced digital ID. It also included the United Nations logo.

Warden Marcus Ryan said they had nothing to do with it. "Not one thing in this flyer reflects any of the policies or goals of Oxford County. It's that simple." He added that while he doesn't know where the misinformation came from, he does say the content is nothing new. "I can't say I haven't heard these kinds of things from various people around Oxford and adjacent municipalities, frankly from all over the province. I've never seen it done in a way that purports to represent the county."

Ryan said whoever did produce it has zero credibility in his mind if for nothing else than trying to convince people it is an official county document. "It's ironic that they are suggesting Oxford is misrepresenting our intentions then they are very intentionally misrepresenting Oxford and themselves with this flyer and the use of the logo. If their message is be careful, the government is lying to you about what they want to do, this group is explicitly lying about who they are when they put



senting our intentions then they are very intentionally misrepresenting Oxford and themselves with this flyer and the use of the logo. If their message is be careful, the government is lying to you about what they want to do, this group is explicitly lying about who they are when they put

that logo on the front." Ryan added that only if someone were to read every single line would it become apparent the county did not create and distribute the flyer. "I'm not going to lie. It's very frustrating but it's also very concerning because some people are going to pick this up and unless they read it carefully are going to think this is what Oxford County is doing. Someone is going through a lot of trouble and expense, driving around delivering this thing."

The county hasn't discussed whether or not to take legal action or even potentially explore if a crime has been committed and Ryan isn't sure if they will. "We haven't really looked into that. I suppose it may be a fraud or something like that, somebody is intentionally misrepresenting things. Whether that's a legal matter or not I haven't looked into it. That may be a possibility, but we haven't explicitly considered that yet."

Here is the message posted by the county's communications team last week upon learning of the brochure:

"Thank you to the many people who let us know about a brochure being delivered to homes across Oxford County today. The flyer bears the Oxford County municipal government logo, but it is not our communication, and use of the logo is unauthorized. None of the initiatives described in the brochure are a part of Oxford County's newly released Strategic Plan, which is available online at www.oxfordcounty.ca/strategicplan.

Oxford County is committed to citizen engagement and transparency. We will always work in agreement with local area

municipalities and consult with the public on any major changes that affect their community."

Oxford County has just completed its latest strategic plan which sets priorities and goals until the end of 2026. There are paper copies available along with an online version on the county's website. Ryan said they have been completely transparent not only in the process of putting the document together, but also in making it accessible to anyone wanting to look at it. "For people thinking maybe there are secrets, we have actually gone to quite a lot of trouble to make this all transparently available to residents. It's there. It's published online for people to see what the county's real goals are that their elected representatives debated and decided on."

Among those goals are a sustainable future, housing for all, managing a growing county, and a safe and well Oxford. Ryan said council was very focused and specific right at the beginning of the planning process. "Before it gets into detailed specific policies we are going to try and advocate and fund, it talks about the three pillars. Promoting community vitality, the second is enhancing environmental sustainability, and fostering progressive government." The warden mentioned a number of key ambitions including improved service delivery, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and housing and sustainable infrastructure.

The Echo was unable to find out what person, people, or group produced the flyer by press time in order to ask for comment.



OLG COMMUNITY RECOGNITION PROGRAM CHEQUE PRESENTATION (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Representatives from the City of Woodstock, South Gate Centre and OLG were on hand Tuesday, November 7 at South Gate Centre to recognize the annual contributions the City of Woodstock receives from OLG as a casino gaming host community.

"We are fortunate to have such an active partnership with OLG. Their funding has far reaching benefits across the city," said Mayor Jerry Acchione. "Not only do the monies we receive go towards capital projects and special events, but it also allows residents to access programs at a reduced cost through our fee assistance program and helps non-profit organizations deliver services through our community grants program."

OLG presented the City with a cheque for \$1,569,496 recognizing contributions from April 2022 through March 2023. Following the cheque presentation, representatives of South Gate Centre offered tours and highlighted the many programs they offer for older adults.

"OLG is proud to be a vital part of the City of Woodstock", said Kathleen Devine, OLG's Senior Municipal Relations Manager. "Each and every year, 100 per cent of OLG profits are reinvested in Ontario to support provincial priorities. From critical infrastructure to important local programs, to community festivals, OLG's profits are hard at work in the City of Woodstock and all across our province to build stronger communities. Today, we are seeing firsthand how a share of the gaming revenue from Gateway Casinos Woodstock is contributing to the region. When you play at an Ontario casino, you play for Ontario."

The City of Woodstock would like to thank OLG for their continued support.

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\$25 in advance
\$30 at the door

SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.

Woodstock Remembrance Day Ceremony

On Saturday, November 11th people gathered to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifice of those who served and continued to serve our country during times of war, military conflict and peace. The ceremony

took place at Victoria Park, located at 413 Buller St, Woodstock. The City of Woodstock is grateful for the efforts of those who assisted in organizing the Remembrance Day ceremony, including the Royal Canadian

Legion Branch #55, The Oxford County Naval Veterans Association, City of Woodstock staff, local MP, MPP, emergency services and local school boards. Also, The City of Woodstock honored more than 60

local veterans with a series of commemorative banners. The banners, which were installed on light poles throughout downtown, featured men and women from Woodstock who served in war and have now passed.



Placing of the Navy Cadet Wreath at the Cenotaph



Organized by Robin Schell (Special Events Coordinator) Kristen Prodhagen (Manager Special Events) and Ann Ash (Executive Assistant to the Mayor)



March of the Sentries



Present at the ceremony were David and Norma Thomas with Veteran of Royal Canadian Army Corp Paul Gratton



The Walking March proceeding to the Cenotaph



MC Ron Findlater at the Cenotaph

United Way Oxford names 2023 Wes Magill Award recipients

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The award was established by the United Way Oxford Board and launched in 1980 and was created to recognize Wes Magill's invaluable contribution to United Way Oxford. It is designed to honour individuals, labour groups, or companies in the community who have gone the 'extra mile' and given their time and talents for the betterment of the United Way. Each year the United Way Oxford Board chooses a nominee and recommends them to the Magill Family Members for their final approval.

The Awards were presented by Joan Vollmershausen, Wes Magill's daughter, and Rob McKinlay, United Way Oxford Board President, at a Woodstock Rotary luncheon.

This year, the Board opted to celebrate an important milestone achievement and selected a group of individuals and organizations that all came together to help us achieve it. "Over the last year, in the space of 11 months, the United Way Board went from an initial discussion on the idea of

investing in a house in Tillsonburg to help meet an identified need for housing supports, to purchasing, fully renovating, and opening a transitional living house," said Executive Director Kelly Gilson.

United Way also made the commitment to provide stabilized funding to the Oxford County Community Health Centre, whose staff provides vital wrap-around and life-skill development supports to the residents of this transitional housing program. "Beyond the willingness of the Board to embrace this alternate form of community investment, this project would never have been possible without so many others who dedicated their time, talent, connections and funds to help make this innovative project a reality; especially impressive is that together they worked to ensure that our doors opened to residents 6 weeks from the date of purchase," added Gilson.

"While there are many who lent a helping hand, there are a few who were instrumental in bringing this to fruition. We think of them as the 'Friends' of the Tillsonburg Light House and are humbled by their generosity and grateful for their efforts and commitment."

Middlesex Community Connect getting students on board

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

Students can ride the Middlesex Community Connect buses at a discount.

The Middlesex Community Connect has two routes: one connecting London to Dorchester, Putnam, Ingersoll, and Woodstock, and the other route passing through London, Arva, Ilderton, and Lucan.

Anum Maqsood, the community transportation project manager for Middlesex County, said students can get a 30-day pass for \$160. The pass is available exclusively on the Blaise Transit app, which can be downloaded with Google Play or the Apple Store. Feedback from students has largely been positive.

"They value the service's convenience, affordability, wheelchair accessibility, and bike rack options. The 30-day student pass, offering both affordability and flexibility, is particularly appreciated," Maqsood said.

She added that the transportation via Middlesex Community Connect is a great option for students because it eliminates transportation barriers for students to attend job interviews, medical appointments, social events, and more. The transportation routes also connect students to the community.

"It encourages students to explore their local community, promoting a sense of belonging and connection," Maqsood said. "Additionally, it connects them to neighboring communities and a network of various transit services, facilitating broader regional engagement."

Ridership among students recently increased, with 20 per cent more students

using the route going from Lucan to London and 36 per cent more students travelling from Woodstock and Dorchester to Fanshawe College. Ridership also rose dramatically by 194 per cent since the back-to-school season began and stayed steady in October.

Along with a stop at Fanshawe College's main campus in London, Ont. Middlesex Community Connect also has stops at London's CF Masonville Place and Medway High School in Arva, Ont. Students exiting the bus nearby Masonville Place can then go on any of the London Transit Commission bus routes at the mall's parking lot to explore London.

"Whether students are commuting to campus, exploring the city/town, or simply in need of a ride, Middlesex County Connect is dedicated to offering accessible and efficient transportation solutions," Maqsood said.

In addition to students, Maqsood encourages all community members to ride the bus.

"Whether you're a student, an employer looking to assist your employees in commuting, or a resident seeking convenient transportation options, Middlesex County Connect is here to serve you."

Middlesex Community Connect also offers one-way trips for \$5.00 per person, free individual and family bus passes at the libraries in Ilderton, Lucan, and Dorchester, and free rides for seniors, veterans, and support persons.

Visit middlesex.ca/ct for more information.



WES MAGILL AWARD RECIPIENTS

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

United Way Oxford's 2023 Wes Magill Award Recipients (from l to r, Chris Willie, Cedric Tomico, Teresa Martins, Bernia Martin, Joan Vollmershausen, Ryan Westbrook, Cassandra Benard, Rob McKinlay, Randy Peltz)

County Council approves homelessness study

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

It wasn't a unanimous decision, but council is putting the big money into hiring a consultant to study the homelessness situation in Oxford and complete a proposed Homelessness Response Strategy. The report isn't expected to be completed until halfway through 2024.

The county's Director of Human Services, Kelly Black, gave members of council a brief presentation on the rationale of hiring an outside consultant. "The report supports the recommendation to use a consultant or an external third party to be able to proceed with objectivity resulting in a strategy that is unbiased to any one organization in the county." She added that community partners have expressed their support for developing a strategy to support the work currently being done across the county.

Deputy Warden and Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione seemed puzzled when the motion came up, asking Black if it wasn't the exact same one council voted against at a previous meeting. Black said that wasn't the case. "It is my understanding the decision on this was deferred while staff did some research and consideration to bring back a report of using a consultant versus a full-time employee to do the work."

Despite the motion passing, Acchione sees no value in paying a consultant. "They are asking for this report that in my opinion, we can take from any other city that has done them, and there's lots. Sudbury has a fantastic one and they are having the exact same issues we are." He added the county does want more of an Oxford approach which he completely understands, but he would rather see a local organization involved. "I use the example of Operation Sharing. They have boots on the ground and know the local situation. Why are we going out and paying \$125,000 when we know what the issues are? We don't need somebody to tell them that. I was in favour of maybe hiring another person if we decided we needed someone. We definitely need some help but again, why are we paying for a consultant when it's pretty clear we know what the issues are." He added it will take months to hire a consultant and even longer for the report to be completed whereas a local solution could be

implemented quickly.

Councillor and Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie said he is in support of the motion and isn't worried as much about how they can improve the situation but instead look at the outcome. "I agree we need an Oxford-centric plan and I think through proper consultation with those who have things to offer to the plan stepping up and providing that information we can have a better plan that will outline what the current and future Oxford situation could look like."

Councillor Deb Tait made it quite clear she was not in favour of spending a nickel on a consultant's study when the money could be better used on the ground. "We have no money. So, I am not spending \$125,000 of taxpayer money for a consultant when we are going to get back a report that everybody already has. As Councillor Gilvesy commented, everybody knows what the solution is but it's going to cost money." She added she heard crickets when Operation Sharing's Sean Shapton spoke to council at a recent meeting. "He expressed what's going on, the help he needs, and we heard nothing around this table. We have made the motion twice to go forward with that and we still have nothing. \$125,000 can go a long way in this community for people who need it." Tait questioned spending money when there are so many agencies already around that are being funded but aren't working together to come up with a solution. Councillor David Mayberry questioned that if so many groups were doing so many positive things, why is the homeless population in the county growing? "I'm fully supportive that we need a pathway out of this, but I am always a little antsy about hiring a consultant. But in this case, I would expect the consultant would be consulting with all of these organizations." Mayberry expects the initiative to come up with an Oxford solution and he doesn't believe it would be the same as one found in Vancouver for example.

Tait asked for a recorded vote on the motion. Those for it were Councillors Schaefer, Petrie, Ryan, Peterson, Matin, Palmer, and Mayberry. Those against were Tait, Gilvesy, and Acchione.

According to the report, once a consultant has been selected the project would begin with an anticipated completion date at the end of June 2024.

Ontario Awarding Victim Support Grant to Woodstock Police Service

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Ontario government is investing more than \$4 million across the province to help support victims and survivors of intimate partner violence, domestic violence, human trafficking, and child exploitation. The funding is being delivered through the Victim Support Grant program and includes \$100,000 for Woodstock Police Service.

Woodstock Police Service (WPS), in partnership with Victim Assistance Service Oxford County, will work together to ensure people feel safe, secure, and supported in the community. In addition to initiatives to raise awareness about human trafficking, intimate partner violence, and child exploitation, funding will be used to help meet victim needs

beyond what is available through counseling, and legal support. WPS will provide “go bags” to victims that contain personal care, nutrition, contact information, and comfort and activity items for youth victims.

“This funding is very welcome in our community,” said Ernie Hardeman, MPP for Oxford. “It will help to further the important work already being done to fight crime in Oxford and across Ontario. We will continue supporting victims of crime by investing in our police services to maintain safe communities.”

“Support for victims and survivors is a crucial first step to recovery,” said Solicitor General Michael Kerzner. “This important grant is part of our government’s plan to combat violent crime on our streets and ensure that victims are not left behind.”

Santa Claus is coming to Oxford County!

Starting with Ingersoll on November 18th and ending with Thamesford on December 17th, Santa Claus will be parading all throughout the County of Oxford over the next month before he and his reindeers return to the area with a sleigh full of presents on Christmas Eve.

The dates and times of Santa Claus Parades in our readership area are as follows:

- Ingersoll: Saturday, November 18 at 11 a.m.
- Woodstock: Saturday, November

18 at 6 p.m.

- Hickson: Friday, November 24 at 7 p.m.

- Tavistock: Saturday, November 25 at 1 p.m.

- Bright: Saturday, December 2 at 2 p.m.

- Plattsville: Saturday, December 2 at 6 p.m.

- Embro: Saturday, December 2 at 6:30 p.m.

- Innerkip: Saturday, December 9 at 6 p.m.

- Thamesford: Sunday, December 17 at 6 p.m.



TAKE NOTICE THAT: any One with a prior, equal, or superior right, interest, CONDUCT, treaty or Convention in/to/for/of the NAME and property of: TEUTA TARELLI and/or TARELLI, TEUTA Estate, or: TEUTA GRIMCI and/or GRIMCI, TEUTA Estate, in any style or variation thereof capable to confuse, suspend or clog said NAME, Title and/or Estate is hereby WARRANTED to present their said claim to Witness: Blerina, Krasnica. c/o: 69 Leacrest Road, East York, ON M4G1E5 before expiration of twenty-eight (28) days of this first publishing of this Notice.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

In gratitude for this experience, Roberts became a volunteer and co-chairs a committee to help fundraise for the hospice because VON Sakura House “relies on donations to be able to run,” Bratt noted.

“All contributions from the community go toward the operations of Sakura House, which includes wages for staff as well as providing training for volunteers, many of whom run programs within Sakura House,” said Allie Neeb, another Fund Development Coordinator for VON Sakura House.

“We are very thankful for the continued support of TMMC, which has been a steadfast in its contributions to VON Sakura House since the very beginning,” stated Neeb. “We are also

Word-of-mouth is key for Oxford’s Seniors in Food Crisis group

MARÍA C. ROSALES GERPE

Echo Correspondent

On a whim, early January 2023, Jayna Leroux-Hendren created a Facebook group to aid seniors – folks over 50 years old – in need due to hiking food prices. Barely a year later, the Seniors in Food Crisis – Oxford County group boasts 1000 online members, in addition to offline seniors and volunteers.

The Woodstock resident credits word-of-mouth to the steady growth, though it is not difficult to see in such windfall a testament to its founder’s industrious and friendly nature. “There’s just so many people in need, but since the COVID-19 pandemic, seniors are going hungry, or their pets are, and they have to give them up,” Leroux-Hendren explained, adding that many people are unaware that seniors live on very little income.

Precarious finances not uncommon for seniors

A 2017 report by the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan states that “one in three Canadian adults is not financially prepared for retirement,” adding that the median value of retirement assets for adults 55- to 64-years-old was around \$3,000 in 2011.

At 65-years-old, Canadians seniors become eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension. But many cannot afford to wait given the rising cost of living. Feed Ontario’s Hunger Report of 2022 noted that a total of 587,000 adults, seniors, and children – a 15 percent increase since 2019 – accessed a food bank in Ontario between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022.

Even at 65 years of age, “seniors are nearly twice as likely to need the assistance of a food bank on a long-term basis compared to adults under 65 years of age,” the Feed Ontario report states. In the spring of 2023, both federal and provincial governments announced a ten-fold increase to the monthly OAS pension until 2024 to address inflation for low-income seniors.

The monthly allotment may be just enough to cover Woodstock housing costs, which CTV recently reported to be over \$1,200 a month. But financial duress is not the only issue impacting this vulnerable demographic; Leroux-Hendren was

surprised to see numerous people messaging to say that what they love most about the Facebook group is that they feel less lonely.

Spreading the word main priority for Seniors in Food Crisis – Oxford County

The grassroots organization has been fortunate thus far with monetary and essential item donations, which have ranged from home-baked goods to freezers. Recently, the Ingersoll’s Vendors and Crafters show held a silent auction whose proceeds benefitted the group, and will also donate future auctions’ funds from two upcoming shows on November 19, 2023, and December 10, 2023 at Ingersoll District Memorial Centre at 97 Mutual St. S.

But the biggest need Leroux-Hendren has at the moment is reach: “how do we get the word out?” She posed the question after realizing through the group that more seniors are in need than she initially thought.

“Tillsonburg has a huge community of seniors that we have not yet reached and would like to help,” she said, hoping more people join the Facebook group. “The priority is I don’t want anyone or their pets going hungry,” she remarked, expanding that scouring flyers and posting low prices on the Facebook group has been a way through which volunteers and members have lent a hand. Others have donated empty alcoholic drink cans which help cover fuel cost for deliveries.

In honour of her son

No stranger to spreading kindness, Leroux-Hendren and her husband Dave Hendren are both heavily involved in the Woodstock community, and have fundraised for other grassroot organizations such as Helping Our Northern Neighbours. Giving back is their way of honouring their son Brent Hendren, presumed drowned in Haida Gwaii, BC, reported the London Free Press in 2016, a year after his disappearance.

“I didn’t realize how much of a giver he was until I started meeting his friends after he went missing,” she recalled, emphasizing that she hopes he sees their efforts as a way of continuing on his path. To reach the Seniors in Food Crisis – Oxford County Facebook group, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1242940716642800>.

‘Lights of Love

grateful for the contributions from many local businesses” that include Valarie Mounstevan Real State Broker, Century 21 Heritage House Ltd. Brokerage, ProResp Community Respiratory Therapy, Bossy Nagy Group Chartered Professional Accountants, and Toyota Boshoku, added Neeb.

How to help toward VON Sakura House

Those interested in donating a lantern on behalf of loved ones or to support residents of Sakura House can visit von.ca/en/von-sakura-house-lights-love. The hospice building will also be lit for the holiday season during the Lights of Love ceremony.

For more information about VON Sakura House, please visit vonsakurahouse.com, and facebook.com/VONSakuraHouse.

Woodstock Police briefs

Woodstock Police partner with CamSafe

The Woodstock Police Service is initiating a new partnership with CAMSafe. It is a voluntary, community-driven CCTV and security video registry program, allowing businesses and residents to partner with police in solving crime in their neighbourhoods.

If there is a crime committed in a particular area, police are able to login to CAMSafe to determine who has cameras in the area that they could contact to request footage. Residents and businesses are able to create a secure account on the camsafe.ca website with only basic information; including name, address, and contact information. They can then register video cameras and doorbell cams by indicating the number of cameras on the property and the direction the cameras face.

There is no direct access to cameras or account information through CAMSafe. It is only a directory for officers to utilize during investigations to locate the owners of potential footage. Members of the community have the ability to add or delete information from their CAMSafe account at any time.

“The Woodstock Police are always looking to leverage the latest technology to assist our officers and provide the necessary tools for them to keep our community safe. This program is built on partnerships with the residents and businesses in the City of Woodstock and will contribute to the overall safety and well-being of our community,” said Deputy Chief Nick Novacich.

The Woodstock Police Service encourages residents and businesses to register their cameras on www.camsafe.ca to help combat crime in the community.

Woodstock Police lay drug charges during traffic stop

Police conducted a routine traffic stop at the end of October close to two in the morning in the area of Huron and Dundas Streets just before 2 a.m. Police say the occupants of the vehicle were found to be in possession of suspected methamphetamine and as a result the 34-year-old driver from Woodstock is facing a number of charges including possession of methamphetamine, driving while under suspension, and using plates not in accordance with regulations. A 38-year-old passenger from Cambridge has been charged with possession of methamphetamine.

Oxford OPP briefs

Two Ingersoll men charged with drug offences

The Oxford Provincial Police's Community Street Crime Unit with assistance from Brant, Middlesex, Elgin, and Haldimand units executed a search warrant at an address on Highway 19 in South-West Oxford Township.

The warrant was executed on November 2 when police say they seized quantities of suspected fentanyl and methamphetamine, bulk Canadian currency, drug paraphernalia, and other property. The approximate value of seized items was \$9000.

A 39-year-old and 43-year-old from Ingersoll have been charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking, and possession of opioids and methamphetamine. The 43-year-old has also been charged with personation with identity fraud.

Drug charges following warrant execution in Ingersoll

Two Ingersoll seniors face drug charges after a bust at a Skye Street residence in Ingersoll. The Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police Community Street Crime Unit along with officers from Brant, Middlesex, Elgin, and Haldimand Crime Units, executed a warrant on November 1.

During the search warrant, police seized a quantity of suspected fentanyl, hydromorphone, drug paraphernalia and other property. The approximate value of seized items was \$26,000.

As a result, a 70-year-old man and 66-year-old woman from Ingersoll have been charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking, possession of an opioid, and possession of cocaine. Both accused are scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Woodstock on November 28.

Collision in Zorra leads to charges

Police and paramedic crews responded to a two-vehicle collision on the 31st Line in Zorra Township just after 6 p.m. on October 30. The driver of one of the vehicles was transported to hospital with minor injuries while the driver of the second vehicle was placed under arrest and transported to the OPP detachment for testing. As a result, 48-year-old Trevor Birtch from Woodstock was charged with impaired driving and dangerous operation of a vehicle. The accused is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Woodstock on December 12, 2023. Birtch, the former mayor of Woodstock, is also facing a number of sexual assault charges which have not been proven in court.

Christmas home tour returns to Woodstock

Four historic houses are opening their doors this holiday season for the Spirit of Christmas Tour of Homes. The tour will take place on Saturday, Nov. 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event, which is returning for the first time since 2019, has been organized by the City of Woodstock's Museum Advisory Committee this year. “The Christmas home tour is one of our most popular fundraisers. Visitors have the chance to see inside some of the city's most beautiful heritage properties while enjoying the festive decorations on display,” said Karen Houston, Manager of Culture and Museum Curator.

“This year we have four lovely homes representing a range of architectural styles, from a Greek Revival house built in 1846 to a quaint modern cottage.”

The locations for the tour include:

- 85 Delatre St.
- 145 Delatre St.
- 636 Walter St.
- 809 Rathbourne Ave.

Tickets are on sale now for \$20 at the Woodstock Museum.

The committee is also looking for volunteer attendants to assist with the event. Volunteers receive one free ticket for the tour. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the museum at 519-537-8411 or museum@cityofwoodstock.ca.

SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.

Support businesses that keep your community and its newspaper thriving

Weekend Quiz

- 1) Who is the voice of Lorax in “The Lorax”?
- 2) What is the atomic number for uranium?
- 3) Which type of wood is commonly used for making pencils?
- 4) How many strings on a Cello?
- 5) What three colors make up The Netherlands flag?
- 6) How many wonders of the world are there?
- 7) What is the capital of Thailand?
- 8) In Shakespeare's Hamlet, what is Hamlet's mother's name?
- 9) What is the scientific name for the windpipe?
- 10) Who sings the song “Head Over Boots”?

This week's answers are found on pg. 29



WOODSTOCK HAUNTED LIBRARY JAIL TOUR

(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

It was rainy but unseasonably warm night on October 25th at The Woodstock Library. A preregistered group of 20 people took a guided Halloween tour around the old Woodstock Jail on 410 Buller St. They learned about the most infamous executions, and some notable architectural features. All in attendance on the steps of the previous Jail were eager to learn more about Historic Buildings in Woodstock. Standing to the right was Tour Guide Liam Gillis.

Woodstock Art Gallery Open House

Saturday November 4th from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The Woodstock Art Gallery held an Open House where there was poetry reading and artist talks in celebration of their Fall 2023 exhibitions. At 1:15 p.m. on the 3rd Floor Printmaking Studio there was a Poetry reading with guest curator and poet Emily De Angelis. At 2 p.m. on the 2nd Floor Main Gallery Artists Ron Shuebrook and Frances Thomas were together in conversation on their experiences of their respective Art. At 2:45 p.m. on the

2nd Floor Community Gallery there was a Q & A with artist Nicholas Crombach and guest curator Jessica Benjak-Waterous. In attendance were patrons and interested guests of the Gallery. The Woodstock Art Gallery is Oxford County's largest municipal public gallery with a permanent collection of over 1000 works. Their Mission: "Providing opportunities for people to express, experience, and learn creatively through art."

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)

Right, Mayor Jerry Acchione and Mary Reid Director/Curator, Woodstock Art Gallery gave an opening introduction to poet Guest Curator Emily De Angelis (Centre).



Mary Reid Director/Curator, Woodstock Art Gallery presents Ron Shuebrook and Frances Thomas Mayor Jerry Acchione at the presentation



Q & A with artist Nicholas Crombach and guest curator Jessica Benjak-Waterous



Guests Lloyd Cargo and Laura Sakerno with poet Emily DeAngelis (Centre) attended in support

Bruce Flowers Sculpture Garden Commission

Artist and educator (Robert) Bruce Flowers, born in Woodstock, passed away on Sept. 10, 2018, and left the residual of his estate to the Woodstock Art Gallery with the provision that the funds be used "for the purpose of establishing an outside figurative sculpture garden." On August 12, 2021, Woodstock City Council approved the renaming of the west side of Vansittart Park (at Ingersoll Ave) to Florence Carlyle Park, with a portion of the park designated as the Bruce Flowers Sculpture Garden. On September 12, 2021, the Woodstock Art Gallery launched the City of Woodstock's first public art commission with a call for qualifications. Nicholas Crom-

bach's proposal, "Wind Vane", was selected by the public art committee following a review by city staff and consultation with the community. The sculpture was installed in the Bruce Flowers Sculpture Garden on November 15 2023.

Nicholas Crombach is an artist working in Kingston, ON. He is the recipient of numerous grants and awards including the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Award. Crombach has presented solo exhibitions in Canada, London, and Berlin. Crombach's public art commissions include Horse and Cart, Kingston, Ontario, Wind Vane, Woodstock, Ontario and Flock, Niagara Falls, Ontario.

(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

At the Bruce Flowers Sculpture Garden, the sculpture "Wind Vane" being erected were Shayne Dark Rita Horan (Supervisor of Parks & Urban Forestry) Nicholas Crombach (Artist) and Mary Reid (Director/Curator Woodstock Art Gallery)



Christ Church Huntingford's ACW

MARGARET WEBBER

Echo Contributor

The October Meeting of Christ Church Huntingford's A.C.W. (Anglican Church Women) was held at Quehl's Restaurant in Tavistock at 1.30 p.m. on October 19th following a delicious lunch.

President, Barbara Bruce welcomed 10 ladies and the Lord's Prayer was said prior to the commencement of the

Business Meeting. The Secretary and Treasurer's reports were read and approved.

We made one person turkey and beef pies on Monday and Tuesday, 30th and 31st October. The cost of the pies was \$5.00 and they were ready for sale on Tuesday 31st October at 2.30 p.m. One person fruit pies was also for sale at that time.

The speaker for our November 16th meeting was Professor Cody Groat who teaches Indigenous Studies at West-

ern University. He is from Six Nations in Brantford. Professor Groat's topic will be "Local Indigenous Affairs and Residential Schools". The Presentation will be one hour in length and there will be an opportunity to ask questions. We will serve coffee, tea and cookies afterwards.

On December 14th we will hold our Christmas Meeting in the Church Hall. We will have a Pot Luck Lunch and Gift Exchange. We will also hold our Election of Officers for 2024 at that meeting.

What is enfranchisement and how did it affect Indigenous veterans?

MARÍA C. ROSALES GERPE

Echo Correspondent

From 1857 until the 1960s, enfranchisement was “a legal process whereby the Government of Canada could revoke the legal ‘Indian Status’ of a First Nations person either with or without their consent,” explained Cody Groat, Oxford County resident and Assistant Professor in the Department of History and the Indigenous Studies Program at Western University in London, Ontario.

His great-grandfather, Edward Groat, from Six Nations, enfranchised in 1919 after the First World War and settled in Brantford. His son Stanley, Groat’s grandfather, was nine years old at the time and thus instantly lost his status, which meant that upon marriage, this loss would be transferred. Following in his fathers’ footsteps, Stanley Groat also fought for Canada in both World War Two and the Korean War as a non-status soldier, though he was born at the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve, located near Brantford, recounted Groat.

Many Indigenous veterans like Edward felt they had no option as “legally recognized Status Indians were excluded from the Soldier Settlement Act, which offered specific benefits to returning soldiers after the First World War, including tracts of land for agricultural purposes or home-



Frederick Ogilvie Loft, mid-1910s photo.

stead, and pensions by the federal government,” expanded Groat.

In contrast, Indigenous soldiers relied on pensions distributed by the Department of Indian Affairs, which often had “little sympathy for their ‘wards,’” chronicles William John Pratt, an adjunct professor of History at the University of Calgary, in an article published in the journal



Cody Groat, Assistant Professor in the Department of History and the Indigenous Studies Program at Western University. of Canadian Military History in 2023. In the article, Pratt goes on to say that “... due to their unique legal status and ongoing racist stereotyping, Indigenous veterans had to prove they were worthy of administering their own pension monies.”

Pratt notes that for some Indigenous veterans, the pensions provided by the

Department of Indian Affairs proved valuable for them and their families living within reservations, which experienced marked poverty. The latter

is also a reason why in search of a better life for their children, many Indigenous veterans opted for legal enfranchisement at the cost of leaving behind their community and traditions.

Some Indigenous veterans such as Frederick Ogilvie Loft whose Mohawk name was Onondayoh and who hailed from the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve became political activists to advocate against the discriminatory treatment of Indigenous veterans, said Groat. During his activism, Loft founded the first national Indigenous organization in Canada, the League of Indians of Canada in 1919, reports The Canadian Encyclopedia online.

In response, the Government of Canada threatened to forcibly enfranchise Loft unless he folded the organization, stated Groat. The Department of Indian Affairs also “consistently refused (Loft’s) requests to speak directly to the Canadian Parliament,” and was “seen as a subversive (dangerous radical) by Duncan Campbell Scott, the deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932,” reads The Canadian Encyclopedia online.

Then in 1985, Bill C-31 was introduced to “amend the Indian Act to conform with the equality rights guaranteed by s.15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter),” details the Assembly of First Nations in a fact sheet entitled “What is Bill C-31 and Bill C-3?” The amendments ensured that Indigenous women who had lost their status due to marriage would be able to regain it, as well as their children’s status.

“Figures such as Mary Two-Axe Earley were influential in achieving Bill C-31 after demonstrating how enfranchisement often disproportionately impacted women,” said Groat. Thanks to Bill C-31, Groat’s grandmother was able to reclaim her Indian Status, though his grandfather Stanley passed before the concept of enfranchisement was abolished, Groat recounted.

Men’s Shed arrives in Woodstock with ‘activities men will actually enjoy’

WOODSTOCK INGERSOLL ECHO STAFF

info@theecho.ca

Men’s Shed is an Australian-based organization with the mission of improving men’s health, particularly that of older men, and men living in rural areas. The over 20-year-old group first arrived in Canada in 2011 via Winnipeg, and has spread through the country over the past decade.

In early 2022, Men’s Sheds Ontario was launched by John Peters, “a retired United Church of Canada minister and woodcarver hobbyist,” from the outskirts of Ottawa, according to the association’s website.

On the need for an organization like Men’s Shed

According to a review article published Spring 2023 by the journal of Health and Social Care in the Community, “globally, men have worse health outcomes and a shorter life expectancy than women.” The Federation University Australia researchers who authored said paper proposed this is likely due to both biological and social reasons, specifically “higher risk-taking behaviours and under-utilisation of health services,” reads the article.

In Australia, Men’s Shed has been successful in fighting isolation, and dementia, as documented by Dementia Australia. The 2023 study from Australia also highlighted research showing that “men tend to connect socially with other men during socially recognized, masculine activities.”

For this reason, Men’s Shed was found “based on a simple concept: Improve our members’ physical and mental health through activities men will actually join,” Christine Cunningham, Executive Director of South Gate Centre, relayed on behalf of Men’s Shed in a press release submitted to the Echo.

Just what is that men will actually enjoy is up to Woodstock men to decide at the Men’s Shed Woodstock

information session that will be held late November, 2023, at South Gate Centre, the city’s active adult recreation centre. According to the press release, potential projects and/or activities range from hands-on work including woodworking, bike repair, car engine work, home maintenance, supplemented by expert-led workshops, to continuous learning on cooking, gardening, music, health, digital technology, and more, while participating in mentoring and skill-sharing.

The aforementioned journal review article reported improved mental health, fostered mutual learning, and increased skills for both Men’s Shed mentors and their younger mentees. The authors noted this finding is encouraging given that today’s working landscape is multigenerational but offers little mentoring opportunities within the workplace to bridge the knowledge gap between generations.

Men’s Shed’s efforts, according to this research may represent an astute approach to forging connection between men of different ages, and thus play a role in passing down knowledge and traditions. According to another study published by the American Journal of Men’s Health in 2017, men “tend to have greater difficulty than women developing and maintaining social relations,” reads the study.

The study’s qualitative data from surveyed men showed how social rigid gender confines of having to be “stoic, independent, self-sufficient, and not wanting to get involved in social activities” prevented health benefits achieved through initiatives such as Men’s Shed, described the article.

Those interested in learning more about Men’s Shed can visit mensshedontario.ca, and contact South Centre Gate at 519-539-9817 to sign up for the information session on Thu, Nov. 23, 2023 at 12:00 PM. Lunch will be provided.

Light Up the Museum



YOU’RE INVITED!

DATE: Dec. 1, 2023

TIME: 6:30PM (Lights on at 6:45pm)

BEACHVILLE DISTRICT MUSEUM

Join us for festive treats and music as we light up the museum grounds this holiday season!

Free attendance, all are welcome.

Ingersoll Cheese and Agriculture Museum Fall Tour

Tuesday, October 24, 2023, was a warm Fall morning to catch up on the displays at the Ingersoll Cheese and Agriculture Museum at 290 Harris Street in Ingersoll. Owned by the Town. The Museum is open year-round, Monday to Friday and most Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Museum was first opened on August 27th, 1977, consisting of a re-creation of a 19th century cheese factory. A former barn had been dismantled and the pieces moved to Centennial Park where they were re-assembled in the shape and design of a typical cheese factory in Oxford County. The museum is just down the road from where renowned cheesemaker James Harris' original factory was, at the current site of The Elmhurst Inn. All the buildings and museum pieces have come from the people in Oxford County and surrounding areas. Currently on display is the exhibit "Be A Doll, Won't You". There are a number of porcelain and straw dolls along with other artifacts from days gone by. On October 21st, those in attendance participated in Pumpkin Fest and put their artistic carving skills to the test.

On display are over 45,000 artifacts, more than half of which came from The Oxford County Museum School. All of these pieces combined tell the story of Ingersoll and the surrounding area – their agricultural roots, settlement, our industries and businesses, our athletes, our churches and schools, and their culture and events.



SAY CHEESE

Advertising the The Oxford County Cheese Trail which is a self-guided tour of 30+ stops featuring cheese, dairy and related offerings for visitors to experience

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



On Track for one of their displays of the importance the Railroad has played in the development of the County is Assistant Curator, Stephanie Conron



Kelly Shaw at the Blackboard in the mid twentieth century School House



The Mammoth Cheese, 6 ft. 10 in. diameter, 3 ft. high, 35 tons of milk, weight 7,000 lbs, was made in James Harris's cheese factory, West Oxford Township, in August, 1866. After a rousing send-off from the Ingersoll townspeople in early September, it was shipped by rail to the New York State Fair at Saratoga Springs; then brought to the Ontario Provincial Exhibition in Toronto in mid-September, and exhibited at the Fall Races, Hamilton, in early October.

Stephanie Conron appointed as Manager of the Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum

The Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum recently announced the appointment of Stephanie Conron as their new Museum Manager. As the Museum extends its warmest welcome to Stephanie, great appreciation was also extended to Scott Gillies for his years of service.

Stephanie brings a wealth of experience

and a fresh perspective to the team at the Museum. "Her extensive background in the arts, culture, and museum management makes her a perfect fit to lead the Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum into the future," per the October 30 press release.

Coming off of a highly successful

Pumpkin Fest, the museum is gearing up for Santa's Village hosted by the Ingersoll Community Services Department. Running from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. each Saturday between November 18 and December 9, the event includes visits with Santa, fireworks, face painting, crafts, Charles Dickens' reading of "A Christmas Carol", a

candy cane hunt and much more.

The museum remains dedicated to the events that have become beloved traditions in the Town of Ingersoll. To keep up with the latest news about the museum, feel free to follow them on Facebook and Instagram @ingersollmuseum.

Enhancements made to Thamesford's Lions River Park



DORIS WEIR

Echo Contributor

The Thamesford Lions Club has partnered with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) and Zorra Township to create some areas along the riverbank in Lions River Park that are accessible for fishing or for just enjoying the view of the river.

The Lions Club committed \$5,000 to move the project forward while UTRCA secured funding from several sources. At present, UTRCA has \$12,000 collected for this project which they will manage as this project evolves.

Local contractor Hogg Construction Ltd.

is completing the construction of the viewing areas. Construction of the first four viewing areas commenced on Friday, November 10.

This project includes a significant amount of natural vegetation planting along the river which will occur next spring. The intent of the project is to improve the riverbank area along the length of the park to allow people to more easily enjoy the riverbank while at the same time protecting the riverbank and fish habitat.

Upper Thames is planning a "Celebrate the Watershed" event in Lions River Park in June 2024.



Thamesford Tidbits

- The Cold Springs Farm star will live on! For over 40 years, a star was lit up on the top of the silos. As of November 1st, the feed mill is no longer and will be demolished in the upcoming months. For residents curious about what will happen with the star, former long-term employee Clarence Beekman was given permission to remove the star and it is currently in a safe place until it is lit up again in its new home.

- On Wednesday, November 22, get ready to dig deep into Thamesford's fascinating history with the Thamesford Lions Club's hotly anticipated event: "Discovering Our Local History". Join Dr. Peter Timmins from the University of Western Ontario as he unveils the secrets of the Wheaton Site, a 19th century tavern on the Governor's Road. This mind-blowing lecture is co-hosted by the London Chapter

of the Ontario Archaeological Society and will take place at the Beauty Room in the Thamesford Library at 7:00 p.m. There is no charge to attend this interesting event.

- The Thamesford Trojans are off to a great start this season with 13 wins against just 3 losses. They are in second place in the PJHL West Yeck Division, just 2 points behind the North Middlesex Stars.

- The Thamesford Lions Club is selling 2024 calendars which feature photos taken by Zorra Township residents. All proceeds go right back into the community.

- Stop by Thamesford District Recreation Centre on December 2 for a great day featuring photos with Santa Claus and the annual Christmas Carol singing.

- The Annual Santa Claus parade will take place in Thamesford at 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 17th.

Digitization Day at Beachville Museum



DIGITIZATION DAY

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Saturday, October 21st was Beachville Museum's first Digitization Day in partnership with the Zorra Heritage Committee and Oxford County Archives. This event allowed the Oxford County community to submit objects, photos, and/or documents relating to local or familial history in the area. The museum had just under 50 items documented and digitized! It was a great day of sharing and learning from each other's histories, strengthening our collective understanding of our local heritage. With the first Digitization Day being a success, the museum hopes to host similar events in the future. A big thank you to our participants and volunteers!

Chamber of Commerce announces award winners

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Woodstock chamber handed out its Awards of Excellence last week at a gala held at the Colombo Club of Oxford in Beachville.

Among the winners was the Brickhouse Brewpub who took home the Outstanding Food Services Award, sponsored by Woodstock Print. The Brewpub is affiliated with Upper Thames Brewery which is also located in the city.

Drake Merritt shares responsibility as a co-owner and brewmaster and said being nominated alone was a great feeling. "We were really excited. This was our second time and I had been to the awards a few years prior, and it was a great experience. Winning it this time around gave us all a real sense of satisfaction and accomplishment." He added his team has worked hard and they absolutely deserved to win.

Merritt said his role is one mainly to

support those working at the operation at the north end of Woodstock on Vansittart Avenue. "The people who run the restaurant are right in it and this is a result of their hard work. I just help keep the pieces together." Voting on each award was done by the public at large and Merritt felt the experience the Brickhouse creates was the main reason they were able to win. "Not many places offer the selection of craft beer we do. 25 taps are a lot, particularly our guest tap side which is 12 taps that we dedicate to breweries across Ontario. The food is quite good, sure I am biased, but even if I wasn't a part of the business the food is really good." He was quick to give all the credit to Chef Hilary Brown for her attention to quality and innovation on the menu. "The service is also great and on most nights the food comes out within 15 to 20 minutes. The building is beautiful as is the vibe. For the most part, I am hearing people are having positive experiences and they love the atmosphere."

Many breweries have either no or very few guest taps, but Merritt said they are more than happy to offer beers from what could be called a comradeship of small brewers in the province. "Woodstock doesn't have a spot where you can go and have a selection of these beers you wouldn't necessarily get to try. I think the business model brings people in. I love craft beer and I just like trying different things. As an owner, I also get to pick what goes on tap, so I get to shop for myself to taste all of them." He added the craft brewing industry has always been a collaborative one. "Even though we are technically in competition with each other, there is more emphasis on cooperation. If a brewery needs help with a problem or is short an ingredient and asks for help, we all have each other's backs. It's like that pretty much everywhere in Ontario and in the States too. It's an industry thing."

As for what's next for the Brickhouse Brewpub, Merritt said they are looking

at some minor tweaks. "Some equipment upgrades to make our service quicker and easier on our staff and a little more profitable. Fine-tuning our business where it is now."

Other Woodstock Chamber of Commerce Awards of Excellence winners were:

- Commercial/Retail – Blue Cow Delivery
- Community Engagement – Big Brothers - Big Sisters of Oxford County
- Agri-Business Award – Deep Purple Lavender Farm
- Manufacturing Award – Maglin Site Furniture
- Outstanding New Business – Fore! Oxford
- Professional Services – Cassandra Bernard – OC Realty Team
- Young Entrepreneurs/Professionals – Dance in Style Studios Inc.

Big Night Out Charity Ball

Big Brothers Big Sisters surpassed their fundraising goal, bringing in over \$116,000 at their annual Big Night Out Charity Ball Halloween Bash held Saturday, October 21st at the Oxford Auditorium in Woodstock!

With over 400 guests in attendance, the Halloween Bash displayed some incredible creativity in costumes once again! From the Spice Girls to the Crazy Cat Lady and her cats, The Griswold's Christmas Vacation, Tom Hanks movie characters, Costco Sampler employees, Yellowstone, Skittles, Minions, and spanning the decades (to name just a few), attendees were decked out and ready to have fun in

support of BBBSOC.

Congrats to our Costume Contest winners, Pamela Pilon Szala with an amazing "Dementor of Harry Potter" costume, and the TD Bank Group who came as Costco Sampler Employees and their outfits (including actual samples) were on-point (photos attached). The funds raised directly support the 11 mentoring programs offered through Big Brothers Big Sisters in Oxford County. The agency has seen an over 200%

increase in mentee applications over the past year, pressuring the need for support in all our programs. As an agency that does not receive ongoing government funding, events like Big Night Out Charity Ball are critical in ensuring we can continue to offer our programs at no cost to young people and their families in Oxford County. Our current waitlist is sitting at approximately 160 youth, and though our interest and addition of new volunteer

mentors is continuing to be successful, the enrollment of young people into our programs is increasing at rates never seen before in the post-pandemic era. We would like to take the opportunity to thank our Presenting Sponsor Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada; as well as all our sponsors, donors, supporters and volunteers for their amazing generosity, friendship and dedication to supporting mentorship in Oxford County.

The Woodstock Choralaires presents

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Chris and Donna Schurman are humbled to be presented the Outstanding Agri Business Award at the 2023 Woodstock & District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards.

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Success Fund Raiser organized by Fund Development Manager Nicole Killaire, Marketing and Communication Manager Liz Wismer-VanMeer and Executive Director Kristen Ralph



Ahoy, Me Hearties! Amanda and Dann Ficca



Scott Brett, DJ for the evening, super hero and Woodstock Fire Fighter.

Hexaport delivers strong network of IT experts

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

A local IT company's team-based approach ensures that all your computer, Internet, and cybersecurity needs are met.

Hexaport, a local IT company on 470 Industrial Avenue, Woodstock, launched about four-and-a-half years ago after noticing substantial population and small and large business growth. Wilfried Van Haeren, president/cio of Hexaport, said that there were few IT companies coming to Woodstock despite more new businesses launching in the area. There is also more demand from businesses to reach out to an IT support company, rather than hiring one person to manage all tech-support duties.

"Being able to maintain a truly good knowledge base and expertise in that field is not a one-man job anymore," Van Haeren said. "What we are basically building is a team with all those different pillars of expertise."

Hexaport did their own advertising and worked with the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce to find customers. Hexaport also helped several customers pivot during the COVID-19 Pandemic during the transition to remote work and education. The company helped ensure remote workers could still access and share files safely and securely and could still talk with clients on the telephone without exposing personal phone numbers. Hexaport also assisted

teachers with online teaching, whether they were in the classroom or at home.

The company, which provides PC support, secure data backups, video surveillance, remote IT, and cybersecurity support services, keeps getting positive feedback from customers.

"One of the most positive comments that we keep hearing back is 'The good news is I don't have to keep asking for Joe or Joanne anymore, I'll just call Hexaport and I know I'll be looked after,' where it's become quality as a key element that we're really proud of when customers say we give them the input that we needed or the services or products that we needed," Van Haeren said.

When working with their clients, Van Haeren said Hexaport will also discuss other issues discovered during the consultation and will address which problems should be solved first.

"We know that money is tight and that it cannot always be done immediately, but we tend to see things where we say 'Well, this is a slightly higher priority than something else,'" he said. "You would like to buy yourself a new PCs, but let's start with putting some decent security software on it before your PC's being hacked or somebody clicks on the wrong link in an email. That we have some software that will prevent those links from being activated."

Visit hexaport.io for more information.



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Navy Vets have terrific start to season

The Woodstock Navy Vets have had a terrific start to the season with a 15-1-0-1 record.

Davin Gray from Ingersoll was named the PJHL Doherty Division Player of the Month for the Sep-Oct

period after recording 27 points on 4 goals and 23 assists. He currently leads the division in scoring with 36 points including a PJHL league-leading 30 assists. He had a league best 16-game point streak snapped this past Saturday against New Hamburg.

Beachville native Nolan Brett leads the Doherty Division with 15 goals.

Chris Coulter from London leads all division defencemen in scoring with 9 goals and 10 assists.

Tillsonburg goalie Tyler Bouck is tied for the PJHL league lead with 10 wins.

Head Coach Darren Young became the 4th man in team history to coach 200 career games ... joining Dave Bogart, Ed MacQueen, and Scott Brooks.

Several other milestones have been reached in the past month ...

Nolan Brett recorded his 50th career goal. Captain Sam Barry played in his 100th career game.

Rookie Woodstock native Aiden Kindurys scored his 1st junior goal.

Upcoming November-December games

- Fri Nov 17 at TAVISTOCK @ 7:30pm
- Sun Nov 19 at PARIS @ 7:30pm
- Fri Nov 24 vs NORWICH at Southwood Arena @ 7:45pm – Teddy Bear & Pajama Toss
- Sun Nov 26 at HESPELER @ 3:30pm
- Fri Dec 01 at NEW HAMBURG @ 7:30pm
- Fri Dec 08 vs HESPELER @ 7:45pm
- Fri Dec 15 vs WELLESLEY @ 7:45pm – Kid's Night & Children's Hospital Toy Drive
- Sun Dec 17 @ NORWICH @ 2 :30pm
- Fri Dec 22 vs PARIS @ 7:45pm
- Sat Dec 23 @ WELLESLEY @ 7:30pm



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)
Davin Gray being presented the PJHL Doherty Division Player of the Month Award from PJHL South Conference Manager Steve Sumka.



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Make this Christmas ROCK!

PJHL STANDINGS South Doherty Division (as of November 12, 2023)

	GP	W	L	OTL	T	PTS
Woodstock Navy Vets	17	15	1	1	0	31
New Hamburg Firebirds	17	12	4	1	0	25
Tavistock Braves	15	8	6	0	1	17
Hespeler Shamrocks	15	7	8	0	0	14
Norwich Merchants	16	5	9	1	1	12
Wellesley Applejacks	15	5	10	0	0	10
Paris Titans	17	3	13	1	0	7

WOSHL STANDINGS (as of November 12, 2023)

	GP	W	L	OTL	T	PTS
Tillsonburg Thunder	7	6	1	0	0	12
Petrolia Squires	8	6	2	0	0	12
Strathroy Jets	11	6	5	0	0	12
Elora Rocks	7	5	2	0	0	10
Tilbury Bluebirds	6	4	2	0	0	8
Alvinston Killer Bees	7	4	3	0	0	8
Delhi Flames	6	3	3	0	0	6
Stratford Fighting Irish	6	3	3	0	0	6
Woodstock Lakers	7	2	5	0	0	4
Dunnville Aeros	8	1	7	0	2	4
Orangeville Blitz	9	1	8	0	0	2

COLD & FLU SEASON



Keep yourself & your community healthy!

- Wash your hands carefully
- Stay home when sick
- Wear a well-fitted facemask in indoor public settings & for 10 days after illness
- Get a flu shot & the newest Covid-19 vaccine, especially if you are 65+



Speak to your pharmacist or primary care provider about a flu shot & your updated Covid-19 vaccine.

65+? Visit swpublichealth.ca/covid19 for Covid-19 vaccine information. Book at **1-833-943-3900**.

Woodstock Lakers win two straight

Kevin Hu scores 9 points against Dunnville



STEWART GRANT

Publisher

After a tough start to the season, the Woodstock Lakers are starting to find the back of the net, and the team is beginning to climb up the Western Ontario Super Hockey League standings.

Forward Kevin Hu had a game to remember on November 11, scoring 6 times and adding 3 assists against the Dunnville Aeros. His 9 points

paced the Lakers to a 10-5 road win. Hu, who won the league's Most Valuable Player award last season, is back on top of the league-wide scoring race, with 9 goals and 7 assists in just 5 games played.

Two weeks earlier, the Lakers won their first game of the season by a 7-5 score in Delhi – ending a five-game losing streak.

The team's losing streak wasn't for lack of effort. In several games this year, the

example of this was their October 21 loss to Elora Rocks. Despite outshooting Elora 48-25, they lost the game by a score of 6-3.

The Lakers hope to continue their strong play as they close out the month of November with a pair of Saturday night games. On November 18th, they visit the Orangeville Blitz, while the following week, on November 25, the Lakers host the Tilbury Bluebirds at Southwood Arena.

club has outshot the opposition only to find themselves stymied by a hot goaltender. An

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 maximum 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.

PJHL STANDINGS

West Yeck Division

(as of November 12, 2023)

	GP	W	L	OTL	T	PTS
North Middlesex Stars	16	14	2	0	0	28
Thamesford Trojans	16	13	3	0	0	26
Dorchester Dolphins	16	11	2	3	0	25
Mt. Brydges Bulldogs	16	11	5	0	0	22
Exeter Hawks	16	8	6	2	0	18
Petrolia Flyers	16	5	10	1	0	11
Port Stanley Sailors	14	4	9	1	0	9
Lucan Irish	18	4	13	1	0	9
Aylmer Spitfires	18	3	15	0	0	6

WOODSTOCK LAKERS

Player Statistics (WOSHL)

(as of November 12, 2023)

PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
Kevin Hu	F	5	9	7	16
Hunter Dubecki	F	7	3	7	10
Damian Caringi	F	5	4	6	10
Christian Polillo	F	6	4	4	8
Mitch Randell	D	7	0	6	6
Mitch Britton	F	7	3	1	4
Hunter Monkhouse	F	7	2	1	3
Corey Flemington	D	5	0	3	3
Lodie Ipeelie	F	3	2	1	3
Justin Cheng	F	7	0	2	2
Karson Massey	D	7	0	2	2
Brody Martin	F	6	0	2	2
Frank Nemeth	D	2	0	1	1
Brady Schmidt	F	7	1	0	1
Jason Horvat	D	6	0	1	1
Tyler Simon	D	5	0	1	1
Dallas Routh	F	6	0	1	1
Brad Krysko	F	5	0	1	1
Robb Shedden	F	4	1	0	1
Andrew Randazzo	D	3	0	1	1
Jesse Bylund	D	3	0	0	0
Matt DiPaolo	D	2	0	0	0
Sam Bell	F	2	0	0	0
Dylan Vandersleen	F	5	0	0	0

PLAYER	RECORD	GAA	SV%
Ben Edwards	2-4-0	5.70	.837
Morgan Reed	0-1-0	15.00	.688

WOODSTOCK NAVY VETS

Player Statistics (PJHL)

(as of November 12, 2023)

PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
Davin Gray	F	17	6	30	36
Nolan Brett	F	17	15	14	29
Chris Coulter	D	16	9	10	19
Ethan Szabo	F	13	5	13	18
Tyler Smeda	D	17	6	9	15
Brodie Kearns	F	11	3	10	13
Ty Crombie	F	13	6	5	11
Sam Barry	F	17	5	5	10
Cole Dann	F	17	5	5	10
Mitch Penner	D	17	0	7	7
Jake Phelan	D	14	4	2	6
Owen Lukings	F	14	3	2	5
Brady Carne	F	10	2	3	5
Rhylan Warford	F	11	2	3	5
Michael Boyle-Ricupero	F	13	2	3	5
Aiden Kindurys	F	13	1	3	4
Aaron Bullock	F	9	1	2	3
Connor Stanley	F	10	1	2	3
Matt Brooks	F	14	1	2	3
Michael Vermeersch	D	13	0	3	3
Brandon Lamb	DF	6	0	2	2
Jordan Thomson	D	15	0	2	2

PLAYER	RECORD	GAA	SV%
Tyler Bouck	10-1-1-0	2.40	.925
Scott Rodrigue	5-0-0-0	2.60	.913

THAMESFORD TROJANS

Player Statistics (PJHL)

(as of November 12, 2023)

PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
Will Lewis	D	15	11	13	24
Alex MacLeod	F	16	11	12	23
Jack Weber	F	13	5	13	18
Brett Busby	F	12	6	8	14
Ewan Meiklejohn	F	16	4	9	13
Matthew Pimentel	F	15	6	6	12
Owen Kernohan	F	16	3	9	12
Ronan Panziera	F	12	6	5	11
Nathan Marques	D	16	5	6	11
Yusuf Jomaa	F	13	4	6	10
Ty Durston	D	11	4	4	8
Jaiden Hay	F	12	3	4	7
Anthony Simpson	F	14	3	4	7
Brenden Smith	F	16	2	5	7
Calvin Hanford	F	16	3	3	6
Cayden Muscutt	F	14	1	2	3
Brandon Page	D	10	0	3	3
Will Strain	D	14	1	0	1
John Poustie	F	1	0	1	1
Stephen Burnett	F	2	0	1	1
Justin McClelland	D	15	0	1	1

PLAYER	RECORD	GAA	SV%
Oliver Rebanks	6-1-0-0	1.85	.939
Kevin Halloran	6-2-0-0	2.50	.917



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Ingersoll Curling Club prepares to host Ontario's best curlers in January

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

The countdown is well underway as the Ingersoll District Curling Club (IDCC) non-profit organization prepares to host the Milk every moment 2024 Ontario Men's and Women's Curling Championship that will be held at Dorchester's Flight Exec Centre from January 21 to 28, 2024.

This event, which was originally known as the 2024 Ontario Tankard/Scotties, was renamed when Dairy Farmers Ontario became the Title Partner.



A total of 12 men's teams and 12 women's teams will be vying for the opportunity to represent Ontario at their respective Canadian Curling Championships – The Brier for the men and The Tournament of Hearts for the women.

"We anticipate attendance for the week to be 18,000 to 20,000, with the event to be live streamed with an expected 1.7 million viewers," Dick Bowman of the IDCC told the Echo. Funds raised from the event supports kids and curling locally. For businesses interested in sponsorship opportunities, they are encouraged to reach out to the club at ingersollclash@gmail.com.

To reserve your ticket for this world-class event coming to the area, or to obtain more information, visit ingersollcurlingclub.ca.

Tournament Results



October 22nd Results

Elite:

Matthew - 3rd in Kumite

Ziad - 4th in Kata, 1st in Kumite

Fiona - 3rd in Kata, 2nd in Kumite

Olivia - 7th in Kata, 2nd in Kumite

Rec:

Kristian - 5th in Kata, 2nd in Kumite

Johnathon - 7th in Kata, 3rd in Kumite

Erik - 1st in Kata

Mercedes - 2nd in Kata, 2nd in Kumite

September 24th

Rableen - 3rd place Girls 12-13 Novice

Kata, 2nd place Girls 12-13 Kumite

Mahira - 1st place Girls 6-7 Novice

Kata, 4th place Girls 6-7 Novice Kumite

Mercedes - 3rd place Women's Novice

Kata, 2nd place Women's Kumite

Jaxon - 3rd place Boys 10-11 Novice

Kata, 5th in Boys 10-11 Novice Kumite

Kristian - 3rd place Boys 8-9 Novice

Kata, 3rd place Boys 8-9 Novice Kumite

Johnathon - 2nd place Boys 12-13 Novice Kata

And our Elite Team:

Fiona - 1st place Female 12-13 Kata, 4th

place Female 12-13 +52kg Kumite

Olivia - 7th place Female 14-15 Kata,

3rd place Female 12-13 +61kg Kumite

Ziad - 5th place in Male 16-17 Kata, 2nd

place in Male 16-17 -55kg Kumite

Matthew - 3rd place in Mens -75kg Kumite

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Saturday, November 25

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Sunday, November 26

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Pair of aces for John Payne



STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Any avid golfer knows how special and rare of a moment it is to make a hole-in-one. Many golfers play their entire lives without recording an ace.

For John Payne of Woodstock, who had witnessed his playing partners record hole-in-ones on three separate occasions this year, he wondered if his time would ever come.

“My friend Tom Shaddick encouraged me, saying ‘your time is going to come, you’re going to get one,’” John said.

Sunday, October 22nd turned out to be that special day. In weather just above freezing, when only the diehard golfers would be out playing, John’s tee shot on the 104-yard 3rd hole at Sally Creek Golf Club found the cup.

Then, remarkably... he made another ace about 30 minutes later, on the 117-yard 7th hole.

According to the National Hole in One Registry, the odds of making two holes-in-one in the same round are around 1 in 67 million. The 62-year-old golfer who wondered if he’d ever get a hole in one, suddenly had two.

Although John didn’t initially realize the significance and rareness of this occurrence, he soon came to understand it

through all the attention that the events caused. As a result of a Facebook post mid-round, friend Brent Lale of CTV News immediately contacted John to set up a virtual interview while he was still on the golf course. Since then, he’s had a number of requests to appear on morning talk radio broadcasts across the country, and people have called Sally Creek from as far away as Florida to find out about the pair of aces.

As a bogey golfer, John is reluctant to give himself too much credit for making the two perfect shots, but he is happy to have some attention directed towards his home course at Sally Creek here in Woodstock.

“The people at the golf course have been amazing, and the course itself at Sally Creek is stunning – it’s a beautiful golf course,” John told the Echo. “There’s a thing here called ‘Challenge the creek’, and the challenge is to try and get yourself around these demanding nine holes with just one golf ball.”

While the two aces in one round was really something, John said that it wasn’t even the best thing that happened during October. “On Thanksgiving Sunday, I got to walk my eldest daughter down the aisle as she got married to a great guy. It’s been quite the month to remember.”



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Financial support Theatre Woodstock has received through the Community Services Recovery Fund

The Community Services Recovery Fund is a one-time \$400 million investment from the Government of Canada to support community service organizations, including charities, non-profits and Indigenous governing bodies, as they adapt and modernize their organizations.

As community service organizations, including charities, non-profits and Indigenous governing bodies, across Canada work to support recovery in their communities, the Community Services Recovery Fund will help them adapt and

modernize their operations to grow their support in communities.

The Government of Canada is delivering the Community Services Recovery Fund through three National Funders – Canadian Red Cross, Community Foundations of Canada, and United Way Centraide Canada

Locally in Oxford County, the Oxford Community Foundation (OCF) is acting as the funding service provider. We would like to thank Oxford Community Foundation (OCF) for their work with the Community Services Recovery

Fund and their continued support for Theatre Woodstock.

Theatre Woodstock is grateful to have received \$75,000 in funding to support our recovery efforts after the impact of COVID-19 on our community theatre.

We look forward to continuing our relationship with Oxford Community Foundation as we strive to provide Woodstock and Oxford County with quality, award-winning live theatre.

“Community service organizations are at the heart of communities like Woodstock, creating a sense of belong-

ing from coast to coast to coast. The Community Services Recovery Fund will enable organizations like Theatre Woodstock that serve our diverse communities to adapt and modernize their programs and services and to invest in the future of their organizations, staff and volunteers. Together, we can rebuild from the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic and build a more just and equitable future for those in Woodstock and Oxford County,” Jenna Sudds, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Ingersoll Theatre Rehearsal Daddy Long Legs

Rehearsal for ITOPA's (Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts) began on Thursday, October 19, for their December production of Daddy Long Legs was underway. Held at their Theatre at the Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts in Ingersoll.

Adapted from the classic tale by Jean Webster, Daddy-Long-Legs is the story of a young girl, Jerusha Abbott, who has been raised in an orphanage circa early

20th Century in the mid west. Despite the sad and boring life she leads, Jerusha is a cheerful and creative person with a talent for writing.

A mysterious man pays for her to go to college, believing she can become a writer. He sets a strange condition – she must write to him monthly about her life, without ever expecting a letter in return. Jerusha nicknames him Daddy-Long-Legs,

and he becomes an integral part of her life. The story then unfolds.

The Theatre was first built as a cinema and has undergone renovations to its current use for stage plays. The Theatre has 149 seats in 13 rows. Each wing accommodates 22 people, and the main floor 104. The seats are comfortable cinema-style seats. The Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts is a non-profit orga-

nization controlled by its members, who have full voting privileges and, therefore, determine its policies and direction. ITO-PA members come from many different backgrounds: actors, directors, backstage crew, and cultural supporters. Some of those involved pursue theatre as a profession and some as a hobby.

(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)



Arjen Vooia (Assistant Stage Manager), Ian Moyer (Producer), Lilyane Moyer (Director)



The orphans played by Carson Haggart (Tommy), Emilye Chye (Jerusha Abbott), Leah Folkma (Clara), Claire Catlack (Sadie), Allison Haggart (Violet) and Lauren Haggart (Kate)



Male Cast Jonathan Folkema (Mr. Digby and Mr. Semple), Allen Howard (Griggs) and Chris Clark (Jervis Pendleton Daddy Long Legs)



Female Cast Lisa Zukiwiki (Mrs Pritchard), Veronica Jackson (Mrs Semple), Charlyn Haily (Sallie) and Ellen Hook (Mrs Dodds and Waitress)

Murder and Mayhem At The Woodstock Museum

On October 28th at the Woodstock Museum, people attended a day of mystery, murder, and intrigue inspired by the Bir-

chall trial of 1890. This event was presented by Live History, a theatre company that specializes in bringing local history to life.

Groups of people explored the building and interacted with characters as they worked together to solve clues and complete tasks.

Groups began in 15 minute intervals and had an hour to complete the event. This event was designed for ages 16+.



Theatre Company's actors were Priscilla Asiffo Alistair Martin Alecia Pagnotta and Jackie Mahoney



Out for some fun and mystery were Carol King Tina Turner Jean Lowes Betty Davies and Dorothy Moore



ABBA, A TRIBUTE SHOW

(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

On Saturday, October 21st, a rocking good time fundraiser was held at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church, Woodstock. They were singing and grooving along with ABBA, a live tribute show. This was chance to put on their best moves for this musical event. The band sang ABBA hits like Dancing Queen, Mamma Mia, Knowing Me Knowing You. and Winner Takes It All. The building at 723 Dundas Street, known as Old St. Paul's Church, is set back from Dundas Street. The red-brick church was designed using elements of the Gothic and Classical architectural styles and was constructed in 1834. New St. Paul's Anglican Church was built at the intersection of Wellington and Dundas Streets in 1879 to accommodate the growing congregation. As a result of this relocation, Old St. Paul's was closed in 1879 and re-opened to serve the Anglican community in 1882.



(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)

Organized by Kerrie Gill, Education Officer and Darieel McIntyre, Clerk and Rental Coordinator

Grand Opening for Embro Family Pharmacy



Embro residents welcomed a significant new business to town on Monday, November 6th when the Grand Opening took place for Embro Family Pharmacy at 104 Commissioner Street.

Pharmacist owners Stuart Alp and Dawood Zulfqar, who are also co-owners of Innerkip Family Pharmacy, are joined in the above photo by Zorra Deputy Mayor Katie Grigg, Ward 4 Councillor Crystal Finch, Rural Oxford Economic Development Officer Crystal Van Roekel, and a handful of appreciative Embro residents.

Embro Family Pharmacy is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. They offer the full scope of pharmacy services including blister packaging, minor ailments prescribing, smoking cessation, diabetes management, injections, and of course, filling prescriptions. Local delivery is also available.

New York Times bestseller author Nita Prose discusses writing and unveils anticipated sequel to *The Maid* at Woodstock's Market Centre Theater

MARÍA C. ROSALES GERPE

Echo Correspondent

For nearly five years, Oxford County Library and the Woodstock Public Library, have fostered a collaborative partnership called Oxford Reads, which “aims to connect readers across the County while celebrating Canadian literature and fostering discussion,” according to the Oxford Reads website. Their annually held Oxford Reads Gala took place on November 3, 2023, in Woodstock's Market Centre Theater, and featured acclaimed Canadian author Nita Prose.

“After three years of holding virtual galas, it was thrilling to gather in person to celebrate this year's title, ‘The Maid.’ We had a nearly full house, and the reception to this year's Oxford Reads programming has been overwhelming,” relayed Sarah Adam, Systems Support Librarian at Oxford County Library. Indeed, Market Centre Theater buzzed with the excitement of many an Oxford County reader, as each sat glued to their seats awaiting Prose to grace the stage.

Oxford County and the Woodstock Library also “held events leading up to the

gala to celebrate the book's themes, including book clubs, paint nights, murder mysteries, and organization workshops,” Adam recounted.

About the author, Nita Prose

Seemingly overnight, Canadian editor Nita Prose became a household name after her debut novel “The Maid” turned out to be both a Globe and Mail, and New York Times bestseller within weeks of its release in January 2022, reported the CBC at the time. At the gala, Prose was introduced by Oxford Gala 2023 host Sarah Acchione, a long-time resident of Woodstock, and co-host and co-producer of the local TV show “Your Woodstock” that highlights local events and businesses.

The evening was filled with playful banter between a publicly confident Prose and a quick-witted Acchione, followed by insightful audience questions about Prose's reading preferences, writing process, and main character Molly's atypical personality, with which many audience members resonated. In between, to a captivated audience, Prose read the prologues from “The Maid,” and its sequel, “The Mystery Guest,” which made Woodstock the first audience to know its words, announced



(RON YUZARK PHOTO)

WRITTEN PROSE

Nita Prose holding two of published novels *The Maid* and *The Mystery Guest*

Prose.

When asked about her remarkable achievement of becoming a bestselling first-time novelist, the Torontonion writer humbly expressed that it likely took her two decades to birth the book despite having only spent six months writing it. “I've been an editor for 20 years,” she addressed the audience, adding “I have imbibed story, writing technique, narrative for 20 years working with a huge array of different writers.”

But that's not to say that her editing experience made her feel infallible. “One of the surprising things for me was how blind you are as a writer,” admitted Prose, describing to the audience how as an editor she often metaphorically stands on a ladder towering above her author clients' writing maze: she knows which plot points, characters, stylistic devices may lead them down a dead end.

And yet, as a writer, she was taken aback when the ladder was swept off her feet, and she was thrust into the unfamiliar maze through which all writers must pay passage. Still, she loved that feeling: “Part of the fun (of writing) is

this discovery of not knowing,” Prose said.

About the book

“The Maid” is an award-winning murder-mystery book that in addition to the aforementioned accolades has been shortlisted for a Best Novel Edgar Award, and will be soon adapted into a motion picture starring Academy Award nominee, English actress Florence Pugh, who you may know from “Midsommar” and Greta Gerwig's “Little Women.” Prose's debut novel central character, aptly named Molly Maid, is an endearing albeit awkward and particular 25-year-old who unexpectedly finds herself as the lead suspect of a murder investigation at the prestigious Regency Grand Hotel where she is employed as a maid.

“Our evening with Nita Prose was a wonderful way to cap off this year's Oxford Reads Gala celebration,” said Adam. Next year's Oxford Readers book choice will be announced in the Spring of 2024. “We can't wait to see what next year brings!” wrote Adam in her email to The Echo.

ITOPA Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts
88 Thames St. South, Ingersoll

Presents

Daddy Long Legs

Adapted by: Lilyane Moyer
from the classic tale by Jean Webster
Directed by: Lilyane Moyer
Produced by: Ian Moyer

December 8, 9, 10*,
14, 15, 16*, 17*

*Matinee performances

Curtain Times:
Evening Performance 7:30 pm
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Ontario and Ohio artists awarded for sister city art exhibition

Six artists have been awarded for their work as part of a joint exhibition between the sister cities of Woodstock and Sylvania, Ohio.

To mark the 65th anniversary of the Woodstock Art Gallery's annual juried art show, it partnered with the art department at Lourdes University. Visual Elements 65 features artwork by 38 artists from Canada and the US and was juried by Thelma Rosner, Irma Makariunaite, Tamara Monk, and Ken Thompson.

The awards include:

Best In Show

- Tabitha Verbuyst, from Tillsonburg, Ont., for the painting All Around Me Are Familiar Places, 2023

Juror's Choice

- Lindsay Liboiron from Mount Elgin, Ontario, for the painting Maurice

- Sean Hammond from Woodstock, Ontario, for the painting Politically Correct Data Corruption, 2023

"I'm absolutely delighted to be selected," said Verbuyst, the best in show recipient. "It is an honour to be exhibiting alongside so many talented artists.



JUROR'S CHOICE

Sean Hammond with his artwork Politically Correct Data Corruption at the Woodstock Art Gallery.

(TRISH ROBERTS, CUSTOM CONCEPT PHOTOGRAPHY.)

I'm so incredibly grateful to the jurors and to be a part of this fantastic exhibit."

The awards were announced at an opening reception recently during the 37th Annual Sylvania Fall Festival.

"Visual Elements 65 provid-

ed artists an opportunity to not only achieve international exposure, but to collaborate with other artists to create a wonderful show," said Erin Palmer Szavuly, Chair of the Art Department at Lourdes University.

"The layers of work to build

an exhibition such as this involves community support and partnership on many levels and the excitement this event generated for our sister cities is a great foreshadowing of events for the future. In addition, this cross-collaboration was a

great opportunity to showcase how art is a common language among artists and how we all have a creative self somewhere within us."

The opening reception was attended by Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione, Sylvania Mayor Craig Stough, members of the Woodstock Sister City Committee and the Sylvania Sister City Commission, representatives from Lourdes University, Woodstock Art Gallery staff and board members, and several of the artists and jurors.

"The afternoon was a wonderful cross-cultural exchange of art and ideas. I am very thankful to the Gallery's partners for making this project become a reality. These include both sister city committees of Woodstock and Sylvania, Ohio, the Sylvania Arts Commission, and the Woodstock Rotary Club," said Mary Reid, Director/Curator of the Woodstock Art Gallery.

The exhibition, which was presented in Woodstock earlier this year, will be on display at the Canticle Center gallery in Sylvania until Dec. 22, 2023. It can also be viewed online on the Woodstock Art Gallery app.

Art Cycle bike racks add vibrancy to city's public spaces

EMILY STEWART

Echo Correspondent

A few years after the idea first popped up, a variety of colourful bike racks are scattered across Woodstock as part of a public art project.

The City of Woodstock announced in an October 24 press release that the first 30 bikes part of the Art Cycle project were installed around the city. The project features the work of five local artists chosen after a request for designs in the summer. Heidi Fotsch, Adele Figliomeni, Nicole Major, Claudia Silva Prates and Filomena McMahon's designs will be featured on 10 bikes each.

Mary Reid, the director/curator of the Woodstock Art Gallery, is thrilled to see the project come together. Art Cycle started as an idea for a public art project for Canada 150 in 2015. The project received funding from FedDev Ontario's Tourism Relief fund.

"It's about trying to put art in everyday places, trying to beautify our city and trying to make our things a bit more unexpected," Reid said. "So, you turn a corner, and there's a work of art by a local artist and what a better way to experience things as you're walking around and enjoying



ART CYCLE

Bike racks designs by Adele Figliomeni, Filomena McMahon and Nicole Major

what Woodstock has to offer?"

Reid said the artists were great collaborators. Some of them hand-drew their designs and others illustrated theirs digitally, but all had to be tweaked to ensure they fit regulations for bike racks. For example, making sure no one could get their head stuck.

(DUANE KUMALA-THOMAS, HIGHLANDER STUDIOS PHOTO)

"I have to thank the artists for being incredibly gracious and very flexible in terms of how the designs had to be translated," she said. "Particularly, those that were quite complex, there had to be a simplification. Whereas other ones that had we were able to embellish a little bit more. It was an interesting dance as we moved

back and forth with each one of the artists."

Maglin Site Furniture designed the bike racks, which were made in Woodstock.

"You couldn't ask for better community partners, collaborators, and supporters. There's a lot of moving parts with this project and to have Maglin literally in our backyard walking us through every part of this step," Reid said. "It was nice to have that support and guidance as we moved through this process."

Public artwork projects like Art Cycle help create landmarks to build cities' identities – such as Paris' Eiffel Tower and Anish Kapoor's Cloud Gate "Jellybean" sculpture in Chicago – and encourages civic pride.

"When you live in a beautiful environment, you tend to feel better," Reid said. "You tend to take pride in things and if you're happier, everyone else is happier. I think public art has that ability to not only beautify but also to create spaces of belonging and community and raise our wellness as a society overall."

The City of Woodstock will install the remaining 20 bike racks after the redevelopment of Dundas Street is completed in 2024.

Route To The Past: The Spirit of Christmas

SCOTT GILLIES

Contributor

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go. The Festival of Winter Lights in Ingersoll is underway with its multi-coloured lights glowing throughout the many parks, and elsewhere homes and businesses are festooned with their own gay displays of colour. On the streets, shops and malls can be heard the sounds of seasonal songs filling the air, and the hallowed halls and walls of our multi denominational ecclesiastical edifices echo to the joyous hymns and carols of Christmas.

Like so many of the old time favourites, the song of the season encourage us to be of good cheer, to let nothing us dismay. Thanks to Gene Autry children today know about Santa's famous reindeer Rudolph, and "Olive" the other reindeer who used to laugh and call him names!

"City sidewalks, busy sidewalks". Hustle and bustles seems to be the norm. With our busy lives taking up so much of our attention each and every day, it is easy to overlook something on The List or worse still, forget someone!

Neighbours pass neighbours

with a friendly greeting and "smile after smile". It's Christmas time in the city, town and county. Children try to be on their best behaviour, hoping that their names appear on a certain someone's Nice List, and not the Naughty one. Some of us – young and old—have written our Christmas wish list, hoping to receive the latest in electronic gadgetry, a new sweater, jewellery, or book. In years gone by, our lists might have included a new doll or train, handkerchiefs or harmonicas.

Some things never change. In the 1920s, stores advertised their wares, especially appealing to the mothers of young girls and boys, with recommendations that new clothes would be not only a sensible gift but also well thought of, and well received by their children. (Who were they trying to kid!?)

It is the season of giving. "Sleigh bells ring. Are you listening?" We haven't had much of the white precipitation yet for the lane to be glistening, but the sound of small brass bells are ringing throughout the land as volunteers don warm winter clothing and tend to their kettles on street corners or in shopping malls. Can you spare a dime, or more, and make a donation to a worthwhile cause?

Will the spirit of the season live

in your hearts long after the tinsel and toys have become nothing more than memories? "If every day could be more like Christmas, what a wonderful world this would be." The words of the song recorded by Elvis may not be all that old, but the lesson of the lyrics ring true down through the centuries.

I think that 19th century Irish poet, patriot and journalist John Boyle O'Reilly captured the essences of this sentiment when he penned "What is Good?" I came across the five stanzas in a long-discarded grade school reader published in 1932.

"What is the real good?"

I asked in musing mood.
Order, said the law court;
Knowledge, said the school;
Truth, said the wise man;
Pleasure, said the fool.

Love, said the maiden;
Beauty, said the page;
Freedom, said the dreamer;
Home, said the sage;
Fame, said the soldier;
Equity, said the seer.
Spake my heart full sadly,
"The answer is not here."

Then within my bosom
softly this I heard:
"Each heart holds the secret;
Kindness is the word."

Princess Elizabeth Women's Institute- A Very Active Group

Princess Elizabeth Women's Institute (PEWI) is an active community group with 12 members that come from Tavistock, Hickson, Plattsville and Casel. We meet on the third Thurs. of each month.

In June we decided to have a picnic at Queen's Park in Tavistock, but because rain was threatening, we moved to the Village Manor. There we enjoyed the delicious lunch that each had brought for themselves – a short meeting followed.

One of the summer events we all look forward to is a trip to Blyth to enjoy a good stage play. This year was no exception as we saw "Liars at a Funeral". This play had many twists and turns and caused much laughter.

In August we always plan to visit the Plattsville Historical Society's display at the Chesterfield Museum in the former Chesterfield Church. After enjoying lunch at Shaker's Family Restaurant in Plattsville, we went to the Museum. This year's display was titled, "A Look Back at Clubs, Teams and Organizations". We were able to identify with

many of the exhibits on display. What a trip down Memory Lane as we reminisced about the clubs, teams and organizations we had or do belong to – Women's Institute, 4-H, Hockey, Baseball, Figure Skating, Eastern Star and so many others. We have never been disappointed by their great displays.

Our Sept. Meeting was again held at the Village Manor. There were 11 members, (1 by Zoom) and 13 guests present. We held a memorial ceremony for Sheila Geason who passed away on Wednesday Sept. 20. A candle was lit and we shared stories and memories of Sheila. "Bubbles" touched many people and had a big smile. Sheila will be missed.

We had two speakers from Days for girls. Non-Profit who provides Menstrual kits to girls. Menstrual health management is a matter of human rights, and a critical component to achieving gender equity. Charity navigator who ranks charities gave in a 4-star 100% rating, because they give 100% of their donations to the kits.

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Echo

The Woodstock Ingersoll Echo is currently a monthly newspaper that, thanks to the support of the community, will be shifting to a bi-weekly newspaper in March 2024. The next editions are:

Friday, November 17th

Friday, December 15th

Friday, January 19th

Friday, February 16th

Thursday, March 14th

Thursday, March 28th

info@theecho.ca

LOCAL MATTERS.



Remember that time when Amazon sponsored your church fundraiser?



Remember when Facebook bought a case of Girl Guide cookies to support your daughter?



Remember when Google provided free pizza to your child's soccer team when they won the championship?

Does the most interesting man in the world live in Oxford?

MARÍA C. ROSALES GERPE

Echo Correspondent

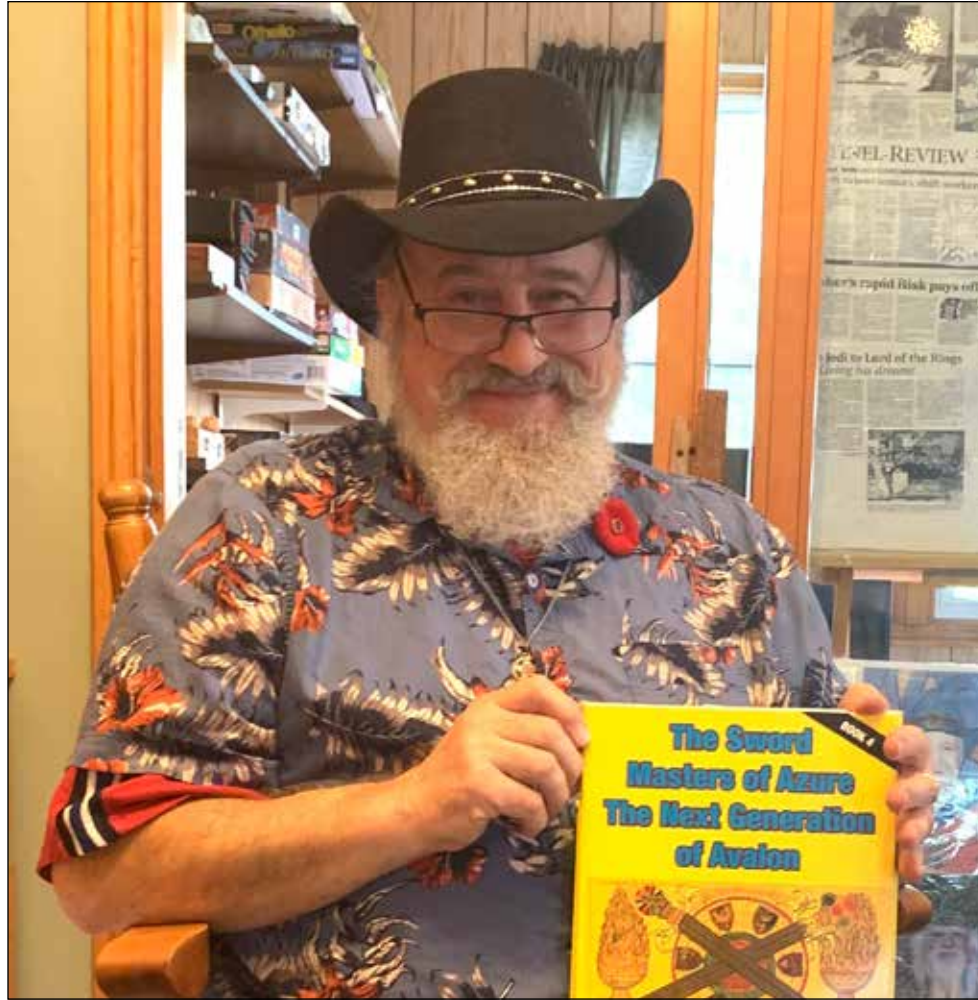
The “Most interesting man in the world” was a highly successful advertising campaign by then marketing firm Euro RSCG for Cuauhtémoc Moctezuma Brewery to advertise their Dos Equis beer. You may recall witnessing a smooth-talking, bearded, blue-eyed older gentleman cheering the audience with a Dos Equis beer bottle after his many accomplishments were narrated over stills from films capturing his many life adventures.

One of the commercials from the popular marketing campaign for Dos Equis begins with the narrator saying, “People hang on his every word, even the prepositions.” And that’s what you may find yourself doing when you hear the radio-voice of Joseph Arena, who also incidentally boasts a mighty beard and kind blue eyes.

Arena, now a grandfather, is a prolific wordsmith with a slew of literature titles under his belt. His book “The Legendary and the Brave – a conquest into the unknown,” which was published in 1979 when it became a limited collector’s edition bestseller, was inducted into the National Library Archives. But Arena is also a sharp game inventor.

In the 1960s, as a kid, while playing a game, he rolled a pair of dice which landed on top of each other, and the phrase “3D dominoes” popped in his mind. “I began creating boxes with numbers and symbols on them to create three-dimensional dominoes,” Arena said. He even used mirrors to challenge himself to extend the 3D game.

The game was a successful venture, although he was never credited. “I learned from this to copyright my inventions,” Arena mentioned about the cautionary tale he often shares with budding writers and creators. But aside from being a



best-selling science-fiction author, and game inventor, Arena is also a crooner, being often invited as a performer of Elvis tribute bands.

He also had the lead title in the musical “Bye, Bye Birdie” in 1975, and was cast for the pilot episode of the TV series “Newcomers” that tackled stories on immigration and which aired from 1977 to 1980. During his acting years, Arena was also part of the larger cast for the movie

“Title Shot” that starred Tony Curtis, father to Academy Award winner Jamie Lee Curtis.

This year, Arena who is also an avid illustrator, having designed his own games, and book illustrations, will be debuting a collection of books meant to inspire a young generation, like his grandkids, to be swept by their imagination. “The books ask the critical question of ‘what if...?’ What if there were alternate realities and

universes?” He asks.

In this new series, Arena follows the lives of four children whose heightened imagination grants them the ability to travel to a planet called Azure, which contains all possible imaginative scenarios concocted in the minds of children and gifted people throughout time all around an alternate Earth.

“Will you dare join in the adventures of four young children swept off their world?” Arena beckons readers in the synopsis for his multiverse where the central characters “encounter celestial cosmic beings,” “battle prehistoric beasts,” and “discover mythical, enchanted creatures.”

The game Score-44 is played by the series’ characters who try to achieve a score of 44 points to win the game. The strategy game, which you can also play in real life, is a fun way of tricking kids to develop math skills, or adults to sharpen theirs. The late Gene Roddenberry, creator of Star Trek, and his wife sent a letter to Arena thanking him for creating a game they found so amusing, Arena recounted showing the handwritten letter from the Roddenberry’s.

You can judge whether Joseph Arena truly is the most interesting man in the world when you stop by to greet him as he unveils the continuation of his sci-fi series from the book housed by the National Library Archives, and the 144-card deck game at the following locations and dates:

November 25, 2023 at Nerdz Gaming Cafe (365 Dundas St.)

December 2 and 16 at Woodstock Fairgrounds (875 Nellis St.)

December 9, 2023 10 AM – 3 PM at Reel Treats (495 Dundas St.)

For more information, please contact Joseph Arena at unyt.ja@gmail.com. Proceeds from the event at Reel Treats will be donated to Salvation Army, Arena related.

A Scottish Ceilidh with the Ingersoll Pipe Band

VERONICA JACKSON

Echo Contributor

A Scottish Ceilidh was held on Saturday, October 21st at the Ingersoll Pipe Band Hall. The event was a fundraiser for The IPB to Ingersoll Pipe Band which is headed to

Phoenix Arizona to the Scottish Festival and Games in March 2024. And what is a ceilidh you ask? Originally, the word ceilidh (kay-lee) descended from the Gaelic word for “gathering” or “party.” When people think of a ceilidh, they think of a fun filled night of good music, great company and good eats!

And it was! 150 patrons purchased tickets and the event ran from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Entertainment began at 7:30 p.m. with traditional Gaelic music as well as contemporary tunes being provided by a variety of musicians. There was a sing-a-long as well as the opportunity to try some Scottish

country dancing. A light lunch was served during the evening and a very successful silent auction was held. The Ingersoll Pipe Band would like to thanks all local businesses and friends of the band who donated items for the auction and supported the event through ticket sales. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)



Catherine Stark and Dave Preswell playing the bagpipes



Pipe Major Doug Collins - a strolling piper during the evening

It takes a community to build a nature reserve...

As we watch the world heat exponentially, and climate change advance faster than scientists predicted, small untouched pockets like nature reserves, conservation areas, and even woodlots become ever more important to our own wellbeing and to that of wildlife. Climate change affects us equally - it is imperiling water, food, biodiversity, and the natural systems that we rely on. It is because of previous nature advocates like Dr. John Lawson that our area has relevant pockets of natural heritage that will serve to help offset global warming and preserve biodiversity. He was one of a kind in recognizing the importance of wild spaces and engaged many in helping to make his vision a reality.

One such area is a tract of land now known as the Lawson Nature Reserve. At one time the property was a small working gravel pit and used for farming. In 1976, Dr. Lawson purchased the property with the intention of reclaiming and conserving this natural area for his family and future generations to enjoy. Known locally as the "Lawson Tract", he opened the property to the public and led interpretive walks. He tried to instill a strong appreciation for nature within the Ingersoll community and was the epitome of a nature advocate ahead of his time. Along the way he involved local boy scouts, nature club members and willing community members too numerous to name. The Lawson Nature Reserve is a 14.71 ha (36.3 acre) parcel of land and is located at 363685 McBeth Road, approximately 4 km south of Ingersoll on Culloden Road, and 1.5 km east on McBeth Road, in South-West Oxford.

Born in Scotland, Dr. Lawson served as a medical officer during World War II. In the late 1950's, he moved his family to Ingersoll and opened a doctor's office on King Street West. Residents who knew him still reflect on his friendly and kind demeanour. Routinely he would be seen riding about town on his bicycle heading off to make patients' house calls or to the hospital, at a time when automobiles were popular and a desired mode of transportation. He was a well-respected resident of Ingersoll, and the Lawson family often opened their home for Federation of Ontario Naturalists meetings (now known as Ontario Nature). He was a charter member and sat for a time as the President of the Ingersoll Nature Club, a member group of Ontario Nature.

Following his passing, in the mid-90's the Lawson Tract was generously donated to Ontario Nature by Dr. Lawson's family. The Ingersoll District Nature Club (IDNC) has continued his conservation vision by acting as stewards of the property, creating a wetland, planting Carolinian species, and restoring its open spaces. This provincially significant property is one of Ontario Nature's 26 nature reserves, which together count for 10.9% of protected lands in Canada as documented in the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database. In 2004, the Tract was granted full Nature Reserve status by Ontario Nature, an achievement of which the IDNC is very proud.

The Lawson Nature Reserve (LNR) exists within the Carolinian Life Zone, a unique ecosystem which has the warmest



DR. LAWSON

average annual temperatures, the longest frost-free seasons, and the mildest winters in Ontario. This area is on the northernmost edge of the deciduous forests of eastern North America. The Reserve is rich in biodiversity. There are over 300 plant species as well as numerous amphibians, birds and mammals that call the LNR home. The area, part of the Ingersoll Moraine and the Salford Swamp, features varied terrain with several types of vegetative communities including mixed hardwood forests, pine and spruce plantations, some open meadow and treed swamp.

The Tract features very diverse habitat areas. Each area is unique and is well-defined in character and identity. Within each area, there is a tight knit community of flowering plants, shrubs and mature trees. These plants adapt to the environment given to them (ie. soil moisture and light differences). There is some overlapping of species from area to area. The mixed forest area flanks both sides of the main trail. Mature black walnut, basswood, sugar maple, white cedar and black cherry dominate this area. It's a photographer's paradise in the spring and summer. Spring ephemerals abound - white trilliums, jack-in-the-pulpit, wild ginger, trout lilies, bloodroot and dog-toothed violets blanket the ground. Christmas fern and cinnamon fern thrive in the reserve along with mayapple, asters and spotted jewelweed. The smaller, interior Peepers Pond is covered with algae for much of the year and is surrounded by cedar, poplar, dogwood, willow and sensitive fern.

Approximately 4.8 ha of the property is treed swamp, known as The Salford Swamp, and is considered a Provincially Significant Wetland. The dominant conifer forests, planted with help from the boy scouts decades ago, cover approximately 2.5 ha in the central and western areas of the property.

The Reserve is a great place to watch birds and view small animals year-round. In the spring and early summer, activity is always busiest around the two ponds. Amorous male wood frogs begin calling as soon as the ice clears from the water surface. Spring peepers and striped chorus frogs are always in abundance in the reeds



singing their hearts out. Warm spring evenings bring male gray tree frogs calling hopefully, high from the treetops and surrounding shrubs.

The shallow waters of the man-made pond allowed for great viewing of both the frog and salamander jelly-like egg masses and was home to many species of dragonflies and damselflies. Unfortunately, despite best efforts by club members, the pond has been encroached upon by invasive phragmites, rendering it inhospitable to many native species. Work will commence this fall, led by Ontario Nature, to remove the phragmites.

Several bird feeding stations have been placed at specific points on the trails, bringing in sparrows, black-capped chickadees, cardinals, and goldfinches to name a few. A good variety of woodpeckers, brown creepers and wrens can be seen scaling the sides of trees searching for insects. Red-winged blackbirds territorialize around the water and evidence of the presence of the seldom seen pileated woodpecker can be seen throughout the trail system.

The property is well used by locals and others travelling from further afield to enjoy its 6 km of trail. Dr. Lawson's foresight to purchase, reclaim, and save this property has led to many hours of recreational enjoyment, education and opportunities for 'forest bathing' for children and adults alike. It is considered a "jewel in the crown" of Ontario Nature and is celebrated and supported by the municipality of South-West Oxford and a fund established through the Oxford Community Foundation. This small parcel of land, providing sanctuary to numerous species of birds, animals, and plants, would not exist without Dr. Lawson and an army of volunteers who worked tirelessly to return and maintain the property to a natural state.

As a community, we are indebted to his family for ensuring his legacy lives on. To those community members who contributed their sweat equity and financial support through the decades, it would not have happened without you. In honour of, and in recognition of, Dr. Lawson's vision five decades ago we could all take time to consider what we might do differently to make the world a better place for our next seven generations to follow us - specifically our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

If we all make steps to curb the advancement of global warming, we can be part of the solution. It's a daunting task. But Dr. Lawson, were he still with us, would

no doubt be leading the way on challenging the status quo and effecting positive change. And of course, he would be leading from his bicycle.

A little about the Ingersoll District Nature Club... The Club proudly celebrates its 71st anniversary this year. We welcome and are actively seeking new members whether nature-knowledgeable or not. We all learn together and are supported by the experts at Ontario Nature. The club provides monthly guided hikes around this surrounding area, as well as a monthly library lecture series from January through April at the Ingersoll Public Library on topics of natural interest. We are a registered charity and issue tax receipts for donations. As stewards of the Lawson Nature Reserve, IDNC club members ensure trails, picnic tables, and structures are maintained. Trails are open throughout the year, although only the brave enter in the summer due to mosquito populations resulting from the Salford Swamp. Winter walking and cross-country skiing make the property enticing during the snowier months, but trails are not groomed during the winter. The main trail to the bridge, while not paved, is still accessible to wheelchairs when dry. Bird feeders along this pathway make it easy to locate and enjoy our many feathered visitors through every season but summer. For more information about the club and the nature reserve please visit Ingersoll District Nature Club (ingersollnatureclub.com).

Ingersoll District Nature Club operates on the traditional territories of diverse Indigenous Nations and Peoples across the region that is now called Oxford County. We honour and show gratitude to the original stewards of these lands and waters.

What Can You Do about Climate Change? Addressing the climate crisis will require individual and collective action. We can all strive to:

- Decrease our carbon footprint by using active transportation, eating more local food and less beef, turning down our thermostats, and more. Ontario Nature is an excellent source of suggested ideas.
- Volunteer for organizations working on the climate crisis like Ontario Nature or Nature Canada.
- Advocate for bold climate action in your community and beyond - including with our elected officials.
- Vote for political parties with a good track record on their climate action commitments.

Riddles

Why didn't the moon finish his meal?
It was full.

How do you put an elephant in a refrigerator?

You open the door and put the elephant in and then close the door.

What do you get when you put a radio in a fridge?

Cool music

What goes around the world but stays in one place?

A stamp.

What did the math book say to the other math book?

"I've got a lot of problems."

What comes twice in a week, never in a month and once in a year?

The letter E.

What animal is NOT allowed to play in games or contests?

Cheetahs (cheaters)

Four men are in a boat and fall in the water. Not a single man gets wet. How is this possible?

All of them were married

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 29

🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 Pet of the Month 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾



JAMES CONNOLLY AND PADRAIG PEARSE

James Connolly and Padraig Pearse 6yr old flame point Siamese. They enjoy bird watching, snuggling together and playing with there brother Honorai as well as just general devilment. Their pet parents are Deborah and Marianne.

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

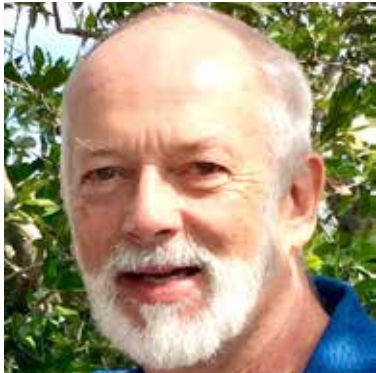
Word Search

AROUND THE AREA

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

- Ingersoll
- Beachville
- Thamesford
- Embro
- Innerkip
- Sweaburg
- Hickson
- Salford
- Strathallan
- Huntingford
- Centreville
- Dicksons Corners

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Sun, sand, sea ... and scones



PAUL KNOWLES

Times Contributor

Odds are good that the autumnal cold snap has you thinking of travelling to somewhere warm. That's a very Canadian phenomenon. And, stereotypically, you may be dreaming of "sun, sand and sea."

Let me suggest a fourth "s" – "scones."

I know, baked goods are probably not top of mind when you think of spending a few days or weeks at a sunny resort. But that's because you haven't met Peg Mullin Laron, owner of Bay Harbor Lodge and Coconut Bay Resort, in Key Largo, Florida.

Peg is a former school teacher who has invested a lot of passion and creativity in developing her waterfront resort, which she started in 1994. Today, she runs the place in partnership with her son, Jonathan.

There are a lot of reasons to stay at Bay Harbor – including sun, sand and sea – but first on Peg's guests' daily to-do list each morning is "scones." Peg's scones are famous – each morning, Bay Harbor guests can help themselves to one – or several – of at least eight varieties of home-baked scones. Over the course of a year, she will offer about 85 different kinds of



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Florida Bay – the view from Bay Harbor.

scones.

Okay, so that means there are 85 different reasons to visit Bay Harbor and Coconut Bay. But actually, there are a lot more than that. This is no ordinary resort, and a far cry from the multi-storey, hundreds-of-units, condo style facilities that abound in any sun-and-sea destination. Peg's place offers what I would call cottage-style living. There are 22 options, including pleasant, single-storey water-front units and a few that are located in a two-storey building. All are steps from Florida Bay, where guests can enjoy spectacular sunsets almost every evening.

Not incidentally, those few steps will take you through an array of tropical plants – Peg and her team have focused on creating wonderful gardens throughout the property.

You can swim in Florida Bay, or you can use the lovely, heated pool. If this all sounds like I was really impressed with Bay Harbor – well, yes, I was. It exudes relaxation, and has all of the

plusses that come with hands-on involvement of owners who are passionate about their project. If a day goes by when a guest does not have a warm conversation with Peg or Jonathan, that would be a shock. They are there, and they care.

The location of Bay Harbor is also a plus. Key Largo is the northern-most of the Florida Keys, and has a lot of unique attractions in its own right. While we stayed in Key Largo, we made sure to take a cruise on the African Queen. This small boat is the authentic craft from which the famed, 1951 Humphrey Bogart-Katharine Hepburn movie got its name. And unlike the dramatic ending of the movie, the African Queen did not actually blow up – it's docked in Key Largo, where its captain, Dave Lawrence, is ready to take you on a cruise out into the Atlantic, and back in time about 80 years!

Another way to experience the Atlantic, about 10 minutes from Bay Harbor, is one of the very best scuba and snorkeling

locations anywhere – John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. You can visit the park – with great beaches, a visitor centre, and plenty of water activities – or you can book an excursion through one of several dive shops throughout Key Largo.

Half an hour south of Bay Harbor is a quirky but important attraction – the Laura Quinn Wild Bird Sanctuary. Visitors are welcome (there is a voluntary donation jar), but the focus is really on the birds they are saving and protecting. Depending on time of year, you may see almost any of the amazing species that make the Keys their home – my favourites include the roseate spoonbills, and the night herons.

Perhaps the most eye-opening destination we visited was the Coral Restoration Foundation, located in an unprepossessing building a few minutes north of Bay Harbor. Visitors can choose to join a seminar on coral restoration, and the presentation is jam-packed with information on the extreme challenges facing

coral, due to climate change, human interaction, pollution, and more.

Coral reefs are vital to the earth... and they are dying in unprecedented numbers. We learned that some reefs are experiencing 90 per cent loss of coral! This is disastrous news, because the coral reefs provide food and shelter to innumerable species of fish; they also clean the ocean's water, and they protect waterfront land.

Organizations like the Coral Restoration Foundation are, through research and development, beginning to find solutions to begin to restore the reefs. We learned a lot about "coral trees" – underwater nurseries "at the forefront of innovation", on which living coral are being grown, for transplanting back onto reefs, to bring them back to life.

The foundation is also active in encouraging individuals and governments to take steps to mitigate actions that damage reefs.

My notes from our session go on for dozens of pages. But instead of pretending to be an expert, I encourage you to visit the foundation, at www.coralrestoration.org.

That's just a sample (and I haven't even mentioned the wonderful, waterfront restaurants) of the activities you can find around Key Largo.

And did I mention Peg's scones...?

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




(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Bay Harbor owner Peg Mullin Laron is famed for her home-made scones, with different varieties served to her guests every morning.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

Coral reefs – and the species of fish they protect – are endangered. A lot of work is being done in the Florida Keys to restore the damaged reefs. This photo was taken at the visitor centre at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.



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COMING EVENTS Email to inquire info@theecho.ca

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
Holy Trinity Church, 1420 Devonshire Ave
Saturday, November 18; 10:00 a.m.
Draws at 2:00 pm
Penny Sale, Raffle, Baking, Crafts, Gift Baskets, Yesterday's Treasures, Religious Goods and Tea Room.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE
November 24-25; 7:00 p.m., December 1-2; 7:00 p.m. & December 2; 2:00 p.m.
Westminster Church
115 George St. Thamesford
Tickets \$35 www.makingconnexions.com/show or call 519-285-3212

EVENSONG SERVICE
Sunday, November 26; 4:00 p.m.
Old St. Paul's Church
Choral Music followed by a Wine and Cheese Reception in the Parish Hall. Everyone is Welcome!

CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
Saturday, December 2; 9:00 a.m. - 2 p.m.
560 Dundas St., Woodstock
Something for everyone. Deli table with homemade turkey pies, shepherd pies, meatloaf and our famous homemade Christmas pudding. There will also be a bake table, preserves, candy, jewellery, plus vendors. Lunch will be served from 11-1. We will be offering soup, sandwich, dessert- homemade Christmas pudding or Apple Crisp, tea or coffee for only \$12.00 per person.

THAMESFORD BELL CHOIR
Sunday, December 3; 11:00 a.m.
Old St. Paul's Church
Everyone is Welcome!

AFTERNOON OF SONG CON-CERT-DIANE SMITH
Sunday November 19; 2:00 p.m.
Old St Paul's Anglican Church
723 Dundas Woodstock
Free will offering

OXFORD COLLEGIUM SINGERS, SOLOISTS AND ORCHESTRA
Saturday, December 2; 7:30
Church of the Epiphany
560 Dundas St., Woodstock
Seasonal Carols by John Rutter
Ticket s\$25 in advance, \$30 at the door
Tickets available at www.eventbrite.ca

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QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) Danny DeVito
- 2) 92
- 3) Cedar wood
- 4) 4
- 5) Red, White, Blue
- 6) 7
- 7) Bangkok
- 8) Gertrude
- 9) The Trachea
- 10) Jon Pardi

SUDOKU

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

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(RON YUZARK PHOTOS)

HALLOWEEN

Above: The Foster Family Brad Emily Eric and Production Boss Amanda (missing from photo) prepared theirs and their neighbors with all kinds of monsters and ghouls along Dorchester Ave.

Top right: Crafty talented pumpkin carvers were Kathryn, Christina and Anna Skorobohacz
Right: Both kids and adults joined in the costumed evening of Trick or Treating. Warren Brandon, Brody, Kim and Kaylee



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October 12th
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November 25th
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