

Thank you volunteers!

April 19–25, 2026 is National Volunteer week in Canada. This year we're celebrating the power of civic participation by highlighting some of the amazing volunteers who help make Woodstock a great place to live.

Freedom Smetana-Slijboom

Freedom Smetana-Slijboom became a special events volunteer after moving to Woodstock in 2024.

"My original reason for volunteering was simply to gain the 40 volunteer hours I needed to graduate from high school. Now I continue to volunteer well after graduation to give back to a community that accepted me during an especially turbulent time of my life," said Smetana-Slijboom.

Participating in events like the Victoria Day Parade has helped Smetana-Slijboom adjust to life in a new city and make new friends.

"Words fail to capture the touching sense of community I feel when I encounter teachers or friends among the audience as I parade towards Southside Park."



Audrey Davis

Audrey Davis started volunteering with the City since she was 12 years old.

"I grew up attending the City of Woodstock's summer camps and always had a great experience. Volunteering allowed me to stay involved with the camps and help create the same positive experiences for younger campers," she said.

In addition to making new friends and creating connections with the campers, Davis gained hands-on experience that she continued to build on last summer as a camp leader.

"I developed valuable skills such as leadership and the ability to make quick decisions when needed. I also learned how important it is to help people feel included and seen within our community," she said.

Peter Epler

Peter Epler joined the Heritage Advisory Committee in 2020 and has been the chair since 2021.

The Heritage Advisory Committee makes recommendations and provides advice on heritage designations, heritage permits and planning matters, and education and awareness of heritage properties in the city.

"I saw this as an opportunity where some of my professional experience and skills could benefit the broader community," said Epler, who is a licensed archaeologist.

Epler has enjoyed working with other residents who are passionate about local history, while learning to navigate provincial legislation and municipal policies.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK



"There are so many different ways for people to volunteer that can suit their schedule and interests," he added. "You can do really meaningful work for your community and meet lots of great people that you may have never met otherwise."



Current Opportunities

Summer Camp Volunteers

- Applications are open for youth ages 13 and older until May 31. Apply online at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/camps

Special Event Volunteers

- Sign up to volunteer for events throughout the year at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/specialevents

Woodstock Art Gallery Advisory Board

- The WAG is looking for community-minded leaders with experience in governance and compliance, financial management, strategic leadership, community partnerships and fundraising to join the Advisory Board. Learn more and apply at www.woodstockartgallery.ca

YOUR PASSPORT'S FAVOURITE Event!

woodstock travel
Presents

Wish You The World Travel Show

Saturday, May 9th, 2026
10am - 2pm

Sally Creek Community Centre
330 Lakeview Drive
Woodstock, Ontario

DRAGON FUN LEAGUE BOAT

COMING MAY 2026

Learn to paddle
Meet new people
Have fun

INFO/REGISTRATION →

Entry fee of \$75 includes:
paddle & life jacket rental + t-shirt

← **WDBC ON FACEBOOK**



File photo

Kim Mitchell to headline Canada Day for Woodstock's 125th anniversary

The rumours are true — multi-platinum, Juno Award winning musician Kim Mitchell is coming to Woodstock to headline our Canada Day celebration on Wednesday, July 1 in Southside Park!

This year's event will be our most memorable celebration to date to mark the City's 125th anniversary.

"Since July 1 is the official anniversary of the City's incorporation in 1901, our goal was to secure an iconic Canadian headliner to help celebrate this memorable milestone," explained Kristen Brodhagen, Manager of Special Events.

"Whether you grew up listening to his classic rock anthems or are a new fan, Kim Mitchell is a celebrated Canadian artist whose music continues to bring people together across generations."

Known for hits including *Go For Soda*, *Rock N Roll Duty* and *Patio Lanterns*, Mitchell has sold more than 1.5 million records in Canada and earned 17 Juno award nominations. The acclaimed singer songwriter and guitarist was also inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame in 2021.

Canada Day Lineup

The free event will take place from 2–10 p.m. with live music from Northern Strum (an acoustic duo featuring Canadian rock veterans Carl Dixon and Sean Kelly), Always on Friday, Canadiana Band, Geoff Masse Band, The Joel Dupuis Trio and others.

The Canadian Kids Zone will feature fun family activities including a photobooth, petting zoo, inflatables and more. There will also be limited-edition Woodstock 125 merch for sale, along with



Photo by Al Peitman

food and marketplace vendors and a beverage garden, and free Canada Day-themed cookies.

Mitchell will take the main stage at 8 p.m., followed by a spectacular fireworks show to close out the evening.

You can find the full schedule and watch for event updates at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/canadaday.

Get Involved!

Join in the festivities by becoming an event volunteer, sponsor or vendor. Visit the website for details and to apply.

For more information about the City's 125th anniversary and other opportunities to celebrate throughout the year, visit www.woodstock125.ca.



Check out the COW Tales 'Way Back When' contest on page 15 and enter today!

A: John Mearns.

Waste Collection Update

It's been two months since the new curbside garbage, organics and recycling programs took effect in Woodstock.

The City's Public Works department is continuing to work with Oxford County, Circular Materials and Emterra Environmental to help residents adjust to the changes.

"We know this has been a challenging transition, especially with the changes to the collection schedule over the holidays and the winter storms at the beginning of January. We'd like to thank everyone for their patience and cooperation," said Jeff Molenhuis, Director of Public Works.

Green Bin Wins

Staff have already seen a positive impact from the new green bin program. Approximately 92 tonnes of organic waste were collected within the first month of 2026.

That's the equivalent of 11,500 bags of garbage that would've otherwise gone to the landfill, which is not only good for the environment, but also means residents can use fewer bag tags.

Collection Stats: Jan. 2–Feb. 4, 2026



564 tonnes of garbage collected



92 tonnes of organic waste collected

EnviroDepot Hours

As of Jan. 10, updated winter hours for the EnviroDepot are now in effect. The EnviroDepot is currently open on Saturdays only from 7:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. for large items, household hazardous waste, construction materials. Recycling and Styrofoam can no longer be accepted under the new province-wide recycling program. Summer hours will begin April 1. Visit www.cityofwoodstock.ca/envirodepot for details and a full list of acceptable materials.

Resources and Support

The new 2026 City Services Calendar was mailed out to residents in early February. Copies are also available online, along with schedules, zone maps and helpful guides at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/waste.

If you have any other questions or concerns about curbside collection, here's an overview of who to contact when:

City of Woodstock

Contact for:

- Residential garbage and organics collection and missed pickups
- EnviroDepot

519-539-2382 ext. 3104 or 3102
publicworks@cityofwoodstock.ca
www.cityofwoodstock.ca/waste

Oxford County

Contact for:

- Business, Commercial, Institutional (BCI) recycling
- Bag tags
- Schedule changes

519-539-9800 ext. 3159
info@wasteline.ca
www.wasteline.ca

Circular Materials

Contact Emterra Environmental for:

- Recycling bin inquiries
- Missed collections
- What you can recycle

1-888-597-1541
customercareont@emterra.ca

For other questions or concerns about the recycling program, contact Circular Materials:

1-877-667-2626
customerservice@circularmaterials.ca
www.circularmaterials.ca/city-of-woodstock/



HIGH FIVE® for the City of Woodstock!

The City of Woodstock's Recreation, Aquatics and Culture departments are preparing for another busy year in 2026.

The winter and spring schedule features a variety of returning favourites and exciting new opportunities for residents including drop-in activities, sports and fitness, swimming, science and technology, art, history and leadership programs. Registration for summer camp also starts on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 10 a.m.

"Each season we're committed to offering high-quality recreation experiences that support healthy development, build lifelong skills and create lasting memories for children ages four to 12," said Danielle Ciccarelli, Manager of Cowan Park Sportsplex.

This commitment was recently recognized on a national level. In November, the City achieved HIGH FIVE® Accreditation — the highest recognized level of quality assurance in children's recreation and sport programming in Canada.

Designed by Parks and Recreation Ontario, HIGH FIVE® is based on five principles of healthy child development essential for quality programs:

- A caring leader
- The opportunity to make friends
- The opportunity to play
- The opportunity to master skills
- The opportunity to participate

HIGH FIVE® offers training and certifications for people working in the sport and recreation industry. All City summer camp and seasonal recreation staff complete the Principles of Healthy Child Development certification, a one-day course that covers best practices for delivering programs to children.

Accreditation is a three-year process, and organizations must meet rigorous standards across programming, policies and risk management.

"We are incredibly proud of the work our team has done to achieve this goal through our hiring policies, training, program development, safe environments, evaluations and more," said Ciccarelli.

For more information on upcoming programs and camps, flip to the Recreation Guide on pg. 11 or visit www.recreationwoodstock.ca



File photo

Recreation staff took part in a HIGH FIVE® Accreditation Celebration on Nov. 28, 2025, at Cowan Park Sportsplex.



Woodstock's Cenotaph: 100 Years of History

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Woodstock War Memorial in Victoria Park.

Located at the corner of Graham Street and Buller Street, the cenotaph was established in 1925 to honour local soldiers who lost their lives during the First World War.

An empty tomb

A cenotaph is a monument to a person or people who are buried elsewhere. The word comes from the Greek *kenos* and *taphos*, meaning "empty tomb."

In the aftermath of WWI, France and Britain erected temporary cenotaphs for their victory march parades in 1919. A permanent cenotaph was later built in London in 1920 after the temporary site drew thousands of visitors.

This style of monument quickly gained popularity in other Allied nations, symbolizing the soldiers whose bodies were never found or could not be identified, and providing a place for people to collectively mourn the lives that were lost.

"Their Name Liveth for Evermore"

The Havelock Chapter of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire led the effort to raise money for the cenotaph in Woodstock.

Designed by Montreal sculptor Coeur de Lion McCarthy, the grey granite and bronze monument was unveiled on August 30, 1925, by Lieutenant-Governor Henry Cockshutt.



Victoria Park Cenotaph, Aug 23, 1925. Photo supplied by Woodstock Museum NHS.

More names were added in the following decades to commemorate World War II, the Korean War and the war in Afghanistan, but by the late-2000s the names cut into the stone had started to fade. Some names were also missing or had been misspelled.

Restoration work on the monument was completed from 2010–2011 and included repointing and repairing the mortar and cleaning the granite. New slabs of polished granite were also added to the front of the monument with an updated list of names etched onto the surface.

In 2015, a monument to veterans of the Afghanistan War was erected to the left of the cenotaph. The monument features a bronze sculpture of a soldier's helmet, rifle and boots, which was purchased by a group of residents with funds raised from an event in support of local veterans.

New commemorative crosswalk

A century later, the cenotaph continues to stand as a reminder of the sacrifices made by the men and women who have served our country and honours their commitment to protecting the rights and freedoms of people around the world.

This year the City has extended the memorial with a commemorative crosswalk across Buller Street.

Staff consulted with Royal Canadian Legion Branch #55 to select a functional, respectful and meaningful design that pays tribute to our local veterans. The new crosswalk features a red and white striped pattern with the silhouette of a soldier and the phrase “Lest We Forget” at each end.



The new crosswalk on Buller Street leading to the Cenotaph.



Check out the COW Tales ‘Way Back When’ contest on page 19 and enter today!

A: Governor General Albert Grey.

Remembrance Day Ceremony

Join us on Tuesday, Nov. 11 to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifice of our veterans and those who continue to serve our Country. The Ceremony will take place at Victoria Park located at 413 Buller St, Woodstock.

Rogers TV Woodstock will be broadcasting the ceremony live starting at 10:45 a.m. on the morning of Nov. 11, and will re-broadcast at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The City of Woodstock is grateful for the efforts of those who have 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.

Time	Agenda	Agenda (Continued)
10:15 a.m.	Pre-Laying of the Wreaths	The Act of Remembrance
10:35 a.m.	March on the Sentries	Reveille
10:45 a.m.	The Walking March proceeds to the Cenotaph	Prayers and Address
10:55 a.m.	Singing of ‘O Canada’	Officials Address
10:58 a.m.	Last Post	Reading of ‘In Flanders Fields’
11:00 a.m.	“THE SILENCE” Two Minutes of Silence, The Lament, Canadian Harvard Aircraft Fly-over	Placing of Wreaths
		Benediction and Blessing
		God Save the King
		Closing Remarks
		The Walking March Departs
		March off of the RCR Sentries





Engaging and supporting youth in Woodstock

This year the City is working to make Woodstock a more inclusive and welcoming place for youth by creating opportunities for young people to get active, make friends and have their voices heard.

One way we're engaging with youth ages 13 to 21 is through the new Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). This volunteer group meets with members of Council and staff to share their perspectives on City policies, programs and services and help develop youth-focused activities and events.

The meetings are also a chance for youth to get out into the community and connect with their peers, while enjoying fun activities at a different location each month.

New Youth Programs

In addition to the committee, the City is piloting two programs for teens ages 13 to 17.

The programs are supported by the Mayor's Community and Social Well-Being Task Force and based on research from Community Building Youth Futures Oxford, which identified a lack of neutral, affordable and inclusive recreation and social opportunities for young people.

"We saw an opportunity to help bridge the gap and build on the fantastic camps and programs offered at our recreation and culture facilities," said Danielle Ciccarelli, Manager of Cowan Park Sportsplex.

The first pilot began in the summer with weekly trips and activities including soccer, swimming, skating, arts and crafts, baking, visits to nearby theme parks and attractions, and a Toronto Blue Jays game. The trips were offered at a low cost with transportation provided from Cowan Park Sportsplex.

The second pilot will start this fall and will offer youth a social space every Friday night, with rotating themes and activities. Staff plan to evaluate the success of both programs and

consider adding them to the City's ongoing recreation offerings in the future.

"Whether they attend a Youth Advisory Committee meeting or sign up for a recreation program, we want young people to feel supported, included and empowered to get involved in their community," said Ciccarelli.

YAC Upcoming Meetings: Join us!

- **Wednesday, Oct. 1:** Woodstock Museum & Escape Room, 5:30 – 8 p.m.
- **Wednesday, Nov. 5:** Woodstock Art Gallery, 6:30 – 8 p.m.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 3:** Real Treats, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Fall Youth Programs

- **Halloween Haunt at Canada's Wonderland**
Sunday, Oct. 19, 2025
\$40 includes transportation and admission
To register please visit our webpage at www.recreationwoodstock.ca
- **Friday Night Fun Nights**
Free drop-ins at Cowan Park Sportsplex
Fridays, 6 – 8:30 p.m.
Registration is strongly encouraged.

Visit www.recreationwoodstock.ca for a full overview of offerings, theme nights and activities throughout the fall.



Reading Towards Reconciliation

Sept. 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) and Orange Shirt Day in Canada.

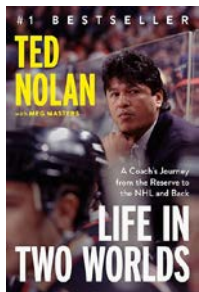
Beginning as an Indigenous-led grassroots movement in 2013, this federal statutory holiday commemorates the survivors and lost children of the residential school system and raises awareness of the ongoing inter-generational impacts of our country's tragic and painful history.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation suggests six actions each of us can take towards reconciliation:

- **Learn** the history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples
- **Understand** the history and legacy of residential schools
- **Explore** the unique intersections we have between treaty, constitutional, Indigenous, and human rights we have in Canada
- **Recognize** the rich contributions that Indigenous peoples have made to Canada
- **Take action** to address historical injustices and present-day wrongs
- **Teach others**

Whether you're just starting to learn about the history of residential schools or looking to discover new Indigenous voices and perspectives, the Woodstock Public Library has put together a list of must-read books in honour of NDTR.

Life in Two Worlds: A Coach's Journey from the Reserve to the NHL and Back



Ted Nolan

Ted Nolan began his hockey career playing for the Detroit Red Wings in 1978 and worked his way up to become the successful head coach of the Buffalo Sabres. Despite leading the Sabres to their first Northeast Division title in 16 years, the team did not re-sign Nolan the following year.

This deeply personal memoir recounts Nolan's life as he navigates the hockey world as an Indigenous man, facing adversity from team management, the media, and even the fans themselves. *Life in Two Worlds* is the 2025 selection for Oxford Reads. For more information, visit www.oxfordreads.ca.

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The First Few Feet in a World of Wolves



Scott Mainprize

This novel follows the emotional and sometimes humorous journey of Nomad, a two-spirit man teaching in the fictional Inuit community of Nunarjuaq Akuluk, as he grapples with the impacts of colonialism, reconciling with his Indigenous heritage, and fostering his relationship with the land of Turtle Island.

In Search of April Raintree



Beatrice Mosionier

In Search of April Raintree tells the raw and powerful stories of two Métis sisters separated by the foster care system, and how their differing experiences allows one sister to embrace her Métis heritage, while the other is convinced she must hide it to survive.

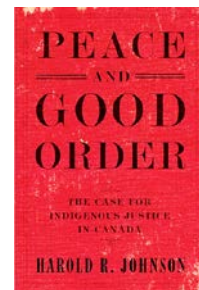
Waiting for the Long Night Moon



Amanda Peters

Ranging from short and sweet to poignant and long-lasting, this collection of short fiction uses beautiful prose to explore the Indigenous experience from the trials and trauma of oppression to the joys in embracing one's identity and traditions.

Peace and Good Order: The Case for Indigenous Justice in Canada



Harold Johnson

Peace and Good Order examines the Canadian justice system, exposing how systemic racism and ignorance to the history and relationships between Indigenous Peoples not only leads to the over-incarceration of Indigenous people but also withholds justice from those who have been wronged.

More Recommendations

Continue reading and learning with more staff picks from the Woodstock Public Library. Scan the QR code for books by Indigenous authors for adults, teens and kids.



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staff. Ad deadline for September
2025 edition: July 30. Email
wow@flyingsquirreldesign.com or
visit www.cityofwoodstock.ca/wow
to book your advertising today.

City of Woodstock Phone Directory Contacts

Art Gallery.....	519-539-6761
City Hall.....	519-539-1291
Civic Centre Arena.....	519-421-3484 x 4301
Goff Hall Rental.....	519-421-3484 x 4301
Library.....	519-539-4801
Market Centre Rental.....	519-537-8411
Museum.....	519-537-8411
Para-Transit Services.....	519-539-1291 x 2510
Parks & Recreation.....	519-539-1291 x 4101
Public Works.....	519-539-1291 x 3140 or x 3104
Small Business Centre.....	519-421-2129
Southside Aquatics.....	519-421-POOL (7665)
Southwood Arena.....	519-421-3484 x 4301
Transit Services.....	519-539-1291 x 3102

Event Listings

To have your events listed in the
FREE Community Events Calendar
in *What's on Woodstock*, please visit
cityofwoodstock.ca/wowevents



New sensory support kits at the Woodstock Art Gallery

Visiting public facilities or unfamiliar spaces can be challenging for many people, especially those who are neurodivergent or sensory-sensitive.

To help create a more accessible and inclusive experience for all visitors, the Woodstock Art Gallery is collaborating with Autism Canada and Oxford Community Foundation to offer sensory support kits.

Each kit includes a backpack with a soft plush friend, a cozy fleece blanket, noise reduction earmuffs, tinted safety glasses and fidget toys.

"Bright lights, crowds and unexpected noises can be stressful, overwhelming and overstimulating. These kits are designed to help visitors manage sensory inputs so they can explore the gallery comfortably and independently," explained Dee Logan, Education Coordinator.

What are sensory supports?

Sensory support items are tools or objects designed to help regulate and engage the senses, provide comfort and focus, and reduce overstimulation.

They can be particularly helpful for people with autism, ADHD, OCD or sensory processing disorders, who may have difficulty processing or regulating sensory information.

Many sensory items have a calming effect and help users focus on tasks or interact with their environment more comfortably.

There are several types of sensory supports:

- **Tactile:** Fidget toys, stress balls, weighted blankets, textured items
- **Auditory:** Headphones, noise-cancelling earmuffs, soundscapes
- **Visual:** Privacy screens, tinted glasses, visual timers
- **Other senses:** Aromatherapy, flavoured items



How to sign out a kit

The Gallery's sensory support kits are available for free to all visitors. You can ask to sign one out at the front desk.

Staff will walk you through the process and can answer questions or provide additional assistance during your visit. Each kit also includes a user guide in the front pocket of the backpack.

Make sure to return the kit before you leave! You can also fill out a short online survey to share feedback about your experience and offer suggestions for the future.

Building community at South Gate Centre

June is Seniors Month in Ontario and this year South Gate Centre has an extra reason to celebrate.

Work is underway on the expansion of the community centre for adults over the age of 50. The project includes a 12,700 square foot addition, renovations to the existing building and landscaping to create more space for socializing, programming and events.

City Council approved the expansion as part of the 2023 capital budget, with \$7.8 million in funding from the City and \$1.2 million from South Gate Centre. Construction began last July and is expected to be completed in the fall.

“This has been a big vision and a journey, and to be able to see the conclusion of it soon will be fantastic,” said Executive Director Chris Cunningham.

A place for connection

South Gate Centre grew out of Woodstock’s first senior citizens club, which was started by Alice Thomson in 1955. The first designated drop-in centre for seniors opened in 1960.

In 1999, South Gate Centre was formally established as a non-profit and found a home in the City-owned building at 191 Old Wellington St. S.

With 410 members, seven full-time staff and more than 200 volunteers, the centre offers a wide range of activities and events focused on health and wellness, fitness, social engagement and lifelong learning. They also operate Local Roots, a café and catering service that provides fresh and frozen meals to go, monthly dinners, lunches and baked goods.

“People come here because they absolutely love the community and connection. It’s a great place to find yourself, try new things and build incredible relationships,” said Angela Hess, Volunteer and Program Coordinator.

As the expansion takes shape, Hess and Cunningham are excited about the possibilities for the future, including cooking classes and more creative arts programming.



Celebrating Seniors Month

June is an opportunity to highlight the health and well-being of older adults, encourage inclusion and promote age-friendly communities across the province.

“Often as a society we tend to undermine people once they get past retirement and we forget that they still want to learn, they still want to grow, they still want to try new things and contribute to the community,” said Cunningham.

South Gate Centre will be hosting its annual Seniors Month barbecue on Friday, June 6, along with special health and wellness talks and pop-up programs throughout the month.

Staff and volunteers are also starting to prepare for the centre’s grand reopening in the fall and are looking for committee members to help plan the festivities.

To learn more and get involved, you can visit www.southgatectr.com or stop by in-person.



Artist renderings of the expansion project currently underway at South Gate Centre. This image shows the planned Fitness Hall.

Growing Together: Woodstock Public Library launches new strategic plan

The Woodstock Public Library is planting seeds for the future with a new four-year strategic plan.



More than 10,500 new users have accessed the library since 2018, with 4,300 new cardholders in the last two years alone. The library has also welcomed many newcomers to Canada who are finding a home in the Friendly City.

The strategic plan outlines goals and objectives around library space, community connections and partnerships, programs and collections, customer service, and marketing and communications.

“As a public library, we strive to not only meet the needs of our growing community, but to continuously evolve and embrace new opportunities for the future,” Harris said.

The plan was approved by the library board in March and will be presented to the public in May, but it’s already started to take root.

In 2024 the library added to its local author collection and partnered with the Oxford County Library to host two Local Author Book Fairs.

They’ve also expanded eBook and eAudiobook offerings for children and teens, resources for newcomers learning English as a second language and online language learning through the Mango app — all available for free with your library card.

Most recently, the library introduced PressReader, which gives users access to hundreds of digital newspapers and magazines from around the world in over 60 languages.

“PressReader has been in heavy use since we rolled it out in January,” Harris noted. “More than 2,500 issues were opened in the first two months, which is already double the use of our previous platform in all of 2024.”

You can learn more about the Woodstock Public Library’s collection, programs and services and watch for the 2025–2028 strategic plan at www.mywpl.ca.

Work on the 2025–2028 strategic plan began last year with extensive community consultation including outreach, surveys and focus groups led by a committee of library staff and board members.

“The theme of ‘growing together’ came up very early in the planning process,” said CEO Lindsay Harris. “We heard how loved the library is from hundreds of people and about the need for more dedicated space, resources and programming as Woodstock continues to grow and change.”



Lighting up Pattullo Fountain



This winter, Pattullo Fountain has been illuminating downtown Woodstock with a shower of blue light.

The dazzling new light display in Museum Square was specially designed for the 108-year-old cast iron fountain and installed at the end of December.

The bright idea for the water feature came from Reta Horan, Supervisor of Parks.

"I wanted to find a way to highlight this beautiful historic landmark when the water is turned off for the season and help brighten Museum Square throughout the winter," said Horan, who oversees the City's holiday and winter light displays.

"It turned out better than I could've imagined!"

Pattullo Fountain was named in memory of Andrew Pattullo, who was the former editor of the Woodstock Sentinel-Review and founder of the Oxford Historical Society. A prominent member of the community, he was also elected as the Member of Provincial Parliament for Oxford in 1896.

Above: Installation of the light display over the Pattullo Fountain.
Below: The completed display as seen at nighttime.

Pattullo died in 1903 and left the Woodstock a bequest of \$1000 for the fountain. It was eventually purchased and installed in 1916 and officially opened the following May.

While the fountain continues to flow more than a century later, the water is turned off in the fall and winter to prevent damage due to freezing temperatures.

Horan wanted the lights to look like water spouting from the figure at the top and pouring into the basin below.

"We worked with Shear Display, the company that does our other holiday lights, to create a custom light display. They started by taking measurements of the fountain and sketching out some ideas," she explained.

Once the design was completed, the display was manufactured and assembled on site. You can watch a behind-the-scenes video of the process on the City of Woodstock YouTube channel.

The lights will stay up through the spring and will be put up again in the fall ahead of the annual Lighting of Museum Square event on Friday, Nov. 14.



Reta Horan, Supervisor of Parks, views the display with her son.



Check out the COW Tales 'Way Back When' contest on page 19 and enter today!

A: William Dill.

Theatre Woodstock

A Rock Sails By

By Sean Grennan
Permission thru Playscripts Inc.

Director
Scott Rooney
Producers
Janny Hughes
Sally Johnston
Stage Manager
Samantha Muller

April 3-6, 10-13, 2025
Sunday matinees at 2:00 pm 7:30 pm

NEW! This Season
Any Thursday
Any Seat - \$20

104.7 Radio Heartfm
MAGLIN

The Charles Dickens
3075 Dundas Street, Woodstock • 519-431-2118
www.charlesdickenswoodstock.com

theatrewoodstock.com • (519) 537-2582 • 22 Reeve St., Woodstock, ON.

THEATRE WOODSTOCK PRESENTS:
Canadian Contemporary Folk Group

maggie's wake

\$40

FRIDAY MARCH 14, 2025
7:30pm (doors open at 7pm)

THEATRE WOODSTOCK
22 REEVE ST.
WOODSTOCK, ON

Tickets available through
the Box Office:
519.537.2582
or at theatrewoodstock.com

Market Centre **104.7 Radio Heartfm**

Downtown Streetscape Phase 1 begins this spring



Dundas Street will start to look a little different this year as construction begins on the Downtown Streetscape.

In March 2024, Council directed staff to proceed with phase one, which includes the section of Dundas between Riddell Street and Wellington Street.

“The work that’s being done is all about improving accessibility, helping pedestrians feel safe and comfortable downtown, supporting the growth of local businesses and creating an inclusive environment for everyone,” said Kerry Baird, Downtown Development Officer.

Rolled curbs and flexible spaces

One of the first things you’ll notice when you walk or drive down the new street will be the rolled curbs that separate the sidewalks, parking spaces and road.

Unlike barrier or straight curbs, rolled curbs have a gentle slope that can be crossed by both vehicles and pedestrians.

“The existing curbs are a significant challenge for people who use wheelchairs and other assistive devices, families with strollers, or even someone

with a temporary mobility issue like a broken leg. By removing that barrier, more people will be able to enjoy the amazing businesses and services we have downtown,” said Baird.

The rolled curbs also allow more flexibility for events and activities without having to fully close the street, enabling businesses to explore opportunities like sidewalk sales or more easily set up patios in the summer.



Renderings and photos supplied

Bright and inviting lights

In addition to the rolled curbs, the streets will be lit by new streetlights as well as catenary lights,

which are suspended from cables between light posts.

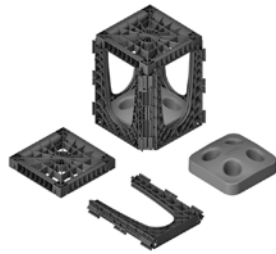
This style of lighting creates a warm and inviting atmosphere, while ensuring the streets are brightly lit.

“The downtown has so much to offer in the evening. People can enjoy dinner out, go shopping, see a show or attend a creative workshop,” explained Baird. “There are also many residents who come home or leave work late at night. The new lighting will help everyone feel safe and comfortable, no matter the time of day.”

The light posts can also be used for multiple decorative and seasonal elements including hanging flower baskets, banners and holiday lights.



Catenary lights



Soil cells

Green design

The environment is another focus of the improvements. New garbage containers will help keep the street litter-free, while bike racks will support active transportation in the downtown core.

Trees will also line Dundas Street with the aid of soil cells. This innovative technology is designed to help trees grow in an urban environment.

The interlocking components provide structural support and allow roots to grow and expand, without causing damage to the pavement above or interfering with other critical infrastructure underground.

Investing in the community

The budget for phase one is \$2.7 million. The next phase of the project was also included in 2025 Capital budget and will focus on the section of Dundas Street between Light Street and Graham Street, with a budget of \$2.9 million.

“We’re working with several local companies, so that money is going back into our community,” said Baird.

The tender was awarded to Viewcon Construction Ltd. Maglin Site Furniture is also supplying the benches, bicycle racks, planters and garbage cans, and the soil cells are created by GreenBlue Urban Ltd.



Woodstock Art Cycle bike racks

Construction impacts

Construction for phase one is scheduled to start by April 1 depending on the weather, with phase two planned for the fall.

City staff are working with the contractor to limit the impact to residents who live, work, shop and eat downtown and ensure businesses will be accessible during business hours.

Updates and information including road closures and transit detours will be shared on the City’s website and social media as construction gets underway.

You can learn more at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/streetscape

Get Involved!

The City is also developing interpretative signage as part of the Downtown Streetscape project. You’ll have the opportunity to share your input on moments in time, places and people that have built our community. Watch for the survey at www.letstalkwoodstock.ca



Photos supplied

Planning for the future at Cowan Fields

Some exciting changes are underway this year at Cowan Fields.

The 24-acre outdoor recreation complex in the northeast of Woodstock opened in 2017 and currently features a spray pad, playground and three Class A baseball diamonds.

Construction on a new cricket pitch began last year and is expected to be finished in the spring. New outdoor pickleball courts are also in the works. Eight proposed courts were included in the 2025 Capital budget and staff will be preparing the tender for construction to take place in late summer.

“Woodstock has seen growing interest in both of these sports over the last few years. A cricket pitch and pickleball courts were recommended as part of the Recreation Facility Needs Study in 2021, so it’s great to see these new outdoor amenities start to come online,” said Brian Connors, Director of Parks and Recreation.

The City is also looking ahead at a proposed indoor facility at Cowan Fields. The Recreation Facility Needs Study recommended a community centre with a single pad arena (with the ability to add a second pad in the future), a gym and multi-purpose rooms.

Last year, Council directed staff to move forward with a feasibility study to explore this recommendation further, identify how recreation trends may have changed since 2021, and provide cost estimates.

Need for space is growing

An update on the North Woodstock Recreation Facility Study was presented to Council in November.

One notable change the study found is that ice use in Woodstock exceeded previous projections, with over one thousand more hours of ice time rented during the 2023 – 2024 season, compared to 2018 – 2019. Participation in local ice sports also increased almost 20 per cent.

The City currently has two ice pads at Reeves Community Complex and one pad at Civic Centre Arena, which are both near capacity. Civic Centre Arena is also at the end of its life cycle. In addition to not meeting current accessibility standards, the 55-year-old arena will need repairs just to stay in operation. The refrigeration floor, boards and benches, for example, will cost an estimated \$2 million to replace.

The study also found that registration for swimming programs increased, while gym operating hours were expanded in the summer to accommodate the growing demand for rentals and programs.

The City’s overall population is continuing to grow on top of this demand, with more children, teens and older adults now calling Woodstock home — and looking for accessible and affordable recreation opportunities.

What could the facility look like?



Based on the findings of the North Woodstock Recreation Facility Study, the updated recommendation is for a multi-use community centre anchored by a twin-pad arena, gymnasium and multi-purpose rooms, along with an indoor aquatics centre. The estimated cost for these core components is \$85.4 million.

The study also provided conceptual plans to show how the facility could be laid out. While these are high level plans that are subject to change through the design process, they give residents an opportunity to imagine what a new indoor recreation facility might look like in the future.

Core Components	Optional
• Twin pad arena • Gymnasium • Indoor aquatics centre • Multipurpose rooms • Administrative space	• Curling facility • Childcare space
Estimated Cost: \$85.4 million	Estimated Cost: \$15.6 million

What’s next?

Construction of the proposed facility is still years away and before shovels can go in the ground, the project will have to be considered by Council as part of future capital budget discussions.

In the meantime, a survey will be rolling out early in the new year to gather feedback from the public.

“We want to know what’s most important to residents, what they think about the proposed amenities and how they would use the space. That feedback will not only guide the design process and shape what the facility looks like, it will also help Council make informed decisions going forward,” said Connors.

You can find information about the survey and more opportunities for engagement at www.letstalkwoodstock.ca.



Check out the COW Tales ‘Way Back When’ contest on page 23 and enter today!

A: George Washington Jones Walk in Museum Square.



COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

Under the current policy, the City provides grants to volunteer, non-profit and charitable organizations to help them fund programs and initiatives that improve the well-being of the community. Staff will bring forward a report to Council in January with recommendations for updates to the policy relating to eligibility and application requirements.

Visit the website at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/communitygrants for details.

The deadline to apply is
Monday, March 3 at 4:30 p.m.*
* subject to change pending Council’s decision



Parks students planting flowers in Museum Square.

Start your summer job hunt with the City!

Winter break is the perfect opportunity for students to get a head start on summer job applications.

The City of Woodstock hires high school and post-secondary students for a wide range of positions and departments including:

- Parks
- Public Works
- Water
- Woodstock Art Gallery
- Woodstock Museum
- Recreation and Camps
- Treasury
- Information Technology

Working for the City is not just a great way to earn money during the summer, it's also an opportunity to learn, grow and make a difference in the community!

Discover your passion

Hailey Plant has been working as a summer student since she was 16 and has held several positions in the Recreation department including camp leader, inclusion facilitator, supervisor and course instructor.

"I knew I had aspirations of becoming an educator and wanted more experience in the field of recreation and children," said Plant, who is now finishing her last year of teachers' college at Brock University in the primary and junior grade level.

"Working at camp not only confirmed my passion for education but has also equipped me with the tools and confidence I needed to thrive as an educator. You learn how to work collaboratively, manage large groups, communicate and problem solve."

Being a part of the summer camp team has also been a rewarding experience for Iwan Smiley.

"You get to be active every day and work with like-minded people. You also get to build programming and work and play games with kids," he said.

Smiley started as a summer camp volunteer in 2016 and became a team lead in 2022. He's currently attending teacher's college at Western University after graduating with a degree in Kinesiology from Wilfrid Laurier University.

"I've enjoyed building lasting friendships with coworkers and being able to see the campers develop from year to year. I've also gained lots of experience with time management, multitasking and creating an inclusive environment," he added.



Summer camp staff.

Build skills and experience

Along with valuable skills like collaboration, communication and time management, summer students have the opportunity to gain specialized knowledge and expertise.

“If you’re looking for a job related to your degree, the City is a great place to use your knowledge, learn new skills and get to try out different tasks that you might not have even considered,” said Macy LeConte, a student in the Global Business and Digital Arts Program at the University of Waterloo.

After working with the Parks department for two summers, LeConte wanted to gain hands-on experience in marketing and communications. She worked with the Woodstock Art Gallery and Woodstock Museum in 2023 as well as the corporate communications department in 2024.

“I was able to grow my marketing and UX skills by creating content for the art gallery and museum and making improvements to the City’s website. I also discovered that I have a passion for media relations and journalism, and even got to write articles for the *Woodstock Sentinel-Review* and *What’s on Woodstock* magazine,” she said.

Make meaningful connections

LeConte has started working as a freelance web designer with the skills she honed over the summer. She’s also continuing to work part-time in the Clerks and Recreation departments as she finishes her last year of school.

Many summer students find ongoing employment with the City while making lasting and meaningful connections.

Courtney Wilker worked as a camp counsellor for the City’s PA Day, holiday and March Break camps before joining the summer camp team in 2018 when she was in Grade 11. She’s now studying to become a junior and intermediate French teacher at Western University.

“I’ve gained some of my closest friends at summer camp and I am so thankful for that,” Wilker said.

“You get the opportunity to grow and learn in a supportive environment. You also get to help those in your community and connect with others that you may not usually get the opportunity to connect with.”



Macy LeConte at the Woodstock Art Gallery.

Join our team!

Summer student positions for 2025 will be posted starting in mid-December.

You can visit www.cityofwoodstock.ca/applynow to find available opportunities and submit your resume and cover letter through our online job application system.



Check out the COW Tales ‘Way Back When’ contest on page 19 and enter today!

A: The Firs.

Become a Special Events volunteer

It's been a busy year of events in Woodstock! The excitement continues next month with the Lighting of Museum Square on Friday, Nov. 15 and the Santa Claus Parade on Saturday, Nov. 16.

Becoming a special events volunteer is a great way to get involved. In addition to having fun and meeting new people, students can earn community volunteer hours. We also like to thank our volunteers with light snacks and refreshments, swag and giveaways at each event.

But don't just take it from us — meet some of the people who have helped make our events possible this year!



Katie and Heidi Leet

Katie Leet signed up to volunteer earlier this year after seeing a post on Facebook. As a working mom of three, it sounded like the perfect way to give back to her hometown.

"I live a busy lifestyle and I thought it would be a great opportunity to still be able to volunteer while spending time with my kids," she said. "I bring my daughter with me every time I go to an event and she loves it. I hope as her younger brothers get a bit older, they'll be interested in helping out as well."

Leet and her daughter Heidi's favourite thing about volunteering is getting to do something new each time. They've marched in a parade with a large blow-up float, helped to making sure the parks are clean and welcoming for visitors and even directed traffic.

"It's important for people to get out and serve their community," she added. "The City puts on a lot of great events for the public and people come from all over to enjoy them. A lot of these events wouldn't be possible without the help of all the amazing volunteers."



Photos supplied

Ezekiel Williams-Blackman

Ezekiel Williams-Blackman first signed up to volunteer for the Victoria Day parade in 2023.

"I've always been interested in attending City-run events and I couldn't pass up the chance to participate behind the scenes and see the work put in to make them run smoothly," he said.

Williams-Blackman has participated in every event since. His favourite so far was the CPKC Holiday Train, where he got to dress up in a mascot uniform to interact with the waiting crowd.

"Despite being a cold winter day, the warm reception we received during the event was a rewarding experience," he explained.

But the most rewarding part of volunteering for is getting to build relationships with the community and having a positive influence on others.

"It is a great opportunity to be more involved with the community and enjoy some fun events while you're at it. It gives you a chance to improve your interpersonal skills. Additionally, for people looking to earn volunteer hours, it is a great way to help the city while fulfilling your volunteer hour requirements."

You can sign up to become a volunteer at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/specialevents.



Check out the COW Tales 'Way Back When' contest on page 15 and enter today!

A: 1934.



CALLING ALL YOUTH!

Woodstock's Youth Advisory committee is recruiting young people 13+ interested in offering their perspective on a wide range of municipal services and help make Woodstock a more inclusive, welcoming place for youth.

You can

- help shape our community by providing advice and recommendations to Council
- gain new skills and experience for your resume or post secondary application
- earn volunteer hours
- meet new people

CARVER'S HOME IMPROVEMENT

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Our landscaping experts help you get your garden ready for the colder season.

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FREE QUOTE



Learn more and apply online by Oct. 31, 2024 at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/youthcommittee

Carbon monoxide alarms save lives

A carbon monoxide alarm may seem small, but it can make a big difference in keeping you and your loved ones safe.

Nov. 1-7, 2024, is Carbon Monoxide Awareness week. This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the Hawkins-Gignac Act.

Before the provincial law was enacted on Oct. 15, 2014, carbon monoxide detectors were only required in homes built after Aug. 6, 2001. Today, all homes in Ontario with a fuel burning appliance or attached garage must have a working alarm installed near sleeping areas.

The bill was introduced by Oxford County MPP Ernie Hardeman and is named in memory of Laurie, Richard, Cassandra and Jordan Hawkins, who died in their Woodstock home in 2008 after the vent to their gas fireplace became clogged.

"They didn't know they were in danger because they did not have a carbon monoxide alarm. This tragic event has served as the catalyst for the new CO alarm law," said John Gignac, Laurie's uncle and spokesperson for the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education.



Photo courtesy Hawkins-Gignac Foundation

John Gignac with a photo of the Hawkins family.



ACCIDENTAL POISONINGS cost the Ontario economy more than half a billion dollars every year

Each year, Carbon Monoxide poisoning in Ontario homes results in **thousands of people** requiring medical treatment



of all Carbon Monoxide deaths and injuries in Ontario occur in homes



Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are similar to the flu without the fever

It is often referred to as The Silent Killer



No Odour



No Colour



No Taste

Many Ontario homes have **4-6 fuel-burning appliances** that produce Carbon Monoxide



Fireplace



Patio Heater



Dryer



Furnace



Stove



Water Heater



Portable Fuel Fired Generator

Carbon monoxide or CO is an odourless, colourless and tasteless gas produced by burning fuel.

Many devices you use in and around your home can produce CO including furnaces, wood stoves, water heaters, gas-powered appliances, charcoal grills, vehicle exhaust and blocked chimney flues. These devices can become a risk if they are not installed or maintained correctly, if they malfunction, or if they are used in poorly ventilated areas.

Because CO is undetectable without an alarm, it can have hazardous effects on your health before you even know it's there.

Breathing the gas reduces your body's ability to carry oxygen in your blood and leads to flu-like symptoms, headache, dizziness, confusion, chest pain, loss of consciousness and death.

It goes without saying — make sure you have a working CO alarm in your home. You can buy a Canadian certified CO alarm at most home and hardware stores. Like smoke alarms, they should be tested twice a year and replaced every 10 years or by the manufacturer's expiry date.



If your alarm goes off, leave your home immediately before calling 911. Don't try to locate the source of the CO and don't return to your home until the problem is fixed by a professional.

Maintaining appliances and keeping the air in your home clean can also help prevent CO poisoning. Keep the door between your house and garage closed, don't idle vehicles or use gas-powered machines inside your garage, don't use barbecues or other fuel-burning equipment in enclosed areas, and avoid smoking indoors.

Learn more about carbon monoxide alarms and safety at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/wfd.



Check out the COW Tales
'Way Back When' contest on
page 15 and enter today!

A: James Hay Jr.

2025 Season
Starts Feb. 3rd



Boys & Girls
Grades 1-8
Ages 7-14

**Limited
Spaces
Available**

woodstockwolverines.ca

Restoring the cupola

With its two-story yellow brick exterior, tall rounded windows, ornate stone trim and black weather vane, the Old Town Hall has been a local landmark for more than 170 years.

Today the building is home to the Woodstock Museum, but over the decades it has served as the community's first market, public assembly hall, fire hall, police lock-up, meeting place of Council and municipal offices and in 1955 it was designated as a national historic site.

This summer, the building has been undergoing work to restore and preserve one of its defining features — the cupola on top of the roof.

Drone photo of the cupola, c2022



What's a cupola?

A cupola (pronounced “koo-puh-luh”) is a smaller dome-like structure that sits above the main roof of a building, often crowning a larger dome, spire, tower or turret.

The architectural feature, which first emerged during the Renaissance, allows light or air into a building and provides a protected lookout.

In the 19th century, a renewed interest in classical architecture led to the development of the Italianate style, inspired by the villas and palazzos of the Italian Renaissance.

“Many early municipal buildings in Ontario adapted British architectural trends including the Italianate style, which was becoming very popular when the Old Town Hall was built in 1853,” said Karen Houston, Manager of Culture and Museum Curator.

Preserving the Old Town Hall

This isn't the first time the Old Town Hall has been restored. Work began on the interior in 1980 to return the mayor's office, Council chamber, original entrance foyer and Grand Hall to how they looked in the 1880s.

On the outside, the wood shingle roof, chimneys and cupola were restored to their 1860s appearance. The final stage was completed in 2000, with masonry work on the walls, foundation and parapet to restore the original architectural details.

“As a national historic site, we have to be careful to maintain the character-defining elements that reflect the building's heritage value and its cultural, political and architectural significance to the city,” explained Houston.

Heritage restoration

While the wood shingle roof has since been replaced, the cupola hasn't been touched since the original restoration in 2000.

“Fortunately, things were in fairly good shape. What they found when they went up there was lots of rotten wood on the exterior and some dry rot on the interior — basically, what you would expect after 24 years without maintenance,” Houston said.

Restoring heritage buildings requires specialized skills and expertise, from custom masonry and woodworking to specialty materials, traditional finishes and painting techniques.

The work on the cupola is being completed by Robertson Restoration, who also replaced the roof in 2018. The project includes waterproofing, interior structural work and refinishing or replacing exterior features including the finial, dome tiles and columns.

The Woodstock Museum is open to the public while construction continues. You can find more information about their fall exhibits, programs and events on pg. 30.



Check out the COW Tales 'Way Back When' contest on page 19 and enter today!

A: Rev. Newton Wolverton.

Thank you to our crossing guards!



Every weekday, Paul Weiler stands at the intersection of Lansdowne Avenue and Mohawk Street, wearing a fluorescent yellow safety vest. When a pedestrian approaches, he steps out into the crosswalk and stretches his arms out wide, holding out his red stop sign to oncoming traffic.

Weiler has been a school crossing guard since 2007, after retiring from a long career at General Motors.

"For six months, I was into everything around the house and my wife said, 'Hey Buster, it's time you found something to do,'" he recalled fondly. "She suggested I could take a cooking class at Fanshawe College, or I could go to City Hall and apply to be a crossing guard. And I'm still here, 17 years later."

June 3–7, 2024, is School Crossing Guard Appreciation Week in Ontario. The annual event recognizes the important role crossing guards play in promoting safe and active travel to school.

There are currently 16 full-time and 10 on-call crossing guards at 15 locations across Woodstock. They help students get to and from school safely in the morning, during nutrition and lunch breaks, and at the end of the day.

"The first and last shifts of the day are very busy. Now that the weather is warming up, I can have anywhere from 90 to 120 students come through after school," said Weiler, who sees students from St. Michael's Catholic School and Algonquin Public School at his location.

The job isn't without its challenges. Crossing guards are outside in every season, rain or shine. Weiler has also had a few close calls with people driving too fast or not paying attention at the wheel.

"I've had cars go right through the intersection while I'm walking out because they're on their phone. That scares the daylights out of you," he said.

Despite the challenges, working as a crossing guard has been a fulfilling experience for Weiler.

"It's been a gift. My wife passed away almost two years ago now, and this gets me out and regenerates me. The kids and neighbours have picked me up. It's rewarding to see people smiling and to make a difference in their day."

Are you interested in becoming a crossing guard? Visit www.cityofwoodstock.ca/applynow!

Crosswalk safety

Whether you're a driver or pedestrian, the best way you can thank a crossing guard is by being alert, patient and courteous. Remember these crosswalk safety tips:

Drivers

- Pay attention and don't drive while distracted
- Slow down when approaching an intersection
- Make eye contact with the crossing guard or pedestrian
- Stop when the crossing guard has their sign raised
- Remain stopped until all pedestrians and the crossing guard are safely on the sidewalk

Pedestrians

- Obey the crossing guard when they are present
- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing
- Get off your bike, skateboard or scooter before crossing
- Don't stop in the middle of the crosswalk
- Always yield to emergency vehicles and clear the road quickly if you've already started crossing



Woodstock's Mute Swans settle into their new home in Stratford

Last month Woodstock said farewell to the pair of Mute Swans that called Southside Park home.

Swans were first introduced to the park in 1998 as part of efforts to control the overpopulation of Canada geese.

The last pair originally came from Stratford and lived in Woodstock for 12 years before returning to their former stomping grounds in March.

"The swans ultimately haven't had the desired effect on the number of geese and may in fact have had a negative impact on the natural ecosystem. Fortunately, the City of Stratford was happy to welcome them back into their flock," said Grant Drygas, Supervisor of Forestry and Parks.

Invasive and aggressive

Mute Swans are not native to North America and are considered an invasive species.

According to Environment and Climate Change Canada, they were first brought over in the 1870s by European settlers looking to beautify parks and gardens. Their numbers have since grown in Ontario, from 500 in 1985 to more than 3000 in 2012.

As one of the largest species of waterfowl in the world, Mute Swans can weigh up to 19 kilograms

(more than 40 pounds) with a wingspan of seven or eight feet. They eat up to 4 kilograms of aquatic plants each day, often uprooting entire plants.

Due to their territorial nature, they can be effective at deterring geese, but they also pose risks to other wildlife and wetlands.

Their size and aggressive behaviour have also been a challenge for Parks staff who are responsible for moving the swans to their winter facility each fall. Because they resist being captured, the process poses a risk of injury to both the birds and staff.

"After careful consideration, we decided it was the right time to find them a new home. The City of Stratford has fantastic facilities and an experienced team to ensure they'll be well-cared for," explained Drygas.

Stratford's storied swans

Stratford is famous for its Mute Swans, which have graced the Avon River since 1918 after a man named J.C. Garden donated a pair to the board of park management.

Some of the city's swans have even come from royalty — Queen Elizabeth II gifted a dozen Mute Swans to Ottawa in celebration of the county's centennial in 1967, with one pair later moving to Stratford.

The annual swan release, which takes place in early April, has drawn thousands of people from around the world to watch the bevy of birds march from their winter facilities to the river.

Today, Stratford has 12 swans and the pair from Woodstock are settling in just in time for the annual breeding season.

Attracting native swans

While the move may be bittersweet for residents who enjoyed watching the swans swimming in Southside Park, it could be good news for another species.

"We're hopeful that with the departure of these territorial non-native swans, we may attract Trumpeter Swans to the park," said Drygas.

The largest native species of waterfowl in North America, Trumpeter Swans, were nearly hunted into extinction in the 19th century. Their numbers have recently started to bounce back, from less than 130 breeding adults in North America in 1933 to around 16,000 swans today, according to Ducks Unlimited Canada.

Conservation efforts are continuing to support the return of this important native species in Ontario.



Mute Swans winter in the City of Stratford facility before their April release into the Avon River.



Check out the COW Tales 'Way Back When' contest on page 15 and enter today!

A: Herbert Milnes.



Volunteers needed!

We are looking for people to fill vacancies on two of our advisory committees. Advisory Committees members offer their expertise and perspectives to help the City deliver programs and services that reflect the needs of the community.

The committees currently recruiting are:

- **Heritage Advisory Committee**
- **Sister Cities Committee**



The deadline to apply is April 30. Learn more and apply online at www.cityofwoodstock.ca/boardsandcommittees



Go Green This Spring!

Did you know rain barrels and composters are available for sale at the Engineering Office, 944 James St. ?



\$20
Black Yard Waste Composter



\$51.50
Green Cone Composter (Kitchen Waste)



\$65
Rain Barrel

www.cityofwoodstock.ca/waste

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City of Woodstock Phone Directory Contacts

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City Hall.....	519-539-1291
Civic Centre Arena.....	519-421-3484 x 4301
Goff Hall Rental.....	519-421-3484 x 4301
Library.....	519-539-4801
Market Centre Rental.....	519-537-8411
Museum.....	519-537-8411
Para-Transit Services.....	519-539-1291 x 2510
Parks & Recreation.....	519-539-1291 x 4101
Public Works.....	519-539-1291 x 3140 or x 3104
Small Business Centre.....	519-421-2129
Southside Aquatics.....	519-421-P00L (7665)
Southwood Arena.....	519-421-3484 x 4301
Transit Services.....	519-539-1291 x 3102

Event Listings

Have your events listed in the FREE
Event List community calendar or
for advertising in the *What's on*
Woodstock Magazine, please email
your event details or ad reservation
to wow@flyingsquirreldesign.com



Growing our green infrastructure: City trees and urban forestry

This spring, up to 200 new trees will be planted by the City's Forestry Division.

Boulevard or street trees are located on city-owned land between the curb and your property line. Woodstock has more than 16,000 trees on city boulevards, with another 3,500 trees in parks and tens of thousands more along our trails.

"We like to call trees our green infrastructure," said Paul Butler, Assistant Supervisor and an Urban Forester.

Growing trees in an urban environment takes careful planning and expertise. The City has two Urban Foresters and arborists who are certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

"Soil conditions, water and sewer lines, power lines, streetlights and city signs all present unique challenges when it comes to planting and maintaining healthy trees," explained Butler.

"It's also important to select the right tree for the right location. We have roughly 30 species that we try to keep in rotation. Each tree can have different requirements for moisture, soil conditions, or resistance to pollution and road salt. Diversity can also help protect against insects and diseases."

Public safety is top of mind for the Forestry Division as well.

"When we're planting a tree in front of someone's house, we need to think about whether it will block their view of traffic when they're pulling out of their driveway or block the view of the stop sign as people approach it," Grant Drygas, Supervisor of Parks and Forestry.

In addition to planting twice a year in the spring and fall, the Forestry Division conducts risk assessments, inspections and maintenance. This includes checking for weak points in the structure of the tree, dead branches, the condition of the bark, the health of the foliage and trimming.

Staff also work collaboratively with other municipalities and forestry professionals to share knowledge and stay informed about any new diseases like oak wilt, which was recently detected in Ontario.

"Just like humans, a healthy tree is less susceptible to disease or other impacts. Having an active and regular inspection and maintenance of all of our city trees allows them to be at their optimal health," said Butler.

Creating a vibrant and healthy urban forest isn't just about making our city a beautiful place to live. Trees offer many environmental and health benefits such as cooling temperatures in the summer, which in turn reduces energy consumption and prevents heat-related illnesses. They also help keep our air clean, improve mental health and can even increase property values.

"When we plant trees, we're not only thinking about the benefits today, but that we have plenty of mature trees 30 years down the road that are going to sustain our urban forest," said Drygas.

Caring for Your Boulevard Tree

- Water your new tree weekly from mid-April to mid-October for the first three years. Set a hose at the base of the tree or use a soaker hose to ensure a slow, deep watering. Your tree will need 50 litres of water per week on average.

- The City places mulch around new trees. If you want to add your own coloured mulch, remember the 4 × 4 × 4 rule — spread mulch in a four-foot diameter around the tree, four inches away from the trunk and four inches deep. Avoid creating a "volcano" of mulch around the trunk.
- Do not use garden edging, rocks or a border around the tree. This can negatively affect the roots as they are growing.
- Do not trim the tree. All pruning will be done by the City of Woodstock Parks Department staff.
- Keep lawn mowers and weed trimmers away from the trunk. When the thin bark of a young tree is injured, the bark will split and die back. This can cause diseases and unwanted pests.

For more tree care tips visit
www.cityofwoodstock.ca/forestry.

The Life of a City Tree

Planting



- Property owners can request a City tree online.
- Planting lists are finalized at the end of January and July.
- Planting is carried out by a contractor in the spring and fall.

Year 1 – 3

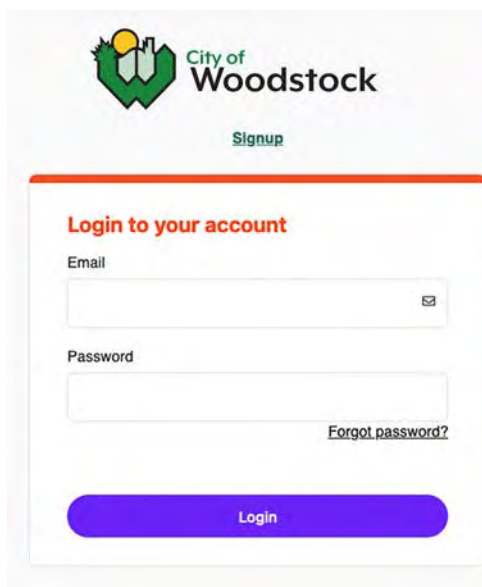


- The tree begins to establish its root system and requires weekly watering in the first three years.
- Forestry staff monitor the tree annually and check the mulch at the base of the trunk.
- The stakes are removed once the tree has stabilized.

Year 4+



- Forestry staff begin structural pruning to help prevent splitting and storm damage.
- Trees are inspected on a four-year cycle. The city is divided into four zones and one zone is inspected each year. Property owners can also request an inspection at any time.
- If the tree poses a safety risk that cannot be addressed with trimming, it will be removed. New trees will be planted to continue to grow our urban forest.

The image shows a web browser window displaying the City of Woodstock's online registration system. At the top left is the City of Woodstock logo, which features a stylized green 'W' with a yellow sun and a green leaf. To the right of the logo is the text 'City of Woodstock'. Below the logo is a 'Signup' link. The main heading is 'Login to your account'. Below this are two input fields: 'Email' and 'Password'. The 'Email' field has a small envelope icon on the right. Below the 'Password' field is a link that says 'Forgot password?'. At the bottom of the form is a large purple button with the word 'Login' in white text.

New year, new (and improved) registration

This year, the City is rolling out a more user-friendly and accessible registration system.

Residents will be able to sign up for programs and book facilities with one easy-to-use online platform launching in January.

“Our new and improved registration system makes it easier to search for activities, add family members to your account, manage your memberships and pay online,” said Danielle Ciccarelli, Supervisor of Recreation & Camps.

The City first introduced online registration in 2017. Since then, we’ve continued to add more programming options, like pickleball, to respond to the demand for recreation and leisure activities for all ages as the City grows. With more people using their computers or smartphones to sign up, we wanted a platform that was easier for people to find the programs they were looking for.

“With this new platform, our parks, arenas recreation and culture facilities can continue to offer more opportunities for people to get active, socialize, learn and be creative,” added Ciccarelli.

Facility bookings and registration for select programs will be available on the new system in mid-January. Summer camp registration opens on Feb. 1 at 10 a.m.

Whether you’re new to online registration or an existing user, you’ll need to start by creating an account. It’s a good idea to create your account early, so you’re set up and ready to go when registration opens.

If you have an account with the City’s previous registration system, any credits or memberships will be transferred over to your new account. You can also continue to sign up for available programs in January and February using your old account.

Get Started Now

- Visit www.cityofwoodstock.ca/online/registration for step-by-step instructions to create your account.
- Watch our website or follow us on social media for updates, reminders and more helpful resources.
- Flip to pg. 14 for more information on aquatics and recreation. You can also find upcoming programs at the Woodstock Museum and Woodstock Art Gallery starting on pg. 38.



Check out the COW Tales ‘Way Back When’ contest on page 23 and enter today!

A: 1949.