

WINDSOR ESSEX SENIOR MAGAZINE

WE SENIOR

Summer 2026

wesenior.ca

A photograph of Wayne Stevens, a man with a mole on his forehead, wearing a red and white checkered shirt. He is sitting in a room that appears to be a radio studio. To his left is a large, vintage-style wooden radio with a black cap featuring the NBC peacock logo on top. The background includes a framed picture and a microphone.

**Retired, But Still on the Air:
Wayne Stevens Keeps the
Laughs Coming | Pg. 12**

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WINDSOR ESSEX SENIOR MAGAZINE

WE SENIOR

Editor:

Matt Weingarden

WE Senior (Windsor Essex Senior Magazine) is a trusted quarterly publication dedicated to celebrating and supporting the vibrant senior community across Essex County and Tilbury. Published seasonally—Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall—by Shazia Nazir, WE Senior offers advertisers a meaningful opportunity to connect with a loyal, engaged, and community-minded readership.

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Editor's Note

Warm Days, Local Voices and the Power of Community



Welcome to the Summer 2026 edition of WE Senior magazine. As the season settles in with long days, warm evenings and a renewed sense of energy, summer reminds us of the joy that comes from slowing down, reconnecting and celebrating the people who make our communities shine.

This issue continues to be shaped by the thoughtful feedback we receive from readers, partners and organizations across Windsor Essex. Your stories and suggestions help us reflect the strength, humour and resilience

of older adults throughout our region. From neighbourhood gatherings to personal milestones, we remain inspired by the many ways seniors lead, contribute and uplift those around them.

Inside this edition, you'll find features on local programs, cultural events and opportunities to stay active, informed and engaged during the summer months. Our cover story highlights longtime radio personality Wayne Stevens, whose quick wit and unmistakable charm have entertained generations. Though retired, his humour remains as sharp as ever — a reminder that laughter is one of the greatest gifts we share.

We're also shining a spotlight on The Burg (CKBG), Amherstburg's community radio station at 107.9 FM. Local media thrives only when local residents tune in, participate and support it. Community radio keeps neighbourhoods connected, amplifies local voices and strengthens the

fabric of small towns. Supporting stations like The Burg is as simple as turning the dial — and every listener helps keep local stories alive.

As always, WE Senior continues to grow through community partnerships. If your organization can assist with distribution or has information to share with older adults, we'd be happy to connect. Together, we can expand our reach and ensure more residents benefit from the resources and stories featured in these pages.

This magazine belongs to you. We welcome your ideas, experiences and reflections as we move through another season together. As summer unfolds, may you find time to enjoy the outdoors, stay connected and be inspired by the people and places that make Windsor Essex such a vibrant community.

Here's to connection, community and the warmth of summer.

Matt Weingarden
Editor

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A Fond Farewell: Gagniers Celebrate Decades of Service



By Matt Weingarden

After 30 wonderful years of bringing style, service, and smiles to Comber, Robert ‘Ziggy’ and Barb Gagnier are ready for their next adventure: retirement.

A recent open house at the Comber Legion celebrated the Gagniers and their decades of service. Robert began his career at Stoney Point Co-op right out of high school, spending five years before heading west to pursue new opportunities. When he returned home to work at the family canning factory, he met Barb—starting a partnership that would flourish both in business and in life.

After returning to manage the Stoney point Co-Op retail

store, Robert transferred to the Comber Co-op and managed it till he and Barb bought it in 1998. “Barb didn’t think it was a very good idea at the time,” joked Robert.

Barb played a key role behind the scenes, handling bookkeeping, accounting, and payroll.

The couple ran it as a “Country Depot” and later a “True Country and Garden” before selling it to “Home Hardware”.

“We sold it to the Drew family, then converted it into a Home Hardware. We stayed on as managers for eight more years. The business was then sold and converted to SAUVE>S Rona, and I stayed on as manager for another two years until we chose

to retire,” said Robert.

In 2007, tragedy struck when their daughter Lillian passed away in an accident. To honour her memory, they opened Lill’s Gift Room—a beloved local boutique known for affordable ladies’ clothing, purses, jewelry, and accessories, all offered with the Gagnier’s trademark warmth.

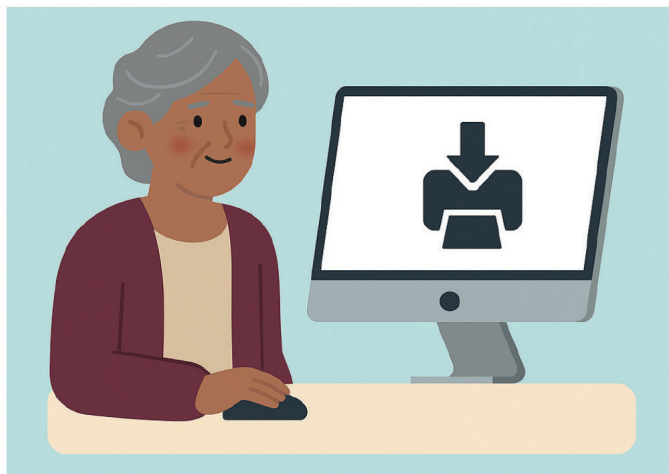
“Lill’s Gift Room became very successful,” said Barb. “It was very popular with the ladies and a frequent destination for visitors from London and beyond,” added Robert.

Giving back has always been important to the couple. Their long-standing involvement with the Comber Fair and organizing fashion shows is just one example of their community spirit.

“There is something to be said about small towns; the people are always the best,” said Barb. “We’re going to miss the everyday interaction with our customers.” “We took pride in offering not just competitive prices, but the extra service that made our business unique,” said Robert. “And we have to thank our incredible staff.”

Now, the Gagniers look forward to retirement—travelling, fishing, and tackling some long-awaited home projects. “While it’s a little bittersweet, we’re looking forward to new adventures,” said Barb. “We want to say a heartfelt thank you to the people of the community for all the laughter, memories, and unwavering support.”

Windsor–Essex Senior Resource Guide



Helping seniors stay independent, healthy, and connected in our community. Staying independent and healthy as we age is possible thanks to the many programs and services available in our community. This guide highlights trusted organizations and resources that seniors and caregivers can turn to for support in Windsor and Essex County.

Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC)

☎ 1-800-668-2642 | TTY: 1-800-309-3388
 🌐 www.cmhc.ca

CMHC provides information for homeowners aged 55+ who want to explore options for using the equity in their homes. Seniors with little or no debt may be able to access funds without selling or moving. Guidance is available on financing choices, home maintenance, and renovations to help older adults remain comfortable and secure in their homes.

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

☎ 519-253-1900 | 1-800-563-2642
 🌐 www.cnib.ca

CNIB supports individuals living with vision or hearing loss. Services include peer support groups, recreational activities, braille and literacy training, and technology programs that help seniors stay connected. CNIB empowers older adults to live independently and confidently while accessing tools that improve daily life.

Council on Aging Windsor–Essex County

☎ 519-968-3586
 🌐 www.councilonaging.ca

The Council on Aging works to educate the public about issues facing seniors and advocates for programs that improve quality of life. They provide information sessions, community outreach, and resources designed to help older adults remain active, engaged, and informed.

Erie St. Clair Healthline (Local Health Integration Network – LHIN)

☎ 1-888-447-4468 | TTY: 519-258-8092
 🌐 www.erieclairhealthline.ca

This service coordinates health care in homes and community settings. Seniors can access nursing, personal care, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, social work, speech therapy, and nutrition counselling. The Healthline also connects residents to social services across Windsor–Essex, Chatham–Kent, and Sarnia–Lambton.

Eye Exams

☎ 211
 🌐 www.211ontario.ca

Eye exams for Ontario residents aged 65+ are free every 18 months. Seniors can call 211 or visit 211ontario.ca to find local optometrists and ophthalmologists. Regular vision checks are an important step in preventing falls and maintaining independence.

Alcohol and Medication Safety

☎ Connex Ontario: 1-866-531-2600
 🌐 www.connexontario.ca

Alcohol can interact with medications in harmful ways. Seniors are encouraged to speak with their healthcare provider about safe use. Connex Ontario offers confidential support and referrals for those concerned about alcohol or drug use.

Geriatric Outpatient Services – Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare

☎ 519-257-5111 ext. 76955
 🌐 www.hdgh.org/geriatricassessmentprogram

The Geriatric Assessment Program (GAP) helps seniors remain independent by providing medical assessments, education, and support. Services are available to adults 65+ who are frail or have complex health needs. Referrals come from physicians or nurse practitioners.

🌐 www.hdgh.org/geriatricmentalhealthoutreach

The Geriatric Mental Health Outreach Team supports seniors living with dementia or serious mental health challenges, offering care in homes, retirement residences, and long-term care facilities.

Health Connect Ontario

☎ 8-1-1 | TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Health Connect Ontario provides free, confidential health advice 24/7. Seniors can speak with registered nurses, dietitians, and mental health counsellors. Support is also available for quitting smoking and managing chronic conditions.

Canadian Hearing Society

☎ 1-866-518-0000 | TTY: 1-877-215-9530

📞 www.chs.ca

Regular hearing tests are important for seniors. The Canadian Hearing Society offers audiology services, hearing aids, and funding options for those with OHIP coverage. Coupons and discounts are often available online or in local newspapers.

Home Maintenance Services

📞 211

📞 www.211ontario.ca

Seniors can find help with yard work, snow removal, cleaning, and small repairs by calling 211. These services help older adults remain safe and comfortable in their homes.

Medical Supplies

📞 211

📞 www.211ontario.ca

Local companies provide medical alert devices, equipment, and supplies for seniors. Call 211 or visit 211ontario.ca to find providers.

MedsCheck Program

📞 1-866-255-6701 | TTY: 1-800-387-5559

📞 www.ontario.ca/page/take-your-medication-safely

Ontario's MedsCheck program offers free annual medication reviews with pharmacists. Seniors can learn how to take prescriptions safely and access specialized programs for diabetes, long-term care, or at-home support.

Ontario Assisted Devices Program

📞 1-800-268-6021 | TTY: 1-800-387-5559

📞 www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/adp

This program provides funding for assistive devices to help seniors with long-term physical disabilities. Equipment includes mobility aids, hearing devices, and home safety tools.

Osteoporosis Canada

📞 1-800-463-6842

📞 www.osteoporosis.ca

Osteoporosis Canada offers information on bone health and fall prevention. Seniors can learn about bone density testing and strategies to reduce fracture risk.

Parks and Recreation Programs

📞 211

📞 www.211ontario.ca

Municipal recreation departments provide fitness classes, cultural programs, and social activities for seniors. Reduced fees are often available. Call 211 for listings in your area.

Seniors Centres and Social Clubs

📞 211

📞 www.211ontario.ca

Local senior centres and clubs offer fitness programs, foot care,

transportation, and social activities. These spaces help reduce isolation and encourage active living.

CareLink Health Transit

📞 1-855-728-1433

CareLink provides affordable transportation across Windsor–Essex for seniors aged 55+ and individuals with disabilities.

Unlock Food Canada

📞 www.unlockfood.ca

This bilingual website from Dietitians of Canada offers recipes, nutrition tips, and healthy eating tools. Seniors can also find information on how to connect with local dietitians.

VON Windsor–Essex (Erie St. Clair)

📞 519-254-4866

📞 www.voneriestclair.ca

VON provides adult day programs, Meals on Wheels, in-home nursing, supportive housing, and chronic pain management services. Their SMART program offers exercise and fall prevention classes for adults 55+.

📞 www.vonsmart.ca

Windsor–Essex Community Health Centre

📞 1-855-259-3605

📞 www.wechc.org

The centre offers free workshops on chronic disease management, diabetes wellness, fall prevention, and home safety assessments. Services include occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and group fitness programs.

Windsor–Essex Compassion Care Community (WECCC)

📞 519-974-2581 ext. 2420

📞 www.weccc.ca

WECCC connects seniors to community supports that reduce loneliness and promote well-being. Programs include one-on-one support, group education, and volunteer opportunities.

Windsor–Essex County Health Unit

📞 519-258-2146 ext. 3200

📞 www.wechu.org

The Health Unit provides fall prevention resources, chronic disease programs, and dental care for eligible seniors through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program.

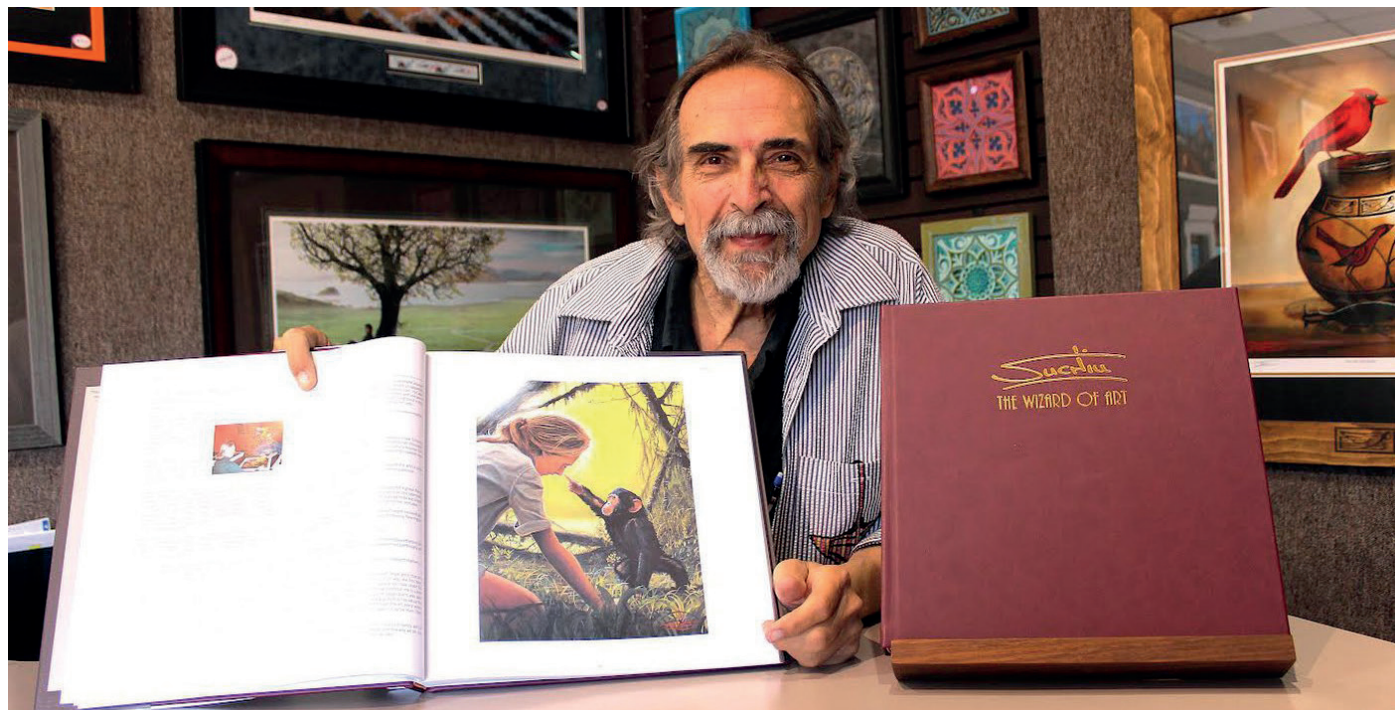
Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program

📞 519-258-2146 ext. 1199

📞 www.wechu.org

Eligible seniors can access free dental care through this provincial program. If you have an Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) card, you can call to schedule an appointment.

Ron Suchiu's stories and artwork captured in new book "Wizard of Art"



By Sylene Argent, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, Essex Free Press

Years ago, world-renowned artist Ron Suchiu of Essex County found himself bedridden in New Orleans for 18-hours, wondering if it was a voodoo curse he acquired after unknowingly taking a forbidden picture of a Voodoo God.

That is just one of many, many stories the artist has in his memory bank. He has worked with an array of celebrities on art pieces, such as Jane Goodall, David Suzuki, Sting, Dan Aykroyd, and Gordon Lightfoot, each forming with interesting happenings. That includes when Eric Burdon of band "The Animals," invited

Suchiu to his 60th birthday in L.A. There, he got to meet Jimi Hendrix's younger brother. The artist ended up completing a painting for Burdon for the song "House of the Rising Sun."

And all of those stories have been captured in his new book, "Wizard of Art," which has recently hit the shelves. The title is a play on a movie on which Suchiu has been hooked.

"There are some pretty amazing stories," Suchiu noted. It has taken eight-years, but Suchiu's long-time goal to share some of his stories are finally printed in a book, nestled against his fine art pieces in a compilation.

"I designed the whole, entire book. Everything about it; the texture, the cover. I wrote it all," Suchiu said, noting its unique

12"x12" size that was handmade with fine quality paper to ensure his art was captured well.

It includes large, high-resolution pictures of almost every painting found in Suchiu's repertoire over the past 35-40-years, including the George Lucas piece he created to raise funds for the Jane Goodall Institute, which is outlined in an entire chapter.

It also outlines Suchiu's own technique called "synergy" where he learns of someone's favourite colours. He uses that to create the background. Then that individual gets to paint on that. He created one with Aykroyd, Suchiu said.

"I wanted to do the highest-quality possible," he said, noting the pandemic-caused inflation increased prices to publish. That

didn't stop him from achieving his goal of producing the book.

In addition to the artwork, it includes a description of the work through the artist's eyes, and all of the "weird and wild" stories behind the work.

Compiling the stories into the book allowed the local artist to share them with a broader audience, rather than telling just one person at a time in casual conversation. "In the book, it would be hard for people to comprehend that it all happened to one guy," Suchiu said. But he can multiply the stories in the book five times and still have more to spare.

"I meet everybody. I met Bob Hope in a store one day. I run into people. President Clinton, I was shaking the guy's hand at a baseball game."

He was even titled a National Treasure by two Prime Ministers: Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien.

Clients, so far, who have said when they read the book, “it is like you are sitting with me.»

The reason putting the book together was so important to Suchiu was because his diversity caused him to be something other than what most artists are. He’s an equestrian artist, an aviation artist.

“It all depends on what I have to be,” he said.

That has created quite the collection of pieces in his repertoire. At one time, there were 45 galleries that dealt with his work, and he lost some because they did not know how to promote an artist who “did it all.

“People who met me 30-years-ago know my whole career, so

what I needed was something that would equalize your education to my art, and this is what we call the equalizer. This allows people to experience what my experience was through my life.”

Suchiu was always an artist.

In his youth, Suchiu said he was a little kid who had no guidance and just wanted to live life. He became an artist who just wanted to live life and not have rules to follow in creating.

“I kind of raised myself,” he said. “So, I found that I took a look at the world differently.” Every time he drew, he did pretty well at the age of six or seven. By the time he was ten, he sold his first portrait, for what his father earned for a week’s pay back then, “which was huge,” Suchiu said.

That really sparked the interest.

He taught himself, studying the works of da Vinci, Norman Rockwell, and Salvador Dali, his three favourite artists. “People see this happening through the book: all of my art is based on myself using three mentors,” he said. “I chose them almost like a recipe.”

When needing to create a loving and friendly piece, he would lean on Rockwell. If he needed to be technical, he would go to da Vinci. If he needed mystery – that feel of surreal – he would go to Dali. Looking back at his career, Suchiu called it a “surreal painting. I don’t know of another artist who has done what I have done.

“The biggest problem an artist has is making a piece of art and thinking it is going to make you famous,” Suchiu said. Running his art business has

been a demanding job. “I’m a Canadian artist that survived on art my whole life.”

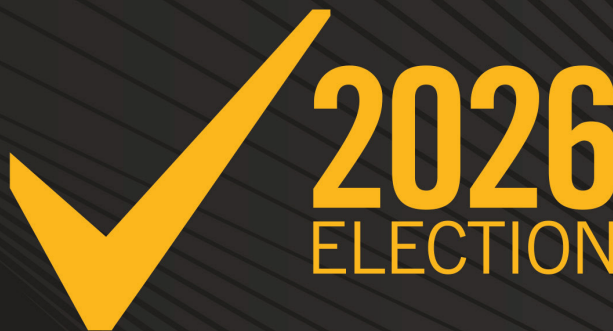
As for his art, some are displayed in the Vatican, Windsor Castle, and in collections of Nelson Mandela and Clinton.

There’s a limited number of 1,250 books available, each hand-signed and numbered. The premier edition book has only 250 copies, and comes with an original sketch inside. Suchiu likes to personalize the sketch for the purchaser. That makes them each unique, and something he doesn’t think he has seen before. There is also a handmade, wooden book stand available.

“It is not going to happen again,” he said.

The “Wizard of Art” book can be purchased at: suchiu.com/product/the-wizard-of-art-book.

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Michael McHugh, Citizen of Distinction

by Kirk Walstedt

Michael McHugh was born on September 22, 1850, on the family farm on Concession #5 in Maidstone Township. His parents were both born in Ireland. Michael Sr. was born in 1808, and his wife, Ellen, in 1809. They were among the early pioneers of Maidstone Township, immigrating from County Cavan, Ireland, in 1845 after a lengthy 7-week journey on a sailing vessel.

Conditions on sailing vessels from Europe to Canada in 1845 were perilous, especially for those with little money seeking a better life in the New World. Many of the ships were converted from cargo vessels into rudimentary passenger vessels with few comforts for passengers.

The ships' dark holds were often overcrowded. Those travelling in steerage were confined to small wooden bunks, often no more than 18 inches wide by 6 feet long. Up to 300 people would be packed into a ship with very poor ventilation. Passengers were often expected to provide their own food, consisting of salted meat, fish and oatmeal. Food would often spoil on the long journey, resulting in rampant malnutrition.

The lack of proper toilet facilities and clean drinking water created breeding grounds for typhus and other contagious bacterial diseases. Upon arrival at Quebec and other ports of entry, passengers were regularly quarantined, where disease often spread, and many died.

So great were the numbers of those who died that hundreds, if not thousands, were buried in mass graves.

Michael and Ellen were among the lucky ones who arrived in Canada in reasonably good health. They immediately set out for Maidstone Township, where they knew several other families from their home county in Ireland had recently settled.

Michael Jr., the youngest in the family, grew up on the homestead and attended district schools. He later studied in Toronto to become a teacher, a profession he pursued for 25 years.

In September 1873, he married Mary Jane McPharlin, daughter of Hugh and Margaret McPharlin. They had 14 children. Two daughters married into the McCloskey and Murphy families, both still well-known names in the Greater Maidstone Area.

In 1874, Michael and Mary Jane sold a quarter-acre lot off the family farm in Maidstone Township, where the first Town Hall was built. It was destroyed by fire in 1915 and replaced with a brick structure that served as the Town Hall until 1964, when a new

building was constructed on an adjoining property. In 1984, the building was restored and became the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum, offering visitors a look into the township's historic past.

Michael and Mary Jane remained on the original homestead for several years. In 1885, they purchased a large parcel of land on the North Middle Road,

now known as County Road 46, in Woodslee. The home was described as a fine brick residence with ample room for Michael and Mary Jane's large family.

In 1892, Michael was appointed Maidstone Township Clerk and one of the auditors for the County of Essex.

Mary Jane passed away on November 4, 1909. Following her death, Michael remained in the family home in Woodslee. He continued in his roles as Maidstone Township's Clerk and County Auditor for another two years before retiring to a quiet life on the farm.

Many of his children lived nearby, so the McHugh home was always lively. In June 1927, Michael's youngest son, Francis, an attorney in Detroit, became seriously ill and was

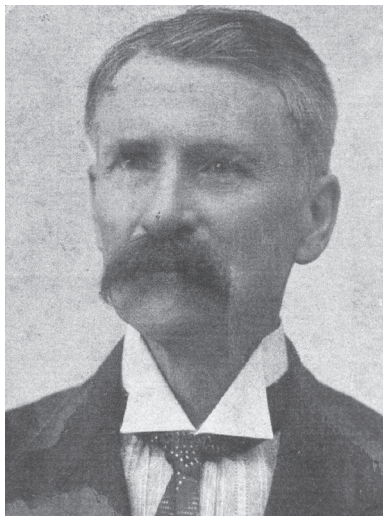
hospitalized. His condition worsened over the following weeks. Michael visited often, hoping and praying for his recovery. On July 17th, Francis's family was notified that he was in critical condition.

Michael rushed to the hospital to be with Francis and his family. As he crossed the street to enter the hospital to see his son, he was struck by a vehicle and killed. Later that same day, July 17, 1927, Francis passed away. The sudden passing of both Michael and Francis was a shock and a heavy loss to the McHugh Family and the community at large.

"Michael was praised as one of the leading instructors of the County of Essex and one of Maidstone's most public-spirited, ambitious men whose efforts had always been directed toward good municipal government and improvement. Many leading men of the County pointed to him with pride as the one who guided them in their early studies, and imparted knowledge gained during a long and useful life."

The Biographical Commemorative Record of Essex County, Maidstone Township, An Historical Review and the Walstedt Archives were valuable resources in the writing of this story.

Kirk Walstedt is a 4th generation Lakeshore resident born and raised on the family farm in the former Township of Maidstone. He is a historian, author, archaeologist, retired municipal lawyer the Deputy Mayor of Lakeshore.



Healthy Routines That Help Protect Your Brain Over Time



By Jiesu Luo

Keeping your brain healthy doesn't always come with obvious warning signs. A cut, a cough or a fall is easy to notice. But changes in the brain — the very organ that helps you recognize when something is wrong — can be harder to spot.

Health experts say paying attention to cognitive shifts at any age is key to long term brain health. Small changes, such as forgetting recent conversations, misplacing familiar items or struggling with everyday tasks, can sometimes signal the early stages of Alzheimer's disease.

Healthy habits can help lower your risk as you get older. The Alzheimer Society of Ontario highlights several ways to support brain health:

- Staying physically active — Activities like walking, cycling or gentle yoga can help reduce risk factors such as depression, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- Keeping socially connected — Spending time with friends, volunteering or even chatting with people in your community can help reduce stress and prevent isolation.
- Eating a balanced diet

— Nutritious meals support both physical and mental well being.

- Challenging your mind — Learning new skills, picking up hobbies, playing games or doing puzzles can help keep your brain engaged.

While healthy routines can lower your risk, some factors — including age, genetics and family history — can't be changed. Even people who follow every recommendation may still develop Alzheimer's disease. But new treatments are offering hope.

A newer class of medications, known as disease modifying therapies, aims to slow the

progression of Alzheimer's by targeting the underlying cause. These treatments, including lecanemab, work best in the early stages of the disease. Slowing decline can give individuals and families more time to share experiences, maintain routines and stay connected.

Being aware of changes in your own brain health — or in someone close to you — can make a difference. Speaking with a doctor or qualified health care professional can help you understand early signs, the value of timely diagnosis and how healthy habits can support cognitive well being.

Retired, But Still on the Air: Wayne Stevens Keeps the Laughs Coming

By Matt Weingarden

Local radio personality Wayne Stevens may have hung up his hat, but retirement hasn't dulled his wit—or his knack for making people laugh.

"Boring," he jokes when asked how he's handling life off the clock, his trademark humour shining through even as he settles into a slower pace. For years, Stevens, was a household name associated with local media, and it seems he's not ready to let the spotlight go just yet.

Stevens, whose real last name is Bobaljik, grew up near Walkerville and was deeply connected to Windsor's Italian neighbourhood. "I grew up at Moy and Erie - so much so that I didn't realize I wasn't Italian until I was 12 years old...but, all my friends were," he laughed.

He attended De LaSalle Catholic School and Walkerville Collegiate, spending countless hours in the Ottawa Street area. As a kid, he fondly remembers catching the Erie St. bus for seven cents and heading downtown to see a movie at the Vanity Theatre



for just a quarter.

Stevens, now 77, began his radio career in June 1969 at CFCO in Chatham. It was a fantastic place to learn the ropes. "I started directly out of high school. I was very, very fortunate. I was 20 years of age at the time...I had no job," said Stevens. "I made an audition tape in Leamington at CHYR, sent it off to CFCO in Chatham, and they hired me. I spent nine years there working my way up from the production department to weekend and overnight shifts playing MOR/country music."

Stevens says it was the perfect entry-level gig, spinning records by Jerry Vale, Andy Williams, and Johnny Cash. "There was no pressure...and no money," he laughed. "We were allowed to do

pretty much what we wanted."

That relaxed format let Wayne try new things. "That loose format allowed me to pitch the idea of interviewing famous celebrities," he explained. "And they went for the idea... back then, interviews with those celebrities were unheard of on small-time radio like CFCO."

This began a journey of hundreds of interviews - from Tim Conway, Tony Randall, Telly Savalas,

Carroll O'Connor, Johnny Carson, and more. And, it all happened before the internet: "You really had to dig to get to these celebrities lined up and on air. There was no googling to see who an agent or publicist was. You built up a contact list, maintained those relationships and worked to get a foot in the door at many

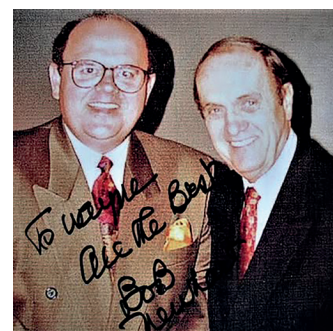
of the larger television studios," explained Stevens.

He remembers connecting with celebrities like Tony Randall and Karl Malden. "Getting to know some of these celebrities on a personal level was a thrill. I got to know Tony Randall and Karl Malden quite well. They were both so nice to me." Years after meeting Malden, Stevens sent him a letter just to say hello - and Malden was so touched, he called into the station to catch up while Wayne was on the air that afternoon."

"It's moments like that you never forget," he shared.

Over the years, Wayne also emceed countless live shows, sharing the stage with Bob Newhart, the Righteous Brothers, and the Beach Boys, among others.

In 1979, Wayne joined AM 580 CKWW, where he would remain on air for a record-setting 28 consecutive years. At the time, the station was located in the Viscount Hotel on Ouellette Avenue before moving to the Pedler Building on Cabana Road and eventually to the legendary



Big 8 studios at 1640 Ouellette.

“My first show on WW was called ‘Contact’ and I found it challenging to do. It was a show which ran in the 1 p.m. till 3 p.m. slot,” he explained. “I was supposed to concentrate on local issues; however, by the time my show started, the news makers of the day had already been interviewed during the morning shows, and often I had to scramble for content at the last moment.”

He sheepishly admits to one embarrassing regret: Mike Drakich, owner of the old Top Hat supper club, asked Wayne to interview an up-and-coming comedian as a favour.

“I did the interview, ran it on air, and then promptly erased the tape... that personality was comedian Billy Crystal,” he laughs.

Another show, “The Exchange,” featured two hosts debating the day’s hot topic. “One day I was preparing to debate with Al Pervin, the program director at the time, about a serious topic. I went first and presented my case for several minutes. When it came Pervin’s time to rebut, he cracked the mic



and quipped, ‘Who cares. I’m Al Pervin.’ Once I regained my senses, we both busted up on air.”

A major change for Stevens was the station’s switch from talk to ‘Music of Your Life.’ “I thought that’s the kiss of death for me... It’s over,” he explained. “I was pleasantly surprised when the station took off. We had a large number of American listeners, and we came in about 15th in the ratings in the Metro Detroit area. A big deal for a 500-watt station.

During that time, Wayne worked with legendary Detroit radio personalities like Jim Davis, Don Alcorn and Tom Shannon. “Working with Tom was an honour.

He shares that he still talks with Dick Purtan on a regular basis.

He was also thrilled to learn that other Detroit-based broadcasters were fans of his on-air work, including Dennis Neubacher and legendary Tigers sports announcer Ernie Harwell.

“I’m a huge Tigers fan!” Stevens shared. He also maintained a close friendship with Cam Gardiner, known as ‘Mr. Windsor,’ until Cam’s passing in 2021. “We were the best of friends, and I miss him dearly,” he shared.

Wayne recalls the two being so loud during show prep in “the pit” that they’d sometimes be asked to leave.

For 25 years, Stevens hosted the local Easter Seals Telethon on CBC TV and continues to give back as a volunteer emcee and assists at the Essex Food Bank. “When some of the young volunteers at the food bank ask me who I have interviewed, I name off a list of old school celebrities, and they look at me like...who? They’re waiting to hear names like Pink and Justin Bieber,” he jokes.

Wayne and his wife Electa enjoyed winters in Florida, summers at the cottage in Goderich, and trips to Wawa, Electa’s hometown. They eventually sold their Forest Glade home and now live in McGregor.

“McGregor...It’s small, so small that we take turns being the town drunk...By the way, next Thursday is my turn,” he laughs.

They are parents to son Eric and wife, Megan and grandparents to Jacob and Quentin. Despite some vision issues, Stevens says his health remains good.

“I’ve been very fortunate in my career... they say if you love what you do, you never have to work a day in your life, and I can attest to that.”

Support Local Media & Local Radio!



Family Service Kent hosts Senior Fair in Tilbury

By Fred Groves, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, Tilbury Times Reporter

Staying active while aging — that was the theme at the Tilbury Arena as Family Service Kent presented its annual Senior Fair.

Nearly 60 vendors brought their information to the event, and an estimated 300 visitors came to learn about the many ways to have fun, stay safe, and access services available in their community.

Chrissy Donais, General Manager of the Tilbury Leisure Centre on Canal Street, attended with Heather Wilson to

highlight the centre's long-running programs for older adults.

"It's so people can get out, be active and socialize," said Donais.

The Tilbury Leisure Centre offers a range of activities including shuffleboard, exercise classes, and Friday lunches.

The free event at the arena also included lunch, served by St. Andrew's Residence of Chatham, which operates the Meals on Wheels program.

Family Service Kent has been providing services that support, empower, and advocate for individuals and families since 1969. According to Well-Being

Coordinator Marjorie Crew, the Senior Fair has been running for 17 years.

"We want to get information out to that particular demographic," said Crew.

Last year's event drew 340 visitors. This year, attendees came from across the region, including Belle River's Margie Hopkins, who stopped by to speak with Tammy Martineau, a Program Coordinator with the Canadian Red Cross.

The Red Cross showcased its "Let's Go Home with Homeward Bound" program, designed to help individuals transition back home after a hospital stay.

"We want seniors to know

what is available to them. For people in Tilbury, it lets them know what is available in Chatham-Kent," said Marie Bergsma, Manager of Support Services at Family Service Kent.

Also set up at the fair were Chatham-Kent Police Services, Fire and Rescue, and several local groups including the Tilbury and District Historical Society.

"We send out invitations to our community partners. We try not to have too much duplication. We only have space for 60 vendors," noted Bergsma.

For more information about Family Service Kent, call 519-354-6221.

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Branch 594 Brings Veteran Services Together Under One Roof

By Matt Weingarden

Are you a veteran seeking support, resources, or answers?

You are invited to the Military/Veteran Support Services EXPO, hosted at the Royal Canadian Legion Metropolitan Branch 594 (5030 Howard Ave) on August 6, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This is an opportunity to connect with numerous organizations—all in one place—dedicated to assisting veterans and military personnel. If you want to discover what resources are available, this is the event to attend. “The event is designed to assist veterans and military personnel in any way possible,” said Dave Woodman, Veterans Service Officer, Branch 594. “A big problem is that military people don’t always know where to turn for answers or that resources are available... things like housing, food, medical care—even counseling for marital issues.”

This comprehensive event brings together a wide range of support service providers, making it easier for veterans and military personnel to access information and assistance. Organizations and units that support the military community are invited to participate as exhibitors, offering a unique chance to showcase the services available to those who have served.

“Sometimes, it’s hard for veterans to ask for help... but here, you are surrounded by other veterans and support systems,” Woodman added. “We’re seeing veterans gather for coffee, socialize, and



Dan LeBlanc and Kim Jones, with the Southwestern Ontario Family Military Resource Centre, are among the many organizations attending the Veterans Service Expo on August 6th.

share life experiences.”

Attendees will include Veterans Affairs Canada, HMCS Hunter, Military Family Resource Centre, Royal Canadian Naval Association, Wounded Warriors Canada, and members of Federal and Provincial Parliaments. Exhibitors will provide informational materials, distribute promotional items, and offer in-depth explanations of their services.

“The veterans’ service officer from the London Bureau travels to our area every six months to assist with veterans’ affairs claims. We coordinated with the Bureau to hold an information session while veterans wait for their appointments,” explained Woodman.

Branch 594 held a successful similar event earlier this year, and the upcoming EXPO is scheduled to coincide with a visit from the

London Service Bureau, which helps with Veterans Affairs claims. Reserve units are also encouraged to use this event as a recruiting opportunity.

John Nayduk, a local reservist who began his service in 1980 and served three overseas tours—including one in Afghanistan—attended the first expo earlier this year. “An expo like this is a wonderful thing. Veterans Affairs isn’t always easy to navigate, so this definitely helps,” said Nayduk. “Looking around the room, you see centuries of service here, and sometimes we fall through the cracks like any bureaucracy. Fortunately, the Legion is here to help. Unfortunately, they shouldn’t have to.”

Kim Jones, a representative of the Southwestern Ontario Family Military Resource Centre, was one

of many members of the organization who attended the earlier expo.

“We support veterans and their families by offering a number of services, such as deployment counselling and morale packages. We talk about the separation between veterans and their families, and what it’s like when veterans return home,” she explained. “We assist in integrating veterans back into society and help with that transition.”

Whether you’re transitioning out of service, seeking community, or simply need a little extra support, the answers and connections you need are here, ready to help you move forward. “Essentially, we’ve created a supportive hub for veterans,” Woodman concluded.

For more information, contact Royal Canadian Legion Metropolitan Branch 594.

When are seniors most at risk of identity theft?



There are many reasons why fraudsters target seniors: a belief that they have accumulated savings, an assumption that they aren't familiar with the technology scammers use or taking advantage of the fact that many seniors are socially isolated and may not have support to help them spot a scam or push back. Identity theft is a priority for many fraudsters, since they can use that information to enrich themselves in a variety of ways. Here are a couple of the biggest threats to watch out for:

Someone can pose as your bank to get your information. This is a technique called "phishing," and it's one of fraudsters' favourite tactics. It works by sending a communication that seems like it's from your bank or another institution you

trust—this could be a phone call, email or text.

They'll claim there's some issue you need to resolve quickly, like a missed payment. They may even accuse you of fraud or ask for help with a fraud investigation. The strategy is to create a sense of urgency or even panic so that you follow the included link to log in or give your information over the phone. When you do, it provides that information to the fraudster, who can use it to compromise your account to get money or even more of your identity.

Tax return scams are more popular than ever. Posing as the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is a popular tactic of fraudsters for two reasons:

- People take their taxes seriously. Telling someone, especially a senior, who may be on

a fixed income, that there's an issue with their tax return or benefits is an effective way to create panic.

- Tax information is valuable. If a fraudster can get you to give them access to your CRA account or your tax forms, they can use that information to steal your identity. To a scammer, your tax forms are a one-stop shop.

How can seniors protect themselves? There are digital security services that can help, at tax time and throughout the year. Using a tool like Telus Online Security can help protect your identity. It uses built-in device security that acts as a first line of defence against phishing attacks and scams, and can help you determine which messages are legitimate and which aren't. In the event that your identity

is stolen, the service offers 24/7 access to support and identity theft specialists who can walk you through the recovery process.

It's important to be vigilant and trust your instincts. Scammers count on you not questioning what you're told, so question it. Ask yourself if any communication you receive makes sense. If all the emails you got from them in the past told you to log into your account directly, why does this one have a link to click?

The threat of identity theft has never been higher, but by protecting yourself and exercising caution and judgment, you can keep yourself safer. Learn how you can better protect your identity and finances during tax season and beyond at telus.com/onlinesecurity. (NC)



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3 refreshing non-alcoholic drinks with a sweet secret ingredient



If you're looking to elevate your mixing game this season, strawberries are a simple but impactful ingredient. Naturally sweet and vibrant, they

add flavour, visual appeal and nutritional benefit. For instance, according to Health Canada, just one cup of strawberries provides approximately 95 per cent of the recommended daily value of vitamin C, along with essential fibre, potassium and folate.

Whether muddled, blended or infused, California strawberries bring a bright twist to beverages that feel both indulgent and nourishing. Here are some recipes to try:

Basil Strawberry Lemonade

Prep time: 5 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 quart (946 ml) water
- 1 cup (250 ml) lemon juice – freshly squeezed
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) sugar
- 1 lb (450 g) strawberries – rinsed
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) basil leaves
- 1 pinch salt

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend at high speed for just 20 seconds.
2. Pass through a strainer and keep refrigerated until ready for the party.
3. Serve over ice with slices of lemon, strawberries and basil leaves as garnish.

The combination of fresh basil, lemon juice, and strawberries creates a balanced drink that is both refreshing and rich in antioxidants.

Strawberry Agua Fresca with Chia

Prep time: 15 minutes

Servings: 5

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp (30 ml) chia seeds
- 4½ cups (1125 ml) of water
- 12 strawberries hulled
- ¼ cup (60 ml) sugar
- 2 lemons
- 1 cup (250 ml) ice

Directions:

1. Add chia seeds to ½ cup (125 ml) of water and refrigerate for at least 10 minutes.
2. Place 8 strawberries, sugar, juice from one lemon and 1 cup (250 ml) of water into the blender. Blend until puréed.
3. Pour 3 cups of water into a large pitcher. Add the

strawberry purée and chia mixture and stir until fully combined.

4. Slice remaining strawberries and one lemon (including peel) and add to pitcher.
5. Pour ice into pitcher. Serve cold and garnish with strawberries and mint.

Blending strawberries with water, lemon and chia seeds results in a cooling beverage packed with fibre and nutrients that support heart health. It's especially appealing on warm days when you need something both energizing and refreshing.

Sparkling Strawberry Ginger Refresher

Prep time: 5 minutes

Servings: 2

Ingredients:

- 8 fresh strawberries, hulled
 - ½ inch (1.3 cm) piece of fresh ginger grated or zested
 - ½ cup (125 ml) ice cubes
 - ¼ cup (60 ml) water
 - 1 can lemon-flavoured, or flavour, sparkling water
1. In a blender, add strawberries, ginger, ice cubes and water. Blend to combine into a smooth slushy, about 1 minute.
 2. Pour strawberry slushy evenly into two glasses. Top each glass with half of the lemon sparkling water, and if you like, an extra squeeze of lemon.

The subtle spice of ginger enhances the natural sweetness of the fruit, resulting in a balanced and invigorating sip.

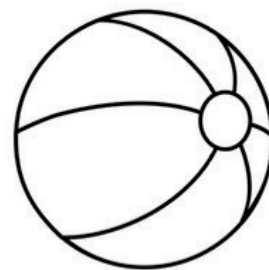
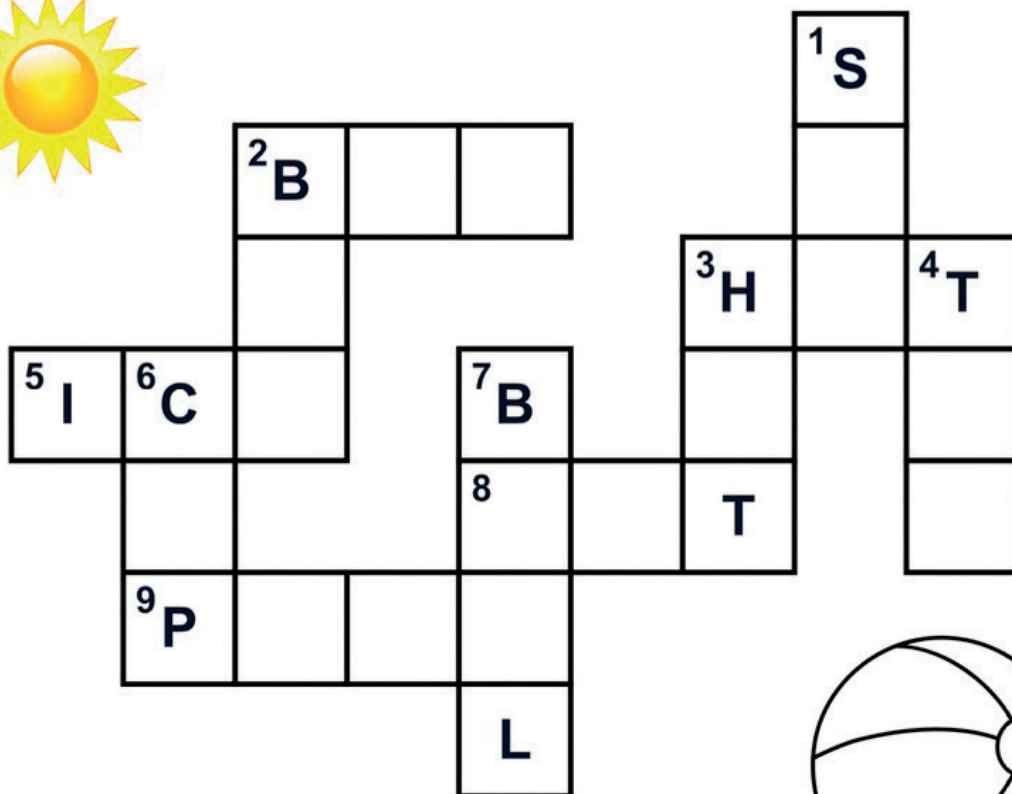
Find more drink recipes at californiastrawberries.com. (NC)

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- 1. Big water (3)
- 2. Makes honey (3)
- 3. Very warm weather (3)
- 4. You play with it (3)
- 6. Small hat (3)
- 7. You throw it (4)

Planting roots locally: LaSalle Horticultural Society Cultivating Community



Photo by Matt Weingarden

By Jan Dugdale

The LaSalle Horticultural Society is one of 15 societies in District 11 of Southwestern Ontario, under the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) and guided by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Our mission is to encourage community gardening for people of all skill levels. We meet at St. Andrew's Church on the third Tuesday of each month (except December, January, and August).

Our meetings are lively and informative, featuring engaging speakers on topics ranging from pollinators to container gardening and beyond. We also

take pride in caring for several community gardens, including Celebration Garden on Front Rd., our pollinator garden in Vince Marcotte Park, and the church gardens at St. Andrew's. This year, we're adding a new pollinator garden beside the pirate bridge in Vince Marcotte Park and enhancing the Tim Horton's garden on Malden Rd. with more colorful blooms.

Founded in Old Sandwich Town in 1963, we are celebrating our 63rd year—40 of those in LaSalle. Over the years, we've participated in local events like the Strawberry Festival Parade, hosted gardening workshops, and organized the Trillium Awards honoring beautiful home gardens.

We also support students through scholarships at St. Clair College and provide grants to grade schools with gardening programs.

Our largest annual event is our plant sale, held the Saturday before Mother's Day at St. Andrew's. Proceeds help us give back to LaSalle by funding projects such as arena seats, tree plantings, bat houses, and park benches—11 so far, with the next planned for the fairy garden off Malden Rd. We also support the Event Center gardens and donate fresh produce each week to the LaSalle Food Bank, sourced from our community gardens. With over 136 members—about 80 attending each meeting—we offer a welcoming, fun atmosphere,

complete with sweet treats, door prizes, and occasional silent auctions. All profits are reinvested in the community, supporting local projects and those in need.

Organization president Jan leads seasonal workshops for seniors and organizes annual bus trips to nurseries. Her upcoming "Egg to Butterfly" workshop at the town library will teach participants about monarch butterflies, from attracting to releasing them.

For more information or to connect with us, visit our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/asalleAmbassadorHorticulturalSociety>.

We welcome everyone—no green thumb required! Join us and be part of the fun.



TREVOR JONES, MPP
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In Focus: Spring Photo Contest Entries

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Spring Photo Contest — your creativity and community spirit truly shone through.

Several entries stood out for their originality and warmth. We appreciate all who shared their work.

Here are some of the participants who submitted their best spring moment photos: Philip Carlone of LaSalle; Linda Iler; James Tarpali; Lundi Buchi; and Jaja Dalla.



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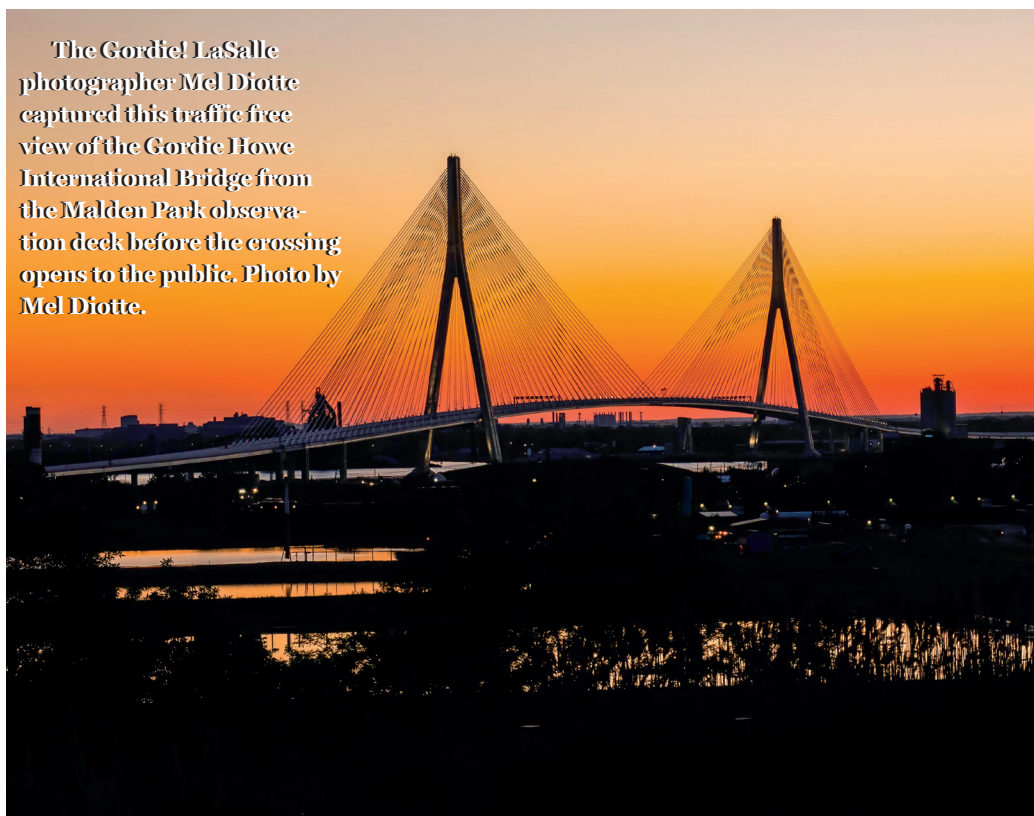


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The Gordie! LaSalle photographer Mel Diotte captured this traffic free view of the Gordie Howe International Bridge from the Malden Park observation deck before the crossing opens to the public. Photo by Mel Diotte.



WINDSOR ESSEX SENIOR MAGAZINE

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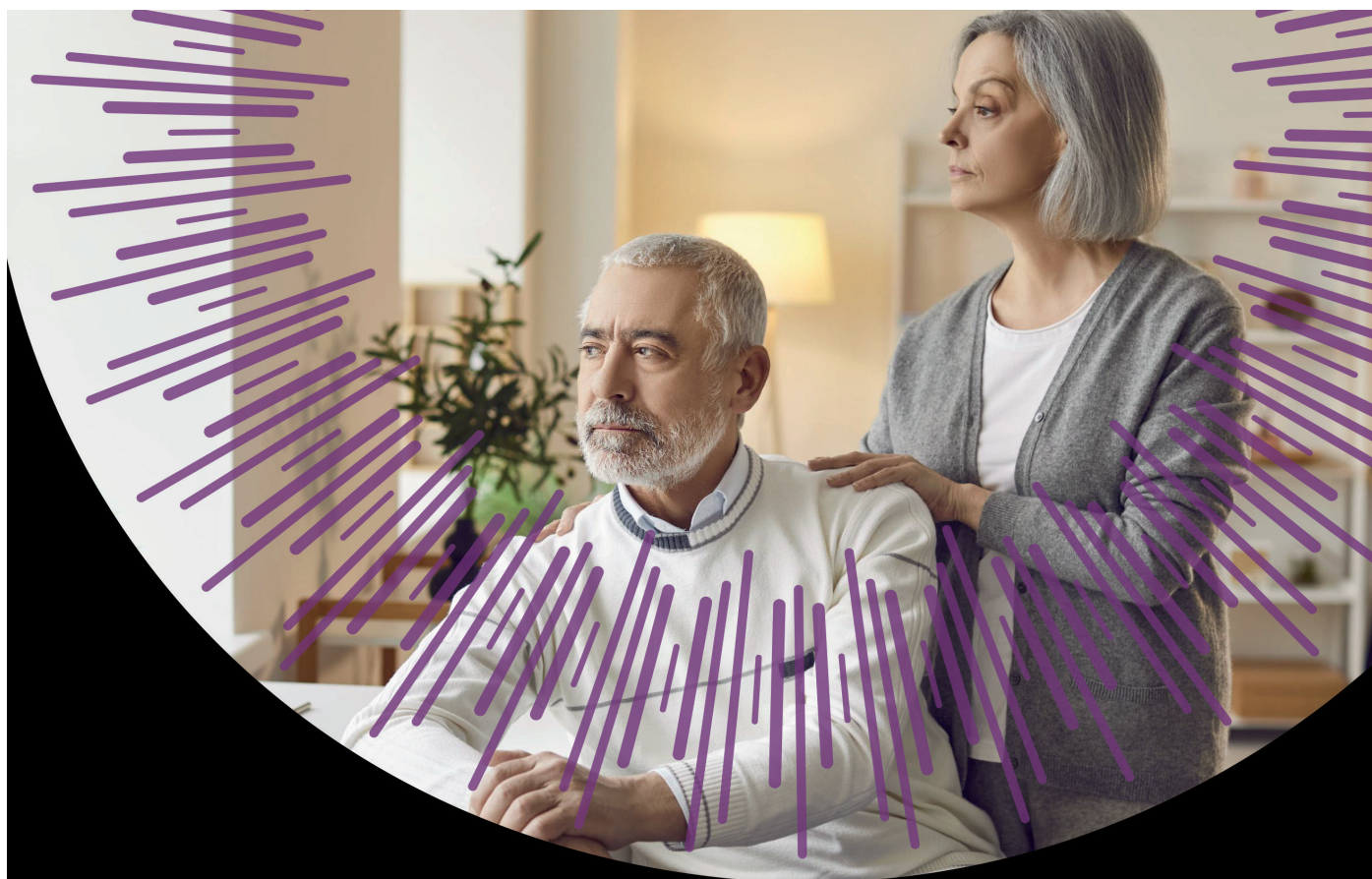
How to Enter:
Email your photo to
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Use the subject line:
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