

ISSUE OF

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THE NORFOLKER



Building Something Local

From the Editorial Team

The world is changing. News is moving from print to digital, connecting with our neighbours can feel increasingly rare, and the future is as uncertain as ever. Yet amid all this change, some things remain constant: the importance of reliable reporting, meaningful conversations with people who hold different perspectives, strong local communities, and the understanding that the future is something we shape together.

The shift from print to digital, and from locally owned newspapers to larger media organizations, has changed the way many people consume and think about the news. At the same time, Norfolk County continues to have its own stories, challenges, and successes that deserve local coverage.

Local opinions also deserve coverage. Facts and conversation are not opposing ideas; they depend on one another. Good reporting provides a foundation of shared information, while open dialogue allows communities to learn, challenge assumptions, and move forward together.

That is where The Norfolker hopes to contribute. We are not here to reinvent local journalism, but to celebrate and strengthen it by highlighting the people, places, businesses, organizations, and ideas that make Norfolk County unique. We believe that a community publication should reflect the voices of its readers. Story ideas, opinions, and feature suggestions are always welcome.

Above all, The Norfolker exists to celebrate what makes Norfolk County special: its local businesses, farms, non-profit organizations, community events, artists, volunteers, and residents. We hope these pages encourage you to discover someone new, support a local initiative, and feel just a little more connected to the place we all call home.

Editorial Team, The Norfolker

Letters to the Editor, Submissions, and story requests should be sent with name, e-mail, and town name to EditortheNorfolker@gmail.com. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



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Cover: Sophia Bowen
Norfolk Together, Digital Piece

www.TheNorfolker.com

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Whiskers Wanted

The Norfolker has teamed up with Purrfect Companions to help find some of their rescue cats and kittens a forever home.

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- Loves exploring, chasing toys
- Grew up surrounded by other cats



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- Adorable brother & sister
- Love to snuggle and play
- Sweetest duo



Hilaria (Hilly)

DOB: May 24, 2025 Fee: \$200.00

- Young loving mama cat
- Loves people, and attention
- Gets along with calm cats

From the Archive

A look back at Norfolk County, through the pages of the archives, local legends and historic maps, uncovering and preserving the stories of generations that came before us.



The Legend of Spooky Hollow

Spooky Hollow is situated in Normandale, more specifically, Spooky Hollow Road is the continuation of Front Road into the Normandale area.

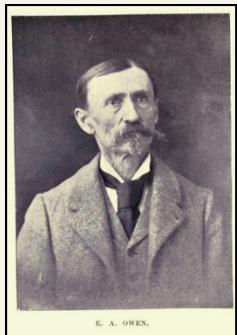
The beauty of Spooky Hollow has been celebrated for more than a century. In a September 12, 1929 article published in *The Simcoe Reformer*, Tom C. McCall described the area:

"Some three or four miles southwest of the little village of Vittoria there is situated one of the most beautiful and perhaps the most legendary spots in the county of Norfolk. From the very beginning of time beautiful trees have grown in abundance here... The spot is Spooky Hollow."

Today, Spooky Hollow may be better known for its legends that have become part of its local identity than for its scenery.

That juxtaposition was evident even in McCall's 1929 article, in which he also acknowledged the area's folklore by referencing an even earlier work: *Pioneer Sketches of Long Point Settlement* by Egbert Americus Owen, published in 1898.

According to Owen, a man named Dr. Troyer was among the first settlers in the Turkey Point area around 1790. Troyer eventually became Norfolk County's first physician.



Egbert Americus Owen,
Author of *Pioneer Sketches of
Long Point Settlement*, 1898

Owen portrayed Troyer as deeply superstitious, writing that he was a "confirmed believer in witchcraft."

This belief made Dr. Troyer notorious, to the point that "the name Dr. Troyer and the term witches are so interwoven in the minds of the old people that they cannot think of one without being reminded of the other."

As Owen tells it, Troyer believed several of his neighbours were witches, including the widow of Captain Edward McMichael, whom Owen described as clever and mostly amused by Troyer's accusations.

Owen recounts that Troyer eventually bolted a large trap to the floor of his home, believing it would catch witches during the night.

He also tells one particularly unusual story: Troyer reportedly believed witches transformed him into a horse, rode him across the lake, and forced him to eat straw before returning him home.

Some local residents have connected this story with the legend of the Headless Horseman. McCall, however, noted in his 1929 *Simcoe Reformer* article that Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is unrelated to Norfolk County's Spooky Hollow.

Concluding his account of Dr. Troyer, Owen wrote: "Strange as it may appear, Dr. Troyer believed all of this yet, aside from witchcraft, he was considered a sane man."

This fall, as you venture through Spooky Hollow on your way to Normandale or Turkey Point, keep an eye out for the spectre of an old Dr. Troyer being ridden by a witch towards the lake.



Whether or not the local legends are true, one thing is certain: Spooky Hollow is at its finest in early autumn, when brilliant leaves transform one of Norfolk County's most storied roads into one of its most beautiful drives.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION 2026

Meet the People Seeking Your Vote: Norfolk's Next Mayor



In May of 2026 Mayor Amy Martin announced that she would not be running for re-election in October. The newly available seat now has six contenders.

The Norfolker has put together brief snapshots of each candidate, their backgrounds, and their priorities.

Written by Leah Bauer

Keith Milner



A Port Dover native, Milner left Port Dover Composite School at 18 to join the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He went on to spend 39 years with the RCMP, serving in Saskatchewan, London, and Toronto, as well as working in political intelligence. Following his retirement, Milner returned to Dover to operate Bronte Shores Yacht Sales.

Milner said his decision to enter politics was driven by his belief that:

"In Norfolk County, the government is spending too much money. The money is not being watched carefully. As a result, taxes are going up, but we are not seeing the return on value."

Milner said his first priority would be to increase public engagement. He believes local government does not have all the answers and can sometimes overlook issues that matter to residents.

In particular, he pointed to the number of community groups that, he said, "are ready to be initiated, or get involved in the issues, and they are being ignored. Then we turn around and spend enormous amounts of money on consultants. From what I've seen, we are not getting a return on investment with these people because they are not from here and they do not understand the issue."

Ken Hewitt



While not originally from Norfolk, Ken Hewitt said he is passionate about this community he now calls home. Hewitt has lived in Turkey Point for close to five years. Before moving to Norfolk, he lived in Haldimand County, where he served as mayor from 2010-2022.

Hewitt said he believes his experience has prepared him to lead Norfolk County.

"People are struggling to make ends meet and are looking for leaders that can help manage taxes and keep them at a level that is sustainable. I have demonstrated that experience in Haldimand, where I kept taxes tied to inflation or less. We still grew the assets and we still fixed the infrastructure."

Hewitt said he is proud of his time as mayor and believes his background in business and municipal government makes him well qualified for the role. Reflecting on his time in office, he said "over the 12 years where I was Mayor, we kept taxes below 2%, while also increasing the reserves."

In 2022, Hewitt ran as the Progressive Conservative candidate in Haldimand-Norfolk, an election he lost to Bobbi-Ann Brady. Reflecting on that campaign he said he "stepped into a bit of a minefield." Despite the loss, Hewitt said he appreciated "the opportunity to see firsthand what party politics looks like." He continued, "I am happy to be here on the local side because it allows me to demonstrate my strengths."



David Finch



David Finch decided to run for office after experiencing frustration with the previous council. He described the situation; "my street was being rebuilt, we were told that they were looking for public input. Eventually they had a public meeting which I attended only to realize the tender agreements for the drawings were signed prior to the so-called public input meeting."

Finch has a varying background, he worked as a paramedic for 40 years in Hamilton. An experience he says "gives one a lot of problem solving skills, you deal with so many people on their worst possible days, you have to make sense of the chaos, put it all together and do what needs to be done for that person."

In addition to his time as a Paramedic, Finch also served as a councillor in Grimsby for 10 years. Now, he works as a psychotherapist, a testament to his "lifelong desire to work with people one-on-one."

Finch believes Norfolk needs someone who "understands how reserves work, how municipalities put money in the bank for big capital projects," Finch said. "We also need more transparency in our Municipal government to ensure our residents are involved or at least informed on what the council is up to."

Noel Haydt



Noel Haydt served as Ward 1 councillor from 2014 to 2018. During that time, he was also elected chair of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority.

Haydt said his professional background in IT has given him the knowledge and experience to “fix complicated systems.” One of the complicated systems Haydt has his sights set on is Norfolk County’s capital plan.

“We need to rebuild the capital plan around what Norfolk can actually afford and deliver. We need to improve customer service, accountability, and transparency,” Haydt said. “Our average household income is \$11,000 below the provincial average here. When you are far below the average, every dollar increase hurts.”

“One of the reasons I stepped up is because Norfolk County needs it. We need to protect the infrastructure we already own,” Haydt said.

Haydt said he is working toward a vision he calls “Norfolk 2030.”

“We need downtown Simcoe revitalized. We need help for people with addictions. We need serviced industrial lands to bring jobs closer to home,” Haydt said. “I want to build something better for us. I want a better Norfolk.”



Doug Brunton



Doug Brunton, councillor for Ward 5 has decided to switch gears and run for mayor this October. A decision that means risking his longtime position in Municipal government. However, this risk does not seem to phase Brunton who believes that as the mayor he would have more say in management of Municipal decisions.

Brunton noted that his 30-year career as Public Works Director and his eight years on council positions him to be the best fit for addressing the issues Norfolk is facing.

“I have worked with five or six different mayors, I have dealt with infrastructure as Public Works Director. I have dealt with Municipal government for my entire career, I have seen both sides.”

Brunton appreciates the time he spent as councillor of Ward 5. In stepping back on that role, he hopes to step forward and take on more of a leadership role as mayor. If elected he believes he will have more “sway in how things are done.”

Brunton also highlighted his experience in two things he views as “essential” to Norfolk’s economy; agriculture and tourism. Brunton is a Chair of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, and he also worked in the U.S in agriculture after retirement. He views his combination of experience makes him the most fit candidate to take on the responsibility of being Norfolk’s mayor.

Adam Veri



Adam Veri served as Ward 6 councillor for one term before deciding to run for mayor. Prior to entering municipal politics, he owned and operated his own small business, Veri Marketing and Development.

A key focus of Veri’s campaign is Norfolk County’s financial position and the need to address its significant debt.

“When I hear people say we need to get back to inflation-level or below-inflation-level tax increases, it is concerning,” he said. “I don’t know how we can charge residents less tax than it takes to run the services.”

Veri said municipal leadership sometimes requires elected officials to make difficult and unpopular decisions with long-term benefits in mind.

“In municipal office, you make decisions that are unpopular, but down the road those decisions will save people money or provide a better service.”

Veri noted that his decision to run for mayor, instead of for re-election as councillor was largely influenced by his constituents’ encouragement.

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COMMUNITY ISSUES

Homelessness in Norfolk

On July 2nd, Norfolk County approved a 2026-27 investment plan to support housing stability and homelessness services across Haldimand-Norfolk.

The plan includes \$3,959,300 in approved funding, consisting of \$3,610,000 in provincial funding and \$349,000 from the municipal levy. The funding will be allocated across five areas: emergency solutions, community outreach and support, housing assistance, supportive housing, and administration.

Homelessness is a widely discussed issue across Canada, including in Norfolk County. The investment plan sparked online debate, with residents expressing differing views on how best to address homelessness in the community.

A County representative clarified that the investment does not represent new or additional funding.

“The County has not received more money; this information explains how the existing Homelessness Prevention Program allocation will be used,” the representative said.

“While the funding is significant, demand and costs have continued to grow, so the County must prioritize services carefully and use the funds where they will have the most impact.”

The County representative explained that the administration allocation covers the work required to manage and oversee the program.

“Administration is part of the program that makes sure funding is properly managed, reported, monitored and delivered in compliance with provincial requirements. It includes the financial oversight, reporting, contract management, data management, and program supervision to make sure public dollars are used for their intended purpose,” the representative said.

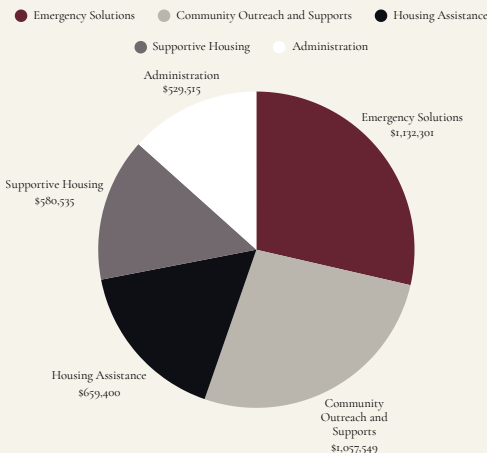
The representative added that “no additional staff are being requested for the Homelessness Prevention team at this time.”

Emergency solutions received the largest portion of the funding. The County describes emergency solutions as “the immediate crisis-response services for people who are homeless or are at the immediate risk of homelessness.”

These services can include emergency shelter or short-term accommodation, weather-related diversion where possible, support to exit emergency accommodation, and other crisis support while longer-term housing options are pursued.

The County representative said the emphasis on emergency solutions does not mean prevention is being overlooked...*contd.*

Allocation of Funds in the Housing Stability and Homelessness Services 2026-27 Investment Plan





Patience, Digital Piece By Sophia Bowen

"Emergency responses are not the end goal, but they are necessary when someone has no safe place to stay. Emergency solutions were prioritized because demand is high, costs have increased, and people in crisis need a safe, practical response. This does not mean prevention is less important. The intent is to meet people at different points on the housing continuum: before they lose housing, when they are in crisis, and when they need support to stabilize after being housed," the representative said.

A longtime social services professional also offered their perspective on the investment and the subsequent online debate.

"The funding doesn't stretch too far when you look at the root causes. To give the County credit, this around-four-million-dollar investment is impossible to do much with."

"People need to be able to get treatment when they are ready to make that change, but it can take months to get into an OHIIP-funded bed, and just days to get into a privately paid bed. People need better aftercare when they leave mental health hospitalization. We need to address housing availability, housing affordability, who can get on ODSP and how much ODSP pays."

Another recurring theme in community discussions about homelessness is the belief that Norfolk County has become a destination for people experiencing homelessness because of its methadone clinics.

The social services professional interviewed for this story does not believe that explanation reflects the broader reality, disputing the claim that Norfolk's homelessness crisis can primarily be attributed to people arriving from other municipalities because of local methadone clinics.

"Everyone wants to make it about the methadone clinics and this concept that people are flocking here for them and that other municipalities are putting their unhoused on buses or in police cars and dumping them here with \$200 to bribe them to relocate out of their area. Everyone wants to believe this isn't truly a Norfolk problem, we're far too good for this. But I don't believe that's true at all."

"I'm sure there is some travel within the unhoused community since nothing is keeping you to one area, but it's a very natural flow that moves both in and out of our area. For example, our unhoused will try going to Hamilton to see if there is more for them there. I think it's rarely the opposite, because why would you? We have less services."

The County representative emphasized that addressing homelessness requires collaboration beyond municipal government.

"Homelessness cannot be addressed by the municipal government alone. We rely on relationships with non-profit service providers, housing providers, health and mental health partners, faith-based organizations, Indigenous and community organizations, and people with lived or living experience to understand what is happening on the ground," the representative said.

The nearly \$4-million investment is one part of a much larger effort to address homelessness in Norfolk County. Understanding how funding is allocated, the factors contributing to homelessness, and the misconceptions surrounding the issue can help move the conversation from debate toward action.

Good Neighbours

A section dedicated to the great people of our community,
those dedicated to bettering the place we call home.

Simcoe Strong Looks to Reinvigorate Downtown Simcoe

Simcoe Strong is a community-led group focused on cleaning up and reinvigorating Downtown Simcoe. Organizer Josh Parsons began the group because he felt Simcoe was missing “a connective tissue to keep things moving along.”

“Downtown Simcoe has been fundamentally ignored for the best parts of a few decades,” Parsons said. “Resources have been diverted to other parts of the county and there hasn’t been the investment needed.”

In fact, Parsons believes there has been “a large disinvestment in Downtown Simcoe,” he said. “Systems are running out of control. As you can see we have a massive sinkhole in Downtown, a Tim Horton’s burnt down, the shell of which is still sitting there.”

Parsons said years of disinvestment has contributed to a “Simcoe comes last mentality” among some residents.



Despite those challenges, Parsons does not believe that the situation is hopeless. Instead, Simcoe Strong is focused on setting concrete goals and advocating for long-term investment in the downtown. Our mandate right now is to get the county to commit to a strategic restoration plan for the Downtown,” Parsons said. “In fact we have been invited to have a seat when they do.”

The group plans to advocate for policies focused on walkability, cultural investment, and measuring how the community is developing.

“We need to set the tone to make Simcoe a place that is great for visitors, tourists, development, business interest, and for those that call it home,” Parsons said.

Parsons describes Simcoe Strong as a “conduit for community conversation,” with discussions ranging from cultural restoration to homelessness and addiction. “We are a facilitator, an opportunity for ideas and organizations to come together and realize that it does take a community to get this stuff done,” he said. “When we discuss and organize, it can be done on the terms of the community members that are affected by the issues.”

That work extends beyond advocacy and discussion. Simcoe Strong also organizes community cleanups, bringing residents together to take an active role in improving the downtown. For Parsons, the goal is ultimately to build a stronger sense of community ownership over Downtown Simcoe, and to turn that involvement into meaningful, long-term change.

The Guardians of the Marsh

Long Point Biosphere Region

Long Point Biosphere Region, alongside Long Point Eco-Adventures and Eco-Kare International, run a local conservation initiative known as the Long Point Turtle Hatchery. Lauren Nightingale, the Road Ecology Program Coordinator at Long Point Biosphere Region, works alongside staff members and a team of volunteers to protect local turtle populations, and, in turn, the marsh ecosystems they call home.

Throughout the nesting season, the team searches for vulnerable nests and then works to protect turtle eggs laid in precarious locations. When a nest is at risk, volunteers carefully collect the eggs, which are then transported to Long Point Eco-Adventures to be incubated.

The hatchery also serves as an educational opportunity, allowing visitors to learn about the important role turtles play in the local marsh ecosystems.

This year, the organization collected more than a thousand turtles for incubation, the turtles began hatching in early August, and were then released into local marshes. While this may seem like a healthy number of hatchlings, the survival odds for turtles are remarkably low. It can take approximately 1,000-1,500 turtle eggs to produce a single turtle that will live to reproductive age.



“Individualism is the death of our world, we can’t do things by ourselves, it has to be a community collective, getting together and getting it done.”

Local populations of Map, Blanding’s, and Snapping turtles are at risk for a number of reasons. Nightingale describes the top three threats to local turtle populations as “cars or transportation, development, and phragmites.”

For Nightingale, turtles are more than just another species found throughout Long Point; “Turtles are sort of our mascots for protecting the marsh. They are so important to the ecosystem. They are predators, they are prey. They move nutrients and seeds out of wetlands and onto dryland. Turtles are also big garburators, so if something dies in the marsh they are there and they will eat it and clean it up, which reduces disease.”

Their presence is an indicator of the health of the ecosystem, but their survival increasingly depends on the intervention of people like Nightingale and the volunteers who spend their summers searching the roadsides for the nests, monitoring the eggs, and then releasing them back into the ecosystem when they hatch.

For the turtles of Long Point, a journey across the road can be one of the most dangerous parts of their lives. The work of the hatchery is intended to give more of them a chance to make it to the other side.



The Power of Community

100 Women Who Care

100 Women Who Care Norfolk is a group of local women who join together four times a year to do good in our community.

As the name implies, the group is composed of women, but don't let the title fool you about the number involved. At its first quarterly meeting back in 2014, 118 women gathered to donate and create change in the community.

Today, the group has almost 200 members who donate \$100 four times a year.

At each meeting, local charities and organizations are invited to put their names forward. Three charities are randomly selected from a hat and given the opportunity to present to the group. From those three organizations, one is selected to receive the collective donation from that meeting.

“100 Women Who Care Norfolk has raised over \$780 000 for 48 local charities” according to board member Kathy Caskenette, who noted that the money has helped “thousands of people in Norfolk County.”



One of the stipulations of receiving a donation from the group is that the money received must “remain in Norfolk and do good in our local community.”

Even charities that are not selected have an opportunity to share their work with the group and can return to try again at future meetings.

The range of charities supported over the years is very diverse.

“When you look at the list of charities that have been successful in receiving our donations, it's a wide range. We have supported daycares, hospitals, community groups, Alzheimer's society, cancer groups, seniors,” Caskenette said.

“These charities that present are all so deserving, and they touch the hearts of the women. Oftentimes, the charities will come back to tell the group how they spent the money. In these cases, there is rarely a dry eye in the crowd.”

Over more than a decade, 100 Women Who Care Norfolk has demonstrated what can happen when individuals choose to act collectively. Four times a year, nearly 200 women contribute what they can, and together, those individual donations become hundreds of thousands of dollars invested directly back into Norfolk County.



IN CONVERSATION WITH

MPP Bobbi Ann Brady

MPP of Haldimand-Norfolk

Q: What do you think the biggest concerns are for the constituents of Haldimand-Norfolk?

The biggest concern is affordability. Many constituents do not have an income problem, they have an outcome problem of things they cannot control. People are busting their humps but they're asking what they are actually getting for the money they earn. As it relates to housing, not only has the cost of homes skyrocketed but so have property taxes, home insurance, utilities, groceries.

Q: As parliament heads back into session, what are the main things you think need to be addressed by this provincial government?

The government must make affordability a priority. The purchasing power of families isn't keeping pace with what they are earning.

Recent flooding should prompt review of how we permit development, particularly in flood-prone areas. Growth shouldn't risk people and infrastructure.

The province should be helping smaller, local builders compete while ensuring large-scale development pays a fair share of infrastructure costs.

Classroom safety and achievement is a concern for constituents with children. Chaos in the classroom is real, and throwing money at it without making systemic change will never solve that chaos.

Further, if we want to tariff-proof Ontario, let's invest in local food processing facilities. This would also make us less susceptible to supply disruptions and rising food prices.

The last one is government spending. The current government is not testing for positive outcomes on the money it spends. I have actually had ministers tell me they do not care what happens with the money once it leaves the Ministry – this is why we see problems like homelessness and addiction persist.



Bobbi Ann Brady, MPP of Haldimand-Norfolk

Q: What do you think the provincial government is getting right for Haldimand-Norfolk, and where is it falling short?

The province is getting a few fundamentals right while falling short in other areas. The province has invested in our two counties respectively when it comes to infrastructure funds. Monies are flowing to our municipal partners. Norfolk County received a historic investment of \$16.5 million from the province to upgrade the Port Dover Wastewater Treatment Plant – this was the largest single provincial transfer payment in the County's history. These were meaningful dollars for a very real infrastructure need, and it definitely took pressure off Norfolk ratepayers.

The Ford government got that one right but now we need to see the same approach applied to roads like Highway 6 and Haldibrook Road, the Argyle Street Bridge in Caledonia and aging infrastructure in our hospitals all of which are necessary to support responsible growth.

Q: How important is the relationship between the MPP and the Mayor?

A positive, professional relationship between an MPP and a mayor is vital. We do not have to agree on everything, but we have to be able to talk about the problems facing our communities and work toward solutions.

I want to be very honest about my experience over the past four years. I've had a productive and professional working relationship with Mayor Bentley. Sadly, I have not had the same relationship with Mayor Martin.

I believe in working with anyone who is willing to work with me.

Being able to have a conversation about what is happening in our communities, exchange ideas and solutions is important. That kind of communication hasn't happened in Norfolk to the degree it should have...

I am grateful to the councillors who have tried to keep me informed. Ultimately, this is not about personalities but rather making sure that the people we represent have every level of government working on their behalf.

My door is always open to our mayors and councillors. At times we might disagree, but those disagreements should never get in the way of serving the people who elected us.

Q: Looking at the mayoral race, what do you hope changes as things are shaken up in municipal leadership?

I hope what we see is a renewed focus on basics. I hear residents asking some legitimate questions about how their tax dollars are being spent and whether their respective county is focused on the things that matter to them.

I'd also like to see changes in the degree of political gamesmanship at the municipal level. While municipal elections are non-partisan, we know that political affiliations exist. In several cases over the past four years, those affiliations have influenced how people approach issues.

Municipal government should be about getting things done for the people who pay the bills. There is nothing wrong with disagreement, but decisions should always be based on what is best for the community, not on who gets credit, who gets blamed, or what political camp is pulling the strings.

I would love to see councils that are prepared to put politics aside, work together, and focus on the fundamentals like responsible spending, infrastructure, planning, drainage, and roads.

Q: Is there a piece of legislation coming up in the next session of parliament that you think Norfolk residents should be paying more attention to?

I'd suggest watching the government's Bill 109, Protecting Ontario's Food Independence Act (POFIA), which targets foreign ownership of farmland.

I was the first to begin talking about this at the Finance Committee in early 2023. The private members bill (Bill 21 – the Foodbelt Act) first took aim at this through legislation. I am certain the government has brought forward POFIA because they were receiving the heat to pass Bill 21, introduced jointly by MPP Mike Schreiner and myself.

I guess imitation is the best form of flattery, and I've always said I don't care who gets the job done, as long as the job gets done.





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Norfolk Culture Desk

Highlighting creativity in Norfolk County



Conversation, Digital Piece By Sophia Bowen

DoverWrites: Discovering Norfolk County's Literary Life

Written by Dick Bourgeois-Doyle

Over the past 25 years, my wife and I have made literary festivals an essential part of our travel itineraries. What many call "literary tourism" has added a special dimension to our travel. It has taken us to some out-of-the-way places, introduced us to interesting people, and more often than not left us with a better understanding and appreciation of a community than conventional attractions and events might.

When we moved to Port Dover five years ago, I wanted to learn more about the local writing stable. With our friends at Beach Reads, we developed a podcast series of interviews to this end with people in our community who have seen success as authors.

What I learned became *DoverWrites: Storytelling in Small Town Ontario*, a new book of newspaper profiles based on those podcast interviews. The interviews were an education in the breadth of writing already around us.

There is David Beasley, the historian, publisher, and lifelong literary adventurer, who was still talking about playing tennis when I interviewed him shortly before his 93rd birthday. His books range from memoirs and studies on library science to historical fiction and poetry. He told me that one of the great advantages of living in Norfolk County is that "there are so many stories that haven't yet been told."

Then there is Deborah Ellis, whose writing takes us far away. Her *Breadwinner* series has introduced readers around the world to the experiences of children living through war and hardship and have generated millions for international humanitarian causes. Notwithstanding the subjects, she says she tries to end her young-adult books on a note of hope, asking how people can become stronger and more capable of loving one another.

Artist and author Janice MacLeod provides another kind of literature. Her New York Times bestseller *Paris Letters* emerged from years of living and creating in France, yet she returned to Norfolk County, where she says the quieter surroundings give a creative person something precious: time to think.



And then there is Port Dover poet John B. Lee, whose work is nationally and internationally recognized. He reads his poetry aloud because, for him, writing begins with sound. He wants words to flow. Kari Gunson turned data about wildlife killed on Ontario roads into an engaging citizen-science book filled with photographs, illustrations, and stories. Autumn Demarest overcame her early life struggles with English to create FEAD, combining local history, farms, food, and photography.

Historian Stephen Selk followed a question about the Long Point Company into years of archival research. Adventurer Adam Shoalts saw a peregrine falcon over a Norfolk field and eventually followed its migration route 3,400 kilometres north, producing the national bestseller *Where the Falcon Flies*.

Port Dover's Peter Ivey writes fantasy. J.P. Riemens combines memoir, music, and imagination. Dr. Kailey Buller somehow found time to write a book about babies while practicing medicine and raising two young children. Waterford's Roselle Lim uses food, art, culture, and a touch of magic to introduce readers to lives and perspectives they might never otherwise encounter.

And there are writers who remind us that literary achievement can be a side benefit to personal growth and reflection. Authors like Liz Grace, Jeff Tribe, and Tamiah Johnston write memoirs and works that test their skills and that are both touching and personal.

Ilse and Aurora Tozer, young sisters from Port Rowan, have already won recognition for their writing. Ilse wants to become a librarian; Aurora is working on her first book. They have curiosity, a willingness to learn and a magical backyard swing that fosters creativity. They and others have been encouraged by our library's Norfolk Literary Prize which has grown from a youth writing initiative into a county-wide celebration of storytelling.

I arrived in Norfolk County wondering whether we could create a writers' festival. I discovered instead that we already have a vibrant and varied literary community worth celebrating.

We have authors with national and international audiences. We have historians and poets, novelists and journalists, scientists and memoirists, food writers, and fantasy writers. We have a bookstore that has become a gathering place for readers and writers. We have a public library supporting emerging writers. We have young people entering competitions and discovering that their stories are worth putting on paper.

DoverWrites is, of course, not a definitive catalogue of Norfolk County writers. It couldn't be. It is an invitation to look around. Ask who is writing here. Ask what stories are being told. And ask what stories remain to be discovered.

For a free copy of DoverWrites and information on Voltaire's Pizza, the locally published celebration of literary travel, email doverwrites@gmail.com and check out DoverWrites <https://doverwrites.blogspot.com>



**Interviewed and Photographed
By Laikynn DeBoer**

Laikynn DeBoer is the Founder of Norfolk Music Press, a page dedicated to promoting live music and musicians in Norfolk County. Follow her on Instagram @NorfolkMusicPress to see weekly updates of where and when you can see amazing local music.

Laikynn is also a talented photographer, more of her work can be found on Instagram @Laikdebo



Local Musician Amber Banks



Amber Banks

Interviewed and Photographed

By Laikynn DeBoer

Q: What inspired you to first get into music and performing live?

I started posting videos in high school, mostly for my grandma. And then one of my dad's bandmates, Tony Duclos, gifted me everything that I would need to play music publicly. I was really nervous to do so, but he said 'Well you've got all the stuff now, you got to use it!' Everyone was just super lovely and encouraging every step of the way, so I really credit Tony Duclos and Sarah Moody-Velduis. She encouraged me to open for Professor Louie & The Crowmatrix. Of course, my dad has played music for years too, so he's always been a huge cheerleader for me playing music, and my mom is a singer and a songwriter as well.

Q: What advice would you give emerging musicians in Norfolk who are just starting out in their performing or songwriting journeys?

Amber: Keep with it, for sure. It's so worthwhile. It's such a worthwhile endeavor to learn an instrument, to play music, to sing, and to join community in music, and jump into it headfirst. You're never going to be 100% prepared. Just do it scared, do it confused, do it clumsily, and the comfortability will come. I've never really gotten over my stagefright 100%, but there are ways and people who will uplift you especially in Norfolk County who are so radically accepting and radically loving of live music. If you put your heart in it people will meet you halfway and celebrate that with you and it's so worth it. Live music is right here under your feet, half the price of super expensive concert tickets and right in your backyard. I think people would be really surprised by how much fantastic talent we have in small towns and even just at bar gigs or whatever right? There's so much great live music to be seen, and I want for all young folk who are just starting out to be a part of that. Join in, y'know, do the scary thing, because doing the brave thing is really worth it.

You can catch Amber performing with fellow Norfolk County musician Nolan Gibson at the Waterford Pumpkinfest on October 18th from 12:00p.m - 1:00p.m

Amber Banks is one of many amazing local musicians from Norfolk County, Ontario, but she stands out for the ethereal tone of her voice and the way she brings a wave of peaceful calm over any crowd. As well as having a true heart of gold and telling the best jokes, she is an incredible singer and songwriter, and has been performing live for over 7 years. She has played in venues across Norfolk, and has even opened for Blue Rodeo and David Wilcox.

Q: Do you have an all time favourite show you've ever performed locally?

I feel like the Valley Heights show with Professor Louie was really special. I got to play with Nolan Gibson and Jesse Murphy opening for David Wilcox in Port Rowan, and I got to play opening for Blue Rodeo at Burning Kiln last year. Such a unique experience and so wild to be in front of that many people at one time, but it was so well worth it and so awesome. And any show at Homegrown Hideaway is so special. It's my favourite place to play music, I think, in Norfolk County, because they're just so lovely and welcoming, and it's such a special place for live music in particular.

Q: What does the live music scene in Norfolk County mean to you?

Amber: It truly means the world. I feel like every single musician I've interacted with the entire time I've been playing live music is just so accepting and wonderful and positive, radically loving and accepting. Truly, everyone is just your biggest cheerleader no matter where you go and people will show up and make you feel loved and accepted and proud to be there and to be a part of this community. So I am a huge superfan of the Norfolk County music scene in particular, and it truly just makes things like Friendship Festival or Cornstock [Birdtown Jamboree] feel like big family reunions y'know? Everybody getting together to raise money and play music and just join together in song and connect and build community in a really beautiful way. I love Norfolk County music so much.

Q: You recently debuted some of your original songs at one of the Songwriter's Rounds held at Homegrown Hideaway here in Norfolk. Can you tell us a little more about one of your new songs?

Amber: At the last concert I played a song called 'Orbit', and it's one of the only two songs that I've written on an electric guitar. I started writing it about three years ago now, but I just couldn't find the ending for a long time. Finally, in the last six months, I started picking up my electric guitar and playing it a bit more and I finally found the end of that song which was really satisfying.

What is Amber Banks listening to?

Only Living by The Burney Sisters
Cactus Tree by Joni Mitchell
A Case of You by Joni Mitchell
Little Green by Joni Mitchell
Vincent by Don McLean
Starry Starry Night by Don McLean



The Public Square



AI & Marketing

For context, my name is Katie and I am the founder of K8's lab, a creative studio, located here in Norfolk County.

In many ways, AI is entirely useful. You can ask it health-related questions, to come up with ideas for your cousin's birthday party theme, use it to finally figure out why your grass is turning brown in certain areas of your lawn. There are endless ways AI can make your daily life easier.

But as a creative, the most frustrating thing is seeing how widespread the use of AI in advertising has become.

As the owner of a creative studio, I spend a lot of my time in my office, brainstorming ideas, planning for upcoming client campaigns, and thinking outside of the box. I'm sure many business owners do the same.

Regardless of the size, nature, and goals of your businesses one thing remains true, marketing and advertising is important.

In the age of AI and social media, business owners are now being tasked with making posts, designing content, and navigating the new terrain of online advertising.

Now, all of this added pressure and work can be handled in a matter of minutes, thanks to AI.

People will talk to me about the 'threat' of AI to the marketing industry, however I think of it as quite the opposite. I see AI as an opportunity for people in the industry to set ourselves apart from AI-generated logos, designs, themes. I see the leverage human creativity has on AI. This is the perfect opportunity for humans to connect with our designs, our creativity, and relate to something, to appreciate something. AI isn't a threat to the industry, it's showing the strength of creatives.

I constantly scroll through social media channels, seeing businesses, companies, even public service agencies using all AI-generated content. To keep myself at peace, I quickly re-do the content in my head and think of ways I would have executed it, the human way.

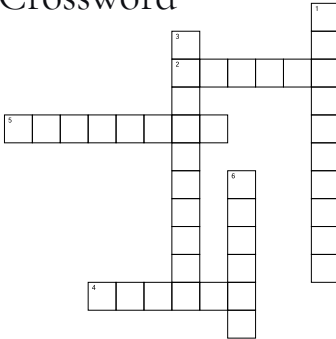
I understand AI services can be free and hiring a designer may not be realistic in some business's budget, however, I'd rather see a 'bad' Instagram ad or poster, somebody who is trying to market their business that they have a passion for, rather than AI-generated content.

Is it frustrating? Yes. Can people tell the difference between an AI-generated ad and an ad designed by a human? Also, yes.

AI isn't a threat to the marketing industry, AI is a threat to what people think of marketers and designers. AI is a threat to the respect people hold with creatives, and the countless hours spent on Adobe Illustrator, Procreate, or even with just a notebook and pencil, doing the work often alone in an office.

Katie of K8's Lab, 25, Norfolk County

Crossword



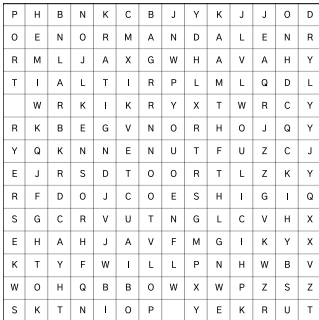
Across:

- 2. Surname of the first Physician in Norfolk (Found in "From the Archive")
- 4. In 1986 ... named Long Point a World Biosphere Reserve.
- 5. 1815 and 1825 the capital of the London District was located in the Norfolk community of...

Down:

- 1. About 25% of Norfolk is covered in... tree canopy
- 3. In 1908 the first provincial forest nursery in Canada was established in...
- 6. The largest community in Norfolk is...

Word Search



Word Bank

TURKEY POINT WATERFORD LYNEDOCH NORMANDALE
WILSONVILLE VICTORIA RENTON COURTLAND
PORT RYERSE



Slow and Steady, By Sophia Bowen

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