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(KATIE MUSSELMAN PHOTO)

Wellesley Junior Fair Ambassador contestant Riley Purdie receives the traditional "kiss for good luck" from Larry the llama while fellow contestant Madison Hernandez waits her turn during a recent farm visit. Program organizer Manni Hayer looks on in the background. Full story on page 15.

EZT to look at allowing food trucks on township recreation properties

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) Township staff are looking at the possibility of allowing food trucks and trailers on township property.

Woodstock resident Samantha Healy recently delegated to members of council, asking if she could set up an ice cream trailer at Innerkip Park for the rest of the summer.

"Our trailer would not be a permanent fixture. It would be brought to the park

each day and removed at the end of the day. I believe an ice cream trailer would be a great treat for families, children and sports teams attending the many events held at the park."

Coun. Scott Rudy asked if allowing

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Wilmot approves new official plan but not without opposition

11 delegates asking for more time as council vote not unanimous

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Wilmot Township council has passed its new official plan, which will come into effect in 2028 and will dictate growth and development in the township over the next 25 years.

The plan was approved in a 4-2 recorded vote, with councillors Lillianne Dunstall, Stewart Cressman and Steven Martin, and Mayor Natasha Salonen voting in favour and councillors Kris Wilkinson and Harvir Sidhu opposed.

Cressman initially voted against adopting the plan, but later said he had misunderstood the motion and believed he was voting on a deferral. A debate over procedure followed before council held a second recorded vote, resulting in the plan's endorsement.

A deferral motion was made by Coun. Wilkinson so staff and members of council could take a second look, but it was voted down.

A total of 11 residents spoke at Monday evening's meeting, and there was one common

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EZT to look at allowing food trucks on township recreation properties

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Healy to set up shop would open the door for others to operate on township property. The township's chief building officer explained parks are zoned recreational and are only allowed what's called a "refreshment room."

"That's why our parks are allowed to operate a little canteen," said John Scherer, the township's building manager. "If we allow them in, of course it opens it to anyone wanting to put a food truck in our parks. Each time they would have to come to council, currently, to get permission."

EZT CAO Karen DePrest cautioned against the township allowing businesses to set up on municipal properties when they compete with taxpaying operations without any permit or license.

"There is currently no charge for setting up a business in the township that is transient. And although (Healy) will not be parking overnight, she's still setting up

a business that is competing with the refreshment booth in Innerkip Park."

In an email to the Gazette, DePrest said concession booths at parks in Innerkip, Tavistock and Hickson are operated by three non-profit groups for the purposes of providing snacks and refreshments to park users as part of the "in-house" service and are included in each of the three operating agreements between the township and those organizations.

The Hickson snack bar is staffed regularly by the Hickson Lions Club, but the canteen at the Queen's Park pavilion in Tavistock has not been open regularly for years, aside from special events. The Gazette reached out to Innerkip Minor Baseball for comment but did not receive one.

Healy added there are no competing businesses in Innerkip selling ice cream.

A food truck was present at a recent fundraising event held at the community

park. DePrest said that if the food truck was invited to attend the event, the arrangement would have been made by the event organizer, not the township.

"Any special event booking which may have invited a food truck to be in attendance would not have been coordinated through or by the township at this time, but rather by the event organization," she said.

Coun. Steven Van Wyk said allowing food trucks is potentially a good idea, but added a policy is a must.

"I would like to get feedback from user groups like Innerkip Minor Ball and Tavistock Minor Ball to see what their feedback is. ... What does Woodstock do? What is the feedback from the user groups? Do we allow one spot or two spots? How do we manage this if we get 10 requests?"

Soon, there will be requirements for organizers who want to include outside food vending as part of any special event according to the council-adopted special

events policy. It comes into effect Oct. 1, and public education sessions will be held sometime in September.

"EZT staff will research the approaches of neighbouring municipalities to mobile food vendors as well as reach out to the groups who provide food and beverage options through the concessions in each of the three parks for their feedback," said DePrest.

She added council did not ask for a timeline on when a report would need to be completed, but they were supportive of the concept of food trucks in parks subject to guidelines and policy.

"With only one meeting left this summer, staff intend to bring back our research and policy recommendations to a fall meeting of council for possible implementation for the 2027 budget and operating year."

Healy hasn't purchased the trailer yet but is hoping to get the go-ahead from the township to set up next summer.

Wilmot approves new official plan but not without opposition

Continued from page 1

theme – take another look at the plan and delay its approval.

"I do believe council wants to do what's best for our community, but by putting this plan through now the way it stands is a recipe for disaster," said John Jordan from the Wilmot Civic Action Network. "We have over two years to submit this plan and get it right, so what's the rush?"

Jordan also suggested the way councilors voted on the plan could affect their chances of being re-elected in October.

"Do the right thing as I believe there is this thing called an election in three months less a day, and this issue will be a big one if it's put through in its present form. In fact, if I could be so bold to say, an elected-office ending decision for those seeking re-election."

Mark Reusser, a Wilmot farmer and vice president of the Waterloo Federation of Agriculture, raised the group's concerns about what is missing from the plan.

"The official plan does not prohibit the incineration of municipal waste on prime farmland. The premier has just suggested

that energy from waste is renewable and our official plan allows that. It does not prohibit the establishment of wind turbines on farmland."

Reusser said the township should be declaring itself an unwilling host, just like many other rural municipalities have done. He added the plan also doesn't prohibit industrial ground-mount solar panels or the establishment of an industrial mega site on farmland.

"There is no mention of protecting the moraine, little of protecting the countryside, minimal mention of a comprehensive plan to protect source water."

He added the farmers and the people of Wilmot want the most visionary, appropriate and most resilient economic official plan in Ontario.

"We ask you to take a stand. Push back. Be leaders, not followers. Support a motion to delay the vote on the draft until such time we can have the opportunity to get it right."

Mayor Natasha Salonen said this council started the official plan process and has an obligation to finish it.

"If we push this off, I agree, it would not be us doing our duty and responsibility to make a decision on a process we started and was also initiated by the province in terms of downloaded planning. I think back to when we first started on council and some of the issues we got planted on us because of indecision from prior councils."

Coun. Lillianne Dunstall defended her yes vote by mentioning the extensive public consultation involved.

"It has been more than a year in the making and has been in the public domain since August 2025. During that time, the township engaged the community, received extensive feedback, revised the document and brought it back with significant updates. I spent weeks reviewing all 215 pages, reading constituent submissions, speaking with residents, reviewing emails and following public discussion."

Dunstall added she asked the consultants where the 22 substantive changes to the water and wastewater policies came from.

"They confirmed the majority resulted from public suggestions, with additional

enhancements from technical review and lessons learned through the Wellesley official plan. That tells me the public consultation process worked. We incorporated every change we reasonably could, while recognizing that some requests simply fell outside the scope of an OP."

Coun. Kris Wilkinson said delaying its approval by a few months or until next year would provide several benefits.

"It would allow the public additional time to review a very large and complicated document. Despite a comprehensive consultation process, many residents are only now beginning to understand how these policies may affect their properties and their communities."

He added significant concerns remain around growth, infrastructure capacity, groundwater protection, agriculture and transportation.

The entire meeting is available on the township's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@WilmotTownshipChannel/ featured. The official plan still needs to be approved by the province.



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Household food insecurity rising across southwestern Ontario

Public health units call for action

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Five public health units have taken the rare step of issuing a joint news release calling for action on the growing issue of food insecurity.

Units across the region are concerned about the growing number of households struggling to afford basic needs, including food. In 2024, one in four families in southwestern Ontario experienced household food insecurity, meaning they lacked reliable access to enough food because of financial challenges. Rising housing and living costs are also forcing many to make difficult choices between paying rent and buying groceries.

Kendall Chambers is a registered dietitian at Southwestern Public Health (SWPH) and said more households are struggling with the issue, which led to coming together to raise awareness.

"We want to raise awareness of the magnitude of the problem and also on the evidence on what's really driving household food insecurity."

She explained household food insecurity is linked to poorer physical and mental health, higher risk of chronic disease and increased pressure on the health-care system. Among children and youth, it impacts concentration, memory, mood and motor skills, making it harder to succeed in school.

"Many households are relying on emergency food programs or facing impossible trade-offs, such as skipping meals. While many low- and modest-income households face challenges after covering housing and other essential costs, individuals on social assistance programs like Ontario Works often cannot afford both rent and food, even with careful spending."

Chambers added the health units want the public to have a better understanding of household food insecurity, including erasing the misconception that it comes from making bad choices or poor budgeting.

"When we look at the evidence, it's really about income. Hopefully raising that awareness in the community can inform conversations amongst the general public, but also with decision makers and organizations that can provide intervention."

The health unit's role is to monitor and assess population health by collecting data and communicating it to its partners, something Chambers said can help inform

decision making at the municipal government level.

"Community partners can also take that data and use it in their own interventions of what they are looking at doing with their programs and services."

Kendall and her team also collect data on the Nutritious Food Basket, a survey on the cost of food which is compared to Ontario income information along with rent costs.

"We put that into a table to show how different households may be able to afford or have more difficulty affording basic needs, including food and housing, transportation and child care. We do that every year and share it with our community partners."

The health unit is encouraging residents to learn how income affects access to food, discuss income-based solutions with local elected officials and support community organizations while recognizing that food programs alone cannot address food insecurity.

Kendall added they are also available to support any business or organization in implementing a living wage.

"It can also be providing local tax clinics and different programs and services that can reduce the cost of living. We also may want to talk about having system navigators who can provide some of that support for community members."

The five health units are calling for higher social assistance rates, including Ontario Works, improved income supports for low- and modest-income households, and policies to reduce housing costs and other essential living expenses.

In 2024, data showed a single adult receiving Ontario Works in southwestern Ontario cannot afford both food and rent, facing a monthly deficit ranging from \$301 to \$859. Many other households with low and modest incomes face similar challenges, with little or no income remaining after covering rent and other essential expenses such as transportation, utilities, child care, clothing and medications.

"More people across our region are being forced to make difficult choices about which basic needs they can afford – and too often, food is one of the first things cut," said SWPH medical officer of health Dr. Ninh Tran. "That has real consequences for physical and mental health. Addressing household food insecurity means ensuring people have enough income to meet their basic needs."

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Public divided over proposed Puddicombe House expansion, apartment development

GALEN SIMMONS
Regional Editor

Supporters say a proposed six-storey redevelopment of New Hamburg's former Felt Boot Factory would breathe new life into a landmark building and strengthen the downtown, while opponents worry the project will worsen parking shortages and change the character of the community.

Wilmot council hosted a public meeting July 27 on a zoning amendment application that would allow Puddicombe House owners Lyle and Karen Cressman to redevelop the former factory at 148-166 Peel St. into a mixed-use building featuring a spa, café and salon on the ground floor and 49 apartment units above. The proposal would retain the three-storey heritage building along Peel Street while adding a stepped four- and six-storey addition at the rear facing Wilmot Street.

Speaking on behalf of the applicants, SRM Architects + Urban Design managing partner Marc Villemaire said the project is intended to preserve the building's heritage while creating new housing and commercial opportunities downtown.

"This is not a single-purpose apartment block," Villemaire said. "It is a mixed-use downtown project that keeps the activity

level and adds residential use in the location intended for support of a walkable core."

He said the taller portion of the building has been pushed toward the rear of the property to reduce its impact on Peel Street.

"The three-storey heritage building remains the primary face to Peel Street and the taller portion is set back so that the height's less dominant," he said.

The proposal requires zoning amendments to increase the maximum building height from four to six storeys, reduce rear-yard setbacks, increase lot coverage and reduce the required residential parking from 74 spaces to 49. The applicants say additional commercial parking would be accommodated on adjacent properties they own as well as existing municipal parking lots.

New Hamburg historian Marie Voisin urged council to support the project, saying redeveloping the former factory reflects how the community has evolved.

"The factories do not belong in the middle of town anymore," Voisin said. "We need to rejuvenate the downtown and that will only happen with more people living downtown and supporting all our businesses."

Voisin also suggested parking concerns may be overstated, noting several residents in another downtown apartment building owned by Marie and her husband, Greg Voisin, have given up their vehicles as they aged.

Baden resident Barry Wolfe also backed the proposal, arguing it would broaden the township's tax base and generate development charges while preserving a historic building.

"I see this as a good money thing," Wolfe said. "I've been delegating here many times about the need to transfer our tax base from residential agricultural ... to commercial industrial."

Opponents, however, focused almost entirely on parking.

New Hamburg resident Aimee Alabaster said she supports revitalizing heritage buildings but believes the proposal is too large for the site.

"I love the idea of the project, but I think it's bigger than the land or the parcel can support," she said.

Alabaster questioned reducing the parking requirement to one space per unit, arguing younger residents are likely to own vehicles and warning the development could overflow into municipal parking lots and neighbouring businesses.

Other residents echoed those concerns, raising questions about downtown parking shortages, snow storage, flooding, future severance of the properties and whether existing parking studies accurately reflect current conditions.

Senior development planner Cameron Miller said staff reviewed the applicant's parking analysis and are satisfied the proposal provides sufficient parking while noting the former industrial site itself historically operated with far fewer parking spaces than would have been required today.

Council did not debate the merits of the application, though several councillors expressed support for continued private investment in the downtown.

Coun. Kris Wilkinson said the project represents "a pretty good compromise," adding it preserves an important heritage building while creating housing and encouraging further business growth.

Following the public meeting, council unanimously received the report for information. Staff will review the comments received before returning with a recommendation on the zoning application at a future meeting.



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New bridge celebrates power of community in Harrington

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

After nearly four years of fundraising, planning and navigating approvals, the Harrington and Area Community Association is inviting local communities to celebrate the completion of a new bridge over the pond along the trail at Harrington Conservation Area.

The bridge officially reconnects the six-kilometre trail loop around the Mill Pond. Before the bridge, hikers would need to walk around the pond or through the water.

The family-friendly celebration will take place Saturday, Aug. 8, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Harrington Conservation Area, 963656 Elizabeth St., Harrington.

The event includes a tour of the restored grist mill, a bridge ceremony, live music, a magic show, a food truck, a historical bridge display and other activities.

While the celebration marks the completion of the bridge, association member Michael Kukhta said the project represents much more than that. It reflects years of determination and the willingness of a small community to work together toward a common goal.

"We haven't had a bridge for about, I'm going to say, maybe four years, and through various trials, it's always ... hard to get one of these things done because of the different people involved."

The Harrington and Area Community Association has managed the conservation area since the early 2000s, raising funds to

maintain and improve the site for visitors. Replacing the bridge became one of its biggest projects after the previous crossing was removed.

Before the new bridge was installed, visitors relied on a makeshift concrete slab. Once that was removed, they either had to walk through the water or detour around the pond, making it impossible to complete the trail loop.

"For years, we had no bridge, so everyone had to walk to one side and then walk back the other and not be able to complete the loop," said Kukhta. "That's pretty frustrating; when you have a pond, you want to be able to walk over it. You can walk through the water if you want, balance on the rocks if you're up for it, but your bound to get wet."

Kukhta said bringing the project to life required support beyond Harrington itself. Throughout the process, the association built new working relationships with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Township of Zorra, which helped navigate administrative requirements and approvals.

He said those partnerships became just as meaningful as the bridge itself.

"Through all the bureaucracy, we followed the tedious processes and we got a beautiful bridge, and we're happy to celebrate that and build bridges, but not just physically, but with people and with the community and outside the community

who helped."

Though Harrington is home to only about 150 residents, Kukhta said the project demonstrates what a small community can accomplish when people work together.

"We often feel left out," said Kukhta. "You know, we're a small cluster of about 150 people up in the north end of nowhere. For our shopping or getting out, we often go to Tavistock, Stratford, or St. Marys and to host an event like this, we really needed to scrimp and save, but we want to showcase our community. It's something we are all very proud of."

"There is a pride, maybe even a stubborn pride in what we accomplished and what we were able to pull off, and we want to showcase that."

The Harrington Conservation Area has long been a gathering place for the community. Interest in preserving the site dates back to 1948, and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority purchased the dam and pond in 1952 before later acquiring the historic grist mill in 1966. The mill, rebuilt after a 1923 fire, remains one of the few surviving water-powered grist mills in western Ontario.

For the association, the new bridge is the latest chapter in that history – one built not only with steel and timber, but through years of community support, fundraising and volunteer effort.



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Harrington will celebrate the completion of the new bridge located at the Harrington Conservation Area on Aug. 8. All are welcome to come out to explore all Harrington has to offer.

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Alzheimer Society session to help families navigate dementia and driving

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For many people living with dementia, giving up the keys can be one of the most difficult transitions they face. An upcoming education session hosted by the Alzheimer Society Perth Huron aims to make that conversation easier.

The society, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, will host a Dementia and Driving education session Aug. 18 at 1:30 p.m. The session will be offered in a hybrid format, allowing participants to attend in person at the society's Stratford office or virtually through Zoom.

Jessica Lawson, public education coordinator with the Alzheimer Society Perth

Huron, said the session was created after she noticed more people in the community struggling to understand how cognitive changes associated with dementia can affect driving.

"Driving is one of the most common things we do in the community. It's how we get from here to there," Lawson said. "It's not to tell someone they can't drive. We're not telling people when to give up their licence. It's more about that education piece and that support and how to have those conversations."

The session is open to people living with dementia, family members and care partners, health-care providers, friends and anyone interested in learning more about the topic.

Lawson said driving depends on a range

of cognitive abilities, including memory, judgment, attention, problem solving, reaction time and visual-spatial skills. Because dementia affects everyone differently, there is no single point at which a person should stop driving.

"There isn't one single sign that tells us it's time for someone to stop driving," she said. "It really differs from person to person and overall functioning."

However, she said warning signs can include getting lost on familiar routes, becoming confused behind the wheel, slower reaction times, difficulty making decisions at intersections or roundabouts, unexplained dents or scrapes on a vehicle, or increasing concern from family members.

Beyond explaining how dementia can affect driving, the session will outline

the Ministry of Transportation's medical review process and connect participants with community transportation options available when driving is no longer safe.

"If someone loses the ability to drive, that is a huge loss of independence," Lawson said. "Just because you lost your driving ability doesn't mean that you can't still get from A to B."

Ultimately, Lawson hopes the session encourages people to start talking about driving before it becomes a crisis.

"When we talk about it early, approach it with compassion and understand the resources available, we can help people living with dementia and their families navigate these decisions with confidence and dignity," she said.

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Still time to vote for your favourite pet

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

More than 100 local pet lovers and their animal companions are taking part in the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth's annual online Calendar Photo Contest, raising funds to support animals in need throughout the region.

The fundraiser, which runs throughout July, invites participants to submit a photo of their pet along with a short biography before campaigning for votes from family and friends. Every vote helps raise money to provide shelter, medical care, supplies and adoption services for local animals.

As the Humane Society prepares to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2027, the organization continues to experience growing demand for its animal care services, community outreach programs and initiatives that help keep pets and families together.

There is still time to enter your pet or cast your vote before the contest closes on Friday, July 31. The \$10 entry fee and \$1 votes all go directly to the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth, helping provide care and support for animals in need.

The top eight dogs, three cats and one other animal will earn a featured spot in the Humane Society's 2027 calendar. Each winner will also receive a professional pet photo session with local award-winning studio Victor Rose Photography.

"The contest has already raised more

than \$17,000," said Breanna Langan, marketing and communications coordinator with the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth. "Every vote is more than a vote for a pet. It's support for local animals who need shelter, medical care and a second chance."

Langan said the contest has become a fun way for the community to support an important cause while celebrating the special bond people share with their pets.

"It's incredible to see the community engage in a friendly competition and rally behind their pets in support of this work," she said.

Many of this year's contestants have inspiring stories of their own. Several of the pets competing were once residents of the Humane Society's shelters before being adopted into loving homes. They are now enjoying the spotlight as calendar hopefuls while helping raise funds for animals still waiting for their forever families.

Last year's contest attracted just over 100 entries and raised more than \$31,000. The top fundraising pets collected between \$1,000 and \$3,000 each to secure their place in the 2026 calendar. Organizers hope to surpass that total this year as supporters continue encouraging votes through social media and community fundraising efforts.

The 2027 calendar will also serve as a special keepsake marking the Humane Society's centennial year. Calendar pre-orders are available through the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth's website following the contest.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Louis the rabbit, Roxy the cat, Miller the dog and Nesta the hedgehog are among this year's adorable pets competing for a spot in the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth's 2027 Pet Calendar. Visit kwsphumane.ca to see all of this year's hopefuls, vote for your favourite and help raise funds to support animals in need.



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Wilmot looks to spur brownfield redevelopment with new incentive program

GALEN SIMMONS

Gazette Correspondent

Wilmot Township is moving ahead with a proposed Community Improvement Plan (CIP) designed to encourage the cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated commercial and industrial properties by sharing a portion of the future property-tax revenue generated by those projects.

During a public meeting July 27, township staff outlined the proposed Brownfield Remediation Community Improvement Plan, which would establish the entire township as a community improvement project area and introduce a Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) program.

Under the proposed program, eligible property owners would receive annual grants equal to a portion of the increase in municipal property taxes generated after a brownfield site is redeveloped. Rather than providing money upfront, the grants would be paid over a period of up to 10 years and could not exceed the eligible

cost of environmental remediation.

Senior policy planner Rachel Greene said the goal is to help offset the significant costs associated with cleaning contaminated sites, making redevelopment more financially viable.

"The goal is to encourage investment in underutilized properties and help level the playing field compared to greenfield or non-contaminated sites," Greene told council.

Staff are also exploring a joint program with the Region of Waterloo, which already operates similar programs with Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. Greene said regional participation could significantly increase the incentive because regional taxes account for roughly 60 per cent of a property's tax bill.

Coun. Stewart Cressman asked whether the program could apply to properties that had already been remediated but not yet redeveloped, citing the former creamery site in New Dundee as an example.

Greene said the proposed township program does not include a timeline restricting eligibility.

"I know there are some opportunities that sites may have been remediated already and those potentially would be eligible to apply for this program if they haven't been redeveloped yet," she said.

Coun. Lillianne Dunstall asked whether the program would primarily support infill development.

Greene agreed that would generally be the case but noted the proposed CIP would apply across the entire township, allowing contaminated sites in rural settlement areas to qualify as well.

Coun. Kris Wilkinson said he had been looking for a simple way to explain the program to residents.

"It's not that we're giving up funds. We're not writing a cheque today, but we're promising to share some of the future increase in property taxes from a cleaned-up contaminated site so that it will essentially

encourage or incentivize owners or developers to redevelop brownfield properties," Wilkinson said.

Greene agreed, noting the township would not receive those increased tax revenues if the sites remained vacant or underutilized.

"If the property weren't redeveloped, the township wouldn't be seeing those increase in taxes anyways," she said. "Once that time period is over, the township will begin collecting at the new assessment rate."

No members of the public spoke during the public meeting.

Staff will now consider any feedback received before returning to council with a final Community Improvement Plan for approval at a future meeting. The proposed program is intended to support private investment, increase the township's long-term assessment base and encourage redevelopment of contaminated sites that might otherwise remain vacant.

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Pic-Nic in the Park returns for another successful afternoon in Tavistock

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Music, dancing, good food and plenty of fellowship once again brought the community together for the second annual Pic-Nic in the Park at the Queen's Park Pavilion in Tavistock.

Held on a beautiful Thursday afternoon last week, the event was organized by Don and Connie Junker and attracted residents, families and friends for an afternoon of entertainment and socializing.

Guests enjoyed lunch prepared by Sheri Bell and the staff from Tavi-Chill Ice Cream and Deli Bar before taking to the dance floor as live music filled the pavilion.

Entertainment was provided by the dynamic duo, Dianne and Gary, formerly of the Country Cavaliers, along with local

fiddler Steve Todd.

The trio kept the crowd entertained with a selection of classic country favourites that had many audience members singing along and dancing throughout the afternoon.

Organizer Don Junker said one of his favourite parts of the event is seeing families, friends and neighbours spending time together.

"I really like seeing families coming together, along with many friends and relatives, having a relaxing time socializing," Junker said.

Residents from The Maples and PeopleCare Tavistock also attended the event and joined in the festivities.

Lunch was capped off with Kawartha Dairy ice cream for dessert, helping make the afternoon another memorable community gathering.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Gary performs on keyboard alongside Dianne on guitar and local musician Steve Todd, whose energetic fiddle playing kept the crowd dancing throughout the afternoon at Tavistock's second annual Pic-Nic in the Park.



Guests of all ages filled the dance floor during Pic-Nic in the Park, enjoying an afternoon of music, dancing and exercise while looking forward to next year's event.



Helping serve lunch at the second annual Pic-Nic in the Park are, from left, Olivia Atwell, Savannah Adair, Ashlyn Witt, Sheri Bell, Charlee Harvey and organizers Don and Connie Junker. Guests also enjoyed Kawartha Dairy ice cream for dessert.



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Fur-Ever Ink'd fundraiser supports local shelter animals

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

Long before the doors opened, tattoo enthusiasts were already lined up around the Hampton Inn in Waterloo, all eager to support a unique fundraiser for local shelter animals.

The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth hosted its second annual Fur-Ever Ink'd fundraiser on Saturday, July 25, bringing together tattoo artists, henna artists, volunteers and local businesses for a day that combined creativity with compassion.

Building on the success of last year's event at the Humane Society's Stratford Animal Centre, this year's fundraiser expanded significantly. Nine tattoo artists representing several local studios, along with four henna artists, donated their time and talents, with 100 per cent of the proceeds supporting shelter operations and animal care.

Participating tattoo artists represented The Exotic Skin Shop, Gauntlet Tattoo, True Ink Tattoo & Piercing Studio, Vendetta Studio and Ryan H Tattoo. Henna artists included Naseera Farhan, Laiba Qadeer and the artists Aamnah and Mahrukh of Mendhibyam Henna.

Among the community partners supporting the fundraiser were Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton Waterloo St. Jacobs, Bingemans Grand Experiences, Eikon and Softhours Photo Booth.

Pio and Geneve Salipot of Softhours donated their photo booth services for the event. The couple, who adopted their two-year-old cat, Bon Bon, from the Humane Society, were pleased to give back to an organization that helped bring their pet into their family.

The event operated on a first-come, first-served basis. Guests registered with their preferred artist upon arrival and were free to enjoy the day's activities while they waited. Volunteers contacted participants by phone when they were next in line,



(DIANE DANEN PHOTOS)

Dena and Chris Bellini volunteered at the Fur-Ever Ink'd fundraiser, welcoming guests at the door. The couple has been volunteering with the Humane Society and fostering cats for the past three years.

allowing them time to visit the nearby St. Jacobs Farmers' Market, enjoy lunch at the hotel's B55 Bar & Grill, stop by the pop-up snack bar or take photos in the complimentary photo booth.

Artists offered a selection of pre-designed flash tattoos for \$125 each, while henna designs ranged from \$10 to \$30. Flash tattoo designs were posted online before the event, allowing participants to browse and choose their favourites in advance.

The event ran smoothly thanks to dozens of volunteers who helped coordinate registrations and artist schedules throughout the day.

Dena and Chris Bellini volunteered to greet guests at the Fur-Ever Ink'd fundraiser, an event that aligns closely with their passion for helping animals. The couple

began fostering cats through the Humane Society about three years ago after looking for a way to give back. With a love for animals and three cats of their own, Chris suggested fostering as a meaningful way to help pets in need.

Their first foster was Nemo, a 10-month-old, three-legged cat. The experience was so rewarding that they continued fostering and have since welcomed 10 cats into their home, including their oldest foster, Figgy, a 17-year-old cat.

"We just want them to live their best life," said Dena Bellini.

"Some of these animals may have been neglected or abused, and we just want them to know that humans can be good," added Chris Bellini.

With the overwhelming response to this year's event, organizers hope to continue

hosting Fur-Ever Ink'd annually in both Waterloo Region and Stratford, giving even more people the opportunity to support local shelter animals while celebrating the work of talented local tattoo artists.

Last year's Fur-Ever Ink'd raised approximately \$5,000. With the event nearly doubling in size this year, organizers hoped to surpass \$10,000 and, based on the steady stream of participants throughout the day, they were optimistic they would reach that goal.

"The funds raised will go directly toward shelter operations and the care of animals," said Breanna Langan, coordinator of marketing and communications for the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth. "They help provide food and supplies, medical care, adoption services, foster care coordination and enrichment to ensure the animals are healthy, happy and ready to find their forever homes."

Langan said approximately 27 animals have already found new homes through the Stratford centre this year, demonstrating both the success of the shelter's adoption efforts and the ongoing need for community support.

She believes the partnership between tattoo artists and animal welfare organizations is a natural fit.

"There is definitely a crossover between animal lovers and tattoo artists," she said. "There's a level of empathy that comes with being creative, and many tattoo artists are passionate animal lovers. It's wonderful to see so many artists willing to donate their time to support a cause like this."

"We're so happy this event has tapped into a unique interest shared by so many people. It's incredible to see local artists and the community come together to support local animals. Every dollar raised directly translates into second to chances for animals in our care."

To make a donation, call 519-745-5615 or visit the <https://kwsphumane.ca>



Geneve and Pio Salipot of Softhours Photo Booth volunteered their time and donated their photo booth services to help capture lasting memories for attendees at the Fur-Ever Ink'd fundraiser.



Rebecca Neill of Kitchener receives a henna design from artist Laiba Qadeer during the Fur-Ever Ink'd fundraiser.



Members of The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth Team from left to right include Jillian Andress, foster coordinator in Stratford Perth, Breanna Langan, coordinator of marketing and communications, Diana Lazano, foster coordinator in Kitchener-Waterloo, and Rachael Kuntz, coordinator of events and fundraising.

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Perth County farmers reel in memorable day on Lake Ontario

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A group of Perth County farmers traded tractors for fishing rods last week, enjoying another successful day on Lake Ontario as part of a tradition that has spanned more than four decades.

The annual charter trip departed from Port Credit before sunrise, with eight farmers from across Perth County joining the captain and first mate for a day of Chinook salmon fishing.

The tradition began more than 40 years ago when dairy farmers Dave Wideman of the Atwood area and Glen Standeaven, north of St. Marys, decided farmers deserved a day away from the demands of the farm each July to relax, catch up with friends and enjoy some fishing.

With an early 6 a.m. start, the group headed into the deeper waters of Lake Ontario in search of salmon.

As the old saying goes, "An average day of fishing is always better than a great day of work."

The fish were biting early as the charter reached warmer water where baitfish were plentiful. The first Chinook salmon tipped the scales at about eight pounds before another, weighing more than 18 pounds, was landed shortly afterward.

By the end of the morning, seven impressive Chinook salmon filled the boat's cooler.

First-time Lake Ontario angler Hans



Holstein breeder Geoff McMullen displays the approximately 25-pound Chinook salmon he caught during his first Lake Ontario fishing trip. Fellow first-time angler Hans Weber also landed one of the day's biggest fish, proving beginners can enjoy plenty of success on the water.

Weber, owner of Stonetown Artisan Cheese near Rannoch, battled the largest fish of the day for more than 20 minutes before landing a Chinook salmon weighing nearly 28 pounds.

The catch was officially weighed as part of an ongoing salmon derby and finished 11th overall for the week, earning Weber a



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Enjoying another successful annual Lake Ontario fishing trip are, from left, Scott Dolson, Dave Standeaven, Dave Wideman (back), Hans Weber, Hans Pfister, Steve Dolson (back), Gary West and Geoff McMullen. Weber landed the largest Chinook salmon of the day, weighing nearly 28 pounds.

\$200 cash prize and a \$300 gift certificate from Custom Fishing Solutions.

Weber may call it beginner's luck, but the rest of the group knew it also took patience, determination and plenty of strength to land such an impressive fish.

Another first-time Lake Ontario angler, Holstein breeder Geoff McMullen, also enjoyed success, reeling in a Chinook salmon weighing about 25 pounds.

The outing once again proved that experience isn't everything when it comes to salmon fishing.



Region of Waterloo

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NOTICE OF STUDY COMMENCEMENT

Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 17 intersection improvements - East Zorra-Tavistock and Woodstock

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study

About this project

Oxford County has initiated a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for the Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 17 intersection to consider a wide range of alternatives for improving the functionality and safety of the intersection.

The 2024 Transportation Master Plan study recommended the implementation of upgrades and improvements to this intersection to accommodate anticipated traffic growth over the next 25 years.

The purpose of this study is to:

- Identify and evaluate alternatives to improve the Oxford Road 4 and Oxford Road 17 intersection, including consideration for nearby CPKC railway crossing to the south and Oxford Road 4 / Oxford Road 60 intersection to the north;
- Select a preferred solution and evaluate a preferred design concept;
- Complete and document the Class EA Study in accordance with municipal and Ontario Ministry of Transportation provincial documents;
- Engage interested parties and the public; and,
- Meet the County's vision "to provide a safe, efficient and sustainable multi-model transportation network."

Study process

This notice signals the commencement of this Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study which will define the project; identify and evaluate alternative solutions; and determine a preferred alternative solution in consultation with the public, Indigenous communities and regulatory agencies. Any potential impacts of alternative solutions on social, cultural, economic and natural environments will be evaluated and assessed during the Class EA Study.

This project is being completed as a Schedule "C" project in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process.

Upon completion of this study, a Project File Report documenting the process will be submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation, and Parks and made available for public review for a period of 30 calendar days.

Public consultation

Public, Indigenous, and agency consultation is a key component of the Class EA process and will be sought throughout the study. Project information, study documents and updates are available on the project website on Speak Up, Oxford! at www.oxfordcounty.ca/speakup.

If you would like to be placed on the mailing list to receive notices and information, or if you wish to provide comments at any time during the Class EA Study process, you can do so through the project contacts.

A Public Information Centre (PIC) to present preliminary study findings is anticipated to be held in the fall of 2026.

All comments received through the course of the study will be considered and documented in the Environmental Study Report as part of the public record.



Project contact

Noah Brister, P. Eng.
Project Engineer,
Oxford County
519-539-9800 ext. 3107
nbrister@oxfordcounty.ca

Vince Pugliese, P.Eng., MBA, PMP
Project Manager,
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519-743-6500
vpugliese@mte85.com

Information will be collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

Special music and inspiring message highlight Grace United Church service

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Special music and an inspiring message combined to make Sunday's worship service at Grace United Church a memorable one for the congregation gathered in Zion Hall.

With the hall filled to capacity, the service featured a musical performance by choir member Jillian Chesney, who accompanied herself on acoustic guitar while Marilyne Nystrom provided piano accompaniment on an instrument donated to the church by members of Hickson United Church.

Rev. Marilyn Arthur's message drew on scenes from the film, *The Blind Side*, encouraging

members of the congregation to reach out to those in the community who may need friendship, encouragement and support.

The sermon reflected on the true story of Michael Oher, whose life was changed after he was welcomed into the Tuohy family. Arthur connected the story to the day's scripture, emphasizing the difference a caring family and supportive community can make in someone's life.

Chesney, who was born in Innerkip, is an accomplished musician and music therapist. She attended Innerkip Public School and Huron Park Secondary School before earning a music degree at McMaster University. She later studied community music at Wilfrid

Laurier University and completed a master's degree in Laurier's music therapy program.

In addition to singing, Chesney plays guitar, ukulele, piano and a variety of hand percussion instruments. She now works as a music therapist with Connections in Music Therapy, based in London.

The 28-year-old is the daughter of Kathleen Hilderly-Chesney of Innerkip and the late Paul Chesney.

Nystrom, the church's music director, said Chesney is a valued member of the church choir.

"It is a real joy to have Jillian in the church choir, who brings her musical abilities to a very talented choir ensemble every Sunday," Nystrom said.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

From left are Grace United Church music director Marilyne Nystrom, choir member Jillian Chesney and Rev. Marilyn Arthur during Sunday's worship service in Tavistock. Chesney provided special music while Arthur's message drew on themes from *The Blind Side* to encourage compassion and support for others in the community.

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STRATFORD NISSAN



U-Turn Ranch builds faith, friendships and lasting memories

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

What began 21 years ago with just 30 campers has grown into a thriving summer camp that will welcome approximately 1,400 campers during the 2026 season.

Founded by Scott and Jodie Zehr, U-Turn Ranch, located just west of Tavistock, was built on a vision of creating a place where young people could experience farm life, build meaningful friendships, strengthen their faith and enjoy the outdoors in a beautiful rural setting. More than two decades later, that vision remains at the heart of the U-Turn Ranch experience.

Campers enjoy a wide variety of activities, including horseback riding, vaulting, fishing, canoeing, archery, swimming, nature programs, team games, campfires and theme meals. They also spend time caring for and interacting with the ranch's animals while learning about their faith through daily devotions and talks held under the camp's iconic big tree.

One tradition that has stood the test of time is the camp's popular staff games, Titanium and Schmuk the Staff. The games have been a highlight of every summer at U-Turn Ranch, entertaining campers for all 21 seasons. The camp's iconic pizza buns have become a tasty tradition for campers as well.

"By the end of the summer, we'll have made close to 7,500 pizza buns," said camp director Jodie Zehr.

Each season, the camp is run by a dedicated team of about 40 staff members. This year, six international staff members have joined the team, including four from Ireland, one from Scotland and one from Finland.

This summer also saw the largest



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

This summer, six international staff members joined the U-Turn Ranch team, including four from Ireland, one from Scotland and one from Finland. Pictured are Inkeri, Orlaith, Martin, Bella, Kai and Aoife.

Leadership in Development (LID) program in the camp's history, with 11 youth spending two weeks learning about leadership, teamwork and personal growth while helping with camp activities.

Several long-serving staff members continue to play an important role in the camp's success.

Program director Sandy Martin is celebrating her 10th summer at U-Turn Ranch. A licensed horseback riding coach and mother of three, Martin first joined the camp as horsemanship director before taking on her current leadership role.

Camp nurse Lorraine Penner is marking her 21st summer at U-Turn Ranch. Penner, who is Jodie Zehr's aunt, travels from Manitoba each year and spends the

summer caring for campers and staff.

Several new additions to the site have enhanced the camp experience this season. Campers are enjoying a new hammock village as well as a new multi-sport playing surface for basketball, volleyball, pickleball and floor hockey. On weekends, the ranch's new pavilion has also become a popular venue and will host nine weddings throughout the season.

The ranch has also expanded its family of animals. Campers are getting to know two donkeys, Faith and Fig, three goats,

Brez, Bubbles and Butter, and two pot-bellied pigs, Waylon and Willy, in addition to the ranch's herd of 16 horses.

The most welcome addition to U-Turn Ranch this season has been the youngest ranch hand of all. Scott and Jodie Zehr welcomed their first grandchild this summer, and at just six weeks old, the newest member of the U-Turn family has already become a familiar face, making daily appearances around camp.

For more information about U-Turn Ranch, visit www.eturnranch.com.

Majestic sky over New Hamburg farmland



(MIKE GRUMMETT PHOTO)

The sun pokes through the cloud cover over a patch of New Hamburg farmland recently.



Members of the U-Turn Ranch team gather in front of the camp's outdoor pizza oven. Pictured are U-Turn Ranch founders and directors Jodie and Scott Zehr, camp nurse Lorraine Penner, Delaney Sparling holding baby Copeland and program director Sandy Martin. More than 7,500 of the camp's signature pizza buns will be baked in the outdoor oven over the course of the summer.

Wellesley Junior Fair Ambassador contestants visit local farm

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Contestants in this year's Wellesley Junior Fair Ambassador program recently enjoyed a behind-the-scenes visit to a local farm as they prepare to represent the Wellesley Fall Fair.

Six of the program's nine contestants toured Laurie and Katie Musselman's farm on Carmel-Koch Road, where they had the opportunity to interact with a variety of animals, including donkeys, llamas, ducks, chickens, sheep, goats and two exotic pigs.

The farm tour is one of several activities designed to introduce participants to agriculture while helping them build confidence and prepare for their ambassador roles.

Program organizer Manni Hayer, herself a former Wellesley Junior Fair Ambassador, said she is excited by the enthusiasm shown by this year's group of contestants.

The Junior Fair Ambassador program gives young participants the opportunity to learn more about agriculture, develop leadership skills and become ambassadors for the Wellesley Fall Fair and the local community.

This year's Junior Fair Ambassador will be selected during the Wellesley Fall Fair, which takes place Aug. 29 and 30. The successful candidate will serve alongside the fair's senior ambassador, who will also be chosen during the fair.



(KATIE MUSSELMAN PHOTO)

Wellesley Junior Fair Ambassador contestants, from left, Braelyn Bonnick, Coraline Byerley, Riley Purdie, Madison Hernandez, program organizer Manni Hayer, Aaron Wiles and Madison King visit Laurie and Katie Musselman's farm on Carmel-Koch Road, where they met a donkey and a llama during a recent tour. Missing from the photo are contestants Zaid Alqiaisi, Claire Manuel and Isabella Barker.

A welcome garden visitor



(ALICE RICE PHOTO)

This closeup of a most welcome garden visitor, a red admiral honeybee, was captured by Alice Rice amongst her echinacea flowers in New Hamburg recently.



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MLS#X12881428 • NEW PRICE \$389,900



Enjoy comfortable year-round living at Happy Hills Retirement Resort, the perfect place to downsize or retire. This welcoming community offers full access to seasonal campground amenities, including the pool, ideal for visiting grandchildren.

The home features 2 or 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, a spacious eat-in kitchen, ensuite laundry, a newer furnace, a backyard deck, and an insulated enclosed gazebo. Whether you enjoy an active social lifestyle or peaceful living, this home has it all. Come to the open house or book your viewing today!

SATURDAY, AUG. 1 • 1:00-3:00 PM
122 HALLIDAY DRIVE, TAVISTOCK
MLS#X13586258 • PRICE \$774,900



NEW LISTING - Skip the wait to build with this beautifully upgraded, one-owner home in Tavistock. Conveniently located near Kitchener-Waterloo, Stratford, Woodstock, and London, this move-in-ready two-storey home offers an open-concept layout with a quartz kitchen,

3 bedrooms, 2.5 updated baths, and a primary suite with a custom walk-in closet. Relax in the private backyard with no rear neighbours, backing onto green space and farmland with beautiful sunset views. An insulated heated garage, unspoiled basement with a rough in bath, and a quiet family-friendly neighbourhood complete this exceptional home. Come to the open house or book your viewing today!

SUNDAY, AUG. 2 • 1:00-3:00 PM • 123 ASH STREET, CRYSTAL LAKE, STRATFORD
MLS#X13094772 • PRICE \$199,900



Why put off viewing this home any longer? If you are tired of renting and are looking for a fixer upper and want to own your own home, this might be just what you have been looking for. Located minutes from Stratford this home offers one bedroom with potential for a 2nd bedroom, ensuite laundry, natural gas heat, detached garage great for parking in for the winter and if you need lots of parking spaces this home has a long double paved driveway and if you want a big yard this home has a large yard and backs on to trees. Why wait any longer be sure to view this home and try an offer, immediate possession is available.

ALSO AVAILABLE



23 GALT ROAD, STRATFORD
MLS#X13444386 PRICE \$549,900
This 3 Bedroom Semi-Detached Home is located within walking distance to both the public and high school. Features include: 1.5 baths, 3 bedrooms, living room with a walk out to a deck and fully fenced rear yard, a finished family room in the basement, single attached garage and so much more. Call today to book your viewing.



3968 WILSON STREET SHAKESPEARE
MLS#X13410370
NEW PRICE - \$874,900
4 + 1 Bedroom Two-Storey Home Located in a Desirable Neighbourhood - Offering plenty of space for your growing family, this home features 2 full baths, 2 half baths, and room for everyone. Call today to book your viewing.



380 WOODSTOCK ST. S. TAVISTOCK UNIT#7
MLS#X13146428 • PRICE \$9.00/SQ FT
Prime Retail or Commercial Space Available for Lease - Located in a high-traffic area, this 5,200-square-foot space offers endless potential for a variety of retail or commercial uses. Call today for more information or to book a viewing. Immediate possession available.



34 SOMERSET ST. STRATFORD
MLS#X13094790 • PRICE \$549,900
This 2-3 bedroom home is located in a desirable neighbourhood and has tons of updates. New renos include: updated kitchen with new appliances, flooring, gas fireplace in the living, new upper bathroom with upper floor laundry, partially finished basement with family room and 2 pc bath, updated wiring and plumbing, new roof April 2026 and updated stucco.



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Wellesley Township honours Citizen of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Award recipients

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Wellesley Township has recognized two longtime volunteers whose decades of service have made a lasting impact on their communities.

Pearl Frey of Hawkesville has been named the township's 2026 Citizen of the Year in recognition of her outstanding commitment to volunteerism and community service.

A Hawkesville resident for nearly 30 years, Frey has served on the Hawkesville Recreation Services Committee for 28 years, including terms as chair and long-time treasurer. She is also well known for maintaining the village's community email list, helping residents stay informed and connected.

Beyond Hawkesville, Frey volunteers her time planning and supporting events throughout Wellesley Township while balancing family life and operating a local business.

She credits her husband and family for supporting her volunteer efforts over the years.

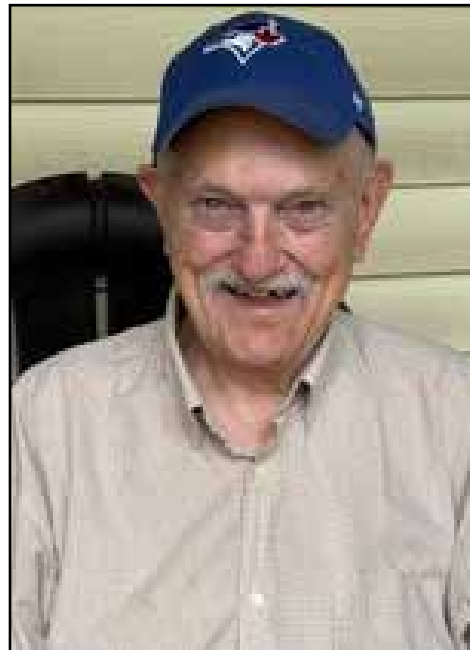
The township recognized Frey's kindness, generosity and dedication to strengthening community connections, noting she exemplifies the spirit of the Citizen of the Year award.



Pearl Frey of Hawkesville has been named Wellesley Township's 2026 Citizen of the Year in recognition of nearly three decades of volunteer service and community leadership.

The township also announced Jerry Sherrer of Linwood as the recipient of its 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award.

A lifelong Linwood resident, Sherrer was recognized for a lifetime of leadership,



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Jerry Sherrer of Linwood is the recipient of Wellesley Township's 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing decades of volunteerism and leadership throughout the community.

volunteerism and community service spanning several decades.

Now 85, he remains an active volunteer and continues to give back through a variety of organizations.

Sherrer has been a dedicated member of the Linwood Lions Club for many years, where he currently serves as secretary. Throughout his time with the club, he has held numerous leadership positions and helped organize fundraising initiatives benefiting Linwood and neighbouring communities.

He was recently recognized by Lions Clubs International for his efforts recruiting and sponsoring new members, helping ensure the organization's continued growth.

Sherrer has also played a key role in organizing Linwood Snofest, including its popular Solo tournament, horse races and Golden Ticket Dance.

Drawing on a career in banking, he has continued to serve the community through volunteer work with Community Care Concepts for Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot, helping support services that allow seniors to remain independent in their own homes.

He also volunteers as a driver for the Wellington Waterloo Community Futures Development Corporation, helping support entrepreneurs and local businesses.

In recognizing Sherrer, the township noted his decades of quiet, consistent service have left a lasting legacy in Linwood and beyond, making him a deserving recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Claire Wight named Wellesley Township's 2026 Junior Citizen of the Year

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Claire Wight (née Koch) has been named Wellesley Township's 2026 Junior Citizen of the Year in recognition of her leadership, volunteerism and commitment to agricultural education.

As the 2025-2026 Wellesley Township Fair Ambassador, Wight focused her efforts on promoting farm safety through her interactive educational program, Barnyard Buddies, designed for students in grades one to four.

The hands-on program teaches children about safety around large farm animals, water and ice safety, farm hazards, personal protective equipment and tractor safety through games and engaging activities.

With support from her family, friends and the fair's current junior ambassador, Wight presented the program at Wellesley Public School and North Easthope Public School. Both schools have invited her to return this year.

She also partnered with Woolwich Community Health to present the program during the Waterloo Women's Farm Safety Day.

Wight hopes to expand Barnyard Buddies to more rural schools across Waterloo and Perth counties.

"I want to help children understand farm

safety, regardless of whether they live on a farm or not," she said.

While attending Waterloo Oxford District Secondary School, Wight founded S.P.A.R.K. (Students Praying and Reaching for the Kingdom), a Christian student group that has grown to more than 60 members. She was also active in student leadership, helping organize community initiatives such as the Gift of Love fundraiser in support of the Wilmot Community Food Cupboard.

A graduate with honours, Wight earned a Specialist High Skills Major in agriculture and received scholarships from the University of Guelph and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture in recognition of her commitment to agriculture and animal medicine.

She is currently studying veterinary technology at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown campus.

In addition to her studies, Wight works on her family's Holstein dairy farm, serves as a receptionist at New Hamburg Veterinary Clinic, works at Verona Health Solutions and assists with marketing design for Farm for Profit.

She also raises a small herd of pygmy goats and hopes to expand it in the future.

Through her dedication to agriculture, education and community service, Wight has earned the honour of being named Wellesley Township's 2026 Junior Citizen of the Year.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Claire Wight (née Koch) has been named Wellesley Township's 2026 Junior Citizen of the Year in recognition of her leadership, volunteerism and commitment to agricultural education and farm safety.

ABC Talent Competition semi-finalists set to perform at Wellesley Fall Fair

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Some of the area's top young performers will take the stage during the ABC Talent Competition semifinals at this year's Wellesley Fall Fair.

The competition will be held Saturday, Aug. 29, beginning at 2:45 p.m. in the auditorium at the Bill Gies Recreation Complex, immediately following the Wellesley Township Citizen of the Year presentations at 2:30 p.m.

The talent competition is one of many attractions planned for the annual fair, which

takes place Aug. 28 and 29 and features activities and entertainment for all ages.

This year's semi-finalists are Julia Bell, Maya Cinarlili, Claire Sachs, Breea Shouldice, Nora Parks and Morgan Woolner.

Their performances will be evaluated by judges Rachel Regier, John "Beetle" Bailey and Allister Bradley.

The public is invited to attend the competition and support the talented local performers as they compete for a place in the finals.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

ABC Talent Competition semi-finalists are, front row, from left, Julia Bell and Maya Cinarlili; middle row, Claire Sachs, Breea Shouldice, Nora Parks and Morgan Woolner; and, back row, judges Rachel Regier, John "Beetle" Bailey and Allister Bradley. The semifinals will be held Saturday, Aug. 29, during the Wellesley Fall Fair.



'Serving You Breakfast Since 1983'

Optimist Club of Petersburg

Breakfast In the Park
Sunday, August 9
8:30 am to Noon

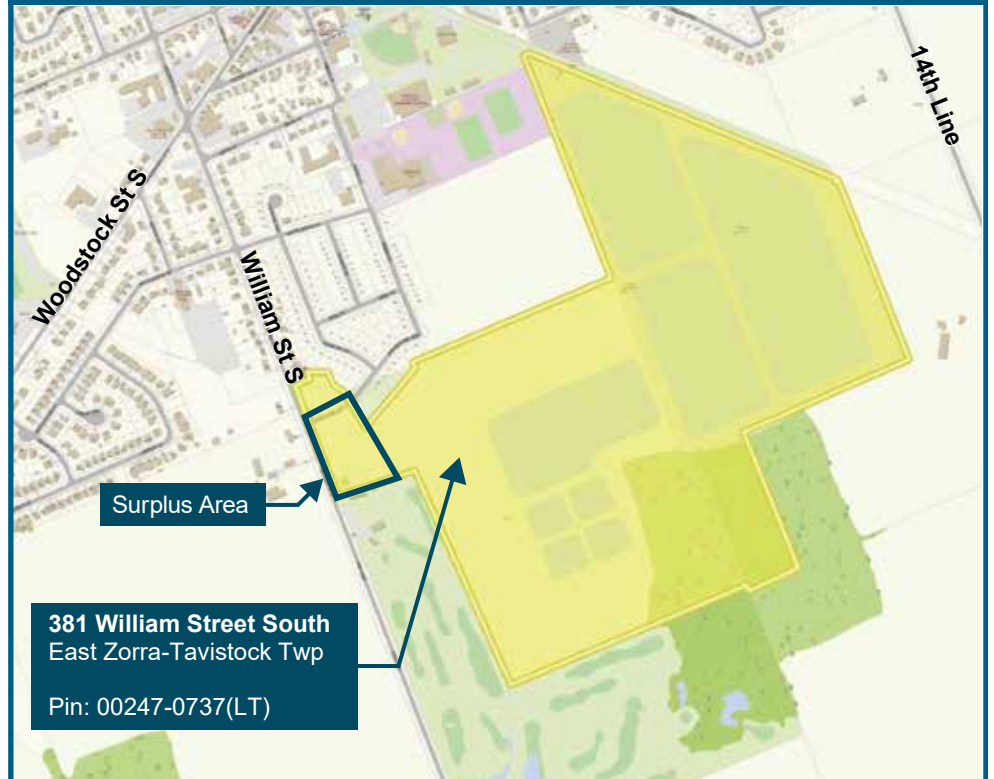
Petersburg Park: 1338 Notre Dame Dr., Petersburg

*Scrambled Eggs, Pancakes, Bacon, Homefries, Toast,
Juice and Coffee*

Adults \$17
Under 10 \$10

Mark Your Calendar for our Upcoming Breakfast:
September 13.

PUBLIC NOTICE



Declaration of surplus property, William Street South, Tavistock

Township of East Zorra-Tavistock
PIN 00247-0737(LT)

In accordance with Oxford County's Disposal of Land policy, Oxford County Council proposes to declare as surplus approximately 150 metres of frontage in the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock, located along William Street South, legally described as Property Identification Numbers (PIN):

- **PIN 00247-0737(LT):** Part Lot 34 Concession 13 (East Zorra) designated as PARTS 1, 2 and 3 on 41R-11031, Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

For further information and/or to submit written comments, please contact the Office of the Clerk.

Lindsey Mansbridge, Clerk
Oxford County
21 Reeve Street, P.O. Box 1614
Woodstock, ON N4S 7Y3
clerksoffice@oxfordcounty.ca
519-539-9800 ext. 3017

Sign language and French language interpretation are available with written notice to the Clerk at least seven (7) days in advance of public meeting.

Public meeting

A public meeting will be held, and a by-law considered for adoption, at the Oxford County Council meeting on:

Wednesday, August 12, 2026 - 9:30 a.m.

Oxford County Administration
Building – Council Chamber
21 Reeve Street, Woodstock

Written and/or verbal comments will be considered at the Council meeting noted. Additional information concerning this notice is available by contacting Jamie Yeung, Project Engineer, at contact information to the right.

Contact for more information

Jamie Yeung, P.Eng.
Project Engineer
Public Works, Oxford County
jyeung@oxfordcounty.ca
519-539-9800, ext. 3222

Information collected will be used in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

OxfordCounty
Growing stronger together

This notice issued July 23, 2026

Zehr Insurance classic car show draws more than 100 vintage vehicles

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

More than 100 vintage cars and trucks rolled into Tavistock last week for another successful Zehr Insurance Classic Car Show, raising money for a local community organization.

Held in the parking lot behind Tavistock Mennonite Church after being postponed one day because of rain, the annual event attracted 110 vehicles from across southwestern Ontario.

From 1940s classics to vehicles from the 1980s, the show featured a wide variety of meticulously restored cars and trucks. Convertibles and hardtops alike gleamed in showroom condition as owners shared the history of their prized vehicles with visitors.

Many participants displayed information cards on their dashboards outlining the year, engine specifications and original retail price of their vehicles. In many cases, the classics have appreciated significantly in value over the years, reflecting strong demand among collectors.

The show also served as a fundraiser for TAP (Tavistock Assistance Program).

Organizer and Zehr Insurance branch manager Kurtis Waymouth said the event raised \$1,888 for the organization, including a \$500 donation from the nearby Toyota manufacturing plant.

Waymouth thanked the approximately 20 sponsors whose support helped make the event possible, including Quehl's Restaurant, Yantzi Home Hardware, Moss Berry Farm, Amkad, Built Fitness, Lynn River Farms, Straight Up Auto, Caveman Firestarters, Urban Barber, Joe's Diner, K&K Racing, Bentley's Bar and Inn, Honeywood Tirecraft, Deep Purple Lavender Farm, Picard's, Cineplex, PuroClean, COBS Bread, Tavistock Shell and Mike's Lanes.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Zehr Insurance branch manager and event organizer Kurtis Waymouth, centre, is joined by Noah, 10, and Violet, eight, at the annual Zehr Insurance Classic Car Show behind Tavistock Mennonite Church. The event, postponed one day because of rain, attracted 110 vintage vehicles and raised \$1,888 for the Tavistock Assistance Program.



Steve Rounds of Lakeside displays his 1960 Chevrolet Impala, which he purchased from friend Ron Box last year. The car was restored in Box's body shop and retains its original interior. Rounds owns 11 classic vehicles, all insured through Zehr Insurance in Tavistock.



Steve Rounds sits behind the wheel of his 1960 Chevrolet Impala, powered by a 283-cubic-inch engine with a three-speed transmission and dual exhaust. The car features its original bench seats, dashboard and gauges.



A total of 110 vintage cars and trucks from across southwestern Ontario filled the parking lot behind Tavistock Mennonite Church for this year's Zehr Insurance Classic Car Show. The annual event raised \$1,888 for the Tavistock Assistance Program.

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NEAT members bring antique tractors to Tavistock

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Dozens of antique tractors rolled into downtown Tavistock last week as members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor (NEAT) Club gathered for their weekly breakfast and community visit.

Club members met at Quehl's Restaurant

before touring The Maples Home for Seniors, where residents enjoyed seeing the vintage machinery and meeting the owners.

Many NEAT members are retired farmers who spent their careers working the land with tractors similar to those they now restore and proudly display. Others have ties to agriculture through family members

or careers in the agricultural industry.

Throughout the summer, the club travels to communities across the region, showcasing historic farm equipment while supporting local businesses and community organizations.

In addition to visiting non-profit organizations that welcome the displays, members also make a point of patronizing local

businesses that contribute to the community and provide employment opportunities for area residents.

The weekly outings offer members an opportunity to share stories, preserve agricultural history and celebrate the machinery that helped shape farming in Perth County and beyond.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

NEAT members visit residents at The Maples Home for Seniors in Tavistock following the club's weekly breakfast at Quehl's Restaurant. In front are Ken Mogk and Ralph Swartzentruber with his antique John Deere tractor. Looking on are Raymond Ruby and Carol Warren.



Staff at Quehl's Restaurant welcome members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club during the group's weekly breakfast. Pictured, from left, are Simon Ruby, Joe Strauss, Delores Hopkins, Kim Larsen, Emily Waymouth, Leah Ruby, Carly McIntosh and Brian Larsen. Missing from the photo are Kim Ziegler and Deb Stolk.



Joe Strauss of New Hamburg displays his 1940 Centaur tractor, believed to be the oldest tractor in the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club. The tractor was built in Ohio and was on display during the club's visit to Quehl's Restaurant in Tavistock.



Residents of The Maples Home for Seniors watch as members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club parade their vintage tractors through Tavistock following the club's weekly breakfast.

OBITUARY

WAGNER: Antoinette "Annette" Lucia (Van Beek)



Passed away unexpectedly at her residence in New Hamburg, Ontario, on Monday, July 13, 2026, at the age of 74.

Born in Mount Forest, Ontario, on June 5, 1952, Annette was the daughter of the late Lawrence and Henrica (De Graaf) Van Beek. She is survived by her children Jerred Wagner (Kristi), Tiffany Gilbert, Victoria Wagner (Aaron), Julia Wagner (Ian), and Lawrence Wagner (Emily), all of whom she shared with their father, Neil Wagner. Grandmother of Ava, Kaya, Ella, Liv, Paige, Oak, Reese, Wiley, and Nicola.

She was predeceased by her parents, Lawrence and Henrica Van Beek (born in Texel, Netherlands), by her sisters Cora Schnarr, and Joan Eichler, and by her niece Jeanette Fischer.

Annette will be remembered by her sisters Laura Fischer and Mary Lou Winkler (Peter); her brothers Lawrence Van Beek (Rosalyn), Ken Van Beek (Deb), Martin Van Beek (Cathy), and Anthony Van Beek (Angela); her brothers-in-law Bob Schnarr (Sheila) and Dan Eichler (Linda); as well as her many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and friends.

Honouring Annette's wishes, cremation has taken place. A private family service and time of remembrance was held at the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, New Hamburg. Personal condolences can be posted for the family at www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca

When Annette's family thinks of her, they first remember the many years she devoted to creating a childhood filled with opportunity, adventure, and curiosity. She volunteered at her children's schools, organized the local soccer league, encouraged a love of reading and learning, and inspired creativity through crafts, gardening, home renovations, and countless hands-on projects.

She shared her love of nature through family adventures exploring the woods, picking blueberries, searching for salamanders, and swimming in the river when they lived in Nova Scotia. An early adopter of new technology, an accomplished gardener, and a gifted creator, Annette embraced new ideas with enthusiasm. Her infectious laugh and imaginative spirit brought joy to those around her. Though her life included difficult chapters, her family chooses to remember the mother who nurtured curiosity, creativity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning. Her influence on her children's early lives continues to shape them today.

May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.



OBITUARY

WILHELM: Wray George



Passed away peacefully with family by his side on Monday, July 20, 2026 at Victoria Hospital, London, Ontario. Wray Wilhelm of Shakespeare in his 82nd year.

Beloved husband of Patricia (nee McCann) who he married January 8, 1966. Loving father of Steven Wilhelm and wife Jennifer De Bruyn of Knoxville, Tennessee and Bryan and his wife Tammy of Stratford Sadly missed by his grandchildren Connor & Taylor, Daniel & Bryden, Sarah & Sam, Georgia and great grandchildren Riley & Carter. Wray is also survived by his nieces and nephews in Australia.

Predeceased by his parents George and Erma (Schmidt) Wilhelm, by his brother Ronald Wilhelm (May 2, 2026), and his sister Jean & her husband John Armstrong.

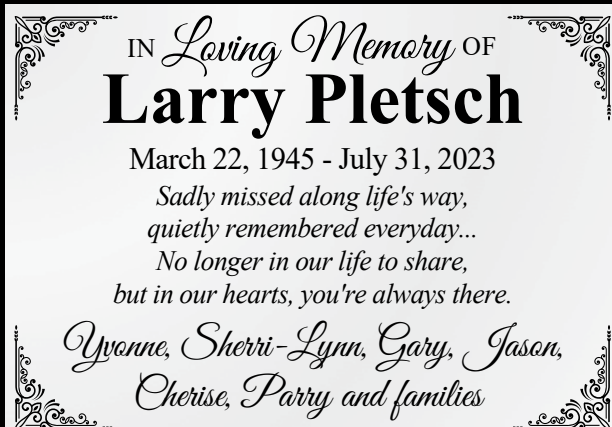
For the past 60 years Wray owned and operated Wilhelm Concrete right up to a week ago. He served as President of the Silo Association. He served 2 terms on South Easthope Township Council and another term as Deputy Reeve. Wray was a Charter Member of the Shakespeare Optimist Club and won the Community Award of Participation in Athletic Sports and enjoyed coaching and umpiring in Shakespeare for many years.

A Celebration of Wray's life will be held at the Shakespeare & District Optimist Hall on Sunday, August 9, 2026 from 1-5pm. A private burial will be taking place in St. Andrews Presbyterian Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the Shakespeare Community Athletic Association or the Heart & Stroke Foundation and would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be shared at www.gffh.ca

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Francis Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock Street N, Tavistock, Ontario.

IN MEMORIAM



by PeterS 2026

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Answers found on classified page



1. What is extracted from the ore cassiterite?
2. How many weeks are there in a fortnight?
3. Who tight roped across the twin towers?
4. What animal is known as the king of the jungle?
5. What company was initially known as "Blue Ribbon Sports"?
6. What is the hottest planet in our solar system?
7. What was the original name of the Boston Red Sox?
8. What is the main ingredient in hummus?
9. Ash Wednesday marks the first day of what?
10. What is the name for the process of electing a Pope?

Answers found on classified page

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The Old Gazettes

By Sydney Grant

Slowly but surely, I'm reading through the past pages of the Tavistock Gazette (est. 1895). Within this weekly column I'd like to share with you some of my findings.

July 20 - 27, 2016, Edition (10 years ago)

Tavistock Minor Ball is pleased to announce that Softball Canada's 2016 U21 Men's Canadian Fastpitch Championship schedule has been released. Representing Team BC will be the defending U21 Canadian Native Champions. "We are excited seeing the release of the schedule; it makes this huge event real!" said Brian Wagler, president of Tavistock Minor Ball. "We are making a lot of history with this tournament. This is the first time the Canadian Native Champions (Team BC) ever entered, and the first time Tavistock has hosted a national sporting event with a title.

The council of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock met at the municipal office, Hickson, at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, July 6, 2016. The May 2016 Pay Voucher was passed with \$504,349.85. Council accepted the bid from Blythe Dale Sand and Gravel in the amount of \$136,200 (excluding taxes) for the supply of granular for Maplewood Sideroad base construction. Council also accepted the proposal from PlayPower Canada for the supply and installation of playground equipment at the Hickson Community Park.

July 19 - 26, 2006, Edition (20 years ago)

The 2006 Hickson Community Vacation Bible School had an awesome week, July 3 through 7, at Hickson Public School! Over 90 children registered from junior kindergarten through Grade 8 and a staff of 42 leaders and resource people took full advantage of a week of wonderful weather. They enjoyed the drama, worship, music, crafts, games and snacks around the theme, "Celebrating the Psalms." The offering project for this year was National Service Dogs that raise and train dogs as companions for children with Autism \$758.65 was raised to assist this excellent Canadian cause.

Amanda Cortes, 17, daughter of Richard and Joanne Cortes, earned first place in Speech Arts at the Senior level at the 2006 Provincial Finals held in London recently. Sponsorship by the Ontario Music

Festival Association Inc. at the faculty of music, the University of Western Ontario, Cortes earned the opportunity to compete by winning the local title at the Kiwanis Music Festival in Stratford. The competition requires that speakers prepare a 15-30 minute narrative of modern or Shakespearean literature. Lyrical or narrative poems can be used as well as prose which must all be linked together to create a winning presentation.

"It's been a long journey through 40 years," says Irvin Zehr, "but I've met interesting people and had some great experiences." Greeting nearly 200 past and present patrons and employees at an open house on Saturday, July 8, Irvin and his sons, Murray and Larry, were more than pleased with the attendance. "It was a super day," he added. Irvin began his automotive career in 1950 as a mechanic with Monaghan Motors, then Steffler GM Shop in New Hamburg. He spent eight years with Perth Motors in Stratford before starting on his own in Tavistock in 1966 in the garage, Wm.

July 23 - 30, 1986, Edition (40 years ago)

The Optimist Club of Tavistock recently finalized the purchase of 11 acres of land within the village for use as community parkland. The land, located off Woodstock Street South (Hwy. 59) north of the highway, across from the Village Variety, was purchased from Canada Farm Distributors, a division of Sommers Motor Generator Sales Ltd., for \$79,500. The purchase of this land was made possible with approximately one-third paid from club accounts, one-third provided by club members as temporary interest-free loans and one-third mortgaged.

Ross and Violet Nicklas of William Street North in Tavistock had a big surprise when they returned home on the weekend. The huge maple tree between their house and the neighbours, Blain and Kathy McCutchen, fell victim to the storm on Friday night. About 9:30 p.m. during the storm, a high wind came up, and although it didn't last too long, it was just long enough to fell the tree, with some minor damage to the Nicklas house. The tree is about 96 years old according to an old photograph he has of the street in 1895.

179th Decoration Service

Trinity Anglican Church

August 9, 2026 • 2:00 p.m.

Everyone Welcome!



Pastor: Darryl Watson

Hwy 59 between Hickson and Tavistock

Tavistock Bible Chapel
invites you to our weekly

**Sunday Drive-In
Gospel Meetings**

in the **Shakespeare
Truck Center** parking lot
(1/4 mile west of Shakespeare on Hwy 7/8)

THIS WEEK...

**Sun., Aug. 2
7-8 p.m.**

Speaker & Music:
Gary Weeks

Free! No offering taken.
For info visit
www.tavistockbc.org/drivein

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Music by Marilyne Nystrome

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Sundays at 10:00 AM

(519) 655-2372

trinitylcoffice@gmail.com

www.trinitytavistock.com

TAVISTOCK MENNONITE

Pastor Julie Ellison White

131 Wettlaufer St., Tavistock 655-2581

Sunday Worship services begin at 9:45am,
with coffee and fellowship to follow at 11am.

All ages Junior Sunday School will follow
after the service.

All are Welcome

Stream services online at
www.tavistockmennonitechurch.ca

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tavistockbc.org

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Service - 2 pm Sunday

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stpaulstavistock@gmail.com

Pastor Rev Michael Mayer

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677044 16th Line Road, East Zorra

Pastors Ray Martin & Mike Williamson

www.ezmennonite.ca

Service audio recordings available at:

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Corner of Waterloo St and Byron St,

New Hamburg

Weekly Sunday services at 10:15 am.

All are welcome.

<https://www.stgeorgesnewhamburg.com>

St James Chapel of Ease

4339 Huron Rd, Wilmot Township

All are welcome.

Contact Carol Massel: 519-502-8648

carol@masselsmarine.com

ST AGATHA MENNONITE CHURCH

1967 Erb's Road St Agatha 519-634-8212

Pastor Jim Brown

Worship service 10am followed by coffee hour
and sermon discussion.

All are welcome

OASIS MENNONITE CHURCH

66 Mill Street, Baden, ON

Sunday School at 10:15 AM

Worship service at 11:00 AM

Pastors: Richard Bean and Gabriel Jantzi

www.oasismennonite.com

**To have your place of
worship listing included
here, please contact
thewtgazette@gmail.com**

**SEND STORY IDEAS AND
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO
GALEN SIMMONS AT
GALEN@GRANTHAVEN.COM**

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

Wilmot U17 boys rally to Twin Rivers Soccer League championship

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

A challenging regular season ended with a championship celebration for the Wilmot U17 boys soccer team.

After recording just one win during the regular season, Wilmot put together an impressive playoff run to capture the Twin Rivers Soccer League championship.

The team delivered a major upset to first-place Ayr Red with a 1-0 win in extra time in the semifinals before returning home to defeat Paris Purple 2-0 in the championship game.

Head coach Matt Gedcke said the team's determination and belief in one another made the title run possible.

"Throughout this season, coach Justin and I found the team's resilience inspiring," Gedcke said. "Despite only having one win this regular season, the boys never backed down and gave our playoffs everything they had."

Gedcke said the players' commitment to working together ultimately paid off.

"We worked hard enough to finish the season as champions, and this season is proof that no matter how tough the odds are, you can accomplish any goal if you believe and work hard together as a team."

The championship capped off a memorable postseason for a team that refused to let its regular-season record define its season.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Wilmot U17 boys soccer team captured the Twin Rivers Soccer League championship after defeating first-place Ayr Red 1-0 in extra time in the semifinals before earning a 2-0 victory over Paris Purple in the championship game. Team members are, standing from left, coaches Justin Lopez and Matt Gedcke, Devanca Sofiyanto, Caiden Dippel, Will McClements, Evan Young, Isaiah Ngeno, Eli Zister, Gabriel Jones, John Weiss, Tomas Ferro and Jared Dippel. Kneeling are Ben Kittel, Parker Smith, Sawyer Zimmer, Parker Fung, Andrew Mol, Nicolo Folino, Emmett Campbell and Marius Di Carlo. Absent from the photo are Stirling Green and Ali Reza.



NOTICE OF ADOPTION TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT OFFICIAL PLAN

TAKE NOTICE

This Notice of Adoption of the new Township of Wilmot Official Plan ("the Official Plan") is issued pursuant to section 17 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13 ("Planning Act").

On July 27th, 2026, the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Wilmot adopted the Official Plan by By-law 2026-55, in accordance with section 17 of the Planning Act. The Official Plan was prepared pursuant to Section 26 of the Planning Act to comprehensively apply provincial land use and planning policies while also addressing local priorities.

Pursuant to section 17 of the Planning Act, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the approval authority for the Official Plan adopted by Council. Once the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing approves the Official Plan, it will come into force and effect and will replace the existing Region of Waterloo and Township of Wilmot Official Plans.

PURPOSE AND EFFECT

The Township of Wilmot has adopted its new Official Plan, establishing a long-term policy framework to guide growth and development within the Township until 2051. The Official Plan applies to land within the Township's municipal boundary and provides direction on where and how future land uses, development, and infrastructure will be planned.

The Official Plan is intended to support the efficient use of land and municipal infrastructure, foster complete communities with a range of housing options, employment opportunities, schools, recreational amenities and active transportation, while protecting natural heritage (calanes, cultural heritage resources and farmland. The adopted Official Plan reflects input received through a significant public consultation process.

MORE INFORMATION

The Official Plan is available online at: <https://www.engagewm.ca/new-wilmot-official-plan>

Information about the Official Plan is available from the Township of Wilmot Development Services Department, which is located at 60 Snyder's Road West, Baden, Ontario, N3A 1A1. Additional information may also be obtained by contacting the Planning Division at 519-834-8444 and/or WmOTGP@wilmot.ca.

WRITTEN AND ORAL SUBMISSIONS

All statutory written and oral submissions regarding the Official Plan have been considered, and where appropriate, their recommendations have been incorporated into the Plan. Additional information on the public consultation process, the written and oral submissions received, and the manner in which those submissions informed the Official Plan is available at the following link: <https://www.engagewm.ca/new-wilmot-official-plan>

RIGHT TO APPEAL

The decision of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Wilmot to adopt the Township of Wilmot Official Plan is not subject to appeal.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY DECISION

In accordance with section 17 of the Planning Act, the Official Plan adopted by the Council of the Township of Wilmot will be forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the approval authority, for review and decision.

Any individual or public body wishing to receive notice of the approval authority's decision must submit a written request including the name, mailing address, and either an email address or telephone number of the person or public body requesting notification and be directed to:

Regional Director, Western Municipal Services Office
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
659 Exeter Road, 2nd Floor
London, ON N6E 1L3

Telephone: 519-873-4020
Toll Free: 1-800-265-4736
Fax: 519-873-4018

Dated at the Township of Wilmot on July 28, 2026

Young standardbred colts represent future of horse-and- buggy transportation

GARY WEST

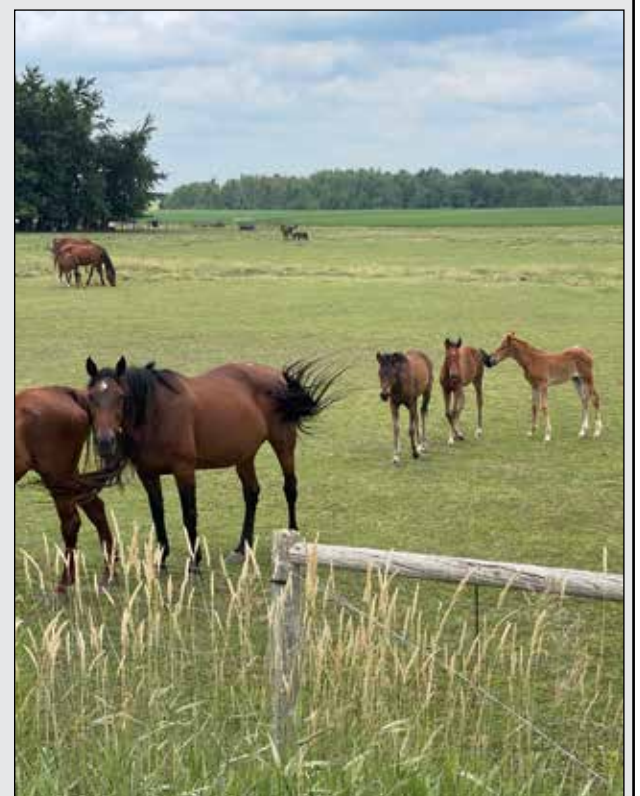
Gazette Correspondent

A pasture near Millbank was filled with new life recently as a number of young standardbred colts enjoyed the summer sunshine alongside their mothers.

Many of these foals will eventually become the horse-and-buggy transportation relied upon by Old Order Amish and Mennonite families throughout the region.

With a steady demand for well-trained buggy horses, some farmers in the Millbank and Linwood areas specialize in raising broodmares and breeding Standardbreds specifically for that purpose.

The young colts spend their first months growing alongside their mothers before beginning the training that will one day prepare them for life as dependable driving horses.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Three young standardbred colts enjoy a sunny morning in a pasture near Millbank alongside their mothers and other mares with foals. Several of the colts in the field were only a few weeks old.

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church to host annual Red Shed ham and corn roast



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The historic red shed beside St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Easthope Township serves as the backdrop for the church's annual Red Shed Ham and Corn Roast on Thursday, Aug. 20. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with dinner served at 6:30 p.m. Guests are asked to bring their own lawn chairs.

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church is inviting the community to its annual Red Shed Ham and Corn Roast on Thursday, Aug. 20.

The church, located at the corner of Perth Line 45 and Perth Road 106 in North Easthope Township, continues a tradition inspired by the historic red shed beside the church.

Many rural churches once had sheds where those travelling to weekly services

by horse and buggy could shelter their horses from the weather while attending worship.

Doors for this year's event open at 5:30 p.m., with the ham and corn roast dinner beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Guests will also enjoy live traditional country music by dynamic duo Dianne and the Cavaliers.

Advance tickets are required. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$10 for children ages six to 12 and free for children under six.

For tickets, contact Carol Horst at 519-274-4494 or by email at carolh@cwisp.ca.

Gazette Puzzles

ONTARIO ROAD TRIPS

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Prince Edward County

Sandbanks
Sauble Beach
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Thousand Islands

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Pet of the Week

SWIFT

Meet Swift, an energetic and affectionate 2-year-old pup who brings excitement everywhere she goes. She loves staying active, whether that's exploring the outdoors, playing fetch, or unleashing a good old zoomie session.

After all the action, Swift is just as happy to slow down and soak up cuddles with her favourite people. She's looking for an experienced, active home that can keep up with her energy and help her continue building confidence and manners as she grows into her best self.

Swift's been looking for her furever home for almost six months now, but we're sure the right family is out there just waiting to make her their new best friend. Meet Swift in-person at our Stratford Centre or online at kwsphumane.ca/adopt/dogs!



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For the first time since I've lived here, I didn't have to drive to Toronto

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Galen Simmons



Feet up, headphones on and a game on my phone to pass the time.

That's how I prefer to travel, whether it be across the country or just an hour or two away. Low stress and relative comfort is the name of the game for me, but since I've lived in Stratford, that hasn't always been possible.

For too long, residents of Stratford, St. Marys, Perth County, East Zorra-Tavistock, Wilmot and

Wellesley had gone without a reliable and cost-effective form of public transportation that could take us to London, Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto and beyond.

That simple reality of rural life – only those who can drive their own cars can escape the confines of our agricultural surroundings – has begun to change as new forms of public transit have been introduced, re-introduced or promised to the region. Flix Bus has start-

ed serving riders in Stratford and St. Marys; a Grand River Transit expansion is in the works for residents of Wellesley and Wilmot; and my beloved Go Train has returned to Stratford, hopefully permanently, after it was discontinued following a failed pilot several years ago.

While I don't tend to use public transit to get to London or Kitchener-Waterloo – it's just easier for me to drive myself – travelling to Toronto is another story.

I hate everything about it – the traffic on the highway, the congested city streets, the other drivers who just seem to know when to abruptly change lanes without causing an accident. It's all very overwhelming and I avoid it whenever I can.

But I have friends in Toronto who I like to visit and there is plenty to see and do in the big city,

so, until very recently, I would brave the often-two-hour drive in rush hour on a Friday night just so I could have a little fun and spend some time with the people I care about.

Recently, I had the opportunity to review a Toronto Fringe Festival Play, Orbit, that a friend was starring in. I was excited about the opportunity to see a Fringe Festival play, but I wasn't so excited about driving two hours to Toronto for a 10:15 p.m. performance on a Saturday night.

My friend asked if I was planning to take the train or the bus and I quickly realized, for the first time since I've lived in Stratford, those were both viable options. So, I looked into taking the Go Train, something I used to do all the time as a kid growing up in the Hamilton and Burlington area.

It turns out, Metrolinx, the com-

pany that operates Go Transit, had just introduced a \$10 weekend day pass that allows for unlimited rides on Go Trains and Go Buses for a single day on the weekend. Looking at the weekend train schedule, I saw the Go Train leaves Stratford at 6:15 p.m. and arrives at Union Station in Toronto at 8:45 p.m. – perfect timing for me to make it to the play.

And though it was an early start after a late night with my friends, the Go Train left Toronto at 8:45 a.m. the next morning and arrived in Stratford at 11:15 a.m., giving me plenty of my Sunday to sleep off the previous night's festivities.

So, for a grand total of \$20 and a sandwich I made at home to eat on the train, I managed to get to Toronto, see the play, spend time with friends and return home the next morning.

Now that's how I like to travel.



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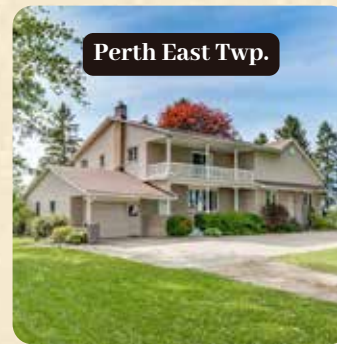
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SOLD



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TO GALEN SIMMONS AT GALEN@GRANTHAVEN.COM

From anchors to apples, business was booming



VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

Tavistock and District Historical Society

Jacob Wagner was a shrewd businessman when he chose this prominent location in Tavistock to locate his new general store only a few years after Confederation. The district was growing quickly and he could foresee the business opportunity of operating a general goods shop in Tavistock.

Only three years later Messrs. Adam Falk and Fred Krug purchased the property from Wagner's estate and constructed the south-facing addition on Woodstock Street, largely matching the style of the main building. They named it the Glasgow Warehouse.

By 1884, Krug became the sole owner and remained so for decades, keeping the Scottish name. He was an astute and very successful businessman, creating an early style department store here with each commodity having semi-independence. Upstairs was a millinery shop and, over the years, the community library as well. The post office and Bell Telephone were located here and a long list of businesses operated in the Woodstock Street addition over many decades.

Business was booming and had as many as 20 employees at one time in the main store. Mr. Krug would negotiate good discounts by making cash purchases in bulk, for example, sugar by the train-car-load retailing at 18 pounds (8.1 kilograms) for one dollar in 1900 and Brazilian coffee directly from the growers in Brazil, from which he passed on the savings to his loyal customers.

The Glasgow Warehouse and its proprietor prospered so much so that Mr. Krug bought a large property on William Street South in Tavistock, building a house that was truly palatial whether then or today. It had three storeys, a mansard roof and front yard big enough to easily accommodate a tennis court. Fred Krug was also very active in his church and community, serving on several local boards over many decades.

This photo is iconic in the Lemp Studio Collection of over 4,000 glass negatives housed at the Tavistock and District Historical Society. It's obvious the photographer, J. C. Sutherland (Jack Lemp arrived in 1905), organized this in advance because of how everyone came out of the shops and

posed in their finery, along with three dogs and bicycles.

One woman leans out of a window and there's one child on the right. There are no wires or utility poles yet as electricity would not arrive for another 24 years following this 1892 picture, however, a hard-to-read "Bell Telephone Co." sign is on one of the porch posts and a single lamp on the left post.

There's a horse tie-up and step on which people could descend from their carriages to the boardwalk on the left and the dirt road, weeds, small ditch and tiny bridge make it clear the village was still developing. Three large stained-glass windows are tucked high under the grandiose porch that seems to dwarf the people; two of these windows are still visible today. Curiously, the large sign on the porch says "F. Krug," instead of Glasgow Warehouse. Mr. Krug is standing on the steps right of the open door and his three sons are between the two left posts: Fred Jr., Dr. H. S. and John.

Numerous businesses have operated at this location over time, including one for 40 years – Harry Roppel's 5¢ and \$1 Store from 1938-1978 when it became Stedman's. This was where I purchased licorice plugs as a child that had a very racist name in the 1960s and sold some of my own pen-and-ink architectural illustrations reproduced on cards 20 years later.

Today, Home Hardware operates out of the main store, Krug's Meat Market is in the shop at the property's southwest corner and there are apartments upstairs. Fred Krug's grand home became the Maples Home for Seniors.

Fred Krug is a good example of immigrant success in early Canada. He had a humble start in life. Born in 1843 in Gartaw, Germany, moving here and working in the newspaper industry until his late teenage years, at one time delivering the journals on horseback to village and farm folk through summer heat and winter cold in Waterloo County.

He moved to Tavistock in 1860, was in business for himself by 1870 and was Postmaster in 1885. His Glasgow Warehouse presaged the modern-day department store,



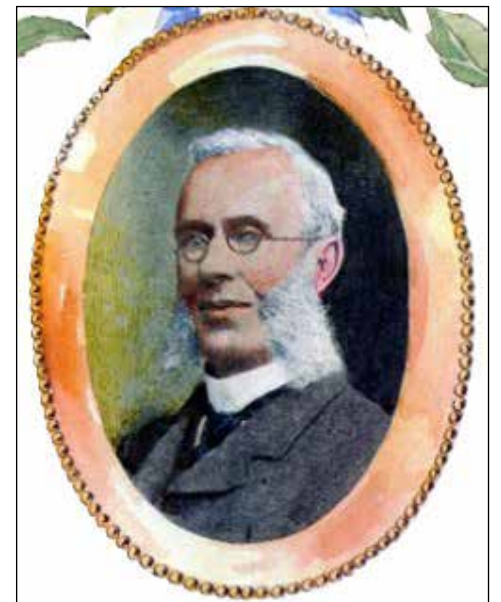
(PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAVISTOCK AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

Whether someone was passing through Tavistock 155 years ago or today, it's difficult to miss this prominent historic building at the five corners. The gingerbread trim, soffit brackets, Romanesque window curves, quoin corners and rare-for-a-retail-store stained glass all remain on this 1871 building. The grand porch, however, is long gone.

and his business acumen served him and Tavistock well, helping the district to prosper. Fred Krug retired in 1917 and died in 1925 at age 82. In his obituary, the Tavistock Gazette wrote that he was "... a veritable Moses among men."

Last week's History Mystery: The question was "How were the workers 'paid' for their labour helping to raise barns?" The first correct answer sent to me was "... they would be repaid in kind when they needed help for themselves on their own farms. Community solidarity!" sent by Trudie Julien of Lagorce, France.

This week's History Mystery: Why was this business called the "Glasgow Warehouse" for many decades, instead of a German name, considering Fred Krug's and the area's strong connection to das Vaterland? The first reader to send me the correct response at tim_mosher@hotmail.com will have their name, rural route number or community name in the next Vintage Views article.



Proprietor Fred Krug's mutton chops, clear blue eyes – even evident in black and white photos – and tall stature gave him a striking appearance.

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Zucchini or summer squash?

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



(MERCEDES KAY GOLD PHOTOS)

Glorious green zucchini deserves centerstage status, but this certified holistic nutritionist would love for its friends to share the summer squash spotlight. There's a reason squash is growing in popularity. In Canada, over 90 per cent of squash sales come from fresh, the healthiest way to consume produce. Shopping local supports farmers and your overall health by choosing fresh ripening closer to home on a field rather than on the truck.

Squash, whether classified summer or winter, is an annual plant belonging to the Cucurbitaceae family and native to the Americas. Lucky for us, the Huron cultivated squash around 1400 AD. Today, squash is a backyard staple for homegrown goodness. Squash is easy to grow and pollinator perfection, attracting bees to the large yellow flowers.

Yes, common zucchini is synonymous with summertime, but variety is the spice of life. Summer squash has a very mild, nutty taste, sometimes resembling fresh corn. Yellow crookneck? Pattypan? Vegetable Marrow? All are at their best harvested before maturity while young and tender. Choose small and firm, brightly coloured summer squashes with no bruises or soft

spots, particularly at the stem end. Pattypan squash should be five centimetres across; yellow squashes, marrows and zucchini up to 15 centimetres long. Their tender skin bruises easily, so handle with care.

Squash is heaps of holistic health help. One half cup of cooked summer squash contains just 16 calories, one gram of protein, three grams of carbohydrates and fabulous fiber for a full belly. They are very low in carbohydrates and ranked 15 on the glycemic index, making them a great choice for keto diet lovers and diabetics. Summer humidity is definitely depleting but with almost 95 per cent of the weight from water, hello hydration.

Roast, raw, pan fried, grilled, stuffed or spiralized, each squash is marvellous mealtime magic waiting to be served. Summer squashes are stunning sides, main courses and brilliant in baking.

For this easy-peasy recipe, I chose yellow or golden zucchini, a stunning summer squash with a sweeter flavour. The standard summer yellow squash has a bulbous bottom, but this beauty is uniformly cylindrical.

Yellow crookneck, another bright sunshine yellow variety with a slightly pebbled or smooth texture and a curved neck, is

These oven-baked chips are the perfect snack and makes use of the summer-squash bounty this time of year.

a precursor to today's beloved butternut squash. The flavour profile is like zucchini but with a richer, more buttery texture. This glowing beauty is best picked small. Keep in mind for fabulous for French fries and a super soup.

Squash chips

Ingredients:

- 6 small yellow zucchinis
- 3-4 tbsp olive or avocado oil
- *1 cup of breadcrumbs, panko, pea protein or ground almond flour
- 1 cup grated parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 tsp dried Italian herbs
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
- Avocado or olive oil non-stick cooking spray

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.

2. Line baking sheet(s) with parchment paper.
3. Add the sliced squash to a large bowl. Drizzle with the olive oil and toss to evenly coat.
4. Grate the cheese.
5. In another large bowl, add the breadcrumbs or coating of choice, cheese, salt, pepper and spices. Toss them to evenly combine.
6. Dip each slice of squash into the cheese crumb coating. Don't be shy. Use your fingers to gently press the mixture into the slice.
7. Place each piece onto the parchment paper.
8. Continue the process one by one.
9. Lightly spray the tops of the chips with nonstick cooking spray. Bake in the center of the oven for 10 minutes.

10. Carefully remove the baking tray(s) from the oven.
11. Use tongs to flip each slice over. Lightly spray the chips again.
12. Place back in the oven for another 8-10 minutes.

*The coating is chef's choice. They all work. With so many food sensitivities, choose the best option. I liked panko best. Serve alone or with your favourite dip.

A friendly reminder; supporting local means fabulous freshness and price-point perfection. Store fresh summer squash in the refrigerator for up to five days.

As summer closes, save money, time and eat fresh all winter. Spend time chopping or make soup for comforting winter meals.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: There's a revolving door in Wilmot!

The YouTube video of Wilmot's public meeting of council Monday night is seven hours, 58 minutes and 36 seconds long. The last delegation, me, was granted the floor at after 12 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

My delegation used publicly available information to present observations and recommendations about the financial affairs in Wilmot. Wilmot has had a revolving door of four treasurers during the three-and-a-half-year tenure of the present mayor.

I indicated in my delegation to council that during a recent period when the township did not have a professionally qualified treasurer, having also been terminated by the CAO, the Strong Mayor's budget proposed officially in public on Jan. 9 was a deficit budget. A deficit budget is not allowed for municipalities in Ontario.

The budget proposal showed an overall

deficit of \$5.5 million, a capital (trucks and stuff) deficit of \$2.3 million and a water and wastewater deficit of \$1. That last one is just silly – no one adjusted a rounding error, but if one adds the capital deficit to the original overall deficit, the actual deficit as proposed was \$7,690,060. At least three officials cannot add or double-check their work – like we expect school students to.

The council meeting agenda had an attachment notifying citizens that the replacement as treasurer was going to be the CAO. So, the person who legally terminated the treasurer was going to replace him with himself – which is a real conflict of interest. It seems that the CAO learned sometime on Tuesday that it was not legally compliant for one person to sign financial documents, so they substituted the acting CAO as the treasurer nominee just

so they had two different names to sign cheques for now. So, they appointed a person just to sign cheques?

It might be of interest to Wilmot citizens to remember that the Ontario Municipal Act specifies the duties of a treasurer in a number of different places, including preparing and maintaining accurate financial records of Wilmot's financial affairs, prepare reports for council, for an auditor and for the Ministry of Municipalities – all of which must be in compliance with all accepted standards of professional accounting. It is also the legislated duty of a treasurer to invest Wilmot's funds in prescribed securities including, "money in a sinking, retirement or reserve fund." It appears that this is a specialized skill requiring professional training.

Neither the CAO nor the acting CAO, who was appointed Monday night, as

treasurer, with all those duties to "maintain the financial integrity of the municipality," is a qualified certified professional accountant. Both are planners, not accountants. No professionally qualified expertise. Zip.

Just because we were presented with a budget proposal which was in deficit by over \$7 million, just because the debt on Dec. 31 will be larger than the debt was on Dec. 31, 2025, just because the treasurer now has no professional qualifications, what could possibly get worse?

The acting CAO was appointed with the approval of the mayor and three councillors. Two voted against. Those are the two I'd vote for!

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Wolfe,

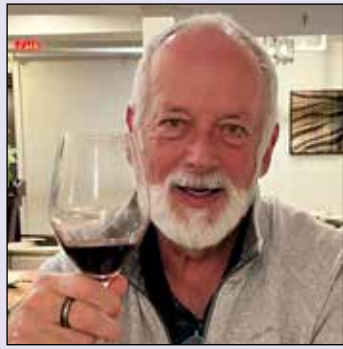
Baden

The opinions expressed in letters to the editor are that of their authors and not of the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette or Grant Haven Media

'Foodie' quality at sensible prices – amazing dining at Punch Ltd.

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



If you have eaten in hotel dining rooms, you will probably agree that some can be really good; many can be ridiculously pricey; some are just run-of-the-mill or worse, although still often overly expensive.

So, when Germain Hotels' France Savard invited us to dine at Punch Ltd., the new restaurant in Le Germain Hotel Toronto on Mercer Street, I did not know what to expect.

What I did not expect was one of the finest meals I have ever enjoyed, but that is exactly what we got. Amazing, unique food in a very elegant setting with superb service. A perfect experience.

Am I exaggerating? Well, at one point during the meal, my partner simply said, "This food is absolutely full of flavour!"

That's the work of executive chef Mandar Kulkarni and his eight-person kitchen crew. Mandar, who is from Mumbai, India, chatted with us and explained that the culinary model at Punch Ltd. is "modern London ... British food with softer Indian touches." This is not, in any way, stereotypical Indian cuisine; it's in a category all its own.

Punch Ltd. opened its doors last October in the hotel that opened in 2003. Le Germain Hotel Toronto was the first Germain establishment outside the province of Québec, though most certainly not the last. Germain hotels now exist all across Canada, still independently owned and operated by the Germain family based in Montréal.

Back to the dining table; while you can certainly order individual meals off the menu at Punch Ltd., there are a couple of more interesting ways to dine here. The dinner menu lists the options as "Small Shares," "Large Shares" and "Sides." So sharing is a great way to go.

But the advice at the top of the menu is, "Let our chefs take the lead. ... Enjoy a personally curated tasting journey."

Now, I have been in restaurants where a "personally curated tasting journey" costs hundreds of dollars. Not here. That option comes with a very reasonable price tag of \$95. In fact, in the holiday months, there is also a "Summerlicious" option – your choice of

small share, main dish, dies and dessert, for \$65. That is definitely not a "foodie restaurant" price, but the food will delight the most demanding foodie.

One other difference; some tasting menus involve minute portions of a variety of food. The portions at Punch Ltd. are very satisfactory.

Our meal? We wisely decided to trust the chef, as well as Lauren Hall, the warm and welcoming director of food and beverage and Punch Ltd.'s sommelier. She matched our courses with truly excellent wines.

Mandar started us with a unique amuse bouche – a vegetarian version of steak tartare, with beetroot substituting for the steak. Delicious.

We were then served Mumbai Chat-Slaw mixed at the table, an amazing mélange of radishes, beets, green apple, pomegranate, boondi (deep-fried chickpea flour), potato straw, crispy leeks and tamarind yogurt.

Next came duck sausage with raisins in puff pastry topped with a unique, dark, spicy house brown sauce.

Then came what may have been our favourite taste of the meal (except, perhaps, the desserts), Agnolotti, a stuffed pasta with morels, English peas, snap peas, porcini mushroom broth and maggie butter.

This was followed by exceptional Beef Wellington, one of the many house specialties. The menu lists "tenderloin, prosciutto, wild mushroom duxelles, Swiss chard, sunchoke purée and rogan josh

jus." The jus brings that soft, Indian spin to the very British Beef Wellington – again, a perfect culinary marriage.

And then came desserts – yes, plural because there were, after all, two of us. One was a Punch Ltd. standard – absolutely luscious sticky toffee pudding. The other involved a surprise. Our server brought a white chocolate mousse with a red fruit sauce, and at the table, poured extra virgin olive oil on the mousse and added cracked black pepper. I was dubious until my first taste.

That dessert included both saffron – the most expensive spice in the world – and cardamom, third most pricey. Mandar explained both are essential to his recipes, so he insists on them, regardless of cost.

Lauren matched our courses with terrific wines from around the world: a Gruner Veltliner from Austria, Cerisier en Fleur from Alsace, a terrific Bordeaux and a couple more. The wine list at Punch Ltd. covers 10 pages; there are three more for spirits and that doesn't include their wide selection of unique cocktails and beer.

The restaurant features low light, pleasant background music and wait staff in black suits and white shirts – it all speaks of elegance. But the diners' clothing tended toward smart casual – no formality, here.

I don't write a lot of articles about any specific restaurant, but Punch Ltd. clearly earned the attention it's getting this week.

You don't have to be a foodie to love Punch Ltd. Sure, foodies will love it, but Punch Ltd. is perfect for anyone who enjoys a dining adventure. You will not be disappointed!

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



(PHOTO COURTESY OF GERMAIN HOTELS)
Beef Wellington with all the fixings – superb!



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The dining room at Punch Ltd.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The bar at Punch Ltd. with a very enthusiastic bartender.

Lost Tribe: Trevor Barnucz's angling trail to Zimbabwe anchored in Norfolk County

JEFF TRIBE

Gazette Correspondent

The four-pound "smallie" was 100 per-cent legit bragging rights.

But the 24-inch pickerel may have strayed over that line into the realm of taunting.

"Hey dad, turn around," called Trevor Barnucz as our three-member party paddled the last 100 metres to our Normandale launch site, children laughing and splashing in the sandy shallows in front of us.

Aquatic ecologist, avid angler, kayak and otherwise, seminar presenter, Pure Fishing ambassador and proud father Jason Barnucz did as directed. Grinning almost as widely as the "bucketmouth" he had landed earlier, Trevor showed off the unexpected product of an end-of-the-trail troll.

The teacher had not become the student. But on this sunny Lake Erie morning, both Jason and the newspaper guy had been schooled in the art of kayak fishing by a passionate 18-year-old.

The phrase "apple not falling far from the tree" is front of mind when speaking of Trevor Barnucz. Always a willing fisher, early enthusiasm was anchored more deeply during COVID. At the end of his and Jason's remote studies and workday respectively, they would head out fishing from their Delhi residence, maintaining sanity in a challenging world through shared, socially distanced outdoor activity.

That passion has taken Trevor places including Trent University this fall, course offerings in environmental science and its proximity to quality fishing on the Otonabee River and nearby Rice, Buckhorn and Pigeon lakes among others, making it an attractive option.

Opportunity accessed through Ontario Junior Bass Nation (OJBN) has taken Trevor Barnucz considerably further and will take him further yet. In 2025, he qualified through the OJBN high school division's annual tournament to compete at Clarks Hill Lake near Augusta, Ga. Subsequently, Trevor was named a member of Team



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTOS)

Trevor Barnucz (right) went from bragging rights to a bit of taunting with this pickerel, as enjoyed by his father, Jason (left, rear)

Ontario for the Zimbabwe Youth Invitational, Dec. 7-9 at the African nation's Darwendale Dam. The three-nation tournament will bring together some of the best young anglers from their respective nations. Its goals extend beyond fishing into developing leadership, sportsmanship, teamwork, cultural awareness and a deeper appreciation for conservation and the outdoors.

Zimbabwe Bass Nation is providing boats and boat captains. Across the three days, Trevor will be partnered with competitors from the host nation, South Africa and Canada respectively. Total weight across three days will decide the champion.

We were working a lot closer to home this mid-July morning, launching from Normandale at 7 a.m. under smoke-tinged blue skies. The opportunity to join a pair of knowledgeable and experienced kayak anglers had been delayed a day due to the threat of inclement weather. When holding forth on one of his favourite seminar topics, be that in his own backyard or at the Toronto Sportsmen's Show, Jason emphasizes the importance of safety first, particularly when heading out onto "big water" – Long Point's outer bay certainly qualifying. My biggest takeaway on the day was the healthy respect both held for wind and water conditions and making sure both were acceptable before heading out on any water, large or small.

The senior Barnucz's three pillars for kayak fishing are always wearing one's personal flotation device, being aware of water temperature in terms of hypothermia risk and finally, weather conditions including wind direction and velocity. The latter relates directly to water conditions both in terms of safety and comfort; the former helps define where to fish, in terms of features minimizing or moderating wind's effects. One of the advantages of kayak fishing is the ability to go places other watercraft can't in terms of depth and rocks, for example. They can handle bigger water when safe, and alternatively, pivot to either smaller lakes or streams if not. A forecast of northerly winds expected to die down mid-morning led to our launch destination and route paralleling the scenic bluffs toward Fisher's Glen and Port Dover.

The Barnucz boys took to the water in sit-on kayaks befitting their commitment to the sport, wide and stable pedal drive (PDL) units locked and loaded with holders for gear including a half-dozen poles apiece, myriad tackle options, nets, mounted electronics and matching red flags to help announce their presence to passing boaters. They both carried paddles, but propulsion was mostly from bicycle-style foot pedals driving underwater propellers, both forward and reverse. That style allows anglers to keep their hands free for fishing, rather than paddling.

I was kicking it old school in a sit-in fishing model purchased on an end-of-the-year sale for \$450, underlining

the approach's affordability level. There is special joy to be found while tooling across the water at 70 miles per hour in a bass boat, however while lacking that speed and sexiness, kayaks also don't come with an associated price tag or require gas, oil and maintenance.

Having fished for many years in standard kayaks, including a couple of short, light 25-pound units a son-in-law and I carry a kilometre or so into Lake Superior Provincial Park's Orphan Lake in search of brook trout, my current basic "fishing yak" weighs under 65 pounds, easy enough to swing onto the roof of a mini-van. It has a pair of rod holders behind the seat and offers significant upgrades in access (a bigger hole for a guy to put a grandchild on his lap or struggle in and out of with a crappy knee and crappy hip), width, capacity and stability. My wife has an equivalent sit-on model, not so much for fishing as ease of access and stability.

"Getting what you pay for" translates into a larger platform for more gear on the Barnucz units, more space to change presentation, the stability to stand up and fish should one choose, netting fish more easily, lessening odds of dropping one's phone overboard and a much better seat. No matter what you do, it's been my experience that sooner or later, butt comfort becomes an issue on hard plastic.

We paddled north-easterly into a rising sun, watching and learning from two experts, fishing quickly became fishing. Whether in a kayak or boat, structure is structure, weed patches and lines and rocky bottoms and piles holding bass in three species. As the guy with two rod holders and a camera stuck to a jerk bait and "wacky" options, Jason and Trevor worked their way through a variety of colours and presentations, greater effort and diversity represented in greater success. Both do fish tournaments, including kayak-specific events. This day was not about competition, but if it had been, Trevor would have finished well atop the leaderboard, moving sequentially up through a three-pound "largie" to a three-pound, 14-ounce smallmouth bass, taken on a tiny piece of drop-shotted plastic.

A wind that instead of dying, swung to the east and hung tough, pushed us back toward Normandale at noon from a highly educational and enjoyable morning. There is an intimacy to fishing almost directly at the waterline, only enhanced by nature's surrounding beauty, a bald eagle soaring over the Erie shoreline's unique sand bluffs. More than bragging rights will be on the line for Trevor when he hits the unfamiliar waters of the Darwendale Dam reservoir this December. But the lessons he's learned in his own Norfolk County backyard will definitely be going with him.

"My goal is to bring home gold. We want to bring home gold for Team Canada," he concluded. "This is the first time we've had a large youth team, and we want to pull out the victory."



Jason Barnucz encourages putting safety first when fishing from a kayak, particularly on big water. He stresses always wearing one's personal flotation device, being aware of water temperature as it relates to potential hypothermia and weather conditions including wind.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - JULY/AUGUST 2026

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5

East Zorra-Tavistock Council meeting
9 a.m.
Council Chambers
89 Loveys Street East, Hickson

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7

Optimist Club of Tavistock Friday Night Fries
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Optimist Food Trailer
Tavistock Optimist Park

MONDAY, AUGUST 10

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Born2Eat, Fo'Cheezy, Beavertails
Donations to Grace United Church
Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11

Perth East council meeting
7 p.m.
Council chambers
25 Mill Street East, Milverton

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

Tavistock & District Historical Society Museum
1-4 p.m. (other times by appointment)
Email: info@tavistockhistory.ca or call 519-655-3334. All welcome.
37 Maria Street, Tavistock

MONDAY, AUGUST 17

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Sigg's, Pablas Street of India, SWAT
Donations to Tavistock Agricultural Society
Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18

Free Caregiver Connection peer support groups
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Worried about your child or youth? Parents and Caregivers for Mental Health (PCMH) offers free peer support groups for caregivers, in person, virtual, or hybrid. Visit family.cmho.org or email oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca for more information.
Revel Realty Woodstock,
111 Huron Street, Woodstock

Wellesley Council meeting

6:45 p.m.
Council chambers
4805 William Hastings Line, Crosshill

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church Annual Red Shed Ham and Corn Roast
Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Meal at 6:30 p.m.
Ham and Corn Roast, Live Country Music and Summer Fun. Fundraising for Wellesley Food Cupboard, Milverton Food Bank, and Youth attending National Youth Conference in B.C. For tickets call Carol Horst at 519-274-4494 or email: carolh@cwisp.ca
St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church
1998 Line 45, Perth East

MONDAY, AUGUST 24

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Berlin 95, Ish n Chips, El Milagro
Donations to Camp Bimini
Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

Wilmot Council meeting

6-7 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road W., Baden

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

Wellesley Township Fall Fair 2nd annual Senior Tea
2:30 - 4:00 p.m.
Seniors and almost seniors from Wellesley Township and their surrounding communities are invited to a special afternoon celebrating the people who have helped build and support the rich tradition of the Wellesley Fall Fair. Live entertainment by the "Dynamic Duo". Call Joanne Stewart for details-519-658-0764.
Bill Gies Recreation Centre
1401 Queens Bush Rd, Wellesley

MONDAY, AUGUST 31

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Born2Eat, Los Rolling Tacos, Fo'Cheezy
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Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

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65 Boulee St., New Hamburg

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Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.
Tavistock Seniors Card Games
Monday drop in 1-4 p.m.
Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.

FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES CONT

VON Senior Exercise Drop-In Standing Class
Tuesday and Thursday 9-10 a.m.
To register contact 519-539-1231 ext. 6319
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.
VON Senior Exercise Drop-In Sitting Class
Tuesday and Thursday 10:25-11:25 a.m.
To register contact 519-539-1231 ext. 6319
Village Manner, 98 Woodstock St., Tavistock

TAVISTOCK & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM DISPLAYS

Museum Display: "The Glasgow Warehouse"
Can be viewed anytime
Tavistock Home Hardware (Front window),
24 Woodstock Street S., Tavistock
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Check out the earliest Hickson baseball teams and the display full of vintage equipment. History and photos of the Hickson Baseball teams dating back to the early 1900's complement the display.
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm
runs until the end of September 2026.
Ezt Township Administration Building (lobby),
89 Loveys Street, Hickson

PLATTSVILLE & DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY

Plattsville & District Heritage Society exhibit "Holidays & Celebrations That Bring Us Together"
June 6 to September 19 | Saturdays 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
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Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.
Contact: thewtgazette@gmail.com

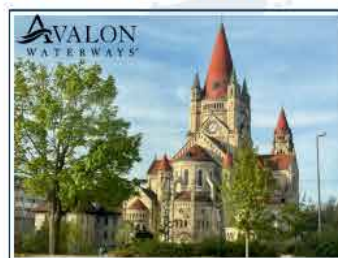
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- If your event is not free admission or you would like to include more details than stated above, The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette offers the following options for promoting your community events:
 - Coming Events Word Ad (50 word max.) - \$10 + hst
 - Coming Events Boxed Word Ad (50 word max.) - \$15 + hst
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| 2. Two | Americans |
| 3. Philippe Petit | 8. Chickpeas |
| 4. The lion | 9. Lent |
| 5. Nike | 10. Papal Conclave |
| 6. Venus | |

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

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