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(DIANE DANEN PHOTO)

Presley Moser, seven, and her brother, Jett Moser, four, enjoy lunch with grandparents Julie Mackie and Gary Hallman during the Childhood Cancer BBQ in Petersburg. The family was happy to support the important cause.

Community supports childhood cancer fundraising barbecue

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

Bechthold Home Improvements hosted its 22nd annual Childhood Cancer BBQ on Thursday, July 9.

Held from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., the annual fundraiser welcomed more than 700

visitors who enjoyed barbecued hamburgers, hotdogs, sausage on a bun and refreshments, with all proceeds supporting childhood cancer charities.

With more than 200 additional people attending this year compared to 2025, organizer Warren Bechthold said the event continues to grow thanks to the

generosity of community members, businesses and suppliers from across Canada and even the United States.

Bechthold credited the many local businesses and sponsors whose support allows every dollar raised through food sales to go directly to the charities. A

Continued on page 2

Province invests nearly \$90K in Perth County through Rural Ontario Development program

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae met with Rural Ontario Development (ROD) program funding recipients at The Perth Farmhouse earlier this week.

The Ontario government is investing \$89,468.06 to support economic growth and long-term prosperity in Perth County, aiming to strengthen local economies, support rural workers and assist communities in planning for long-term growth.

Across the region, four projects are receiving funding through the first intake of the ROD program. Funding recipients include The Perth Farmhouse, Perth County, Broken Rail Brewing Company and Klomp's Home and Garden.

Casey and Steve Howanyk, owners of The Perth Farmhouse, said the funding will be used for architectural changes that will allow them to continue offering services during the shoulder season.

"It's incredible to receive the funds," said

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Community supports childhood cancer fundraising barbecue

Continued from page 1

complete list of community partners will be published in next week's Gazette as a thank-you for their generous contributions.

"We are extremely grateful for all the support from our community and the many businesses that make the annual Childhood Cancer BBQ such a success," said Bechthold.

Area service clubs also play an important role in the fundraiser's success. The Petersburg Optimist Club provides the barbecue equipment, while the New Hamburg Optimist Club supplies the event tents. Members from numerous community organizations also volunteer their time throughout the day.

"The Lord has blessed us with three healthy grandchildren. Our family hasn't had to deal with childhood cancer firsthand, but we recognize the challenges many families face, and we are committed to helping children and families affected by the disease," Bechthold said.

"Our plan is to keep doing it. You never really know the impact the support has on families and individuals, but hopefully it is making a positive difference. There will always be a family that needs a little extra help. Our family and our business have been blessed by the support of this community for more than 40 years, and this is our way of giving back. We also hope it

encourages others to get involved and support their community."

The event is truly a family effort. Bechthold and his wife, Bernice, work alongside their children, Stacy, Stewart and Leslie, as well as approximately 40 dedicated volunteers who help run the annual fundraiser. Granddaughters Victoria, Lydia and Ada were among the many volunteers helping throughout the day along with some of their friends.

Special guest Mike Farwell, a well-known Waterloo Region broadcaster, journalist and community advocate stopped by the barbecue to show his support for this worthwhile cause.

Also attending was New Hamburg resident Melanie Austin, a childhood cancer survivor, speaker, advocate and fundraiser. Three years ago, Austin shared her personal story publicly for the first time at the barbecue, speaking about her battle with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. Since then, she has become a passionate advocate for childhood cancer awareness, using her experiences to inspire hope and encourage others facing similar challenges.

Last year's barbecue raised just over \$38,000. Organizers set a goal of raising \$40,000 this year and, as of July 12 at 3 p.m., donations had already reached \$40,700.

One hundred per cent of proceeds raised



From left: Neil and Gloria Campbell of Foxboro Green in Baden, along with Faye, Jim and Pam Mahoney of Petersburg, have been attending the Childhood Cancer BBQ for many years. Jim Mahoney, a former employee of Bechthold Home Improvements, helped out with the event for many years. Today, he enjoys attending as a guest while continuing to support this important cause.

through the barbecue and online donations will be shared among three organizations: Children's Health Foundation (London Children's Hospital), The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation and the Waterloo Regional Health Network Foundation in support of childhood cancer.

Those who were unable to attend but would still like to support the fundraiser may make an online donation until the end of July. To make a donation online, visit www.bechtholdhome.com/childhood-cancer-bbq.



(DIANE DANEN PHOTOS)

Bechthold Home Improvements, located at 1239 Notre Dame Dr. in Petersburg, was bustling with activity with more than 700 people attending the annual Childhood Cancer BBQ.



Guests at the Childhood Cancer Fundraising BBQ visit while waiting to be served as event organizer Warren Bechthold welcomes a first-time attendee.

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Province invests nearly \$90K in Perth County through Rural Ontario Development program

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Steve Howanyk. "Without it, I don't know that we could have taken the leap to extend our operations. It would have taken a lot longer and a lot more sacrifices for us."

Rae said the program demonstrates the provincial government's continued commitment to supporting rural and northern communities across Ontario.

"Strong rural communities are built through partnerships that support local businesses, encourage investment, and create new opportunities," said Rae. "This provincial funding will help Perth County and its local businesses build on the great work already underway, strengthen the local economy and enhance the quality of life that makes our communities such great places to live, work and visit."

Alongside The Perth Farmhouse, which received \$10,000 to help diversify its winery for year-round tourism, Klomp's Home and Garden received \$8,607.12 to increase roadside appeal, Broken Rail Brewing Company received \$309.69 for equipment and accessibility expansion, and Perth

County Tourism received \$70,551.25 for its ongoing wayfinding signage project throughout Perth County.

"When there are investments into our rural communities, the impact helps strengthen local economies, support small businesses and create an environment where tourists and locals alike can enjoy the amazing places and businesses close to home, and that matters not just here in Perth County, but across rural and northern communities," said Rae.

Through the first intake of the ROD program, the province is investing more than \$5.5 million in 116 projects across rural Ontario. The Rural Ontario Development program supports local projects from municipalities, small businesses, not-for-profits and Indigenous groups. Since 2019, Ontario has invested \$34.3 million in 653 projects through the ROD program and the former Rural Economic Development Fund.

The third intake for the ROD program opens Aug. 17. To learn more, visit ontario.ca.



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Marty Klomp of Klomp's Home and Garden, Meredith Forget, director of economic development and tourism, Casey Howanyk of The Perth Farmhouse, Perth County Warden Dean Trenowsky, Justin Dias, economic development officer for Perth County, Steve Howanyk of The Perth Farmhouse and others pose in front of one of the 10 picture frame signs funded through the Rural Ontario Development program.

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Perth County paramedics launch summer care kits for people experiencing homelessness

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

While responding to a call, Perth County paramedic Nicole Player recognized a need in the community and decided to bring a new idea forward to the Perth County Paramedic Services Community Care Fund.

"The idea for the community care kits came from a call I attended for someone experiencing homelessness who declined transport to the hospital," she said. "As paramedics, we often respond to calls where the person doesn't end up needing or wanting to be transported to the hospital. We were in a rural part of the county where access to community resources can be limited, and it didn't sit right with me to leave knowing we couldn't offer anything beyond medical care."

She said the experience inspired her to develop an initiative to distribute care kits containing summer essentials to people experiencing homelessness.

"The goal was to create something simple that our crews could carry and provide in the moment, when someone needs a little extra support," she said.

The care kits are intended to provide relief by supplying much-needed items during the summer months. Each kit includes sunscreen, electrolyte beverages, bug spray and personal care items to help individuals stay safe, hydrated and healthy, particularly during periods of hot weather.

The initiative is funded through the Perth County Paramedic Services Community Care Fund, which supports projects and initiatives that improve the wellbeing of



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)
From left, Perth County paramedics Nicole Player, Lucy Kus and Jodi Grobbeck display the summer care kits that will be distributed to individuals experiencing homelessness throughout Perth County.

vulnerable residents throughout Perth County.

The fund was established in 2015 after paramedics noticed many people wanted to express their gratitude through monetary donations or gifts. Instead, Perth County Paramedic Services created the fund to accept donations that could be re-invested into the community. The fund is also supported through payroll contributions from paramedics.

"When someone brings forward an initiative, like Nicole, we have funds available

to help," said Tristan Barter, deputy chief of operations with Perth County Paramedic Services. "The suggestion is brought to the committee, and we decide how to use the funds to help the community."

Other initiatives supported by the fund include Christmas hampers, assistance for families and children in need, taxi rides for people who cannot afford transportation to and from the hospital, dry socks for people experiencing homelessness and food vouchers.

"We really try to talk to people and

learn what our communities need," said Debbie Hunter, deputy chief of mobile integrated health supporting the Community Paramedic Program in Perth County. "Whether that's kids, older adults, those experiencing homelessness or even someone working outside all summer, we want to help everyone."

Beyond the physical items in the care kits, Player said they provide another opportunity for paramedics to connect with vulnerable members of the community and start conversations.

"I hope these care kits remind people that they're seen and that someone cares," said Player. "Sometimes a bottle of water, sunscreen or bug spray won't solve the challenges someone is facing, but it can make their day a little easier and show compassion in a moment when it's needed most."

"At the end of the day, we're all members of the same community, and everyone deserves to be treated with dignity, kindness and respect."

In addition to personal care items, the kits include information on accessing local community support services. A total of 100 care kits will be distributed by Perth County paramedics throughout the summer.

For more information or to donate to the Perth County Paramedic Services Community Care Fund, visit the Perth County website at

www.perthcounty.ca/living-here/paramedic-services/paramedic-community-care-fund/.

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Oxford County council approves pay raise for next council

Move passed by a 7-3 vote

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Oxford County councillors have voted to give members of the next council a pay hike.

In a recorded vote, Warden Marcus Ryan, Deputy warden Bernia Martin and councillors Brian Petrie, David Mayberry, Jim Palmer, Mark Peterson and Phil Schaefer voted in favour of the increases. Councillors Deb Tate, Jerry Acchione and Deb Gilvesy voted against the move.

"You will see adjustments recommended to all three positions – warden, deputy warden and councillor – ... to maintain the 60th percentile pay target," said the county's director of human services, Rebecca Smith. "We are also recommending to keep the practice consistent of adjusting council's pay based on whatever is

approved for a non-union adjustment in each budget year."

In dollar figures, the move will cost taxpayers about \$40,000 in the next term of council. The warden jumps from \$110,455 to \$111,830; the next deputy warden will earn \$46,613, up from \$41,841; and eight councillors will see an increase of \$3,844 to \$41,336, up from \$37,492.

"I'm not going to be on council, so I'm not going to be getting the raise," said outgoing warden Marcus Ryan, who has already said he will not be seeking re-election as Zorra Township's mayor. "I voted for it because I'm still going to be an Oxford resident, I'm still going to use the services, I'm still going to pay the taxes. I very much want us to attract and retain the best councillors we can to spend my tax dollars."

East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer did not comment on the increase, but Woodstock and Oxford County Coun. Tait made it clear why she voted against the move.

"Times have changed and it's very hard on our residents with all the (tax) increases we have had over the years, and of course the cost of living is up."

Gilvesy explained politics can be a difficult job at times, but she doesn't see her role as one of employment.

"We're not here to collect a paycheque or a wage or a salary. We're here for public service."

Ryan said lowering compensation in any sector does not result in increased productivity. He added more people will not be attracted to the warden's chair without offering a good wage.

"That's just not the way the world works. Whether you're an Oxford County councillor or a McDonald's worker or a farm operator, no matter what your business is, you only attract and retain better people by offering better compensation."

Tait explained her concern is people will run for public office just for the monetary rewards as opposed to the right reasons.

"The people who are doing it for the money means we're not getting the best people to serve the community and I've seen it. ... We're not the private sector and

it's not a job."

Petrie said the workload for members of council shouldn't be overlooked and added he treats his position as mayor of Ingersoll as a full-time role.

"I don't know how someone would not treat it as a full-time position and be able to say you're giving all you could give. Yes, it is public service ... but you need to be able to give the time it deserves. You see the size of the agendas, the amount of reading it takes and the research; there are a lot of things going on. I don't think this increase is extravagant whatsoever."

Tait pushed back, saying serving as an elected official does not prevent someone from having a career outside of politics.

"You use your time wisely. ... I think it's a terrible comment to say you can't be employed to be a mayor or something. That's incorrect."

"Just sharing my opinion," added Petrie.

Some municipalities in Ontario have other methods of setting elected officials' pay, including London and Guelph, which use independent citizen remuneration committees to review council compensation. Ottawa has a policy that ties annual cost-of-living adjustments for council remuneration to inflation, avoiding annual votes on raises. Mississauga has also used an automatic annual indexing formula for council compensation.

Multiple charges laid following impaired driving collision in Wellesley Township

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

Waterloo Regional Police have laid multiple charges following a single-vehicle collision in Wellesley Township.

On July 10 at approximately 5:10 a.m., Waterloo Regional Police north division officers observed a vehicle with significant damage being driven near Kressler Road and Erbsville Road, just west of Erbsville.

Through the investigation, officers allege the driver of a black Nissan Rogue had lost control of the vehicle, left the roadway and then attempted to continue driving.

There were no reported physical injuries.

As a result of the investigation, a

23-year-old man from Kitchener was arrested. Police say the man was already subject to a provincial driver's licence suspension and a Canada-wide driving prohibition.

The accused has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired
- Operation while impaired – blood alcohol concentration
- Dangerous operation
- Drive while prohibited
- Drive while under suspension (two counts)
- Novice driver with blood alcohol concentration above zero

The accused was held for a bail hearing.

Anyone with information or dash-camera footage related to the incident is asked to contact Waterloo Regional Police at 519-570-9777 ext. 7030.



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OPP signs 30Forward pledge

Program renews commitment to equity and advancing women in policing

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The Ontario Provincial Police is joining the 30Forward initiative, a program aiming to increase the representation of women in policing.

Inspired by the 30x30 initiative, 30Forward is a Canadian movement dedicated to recruiting, retaining and advancing women in policing. By signing the pledge, the OPP is committing to working toward women representing 30 per cent of its uniform officers.

In 2024, approximately 1,300 women were serving in uniform roles within the OPP, which is approximately 21.5 per cent of uniform members.

Oxford OPP media relations Const. Randi Crawford said, while she is not formally on the organizing committee, she is actively involved in supporting the program through media and recruiting events.

"I am always hopeful when new initiatives are started. Anytime there is something new, it usually catches the attention of a lot of people. I'm hopeful that it catches the attention of possible new female recruits."

She added the campaign will help break down the stigma that policing is still more of a masculine career.

"Women are going to be able to see more women with personalities similar to their own doing great things in policing. I think focusing on getting females interested in a career with us and talking about transferable skills they already possess can really open some minds and create some interest and excitement for some women."

As part of Crawford's role with the OPP, she helps organize and schedule attendance at career fairs and makes herself available to take phone calls and emails from members of the community interested in policing.

"I mentor female auxiliary officers and cadets as they navigate opportunities in the organization. But I think the most important role I play is by trying to be the best role model I can possibly be. Being a female police officer with great family, friends, colleagues and community partners, I try to lead by example."

She added she cares for the community and tries the best she can, personally, to apply positive interactions in her career as a police officer.

"By truly loving what I do and sharing that passion with others, I hope to inspire other women around me to fall in love with the career as well."

Crawford said she feels the OPP will eventually reach the 30 per-cent target in the future.

"I think we can. We aren't too far off. I have seen the number of women in policing increase greatly since 2011 when I started in Halton and 2014 when I joined OPP."

She also wants people to realize even though there is a push for hiring more women, they are also pushing to hire in general.

"We need more people with good morals who are hardworking and mentally and physically strong; people who care about the safety of themselves and others and who truly want to make a difference in the communities they serve. It's not an easy career, but it is a rewarding one."

In addition to enhancing recruitment strategies for women, the OPP said it is committed to identifying and removing barriers that may inhibit increasing representation across all ranks, including leadership roles.

"The OPP has long held the view that when we reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, we are in a better position to respond to their safety needs and concerns. Signing on to the 30Forward initiative is a step closer to achieving this goal," a press release said.

"The OPP is pleased to partner with 30Forward and renew our commitment to creating opportunities for women in policing," added OPP Commissioner Thomas Carrique in the release. "Every woman who joins policing helps build a future where the next generation sees no limits on who can serve"

Deputy commissioner Kari Dart said women belong in policing because their voice, perspective and leadership make the profession stronger.

"30Forward provides the OPP the tools and network to strengthen opportunities for women within the organization."

30Forward is a Canadian initiative that invites police leaders to make clear, measurable commitments to support women throughout their policing careers. More information is available at www.30forward.ca.



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Castle Concert Series 2026 keeps audiences swinging in Baden

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Summer is the perfect time to enjoy live outdoor music, and Castle Concert Series 2026 continues to provide residents with an evening of entertainment in the picturesque setting of Castle Kilbride.

Although last week's concert was moved from Thursday to Saturday because of rain,

the Uptown Swing Band treated the audience to an energetic performance on the front lawn of the historic Baden mansion.

The 17-piece ensemble delighted the crowd with the rich sound of a traditional big band, performing classic swing and jazz favourites that had audience members tapping their toes throughout the evening.

The concert featured standout

performances from the band's talented musicians, showcasing the trombone, clarinet, trumpet, saxophone, keyboard, bass guitar and drums through a variety of solos and ensemble arrangements.

Among the evening's selections were "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Bye Bye Blackbird," "The Charleston," "St. Louis Blues" and "Baby Won't You Please Come

Home." Each song was introduced with a brief history of its origins and the artists who helped make it famous.

Castle Concert Series 2026 continues throughout the summer with free outdoor concerts on the front lawn of Castle Kilbride. Performances are typically held Thursdays from 7-8 p.m., weather permitting, with admission by donation.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

The Uptown Swing Band entertains the crowd during a Castle Concert Series 2026 performance on the front lawn of Castle Kilbride in Baden. Originally scheduled for Thursday evening, the concert was moved to Saturday because of inclement weather.



Audience members rewarded the Uptown Swing Band with a standing ovation after the 17-piece ensemble performed an evening of classic swing and jazz favourites as part of Castle Concert Series 2026 at Castle Kilbride.

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SCAN TO VIEW

Stratford Film Festival brings the endearing film, *Dancing on the Elephant*, to Stratford city hall

LISA CHESTER

Contributed to the Gazette

A special VIP screening of the heartfelt film, *Dancing on the Elephant*, written by New Hamburg's Lisa Hagen is being brought to Stratford by the Stratford Film Festival (SFF) for two showings on July 22 at 4 and 7 p.m. with a reception in between.

The Q and A following will feature actor Sheila McCarthy who plays the character Nora as well as Hagen, both of whom will be on hand for the reception – an opportunity to meet and greet fellow film enthusiasts and learn more about one of Canada's most gracious actors and the writing process that made the film so real.

"Lisa is a writer from New Hamburg and this film is adapted from her stage play. What is unique is she actually got to adapt the play to film herself, which is quite unusual. Usually there is a novel or a play to adapt by a different screenwriter. So, Lisa will be there to discuss the behind-the-scenes process of what it was like adapting her play to screenplay and seeing it come alive on the big screen," said SFF director Megan Smith-Harris.

Sheila McCarthy plays Nora, whose family decides for her, not with her, that it is time for her to move into a retirement



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Nora (Sheila McCarthy) and Edna (Mary Walsh) form an unlikely bond in a retirement home in New Hamburg screenwriter Lisa Hagen's film, *Dancing on the Elephant*.

home. Smith-Harris thinks she is perfect for the role because of the sense of vulnerability and relatability she carries. In the residence, she befriends Edna, played by Mary Walsh of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* fame.

"A lot of people don't realize that Mary

Walsh is not just a brilliant comic actor, she's also a fantastic dramatic actor and she plays Edna, who's already in the retirement home. They form an unlikely friendship and she's, as Mary is often portrayed, irreverent, she's funny, she's blunt, but underneath all that, there's a lot of compassion and loneliness, which I think they capture really well," Smith-Harris said.

Hagen was inspired by her grandmother who she was very close with and would tell wild stories which she incorporated into a one act play. That evolved into a full play set in Cape Breton and it just kind of grew more and more and had more of an element of living life to the fullest right to the end.

"I really enjoyed writing for film because of being able to move to different locations and being able to have flashbacks more easily. It really afforded a bigger dramatic range," said Hagen. "This film is very collaborative. As a writer, you sell your script and it leaves your tender loving care, the producers and directors now own it. These producers were very kind and allowed me to do rewrites with them so there was a collaborative effort there, adding a finer touch to the story."

All writers feel a connection to their characters, but the one she felt the most connected to is Edna because she carried a lot of Hagen's grandmother in her. McCarthy's Nora came out of the gate slowly but picked up speed.

"She became a very grounded person, a character that drives the dramatic engine so that character grew and grew and then Sheila got a hold of her and just made it a beautiful role. She made it grow from analog television to 4K television," said Hagen.

McCarthy loved the script right away upon reading it and was attracted to the project immediately.

"It was fairly immediate; I loved the idea of this friendship that develops in their later years and the Thelma and Louise aspect of two old broads trying to escape their lives in this retirement home. I loved the heart and I love the friendship. Then when I heard Mary Walsh might be attached, that sealed the deal for me. Mary and I have done several projects together and I thought that's perfect casting and these roles were kind of tailor made for us in a way," McCarthy said.

This is a story worth telling and a story well told by the author. The film was shot in Halifax, making it a dream to work on with a crew that was top notch and warm and friendly as East Coasters are known to be. Together, Walsh and McCarthy laughed a lot and cried a lot.

Putting a loved one in a retirement home is something almost every family must face at one point or another so this film will resonate with everyone. The most surprising demographic came in St. John's when there was a group of students from Labrador doing an educational aspect of the festival.

"That was a group of eight young women age 13 through 16 and they bawled through the whole movie and they came up after and said, 'I have to call my grandma right away,' and I was so surprised that it resonated with them because you don't think 13-year-olds are thinking about that," Hagen said, smiling.

For more information, visit stratford-filmfestival.com.



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Model Train Day at Brocksden Country School Museum

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

Brocksden Country School Museum welcomed model train enthusiasts and families on Saturday, July 4, for Model Train Day.

Held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the event attracted approximately 70 guests who enjoyed a fun-filled day of miniature railway magic.

Visitors had the opportunity to explore eight different displays featuring a variety of model train scales, including Z Scale, N Scale, HO Scale, Garden Railway Scale and a Brio and Thomas wooden train layout. Children also had the chance to get hands-on with a Thomas track and train set designed for play.

Sharing their impressive layouts and collections were Dave and Catherine MacDonald of Kitchener, Richard and Barb Owen of Woodstock, Roger and Elaine Cook, Jim and Pat Campbell, and Daniel and David Campbell of Perth East.

The museum will continue to offer a variety of hands-on events throughout the summer. On Aug. 8 at 10:30 a.m., participants can create a leather pouch using simple hand-stitching techniques, followed by a 2 p.m. workshop where participants can make a handbound leather journal. Pre-registration is required for both workshops by contacting Jessie Campbell.

On Aug. 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., a skilled blacksmith will bring history to life with a working forge demonstration, showing how raw metal is heated, hammered and shaped using traditional techniques passed down through generations.

For more information or to register for upcoming workshops, contact Campbell at brocksdenschool@gmail.com or call 519-271-2619.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Jim and Pat Campbell display their train sets at the Model Train Day at Brocksden Country School Museum.



From left, Catherine and Dave MacDonald of Kitchener and Kim Schelhaas of Stratford, a Brocksden teacher, enjoy the day at Brocksden Country School Museum.



Elaine Cook proudly displays the wooden train and track she created, noting that her husband, Roger, helped with a small part of the project.



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Unique Ural motorcycle draws attention at NEAT breakfast

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

While vintage tractors were the main attraction at the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club's recent breakfast gathering at Scran & Dram, one modern machine caught the attention of many club members.

Parked near the line of antique tractors was a nearly new 2023 Ural motorcycle complete with its distinctive sidecar.

Owner Steve Gerber of Wellesley said the motorcycle's rugged military-inspired design often attracts attention wherever it goes. Originally manufactured in Russia, Ural motorcycles have a long history and were once used for military purposes.

Powered by a 750 cc BMW-based engine, the three-wheeled motorcycle has a top speed of about 110 km/hr while carrying a passenger in the sidecar.

Gerber jokingly invited anyone interested to climb into the sidecar for a ride, though there were no volunteers, including the staff at Scran & Dram.

Many of the NEAT members laughed that riding their open-cab antique tractors through town provided plenty of excitement on its own.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)



Pictured left: Steve Gerber's 2023 Ural motorcycle features driven wheels on both the motorcycle and sidecar, giving it added traction and stability. Gerber says the three-wheel design means "you never have to worry about it falling over at sudden traffic stops." Pictured above: Wellesley's Steve Gerber's Ural motorcycle includes a sidecar with room for a spare wheel, luggage and extra fuel, making it well suited for long-distance touring.

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Free summer counselling program offers support for youth before problems become crises

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Summer break can be a welcome change of pace for school-aged children, but the end of the school year also means many lose easy access to the teachers, guidance counsellors and support staff they rely on throughout the year.

That's why the Interfaith Counselling Centre (ICC) in New Hamburg is once again offering free, drop-in counselling for children and teens every Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. until Sept. 4, providing barrier-free mental-health support throughout the summer. Counselling is available in person, by telephone or by video call.

The program, now in its second summer, is supported through funding from the Waterloo Region District School Board, along with community donations. ICC child and youth program manager Cathi Watson said the idea grew out of conversations with school-board staff, who recognized students lose access to many school-based mental-health supports during the summer months.

"We're aware that within the school system, they do have teachers or guidance counsellors, social workers (and) child and youth workers that they can talk to," Watson said. "During the summer, they don't have easy access to that."

While the ICC provides counselling year-round, Watson said the drop-in format offers immediate support without the wait that often comes with booking regular counselling appointments.

The service is designed to remove as many barriers as possible by offering flexible appointment options, free counselling and times that better fit teenagers' summer schedules.

"Anxiety and depression do not take a holiday for school holidays," Watson said. "Having something a little less formal that they could just do a walk-in or drop in and know that there's somebody to talk to, we felt was really important."

Watson said one of the biggest misconceptions about counselling is that people should only seek help during a major mental-health crisis.

"You don't have to have some major

crisis," she said. "You don't need to be suicidal, you don't need to have had your parent die. Obviously, those things, for sure, we are here and available. But that's when people think you should reach out for help."

"It can just be talking to someone if they're having a hard time with friend relationships, they're feeling kind of down through the summer, they've had a break-up, problems at home or they're just struggling with being a teenager."

The program is open to school-aged children and teens. Youth under 12 require parental permission, while those older than 12 may be able to access counselling independently in certain situations. Watson said the centre always prefers to involve families when appropriate but recognizes that isn't always possible.

Beyond providing immediate support, Watson hopes the program helps normalize counselling and reduce the stigma around seeking help.

She said introducing young people to counselling in a welcoming, non-threatening environment can make them more comfortable reaching out in the future.

"Sometimes it's just coming in for a walk-in session and they kind of go, 'Okay, so this is what it's about,' " Watson said, recalling one young client who admitted she expected a counsellor's office to resemble a doctor's examination room.

Instead, the youth found a comfortable space where talking openly felt natural.

Watson said counselling should be viewed much like any other aspect of health care.

"It doesn't have to be a major crisis," she said. "It can actually just be part of a little check-in; somebody to talk to and get a different perspective."

Students and families interested in learning more about the summer counselling program can contact the Interfaith Counselling Centre by calling 519-662-3092 or emailing admin@interfaithcounselling.ca. If Watson is unavailable on a given Friday, another ICC child and youth counsellor will be available to ensure no one seeking support is turned away.

For more information on ICC programs and services, visit www.interfaithcounselling.ca.

Hickson Lions Daze July 17th & 18th

FRIDAY JULY 17th

6:00 pm - 12:00 am **Adult Lounge**

Bar services available in Pavilion

Food & snacks available at Ball Booth

6:00 pm - 8:30 pm **Auction Sale**

Donated items/baking greatly appreciated

Viewing 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Auction begins at 7:00 pm

Contact Lawrence Clark @ 519-535-8222

7:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Co-Ed Baseball Tournament

Contact Rob McLaren @ 226-228-1944

8:30 pm - **Corn Hole Tournament**

Contact Dave McLaren @ 226-228-2717



Craklin's Fish & Chips Dinner

Tickets Available: Any Lions Member

Heather McKim @ 519-426-2048

Brad Smith @ 519-535-7051

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9:00 am - 11:00 am

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10:00 am - 1:00 pm

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11:00 am - 11:00 pm **Adult Lounge**

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SERVE program gives youth opportunity to strengthen communities and their faith

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Nearly 50 young people from across Ontario spent a week serving local communities through the SERVE program, lending a helping hand to charitable organizations while growing in their faith.

Tom Mosterd of Amulree, one of the local organizers, said SERVE is a youth exchange program organized through ThereforeGo Ministries that brings together young people from Christian Reformed churches across Canada and the United States to volunteer in communities away from home.

This year, the Stratford and New Hamburg area hosted 49 participants from Blyth, Clinton, Goderich, Leamington and the Peterborough area. The youth stayed with local host families connected to Christian Reformed churches while completing volunteer projects throughout the week.

Mosterd said Stratford-area youth have participated in SERVE exchanges for many years, travelling to communities as far away as Sioux City, Iowa, Grand Rapids, Mich., Thunder Bay and Washington, D.C. This marked the third year the Stratford area has served as a host site.

During the week, participants



(TOM MOSTERD PHOTO)

Participants in this year's SERVE program gather for a group photo during a week of volunteering in the Stratford and New Hamburg area. The 49 youths spent the week assisting local charities and non-profit organizations.

volunteered with a variety of local organizations, including the Stratford Connection

Centre, Emily Murphy Centre, Hidden Acres Camp near New Hamburg, the

New Hamburg Thrift Centre, The Local Community Food Centre, Shelterlink Youth Services, L'Arche Stratford, House of Blessing, the Salvation Army, Huron County Food Bank, Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, Festival City Co-operative Homes, Medical Mission and the Canadian Mental Health Association, among others.

Working in small groups, the youth tackled projects ranging from painting, landscaping and renovations to sorting food donations and assisting with other tasks requested by the organizations.

Beyond community service, the week also emphasized faith and personal growth. Participants gathered each evening for worship, music and guest speakers before meeting in small groups to reflect on the day's experiences.

The week concluded with a day of recreation, including a visit to The Factory in London, where the group enjoyed attractions such as trampolines, ropes courses and arcade games before wrapping up the program with fellowship at a local farm pond.

Mosterd said the youth worked hard throughout the week, completing a wide variety of projects while making a positive impact in the communities they served.

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Ghost Walks return to Castle Kilbride with expanded fall schedule

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For anyone who's ever wondered whether Castle Kilbride is truly haunted, there will be plenty of opportunities to find out this fall.

Ghost Walks will return to the historic Baden mansion beginning Aug. 22, followed by a Sept. 19 tour and weekly walks throughout October. Operated in partnership with Ghost Walks, the popular indoor tours combine local history, ghost stories and reported paranormal experiences inside one of Waterloo Region's best-known historic homes.

Ghost Walks owner Daniel Cumerlato said Castle Kilbride has become one of the company's most unique locations since the tours were introduced in 2019.

"We've done other houses and inside locations in the past," Cumerlato said. "Kilbride has kind of stood out from those."

Ghost Walks, which began in Hamilton in 2003, now offers tours throughout southern Ontario, including Hamilton, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Dundas. While many people are drawn by the paranormal, Cumerlato said history lovers make up much of the audience.

"I know most people who come on ghost tours are definitely history buffs," he said. "They love these old buildings and the ghost tours just add to that. ... If you're not coming for just ghost stories, then you're also getting that history, but in an extremely interesting way."

Castle Kilbride curator Sherri Gropp said the partnership began after she attended one of Cumerlato's tours at another National Historic Site.

"I attended one of Daniel's Ghost Walks at another National Historic Site and I was fascinated and knew the castle would be a great fit for the program," Gropp said. "We launched our first tour in July 2019."

After a pause during the COVID-19 pandemic, the tours returned in 2023 and have continued to grow in popularity.

"We are truly grateful for the partnership as it brings people that might not have visited otherwise," Gropp said. "Daniel's team brings fun and intrigue to all of their tours and it has been a wonderful partnership."

The castle has no shortage of stories for visitors.

Gropp said staff have experienced cupboard doors and other doors opening on their own, along with the unexplained scents of cigars and perfume.

"After working here for so many years, it does not phase us," she said. "We feel at home and comfortable with the energies inside the museum."

Museum assistant Taylor Hynes said she has come to appreciate what she believes are the castle's helpful resident spirits.

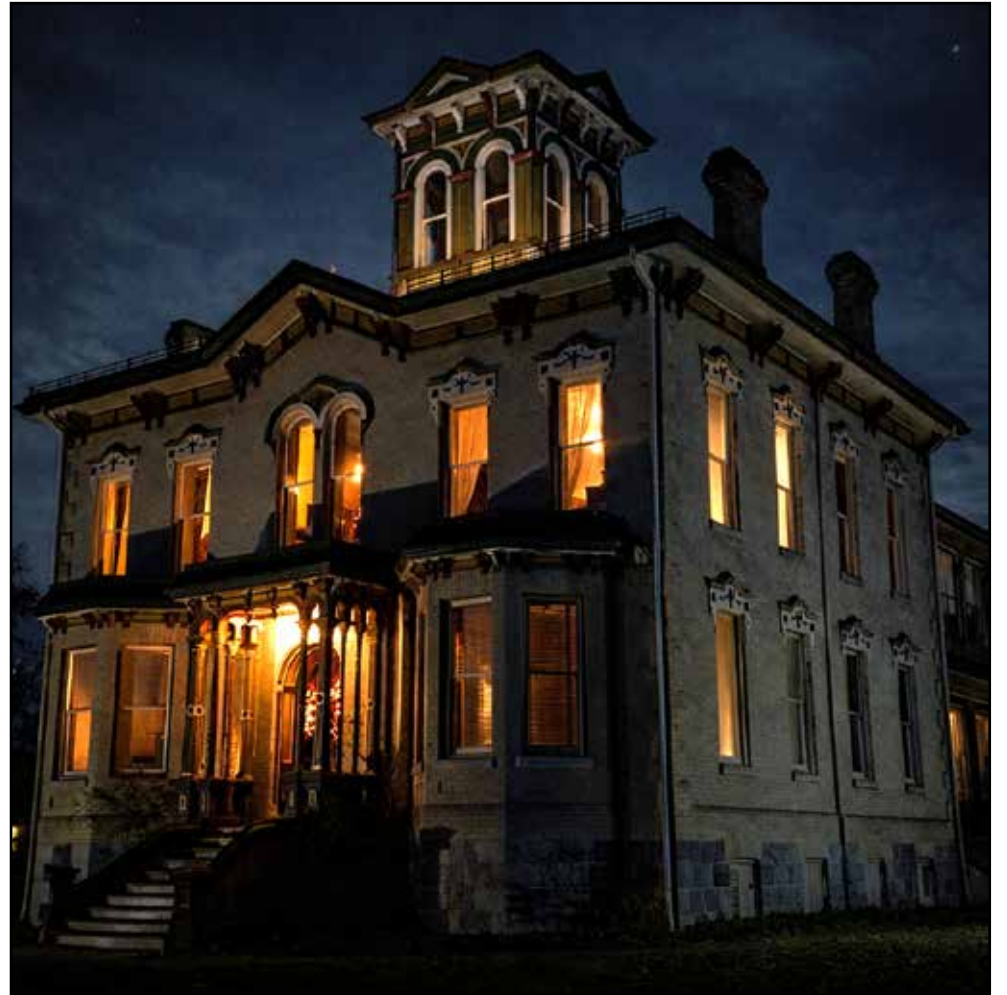
"If Sherri or I ever misplace something, we find if we ask the castle for help, the item we were searching for seems to reappear," Hynes said. "When the items are found, it's usually responded to with a 'Thanks James!'"

Castle Kilbride was built for James Livingston in 1877.

Hynes said the mansion also seems to come alive during special events.

"Being avid celebration and party throwers, it's nice to see the Livingstons' passions continue in the afterlife."

According to Cumerlato, guests have reported hearing unexplained tapping coming from a closet in what was once Laura



(PHOTO COURTESY OF CASTLE KILBRIDE)

Castle Kilbride will once again begin hosting ghost walks beginning Aug. 22.

Louise Livingston's bedroom, while paranormal investigators and psychics brought in before the tours launched also experienced unexplained phenomena.

The Castle Kilbride tours focus not only on reported hauntings but also on the unusual and darker aspects of the home's history. Participants explore the mansion

after hours, hearing stories of mysterious frescoes, haunted antiques and the castle's resident spirits.

Upcoming Ghost Walks are scheduled for Aug. 22, Sept. 19 and Oct. 3, 10, 17 and 24. Tickets are available through Ghost Walks at ghostwalks.com.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF GHOST WALKS)

Ghost walk guides bring the strange, dark and mysterious history of Castle Kilbride to life during the popular tours.

SHOW US YOUR WILMOT



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SHOW US YOUR WILMOT FACEBOOK PAGE)

Golden rays broke through dark clouds above New Dundee on the evening of July 10, creating a striking sunset display. The stunning scene was captured by Teresa Bricker-Muir on Queen Street near Cottage Lane and shared to the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook page.

Huron District Freemasons donate to three hospices

WENDY LAMOND

Gazette Correspondent

The role of district deputy grand master of the Freemasons is a prestigious honour to have and one that R.W. Bro. Jamie McFadden took very seriously as he's finishing his year in the role.

As his term comes to a close, McFadden shared that one of his goals was to resurrect and spearhead a chosen charity to support throughout his year as district deputy grand master of the Huron District Freemasons. What he picked was to raise funds for the three brick and mortar hospices located in Huron and Perth counties.

The Masonic Foundation of Ontario topped up the amount raised by 33 per cent, bringing the grand total to \$10,500. This amount was split evenly in three ways with \$3,500 going to Huron Hospice in Clinton, Jessica's House Hospice in Exeter and Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth in Stratford.

Last Wednesday, McFadden and Huron District Secretary W. Bro. Cliff Anderson travelled to all three locations

presenting cheques to the executive directors for the hospices who were all very grateful for the donation. Funds donated to the hospices will help towards the associated costs of running the facilities. The hospices all need to raise a substantial amount each year to keep them going.

In 2017, the South Huron district deputy master at the time ran a charity for Jessica's House. McFadden said if he were to ever take on the role, he would want to do something similar and thanks to the added 33 per cent from the foundation, McFadden was thrilled with what was accomplished.

The Freemasons are a brotherhood of all faiths that focus on making good men better and believe strongly in helping others. The Ontario Masons are made up of 38 districts with the first recorded Canadian member being from the mid 1600s. The Huron District is made up of Stratford, St. Marys, Listowel, Goderich, Carlow, Ailsa Craig, Granton, Mitchell and Exeter. The local club is alive with tradition, service and spirit.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Rotary Hospice executive director Louise Lepp was happy to receive her location's \$3,500 donation from Huron District Deputy Grant Master Jamie McFadden.

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New Hamburg Legion celebrates a century of service with community open house

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

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While the Royal Canadian Legion marks its 100th anniversary nationally this year, New Hamburg's Branch 532 is inviting the community to celebrate more than 70 years of local service with a special open house on July 17.

The event will highlight both the Legion's national milestone and the long history of Branch 532, which has been serving veterans, their families and the New Hamburg community since 1952.

The celebration will feature historical displays showcasing the branch's banners, Military Service Recognition books, youth education initiatives, membership information and historical artifacts. Visitors will also be able to watch videos from the In Their Voices veterans project and hear recordings of local veterans speaking to students.

The day will include a Lest We Forget flag-raising ceremony, tours of the clubhouse highlighting the branch's history, including past presidents and the Ladies Auxiliary, Legion merchandise for sale, a 50/50 draw and a ceremony welcoming new members at 2 p.m. Free hot dogs and fries will be served following the membership ceremony, with additional food available for purchase. The branch is also offering free Legion memberships for 2026.

The history of Branch 532 dates back to 1952, when members of Kitchener Branch 50 sought to establish a Legion in New Hamburg. Their efforts culminated in the issuance of a charter on Jan. 15, 1952, with George Thomas serving as the branch's first president. Two years later, members moved into their first Legion hall on Jacob Street, and the branch's inaugural poppy campaign raised \$300.

Throughout its history, the New Hamburg Legion has played an active role in community life. In the 1960s, members helped raise thousands of dollars toward the community swimming pool, supported Nithview Home, the Horticultural Society and Christmas hamper programs, and contributed to numerous other local initiatives.

As membership grew through the 1970s and 1980s, so did the branch's ambitions. Fundraising efforts eventually led to the construction of the Legion's current clubhouse, which officially opened in 1982. The mortgage was paid off just two years later, allowing members to focus on further improvements and additional community projects.

The branch has also been a leader in recognizing veterans and promoting remembrance. Members played a key role in replacing New Hamburg's cenotaph, helped establish the Canadian Women's Army Corps Memorial in Kitchener, created a memorial scholarship program for local students and supported

veterans' memorial projects throughout the region.

More recently, the branch weathered the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic before reopening its doors in 2023. In 2025, 11 branch members were recognized with King Charles III Coronation Medals for their service to the community.

As the Royal Canadian Legion celebrates its centennial nationwide, Branch 532's July 17 open house offers residents an opportunity to learn more about the organization's history, its ongoing support for veterans and the many ways it continues to serve the New Hamburg community.



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From the staff of
The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

Children explore the nature of God at Vacation Bible School

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

Nearly 185 children from preschool to Grade 8 spent the week of July 6-10 learning, singing, playing and growing in their faith during Vacation Bible School (VBS) at East Zorra Mennonite Church.

This year's program, Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God, was led by VBS directors Ashley Witzel and Chelsea Sider. For Witzel, it was her sixth year leading VBS, while Sider was stepping into the director role for the first time.

"The VBS directors take the lead in planning and organizing VBS, and then delegate to our volunteers," said Witzel. "We were blessed to have 185 kids join us, plus 70 wonderful volunteers. It takes so many hands," said Witzel.

Volunteers help make the week a success, serving in a variety of roles including station leaders, crew leaders, decorators, audio/visual, photographer, snack coordinators, the setup and takedown committee, and the Grandparent Gang.

"Most of our volunteers were members of East Zorra Mennonite Church, but this year we also welcomed volunteers from area churches and the wider community, which we love," said Witzel.

Throughout the week, children explored the rainforest-themed setting while learning about God's nature through daily Bible lessons and hands-on activities.

"As we step through the mist, we've discovered a rainforest world overflowing with wild waterfalls, towering trees and colourful creatures," said Witzel. "But even more than exploring the nature of the

rainforest, we are discovering the nature of God, who God is."

Each morning began with an assembly in the church sanctuary featuring worship music, a Bible story, a memory verse, the day's Bible point and opportunities for children to share "God Sightings," or ways they had seen God at work around them.

Children then rotated through four activity stations including Sticky Scripture, Rooted Bible Adventures, Wild Games and Imagination Station, where the daily Bible lesson was reinforced through games, crafts, experiments and interactive learning. When asked about their favourite activities, children gave enthusiastic reviews to all four activity stations.

Throughout the week, each day focused on a different Bible point, helping children learn that God is our creator, God knows

everything, God is our safe place, God is love and God is forever.

"Our prayer is that kids know who God is, that he made them and loves them, and that he sent his son Jesus to save us," said Witzel.

Daily offerings collected throughout the week, along with donations from families, were designated to support the Tavistock Assistance Program (TAP).

East Zorra Mennonite Church's Vacation Bible School once again provided a wonderful opportunity to bring children together to learn about faith, friendship and God's love.

"It's such a special outreach of God's love, and we're truly grateful for the support from our community," said Witzel.



(BETHANY KROPF PHOTOS)

Tyler Yantzi and Maverik Gruber take a break to cool off after playing games outdoors.



Hailey and Rebecca Ropp are pictured with the cross during the worship service at Vacation Bible School at East Zorra Mennonite Church.



Brian Wagler, as Dr. Flutterby, and Alexis Leis, as herself, perform a skit about Dr. Flutterby's rainforest adventure, where he searches for a special butterfly while discovering more about the nature of God.



Members of the worship team lead children in singing and actions during the worship service where they perform the song "God Is."

Amish families gather for Sunday worship near Topping



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Horse-drawn buggies are parked outside a farm near Topping as Amish families gather for Sunday worship in the property's driving shed. The horses are tied nearby while the service takes place.

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

While many church parking lots across Perth County fill with cars and trucks on Sunday mornings, Amish families near Topping arrive for worship by horse and buggy.

On this particular Sunday, families gathered at a farm east of Topping, where church services were held in a farm driving shed, continuing a longstanding tradition of rotating worship among Amish homes and farms.

For the Amish community, Sunday remains a day devoted to faith, family and rest. The familiar sight of horse-drawn buggies travelling the rural roads is a reminder of a lifestyle that continues to value simplicity and tradition.

QUIZ TIME

BY JAKE GRANT

1. The Daytona 500 takes place in what US state?
2. What is the largest ocean on Earth?
3. What are the birth flowers for July?
4. Who won Wimbledon 2026?
5. What part of the brain controls hunger?
6. The fear of fire is known as what?
7. What is the primary mountain range in Iran?
8. Who is Percy Jackson's father?
9. What was used to fill thermometers before mercury?
10. What is the name for what an archer carries their arrows in?

Answers found on classified page

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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.



by PeterS 2026

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Answers found on classified page

OBITUARY

WETTLAUFER, Earl George



Passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on July 8, 2026, in Wiarton, Ontario, just 4 days after the passing of his wife Joyce Wettlaufer.

Dear father of Ron Wettlaufer (Miriam), Carol Murray (Bill), Dave Wettlaufer, Brian Wettlaufer (Michelle), and Elaine O'Hara (Shawn). Earl will be missed by his grandchildren Leah, Rebecca, Kevin, Kayleigh, Morgan, Brooke, Caitlin, Regan, and Erin; and by his 17 great-grandchildren.

Predeceased by his mother Edna Mae Wettlaufer, son-in-law Bill Murray, sister Lorene Wettlaufer and husband Clarence.

Earl worked for the City of Kitchener for many years. He enjoyed the outdoors and loved spending time in cottage country and living in Red Bay.

At Earl's request, cremation has taken place. A celebration of life will take place at a later date.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to Brightshores Wiarton Hospital are appreciated and can be made through the funeral home.

Personal condolences may be posted at www.mark-jutzi-funeral-homes.ca

THANK YOU

Thank You!

How do we begin to thank so many people for everything!

We were overwhelmed by your phone calls, emails, cards, flowers, memorial donations, and more. Your love and kindness were so heartfelt and comforting.

Special thanks to the doctors and nursing staff at WRHN Midtown and St. Mary's Hospital, and to the Palliative Care teams who came to our home. You helped me honour his wish to be at home.

"I was so grateful for the quick response to all of Bryan Pfaff's immediate needs."

To All our church family, Pastor Tim, and our caring community, you all wowed us by coming out and supporting us!

To Firebirds Bertie Shantz and Gord Mills; family Scott, Julia, Amanda, Parker, and Sadie Pfaff; and Jeff Glendinning—your speeches were incredibly beautiful!

To the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home - Jeff Glendinning, your attention to tender details was greatly appreciated.
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Sincerely

Mary Pfaff

Scott, Jody Pfaff & Families

Ann, Tara, Jim Junker & Families

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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 6 - 13, 2016, Edition (10 years ago)

Tavistock Public School (TPS) will see some big changes next year. After five years as principal, Mrs. Laurie James will be moving on to Central Public School, Woodstock. At the year-end assembly on Wednesday morning, June 29, 2016, Mrs. James said, "What a special place TPS is. You don't realize, it's absolutely phenomenal. ... Not only the staff, but the parents, students and volunteers. They want you to achieve and they give you the opportunity to do the best you can." Mrs. James taught for her first 10 years at the Tavistock school before moving on to serve other communities. Nicola Bankes, who has served at Plattsville Public School will be the new principal.

The Pete's Sports/Bailey Construction Mite Girls competed in the South Oxford League Tournament this past weekend in Otterville where they captured gold. This season brought a lot of highs as they were Mitchell Tournament champions, Exeter B Tournament champions, and league champions. The Mite girls are Ashlynn Witt, Breana Blum, Makaya Mohr, Tori Burchatzki, Avery Faulhafer, Shauna Everett, Abigail McIntosh, Addison Reneker, Charlee Harvey, Ella King and Morgan Yantzi, with coaching staff Sheri Bell-Witt, Rob Faulhafer and Amanda Blum.

The Oxford County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is investigating a break, enter and mischief that occurred at the Tavistock Public School. The school is closed for the summer and was secured in the afternoon on Thursday, June 30, 2016. Sometime between 9:49 and 9:52 p.m. on Monday, July 4, multiple alarms were received by the off-site security company. The suspect(s) entered the school through the south facing window by breaking the glass. Once inside, the suspect(s) poured paint on one of the classroom floors; damaged two laptops; set a piece of paper on fire; and removed a portable radio and

smashed it outside the building.

July 5 - 12, 2006, Edition (20 years ago)

Talented young entertainers were a common sight at the Southwestern Ontario Fiddle and Stepdance Championships held in Tavistock this past weekend. While entries might be down slightly in the older age groups (four overall), the younger contestants are filling their categories with some tough competition. Rebecca Ardley of Nepean returned to claim the open step-dancing title and the Cliff Adams Memorial Trophy. Shane Cook, after a year away from the competition, also returned to claim the open fiddle title and the Graham Townsend Trophy.

Tavistock's only grocery store is closing at the end of this month. In a telephone interview on Tuesday morning, Kelly Norgate, director of communications for Sobey's Ontario said, "The store will go dark on July 28." She noted that the store has been experiencing "financial challenges" as the cause of the closing and stated the business will not be relocating. Ms. Norgate said the Tavistock store is the first to be closed in a long time under the Foodland banner which is one of Sobey's community format stores.

July 9 - 16, 1986, Edition (40 years ago)

In a fitting close to his year as president of the Rotary Club of Tavistock, Peter Francis and treasurer Jim Miller presented Donna Hart from the board of ARC Industries in Woodstock with a cheque for \$5,000. The money represented the pledge that the Rotary Club had made towards the building of new facilities for the mentally challenged and handicapped. Mrs. Hart thanked the club for its help in the past, especially for the many years it assisted with transportation of the preschool children to Woodstock.

Another of Tavistock's early shops is being partially razed this week. Although it has seen many additions and one reduction over the years, this time the old Matthes carriage shop will be reduced to a minimal, office-sized, somewhat square, two storey building. Presently owned by John Baker, for North Oxford Farm Automation, the building is believed to have been erected in 1874 by Wm. Matthes.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette **SPORTS**

Stevie B's Ride for Hospice honours cyclist's legacy

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Cyclists from Wellesley Township and surrounding communities gathered Sunday for the second annual Stevie B's Ride for Hospice, raising funds in memory of longtime cyclist Steve Baechler while supporting the Rotary Hospice Stratford

Perth.

Steve Baechler's wife, Beth, sons Sam and Alex, extended family members and the Wellesley Township Flyers cycling club welcomed participants of all ages to this year's ride.

The event followed sections of the G2G Rail Trail, a route Baechler frequently

rode with friends during his lifetime. Participants had the option of riding distances ranging from five to 60 kilometres.

The annual fundraiser continues to grow, attracting support from individuals, businesses and community organizations while raising thousands of dollars for the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth.

The hospice, where Baechler spent his final days, continues to benefit from the Baechler family's commitment to supporting end-of-life care in the community. Hospice staff and volunteers remain grateful for the family's ongoing efforts to honour Baechler's memory while helping other local families.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Cyclists, including many members of the Wellesley Township Flyers, set out from the Linwood Recreation Centre during the second annual Stevie B's Ride for Hospice. Riders chose routes ranging from five to 60 kilometres in memory of Steve Baechler while raising funds for the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth.

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Georgia Brick, three, (left) and Elizabeth Brick, one, enjoy snacks while their father, Derek Brick, takes part in Stevie B's Ride for Hospice. The girls' great-grandparents, Walter and Eleanor Cook, farmed for many years on the Eighth Concession of North Easthope Township and would have been proud to see their family supporting such a worthy cause.



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Cassel Mennonite Church's annual tractor breakfast supports Canadian Foodgrains Bank

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Rural roads throughout Oxford, Perth and Waterloo counties were busy Saturday morning as tractor enthusiasts made their way to Cassel Mennonite Church for its annual tractor breakfast.

Drivers of tractors of all makes, models and colours gathered at the church, located at the corner of 17th Line and Cassel Side Road, where church members and volunteers served breakfast in support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

The annual fundraiser has become a popular tradition, with local farmers, agricultural organizations and businesses donating food and other supplies to help make the event a success. All proceeds from the breakfast support the work of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Cassel Mennonite Church, which celebrated its 90th anniversary last year after being built in 1935, remains an active rural congregation with strong ties to the local farming community.

Surrounded by some of Ontario's most productive farmland, the church continues to host community events that bring neighbours together while supporting worthwhile causes at home and around the world.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Volunteers prepare and serve breakfast during the annual tractor breakfast at Cassel Mennonite Church in support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Front row, from left, are Noah Simas, Tim Roth, Evan Zehr, Ralph Swartzentruber, Isaac Zehr, Nathan Johnston, Dwight Zehr, Donna Zehr, Nancy Zehr, Kristen Cressman and Daryl Cressman. Missing from the photo are Angie Bender and Bill Roth.



More than 100 people attended the annual tractor breakfast at Cassel Mennonite Church before heading home in an impressive collection of vintage and modern tractors on a beautiful summer morning.



A miniature Allis-Chalmers WD tractor was a popular attraction for young visitors at the Cassel Mennonite Church tractor breakfast. Seated are Abram Musselman, 7, and Ely Roth, 6. Standing are Evan Zehr, 15, and Noah Simas, 14. The tractor was donated by Patti Bast and her late husband, Glen Bast, of Shakespeare.

Buffalo herd draws attention in central Perth County

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A herd of grazing buffalo near Kingwood has become a familiar sight that often prompts passing motorists and horse-and-buggy travellers to take a second look.

The western buffalo, quietly grazing in a lush pasture northeast of Millbank, appeared right at home as they soaked up the

summer sunshine alongside their spring calves.

The animals remained calm as they grazed, seemingly unfazed by curious on-lookers stopping to admire them or take photographs.

With plenty of fresh pasture and room to roam, the herd offered a striking reminder of a species more commonly associated with the Prairies than rural Perth County.



A herd of buffalo grazes in a pasture near Kingwood while this year's spring calves rest in the long grass and enjoy the summer sunshine.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

The herd bull keeps watch over the buffalo cows and their calves from behind secure page-wire fencing. His impressive size is difficult to capture in a photograph but is unmistakable to anyone who sees him in person.

NEAT members enjoy annual breakfast stop at Scrان & Dram



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Staff at the Scrان & Dram Scottish Public House in New Hamburg welcomed members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club (NEAT) for their annual breakfast stop. Front row, from left, are club president Murray Gingerich, Dwayne Snyder, Wayne Gerber, Simon Hazelwood and Donald Mann. In the kitchen doorway are Lanaya Sherwood, Keanna Marshall (manager) and Sara Bews (assistant manager). At the back are Kevin Winhold, Keith Bell, Calvin Schmidt, John Schyff and Ralph Gerber.



NEAT members Marvin Good (left), who now farms near Topping after growing up on a dairy farm on the outskirts of New Hamburg, and Ken Dechert, a former dairy farmer near Rostock who now drives his Ford tractor from Stratford for the club's weekly tours, were ready to enjoy a full breakfast at the Scrان & Dram.

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The North Easthope Antique Tractor Club (NEAT) made its annual breakfast stop at the Scrان & Dram Scottish Public House in New Hamburg, where 42 members enjoyed a hearty meal and warm hospitality before continuing their weekly tractor tour.

Among the tractors on display was a

1955 John Deere 60 owned by Ron Neeb of Gadshill. Producing 39 horsepower, the tractor was considered one of the largest and most powerful farm tractors of its era.

During the mid-1950s, when many local farms ranged from 100 to 200 acres, machines like the John Deere 60 represented a significant step forward in agricultural technology.

Gazette Puzzles

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Egg farmers discuss industry innovations and community support at summer meeting

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Egg and pullet producers from Oxford, Perth, Waterloo, Huron and Wellington counties gathered recently at the Veldman family farm between Stratford and St. Marys for their annual summer meeting and barbecue.

Among the topics discussed was the continued growth in egg consumption across Ontario, which recent reports indicate is up two to three per cent over last year.

Producers also received an update on the In-Ovo sexing technology project, with news that Canadian Egg Technologies has reached a significant milestone through a strategic partnership with Sanovo Technology Group.

Canadian Egg Technologies is a partnership between Egg Farmers of Ontario, Egg Farmers of Canada and MatrixSpec. The new partnership is expected to accelerate



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Fresh Ontario eggs are unloaded for delivery in Tavistock as local egg farmers continue working with retail and food-service partners to meet growing consumer demand.

the development and commercialization of pre-incubation sex identification technology for egg hatcheries in Ontario, across Canada and internationally. A global commercial launch is anticipated later this year

or in early 2027.

Meeting attendees also heard updates on the Special Ingredient campaign, a joint consumer-awareness initiative involving Egg Farmers of Ontario, Chicken

Farmers of Ontario and Turkey Farmers of Ontario. The campaign promotes Ontario's supply-managed poultry and egg sectors and has generated more than 63 million social-media impressions in its first six months.

Perth-Waterloo director Sally Van Straaten said district meetings are about more than flock management and producing fresh, high-quality eggs at affordable prices.

She said giving back to the community remains an important part of being an Ontario egg farmer, whether through donating eggs to local food banks and schools, supporting community organizations or helping neighbours in need.

Van Straaten added Ontario egg farmers remain committed to providing consumers with a reliable supply of fresh, nutritious eggs while continuing to support the communities where they live and work.



Egg Farmers of Ontario zone directors attending the summer district meeting included, from left, Scott Brookshaw (Wellington County), Rick Kootstra (Huron County), Sally Van Straaten (Perth-Waterloo), Egg Farmers of Ontario CEO Ryan Brown and meeting host Dan Veldman, Oxford County director and board vice-chair. Absent due to prior commitments was board chair Scott Helps of Lambton County.



Egg and pullet producers from Oxford, Perth, Waterloo, Huron and Wellington counties gather at the Veldman family farm for their annual summer meeting, where they discussed industry developments, emerging technologies and the future of egg production in Ontario.

Perth-Huron Jersey Club holds 49th annual Incentive Booster Sale

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Jersey breeders from Perth and Huron counties recently marked another successful year of promoting high-quality dairy genetics during the Perth-Huron Jersey Club's 49th annual Incentive Booster Sale.

For nearly five decades, the sale has provided dairy producers with an opportunity to buy and sell registered Jersey cattle while preparing their herds for increased milk production during the fall incentive period offered through Dairy Farmers of Ontario.

This year's sale was conducted by video and online bidding, attracting buyers from across the province.

The sale's top-selling animal was Spruce Avenue Boom Lotto, a very good junior three-year-old from the Dean Sayles family's Spruce Avenue Jerseys in Paris. Due to

freshen later this summer, the cow sold for \$4,700 and traced back through seven generations of very good and excellent dams.

The second-highest seller was Perennial Virtuoso Chanel, a fresh junior two-year-old consigned by Bryan Weldrick and Emma Johnson of Perennial Jerseys near Tavistock. Backed by 12 generations of very good and excellent dams, she sold for \$4,500.

A total of 18 registered Jersey cows and heifers were offered during the sale.

The event was managed by Paul Franken of Paullor Jerseys in Clinton.

With next year's sale marking the 50th anniversary of the Perth-Huron Jersey Club's annual Incentive Booster Sale, organizers are encouraging Jersey breeders from Ontario and beyond to consign some of their top animals to help celebrate the milestone.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF SAYLES FAMILY)

The Dean Sayles family of Spruce Avenue Jerseys in Paris consigned the top-selling animal at the 49th annual Perth-Huron Jersey Club Incentive Booster Sale. Spruce Avenue Boom Lotto sold for \$4,700.

Waterloo Region says goodbye to its only all-talk radio station

Farwell and 570 NewsRadio off the air

CHASING A STORY

By Lee Griffi



Rogers Sports and Media has shut down its news radio station in Kitchener.

570 NewsRadio went off the air on Tuesday, July 7, along with stations in Calgary, Halifax and Vancouver. Vancouver and Calgary's sports radio stations, Sportsnet 650 and 960, were also shuttered. Eighty employees were affected by the radio station closures, while a total of 230 positions across the company were eliminated.

While this comes as a huge disappointment, it certainly shouldn't come as a surprise. Radio has been a struggling industry for years, and it is very difficult to turn a profit.

I took the broadcast journalism program at Fanshawe College in London, arguably the best college program in the country. My first job was in my hometown of

Stratford at CJCS radio, a station still on the air today, albeit on the FM dial, and I still do some news writing for Vista, the largest chain of stations across the country. Oh, and the program at Fanshawe? It has been eliminated.

Back in the '90s, we certainly weren't getting rich sitting behind a microphone, but stations were generally profitable before Google, Meta and the digital world came along. Just to give you an example, my first newscaster/reporter job paid \$17,500 per year. I was promoted to news director, making a whopping \$25,500. I wasn't getting rich, but I loved my job and became a well-respected member of the media and the city. My friends jokingly gave me the nickname, "The voice of Perth County." After 10 years, I decided it was time to make the jump into the

communications/public relations world and more than doubled my pay. My growing family needed it.

What I am getting at here is radio personalities become pillars of their communities, often for very little money. I have no idea what Mike Farwell made as the main talk show host at 570, but I can tell you it likely wasn't enough. He is the definition of community. All you have to do is look at his incredibly successful Farwell4Hire campaign, where he raised money for cystic fibrosis research and support programs. The campaign was launched in 2014 in memory of Farwell's two sisters, Luanne and Sheri Farwell, who both died from complications of the disease.

The tributes and, in all honesty, disbelief from the public and Farwell's friends came in fast and furious. Wilmot Township mayor Natasha Salonen said the closure of 570 NewsRadio is a tremendous loss for Waterloo Region.

"For decades, 570 has helped keep our community informed, connected and engaged – covering the decisions made at local council tables, telling the stories of our residents and organizations, and being there

when important news was breaking."

She added a strong community needs a strong and diverse network of local media.

"No single outlet can replace another; each contributes reporters, perspectives, institutional knowledge and an essential layer of public accountability. When one of those voices disappears, our entire community is poorer for it."

Salonen added her thoughts go out to the journalists, broadcasters and other employees – and their families – whose lives were abruptly affected by the corporate decision.

"They have made an enormous contribution to Waterloo Region, and they deserved better than to see such an important local institution brought to such a sudden end," she said.

The Gazette also contacted Erik Kuttis, who became friends with Farwell through many years of TLC Pet Food's support of the Farwell4Hire Campaign.

"It was immediately apparent why Mike Farwell was the voice, and in my opinion the heart, of Waterloo Region. He was genuine about everything he did. Whether it was his popular daily talk show,

voicing the Kitchener Rangers or pulling weeds to help cure Cystic Fibrosis – that is the real Mike Farwell," he said.

Kuttis added Farwell cares about the issues that affect us and can give them a voice.

"That is why people had a visceral response to losing his daily voice in our lives. Time will tell where Mike will land, but he will always be a strong advocate for the people of the region and a voice for those who need one.

The beauty of radio is it can provide up-to-the-second information on breaking stories and important issues of the day. The Kitchener area has now lost that incredibly valuable tool. It also lost a heck of a talk show host who provided a format for people to give their opinions on a wide range of topics, something which created healthy debate.

I didn't know Farwell well, but I had talked to him on a few occasions about story ideas for his show. We were also just about to meet to plan out a regular guest spot for me on 570. I don't know where he will resurface, just that he will in some way, shape, or form. I know I have had to do it several times in my career, and he has way more talent than I ever did. I think he will be just fine.

Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW

Jun. 28 Bill Rundle, Woodham.	\$50.00
Jun. 29 Ken & Carmen Jenkins, Stratford . . .	\$50.00
Jun. 30 Eleanor Kittmer, Lakeside	\$50.00
Jul. 1 Chris & Keith Wiffen, Woodstock. . . .	\$50.00
Jul. 2 Mario Mendez, Stratford.	\$50.00
Jul. 3 Mark Leyser, Stratford	\$50.00
Jul. 4 Calleb Smidts, Stratford	\$200.00
Jul. 5 Pauline Baumbach, Gads Hill	\$50.00
Jul. 6 Sam & Braiden Weston, St. Marys. . . .	\$50.00
Jul. 7 Tammy Beswarick, London	\$50.00
Jul. 8 Blaine Woods, Mitchell.	\$50.00
Jul. 9 Stephen & Colleen Couthard, St. Pauls	\$50.00
Jul. 10 Bentley Armstrong, St. Marys	\$50.00
Jul. 11 Bruce Gerber, Stratford	\$200.00



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(PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE FARWELL)

Former 570News radio host Mike Farwell was one of over 200 Rogers employees let go in a recent wave of radio station closures and staffing reductions. The Waterloo Region community reacted in shock and disappointment that Farwell's talk show will no longer be on the air. He was also the play-by-play voice of the Kitchener Rangers.

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

Hiking and a healthy sidekick

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Wilmot and the surrounding townships offer top notch trails. Hiking is an all-age, full-body workout inside and out.

Walking strengthens muscles and builds core strength. Good news for the cardiovascular system, and the heart. Exercise may elevate heart rate in the moment but lowers resting heart rate over time. Blood pressure and cholesterol levels are more easily managed plus walking builds bone density. Walking has virtually zero impact on the joints and helps alleviate pain associated with arthritis. Walking, especially after meals, helps balance blood sugar.

We all know walking has boatloads of benefits, but outdoor walking is winning the health lottery. Take a stroll in the sun or shade, and Mother Nature

steps in, releasing feel-good hormones throughout the body. With the sound of birds singing, whispers of wind, green as far as the eyes can see, fabulous floral or the sound of water moving, moods shift and stress subsides. Having issues sleeping? Walking in natural sunlight regulates your circadian rhythm. Putting the phone down and unplugging on a dirt path prevents cognitive decline. Some of the best ideas in life come while walking in the wilderness. Serenity is fresh air and Wi-Fi free.

Happy trails begin with comfortable and appropriate footwear. Our township is home to paved, dirt, wood and all-terrain trails. Whether flat or hilly, choose a level that will be fun, building a solid foundation for longer, more challenging

walks.

Do you need a walking stick? Pack the essentials: Bug spray, sunscreen, water, hat and my favorite trail mix. Bring a camera and leave your phone on silent. You won't be sorry.

Trail mix is always a great snack but is yours healthy or harmful?

This holistic nutritionist advocates building one catered to your unique needs. Choose any raw nuts and seeds as a base. Protein-packed, plant-based sunflower seeds equal vitamin E while pumpkin is higher in zinc. Banana chips add a touch of sweetness. Almonds are always an all-star for weight management, but did you know walnuts are heaps of heart health. Macadamia nuts have the highest monosaturated fat content and lowest omega-6 to omega-3 of the tree nuts. They are also a favourite of keto-diet lovers.

Just 50 grams of high-cocoa-content dark chocolate is fabulous full-body loving flavonoids. Dried cranberries are a touch of tart and may support urinary tract infections. Add a taste of the

tropics. Shredded coconut is low carbohydrate and full of fabulous fats. Chop up dates for all-natural sweetness and piles of potassium. Dried fruit is phenomenal, but buyers beware. Steer clear of artificial colours, sulfites and seed oils.

With so many local markets, buy fresh. Avoiding sugar is a snap; simply dehydrate at home. When all the ingredients are salt-free, add a teaspoon to the jar and shake. Salt is a valuable electrolyte.

All set! I love the app, AllTrails, for navigating which trail suits my hiking tribe.

According to the experts, there are plenty of the "Best trails in New Hamburg." There is the 2.1-kilometre Mike Schout Wetlands preserve rated easy. At just 3.2-kilometres, Schmidt Woods' well-maintained paths are perfect for strollers and wheelchairs. Tavistock is topnotch. Take a stroll on the 4.5-kilometre easy trail that begins in a young forest. Looking for a moderate to difficult workout with steeper winding trails? Baden Hills Trail is for you. One



(MERCEDES KAY GOLD PHOTO)

Trail mix can be custom-made to best suit your hiking tribe.

of the sweetest trails is ranked easy and just 3.2 kilometres is the shady and scenic Walker Woods

Enjoy life. Find time for shinrin-yoku, the Japanese practice of immersing yourself in a natural forest setting. Breathe in nature, breathe out stress and say goodbye to elevated cortisol as you spend time forest bathing.

Invest in Your Future: Meet Ellen Hurley



Libro Credit Union invites you to connect with **Ellen Hurley, Banking Advisor** at our Stratford branch.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR: A change in lifestyle

This is in response to an article posted on Facebook written by Alicia Horne about Dan Brenneman's stroke recovery journey, his relentless effort to regain as much of his former life as possible, the excellent support of his wife, Lena, and the professionals who were trained to push him to recovery.

Thank you, Ms. Horne. I too had what Dr. Noryan called a "significant stroke" in December 2016. I have three thoughts after reading the excellent article.

One: I also had excellent care from my wife, Ruth. One never has a major health crisis alone. The primary caregiver has the heaviest load at times. The result is now a case of "we had a stroke" not just "I had a stroke."

Two: My experience at the stroke unit at Stratford General Hospital was one of excellence. Seven weeks in hospital and another six months of daily support

at home. And yes, it was hard work, but the support of the stroke recovery team was helpful. I am sorry Dan's experience at Stratford was not what it should have been.

Three: A request by Ministry of Transport regarding a driver's license. I agree totally with Dan. The return-to-drive process is designed for you to fail. The staff was not professional with no regard for speed limits, constant push to pick it up and being told you are impeding traffic all the while driving the speed limit and following traffic conditions. Their style of driving was not right, not legal and not me, and their testing cost us \$1,500 for three hours of their time and talent, or lack of.

Thank you respectfully,

Keith Wagler,
Tavistock

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

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Leaning into history with the famous Tower of Pisa

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



It turns out, one of the world's most famous destinations is the result of a mistake. In fact, a series of mistakes.

We had the chance to visit Pisa and verify for ourselves that the Leaning Tower of Pisa is, indeed, leaning and not simply an optical illusion. This was a day trip that was part of our terrific Viking Mediterranean cruise.

Pisa is a city in the beautiful region of Tuscany. If you are visiting this part of Italy, be sure to allow time to enjoy the area and make Pisa one relatively small part of your stay. I say this because, while every traveller wants to see the Leaning Tower, the entire experience can be accomplished in a few hours.

The tower is one of four historic buildings located in the "Square of Miracles," a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There you will find the Pisa Cathedral, a round, domed building known as the Baptistry of St. John, the Camposanto, as well as the Leaning Tower.

All of them are built in the wrong place because the subsoil in the area of the Square of Miracles is, to be somewhat Biblical about it, "shifting sand." The unstable topography means it isn't just the famous tower that leans – everything here is susceptible.

We got an immediate introduction to this local reality when our enthusiastic guide led us into the square through what she called a back door. After the trek from the coach park, we followed a wall to a gate with a tower and entered the square from the side.

That tower in the wall – not the iconic one by any means – was also askew. The guide explained that darn near everything in this part of Pisa is off-centre because of the unstable terrain.

Our first view was of the baptistry, a large, round, domed Gothic building constructed over a 200-year period starting in 1152. And although the word "leaning" does not appear in its name, it does in fact tilt slightly, leaning 0.6 degrees toward its neighbour, the cathedral.

Speaking of this, it's good for prospective visitors to know that you can see all of these amazing buildings from the outside, free of charge, but it will cost you up to

35 euros if you want to enter all of them.

The Pisa Cathedral – officially, the Primatial Metropolitan Cathedral of the Assumption of Mary – is a striking, Medieval masterpiece started in 1064 and completed in its original form in a surprisingly short time. It was finished in 1092.

Nearby sits the Camposanto Monumentale, which is an enclosed cemetery created in the centuries following the construction of the cathedral and the baptistry, and today, famous for its frescoes.

I've saved the best – or at least, the most famous – until last: the Leaning Tower of Pisa. I confess, I knew almost nothing about this modern wonder of the world. I didn't know it is actually the free-standing bell tower of the cathedral. I didn't know that it began to lean during construction, so the engineers of the time tried to compensate architecturally with the result that the tower actually has a bit of a banana shape. And that the ongoing problems of unstable sand caused the project to end up significantly lower than planned – the tower is 56 metres high; it was intended to stretch 70 metres. That still involves a climb of 300 stairs if you are so inclined and are willing to pay the entrance fee.

This series of mistakes, adjustments and miscalculations has re-

sulted in one of the most famous buildings in the world. Our guide laughed as she said, "We appreciate in Pisa this mistake very much."

The reason for that gratitude is immediately apparent when you consider the crowds of tourists wandering around the square, approximately half of whom are posing for photos as they "hold up" the tower.

Like many historic buildings, the tower took forever to build – 199 years in three stages beginning in 1173.

The tower was closed to the public for 10 years, ending in 2001, as engineers sought to counter the continuing lean. They were moderately successful – the lean was reduced by just under half a metre, and the tower was open for climbing once again.

The tower is certainly still leaning; it tilts five degrees, or four metres off true, enough that it is clearly evident and very dramatic. Nonetheless, the engineers of the most recent adjustment assure us that the tower is stable for at least another 300 years and it has surprisingly withstood four strong earthquakes since 1280.

So, it will probably be fine if you decide to climb those 300 steps. For us, after exploring the square and looking at the tower from every direction (it leans to the south, by the way), we found our best perspective as we enjoyed a refreshing treat on the terrace of a nearby gelato shop.

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.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

It's not the famous tower, but this tower on a wall in Pisa is also leaning.



The tilt of the Leaning Tower of Pisa is clearly evident, caused by unstable subsoil.



The baptistry, one of four historic buildings in the Square of Miracles.



The economy of Pisa is heavily dependent on tourism; "We appreciate this mistake very much."

Raising the rafters was a dangerous business



VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

Tavistock and District Historical Society

Barn raising was a community affair in early Ontario where sometimes many dozens of entire families would gather at a neighbour's farm to build a full-sized barn in a day or two without steam power or electricity. The men were skilled carpenters who braved the heights; the women prepared substantial meals for all; the teens emulated their parents; the children delighted in each other's company and the farm's animals.

Hard hats, steel-toed boots and safety harnesses were unheard of, so injuries and the occasional death would occur on site. Two such accidents occurred at one barn raising in East Zorra Township, as reported in one long paragraph with a very small title in the July 21, 1898, Tavistock Gazette.

Two Accidents.

The raising of Mr. Robert Murry's large new barn at his farm on the 13th con., East Zorra, near this village, occurred yesterday and was the occasion of two accidents, both of which narrowly escaped being fatal.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon while one of the bents was being raised a pike-pole became loose and fell, striking Mr. Murray upon his head. He fell unconscious to the floor, and it was at first thought he was dead. Dr. Steele was at once sent for and found that the skull was not broken, and he left the patient much improved.

Half an hour afterwards Louis Roi lost his balance while working at the top, and fell a distance of 16 feet to the floor. In his passage down his head struck a beam and he fell on his head on the floor. He also was picked up for dead and was carried outside of the barn to the grass where the Dr. attended to his injuries, and he was taken home in the afternoon.

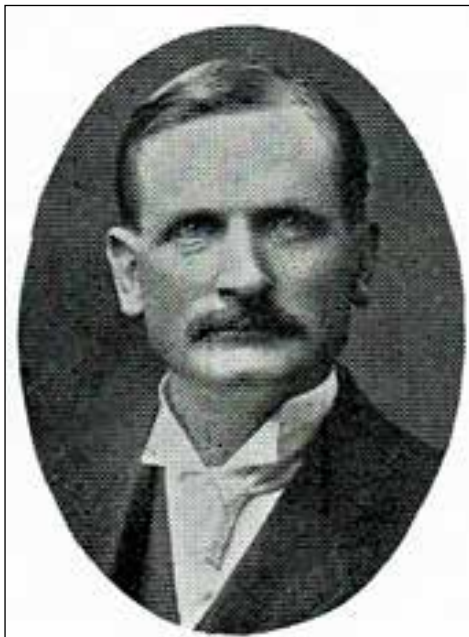
At this writing (3 o'clock, p.m.) he is still unconscious although there is every reason to hope he will recover.

There was no racing of "sides" at this raising, both mishaps being the result of accident.

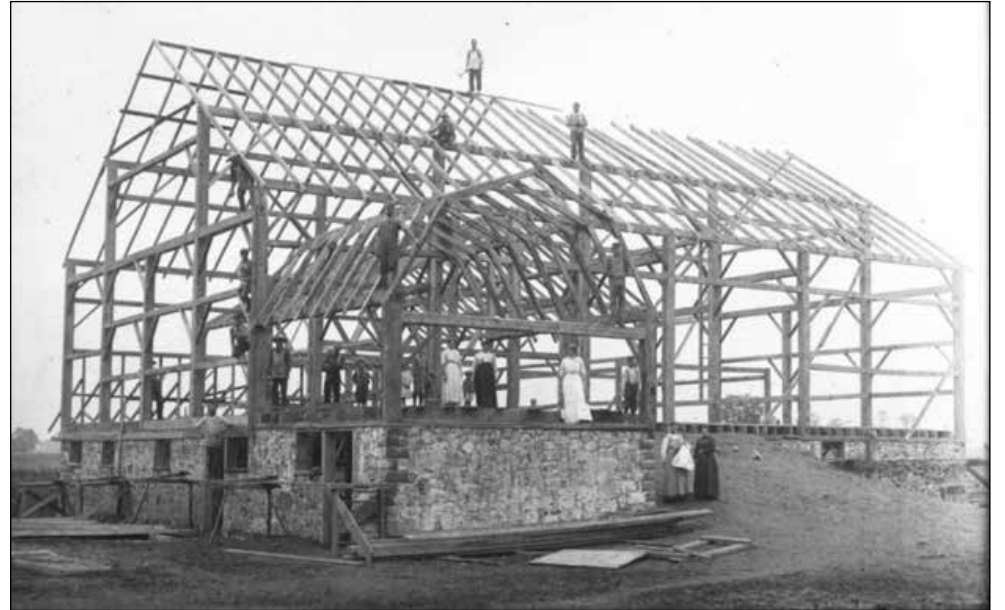
There are still many bank barns in southern Ontario, though some have succumbed to fires, tornadoes, were demolished to rebuild modern barns, or for new subdivisions. So, when you see these century-old structures, remember the blood, sweat and sometimes tears that went into building them. They really are a rustic artform of days gone by.

The last History Mystery: The question was, "What was the ongoing technical problem that bedeviled photographers – amateur and professional alike – when taking photos of pets, babies and toddlers that lasted until about the 1960s?" The first correct answer was "It would be hard to get pets and babies to stay still and to hold a pose long enough to expose the film without blurring" until faster shutter speeds became widespread, provided by Trudie Julien, Lagorce, France. Chouette!

This week's History Mystery: How were the workers "paid" for their labour helping to raise barns? The first reader to send the correct answer to me at tim_mosher@hotmail.com will have their name and rural route number or name of their community published in the next Vintage Views article.

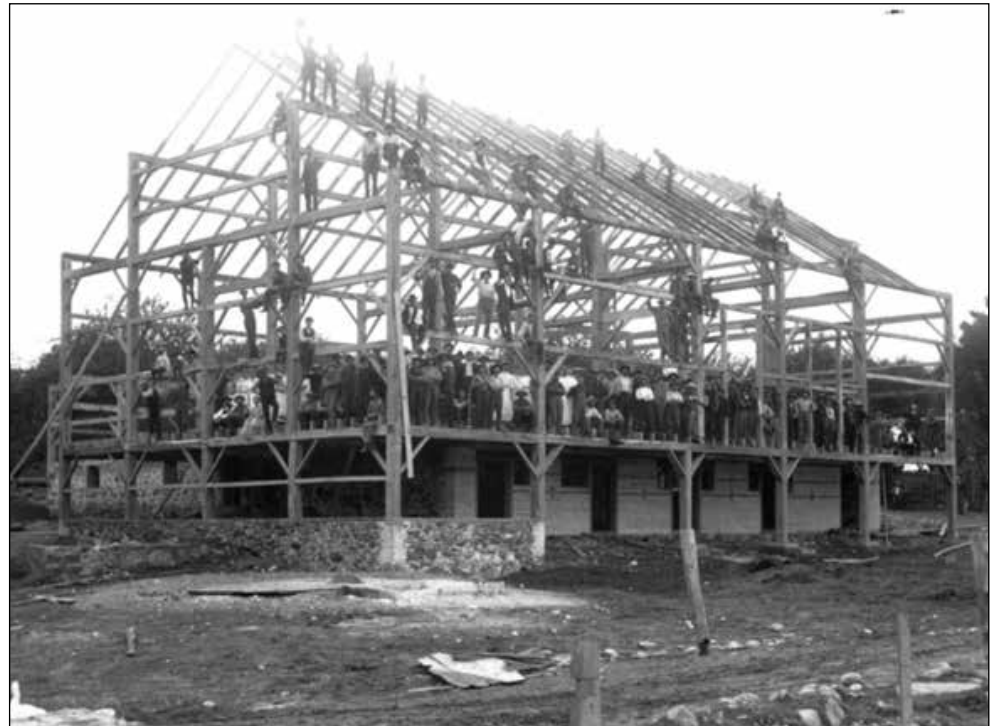


Dr. Michael Steele (1860-1946) attended to the two injured men; they both recovered. Dr. Steele had a remarkable life. His parents survived a shipwreck immigrating to Canada, he practised medicine in Tavistock for 34 years, was MP for South Perth (1911-1921) and finished his career as a judge of juvenile court.



(THE PHOTOGRAPHER IS NOT KNOWN, CIRCA 1895)

This unknown local bank barn is so named because of the earthen ramp or bank built up to the main floor. Also known as basement barns as the under storey was exposed, this one has a gambrel roof extension. The man standing on the ridge beam, top, clearly has no fear of heights.



(THE PHOTOGRAPHER IS NOT KNOWN, CIRCA 1895)

About 10 women, three children, 108 men and a duck posed for this barn raising at lot 24, Concession 5 in South Easthope Township. Barn raising was a warm-weather activity but shorts and lightweight, single layer clothing were many decades away. The milliners and haberdasheries (hat shops for women and men respectively) did great business in those days though.



'Serving You Breakfast Since 1983'

Optimist Club of Petersburg

Breakfast In the Park

Sunday, July 19

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

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - JULY/AUGUST 2026

FRIDAY, JULY 17

Hickson Lions Daze
6 p.m. - 12 a.m.
For details see ad on page 11.
Hickson Park
99 Loveys St E, Hickson

SATURDAY, JULY 18

Hickson Lions Daze
9 a.m. - 11 p.m.
For details see ad on page 11.
Hickson Park
99 Loveys St E, Hickson

Legion New Hamburg Branch 532 100th Anniversary Open House
1-4 p.m.
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532
65 Boulees St, New Hamburg
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

SUNDAY, JULY 19

Optimist Club of Petersburg Breakfast in the Park
8:30 - 12:00 noon
Petersburg Park
1338 Notre Dame Dr., Petersburg

MONDAY, JULY 20

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Born2Eat, Berlin 95, Doc Mac Cheezy
Donations to TAP - Tavistock Assistance Program
Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

Wellesley Special Council meeting
5:45 p.m.
Council chambers
4805 William Hastings Line, Crosshill

TUESDAY, JULY 21

8th Annual Tavistock Community "Show N Shine"
4-7 p.m.
Bring your classic car or truck out! Many door prizes and a prize raffle. There are more than 20 sponsors, for a usual 100 to 150 vehicles who have been there in the past. All proceeds again go to TAP. More info with Kurtis Waymouth, at Zehr Ins. Brokers or 519-655-2422.
Tavistock Mennonite Church (In the back parking lot)
131 Wettlaufer St, Tavistock

TUESDAY, JULY 21 CONT

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

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

Wednesday Walks in Wilmot's Wonderful Woods - Scott Park, New Hamburg
7 - 8:30 p.m.
This park, on the flood plain, has had a good variety of mature trees and newly planted ones. See the challenges of floods have on the trees. Details and registration: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/lets-tree-wilmot-34384003923>
William Scott Park
75 Hunter Street, New Hamburg

THURSDAY, JULY 23

Pic-nic In the Park
Lunch : 12:00 to 1 pm from Tavi Chill
Music & Dancing : 1.30 to 3.30 pm
Entertainment : Dianne & Gary The Cavaliers, with Steve Todd. Bring lawn chairs. For tickets and more information, call Don Junker (519) 535-7052
Queens Park Pavilion,
1 Adam St, Tavistock, ON

All Things Green Youth Trivia Night
6-9 p.m.
Hosted by the Nith Valley EcoBoosters Youth Advocates. For more information contact nveb. youthadvocates@gmail.com
Wilmot Recreation Complex
1291 Nafziger Rd., Baden

SATURDAY, JULY 25

Saturday Strolls in Sylvan Splendor - Schmidt Woods, NH
1:30 - 3 p.m.
Keep an eye out for the rare rock elm, and look at the tree trunks. Some look like elephant legs, some shaggy, and others like burnt cornflakes. Details and registration: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/lets-tree-wilmot-34384003923>
Wilmot Recreation Complex (meet at trail entrance near the Splash Pad)
1291 Nafziger Road, Baden

MONDAY, JULY 27

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Siggi's, El Milagro, Ish n Chips
Donations to Tavistock Health Clinic (no trucks on August 3, 2026)
Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock
Wilmot Council meeting
6-7 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road W., Baden

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

MONDAY, AUGUST 17

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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

TOPS - Taking off Pounds Sensibly
Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.
Contact Cathie 519-662-9273
St James Church, Baden

Euchre Night
Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
New Hamburg Legion
65 Boulees St., New Hamburg

FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

Tavistock Seniors Pickleball
Monday, Wednesday & Friday 12-4 p.m.
Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052
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.
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
Travelling Museum Display: "Heritage of Hickson's Sports Teams"
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.
Donations accepted. Refreshments. Contact plattsvilledistrictheritage@gmail.com or call 519-535-1417.
Archive & Museum at Chesterfield,
816661 Oxford Rd 22, Bright

Events submitted for the Community Calendar will be published as space permits. Submission does not guarantee publication, and events may not appear every week prior to the event date. Please submit your events to thewtgazette@gmail.com by Tuesday at 3 p.m.



The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Quiz Time Answers

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Florida | 6. Pyrophobia |
| 2. Pacific Ocean | 7. Zagros |
| 3. Larkspur & water lily | Mountains |
| 4. Jannik Sinner | 8. Poseidon |
| 5. Hypothalamus | 9. Alcohol |
| | 10. Quiver |

Coming Event



Branch 532
New Hamburg

Discover the story of Branch 532. Join us as we open our Hall to the community to showcase the milestones and contributions that have defined our Legion since 1952 on **Saturday, July 18th between 1 and 4 p.m.**

Food will be available.

New member welcoming ceremony will take place at 2:00 p.m.

Joining the Legion is free in 2026.

Applications will be available at the event.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

Coming Event

OXFORD FISH AND GAME CLUB

will be holding their "Sporting Goods Swap Meet" **Saturday July 25th from 9:00am to noon** at their club house 545324 Pattullo Ave, Woodstock. Club members will be selling a wide variety of shooting, hunting, archery and fishing related items from their own collections. Admission \$2:00.

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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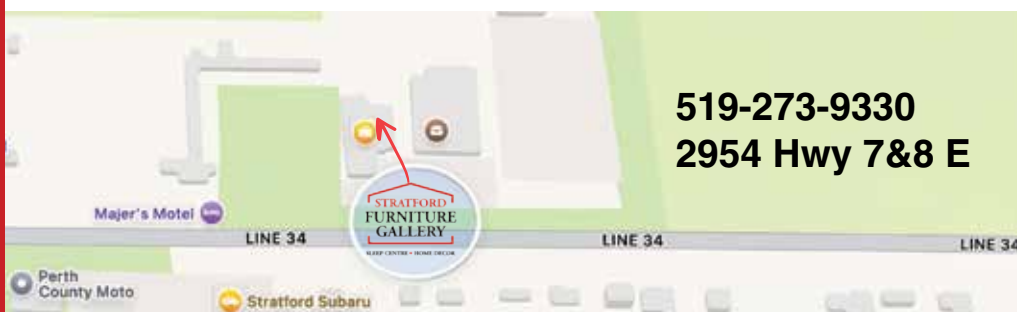

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