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As Santa Claus yelled cheese, Jesse Weicker and daughter Dorothy smiled for the camera and were glad to be treated to cheese sticks courtesy of Saputo and chocolate milk courtesy of the Oxford County Milk producers following the parade through town on Saturday. Find more photos of the parade on page 8. Photo by Gary West

## Massive budget hike proposed for residents of Wilmot Township

### Draft document carries a nearly 51 per-cent increase

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Residents of Wilmot are well aware of the township's poor financial situation, including extremely low reserves, but no one could have predicted the proposed tax increase coming out of the 2025 draft budget

– 50.87 per cent.

The 2024 tax hike was 10.8 per cent, resulting in a \$123 increase to the average home's property taxes on \$424,800 of assessed value.

Greg Clark is the township's interim CAO and said he sees the draft document as a turning point for the township to meet

current needs.

"This significant, one-time increase will ensure the organization can continue to maintain its facilities and provide high-quality services to residents now and in the future," he said.

The proposal includes a major, one-time

Continued on page 2

## Wellesley Township introduces draft 2025 budget with nine per-cent levy increase

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Collectively, property owners in Wellesley Township could pay nearly nine per cent more in taxes in 2025 over this year after township staff recently introduced a draft 2025 budget with a proposed \$8.14-million tax levy.

Township staff and councillors officially dug into next year's draft budget at their first, marathon budget meeting Nov. 28. The proposed tax levy is nearly \$672,000 more than what was collected by the township this year. However, the township also saw roughly 3.7 per-cent growth, representing an increase by roughly \$304,000 to the tax base. That growth will lessen the burden of next year's levy increase on rate-payers, leaving it at just over 4.9 per cent.

"The draft budget aims to continue with the mission and vision of council with no proposed service-level reductions," said CAO Rik Louwagie, introducing the draft budget. "Inflation has declined throughout 2024 largely due to the decrease in fuel cost ... but some of the major costs the municipality incurs such as aggregates, construction materials and equipment has continued to increase at a higher rate."

Louwagie noted this year's budget once again includes a proposed 0.75 per-cent greening levy amounting to just over \$60,000 to be collected from ratepayers to combat climate change and support greenhouse-gas-emission reduction efforts locally, as well as a proposed one per-cent infrastructure levy amounting to just over

Continued on page 3

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# Massive budget hike proposed for residents of Wilmot Township

Continued from page 1

boost to capital infrastructure investments. The increase will fund projects like a new fire station in New Hamburg, upgrades to the road network and improvements to the Wilmot Recreation Complex.

In total, the budget proposes a \$48.35 per month (\$580 per year) increase to the township's portion of the average homeowner's tax bill. Thirty-five dollars per month makes up the capital portion. A press release stated, "The increase will shore up the township's finances and bring the municipality closer to a sustainable level of annual funding."

The Gazette talked to Clark just after the budget was released. He said staff looked at the current financial situation in Wilmot and realized the level of capital planning in the past was very low, meaning they have to play catch up.

"The level of capital investment we should have been doing and should be doing going forward; it's not sustainable. We can't even begin to make a dent in the level of projects. Things like new chillers at the rec centre are required to make sure the ice is in every year."

That project carries a price tag of about \$1.5 million. Clark added improvements need to be made so township facilities and roads can continue to operate.

"In my mind, it's about having a conversation about our priorities with the public and council. I know full well this is a starting point and not the end point, so what we get approved will be something different than this."

Clark added he wants to be transparent for council to understand the magnitude of the capital pressure Wilmot is facing so council can make critical decisions on where and how much money should be invested in infrastructure.

The next stage of the budget process is on Monday when it will be presented at a special meeting of council. There will be no deliberations and the public, while permitted to attend, are not allowed to delegate. Wilmot ratepayers will have their opportunity to present to council early in the new year.

The Gazette reached out to the mayor and all five members of council for their thoughts on the shockingly large figure. The theme of the reaction was for residents to get involved in the democratic process.

**Natasha Salonen – Mayor**

Salonen spent most of her day at the Region of Waterloo in meetings and didn't have a chance to look at the entire document but said council received it at the same time it was released to the public.

"It's our first chance to start reviewing it but this is the start of our process and I encourage the public to come out to our budget meetings. I look forward to council and myself learning where staff is coming from and deliberating to finalize a reasonable 2025 budget."

**Stewart Cressman – Ward 1**

Cressman wasn't prepared to discuss the document but admitted Wilmot's poor monetary situation is a surprise to no one.

"I will reserve my comments until I have had an opportunity to study the budget and gain some degree of understanding from staff and other council members. The severity of our financial situation is no shock."

**Kris Wilkinson – Ward 2**

"This is the staff's proposed budget and I haven't had a chance to fully review it," he explained.

"My initial reaction is that the people of Wilmot didn't build their businesses, homes or communities by sending a bill to someone else, they did it through hard work and

discipline. I will take the time to review this budget and I'm prepared to put in the hard work to make what I believe will be necessary changes. We need to be focused on the cost of living and how it's impacting everyone right now."

Wilkinson added he strongly encourages residents to engage and reach out to members of council.

**Harvir Sidhu – Ward 3**

In his response, Sidhu was critical of previous employees and elected officials who shoulder the blame for where the township is now.

"This proposed budget from staff outlines years of decisions by staff and councils which have led us to today. Council passed my motion for a line-by-line budget which will help identify areas of concern. I am ready to roll up my sleeves and make the long-needed changes. I encourage all residents to take part and share their views."

**Steven Martin – Ward 4**

Martin referred to the upcoming budget meetings and hoped residents will get involved.

"I encourage people to reach out to council with their concerns. There is a one-time levy on capital expenditures and this will need to be debated along with the operating-cost levy. I look forward to healthy

discussion in our council meetings as we make the decision."

**Lillianne Dunstall – Ward 4**

"I understand this is only a draft, but I was certainly taken aback by the numbers. This council has consistently raised awareness, both to those receptive and those who may not be, about the severity of Wilmot's financial challenges."

She added the budget is presented with a detailed line-by-line breakdown, offering an opportunity to identify cost reductions.

"Tough decisions need to be made, and taxpayers need to engage. I encourage you to attend the discussions in person or watch on YouTube. Stay informed on the decisions being made and share your thoughts or concerns with your councillor. It's your money," she added.

Members of the public can provide input on the budget by emailing [budget@wilmot.ca](mailto:budget@wilmot.ca), or by registering to delegate at a public delegation night on Jan. 7, 2025 at 7 p.m. Instructions for registering as a delegation are available at [www.wilmot.ca/delegation](http://www.wilmot.ca/delegation).

A copy of the budget and schedule of upcoming budget meetings is available online [www.wilmot.ca/budget](http://www.wilmot.ca/budget). Questions about the budget can be sent to [budget@wilmot.ca](mailto:budget@wilmot.ca).

## Community Care Concepts' Annual Christmas Benefit Breakfast



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**Location:** St. Agatha Community Centre, 1791 Erbs Rd,  
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# Wellesley Township draft 2025 budget

Continued from page 1

\$80,000 to help the township replenish its capital reserves and tackle its long-term infrastructure deficit.

If passed as is, the draft budget will result in an increase to the township portion of the yearly property-tax bill by just over \$72 for an average-assessed home in the township valued at roughly \$397,000.

"I have a tremendous amount of confidence in all those folks that are sitting across the table here," Mayor Joe Nowak said, thanking staff for their hard work preparing next year's draft budget. "I know they have the best interests of our community at heart.

"When it comes to the starting point – if it is a starting point, I don't know, maybe it's a final point – 4.9 per cent; having personally gone through this, I know it's going to be difficult to make any significant changes to that to move the needle. ... I'm looking forward to the discussion. Maybe we can see what we can do."

The 2025 draft budget includes roughly \$2.9 million in capital projects for the year. Broken down, nearly three-quarters of that spend will go to public-works projects for the maintenance and rehabilitation of roads, bridges and other infrastructure, including several projects carried over from this year, and 16 per cent will go to the recreation department for projects including the construction of a recreation maintenance shed as well as windows and dressing-room doors at the St. Clements Arena.

From the remaining capital budget next year, if approved as is, 5.6 per cent of that \$2.9 million will go to the planning department for the township's official plan update; 1.8 per cent will go to the Wellesley Township Fire Department for the purchase

of major equipment; 1.5 per cent will go to the township's IT department; and 0.4 per cent will go to the building department for the purchase of furniture and equipment at various township facilities.

"We utilize long-range capital forecasts as a tool to ensure consistent contributions to all reserves year over year," Louwagie said. "The asset-management plan is also a critical piece in securing funding from upper levels of government. But even with funding from provincial and federal government, there's still a significant deficit to meet all of our infrastructure obligations, and this is why we're continuing with the infrastructure levy for 2025. We will continue to monitor all funding avenues to ensure our infrastructure is properly maintained."

As each of next year's proposed capital projects will be funded through a combination of township reserves, provincial and federal grant funding, and private donations, the capital budget does not have an impact on the overall proposed tax levy.

Following the presentation of each department's capital budgets next year, township council began digging into the departmental operational budgets at the Nov. 28 meeting.

"For the operating budget, our intent is to go through the budget lines and highlight any significant changes," Louwagie said. "You will hear about some additional staff members as a result of some changes to provincial legislation, workloads and increased revenue opportunities."

There are two more budget sessions scheduled for Wellesley Township council, one on the day this paper comes out, Dec. 5, and the other on Dec. 17. Both are scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will be livestreamed on the township's YouTube channel, IT Wellesley.

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# Wilmot's Prime Ministers Path consultation continues; Tea Circle event set for next week

LEE GRIFFI

*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

The Township of Wilmot and its consultants have come up with a unique way to get people involved in the controversial and latest Prime Ministers Path project – a tea circle.

LURA Consulting, led by advisors Benny Skinner and Denise Soueidan-O'Leary, is guiding the process. Soueidan-O'Leary said a tea circle is just one form of public discussion.

"There are public meetings, town halls and they bring forward a lot of ideas from people. We intentionally renamed this consultative process and we are going to have a conversation and we want it to feel like a discussion."

She added the tea circle will be a more intimate setting where people can sit down with their neighbours to share information, thoughts and ideas.

"It will be a little less formal than a focus group or some of the other language we would use in an engagement process. The point is to hear how residents are feeling, hear what they have to say and be open to what comes up."

Soueidan-O'Leary admitted there will be many different opinions and feelings coming up through the consultation, but that is the goal of the process.

"Benny and I wanted to make sure there was space for those to come out and it's okay to have differing opinions, thoughts and ideas as we are all in discussion together."



The statue of former Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, once part of Wilmot Township's Prime Ministers Path, symbolizes the complex discussions shaping the path's future as the community engages in innovative consultations like a tea circle to envision what comes next. Contributed photo

For anyone wanting to take part but unable to attend in person, a virtual option is available by registering before the event so the meeting link can be sent out to participants. Soueidan-O'Leary explained the goal is to protect the exercise's integrity.

"We wanted to make sure, especially because we are using Zoom, that only folks who have access to the link are part of the process. We don't want to waste time and threaten the space with people who find the link somewhere and come in with no intention to participate or no stake in the game," said Soueidan-O'Leary.

She added those participating at home will be able to interact virtually.

"This is definitely not a spectator sport. Folks in person and online will be encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings and be involved in the

conversation."

Mayor Natasha Salonen said the tea circle is a different way to hear from concerned residents but she's looking forward to the results.

"(It) represents a distinctive and thoughtful approach to community outreach within the Prime Ministers Path engagement process. At a time when I know our community is eager for substantive engagement and meaningful opportunities to have their voices heard, this format provides an opportunity for dialogue that is both respectful and inclusive."

She added the discussions create a space where the complexities of our history, community dynamics and shared aspirations can be explored in depth.

"While the format is unique, the emphasis on constructive and open dialogue is exactly what our community needs to move this project forward, together," Salonen said. "I look forward to seeing how this process evolves to reflect the priorities and values of our community."

A final plan isn't expected to come to Wilmot Township council until next summer, but Soueidan-O'Leary explained she is happy with the public's interaction at an open house last month.

"We were really pleased with the turnout.

There were about 100 people who came to the first community gathering with a lot of engagement. Many attendees wrote sticky notes and gave us their feedback. We have also had people reach out through the project email sharing their thoughts."

She said the social-media side of the plan isn't garnering much in the way of attention but she hopes more people will engage through the available channels. A big part of the plan is the appointment of a 12-person working group. While 20 people applied, the 12 selected held their first meeting on Tuesday.

"We hope the group will help share information with the community and get their friends, families and neighbours involved in the process so more people are aware of what's going on. The level of engagement so far shows us it's an important issue for people. Ninety-five per cent of those who have engaged live in Wilmot or are close enough that this issue matters to them."

A link to register has already been sent to those who have signed up for project updates. Those who haven't can register for the tea circle at <https://tinyurl.com/PMPteacircle1>.

The event takes place on Dec. 12 at the Wilmot Recreation Complex Community Centre from 6-8 p.m.

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## The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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# Region of Waterloo to host online public meeting about future of water and wastewater in Village of Wellesley

GALEN SIMMONS

*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

Village of Wellesley residents will soon have the opportunity to have their say on the future of water and wastewater.

As part of the ongoing development of a Water and Wastewater Master Plan for the Village of Wellesley, the Region of Waterloo is hosting a third online public meeting Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. The master plan, once completed, will examine how the region provides water and wastewater services to the Village of Wellesley until the year 2050.

“The master plan for water and wastewater is looking at your water and wastewater needs ... for the next 26 years,” Region of Waterloo commissioner of engineering and environmental services told Wellesley council at its Nov. 26 regular meeting. “We’re forecasting out that far to see what kind of infrastructure we need to support growth in the Village of Wellesley.”

Based on conversations with Wellesley Township staff, Rose said the village’s

population – currently 3,700 people – is expected to grow to 5,600 residents by 2050. In accordance with those growth projections, the Village of Wellesley’s current water and wastewater infrastructure will need to be expanded to meet the needs of village residents.

At the upcoming meeting, engineering staff from the region will review a number of options for expanding and upgrading water and wastewater infrastructure first presented during a master plan public meeting held in June. Region staff will also share their preferred options and solicit feedback from those in attendance.

“We do supply the Village of Wellesley with water from a well, so it is from groundwater and it’s not piped in from anywhere,” Rose said. “... The work we had done up until the last public meeting was to identify alternatives to address well capacity. What that means is how much water can that well produce?”

While Rose said water conservation alone will not adequately address the village’s growth needs, there are three other

options that would. They include increasing the existing well supply by exploring taking more water from other existing well sources, supplementing the water supply with a new well or wells, or supplementing the existing supply with external water sources from another drinking-water system like the one in Kitchener-Waterloo.

To address future disinfection and water-storage needs, region staff will also discuss at the meeting the need to build a new, off-site storage tank since there is currently no room on the Wellesley village pumping station property to build a new storage tank.

“We are looking at the wastewater treatment plant with respect to influent pumping needs – that’s where sewage comes into the treatment plant – the headworks – that’s where the sewage is strained ... of large, bulky things that are in sewage like rags, wipes or something else that hasn’t disintegrated in the sanitary sewage system – and then secondary, tertiary treatment, sludge-holding capacity and discharge-capacity needs,” Rose said. “So,

we’re looking at three different things with respect to the wastewater-treatment needs for the future.”

Staff at the meeting will discuss the possibility of either replacing the existing pumps, equalization tank and headworks or building a new pump station and equalization tank, as well as a new headworks facility, somewhere else.

The meeting will also touch on options for addressing growth through improvements to the Firella Creek trunk sewer, as well as improvements to local sewage pipes.

For more information and to register for the Dec. 12 online public meeting, visit [www.engagewr.ca/wellesleywater](http://www.engagewr.ca/wellesleywater). Once feedback has been collected, region staff will present the preferred options for improving water and wastewater capacity in the village to council at some point early in the new year. A report on those options will be made available to the public after that.

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Region of Waterloo

**Public meeting – December 12, 2024  
(Public Consultation Centre #3)**

## Wellesley Water and Wastewater Master Plan

The Region is responsible for the water and wastewater systems in the Village of Wellesley, and for planning for new growth while meeting regulatory requirements. The Region is developing the Wellesley Water and Wastewater Master Plan (WWWMP) to look at water and wastewater needs to 2051.

### We want to hear from you.

Your feedback is an important part of this study. Please join us for a virtual meeting on December 12, 2024, at 7 p.m. Visit [EngageWR.ca/wellesleywater](http://EngageWR.ca/wellesleywater) to register for this meeting.

At this meeting, we will review the evaluation criteria and alternatives presented at the second public meeting (PCC#2). We'll also share the preliminary recommendations on the preferred alternatives for water supply and wastewater and look for the public's feedback on the evaluation of those alternatives.

### Project Information

More project information, including material from the first and second public meetings, is available at [EngageWR.ca/wellesleywater](http://EngageWR.ca/wellesleywater) or contact Kaoru Yajima, project manager at [kyajima@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:kyajima@regionofwaterloo.ca) or Tom Mahood from our consultant team at [tom.mahood@jacobs.com](mailto:tom.mahood@jacobs.com)

This Class Environmental Assessment Study will be carried out as a Master Plan in accordance with the Municipal Engineers Association's (MEA) Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) Process (MEA 2000, as amended 2007, 2011, 2015, 2023), an approved process under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. The study will follow MCEA Approach #2 for completing a Master Plan, which involves the preparation of the WWWMP at the end of Phases 1 and 2 of the MCEA process.

**This notice was first issued on November 28, 2024.**

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# Christmas trees are once again for sale in Tavistock

GARY WEST

*Gazette Correspondent*

If Tavistock and area residents are still interested in getting a freshly cut tree for Christmas, there is still a good choice available of mostly Balsam Fir and Colorado Spruce in the yard of Mike and Beth Kaufman on William Street North.

Tree buyers can't miss them because Charlie Brown and all his friends are standing on the front lawn, like they have been every year for the past number of decades.

Beth Kaufman's parents, Bob and Jean Elliott, came up with the picturesque look-a-likes of Charlie Brown and his friends to make Christmas a fun time of year, especially for area families picking out a Christmas tree to decorate.

This year, the Grace United Church group known as the Middle Aged Pews have taken up the job of selling more than 100 freshly cut trees, taking over from the Adult Study Fellowship church group, organized for years by church members Ken and Gloria Reibling.



Mike and Beth Kaufman are shown in their side yard with a large assortment of freshly cut Christmas trees, which they are selling for the Grace United Church group, the Middle Aged Pews, for their yearly fundraiser. Photos by Gary West



Hayley McKay and Kyle Pearson are shown buying their Christmas tree with their children, four-year-old Gracelyn and one-year-old Gavin. The Pearsons made their choice early to avoid disappointment before they sell out.



William Street North in Tavistock has been the home for many years of Charlie Brown, Snoopy and friends as fresh snow and cold weather makes for a welcoming climate for purchasing a fresh Christmas tree in the yard of Beth and Mike Kaufman.



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# Tavistock Men's Club Annual Santa Claus Parade



The Tavistock Men's Club hosted its annual Santa Claus Parade Nov. 30, which wound its way throughout town and

finished up at Queens Park, where Santa Claus was waiting to take photos with local children.



Pictured is Santa with four-year-old Maddie Assaad and mom, Danielle Assaad, who says Maddie is a doll. They were both treated at the Pavillion to cheese sticks courtesy of Saputo and chocolate milk courtesy of the Oxford County Milk producers.



With a minus-10 degree wind chill, members of the New Hamburg Concert Band still sounded great with their Christmas music during the annual Tavistock Santa Claus Parade.



The Tavistock Agricultural Society float placed first in the Santa Claus Parade's organization category. Photos by Gary West

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First place in the commercial category went to the Cressman Insulation float.



Second prize in the parade's organization category went to the Key Bible Club float.



Third prize in the organization category went to the Tavistock Optimist Club float.



# Baby Faces of 2024

Baby's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Male or Female \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Weight (birth) \_\_\_\_\_ Weight (now) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings (Name[s] & Age) \_\_\_\_\_

Grandparents \_\_\_\_\_

What I Liked best about 2024: (a reply your baby might make)

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From left are Shayna Martz on Linc and Rayden Weeks on Elira in the Tavistock Santa Claus Parade.

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# Wilmot Township's council-staff policy getting another look; deferred after spirited debate

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Following a long and, at times, contentious discussion, the township's Council-Staff Relations Policy is headed back to staff for another look.

The policy's purpose is to "ensure that the relationship between council and staff is cooperative, supportive and positive with a clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities." It applies to all staff and members of council in their interactions with staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors that work on behalf of the corporation.

Coun. Kris Wilkinson explained the township currently has a staffing policy and wasn't in favour of passing the proposed version without further vetting. He suggested waiting for a new CAO to be hired would be better timing for approving a new policy.

"I'm looking at this and thinking perhaps given what the substance of this is and what it's suggesting, are we potentially better served by reviewing this policy when we have ... a new CAO that has been hired. I think there is a lot of good in here but there are potentially pieces that

need change."

Wilkinson had several issues with the wording of the draft including what would be designated as a routine matter as opposed to a non-routine matter. He objected to the suggestion councillors are identical to members of the public and are entitled to be provided the same information at the same time.

"There was also a section that basically said we are only owed the same information as the general public. We can't request more than a routine piece of information. Anything non-routine has to go through all of council. What's the point of having an elected council?" he asked.

Wilkinson made the argument council should get more information.

"We have been entrusted by the public to represent them; that's why we are here. Our job is to direct policy, administer and adjudicate tax dollars and make sure we are giving proper direction based on what our public is looking for."

He also took exception to a portion of Section 7 of the policy which states members of "council will reach out to the appropriate director for policy prior to responding to a constituent."

"My concern is that this clause essentially

limits and tries to define what a councillor can and cannot do. Only the municipal act has that authority. As a councillor, if I want to engage with a constituent then I will."

He added there are times when it's appropriate to reach out to staff for policy clarification but not always.

"I don't want any politician to be limited in their role to serve the public period."

Acting CAO Greg Clark was taken aback by some councillors questioning the policy's wording.

"We brought this report three weeks ago in good faith asking council to provide feedback, suggestions and recommended edits in any way shape, or form. To be brought to a council meeting where I didn't hear a peep other than a brief conversation about a couple of points and I went through everything the mayor shared with me. It is very disheartening."

Wilkinson immediately shot back with a point of privilege, saying the report was deferred at the last council meeting.

"Regardless of whether the points were made at that meeting or not, we're here to debate it again so I think it's well within our rights to make points. It's open for debate until passed and it has not passed."

Mayor Natasha Salonen at that point

stepped in to request some restraint.

"I really don't want to be getting into a debate with staff. The debate is to happen amongst council regarding the policy so I would ask we stick with council debating with council."

The next elected official to express concern was Coun. Lillianne Dunstall who admitted some points were raised that made her reconsider passing the policy in its current form.

"One of the things I learned in my business life was that sometimes I make decisions and sometimes I hear things that make me change my mind, and in a lot of cases the thing that makes me change my mind ends up being a good thing."

After listening to Wilkinson, she said a longer look at the policy is necessary.

"I'm not disparaging our staff at all, but I would like to have more clarification as well. There were things brought up ... that I perhaps didn't notice in reading, so I am in favour of deferring and having further conversation."

A motion was passed by council to defer the report and have it come back for another look at the end of January.



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Commemorating Domestic  
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This event honors those who have lost their lives, celebrates those who have survived, and asks our community to renew their dedication to ending violence against women.

Join us for a candle lighting ceremony while we listen to a story of hope from a domestic violence survivor. Together we remember the 14 lives taken at Ecole Polytechnique.

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## Forget the chicken, why did this herd cross the road in Wilmot?



New Hamburg resident Mike Grummett submitted this photo of cows crossing a local road. Photo by Mike Grummett

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# Beekeepers are busy bees this time of year

GARY WEST

*Gazette Correspondent*

Mike Roth of Nith Valley Apiaries between New Hamburg and Baden was very busy over the past couple weeks tending to his beehives spread throughout the surrounding area in Perth and Oxford counties, and Waterloo region.

He and his wife, Erika Roth, manage 800 hives with just one of those hives being home to as many as 30,000 honey-producing bees.

We were able to gain some insight on honey production and bee management from Mike Roth as he readied his hives for winter.

“European honeybees came to the Americas a couple hundred years ago by boat with European settlers,” he said. “I can only imagine the opportunity they had then with extensive foraging available and very low disease pressure, and presumably no environmental toxins.”

This began to change with farm development and, in the late 1800s, the first orchard sprays were developed.

In current times, it is completely reversed. Human land-use has decimated foraging options like corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa hay.

The alfalfa is now cut at around 10 percent bloom for top protein in dairy herds and covers a huge percentage of the province, which also sees pavement and lawns as another sizeable chunk.

The marginal and conserved lands left are often in lowlands, which collect from all over a given watershed the various human inputs into the land.

Then to top it all off, global trade has spread Varroa Mites and other lesser pests

and diseases to the North American honeybee population. Keeping honeybees alive today is a challenge as honey crops have become harder to produce.

Roth says they now manage more hives covering more area to try and collect what honey flows are out there.

Most years, Mike says he feels disappointed.

“Even with strong hives, there’s no guarantee that they’ll make honey,” he said.

Spring and fall wildflower blooms are pretty reliable but summers, when the populations peak and bees traditionally make the most honey, have become unreliable.

In 2024, July and August saw some bee yards starving as rain and pressures to harvest hay earlier than normal resulted in very little bloom available, while the sparse summer wildflowers didn’t yield.

It was interesting to note that bees gather resources from a roughly two-kilometre radius around their hive and concentrate the resulting foraging in their hive.

Mike Roth says the bees of today are exposed to multiple fungicides, insecticides and herbicides, as well as the beekeeper’s own miticides over the course of a year.

This experienced beekeeper said it took 800 hives this year to make what 200 hives typically made 10 years ago.

In the midst of these challenges, he said they have been able to grow the business, begin a family and feel a lot of support for what they do, selling honey of many varieties to area consumers.

Roth says these are the things that make it all worthwhile.

“We are thankful to be here in Ontario in 2024 with the opportunity to keep bees and make a living doing what we love,” he said.



Nith Valley Apiaries beekeeper Mike Roth shows how he is getting his hives ready for winter. Photo by Gary West

## ...Tis The Season

# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Christmas/Holiday Edition

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# EZT taxpayers off the hook for big increase in 2025 OPP contract

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT), just like many municipalities across the province, was looking at a double-digit increase in its Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) cost for next year, but the province has provided millions to help out.

“Our 2025 billing will be going up approximately 2.2 per cent instead of close to 20 per cent in the initial invoice,” said Mayor Phil Schaefer.

“The province is reducing the increase by \$190,723 in our case. Certainly, good news for East Zorra-Tavistock ratepayers.”

The township and all other OPP-patrolled municipalities recently received a letter from Ontario Solicitor General Michael Kerzner outlining the areas the province would be providing dollars. It included a 44 per-cent reduction in overtime

from 2023 and a 10 per-cent reduction in the overall 2025 OPP invoices.

Schaefer was invited to a video call explaining police billing for next year and had a feeling something was coming down the pipe. He added the additional money will benefit the bottom line for next year’s budget.

“I had heard rumours the province was going to take a look at these large increases, and when the webinar that was set up to discuss the 2025 billing was cancelled at the last minute, I had a strong feeling that changes were coming. Without the latest reduction, the increase to the tax levy for 2025 from police coverage alone would have been approximately three per cent in EZT.”

Once a municipality receives an invoice from the Ontario Provincial Police there is no room to negotiate the final amount. Schaefer explained the only option is to

add more police hours.

“There really aren’t any negotiations involved in the basic bill. A municipality can add an enhanced service like we did with the additional traffic officer. The enhanced officer position will continue in 2025. It is contracted until 2027; however, it can be cancelled with a year’s notice.”

Schaefer added the township has a very position relationship with the Oxford OPP.

“Media relations officer Randi Crawford has made a real effort to be visible in the township, and the county for that matter, and I feel that it goes a long way to promote positive community policing.”

The Ontario government is providing over \$77 million in financial relief to municipalities to help offset the increased cost of municipal police services provided by the OPP.

A news release from the province said the investment will help predominantly

small and rural communities address the budget impacts resulting from the collective bargaining agreement that was reached between the province and the Ontario Provincial Police Association in July.

“Our government is working closely with our municipal partners and our women and men in uniform to keep communities across Ontario safe,” said Kerzner. “The financial relief we are proposing will help municipal leaders balance their budgets and invest in their communities while ensuring no change to the policing provided by the OPP that keeps families and businesses safe.”

The province has also committed to looking at different options for reviewing the OPP billing model to ensure that it meets the needs of communities across the province.

## Rae Announces over \$943,000 to support local agribusinesses

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae recently announced more than \$943,000 in provincial funding to assist dozens of agri-food businesses and farm families enhance their biosecurity capabilities.

This funding is part of the governments of Canada and Ontario’s Biosecurity Enhancement Initiative.

“Farmers and farm families work hard to put food on our tables,” Rae said in a press release. “Our government understands that by supporting them through initiatives like this, that they can focus on providing quality, nutritious food that Ontarians need.”

The Biosecurity Enhancement Initiative aims to help agri-food businesses and contributors enhance their biosecurity capabilities,

allowing them to focus on providing safe and nutritious food to Ontarians. Successful recipients are receiving between \$2,700 and \$50,000 for projects including the establishment of a tracking system, building an isolation facility and installation of disinfecting units.

“Our government is committed to working with our agriculture and food sector to ensure it has what it needs to maintain, strengthen and grow the supply of safe, quality foods for consumers both at home and abroad,” said Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness Rob Flack in the press release. “Through initiatives such as this, we are boosting the resilience of Ontario’s food supply chain and maintaining its place as a trusted source of agri-food products.”

The Biosecurity Enhancement Initiative will support 365 projects

across the province through an investment of up to \$7.5 million. Funding will help farmers, food processors and other essential farm-supporting agribusinesses protect their operations against disease, enhance operational resilience and improve public trust in our food-supply system.

The Sustainable CAP is a five-year, \$3.5-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation and resiliency of Canada’s agriculture, agri-food and agriculture-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5-billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

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# Grace United Church in Tavistock welcomes new minister

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The congregation at Grace United Church in Tavistock recently welcomed their new, full-time minister, who is the mother of two sons, Rory and Graeme, and comes to the church after being involved in the ministry for the past 26 years.

In a recent interview, Rev. Marilyn Arthur said she is incredibly grateful to have been called to be the congregational minister at Grace United Church as of the end of October.

The faith community is filled with inviting, welcoming, compassionate

and kind people, and she said she is fortunate to be in the ministry with this congregation.

She says she has also very much enjoyed getting to know the charming, friendly town of Tavistock and looks forward to being part of the broader community in the future.

Arthur began her ministry 26 years ago at Central United Church in Woodstock as their Sunday school coordinator and youth leader.

Four years later, she answered the call to lead the children, youth and young family ministry at Riverside University Church in London.

She said she was in the ministry with this faith community for 19-and-a-half years as a recognized designated lay minister.

For the past two-and-a-half years, she has served three congregations in London as their shared youth and youth adult minister. In May 2024, she was commissioned as a diacanal minister and answered the call to Grace United Church.

Her education includes George Brown College, the Princeton Seminary in New Jersey, Emmanuel Theological School in Toronto and Huron College in London.



Rev. Marilyn Arthur conducts one of her first services before the congregation at Grace United Church in Tavistock. Photo by Gary West



Rev. Marilyn Arthur brings a new enthusiasm to the congregation at Tavistock's Grace United Church. Contributed photo

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## At This Time Of Year...

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## BIRTHDAY



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*For part of me went with you*  
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*And though I cannot see you*  
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## The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. What is the traditional birthstone of December?
2. Who plays the role of the Winter Soldier in the Marvel universe?
3. How many times did the boy call "Wolf!"?
4. What was the original name for the song Jingle Bells?
5. What year was the Star Wars Holiday Special televised?
6. What color are the berries of the mistletoe plant?
7. "Mele Kalikimaka" means Merry Christmas in which language?
8. How many points does a snowflake have?
9. True or False. Greenland has green on their flag.
10. What's more dangerous: hypothermia or frostbite?

Answers found on page 30

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## Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette



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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.*

#### December 4-11, 2019, Edition (5 years ago)

A cold, dry day greeted participants in the Tavistock Men's Club annual Santa Claus Parade on Saturday, Nov. 30, 2019. An east wind kept spectators bundled up on the parade route as the line of floats and costumed pedestrians wound their way south through the village, then west and back up to the centre of town.

On Sunday, Nov. 3, nine members of the Oxford 4-H Classic Team travelled to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto to participate at the 40th TD Canadian 4-H Dairy Classic. Team members worked hard as a team at the event and supported each other over the three days at the Classic competing with over 300 4-H members from Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The team came home with the honour of winning Premier County by accumulating the most points for showmanship, confirmation and exhibit. This is the first time this trophy has come to Oxford County. Team members include Dani Karn, Brandon Wielinga, Sophie Pike, Taylor Buckrell, Ri-Jul Tattoo Magic, Megan Atkinson, Smithden Cinderdoor Aabriella, Ashley Smith, Come-star Lamagoldy Goldwyn, George Mason, Callum Karn and Alex McKay.

The ninth annual Spaghetti Dinner was held at Quehl's Restaurant on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019 with proceeds donated to the Tavistock Assistance Program (TAP). The event was originally organized by Amy (Larson) Yantzi and Emily Shantz in 2011 for a high school project. The event has continued to grow each year. The buffet-style dinner fed approximately 225 people and co-sponsor Zehr Insurance donated

two dollars for every plate purchased. This year, the event raised \$3,650 for TAP.

Hebron United Church members place cookies in patron's containers during the 11th annual Cookie Walk at the church on Saturday morning, Dec. 7, 2019. Organizers said there were lots of first-time customers this year. They sold 374 dozen cookies and a spokesperson said they are truly grateful to the kind folks who purchased them.

#### December 2-9, 2009, Edition (15 years ago)

The Tavistock branch of the Oxford County Library is moving to a new home more than three times its current size after Oxford County council approved a lease agreement at their Nov. 25 meeting allowing the library to relocate. Council's approval of the signing of the lease agreement will allow the Tavistock Library to move from the Carnegie library building on Maria Street to the former Oxford Hotel at 40 Woodstock St. S. The new Tavistock Library will occupy the main floor of this grand old building, which is being lovingly restored by its owners, Dave and Kim Piggott.

During the spring and summer of 2009, the Hickson and District Lions Club in conjunction with the Hickson parks and recreation committee installed new, accessible washrooms and a new septic system in the Hickson Park. With the financial assistance of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, with a grant of \$74,700, and the backing of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock council, the project proceeded during the summer and was completed in the early fall.

The four Olympic torchbearers carrying the flame through Tavistock on Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009, are excited about their job. Designated as a route community, Tavistock is fortunate to have the Vancouver 2010 Olympics Torch Relay pausing in the village two days after Christmas to give the

community a chance to celebrate the Canadian spirit in preparation for the Olympic Winter Games beginning on Feb. 12, 2010.

Senior skaters from the Tavistock and District Skating Club earned medals at the John McKay Memorial Invitational figure skating competition held in Tillsonburg on Saturday, Nov. 28. Jessica Quinn was first in the WO Preliminary A Limited division while Drika Nauta also placed first in the WO Junior Bronze Limited category. Lauren Holdsworth placed second in her flight of the WO Preliminary A Limited division.

#### November 30 - December 7, 1994, Edition (30 years ago)

Two business dreams have been fulfilled with the sale of the Nosy Nook Flowers and Gifts shop in Tavistock effective Dec. 1, 1994. For the original owners, Doreen and Ralph Bick, it was a dream that became reality and blossomed into a beautiful business in downtown Tavistock. For the new owners, Brenda Smythe and Brenda Meadows, it's the result of a partnership that has outgrown the beginnings and now requires room to develop and mature.

Frank Meisner of Rensiem Holsteins, R.R. 7, Woodstock, has been named the 1994 recipient of the Curtis Clark Achievement Award. His selection was announced on Nov. 18 during the Holstein Show at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. Frank is the seventh recipient of this award established in 1988 to honour the integrity and character of Master Cowman Curtis Clark of Acme Holsteins.

The accounting firm of Clive A. Lawry, C.M.A., moved into its new quarters at 18 Woodstock St. S in Tavistock last week and invited past clients and friends in the community to an open house on Tuesday evening. The 1,200 square-foot facility has been thoroughly renovated with a reception area, conference room and three modern offices on the main floor, and a large filing area and research room downstairs.



# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

## PJHL Roundup: Firebirds take four points from Applejacks as tempers flare in Saturday's matchup

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

One of the Provincial Junior Hockey League's (PJHL) best rivalries came to a head over the weekend in Wellesley as the Applejacks dropped both ends of a home-and-home matchup with New Hamburg.

On Friday, each team took six minor penalties in a 2-1 Firebirds win on home ice. Wellesley led 1-0 on Eric Lacey's third of the season just under seven minutes into the first period. Jake Thompson tied it up nine minutes into the third, his 10th of the year, before Keegan Metcalf's game-winning shorthanded marker found the net just over two minutes later.

Saturday night's game in Wellesley was a much different story as New Hamburg earned a 6-1 win in a game that featured 96 minutes in penalties, including seven majors.

The drama reached a head at the 7:16 mark of the third period when Wellesley goalie Brandon Abbot and New Hamburg netminder Liam O'Leary challenged each other at centre ice, removed their helmets and went at it. Both will serve some suspension time after being served with gross-misconduct penalties along with five-minute majors for fighting.

On the ice, Owen Bruder and Jack MacDonald scored twice for the Firebirds with singles going to Carter Niall and Owen Fischer. Boden White scored his first goal of the season for Wellesley in a game that saw the Applejacks get outshot 42-17.

New Hamburg coach and general manager Shane Gerber said he couldn't ask for more than taking four points against Wellesley.

"If we had gotten three out of the four, I would have been happy, so to end up with all four was great."

Despite the on-ice shenanigans Saturday night, Gerber explained the rivalry with the Applejacks isn't the most heated in the Doherty Division.

"I wouldn't say it's the biggest but it's



Members of the New Hamburg Firebirds collected non-perishable food items during the New Hamburg Board of Trade's Santa Claus Parade on Sunday evening. Contributed photo

definitely a rivalry between two close teams. We've had some good playoff rounds with them over the years, but we've had the same with Tavistock. It's always nice to have those close teams. It's good for travelling and for the fans."

Teams in the PJHL have a tremendous amount of turnover every year, mainly due to the age of the players. It's hard to say how a team will gel until they get on the ice but Gerber said he's pleased with his team's progress just past the halfway point of the season.

"The old saying, 'The next man up,' has really taken its place here. We've dealt with some injuries and illnesses and have relied on our APs pretty heavily this year and those guys are local. Everybody has taken the opportunity they've been given, and to

sit where we sit having gone through that, we are extremely happy," Gerber said.

The team's injuries have included captain Owen Fischer and Jake Thomspson who have a combined 13 games on the shelf.

"The depth inside that room and the way they take on the challenge, that's what builds successful teams," said Gerber, who added if there is one area where there is room for improvement, it's goals against and team defence.

As for Saturday night, Gerber admitted he didn't want to see his goalie fighting at centre ice, but the season goes on.

"It wasn't ideal. We play them again in two weeks in Wellesley and I hope the dust settles and we can move on."

Applejacks head coach Derek Lebold

said despite his starting goalie's upcoming suspension, he couldn't be more pleased with Abbot's play.

"Brandon was outstanding in (the first game); one of the best goaltending performances I have seen during my three years here. Our defense played a very heavy and physical game, and I was extremely proud of the way they logged heavy minutes."

He added Jordan Abbott was moved from forward to defense and rose to the occasion.

"I thought he did a great job of keeping his game simple while using his size to win a lot of key defensive battles for us. All six of our defencemen battled relentlessly and I was proud of them," Lebold said.

As for Saturday, Lebold explained they played a solid first period but got away from competing and didn't keep up with New Hamburg's speed.

"It was frustrating but there are a lot of correctable pieces we can take from that game."

Speaking to the goalie fight, Lebold said while he didn't want to see Abbot drop the gloves, he understood his frustration.

"I certainly don't want that to be something Brandon adds regularly to his game, but he had every right to make that decision given how we were playing in front of him. He is a leader for us and hopefully that sparks our group to compete more for 60 minutes as he never takes a night off."

Lebold echoed Gerber's remarks about the next time the two teams play in two weeks, saying the Applejacks will be sticking to hockey and not focusing on the extracurricular activities on the ice. He added despite the weekend losses, he likes where his team is at.

"I am proud of the group for how they have gelled and have come together as we integrate some new bodies into the lineup. We do have another gear that this group can hit, though, and we need to get that out of them as we head into the upcoming weekend here."

TAVISTOCK ROYALS SR. "AA" HOCKEY



Tavistock Royals

Georgian Bay Applekings

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>

AT 7:30PM

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|---------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|-------|-----|----|-----|---------|-------|--|
| PJHL                            |    | As of Wednesday, December 4      |    |     |   |     |     |     |     |    |     |      |       |     |    |     |         |       |  |
| South Doherty Division          | GP | W                                | L  | OTL | T | SOW | SOL | PTS | OTW | GF | GA  | DIFF | PCT   | PIM | RW | ROW | STK     | GPCT  |  |
| 1 Norwich Merchants             | 23 | 18                               | 5  | 0   | 0 | 2   | 0   | 36  | 0   | 89 | 54  | 35   | 0.783 | 320 | 16 | 16  | 5-0-0-0 | 0.622 |  |
| 2 New Hamburg Firebirds         | 23 | 17                               | 5  | 0   | 0 | 0   | 1   | 35  | 2   | 99 | 69  | 30   | 0.761 | 378 | 15 | 17  | 2-0-0-0 | 0.589 |  |
| 3 Woodstock Navy Vets           | 22 | 14                               | 7  | 0   | 0 | 1   | 1   | 29  | 0   | 86 | 68  | 18   | 0.659 | 270 | 13 | 13  | 0-1-0-0 | 0.558 |  |
| 4 Wellesley Applejacks          | 21 | 12                               | 7  | 1   | 0 | 2   | 1   | 26  | 1   | 67 | 55  | 12   | 0.619 | 486 | 9  | 10  | 0-2-0-0 | 0.549 |  |
| 5 Dorchester Dolphins           | 22 | 10                               | 10 | 0   | 0 | 0   | 2   | 22  | 3   | 59 | 67  | -8   | 0.500 | 375 | 7  | 10  | 2-0-0-0 | 0.468 |  |
| 6 Tavistock Braves              | 22 | 8                                | 13 | 1   | 0 | 1   | 0   | 17  | 0   | 78 | 89  | -11  | 0.386 | 511 | 7  | 7   | 1-0-0-0 | 0.467 |  |
| 7 Paris Titans                  | 24 | 7                                | 14 | 3   | 0 | 0   | 0   | 17  | 1   | 64 | 90  | -26  | 0.354 | 320 | 6  | 7   | 0-2-1-0 | 0.416 |  |
| 8 Hespeler Shamrocks            | 23 | 4                                | 16 | 2   | 0 | 0   | 1   | 11  | 0   | 56 | 106 | -50  | 0.239 | 366 | 4  | 4   | 0-3-0-0 | 0.346 |  |



# Royals back in the win column

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

Deven Kropf's goal with just under seven minutes remaining in the third period was the game-winner, breaking the Tavistock Royals two-game losing skid in Ontario Elite Hockey League action on Saturday night.

Tavistock downed the visiting Georgian Bay Applekings to remain fifth in league standings. Kropf,

who scored his fourth of the season, was set up by Lucas Bast and Callan Christner.

The Royals trailed 1-0 after 20 minutes but a powerplay goal by Luke Fanjoy and a shorthanded marker by Jeremy Munro gave them a 2-1 lead after two periods.

Next action for Tavistock is Saturday night as they host the Creemore Coyotes.

Pictured to the right, the Tavistock Royals held a First Responders Night during the game against Georgian Bay on Saturday. To the right of the Applekings captain is recently retired Tavistock Fire Chief Mike Donaldson, Tavistock resident and advanced-care paramedic at Waterloo Region Jeremy Bartlett. Bartlett is a recent recipient of the Governor General's Emergency Services Exemplary Service Medal, receiving the honour in October. Two Oxford OPP auxiliary officers were also on hand as was Royals captain Tristan Hohl. Contributed photo



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## SHOW US YOUR WILMOT



Snow fell throughout the weekend and into the week, making for a beautiful morning earlier this week along the banks of the Nith River in New Hamburg. Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group member Michelle Egli-Shantz took this photo. Photo courtesy of Show Us Your Wilmot

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# Journey to Bethlehem in North Easthope Township

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Red Barn next door to St. James Lutheran Church in North Easthope Township, northeast of Amulree, was the setting for a Journey to Bethlehem to recognize the true meaning of Christmas.

This was the 27th year church organizers have put on the play and, after two productions at 4 and 7 p.m., hundreds of attendees were very impressed with the well-written production and the local actors who recreated the nativity scene alongside live

animals.

Organizers said everyone's contribution is as important as the next, and they thanked everyone who came out and all those who worked so hard and participated again this year.

The Journey to Bethlehem at St. James Church was first organized many years ago and, even though a number of area residents were involved, organizers of this year's production thanked North Easthope's Sharon Lindner, who really got it started with her high energy 27 years

ago.

For those who were not part of the large crowd in attendance, the play centres around a grandmother and grandfather retelling the Christmas story to their grandchildren in this live nativity scene. The night also featured the singing of Christmas carols like "Silent Night," "Joy to the World" and "We Three Kings," to name only a few.

It's very much a joint effort with many members and youth of St. James, neighbouring churches and the outside

community helping to make it another successful production.

Local New Hamburg veterinarian Dr. Mike Ritter has loaned his donkey, Noah, to the church for over 20 years for the production.

Several other area families have been coming for many years as part of their family's annual Christmas tradition to tell the real meaning of Christmas with the birth of Jesus.

Organizers said they hope to be back for their 28th year next Christmas.



In the red barn next to St. James Lutheran Church on Perth Road 106 are a grandfather and grandmother sitting in a stable in rocking chairs explaining to their grandchildren the true meaning of Christmas and the birth of Jesus in a stable in Bethlehem. Photos by Gary West












A large crowd of onlookers listen to angels and children from the audience sing the Christmas carol, "O' Little Town of Bethlehem."




Mary and Joseph watch over the recreated birth of the Christ child on Christmas Day.

## Welcome Home for the Holidays



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# Outdoor rinks beginning to take shape in Tavistock

GARY WEST  
*Gazette Correspondent*

With colder weather on Dec. 1 than we have seen for a couple years, it seemed like a good time to start making an outdoor rink bigger than most backyard skating surfaces.

This one is behind the Tavistock Missionary Church on Mogk Street in Tavistock. Will Gunn, along with his 11-year-old daughter, Elaina, were busy

Saturday putting up planks and stakes to get ready for the plastic that will hold the water that will freeze for outdoor skating and hockey.

The rink measures 64 by 100 feet and the pair were working hand in hand to complete the job. Gunn runs his own construction company, Complete Construction, and volunteers his time at his family's church.

His daughter said she was glad to help out with the rink.



On Saturday, Will Gunn with daughter Elaina prepare the backyard ice rink behind Tavistock Missionary Church. Photo by Gary West-

## Gazette Puzzles

"CHRISTMAS \_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_"

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# Trump's not joking about Canada becoming 51st state

## FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

By Stewart Grant



Well, that didn't take long.

Trump is still six weeks from officially being back in office, but already he is floating the idea of redrawing the North American map.

Fox News reported Monday night that "when Trudeau told President-Elect Trump new

tariffs would kill the Canadian economy, Trump joked to him that if Canada can't survive without ripping off the U.S. to the tune of \$100 billion a year, then maybe Canada should become the 51st state and Trudeau could become its governor."

Something we should know

about Donald Trump by now is that he's not known as someone who jokes. Moreso, he's known as someone who says the quiet part out loud. Most of all though, he's known for being an extreme narcissist; one who constantly seeks attention and one who considers himself to be of great importance.

The thing that worries me most about a second Trump presidency is his first term, in the grand scheme of things, was not that historically important. Now that Trump has secured the first goal of his second term (staying out of jail), he can move on to doing something of equally great importance to him: building a legacy so his name will be remembered not just in our century, but for the many cen-

turies that follow.

But how can one be remembered for a thousand years? It's not easy. Good or bad, you need to do something very significant, very memorable. Many of the names that will long be remembered, such as Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Genghis Khan, Adolf Hitler, were all empire builders. Redrawing maps is the number-one way to be remembered, unless you are Jesus.

I don't believe for a minute that Donald Trump truly cares about "Making America Great Again" for your everyday person. It's a memorable and effective catchphrase. I also don't believe that illegal immigrants coming over the Canadian border is of particularly great danger to the se-

curity of the United States. Instead, Trump highlighting this issue and threatening a 25 percent tariff was a means to open a dialogue about Canada. In the coming months, expect right-wing talk shows, social media bots, and Elon Musk's X platform to spread misinformation exaggerating about "the problems with the Canadian border" or making the case for "why Canada should join the U.S."

Canada, with its vast resources, is a very attractive asset for a U.S. president who constantly seeks recognition and notoriety.

There's Trump Tower, Trump National Golf Club, Trump Coins, even a Trump Bible. Does he envision a 51st state, perhaps dubbed Trump North? It's a terrifying thought.

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# A new outlook for the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

## CLIMATE CORNER

By Ashley Ropp,  
Nith Valley EcoBoosters



**Wait! Don't turn the page!**

I know that coming across the word, "climate," can be quick to put people off. Whether you're scrolling on social media, flipping through the newspaper, or just having a conversation, hearing words like green, sustainability and climate change are signs to stop listening.

And who can blame you? Nobody wants to hear more disastrous news when there's already more than enough. Nobody wants to be guilted or lectured for the endless ways they don't live sustainably; how much red meat they eat, the fact that they don't drive an electric

car, their plastic to-go cups, or their water usage. The list goes on and on.

But, regardless of the controversial nature of the subject, regardless of the frustration we've all grown to feel within these conversations, regardless of your personal investment in the issue, climate change is here, and we need to talk about it. And I don't just mean talking about far-out goals that will continuously be pushed back – lowering whatever percentage of emissions by whatever year. I mean we need to talk about lowering emissions now!

What if words like climate or

environment weren't the signs of a not only divisive, but intensely grating conversation coming to life? In a world of increasing political tension, community division and all-consuming uncertainty, I believe it's crucial these words make their way into our daily vocabulary so that we can have genuinely constructive, productive and truthful conversations. I believe we need a new outlook on our climate conversations.

Speaking of what I believe, I should probably explain who I am. My name is Ashley Ropp and I am a lifelong resident of Tavistock, a lover of art and someone who has whatever the opposite of a green thumb is. Most importantly, I am committed to learning about the best ways to help those around me – about how to advocate for environmental and social justice, and, currently, about how to write a column for the local newspaper. I am thrilled to introduce my column, Climate Corner.

In Climate Corner, I will discuss topics about sustainability,

the environment and climate change. I will do it with this new outlook of which I so cryptically speak. For too long, climate action has been presented as something for specific people. It's for activists not regular people. It's for people with excess money, those who can afford house renovations and electric vehicles. It's for people in specific spaces – political spaces, that is.

It's time for a change. At the risk of sounding preachy, I think it's time we start realizing that climate action is for everyone, in our everyday lives. I want to explore and learn alongside everyone who is willing to read this column. How can we make climate action effective, accessible, practical and non-divisive so we can all sleep better knowing our future is bright? (Bright green, that is!)

And most crucially, I want us to make climate action not boring. This doesn't have to be an insufferable chore, and this bright-green future I speak of doesn't have to be a miserable life of inconvenience where

paper straws dissolve in our drinks and every field is filled with towering windmills. There is no universal definition of an environmentally sustainable community. Once we realize we can create a more just and enjoyable world, the creative task of defining our environmentally sustainable community can begin – in Wilmot, in our individual towns, workplaces, schools, homes and in every other community which we enjoy.

Climate Corner represents Nith Valley EcoBoosters (NVEB). The NVEB is a not-for-profit, politically non-partisan volunteer group established in 2015. It is committed to achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley townships through education, action and collaboration. In nine years of work, they have organized 18 live or online workshops, webinars and events. For more information on the group, visit [nvecoboosters.com](http://nvecoboosters.com). Climate Corner will include NVEB updates and how you can get involved or support us.

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# My December happy holistic holiday wishes

## HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



As a wellness expert, my holistic holiday wishes are for you to check off a happy, holistic, winter bucket list.

Living in balance is key. End 2024 with synergy between mind, body and spirit and a mindset ready to make fitness and nutrition a bigger part of 2025. The choices you make impact the quality of life today and tomorrow for you, friends, loved ones and those whose lives you touch.

Get outside and enjoy Mother Nature. Make a snowman or have a snowball fight.

Exercise outdoors. Whether you skate, snowshoe or walk, they are all great forms of exercise. Activity comes in all forms. Shovelling is considered cardio, burning over 400 calories in an hour for a person weighing 155 pounds.

Make hot chocolate but skip conventional powders. Instead use pure cocoa and full-fat coconut milk with a teaspoon of maple syrup.

Stay in your PJ's and cuddle up with a cup of cozy chamomile tea.

Read a health book linked to longevity. It's never too late or too early to start living your best life.

Make soup. Warm up with a hearty squash or pumpkin-coconut soup flavoured with anti-inflammatory herb turmeric and flavour-boosting curry.

Take your bestie to coffee. A Portuguesa Bakery is a quaint café located at 74 Huron St. in New Hamburg, and they have the most incredible coffee, tempting pastries, cakes, fancy deserts and sandwiches for chats.

Clothes snug? Set a fitness goal! Need to shed a few pounds?

Increase muscle? Either way, you will be smaller so go ahead and donate to the MCC Thrift Shop at 41 Heritage Dr. in New Hamburg.

Make bone broth from scratch. It's easy, nourishing and a favorite go-to on low-calorie and keto diets, and a fabulous way to break fasting.

Donate to a food drive. Skip sugar and unhealthy fats. Choose plain oatmeal, pasta, unsweetened apple sauce or canned tuna as healthy, helping-others options.

Watch a holiday movie and snack on air-popped popcorn with melted butter or go plant-based with coconut oil and Himalayan salt.

De-stress. Soaking in a bathtub filled with hot water and magnesium flakes replenishes the body while soothing sore muscles.

Clean and organize your home. Decluttering your space can improve your energy field. Go metaphysical and hang a crystal in the window to attract light.

Donate to a local Christmas toy drive but choose a gift that has kids up and moving. Kids' hopper balls are huge, indoor fun. Balance stepping stones for an outrageous obstacle course or a plastic bowling set for super fun, snowed-in days.



Happy Holistic Holidays from health-and-wellness columnist, Mercedes Kay Gold. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold

Eat seasonally showing love to Ontario farmers. Power up with a plant-based stew of parsnips, beets and carrots. Poach pears and top with cinnamon and a drizzle of honey for a simple yet elegant dessert.

Start a journal. Write a list of things you are grateful for.

Fall in love with you. Write a list of things you love about yourself. Don't be shy.

December is a busy bee month with social gatherings and a slew of smiling to do. Schedule a date with the most important person in life, YOU!

Happy holistic holidays!

## Buying a fixer upper

### EXPERT REAL ESTATE ADVICE

By Isabel Livingston



I can't believe I have yet to write about this topic; it is one I am particularly excited to talk about!

A little background as to why and a little fun fact about me to go with it. I am currently in the process of renovating my own fixer upper with my boyfriend to move into! So exciting, I know. It has been a crazy fun project for the two of us and such an exciting way to start building some equity.

We have taken on a quite large project with our fixer upper – two dump runs, new bathrooms, new floors in the entire home, dry-wall and paint, kitchen renos, you name it and we are probably doing something with it. Having experienced this all first-hand and in real time, I wanted to share this approach with you all and help guide you through what to look for and what to watch out for.

Disclaimer: I know a fixer upper isn't for everyone and I am by no means an expert when it comes to home renovations, so today will simply be coming from a realtor's perspective when looking at a fixer upper.

First and foremost, determine how much of a project you are wanting and/or able to undertake. Is it purely cosmetic, ripping it right down to studs or somewhere in between? From here, we can determine budget. How much are you wanting to spend on the project all in? Here is a fun little fact you may not know about; you can sometimes roll some of the costs of your renovations into your mortgage. Talk to your mortgage agent about this option if it is something you are considering to see your qualifications! There are also incentives for different improvements and upgrades that

you can get money back from. Windows and doors that improve energy efficiency are pretty common examples.

Now we get to go and look at homes. What exactly are we looking for when walking through a fixer upper? Well, a lot of the same things we would look for if you weren't buying a fixer upper like anything that may seem alarming and does not fit into what you are wanting to do to the home, or bigger-ticket items like foundation and structural issues, water issues, or electrical, plumbing and heating-system concerns.

Fixer uppers tend to be older homes and a home inspection is highly recommended. I am not a plumber or an electrician and your realtor likely isn't either, so we leave diagnosing these sorts of issues up to the people who are. A home inspection condition on

your offer will allow us to have the right people with the right knowledge come look at the home and ensure everything checks out and any issues can be made apparent.

When purchasing a fixer upper, it is my goal that my clients love the home, the home fits into their vision of what they hope to turn it into and any issues are disclosed prior to them securing the home to minimize the surprises as much as we possibly can.

Now the fun part. Happy renovating!

For article suggestions or questions about real estate, feel free to contact me anytime at 226-232-4236 or ilivingstonsells@gmail.com.

Isabel Livingston is a sales representative with Gale Group Realty Brokerage Ltd. and the Jennifer Gale Real Estate Team.



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# Getting the real story at Pier 21

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



Some travel experiences are just plain fun; some offer a combination of entertainment and education; and some are simply serious – sometimes life-changingly serious.

I would put the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in the latter category. If you spend the time and pay attention as you make your way through the exhibits at this museum on the Halifax waterfront, you will come out with a lot of new knowledge and perhaps even some changed perspectives.

You may even learn some new things about your own personal heritage – but more about that later, in our last stop at the museum.

Pier 21 was where about a million immigrants first set foot in Canada, from 1928 to 1971. It was also an important transfer site for the Canadian military during World War II. So ironically, this is the place where many new Canadians entered the country for the first time, and also the place where many young Canadians left the country, too often for the last time, as they headed for the battlefields of Europe.

Those kinds of stories would make it easy for Pier 21 to be romanticized as heartwarming stories of newcomers and courageous stories of young soldiers are told. And while, yes, those accounts are part of the narrative here, Pier 21 does not duck the ugly realities of Canada's racist immigration policies

that lasted throughout the majority of our national history.

And that is, above all, the cause of the new knowledge and changed perspectives that can result from your visit, as I mentioned above.

The problem is summed up on one information panel entitled, Why Europeans? It reads, in part, "Canadian immigration policies overwhelmingly favoured white Europeans and Americans. Racist immigration policy and practice effectively excluded African, Asian and other racialized people until just a few years before Pier 21 closed in 1971."

The museum tells its stories with brutal honesty. When we visited, there was a deeply moving exhibit concerning the reality of slavery in Canada. The facts as presented were in stark contrast to our comfortable image of Canada as the welcoming terminus of the underground railway, which welcomed enslaved people escaping from slavery in the U.S. That certainly happened, but so did slavery, with all its horrors, for a period that extended from 1629 to 1834.

Pier 21 owes its very existence to the work of a woman, herself the daughter of Jewish-Russian immigrants who settled in Cape Breton. Ruth M. Goldbloom led the campaign to restore Pier 21 as a museum telling the stories of immigrants. Pier 21 opened in 1999. A decade later, it officially became The Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, Canada's sixth national museum (four are in Ottawa, the fifth, the National Museum of Human Rights, is in Winnipeg).

Pier 21 is a facility that rewards those who take the time to read all of the information panels. There you find the true story of immigration, and you will inevitably pause to reflect on our national history, a mixed bag at best. Rivalling the stories of slavery for sheer horror is the account of the ship, the MSS St. Louis. In 1939, the MSS St. Louis attempted to land in Canada. It carried 900 Jewish refugees

attempting to escape Nazi Germany. Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King refused to allow the ship to land, and sent it back to Germany, where over a quarter of the passengers eventually died in concentration camps.

This, one of the darkest moments in Canadian history, is commemorated in an installation at Pier 21 called The Wheel of Conscience. The dramatic creation of Daniel Libeskind includes four interlocking gears. The smallest, labelled hatred, activates the racism wheel, which moves the xenophobia gear, which drives the anti-Semitism wheel. The names of the passengers are etched on glass in the piece.

The museum not only offers hours of exhibited reading materials, carrying the visitor from the darkest days of immigration policies to today's much more inclusive times, but there are also regular tours presented by clever and entertaining guides.

The museum's theatre shows an uplifting film featuring recent immigrants to Canada.

And visitors may be surprised to discover the family research centre, where knowledgeable staffers are poised behind computer screens, ready to help you with your individual quest for personal history.

We had come quite unprepared for such an opportunity, but after dredging up a very few bits of personal genealogy, I was surprised at how much information our guide was able to excavate from the records. In a matter of minutes, we had gone back six generations in the history of my birth family – a family I only discovered a few years ago. I left with a few sheets of information, including the earliest ancestor discovered in that brief time, a man with the intriguing name of Ritchison Travers.

So avid, amateur genealogists may want to skip the tour and spend all their time in the family research centre! But that would be a shame, because time spent at Pier 21 will change your perspective on the history of our country. You will feel shame at what we were, and perhaps pride at what we are becoming. We can hope so, anyway.

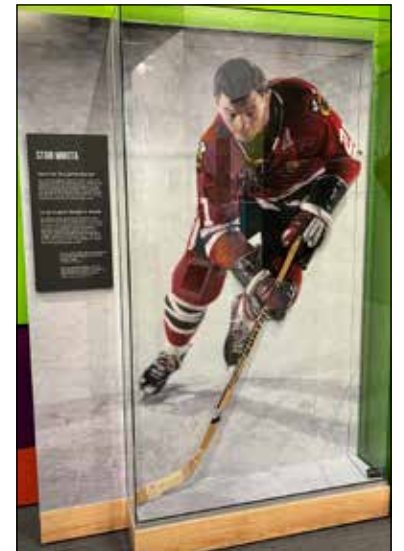
Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and president of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email [pknowles@golden.net](mailto:pknowles@golden.net).



Pier 21, the Canadian Museum of Immigration, on the Halifax waterfront. All photos by Paul Knowles



Pier 21 founder Ruth M. Goldbloom was the daughter of Jewish-Russian immigrants to Canada.



Hockey fans will remember this famous immigrant to Canada – Hockey Hall of Famer Stan Mikita, who came to Canada as a child from the former Czechoslovakia.



The Wheel of Conscience is inspired by the horrific story of Canada's rejection of the MSS St. Louis, which carried 900 Jewish refugees trying to escape Nazi Germany.



An art installation by Métis artist Tracey-Mae Chambers. The piece reflects the conflicting emotions inspired by the colour red and according to the artist is an attempt "to bridge the gap between settlers and First Nations."



# Stay sharp in the chill: Winter-fashion essentials for men

## DRESS SHARP. SPEND SMART.

By Scott Dunstall



Winter's here and it's time to layer up and stay warm without losing your style.

Whether you're heading to work, meeting friends, or just braving the cold, it's easy to look sharp while staying comfortable.

Here's your guide to practical, stylish winter fashion.

### Coats: The cold-weather heroes

Your coat is the centerpiece of your winter wardrobe. A good one keeps you warm and pulls your look together. Here are some solid options:

#### **Wool overcoats**

Classic and versatile, wool overcoats work for both formal and casual outfits. Stick to colours like navy, charcoal, or camel for easy pairing with your wardrobe. Wear it with slim-fit pants and Chelsea boots for a polished look.

#### **Parkas**

For outdoor, laid-back vibes, go with a parka. Features like fur-lined hoods and insulated layers are perfect for warmth. They pair well with chunky boots like Timberlands and make for a solid

weekend outfit.

#### **Peacoats**

A peacoat offers a sharp, tailored silhouette that's great for semi-formal occasions. Layer it over a turtleneck or sweater and pair it with leather boots for a sleek, put-together style.

#### **Puffer jackets**

For casual days, puffer jackets are practical and stylish. Stick to simple colours like black or green and pair them with slim jeans and boots for an easy, sporty vibe.

#### **Boots: Style meets function**

Winter boots can be practical without sacrificing style. These options keep you looking good while staying warm:

#### **Chelsea boots**

Sleek and timeless, Chelsea boots work for everything from office wear to nights out. Choose leather for a classic look or suede for added texture. Pair them with dark jeans and a wool coat for a sharp look.

#### **Chukka boots**

These versatile boots are great for semi-casual outfits. Go for leather in rich shades like dark

brown or oxblood, and pair them with chinos or jeans. Add a scarf for a polished finish.

#### **Brogue boots**

Brogue boots bring a heritage-inspired feel with their detailed stitching. They pair well with wool coats and tailored pants, giving you a vintage yet polished look.

#### **Jodhpur boots**

With their strap-and-buckle design, Jodhpur boots are a sleek option for a modern, sophisticated outfit. Wear them with slim-fit trousers and a structured coat.

#### **Dress boots**

For formal occasions, dress boots in polished leather are a must. They work perfectly with suits and overcoats, giving your outfit a refined edge.

### Accessories: The details matter

Winter accessories aren't just functional, they're the finishing touch that completes your look.

#### **Scarves**

Choose classic patterns like plaid or herringbone or go bold with colour to brighten up neutral coats. Wool and cashmere are warm and stylish.

#### **Gloves**

Leather gloves with wool or cashmere lining are both practical and sleek. Knit gloves with touch-screen tips are a great choice for casual looks.

#### **Hats**

A beanie works for casual outfits, while a flat cap or fedora can dress things up a notch.

### Sweaters: The layer you'll live in

Sweaters are essential for winter style, giving you warmth and versatility. Here's how to wear them:

#### **Turtlenecks**

Turtlenecks are a winter staple. Go for thin, neutral-coloured ones for layering or chunky knits for a cozy, rugged look. Pair them with wool overcoats or peacoats.

#### **Cable-knit sweaters**

Cable-knit sweaters add texture and personality to your outfit. Wear them with dark jeans or corduroy pants under a peacoat for a timeless winter look.

#### **Cardigans**

Cardigans are perfect for layering. Wear a fitted one over a dress shirt and tie for work or throw one over a t-shirt for a relaxed, casual vibe.

#### **Crewneck sweaters**

A classic crewneck sweater is a go-to piece. Pair it with chinos and a puffer jacket for a clean, casual style.

#### **Quarter-zip sweaters**

These are the perfect balance of sporty and refined. Layer one under a coat or wear it solo with tailored chinos and boots for a smart-casual look.

#### **Layer smart, not bulky**

The key to winter layering is warmth without bulk. Start with thin, heat-retaining base layers like thermals or merino wool. Add a mid-layer like a sweater or fleece and top it off with a fitted coat. This keeps you warm while maintaining a sharp silhouette.

### Mix colours and textures

Winter is the perfect time to experiment with textures like tweed, corduroy, or chunky knits. Deep colours like burgundy, forest green and mustard add richness to your look, while neutrals like grey and black keep it balanced. Stick to a maximum of three tones to keep your outfit cohesive.

### The bottom line

Winter style doesn't have to be complicated. With the right coat, boots and accessories – and a little attention to layering – you can stay warm and look great. Whether you're heading to the office or hitting the town, these essentials will have you covered all season.

Stay warm, stay stylish!

*Scott Dunstall has been on a stylistic journey for over 10 years. His belief is that every guy has a style of their own. When it's discovered, it empowers and builds confidence. Scott has appeared several times on Rogers TV Kitchener as a guest on DAYTIME. His writing has been republished by LinkedIn Top Influencer and INC. Magazine contributing editor, Jeff Haden. He has also written several pieces for the Baden Outlook. You can follow Scott on Instagram @everydaystylebyscott or on LinkedIn @scottdunstall or Life & Style Wilmot on Facebook. Feel free to ask questions or propose collaborations: everydaystylebyscott1@gmail.com.*

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2024

### THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

**Wellesley Council budget meeting**  
**9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**  
Council chambers  
4805 William Hastings Line, Crosshill

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

**Candlelit Vigil Commemorating Domestic Violence Awareness Month**  
**6 p.m.**  
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532  
65 Boullee St., New Hamburg

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

**Live Nativity Walk Thru**  
**5 - 8 p.m.**  
www.ezmennonite.ca  
East Zorra Mennonite Church  
677044 16th Line, Tavistock

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

**Wilmot Council budget meeting**  
**6-9 p.m.**  
Council chambers  
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10

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

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

**Tales for Tots | Join Miss Kathy for storytime!**  
**10 - 11 a.m.**  
Tavistock Public Library  
40 Woodstock St., Tavistock

### FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

**21st Annual Christmas Tyme in Wellesley**  
**6:45 p.m.**  
Details on page 7

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

**A Jazzy Christmas Concert with Jack and Kyla**  
**7 p.m.**  
Pay What You Can - All are welcome  
Zion United Church  
215 Peel Street, New Hamburg

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 16

**Wilmot Council meeting**  
**7-11 p.m.**  
Council chambers  
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

**East Zorra-Tavistock Council meeting**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
Council Chambers  
89 Loveys Street E., Hickson

**Tales for Tots | Join Miss Kathy for storytime!**  
**10 - 11 a.m.**  
Tavistock Public Library  
40 Woodstock St., Tavistock

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

**Community Christmas Dinner for those in need of community, food or cheer**  
**12 noon**  
Email info@wilmotfamilyresourcecentre.ca  
or call 519-662-2731 by December 18 to register  
Steinmann Mennonite Church  
1316 Snyder's Rd W, Baden



DECEMBER 26, 2024



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- The Community Calendar allows non-profit organizations to promote their free admission community events at no charge. Event listings can include your event name, date, time and location as well as contact information (ie phone number, email address or website).
- If your event is not free admission or you would like to include more details than stated above, The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette offers the following options for promoting your community events:
  - Coming Events Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$10 + hst
  - Coming Events Boxed Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$15 + hst
  - Display Ad - Sizes begin at a Small Classified Display ad (3.3" x 2.5") - \$35 + hst

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## Weekly Quiz Answers

- |                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Turquoise                 | 6. White        |
| 2. Sebastian Stan            | 7. Hawaiian     |
| 3. Three                     | 8. Six          |
| 4. The One Horse Open Sleigh | 9. False        |
| 5. 1978                      | 10. Hypothermia |

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