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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

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(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Volunteers with the Mennonite Central Committee stand in front of five-gallon buckets to be filled with hygiene supplies that will be sent to families in Malawi and Zambia.

Buckets of Thanks project delivers hope one bucket at a time

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

The community came together, Saturday, Aug. 29, at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Hub in New Hamburg for the Buckets of Thanks program, an annual fall event that brings volunteers together to pack relief kits for people in need around the world.

More than 200 relief kits were packed during the event, thanks to the efforts of local volunteers who played a key role in making the day a success.

The majority of the kits were funded through the New Hamburg Thrift Centres Round Up for Relief Campaign, held in the spring. Customers were invited to round their purchases up to the nearest dollar, with those small contributions

adding up to make a significant impact. The funds helped purchase the supplies needed to fill the kits.

The five-gallon buckets were packed with essential hygiene products, containing items to support a family of four.

Keeping clean is an important part of staying healthy. Hygiene kits can provide practical assistance to families facing

Continued on page 2

Regional council passes motion to prevent elected mayor from serving as chair

Wilmot mayor hoping for clarity

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Members of Waterloo regional council have unanimously approved a motion asking the province not to allow a mayor to serve simultaneously as regional chair.

Under legislation passed in May, the next regional chair will now be appointed by Ontario, with the first provincially appointed chair taking office Nov. 15 after the Oct. 26 municipal election. No date has been set for the announcement, but the person in the position will serve a four-year term.

The appointed chair will have considerably more power than the traditional elected chair. Ontario has given the position the province's "strong chair" powers, which largely mirror the strong-mayor powers already used in designated Ontario municipalities such as East Zorra-Tavistock.

There is nothing in the Better Regional Governance Act, 2026, which states an elected mayor who applied for regional chair couldn't hold both positions.

Continued on page 3





TIM LOUIS

Member of Parliament for Kitchener-Conestoga



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Volunteers turn small donations into big impact with Buckets of Thanks

Continued from page 1

difficult circumstances while also offering a message of hope and compassion.

The buckets packed in New Hamburg will be included in upcoming international relief shipments to Zambia and Malawi. Once the hygiene supplies have been used, the buckets themselves can be repurposed for a variety of household needs.

While packing relief kits was the main focus of the day, the Buckets of Thanks program offered plenty of opportunities for family and friends to enjoy the event together. Activities and refreshments were available, and a bouncy castle provided plenty of entertainment for the kids.

Volunteers continue to be the driving force behind this project and the many initiatives at MCC. By giving their time and energy, they help turn locally donated funds and supplies into practical support for families around the world.

For MCC, the kits are more than the items inside the buckets, they are a tangible way to communicate compassion and care to people facing hardship and to put into action the call to love our neighbours.

For more information about MCC relief kits and how to get involved, visit mccthriftontario.com.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

More than 200 five-gallon buckets filled with essential hygiene supplies were packed during Saturday's event thanks to dedicated volunteers.

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MCC volunteers sort and organize hygiene supplies before packing them into five-gallon buckets as part of the annual Buckets of Thanks project.

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Regional council opposes mayor serving as chair

Continued from page 1

"For me, the question is less about legal eligibility and more about ensuring clarity in governance and accountability," said Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen. "Both mayor and regional chair are significant leadership roles, and there will inevitably be occasions where the priorities of an area municipality and the region do not perfectly align."

Salonen said she supported Cambridge Coun. Doug Craig's motion because she believes there is value in considering how those responsibilities would be managed and ensuring the regional chair can represent the interests of the region as a whole.

"That said, I do not believe good governance can only be achieved by separating the two roles. There are well-established municipal models elsewhere in Ontario, including county systems where wardens also continue to serve at the lower-tier level. Those structures demonstrate that overlapping roles can work when responsibilities, accountability and expectations are clear," she said.

Ultimately, the legislation leaves the appointment decision in the province's hands, which will determine who it believes is best positioned to serve as regional chair.

"There are examples of both elected and appointed roles functioning effectively within our system of government, and each model has its own strengths and considerations," Salonen said.

"The province has decided to use an appointment process for this term, and my focus is less on debating the selection

model and more on ensuring that whoever serves as regional chair can work effectively with council and serve the interests of Waterloo Region."

The motion passed by regional council is not binding, but it is rather an advocacy motion expressing council's position. It does not bind the province or change the authority provided to it under the legislation.

Salonen said whoever serves as regional chair, the most important detail is that they are capable, competent and focused on the work ahead.

"The region is at a point where we need greater clarity about our role, the services we are legislated to provide, what residents and ratepayers can reasonably be expected to fund and where there is overlap with other orders of government or local municipalities."

She added the region needs to excel at the responsibilities that properly belong to it, while also allowing other jurisdictions and organizations to do the work that properly belongs to them.

"That kind of focus and discipline will be important for the next chair and the next regional council."

Wilmot Township and other municipalities are responsible for local services such as roads, fire protection, parks, recreation and municipal facilities, while the Region of Waterloo is responsible for major regional services including policing, paramedics, public health, social services, housing, regional roads, waste management, transit and wastewater treatment.

Sophie West takes the wheel off the coast of Greece



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Shakespeare's Sophie West took a turn at the wheel of a large sailing vessel while exploring the waters off the coast of Greece with her parents last week. Under the guidance of the ship's captain, West took control for a few minutes while the family enjoyed their time visiting the Greek islands. After returning home, West will begin her first year at the University of Guelph.

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Health unit asking the public to know their drinking risk

Online tools help residents understand the benefits of cutting back

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Southwestern Public Health is encouraging residents to reflect on their drinking habits and explore new, easy-to-use online tools that can show the real impact alcohol can have on their health.

Local survey data shows weekly alcohol use can range widely, from none to seven or more drinks, and people generally do not always recognize how their habits add up over time.

In 2023, nearly 21.7 per cent of residents in Oxford and Elgin-St. Thomas who drink reported consuming an average of seven or

more drinks per week – well above the recommended upper threshold of high-risk to health outlined in Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health.

"Alcohol is generally normalized in our society, and the health effects of alcohol are often time-delayed over many years," said Dr. Ninh Tran, medical officer of health at Southwestern Public Health. "What's empowering is that even small behaviour changes, such as cutting back by one drink per week or understanding how much alcohol is in a single drink, can make a meaningful difference to your health."

He added the goal of the campaign is

to promote a pair of evidence-based online resources that have recently become available.

Developed by the University of Victoria, KnowAlcohol.ca is an online resource that focuses on alcohol risks through personalized insights, such as how drinking may affect their risk of chronic disease, sleep, mental wellbeing and overall quality of life. It also features an alcohol calculator that simplifies what qualifies as a standard drink, as serving sizes vary widely between beer, wine and spirits.

RethinkYourDrinking.ca is another online resource for people seeking practical strategies to cut back on alcohol.

While many recent surveys and studies show drinking is on the decline in Canada, Dr. Tran said alcohol abuse remains a significant problem.

"Any amount of reduction in consumption will have benefits, whether they are health benefits or reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer. There are also financial benefits as well as social and emotional advantages."

New national guidelines suggest people quit drinking altogether to reduce health risks to zero, while one to two drinks per week represents a low risk, three to six is moderate while seven-plus drinks each week raises the risk of developing health issues.

Dr. Tran added the health unit wants to be practical and realistic when it comes to area residents cutting back on booze.

"We aren't asking people to make dramatic changes in their habits, which

is why we pointed out these two evidence-based tools. For example, if you go to KnowAlcohol.ca, type in your age, sex and the amount of alcohol you are currently drinking; if you were to slightly reduce your intake to whatever goal you have, you would be able to see the health and financial benefits you might get."

He added RethinkYourDrinking.ca has practical tips such as drinking more fluid while consuming alcohol, spacing drinks out, or dedicating some alcohol-free days.

"The small steps people are willing to do can have significant benefits. Any time you can cut back together with your family or friends, that can help with direct support and encouraging others to make small but meaningful changes."

Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health highlights that less is better when it comes to alcohol. Cutting back, even slightly, can lead to measurable benefits, including better sleep and improved mood, increased focus and energy, lower risk of cancers and other chronic diseases, financial benefits, and a stronger sense of control over your health.

"Interactive tools allow individuals to have clear, honest information in accessible formats so they can make informed choices that feel right for them," said Dr. Tran. "Whether it's reducing your intake each week, choosing alcohol alternatives, or simply becoming more aware of your habits, every step matters."

To learn more about these online resources, visit www.KnowAlcohol.ca and www.Rethinkyourdrinking.ca.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Oxford County OPP ready for Operation Safe Start to improve bus safety

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Most Oxford County students will be back in the classroom on Tuesday, Sept. 8, and for many of them it means getting on the bus in the morning and getting off the bus in the afternoon. For the Oxford OPP, safety is top of mind.

The Oxford detachment will be conducting a traffic initiative during the first two weeks of the school year called Operation Safe Start. The initiative will run from Sept. 8-11 and 14-18 throughout Oxford County.

Starting in September, Oxford County experiences increased traffic volumes around schools and along school bus routes during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up periods. These conditions increase the risk of collisions, speeding, distracted driving, pedestrian conflicts and violations involving stopped school buses.

OPP media relations Const. Randi Crawford said any time there is an increase

in the amount of people on area roadways there will be a rise in the chance of a collision occurring.

"We are trying to get people to get it in their heads right now to start preparing for those buses to make sure people are prepared by giving themselves extra time."

Police will conduct targeted enforcement throughout county municipalities. The initiative will focus on monitoring driver behaviour around school-zone regulations and school-bus safety laws, which will support safe student boarding and unloading. Officers will educate and enforce, where appropriate.

"We want our results to be zero. We don't want to give out any warnings or charges. We want motorists to get themselves into the right mindset to have a safe start to the school year. We understand people have busy schedules, but that's no excuse for parking in bus zones and travelling faster than you should be through a school zone," said Crawford.

Student safety remains a priority for police, particularly in school zones and at school-bus loading and unloading locations, where children are most vulnerable.

"Motorists must stop at least 20 metres away whenever approaching a stopped school bus with its upper alternating red lights flashing, regardless of whether they are approaching it from the front or rear," Crawford said. "You cannot proceed until the bus moves or the lights have stopped flashing."

She added it is illegal not to stop for a stationary school bus with its red lights flashing.

"If you don't stop, you can be fined \$400 to \$2,000 and receive six demerit points for a first offence. School bus operators and other witnesses can report vehicles that have illegally passed a school bus."

Police are also asking parents to educate their children on being smart when riding a bus to reduce the chance of injury.

"This is a great time for parents to talk

to their kids about safe and smart activity on a bus. Make sure they are sitting down, paying attention and following the bus driver's instructions. If a collision does happen, if you are doing all the right things, the risk of injury is definitely lower," Crawford said.

To learn more about the rules pertaining to "stopping for school buses" visit www.ontario.ca/document/official-ministry-transportation-mto-bus-handbook/stopping-school-buses-law.

"Student safety remains a high priority in our communities. This initiative aims to promote compliance with school zone regulations and school bus safety laws while enhancing the safety of all students travelling to and from school," said Oxford OPP detachment commander, Insp. Tony Hymers.

"Motorists remaining patient and alert when driving among school buses and school zones can help everyone have a safe start to the school year."

SHOW US YOUR WILMOT



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SHOW US YOUR WILMOT FACBOOK PAGE)

Char Heaman enjoys stopping along Wilmot's roadsides to photograph her favourite fall flower, the aster. One of her photographs later inspired the painting shown below it. Heaman shared her photos on the Show us your Wilmot Facebook page.

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Wellesley Fall Fair celebrates community, agriculture and achievement



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Finn Bell and his sister, Azlynn Bell, brought their unique feathered friends to the Wellesley Fall Fair pet show. Finn showed his white Silkie chicken, while Azlynn brought her black Cochon, with the pair earning honours in the unique pet category. The siblings, children of Janelle and Tony Bell, live with their family on the outskirts of Wellesley.



Outgoing Wellesley Fall Fair Ambassador Claire Wight, formerly Koch, passes the sash to Manni Hayer after Hayer was named the fair's 2026 Senior Ambassador during Friday evening's opening ceremonies.



Pet show coordinator Marlene Kuepfer, left, and newly crowned 2026 Wellesley Fall Fair Junior Ambassador Riley Purdie help select a winner in the friendliest dog category during the fair's popular pet show.



Newly crowned 2026 Wellesley Fall Fair Senior Ambassador Manni Hayer receives a dozen roses and congratulations from outgoing ambassador Claire Wight.



Gerry Sherrer receives the Wellesley Township Lifetime Achievement Award from Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louie and Wellesley Fall Fair president Susan Prange during the fair's opening ceremonies.



Outgoing 2025 Wellesley Fall Fair Ambassador Claire Wight shares a moment with her grandmother, Anne Koch. The Koch family has been a longtime supporter of the fair and is well known in the area's dairy-farming community.



From left, Claire Wight accepts the Junior Citizen of the Year Award from Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louie and Wellesley Fall Fair president Susan Prange.



The Martin family from the Drayton area made the Wellesley Fall Fair a family affair, with three of the five children showing their 4-H projects Saturday afternoon while the younger siblings helped ensure the calves were ready for the show ring. From left are Whitney, eight; mom Lynn; Abrie, 10; Rylar, 13; Quintin, 15; Spencer, three; and dad Shawn. The family also brought their Holstein calves out to meet fairgoers, giving visitors of all ages a chance to get up close with one of the agricultural traditions at the heart of the fall fair.



The 173rd Wellesley Fall Fair featured beautiful weather, plenty of exhibits, livestock shows and the annual parade. The black Percheron team from Squirrely Acres, owned by Katie, Marilyn and Jamie Fleming of the Norwich area, returned to the fair with their wagon and polished silver harnesses.



Pictured right, Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louis and his assistant, Julia McIntyre, speak with Colleen Adlam of Harley, left, and Melissa Keefner of Jarvis as they prepare for the next class in the Wellesley Fall Fair heavy horse show.

CORRECTION:

An error appeared in the story, Local fair ambassadors compete at CNE," on page 14 of the Aug. 27 Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette. The story incorrectly identified Hailey Lupton as the Embro and Zorra fall fair ambassador. The Embro and Zorra ambassador is actually Alyssa Hewett. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

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(WENDY RICHARDSON PHOTO)

Five talented singers competed at the Wellesley Fall Fair on Saturday for a chance to advance to the finals of the annual singing competition at the upcoming Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese Festival. Pictured in the front row, from left, are contestants Breea Shouldice, Nora Parks, Morgan Woolner, Maya Cinarilli and Claire Sachs. In the back row are judges John "Beetle" Bailey, Tim Louis, Saibal Chakraborty and Allister Bradley. Parks, Woolner and Sachs were selected to advance to the finals, while Woolner was also named the fan favourite. A large crowd gathered in the community hall at the Bill Gies Recreation Centre to cheer on the performers.



Clydesdales owned by Melissa Keefner and her family of the Jarvis area were among the horses shown at this year's Wellesley Fall Fair. Keefner said her family enjoys returning each year for the fair's small-town atmosphere and the warm welcome they receive from organizers.

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Upward running for Ward 1 on platform of listening, learning and representation

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Listen, learn and represent. Those are the principles Kiera Upward says will guide her as she seeks to represent Ward 1 on Wilmot council.

Upward decided to run for council because she says she cares deeply about Wilmot's future and wants to take a more active role in shaping it.

"I was raised here and hope to build my career, settle down and eventually raise my own family here," she said. "The decisions being made today will affect what this community looks like decades from now."

She said going through the process of running for council has also made her realize how disconnected residents can feel from local government.

"I want to help close that gap by being accessible, listening to residents and making it easier for people to understand and participate in the decisions affecting their community," she continued.

Though she is new to politics, she says she is coming into this willing to ask the hard questions, learn and look at issues with a fresh set of eyes.

"In terms of my experience and background, I'm currently studying actuarial science, which has given me a strong

background in math, statistics, risk and critical thinking," she said. "A lot of what I study involves looking at information, considering different outcomes and using that information to make informed decisions. I think those skills can translate well to the decision-making at council."

Upward brings an array of work experience to the table, including co-op placements and work experience at several financial services businesses in Wilmot, including RBC PH&H. She also has hands-on experience serving the community at the New Hamburg McDonald's as a crew member and later as a manager.

"These experiences have taught me how important it is to listen, work with others, take responsibility and consider different perspectives when making decisions," she said. "In other words, I don't come into this pretending to have decades of political experience, a pre-existing agenda, or all the answers. What I do bring is a willingness to learn, a deep curiosity and a reliance on my community's input and feedback to help guide my focus and actions."

Upward believes one of Wilmot's biggest concerns is how the township manages growth while protecting what makes people want to live in Wilmot in the first place. She says that includes our agricultural land, water, rural character, small communities and quality of life.

"Affordability and municipal finances are also major concerns," she said. "Residents are feeling financial pressure and deserve to understand where their tax dollars are going, why costs are increasing and how council is planning for Wilmot's long-term needs."

Upward also plans to focus on trust and communication, as well as issues surrounding land expropriation and water, which she says have personally affected people close to her.

"This has left residents feeling shut out of decisions that directly affect their lives and communities," she said. "Residents should be able to get answers, understand what is happening at both the township and region and have opportunities to be heard when major decisions are being considered."

She also plans to tackle everyday issues, including roads, traffic, infrastructure, recreation and municipal services.

"To help close the gap between residents and local government, I want to make information easier to understand, communicate before important decisions are made and be someone people feel comfortable reaching out to with questions or concerns," she said.

Upward believes the role of councillor is to be the voice of the residents she represents.

"While I can't promise every resident will always get the outcome they want, I will commit to being their voice," she said.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Kiera Upward is running for Ward 1 councillor in the upcoming municipal election this fall.

"There will be difficult decisions and disagreements, but my goal will always be to make decisions that improve the lives of residents. As their councillor, I will be accessible, accountable, prepared and willing to show up on their behalf."

Residents can reach Upward on her Facebook page or email her at kiera4council@gmail.com.

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peopleCare Tavistock celebrates community connection with annual Walk to Wellness

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

On Friday, Sept. 18, at 10 a.m., peopleCare Tavistock will be celebrating Long-Term Care (LTC) Community Engagement Day alongside its annual Community Walk to Wellness.

All are welcome to attend at 10 a.m. in the front parking lot at peopleCare Tavistock, 32 William St. S. This special event is an opportunity to bring residents and the community together to celebrate wellness, friendship, connection and belonging.

The Ontario Long Term Care Association launched LTC Community Engagement Day to help highlight the importance of community, connection and care in LTC homes across the province.

This event, paired with peopleCare Tavistock's annual Walk to Wellness, aims to dispel misconceptions about life in long-term care by inviting the community to the home and engaging with residents who live there.

Last year, over 750 people participated in the tours and events. The event also highlights the importance of long-term care in the community, its role in the health system and as a major employer, said Sheena Campbell, vice-president of



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Community members take part in last year's Community Walk to Wellness at peopleCare Tavistock. The annual event brings residents and the broader community together to celebrate wellness, friendship and connection.

communications and engagement.

"Provincially, we're trying to share is how important long-term care is within our communities," she said. "That it really does matter to the whole community. We're part of the health-care system,

particularly as our population is getting older. We help relieve pressure on hospitals and in many communities, we're also a major employer."

This event also reminds community members outside of the home that residents

don't stop being part of the broader community when they step inside the long-term care home; they still are vital parts of their community and continue to be involved in many aspects, such as politics and community engagement.

"We really love the idea of Community Engagement Day because our communities are a big part of our long-term care homes," said Campbell. "Our residents don't stop being part of their community when they move into long-term care, and we want to make sure those connections continue to grow."

Campbell says that life within the long-term care home is, if anything, more full and rewarding, and she encourages anyone interested to attend the event this month.

"There are always events and outings, and our residents are always involved in so many activities outside of the home," she said. "They're a big part of the community, they volunteer and take part in all things within the community, too."

Alongside the events that day, there will be certificate presentations, and local dignitaries will attend and speak to residents and community members.

Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP to kleenders@peoplecare.ca by Sept. 17.

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STRATFORD NISSAN



Young cyclists learn to ride smart at Shakespeare bike education day

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Young cyclists put their bike-handling skills to the test in Shakespeare on Monday as the Perth County OPP hosted its Ride Smart Cycle Education Program.

The youth mentoring and crime-prevention program aims to engage young people in local communities while teaching practical, lifelong skills focused on safe cycling.

Designed for students of all cycling abilities, the interactive program gives participants an opportunity to develop their skills and confidence while learning how to safely control their bikes in different situations.

Shakespeare was the third local stop for the program, following events in Listowel and Milverton last week.

Despite rain forcing some of Monday's activities under the Shakespeare Athletic Association pavilion, 11 young cyclists participated in the Perth East-sponsored program.



Perth County OPP Const. Margaret Geurts, left, works with Sophie Hofer during the Ride Smart Cycle Education Program in Shakespeare on Monday. Hofer is completing her fourth year at Georgian College and hopes to pursue a career in policing.

(GARY WEST PHOTOS)





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Sgt. Leanne Wilhelm and student assistants guide 11 young cyclists through an obstacle course under the Shakespeare Athletic Association pavilion during Monday's Ride Smart Cycle Education Program. The course helps participants develop the skills and confidence needed to safely control their bikes in a variety of situations.



Perth County OPP Const. Margaret Geurts works with young cyclists as they manoeuvre through an obstacle course during the Ride Smart Cycle Education Program in Shakespeare on Monday. Rain moved the cycling activities under the Shakespeare Athletic Association pavilion.

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EZT council looking at walking trails around stormwater ponds in Tavistock and Innerkip

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) council has asked township staff to investigate the development of new walking trails.

Coun. Steven Van Wyk brought a notice of motion to Wednesday morning's regular council meeting which was passed by council.

"That council direct staff to include in the proposed 2027 budget the necessary funding and associated work for the development of a walking path at one stormwater management pond in Tavistock (Pond 5) and one stormwater management pond in Innerkip, for consideration during the 2027 budget."

Van Wyk said the goal is to allow the public to access the area in the Southbridge Estates development behind homes located on Moonstone Street.

"This would be to allow the public to use the current maintenance trail. I am not asking for it all the way around, just the

existing one and what cost would be involved. Obviously, we need some planting of shrubs for a living wall. I assume there would be some signage."

Coun. Scott Rudy asked if a trail near a stormwater pond contravened any rules or regulations. Township clerk Meagan Vader said staff has talked with EZT's insurance provider in terms of what safety measures would need to be implemented.

"If a child was to fall into a wet pond and we haven't properly fenced and signed it, our insurance company has said we would not be covered for that and we would be on our own for any liability in that case. Just something council would need to consider when they go down that path in terms of what the fencing and path could look like."

Van Wyk said he looked at the provincial regulations, and a living fence is possible.

"There are ways to do it, and neighbouring municipalities have done it. Obviously, there will be a cost involved, but what is that? Against headwalls where (the land)

is really steep, you might need permanent fencing there."

A living fence is a boundary or barrier made primarily from living plants, rather than wood, vinyl or metal.

Director of infrastructure and community services Tom Lightfoot said the township is also looking at utilizing another stormwater pond on the 14th Line for a walking trail. There was no mention of having any public consultation on the plan at the Sept. 2 East Zorra-Tavistock council meeting.

The passing of the motion comes nearly a year after councillors approved a controversial walking trail behind homes on Janelle Drive in Tavistock. At that time, homeowners complained about the lack of any public consultation.

"As to the comment that it could be a social experience and a chance to visit with people, I would suggest that I enjoy doing my visiting in the front yard, where the street is, and not my back yard, which is

my sanctuary, my peaceful private space," said Janelle Drive resident Jeanne Bender who added her privacy was being infringed on.

"It is inconsiderate to take that from us. ... I suspect that trail users would find it much more interesting to see what is going on in backyards than the weeds in a ditch and corn growing in a field."

Two members of council voted against that trail, including Mayor Phil Schaefer, who explained he appreciated the need and is supportive of walking trails, but felt the Janelle Drive location didn't meet the necessary criteria.

"If our intent is to ensure the proper functioning of this infrastructure, and I believe it is, I don't think it's ideal to open the gates to widespread public access, which could interfere with that. Having it run behind established homes is an issue."

Schaefer admitted privacy is never guaranteed but added it is something that should be cherished.

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SEPTEMBER IS WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Changing the Narrative on Suicide

Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council works to build hope, help and healing

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

When it comes to suicide prevention, Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council executive director Elisa Brewer-Singh says everyone has a role to play.

Sometimes that role means recognizing when someone may be struggling and starting a difficult conversation. Other times, it can be helping someone find professional support or simply showing up for a person grieving the loss of a loved one.

For nearly 30 years, the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council (WRSPC) has worked to give people the knowledge, resources and confidence to do just that.

"We're a small organization whose primary goal really focuses on what we often refer to as hope, help and healing," Brewer-Singh said. "It's just supporting the community and increasing awareness."

Established in 1997, the non-profit organization works to reduce suicide and its impact through collaboration, education and training while fostering a sense of

belonging. Its work includes presentations in schools and workplaces, community workshops and events, suicide-prevention resources and training opportunities.

While the council does not provide crisis intervention or counselling itself, it acts as a hub connecting people with organizations and resources that can help.

A significant part of that work is breaking down the stigma that can make people reluctant to talk openly about suicide.

"We all do have a role in suicide prevention," Brewer-Singh said. "We have a key role in whether it's raising awareness, whether it is addressing stigma that sometimes still exists."

One persistent misconception is that asking someone about suicide could put the idea in their mind. Brewer-Singh said research shows open and caring conversations can instead encourage people to seek or accept help.

For someone unsure how to begin, she said it does not require a carefully rehearsed script.

"Sometimes we're just starting with, 'I

really care about you and I've noticed ...,' whatever that may be, 'and I just want to have a conversation with you.'"

The council's work continues after a suicide through its free bereavement programming.

Three times each year, WRSPC offers a 10-week closed support group for people who have lost someone to suicide. Led by two professional clinicians, the group explores traumatic bereavement while helping participants find ways to remember their loved ones and incorporate them into new traditions.

Even that program has become a community effort. Cambridge's Busy Hand Quilters Guild has donated quilts for participants for several years, with each person also receiving other comfort items.

"It's just the community's way of also saying, 'We see you in this moment and we just want you to know that we care as well,'" Brewer-Singh said.

That willingness to show up matters. Brewer-Singh recalled advice she once heard about supporting someone grieving a suicide: "Bring them the soup."

"We wouldn't hesitate to show up with soup for someone who had experienced a loss, but sometimes they get a little bit

uncertain about what to do when it is a loss by suicide," she said. "Bring them the soup."

As World Suicide Prevention Day approaches Sept. 10, Brewer-Singh said this year's message continues an international theme focused on changing the narrative around suicide.

For WRSPC, that means creating communities in which people are better equipped and more comfortable talking about suicide, offering help and asking for it themselves.

"We collectively can all engage in those open and honest conversations," Brewer-Singh said. "We can work together to help change the narrative and support individuals who may be experiencing really intense emotional or psychological pain to find help. We truly do all have a role to play."

WRSPC will mark World Suicide Prevention Day with a community event Sept. 10 from 4-7 p.m. at the Family Centre in Kitchener featuring information, activities and a guest-speaker panel.

More information about the council, suicide prevention and bereavement resources is available through WRSPC's website, wrspe.ca.

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Resources for those bereaved by suicide

The following is a list of resources available to those impacted by suicide in our region and across the country.

1. The Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council

- Information about grief after suicide.
- Coordinates the "Why...?" Support After Suicide Loss group for those bereaved by suicide in Waterloo Region and Wellington County.
- For 24/7 crisis support, call 24/7 at (844) 437-3247; visit wrspe.ca for more information.

2. The Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region

- Provides grief counselling for those bereaved by suicide.
- Provide group support through the "Why...?" Support after Suicide Loss.
- Visit counsellingwr.ca for more information.

3. Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)

- Toolkit for People Who Have Been Impacted by a Suicide Loss
- Practical coping strategies
- Information about grief after suicide
- Safety planning and support resources
- Available across Canada
- Visit mentalhealthcommission.ca for more information.

4. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

- Hope and Healing After Suicide
- Ontario-focused practical guide for people who have lost someone to suicide
- Information developed with survivors and mental health professionals
- Visit www.camh.ca/hopeandhealing for more information.

Continued on page 13

SEPTEMBER IS WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Changing the Narrative on Suicide

Breaking the silence: Agriculture Wellness Ontario works to prevent suicide in farming communities

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For farmers, the pressures of work and home are often impossible to separate.

Weather, commodity prices, livestock health and finances can all weigh heavily on a farm family, while long hours and geographic isolation can make it difficult to connect with others or seek help when those pressures become overwhelming.

Agriculture Wellness Ontario (AgWO) is working to change that by providing mental-health education, counselling and community support designed specifically for Ontario's agricultural community.

"Our programs and services are not only ag-informed, they've been co-constructed with actual farmers and industry partners to ensure that we're actually providing mental-health education and support that is accessible, relevant and applicable to those who we are aiming to serve," said Avery Dixon, program outreach coordinator for AgWO's Guardian Network.

That agricultural focus is particularly important when it comes to suicide prevention.

Dixon said research shows farmers are twice as likely as the general, non-farming population to experience suicidal thoughts or die by suicide. At the same time, stigma can prevent people from acknowledging they are struggling or asking for help.

According to Dixon, the 2021 National Survey of Farmer Mental Health out of the University of Guelph found 40 per cent of Canadian farmers and producers would not be comfortable seeking professional help, largely because of concerns about judgement from others.

"I think there's often this perception in

farming that your worth as a person is tied to the productivity of your farm," Dixon said. "So, it's a really vulnerable thing to say to someone, 'Hey, I'm not doing well. I'm struggling to keep up with chores, I'm struggling financially, I'm going through family difficulties,' whatever that situation might be."

Instead of inviting others in, Dixon said farmers may keep those struggles to themselves, compounding feelings of isolation and burdensomeness.

Through the Guardian Network, AgWO is attempting to build supports directly into agricultural communities. More than 500 Guardians have been trained across Ontario through a full-day, farmer-focused suicide-prevention program.

Those volunteers learn to recognize signs someone may be struggling, start difficult conversations and encourage that person to seek professional support.

"Guardians are the bridge between a farmer or an ag community member who is struggling and professional support," Dixon said.

One place that bridge can lead is AgWO's Farmer Wellness Initiative, which provides farmers, farm workers and their families – including international agricultural workers living in Ontario – with free, unlimited counselling 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Counselling is available in English, French and Spanish by phone, virtually and, when available, in person. The professionals providing the service receive specialized training to understand the pressures and realities of agriculture.

That means a farmer doesn't necessarily have to sacrifice several hours during a busy planting or harvest season to travel to

and from an appointment.

"It's about meeting farmers where they're at," Dixon said. "Most farmers don't have that potentially up to two hours a day to drive to an appointment, attend the appointment and drive back. So, calling from your tractor can make all the difference in the world for some people."

AgWO also offers education through In the Know, a four-hour mental-health literacy workshop developed specifically for agriculture, and shorter Growth Workshops covering subjects including mental health and agriculture, preparing for uncertainty and navigating stress.

While those programs can give farmers tools to look after their own mental health, Dixon said education can also prepare neighbours, friends, relatives and other members of agricultural communities to recognize when somebody else needs support.

"If you notice a community member doesn't seem like themselves for whatever reason, don't shy away from having those hard conversations," Dixon said. "For a lot

of people, it can be lifesaving."

Sometimes that support can be as simple as checking in or stopping by to lend a hand with chores.

For AgWO, breaking down stigma means making conversations about mental health as acceptable in agriculture as conversations about weather, crops, livestock or equipment.

"Normalizing that experiencing a mental-health concern doesn't make you weak, it doesn't make you a bad farmer, and teaching people what supports are available to them is so important," Dixon said. "The better we get at understanding, as a community, mental health, having candid, open conversations about it and recognizing when someone needs support, I think the healthier and more prosperous our industry will become as a whole."

More information on AgWO, its Farmer Wellness Initiative and upcoming workshops is available through the organization's website.

Continued from page 12

5. Centre for Suicide Prevention

- Educational resources on suicide grief and bereavement.
- Support group guidance and information.
- Visit www.suicideinfo.ca for more information.

6. Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP)

- Resources for suicide loss survivors.
- Information for supporting children and families.
- Visit www.suicideprevention.ca for more information.

7. Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

- Regional grief and bereavement programs.
- Peer support and counselling services.
- Visit cmha.ca for more information.

8. 988 Suicide Crisis Helpline

- Call or text 988
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week across Canada
- Support for people in crisis and those affected by suicide loss.

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SEPTEMBER IS WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Changing the Narrative on Suicide

Coping with the loss of a loved one to suicide

LESLIE ALLABY

Interfaith Counselling Centre

Losing a loved one to suicide is one of life's most painful and challenging experiences. And because suicide is sudden and traumatic, the grieving process is especially complicated. While each person's journey is unique, it is important to know that your reactions are normal, and healing is possible with time, support and compassion.

The loss of a loved one to suicide often brings an intense search for answers. Many people find themselves repeatedly asking, "Why did this happen?" or wondering whether they could have done something differently. Feelings of self-blame are common, even though suicide is the result of many complex factors, including emotional pain, mental-health challenges and life circumstances. For many bereaved, there are questions that may never be fully answered. Learning to live with uncertainty is difficult – and can become part of the healing process.

Grief after suicide affects both the mind and the body. Emotionally, people may experience shock, disbelief, sadness, guilt, anger, anxiety, loneliness, shame, or even relief if their loved one had been struggling

for a long time. Physical symptoms may include fatigue, sleep disturbances, changes in appetite, difficulty concentrating, muscle tension, or feelings of restlessness. These reactions can come and go unexpectedly, often arriving in waves. Some days may feel manageable, while others can feel overwhelming.

One of the most important things that a bereaved person can do is give themselves permission to grieve. There is no "right" way to grieve and no timeline for recovery. Healing does not follow orderly stages or a schedule. Allow yourself to experience your emotions without judgment. Whether you find comfort in talking, crying, reflecting quietly, or expressing yourself creatively, your grief is personal and deserves to be honoured.

Connection and support are essential. Suicide loss can feel lonely, particularly because of the stigma that still surrounds suicide. Reaching out to trusted family members, friends, faith leaders, or support groups can help reduce isolation. For many people, talking with others who have experienced a similar loss and who understand the unique challenges of suicide bereavement can be helpful.

Taking care of your physical health is equally important. During periods of

intense grief, basic self-care can easily be neglected. Focus on small, manageable steps such as eating regular meals, staying hydrated, getting adequate rest, and engaging in gentle physical activity. A short walk, time outdoors, or maintaining simple daily routines can provide stability during a difficult period.

Finding meaningful ways to remember your loved one can also support healing. Some people create memory books, photo albums, or personal rituals that honour the person's life. Others find comfort in sharing stories, celebrating meaningful anniversaries, or participating in activities that reflect their loved one's values and interests. Healing does not mean forgetting. Rather, it involves finding ways to carry the person's memory forward while continuing to live your own life.

Professional counselling can be especially helpful for individuals struggling with traumatic grief. A counsellor can provide a safe, supportive space to explore feelings, process difficult emotions and develop healthy coping strategies. Professional support may be particularly beneficial when grief begins to interfere with daily functioning or relationships.

If you experience persistent hopelessness, thoughts of self-harm, severe

depression, significant substance use concerns, or difficulty managing daily responsibilities, seeking professional help is important. Crisis support is available 24 hours a day through the 988 Suicide Crisis Helpline by calling or texting 988. Counselling support is available through The Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region, a group of local not-for-profit counselling agencies. Visit this website for more information: <https://counsellingwr.ca>.

The loss of a loved one to suicide changes life forever. While the grief may never completely disappear, healing is possible. With support, self-compassion and time, many people find ways to move forward while continuing to honour the memory of the person they lost. Most importantly, remember that you do not have to carry your grief alone. Help is available, and hope remains possible even in the darkest moments.

This article is intended for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional mental health care. If grief is significantly impacting your daily life, consider speaking with a mental health professional or your health-care provider.

Let's Be There for One Another

September Is
Suicide Prevention Month



New outdoor space gives Maples residents more room to enjoy music, company

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Residents of The Maples Home for Seniors in Tavistock have been making the most of the summer weather thanks to a newly renovated outdoor sitting area.

The new covered space provides residents with a comfortable place to enjoy the gardens, visit with family and friends and take in outdoor entertainment.

Residents recently gathered there for a performance by veteran Stratford musician Conn Smythe, who entertained the crowd with familiar songs from the 1960s, '70s and '80s.

With Smythe providing the music and the new roof offering shelter overhead, the afternoon brought back memories for some residents of attending outdoor concerts in their younger years.

The Maples executive director Joan Hergott credited Tavistock contractor Jeff Lange Construction with completing the new outdoor space.

Hergott said the addition will give residents a comfortable area to enjoy the outdoors when family and friends come to visit throughout the warmer months.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Residents of The Maples Home for Seniors in Tavistock enjoy an outdoor performance by Stratford musician Conn Smythe from the home's newly renovated covered sitting area recently.

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Eight contestants vie for Wellesley Fall Fair Junior Ambassador title

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Just two years after Katie Musselman launched the Junior Ambassador competition at the Wellesley Fall Fair, the program continues to grow as an important part of the annual event.

This year, eight young contestants, both boys and girls, participated in the competition for the 2026 Junior Ambassador title.

According to the three area judges tasked with selecting this year's ambassador, it was a close competition among a talented group of young people.

With strong participation again this year, members of the Wellesley-North Easthope Agricultural Society credit Musselman with establishing a program that gives local youth an opportunity to get involved in the fair and represent their community.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Eight contestants participated in the competition to become the 2026 Wellesley Fall Fair Junior Ambassador. In the front row, from left, are Aaron Wiles, 13; Braelyn Bonnick, 13; Caroline Byerley, 13; newly crowned 2026 Wellesley Fall Fair Senior Ambassador Manni Hayer; and 2025 Junior Ambassador Chloe Scott. In the back row, from left, are Zaid Alqaisi, 12; Riley Purdie, 15; Madison Hernandez, 14; Isabella Barker, 13; Madeline King, 14; and 2026 Junior Ambassador coordinator Bea Borsato.

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by PeterS 2026

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Answers found on classified page

QUIZ TIME

BY JAKE GRANT

- Who plays the piano in Charlie Brown?
- What is the birthstone for September?
- How many equinoxes are there in a year?
- What's the name for the science of growing apples?
- What does AKA mean?
- What dog breed was traditionally kept by monks in the Swiss Alps to find lost travelers?
- How many members does the South Korean band BTS have?
- What are baby goats called?
- What ball has 32 panels?
- A pantheon is a temple dedicated to who?

Answers found on classified page

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The Old Gazettes

By Sydney Grant

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

August 26 - September 2, 2021, Edition (5 years ago)

A large hay-shed fire in Topping caused \$1 million in damages Thursday night, Aug. 19, 2021. There were no injuries. The property is owned by the Kevin Gerber family on Road 116. Perth East Fire Chief James Marshall said fire crews received multiple 911 calls starting at about 10 p.m. A full response from Milverton and Shakespeare fire halls was dispatched. When firefighters responded, the building was fully engulfed in flames. At one point, there were 34 firefighters and seven trucks on scene to control the burn.

Staff at Fellowship Bible Church were pleased with the turnout at their third annual Pet Talent Contest on Friday, Aug. 13, 2021. Winning first place in the Costume Contest was 16-week-old Australian Shepherd, Enzo, who walked the runway sporting a matching costume with his young owner. In second place came "Mighty Gus," a dachshund mix who looked very stylish in his own pair of headphones. The star of the evening, however, was the black and white border collie, Molly. Winner of the Best Overall award, Molly charmed the crowd with her friendly nature, even offering to share her frisbee with audience members after catching it.

There were yelps and leaps of joy at a celebration that signaled the final phase of Wilmot's first dog park, while the humans in attendance showed their gratitude by applauding. In New Hamburg's William Scott Park on Aug. 26, 2021 – National Dog Day – local residents and their canine companions celebrated newly installed benches funded by a \$20,000 donations from TLC Pet Food. They were joined by the TLC team, as well as township staff and council members.

August 31 - September 7, 2011, Edition (15 years ago)

A 5.8 magnitude earthquake centered in Mineral, Va., U.S. shook some Tavistock residents last Tuesday, Aug. 23, 2011, just before 2 p.m. The quake, the first major tremor since 1944, came at 1:51 p.m. and sent out seismic waves felt by millions. It caused widespread evacuation of high-rise buildings along the eastern seaboard from New York to Washington. No major injuries or extensive damage were reported after the earthquake, which struck about 40 miles northwest of Richmond, Va.

It's a homecoming of sorts for Tavistock Public School's new principal, Mrs. Laurie James. She began her career teaching in Tavistock in 1992 under principal Bill Ebel. "I always thought I would retire here in Tavistock," she said last week as she prepared for the new school year. Maybe her wish will come true. Tavistock has a history of long-serving principals and support staff who enjoy children and parents and the community itself. Other new teachers in Tavistock this year include Sarah Chiarappa, Cara Van Straaten and Sarah Lowes.

August 28 - September 4, 1996, Edition (30 years ago)

Council will consider a bylaw regulating smoking in township buildings at its Sept. 4, 1996 meeting with the help of comments by the local police and the Tavistock Curling Club. The bylaw being considered will regulate smoking in municipal buildings owned by the Corporation of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock and under its control, namely the Tavistock & District Recreation Centre, the Tavistock Municipal and Police Office and the Hickson Municipal Office. The proposed bylaw states that "whereas it has been determined that second hand smoke (exhaled smoke and smoke from cigarettes, cigars and pipes) is a public nuisance because of its irritating and discomforting affects and is a health hazard because of its impairment, adverse effects and risk to health of the residents of the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock," the township will provide for "the prohibiting and abating of second-hand smoke" in accordance with the provisions of this bylaw.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette **SPORTS**

U23 Mustangs down Merchants to earn Canadian bronze

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The U23 New Hamburg Mustangs ended their 2026 season with a third-place finish at the Softball Canada U23 Men's Canadian Fast Pitch Championship in Saskatoon.

The team downed Tavistock 3-1 to earn bronze, thanks in large part to an incredible catch by outfielder Colby Ricketts. The game ended with a dramatic catch in centre field by Colby Ricketts in the bottom of the seventh inning. The Merchants had a runner on base and the tying run at the plate when Caleb Stonefish hit a deep fly-ball into the left-centre field gap. Ricketts raced over and made the catch, crashing into the fence to end the game and clinch third place.

The Mustangs scored three times in the first four innings. Aiden Cloet hit a first-inning triple and scored on an RBI single by Cohen Christner. Jared Vosper and Connor Hopper each added a solo home run, and Vosper was outstanding on the mound, pitching a complete-game three-hitter with nine strikeouts.

In the playoff round, New Hamburg drew Newfoundland and earned a 5-3 victory. In the fifth inning, Adam Roth hit an RBI single to tie the game, and Brayden Van De Wynkle drew a bases-loaded walk to take the lead. Kaden Eichler broke the game open with a two-RBI single in a five-run inning. Cohen Christner went four-for-four at the plate and pitched a complete-game victory, allowing four hits while striking out eight.

The Mustangs jumped out to a 5-0 lead over the heavily favoured Batmen on the strength of homeruns by Sean Demarest and Cloet. Demarest started on the mound for New Hamburg, striking out five batters. The Batmen battled back with a six-run sixth inning to earn an 8-5 win.

Toronto beat Nova Scotia in the championship game by a score of 5-1 to win the gold medal.

New Hamburg won three of their six round-robin games, which included a 5-2 victory over Tavistock and a narrow 8-7 loss to Toronto. Demarest and Hopper were



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The U23 New Hamburg Mustangs brought home a bronze medal from the Softball Canada national championship tournament in Saskatoon thanks to a 3-1 win over the Tavistock Merchants.

named tournament all-stars, with each batting over .400 during the round-robin.

"Our team did extremely well. We were seeded as Ontario 2, behind the defending champion Toronto Batmen, who won the OASA Elimination tournament held in Tavistock at the end of June, and Ontario 1 Tavistock Merchants, who finished second there," said Mustangs head coach Ryan Roth, who added they faced some stiff competition.

"The Toronto team is filled with players from across the province, at least 10 of whom have played for Team Canada

at either U18 or the U23 age groups. The Nova Scotia team was a select team from across that province and also picked up the tournament's top pitcher, Nick Neid from British Columbia, for the tournament."

Roth added he picked up Ottawa's Connor Hopper for the tournament, but every other player on the team lives nearby.

"We have four players from New Hamburg, four from Baden and three from Plattsville, so we are a very local team."

The Mustangs, who play in the Tri-County loop during the regular season, finished tied for second place, but opted

out of the playoffs due to school and other commitments for many of the players. Their season is now over.

"Very proud of these guys," said Roth. "It's tough to have a local team and compete at this level, and they really did that. We did not play very well at the beginning of the tournament with two mercy losses, but the team improved throughout the week and played their best at the end. Since so many of these guys have played together growing up, they really support each other and really came together as a team."

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Fire destroys barn east of Tavistock, causes estimated \$490,000 in damage

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A major barn fire on the eastern outskirts of Tavistock kept firefighters from several area departments busy for hours last week and caused an estimated \$490,000 in damage.

Property owner Robert Harrison said he was awakened around 2 a.m. by a passing motorist who alerted him that his barn was on fire. A call to 911 had already been made, with Tavistock firefighters first to arrive before being joined by firefighters from Shakespeare.

Harrison said the two-storey barn was originally built as a broiler chicken barn many years ago but was more recently used for storage and as a repair shop.

Among the items lost in the fire were a tractor, car, restored 1986 Chevrolet pickup truck, lawn mower and numerous shop tools and accessories.

The loss was estimated at \$490,000 and was partially insured. No animals were inside the barn at the time.

Shakespeare Fire Chief Greg Ankenmann said the barn was completely engulfed in flames when

firefighters arrived. He thanked Tavistock Fire Chief Chris Roth and his department for their quick response, which helped prevent the fire from spreading to nearby buildings.

Ankenmann said the fire was an example of the importance of mutual aid between area fire departments, with firefighters from several departments assisting because of the size and scope of the blaze.

The property has a long history of poultry farming, with previous owners including the William Ducklow and David Guthrie families.



(MARIA HARRISON PHOTO)

A barn fire on the eastern edge of Tavistock has resulted in an estimated \$490,000 in damage. Area firefighters were on scene for more than seven hours as they battled the blaze.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Property owner Robert Harrison stands in front of the remains of a two-storey barn destroyed by fire east of Tavistock last week. The former broiler chicken barn was being used for storage and as a repair shop. No animals were inside at the time of the fire.



Little remains of a barn owned by John Harrison east of Tavistock following a major fire last week. Firefighters from Shakespeare were on scene from around 2 a.m. until approximately 9:30 a.m., with several area departments assisting through mutual aid.

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NEAT members tour Scholten collection in North Easthope

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club (NEAT) motored through the hills of North Easthope last week for a visit to Neil and Theresa Scholten's farm and an up-close look at Neil's extensive collection.

Club members were invited to tour a collection that includes cars, trucks, full-sized and miniature tractors, vintage Supertest and Texaco signs and gas pumps, along with hundreds of other pieces of memorabilia from decades past.

For Neil Scholten, collecting is a hobby that fits well with his entrepreneurial spirit. Over the years, he has been involved in establishing agricultural-equipment businesses including CountyLine, based in Listowel, Bulk Tech, headquartered north of Shakespeare, and now Smart Ag. Solutions.

Neil Scholten is always searching for another unique piece of machinery or memorabilia to add to his collection.

His wife, Theresa Scholten, says with a smile that while her husband talks about retirement, she knows it likely won't happen because he is always thinking about the next project.

The couple has four daughters and 13 grandchildren.

Neil Scholten said his outlook on life changed dramatically after he became seriously ill with sepsis in 2019 and nearly died. After more than two years of dealing with the effects of the illness, he said he now looks at life differently and makes an effort to help his family, business partners and neighbours whenever he can.

Those who know Neil Scholten describe him as high energy and constantly on the move, always willing to lend a hand when someone needs it.



The former North Easthope Township Hall, built by the township in the 1960s, was recently purchased by the Neil and Theresa Scholten family, including their daughter Candice and her husband, Collin, for their Smart Ag. Solutions business. A new showroom is being added to the front of the building, while the lower level will be converted into company offices and the upper floor into a pickleball court for family and area neighbours. Smart Ag. Solutions manufactures electrical-monitoring devices designed to detect abnormal electrical currents and alert users to potential problems, along with Omnivore Composters and battery-powered trolley systems for poultry barns.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Neil and Theresa Scholten stand with some of the antique tractors brought to their North Easthope farm by members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club (NEAT) last week. Club members enjoyed breakfast before touring Neil Scholten's extensive collection of tractors, vehicles, signs, gas pumps and other memorabilia.



From left, Neil Scholten explains to NEAT members Bob Schlotzhauer, Keith Schmidt and club president Murray Gingerich how he acquired some of the many items in his collection. The collection includes machinery and memorabilia of all shapes and sizes, much of it dating from the 1940s through the early 1970s.

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Beef cattle enjoy green pastures near New Hamburg



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)
Beef cows and their spring-born calves enjoy green pasture at the Wagler homestead along the Wilmot-North Easthope boundary northwest of New Hamburg last week.

GARY WEST
Gazette Correspondent

Beef cows and their spring-born calves grazing on green pastures in North Easthope, near the border of Perth and Waterloo counties, are a familiar sight in the countryside northwest of New Hamburg.

These Charolais-Angus cross cattle

represent two breeds commonly found in today’s beef industry.

Beef herds in Ontario and across Canada have been declining for a number of years. A wide variety of breeds and bloodlines can be found on Canadian beef farms, including Hereford, Maine-Anjou, Speckle Park, Limousin, Galloway, Murray Grey, Chianina, Dexter and Japanese Wagyu.

Gazette Puzzles

AUGUST 2026 NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

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Angry Toddler	Iran Conflict	Natalie Harp
Bad Lettuce	Lake Ontario	Nepal Flash Flood
Commonwealth Games	Lindsay Clancy	Trump Tariffs
Dolly Parton	Lloyd Robertson	US Trade War
Google Maps	Mark Carney	Wildfire Smoke

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Pet of the Week

LUNA

Meet Luna, a sweet 2-year-old girl who is a true lap cat at heart! In her foster home, she happily cuddles with her people while watching TV or reading, and loves curling up on their chest in the morning.

This loving girl adores face rubs – cheeks, chin, and ears are her favourites. Luna loves being part of the family but is confident and independent, too. Sometimes she’d rather have some alone time, and she’s great at communicating her preferences!

If you’re looking for an affectionate, sweet girl to curl up with you every day, Luna could be the cat for you. Learn more about her by contacting our Kitchener Centre or visiting our website at kwsphumane.ca/adopt/cats



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Whole-body exercises for beginners

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Question: *What is your favorite whole-body exercise for beginners?*

First off, let me remind you that exercise is non-negotiable. Movement is mandatory.

My top pick is the bird dog or “opposite arm and leg raise.” This exercise is a bounty of body-boosting benefits. Bird dog is simple and effective, requiring just you and the ability to get down to a mat for the old-school version. Don’t throw in the towel, there’s a standing version as well.

This all-in-one exercise is phenomenal for targeting the core. Focusing on the abdominals, back, pelvis and hips help stabilize the spine and therefore improve posture and balance. Because bird dog requires you to engage your entire core, referred to as core bracing, the spine is protected as it strengthens.

Bird dog also provides what trainers call time under tension, the total amount of time your

muscle is under strain during a single exercise set. Using the concept of time under tension, speed can be adjusted during the three phases of the exercise; eccentric, concentric and isometric. Slowing down the exercise leads to better form and less joint stress. No need to rush. Slowing down stimulates muscle fibers, building strength and endurance.

Like any new exercise, start with one set and minimal repetitions, increasing accordingly. Bird dog can be used as a single exercise for newbies, part of a warmup or challenging by adding a

resistance band above the knees, weighted vest, or hand and ankle weights.

Bird dogs also support cognitive health thanks to this exceptional exercise being a contralateral movement. Working opposite sides of the body in unison benefits the brain in aging!

The standing version is like the original, effectively engaging stabilizer muscles but even better for those looking to improve balance.

1. Stand with feet shoulder width apart, feet facing forward and arms down by your sides.
2. Lift your right knee up until your thigh is parallel with the floor while raising your right arm straight to the ceiling.
3. Lower to the starting position and switch sides.

Bird dog

Before you begin, remember to breathe throughout the

exercise. Focus on the body as a whole for heaps of holistic-health-helping love!

1. Begin on all fours in the tabletop position. Knees are under the hips while hands are under the shoulders.
2. Spine is neutral. Keep the tummy tight. Think of pulling the belly button through the spine. Do not let the tummy sag.
3. Shoulders back and shoulder blades drawn together.
4. Raise your right arm and left leg at the same time.
5. Gaze at the floor.
6. Pause and hold the position for the count of three.
7. Lower both limbs back to the starting position.
8. Repeat now raising left arm and right leg.
9. Return to starting position.
10. Congratulations! You

have completed one set. For beginners, do 12 in a row. Rest and repeat one to two more sets of 12 as you gain strength and endurance.

Before starting any new exercise, consult your health practitioner.

Have a question? Find me on social @mercedeskaygoldfitness or email me at mercedeskaygoldfitness@gmail.com.



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF MERCEDES KAY GOLD)

The bird dog, either standing or down on the mat, are a great exercise for beginners.



My dad can fix anything

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

I grew up on a farm and, to this day, as a 40-year-old woman who lives in a high-rise apartment in the city, I still refer to myself as a farm girl.

Growing up as a farm kid, we didn’t get new things all the time. Toys were handed down, along with clothes and shoes and everything in between. I grew up with a fix-it attitude that very much came from both of my parents, which I really loved, but also sometimes wished I could just get something new instead of wearing my sister’s old clothes.

But one thing I always knew was that if something big was broken, ripped or needed to be repaired, one of my parents could fix it.

My dad, especially, could fix anything.

Recently, I moved to Guelph and, along with the expenses of moving, my car decided to break down. Now, I’m not saying it wasn’t going to happen. My 2018 Volkswagen Tiguan has over 270,000 kilometres on it, I drive it like it’s an off-road tractor and sometimes I forget to top up the oil. But this beast has been with me through everything, and I’ll be damned if I let it go now.

The thing barely has a speck of rust on it. Everything else works fine. So, when the AC went, I wasn’t overly concerned — until a very loud screeching sound started coming from the left side, under the hood. Although I tried my best, the radio just wasn’t loud enough to cover it up anymore, so I caved and brought it into Volkswagen.

When I was there, they broke the news that the part, along with the repair, would cost more than \$3,000. And because my car, in the condition it was in, was only worth maybe \$2,000 — according to Volkswagen, because to me, she’s priceless — it just wasn’t worth it.

They sat me down with a salesperson and went through the loyalty pricing on a new one, along with the great interest rates I could get because I’m a loyal customer.

But I just knew, in the back of my head, that whatever they said wouldn’t fly because my dad was going to get this thing running again if it was the last thing I did.

So, I called my dad.

He told me to lift the hood, look on the left side and asked me if the “belt thingy” was running or wiggling. I gave him my honest and most specific review of what was happening to all the things under my hood. I wiggled the hose, tried to pull on

the belt and checked to see if the metal piece was hot.

Somehow, I answered enough of his questions that he had a pretty good idea of what was happening and decided to order all the parts based on my perfect assessment.

Dad always has “a guy.”

Luckily, Car Guy number 1 could order the right part from Car Guy number 2, who could get it delivered quickly to mom and dad’s house out in Chesley.

From there, I brought my car to him.

My dad has a magical shop that would make anyone in the car business jealous. He fixed what was making my AC, heat and coolant not work. He replaced a ball joint, topped up my windshield washer fluid that had been empty for months and ordered another part he noticed was broken.

After that, we brought it to Car Guy number 3, who charged my AC, and I drove home with a quick hug and a thank you.

It wasn’t until later that I really thought about how lucky I am; not just because my dad saved me thousands of dollars, not just because he could look under the hood of my 270,000-kilometre Volkswagen and somehow know what was wrong with it after asking me a few questions, but

because I grew up knowing that if something broke, Dad would figure it out.

There was never really a question of whether something could be fixed. The question was how.

Sometimes I wonder what happens to all those people in the world who don’t have family members who can do everything.

My dad can fix anything. My brother-in-law is a plumber. I have a nursing background and am always the go-to for those “could this be cancer” spots on people’s skin. My sister, Katie, knows everything about animals, literally, and is my go-to for all things pets. My mom can sew, cook and bake anything from scratch. I have a niece who’s a hairdresser, and she even gives me a discount.

I’m lucky. I have a person in my family for almost everything.

And sometimes I don’t even realize how lucky I am.

But as I drove my old Tiguan home, with the AC blowing cold air again, I thought about my dad.

The same dad who taught me that you don’t necessarily need something new just because the old thing is broken.

Sometimes, you just need someone who knows how to fix it. And I’m pretty lucky that I have him.

Canada's biggest hotel gets a full refresh

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



For many of us, simply planning to renovate a bathroom or a kitchen is an almost mind-boggling challenge. Now, imagine the full-scale renovation project involves the largest hotel in the country.

But that's what they have accomplished at Toronto's Chelsea Hotel. And this is, indeed, the largest hotel in Canada, stretching up 24 floors and including 1,588 guest rooms, plus all of the amenities you would expect at a popular downtown Toronto hotel.

Tracy Ford is director of public relations at the Chelsea. She's also a friend and a colleague – Tracy was president of the Travel Media Association for two years and I was her vice president, eventually succeeding her in that role. I have nothing but admiration for this woman, and when she told me her hotel was doing something special, I believed her.

And then she invited us to stay at the Chelsea for a couple of nights, which happily coincided with our tickets to a Blue Jays game.

This gave me the chance to check out the new and improved Chelsea for myself. And yes, it is new and improved.

The rooms have always been comfortable, and that has not changed, though the décor in all 1,588 rooms has been refreshed. But the most dramatic features of the hotel are found in the shared spaces.

For instance, the Chelsea has two indoor pools, one in an adults-only area, and the other featuring a waterslide.

The latter, branded as The Cove, is one of three recreation spaces designed for children and families. Tracy explained this area – collectively known as “The Hive” – is intended “to inspire curiosity, creativity and connection.” The Hive includes The Workshop, which offers hands-on, play-based activities for kids; The Studio, offering creative content, digital play and social connection for older kids; and The Cove, with Toronto's only 130-corkscrew waterslide.

The Chelsea used to have two restaurants – one a casual, breakfast and lunch kind of place, and the other a smaller bar and restaurant. Those are gone. The

main dining establishment is now known as The Elm Tavern, much expanded from the earlier pub but still featuring the excellent service I remember from my previous, pre-renovation stays at the Chelsea. The new pub offers a feature I don't recall from earlier days – live entertainment. A solo guitarist/singer performed while we enjoyed an excellent dining experience.

Adults looking for recreation and relaxation away from a family atmosphere enjoy The Heights, the hotel's adults-only retreat on the 24th floor. The Heights includes cardio and strength-training equipment and the heated, indoor “Skyline Pool.” In fine weather, comfortable chaise longues are located on the outdoor Horizon Deck, where visitors can enjoy a birds-eye view of Canada's largest city.

I am intrigued that the new version of the Chelsea includes a feature I have never encountered in a hotel – Escape Room experiences. And no, I don't mean a struggle to exit your hotel room. The hotel is now home to “Time Zone Escapes” – two private, 60-minute escape rooms, one called “The Curse of the Evil Genie” and the other, “Blackbeard's Brig.” Full disclosure: I have personally experienced escape rooms, and it turns out, I am terrible at them. Doomed from the start. But I know many people who love the experience, and I find it fascinating it is now available on the lobby level of a hotel. I suspect Time Zone Escapes will be one of the most popular features of the Chelsea.

The Chelsea also has an event space branded as “Monarch's,” which features live music and

other entertainment, usually with a cover charge discounted for Chelsea guests.

The Chelsea, now part of the Langham Group (although not branded as such), first opened in 1975. Rumour had it in recent years that the downtown property was going to be converted into condominiums. But that concept was abandoned, and the ownership devoted a lot of time and effort to recreating a hotel whose welcome is as large as its footprint in the city.

That footprint is not only related to its size and location. The Chelsea has long been committed to good corporate citizenship. The hotel partners with local charities including the Daily Bread Food Bank, “Ask for Angela” Safe Space program (protecting people facing gender-based violence); and SickKids Hospital, which has received well over \$1 million in charitable donations from the Chelsea.

A unique element of the SickKids program involves the bee hives on the Chelsea roof. The Chelsea sells honey from those hives to benefit the Hospital for Sick Children.

The Chelsea is also committed to sustainable operations. Tracy told me “the hotel has achieved the coveted EarthCheck Gold Certification, which recognizes eight consecutive years of commitment to environmental and social responsibility. This places the hotel as a leader in the unique worldwide group of sustainable tourism operators that are certified to the internationally recognized EarthCheck Company Standard.”

Of course, there are a number of fine hotels in downtown Toronto, but I am happy to feature the Chelsea this week, both because of the impressive renovation program just completed and because of the hotel's commitment to giving back to its community.

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.



The Heights, the 24th-floor adults-only relaxation spot. (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHELSEA)



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHELSEA)

Toronto's Chelsea hotel is the largest hotel in Canada.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The new Elm Tavern.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The cute greeting that meets visitors approaching the hotel.



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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship 12 p.m.

Please register by September 4 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900
Wellesley Recreation Complex,
1401 Queen's Bush Rd., Wellesley

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

OPTIMIST CLUB OF PETERSBURG BREAKFAST IN THE PARK

8:30 - 12 noon
Petersburg Park
1338 Notre Dame Dr., Petersburg

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Perth East council meeting

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

Garden Wilmot event: Youth Appreciation Night, and learn about Moths

7 p.m.
We'll celebrate the achievements of our Junior Gardeners. Our speaker, Alan Macnaughton, is an award winning amateur entomologist who will introduce us to the fascinating world of moths.
Wilmot Rec Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship

12 p.m.
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Wilmot Rec Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

East Zorra-Tavistock Council meeting

7 p.m.
Council Chambers
89 Loveys Street East, Hickson

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Morningside Community Fall Craft Show

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Free Admission. Wreaths, table decor, Halloween, hostess gifts, Raffle & more Coffee & a Slice.
10 Homestead Place, New Hamburg

Perth County Beef Farmers Annual Beef BBQ Dinner

Dinner 5-7:30 p.m. Live Music 6-10 p.m.
For tickets email perthcountybeef@gmail.com. For more information contact Angela Schneider 519-291-8668
Milverton Agri Centre (MAC)
17 Pierson Street, Milverton

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Wilmot Terry Fox Run

9-11 a.m.
Wilmot Rec Centre,
Schmidt Woods Trail

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Wellesley Council meeting

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

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship

12 p.m.
Please register by September 18 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900
Linwood Community Centre,
5279 Ament Line, Linwood

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

CMHA Huron Perth Recovery Breakfast, in recognition of Recovery Month

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
By donation. Eggs, Bacon, Hashbrowns, Toast, Fruit, Sweet Treats, Coffee, Tea Juice
Generous Donations by : Ontario Pork Congress, Egg Farmers Of Ontario, Cobs Bread, The Local Community Food Centre, Festival City Dairy, Joe's Diner, To Bean Or Not To Bean, Zehrs.
Holy Trinity Anglican Church (formerly St. James) 41 Mornington Street, Stratford

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

Oxford Philatelic Society Circuit Book (Stamp) Fair

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Free Admission & Parking
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Contact: dheaton3e3@gmail.com
Website: http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford
Church of the Epiphany,
560 Dundas Street, Woodstock

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

Rescue Junction: Gospel Bluegrass Concert

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Free Will Offering taken.
Rosebank Church
1434 Huron Road, Petersburg

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Wilmot Council meeting

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

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Free "Explore Your Future" career expo for Gr 7-12 students/parents

5-8 p.m.
bepwr.ca/eyf
Tapestry Hall,
74 Grand Avenue South, Cambridge, ON

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The Second Hand Book Nook Sale

Friday, Sept. 11, 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 12, 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 13, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
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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.

FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES CONT

VON Senior Exercise Drop-In Standing Class

Tuesday and Thursday 9-10 a.m.

To register contact 519-539-1231 ext. 6319
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.

VON Senior Exercise Drop-In Sitting Class

Tuesday and Thursday 10:25-11:25 a.m.

To register contact 519-539-1231 ext. 6319
Village Manner, 98 Woodstock St., Tavistock

TAVISTOCK & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM DISPLAYS

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 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 plattvilledistrictheritage@gmail.com or call 519-535-1417.
Archive & Museum at Chesterfield,
816661 Oxford Rd 22, Bright



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Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.
Contact: thewtgazette@gmail.com

PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

- 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 (50 word max.) - \$10 + hst
 - Coming Events Boxed Word Ad (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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8	4	3	6	5	7	1	2	9
7	8	4	3	6	9	5	1	2
9	6	5	4	2	1	8	3	7
3	1	2	8	7	5	9	4	6

Quiz Time Answers

- Schroeder
- Sapphire
- Two
- Pomology
- Also known as
- St. Bernard
- Seven
- Kid
- Soccer Ball
- All gods

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