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(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Maple Tap Farm's Andrew Sallans (left) shows Marc McInerney (right), chair of the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival, how to tap a maple tree during the Waterloo Wellington Maple Producers' First Tapping ceremony at the New Dundee farm Feb. 27. Full story on page 4.

Wilmot walkers exceed \$40,000 fundraising goal at ninth annual Coldest Night of the Year walk

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

More than 100 walkers braved the late-winter chill in New Hamburg Feb. 28 for the ninth annual Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser in support of the Wilmot and Wellesley Resource Centre (WWRC), raising \$44,000 and counting to help local residents experiencing

hunger, homelessness and poverty.

By the time participants stepped out onto the walk routes that evening, the fundraiser had already surpassed its \$40,000 goal. As of press time March 4, the event had raised \$44,751 – 111 per cent of its fundraising target – with donations continuing to be accepted until March 31.

“This is our ninth year of partnering

with Coldest Night of the Year,” WWRC executive director Trisha Robinson told those gathered before the walk. “At our first Coldest Night, we had nine teams, 63 walkers and we raised \$9,000. And today, nine years later, we have 117 walkers, 24 teams and we are over our goal.”

Those who participated in the fundraiser walk were supported by 29 volunteers

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EZT previews 2026 budget

Draft budget includes proposed 3% tax increase

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) ratepayers could see a 3.17 per-cent increase on their property tax bill this year.

EZT CAO Karen DePrest provided an overview of this year's budget at council's March 4 regular meeting. Mayor Phil Schaefer and Coun. Steven Van Wyk were not in attendance.

“I think the budget summary is an all-good news story,” said DePrest. “This is the lowest tax-rate increase we have brought in over the last four years. Although the levy is going up 6.38 per cent ... the important part for rate-payers in East Zorra-Tavistock is actually the tax-rate increase of 3.17 per cent.”

For an average home assessed by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) in 2016 at \$350,000, the hike translates to a \$50 to \$60 increase, according to DePrest. A special meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10, at 9 a.m. for members of council to take a deeper dive into the budget.

“The (full) document will be released to the public on Friday for the special council meeting. Council will receive a PDF copy as well to go through each line by line in preparation for our meeting on Tuesday,” she added.

If the 2026 draft budget is approved without changes, the levy would rise by 6.38 per cent, or \$536,114. The township saw \$269,611 or

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Coldest Night Walk raises \$44K for Wilmot, Wellesley residents in need

Continued from page 1

who helped organize and run the evening's activities.

The walk began at the New Hamburg Community Centre, where participants gathered beforehand to socialize, play games, take photos and enjoy live music from local band Folklore Junction before heading out into the cold. Walkers then set out on either a shorter or longer route through the community before finishing the evening with a hot meal and fellowship at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532 next door.

Robinson said the funds raised through the annual event help the resource centre respond to growing and increasingly complex needs in rural communities like Wilmot and Wellesley.

"I just want to talk about how hard our work has gotten over the last little while,

how complex, how much it's affecting our staff," Robinson said. "I have staff that call me at night in tears, afraid that the people they're serving are not going to make it through the night because they're going to freeze in their unheated cars or their vans."

She said staff and volunteers are doing everything they can to support those struggling in the community, often providing essentials such as sleeping bags, tents and other emergency supports for people with nowhere else to go.

"It's very dire," Robinson said. "We're used to fixing things. We're used to helping people. We're used to being able to house people. That's not the way it is anymore."

Robinson also reminded participants that poverty and housing insecurity are not always visible in rural communities.

"The hungry, the homeless, the hurting – poverty and low-resourced people can have many appearances," she said.

"Poverty looks the same to a child, a family, an individual or a senior in a rural community as it does in a large city."

She added anyone can find themselves facing hardship.

"In other words, poverty looks like you and me," Robinson said. "Any of us who find our circumstances beyond our control can have our lives changed in the blink of an eye."

The Coldest Night of the Year walk takes place in communities across Canada each winter, raising funds for local organizations that support people experiencing homelessness, hunger and hardship.

In Wilmot and Wellesley, the money raised through the event supports the programs and services offered by the WWRC, including food assistance, housing supports, counselling and other resources for residents facing difficult circumstances.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTOS)

Wilmot and Wellesley Resource Centre executive director Trisha Robinson speaks to those gathered in the New Hamburg Community Centre for the ninth annual Wilmot Coldest Night of the Year.



Walkers at the Wilmot and Wellesley Resource Centre's ninth annual Coldest Night of the Year walk Feb. 28 head out into the cold after assembling at the New Hamburg Community Centre.



Walkers of all ages participated in this year's Wilmot Coldest Night of the Year.



Walkers register and pick up their branded toques at the New Hamburg Community Centre ahead of the ninth annual Coldest Night of the Year walk Feb. 28.

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EZT eyes 3.17% tax rate increase in 2026 draft budget

Continued from page 1

3.21 per cent growth to its tax base last year through the addition of new businesses and homes, reducing the tax increase for ratepayers to \$266,503 or 3.17 per cent over last year.

The largest departmental increase comes from Infrastructure and Community Services. The 4.69 per-cent or \$369,000 jump includes the hiring of a lead hand position for recreation to assist with operations and allow for programming trials. There is also increased capital funding for the Tavistock arena and more cash for excessive winter snow operations.

“(Roughly) \$272,000 of that is related to winter control. As council is aware, we had an overrun last year over the 2025 budget of \$250,000, so we want to provide for a contingency should Mother Nature not be agreeable again this year,” DePrest said.

If the budget is passed as presented and the winter of 2026 results in a surplus, that money could be put into what DePrest called a reserve for weather-related incidents.

“That way, we could use it generically for accidents on the road from bad weather or for snow events. What we would recommend as the year progresses is if we start to see a surplus in the winter control budget, we could put it into a reserve just for weather-related events.”

A transfer of \$44,500 has been proposed for the township parks reserve for possible future lighting projects at baseball diamonds.

“We have also increased our transfer to the arena reserve by \$125,000. It has become apparent the arena floor and all the mechanics underneath it will potentially need to be replaced within the next five to

10 years.”

DePrest explained part of the reason for the increased levy is due to a decrease in building-permit revenue by \$100,000 compared to 2024.

“We are recommending drawing down the building code reserve. It currently has \$380,000 in it, I believe, and we can use that to get us over this hump. At \$50,000 a year for three years, we figure things will turn around by 2028 and the 2029 budget will show that reflection.”

The general government department budget is increasing by just under two per cent or \$163,000, something DePrest attributed to lower interest rates.

“We have seen a reduction in interest income on our bank account. We have seen declining rates on interest, so that is a \$60,000 reduction.”

The township has also completed a departmental restructuring, merging the previous five departments into four.

“Building and development services, fire and emergency services will remain the same. General government will cover corporate services, planning, treasury and the CAO’s office in general. The final department will be infrastructure and community services, which will cover everything recreation, parks and public works,” said DePrest.

Councillors in attendance at the meeting did not pose any budget questions to DePrest after her presentation. In the absence of Schaefer and with deputy mayor Brad Smith joining the meeting virtually, Coun. Jeremy Smith sat in as the chair for the second straight meeting. Smith said he expects the mayor to be back in the chair next week.

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First taps signal sweet start to maple season at Maple Tap Farm

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

A crowd of maple syrup producers, local politicians and industry representatives gathered at Maple Tap Farm near New Dundee Friday morning for the Waterloo Wellington Maple Producers' annual First Tapping Ceremony, the traditional kickoff to maple season and the first agricultural crop of the year.

Hosted this year by Andrew and Jennifer Sallans, whose syrup has twice topped the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival's producers' contest and placed third at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, the event combined a ceremonial tapping, a tour of the bush and sugarhouse, and a lunch of pancakes and sausage topped with last year's maple syrup.

On behalf of the Waterloo Wellington subcommittee of the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers' Association, chair Kevin Snyder welcomed guests to what he called the unofficial start of spring for maple producers.

"We do these annual events every year to celebrate the beginning of the season," Snyder said. "It is the first crop of the year in the agricultural business, but a lot of people don't realize that we're actually harvesting the sugar the tree made last summer."

He reminded those in attendance that maple syrup is uniquely tied to North American climate and hardwood forests. Producers rely on a freeze-thaw cycle to get sap moving.

"We need that warm temperature during



Representatives from the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival and their mascot chat with local maple producers at a First Tapping Ceremony at Maple Tap Farm in New Dundee.

the daytime and freezing nights to get the sap to flow and that's what we're able to capture out of the tree," Snyder said, adding that while Quebec produces roughly 70 per cent of the world's maple syrup, research has shown Ontario has more tappable maple trees.

"This winter, we actually had a real winter for a change," he said, noting steady snow cover, a cold, windy January and only a few thaws. "The conditions do look favourable that we're going to be in full production next week. ... The tree has it in it. We just need the right conditions to be able to get the sap out of the tree."

As in past years, the first tapping ceremony also served as the announcement of the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival's 2027 Producer of the Year. This year's honours went to Tom Snyder of TDS Farms Ltd. in West Montrose, with Sunlane Farms of Alma named runner-up. Both producers will be featured at future Elmira festivals.



David and Chris Wagler of Wagler Maple Products in Wellesley cook pancakes and sausages for lunch at Maple Tap Farm in New Dundee during the Waterloo Wellington Maple Producers' First Tapping Ceremony Feb. 27.

For the Sallans family, hosting the ceremony at Maple Tap Farm was both an honour and a continuation of a long family tradition.

"It's something we always talked about. We thought it'd be neat," Andrew Sallans said, noting his late father, Wally, would have loved to see the yard full of producers and dignitaries. "My father never missed a year since he was 13. ... I've done it all my life, so I don't know what spring's like without it."

Maple syrup season is also very much a family affair.

"I married into it," Jennifer Sallans said with a laugh. "I enjoy being outside, and it's family too. We have a lot of family, cousins, friends that come and help us, and it's just kind of a neat time to hang out and make syrup."

The Sallans recently bought a larger reverse-osmosis machine to make their operation more efficient. The larger machine

filters water from the sap, increasing sugar concentrations to as high as 14 per cent before it goes into the boiler.

"New equipment is going to make a big difference in time and energy savings," Andrew Sallans said. "Less boil time."

By the end of the boil, which can last as long as a day or more, the sugar content of the maple syrup should be around 66 per cent.

While Friday's ceremony highlighted commercial producers, Andrew Sallans said maple is something anyone with the right tree can try on a smaller scale.

"Anybody can do it," he said. "If you have a maple tree in your backyard, you can do it. It's a lot different doing it on a big scale, but it's still just as much fun."

Snyder encouraged maple fans to seek out locally made syrup at their grocery store or buy directly from area farms. A list of producers can be found through the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers' website.

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Andrew Sallans (right), a third-generation maple syrup producer in New Dundee, shows Caitlin McCabe (left) of the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival how to hang a bucket after tapping a maple tree on farm.



Representatives from the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival named Tom Snyder (centre right) of TDS Farms Ltd. in West Montrose as the festival's 2027 Producer of the Year.

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Waterloo regional chair confident changes to system will keep water flowing

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

“The quality of our water is not in question. It is a specified capacity issue at the Mannheim water treatment plant.”

That was the first sentence when the Gazette asked Region of Waterloo Chair Karen Redman what her message was to residents about the water shortage in the area.

“Development can happen in a large swath of Cambridge, in North Dumfries, Wellesley, part of Wilmot and Woolwich. We are determined, and this is job one, to figure out and navigate this capacity issue to make sure we can continue forward,” she added.

“We will get through this, and (developers) have my word we will get through this. It is a focus and a priority,” Redman said.

The region owns the water system in partnership with lower-tier municipalities such as Wilmot Township. The region is also working closely with the province to navigate ways to address the capacity constraint.

“We are working with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) and have gone to them and said when 80 per cent of our potable water comes from groundwater isn’t as accurate as

we think it should be. We have a third-party consultant come, and they have validated our findings that we need to measure average capacity instead of maximum capacity.”

Redman said MECP officials have been working with region staff since the problem was identified when a company called Agile confirmed the water measurement methodology.

“We are working with the province on large ticket items and in some ways, it’s a perfect storm. The components involve increased water processing capacity. We have two water treatment plants that are 100 years old. We are not taking as much water as we are allowed to process from the Grand River, and we have about 100 wells in the aquifer. All of these things need to be updated.”

Redman said the region needs help from the province as well as expedited environmental assessments in the short, medium and long term to help with the capacity issue.

“It’s isolated to the Mannheim service area. It’s important to point out that all other areas of the region remain unaffected and development remains unchanged in those areas,” she said.

Redman said the region is making the issue a top priority, demonstrated by the

hiring of a new water commissioner and increased collaboration with the development community.

The region has hired a new water commissioner on a six-month contract. Kenneth Brothers is an internationally recognized expert in water utility management and is a fellow of the International Water Association. He is a professional engineer and has held senior leadership positions in multiple Ontario municipalities related to water services and infrastructure.

In his role with the Region of Waterloo, Brothers will work with local municipalities, developers and the provincial government to strengthen operational resiliency, accelerate repairs and maintenance, and plan infrastructure investments to increase water capacity.

“He’s an expert in the field and we are lucky to have him. We have expert water staff, and we have been working with the University of Waterloo as well as developers and other experts,” said Redman, who added other groups are working on technological issues.

“They are looking at how we can coordinate with area municipalities to make sure we get the best results possible as quickly

as possible.”

Another addition to the region’s array of water weapons is a mobile water treatment plant. One is being purchased at a cost of \$15 million, and more could follow if it is proven effective.

“It will be attached to the Mannheim water treatment plant and we’re looking at several litres per second. That will help build up the resiliency,” Redman explained.

That resiliency, she continued, is what the region needs to maintain water pressure, which guarantees fire suppression systems and allows development to continue.

“Construction continues for anyone who has building permits and draft approvals, even in the Mannheim area.”

One member of regional council wants the region to take a deep dive into how the water situation came about.

Cambridge regional Coun. Doug Craig has filed a notice of motion calling for the appointment of an independent investigator to make public the causes of the water-supply crisis. The motion will be debated during a meeting on March 10.

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Oxford County launches online pothole reporting

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

This year has seen a particularly brutal pothole season thanks to fluctuating temperatures and the most precipitation we have seen in many winters.

The good news is Oxford County Public Works crews are working to repair cracks and potholes on the more than 670 centre-line kilometres of county roadways. Anyone who sees a troubling patch of pavement can now help public works crews reduce potential road hazards by reporting cracks and potholes on Oxford County roads online at Service Oxford.

All pothole reports should include the name of the road or street, which lane and the approximate size.

“We have reminded drivers the last few years that this is the time of year you will see potholes form, and we wanted to provide an easy mechanism for reporting so they can get fixed in a timely manner,” said Frank Gross, the county’s manager of roads.

When winter temperatures constantly

fluctuate above and below freezing, water gets into tiny cracks in the pavement, freezes and expands, and then thaws again. This repeated freeze-thaw action weakens the road surface and creates potholes as pieces of asphalt break apart under traffic. Late winter into early spring is traditionally when potholes become most visible and numerous – melting and weather shifts make them form quickly, and cold weather can delay permanent repairs.

Gross said this year’s winter weather has taken its toll on county roads across Oxford.

“The conditions are prime to see an increase in potholes with the amount of snow. When the temperatures warm up during the day, you get the runoff of melting snow and then freezing temperatures overnight. That’s prime for pothole formation.”

He added some roads owned by the county are located in lower-tier municipalities, but if people are unsure, they are still welcome to report a problem.

“If residents want to use the county’s customer service portal to report it,

we will forward it on to the appropriate municipality.”

Under provincial legislation and safety standards, Oxford County must maintain its roads in good repair for motorists. Potholes reported by residents or spotted during routine patrols are repaired by staff according to provincially defined timelines.

This has been the coldest winter in recent memory, something Gross said will likely lead to a hike in repairs across the county.

“I would say it’s been a typical year for winter conditions. The last few years, we have had milder weather and fewer potholes so we will see more potholes than we have seen in recent times.”

For vehicle damage potentially caused by potholes, motorists are advised to have their vehicle checked by a mechanic and consider reporting any potential damage to their insurance companies.

“Municipalities have to meet municipal maintenance standards, so there is a minimal timeline based on the size of the pothole to repair it. But, unless the municipality is negligent in any way, it would be

an insurance claim.”

Residents can report potholes online on Oxford County’s new customer service portal at www.oxfordcounty.ca/serviceoxford. The online form allows residents to pinpoint the pothole location on a map, fill in additional details, upload a photo and choose to receive an update from Oxford County Public Works staff if they would like.

The county is also offering some tips to reduce the chances of striking a pothole while driving, including keeping eyes on the road and avoiding puddles, shoulders and slush on the road where possible.

County staff add it’s also a good idea to check vehicle tire pressure regularly and ensure each wheel is inflated to vehicle specifications. If a pothole is unavoidable, reduce driving speed, but only if it’s safe to do so and without slamming on the brakes.

“Be aware. Potholes can seemingly occur out of nowhere. Conditions are happening beneath the asphalt, and all of a sudden, it becomes a pothole. What wasn’t there in the morning might be there in the afternoon, and drivers need to be aware,” said Gross.

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Tavistock Citizens Brass Band remembered in 1970 photo

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Patrons dining at Quehl's Restaurant in Tavistock often find themselves admiring the memorabilia lining the walls and filling the glass display cases as much as they enjoy their meals.

Among the many historic photos is a treasured image of the Tavistock Citizens Brass Band, taken before the 1970 fall fair parade. The photograph, believed to have been taken by a member of the Gladding family, captures the band proudly dressed in uniform.

According to the inscription accompanying the photo, it was the last picture taken of the band in uniform.

The Tavistock Citizens Brass Band was once a familiar and much-anticipated presence at community events and parades,

providing music that brought residents together and added to the festive spirit of the village.

Those pictured in the front row, from left, are conductor Spencer (Ben) Weston, Ken Seltzer, Rosanne Wilker, Joanne Yausie, John Belland and John Klein.

In the back row, from left, are Craig Wilker, Ron Wilker, Bob Rudy, Robert Gladding, Lorne Yausie, John Rudy, Fred Funk, Otto Wilker and Donald Tough.

For many in the community, the photograph brings back fond memories of local music, community pride and the important role the band once played in Tavistock's cultural life.

Take a moment next time you're at Quehl's to see if you recognize any of the musicians – and to enjoy a small piece of Tavistock history.



TAVISTOCK CITIZENS' BAND – LAST PHOTO OF BAND IN UNIFORM (Fall Fair Day – September 1970)

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The Tavistock Citizens Brass Band circa 1970, as seen here in this photo on display at Quehl's Restaurant.

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Free legal advice available for Ontario workers facing sexual harassment

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Waterloo Region Community Legal Services has partnered with the Sexual Harassment Advice Prevention Education (SHAPE) project to provide free legal advice to workers across Ontario who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

Funded by the Department of Justice, the program offers confidential legal information and guidance under employment and human rights law. It is open to anyone in Ontario and can assist with any questions or concerns related to harassment in the workplace.

A 2024 report from Statistics Canada found that 47 per cent of surveyed women reported experiencing some form of harassment or sexual assault in the workplace. Approximately three in 10 men also reported harassment in the workplace. Harassment can be inappropriate

sexualized behaviour, discriminatory behaviour or sexual assault. Workers who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community were found to be two to four times more likely to experience harassment or sexual assault on the job.

Despite being available for more than a year, the SHAPE program has been underutilized.

Joanna Mullen, an employment lawyer with Waterloo Region Community Legal Services, said fear of repercussions can prevent workers from seeking help, particularly when the alleged harassment involves someone in a position of authority.

"The service is for anyone who's looking for information or advice about their rights around harassment in the workplace," Mullen said. "Anyone is welcome to call us, even if, potentially, we're talking about something that happened a long time ago. It's still a good idea to find out what your options are and what your rights are."

Mullen said workplace sexual

harassment can take many forms.

"Sexual harassment in the workplace can be sexualized jokes. I've had cases where people in the workplace are given nicknames that have sexualized connotations. That's a form of sexual harassment," she said. "And then there can be more extreme examples where you could have sexualized touching, sexual assault, sexual solicitation. Sexual solicitation is a legal way of saying that someone in a position of authority over you, or even a co-worker, attempts to start a sexual relationship, and that causes a power imbalance."

The clinic provides legal advice related to employment and human rights legislation but does not handle civil lawsuits or personal injury claims related to sexual assault.

"We're providing legal advice about people's rights under employment law and human rights law. We're not experts when it comes to personal injury or civil liability for sexual assault issues," Mullen said. "If

someone comes to us and is interested in pursuing a case civilly in court, we would then refer them to someone who could help."

Mullen emphasized those she helps remain in control of any next steps after seeking advice.

"Ultimately, the person who calls us gets to decide what happens. They can choose whether or not to take legal action," she said. "But it is important, I think. Even if you decide that you don't want to do anything about it, it can be empowering. It can be empowering to gain knowledge about what the law says, what your rights are and what an employer should have done based on what happened."

All personal information shared with the clinic is kept confidential and is only shared internally for contact purposes.

Workers seeking advice can call 1-833-677-5146 Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. More information is available at shapeyourworkplace.ca.

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Local egg farmer shares farm life with Sprucedale kindergarten class

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Students in the kindergarten class at Sprucedale Public School in Shakespeare recently received a hands-on lesson in where their food comes from.

Julie Wynette, a Tavistock-area egg farmer, visited the classroom to explain how eggs are produced on her family's farm and to give students a closer look at modern egg farming.

For several years, local farmers have been invited into area schools to help connect young students with agriculture and the origins of the food they eat. Wynette's visit offered an age-appropriate introduction to the daily work involved in caring for laying hens.

During her presentation, Wynette showed the class a video tour of the family's egg barn. Students were able to see and hear the hens clucking as they moved freely in their enriched housing environment – eating, drinking and nesting to lay the eggs collected each day.

She explained what the hens are fed, how the barns are kept clean and well ventilated, and how the birds' natural behaviours

are supported in the modern system.

Wynette was joined by her two sons, Nash and Reid, who both attend Sprucedale. She told the class that egg farming is very much a family effort, with she and her husband, Kyle, working together with their boys to collect eggs every day of the year.

Egg farming, she noted, is a 365-day-a-year commitment.

Wynette also spoke about the nutritional value of eggs, highlighting the protein and other nutrients they provide. When she asked how many students liked eggs, every hand in the room went up. Some children even shared their own experiences helping care for chickens and other animals on family farms.

Following her talk, Wynette set up activity stations where students divided into small groups to complete egg-themed crafts, reinforcing what they had learned about egg farming in a fun and creative way.

The visit not only gave students a better understanding of how eggs make their way from farm to table but also helped foster an early appreciation for the work of local farm families.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Egg farmer Julie Wynette explains how the laying hens on her family's farm are housed. She also showed students a video tour of the inside of the barns. Slides highlighting the nutritional value of eggs were included as part of the presentation.

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Nicole Zandstra goes above and beyond for Sprucedale students

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

At Sprucedale Public School in Shakespeare, there is a familiar face in the front office who many students, teachers and parents have come to rely on.

Nicole Zandstra, the school's office administrator, is known for going above and beyond in her role, helping wherever she is needed throughout the school day.

Whether it's tending to minor cuts and bruises, offering comforting words – and sometimes a much-needed hug – or making

phone calls home, Zandstra is often the steady presence students turn to. She also keeps daily operations running smoothly, ensuring snack orders are placed on time, helping organize pancake days and pizza lunches, and keeping the fridge stocked with individually packed hard-boiled eggs for hungry students.

When winter storms roll in unexpectedly and buses are dismissed early, Zandstra is on the phone making sure parents are informed and students are safely accounted for.

She speaks warmly about the school's

approximately 170 students and says she treats them as if they were her own.

Now in her fourth year at Sprucedale, Zandstra says she has loved every minute of her time at the school. Each June, she admits, it's difficult to say goodbye for the summer months until September brings students back through the doors again.

Born in Guelph, Zandstra worked as a developmental service worker in that city for 19 years before coming to Sprucedale. She initially supported teachers as an educational assistant before moving into the front-office administrator role.

Beyond her work at the school, Zandstra has also spent the past decade welcoming international students into her home

through the MLI Homestay student-exchange program. Hosting students in grades 9 to 12 from countries around the world, she says the experience has been both rewarding and educational.

Zandstra notes she has learned just as much from the students as they have learned from her. Over the years, she has hosted students from Spain, Japan, Germany and Italy, among others, and hopes one day to visit some of them in their home countries.

Whether at school, at home or in the wider community, Zandstra continues to make a positive difference through her caring and supportive nature.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Nicole Zandstra is shown helping at the recent Courage for Carter fundraising spaghetti dinner for seven-year-old Carter Kuchma, hosted by the Sprucedale Home and School parents association.



(KYLIE FIFIELD PHOTO)

Nicole Zandstra is pictured with her 15-year-old son, Brendon, who attends St. Marys DCVI, at their farm home on the northern outskirts of St. Marys.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

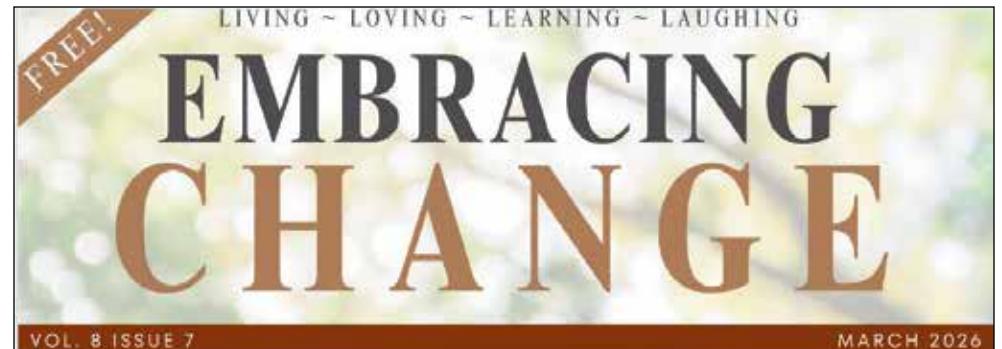
Nicole Zandstra invites the school's junior kindergarten class into her office for a recent fun-loving photo. She says the youngest students remain near and dear to her heart.

Tavistock Community Health Inc. seeks new board members



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Tavistock Community Health Inc. chair Russ Huber is encouraging residents interested in local health care to consider joining the organization's board of directors. The group will hold its annual meeting April 8 at 7 p.m. at the Tavistock Men's Club Hall. Anyone interested can speak with a board member or email Frank Meconi at fameconi@roger.com or Russ Huber at huberruss@gmail.com.



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Community Players bring *Into the Woods* to Trinity Theatre

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Community Players of New Hamburg are back on stage this spring with a limited run of *Into the Woods* at Trinity Theatre from May 7-10.

The beloved Stephen Sondheim musical weaves together familiar fairytale characters in a story where wishes come true – but not always as expected. Audiences can expect twists, humour, memorable music and moments that keep them guessing about what will happen next.

Artistic director Brooke Gamble says theatregoers who have enjoyed previous Community Players productions won't want to miss this one.

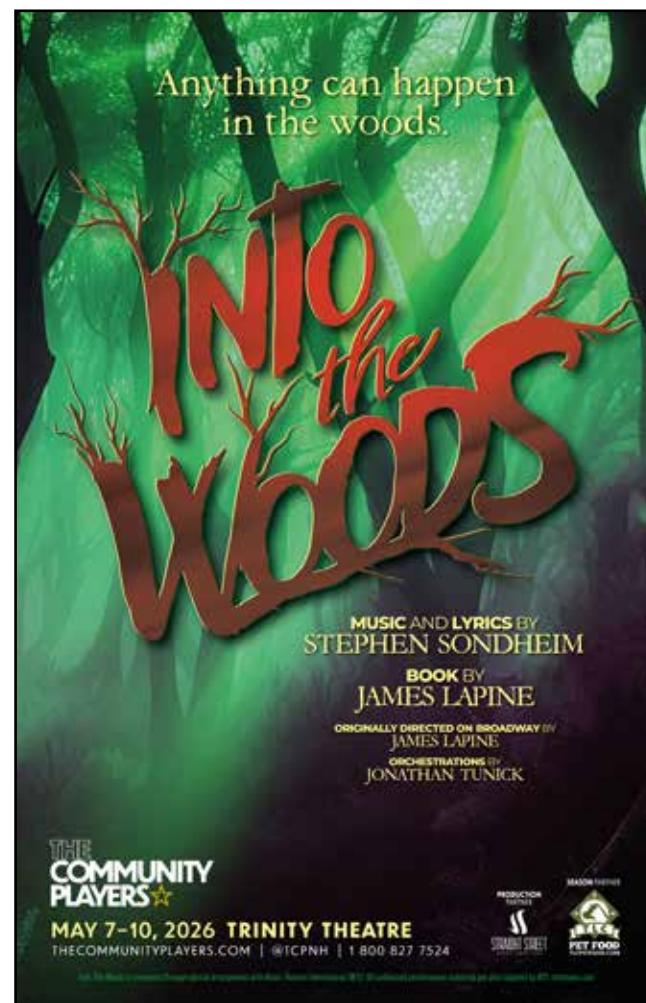
Director Aaron Balzer adds there is "something magical about this combination of classic fairy tales, unforgettable music, humour and powerful themes," noting the show offers entertainment for a wide range of audiences.

Into the Woods blends the stories of *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Rapunzel*, exploring what happens after "happily ever after" and touching on

themes of family, responsibility and community.

The Community Players of New Hamburg, known locally as TCP, have built a reputation for delivering high-quality community theatre productions, drawing performers and audiences from across the Waterloo Region and surrounding areas.

Tickets go on sale March 21 at 9 a.m. and can be purchased online at www.communityplayers.com. With only four performances scheduled, organizers encourage patrons to mark their calendars and secure seats early.



Police charge 19-year-old driver with impaired driving after Wilmot collision

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE

thewtgazette@gmail.com

Waterloo Regional Police have charged a driver with impaired driving following a single-vehicle collision in Wilmot Township last week.

On Feb. 26 at approximately 3:50 p.m., police responded to the area of Hillfield Drive after receiving a report of a male driving recklessly in the area before striking a snowbank.

Officers arrived and arrested the driver on impaired-driving charges.

The vehicle sustained significant front-end damage and there were no physical injuries reported.

As a result of the investigation, a 19-year-old Wilmot man was charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs
- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration
- Dangerous operation
- Drive vehicle with cannabis readily available

Waterloo Regional Police are

reminding drivers that impaired driving is a serious offence that puts lives at risk. Anyone who suspects an impaired driver should call 911 immediately.

Anyone with information or dash-camera footage of the incident is asked to call police at 519-570-9777 ext. 6399.

To provide anonymous information, call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or submit online at www.waterloocrimestoppers.com.

CORRECTION:

An error was published in the story, "Sebben family farm part of North Easthope's early rural history," on page B20 of the Feb. 19 Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette. While the story indicated the Sebben family farm had been located to the east of the sideroad in North Easthope township that is now Perth Road 111, it was actually located to the west of that road, where the Stratford Home Hardware Building Centre is located today. We regret any confusion this may have caused.



Applications now open for WRCF grant streams!

Annually, Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) distributes Arts Grants, Community Grants, and Racial Equity Grants.

In 2026, all three grant streams will be focused on strengthening social infrastructure across Waterloo Region, to support members of our communities now and in the future.

Visit wrcf.ca/news/si-grant-streams-2026 for more information and to apply.

Applications close: March 30, 2026



Note: Only one application per organization will be considered across the three WRCF grant streams.

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McBride wins again in Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades monthly draw

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

here was another lucky winner at the end of February in the Wilmot Heritage Antique Fire Brigades' monthly draw.

Arlene McBride was surprised to receive the call informing her she had won \$450. This marks her third win in the brigades' ongoing monthly fundraiser draw.

McBride says she continues to purchase tickets not just for the chance to win, but to support the volunteers behind the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades and Museum in Baden.

She noted the funds raised through the monthly draw help the organization collect and preserve antique firefighting equipment, including vintage fire trucks, with the long-term goal of securing larger facilities in Baden to properly house and display the growing collection.

The museum showcases firefighting equipment from decades past and continues to attract visitors interested in local history and the evolution of fire services in the region.

McBride encourages others in the community to consider supporting the brigades by entering the monthly draw online at wilmotfiremuseum.com.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF WILMOT HERITAGE FIRE BRIGADES) Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades president Peter Gingerich presents February draw winner Arlene McBride with a cheque for \$450 in last month's fundraising draw.

Thanks for the melodies: special quilt presented to Shakespeare Presbyterian's supply organist



(DIANE DANEN PHOTO)

Organist Paul Hyatt surprised Shirley Kraus with a beautiful quilt this past Sunday at Shakespeare Presbyterian Church in recognition of her many years of dedicated service as supply organist. For several years, Kraus graciously filled in whenever Hyatt was away and became a faithful and much-appreciated part of the church's music ministry. While she is stepping away from her role as supply organist, she will continue to play piano alongside Hyatt during services. The quilt was created by Paul Hyatt's mom, Lori Hyatt.



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Tree Trust demonstrates pruning of 80-year-old pin oaks in New Hamburg Arboretum

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

On Tuesday, March 3, Reep Green Solutions and Tree Trust invited the public to celebrate its mature trees with a live demonstration of pruning on two 80-year-old pin oaks.

This work was funded entirely through donations to care for two of the Arboretum's mature pin oaks located in the New Hamburg Arboretum at 470 Waterloo St., New Hamburg.

"The township doesn't generally have funding for things like this and with the budgetary struggles, we really appreciate any kind of support we can get," said Cody Eby, manager of parks and facilities. "So being able to work with Tree Trust on this has been a great opportunity for us."

The Tree Trust program focuses on caring for and preserving mature, legacy trees across the region, aiming to extend their lifespan and ensure their benefits continue to be enjoyed for years to come.

"We are focused on preserving and caring for mature legacy trees in the region,"

said Ashlynn Fleming, interim manager of tree programs with Reep Green Solutions. "So, these are trees that are around 100 years old that have particular importance when it comes to historical, cultural or social significance."

The New Hamburg Arboretum was established more than 60 years ago, with its first trees planted in 1957 and official opening in 1964.

"The reason that we're working with the arboretum here is because it's in need of a lot of restoration work and some of the loss of some of the existing large trees," said Fleming. "We do work like this to try to prevent that from happening to the trees we see here today."

Tree Trust is dedicated to caring for significant trees in the region, ensuring their health and longevity through the support of professional arborist services.

The arboretum hosts more than 350 trees and 70 unique species. However, heavy clay soil in the area makes it difficult for many trees to survive, especially those that were not native to the region.

While this issue was addressed using

soil amendments and by improving existing drainage infrastructure, the arboretum, now managed by the Township of Wilmot, continues to face issues with keeping trees healthy.

Several of the oldest and largest trees have been lost in recent years to storm damage or disease, and there is ongoing work by the township and arboretum task force to rehabilitate the space.

Highlighting the importance of these elder oak trees, Nicola Gailits from Reep Green Solutions noted the oak tree supports up to 500 species of caterpillars, which is crucial for bird populations.

"Oaks have a huge potential to support a biodiversity of insects and habitat. And so, when we look at supporting our insects, supporting our pollinators, supporting our decomposers, one way we can support everything is specifically caterpillars.

"The way that this happened was over millennia, oak trees and caterpillars actually co-evolved so the caterpillars could handle oak leaves."

Gailits said protecting mature oak trees is one of the most effective ways to improve



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTOS)

Arborist Andrew Campbell working on the almost 100-year-old pin oak trees in New Hamburg Arboretum during the live demonstration earlier this week.

biodiversity in local communities.

To learn more about the work of Reep Green Solutions' donor-funded Tree Trust program, visit www.reepgreen.ca/tree-trust.

New Hamburg Legion continues search for families of local veterans

Focus for 13th volume of military service recognition book is on First World War veterans

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

The New Hamburg Legion continues to seek out family members of local First World War veterans as part of its ongoing effort to document and preserve their stories in the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command Military Service Recognition Book.

Bob Berg, the Legion's military service recognition book coordinator, has been researching veterans with connections to Wilmot and surrounding townships as he prepares submissions for the book's upcoming volume. As with previous editions, Berg is hoping to connect with descendants who may be able to provide photos, personal stories and additional biographical details to help bring the histories of these veterans to life.

While military service records provide basic information, Berg said those documents often lack the personal context that helps tell the full story of a veteran's life.

By connecting with family members, he hopes to learn more about who these veterans were beyond their service records and to include those stories alongside their photographs and biographies in the recognition book.

The project focuses primarily on veterans from Wilmot, Wellesley, East Zorra-Tavistock, Blandford-Blenheim and neighbouring communities. Berg is currently researching a new list of First World War veterans with ties to the area and is hoping family members may come forward with additional information.

The latest veterans Berg is researching include:
World War I

Wilmot Township and neighbouring communities

- Sgt. Howard Leslie Bean: Born Aug. 12, 1897, in Wilmot Township
- Pte. Harvey Henry Bechtel: Born March 11, 1898, in Baden
- Pte. Llewellyn Emmanuel Brill: Born April 18, 1895, in New Hamburg
- Gnr. James Alexander Dewar: Born Jan. 3, 1896, in Wellesley

- Pte. Robert Dietrich: Born Oct. 11, 1892, in Baden
- Pte. Gordon Christian Eby: Born Sept. 6, 1890, in Kitchener
- Pte. William Otto Erb: Born Jan. 4, 1893, in New Hamburg
- Pte. Irwin Michael Fleischauer: Born Sept. 24, 1894, in Wellesley
- Gnr. Harry George Forler: Born Dec. 18, 1892, in Philipsburg
- Lt. Norman John Goebel: Born May 4, 1889, in New Hamburg
- Pte. Robert James Halls: Born April 5, 1890, in New Hamburg
- W.O. Cecil Alexander Hamilton: Born Feb. 2, 1894, in New Hamburg
- Sgt. Edward George Hartung: Born Sept. 9, 1898, in Gadshill
- Pte. Milton Daniel Hartung: Born Aug. 25, 1895, in Gadshill
- Pte. William Melvin Hebel: Born July 11, 1896, in Lisbon
- Pte. Alvin Emerson Hiller: Born Nov. 25, 1894, in New Hamburg
- Pte. Oliver Hiller: Born May 11, 1898, in New Hamburg
- N/S Lavina Kropf: Born Sept. 28, 1885, in Wellesley
- Pte. Andrew Lantz: Born May 26, 1896, in Wilmot Township
- Capt. John Milton Livingston: Born March 3, 1888, in Blyth
- Pte. Harvey Albert Ludwig: Born Oct. 4, 1897, in New Hamburg
- Pte. John George Marth: Born June 1, 1891, in Petersburg
- Cpl. Chester Kastner Merner: Born Oct. 26, 1892, in Sebringville
- Spr. Hugh Patrick Miehm: Born Nov. 29, 1891, in New Hamburg
- Pte. Walter Raymond Miehm: Born June 5, 1899, in Waterloo
- Pte. John Ernest Randall: Born Aug. 14, 1899, in Baden
- Gnr. Roy Jacob Reid: Born Oct. 23, 1897, in New

- Hamburg
- N/S Jean Robertson: Born May 3, 1886, in Wellesley
- Pte. George Milton Rush: Born Dec. 30, 1896, in Wilmot Township
- Pte. William Edward Russell: Born Oct. 16, 1893, in Baden
- Pte. William Alfred Ruthig: Born Sept. 5, 1895, in New Hamburg
- Pte. Peter John Schmehl: Born June 17, 1893, in Perth County
- Pte. Herman Eugene Schultz: Born July 19, 1889, in New Hamburg
- Sgt. Oscar Frank Schultz: Born Aug. 16, 1887, in Stratford
- Pte. William Seftel: Born Oct. 4, 1895, in Wilmot Township
- Gnr. Andrew Allan Shuyler: Born June 20, 1896, in New Hamburg
- Pte. Victor Joseph Smith: Born March 19, 1894, in New Dundee
- Pte. Alfred Thomas Thomas: Born Oct. 13, 1874, in New Hamburg
- Pte. Arthur Wellington Thomas: Born Aug. 27, 1894, in New Hamburg
- Pte. Lorane Thomas: Born Feb. 18, 1895, in Waterloo
- Sgt. Joseph James Vance: Born July 18, 1894, in East Zorra Township
- Lt. Ross Walker Veitch: Born May 5, 1898, in Plattsville
- Pte. Herbert Max Wanklin: Born May 9, 1896, in Wilmot Township
- Bmbr. Theodore Franklin Wiese: Born Oct. 4, 1897, in New Hamburg

Berg is also continuing to accept submissions for veterans who served in the Second World War or during the Cold War and who have connections to the local area.

Families interested in sharing information about a veteran or submitting a biography and photo for inclusion in the recognition book can contact Berg at rwbergy@gmail.com or by phone at 519-745-0212.

Grace United Church congregation blesses handmade prayer shawls

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Members of Grace United Church in Tavistock gathered Sunday morning for a special service celebrating a ministry that has quietly stitched comfort and care into the community for years.

Throughout the year, a dedicated group of women from the congregation – with men in the area also invited to take part – meet every two weeks with knitting and crochet needles in hand. Together, they create handmade Afghans and prayer shawls for those in need of warmth and encouragement.

Over the course of several months, the group carefully pieces together each blanket and shawl, knowing the finished items will be delivered to individuals and families who can use a little extra comfort. Many are distributed locally through area shelters in surrounding towns and villages, while others are sent to communities in northern Ontario.

During Sunday's service, congregational leaders Carol Young and Teresa Coulthard offered a blessing over the completed works.

They prayed that the recipients "may feel the warm breath of the Holy Spirit as they warm themselves with it," and that they would take comfort in knowing someone prayed for them while each piece was lovingly stitched together.

The prayer continued, expressing hope that those who receive the shawls and blankets will feel touched by the congregation's love, strengthened by faith and supported by the caring hands that created them.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Members of Grace United Church display handmade prayer shawls that will be distributed to those in need locally and in northern Ontario. Front row kneeling, from left: Carol Young and Anne Gregory. Second row: Mary Boland, Jean Lowe, Allison Cross, Mary Alice Roth, Marjorie Wisby, Shirley Weicker, Bev Vandervliet and Shirley Binke. Back row: Joan Bartlett, Gail Woolcott and service leader Teresa Coulthard.



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New water-filtration building in Shakespeare nearing completion

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A new municipal building beside the Shakespeare Variety store is nearing the end of construction and will soon house a modern water-filtration system designed to improve drinking-water quality and support future growth in the village.

Shakespeare-area residents have watched the project take shape along Highway 7/8. The facility will include an arsenic-filtration system, high-lift fire pumps and a large water reservoir to accommodate future expansion in the community.

Perth East Coun. Andrew MacAlpine, who lives in Shakespeare, explained the background behind the project and the need for the new system.

In 2018, the Ontario government lowered the allowable level of arsenic in drinking water from 0.025 mg/L to 0.010 mg/L. Testing showed arsenic levels in the Shakespeare municipal drinking-water system at 0.0126 mg/L and 0.0108 mg/L – slightly above the new provincial limit.

The municipal system primarily services the subdivision north of Highway 7/8, along with some smaller systems

south of the highway, while much of the village continues to rely on private wells.

In April 2021, Perth East council determined filtration options needed to be explored. At that time, the cost of installing arsenic filtration was estimated at approximately \$1.88 million, with a significant portion of the funding secured from the province with support from then Perth-Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece.

During the evaluation process, the township engineer recommended a site beside the Shakespeare Variety store. Council also decided to incorporate high-lift fire pumps and additional growth capacity into the project.

With those additions, the estimated cost rose to \$2.765 million. As of Feb. 4, 2025, the most recent public update placed the total project cost at \$3.612 million.

Xterra Construction of Kitchener, a company experienced in water-treatment facilities, submitted the lowest bid and was awarded the contract.

With exterior work now nearing completion, the building represents a significant infrastructure investment for the village.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Workers with Xterra Construction put the finishing exterior touches on the new Shakespeare water-filtration building beside the Shakespeare Variety store last week. The facility will house arsenic filtration, fire pumps and a water reservoir to support future village growth.

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Silver Swans dance their way to better health at Centre Stage in New Hamburg

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Centre Stage Dance Studio in New Hamburg is getting praise for offering its popular adult dance classes, including a Silver Swans ballet class, which gives dancers a chance to learn ballet or build on the foundation they developed when they were younger.

Donna Bender, founder and director of Centre Stage Dance Studio, started the class after two of her students from another dance class said they wanted something more challenging. With a class size of no more than eight dancers, Bender knew the class would be ideal not only for those with a ballet foundation but also for those who have never danced before.

She said with the smaller class size, she can focus on foundation building and technique for each dancer in a personalized way.

Dancer Claire Wilson, 90, is the oldest of the dancers and says she not only enjoys the program's community aspect but also notices her balance improving each week.

"I was never a good dancer, but this class certainly keeps me active," she said. "It's quite demanding, as I haven't exercised for



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTOS)

Dancer Irene Edwards from Cambridge, dancer Nancy Reid from Waterloo and dance instructor Donna Bender in last week's Silver Swan dance class.

years before taking the class. I'm building muscle in my legs, and I'm working on my balance."

The program is not only attracting locals but also bringing in women from across Waterloo Region, including Nancy Reid



Dancers Cathy Boman from New Hamburg, Bev Marshman from Haysville and senior dancer Clair Wilson, 90, from Baden learned not only ballet but also the foundations for better health at last week's dance class.

from Waterloo and Irene Edwards from Cambridge.

"There are adult ballet and dance classes closer to home," said Reid, "but those classes are for everyone, and you may be in a class with an 18 year old who has been

doing ballet their whole life."

She said the class is more than just physically challenging; it's also mentally challenging.

"Not only are you building strength by dancing, but you also need to use your brain," Reid said. "It's challenging to remember what to do next. Donna will go through the exercises and steps, and you need to focus on that while also maintaining your posture."

The women in the class say Bender's focus on foundational strength is helping them in their everyday lives as well.

"What I like about Donna is that she explains what you're doing, like making sure you're turning out from your hips, the importance of keeping your shoulders down and where you should feel it in your body," said Reid.

"It's not just exercise, it's a real pleasure to be in this class," added Cathy Bowman from New Hamburg. "The movements in ballet are very controlled, and the music is pleasant. It's less aerobic than other classes, but it's still demanding."

The program is offered to anyone, whether experienced in dance or not. For more information, visit www.centrestagedance-studio.ca/adult-class.

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Notice of Application for Approval to Expropriate Land

Form 2

Expropriations Act

In the matter of an application by the Ministry of Transportation for approval to expropriate land, pursuant to s.11(2) and subsection 11.1(3) of the *Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act*, being in the Geographic Township of North Dumfries, Township of North Dumfries, Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Province of Ontario.

For the purpose(s) of: Property is required to accommodate the bridge replacement and interchange improvements at Highway 401 and Waterloo Regional Road 97 (Cedar Creek Road) to improve the safety and operations of this overpass and interchange.

Notice is hereby given that application has been made for approval to expropriate the land described in the schedule attached hereto.

The approving authority is the Minister of Transportation with an address of:

Minister of Transportation
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8
416-327-9200

Any owner of lands in respect of which notice is given, who desires to comment on the proposed expropriation of the land for the described purpose(s) may do so by submitting the comment within the time stated herein to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Transportation Infrastructure Management Division, Ministry of Transportation, in writing.

SCHEDULE "A"

All right, title and interest in the following lands:

1. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03847-0176 (LT), being Part of Lot 33, Concession 11, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 1 on Plan 58R-22424 (P-3164-96).
2. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03847-0476 (LT), being Part of Lot 32, Concession 11, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 2 on Plan 58R-22424 (P-3164-96).
3. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03847-0456 (LT), being Part of Lot 32, Concession 11, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 3 on Plan 58R-22424 (P-3164-96).
4. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03847-0220 (LT), being Part of Lot 32, Concession 11, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 4 on Plan 58R-22424 (P-3164-96).
5. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03850-0114 (LT), being Part of Lot 33, Concession 10, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 5 on Plan 58R-22424 (P-3164-96).
6. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03851-0228 (LT), being Part of Lot 30, Concession 10, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 3 on Plan 58R-22425 (P-3164-95).
7. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03851-0229 (LT), being Part of Lot 30, Concession 10, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 4 on Plan 58R-22425 (P-3164-95).
8. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03851-0004 (LT), being Part of Lot 30, Concession 10, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 5 on Plan 58R-22425 (P-3164-95), subject to an Easement over PART 5 as in Instrument WS687957.
9. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03851-0005 (LT), being Part of Lot 30, Concession 10, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 6 on Plan 58R-22425 (P-3164-95), subject to Easement over PART 6 as in Instrument WS687957 and WS687987.
10. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03851-0006 (LT), being Part of Lot 30, Concession 10, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 7 on Plan 58R-22425 (P-3164-0095), subject to an Easement over PART 7 as in Instrument WS687957.
11. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03851-0007 (LT), being Part of Lot 30, Concession 10, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 8 on Plan 58R-22425 (P-3164-95), subject to an Easement over PART 8 as in Instrument WS687957.
12. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03851-0008 (LT), being Part of Lot 18, Registered Plan 1452, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 9 on Plan 58R-22425 (P-3164-95), subject to an Easement over PART 9 as in Instrument WS684762.
13. All right, title and interest in the lands described as follows:
In the Township of North Dumfries, in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, being Part of PIN 03848-0178 (LT), being Part of Lot 30, Concession 11, Geographic Township of North Dumfries, designated as PART 1 on Plan 58R-22425 (P-3164-95).

THIS NOTICE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED ON: FEBRUARY 18, 2026

The Ministry will review the comments for their technical/engineering information, having regard to the need for the land for the purposes of the project.

The Assistant Deputy Minister must receive the comments within thirty days after the owner is served with this notice, or within thirty days after the first publication of the notice.

The comments must be sent:

By e-mail to: Property.Process@ontario.ca

Or by mail to: Assistant Deputy Minister
Transportation and Infrastructure Management
Ministry of Transportation
4th Floor, Garden City Tower
301 St. Paul Street
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7R4

Please include the municipal address of the land in the comment.

The expropriating authority is the
Minister of Transportation with an
address of:

777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8
416-327-9200

Minister of Transportation

Per: Linda Wilson-Holmes
c/o Linda Wilson-Holmes
Conveyancing Supervisor
659 Exeter Road, 3rd Floor
London, ON N6E 1L3

The Table brings community together at Shakespeare Presbyterian Church

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

Richard and Jean Smelski were away on vacation and attended a church service where they experienced a dramatic presentation of *The Last Supper*. They describe the performance as deeply moving and truly life changing.

Long after they returned home, the impact stayed with them. Wanting to share that same meaningful experience with their own community, the couple began speaking with others about staging a similar dramatization.

Their vision took shape when they connected with Rev. Gail Fricker, a gifted minister and storyteller, who wrote an original drama titled *The Table: Bread. Wine. Betrayal*. The production explores the stories behind the events of Jesus' final days, touching on timeless themes of faith, friendship and betrayal.

The play will be presented at Shakespeare Presbyterian Church on Friday, March 27, and Saturday, March 28. Community response has been exceptional, with all seats spoken for weeks in advance.

"The support we have received has been overwhelming," Richard Smelski said.

Since rehearsals began in January, the production has brought together not only members of Shakespeare Presbyterian Church but also participants from nearby

churches and the wider community. Cast members have been meeting weekly under the guidance of writer and director Fricker, with stage manager Shelley Jeary overseeing the production.

Rev. Rob Congram, minister at Shakespeare Presbyterian Church, joins several congregation members and other community participants in the cast. Sunday afternoon rehearsals have become a regular gathering, as the group works together to bring *The Table* to life later this month.

The entire Shakespeare congregation has played a part in supporting the production. Elder Don Burton took the lead in building the stage, assisted by several dedicated volunteers. Other members of the congregation have generously contributed props and are stepping forward to help with a variety of roles on the evenings of the performances.

The play itself is expected to be a great success, but it is the journey of bringing everyone together that has made it especially meaningful. More than just a performance, *The Table* has become a shared effort, uniting church and community members in creating a memorable experience for the entire community.



(DIANE DANEN PHOTOS)

As audience members, Jean and Richard Smelski interact with a market vendor during rehearsal for *The Table* this past Sunday.



Jean Aitcheson and Sherry LeSouder step into their roles as vendors in the bustling market scene, while Mike Vanderloo, portraying the disciple, Andrew, makes his way up the aisle through the lively crowd during Sunday's rehearsal of *The Table*.



Brynn Sebben and Savannah Pugh, joined by Rachel Drake in their roles as youth in this scene, share the stage with Bruce Whitmore as the Centurion in *The Table*.

OBITUARY

MOGK: Carol Dorothy (nee Blum)



Passed away peacefully at Sakura House in Woodstock on Sunday, March 1, 2026. Carol Mogk of Tavistock was in her 86th year.

Beloved wife of Kenneth Mogk whom she married August 24, 1957. Loving mother of Donna Mogk of Bright, Brenda & husband Marlin Bender of Tavistock,

Ken "Butch" & wife Christine of Tavistock, Brad & wife Karen of Tavistock and Cindy Mogk of Tavistock. Sadly missed by her grandchildren Karla & Dwayne, Amy & Drew, Kim & Jordan, Jarrett & Kate, Kayla & Jackson, Nikkole, Kelsey & Mike, Larissa, Brandon & Kim, Caitlin, Mitchell, Brady, Morgan & Justin and great grandchildren Wyatt, Ethan, Beau, Quinn, Owen, Logan, Lily, Jake, Ava, Mason, Henry, Natalie, Case, Wesley, Derek, Blakely and Jett. Survived by her brothers Ken & Lynn Blum, Alan & Brenda Blum, and sisters Ina & Jim Seyler, Janice Ballantyne, Susan & Bill Little, Sonya & Mike Floyd, Kathy & Dave Ashkanese, Nancy & Tony Ernest and Maribeth Youngblut, by brother and sisters-in-law Hank & Reta Mogk and Hilda Blum.

Predeceased by her parents Lloyd Blum, Arnetta (Vogel) Youngblut, and by her brothers John Blum and Paul Blum and brothers-in-law Jack Wittig and Neil Stere, sister-in-law Carol Satchell.

Relatives and friends will be received in the Francis Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Friday, March 6, 2026 from 5-8pm. Private family graveside service will take place at Trinity Lutheran Church Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Trinity Lutheran Church or Sakura House would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be shared at www.francisfh.ca.

QUIZ TIME

BY JAKE GRANT

1. What actor starred in *Ace Ventura*?
2. What is the capital city of Iran?
3. What does MAID stand for in medical terms?
4. Which Renaissance artist painted 'The School of Athens' in the Vatican?
5. In 'Children of Men', what event has made humanity desperate?
6. The Danube River flows into which sea?
7. Which hormone is produced by the pineal gland and helps regulate sleep cycles?
8. A Phon is a unit of what?
9. What is the highest-rated daytime talk show in American Television history?
10. What country do the Galapagos Islands belong to?

Answers found on the classified page



by PeterS 2026

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

ANSWERS FOUND ON THE CLASSIFIED PAGE

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.

March 3-10, 2021, Edition (5 years ago)

With the recent blast of mild weather, the snow activities like snowmobiling and skiing have probably slowed down a bit, but it has made farmers like David and Chris Wagler gear up for the upcoming maple syrup season. They were pictured on the weekend, working in a local bush northeast of Shakespeare, tapping maple trees and setting up their pipeline on what they think will be an exceptional maple syrup season because of the large amount of snow over this winter. With a total of three bushes under their guidance, the pair say they will have a total of 3,800 taps this year with each tap creating approximately 1.5 litres of syrup.

When the news was announced that the Tavistock and District Skating Club could return to the ice, the club executive jumped into action so their programs could resume on Feb. 16, the first day the arena opened. They worked with the arena facility to ensure they were following additional restrictions imposed by being in the Red-Control zone. With only 10 participants permitted on the ice, the arena was able to accommodate the club's needs for additional ice time so that they could continue to offer all programs. The club's plan is to pick up where they left off. Their second session, which started at the beginning of December, will now run until Easter weekend.

March 2-9, 2011, Edition (15 years ago)

When Orval Bast received a telephone call from an eight-year-old Tavistock girl who wanted to donate to his late wife's scholarship fund, it was a moving experience. Isla Romano planned her eighth birthday party with family friend Jackie Bast in mind. Isla sent out invitations to her friends asking for a donation to the Teal Heart Scholarship Fund for Ovarian Cancer Research instead of a gift. Eleven children attended the birthday party and Isla collected \$230.50 for the Fund. "I just wanted to," she said when asked about her reasons. She told her mother she didn't want anyone to suffer

like Jackie did.

The Wellington Street sewage pump station construction is well underway. Consultant R.J. Burnside and Associates awarded the County of Oxford contract to Elgin Construction at an estimated cost of \$842,947.38 plus HST. The completion date is scheduled for June 30, 2011. Subcontractor for this portion of the project also includes DeJong Construction. The new Wellington Street sewage pump station (SPS) is designed to redirect a portion of the sewage flows that normally flow through the two existing SPSs (Hope Street and William Street) to the wastewater treatment lagoons.

February 28-March 6, 1996, Edition (30 years ago)

The "Tavi Two Picks" 4-Star Precision B figure skating team placed second in the Strathroy Futures Competition on Sunday evening, Feb. 25. Under the direction of coach Lori Thomson and assistant coach Phyllis Wilhelm, the team includes Lesli Gladding, Shannon Roth, Amanda Rozendal, Lindsay Schlegel, Jennifer Currah, Melanie Matthews, Jessica Riehl and Deb Iacobellis.

The Optimist Club of Tavistock held its annual Spelling Bee at the Legion Hall on Monday, Feb. 26, with 11 Grade 5 students from Tavistock and Hickson public schools participating. Jeff Schwartzentruber of Tavistock Public School was declared the winner with Travis Kropf of Hickson in second place. A three-round playoff could not break the third-place, three-way tie between Tavistock's Ryan Walkom and Hickson's Stephanie Bender and Ben Jancsar. All finalists will receive engraved plaques from the club.

March 2-9, 1966, Edition (60 years ago)

In its 1965 annual report issued last week, the Bell Telephone Company of Canada shows a net growth of 264,996 telephones, the greatest annual increase in its history. The total number of telephones now in service was reported in excess of 4,578,000. This expansion was reflected here in Tavistock, where 20 telephones were added to service. J.M. Scott, Bell manager for this region, said 709 telephones were in service here as of Dec. 31. It was interesting to note in the report that of Bell of Canada shareholders, 97.5 per cent live in Canada and own 94 per cent of the stock total.



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stpaulstavistock@gmail.com

Pastor Rev. Michael Mayer

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

Gear says goodbye to junior hockey

Nothing but fond memories of his time in New Hamburg

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Two-hundred and eighteen games played on the blueline. Ninety-two career points. Two Doherty Division titles. An appearance in the Schmaltz Cup semi-finals. Team captain during the 2025-2026 Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) season for the New Hamburg Firebirds.

Andrew Gear left his heart and soul on the ice for the team during four seasons, but said he would like to be remembered for his off-ice conduct just as much as on the ice.

"I believe my legacy in New Hamburg is represented by so much more than the success on the ice I have been lucky enough to be a part of. I really wanted to be remembered as a good person and someone who was always welcoming and friendly to everyone," Gear told the Gazette.

The Elmira native added he did all he could to give back to the amazing community that supported him and his team over a four-year journey.

"I've tried to be the best leader I could possibly be, and it's been a true honour and privilege to help lead this team the last few years, and wearing the C is something that I will never take for granted. I hope my legacy in New Hamburg was not only focused on the great successes I've been a part of, but most importantly, the person and leader I wanted to be each and every day."

Gear said there isn't really one specific memory that stands out. He prefers to reflect on all four years.

"I was going to university, so I didn't know if minor hockey would be it for me. I am forever grateful I had this opportunity with a team that did some pretty incredible things, but more importantly, meet some amazing people in the organization."

He added it's far too difficult to pick one person from the Firebirds who had the most influence on his career, but had many people to thank.

"The entire coaching staff, president Gord Mills and everyone behind the scenes. Both Als, Brucey, all the trainers from Kate to Angela this year, and the big one standing out is Billie Jo Mark (the team's player-support person) and how much she does for us behind the scenes."

Gear said the overagers he played with during his first season played a vital role in his development.

"They were very welcoming and made me feel comfortable right away. In the past few years, I have been able to meet some of my best friends, from Kyle Kraemer to Jake Thompson and Antonio Pasqualino."

Former captain Owen Fischer was also a positive influence on Gear's career. He added while this season was disappointing, he had no regrets with the team's

performance.

"We've had some pretty special teams the last few years. We had a fair bit of turnover this season with new faces and some younger guys. It would have been nice to win three straight (Doherty) championships for the town, but at the end of the day, I am proud of the team. We gave everything we had."

While Gear has some aspirations to remain active in the sport, his priority right now is school. At the same time, he isn't ruling anything out and we may find him behind a bench somewhere.

"Going to teacher's college is the big focus for me. Growing up in minor hockey, you have those non-parent coaches, and those were some of the best years. They were in their mid-20s and giving their time back to the game. Getting into coaching is always something I have wanted to do, especially as a non-parent."

Gear is finishing his undergraduate studies this year and has two years of teachers' college ahead of him.

"I am hoping to teach around here. My dad is a teacher and my mom is also in the education field. They are both my biggest inspirations in life. Teaching around New Hamburg would be cool, maybe Grade 8, but we'll see how it goes."

He added he is appreciative of the media coverage by outlets such as the Gazette, just as we are thankful to him for making himself available during the season.

"Whenever I had the chance to talk to you or the 519 Sports guys, it kind of made it feel like we're in the big leagues. Those videos and even the interviews I've done with you, I can look back on in 20 years and rewatch or reread, and it will be special."

Gear had one final message for the New Hamburg fans who support the team every

season.

"Thank you for everything from start to finish. It's been an incredible ride and every single playoff run we've packed the Wilmot Rec Centre. It's been pretty special for my teammates and me. We have some memories in that arena that will last a lifetime."

Firebirds head coach and general manager Shane Gerber said it's hard to put into words what Gear has done for the program in New Hamburg.

"He's a good hockey player, but he's a fantastic person. He's got an infectious way about him. He's always positive and he has a way of making people laugh, but he has a way of being serious when he needs to be. He's the total package."

Gerber added Gear has grown tremendously both on and off the ice, despite being shy when he first joined the team.

"He was kind of quiet when he started, but once he found his way, he really opened up to the point where it was easy to make him the next guy to follow Owen (Fischer)."

Gerber explained how fortunate his teams have been to have tremendous leadership, something which leads to a positive culture in the locker room.

"It started a few years ago now, and it took some baby steps, but it seems to be working out that the guys who have been here for a few years, like the Owen Fischers and Andrew Gears, they seem to follow each other and they really work for each other."

The process has already started to name a captain for the 2026-2027 season, and Gerber said it won't be an easy task.

"There are so many good people in that room and guys keep emerging, which is a result of the leadership group in the past. We have guys we never would have



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Andrew Gear's career as a member of the New Hamburg Firebirds has come to an end. The Elmira native spent four seasons with the team, the last wearing the captain's C.

imagined being considered for a captaincy. It's too bad we have to pick one captain, but we have plenty who are deserving."

Gerber added despite the Firebirds goal to win at least a division title each year, the organization allows players to focus on work and school first.

"We stress that when they come here. School is important, and hockey is hockey. We allow them the time to develop into the career they want to follow. We will continue to do that, and we wish nothing but the best for everyone who leaves our program. Andrew will be a good teacher; I am sure of that."

DOHERTY DIVISION SEMI FINAL

ROUND 2 SCHEDULE

GAME 1	Mar. 6th - 7:30pm - Tavistock
GAME 2	Mar. 7th - 7:30pm - Wellesley
GAME 3	Mar. 10th - 8:30pm - Tavistock
GAME 4	Mar. 11th - 8:30pm - Wellesley
GAME 5*	Mar. 13th - 7:30pm - Tavistock
GAME 6*	Mar. 14th - 7:30pm - Wellesley
GAME 7*	Mar. 17th - 7:30pm - Tavistock

*If necessary

PLAYOFF HOCKEY

Semi Finals

GAME ONE	FRIDAY MARCH 6	AT HOME	GAME TIME 7:45
GAME TWO	SATURDAY MARCH 7	AT NORWICH	GAME TIME 7:30
GAME THREE	WEDNESDAY MARCH 11	AT HOME	GAME TIME 7:45
GAME FOUR	FRIDAY MARCH 13	AT NORWICH	GAME TIME 8:00
GAME FIVE (IN)	SATURDAY MARCH 14	AT HOME	GAME TIME 7:45
GAME SIX (ON)	TUESDAY MARCH 17	AT NORWICH	GAME TIME 7:30
GAME SEVEN (IN)	WEDNESDAY MARCH 18	AT HOME	GAME TIME 7:45

PJHL

Royals five-game playoff winning streak snapped

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

All good things must come to an end, as the old saying goes, and for the Tavistock Royals, a five-game playoff run of victories was halted on Sunday afternoon.

Tavistock swept the Erin Outlaws, allowing just one goal against in four games as goalie Andrew Masters went nearly 239 minutes without surrendering a goal against. He was up to his old tricks in Game 1 of the current semi-final series against first-place Seaforth with another shutout, but the Centenaires came back to win Game 2 in overtime by a 4-3 count.

Tavistock jumped out to a 2-0 lead at home Sunday on goals from Tyler Reid and Drew Gerth, but Seaforth took a 3-2 lead 12 and a half minutes into the third period. Reid potted his second of the game to force the extra period but former Stratford Culliton Jared Nash scored the game-winner just over 16 minutes into overtime.

Masters stopped all 30 shots he faced as the Royals earned a 4-0 road victory in Game 1 on Saturday to earn his fourth shutout in six playoff games. Erik Robichaud scored twice in the first period, which would be all the offence Tavistock needed. Reid and Patrick Vulgan added third-period insurance markers.

"I would say that I've certainly had other streaks in my career where I've played



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Tavistock Royals forwards Drew Gerth (14) and Mitch Atkins (93) get set at a faceoff at the Tavistock and District Recreation Centre on Sunday afternoon. Seaforth won the game 4-3 in overtime to tie the Ontario Elite Hockey League (OEH) Southern Division semi-final series at one win apiece.

very well, but there have been great efforts in front of me, and I've been getting the bounces too," said Masters.

"Our team defence has been great, limiting scoring chances, not giving up tap-ins, and we've committed to team defence. I think the playoffs bring out the best in all of us. It creates a different brand of hockey, and we've shown that it's a brand that we enjoy playing."

He added the entire team has bought into the right way to playoff hockey.

"They've had playoff success before and understand the formula to win at this time of year."

The Gazette still hasn't been able to find out if Masters' streak is any kind of playoff record, but the 30-year-old Kitchener native said it's not on his mind.

"Honestly, I tried not to think about it

too much. In the playoffs, we're just focused on putting in 60-minute efforts and playing hard right to the end. At this time of the year, it's 100 per cent about team success and the individual stuff goes on the back burner."

He added his experience in Tavistock has been a memorable one.

"The organization and the volunteers have been great. I can sense the town is really getting behind this team, and we're looking forward to seeing the support grow every weekend!"

Head coach Tyson Zehr said despite his team's first loss of the season, there's no time to hang their heads.

"It was a tight game and honestly could have gone either way. There are definitely a few areas we need to clean up, but there's no overreaction here. It's playoff hockey. One bounce can change a game."

He added that the entire team, from the management to the coaching staff and down to the players, will be ready for the weekend.

"I'm not concerned at all. We've got a veteran group that's been through this before. They all understand that we weren't going to win 16 straight games. If anything, a game like that fuels them."

Game 3 is set for Saturday, March 6, in Seaforth at 7:30 p.m., with Game 4 on Sunday at 1:30 p.m. in Tavistock.

PJHL Roundup: Braves complete first-round sweep, division semi-final matchups set

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The Tavistock Braves steamrolled over its first-round opponent in the Doherty Division, a series win capped off with a 7-3 home-ice victory last Wednesday over the Paris Titans.

The Braves jumped out to a 4-0 lead after 40 minutes and were led by Tyler Brezynskie's two goals, while Ethan Stover, Yann Raskin, Carson Bernhardt, Evan Palubeski, Keegan Metcalf and Felix Isert-Bender added two points each.

Tavistock outscored Paris 26-10 and outshot them 183-103. The rough stuff continued during Game 4 as the Titans picked up 47 penalty minutes and the Braves 29. Paris earned 156 minutes during the series compared to 96 for Tavistock.

"I'm happy with where our game is right now, and the first round was a positive step for us," said Braves head coach Zac Berg. "But at the end of the day, we haven't accomplished anything yet. Our full attention is now on preparing for the second round, and we know the challenge is only going to get tougher."

The Braves will have a bit of time off before facing the Norwich Merchants, something Berg is looking forward to.

"It's always beneficial to get some rest during a playoff run. It's a physical time of year, and getting healthy can give you a bit of an edge. We've got a couple of practices



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Braves bench staff have won the Doherty Division Coaching Staff of the Year. From left to right are Jensen Van Boekel, Brody Oliver, Zac Berg and Jake Wiffen.

before the next round, and we'll use that time to stay sharp and make sure we're prepared for round two."

He added the Tavistock community has been supportive this season but is hopeful for more support going forward.

"I think there's still room for the community to take it to another level. These players deserve a packed barn, and we'd love to see even more people come out, get loud and help make the atmosphere something special for them."

The Braves averaged just over 200 fans over two home games against the Titans.

Tavistock's coaching staff picked up some hardware recently, being named the Doherty Division's Coaching Staff of

the Year after guiding the team to a second-place finish after finishing last season in seventh.

"Our focus is certainly on the playoffs, but it's nice to see the hard work of so many people being recognized. This award really speaks to the commitment of everyone across the organization," said Berg.

"I think we were chosen because of the way our group improved and competed all season. I think we are a hard team to play against and other teams recognized that. Any recognition we receive is really because the players bought in and worked hard to get where we are. Coaches don't win anything without players who are willing to commit and do things the right

way."

Berg said general manager Brent Lange and the team's scouting staff worked tirelessly to help build the roster and bring in the right people.

"Our equipment and training staff help keep the team prepared and healthy on practice and game days, the support staff are behind the scenes and make our jobs easier, and obviously, the players are the ones who execute, compete and make this possible. This is truly an organizational award."

Braves prepare for Applejacks

Wellesley took the season series, winning four of the six matchups. The Braves downed the Applejacks 4-2 in their last meeting on Jan. 30. Each game was decided by two goals or less.

Wellesley defenceman Riley Noble has been the team's top performer so far in the playoffs, earning nine points in four games. Noble had 40 points in the regular season, second in team scoring behind Ian Speiran. In round one, eight Applejacks players averaged a point or more per game.

Wellesley is coming off a four-game sweep of Hespeler, a series where the Applejacks outscored the Shamrocks 21-9.

Tavistock general manager Brent Lange said his team matches up very well with Wellesley and is expecting a great series.

"I know you mentioned they're playing some of their best hockey right now, but I

Continued on page 24

Continued from page 23

think if you look at our record in the last two months, so are we. We won 10 of our last 11 games of the year and got a point in the last game as well. So, 21 of 22 points in the last 11 games of the regular season and won our first playoff round in four straight. I think that is playing some pretty good hockey as well, if you ask me.”

Lange said his team didn't have its final roster for the first five matchups with the Applejacks, but the last game was different.

“We finally had our team against them

and outplayed them for about 50 minutes basically and even had two shorthanded goals as well. But the regular season is in the past now and it doesn't mean anything anymore. It's about who wins four games first now.”

The Braves were led offensively in round one by defenceman Keaton Bartlett, who racked up 10 points in four games.

“He did struggle a bit throughout the season, but he's always been able to bounce back bigger and stronger from it. Things are going well for him of late, and we want to keep that going for him,”

added Lange.

“He is a great leader for us who works hard every night, no matter the outcome. He is a great heads-up D-man who moves very well and gets pucks on net. It's exciting to know we still have him for two more years.”

Merchants in tough with Navy Vets

Norwich will take on first-place Woodstock in its second-round series. The Navy Vets took the season series four games to two, capped by a 2-1 Woodstock win in their last head-to-head contest on Jan. 18.

The Merchants will have to deal with one of the league's most explosive offenses and the big three of Charley Barnes, Owen Ireton and Cooper Vickerman.

Norwich disposed of the New Hamburg Firebirds in five games, including a series clinching 4-2 road win on Saturday night. Jayden Fischer and Cayden Livingston found the back of the net for the Firebirds who were outshot 35-30 in the game. The loss snaps a two-year run as Doherty Division playoff champions for New Hamburg.

The Tavistock Curling Club: Half a century of curling

ROBERT REID

Tavistock Curling Club

A half century of curling is being celebrated this year by members of the Tavistock Curling Club.

The club's founding and growth has been characterized by the contributions of volunteers who enjoy curling while simultaneously offering their skillset wherever it can best serve the club. It has not been revealed if any single curlers met their future spouses while curling at the Tavistock Curling Club, but certainly many married couples have enjoyed the sport together. Curling is, after all,

acknowledged as a highly social game.

Wayne and Carol Shewfelt are one of those married couples, first introduced to the club by Wayne Shewfelt's boss at the local veterinary clinic, early in the club's history. Since retiring from veterinary work, Wayne Shewfelt has joined the group of volunteers responsible for installing and maintaining the two sheets of ice contained in the building that is attached to the East Zorra-Tavistock municipal hockey rink.

After the club was first established by 50 members in October of 1976, electing Kenneth Schwantz as president, curlers shared an arena with the local hockey teams. The first night of curling was on Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. The first Fun Day, now an annual event, was held April 9, 1977, with the 40 curlers taking a break between two draws to share a bucket of fried chicken.

The hacks providing footing for launching curlers down the ice to release rocks in play were taken in and out as required by Lorne Yausie, the arena ice maker, to accommodate the hockey schedule. According to Wayne Shewfelt, Yausie would get some slushy snow, pack it on and freeze it to the ice with the hacks imbedded in the slush to provide a launching foothold.

When it came time to remove the hacks, Yausie would often have to give the hacks a tremendous, loud whack with a wooden club to remove them.

The roof structure in the old arena – replaced in 1995 with the current facility – leaked in a few places which created bumps on the ice that could provide a launching pad of a different kind for stones thrown with some force. Curlers would often have to scrape the ice during a game to remove the ridges created by the dripping roof, Carol Shewfelt recalled.

“It was more luck than skill getting a

rock from one end of the ice to the other,” she said.

Whether a game had reached its required number of ends or not when it was time to get ready for a hockey game, the curling stopped.

“When we heard the loud noise of the tractor starting up, we knew we had to get off the ice,” she added.

If a game was running slightly past its allotted time of 10 p.m. to make way for hockey practice, one curler would have to stand by the hacks to protect them from being taken out if the game was to be finished, said Keith Wiffen, one of the club's first ice makers.

Regarding the two-or-three-inch-high ice ridges, it was possible to see the bottom of a stone as it flew over them, he added.

Wiffen and wife, Chris, were original club members with Chris Wiffen serving as board secretary and bar manager even years after she was no longer curling.

Keith Wiffen, along with club members Gary Zehr and Bill Green, were the first ice makers in the new facility. Collectively, they were identified with the acronym “KGB.” It became known that you didn't argue with the KGB in trying to blame a poor game result on bad ice as curlers are known to do.

Keith Wiffen attributes the ice-making abilities acquired by the Tavistock trio to Brantford Curling Club ice maker Shorty Jenkins. They worked with Jenkins when The Briar was held in Brantford, a period when Jenkins slept on a portable cot in the arena for the duration of the national event.

The Tavistock ice men have upgraded those skills via courses made available by the Ontario Curling Association and some experimentation to get better results on home ice.

“We had half an idea we knew what we were doing,” Keith Wiffen said.

The job comes with some challenges and dangers on the ice. A fall while preparing the ice for a Saturday event resulted in Keith Wiffen being taken from the rink to hospital by ambulance.

With a spacious lounge and licensed bar in the current curling facility, it is traditional for the winning teams to buy losing teams a shared drink.

Chris Wiffen recalled working with Randy Schwantzenruber to acquire the liquor license.

“I enjoyed everything I did with the club and wish I was still curling,” she said now that both she and her husband are retired

from the sport.

In the old arena, the options were far fewer for winners treating the losing teams, mostly buying them licorice from the confectionary booth.

The schedule for curling was also quite limited with ice available only on Wednesdays on five sheets. There were two draws in one day to accommodate all the curlers and occasionally three draws as required.

The start-up of a tractor was not the only noise in the arena. The sound of corn brooms slapping against the ice to sweep rocks was very noticeable – much louder than the brush brooms that replaced the corn brooms.

The club has hosted a Learn to Curl program for adults along with a youth program for Grade 8 students for 40 years at no cost. Public schools from Tavistock and Hickson originally took part with Hickson no longer participating because of a lack of bus transportation.

Some students eventually became full curling club members and today, as adults, their children represent the second generation of youth curlers.

“One of the young curlers asked me, ‘Are you still here?’” said Carol Shewfelt, now in her 46th year of curling.

With fundraising going well for a hockey arena, the township asked the curling club if it wanted to be part of the project.

“We were given a wall and a floor,” she continued, “with the club taking responsibility for adding the rest needed for curling in the interior space.”

Fundraising for the curling club portion of the arena began with a number of club members offering sizable loans as a means of finance. Those loans, totalling \$18,000, were eventually paid back in a “loan burning ceremony” at an annual general meeting (AGM) held at the Legion Hall in Tavistock.

AGMs were eventually moved to the curling club itself. The Tavistock Curling Club has always been a volunteer-based club.

“People pitch in with things that need to be done,” Carol Shewfelt said.

Randy and Diane Schwantzenruber are another longtime couple from the club with Diane Schwantzenruber joining in 1978 a year or two before Randy Schwantzenruber, who has served as the club's treasurer for 40 years.

Diane Schwantzenruber was encouraged to join the curling club by her mother, Shirley Binkle, who no longer curls while

her daughter carries on.

“I'm still here so (the club) must be good,” said Diane Schwantzenruber, the member who has been with the club the longest.

Curling ended a bit early in the spring of 1995 so builders could get a start on constructing the new facility. Work progressed in an efficient and orderly manner with the facility open in time for the following curling season in the new building on the same site as the old arena it replaced.

Since most of the club members were new curlers, instructions on playing the game along with a code of conduct was issued, which remains applicable today. For example, “When a member of a team misses a crucial shot, the other members should not find fault. They should humour and encourage him. He will already be feeling bad.”

Women made up half of the membership but were perhaps not as sensitive about missing a shot as described in the message addressed to male curlers.

Membership in the club peaked in 2022 at 172. The current number stands at 133 with a variety of curling options offered across a weekly schedule. Membership declined during the COVID-19 pandemic when the club was required to close for the 2020-2021 season.

The experience of accountant and longtime club treasurer Randy Schwantzenruber proved valuable in dealing with federal government requirements and assistance programs through a difficult financial period for the club.

To accommodate as many curlers as possible, the club continues to introduce new curling options, including, most recently, mixed doubles – male and female players comprising a team and yet another gender-balanced means of meeting people from the community.

Canadian wheelchair curler Mark Ideson will be the guest speaker at the curling club's AGM on Thursday, June 11, with drinks at 6 p.m. and a banquet to follow at 7 p.m. Ideson won a gold medal in the Paralympic Games in Sochi in 2014.

Curling club board members have expressed their wishes to connect with as many past club members as possible through this 50th celebration of the club's founding. Tickets for this commemorative event can be purchased for \$30 by contacting the club at tavistockcurlingclub@gmail.com or 519-301-5820.

Breaking Elements dance team takes the stage

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

The Elite Company Competitive Team from Breaking Elements Dance Company in Tavistock took to the stage over the weekend for a special showcase performance.

Held at the Tavistock Memorial Hall, the event gave dancers the opportunity to perform the routines they have been working on all season before heading off to competitions in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Guelph, Oakville and nationals in Collingwood.

For the dancers, it was a chance to celebrate months of hard work, while giving loved ones the opportunity to see the results of their efforts and cheer them on. More than 100 people filled the audience, providing a strong show of support for the team.

During intermission, Kolbie Vanderploeg was announced as the winner of the Dream Duffle raffle, receiving a loud cheer and warm round of applause. The evening wrapped up with everyone joining together to sing "Happy Birthday" to Blake Willsey as she celebrated her eighth birthday. She was presented with a cupcake as the crowd applauded.

Owned and operated by Brooklyn Ross and Emma Haggit, Breaking Elements Dance Company officially opened its doors at the Francis Building on March 18, 2025, though classes had been running since September 2024. The studio first held lessons at Trinity Lutheran Church in Tavistock before relocating to memorial hall while renovations were completed at their permanent home in the former Francis Furniture Building.

What started with just 20 students has quickly expanded. The studio now enrolls 54 full-term students, and with part-time and adult participants included, total enrollment has reached about 70.

Ross and Haggit met while teaching at the same dance company and soon realized

they shared a dream of opening a studio of their own. Tavistock, with its strong sense of community and small-town charm, felt like the perfect fit. The fact there were few dance options in the immediate area confirmed the need.

Ross and Haggit say their goal is simple; to offer strong technical training within a fun, welcoming, family-focused environment where every dancer feels encouraged, valued and excited to walk through the studio doors.

Breaking Elements offers competitive, pre-competitive and non-competitive programs, with all dancers participating in the same technique classes to ensure well-rounded training. Seven age groups are available: kinderdance (18 months to three years), tiny (three to five years), mini (six to eight years), junior (nine to 11 years), intermediate (12-14 years), teen (15-17 years) and adult (18 and older).

Classes include ballet, jazz, tap, acro, hip hop, lyrical, contemporary, tumbling and combo/kinderdance classes, a variety class offering ballet, jazz and acro. Adult dancers can also take part in six-week sessions featuring alternating styles.

Both owners bring more than 15 years of dance experience each, teaching professionally for over six years. Ross is a trained NCCP gymnastics coach and has taught both recreational and pre-competitive gymnastics, along with several years of recreational and competitive dance instruction. Haggit began teaching as a young student teacher and has experience instructing both recreational and competitive dancers and choreographing competitive routines.

Families interested in joining the company can request a trial class before registering. Summer programs are also available. Registration for upcoming sessions opened March 1.

For more information, Breaking Elements Dance Company can be found on Instagram at @breakingelementsd.



(DIANE DANEN PHOTO)

Dancers from the Elite Company team at Breaking Elements Dance Company pose together after performing their routine, Rise, joined by their teachers, Miss Brooklyn Ross and Miss Emma Haggit. Front row (left to right): Blake Willsey, Maeve Gunn, Aurelia Bowman, Ava Fuhr and Kolbie Vanderploeg. Back row (left to right): Ross, Elliot Beattie, Kacey DeWetering, Madison Hilts, Cailee McNicol and Haggit.

Gazette Puzzles

MAPLE SYRUP SEASON

K C A H S R A G U S Z A J P M H U Z M I
 C W F B Q I W B W S Y O D B E N M Y C R
 T Y L N Z U T W V T U Z F X I A E O V E
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Pet of the Week

MEET MILLER!

Miller has been waiting almost a whole year in our care for someone to choose him. Miller is a young, large breed mix with a big love for the outdoors and an even bigger heart. He's looking for an active home where he can go on long walks, explore, and spend time with his people. He's a talker and loves to "chat," especially when he's excited. Miller is still learning his basics, such as leash manners, sit, and not jumping up. But he's eager to learn and thrives with consistent guidance. If you're looking for a fun, energetic companion who's always up for an adventure, Miller might just be your perfect match! Learn more at kwsphumane.ca/adopt/dogs



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What's the skinny on sea moss?

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



I am hearing a lot about sea moss. Should I take it?

Sea moss is a nutrient-dense algae in an array of colours from brown to yellow to purple and black, but the most common one is red. Irish moss, its more popular name, grows along rocky Atlantic coasts between Europe and North America.

Sea moss is the only natural source of carrageenan; a thickening agent widely used in plant-based milks and even baby formulas.

This edible marine vegetable is also harvested for supplements in capsules, gummies, powder or dried for those who want to make their own gel. With the wide range of flavours, I recommend first-time testers go with the

ready-to-use option. For the faint of heart, there are fabulously flavourful fresh-pressed juices with sea moss added.

Sea moss is all-natural and linked to body-boosting benefits. Because algae are all about iodine, supporting the thyroid tops the list. The body doesn't produce iodine on its own and fluoride and chlorine deplete the body, putting you at risk for hypothyroidism.

There are studies linking sea moss to reducing cholesterol, blood pressure and the risk of heart disease.

One key component in algae is fucoxanthin and researchers are hoping algae will reduce high blood sugar in humans, not just mice. This holistic nutritionist

is looking forward to future findings.

For plant-based eaters, anemia is often an issue and sea moss is an absorbable source of iron.

Sea moss is a pre-biotic, feeding the gut with good bacteria and laying the foundation for probiotics to work more effectively. Gut health is linked to improved mood and a strong immune system.

Taurine, an amino acid, is found in sea moss and linked to muscle-building and energy.

This health expert loves a stocked smoothie for a busy bee lifestyle and mini picky eaters. With the right fruits, veggies and herbs, a smoothie is a whirl away from fueling cells. The only trap is boredom and the potential for deficiencies using the same ingredients repeatedly.

Sea moss is a great break from the same old, same old. A tablespoon is less than 10 calories but provides a sprinkle of calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc and copper. Zinc and copper are two minerals that work in tandem. Due to over-farming, the tiny, trace amount we need for optimal function is



(VECTEEZY PHOTO)

Sea moss, a nutrient-dense algae harvested from coastlines, is gaining popularity for its potential thyroid, heart and gut-health benefits.

deficient in most humans. We tend to over supplement zinc in the cold months hoping to ward off the cold or flu and forget copper is crucial. The ratio of copper to zinc is all-important. Sea moss would be a stellar source.

For optimal health and longevity, it's critical to flood the body with all the antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, not favouring any one specifically. Adding sea moss to your protocol a few times a week in lieu of

another is forward thinking. Consistency is key to health along with variety. For example, wild blueberries offer boatloads of anthocyanins, heart helpers, but pineapple is a bromelain bonanza linked to digestive support.

There's no shortage of sea moss options, but the flavoured gel is the perfect oatmeal, yogurt or cottage cheese topper.

Always check with your physician for contraindications to prescriptions before starting any new supplement.

Has spring actually come early?

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Galen Simmons



As the clock springs forward this weekend and we get more daylight later into the evening, and as we look ahead to double-digit temperatures with lots of rain over the next week or so, I've been hearing a lot about how winter has released its icy grip and spring has sprung.

Sure, I've also been encouraged by the weather as of late. The sun is shining, the birds are chirping and the snow seems to be falling with much less frequency and intensity. I haven't shovelled the

driveway – even a little bit – in over a week.

But we've played this game before. A thaw in mid-February to early March fools us into thinking the worst of winter is in the rearview. We chip the ice from the end of our driveway, put away the snow shovels and winter coats, and trade our boots for shoes as if we won't need that thick tread under our feet until the snow flies again in the fall.

Yet Mother Nature is a fickle mistress. As soon as we think we're safe and we've let our col-

lective guard down, she likes to catch us unaware with one more blast of winter – a blizzard, an ice storm, or a deep freeze that turns the driveway into a sheet of ice that makes me wish I'd traded my boots for skates instead of shoes.

Even our most trusted animal harbingers of spring don't always get it right. I've seen robins hiding from snowstorms in the undergrowth, and I'm pretty sure that damned groundhog has been wrong more times than he's been right.

While I admit willful ignorance bordering on blind optimism is the strategy that gets many of us through winter's darkest days and longest nights, constantly moving the goalposts of spring a little farther ahead until the warmer weather is actually here to stay, as Canadians, we know the truth deep down in our woolen socks.

Winter will depart when it's good and ready. At this point in March, there is no meteorologist



(VECTEEZY PHOTO)

As clocks spring forward and hints of warmth arrive, Canadians know better than to pack away the winter clothes just yet.

on the planet who can convince me otherwise. And while I may not always choose to wear my boots or my winter jacket when I go out in the coming weeks, you better believe I'm not putting them away for the season – at

least not yet.

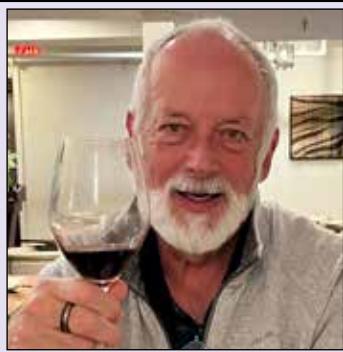
As for my winter tires, they'll come off in May or June – or maybe in July if I put that off for too long again – when Mother Nature couldn't possibly throw another flake of snow our way.

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Some quirky twists to a visit to Seville

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



The setting could not have been more pleasant. We were seated with some friends at a table in front of a tapas restaurant, a short walk from the impressive Seville Cathedral. We were sampling terrific local tastes, nicely complemented by a jug of sangria. Perhaps two jugs.

And then, within minutes of our being seated, a group of musicians wandered by, played for about 45 seconds, and then rather aggressively passed the hat among all of us partaking in al fresco lunches. Cute, we thought.

Except, perhaps four minutes later, another performing group did the same thing. And then another. Singers, drummers, jugglers and finally some rather talented acrobats. Between donating yet again, or trying to ignore the proffered collection hat, we barely had opportunity to eat!

So, am I knocking Spain's fifth-largest city, the capital of the beautiful southern Andalusia region? No. We enjoyed our visit to Seville. It just seems like everything here is kicked up a few intense notches from the more laid-back atmosphere we encountered in the communities we visited during our Senior Discovery Tours stay on the Costa del Sol.

For example: the cathedral, itself. The Seville Cathedral is overwhelming. It's the largest gothic cathedral in the world, and the third largest church after only St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and St. Paul's in London, England.

The church's history dates back before the actual founding of the church – and if that seems confusing, it's because of the rich history of this region of Spain, which was once ruled by the Moors, who were Moslem. So, the cathedral actually includes elements of the mosque that was built in the 1100s. After the Moors were defeated, construction of the cathedral was begun around 1401 and, as was typical of such grand projects, building continued for more than a century. The cathedral's belltower, known as the Giralda, was originally the minaret of the mosque.

Today, the cathedral (officially the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the See), and the Moorish palace

known as the Alcázar, are part of the historic centre of Seville, all designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Back to the cathedral itself; it's ornate, rich, full of art and stained glass. The Chapter House – where the monks and clergy once held meetings and heard readings from Scripture and the rule of St. Benedict – is lavishly decorated.

But perhaps the most striking thing in the Cathedral is an enormous tomb, which bears a plaque that reads, "Tomb of Christopher Colón; Remains with historical certainty (exhumation carried out in 2003)."

This is the impressive resting place of Christopher Columbus and therein lies a story. Columbus died in 1506 in Valladolid, Spain, the site of his original grave. But because of his important role in Spain's history, his body was soon moved to Seville. But it did not stay there. In 1542, Columbus' remains followed the route of his own nautical adventures – it was taken by ship to what is now the Dominican Republic and interred in the Cathedral of Santa Maria.

But in 1795, when Spain lost control of the Dominican Republic, Columbus' remains were again on the move, this time to Havana, Cuba. There, he was re-buried in a very impressive tomb, and there he rested for about a century until 1899, when not only Columbus' remains, but also the entire elaborate tomb, was transported to Seville, and installed in the cathedral.

But the story doesn't end there. Some people argue Columbus'

body never left the Dominican Republic, and even today, a box with an inscription indicating it contains Columbus' remains can be found on that island.

So, the Spanish authorities decided to answer the question once and for all. In 2003, Columbus' remains were again disturbed, DNA testing was carried out and it was conclusively proven that the explorer was, indeed, now resident in the Seville Cathedral.

It must be noted that when you visit the cathedral, and Columbus' tomb in particular, he is lauded in a very politically incorrect manner. There is no hint that Columbus did not "discover" anything, because the Americas were already well populated by people, nor that his work led to the horrors of colonialization. It felt like we were back in the day when our knowledge of this bit of history was contained in the jingle, "In fourteen hundred ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." Turns out, the story is a lot more complicated than that.

There is much more to see in this city that attracts several million visitors a year. One rather unusual site is "Spain Square," an impressive sprawling architectural gem, complete with fountains and canals. You would swear that it dates back centuries, but the whole thing was actually created in 1928 as the site of the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929, an event hosted by Spain. It was probably an attempt on the part of Spain to assert its role among all of the Spanish-speaking countries that were once colonies of Spain. I love the fact that it was used as a location for both a Star Wars movie and a Simply Red music video. I wonder what Christopher Columbus would think of Obi-Wan Kenobi or Mick Hucknall.

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

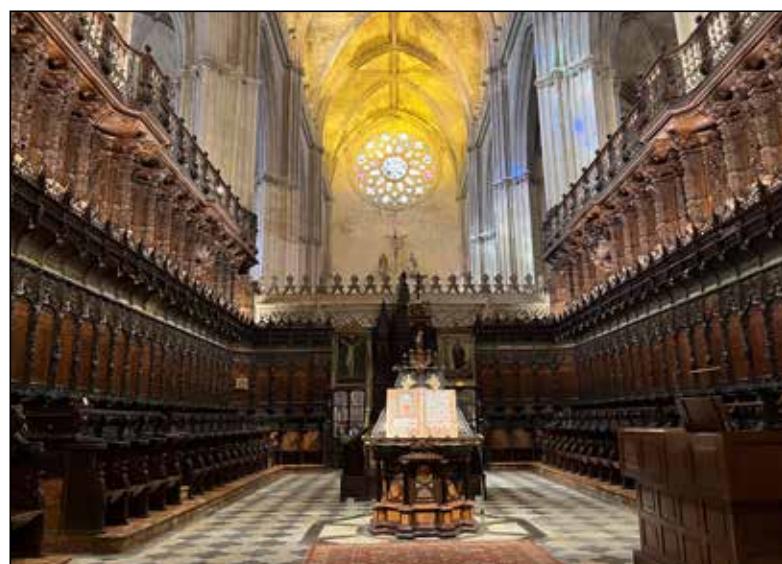
The ornate Chapter House in the Seville Cathedral.



The tomb holding the much-travelled remains of Christopher Columbus.



A couple boating on the water feature in Spain Square.



The choir in Seville Cathedral.

The cost of protecting the people we love

INTERFAITH COUNSELLING CENTRE

By John Dinner

Most of us learn early on that love and protection go hand in hand. Parents soothe children by absorbing their fears; friends show loyalty by shouldering burdens; partners try to fix each other's problems – often before the other person has even asked.

So, it's no wonder that, as adults, many of us instinctively try to shield the people closest to us from our own stress, disappointment or struggle. It feels noble; it

feels selfless; it feels like the right thing to do.

But the instinct to protect can become a barrier to genuine connection. Part of the problem is that "protecting" often means limiting what we share with those closest to us. We hide financial worries so our partner won't stress. We keep career frustrations to ourselves because we don't want to burden a friend who already has a lot going on. We put on a brave face for our children, even when we feel lost.

Over time, we can present a version of ourselves that is smoother than reality – an edited story that leaves out the messier chapters.

The trouble is real intimacy can't grow in altered spaces. Relationships deepen when people share not just victories, but vulnerabilities as well. When we keep our struggles hidden, we deprive those around us of the chance to understand us more fully. It may also send an unintended message: "I don't trust you to handle this with

me."

There's another cost to this habit of protective silence. When we never let others see our weaknesses, they may start to believe we don't have any. That can make their own challenges feel heavier by comparison. What begins as an effort to protect can morph into an unspoken pressure for others to be equally invulnerable. The relationship becomes a performance instead of a partnership.

Of course, there's a difference between honesty and oversharing. Authentic relationships don't require us to dump every fleeting feeling at someone's feet. They simply require we resist the temptation to perform when we don't feel strong. Vulnerability isn't a demand for rescue; it's an invitation for closeness.

The needed shift can start small. Tell a friend that something at work is weighing on you instead of insisting everything is fine. Admit to a partner that you're anxious about a big life decision. Allow your-

self to say, "I'm having a rough week," even when you'd rather pretend otherwise. These openings give others permission to show up – not to fix your life, but to accompany you through it.

What many people discover is the act of sharing a burden rarely places weight on the listener. Instead, it distributes weight in a way that makes both people feel stronger. When someone we love confides in us, we don't feel burdened, we feel trusted.

Protecting our loved ones from every challenge might come from a place of care but letting them in is a deeper kind of love. Authentic relationships aren't built on perfect lives, they're built on shared ones.

John Dinner is a registered psychotherapist who works as a counsellor at Interfaith Counselling Centre in New Hamburg. He grew up in our individualistic society thinking he had to carry life's load entirely on his own. No more.

Collectors preserve history of Dryburgh wood planes

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Across Perth County and neighbouring communities, collectors treasure everything from antique automobiles and tractors to vintage construction tools.

Among the more unique items carefully preserved by local enthusiasts are handcrafted wooden planes – tools once essential to carpenters shaping lumber for homes, churches and public buildings.

These are not planes that take to the skies, but traditional woodworking tools used to smooth and shape wood long before modern power equipment existed. In North Easthope Township, one craftsman in particular left a lasting mark on the

region's building history.

John Dryburgh, originally from Dundee, Scotland, began making his carefully handcrafted wood planes in 1837. After training other plane makers, he emigrated to Canada in 1856, first settling in Toronto before moving in 1858 to Lot 29, Concession 10 in North Easthope Township, west of Hampstead.

From 1858-1881, Dryburgh produced wooden planes from his own blueprints on the North Easthope farm. His tools were used in the construction of many century homes, churches and municipal buildings throughout Perth, Oxford and Waterloo counties.

When the Dryburgh farm was sold in 1881, his sons, John Jr. and William,

moved to Bright in Oxford County where they continued crafting Dryburgh wood planes until 1905. Their father later relocated to Manitoulin Island, taking his original blueprints with him.

Today, much of that history is being preserved by local collectors Darryl Ehnes of Shakespeare and John Huiser of Stratford.

Ehnes has assembled a collection of 43 Dryburgh wood planes, all made during the North Easthope years between 1858 and 1881. He focuses exclusively on planes produced at the original township location, appreciating the craftsmanship and local heritage tied to each piece.

Meanwhile, Huiser began collecting Dryburgh planes 40 years ago. Now owning farms south of Fairview in Oxford

County, he has built an impressive collection of 115 planes. Huiser recently displayed part of his collection at the 30th annual Heritage Fair in St. Marys.

Among his prized pieces is a rare plow wood plane. Though he has received numerous offers from fellow collectors eager to purchase it, Huiser has chosen to keep the plane as part of his extensive and carefully curated collection.

Through the efforts of collectors like Ehnes and Huiser, the legacy of John Dryburgh's craftsmanship – and a small but significant chapter of local woodworking history – continues to be remembered and appreciated.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

North Easthope's Jim Campbell and Shakespeare's Darryl Ehnes look over Ehnes' collection of 43 Dryburgh wood planes made on Lot 29, Concession 10 in North Easthope Township, where John Dryburgh settled in 1858. Ehnes collects only those made in North Easthope between 1858 and 1881.



Stratford's John Huiser is shown as an exhibitor at the recent 30th annual Heritage Fair in St. Marys. Huiser began collecting Dryburgh wood planes 40 years ago and now has 115 in his collection. The bottom photo shows a rare plow wood plane that remains one of the highlights of his collection.

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WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

2 p.m.
Service prepared by WDP committee of Nigeria "I will give your rest: come"
Hillcrest Mennonite Church,
1056 Huron St. New Hamburg

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

Optimist Club of Petersburg Bottle Drive

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Also accepting food bank donations.
1239 Notre Dame Drive Petersburg

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

East Zorra-Tavistock Special Council Meeting (budget)

9 a.m.
Council Chambers
89 Loveys Street East, Hickson

Wellesley Council meeting

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

Optimist Club of Wilmot's St. Patrick's Day Craft and Gift Sale

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Over 35 vendor tables. Proceeds go to supporting youth in our community.
Wilmot Recreation Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

Perth East council meeting

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship

12 p.m.
Please register by Mar 13 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Wilmot Recreation Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

East Zorra-Tavistock Council meeting

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

Oxford Philatelic Society OXPEX & OTEX

2026 Stamp Show
9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Free admission and parking.
Framed and Judged exhibits, Stamp dealers, youth gift bags, Sales Circuit, draw prizes.
Contact: dhfe@silomail.com
Web: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>
St. Mary's Catholic High School,
431 Juliana Drive, Woodstock

MONDAY, MARCH 23

Wilmot Council meeting

7-10 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road W., Baden

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

"LIFE WORTH LIVING"

7 p.m.
The one-hour film was produced by Woodstock native, Alex Schadenberg, Executive Director of Euthanasia Prevention Coalition and will be followed by a Q & A session with Alex. Admission is free. For more information, please email info@oxfordcountyrighttolife.com
Woodstock Polish Hall,
878 Dufferin Street, Woodstock

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship

12 p.m.
Please register by Mar 20 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Linwood Community Centre,
5279 Ament Line, Linwood

Community Solar Forum

6:30 - 9 p.m.
A collaborative discussion featuring local stakeholders & experts. Free admission.
Wilmot Recreation Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

The Nith Valley EcoBoosters are hosting another Repair Café

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Skilled volunteer fixers will be on hand for mechanical, woodworking, sewing, mending, knitting, crocheting, jewelry and book repairs.
Contact us at: nvebrepaircafe@gmail.com or check out www.nvecoboosters.com
Zion United Church,
215 Peel St., New Hamburg

SATURDAY, MARCH 28 CONT

Optimist Club of Wilmot's Easter Egg Hunt

Registration starts at 10:30 a.m.
Hunt starts at 11 a.m.
Beck Park
215 Snyder's Rd E, Baden

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

Tavistock Community Health(T.C.H.I.) annual meeting

7 p.m.
New board members are needed. Please Contact Frank Meconi at 519-655-2178 or email fameconi@rogers.com. Everyone welcome.
Tavistock Men's Club Hall
78 Woodstock St N, Tavistock

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

Swing into Spring - Craft Sale

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Free admission
Morningside Adult Community
Off Hwy 8 at Bleams & Bergy, New Hamburg

MORNING & EVENING BIBLE READING

Read the Bible in a Year in Community

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Evening meeting 6:00 p.m. daily
Contact Arthur Rosh if interested.
Phone number: 226-899-1551
Email address: arthur.rosh@gmail.com
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Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
65 Boulee St., New Hamburg

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No meetings in July and August
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Website: tavistockmensclub.ca
78 Woodstock St N

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Oxford Philatelic Society

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday (2-4 p.m.) and 4th Tuesday (7 to 9 p.m.)
September to May
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Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com
Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>
Church of the Epiphany
560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7

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Tavistock Seniors Activities @ Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St. Tavistock ON, except Shuffleboard

Pickleball Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon, 12-4 p.m. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052
Cards Monday, Wednesday afternoon 1-4 p.m., euchre, crib (bring board), etc. Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118
Inside walking Monday & Wednesday morning 8.30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Contact: Larry Brown 519-240-6715
Crokinole Monday, Wednesday morning 8.30 a.m. - 12 p.m., Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: John Schultz 519-655-2346
Shuffleboard @ arena, Wednesday 12:30-4 and Thursday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052.
VON Smart Seniors Exercise, Tuesday and Thursday morning 9 - 10 a.m.; Village Manor 10:25 - 11:25 a.m. Contact: 519-539-1231 x 6285

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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 (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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5	6	4	8	1	3	2	7	9
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| 2. Tehran | 7. Melatonin |
| 3. Medical Assistance in Dying | 8. Loudness |
| 4. Raphael | 9. The Oprah Winfrey Show |
| 5. Infertility | 10. Ecuador |

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