

# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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A photo of some locals canoeing past the ball diamond in New Hamburg's Norm Hill Park over the weekend shared to the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook page by group member Deb MW. Read the full story on page 5.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOW US YOUR WILMOT)

## Wilmot Township councillors cleared following investigation

35-page report illustrates divide between some elected officials

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

"I find that councillors Wilkinson and Sidhu did not contravene the township's code of conduct through their actions at the Jan. 4, 2025, town hall. Accordingly, no recommendation is made against them."

That was the final decision made by Benjamin Drory, Wilmot Township's

integrity commissioner, following lengthy complaints levied at councillors Kris Wilkinson and Harvir Sidhu. Councillors Lillianne Dunstall and Steven Martin accused their counterparts of breaching council's code of conduct as a result of a Jan. 4 town hall meeting hosted by Dunstall and Martin. The pair were also accused of bullying and harassment, a charge dismissed by Drory.

Dunstall also levied a complaint of unbecoming behaviour of an elected official against Wilkinson and Sidhu, which was also rejected by the integrity commissioner.

The complaints stemmed from the possibility the public meeting contravened the Municipal Act as five councillors were present when it was about to begin. Wilkinson and Sidhu were asked to leave the meeting

## Louis launches consultations on the Canada Farmland Protection Act

### Wilmot land acquisition shows importance of legislation

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louis has introduced The Canada Farmland Protection Act.

The proposed legislation is aimed at establishing a national framework for the conservation of Canadian farmland.

"Our farmland is a precious resource that we cannot afford to lose," said Louis. "The Canada Farmland Protection Act is as much about preserving a way of life as it is about protecting land. This legislation is an acknowledgement of the hard work and dedication of our farmers. By working together with local stakeholders, we can create policies that support our farmers and protect our farmland for generations to come."

The proposal includes the development of a comprehensive national framework to promote the conservation of farmland across Canada through support for farmland trusts, harmonization of practices, policies for land transfers, incentives for conservation and research and data enhancement.

Consultations will take place over the coming months to gather input from farmers, industry experts and local

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# Wilmot Township councillors cleared following investigation

Continued from page 1

by Dunstall but did not believe they were contravening the act. The report was released to the public, despite no findings of wrongdoing.

"It is essential to clarify that the meeting was not an official council meeting, nor was it sanctioned, nor did it have any motions or official agenda," said Wilkinson's response, found in the decision.

"... A meeting is defined as a gathering where a quorum of members is present and where discussions materially advance the business of or decision-making of the township. The Ward 4 town hall did not meet that criteria."

The decision did not include a ruling on if the Municipal Act's quorum rules were breached. The LAS, Ontario's closed meeting investigator, provides professional independent services to examine complaints under section 238 of the Municipal Act.

"It is not my jurisdiction to determine whether the ... closed meeting rules would have been breached if four or more members of council had stayed at the town hall – only the LAS can opine on that," said Drory, noting it was unfortunate LAS was unwilling to provide a formal declaration on the issue but he felt no ruling was delivered since three councillors were present.

"It was clear there could have been a contravention had councillors Martin and/or Cressman also remained at the meeting," said Drory.

Dunstall provided a statement following the release of the report.

"The integrity commissioner's report highlights serious governance issues within council. While the report did not find councillors Wilkinson and Sidhu in violation of the code of conduct, it made clear that their actions were disruptive and detrimental to

public trust. The fact that the IC felt compelled to issue a report at all, when typically, no report is issued if no violation is found, speaks volumes."

She added the lack of formal consequences raises concerns about accountability.

"Disrupting a public meeting, dismissing concerns about quorum and creating an atmosphere that led to an elected official leaving their own meeting is not behavior befitting of public representatives. While no legal violation occurred, the real issue is governance, respect and professionalism, qualities that were clearly lacking in this situation."

Dunstall also admitted council is divided, something that has tangible consequences for residents.

"When political grandstanding and personal conflicts overshadow the actual work of governing, it prevents council from effectively addressing pressing issues such as financial concerns, infrastructure and community services. The dysfunction on display at the Ward 4 town hall has understandably eroded public confidence even further than it already was."

She added the incident should be a wake-up call.

"Residents deserve better and it is up to council to prove that they can rise above division and work together for the good of the community."

In his complaint to Drory, Martin said Wilkinson and Sidhu were "bullying and harassing" by not respecting his role as meeting host.

"They also did not respect my decision on the quorum issue. Even if I am wrong on the issue of quorum or an illegal meeting, they should have respected my concern since it was my meeting along with Coun. Dunstall."

Wilkinson also released a statement

following the report's release, saying he will continue to work hard for residents.

"I appreciate the integrity commissioner's report and the finding that my colleague and I didn't break any rules. I look forward to getting back to work and advancing business at council while continuing to work within the rules of our township. I will continue to advocate for the people of Wilmot and focus on their priorities. That means continuing to ask tough questions, challenging the status quo and protecting every tax dollar that this township spends."

Sidhu provided the Gazette with a statement in response to the report.

"I want to thank the integrity commissioner for their detailed report. As always, I am committed to the residents who elected me first and foremost. My top priority is respecting their tax dollars and asking the tough questions."

In his testimony to Drory, Sidhu said he did not intend to create an atmosphere where Martin and Dunstall felt bullied.

"I did not see the problem with being there in attendance as a quiet observer. There was no material advancement of any business and no votes or motions that could have been seen as official township business. ... I do acknowledge my presence there did disturb the start of the meeting and for that I do apologize as that was not my intention."

Martin also issued a statement and he feels the rules need to change.

"I understand that the integrity commissioner made his ruling based on our code of conduct. So that is all that he can rule on, and according to the Wilmot Township code of conduct, there were no rules broken. It makes me realize that we need to update our code of conduct."

He added council works well together but admitted there are ups and downs.

"There are times that votes are divided,

and then there are other times that we make decisions with a unanimous vote or only one or two in disagreement. We have come through a difficult budget and reached final decisions."

Martin said he is interested in working with everyone on council, but added they need to follow the Municipal Act.

"The reason I left our town hall on Jan. 4 was because the quorum rule is important and I did not want to put our township at risk of an illegal meeting. I continue to show that I will work with everyone on council."

Drory added the incident at the Jan. 4 town hall meeting did not do the township any good in terms of the image of elected officials.

"Councillors Martin and Dunstall were both clearly frustrated, as were a number of people in the audience. This was a regrettable incident that probably tarnished the township in the eyes of some of its residents."

The Gazette reached out to Mayor Natasha Salonen's office for comment but she is on vacation out of the county and unavailable. Coun. Stewart Cressman, who left the meeting to ensure there was not a quorum, did not reply to our request for a statement by press time.

"Councillors Wilkinson and Sidhu didn't breach the code of conduct. Rather, I believe the concerns in this case are better characterized as being about governance – for example simpler questions like why the township's members of council appeared unable to respect each other's positions or work together positively," added Drory near the end of his report.

The full integrity commissioner report is available on the Wilmot Township website as part of the March 24 council meeting agenda.

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# Louis launches consultations on the Canada Farmland Protection Act

Continued from page 1

communities. Louis encourages those interested in contributing to reach out and participate in shaping this important initiative.

"The goal of The Canada Farmland Protection Act is to create a legislative tool for farms to protect their land for future generations," said Louis. "As the stewards of our agricultural land, farmers deserve unwavering support. I am committed to standing with them as they deliver the high-quality food that feeds our nation and the world."

Louis explained he has been working on the proposed legislation for several months and it comes out of his experience on a federal-government group.

"As a member of the agriculture committee for the last five or six years, I've got good relationships with national stakeholders as well as local. Whether it's local stories or from across the county, there is a need to protect farmland."

He added the legislation, if passed, will establish a national framework for farmland conservation.

"And also give them the options on how they want to transfer their land if they want to put it into trust, to make sure the farmers themselves have a say in what happens to their own farmland which they have worked so hard on."

Louis said the provinces would need to get together to harmonize policies and practices for conservation and support for farmland trusts.

"There are ways we can incentivize the good work farmers do, and they should be rewarded for that. These are all things I have heard being in committee for years and I am at that consultation phase. What I don't want to do is say here, I have written this and this is the way it is. I want feedback from farmers to make sure they are helping to shape this."

Louis will eventually travel across the county to hold in-person consultations. Written submissions will also be accepted to create what he called a blueprint for cooperation.

"I also know the local organizations in the riding, so I will be talking to them. There will be agricultural, environmental and even conservation stakeholders at the table as they are all working together. Those conversations will help finish the legislation."

He added the work he has done so far on the bill is non-partisan.

"I am working across party lines right now with Senator Rod Black. The two of us have also successfully lobbied for the protection of other farmlands in Ontario. This is about our food sovereignty, about protecting Canadian farmers and Canadian farmland. I am encouraging people to reach out."

The Gazette asked Louis if the proposed legislation, at least in part, came out of the Wilmot Township land-acquisition plan spearheaded by the Region of Waterloo. He said the issue is a perfect example of why the legislation is necessary.

"Right here in Wilmot has shown where the conversations need to be stronger. What I have heard from countless constituents is no one, me included, is against growth and development. We are a fast-growing region, but we have to do it in a responsible and transparent way. Wilmot has played a part in shaping this legislation."

He explained interprovincial cooperation will be key in hashing out a law that works for all Canadians.

"At the end of the day, it's provinces that decide land assembly and that's where I can help by bringing those best practices to light and have them work on a national framework."

A new Liberal leader has been chosen and a federal election could be called in the very near future. Louis said while the legislation might not be tabled as quickly as he hoped, the work would continue.

"It is my hope to work as fast as possible on it, and then after an election, should I be re-elected, I can continue the process. There is never a bad time to start. Now is the right time to do the right thing by doing the work regardless of the fact there will be an election between April and October."

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# EZT couple nominated for Oxford land stewardship award

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Gord and Debbra Eddy have lived at Eddycrest Farms on the 11th Line in East-Zorra Tavistock (EZT) for the past 48 years. The couple's love for their land has translated into a 2024 Oxford Stewardship Award nomination.

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan will give the prize to one of the three nominees at the March 26 meeting of county council. The award recognizes county landowners who have made exemplary contributions to preserve and enhance the natural features and areas on their properties, such as woodlands, wetlands, streams and meadows.

Land stewardship has always been important to the Eddy family. Over the years, they have improved the municipal drain by adding a berm on the driveway to separate fields and prevent erosion. Gord Eddy said they have planted over 700 trees on the property.

"We added a massive cedar line of trees above the property to keep the cold out of the building and separated our westside boundary with the cedar line. We also do a controlled logging on our woodlot every 12 or 15 years."

The Eddy family worked with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) and Ducks Unlimited for their latest project, converting three acres of farmland into a two-acre wetland. The wetland restoration turned a wet section of the Eddy farm into a highly functioning wetland system. Gord Eddy says he enjoyed working with Phil Holst from Ducks Unlimited to get this project going.

"I always had three acres of farmland you think you can work, but you really can't. I would always get stuck, and it got to the



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

**Gord and Debbra Eddy will be presented with a 2024 Oxford Stewardship Award at the March 26 Oxford County council meeting for their commitment to environmental stewardship at Eddycrest Farms in East Zorra-Tavistock.**

point where we couldn't pasture it anymore. When Phil (Holst) suggested turning the three acres into a wetland, it made sense."

Debbra Eddy said Holst, also a landowner on the 11th Line in EZT, guided the couple through the exercise.

"He knows all the right channels, the places to apply to and getting the right permits. He did all that groundwork which was awesome. We also didn't know how to apply for some of the grants available or how to find the contractors we needed. That was very helpful."

The wetland has also helped drainage on the property.

"We have already noticed part of the field that was sitting wet is draining better. The work we did is making the water flow to a central spot and away from the field. The land next to the pond is drier for working it," Debbra Eddy said.

Gord Eddy admits his kids were a little upset they didn't do this sooner.

"My son gave me some heck. Why didn't you install a pond years ago? I could have played hockey."

One of the couple's grandsons is a member of the Tavistock Titans U13 Rep team and the entire squad was recently on the pond playing an old-fashioned game of shinny.

"There were 14 kids on the ice just having fun. It was great to see. They have an ice rink at their house that he made but he said being on the pond is much more fun," said Debbra Eddy.

Gord Eddy said the pond is now home to a wide array of wildlife, with visits from ducks, geese, blue herons, coyotes and deer, and they've even had a visit from a bald eagle.

He added they worked with the UTRCA to plant 500 trees last April and May.

"The UTRCA was great to work with. They came out a few times to help us size everything and helped with what to plant and where. We planted 200 trees around the pond and 300 trees around the fence lines to create a windbreak."

Gord Eddy said his grandkids love the new pond. They were collecting tadpoles last summer, and he is excited to show them footage from the trail camera they set up to capture wildlife.

"Just the fact we did something for the environment that makes it better for the whole community; we took a wet area and made it presentable and functional," Debbra Eddy said.

When asked what advice they have for other landowners looking to make improvements, she said don't procrastinate.

"Don't put it off. Get it done. For years, we would just keep working around it and we should have just dug it out."

The other nominees are Joe and Susan Hampson from Norwich Township and Gord and Lisa Ross of South-West Oxford.

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## The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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# Despite piles of snow, pouring rain and frozen ground, spring melt on par with previous years in Wilmot Township

GALEN SIMMONS

*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

Though photos and videos of high water along the Nith River in New Hamburg flooded social media last weekend, Wilmot Township officials say this year's spring melt is on par with previous years.

Photos and videos of flooded parks and farmers' fields, a fast-running Nith River swollen with rain and melted snow, and large tree branches collecting at the dam in downtown New Hamburg featured heavily on local community Facebook pages as friends and neighbours shared concerns for property and personal safety.

One member of the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group even posted a photo of local firefighters rescuing a stranded driver after their pickup truck became stuck in the flooded parking lot at Norm Hill Park near the New Hamburg Legion.

On March 16, the Grand River Conservation Authority issued a flood warning for a number of communities in the Grand River watershed, including New Hamburg. In the warning, the conservation authority warned a combination of double-digit temperatures, a Colorado low weather system expected to bring heavy rainfall and sporadic thunderstorms to the area, and melting snow in the watershed's north end could result in flooding for New Hamburg properties in flood-warning zones one and two.

For Zone 1 properties, which are

concentrated along the southern portion of Jacob Street and the northern portion of Milton Street in New Hamburg, property owners are warned of potential flooding when the Nith River reaches flows of 120-175 cubic metres per second. For Zone 2 properties, which are concentrated around the Sobeys and Home Hardware stores in downtown New Hamburg with a few scattered elsewhere in town, property owners are warned of flooding when Nith River flows are recorded at 175-300 cubic metres per second.

According to Wilmot fire chief Rod Leeson, the Nith River peaked on Sunday at flows of nearly 170 cubic metres per second, just below a Zone 2 flood level.

"The outcome of the spring melt this year was average, however, with significant ice in the Nith River combined with a significant snow pack, we could have experienced significant flooding," Leeson told the Gazette. "We have no reports of any significant property damage at this time."

"High flows and unstable ice conditions increase the safety risk around rivers and streams throughout the watershed. The public is encouraged to exercise extreme caution around local waterways. Parents are reminded to keep their children and pets away from watercourses; swift water is extremely dangerous and unpredictable."

By the Gazette's press time on March 19, Leeson said the Nith River was flowing at nearly 17 cubic metres per second, well below Zone 1 warning levels.



(MIKE GRUMMETT PHOTO)

The Kirkpatrick Park Gazebo was underwater over the weekend as the Nith River, swollen with rain and snowmelt, peaked at a flow of nearly 170 cubic metres per second.



(MIKE GRUMMETT PHOTO)

A swollen Nith River breaches its banks and threatens a nearby sidewalk in New Hamburg.



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**Applications close: March 31, 2025**

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



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(LOU DIVITA PHOTO)

A photo of a flooded field near Philipsburg in Wilmot Township over the weekend, nearby sidewalk in New Hamburg.

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# Tavistock Agricultural Society planning a busy 2025

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Tavistock Agricultural Society is already hard at work organizing events for what promises to be another busy year in 2025.

## Tavistock Fall Fair set for September

The society's biggest annual event, the Tavistock Fall Fair, will once again take place the weekend after Labour Day. Directors are reminding exhibitors the 2025 fair theme is "Seed to Harvest."

## Upcoming events

Several additional events are already in the works, including the Trivia Night fundraiser on Saturday, April 12 at the Tavistock Legion. Organizers hope to increase participation from last year's turnout of 11 tables of eight players. More volunteers are needed to make the evening a success. Those interested in helping can contact any director or president Kim Urlando for details.

The society will also host its annual Easter Egg Hunt at Queen's Park on Saturday, April 19, the day after Good Friday.

All local children are invited to take part in the fun, searching for chocolate Easter eggs and enjoying snacks served from the park pavilion, which will be staffed by agricultural society directors. New volunteers are always welcome.

For more information about any of these activities, contact Julie Kimpel at [jkimpel2003@yahoo.ca](mailto:jkimpel2003@yahoo.ca).



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Directors pictured at this week's Tavistock Agricultural Society meeting are, from left, Perry Keller, Kaitlin Keller, Chad Keller, Kathy Rosenberg, Julie Kimpel, Kim Hill and Chris Wiffen. Missing from the photo are president Kim Urlando (photographer), Val Jones, Rick Lange, Greg Pye, Sandy Schultz and Alisha Wilson.



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# Big changes coming to the 2025 Wellesley Township Fall Fair

GARY WEST

*Gazette Correspondent*

The Wellesley Township Fall Fair is set for a major transformation in 2025 as the Wellesley-North Easthope Agricultural Society has announced a change in the fair's date.

The 172nd edition of the event will now take place on Friday, Aug. 22 and Saturday, Aug. 23 – moving the fair to a weekend format for the first time.

## A fresh new approach

Fair president Joanne Stewart said the change comes in response to community feedback and aims to make the fair more accessible to families and the wider community.

"This year's theme is New Roots, Kick Up Your Boots, and it reflects the spirit of growth, fun and celebration that has kept the Wellesley Fair going strong for 172 years," Stewart said.

She added shifting the event to a weekend allows more people to participate and enjoy the fair while continuing its long-standing tradition of promoting agricultural education and celebrating Canadian heritage.

"We are grateful for the hard work of the

directors, volunteers, sponsors and exhibitors," Stewart said. "Without the community, the fair would not be possible and we invite everyone to get involved – whether as a volunteer, exhibitor, or attendee."

## What's new for 2025

The Friday, Aug. 22 schedule kicks off at 4:30 p.m. with the opening of exhibits. Highlights of the evening include the ambassador program, pie auction and live local entertainment.

On Saturday, Aug. 23, exhibits will be on display from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. The day will feature a cattle and horse show, baby show, pet show, youth activities and a colourful parade through town.

The evening program promises an unforgettable lineup and will close with a dazzling fireworks show to wrap up the fair's inaugural weekend event.

## Dairy education continues

Despite the shift in the fair's schedule, the dairy education program for Grade 3 students will still take place on Tuesday, Sept. 9, ensuring its continued role in agricultural education.

For more information, visit [www.wellesleynehfallfair.ca](http://www.wellesleynehfallfair.ca) or contact fair secretary-treasurer Mary Lichty-Neeb at [mlichty@execulink.com](mailto:mlichty@execulink.com).



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

At last year's Wellesley Township Fall Fair, Katie Musselman (left), the 2024-2025 Wellesley Fair Ambassador, stands alongside Katelyn Bartlett, the 2023-2024 fair ambassador, who presented Musselman with gifts and the honour of being named the newest Wellesley Fair Ambassador.



Barb Nowak receives a special Lifetime Achievement Award at last year's fall fair, recognizing her dedication and countless hours of volunteer work in making the Wellesley area a more inclusive community. Wellesley Township Mayor Joe Nowak presented the award on behalf of the township.

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# Bidding high for apple pie: Tavistock church auction raises funds for local programs

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

There were smiles all around Tavistock March 16 as Grace United Church members gathered for their annual bake sale auction, raising funds to support local church programs.

Following their weekly church service, a large crowd enthusiastically bid on a variety of homemade baked goods, eager to contribute to the cause.

## A winning bid for a winning pie

Among the many generous bidders, Karen Brenneman stood out as she secured the top-selling apple pie, determined to take home the freshly baked treat.

Her son, Dale Brenneman, also played a key role in supporting the event. A dairy farmer from East Zorra, Dale donated four large bricks of cheese made from his Oxford County Holstein dairy herd, further boosting the fundraiser's success.

Thanks to the enthusiastic bidding and community generosity, the event raised more than \$1,900 to support the church's programs, benefiting residents throughout the area.

## A spring tradition of giving

Each spring, Grace United Church members contribute dozens of home-made baked goods, demonstrating their commitment to the church and the wider community. This tradition continues to be a cherished way for the congregation to come together and support meaningful initiatives.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Karen and Dale Brenneman prepare to share the highly sought-after fresh apple pie that Karen successfully outbid others for at Grace United Church's annual bake sale auction on Sunday. In the background is auction organizer Trish Wettlaufer.

# Local charities benefit from Wilmot Lions/Lioness 12 Days of Christmas Draw



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WILMOT LIONS/LIONESS CLUB)

At the Wilmot Lions/Lioness Club dinner meeting March 17, Lions president Michelle Bousseau presented cheques to the four local charities that benefited from the proceeds of the club's 12 Days of Christmas Draw. This year's recipients were Community Care Concepts, Camino Well Being + Mental Health, Love Your Neighbour Community (LYNC) and Food4Kids. Pictured from left are Lion Maggie McElligott, Lisa Doherty (LYNC), Kathy Herrington (Community Care Concepts), Lion Susan Hammer, Carrie Guse (Food4Kids), Brousseau and Sally Sarachman (Camino Well Being + Mental Health).

## CORRECTION:

An error was published in the story, "Perth County Paramedic Service meets all response-time targets in 2024," on page 9 of the March 13 Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette. In the story, the offload-delay statistics for Perth County paramedics in 2024 are incorrect. Instead, the story should have stated in 2024, the Perth County Paramedic Service spent the equivalent of 25 12-hour shifts waiting at

St. Marys and Listowel hospitals beyond the 30-minute target – up from the equivalent of 15 12-hour shifts in 2023. The paramedic service spent an equivalent of 59 12-hour shifts at the Stratford General Hospital beyond the 30-minute target during 2024, down from the equivalent of 77 12-hours shifts in 2023. We regret any confusion this error may have caused.

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# Perth County appoints deputy paramedic chief as community emergency management coordinator

GALEN SIMMONS

*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

When it comes to navigating a local emergency, it's important to have the right person with the right connections and the right plans in place leading the response.

For Perth County, that person is now deputy paramedic services chief Chris Keyser after he was appointed community emergency management coordinator (CEMC) at county council's March 6 meeting.

"I've been involved with emergency management for almost my entire time here," Keyser said. "With various community emergency management coordinators over the years, I usually helped them out with their training. I'm a provincial (incident management system) instructor, so that's the foundation for emergency management from the Ontario perspective. I have experience delivering the training and I think, too, just being in paramedic services kind of lends itself to managing emergencies."

"I'm definitely growth-minded, so I like doing new things, learning about the ins and outs of all of it, and having a better understanding. So, when I was approached about possibly taking this on, I was very excited about the opportunity."

After cycling through several emergency management coordinators hired from outside the county organization over the past several years, Perth County CAO Lori Wolfe said senior staff was looking for someone with Keyser's skills, experience, ability to teach, mindset and community connections. As it turned out, the only person who met those criteria and more was Keyser.

"We've had several great individuals in that role ... and there was a vacancy in the fall, so we looked at that and said, 'How can we utilize skills that we already have in our system?'" Wolfe said. "It's a regional program for the county and each of the four local municipalities, and our partners in Stratford and St. Marys have their own CEMC, so Chris will work very closely with them. We



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

**Perth County Paramedic Service deputy chief Chris Keyser is the county's new community emergency management coordinator.**

were looking for a way to provide really good stability in the role because it is one that will often see changes; people will go on to bigger roles with more staff complement and things like that. So, we were looking for a way to find good stability with the role.

"This is an opportunity to use Chris' background. We're looking for somebody in that role that has the ability to train and educate the staff because it's all about prevention. There's curriculum development in that portfolio, there's presentation, there's heavy training, there's heavy regulatory framework where you have to take the legislation, interpret and apply (it locally). So, when I'm looking over all the county departments ... I need somebody who is going to take (this program) to the next level, and Chris stands out for that."

In his current role, Keyser is heavily involved in both staff training and meeting regulatory requirements. At

both the Perth County Paramedic Service and in previous positions he's held with neighbouring paramedic services, Keyser has developed working relationships with all the key players he will be dealing with across the county, in Stratford and St. Marys, and in adjacent counties.

On top of all that, Wolfe said Keyser's ability to calmly and effectively communicate with anyone, whether it's during one of his training sessions or in a life-or-death emergency, is one of his most-valuable assets.

"I've been involved with paramedic services with the county for over 20 years now," Keyser said. "I've moved up from working as a paramedic in Milverton to a paramedic working in Stratford to a commander on the road managing emergencies on the frontline to now I'm in the deputy chief role. My portfolio deals with regulatory compliance from the ambulance-service perspective ... so regulatory compliance isn't foreign to me. ... I've led the public access defibrillator (PAD) program for the county since its inception 15 or 16 years ago. I placed the first ones, developed the first partnership agreements and, recently, Lori and I have been working on regionalizing that program ... to make it more sustainable in the future. Through that, I have relationships with all of our partners from the Town of St. Marys to Stratford to all of our lower tiers, as well as at all of our county facilities."

"It's nice taking a step into this role because a lot of the players are the same."

For now, Keyser will continue in his current role as deputy paramedic services chief alongside his new role as community emergency management coordinator. He is already working with and training other members of the Perth County Paramedic Service who will gradually take over aspects of the deputy chief role with a goal of Keyser ultimately transitioning full-time to the CEMC role.

Part of that role, Wolfe explained, will also be focused on ensuring there is a succession plan for filling the CEMC role after Keyser and well into the future by providing current staff opportunities to train and take on extra responsibilities.

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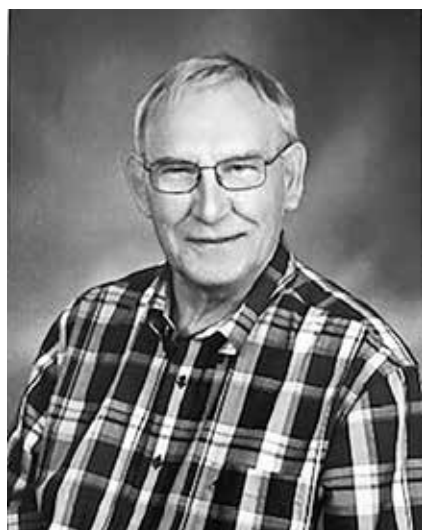
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## OBITUARY

### OTTO, Joan Elizabeth

Of New Hamburg was called home to be with her Heavenly Father on March 17, 2025, in her 97th year, at her home with family by her side.

Joan was born September 5, 1928, in New Dundee, Ontario to the late Victor E. Dinger and Elma (Sararas) Dinger. She was formerly a Legal Secretary in Waterloo. Joan was predeceased by her beloved husband, Arthur Otto (2009) after 56 years of marriage and sister Hazel Zehr (Raymond) (2017).

Loving mother and grandmother of son Howard and his children, Janessa Otto Jantzi (Stephen), Jennifer Otto (Greg Rabus), Janet Sales (Joe); daughter Margaret Swoboda (the late Frank) and their children, Jonathan (Swati), Dwayne (Stefanie), Jeremy (Shelby), Andrew (Karina), Bethany Gray (Chelson); son James (Mary) and their children, Michael (Janine), Andrea Neidenbach (Jason), Christine Horn (Owen), Kathryn Mogk (Bradin), Matthew (Caitlyn), and Daniel; son David (Lorraine) and their children, Joshua, Stephanie Peters (Fletcher), Graham and Serena; and 27 great-grandchildren.

Joan was a faithful member of New Dundee Baptist Church and a Dominion Life Member of the Baptist Women's Missionary Society. She enjoyed crocheting and sewing and travelling with Art.

Relatives and friends are invited to visit with her family on Friday, March 21, 2025, at the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg from 6 – 8 p.m.

A service to celebrate her life will be held in the chapel of the funeral home on Saturday, March 22, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

Interment will follow at Riverside Cemetery. All are welcome to join the family for a time of fellowship and refreshments following the interment in the basement of the funeral home.

As expressions of sympathy, donations to New Dundee Baptist Church would be appreciated and can be done through the funeral home website.

Personal condolences and donation information available at [www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca](http://www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca)

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on in sweet  
refrains.

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## The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

*By Stewart & Sydney Grant*

1. Who are the "big five" banks in Canada
2. Area 51 is located in which U.S. state?
3. The sport of curling comes from what country?
4. What reptile cannot stick its tongue out?
5. How many numbers are on a dartboard?
6. Glossophobia is the fear of what?
7. What year was Snapchat launched?
8. The Birkin bag was introduced by what company?
9. What is Lady Gaga's real first name?
10. What Canadian province produces the most maple syrup?

Answers found on the classified page

## OBITUARY

### WETTLAUER: Charles "Keith"



It is with great sadness that Keith's family announce his peaceful passing at the Hospice Waterloo Region on Sunday, March 16, 2025 at the age of 92.

Keith will be lovingly remembered by his chosen daughter, Dianne Wilbee (Jeff 2019), grandson Derek Wilbee (Michele), great grandson Caleb Wilbee (Laura) and great granddaughter Keira Wilbee. Keith was predeceased by his parents, Anna (nee Mills) and Carl Wettlaufer, his partner Ruth Moore

(2002), son-in-law Jeff Wilbee (2019) and granddaughter-in-law Deirdre Wilbee (2017).

Keith grew up in Maplewood. In his youth he assisted his parents in their general store and worked on area farms. As a young man Keith was active in sports and travelled extensively, in his adult years, throughout North America and Europe.

Keith was a man of great strength, resilience, independence and intellect. He was an avid reader of non fiction books and numerous business magazines. He retained enviable knowledge from his readings, past experiences and current affairs which he enjoyed sharing. He was an invaluable resource to all. He loved country and western music amongst other genres and enjoyed evenings of shared pizza with his great grandson, Caleb while watching sports.

His early career included work at the Stratford CNR shops. After a lengthy apprenticeship Keith became a hydro lineman working for Ontario Hydro then British Columbia Hydro. While living in Vancouver Keith experienced a life altering accident. Following extensive medical care and rehabilitation he returned to Maplewood. His return proved providential as he then met Ruth. Together they shared many wonderful times at the Happy Hills Retirement Resort and where he remarkably lived independently during better weather months after Ruth's passing. Keith subsequently resided long term with Jeff and Dianne where he was a much loved family member. He eventually relocated to the Aspira Doon Village Retirement Home in Kitchener.

Keith's family express their appreciation to the Retirement Home staff and to Grand River Hospital staff. Also, to the Hospice Waterloo Region for their care and compassion for Keith and his family as Keith transitioned to his Lord.

Life has many Chapters and for Keith's family his presence within our family unit has brought immeasurable pleasure and his absence leaves a spot unable to be filled by others. Sending our love to Heaven where we believe Keith is at peace, reunited with Ruth, Jeff and his parents and once again is whole. We will miss you dear Keith.

In celebration of Keith's life, a private family funeral service will be held at the Francis Funeral Home, Tavistock. Cremation has occurred with private interment at a later date.

Memorial donations to the Hospice Waterloo Region or a charity of your choice would be appreciated and can be made through the funeral home. Personal condolences can be posted at [www.francisfh.ca](http://www.francisfh.ca)

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# The Old Gazettes

By Sydney Grant

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

**March 18-25, 2020, Edition (5 years ago)**

These are scary times. The Coronavirus, or COVID-19, which began in China at the end of December 2019, has now transmitted all around the world. Canada is not immune. For that reason, with the start of March Break this week, the world as we knew it has changed drastically. From the closure of schools for an extra two weeks after March Break to the cancellation of community gatherings and entire sports seasons, we are living in an unpredicted age.

Exactly five years ago to the day, March 10, 2015, D&D Homestyle Cuisine and Café held their grand opening. Last week, Tuesday, March 20, 2020, owners Doug and Dianne Sparling and their employees welcomed local clients into their café for free coffee and cake to celebrate. They started out with a couple of freezers of entrees and offering soups, salads and sandwiches to the lunch-hour crowd. After a couple of years, they expanded their premises to the adjoining storefront to allow for an increased seating area.

Tavistock Curling Club youth curling wrapped up their season with a fun day on March 14, 2020. After another great season, they finished with a fun day of curling, an awards presentation and everyone enjoyed eating pizza. Youth curlers include Ryan Carey, Keegan Schallhorn, Jacob Bergsma, Ethan Bender, Regan Oesch, Simon Ruby, Andrew Weitzel, Evan Carey, Jayden Ruby, Matthew Brenneman and Matthew Romano.

**March 17-24, 2010, Edition (15 years ago)**

Tavistock figure skaters Emma Bender and Stephanie Lupton have capped off a great year with the Plattsville Figure Skating Club under the leadership of Cindy Brick. The Western Ontario Starskate Championships in St. Marys saw Emma in first place in her flight to advance to the finals

where she finished fourth, advancing to provincials. Stephanie was third place in the finals in Starskate Senior Silver Women's Freestyle and also advanced to the provincials. During the provincial finals, Emma earned second place in the province in Starskate Bronze Triathlon and Stephanie was third place in the province in Starskate Senior Silver Ladies Freeski.

The Bruce Kropf Forestry Tavistock PeeWee Reps successfully defended their Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) championship from 2009 with a pair of weekend victories over the Blenheim Blades. The Titans won convincingly 5-1 on Saturday before a full house in Tavistock. Goals were scored by Tayler Trachsel, Derek Hyde, Matt Ramseyer, Justin Wagler and Jakob Wiffen. Sunday afternoon, Tavistock travelled to Blenheim and won 5-1 after a rough start.

The Tavistock Scotiabank Double B Machine PeeWee AE's brought home OHMA gold from Tweed on Sunday, March 21 with a 3-0 victory and a 6-2 series win. The team consists of Mitchell Griffi, Trent Jones, Brodie Ross, Alexander Francis, Colin Willson, Luke Roth, Jacob Bender, Grant Bickle, Hayden Ramseyer, Jay Churchward, Tyler Kirkbride, Jameson Kalbfleisch, McGregor Ramseyer and Jason Winhold.

**March 15-22, 1995, Edition (30 years ago)**

Ron Kropf of K&S Carpentry, along with Jamie McGregor and Jim Capping, install the supporting wall for 200 additional lock boxes at the Tavistock Post Office over the weekend. Renovations are well underway and it is hoped that keys for the new boxes will be issued to general delivery customers by some time this weekend. New counters are also being installed along with a dividing wall between the outer office and the sorting area.

Young art enthusiasts spent three days of their March break, March 14-16, at the Tavistock Public Library enjoying classes with well-known Tavistock artist Bonnie Steinman. Fourteen children signed up for the daily morning class which saw demonstrations and hands-on experience in mono printmaking, drawing, watercolour painting, stencil and splatter painting.

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# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

## Local minor hockey association taking zero-tolerance of officials seriously

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Tavistock Minor Hockey is taking action to protect referees from abuse.

The organization has posted a banner in the arena reminding everyone that abuse towards on-ice officials will not be tolerated and offenders will be asked to leave. Minor hockey president Brad Witzel said the executive decided collectively to take a proactive stance.

"It's not really something parents have raised. We are all aware of the odd incident where someone gets a little bit carried away. Thankfully, we haven't had any incidents anywhere close to the one ... in Woodstock."

That incident saw a hockey coach arrested and charged with assaulting a pair of police officers. It allegedly began after a coach contested a young official's call on the ice. The referee kicked the coach out, eventually leading to the arrest of a 42-year-old Woodstock man.

Witzel added the sign serves as a reminder for fans in the arena that it's not okay to berate on-ice officials.

"It's located right above the timekeeper's box. In theory, if you are looking across and, as a fan, are yelling at the ref, it's pretty hard to ignore (the sign). We're trying to be proactive and we certainly don't ever want something like that to happen in our centre," Witzel said.

He said the move is also intended to show support for referees officiating games in Tavistock.

"As you are well aware, it is becoming harder and harder to get refs and we want them to know we support them. You can have dialogue with a ref in a respectful way. When they are supported, I think they end up doing a better job."

I have refereed minor hockey for 17 years and had my share of confrontations with



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

**Tavistock Minor Hockey has unveiled a sign to remind coaches, players and fans that abuse of on-ice officials will not be tolerated.**

coaches, players and fans alike. The worst incident I was involved in was while skating a U18 Silver Stick tournament game in St. Clements when a parent jumped up on the outside of the glass and shook it so hard it almost came down onto the ice. While referees do not have the authority to kick someone out of a publicly owned facility, we can ask the person to leave and stop the game until he or she does so. The gentleman did eventually head into the arena lobby and the game carried on.

Many centres are having difficulty recruiting referees and Tavistock is no different. I can only remember one local minor hockey player who obtained his Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) referee credentials while still playing in recent years.

Andrew Raymer is another member of the minor hockey executive and explained recent recruiting initiatives have come up empty.

"We had tried to get players from the U15 and U18 teams to see if they were interested, but the common response was they just didn't want to put up with the abuse from parents. To have young people join the system, we have to stop the abuse. Hopefully, that will change the culture and

let them know that it's a good job for kids."

Partway through this season, the executive decided to hire the Stratford Referee Association to assign officials for games in Tavistock. I am a past member of that association, and I know it charges a flat fee of several hundred dollars for a season and an additional \$4 (in 2023-2024) for each game meaning higher costs for minor hockey.

Raymer explained they won't stop looking for local officials but for now, they have no choice but to keep the status quo.

"We would need quite a few to move away from the model we have now. As much as we would like young referees to come along, I don't see how we would move away from the Stratford association. We were getting to the point where we just didn't have referees and at the point of almost cancelling some games."

Witzel explained there were only three or four local referees who were not able to handle every assignment, which forced the move to Stratford.

"We were already pulling in from all over the place and we did have to make that difficult decision. The hope is we can still develop refs here. We are incurring some increased costs with mileage and

other things, but that's unfortunately part of the process."

He added the days of abusing on-ice officials need to come to an end.

"Times are different. You have reffed a long time and it used to be acceptable, for lack of a better term, to lose it on a ref and yell and scream. We are heading in a different direction and that's not the way the game is going to be played anymore. We won't have a game without the refs."

Witzel said the key to eliminating the abuse of officials begins on the bench with the coaching staff.

"When the coach stays calm, it trickles through the entire bench and then into the stands. When the coach goes off, the players follow suit and it goes off the rails. That's where we can set an example here in Tavistock."

I have lobbied for years to have coaches take educational courses on the rules of the game, particularly when some are changed or new ones are introduced. To date, Hockey Canada has never included this in its education both in-person or online for new and existing coaches. On many occasions, the protests by team officials stem from a lack of understanding of the rules.

"When we look at all the different courses and training coaches are required to take, and a lot of it is valuable, and with technology, there is really no reason why we couldn't create something like that," said Witzel. "It's just being knowledgeable about different situations. I think there are times coaches get upset and think they are right, but they're not and the referee is making the right call. ... Being informed is important and there are ways the OMHA, Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) and Hockey Canada could help with that."

He added Tavistock Minor Hockey will continue to work with its coaches to encourage them to set the right example and change the culture surrounding referees.

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# PJHL playoff roundup: Firebirds punch ticket to PJHL division final

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

New Hamburg has earned the opportunity to defend its Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) Doherty Division title after disposing of Woodstock in five games. They await the winner of the Norwich and Wellesley semi-final.

The Firebirds clinched the series with a 6-3 win on home ice Sunday in front of nearly 800 fans. They led 3-1 after two periods of play setting up a five-goal third including two empty net goals by New Hamburg. Keegan Metcalf led the attack with a pair of goals and an assist while Antonio Pasqualino scored twice. Josh Jacklin stopped 33 shots to earn the win as the Navy Vets held a 36-28 shots-on-goal advantage.

New Hamburg jumped out to a 3-0 lead after 20 minutes on Friday in Woodstock and held on for a 3-1 victory. Owen Bruder scored the first two goals, followed by Jake Thompson's marker late in the period. Pasqualino chipped in with two assists.

Captain Owen Fischer said the first two series have prepared them for what's next, whichever team that may be.

"Tavistock was seventh in the division but they weren't a seventh-place team. Going through the adversity (of a seven-game series) like that can carry into the next one with Woodstock, but we prepared the right way, did the right things and we hope to apply what we learn to more series to come."

The Gazette asked Fischer if there was a turning point in the series with the Navy Vets. He said the Game 2 loss gave them a wakeup call.

"That's when we learned a lot. We were having some issues we were able to resolve and the first two games went into overtime where anything can happen. We changed a few things around and won three straight. Like I said, that was another lesson to learn from."

Nine of New Hamburg's 12 playoff games have been decided by two goals or less and they have only outscored their

opponents by 11 goals. Fischer admitted they have plenty to improve on if they want to repeat last season's run where they made it to the PJHL's final four.

"If there wasn't, the season would be done. The team is playing amazing right now. We are all clicking and playing well together and as a unified group, but we need to keep it going and cutting down on the mistakes."

He added the team is keeping a close eye on the Wellesley-Norwich series, though he won't be able to make the trip to Wellesley to watch Game 6. He is, however, predicting there will be a Game 7.

"There is a tremendous curiosity there, but we have practice and won't be able to watch. We had the night off last Saturday, so a lot of the guys went to Wellesley. We know what both teams bring and we are prepared for whatever we have to face. I personally don't think this series is over, but we will see what happens (Wednesday).

Applejacks one win away

Wellesley continues to impress in the

postseason and can advance to the Doherty final after taking a 3-2 lead over first-place Norwich. Game 6 in the series was played March 19, just after the Gazette's press deadline.

The Merchants entered last weekend with a 2-1 series lead but a 2-0 win at home Saturday followed by a 6-3 road victory Sunday has the Applejacks in the driver's seat. Applejacks goalie Brandon Abbot continues to play a major role in his team's success, stopping 80 of the 83 shots he faced in the two games.

In Game 4, Wellesley led 1-0 after the first period thanks to a powerplay goal by Boden White just as the buzzer sounded. Luke Schofield added the insurance marker late in the second period. Game 2 was a different story as the Applejacks led 5-2 after two periods. White and Dimitri Eleftheriadis each had a pair of goals while Evan Silveira chipped in with a goal and assist. Norwich starting goalie Thomas Staszczyszyn was pulled in the second period after allowing five goals on 20 shots.

**MEET THE BIRDS**

*Keegan Metcalf #13*

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(NEW HAMBURG FIREBIRDS PHOTO)

New Hamburg native Keegan Metcalf scored twice in a series-clinching 6-3 win as the Firebirds eliminated the Navy Vets on five games. New Hamburg will take on either Norwich or Wellesley next in the Doherty Division final.

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## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

**TAKE NOTICE** that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of East Zorra - Tavistock will hold a public meeting on the 2nd day of April, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in order to consider proposed updates to the Building By-law under Section 7 of the Building Code Act. The Meeting will be held in Council Chambers at the Township Administration Building at 89 Loveys Street, Hickson, Ontario.

**PURPOSE AND EFFECT** – The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock is proposing to amend the costs of the building permit fees following a review of the current permit fees and the costs associated with providing service to enforce the Building Code Act, as amended, with regards to issuance of building permits through Section 7. The effect will be to increase portions of the existing fee structure and introduce new fees.

Information will be provided at the meeting on the estimated costs of enforcing and administering the Building Code Act, the amount of the proposed fee(s) and the rationale for changing (and/or imposing) fees. To obtain a copy of the proposed Building Permit Fees Increase, please refer to the agenda package for the April 2nd, 2025 Public Meeting, found on our website at <https://www.ezt.ca/en/township-office/agendas-and-minutes.aspx>. The agenda package will be available online no later than 4:30pm on March 28th, 2025.

Any person may attend the public meeting and/or make written or verbal representation either in support of or in opposition to the proposed fees.

Dated at the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock this 11th day of March 2025

Meaghan Vader, Clerk

Township of East Zorra-Tavistock

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# Roller derby excitement comes to the New Hamburg Arena this Saturday

SCOTT DUNSTALL

*Gazette Correspondent*

Roller derby – a sport as exhilarating as it is misunderstood.

For those unfamiliar with the fast-paced, full-contact game, understanding the mechanics, strategy and energy of a bout can be daunting. But fear not, Tri-City Roller Derby (TCRD) is a regional roller derby league and is ready to break it down and invite more fans into their world.

To learn more, I zoomed and then spoke over the phone with Maggie Middleton, a media representative for the league, who skates for all three of Tri-City's teams – Storm, Lightning and Thunder. More on those in a moment.

For Middleton, who skates for The Thunder, roller derby was an opportunity to reconnect with her athletic roots. A lifelong athlete, roller derby has provided her with a strong sense of community and a powerful physical outlet. Middleton, whose derby name was once Typhoid Maggie, notes that while some skaters enjoy adopting an alter ego, she now embraces her own name, seeing it as a step toward legitimizing the sport.

"For me, it's part of helping to professionalize roller derby, but I respect anyone who wants to keep their derby persona," she said.

I wanted to share this story ahead of this Saturday, March 22 when our New Hamburg based teams will be kicking off their home-opener at the New Hamburg Arena (251 Jacob St.) starting at 5 p.m. Check out the What's Up Wilmot Facebook page for a QR code that leads to a tickets and event-details page, or simply visit the TCRD Facebook page.

To learn more about roller derby prior to attending, read on!

## The Basics of roller derby

Each bout consists of two 30-minute halves divided into shorter segments called jams. Each jam lasts up to two minutes, during which teams try to score points by getting their designated scorer, the jammer, past the opposing team's blockers. Blockers play both offense and defense, helping their jammer break through while simultaneously preventing the opposing jammer from advancing. The strategy is dynamic, the pace relentless and the atmosphere electric.

## Player positions and roles

In roller derby, players take on specific roles:

**Jammer:** The point scorer, identifiable by the star on their helmet. Their goal is to



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

**Tri-City Roller Derby in New Hamburg is set to kick off another exciting season this Saturday at 5 p.m. down at the New Hamburg Arena.**

break through the pack and complete laps to earn points.

**Blockers:** Defensive and offensive players who form a pack to impede the opposing jammer while assisting their own.

**Pivot:** A specialized blocker who can take over as the jammer mid-jam if needed, wearing a striped helmet cover.

The jammer is often the most skilled and agile player, but strength and endurance are equally crucial. Blockers come in all shapes and sizes, with some excelling in brute force and others in quick lateral movement to maintain defensive formations.

## Strategy: the art of timing and control

One of the most strategic elements of roller derby is knowing when to call off a jam. The lead jammer – the first jammer to break through the pack – has the power to end a jam at any time by tapping their hips. This allows teams to stop play before the opposing jammer can score, preserving a point advantage. Some jams last the full two minutes, while others can be called off

within five seconds if it benefits the team. This split-second decision-making adds a layer of tactical depth that keeps the game unpredictable and exciting.

## The Tri-City teams: Storm, Lightning and Thunder

Tri-City Roller Derby operates as a league with team organizations around the Waterloo Region. Based in New Hamburg are three primary teams:

**Storm:** The development or house team where newer skaters hone their skills and seasoned skaters play recreationally.

**Lightning and Thunder:** Two competitive teams that compete nationally and internationally. Thunder consistently plays in the post-season playoffs for the North America North East division.

## Player recruitment and development

Most skaters begin with little to no skating experience. Some come from backgrounds in figure skating or hockey, but most take up the sport from scratch. Newcomers start with the fundamentals, progressing through training before advancing to competitive play. TCRD's

structured development system allows skaters to refine their skills before trying out for higher-tier teams like Lightning and Thunder.

The recruitment process typically follows these steps:

- 1. Joining as a beginner:** New skaters enter via Tri-City's annual new skater intake.
- 2. Development:** Initial training focuses on skating fundamentals, endurance and game rules.
- 3. Placement:** After training, skaters may be placed in the Storm team to gain experience in live bouts.
- 4. Tryouts for competitive teams:** Skaters ready for the next challenge can try out for Lightning or Thunder, where they will compete in higher-level matchups.

## A sport for every body type

Unlike some traditional sports that favour a specific physique, roller derby thrives on diversity. Different body types bring unique strengths to the track. Taller, more solidly built skaters can be formidable blockers, making it difficult for jammers to push past them. Smaller, agile skaters might excel as jammers, using quick footwork and speed to weave through the pack. Others find success in hybrid roles, blending power with endurance. This inclusivity makes roller derby a welcoming sport where anyone can find their place and thrive.

And in recognition of that value code and belief, the Lightning and Thunder have suspended their travel to the US due to what Middleton classifies as an environment now unsafe to members of the roller derby community, particularly anyone that identifies as trans or non-binary. U.S. teams are invited and encouraged to work with Roller Derby leagues in Canada to attend bouts north of the border this season.

## What's next for Tri-City Roller Derby?

TCRD's home opener on March 22 promises a thrilling lineup featuring junior and adult bouts that showcase the best of local and visiting talent. With commitment to community engagement and fierce competition, Tri-City Roller Derby is rolling full-speed into an exciting season.

Whether you're a lifelong fan or a curious newcomer, one thing is certain – roller derby is a sport that demands to be experienced live. So, grab a seat, cheer on the jammers and witness the thrilling chaos of a bout in action.

# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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# Shakespeare Optimist Club hears important message from longtime member

GARY WEST

*Gazette Correspondent*

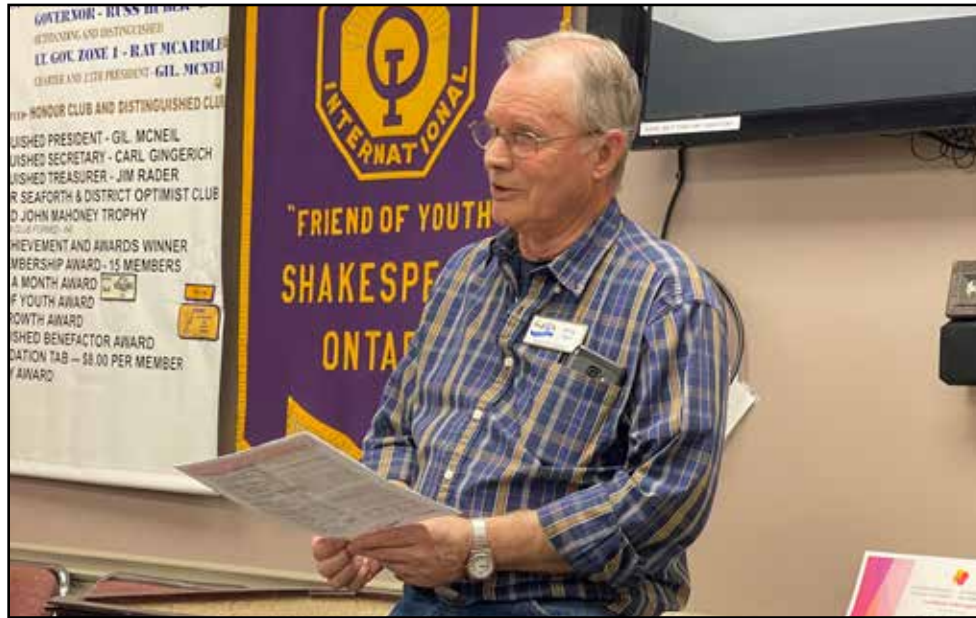
Members of the Shakespeare Optimist Club recently heard a powerful and personal message from longtime member and past president Brian Bell, who shared his experience of surviving a heart attack last November.

## A life-changing event

Bell, who farms with his wife Laurie on the 3rd Concession of North Easthope Township near New Hamburg, suffered a heart attack on Nov. 18, 2023. Speaking to club members, he detailed his symptoms and emphasized the importance of recognizing warning signs to help others who may find themselves in a similar situation.

He explained that for two years prior to the heart attack, he had been experiencing soreness in his throat and left arm – symptoms that gradually became more pronounced. He also felt weak, shaky and constantly fatigued, signs he now recognizes as clear warnings.

On the night of his heart attack, Bell was watching television when he felt discomfort. He had been prescribed nitroglycerin, which he took, but the pain was worse than usual. Realizing he might be experiencing a heart attack, he and his wife called an



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

**Longtime Shakespeare Optimist member Brian Bell speaks to members at last week's dinner meeting about his experience suffering a heart attack in November 2023, sharing important information on recognizing symptoms and seeking help.**

ambulance.

## Fast emergency response and treatment

Paramedics quickly arrived and transported him to Stratford General Hospital, where he was immediately hooked up to

monitors in the emergency department. Bell praised the quick response time and high level of care he received, noting the nurses and doctors were exceptionally attentive.

After blood tests confirmed a heart

attack, he was transferred the next morning to St. Mary's Hospital in Kitchener where three stents were inserted to restore blood flow to his heart.

Following two hours of surgery, he returned to the Stratford hospital for further monitoring, including blood-pressure checks and lactic-acid testing – a key indicator of heart-attack severity.

## A new approach to health

Since his recovery, Bell has been attending cardiac rehabilitation twice a week, following a program that includes exercise on a stationary bike and treadmill under the supervision of trainers. He also maintains an at-home exercise routine.

Diet has also become a major focus of his recovery. Dietitians play an essential role in his rehabilitation, ensuring he follows a balanced approach to nutrition.

When asked how he is feeling now, Bell told club members he has more energy than before and is far more mindful of his eating habits and daily routine. His goal is to stay healthy and enjoy life with family and friends for many years to come.

His most important message to the group: if you think you're having a heart attack, don't wait – seek medical help immediately. Acting quickly could save your life.



## Notice of Annual Meeting

**Date:** Saturday, April 5, at 1:30 pm

**Place:** Zion Hall, Grace United Church  
116 Woodstock Street South, Tavistock ON

**Feature Presentation:**  
"The Story of the  
John Lemp Grandfather Clocks  
and How We Acquired One"

**Presentation by**  
**Donna Dickson**

**All are welcome!**



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# New Dundee News: Community comes together for Golden Ladle Challenge and Board of Trade Pancake Breakfast

LYNN PERRIN

Gazette Contributor

New Dundee's Golden Ladle Challenge returned on Wednesday, March 12 as St. James Lutheran Church hosted a soup supper fundraiser in support of Nutrition for Learning.

The unique event featured a friendly competition among community members who prepared soups for the evening. Each attendee received a voting ticket to cast their choice for the best soup, while admission was either a monetary or food donation to the cause.

With eight soups to sample, guests enjoyed a variety of flavours alongside homemade cookies, rolls, butter, coffee, tea and juice. At the end of the evening, the votes were tallied and Susan Lade's cream of mushroom soup was crowned the winner of the Golden Ladle trophy, with potato bacon soup as a close runner-up.

A total of 75 people attended, donating \$1,015.40 and a bag full of Melba toast and yogurt tubes. In a further show of generosity, St. James Lutheran Church will match the cash donations dollar for dollar.

"We are truly blessed to be in such an amazing community," said council chair Kelly Hammer.

## Board of Trade hosts successful annual pancake breakfast

The New Dundee Board of Trade (BOT) welcomed approximately 250 guests to its annual pancake breakfast on Sunday, March 16 at the community centre.

A dedicated team of BOT members and community volunteers served up fluffy pancakes drizzled with local maple syrup from Maple Tap Farm, scrambled eggs donated by the Egg Farmers of Ontario through the West Family Farm, pork sausage, apple sauce, coffee, tea and juice.

The BOT expressed gratitude to the community for its continued support and



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Susan Lade proudly holds her Golden Ladle trophy which she received for her award-winning cream of mushroom soup.

to the volunteers who return each year to help make the event a success.

"It's always a great time to visit and reconnect with friends, neighbours and family," organizers said.

The BOT also hosts monthly dinner meetings at the community centre on the first Tuesday of each month. Their next gathering is scheduled for Tuesday, April 1, with social time at 6 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be Anita Cressman, who will discuss Nutrition for Learning.

Those interested in attending can RSVP by contacting [newdundeebot@yahoo.com](mailto:newdundeebot@yahoo.com).

com.

## Award-winning cream of mushroom soup

Submitted by Susan Lade

I found this recipe on Facebook in a Vegan Cooking group. I have found this to be a good source of recipes to accommodate my dairy intolerance.

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup raw cashews (not roasted)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 sweet onion finely chopped
- 3 large garlic cloves finely chopped (approx. ¾ bulb)
- 1 ½ lbs (24 oz/680 gram pkg)

cremini mushroom sliced

- ¼ cup all-purpose flour (I used gluten free all-purpose flour)
- 2 cups vegetable broth (I used homemade turkey broth; beef broth is good too)
- 6 sprigs of thyme tied with twine (I used about 2 teaspoons of dried loose thyme)
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon miso white or red (I used white wine)

### Directions:

1. In a small bowl pour boiling water over the cashews and set aside to soak.
2. Add olive oil, onions and garlic to a large saucepan at medium-high heat. Cook for about 7 minutes stirring frequently until onions are soft.
3. Add the mushrooms and cook for about 5-7 minutes.
4. Add the flour and mix. Cook for about 2 minutes.
5. Add ½ cup of broth, thyme, bay leaves, salt and pepper. Cook the soup for 5 minutes.
6. Add the remaining broth, mix, cover and let the soup simmer for 10-15 minutes.
7. While the soup is simmering, make the cashew cream. Drain the cashews and add them to a high-speed blender with the miso (wine) and ¾ cup fresh water. Blend until smooth and creamy.
8. When the soup has cooked, turn down the heat, add the cashew cream and mix thoroughly. Remove the bay leaves and the thyme sprigs (if using sprigs) and serve.

Enjoy!



Three generations serve approximately 250 people at the New Dundee Board of Trade Breakfast. From left to right are Julie Bolton, Julia Johnston and Amanda Johnston.



Egg producers of Ontario donate eggs from the West Family Farm.



# Measles outbreak grows in Southwest region

## Waterloo Region yet to see a single case

LEE GRIFFI

*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

The Waterloo Region hasn't had a single confirmed case of measles since an outbreak began late last year, but that doesn't mean they aren't working behind the scenes to keep it that way.

"We are right in the middle of enforcing the Immunization of School Pupils Act. It is the act in Ontario that requires school-children to be vaccinated," said David Aoki, the Region's director of infectious disease/chief nursing officer. "Students are allowed exemptions, either philosophical or medical."

The act covers a total of nine different vaccines including measles and Aoki said it is a yearly exercise for every student from junior kindergarten up to Grade 12.

"This is something we are doing to really promote and make sure, at least with our school-aged children, that they have the appropriate number of vaccine doses and are protected. That way, if the virus enters a school, it hopefully doesn't have an opportunity to spread," said Aoki, who added they are confident many of the region's former students are fully vaccinated as a result of the program.

The region is also busy behind the scenes working with community health-care providers to ensure follow-up with anyone needing additional doses of the vaccine.

"We are also working with physicians and our health-care community to make sure we have the right steps in place should we get a case to quickly identify it through testing and then ensure we mitigate the spread by working closely with the infected person and their family, school or workplace to hopefully minimize the spread," said Aoki.

Seven health units have reported first cases of measles recently, and Aoki said the region realizes it could be next.

"We are glad we don't have any cases at this point and we are continuing to try to prevent having any, but there is a likelihood it may come to Waterloo Region."



(VECTEEZY PHOTO)

**A distinctive red measles rash spreads across the skin, a hallmark symptom of the highly contagious virus. Health officials stress the importance of vaccination to prevent outbreaks and protect communities.**

The situation is much worse in the Southwestern Public Health Unit area, which includes all of Oxford County and the City of St. Thomas.

Dr. Ninh Tran, medical officer of health at the organization, said 195 cases have been confirmed in Elgin and Oxford counties since October 2024. The number has increased by nearly 60 since March 6 but he warned the actual number of cases could be higher.

Southwestern Public Health advised the public of the most recent exposures in Woodstock, both at the hospital's emergency room. One was on March 12 from 6:57 p.m. to 9:04 p.m. and the second was on March 14 from 12:15-2:30 p.m.

"The majority of people who've contracted measles are unvaccinated," said Tran. "Vaccines offer the best protection against the disease. The cases are predominantly in individuals who are not up to date in vaccinations, and particularly who have never been immunized against measles, and that's still the biggest risk. We

have a safe and effective vaccine that's up to 99 per-cent effective if you've had two doses."

A total of 133 of the cases have been in children under the age of 18. Tran said serious complications have been reported with some of them.

"Some patients have experienced difficulty breathing, extreme dehydration, increased heart rates, diarrhea, vomiting and high fever."

Despite the high number of measles infections in the Southwestern area, the Middlesex-London Health Unit has just one confirmed case.

The Woodstock Hospital has decided to implement precautions to help ensure the safety and health of newborns, patients, visitors and staff.

"Beginning March 19, only two essential caregivers will be allowed to accompany patients to the Maternal Child Women's Health Unit. Essential caregivers are defined as the individuals who will provide direct support to patients during labour

and delivery," said a hospital news release.

"This can include the patient's partner, a family member, or a support person. No additional visitors will be permitted during the patient's stay. This includes children and other family and friends."

All visitors to the unit are required to wear a mask.

In nearby Stratford, one new measles exposure was reported at the Stratford General Hospital emergency room on March 9 between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Anyone present at this location during this timeframe born in 1970 or later and is not up to date with their measles vaccinations was asked to call Huron Perth Public Health at 1-888-221-2133 ext. 3299. This includes those who were only present briefly as measles is highly contagious and can linger in the air for up to two hours.

According to Public Health Ontario, 252 confirmed cases and 66 probable cases of measles have been logged in the province this year as of March 12. The organization said all but five cases were associated with the outbreak in Oxford and Elgin, five cases had a history of travel and were acquired outside of Canada and one was linked to a visitor to Ontario.

"In the past, cases in Ontario have been primarily associated with travel, meaning they acquired measles outside of Canada. However, there is currently a measles outbreak in Ontario, primarily southwestern Ontario, and the majority of measles cases in 2025 have been acquired in Ontario," Public Health Ontario said in a statement.

There were only 146 cases reported in all of Canada last year, and just 12 cases were reported in Canada in 2023.

Measles is a highly contagious virus. It is airborne and can remain in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours. The virus can spread to other people when someone with measles coughs, sneezes, talks, or breathes. Measles can result in complications such as diarrhea, ear infections and pneumonia. Rarely, measles can cause brain infections and death.



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# SHOW US YOUR WILMOT



(PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOW US YOUR WILMOT)

A sure sign of spring! Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group member Kateryna Ivanchenko recently shared this photo of snow drops poking their heads up in New Hamburg.

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# Gazette Puzzles

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|----------------|-------------|--------------|
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# Stretching is super

## HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Stretching is underrated and, unfortunately, most people skip it. As a certified personal trainer, I encourage all ages to stretch before and after any physical activity. According to Wikipedia, “Stretching is a form of physical exercise in which a specific muscle or tendon (or muscle group) is deliberately expanded and flexed in order to improve the muscle’s felt elasticity and achieve comfortable muscle tone.” The result is a feeling of increased muscle control, flexibility and range of motion.

Stretching should be included in your exercise routine. For starters, regular stretching improves flexibility, increases range of motion and helps prevent injuries. Stretching also promotes good posture, better circulation, pain relief, better sleep and overall relaxation. Stretching boosts blood flow, delivering more

oxygen and nutrients throughout the body. Clients complain just how painstakingly boring stretching is but the bounty of body-boosting benefits are worth the time and effort.

There are four types of stretching, and none of them should be painful but rather an uncomfortable pull.

Each form is magnificent for maintaining optimal physical wellness. Whether you are a competitive athlete, weekend warrior or looking to step up the daily step count, there is a type of stretching suited to your needs.

**Dynamic stretching** involves active movements. Muscles are stretched through movement and warmed up as a way to jumpstart workouts. Each movement suits the activity ahead and by gradually increasing speed, the body prepares for training. This type of stretching targets specific

muscle groups required for the activity. For example, swimmers can boost blood flow through arm circles.

**Static stretching** is best done post-training. It involves stretching a muscle group to its farthest point. Each stretch is held up to thirty seconds. Static stretching is a great way to cool down and relax after an intense workout. It helps prevent stiffness while still promoting flexibility. Stretching post-exercise reduces injury.

**Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation (PNF) stretching** is more advanced. It was originally developed as rehabilitation. PNF involves stretching a muscle group and contracting it against a resistance. A stretching band is ideal when solo. With the increased buzz around PNF stretching, big-box franchises from south of our border are popping up. They offer assessments followed by one-on-one stretch sessions. PNF is a faster route to flexibility while also increasing muscle strength due to contracting muscles.

**Ballistic stretching** is gentle bouncing. Some trainers would say this type is outdated since overstretching is possible if muscles are cold. It does engage fast-twitch fibers in the muscles, increase flexibility and often a



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

**Regular stretching improves range of motion, circulation, and overall well-being—an essential part of any fitness routine.**

to seasoned athletes. Yoga-based stretching can be modified to chair yoga for those with limitations. Yoga continues to thrive thanks to tons of top-notch reasons. The improvement in balance, posture and core strength goes without staying. The rhythmic breathing technique practicing yoga reduces stress. Namaste.

Stretching safely is the key to avoiding pain. Stretch slowly, drink lots of water and take breaks.



Stretching a few times a week for even 10 minutes per session will lead to gads of gains. Listen to your body, it knows best!

# How Japan’s wonderful toilets reflect a respectful society

## FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

By Stewart Grant



After spending 10 incredible days in Japan and experiencing their culture, one simple thing I will miss is their incredible, high-tech toilets.

In Japan, everywhere you go, not just in fancy hotels but even in public parks, you will find very nice toilets.

How nice are they? Well, how about a heated seat to warm your tush while sitting? How about a built-in bidet with options to adjust the nozzle position and

strength of the spray of warm water? And yet another button to press to activate a dryer when you are all done? The Japanese have proven all of this is possible.

I was particularly surprised that these expensive, multi-featured appliances were available in public spaces accessible by anyone. This couldn’t work here in North America, could it? Can people be trusted not to abuse them?

“This is why we can’t have nice things,” is a phrase com-

monly used. It’s something we say following the careless actions of others. When people can’t be trusted, certain privileges are taken away from society, or not made available in the first place, thus making things a little less nice for us all.

That’s why I think Japan’s toilets are a byproduct of a culture based on respect – respect for property, respect for rules and respect for other people. We saw instances of this everywhere.

For example, we noticed immediately upon arrival in Tokyo that people walked on the left side of the sidewalk. Later, while visiting the Samurai Ninja Museum, we learned this tradition dates back centuries from the time of the Samurai. If Samurais walked on the right, then their swords, which pointed left, would collide when passing each other, which may inadvertently launch a duel.

Respect for the rules of traffic

were evident at each intersection, where the green “walk” and red “wait” pedestrian lights were strictly followed, even on quiet, narrow crossings with no sign of oncoming cars. People just patiently waited. This is not my style, but we followed the custom and showed respect for the system.

We saw absolutely zero graffiti while walking the sidewalks. There was hardly any litter to be seen, and this is despite (or because of?) the fact there are no public trashcans on the streets. If people have trash, they just hold onto it until they get home or until they find a bin. Even the subways were clean, and they ran on time, to the minute.

Anywhere in commerce, from stores and restaurants to hotels and transportation, business owners and employees alike showed their appreciation without fail to customers, uttering cheer-

fully what seems to be the most common words in the Japanese language, “arigato gozaimasu,” which translates to “thank you very much.”

As I make this list, I’m realizing many of these aspects of kindness and respect are similar to what we experience here in small-town Ontario. I suppose what felt so unique about it in Japan is these positive traits held true in huge cities containing millions of people.

Here in our small town, we give a friendly hello to people that we pass on the trail. We walk on the right side. We don’t have a graffiti problem. We do have some litter, and the public restrooms do get trashed occasionally.

But maybe we’re not that far off from earning our first fancy public toilet. On a cold Canadian winter day, I’ll bet that heated seat would feel pretty good.

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# The reluctant fisherman

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



There was good news and bad news. The good news was we were going to stay in a treehouse cabin at Shogomoc Reach in south-western New Brunswick. Cool! The potentially bad news was Shogomoc Reach owner Mark Alward, an award-winning tournament fisherman, was going to take us out fishing.

I am not a fisherman in the same way that I am not the Pope; not even close. Many years ago, I was invited to be part of a bass-fishing group that spent a day each year on Long Point Bay. Others caught fish. I got sick on the way home and thus ended my fishing career until we went to visit Alward.

Alward met us at the cabins. They're called treehouse cabins and while they are not suspended in trees, they are built among the trees that line the shore of the absolutely beautiful Saint John River. They are way more than comfortable; fully furnished with everything you might need for a pleasant getaway. They are raised on stilts, so the view of the river, seen from welcoming Muskoka chairs on the porch, is spectacular.

And Alward has supplied a variety of amenities from horseshoes to plastic-axe throwing. There is a long, inviting dock reaching out into the river, just begging visitors to snap a selfie. Most importantly, perhaps, there is a hot tub tucked into a private corner of the space under the raised cabin.

In short, since we'd come with some food supplies, it was very clear we could happily stay at the treehouse cabin for our entire stay, never venturing afield.

But this was not to be, for our itinerary also noted Alward was going to take us fishing.

We piled into his pickup truck, hauling a trailered boat, and headed to a secluded lake he knows and loves. En route, he regaled us with stories about fishing tournaments, about building the two existing cabins and his plans to build two more, and about the unique folk who live in this part of New Brunswick. Like many terrific Maritimers I have met, Alward is a fabulous storyteller.

Now, about that boat. I could

not help but notice this craft had a large, flat surface at the front; the kind I had seen in pictures and videos with fisherfolk standing to fish while the boat rocked on the waves.

That, I knew, I could not do. I have a lousy sense of balance and I was confident I would end up in the lovely, secluded lake, soaked and scaring the fish, and probably getting snagged on someone else's hook in the process.

After a rather exciting trip on rather exciting back roads, we arrived at the lake and Alward backed the trailer into the water and launched our boat. We clambered aboard and settled back in a sitting position to enjoy the ride as we headed for the area where Alward was sure we would catch fish.

The lake was calm and peaceful and Alward had a small, clever motor that uses GPS to keep the boat in one spot. Nonetheless, I still knew I could not risk standing up in the boat.

"Stand up in the boat," said Alward. "Here's your pole and it's baited. Do you know how to cast?"

I had a vague memory of using a casting rod and reel. I also knew that if I cast, the momentum was likely to carry me straight into the drink. But I tried.

And, to my shock – and probably Alward's, as well – I succeeded. I didn't topple into the water. I

soon had my sea legs – yes, okay, it was very calm – and actually began hauling in bass!

Over the course of a couple of highly enjoyable hours, I landed about half a dozen. I am loathe to mention my partner tripled that take, while Alward, who spent a lot of his time putting lures on our hooks, still outdid me by a considerable number.

But I figured I had succeeded on two counts; I actually caught fish, all of which we released, and I stayed dry. Amazing!

All the time we were on the lake, we were entirely alone. No one else appeared onshore or on the water. We heard the cry of loons. It was magical.

And when Alward drove us back to the cabin, it was pretty magical there, too. There are fire pits closer to the river, with more Muskoka chairs. The two cabins are nicely distanced from each other. We greeted the couple who were staying in the other cabin as we passed them on our way down to the dock, but that was the extent of human interaction.

Shogomoc Reach is near Ritchie, N.B., a 45-minute drive from Fredericton along the Saint John River – also known as the Wolastoq in deference to the original name given by First Nations inhabitants.

For more information, visit [treehousenb.com](http://treehousenb.com). Alward would be glad to host you, and happy to take you on one of the most enjoyable fishing adventures you will ever experience. As a bass-fishing expert, I can confidently guarantee this.

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

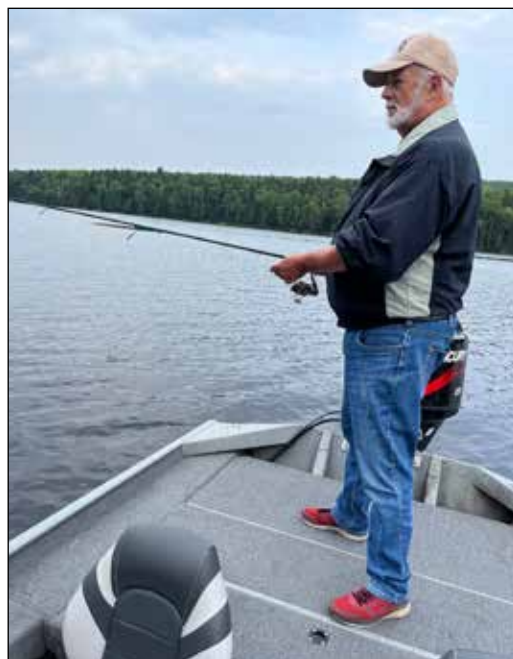
Our treehouse cabin at Shogomoc Reach, N.B., with the Saint John River in the background.



Our host and fishing guide, Mark Alward.



Mark launching the boat with no help at all from the author.



The author trying not to fall into the lake.



Success!



Two cabins now, with more to come.



# If you are thinking about selling this spring, do these things to get your home ready

## EXPERT REAL ESTATE ADVICE

By Isabel Livingston



We know that spring is one of the most popular times to list your home for sale. Gone is the nasty weather, the cold days and the holiday season. So, as you prepare for the spring market and listing your home, let this article guide you to what is actually important for the sale of your home.

No matter the reason, letting go of a home can be an emotional experience. The same applies to buying a home. Buyers want to feel at home; they want to envision themselves living in your home. For this reason, curb appeal and first impressions are so important. You have seven seconds to get their interest and then an additional 23 seconds to make

a first impression. Think about visuals, smells and ease. These are the three areas we are going to touch on today.

First is visuals. Your home needs to present well visually for a prospective buyer to feel like it could be their home. Decluttering personal items will achieve 50 per cent of this goal. Less is more and things like family photos and bold decor and artwork can sometimes distract from the home itself. Eliminating bright and bold paint colours is another way to allow the space to feel more neutral. Lighter colours create the illusion of more open and larger spaces. On that note, no one wants to buy a dark home.

Changing any burnt-out light bulbs to allow for ample light in your home is a great way to boost appeal.

Creating a great-smelling environment is a sure way to invite buyers in. Everyone likes to be around things that smell nice. A nice deep clean when getting ready to list your home has many benefits. Bonus tip; cleaning out or decluttering your closets and cabinets is a great way to show off storage space. Aside from a deep clean, lighting a candle an hour before showings or having wall fresheners plugged in is a great option. I love to encourage sellers that on a nice sunny and warm day, having a window or two cracked allowing fresh air in is a great idea, too. Sidenote, do not do this on a cold day; there is nothing worse than walking into a cold home.

When it comes to ease, here is what I mean. Any tedious little repairs or touch ups you have been putting off; now is the time to do them. Create a move-in ready space so buyers won't have to worry about fixing that squeaky



(VECTEEZY PHOTO)

**Preparing a home with curb appeal, inviting scents, and move-in-ready ease can make all the difference in attracting the right buyer.**


door or loose handles.

My last tip is to find a qualified and trust real estate agent to help guide you towards your goals with success. Take your time and interview your agent before deciding to work with them. You are hiring them to do a job, you want to make sure that you are going to be satisfied with everything they are going to do. After all, it's not just putting a sign in the ground. How are they going

to promote your home and get it sold?

If nothing else, I hope you have a wonderful day and a fabulous week! For any questions or article suggestions please reach out at 226-232-4236 or ilivingstonsells@gmail.com.

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



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# A eucatastrophic nation

CONNOR LUCZKA

Gazette Correspondent

In a lecture at the University of St Andrews, British fantasist J. R. R. Tolkien posited an antonym for catastrophe – that just as there is catastrophe, the sudden change from good to bad, there is also eucatastrophe, the sudden change from bad to good.

Tolkien gave that lecture in March 1939. He wasn't talking about reality in that lecture, but it is difficult to think reality didn't influence him at least a little. Tensions were rising in Europe with the old enemy and just a few months after his lecture, England would declare war on Germany and many of Tolkien's young students at Oxford would go off to France to fight – something he himself did when he was a young student at Oxford during the First World War.

When September rolled around and

tanks rolled through Warsaw, did Tolkien think about eucatastrophe? It must have felt uneasy at that point. Gut-wrenching. It must have felt like history repeating itself.

In November, history repeated itself on our continent when Donald Trump was re-elected as president of the United States – though his short tenure so far has been anything but a repeat of his last time in office. Along with some questionable domestic actions, he has violated the trade agreement his own administration signed in 2018, ignited an on-again-off-again trade war on the continent and has made repeated threats to our sovereignty in Canada.

Even worse, his supporters have latched onto the idea of the "51st state" and whether because they think it's funny or they think it's a good idea, Trump has not been the last to make the suggestion.

What a catastrophe.

Yet, coast to coast to coast, the reaction has been anything but a catastrophe. I ask anyone reading, have you seen our country so united behind Canada? I haven't. Not recently and certainly not in my lifetime.

What does it say about us that we have a word like catastrophe so common in our collective lexicons, when hope is all around us and the goodwill of our neighbours can so often be seen in this country. Here in Stratford, we at the Times chronicle this goodwill bi-weekly on the local level, but nationally, we have known eucatastrophe before.

Vimy Ridge, Terry Fox's run, Laura Secord's walk, Sidney Crosby's 2010 Golden Goal, Connor McDavid's recreation just last month in the 4 Nations Face-Off, Gander's hospitality after 9/11, the Kitchen Accords, Banting's breakthrough in my hometown of London, Ont.

Tommy freaking Douglas.

Our nation has seen eucatastrophe before but it has never, ever, ever happened on accident. We have never just stumbled into it. Eucatastrophe has only ever been possible because when Canadians have been face to face with catastrophe, they have fought against it. This time around, as we face a catastrophe like never before, we can't just sit and wait for the sudden change from bad to good. That's not what Canadians have done in the past and that is certainly not what Canadians want to do now.

A catastrophe may be around the corner for us. In fact, it is hard to imagine that catastrophe won't crash into our world – yet eucatastrophe might also be in our future if we fight for it.

It's a moot point at this point, when Canadians are so united already, but it needs to be said regardless:

Elbows up everyone.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR - MARCH/APRIL 2025

### MONDAY, MARCH 24

**Wilmot Council meeting**  
7-9 p.m.

Council chambers  
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

**Community Dining for Seniors in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships**  
12:00 p.m.

Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please register by March 21 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.  
Linwood Community Centre  
5279 Ament Line, Linwood

### SUNDAY, MARCH 30

**Tree Pruning with Mike Yost**  
1:30 - 3:30 pm

Free workshop will cover all aspects of tree pruning. For details and registration go to [letstreewilmot.ca/events](http://letstreewilmot.ca/events).  
Mannheim Community Center  
1467 Mannheim Road

### TUESDAY, APRIL 1

**Getting Off Gas - Electrify Your Home**  
7:00 p.m.

A free webinar hosted by the Nith Valley EcoBusters and Reep Green Solutions. For more information check out [nveco-busters.com](http://nveco-busters.com)  
This is a virtual event

### TUESDAY, APRIL 1 CONTINUED

**Ostomy Support Group Meeting**  
7:00 p.m.

Speaker - Karen Skinner, Social Worker  
"Turning the Tide" - coping and navigating life after ostomy surgery. Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome.  
(519)273-4327  
93 Morgan St., Stratford

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2

**East Zorra-Tavistock Council meeting**  
9:00 a.m.

Council Chambers  
89 Loveys Street East, Hickson

### TUESDAY, APRIL 8

**Wellesley Council meeting**  
6:45 p.m.

Council chambers  
4805 William Hastings Line, Crosshill

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9

**Community Dining for Seniors in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships**  
12:00 p.m.

Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please register by April 4 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.  
Wellesley Recreation Complex, 1401 Queen's Bush Rd., Wellesley

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9 CONTINUED

**Tavistock Community Health Inc. (TCHI) Annual Meeting**  
7:00 pm

For more info contact chairman Frank Meconi; [fameconi@rogers.com](mailto:fameconi@rogers.com)  
Tavistock Men's Club Hall  
78 Woodstock St N, Tavistock

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

**Community Dining for Seniors in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships**  
12:00 p.m.

Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please register by April 11 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.  
Wilmot Rec Complex  
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

**Community Dining for Seniors in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships**  
12:00 p.m.

Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please register by April 18 by calling 519-664-1900 or toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.  
Linwood Community Centre, 5279 Ament Line, Linwood

### MONDAY, APRIL 28

**Wilmot Council meeting**  
7-11 p.m.

Council chambers  
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

### FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

**Tavistock Seniors Activities**

Inside walking Monday & Wednesday morning 8:30-12. Contact: Larry Brown 519-240-6715

Pickleball Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon, 12-4. Wednesday night 7-9. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052

Cards Monday, Wednesday afternoon 1-4, euchre, crib (bring board), etc. Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118

Crokinole Monday, Wednesday morning 8:30-12, Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: John Schultz 519-655-2346

Shuffleboard @ arena, Wednesday 12:30-4 and Thursday 10-4. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052.

VON Smart Seniors Exercise, Tuesday and Thursday morning 9-10; Village Manor 10:25-11:25. Contact: 519-539-1231 x 6285

Tavistock Memorial Hall  
1 Adam St. Tavistock ON



The  
Wilmot-Tavistock  
Gazette

Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.  
Contact: [thewtgazette@gmail.com](mailto:thewtgazette@gmail.com)

## PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

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

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**To book space in our classified section, contact Sharon Leis at 519-580-5418 or sharonbleis@gmail.com**

## HELP WANTED



**Recreation Department is hiring two (2) positions:**

**One (1) Recreation Services Representative**

Deadline to submit resume:  
Monday, March 24, 2025  
and

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## Weekly Quiz Answers

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. RBC, TD,   | 6. Public  |
| Scotiabank,   | Speaking   |
| BMO, CIBC     | 7. 2011    |
| 2. Nevada     | 8. Hermès  |
| 3. Scotland   | 9. Stefani |
| 4. Crocodiles | 10. Quebec |
| 5. 20         |            |

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Thrift Centre, Short Stop, Sobeys, Office Pro, No Frills, Mario's Chicken, Library, McDonalds, Tim Hortons, Nith Valley Butcher, The Whining Tree, Town Square Pharmasave, Heart'n Home Creations, Cook's Pharmacy, Great Canadian Dollar, Wilmot Recreation Centre, Pizza Arca, Old Country Restaurant, Cloverleaf Leaf Farms

### Tavistock

Double D's Restaurant, D&D Homestyle Cuisine, Tim Hortons, Hasty Market, Sam's Independent Quehl's Restaurant, IDA Pharmacy, Shell Gas, Library, Tavistock Arena, Scotia Bank

### Baden

Tim Hortons, Circle K, Subway, Mars Variety, Baden Coffee Company, Pharmacy in Baden Plaza

### New Dundee

New Dundee Village Market

### Wellesley

Pym's, Schmidt's Bulk Pantry, Cook's Pharmacy Schmidtsville Restaurant, Wellesley Service

### Shakespeare

Shakespeare Brewery, Shakespeare Variety

### St. Agatha

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