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John Schultz, left, and Diane serve additional portions of pickerel to guests enjoying the all-you-can-eat fish fry at the Tavistock Men's Club. Full story on page 4.

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

EZT councillor asking for reduced speed limit on all township residential streets

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

"Forty is the new 50."

That's what East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) Ward 3 Coun. Jeremy Smith called his notice of motion at last week's regular township meeting. Smith's motion asked "that council direct staff to prepare a comprehensive report, including costs, on the implementation of a 40 km/hr speed limit, reduced from 50 km/hr."

No specific timeline was set in the motion, but Smith is asking for the report to come to a future meeting of the current council, which means before the end of October.

"Since 2017, since an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act, municipalities have proactively reduced speed limits on residential streets, commonly to 40 km/hr," said Smith. "Even 30 km/hr has been applied in instances where it's deemed appropriate."

He said many municipalities use what are called gateway signs at neighbourhood entry and exit points, something which eliminates the need for sign installations on every street.

"The impetus of bringing this to council and staff has been my firsthand experience, mostly in my own neighbourhood as a driver where I do feel 40 km/hr is an appropriate

Continued on page 3

Regional council approves additional water extraction from Wilmot

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The Region of Waterloo met for seven-plus hours last week with water dominating the narrative. What resulted was the approval of more H2O being pumped out of Wilmot Township, but with some protections in place.

Councillors okayed an additional 15 litres per second from the Wilmot Centre well supply, something Mayor Natasha Salonen said will assist with growth areas until a new side stream system comes online to increase water supply later this year.

"(Those growth areas are) Kitchener, part of Cambridge, Waterloo and part of

Woolwich Township. The other component, which I was particularly happy to see passed unanimously, was an amendment to protect Wilmot residents around this well."

As has been widely reported in the Gazette and other area media, there have been over 30 complaints of well

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Wilmot mayor has safeguards passed

Continued from page 1

interference from Wilmot residents who have gone through stretches with no available water. Many of them feel the issue stems from too much water being pumped away from the township.

"I wanted to ensure we are properly investigating that and seeing if the correlation is actually a connection," Salonen said. "While we are waiting for staff to bring back a new well interference policy (in August), I want to make sure my residents have access to water."

Salonen explained that while the water will be pumped away from Wilmot, emergency water will be supplied to anyone who is experiencing a shortage.

Coun. Mike Harris, who represents the City of Kitchener, was able to pass a few motions, including a third-party review by the Ontario Clean Water Corporation (OCWA), a provincial Crown corporation.

"They will essentially validate the timelines and actual work staff are recommending, and I think that's very important as there has been a loss of trust in the general public in terms of how things have unfolded with water-capacity constraints," the Wilmot mayor said.

Salonen said the move is similar to what Wilmot did with its 2026 budget process in hiring KPMG, a third party brought in to instill faith in the process. She is also seeing a shift in how regional council is voting on important water issues.

Citizens for Safe Ground Water (CSGW) has been a very vocal supporter of change in how the region deals with water issues, and the group issued a statement following last week's meeting. They are concerned about the increased pumping by the region.

"This means our aquifer will face increased pumping stress over the coming summer months, and we are still a summer away from seeing the new well interference policy and committee formally established in August," the group said in a statement.

The group added the region did not get a blank check thanks to Salonen's motion that immediately puts strict interim protections in place to guard households during this vulnerable summer period.

"This was only possible because of the incredible courage of our neighbours who stood up to delegate and speak truth to power today," the statement adds.

The organization said residents must

remain vigilant about the extra pumping but added the burden of proof when it comes to well interference has changed.

"Until the new policy is adopted, if you report water loss reasonably believed to be linked to municipal pumping, it is now the region's job to prove its pumps are not the cause."

The statement added any future requests to extract more Wilmot water must now go through a strict screening process that requires an assessment of impacts on surrounding private wells, costing and implementation options to connect affected private properties to the municipal water system, and costing and implementation options for drilling deep replacement wells or providing other secure, permanent water solutions for residents.

CSGW is also advising residents to closely monitor their wells, document any changes in water pressure or quality and report issues immediately to the region's 24/7 hotline at 519-575-4400 and to CSGW.

Salonen added the group's vigilance has been a huge addition to the fight to ensure Wilmot residents provide her with real-time information on what's happening

under the ground.

"Samantha (Lernout) and Rory (Farnan) send me updates and I text them regularly. It's been really helpful because out of 22,000 residents I represent, I can't know everything that's happening unless it's brought to my attention."

She added she can tell people to report instances of well interference to the region, but sometimes having a neighbour provide support is a huge help.

"I would say it's important to have advocates on issues like this, but we also have amazing residents who have stepped up to advocate on behalf of their neighbours."

Salonen explained she's optimistic when it comes to the water supply for Wilmot residents in the future, but there is much work left to be done to strike an appropriate balance.

"I still think we aren't really there and we've seen that from the development community. They're still not satisfied with the pace at which we are going, and frankly, I share a lot of those concerns. I am pleased to see the province is formally engaged, and I think that will continue to drive positive outcomes."

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Smith looking for 40 km/hr maximum

Continued from page 1

level, and as an avid walker and cyclist.” Smith said road safety, as it relates to speed and driver behaviour, continues to be a hot topic of conversation with residents in the township.

“In Innerkip, we still have upwards of two kilometres of streetscape that does not have the added safety of a sidewalk. Think of a young mother with one child on foot and another in a stroller, or a senior navigating a roadway with their beloved dog.”

He added getting around on those streets, especially during the winter, is particularly challenging as snow buildup causes streets to narrow.

Smith also quoted the Canadian Association of Road Safety Professionals in his address to council. The group said traffic speeds have a huge influence on not only the prevention of incidents and injuries, but also societal choices on walking and cycling and the impact of motor-vehicle use on overall public health.

“The pedestrian survival rate rises measurably with speed reduction from just 20 per cent at the current 50 km/hr to 60 per cent at 40 km/hr and 90 per cent at 30 km/hr,” he added. “There should be consideration for that (30 km/hr) threshold, perhaps in our school zones and on other streets where the configuration is problematic.”

Ward 3’s other elected official, Coun. Matthew Gillespie, said the majority of people are currently driving below the current 50 km/hr maximum. He also asked what kind of cooperation EZT would need from the county if the township were to implement a blanket speed of 40 km/hr in residential areas, considering Oxford has a considerable amount of control over roadways.

“I guess that would be part of what staff would be looking at,” responded Mayor Phil Schaefer. “I don’t think there’s any indication we would be affecting any county roads. This is just residential streets in our neighbourhoods.”

EZT CAO Karen DePrest said the report would be a comprehensive one and it would note the township has no authority to make suggestions for county roads.

“We can only speak to our township roads. If council wanted to forward the report after it was compiled to the county for their consideration, we could do that.”

Coun. Scott Rudy said one of the biggest issues from residents during his last two terms on council has been speeding on county roads.

“I think we have the same issue on our residential streets. ... It’s come up as an issue everywhere, and more municipalities are putting in safety zones or reduced speed, even to 30 (km/hr) on smaller roads. I’m agreeable to looking into it.”

Schaefer explained a township report would be timely since Oxford County is working on a Road Safety Strategy and the EZT mayor will sit on a committee.

“We have our first meeting in early July, and although that’s a county-based initiative, I think something like this could be interwoven with that to determine a strategy. I think we want to consult with the OPP and other municipalities who have done this.”

He added it would be a good idea to consult areas with more police protection than in EZT.

“The OPP frankly don’t have the capacity to be covering a lot of our residential streets in their patrols, but others may. Just get some feedback from them on how it’s going.”

Smith explained there are three streets in the Village of Tavistock where 40 km/hr zones currently exist. The councillor also expressed interest in other traffic-calming measures such as raised crossings, median islands, curb extensions, speed humps and speed feedback signs.

He has served as an elected official in EZT for 20 years and is seeking re-election for a sixth consecutive term in the fall. His motion passed unanimously.

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Tavistock Men's Club fish fry reels in another successful year

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

More than 600 people packed the Tavistock Men's Club facilities last Wednesday evening for the club's annual fish fry, making it another successful fundraiser for the community organization.

Fish lovers from across the area lined up to enjoy what many described as some of the best all-you-can-eat pickerel dinners around.

Along with generous portions of freshly prepared fish, guests were treated to fries, coleslaw, tartar sauce and ice cream for dessert.

Judging by the comments heard throughout the clubhouse and hall, those attending left satisfied.

"Wasn't that about the best fish dinner you could ever have thought possible?" was a common sentiment shared by diners during the evening.

The event required the efforts of numerous volunteers, including club members, their spouses and other community supporters, who worked together to keep the serving lines moving smoothly.

In addition to serving guests at the hall, volunteers also prepared takeout meals for people unable to attend, including local farmers busy working in the fields during the spring planting season.

Tavistock Men's Club president Brian

Boland and fish-fry chair Ross Schumm said they were pleased with the turnout and thanked area residents for their continued support of the annual fundraiser.

Many visitors also took the opportunity to purchase some of the Men's Club's well-known sauerkraut before heading home.

Club members reminded residents that quantities are limited and encouraged anyone interested in purchasing sauerkraut to do so before it sells out.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Patrons line up along the newly paved driveway at the Tavistock Men's Club during the organization's annual fish-fry fundraiser last week.



More than 600 people attended the annual Tavistock Men's Club fish fry, filling both the clubhouse and hall. Among those enjoying the meal was Verlus Bender.

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Annual duck race raises funds for Wellesley Lions Club

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Hundreds of spectators gathered in Wellesley recently for the annual Wellesley Lions Club Duck Race, a popular fundraiser that combines family fun with support for local community initiatives.

Held each year in the creek below the dam near the community park, the event

sees approximately 1,500 yellow rubber ducks sponsored by participants and released into the water to race toward the finish line.

As always, excitement built along the creek as participants watched to see which ducks would cross the finish line first and claim the top prizes.

Prizes were awarded to the owners of the

first three ducks to complete the course.

The annual fundraiser continues to be one of the Lions Club's most popular community events, attracting families and supporters while raising money for future projects and charitable initiatives throughout the area.

Club members thanked everyone who sponsored ducks, attended the event and

supported the fundraiser.

They also expressed appreciation to several prize winners who donated a portion of their winnings back to the club. Those funds will be directed toward the local food cupboard and other community initiatives.

Perfect weather helped make this year's event another successful and enjoyable day for participants of all ages.



(WENDY RICHARSON PHOTOS)

Winners of the annual Wellesley Lions Club Duck Race are, from left, Karen Gosine, whose duck finished first and earned the \$1,000 top prize, Cathy Koch, whose duck placed second and won \$250, and Joe Nowak, whose third-place duck earned \$100.



Karen Gosine, Cathy Koch and Joe Nowak display their prizes after their ducks finished first, second and third, respectively, in the annual Wellesley Lions Club Duck Race. Lions Club members thanked everyone who participated and supported the fundraiser, with some prize money being donated back to support the local food cupboard.

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Exhibit celebrating holidays and traditions opens as Plattsville prepares for 175th anniversary

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

As the Plattsville and District Heritage Society prepares to celebrate a major milestone in the village's history later this month, it is also inviting residents to reflect on the traditions, holidays and celebrations that bring communities together year after year.

The society recently opened its annual summer exhibit, *Holidays and Celebrations that Bring Us Together*, at the Archive and Museum at Chesterfield, featuring more than 30 holidays, observances and celebrations recognized throughout Canada.

Curator Marg Schiedel said the exhibit includes everything from New Year's Day, Valentine's Day and Thanksgiving to more recent observances such as Pride Month, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Pink Shirt Day and International Women's Day.

"We've tried to hit pretty much every holiday or celebration that we in Canada observe," Schiedel said, noting the exhibit combines artifacts, decorations,

photographs and historical information explaining the origins and significance of each occasion.

The exhibit blends historical and contemporary traditions, displaying everything from vintage Christmas items and Easter decorations to modern symbols like ugly Christmas sweaters and Halloween displays.

"We did not zero into any particular decade," Schiedel said. "We wanted to show both the symbols and some history of when we started celebrating and why we celebrate."

According to society president Denise Tew, one of the exhibit's goals is education.

"Some people will look at the display and go, 'Oh, isn't that great?' Another person will read every piece of history just to learn, but everybody's interest is different," Tew said.

Schiedel said the exhibit also helps explain the meaning behind celebrations many people observe without necessarily knowing their history.

"The boys that I showed around this morning said they wear pink shirts, but they never knew the story behind it," she

said. "The information is there for people that maybe don't know why we celebrate Pride or why we mark some of these days."

The exhibit opened with a successful grand opening June 7 and will remain open Saturdays through Sept. 19, as well as by appointment. The museum is also improving accessibility this season with the installation of a new access ramp and accessible, portable washroom facilities.

Plattsville prepares for 175th anniversary celebration

The heritage society's next major undertaking is the Plattsville 175th Anniversary Celebration, set for June 20 at the Plattsville Memorial Community Arena and Lions Park.

Running from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., the free event will feature a full day of activities, entertainment, heritage displays and community gatherings celebrating the village's past and present.

The festivities begin with a firefighters' breakfast before a noon parade featuring the Ingersoll Pipe Band. Opening ceremonies are scheduled for 1 p.m. and are expected to include Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman and Oxford MP Arpan Khanna.

Other attractions include a vendor market, car and tractor show, Touch-a-Truck, children's games, heritage displays, Indigenous crafts and drumming, live entertainment, roller skating, line dancing

and a custom drone show designed around Plattsville's history and identity.

Inside Lions Hall, visitors will find a special heritage display showcasing artifacts and stories from Plattsville and surrounding communities including Chesterfield, Bright, Ratho and Blink Bonnie. The display will also feature recreations of a schoolroom, a general store and the bedroom of Plattsville founder Sam Platt's wife, offering visitors a glimpse into the community's early years.

Tew said the anniversary celebration is about more than commemorating a date.

"It's a free event. The only thing that'll cost you is if you buy food," she said. "Just come on out and join us."

Volunteer Donna Caldecott said events like the anniversary celebration help strengthen community connections as Plattsville continues to grow.

"With our town growing the way it is, this type of event brings people together and creates that sense of community," she said.

The celebration is being led by the Plattsville and District Heritage Society with support from numerous community partners, sponsors and volunteers.

"We have an incredible team of volunteers," Tew said. "It's going to be an awesome day."



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTOS)

Seated from left to right in the Canada Day display at the Archive and Museum at Chesterfield are Plattsville and District Heritage Society volunteer Donna Caldecott, society president Denise Tew and society curator Marg Schiedel. The display is part of the museum's annual exhibit, *Holidays and Celebrations that Bring Us Together*.



The Easter Display is one of well over 30 displays featuring items, photos and information about holidays and celebrations celebrated by Canadians – part of the annual exhibit at the Archive and Museum at Chesterfield.



The Christmas display – part of the Plattsville and District Heritage Society's annual exhibit, *Holidays and Celebrations that Bring Us Together*.



The museum's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation display features orange shirts, red dresses and a handstitched quilt featuring the slogan, "Every Child Matters."

Oxford County seeking community feedback for new official plan

Four workshops and online survey available for residents

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Oxford County is hosting four in-person workshops and launching an online survey to gather feedback to help develop its new official plan (OP).

“The county’s population is expected to jump to more than 200,000 over the next 20 to 30 years. The new official plan will help shape this future growth by guiding housing and employment planning in Oxford, supporting infrastructure and other services, protecting the environment and overall community design,” said a county press release.

An OP is the key planning document that directs a municipality’s future growth and development. It outlines how land should be used and ensures new development is supported by appropriate infrastructure and public services through a series of policies and planning tools.

“The current plan was originally approved in 1995, and it has been an incredibly effective tool to help us guide growth over the last number of decades. It has

been reviewed and updated from time to time over that period,” said April Nix, the county’s manager of planning policy.

“We’ve kept it up to date as things have changed and as we’ve gone through growth and development as a community. One of the things we’re finding now is that we’re seeing a lot more significant changes both in terms of the amount of population growth that we’ve been seeing over the last five to 10 years and the amount of population growth it looks like we’re going to be dealing with going forward.”

Nix added there are some other legislative and regulatory requirements in the province the county will have to meet with the new plan. She said now is the time for residents across the county to get involved in the process.

“The visioning we’re doing right now will help us shape the goals and objectives for the plan in terms of how we’re going to grow, where we’re going to grow and what that looks like. Also, how we create a balance so we protect the things that are important to our communities like farmland, natural spaces and water resources.”

She said there are many questions to ask, including what change looks like and where there are opportunities to get behind some of that change.

“And to think about this at a countywide scale, at a communitywide scale, to have some of those conversations early rather than waiting for maybe that individual development application to show up in your community or in your neighbourhood. This actually helps set the rules and requirements that influence those types of things when they happen at that local level.”

Nix said she would like to see people from all parts of the county get involved in the process to have their say, and now is the time to get involved and help Oxford set the vision for the plan in terms of how to deal with growth moving forward.

“What does growth and development look like in Thamesford, in Tavistock, in the Village of Norwich, in Mount Elgin or Drumbo, which are equally fully serviced settlement areas. What does growth look like in some of our rural villages, which could be substantively different from

Tillsonburg, Ingersoll or Woodstock?”

What are some of the things maybe that those villages need? And I’m sure there are ideas out there about that. So, you know, that kind of thinking and that kind of feedback is really, really important right now. This is the kind of feedback we’re looking for through the visioning workshops and through the community survey online.

Residents can attend one of four in-person visioning workshops to have their say and are encouraged to register online in advance at www.oxfordcounty.ca/official-plan-engage. The survey closes on Aug. 31. In-person Events are scheduled in Innerkip, Mount Elgin, Woodstock and Embro between June 16 and 25. Nix said anyone interested in attending should RSVP so the county has enough staff onsite.

To learn more, provide feedback through the online survey, or submit comments at any time throughout the official plan process, visit www.oxfordcounty.ca/official-plan-engage.

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Fortino triumphs in rematch against Hagarty at World Crokinole Championship

NATHAN WALSH

World Crokinole Championship committee

It was a case of déjà vu as the World Championship final at the Tavistock and District recreation centre over the weekend was a repeat of the previous year with Devon Fortino facing off against Shawn Hagarty.

In what was a barn-burner of a match, Fortino avenged his loss from the previous year to win the 2026 World Crokinole Championship.

Fortino won the first game of the best-of-three final, and was one round away from winning the match in the second game before Hagarty extended the match.

"He's such a good player," said Fortino of his championship opponent. "I was telling myself that I have to win now. I really didn't want it to go to a third game."

Nevertheless, Fortino got the lead in the third game and when he was once again one round from victory, he capped off the match with a perfect round (scoring all eight shots for 20s) to become World Champion.

Fortino and Hagarty are now crokinole's greatest rivalry, after having played a number of memorable matches, and pushed the boundaries of 20s shooting. A month ago, in a match at the Ontario Championships, the pair shot back-to-back perfect rounds

in overtime before Hagarty won the match. In the final of a tournament in Tuscarora First Nations last August that Fortino won, the pair shot a combined 85 out of 90 open 20s (94 per cent)

The Fortino vs Hagarty rematch was the fourth rematch in the history of the World Crokinole Championship final. Interestingly, every player who lost their first matchup returned victorious in the second match: Brian Cook lost to Bruce Hartung in 2005 before winning against him in 2007, Cook also lost to Justin Slater in 2010 and won the rematch in 2014, while Slater lost to Jon Conrad in 2012, but won in 2018.

Ryan Buhr of Fort Wayne, Ind., won the third-place match against 2019 finalist, Darren Carr of Shelburne. Former champions Connor Reinman and Jason Beierling were eliminated in the quarterfinal stage, as were James Medway of Simcoe and Jamie Harter from Stevens Point, Wis.

Devon Fortino is an MRI technician from Astorville who has only been playing crokinole on the competitive circuit for two years, but has already had substantial success, finishing second and now first in his only World Championship appearances.

Fortino and Hagarty also faced each other in final of doubles competition. Hagarty partnered with third-place finisher Ryan Buhr and won the championship match



(MARGARET HERLICK PHOTO)

2026 World Crokinole Champion, Devon Fortino of Astorville, Ont., stands centre in front of the World's Largest Crokinole Board, flanked by longstanding WCC Committee members Mary Alice Roth and John Schultz.

by a score of 7-1 against Fortino and his partner, Josh Carrafiello, the second-place finisher from 2024.

The third-place match of the doubles competition was won by Justin and Fred Slater, previous five-time doubles world champions, against last year's victors, Andrew Hutchinson and Jeremy Tracey.

The World Crokinole Championship hosted their 25th annual tournament on Saturday, June 6, with another year of record-setting numbers. A total of 430 people participated including contestants from Japan, Hungary, Germany, Australia, First Nations, 18 U.S. states and seven provinces.

Weber wins again

In the Cues division, Oscar Weber came away with two trophies, winning both the singles category and the doubles with his brother, Paul Weber.

It was the fourth time Oscar Weber had won either category. He previously won the singles events in 2004, 2005 and 2024. He first won the doubles championship in 1999 with his brother, Enoch Weber, and now has won three times with his brother, Paul Weber (previously in 2007 and 2011).

The Webers won the doubles final match against another pair of brothers, Dave and Dennis Brubacher. Last year's fourth place finishers, Wayne Kipfer and Lorraine Ziegler improved their position to finish third, ahead of Lorne and Karl Steckley.

In the cues singles category, Herb Rau of Kitchener finished second, with David Notzold of Elmira third and Lorraine Ziegler, St. Agatha, finishing fourth. For both Rau and Ziegler, the performance was a large improvement, as neither had

finished inside of the top 10 before.

In other singles play, David Whyte won the recreational singles title, Knox Clark won the intermediate division and Morgan Webster won the junior division.

The youth doubles competition was won by Dietrich and Jude Clark. The recreational doubles competition was won by Benjamin Doner and Colin Murphy.

World Crokinole Championship celebrates 25th anniversary with world's largest board

The major showpiece of the 25th World Crokinole Championship was the unveiling of the World's Largest Crokinole Board. The 10-foot diameter board was manufactured by Tracey Boards.

While used as the backdrop for the photo gallery, the board was also set out for the Friday Night Social and part of Saturday to allow people to play on the oversized board.

On display as well were photos and stories from each year of the 25-year history of the event, along with antique boards, one loaned by Tracey Boards and another from the Tavistock and District Historical Society.

A replica of the Ekhardt Wettlauffer board was also on display, loaned from the Schneider Haus Museum in Kitchener. The board, built in 1876 in Sebastopol, is now 150 years old.

The 25th edition also featured a "Tournament of Champions" event at the Friday Night Social, including nine prior World Champions. The mini event was won by Hagarty, who defeated Ray Beierling in the finals.



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Special thanks to the staff at Tavistock Recreation Facility and all the volunteers who helped on Friday and Saturday

The World Crokinole Committee:

Jason Beierling, Keith Brenneman, Paul Epp, Val Kropf, Allen Pengelley, Kathy Rosenberg, John Schultz, Jeremy Tracey, Nathan Walsh, Mary Alice Roth, Sherrill Calder, Gloria Walsh

Continued from page 8

Overseas competitors at the event also had a good deal of success. The Hungarian doubles team of Árpád Lonsták and Nikolett Huszárík advanced to the playoffs and ultimately finished 10th, as did the team of Ryotaro Fukuda, of Japan, and Noel Redmond, of Hacketts Cove, N.S., who finished 12th.

Dennis Graham of North Sydney, Australia was the best placed overseas competitor in the singles competition. He finished 14th in the preliminary round with 56 points before being eliminated in the round of 32.

Five players were honoured who share the claim to having attended every World Crokinole Championship, all of whom have been victorious in the tournament at some point. Jason and Ray Beierling have each won the singles competition once in addition to the doubles competition eight times. As previously mentioned, Oscar Weber is now a four-time winner of both the cues doubles and singles events. Ray Kappes won the singles title in 2003, while

Clare Kuepfer won the doubles title with partner Nathan Walsh in 2017.

The World Crokinole Championship (WCC) committee wishes to thank all of the players who attended the event, the number of which astonishes the committee each year that it grows to a new level.

The WCC Committee also expresses deep gratitude to the local sponsors who contributed to the event, and the vast number of volunteers who helped run the event. The efforts from our referees, scorekeepers, emcee and those who assisted in the setup and cleanup of the event were tremendous.



(MARGARET HERLICK PHOTOS)

Nine prior world champions. From left, Jason Beierling (2006 winner), Jon Conrad (2012 and 2013), Ray Kappes (2003), Justin Slater (2010, 2015, 2016, 2018 and 2019), Ray Beierling (2010), Connor Reinman (2023 and 2024), Al Fuhr (2000), Shawn Hagarty (2025) and Bruce Hartung (2005).



Competitors take some time during the day to take shots on the World's Largest Crokinole Board.



2026 cue doubles world champions Paul Weber, left, and Oscar Weber, right. Oscar Weber later went on to win the cue singles title as well.

Tavistock's busy Saturday featured crokinole tournament, firefighters' barbecue and Optimist Club fundraiser

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Tavistock and area residents had plenty to choose from on Saturday as several major community events drew large crowds throughout the day.

From the World Crokinole Championship at the arena to the Tavistock Fire Department's annual chicken barbecue and the Tavistock Optimist Club's fundraising concert in the park, the community was buzzing with activity from morning until late at night

If anyone described it as a quiet weekend, they were probably out of town.

While Diane Danen has a full report on the world-class crokinole tournament, I was able to attend New Hamburg's Forest Glen Public School 50th reunion celebration and watch the Tavistock U20 Athletics capture a bronze medal at a tournament in New Dundee before making it back in time for the firefighters' popular drive-through chicken dinner.

Fire Capt. Paul Brenneman said members of the Tavistock Fire Department were busy serving hundreds of residents,

many of whom went home with a meal featuring barbecue chicken and Quehl's Restaurant's award-winning apple pie.

Many diners then made their way next door to Optimist Park, where local favourite Highway 21 kept the crowd entertained well into the evening.

Optimist Club president Jesse Weicker said the club was pleased with both the turnout and the weather for the outdoor fundraiser.

"The club was glad the weather was perfect for a good old-fashioned concert on the ball field with one of the best bands in

the area that has a very large following," said Weicker.

He added the Optimist Club would like to thank the community for its continued support, as well as the Sommers family and Apple Homes for providing additional parking space for concertgoers.

The event also marked the launch of the club's 50/50 draw as part of its 50th-anniversary celebrations. The draw will run through Nov. 28, when the winning ticket will be selected just prior to the Tavistock Santa Claus Parade.



Members of the Tavistock Fire Department who helped prepare and serve meals at Saturday's annual chicken barbecue included, from left, Ryan Ropp, Emily Van Uden, Stefan Yantzi, Jaclyn Lange, Mark Wettlaufer, Josh Jantzi, Connor Occleston, Sean Lonergan, Luke Bender, Zach Lorentz, Max Kalbfleisch, Matt Lamers, Alyssa Habel, Craig Blum, Jacob Hutchinson and Paul Brenneman. Missing from the photo are Nick Hendry, Gavin Klatecki, Matthew Jordan, Marc Dionne, Chris Roth and Scott Zehr.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

A large crowd gathered at Optimist Park to enjoy Highway 21 on Saturday evening.

World Crokinole Championship celebrates 25 years in Tavistock

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

The 25th World Crokinole Championship drew players from around the world to the Tavistock and District Recreation Centre this past weekend, celebrating a quarter-century of competition, friendship and community.

What began in 1999 as a small gathering of crokinole enthusiasts has grown into an international championship attracting players from Canada, the United States, Japan, Germany, Hungary, Australia and First Nations communities.

In its early years, organizers had to create their own rules and borrow crokinole boards of various shapes and sizes to make the tournament possible.

Over the past 25 years, the championship

has continued to grow while remaining open to players of all ages and skill levels. Last year, the tournament featured its youngest and oldest competitors ever, a five-year-old and a 92-year-old.

While players compete for world titles, many participants say the tournament is about much more than winning. The annual event has become a gathering place where friendships are renewed and new connections are formed.

For David Younker of Kingston, P.E.I., the people are what keep him returning year after year. Younker has attended the championship since 2002.

Younker grew up playing crokinole with family members and his next-door neighbour and close friend, Darryl MacDonald. Though MacDonald now lives in Burlington, the pair have maintained their friendship and a tradition that spans more

than two decades. Each year, Younker makes the 1,800-kilometre, 17-hour drive to Ontario to visit MacDonald, and together they compete in the championship doubles event.

For Younker, it's about more than the competition.

"I really enjoy seeing old friends and meeting new people each year," he said. "I've made a lot of friends from all over the world."

Some of those friendships have extended beyond the tournament, with fellow players travelling to Prince Edward Island. In 2012, Nathan Walsh of Kitchener and Clare Kuepfer of Dobbinton made the trip to Prince Edward Island and went on to win the Island Crokinole Championship.

Younker belongs to the Hunter River Crokinole Club, which operates through the Lions Club. During the winter months,

he plays up to five times a week.

Members of the Railway City Crokinuts from St. Thomas are a good example of the friendships and community that can develop through crokinole. Founded by Pat Weiler and Janice McNorgan, the club's name reflects the fun-loving spirit of its members.

The Railway City Crokinuts meet monthly at the St. Thomas Seniors' Centre. Several members also live in the same apartment building and gather weekly in their social room, strengthening the friendships they have built through their shared love of the game.

As the World Crokinole Championship celebrates its 25th year, the tournament continues to showcase not only the skill of its competitors but also the friendships and community spirit that have helped make the event a lasting success.



(DIANE DANEN PHOTOS)

Kathy Irwin Event Volunteer from London, Mark Weiler from Kitchener, Lynne Whale, Linda McCaffery, Janice McNorgen, Bill Coles, all from St. Thomas and Mark McInnis from Kitchener pose for a photo in front of the World's Largest Crokinole Board at the 25th World Crokinole Championship in Tavistock.



Pictured with a crokinole board used in one of the first World Crokinole Championship competitions more than 25 years ago are, left to right, David Younker of Kingston, P.E.I., Darryl MacDonald of Burlington, and Willard Martin of Waterloo. The board was handcrafted by Martin's father, Manasseh Martin, and remains an important part of the tournament's history.

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Wilmot council defers proposed communications and revenue manager positions to 2027 budget discussions

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

With a municipal election less than five months away, Wilmot councillors opted against adding two new management positions to the township's organizational structure this year, instead referring both proposals to the 2027 budget process for consideration by the next term of council.

At its June 1 committee of the whole meeting, councillors considered separate staff recommendations to establish a manager of communications, public engagement and strategic initiatives position and a manager of revenue position. Both recommendations were ultimately referred to the 2027 budget process rather than moving ahead with recruitment in 2026.

The proposed positions stemmed from separate consultant-led reviews completed for the township this year. The communications role was recommended as part of the township's refreshed corporate communications strategy, while the revenue position emerged from KPMG's financial maturity assessment and long-term financial planning work.

Communications role intended to enhance communications capacity and public engagement

According to a report from deputy CAO and director of corporate services Harold O'Krafka, the proposed manager of communications, public engagement and strategic initiatives position is intended to support implementation of the township's recently approved 2026-2030 communications strategy.

The communications strategy, developed with assistance from Redbrick Communications, identified the need for increased investment in communications, public engagement and storytelling. The consultant's business case concluded a full-time communications manager would allow the township to take a more proactive, professional and strategic approach to both internal and external communications.

"Effectively, the strategy and the service-delivery review identified that the public wants more communications," O'Krafka said. "They're happy with the consistent level and enhancements being made over the last number of years, but they continue to seek out more opportunities to communicate with the township to know what's going on, and public engagement is an important part of that.

"Staff have seen a similar response from directors and staff in general. We enjoy communicating with the public and we've seen a consistent approach that makes it easier to communicate with the public. So, I think there's a willingness and a desire on both sides of the equation to enhance the communications with the public, and certainly council has made that clear, that

further and better communications is always welcome."

Staff proposed filling the position beginning in the fourth quarter of 2026. The role was evaluated within Grade H of the township's compensation grid, with an annual salary range of approximately \$101,500 to \$123,300. Staff estimated the 2026 cost would range from roughly \$33,000 to \$41,000 and could be accommodated within the existing communications budget by reallocating funds currently used for consultant support.

The full-year cost would have been incorporated into the township's 2027 operating budget, partially offset through reduced consultant spending and potential cost recovery from communications work associated with major capital projects.

"On one hand, I certainly would love to see the communications function enhanced, and I know that there is certainly benefit to it, no doubt," Coun. Kris Wilkinson said. "I think my concern is more so around the fact that we would be looking to hire and move this forward, and therefore essentially locking in what would be a needed increase already for the 2027 budget. And my concern is what does that look like?"

"... I think when you look at what we desire to add to our staffing complement and also taking into account what the tax increases have been over the last number of years, I'm hesitant to want to lock this in ... without seeing the full effects of it."

Coun. Steven Martin, the only councillor to vote against referring the communications manager position to 2027 budget discussions for consideration by a new council, noted his concern that a new council may not want to commit to new staffing so soon after being elected.

"If there is a gap, then I would worry it could be problematic," Martin said. "I'm thinking about, in our term, the number of items that we've had that required a lot of communication. And I think about the difficulty that has occurred, maybe when misunderstandings have occurred, so I'm not sure that I would be in favour of delaying it."

Revenue manager recommended by KPMG

Councillors also considered a recommendation from treasurer and director of financial services Harjot Grewal to establish a manager of revenue position as part of KPMG's review of the township's financial operations.

KPMG's draft financial maturity assessment identified challenges related to ownership and oversight of revenue-related functions, including taxation, utility billing, accounts receivable, collections, grants and deferred revenue. The consultant recommended creating a dedicated

management position to provide oversight of those functions and improve accountability, reporting consistency and internal controls.

The proposed position would also support audit readiness, financial reporting and implementation of future initiatives such as enterprise resource planning software and long-term financial planning.

"This position is about establishing clear ownership, improving oversight and reducing key-person dependency," Grewal said. "Currently, we have no redundancy on the financial-services team, and a lot of knowledge sits with key individuals. So, this position would be backfilling some of those roles as well, just ensuring that the finance team is stable through any changes that happen in the future."

The position was tentatively evaluated at Grade J on the township's pay grid, with a salary range of approximately \$116,400 to \$141,400. Including benefits and employer costs, staff estimated the annual cost at roughly \$166,800, with a prorated 2026 cost of approximately \$83,400 if the position were filled in July. Staff proposed funding the first-year cost through the operating reserve before incorporating the full annual cost into the 2027 budget.

During discussion, councillors expressed concerns about committing future councils

to ongoing operating-budget increases before the Oct. 26 municipal election. Several members indicated they were not opposed to the position itself but preferred allowing the next council to evaluate the long-term financial implications as part of the 2027 budget process.

"I'm struggling both with the deputy treasurer role not filled – and I understand the rationale – but we haven't had our finance department working at full capacity in a long time," Mayor Natasha Salonen said. "So, I'd kind of, personally, like to see what can be done with them working at full capacity, as well as we still have KPMG engaged at this point in time.

"I'm pretty confident with the teams that exist, we can get the budget and get the rest of the financial long-term planning ... done until the 2027 budget where, again, I would like to personally see this weighed against other options."

In response to a question about when a new deputy treasurer would be hired, Grewal said that hiring process had been deferred until council decided whether to hire a revenue manager this year, as that would have changed the deputy treasurer's job description. Since council referred that position to 2027 budget discussions, Grewal said the township would begin recruiting for a deputy treasurer immediately



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Old meets new at Brocksden Country School Museum

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

History and technology came together at Brocksden Country School Museum on June 6 as the museum partnered with the Stratford Public Library to present Old Meets New.

Held in the historic, one-room schoolhouse, the museum welcomed the Stratford Public Library's MakerSpace On The Move, giving visitors an opportunity to explore modern technology in a heritage setting. Activities included a 3D-printing demonstration, hands-on building projects and traditional games and toys.

Brigette Clark-Charmichael of the Stratford Public Library's MakerSpace On The Move discovered a class photo

and her signature in the museum's guest book from 1996. As a Grade 6 student at Hamlet Public School in Stratford, Clark-Charmichael had participated in the museum's 1910 school day program. Nearly three decades later, she returned to the schoolhouse in a very different role, helping a new generation of visitors learn and create.

Participants Beth DeWeerd, nine, and John DeWeerd, 11, teamed up with Eric Ball of MakerSpace On The Move to build miniature sailboats. Once completed, the boats were put to the test in a water table set up outdoors. Visitors also enjoyed traditional outdoor activities including walking on stilts and playing ring toss on the lawn.

A 3D printer was onsite creating custom

keychains for the museum. Another Old Meets New activity featured small 3D-printed cars and motorcycles fitted with marble wheels, offering a creative new use for a classic toy.

Visitors who enjoyed the technology at the Old Meets New program can explore even more at the Stratford Public Library's MakerSpace. The space features a 3D printer, vinyl cutter, button maker and digital design stations. Community members are welcome to drop in during open lab hours to learn new skills, create projects and explore new technology. Visit the Stratford Public Library website for more information.

The Brocksden Country School Museum has a full schedule of summer programming ahead. Everyone is invited to the

Teddy Bear Picnic on June 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visitors are encouraged to bring their teddy bears and a snack while enjoying a scavenger hunt, Grandma's Storytime and displays of toys from the past.

Other upcoming events at Brocksden Country School Museum include School Stage Days on July 4, Train Day on July 11 and a Make-and-Take Craft Day on Aug. 8. One of the highlights of the summer will take place on Aug. 29 when a blacksmith will be onsite offering visitors a chance to see traditional metalworking skills in action.

For more information about these events visit brocksden.ca or contact Jessie Campbell at brocksdenschool@gmail.com.



(DIANE DANEN PHOTOS)


Samantha DeWaal of Stratford (Nana) helps her four-year-old granddaughter, Jessa-Lee Rawn, select crayons for a colouring activity during the Old Meets New event at the Brocksden Country School Museum.



Brigette Clark-Charmichael of the Stratford Public Library's MakerSpace On The Move took a stroll down memory lane during the Old Meets New program at Brocksden Country School Museum on Saturday.




Beth DeWeerd, nine, and John DeWeerd, 11, work alongside Eric Ball of the Stratford Public Library's MakerSpace On The Move as they create sailboats during the Old Meets New program at Brocksden Country School Museum.



**DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN
STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING**

The Township of Wellesley is creating a new Official Plan - a roadmap that will guide growth and development to the year 2051.

To review the Draft Official Plan, scan the QR code or visit:




<https://www.engagewr.ca/official-plan>

JOIN US FOR THE STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING - June 18, 2026 at 5:45pm

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Forest Glen Public School alumni celebrate 50th anniversary

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Former students and teachers gathered in New Hamburg recently to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Forest Glen Public School.

The reunion, organized by a volunteer committee, was held at the New Hamburg Legion and brought together alumni from the school's earliest graduating classes.

Attendees enjoyed reconnecting with former classmates and teachers while viewing photographs and memorabilia documenting the school's first 50 years.

Forest Glen Public School opened in 1974, with its first graduating class completing Grade 8 in June 1975.

Committee chair Ken Brown said the reunion focused on graduates from 1975, 1976 and 1977, marking the 51st, 50th and

49th anniversaries of those classes.

"The committee started organizing the event in July of last year and was able to reach nearly 75 per cent of the original 215 graduates through various means," Brown said.

Of those contacted, 67 graduates purchased tickets and attended the celebration.

Former students and teachers travelled from across Ontario, including from Windsor, Welland and Toronto, to take part in the event.

Organizers said the reunion provided an opportunity for attendees to share memories, reconnect with old friends and celebrate the history of a school that has played an important role in the New Hamburg community for five decades.

Brown added that any proceeds remaining after event expenses will be donated to a local charity.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Forest Glen Public School students, teachers and parents have long supported community fundraising initiatives. Participants in a Jump Rope for Heart campaign raised \$4,090.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The organizing committee for Forest Glen Public School's 50th-anniversary reunion included, from left, Dan Boshart, Sharon Wigle, Susanna White (Seibel), Caren McLaughlin (Tye), Wendy Brown and Ken Brown. Missing from the photo is Judy Riley (Burrell).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Members of Forest Glen Public School's graduating class of 1976-1977 gathered during the school's 50th-anniversary reunion in New Hamburg.

ABC Idol semi-finalists selected for Wellesley Fair competition



(WENDY RICHARDSON PHOTO)

Organizers of the Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese (ABC) Idol competition have selected the semi-finalists who will compete for a spot in this year's finals at the Wellesley Township Fall Fair. The competition showcases local singing talent between the ages of 10 and 18. The finals will be held Aug. 29 at 3 p.m. during the fair. Front row, from left, are Julia Bell and Maya Cinarlili. Middle row, Claire Sachs, Breea Shouldice, Nora Parks and Morrigan Woolner. Back row, judges Rachel Regier, John "Beetle" Bailey and Allister Bradley. Organizers said they were pleased with the number of talented young performers who entered this year's competition.

Nominations now open for Wilmot's 2026 Citizen of the Year Awards

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

Do you know a shining star in Wilmot's community? A senior, youth, athlete, or someone dedicated to culture or community service? Nominate them today for a Citizen of the Year Award!

The Citizen of the Year Awards recognize local volunteers for their exceptional contributions to the community.

"Our community is strengthened by residents who volunteer, lead and support others in countless ways," said Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen in a press release. "If you know someone whose efforts deserve recognition, I encourage you to nominate them for Wilmot's Citizen of the Year Award. I look forward to recognizing this year's recipients at the New Hamburg Fall Fair in September!"

Awards are presented annually to

residents who have made outstanding contributions in the following categories:

- Athletics
- Community Service
- Culture
- Seniors
- Youth

Nominations are open from Monday, June 8, to Sunday, June 21. Full details and nomination forms are available at wilmot.ca/citizenoftheyear.

Paper copies of the nomination forms are available at the township administration complex (60 Snyder's Rd. W, Baden) and the Wilmot Recreation Complex (1291 Nafziger Rd., Baden).

Full details about the Citizen of the Year program are available at wilmot.ca/citizenoftheyear. Questions about the program can be directed to citizenoftheyear@wilmot.ca.

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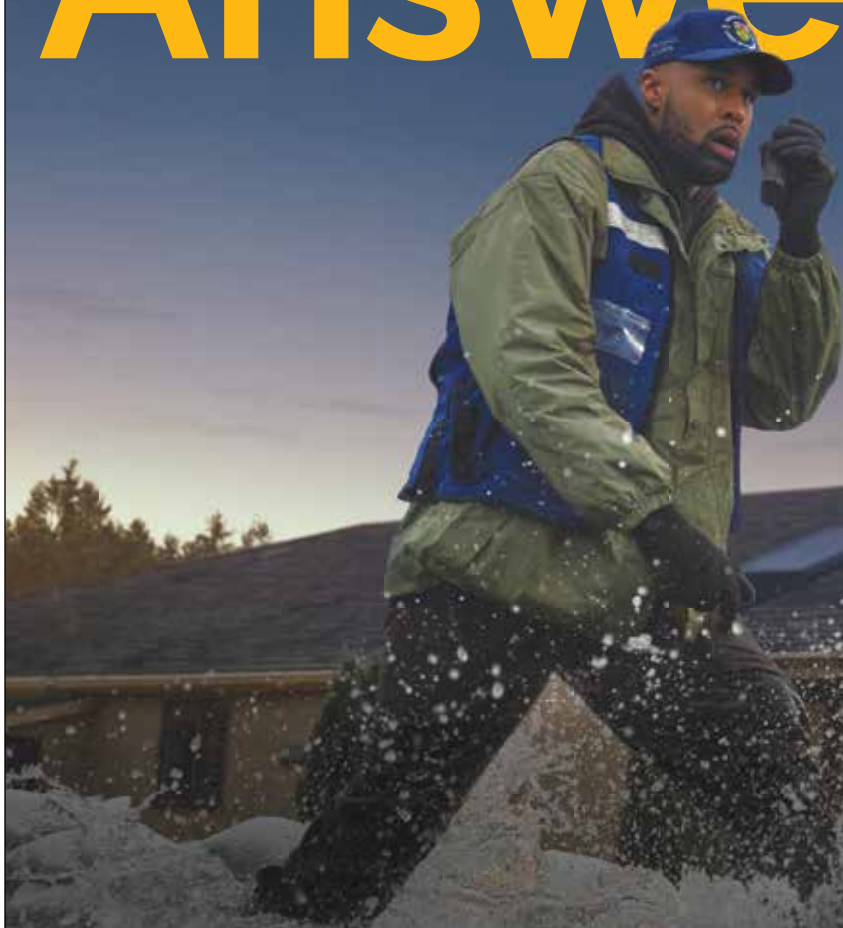


(PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SHOW US YOUR WILMOT FACEBOOK PAGE)

Lou Divita shared this incredible aerial shoot of the beautiful sunset that took place on the evening of June 6, 2026 over the wetlands.

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Perth County awards \$1.3-million tender for ambulances and patient-handling equipment

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth County council has approved the purchase of four new ambulances and associated patient-handling equipment as part of the county's ongoing effort to keep its frontline paramedic fleet up to date and in compliance with provincial standards.

At its June 4 meeting, council awarded a tender for four replacement ambulances to Tri-Star Industries Ltd. and approved the purchase of four Stryker Power Cot stretchers and four Stryker PowerLOAD systems from Stryker Canada. Together, the purchases total approximately \$1.35 million before HST and remain within the county's approved 2027 capital budget.

"We put a tender out for the purchase of four ambulances next year," Perth County Paramedic Services chief Mike Adair told councillors. "During COVID, we ended up receiving four in one year and our replacement cycle is every seven years, which is

why we're purchasing four and hoping we can enjoy some of the economies of scale for purchasing four ambulances at once."

According to a report prepared by deputy chief of operations Tristan Barter and reviewed Adair, Perth County Paramedic Services replaces ambulances and stretcher systems on a seven-year lifecycle to ensure vehicles and equipment continue to meet Ministry of Health standards, manufacturer requirements and operational needs.

The replacement program is designed to support safe and effective patient care while reducing maintenance costs and minimizing service disruptions caused by aging equipment.

Perth County issued a request for tender earlier this year for the supply and conversion of four ambulances, including all emergency-vehicle modifications and certifications required before they can be placed into frontline service. Tri-Star Industries was the sole compliant bidder.

"We only had one bidder. At the time, we were very surprised both (ambulance manufacturers in Ontario) didn't bid, but it turns out that one of the organizations missed a deadline," Adair said.

Following negotiations permitted under the county's procurement bylaw, the company reduced its pricing below the originally approved project budget while continuing to meet all operational and Ministry of Health requirements.

The negotiated price for the four ambulances is \$1.061 million, excluding HST. The agreement also includes access to local onsite warranty and non-warranty service support, which staff say will help reduce vehicle downtime and improve fleet-maintenance turnover.

The county also completed a competitive procurement process for four replacement Stryker Power Cot stretchers and four Stryker PowerLOAD systems. Stryker Canada was identified as the lowest compliant bidder meeting all tender

specifications and operational requirements, with a bid of \$293,829.59.

"These systems are an important part of our staff-safety and patient-handling program and align directly with our seven-year replacement cycle," Barter said.

The powered stretchers and loading systems are designed to reduce the physical strain on paramedics when lifting and transporting patients, while improving safety and efficiency during emergency responses.

Staff noted replacing the equipment at the same time as the ambulances aligns with the county's established fleet-replacement strategy and ensures continued compliance with manufacturer and Ministry of Health requirements for patient-handling systems.

Funding for the project will come from Perth County's fleet and medical-equipment reserves, as previously approved by council.

New dispatch system to prioritize most serious medical emergencies in Perth County

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

A new emergency medical dispatch system coming to Perth County later this year will help ensure ambulances and other emergency resources are sent to the patients who need them most while reducing unnecessary emergency responses.

At its June 4 meeting, Perth County council received reports from paramedic chief Mike Adair and deputy chief of operations Tristan Barter outlining the implementation of the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) and new tiered-response agreements between Perth County Paramedic Services and local fire departments in Stratford, St. Marys, North Perth, Perth East and West Perth. The changes are scheduled to take effect when MPDS is rolled out through the London Central Ambulance Communications Centre in November.

"At its core, MPDS is a modernized, emergency medical dispatch system that is already widely used across Ontario and North America," Barter said. "The goal of this system is really straightforward; making sure the right resources get to the right patient at the right time."

The new dispatch system replaces the current two-tiered ambulance dispatch model with a five-level priority framework designed to better match emergency responses to a patient's condition. Under the system, call-takers use a structured series

of questions to determine the severity of an incident and assign the most appropriate response.

According to Adair's report, the internationally recognized, evidence-based system is intended to improve dispatch accuracy, enhance patient care and ensure life-threatening emergencies receive the fastest response possible.

One of the most significant changes residents may notice is that lower-acuity calls will no longer receive the same response priority as life-threatening emergencies.

"Life-threatening emergencies will continue to receive the fastest response possible, while lower-acuity calls may receive a response that is clinically appropriate based on a patient's condition," Barter said.

"... Another significant benefit of MPDS is it should reduce unnecessary lights-and-sirens responses within the county. Emergency driving carries a risk for not only paramedics but for the public. By reserving lights and sirens for truly timely, critical emergencies, we improve safety while ensuring patients receive appropriate care."

The report notes that during periods when ambulance resources are limited – defined as three or fewer ambulances available in the system – some lower-acuity calls may be held for a defined period under guidance from base hospital physicians to ensure ambulances remain available for higher-priority emergencies.

Those situations are expected to be rare and will be closely monitored.

The goal, according to the report, is to preserve resources for patients experiencing serious medical emergencies while ensuring lower-acuity patients continue to receive care within clinically appropriate timeframes.

"There really is not difference for the end user in terms of when you call 911," Adair said. "It will feel exactly the same. They might ask you a few more questions, but if you've called 911 before, that system will remain the same. This is all the process behind the scenes that will change the way that we're dispatched."

"What will feel different is in certain circumstances, we may be responding at a slower rate because it's more appropriate to that call and we want to always have resources available for those higher-acuity calls."

To support the transition, Perth County Paramedic Services is renewing tiered-response memorandums of understanding with the fire departments serving Stratford, St. Marys, North Perth, Perth East and West Perth. Adair told council the updated agreements have the support of all local fire chiefs.

The agreements establish when and how fire services may be dispatched to medical emergencies alongside paramedics. Under MPDS, fire departments will generally be sent to calls where their involvement provides clear clinical or operational value,

such as cardiac arrests, unconscious or unresponsive patients, respiratory emergencies, motor-vehicle collisions, farm and industrial incidents, and remote-access rescues.

The new agreements are intended to reduce fire-department responses to lower-acuity medical calls while ensuring firefighters remain available for serious emergencies and situations where additional personnel or specialized equipment may be required.

"This (memorandum of understanding) establishes a process for fire services to bring forward either any kind of concerns or requests to make changes in terms of how they're responding to calls," Adair said, noting the new agreements will be flexible in nature so changes and improvements can be made over time, when necessary.

Adair's report notes MPDS will not increase call volume. Instead, it is designed to ensure the right resources are dispatched at the right time based on real-time clinical information received through the 911 system.

Perth County Paramedic Services is working with the Ministry of Health, local fire departments and other emergency-service partners to prepare for the transition. A public-awareness campaign is also planned before the system goes live to help residents understand how calls will be prioritized and what they can expect when they call 911 for medical assistance.

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

Community foundation awards more than \$78,000 in scholarships to Perth County students

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Thirty-four graduating high-school students from across Perth County are receiving a helping hand as they prepare for the next chapter of their education.

The Stratford and Perth County Community Foundation (SPCCF) will award more than \$78,000 in scholarships this spring through 14 scholarship funds established by local families, organizations and community leaders to support post-secondary students pursuing a wide range of careers and educational pathways. According to SPCCF executive director Rachel Smith, the scholarships are funded through endowed funds created by donors who want to invest in local youth while often honouring the legacy of a loved one.

“We have scholarships that come from industry leaders and we have families that

want to remember the legacy of a loved one,” Smith said. “It’s a way to support students and keep those memories alive in the community.”

Among the scholarships awarded this year are trades-focused awards funded by local businesses and memorial scholarships established in honour of community members. One example is the Peter Donaldson Memorial Scholarship, which supports students pursuing studies in television and film.

This year’s awards include the foundation’s newest and largest scholarship initiative, the Joyce Dalglish Parkview United Scholarship Fund. The fund will provide six four-year scholarships worth \$3,000 annually and six two-year scholarships worth \$1,500 annually, creating long-term support for students as they move through post-secondary education.

Unlike many traditional scholarships

that focus primarily on academic achievement, the Joyce Dalglish Parkview United fund places a strong emphasis on financial need.

“There are a lot of scholarships out there for the best marks,” Smith said. “They really wanted this one to go to students who may not have the opportunity (to attend post-secondary school) otherwise without that extra boost.”

The foundation works closely with local secondary schools, which review applications and select recipients based on criteria established by donors. Those criteria can include financial need, intended field of study, community involvement or other factors important to the family or organization that established the fund.

This year, scholarship recipients came from secondary schools across the county, including four awards at Listowel District Secondary School, three at Mitchell

District High School, one at South Huron District High School, three at St. Marys DCVI, 17 at Stratford District Secondary School and eight at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School.

Smith said community-funded scholarships are becoming increasingly important as families face rising post-secondary education costs.

“Education changes lives,” she said. “These scholarships are more than financial assistance. They’re a vote of confidence from the community that says we believe in these students, their goals and their potential.”

She added scholarship funds also provide donors with an opportunity to create a lasting legacy, helping local students for generations to come.

To learn more about establishing a scholarship fund or supporting local students, visit www.spccf.ca.

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Annual public-health unit report highlights measles outbreak, growing challenges

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) has released its 2025 annual report, highlighting programs and services delivered throughout the year to prevent disease, protect health and promote wellbeing across Huron and Perth.

The report highlights efforts in infectious disease control, vaccination, health promotion, health equity and community engagement. Key achievements include managing Ontario's largest measles outbreak, which included 297 probable or confirmed cases in the region, the highest number seen in three decades.

"For most of my public health career, I haven't seen one case of measles; there would be a handful across all of Ontario every year, so this was a considerably large outbreak," said Dr. Miriam Klassen, HPPH's medical officer of health. "There were 35 hospitalizations, and one of those was in the ICU. Fortunately, there were no deaths."

As measles cases increased, HPPH expanded measles vaccine eligibility to people six months of age and older who live, work, play, travel to or worship within the Huron Perth Public Health region.

HPPH distributed 10,532 doses of measles-containing vaccine (MMR/MMRV) to primary care providers in 2025, compared to 4,800 doses in 2024, and administered 1,251 doses in 2025, compared to 549 in 2024.

"The biggest challenges were misinformation, both about measles and misinformation about the vaccine," said Klassen.



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Representatives from Huron Perth Public Health say the organization's 2025 annual report highlights efforts in infectious disease control, vaccination, health promotion and community health initiatives across Huron and Perth counties.

"Rumours say that measles is a very minor illness and a routine childhood illness, and that it's better to acquire immunity by becoming infected. That's absolutely not true. If you develop a measles infection, you have a much higher risk of severe illness, including hospitalization or death, or even a complication that can happen years later called subacute sclerosing panencephalitis, which is a fatal brain illness.

"Measles is not a minor illness; it's a very serious one."

Klassen said HPPH saw a decrease in vaccination rates following the pandemic,

which she believes contributed to the rise in measles throughout the region.

"Because vaccination rates dropped, that's why measles was able to spread so effectively," she said. "Although rates are still generally high in Ontario and Huron-Perth, there are communities whose vaccination rates are not high enough to stop transmission. If the infection enters that community, it can spread very effectively.

"We repeated it over and over. Measles is one of the most infectious pathogens that we know about. It spreads very easily through the air."

HPPH continues to educate families about the importance of vaccines, and the number of vaccinated children has risen since 2020.

"Collective trauma and the challenge of the pandemic impacted all of us, and certainly during that time, a lot of misinformation about vaccination spread, as well as people's responses to public-health measures that were intended to break chains of transmission, keep people safe and help support health-care systems," said Klassen. "It was a difficult time, and because of that, people's attitudes did change. However, we've seen an improvement and continue to find that if we can talk to people about their specific concerns, the majority of people vaccinate."

Aside from the measles outbreak, Klassen said global challenges and technology have affected how HPPH operates on a daily basis.

"The global context has never been as important," she said. "Normally, what the president of the United States is doing, or what's happening in other countries, doesn't really impact us on this large a scale, but right now the uncertainty due to everything happening globally does impact budgets and plans in Canada and Ontario."

"There's a lot of uncertainty and that impacts our organization," she

continued. "And, again, misinformation. Misinformation is nothing new; it's always been a challenge for medicine and public health, but now technology has enabled it to spread. It's a different challenge, and we have to respond differently."

Klassen said in 2026, HPPH will continue to focus on education and building public trust through outreach and technology. She said ongoing challenges related to global politics and climate change will continue to affect communities across Ontario.

"Emergency preparedness with climate change – we're going to see more heat events, winter storms and poor air quality," she said. "We're going to see new infectious disease risks. You're hearing in the news about Ebola virus. I've mentioned vector-borne diseases like anaplasmosis, Powassan virus and babesiosis. These are new and emerging.

"Tuberculosis around the world is still continuing and rising in some areas. We need to keep doing our core public-health functions. I think some of what we need to do is leverage technology, leverage partnerships and focus on health equity because a lot of people aren't seeing these things because they are very well-resourced and privileged. But some people are being left behind, and we want to make sure that everyone benefits from public-health work."

The report also highlights HPPH's continued focus on health equity, accessibility and inclusion, including efforts to strengthen social connections, advance anti-racism initiatives and support community partnerships.

The 2025 report marks the fifth anniversary of Huron Perth Public Health, which was formed in 2020. HPPH said it continues to build on its work through community partnerships, evidence-informed programs and services aimed at improving population health across Huron and Perth counties.

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Perth County Community Choir celebrates Canadian music at Avondale concert

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

For those who have never attended a Perth County Community Choir concert, they may not realize what they have been missing.

The choir recently returned to the stage at Avondale United Church in Stratford for its annual spring concert, entertaining a packed audience with an evening dedicated to Canadian music.

Under the direction of Daniel Van Winden, whose family roots trace back to the Embro area, the choir delivered a lively performance that had audience members tapping their feet and singing along to many familiar favourites.

The concert featured music made famous by some of Canada's most celebrated artists, including Anne Murray, Gordon Lightfoot, The Tragically Hip, Ian Tyson and Neil Young.

Adding to the evening was guest performer Allison Lupton and her band. Lupton, an accomplished recording artist who grew up on a dairy farm near Fairview in Oxford County, captivated the audience with her original music and powerful vocals.

Champion step dancer Kyle Waymouth also entertained concertgoers with several performances throughout the evening, adding another element of Canadian culture and talent to the program.

With a choir of approximately 160 voices accompanied by talented musicians and guest performers, the concert showcased the depth of musical talent found throughout Perth County and beyond.

The Perth County Community Choir presents concerts each June and December at Avondale United Church, and organizers encourage music lovers to purchase tickets early as performances regularly sell out.

If the enthusiastic response from last week's audience was any indication, the choir's next concert in December will once again be a popular event on the local arts calendar.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Part of the 160-member Perth County Community Choir performs during its recent spring concert at Avondale United Church in Stratford. Guest performer Allison Lupton and her band also took part in the evening's celebration of Canadian music.



Guest artist Allison Lupton performs alongside the Perth County Community Choir during its Canadian-themed concert at Avondale United Church.



Choir director Daniel Van Winden leads the Perth County Community Choir during its recent concert in Stratford. The choir's June and December performances continue to attract audiences from across Perth County and beyond.



The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Decoration Day: A tradition older than Remembrance Day

SCOTT DUNSTALL

Gazette Correspondent

Many Canadians are familiar with Remembrance Day on Nov. 11, but fewer realize that Canada's original day of military remembrance was actually Decoration Day.

On Sunday, June 7, members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532, veterans, families and community residents gathered at Riverside Cemetery in New Hamburg to take part in the annual Decoration Day service. The event was kicked off as The New Hamburg Band played in the Colour Party from Branch 532 as well as the Royal Canadian Air Cadets 822 Tutor Squadron.

The ceremony, which includes the placement of wreaths and the remembrance of veterans laid to rest in local cemeteries, continues a tradition that dates back more than 135 years. On hand to lay wreaths for the Dominion of Canada was Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louis and Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Mike Harris Jr.

The Township of Wilmot was represented by Coun. Steve Martin acting on behalf of Mayor Natasha Salonen. Martin delivered a poignant reflection of those in our community who served and now rest eternally in our midst.

"Decoration Day gives us an opportunity to pause, reflect and remember in the business of our daily lives," Martin said. "It can be easy to take for granted the freedoms we enjoy every day."

Bill Pearson, incoming president of the New Hamburg Legion, delivered a speech that recognized everything that went into the day.

"Thanks to many volunteers that helped make this a great day and to all the families that have gathered to show their love and respect to their family members that have passed on."

For more than four decades, Decoration Day served as Canada's unofficial national memorial day. That changed in 1931 when Parliament established Nov. 11 as Remembrance Day. While Remembrance Day became the country's principal day of remembrance, Decoration Day did not disappear. Many Royal Canadian Legion branches continued to observe it, particularly through cemetery services that honour veterans buried within

local communities.

The tradition remains especially meaningful because it focuses on individual veterans and their final resting places. Graves are decorated with wreaths, flowers and Canadian flags, providing a personal connection between today's generations and those who served before them. In many communities, Decoration Day is viewed as a complement to Remembrance Day rather than a replacement for it.

In New Hamburg, the annual ceremony organized by Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532 reflects the Legion's broader commitment to preserving the memory of those who served Canada in times of war and peace. The branch has long played a leading role in local remembrance initiatives, including Remembrance Day ceremonies and the community's Memorial Banner Program, which honours veterans from Wilmot Township and beyond.

Jane Eichler, who has been very active in the Legion, said her reason for attending the service was her father.

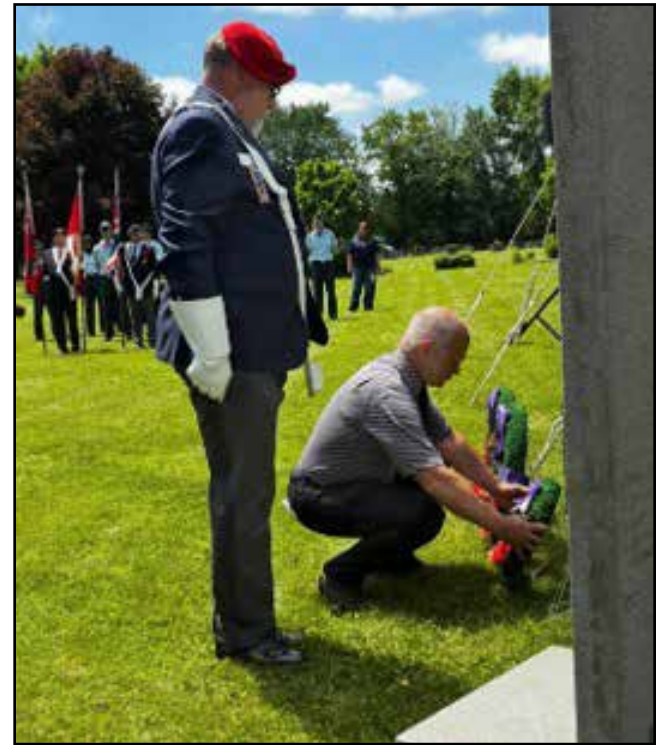
"I attend Decoration Day in remembrance of my father. He was married on a Wednesday and left for the Navy on the Friday. He came back in '45 and I was born in '47. So, I always come for him."

Gail McMullen, longtime legion member and, until recently, food committee chair, also remembered her dad when asked what Decoration Day meant to her.

"It's a personal day for me. My father lost an arm in the Second World War, and it is important for me to attend this service and the one in November so as to honour his sacrifice that he had to endure for the rest of his life."

As the ranks of veterans from the Second World War and Korea continue to diminish, traditions such as Decoration Day take on even greater significance. They serve as reminders that remembrance is not confined to a single day in November, but is an ongoing responsibility shared by the community.

The quiet ceremony held at Riverside Cemetery this past weekend connected New Hamburg residents with a tradition that predates Confederation's 50th anniversary, predates both world wars and even predates the Royal Canadian Legion itself. More than a century after



(SCOTT DUNSTALL PHOTO)

While New Hamburg Legion Sergeant-at-Arms John Svartsjo looks on, Coun. Steve Martin, Ward 4 New Hamburg, lays a wreath on behalf of the Township of Wilmot during last Sunday's Decoration Day Service.

Canadians first gathered to decorate the graves of fallen soldiers with flowers, the spirit of Decoration Day continues to endure.

It is a simple act of remembrance, but one that ensures those who served are never forgotten.

OBITUARY

RUDY: John Franklin



It is with great sorrow that the Rudy family announce the passing of John Franklin Rudy.

John was born in Stratford on Jan 21, 1950. He graduated from University of Waterloo in 1973 with a BSc Hon in Biology, spending the majority of his career in research at McMaster University.

He is survived by wife Sylvia, daughter Katrina and granddaughter Desdemina, son Alex (Sandra) and granddaughter Miriam, brother Bob (Joan), first cousin Katherine Ann (Laurie), and numerous Rudy and Hübner nieces and nephews and their families.

He was predeceased by his parents, Bob and Doris, his Aunts and Uncles, Ethel Rudy, Helen Rudy, David (Dorothy) Rudy, Franklin Holley, John (Marion) Holley, and his godson Jarrett Rudy.

Friends may call at the Wm. Kipp Funeral Home, 184 Grand River St. N. Paris, on Sunday June 14, from 1-4 PM for a memorial gathering, eulogies will be offered at 3:30 PM.

A Masonic Service under the auspice of St. John's Lodge No. 82 AF & AM will be offered on Sunday at 12:30 PM.

Memorial donations may be made to the Brant SPCA, Juravinski Cancer Centre (Hamilton), or Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre (London Health Sciences).

Online condolences and donations may be arranged through www.wmkippfuneralhome.com or by contacting Wm. Kipp 519 442 3061

QUIZ TIME

BY JAKE GRANT

1. What zodiac signs fall in June?
2. What important historical event occurred on June 6, 1944?
3. What is the oldest national park in Canada?
4. What was Blackbeard's real name?
5. In what Canadian town is the World Crokinole Championships held?
6. When did the Peasants' Revolt take place?
7. Who is the film The Social Network about?
8. What boarding device was used by ancient Roman ships?
9. Canada uses what measurement system?
10. What is Moscow's famed opera house?

Answers found on classified page



by PeterS 2026

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Answers found on classified page

OBITUARY

BENDER: Dorothy Estelle (nee Beckner)



We are sad to announce the sudden passing of Dorothy on Friday, June 5, 2026 at WRHN@Midtown, Kitchener. Dorothy Bender of New Hamburg in her 79th year.

Beloved wife to Glen whom she married February 24, 1968. Loving mother of Brad & wife Michelle of Brunner, Brent & wife Kari of Wellesley and Lee Ann & husband Jamie Trachsel of Shakespeare. Sadly missed by her grandchildren Wendy Lee & Kenny, Stephanie & Tyler, Brittany, Brett, Jesse & Jenna, Cole, Blair, Eric & Emily, Corrina and great grandchildren Paisley, Isla, River, Kai and Eloise. Survived by her brothers Ken & Sheila Beckner of Kitchener, Barry Beckner of Victoria, B.C., brothers & sisters-in-law, Norm Ashley of Fergus, Gloria Beckner of New Hamburg, Luanna & John Gravelle of Stratford, Bruce & Marlene Bender of New Hamburg and Ruth & Jim Gingerich of St. Joseph.

Dorothy is predeceased by her parents John & Theresa (Mulligan) Beckner, sisters June & Lloyd Holliday & Terry Wendon, and Mary Ashley, brother and sister-in-law Ralph and Marjorie Bender

Relatives and friends are invited to the Mark Jutz Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg, on Monday from 2-4 & 6-8pm, Funeral service will be held at Zion United Church, 215 Peel Street, New Hamburg, on Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at 2:00pm. Interment to follow at Riverside Cemetery, New Hamburg.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the WRHN Foundation or the Zion United Church would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be shared at www.markjutzfuneralhomes.ca

May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.



OBITUARY

CARDIFF: Norma



Our beloved Mother, Norma Cardiff passed away peacefully at Hospice Waterloo Region on June 1st, 2026. Mom was in her 90th year and spent her last few days surrounded by family and friends in a beautiful space with a gorgeous view of the hospice gardens. She was deeply loved and will

be missed by her children Deborah Cardiff (Robert Joyce), Daniel Cardiff (Barb Davenport), and Darcy Cardiff (Connie Cardiff). One of her greatest joys were her grandchildren, Tyler, Courtney, Matthew, Daneen, Alex, Nicolle and Martina and her great grandchildren, Dylan, Georgia, Lily, Brienne, Caiden, Teagan, Zayden, Zyra, Raven, Kaliann and Lilli Anne. She will be missed but will remain forever in our hearts.

Our father, Keith Cardiff passed away in 1994. He has been waiting for Mom to join him for a very long time. We are pleased to know they are reunited.

Mom was born in South Easthope Twp. on April 10, 1937 to the late Clarence and Luella Erb. She was predeceased by her sister Shirley Marlow, brother Jim Erb, and in laws Allan Fuller, Arlene Erb, Aldene Simmons, and Bill Pfaff and nieces Sonia, Yvonne, Debbie and nephew Rick. She is survived by her sister Dianne Fuller and sister-in-law Joyce Gilliard, Connie Tanner and Colleen Cardiff as well as her nieces Cat, Shelby, Karin, Jennifer, Lori, Terri, Jana and nephew Jeff. They all adored Auntie Norma.

Mom worked for over 30 years as an industrial sewing machine operator for Kroehler Manufacturing on Ontario St. Stratford. Although she was a factory worker, her artistic drive found an outlet through a variety of creative endeavors. She was an exceptional decorator renovating, painting and wall papering in her unique visionary style wherever she lived. She re-finished and reupholstered antique furniture, learned stenciling, stained glass, furniture seat caning, macrame, pottery, sculpture, sketching and painting. She was an avid gardener and created magical gardens wherever she lived. Mom was also an excellent cook and Sunday dinners were a favourite tradition with family gathered around her prized antique cook stove in our family home in Tavistock.

Mom will be laid to rest with Dad at Avondale Cemetery at a private family interment.

A "Celebration of Life" will be held Sunday June 28th from 1-4 pm at W.G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron St, Stratford, ON. Come and join us share memories and refreshments as we celebrate Mom's life.

In lieu of flowers contributions can be made to Hospice Waterloo Region or any charity of your choice. Plant a tree in Mom's honour or donate to a Nature Conservancy through the funeral home. www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com

OBITUARY

WEITZEL: Doris Lucinda (nee Wilker)



Passed away peacefully at her residence the Maples Homes for Seniors, Tavistock in her 99th year.

Beloved wife of the late Wilfrid (Mike) Weitzel who predeceased her November 21, 1999. Loving mother of Carl (Fay) of Tavistock, the late Bernice Facey (2014) and Don MacLachlan of Tavistock, the late Margaret Fleming (2001), William (2018), Andrew (2002) and Leanne (Greg) Darlington of Tavistock. Sadly missed by her grandchildren Julie-Marie (John) Diniz, Jennifer Facey & Jayne Petrie, Lynn Hart, Patti (Jason) Noot, Scott (Amber) Weitzel, Chris (Holly) Weitzel, Shannon (Michael) Bisch, Keli Weitzel, Andrea (Andrew) Zlak, Sarah Weitzel (Gabriel Seri), Thomas Darlington (Saleya Kwiatkowski), Clayton Darlington (Julia Amaral), Heather Darlington, 15 great-grandchildren, 1 great-great-grandchild, and many nieces and nephews. Survived by brother Lloyd & Elsie Wilker of London and sister-in-law Joyce Jones of New Westminster, British Columbia.

Predeceased by her parents Jacob & Martha (Lange) Wilker, brothers Albert (Simone) Wilker and Roy Wilker, sister Marie (Lorne) Kaufmann, brothers and sister-in-law Lorne (Doris) Schaefer, Bill (Mary) Schaefer, Irma (Don) Darroch, and nieces Lorna Kaufmann, and Joan Kyer.

Doris was born May 19th, 1928 and grew up on a farm east of Stratford. She learned early on that sewing was a passion, and made that part of her life and work for many years. She also enjoyed gardening, cooking, and canning. In her retirement years, Doris enjoyed attending her grandchildren's hockey and baseball games, and being a passenger on many road trips that would end with a small Tim Hortons steeped tea, triple-triple. Doris' love and dedication for family will be deeply missed, but her memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew her. She was a long time member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Sebastopol-Tavistock attending worship regularly until her health would no longer allow. Her final years brought her to the Maples, first in retirement, then in Long-term care, where she found joy in participating in many activities and events, especially Bingo! Special thanks to the staff of the Maples for their care, love, and kindness over the past five years.

Relatives and friends will be received in the West Room of Trinity Lutheran Church, Sebastopol on Friday, June 12, 2026 from 10:00 - 10:45 am followed by the Memorial Service in the Church at 11:00 am with Pastor Steve Hoffard officiating. Reception to follow in the church hall.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Trinity Lutheran Church Accessibility Fund or the Tavistock Assistance Program would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be shared at www.gffh.ca

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St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church celebrates annual anniversary and decoration service

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Generations of families gathered Sunday at historic St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, north of Shakespeare, for the church's annual anniversary and decoration service.

Although regular worship services ended more than 65 years ago, the small church on the hill at Bell's Corners continues to draw descendants of the area's early settlers and members of the community each year for the special service.

Located on the Second Concession of North Easthope Township, the red-brick church was built by Scottish pioneers in the early 1850s. It sits across the road from the former S.S. No. 2 Bell's School, a one-room schoolhouse that once served local families.

St. Andrew's held its final regular church service in 1960. The following year, ownership of the church was transferred to the St. Andrew's Cemetery Board, which has organized the annual anniversary and decoration service ever since.

Throughout its history, the church supported missionary work at home and abroad. Its Women's Missionary Society remained active until it disbanded in December 1997. The congregation also supported Bible Society initiatives and offered programs including Bible classes, Mission Band and young people's groups.

Funds raised through the annual service continue to support the upkeep and



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

The historic St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church overlooks the surrounding countryside north of Shakespeare. Families gathered Sunday for the annual anniversary and decoration service to honour generations of community members who came before them.

maintenance of the adjacent cemetery.

Cemetery board member Murray McTavish welcomed attendees and introduced guest speaker Bruce Whitmore, who delivered the service. Music was provided by organist Doug McTavish and soloist Jeff Skubowius.

The church pews were filled as members

of the congregation gathered to honour family members and generations of community residents who came before them.

Many attendees commented on the condition of the historic church, praising the cemetery board and volunteers for maintaining both the interior and exterior of the building.

Under sunny skies and ideal weather

conditions, the annual service once again provided an opportunity for families to reconnect with the history of the church and the community it has served for more than 170 years.

Those wishing to make a donation toward the upkeep of the cemetery may contact treasurer Darlene Robertson.

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Guest speaker Bruce Whitmore delivers the message during the annual anniversary and decoration service at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church north of Shakespeare on Sunday.



Jeff Skubowius of Shakespeare Presbyterian Church performs a solo rendition of "Amazing Grace" during the annual anniversary and decoration service at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

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.

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

The over 30-year-old iconic waterwheel in downtown New Hamburg has exceeded its expected lifespan by six years and is in need of attention according to a consensus vote at the recent board of trade meeting. Over the last year, the board commissioned a study by engineering graduates from the University of Guelph. The students proposed a new design with more durable materials that would retain the aesthetics of the current wheel. A cost of between \$200,000 and \$300,000 was estimated.

Crystal LeBlanc has been working hard these last few weeks to get her new food truck, Crystal's Fries, ready to hit the streets of Wilmot. "I hope that this will do really well since all my money is invested in it," said LeBlanc "But I believe if you do good quality food, word gets around and you really don't even have to ask for business. It's just going to be there. Especially around these little burgers, word travels fast."

Two Stratford men have been charged with robbery, kidnapping and possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose when they got into a man's vehicle in New Hamburg and forced him to drive. Through investigation, police learned that the male had been involved in a relationship with a 16-year-old female. The two individuals, known to the female, arranged a meeting with the man at Wilmot and Huron Street. Brandishing a knife, the 34- and 25-year-old Stratford males assaulted the driver before he was able to flee the car and phone 911. Officers arrested the men who were held in custody for a bail hearing.

June 8 - 15, 2011, Edition (15 years ago)

Ray Beierling has finally done it. After 13 years of competing in the World Crokinole Championship, he has finally won the coveted adult singles title and the \$1,000 cash. He defeated three-time winner Brian Cook (2007, 2008, 2009) in a two-out-of-three round final game. Last year's champion, Justin Slater, finished eighth in the 16-player final round-robin contest. Ray Beierling joins his brother, Jason Beierling, in the champion circle. Jason Beierling won the singles title in

2006.

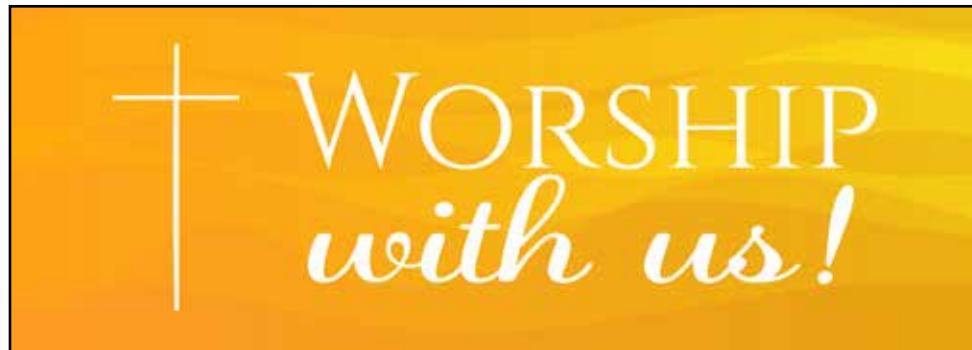
Five local athletes qualified for high school track's top meet, the OFSAA track and field championship in Sudbury, held this past weekend. They earned a place in the competition after winning medals the previous week in London. Woodstock Collegiate Institute was represented by Branden Wilhelm, Kaitlin Wilhelm, Alyssa Bickle and Ashley Bickle with Madalyn Ruby competing for Huron Park Secondary School. Madalyn competed in the 800-metre and 1,500-metre junior women's races. Branden set a personal best and drew the day's biggest crowd with a 2.15-metre leap in the senior boys' high jump.

Yantzi TIM-BR Mart and Total Home has earned two SABA Awards of Distinction from the Stratford & Area Builders Association. The local home décor and building centre was named Best Design/Décor Centre and the Best Radio Advertising at this year's annual board meeting held on June 7 at the Queen's Inn in Stratford. The honour was announced on Thursday morning, June 9, at the Contractor's Breakfast hosted by Yantzi's. Winning this year's Dream Sports Trip for two to the NASCAR Brickyard 400 in Indianapolis, Ind., was Dave Weicker Carpentry of Stratford.

June 5 - 12, 1996, Edition (30 years ago)

Two Conestoga College Electrical Engineering Technician students, Brad Hammer of Tavistock and Lawrence Joyce of Drumbo, are this year's winners of the Kay and Wes Sommers 50th Anniversary Scholarship Award presented for academic excellence, positive learning attitude and the ability to meet program objectives. Each received a cheque for \$400 from Ken and Jim Sommers, sons of Kay and the late Wes Sommers, who operate Sommers Motor Generator Sales Ltd. of Tavistock.

Former students, colleagues and family gathered Sunday afternoon at Tavistock Public School to pay tribute to their teacher, friend, mother and grandmother, Audrey Schultz, who is retiring from teaching on June 30, 1996. Mrs. Schultz, accompanied by her husband Charlie, their children and grandchildren, accepted praises from special guests on behalf of those attending. Tavistock principal Barbara Bellinger hosted the program following a social hour, calling on spokespeople from the past to shed some light on Mrs. Schultz's 34 years in the teaching profession.



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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette **SPORTS**

Braves sign Sutherland Cup champion

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The newest member of the Tavistock Braves comes with some serious hockey swagger.

The Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) team has signed Owen Yagar, a defenceman from Waterloo who spent the last three seasons with the Cambridge Red Hawks of the Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL). Yagar served as captain of the Red Hawks for the past two campaigns and helped the team win its first-ever Sutherland Cup just one month ago with a five-game victory over the St. Marys Lincolns.

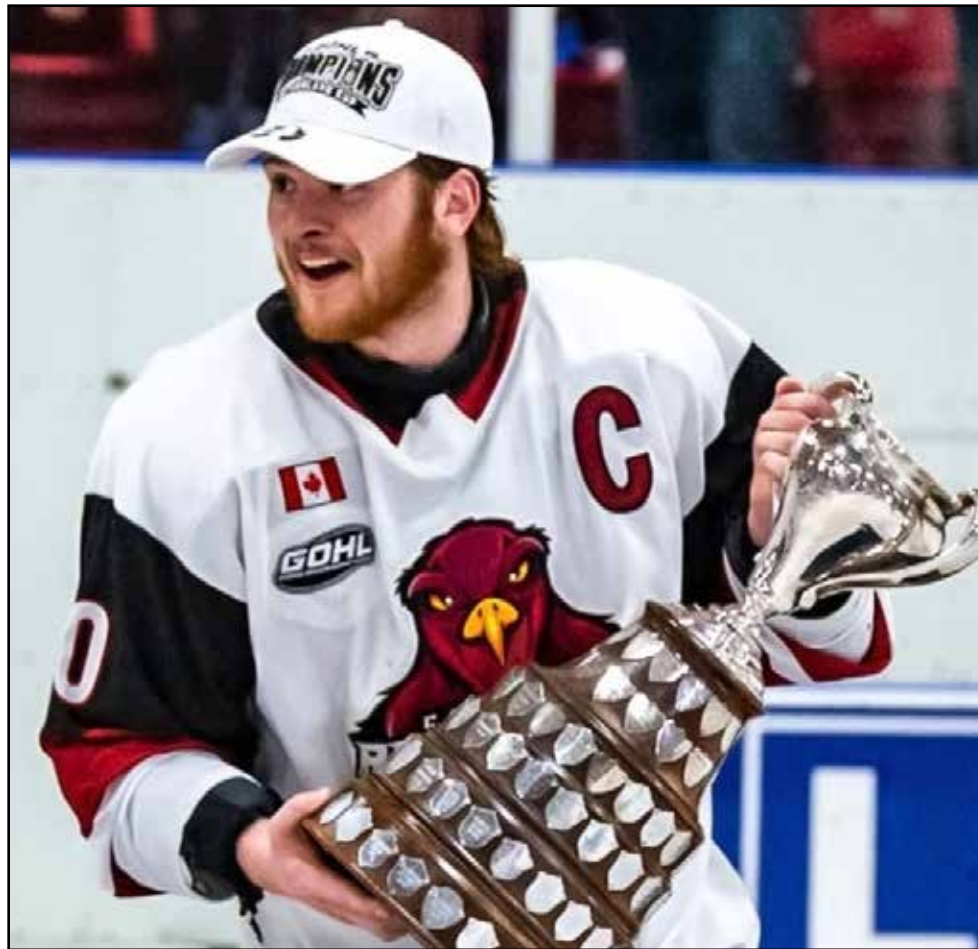
"I have gotten to know Owen over the last year or so, as he is friends and lives with players on our team," said Braves general manager Brent Lange. "I watched him back when he was on the U18 Kitchener AAA team and liked his play back then already. He is a very respectful young man who has loads of talent and is a proven leader on and off the ice."

Lange added Tavistock was Yagar's first choice to spend his last season of junior hockey.

"He wants to come here with his buddies he grew up with and wanted to play his final year here with them and play for a Schmalz Cup. He is in school and works three different jobs as well. You got to love a kid who has that much drive off the ice. We know he will play hard on the ice."

He added Yagar will be a great fit in the locker room and winning Junior B's biggest trophy won't hurt either. Lange said his newest signing was also very well-coached in Cambridge.

"He was the captain of a fairly young team that looked up to him and was coached by Todd Bertuzzi, Nick Spaling, Rob Radford and Jeff Butt. That pulls a lot of weight as well, in my opinion, and there is a good chance he will be part of our leadership group."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Tavistock Braves have announced the signing of Owen Yagar. The 21-year-old helped the Cambridge Red Hawks to a Sutherland Cup title in May.

The Gazette reached out to the Red Hawks vice president and director of operations, who backed up Lange's claim.

"How does your leadership not get stronger with a guy like Bertuzzi in charge?" said Eric Boissonneault. "Fifth overall NHL draft pick; 1,160 NHL games. There's nobody out there in the GOHL who's better at what he does."

The Braves lost four key leaders to age after last season, including captain Marc Dionne, Carter Arseneau, Tyler Brezynskie and Ryan McKellar.

"Bringing in Yagar and knowing he is a proven leader and will be a great fit fills a big part of that void for us that we will be losing," said Lange.

Yagar is described as a smooth-skating defenceman with a good offensive touch and a solid physical game.

"His being the captain of the Sutherland Cup Champions this past season is a massive thing for us. Anyone I talk to speaks highly of this great young man, and we know and see why. He will be instrumental to our back end this season," added Lange.

"We will have one of the deepest back ends this season, and likely one of the best in the league."

"There's no better kid on the planet. There's no ego in him, and he does it for the right reasons," said Boissonneault. "He walks into any changeroom, and you can tell he's in charge. He does it with such poise, chivalry and patience, on and off the ice. You ask him to do something with the team, and he takes charge right away."

Boissonneault also applauded Yagar's family.

"His parents did an amazing job. I have never met a kid like him in my life, and I've been involved in this sport a long, long time."

He added the fact Yagar raised the Sutherland Cup as the Cambridge captain speaks volumes about the kind of leader he is.

"Last year, he scored a bunch of goals. This year, we didn't need him to do that, so he changed his role and earned every minute of ice time. We put him out there on the penalty kill, the powerplay, five-on-five, or three-on-three in overtime. It didn't matter."

The Braves potentially have five returning blueliners eligible to return from last season's team that lost in the PJHL final to the Fergus Whalers. Tavistock has also signed Drumbo native Matthew Meyer, who played the last two seasons for the Woodstock Navy Vets.

Lange said he's pleased with how the team is coming together.

"We don't have it fully picked yet as we still have some spots to fill upfront. Our back end is basically set, and we're still figuring out the goaltending situation with both able to return as well. All in all, pretty excited here to get back to where we left off and try to finish the job this time around."

Yagar picked up nine goals and 34 points in 48 regular-season games and added a pair of assists in 17 playoff games.

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Children learn important farm-safety lessons at annual Wellesley event

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Area children had the opportunity to learn valuable farm-safety lessons during the annual Children's Farm Safety Day held Saturday at Lebold Dairy Farms west of Wellesley.

Sponsored each year by Waterloo Rural Women, the event combines hands-on learning, demonstrations, activities and games to teach young people about the

importance of staying safe around farm equipment, livestock and agricultural workplaces.

This year's event was hosted by Terry and Sue Lebold and their family, who welcomed a large crowd of children, volunteers, organizers and parents to their farm.

Organizers say farm-safety education remains important in rural communities, where children are often exposed to farm machinery, animals and other potential hazards from an early age.

Throughout the day, participants took part in interactive activities designed to help them recognize risks and learn safe practices around the farm.

The annual event continues to be a popular educational opportunity for local families and serves as a reminder that

awareness and prevention are key to reducing accidents and injuries on farms.

With strong community support and excellent participation, organizers considered this year's event another successful step in promoting farm safety among the next generation of rural residents.



(WENDY RICHARDSON PHOTOS)

Children participate in farm-safety activities during Children's Farm Safety Day at Lebold Dairy Farms near Wellesley on Saturday. The annual event is sponsored by Waterloo Rural Women and focuses on teaching young people about staying safe on the farm.



Chloe Scott, Claire Koch and Esther Koch were among those attending Children's Farm Safety Day at Lebold Dairy Farms near Wellesley. The trio also helped promote the Wellesley Fair Ambassador program during the event.



Organizer Susan Martin, left, joins Wellesley Fair ambassadors Chloe Scott and Claire Koch in discussing the Wellesley Fair Ambassador program during Children's Farm Safety Day. The program helps young people learn leadership skills while educating consumers about where their food comes from.

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Wilhelm family passes treasured Farmall tractors to next generation

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Wilhelm name has been part of the history of North Easthope Township for generations, and recently one local farm family took a special step to ensure part of that heritage will continue for years to come.

David and Shirley Wilhelm welcomed their children and grandchildren to the family farm northeast of Stratford for a gathering centred not on a birthday or anniversary, but on the passing down of three treasured antique tractors that have long been part of the family's farming history.

Bringing together all 17 members of the family's three generations was no small task, but the occasion was one the Wilhelms felt was worth celebrating.

Over the years, David and Shirley Wilhelm have carefully maintained a collection of International Harvester Farmall tractors, using them for light farm work, community parades and Canada Day



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Shirley and David Wilhelm sit in front of three International Harvester Farmall tractors they recently gifted to their children during a family celebration at the home farm on the Fifth Concession of North Easthope Township.

celebrations. The bright-red tractors have become a familiar sight at local events and a symbol of both the family's agricultural roots and their pride in Canada.

It had long been the couple's wish to pass the tractors on to their three children.

During the family gathering, son Bradley Wilhelm and his wife, Danielle, received the Farmall Super C, which will remain on the home farm where they live and work. Daughter Leanne Bayer and her husband, Alex, took ownership of the

Farmall Super H and brought it to their home in Sebringville, while daughter Lisa Zehr and her husband, Jay, received the Farmall Super M for their farm in East Zorra-Tavistock Township.

The tractors represent an important era in local agriculture. Widely used on Perth County farms during the 1940s and 1950s, many of these machines remain in operation today for lighter farm duties and community events.

For David and Shirley Wilhelm, however, the tractors represent much more than machinery.

Their hope is future generations of the family will continue to appreciate the role these tractors played in helping earlier generations work the land, earn a living and provide for their families.

By passing the tractors on to their children and grandchildren, the Wilhelms are also passing on a tangible connection to the family's farming heritage and the history of North Easthope Township.



David and Shirley Wilhelm are joined by their children and grandchildren after presenting the family's three restored Farmall tractors to the next generation. The tractors have been a cherished part of the Wilhelm family's farming heritage for many years.



The Wilhelm grandchildren took part in a Farmall tractor parade during the family gathering. From left are Brooke, Julia, Dylan, Spencer, Darcy, Blake, Connor, Devon and Hunter.

Townsend Brothers take advantage of ideal planting conditions near Shakespeare

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Modern farm equipment has come a long way over the past several decades.

While many farmers in the 1950s planted corn with two-row planters, today's equipment allows producers to cover significantly more ground in a fraction of the time.

Ross Townsend Jr. of Townsend Brothers was doing just that late last week while planting corn in a field between Shakespeare and New Hamburg.

Using a 24-row planter, Townsend was busy filling seed bins and taking advantage of what many area farmers describe as nearly ideal planting conditions during the spring of 2026.

In a brief conversation, Townsend said the planting season has been one of the best in recent memory on fields farmed by the family in

Perth and Oxford counties.

Other farmers throughout the region have expressed similar views, noting warm temperatures, suitable soil conditions and timely field access have helped crops get off to a strong start.

While planting progress has been excellent, many producers were also welcoming the rain forecast later that week after an extended dry period.

Tavistock-area farmer Dwayne Dietrich said he has been pleased with the emergence of both corn and soybean crops. He added winter wheat fields are now headed out and appear poised to produce another strong crop when harvest begins in late July or early August.

Area farmers are hopeful the combination of favourable spring conditions and timely rainfall will provide a solid foundation for the growing season ahead.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Ross Townsend Jr. of Townsend Brothers works to finish planting a field east of Shakespeare before an overnight rainfall arrived. With ideal planting conditions throughout much of the spring, area farmers have made excellent progress on corn and soybean planting. The rain was welcomed by producers across Perth, Waterloo and Oxford counties following a stretch of dry weather.

NEAT club member combines love of tractors and trucks

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor (NEAT) Club are known for their appreciation of vintage farm machinery, but for Frank Gollinger, that passion extends beyond tractors.

Gollinger, who lives on the 16th Line east of Tavistock, is a longtime supporter of the NEAT Club and a dedicated John Deere enthusiast. His love for the iconic green-and-yellow brand inspired him to create something a little different – a truck that looks like a John Deere tractor.

In 2012, Gollinger purchased a 1966 Mercury 350 one-ton flatbed truck and set about transforming it into a unique tribute to his favourite brand.

The truck is powered by a 352-cubic-inch Cleveland engine and is equipped with a four-speed transmission, as well as

a dump box and hoist. Despite being nearly 60 years old, the vehicle has just 57,000 original miles on the odometer.

Gollinger said he chose a Mercury because it was a Canadian-built vehicle.

After bringing the truck home, he and several friends began the restoration project. The truck received four coats of paint in the familiar John Deere colours, creating a vehicle that turns heads wherever it goes.

The finished product may not be a tractor, but its appearance leaves little doubt about the inspiration behind it.

Today, the customized truck is a popular conversation piece at antique-tractor events and local gatherings, where it reflects both Gollinger's appreciation for vintage machinery and the creativity often found among members of the antique-tractor community.



(RON NEEB PHOTO)

Frank Gollinger shows off his customized 1966 Mercury 350 flatbed truck while attending breakfast with fellow antique-tractor enthusiasts at Quehl's Restaurant in Tavistock. Inspired by his love of John Deere tractors, Gollinger transformed the Canadian-built truck into a one-of-a-kind vehicle finished in the company's familiar green-and-yellow colours.

Gazette Puzzles

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519-662-1710

24 Hope Street
Tavistock, ON
519-655-2422

Pet of the Week

MAPLE

Meet Maple, a two-year-old gentle, affectionate pup with a heart as warm as her name suggests. She happiest by your side, whether she's curled up for a cozy nap or proudly carrying around her favourite toy. She loves a good game of fetch and will chase a ball with joyful determination before settling in for cuddles. Maple's loving nature is undeniable, but new places and unfamiliar surroundings can make her a little shy at first. She's looking for a patient, understanding family who will give her the time and space to grow into her most confident self. With kindness and a little love, Maple is sure to blossom into a loyal, devoted companion. If your home could use a little extra warmth, and a wagging tail or two, Maple might just be the perfect addition to your family. Maple can be found at our Stratford Centre: <https://kwsphumane.ca/adopt/dogs>



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Crazy for castor oil

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



The new craze on social media just might be magical. Who's willing to place a spoonful of castor oil inside their belly button before going to bed?

Sounds silly, yes. It may be holistically helpful or super silly. This health expert decided to go for it and after 30 days straight, I kept up my nightly habit.

Castor oil is nothing new, dating back to ancient Egypt and a beauty hack for brightening Cleopatra's eyes.

Castor oil is a very thick, odourless oil made from the seeds of the castor plant, primarily produced in India.

Castor oil is used in motor oil but, surprisingly, it has a bounty of body-boosting benefits inside and out and top to bottom.

Starting at the head, castor oil is said to help hair grow. Many beauty experts apply a small amount to bare eyelashes to help

thicken, swearing the oil makes skin supple while fading age spots. Castor oil is chemical-free, but I always choose organic for added protection.

I love combining castor with rosehip oil as an ultra-luxurious facial serum. Because castor oil contains ricinoleic acid, the oil is naturally antibacterial and anti-inflammatory. It also may be effective in treating acne.

Castor oil supports detoxing the body naturally. Conventional medicine advocates that the liver does this all on its own whereas natural health lovers believe the body may need some help from time to time.

The liver is responsible for over 500 different functions. That's a lot of work for one organ. Take into account a toxic diet, lack of sleep, excess stress and a boatload of bad habits; maybe a helping hand is a great idea

for the average Joe. Because the skin is the largest organ and everything applied is absorbed, castor oil is brilliant.

For pain and inflammation, mix four ounces of castor oil with two teaspoons of cayenne pepper and apply to the area of concern. Capsaicin, the active ingredient in cayenne pepper, blocks pain signals.

Have a headache, add a few drops of peppermint essential oil to castor oil and rub on temples and ear lobes.

Chest congestion? Castor oil combined with a few drops of eucalyptus essential oil is a natural vapor rub for the chest.

Sleep an issue? Combine a few drops of lavender essential oil with castor oil and rub on the soles of feet. Put on your socks and enjoy deep slumber.

By applying castor oil directly to the skin through the belly button, gentle natural elimination without harsh laxatives is accomplished. This may be too much information (TMI) for readers, but without my magnesium citrate nightly, I am constipated. After a few days of applying the castor oil to my belly button, I needed to lower



(PARVATHISRI, CC BY-SA 3.0-VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS PHOTO)

The castor plant, whose seeds are used to produce castor oil, has been valued for centuries and has recently gained renewed attention through popular wellness trends.

my magnesium dose for obvious reasons.

After the sensational success, I have now started placing castor oil packs on areas of concern. How? By applying a liberal amount of castor oil to organic cotton then placing the pack on my liver and topping with a hot water bottle, Mother Nature is working her magic.

On the liver, I help detox chemicals in food, air and the

slew applied daily to the skin. By placing a pack on the stomach, digestion is enhanced, bloating is reduced, hormones balance and menstrual cramps are alleviated.

Let me know if you tried this health hack! Write me at mercedeskaygoldfitness@gmail.com.

Always check with your health practitioner before making changes to your health and wellness routine.

A midnight beeping

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Galen Simmons



Late one night as I was sleeping,
I woke to the sound of an alarm a-beeping.
My sleep disturbed, I rolled out of bed,
I looked around and scratched my head.
The beep I heard was not alarming,
A battery dying is what it's warning.
Between the sounds of Julia snoring,
I stood and listened, not ignoring.
Chirping once every 30 seconds,
I focused on from whence it beckoned.
From in the basement, I heard that beep,
And toward it softly, I did creep.
Though still plugged in, a detector was dying;
Remove the battery, I started trying.
I pulled it out and to my relief,

The sound had stopped, I could finally sleep.
Back in bed, all snug and warm,
A thought intruded in full form.
Why had the detector suddenly died,
when power should have been well-supplied?
With dawning horror, I opened my eyes,
A crisis was brewing, I hadn't realized.
Just one week ago, we had contractors in,
They'd shut off the power so work could begin.
This house is old, its wiring confusing,
The upstairs lights weren't all we were losing.
A pit in my stomach, I walked back downstairs,
To see the freezer sitting silently there.
I opened the lid, afraid what I'd find,
Hopes of still-frozen food I had in mind.
But up from the freezer a smell did arise,
So putrid and pungent, it brought a tear to my eye.
Meat, veggies and fruit long forgotten
Had, over a week, all gone rotten.
Lightly sighing, trying not to gag,
I knew all was lost and doomed to a bag.
At three in the morning, I closed the lid,
Went back upstairs – beneath the covers I hid.
A problem for tomorrow, I closed my eyes,
And worried about the food we'd need to buy.

Innerkip Stormwater Management Master Plan

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

June 25, 2026

5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Innerkip Community Centre
(695566 17th Line, Innerkip)

The Township of East Zorra-Tavistock has developed a Stormwater Management Plan for the Village of Innerkip.

Join us at the Innerkip Community Centre to review the project findings and proposals. Your comments and feedback are needed.

About the open house:

- Review the current and proposed environmental, stormwater, and municipal infrastructure assets within Innerkip.
- Share your knowledge and experience
- Identify any stormwater issues within your neighbourhood.

Drop in anytime. Staff and consultants will be available to receive your feedback and answer questions.



Project Webpage:
<https://www.ezt.ca/en/business-and-development/innerkip-master-drainage-plan.aspx>

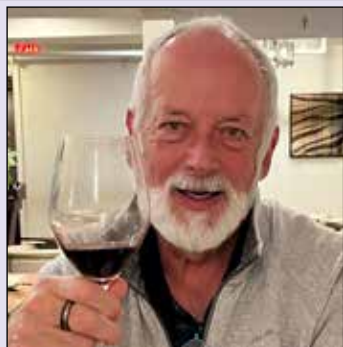
EZT
EAST ZORRA-TAVISTOCK

**FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES CONTACT HEATHER DUNBAR
AT 226.261.1837 OR HEATHER@GRANTHAVEN.COM**

An award-winning distillery arises from initial failures

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



"I failed." What a depressing idea! But there are some great thoughts about failure that put it in an entirely different perspective. For example, Thomas Edison said, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." And my literary hero, C.S. Lewis, wrote, "Failures are finger posts on the road to achievement."

And what, you may ask, does this have to do with travel? Come with me to Saskatchewan to meet a feisty woman named Barb Stefanyshyn-Cote. Barb and her husband, John Cote, are the founders and co-owners of Black Fox Distillery, located just outside Saskatoon.

Barb will tell you, with lots of witty anecdotes to prove the point, that Black Fox, now a notable success, was born out of a whole series of failures, mistakes and missteps.

Today, locals and visitors alike enjoy the ambience, the events and the products of Black Fox, but it took a while to get here.

John and Barb are fifth-generation farmers. Their "roots" go back for generations and they continue to be deeply committed to agriculture in Saskatchewan. Both have studied and consulted on agricultural practices worldwide and are recognized nationally and internationally for their industry leadership.

Once upon a time, they were grain farmers, but – and this where an Ontario perspective on agriculture may cause some bafflement – they only had 5,000 acres of land, and that was not enough for a sustainable operation.

So, they pivoted, sold the 5,000 acres to a much bigger operator and bought the property that is now home to Black Fox Distillery.

But they didn't come there with any thought of creating an award-winning distillery. Barb explains that they tried growing vegetables, but that was not a success. They tried fruit, planting acres of orchards, but that, too, was a commercial failure.

Barb says they then thought of creating a winery, but there was one hitch: "We don't like wine."

And thus, through trial and error, they arrived at the idea of creating a distillery. It's named for a real black fox, one that took up residence one season on their original

grain farm.

And although the idea of a distillery was new, their agricultural philosophy was bred in their bones.

"We are proud to be part of a movement of pioneering craft distillers who advocate for terroir, believe in the provenance of place and understand the ways in which soil, climate and topography influence the bounty a land bears."

They also argue that "ecology and economy can live in harmony."

"Through incorporating environmentally conscious, efficient systems across our business we pledge ourselves to a more sustainable way of life. From ingredient production to distillation, transportation, packaging and water conservation, our agronomic practices emphasize environmental stewardship and a love of the land. As its current custodians, we take seriously our responsibility to leave it better than when it came into our care.

"We recognize that each step of the production process has an impact on the land and those who work it. Better soil management leads to more fertile soil, better crops, increased biodiversity and improved climate regulation."

The couple brought all of their experience, their education and what they learned from their initial failures to the development of Black Fox Distillery. And, Barb explains, this worked almost too well. When they began to produce their whisky, and to win awards, they were accused of being "charlatans." They are one of only two distilleries in the province making craft whisky from scratch, and

some of the "experts" felt their product was simply too good to come from a fledgling operation.

Barb says there were two keys to the exceptional quality of their whiskies. First, they used a unique rye-wheat blend, producing an unusually dark whisky. Second, even in Saskatchewan's climate, the whisky is aged in barrels kept outdoors. The changes in weather actually promote the development of flavours. No one else is doing this.

The couple grows most of their source products right on the property, and uses them for their whiskies, gins and cocktails. They still have fruit, though they don't grow fruit as an end product. They have a haskap orchard, rhubarb gardens and are in the process of converting apple orchards into elderflower patches.

When we visited Black Fox, we tasted three excellent whiskies and enjoyed an unexpectedly tasty haskap gin cocktail. We were certainly not the only visitors – the outdoor patio had welcomed a fair number of drop-in customers, including some who clearly knew and loved the place.

Black Fox offers a full menu of ways people can enjoy the place. Of course, you can simply drop in, but there are also organized tours, mixology classes, organized tastings and unusual "u-pick" opportunities – not apples or pears, but flowers (peonies, gladioli and others) and, in mid-September, a u-pick pumpkin patch.

You're probably not going to travel to Saskatchewan simply to visit a distillery, no matter how much you enjoy whisky. But when you do visit the province – and there are an incredible number of reasons why you should – be sure to include a visit to Black Fox Distillery on your itinerary.

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



Black Fox whiskies are aged in barrels kept outdoors – a key to their unique flavours.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Black Fox Distillery co-owner Barb Stefanyshyn-Cote.



Remembering the original black fox, which inspired the name of the distillery.



Black Fox staffers ready to make some whisky-loving customers very happy.

A visit to Transition Acres – an equine rescue farm and more

Laura Green

Braemar Women's Institute

Horses were grazing in the paddocks and new puppies were barking at the Transition Acres Rescue farm just outside of Tavistock when members of the Braemar Women's Institute (WI) visited the site on June 3.

Alisha Wilson, founder of Transition Acres, a non-profit organization which offers one-of-kind equine-assisted wellness and learning experiences for visitors, families and corporate teams, introduced us to their newest member – a week-old filly miniature pony who needs a perfect name.

In the herd of 16 horses, 13 are non-profit which includes three Ojibwe Spirit Ponies and three boarders. Visitors can also find rabbits, chickens and ducks in fenced-in areas.

Besides identifying with horses, visitors can relax with a cup of coffee at the fire pit with a book or take a reflective stroll through the Indigenous Medicine Garden.

Visit the website to learn more about experiences offered.

Wilson has received many recognition awards for her programs offered at Transition. Local awards were Young Entrepreneur of the Year (2025) from Community Futures and Woodstock Chamber of Commerce;

Tourism Oxford Best New Product Award recognizing meaningful impact on wellness-based tourism;

and Ontario Southwest Signature Experience awarded to her signature Cowgirl Kickback Experience.

WI members thanked Wilson with her request of a bale of hay, which we paid for with Canadian cash.

We held our business meeting under the shade trees with a glass of lemonade.

Our next meeting will be a tour of the Tillsonburg Station Arts Centre with our twinning branch, Jean Brumpton WI, on Aug. 5 at 1:30 p.m. For more information, contact lauragreen77@gmail.com.



(Laura Green Photo)

The newest addition to the stables is filly miniature pony who is just a week old. Closest to the baby is volunteer Kelly Ann Ruddock and to the right is founder of Transition Acres Alisha Wilson.

Mitchell UCW members explore local history at Fryfogel Tavern and Shakespeare cairn

Gary West

Gazette Correspondent

Members of the Main Street United Church Women (UCW) in Mitchell spent Saturday exploring some of Perth County's earliest history during a tour of the Fryfogel Tavern and Arboretum east of Shakespeare.

Led by organizer Jean Morris, the group of 11 women visited the historic tavern, where they learned about the area's pioneer roots and the important role the inn played in the early development of the Huron Tract.

During their visit, the group also viewed the Fryfogel family cairn, which commemorates Sebastian Fryfogel and his family, among the earliest settlers in Perth County.

Tour guides shared the history of the three-storey stone inn, which served as an important stopping place for travellers making their way west from Berlin, now Kitchener, toward Goderich and Lake Huron in the 1800s.

In its early days, the inn provided food, lodging and rest for travellers journeying through what was then largely unsettled territory.

Today, the Fryfogel Tavern operates as a historic site

during the summer months and offers guided tours highlighting its significance to the region's history.

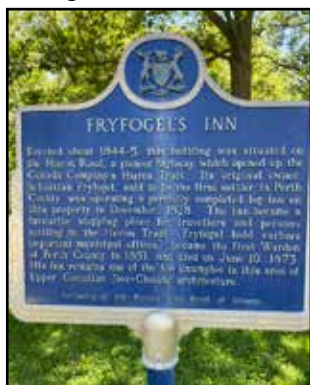
Following their visit to the tavern, the group stopped in Shakespeare to view another local landmark – the historic stone cairn on Main Street that recognizes many of the earliest settlers who arrived in Shakespeare and North Easthope Township beginning in 1832.

The outing provided participants with an opportunity to learn more about the people and places that helped shape the communities of Perth County and the surrounding area.



(Gary West Photos)

The historic Fryfogel Tavern east of Shakespeare served as an important stopping place for travellers journeying through the Huron Tract during the 1800s.



A plaque at the Fryfogel Tavern outlines the historical significance of the site and its role in the settlement of Perth County.



The Shakespeare cairn on Main Street recognizes many of the earliest settlers of Shakespeare and North Easthope Township.



Members of the Main Street United Church Women from Mitchell tour the Fryfogel Tavern east of Shakespeare. Front row, from left, are Erma Lannin, Jean Morris, Beryl Ortelli, Sheila Gibb, Noele Taylor and tour guide Ali Doupe. Back row, Nancy Eaton, Hilda Lansbergen, Twyla Waddell, Marg Schrader, Dianne Moses, Helen Lockhart, Deb Thiel and Kate Johnson, a member of the Fryfogel Tavern staff.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - JUNE/JULY 2026

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

Optimist Club of Tavistock Friday Night Fries
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Optimist Food Trailer
Tavistock Optimist Park

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Shakespeare's 79th Annual Field Day and Fish Fry
Festivities begin at 8 a.m.
Parade theme is "Life's a Beach". Shakespeare Firefighters Breakfast, Mini Kids Midway, and Fish Fry and lots more. More info and tickets for Fish Fry - call Deb at 519-276-8109.
SCAA Park and Optimist Hall
Shakespeare, ON

Saturday Strolls in Sylvan Scenery
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Who knew 'coffee' grew in New Hamburg? And there's more too. Many unusual trees. See what grows along the old lane, the Christner Trail. Learn what trees in this tree museum survived. Goosefoot Maples? You'll learn how it got this name. Registration and Details: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/lets-tree-wilmot-34384003923>
Arboretum & Christner Trail
470 Waterloo Street, New Hamburg

MONDAY, JUNE 15

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30-7:30 p.m.
Wild Boar, El Milagro, Pablas Street of India, Beavertails
Donations to Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

TUESDAY, JUNE 16

Free Caregiver Connection peer support groups
6:30-8:30 p.m.
Worried about your child or youth? Parents and Caregivers for Mental Health (PCMH) offers free peer support groups for caregivers, in person, virtual, or hybrid. Visit family.cmho.org or email oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca for more information.
Revel Realty Woodstock,
111 Huron Street, Woodstock

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

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

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

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Please register by June 12 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900
Wilmot Rec Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

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

THURSDAY, JUNE 18

Tavistock Mens Club Meeting
Dinner at 6.15 p.m.
Welcome to attend. Phone: 519-655-3573
Website: tavistockmensclub.ca
78 Woodstock St N

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

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

Fundraising Golf Tournament
Tavistock Community Health Inc. is hosting a fundraising golf tournament. All the money goes to the renovations at the Tavistock medical health building in Tavistock. Information is available by clicking on "Events and Fundraising" at: info@tchi.ca
River Valley Golf Club
4725 1 Line, St. Marys

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

Plattsville's 175 Anniversary Celebration
10 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Join us for: Firefighter Breakfast 10 a.m., Heritage Displays 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Portraits of Honour, 12 noon Parade, Opening Ceremony 1 p.m., Car & Tractor Show 1-4 p.m., Live Music & Entertainment 2-10 p.m., Kids Activities, Vendor Market, Lions BBQ and the grand finale, an 18 minute Drone Show at 9:45 p.m. Free admission. Fun for all ages. Thanks to our Platinum Sponsors - Canadian Heritage and North Blenheim Mutual Insurance celebrating 165 years. www.plattsvilledistrictheritagesociety.com
Plattsville Park and Arena
68 Mill St E, Plattsville

Tavistock & District Historical Society Museum Open
1-4 p.m. (other times by appointment)
Email: info@tavistockhistory.ca or call 519-655-3334. All welcome.
37 Maria Street, Tavistock

MONDAY, JUNE 22

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30-7:30 p.m.
Berlin 95, Born2Eat, El Milagro, Ish n Chips
Donations to TAP, Tavistock Assistance Program
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

Garden Wilmot visits Deep Purple Lavender Farm.
6:30 p.m.
Join us for a guided walk of the farm, nestled in a scenic valley with a wooded ravine, located south of Embro. FREE for GW members. For more info: <https://wilmothortsociety.ca>

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

TUESDAY, JUNE 23

Oxford Philatelic Society
7-9 p.m.
If you have never belonged to a stamp club, now's the time. Meet new friends, grow your knowledge and collection.
Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com
Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>
Church of the Epiphany
560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Please register by June 19 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900
Linwood Community Centre,
5279 Ament Line, Linwood

Wednesday Walks in Wilmot's Wonderful Woods with Louis

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Spend a pleasant evening strolling and learning about a few of the trees from their bark - burnt corn flakes, grey fettuccine. You'll also have an audience with royalty. Registration and Details: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/lets-tree-wilmot-34384003923>
Walker Woods
2107 Walker Road, New Hamburg

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

5 Corners Summer Sips - Tavistock Fall Fair Fundraiser
2 p.m. to Midnight
Get ready for a full-blown summer party with craft brews, food trucks and live music. Family-friendly event. Kids 12 and under free. Visit <https://www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/5-corners-summer-sips> for tickets. Early bird ticket special until June 1.
Tavistock & District Recreation Centre
1 Adam St, Tavistock

Explore Downtown New Hamburg's Pageant of Trees with Louis

1:30 - 3:00 p.m.
There is a pageant of a wide variety of tree species, and some of them are spectacular! Stroll along the sidewalks to see dozens of different trees. If we're lucky, we can enjoy the fragrance of the Little Leaf Linden flowers. Registration and Details: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/lets-tree-wilmot-34384003923>
Kirkpatrick Park
122 Wilmot Street, New Hamburg

MONDAY, JUNE 29

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30-7:30 p.m.
Pablas Street of India, Swat, Fo Cheezy
Donations to TAP, Tavistock Assistance Program
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

TUESDAY, JULY 7

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

FRIDAY, JULY 10

Optimist Club of Tavistock Friday Night Fries
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Optimist Food Trailer
Tavistock Optimist Park

MONDAY, JULY 13

Food Trucks at Grace United Church Tavistock
4:30-7:30 p.m.
SWAT, Pablas Street of India, Beavertails
Donations to Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St. S. Tavistock

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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

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

FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

Tavistock Seniors Pickleball
Monday, Wednesday & Friday 12-4 p.m.
Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.
Tavistock Seniors Card Games
Monday drop in 1-4 p.m.
Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.
VON Senior Exercise Drop-In Standing Class
Tuesday and Thursday 9-10 a.m.
To register contact 519-539-1231 ext. 6319
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.
VON Senior Exercise Drop-In Sitting Class
Tuesday and Thursday 10:25-11:25 a.m.
To register contact 519-539-1231 ext. 6319
Village Manner, 98 Woodstock St., Tavistock

TAVISTOCK & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM DISPLAYS

Museum Display: "25th Tournament of the Tavistock World Crokinole Championship".
Open 7 days a week until June 22
Tavistock & District Recreation Centre (arena lobby), 2 Adam Street, Tavistock
Museum Display: "The Glasgow Warehouse"
Can be viewed anytime
Tavistock Home Hardware (Front window), 24 Woodstock Street S., Tavistock
Museum Display: "Heritage of Hickson Post Office"
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm runs until July 13
Ezt Township Administration Building (lobby), 89 Loveys Street, Hickson

PLATTSVILLE & DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY

Plattsville & District Heritage Society exhibit "Holidays & Celebrations That Bring Us Together"
June 6 to September 19 | Saturdays 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Donations accepted. Refreshments. Contact plattsvilledistrictheritage@gmail.com or call 519-535-1417.
Archive & Museum at Chesterfield,
816661 Oxford Rd 22, Bright

Events submitted for the community calendar will be published as space permits.

Submission does not guarantee publication, and events may not appear every week prior to the event date.

Please submit your events to thewtgazette@gmail.com by Tuesday at 3 p.m.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE

6 Bose speakers \$300, Fire Table like new \$300 or \$350 with the tank, Electric Fireplace 1500Watts with remote \$250, Ladies 24" 18 gear Mountain Bike like new #100, \$40 Planer, 16" scroll saw with table \$40, Miter saw stand brand new in box \$75, Worx table new in box \$75, Everlast heavy bag with 2 pairs of gloves \$50, NordicTrack treadmill \$300, accordion imported from Italy needs minor repair best offer. Contact Joe 519-242-7904

FOR SALE

Shade Trees; Maples, Oaks, Birch, Beech, Honey Locusts, Elms, Magnolia, Hydrangea Tree, Tulip Tree, Crab apples, Ivory Silk Lilac, Chanticleer Pear, Golden Weeping Willows and more. Apples, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Apricots, Nectarine, Blueberry, Haskap etc. Lots of healthy strong Spruce, Cedars and White Pine for your privacy hedges and wind-breaks. Hundred of flowering shrubs. Reg Hours 7am-6pm Mon-Sat at Martins Nursery c/o Emanuel Martin. 42661 Orangehill Rd., Wroxeter, ON

LOOKING FOR

Senior living in central Tavistock looking for person to do light housekeeping including laundry once a month. Also need bi-weekly grocery shop. Fair compensation for gas & time (Cash). If interested, please call 519-655-3595 to schedule a meet and greet. Suitable candidate will be notified by phone.

WANTED

I will pay cash for antiques and collectibles. Coca Cola, Pepsi, any pop company, Brewery items Kuntz, Huether Labatts, etc. Old radios and gramophones, Wristwatches and pocket watches, Old fruit jars, Beaver Star Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs Red Indian Supertest etc Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me - 519-570-6920.

WANTED

\$ Cash Paid \$ for your RECORDS and LPs. Jazz, Blues, Rock, Pop, Folk, Soundtracks, and more. Selectively buying CDs, Cassettes, Turntables, and Stereo Equipment. For more information: Diamond Dogs Music 114 Ontario St. Stratford / 226-972-5750

**TO PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD CONTACT
HEATHER DUNBAR AT 226.261.1837 OR
HEATHER@GRANTHAVEN.COM**

Garage Sale

QUILTERS ESTATE GARAGE SALE
All Proceeds to Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth
SATURDAY JUNE 20 • 8 A.M.
Shakespeare Presbyterian Church
(located at the lights in Shakespeare)
Contact Linda for more information
519-272-7783

Quiz Time Answers

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Gemini & Cancer | 6. 1381 |
| 2. D-Day | 7. Mark Zuckerberg |
| 3. Banff | 8. The Corvus |
| 4. Edward Teach | 9. Metric system |
| 5. Tavistock, ON | 10. Bolshoi Theatre |

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