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(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Attendees affected by the Petersburg Water System project were invited to participate and provide feedback at last week's open house/public information centre meeting at the St. Agatha Community Centre. Full story on page 2.

## Wilmot council to revisit pay-review options at March 2 committee of the whole meeting

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Wilmot council has deferred a decision on how it will conduct its mandatory council remuneration review this year, opting instead to revisit the matter at its March 2 committee of the whole meeting.

At its Feb. 23 regular meeting, council received a report from CAO Jeff Willmer outlining options for reviewing pay and benefits for elected officials for the 2026-2030 term. Council ultimately voted to refer the decision to committee of the whole to review a compensation study completed by human-resource consultants Pesce & Associates in December 2023 before selecting a review method.

"The council remuneration review policy sets out three different options that are available to council for a method of review," Willmer said, presenting his staff report for council's consideration. "One is a citizen-review committee; second is an independent review consultant; and third is an internal administrative review. ... It's before you to determine which method you prefer."

Under the township's recently approved

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## Tavistock school evacuated due to odour Reports of strong smell over much of the town, source remains a mystery

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) fire crews were called to Tavistock Public School on Tuesday morning after receiving a report of a possible natural gas leak.

Students and staff were evacuated while testing was conducted at the school by firefighters and Enbridge Gas. The result

was negative for natural gas, leaving the cause of the smell unknown.

"I can confirm that Enbridge Gas received a number of calls from the Tavistock area earlier (Tuesday) morning about the suspected smell of natural gas," said company spokesperson Lesley Hunter. "Our crews responded immediately, and their investigation determined that the odour was not related to natural

gas."

EZT Fire Chief Scott Alexander said his department was called to the school at approximately 9:25 a.m. (Tuesday) morning.

"The department searched and found no readings at that time. Enbridge was requested to attend, and at approximately 10:20 a.m., performed an investigation.



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# Wilmot hosts open house on Petersburg water system project

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

The Township of Wilmot held an open house/public information centre meeting for residents affected by the Petersburg Water System project at the St. Agatha Community Centre last week.

As part of transitioning the former Knipfel private drinking water system to the Petersburg Distribution Water System, the Township of Wilmot is preparing to replace the existing watermain and water services on Deerfield Avenue, Alice Crescent, Redford Drive and Notre Dame Drive from Snyder's Road to the railway tracks, and Snyder's Road East from Notre Dame Drive to 1745 Snyder's Road East, to meet current standards.

The goal of the presentation was to answer questions and receive feedback and input from residents regarding the proposed roadway improvements.

Kris Wilkinson, Ward 2 councillor, presented design options for the roadway rehabilitation, including a semi-urban cross-section with no curbs and a wider asphalt surface. He emphasized the importance of providing feedback to council.



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Wilmot Coun. Kris Wilkinson speaks to attendees at the recent open house/public information centre meeting for residents affected by the Petersburg Water System project at the St. Agatha Community Centre last week.

"We're making decisions based on the feedback we get," he said. "It could go any number of ways, but I know my peers on council, and if they look at the feedback and see what people want, they're going to do their best to make it happen."

Ken VanderWal, director of infrastructure services for the Township of Wilmot, touched on the same, detailing the urban cross-section proposal for road reconstruction, which includes 3.5-metre lanes, curb and gutter, storm sewer and a sidewalk on one side, mandated by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

"What we have presented, and what we are recommending, is an urban cross-section," he said. "This urban cross-section would provide three-and-a-half-metre lanes, curb and gutter, as well as the storm sewer and sidewalk on one side of the road."

VanderWal said the design is being done in-house rather than by external consultants to save money, and the township is actively reviewing past tender costs and focusing on an efficient design to help keep project costs down.

"The overall cost of the project is estimated right now at \$4.8 million, which would be over two years. Of this, 48.6 per cent, or \$2.35 million, is for the water system. The remainder, 51.4 per cent, is for road reconstruction, storm sewers, curbs and gutters."

Construction will be phased over two years, beginning in the summer of 2026, and will consist of replacing the existing private water main with a new municipal water system, installing new water services to the property line, as well as road rehabilitation, drainage and active transportation.

Participants are asked to complete the resident/owner questionnaire to assist the team in understanding concerns and issues and to provide comments or questions for the project by March 6.

Feedback received from the questionnaire will be reported to council on March 23.

# Students evacuated after gas smell reported at Tavistock Public School

Continued from page 1

They also did not detect any readings. Fire was released from the scene, and Enbridge is continuing to investigate."

A notification was delivered to parents through the school's messaging system at 10:29 a.m.

"Earlier this morning, the fire department and utilities services were called to respond to reports of a potential gas leak at Tavistock Public School. Students and staff have been temporarily evacuated to the neighbouring Tavistock and District Recreation Centre. The fire department and utilities services are currently investigating to determine if it is safe for students to re-enter the building. We will provide updates to families once more information is available. As always, the safety and wellbeing of Tavistock students remain our highest priority."

While the email said the students were at the arena, they were actually taken to the Memorial Hall. Parents received an update at 11 a.m. that their kids were safely back in class.

A mother with children enrolled at the school, who lives several blocks away on Fred Krug Avenue, said she smelled a strong odour from her home.

"It hit me like a wall as I stepped onto the porch. I started a group chat with my neighbours to check their gas lines. Moms who live by Tim Hortons were calling their husbands. One that lives on Jacob Street called Enbridge right away, and their reader wouldn't pick anything up. What could smell that strong all through town, and are we going to get an explanation? Pretty unnerving."

An odour was also present at other locations in Tavistock, including Jacob Street. One possible explanation is an issue at the sewage lagoons, which are located close to the school, but Oxford County said that was not the case.

"No abnormal odours have been detected by wastewater treatment operations staff onsite at the Tavistock waste water treatment plant," said Jason Kreitzer, supervisor of wastewater operations.

He also noted that dissolved oxygen concentrations in the treatment lagoons are well above minimum requirements, meaning the lagoons are healthy and not overloaded.

County staff also noted odours may be originating from other industrial operations in the area. They also said the wind was blowing from the northeast, away from the school.

The Gazette also reached out to Mike Harris, MPP for Kitchener-Conestoga and minister of environment, conservation and parks.

"I am going to flag the issue for my team, and we will look into it."

The Gazette reached out to EZT to see what steps, if any, they are taking to investigate the odour.

"It would appear that it was a false alarm. The township fire department responds to many false alarms throughout the year and does not do any additional investigation after the area is cleared and deemed safe," said EZT CAO Karen DePrest. "There are plenty of other possible sources of the smell, but where or how to track them down is beyond the scope of our team."

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# Council delays decision on remuneration review, cites time constraints

Continued from page 1

council remuneration review policy, a review must be conducted once per term, with recommendations brought forward prior to May 1 – the start of the nomination period for the Oct. 26 municipal election. Any approved changes would take effect at the beginning of the next term of council. Each option for review outlined in the policy includes benchmarking against at least five comparable municipalities and consideration of base salary, benefits and allowances.

The policy, developed in 2025 at the direction of Mayor Natasha Salonen and approved in November, established a formal framework for regular reviews of council pay. At the time, Salonen emphasized the need for a transparent and consistent governance process, making clear any changes would apply to future councils rather than the current one.

In his Feb. 23 report, Willmer noted that a consultant-led review has already been completed during the current council term, referencing the 2023 Pesce & Associates compensation study presented to council in closed session. He also pointed out that time constraints may limit the feasibility of forming a citizen review committee before the May 1 deadline, and that neighbouring municipalities such as Wellesley and Woolwich are using internal administrative reviews this year.

“In a perfect world, I would like it to be a committee of the public. I also agree with the staff report that we don’t have enough time for that,” Salonen said. “The biggest reason, personally, that I would be leaning to ... going to a consultant is a few things. One ... is to encourage people from every and any diverse background to want to engage in and run in municipal politics. ... A huge barrier to people running is compensation. I would also argue that simply looking at what our comparators are doing

isn’t addressing the root cause of why a lot of people don’t run.”

Salonen also suggested positional reviews for both councillors and mayor should be conducted to better determine their scopes of work – which have changed as a result of technological changes over the past several decades and the recent introduction of strong mayor powers – to determine adequate compensation for both.

The financial implications of hiring another independent consultant were estimated at between \$10,000 and \$20,000.

The decision to refer the matter to committee of the whole will allow councillors to revisit the 2023 consultant report and weigh whether further external analysis is necessary, or whether staff can bring forward updated recommendations internally based on existing data and current comparators.

“Regarding the Pesce report; if I’m not mistaken ... I believe it was delivered verbally in closed (session). I don’t know if we actually received a written report. With that said, I hope that doesn’t complicate anything,” said Coun. Kris Wilkinson, who ultimately tabled the motion to refer the discussion to committee of the whole.

“Staff will bring it forward in whatever appropriate manner,” Salonen responded. “So, if it is a matter for closed (session) or not, they’ll be able to pick out the parts of that report and report it appropriately to council.”

Council is expected to continue the discussion March 2, with a final decision on the review method required in time to meet the policy’s pre-election deadline.

Currently, the mayor’s salary sits at \$39,425 per year and councillors earn \$21,872 – rates that have remained frozen since 2023 when council voted against increases. Council also forwent cost-of-living increases in both 2024 and 2025.

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# Nater steps back in time at Brocksden Country School Museum

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater took a step back in time on Friday, Feb. 20, when he spent part of his morning at Brocksden Country School Museum.

The visit gave him a firsthand look at what school life was like more than 100 years ago.

Built in 1853, Brocksden is the oldest one-room school in Perth County.

Ester Campbell took on the role of the school marm for the day. At 13, she is only a few years younger than many of the young women who once taught in one-room schoolhouses like Brocksden.

Keeping the program authentic, Miss Campbell began the day as it would have started in 1910. She raised the Union Jack outside the school and ushered everyone inside.

The group gathered in the basement, where students long ago would have hung their coats and stored their lunch pails. The basement once served as a space for physical education and indoor recess.

Miss Campbell shared a story passed down from her grandfather about children playing “hockey” with baseball bats and balls, resulting in a few broken light bulbs.

The basement has since been transformed into a museum space, with old books and toys on display. Smaller desks set out in rows are now put to good use, giving younger children a place to play and practice printing on slates while their older siblings take part in lessons in the classroom upstairs.

Among the “students” that morning were Campbell’s parents, Jesse and Scott Campbell, along with Nater and retired teacher Gloria Hutchison. Hutchison first visited Brocksden Country School Museum in 1989 with her Grade 4 class and remembers being inspired by its history and charm.

After retiring from teaching, she returned to Brocksden in 2004, taking on the role of school marm. She was known as Miss Priestap for 20 years before retiring in 2025. On Friday, she enjoyed the chance to take on the role of a student long ago in her beloved little schoolhouse.

Nater first visited Brocksden Country School Museum



Master Nater receives a traditional schoolhouse punishment, holding logs outstretched for five minutes. With his arms forming the letter “T,” the pose serves as a reminder to tell the truth.

on a class trip when he was a Grade 4 student at Upper Thames Public School in Mitchell. During Friday’s visit, Jesse Campbell found the guest book from that year. Looking at the class photo and the names of his classmates written neatly in ink brought back many memories for Nater.

Raised on his family farm in Logan Township, now part of West Perth, Nater learned early in life the importance of hard work and being involved in the community. His return to Brocksden was a reminder of those same values, lessons that were once taught in one-room schoolhouses many years ago.

This spring, Brocksden will once again open its doors to school groups, giving students the chance to experience what a school day was like in 1910.

The museum also has several weekend events planned. Hymn sings will be held on the second-last Sunday of the month from May to August. Special Saturday events include Make-n-Take Crafts, Old Meets New, a Teddy Bear Picnic, School Stage Days and a Blacksmith demonstration.

To book a class visit or learn more about upcoming events, email brocksdenschool@gmail.com, call 519-271-2619, or visit brocksden.ca.



(DIANE DANEN PHOTOS)

Jesse Campbell, treasurer of the Easthope Historical Group, shows John Nater, MP, the guest book containing his class photo and the names of classmates written neatly in ink from a dip pen.



School marm Miss Campbell, dressed in period costume, stands at the front of the classroom with Scott Campbell, chair of the Easthope Historical Group, John Nater, MP, and board member and former school marm Gloria Hutchison.

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# WRPS lays charges after serious Wellesley collision

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF  
 thewtgazette@gmail.com

The Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) has laid charges in connection to a serious collision in Wellesley Township last month.

On Jan. 22 at approximately 1:10 p.m., WRPS officers responded to a collision on Line 86 near Chalmers Forest Road involving two transport trucks and two other vehicles. Through the initial investigation, police determined an earlier minor collision involving a brown Ford and a white Buick had occurred, and both vehicles had been moved to the shoulder of the roadway.

While the Ford and Buick were on the shoulder of the roadway, a second collision took place involving two transport trucks. During this secondary collision, one of the transport trucks struck the vehicles

involved in the first collision.

As a result of the collisions, a 25-year-old male driver from the initial crash was transported to an out-of-town hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. A 57-year-old male transport truck driver was taken to an out-of-region hospital with serious injuries.

Line 86 remained closed for several hours for the collision investigation.

As a result of the investigation, police charged the driver of one of the transport trucks, a 57-year-old man from Brant County, with dangerous operation of a conveyance, careless driving and driving with a handheld entertainment device.

The investigation remains ongoing by WRPS' traffic services unit.

Anyone with information is asked to contact police at 519-570-9777 ext. 8856.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF WATERLOO REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE)

The 57-year-old driver of a transport truck involved in a serious collision in Wellesley Township Jan. 22 has been charged with dangerous operation of a conveyance, careless driving and driving with a handheld entertainment device, Waterloo regional police say.

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# Local fair ambassadors represent Perth County at OAAS convention

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Local fair ambassadors took centre stage at this year's Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS) annual convention in Richmond Hill.

Among the hundreds of delegates in attendance were young women representing agricultural societies from across Perth, Oxford and Waterloo counties and surrounding areas, proudly promoting their local fairs while taking part in workshops, networking sessions and leadership development opportunities.

The annual convention brings together more than 200 fairs and agricultural

societies from across Ontario. While fair boards are made up largely of volunteers, it is the ambassadors who often serve as the public face of their communities – promoting agriculture, local food production and the importance of rural traditions throughout the year.

Workshops at the convention focused on personal development, public speaking, agricultural awareness and ways to enhance the local fair experience for exhibitors and visitors alike. Ambassadors returned home with new ideas and renewed enthusiasm to share with their respective fair boards.

Agricultural societies continue to play a

vital role in communities across the province, promoting grassroots agriculture, supporting local economies and celebrating the achievements of farmers, youth and exhibitors during spring, summer and fall fair seasons.

Several local ambassadors proudly represented their fairs at the convention. Tavistock Fall Fair Ambassador Brooklyn Ross (2025-2026) was among those participating in ambassador workshops and events.

Also attending were Claire Koch, representing the Wellesley-North Easthope Agricultural Society; Hailey Lupton from the Embro-Zorra Agricultural Society; and

Erin Jackson from the Wilmot Agricultural Society.

Adding to Perth County's pride, Listowel Fair Ambassador Lexi Johnson was named Ontario Fair Ambassador at this year's Canadian National Exhibition competition. Johnson earned the provincial title while competing against ambassadors from across Ontario, further highlighting the strength of local agricultural youth programs.

With strong representation from area fairs, Perth, Oxford and Waterloo county ambassadors once again demonstrated leadership, dedication and pride in their rural roots at the provincial gathering.



((CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS))

Tavistock Fall Fair Ambassador Brooklyn Ross (2025-2026) was among the hundreds of fair ambassadors attending workshops at this year's OAAS convention in Richmond Hill.



Area fair ambassadors at the OAAS convention included, from left, Claire Koch (Wellesley-North Easthope Agricultural Society), Hailey Lupton (Embro-Zorra Agricultural Society) and Erin Jackson (Wilmot Agricultural Society).

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# Mary Lichty-Neeb honoured at OAAS convention for decades of volunteer service

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

If there has ever been a volunteer in Wellesley and North Easthope townships who has done more for the community than Mary Lichty-Neeb, fair board member Wendy Richardson says she would be hard pressed to name one.

Richardson describes Lichty-Neeb as one of the most helpful, courteous and dedicated volunteers the Wellesley-North Easthope Agricultural Society has ever had.

“Mary has been the most hardworking and dedicated fair board member that anyone could imagine,” Richardson said, speaking on behalf of the Wellesley Agricultural Fair board.

Lichty-Neeb was recently recognized at the annual convention of the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS), where she received an award honouring her longstanding volunteer commitment to the Wellesley Fall Fair and more than 50 years of service to the local community

In presenting the award, OAAS officials

recognized Lichty-Neeb for her tireless dedication, knowledge, skill and deep love for the Wellesley fair. Fair directors say she routinely takes on roles that require countless hours of preparation and organization, while always welcoming others to lend a hand and learn from her experience.

They add that Lichty-Neeb ensures every detail is attended to and everything that needs to get done always does.

Beyond her work with the fair, Lichty-Neeb remains active in many other aspects of community life. She has been involved in the production and performance of the Watercourse Theatre production, Belonging in Wellesley, supports local 4-H and Junior Farmer programs, assists with the annual Taste the Culture event, and volunteers at the Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese Festival, among many other initiatives.

Those who know her say she is truly a cornerstone of the Wellesley-North Easthope Agricultural Society and the Wellesley Township Fall Fair, as well as a dedicated member of the broader OAAS community.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

At the recent annual OAAS convention, Mary Lichty-Neeb accepts the Paul Nother Award for exceptional work with the Wellesley fair and agricultural society. With her are William Morris, chair of the OAAS Past Presidents' Association (left) and Paul Nother, whose company sponsors the annual award.



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# Sprucedale school council hosts spaghetti dinner for Carter Kuchma

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

The Village of Shakespeare and the Sprucedale Public School community came together on Thursday, Feb. 19, to surround Carter Kuchma and his family with love and support.

In August 2025, Carter was diagnosed with Type B Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, a form of blood cancer. Carter was just seven years old. While his prognosis is good, he will require ongoing chemotherapy treatments over the next three years at SickKids Hospital in London. His father, Tyler Kuchma, has taken a leave from work to care for Carter and drive him to his many medical appointments.

To help the family, the Sprucedale parent council organized an all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner in partnership with Quehl's Restaurant. Held from 4:30-6:30 p.m., the event welcomed guests to dine in or take their meals to go.

The menu included spaghetti with a choice of two sauces, Caesar salad, dinner rolls and a selection of desserts, along with cold drinks, coffee and tea. With more than 400 meals served, the evening was a tremendous success.

"It was an amazing turnout," said Dianne Kuchma, Carter's mom. "We are so incredibly grateful for the support we have."

Dianne and Tyler Kuchma moved to Shakespeare four years ago with their three children, Carter and his sisters, Hailey, nine, and Natalie, 11. Over the past several months, the family has felt the support of the small but tight-knit community.

Local service clubs have stepped forward in support of the Kuchma family since Carter's diagnosis. The Shakespeare Optimist Club made a financial donation, along with Ed Jeffrey, who donated his winnings from one of the Optimist draws. The Shakespeare Men's Club donated proceeds from its October Halloween Dance, and the Shakespeare Athletic Association, along with the congregation at Shakespeare Presbyterian Church, have also provided support.

Julie Wynette, a member of the Sprucedale parent council, helped organize the fundraiser. She and her husband, Kyle Wynette, understand the journey all too well, as their son, Nash, was also diagnosed with cancer and underwent treatment. Today, Nash is healthy and enjoys playing sports and spending time with family and friends.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Carter Kuchma stands with his family, from left, Hailey, Carter, Tyler, Diane and Natalie. The family expressed heartfelt thanks to the Shakespeare community, Sprucedale Public School and local organizations for their overwhelming support since Carter's diagnosis.



Members of the Sprucedale Public School home and school committee prepare spaghetti and Caesar salad for Thursday night's fundraiser in Shakespeare. From left are Whitney Reis, Samantha Weber, Julie Wynette, Raeven Graham with daughter Jovi, Mackenzie Lapointe and Amy Yantzi.



Sprucedale organizers and volunteers behind the "Courage for Carter" fundraiser included, back row from left, acting principal Sarah Gerber, Kyle Wynette with Nash Wynette, Julie Wynette, Mary White, Mackenzie Lapointe, Paula Roser, Tara Rochelequien, Jody Hart, Amy Yantzi, Whitney Reis, Raeven Graham and Sammi Akins. Front, from left, Isla Riser, Savaya Hobson, Acadia Hobson, Breyer Robinson, Tavlynn Rochelequien, Tessa Rochelequien, Sam Weber, Annie Reid and Kathleen Lindner.

The parent council expressed sincere thanks to Quehl's Restaurant for its significant contribution to the event. They also thanked the Shakespeare Optimist Club for providing the hall and assisting with setup and cleanup.

Generous sponsors included Saputo, The Butcher Barn, Flanagan's, Sysco, Morton's Food Service, New Hamburg Sobey's, Fresh Start, Stone Town Supplies, New Hamburg No Frills, Stratford Zehrs,

S.T.O.P. Restaurant Supply and Chicopee Tube Park.

The entire Shakespeare community looks forward to the day when Carter can return to school and once again take part in the activities he loves. With continued encouragement and support from the school and community, the hope is this journey will be made a little easier for Carter and his family.



The Shakespeare Optimist Hall was filled with supporters Thursday evening as the Sprucedale home and school committee raised thousands of dollars for local Grade 2 student Carter Kuchma, who is undergoing treatment for Type B Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. The "Courage for Carter" fundraiser brought the community together in support of Carter and his family. Tavistock's Quehl's Restaurant and Catering prepared the meal.



A large crowd turned out at the Shakespeare Optimist Hall to enjoy a spaghetti dinner prepared by Quehl's of Tavistock while raising funds for Carter Kuchma and his family.



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# Waterloo Region tweaking waste collection schedule

## Recycling now on bi-weekly pickup schedule

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The Region of Waterloo's new waste-collection system hasn't started, but some schedule changes have been announced.

Waterloo Region is rolling out its new waste cart collection system on March 3.

Garbage and organic waste will be picked up by trucks with mechanical arms that will lift the carts and dump their contents into the vehicle. The operator typically remains inside the truck, operating the arms with a joystick.

When putting out garbage, residents should place the carts about two feet, or approximately an arm's length of space, between them.

The arrow on the lid should point to the street, the handle should point toward the home and the lid should be closed. The lid on the green organics carts can also remain locked, as it will open during the tipping process.

Bags can be used inside the carts (compostable bags or paper liners in the case of the green organics bin), or loose items can be placed directly inside.

The truck's mechanical arm dumps the carts into an area that has two different sections – one for organic materials and the other for waste.

The trucks also have cameras so the operator can ensure nothing hazardous is being mixed in with the garbage.

"If there's anything like a propane tank or something dangerous, the operator would be able to retrieve it," said Olivia Kwok, the region's director of waste management.

Under the new system, waste will be picked up four days a week instead of five, with residents urged to double-check their collection day as it may have changed. That information can be found on the map on the region's website at [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/carts](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/carts), through the Waste Whiz app, or in an information booklet that has been mailed to residents.

"We have a look-up tool on our website where residents can look up their address, and it will confirm their collection day and zone," said Kwok, adding Wilmot Township falls into two different zones.

The changes will impact about 170,000 households in Waterloo Region.

As people get used to the new process, there will be a team out in parts of the region going ahead of the trucks to make sure the carts are positioned properly.

"They will adjust as needed and also give tips and suggestions for a successful collection in the future," Kwok said.

Those who may have difficulty maneuvering the new carts can apply for support

programs the region offers, such as assisted waste collection. Details on how to apply can be found at [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/medical-waste-disposal.aspx](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/medical-waste-disposal.aspx).

For the first week, households will receive both garbage and organics collection. After that, the schedule will be garbage collection (black carts) every other week, organics (green carts) weekly, bulky item collection will move to once a month and yard waste collection will remain every other week, from spring to fall.

Kwok said the changes come as a result of moving to a four-day schedule.

"That is part of the new program, and by eliminating Monday, we had to rejig the whole system and redo all the routing. We did that to incorporate efficiencies in scheduling. It also reduces the collections we had on holiday Mondays. It also helps with staff retention."

Recycling (blue box) is now managed separately by Circular Materials. Pickup will now occur every other week, on the opposite week from regular garbage collection.

Circular Materials is the non-profit organization now leading recycling in the province. Its director of community and media relations told the Gazette recycling collection changes are aligned with other waste management changes happening in the region, particularly changes to the garbage and organics collection schedule managed by the region.

"Circular Materials collaborated with regional staff to align with the new schedule and support a smooth transition for residents in March 2026," said Jennifer Kerr.

She added the way in which recycling services are delivered in a community is determined by the company's local collection contractor, based on the contract awarded during the procurement process.

"Several assessment factors are considered during the procurement process to ensure service delivery meets the needs of residents, the community and regulatory requirements. As the administrator of Ontario's common collection system, Circular Materials follows a procurement process that ensures the effective and efficient provision of services to meet the obligations of Ontario's Blue Box Regulation," Kerr said.

She added regardless of collection method, residents can be assured their efforts to recycle matter and all types of collection methods are designed to meet regulatory performance requirements and result in positive environmental outcomes.

Ontario's new blue box recycling program is 100 per-cent funded by producers,



(PHOTO COURTESY OF REGION OF WATERLOO)

Pictured is the region's new waste collection truck which utilizes mechanical arms. The bins must be two feet apart with the arrows on the top facing the road.

the companies that supply packaging and paper products to consumers in Ontario, including the familiar brands and retailers Ontarians interact with every day.

"This means municipalities and taxpayers will no longer pay for recycling services as this cost will now be paid by

producers," Kerr said. "By shifting financial responsibility to producers, (extended producer responsibility) enables municipalities to redirect their budgets to other local initiatives. Under this new system, Ontario municipalities are collectively saving over \$200 million in costs."

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# Local MPP weighs in on region's water woes

## Local activist blames province for the problem

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Mike Harris said he and his government are in close contact with the Region of Waterloo as it deals with a water shortage.

"Since the Region of Waterloo made me aware of water capacity concerns in the Mannheim service area, I have been in regular contact with Regional Chair Redman and staff on the region's plan to resolve this issue," said Harris in a written statement released to the media.

Harris added while responsibility for planning and maintaining water infrastructure lies with the region, he and his government colleagues, including the minister of environment, conservation and parks and the minister of municipal affairs and housing, have been collaborating with the municipality.

"These conversations have been productive, bringing forward several preliminary solutions."

Not everyone is taking Harris at face value, including the vice chair of the Grand River Environmental Network.

"It is astounding to see him ducking any responsibility and trying to shift blame for this water crisis to the region when it is his government that has destroyed our community's visionary, sustainable regional official plan and removed planning

authority completely from the Region of Waterloo with no rationale or justification," said Kevin Thomason.

"How can they expect the region to solve this water crisis without the needed power and authority to properly guide growth, development and infrastructure most efficiently in our region? It is confounding."

Thomason said provincial decisions are at the root of the region's water issues, including the approval of hundreds of water-taking permits without study and the acceptance of all aggregate pit applications despite objections. He added the government is also overriding regional government water concerns to approve developments on essential primary groundwater recharge areas in Mannheim.

"They have forced thousands of acres of unnecessary urban sprawl, destroying our farms, wetlands and natural aquifer areas. They have desecrated our conservation authorities, prohibited important green development standards requiring green roofs, cisterns and water efficiency measures, and eliminated essential development charges that funded necessary water and wastewater infrastructure."

In an interview with the Gazette, Harris said Thomason's blame toward the government is completely unfounded because the region has been responsible for its own water supply since the early 1970s.

"Whether that's source protection,

purification, or the actual pumping capacity that is generated," Harris said. "So, to say the Ford government is the one running roughshod here; I don't understand that. The region thought they had enough pumping capacity, so they had maybe deferred some maintenance or weren't making the necessary investments."

He added a review of the numbers show the region underestimated the amount of development on the horizon. Harris said the water problem in the region is strictly a capacity issue, adding it has nothing to do with the quality or quantity.

"There is still plenty of water in the region's aquifers. We just can't get it out of the ground fast enough with the existing infrastructure. That is the crux of the problem. Making that very clear is extremely important because I don't want people to think we are going to run out of water."

He added when people make comments about the taps running dry, it creates panic and misunderstanding.

"It's not helpful."

Thomason said the province has forced development on Wilmot Township and the rest of the region with no regard for the water supply, acting as if it were unlimited.

"They ignored our essential planning and water resource balance that our region has always depended on to grow rapidly as one of the fastest growing areas in North America, within the carrying capacity of

our watershed."

Harris is confident the region will be able to continue with growth, and it needs an additional 400 litres of water per second to move ahead with new building permits and development.

"It could be a single-family home, a retirement home, a not-for-profit housing project or a church. It's not just about housing development. It's also about economic development and our farms and agri-food processing capacity and all kinds of things," Harris said.

He added he is confident the region will be able to unlock more capacity over the next few months, allowing low-risk permits where little water will be required.

"The permits that have already been signed, sealed and delivered are still moving forward. Let's say something has a permit and they are going to start building tomorrow. It's probably a year or more before that house or building is going to be drawing water from the system."

According to Thomason, the province has shown a continuous disregard for a proper planning process, public consultation, expert engagement and necessary studies that have led to this current water crisis and full development approval moratorium. He also offered up four asks to improve the situation.

"We need the help and assistance of the

Continued on page 11

## We're rolling out in Waterloo Region!

Black garbage cart and green organics cart collection starts in March.

Make sure you're ready to roll and learn more at [regionofwaterloo.ca/carts](https://regionofwaterloo.ca/carts).



Continued from page 10

provincial government to finally properly protect our Waterloo Moraine aquifers like they have the Oak Ridges Moraine and other vulnerable groundwater and headwater areas with Greenbelt or Bluebelt protection.”

The second request is to cancel the absurd 770-acre land assembly, followed by a moratorium from Harris’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry on water-taking permits and new aggregate pits to protect groundwater aquifers.

“We also need the province to restore the regional planning authority and our visionary, sustainable regional official plan to ensure the collaboration and efficiencies with our area municipalities working together rather than against each other,” Thomason said.

Harris said the province has not yet committed funding to address the region’s capacity constraints, but he believes assistance is on the way.

“There will be some asks, but most of the incremental capacity pieces the region is doing right now, they are going to be able to manage from existing budgets. The province will be there to assist where we can,” Harris said.

# Hydro pole fire causes daylong power outage near Shakespeare

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Motorists travelling east of Shakespeare early Friday morning were met with an unusual sight – the top of a roadside hydro pole engulfed in flames.

Members of the Perth East Fire Department in Shakespeare responded quickly and reported the fire was contained to the pole and attached hydro wires, with no additional property damage.

Hydro crews were also on scene shortly after the fire was reported, assessing the damage and beginning what

would become a daylong repair effort. It appeared a malfunctioning insulator or similar issue may have caused two hot wires to come into contact, igniting the pole.

As a precaution, the OPP closed Highway 7/8 for much of the day while Ontario Hydro crews replaced the damaged pole with a longer one and restrung the high-tension wires.

Homes and farms in and around Shakespeare were without electricity for most of the day, but power was restored before nightfall.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Local hydro crews work at the corner of Highway 7/8 and Perth Road 106 on Friday morning after a hydro pole caught fire near Shakespeare. There was no damage beyond the hydro pole, wires and wooden cross members attached to the structure.

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# Wellesley councillors back onboard camera policy in split vote

## Some councillors still concerned with impact on employee privacy

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

The Township of Wellesley's committee of the whole has voted 3-2 to recommend council adopt a new onboard mobile surveillance systems policy governing the use of dash cameras in township fleet vehicles, despite concerns raised about employee privacy.

The policy, presented by CAO Rik Louwagie at the committee's Feb. 24 meeting, would formalize the use of both forward-facing and driver-facing cameras in corporate vehicles as part of the township's broader risk-management strategy.

"This report is recommending forward- and driver-facing cameras to be installed in all township vehicles," Louwagie said. "The fleet action plan is now a requirement from the Waterloo Municipal Insurance Pool, and what that means is they're looking for policies that reduce liability and improve available evidence in the case of claims against the municipality. This policy provides protection for employee privacy and outlines when and how camera footage can be used.

"Audio is not being recommended as part of this even though the cameras have that physical capability. We have not determined any benefit to audio recording. ... Approving this policy would provide added risk protection for the municipality."

While Wellesley already monitors fleet

vehicles using GPS and telematics data – including speed, braking, idling and location – this system does not provide visual evidence of road conditions, environmental factors or driver behaviour in the event of a claim, collision or complaint.

The proposed policy outlines strict limits on how footage can be used and accessed. Cameras would not be monitored on a regular basis and footage would only be reviewed in cases involving a claim, collision, complaint or where management has reasonable grounds to believe misconduct or a breach of health and safety protocols has occurred. Access to recordings would be restricted to designated personnel and subject to Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act requirements.

The policy also states the township's intent is not to use the cameras to monitor the daily work of employees or infringe on privacy rights.

Despite those safeguards, some councillors raised concerns during the meeting about the inclusion of a driver-facing camera in addition to a forward-facing camera, questioning whether the added layer of surveillance was necessary and expressing unease about the potential impact on employee privacy and trust.

"If it isn't a big benefit at this point – if we don't have a lot of accidents – and we know that a lot of the drivers are not in favour of it, would it make sense at this point to have

the outward-facing cameras and maybe we hold off on the driver-facing ones until it's an issue, until something happens – maybe more accidents or whatever – and bring it forward at that time?" Coun. Lori Sebben asked.

"I think everyone agrees the forward-facing camera is definitely a benefit to have; I'm not in favour of the driver-facing camera," added Coun. Claude Hergott. "I think it's going to deter good candidates in the future from applying, possibly, and it may encourage some of the current staff to look elsewhere if they're not comfortable with the camera."

The CAO and other councillors pointed to the risk-management benefits outlined in the report, including protection against fraudulent or disputed claims, improved litigation outcomes, enhanced accountability and the potential to encourage safer driving behaviour. Staff also noted that insurance representatives are supportive of both forward- and driver-facing cameras as part of the township's fleet action plan.

"I don't understand why we would wait for something to happen before you implement something," Mayor Joe Nowak said. "I think you want to pre-empt it. I can understand where it's something different and it's something new, and I can understand where some of the staff may feel a little bit uneasy with it, but from my understanding, in my discussions with staff ... they're

willing to accept it."

Louwagie also suggested some staff or potential future hires may appreciate the added legal protection offered to drivers through the installation of driver-facing cameras.

"I think we have good staff; I think they do what they're supposed to do," Coun. Shelley Wagner said. "I don't know that we'd lose anybody because of this because they're already doing what they're supposed to do. ... And if somebody's not, this just makes them a little more honest."

To help affected staff feel comfortable with the new cameras, Louwagie said the township will review the new policy line by line with drivers and show them exactly how and when footage is collected, as well as what that footage would look like.

The cost of operating the cameras was approved as part of the 2026 operating budget, with no additional capital expense required as the devices are supplied through the township's existing GPS provider.

If adopted by council, the policy would take effect following staff communication sessions with employees, and the township's previously approved electronics monitoring policy would be amended to reference the new onboard surveillance policy for specific operating details.

Council is expected to consider final approval at an upcoming meeting.

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# The Garden Stand turns 10: Building a New Hamburg icon

SCOTT DUNSTALL

Gazette Correspondent

Anyone who wants to understand chef Adam Brenner's business philosophy shouldn't start with a mission statement. Start with a basket of tomatoes.

"You can pick a basket of tomatoes and sell it for three bucks," Brenner said. "Or you can take that basket, make a batch of soup and sell it for \$10."

That lesson helped shape The Garden Stand, Brenner's New Hamburg retail and prepared food operation, now marking 10 years of turning local ingredients into meals for people.

Brenner is New Hamburg born and raised. He was not raised on a farm, but his food story starts in the dirt. As a kid, he spent summers at his grandmother's farm in the Wellesley area, picking berries, tending flowers and learning the patience and ingredient respect that would shape his work.

"My grandma was a great cook. My mom is a great cook," he said. "Major influences."

The Garden Stand started because Brenner was catering on weekends and kept ending up with extra food. Instead of wasting it, he sold it. Retail took off and became a big part of the business. Today, he estimates retail is about 50 per cent of the operation, with catering and wholesale

splitting the rest.

Wholesale has expanded beyond town and so has the customer base.

"People come from London, Toronto, all over," he said, describing how The Garden Stand has become a daytrip stop for visitors touring.

The 10 years became official this past January. Back in January 2016, he opened in the new year right after the Waterlot location closed. Anyone who remembers him moving around would be correct. His path included the Waterlot, a stretch in the Green Building during renovations and extra rented units along the way, all to keep production rolling.

Renovations brought pressures. Moving out of The Waterlot created many challenges for Brenner and his team. The new building and the renovations took longer than expected as the team continued to work in extremely tight quarters. What they were able to accomplish during that time is nothing short of remarkable.

When things went sideways in the early days, Brenner says his dad was the guy who kept the whole operation from flatlining. A retired mechanic and hands-on problem solver, he would show up when equipment failed at the worst possible time and figure it out. Back then, the store was basically a couple of coolers in the kitchen. And when people did not even know Brenner was there, his dad built a makeshift open

sign box and planted it outside. It was not flashy. It was practical. It was work ethic in physical form.

That same grind-it-out mindset is the thread through Brenner's story.

"I built this business from the ground up," he said.

And he is not being dramatic. The work and dedication it took to grow it into what it is today has been relentless, with real sacrifice and heavy wear and tear on his body to match. Blood, sweat and tears doesn't even begin to cover it.

Early on, Brenner gave away more product than he sold. The food would spoil anyway, so sampling built awareness.

"Try this, try that," he said.

He still gives food away, especially when introducing something new. Fresh food has a short shelf life, but generosity has a long one.

It is mostly word of mouth now. He ran some paid ads early on, but referrals carried the business forward. The flip side is capacity. For 10 years, his days have run from 5 a.m. until 8 p.m. When asked what would surprise people most about running the business, he did not hesitate.

"The dedication," he said. "I have not missed a day in 10 years."

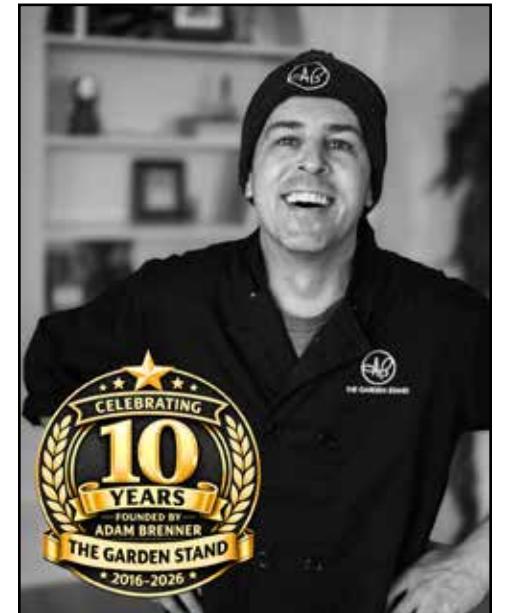
These days, he tries to protect time with his four-year-old son. He typically closes on statutory holidays now and structures catering pickup times to reclaim part of the day, even if he stays available when he is technically "off."

Inside the shop, the experience has evolved with intention. Seating and coffee are part of hospitality, and he pays attention to what regulars like and what they need, including customers with mobility challenges who appreciate an easy walk in and a place to sit.

He also watches changing tastes. Every January brings new dietary shifts: low carb, dairy free, vegetarian, vegan and the tough one, no sodium. He tries to accommodate, but when production scales to 50, 100, 200 portions, some requests become custom orders by necessity.

COVID was another turning point. Catering took a major hit, retail surged and Brenner had to build delivery systems and adapt quickly.

"People have no idea what it took," he said, describing the sacrifices required to keep a small business alive when the



(CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

**Chef Adam Brenner marks 10 years of The Garden Stand, a New Hamburg destination built on grit, generosity and community.**

world changes overnight.

So, what's next?

A lot, but not all at once. He is working toward a liquor license so customers could have lunch and a beer on site. He is also eyeing pop-ups, a dinner-club concept and better use of the heritage rooms in the back for private events. On the wholesale side, he is pushing forward with the labels, inspections, packaging and shelf-life requirements needed to land products in larger outlets. Longer term, he sees potential for outdoor hosting with a patio and tent setup, depending on approvals and timing.

Now, as The Garden Stand keeps expanding, he knows the next stage of success cannot run only on his own back. His biggest focus now is people.

"I have to let some stuff go," he said.

Delegating more to staff is the only way the business grows without burning out the person who built it. The future of The Garden Stand will be built by other chefs and skilled professionals who can take direction, carry the standard forward and help grow what he started.

To congratulate Brenner, stop by 90 Wilmot St., New Hamburg, on Saturday, Feb. 28, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. for his 10-year Sip and Shop celebration, with goodies, giveaways and samples.



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# Notice of Application for Approval to Expropriate Land

## Form 2

### Expropriations Act

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The comments must be sent:

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

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

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

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

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

Minister of Transportation

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

#### SCHEDULE "A"

All right, title and interest in the following lands:

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

THIS NOTICE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED ON: FEBRUARY 18, 2026

# County to weigh options for forestry bylaw update after extensive public input

## Council discussion gets heated as warden warns against potentially problematic motion

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth County council will revisit proposed updates to its forest conservation bylaw in April after receiving a final report on months of public consultation that drew significant input from farmers, residents and municipal councils across the county.

At a special meeting Feb. 12, council directed staff to bring back options for a revised bylaw on or before April 2 that incorporate the ideas and concerns raised during the public-input process, which began last year following council's direction to review the existing bylaw.

"During this period, we received significant engagement across multiple formats. ... The consultation revealed the division in community perspectives," county clerk Tyler Sager told council. "One group strongly supports maintaining or even strengthening forest-conservation measures, citing Perth County's low forest coverage at nine per cent. Another group advocates for reduced regulation, particularly around agriculture exemption and alignment with provincial standards.

"Both perspectives are rooted in legitimate concerns – environmental protection

versus operational flexibility for agricultural landowners."

The review initially stemmed from work undertaken by the county's agricultural working group, which compared Perth's bylaw with those in neighbouring counties and recommended clarifying definitions, adding new definitions such as "windbreak" and "woodlot," and formalizing an appeal process similar to that used in Oxford County.

Since then, the proposed changes have prompted strong reaction from members of the agricultural community, including a petition submitted by a group of Perth County farmers calling for significant amendments to the draft bylaw.

The petition, signed by residents, landowners and agricultural producers from across the county, calls on council to expressly recognize and exempt normal farm practices protected under the Farming and Food Production Protection Act, set a minimum one-hectare threshold for regulated woodlands in accordance with provincial standards and categorically exempt windbreaks and tree plantations from being classified as regulated woodlands to allow landowners to remove, harvest and maintain those trees as they see fit.

"We know the benefits of windbreaks and strategic plantations; the rural community wants the freedom to plant trees," said Perth South farmer Henry Koskamp, who, along with West Perth Farmer Gerald Kolkman, have been leading the charge against many of the proposed changes in the county's draft bylaw update, going so far as to draft an alternative bylaw, which they've presented to county and lower-tier councils over the last several months.

"... We need the support of the landowners of Perth County (to get more trees planted). As of this morning, we have 274 signatures on the petition with still more coming. They are in support of the agriculturally supported forest conservation bylaw for Perth County. We also need support from the rural farm organizations in Perth County. We have letters of support from the Perth Grain Farmers, Perth Pork Producers, Perth Dairy Producers, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario and the Perth County Federation of Agriculture, as well as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. They're all supporting the same alternative bylaw, or at least the intent."

The petition also requests formal biosecurity protocols for forestry officers

entering farm properties, protection from enforcement for the routine removal of dead or hazardous trees, reinstatement of stewardship funding to lower-tier municipalities, and the establishment of an independent appeal committee made up of elected officials rather than municipal staff.

Both Perth East and Perth South councils have endorsed the farmers' alternative bylaw, while West Perth and North Perth councils have not.

On the other side of the debate, Sager told council many who provided input into the bylaw update were in favour of the county's proposed change in definition for "woodlot," suggesting reducing the size threshold for a woodlot in the bylaw from one hectare to 0.5 hectares would help protect the county's already low, nine per-cent forest coverage.

"Forests under professional management generally do better across most forest-health parameters, however, (our) forests also have multiple co-occurring disturbances. This could include windthrow, harvest, pests and disease," said Maitland Valley Conservation Authority watershed ecologist Erin Guthro as part of

Continued on page 17

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Continued from page 16

a joint delegation made up of representatives from area conservation authorities at the Feb. 12 meeting. “This suggests forest-management practices that puts economic returns over overall forest health will lead to more forest decline over time. ... A bylaw provides a minimum standard to level the playing field and ensure practitioners that follow good forestry practices are supported, and this is needed.”

“Woodlots really provide (flood and erosion-control services),” added Nathan Schoelier, stewardship and conservation lands manager at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. “... This is going to be most apparent in the coming months ... when we have the flow. ... You’re going to see a slower, more drawn-out snowmelt in these areas, then you’re going to see ponded water on the landscape. This is water that these woodlots are holding across our entire landscape, not just at point locations like a dam. That’s water that’s no longer rushing toward your infrastructure, whether that’s communities, your municipal drains, or even your private drains, and allows that agricultural drainage to do its job, and allows us to grow the food in those areas.”

Tensions rise amid council discussion

Tensions surfaced at the Feb. 12 meeting when Coun. Rhonda Ehgoetz of Perth East introduced a motion to have council

review Koskamp and Kolkman’s proposed bylaw at the same meeting, before staff had an opportunity to consolidate all feedback and present a full slate of options.

“The purpose of this meeting was for council to have an opportunity to discuss the forestry conversation bylaw. I don’t even see that on the agenda,” Ehgoetz said. “Now you want us to send it back to staff again and for them to come up with recommendations. I was hoping that council would come up with recommendations and questions this morning and go through the bylaw and see what we actually want.”

Ehgoetz suggested the process could be drawn out to the point where an updated bylaw won’t be approved by council before October’s municipal election removes council’s ability to vote on it. Instead, Ehgoetz moved to have county council review the farmers’ proposed bylaw line by line to incorporate pieces of it into the county’s draft bylaw.

“Before I ask for a seconder, I will indicate the following observations to my council colleagues,” Warden Dean Trentowsky began before being interrupted by Ehgoetz, who claimed the warden couldn’t comment on the motion before it was seconded.

“I have the chair; you do not,” Trentowsky responded, ultimately issuing two formal warnings to Ehgoetz. “... I am the head of council. As such, I have

a duty under the Municipal Act to inform this council the following. ... What your motion entails; you communicated this to us, all of council, in an email prior to this meeting. You communicated it not within the confines of a council meeting. So, my point is this has been done and you’ve brought the motion forward as such. It was communicated outside a meeting last night through an email to all of council.

“I have to raise to all of council’s attention the possibility of the following concerns: perception of a lack of transparency on the conduct of council business, perception of public bias, perception of insufficient fairness of process. These concerns could be under scrutiny by others, perhaps the integrity commissioner, perhaps an ombudsman, perhaps it could provoke a legal challenge for this council and this corporation. I would indicate that the unintended consequences of this motion may result in not being in the best interests of this council.”

After debate around process and timing, council ultimately opted to wait for staff’s comprehensive report, which will outline potential paths forward incorporating the range of submissions received. The updated bylaw, once drafted, will return to council for further discussion and potential approval after all the options are discussed at either the April 2 regular council meeting or a special meeting of council

called before then.

Ehgoetz later posted about the dispute between herself and the warden on the Mitchell Life Facebook page, claiming she was unfairly treated in front of her council colleagues and members of the public.

“To me, he is a bully, he embarrassed me, he intimidated council,” Ehgoetz told Grant Haven Media. “... I think he owes me a public apology. He thinks he was in the right to do what he did to me. I’ve never seen in my 25-plus years someone do that to another member of council in a public forum.”

When reached for comment about his comments on Ehgoetz’s motion, Trentowsky said he couldn’t comment further.

“Following the conclusion of this meeting; out of due respect and consideration for all of my Perth County council colleagues (including Coun. Ehgoetz) and for all of Perth County staff, I feel it is necessary that I withhold providing comments to the media until such time that this matter is fully dealt with at Perth County council.

“I must also withhold providing any comment or response towards any comments (including social media posts) that may be attributed to Coun. Ehgoetz (or others) following the conclusion of the Feb. 12 special council meeting.”



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# OBITUARY

## WHARRAM: Ronald K.



Passed away at home, surrounded by family, on February 21. He was 78. Ron was married to Eileen (Sim) for over 57 years, most of those living in Hickson. They were blessed with 2 children -Angela (Mark) Wygoda, and Darryl (Michelle). He also leaves 5 grandchildren and 1 step-granddaughter. He was also survived by 3 sisters and 2 brothers.

Ron's main interest was sports and he tried his hand at a lot of them. His favourite being softball which he played, coached, and umpired for many decades. To show his love for the game of ball, he took a ball, a bat, and his glove "Big Blue" with him so wherever he ends up, he can get a game going. He tried his hand at golf for a long while but a couple of years ago, his health said, "Leave them there clubs in the garage Old Man".

After harvesting and donating any organs of value or still working, Ron was cremated. Anyone wishing to make a contribution in Ron's memory, please consider Woodstock General Hospital, or Hickson Fire Department of which Ron was a member for several years.

By the way, some of you may have already guessed - I wrote this myself while sitting in the hospital. Bye all!

The family would like to extend our deepest gratitude for the personal and supportive services provided to all of us by the Palliative Care Team.

Honouring his wishes, no formal services will be held.

Memorial donations can be made through Brock & Visser Funeral Home, Woodstock, ON.

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- Feb. 11 Brad Braekevelt, Stratford . . . . . \$50.00
- Feb. 12 Elizabeth Seamans, Angus . . . . . \$50.00
- Feb. 13 MaryLou McCarthy, St. Marys . . . . . \$50.00
- Feb. 14 Jordon Van de Kemp, Embro . . . . . \$200.00
- Feb. 15 Paul Forrest, Stratford . . . . . \$50.00
- Feb. 16 Eleanor Kittmer, Lakeside . . . . . \$50.00
- Feb. 17 Jayne & Greg Tinney, St. Marys . . . . \$50.00
- Feb. 18 Bev Hepburn, Stratford . . . . . \$50.00
- Feb. 19 Tom Kittmer, Embro . . . . . \$50.00
- Feb. 20 Ron & Glen, Dunseth, Sebringville . . \$50.00
- Feb. 21 Marilyn Dixon, Lucan. . . . . \$200.00

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by PeterS 2026

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**ANSWERS FOUND ON THE CLASSIFIED PAGE**

## QUIZ TIME

BY JAKE GRANT

1. What countries were banned from the 2026 Winter Olympics?
2. True or False. Hamsters are nocturnal.
3. What is the mascot for Wilfred Laurier University?
4. What mathematician had an apple fall on his head?
5. Who came up with the "Modern Olympics"?
6. What is the longest muscle in the human body?
7. Are sea cucumbers plants or animals?
8. What three things did Jack steal from the giant?
9. When was the last time the USA won Gold in Men's Olympic Hockey?
10. What country invented the saltine cracker?

Answers found on the classified page

# The Old Gazettes

By Sydney Grant

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

**February 17-24, 2016, Edition (10 years ago)**

Tavistock Team Unity Synchronized Skating Teams travelled to Kingston, Ont., to compete in the 2016 Ontario Regional Synchronized Skating Championships held from Feb. 11-14. The teams came home with some personal bests and, overall, a very successful weekend. The Beginner 2 Team was Ontario Silver Medalists; Pre-Novice finished ninth place; Adult II was Ontario Silver Medalists; and Adult III was also Ontario Silver Medalists.

Brian Grasby of Stratford was the lucky winner of \$1,000 in the Tavistock Braves' 400 Club Draw. He was presented the prize by executive member Duane Roi. Nineteen draws were held throughout the season, and the final prize was drawn on Feb. 19 with Grasby as winner. Grasby is no stranger to the hockey rink. He was a referee for 35 years and is a timekeeper for Stratford Minor Hockey House League as well as the new convenor for Thursday night house league.

Employees of the CIBC Tavistock Branch were honoured to receive the Caring Cup as the top Banking Centre Team in Ontario. The award was presented at the Financial Advisory Forum, held in Toronto on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2016. Manager Alisha Wilson said the branch received a 100 per-cent rating from their customers. About 600 CIBC employees attended the event from almost 200 branches located across the province, from Ottawa to Windsor.

**February 15-22, 2006, Edition (20 years ago)**

Old Man Winter stuck around last week and provided a beautiful, sunny, crisp day to hold Hickson Central School's winter carnival. "Le Carnaval de Hickson" was organized by French teacher Madame Marya Helm and included everything a winter celebration could ask for, along with a visit from Quebec winter carnival mascot, Bonhomme. Regular classes were suspended for the day as students organized themselves into 12 teams using a distinct colour and the name of a famous Canadian, such as Champlain, Grosilliers, Radisson, Mackenzie, Cabot and Carti-

er. Each team then had one hour to create a team banner, design a snow sculpture and build a dogsled from cardboard, duct tape and a length of rope.

The team from Bonnie Brae won the Alzheimer Walk for Memories Corporate Challenge at the Woodstock run this year. They raised over \$2,600 for Alzheimer Oxford. The group started fundraising in November by selling Rheo Thompson mint smoothies, held staff brunches, sold cookies for Christmas, hosted dress-down days and sold homemade soup every Friday. Each team member filled their pledge form as well. Last year, the group won the corporate challenge by raising over \$2,100 with 10 team members.

Tri-County Mennonite Homes (TCMH) has announced that two partner organizations, the YMCA and the Oxford County Public Library, have agreed to continue their participation in the master plan and preliminary design stages of the Tavistock Project. This announcement follows the release of a comprehensive survey conducted for TCMH, which indicates significant community support for the services of these organizations. The VON Board will decide on their participation in the next stage of the project by the end of February.

**February 19-26, 1986, Edition (40 years ago)**

For the fourth year in a row, the Shakespeare Optimists have retained their volleyball tournament trophy. The tournament held on Saturday, Feb. 15, at the Shakespeare Optimist Community Centre involved 10 teams including New Hamburg, who took Shakespeare to the finals and received the runner-up trophy. The winning team is Gord Mair, John Lantz, Jim Rader, Bob Lantz, Bob Kollman, George Weicker, president Bruce Edwards, Al Fuhr and Jim Algie.

The annual Oratorical Contest for public school children sponsored by the Optimist Club of Tavistock was held at the Legion Hall on Thursday, Feb. 20. There were 11 young people with their parents and friends who attended the delicious roast beef dinner as guests of the club. Following the dinner, each of the contestants gave their speech and were judged by three gentlemen from the Bards-Orators Toastmasters' Club of Stratford. First place winners were Jodi Smith, Grade 6; Chris Brenneman, Grade 7; and Elizabeth Bender, Grade 8.

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# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette **SPORTS**

## PJHL Roundup: Braves take commanding lead in first-round series Firebirds in tough while Applejacks on verge of sweep

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The Tavistock Braves have put themselves in a position to sweep the Paris Titans in their Doherty Division opening-round series.

The Braves took game three by a 7-4 count despite trailing 3-2 after the first period. Tavistock scored five of the game's next six goals to earn the win, led by three-point performances by Evan Palubeski and Keaton Bartlett. Ryan McKellar and Carter Arseneau added a goal and assist each.

Tavistock cruised to an 8-3 win on the road Saturday to grab a 2-0 series lead, converting five of seven chances with the man advantage. Jacob Reid-Brant and Arseneau led the offence with three points each, while Bartlett, Palubeski and Nolan Miller added a goal and assist apiece.

Paris took 44 minutes in penalties while Tavistock had 15 as the Braves held a 41-20 edge in shots on goal.

Blake Richard stopped all 23 shots he faced in Tavistock on Friday as the Braves earned a 4-0 win. Ethan Stover, Palubeski, Arseneau and Reid-Brant all found the back of the net.

The Titans have amassed a total of 107 penalty minutes, with the Braves sitting at 67.

"Paris has tried to be physical for the most part with hits and throwing an extra shot in, or a spear or slash at our guys after whistles," said Braves general manager Brent Lange. "Player safety is a concern at times, yes, but that's why the four-referee

system is in place, and each game is being recorded and goes back to a director of player safety for review if anything goes wrong."

Lange added his team has been able to, for the most part, resist retaliation penalties, which has resulted in seven powerplay goals on 19 opportunities.

"The guys have been great, playing at a high pace each night. Our forechecks have been solid, making life hard on Paris defencemen. All four lines have been rolling, our defence and goaltending have been great so far. As long as we keep that going, we will be fine."

Game 4 was scheduled for Tavistock on Wednesday night, after the Gazette's deadline.

### Applejacks take stranglehold over Shamrocks

Wellesley travelled to Hespeler on Tuesday night and came away with a 5-2 victory to take a 3-0 series lead. The Applejacks went two for three on the powerplay with defenceman Bobby Tsiogianis and Riley Noble leading the attack with two points each.

Wellesley easily took Game 1 by an 8-2 score after building a 7-1 lead after 40 minutes. Riley Noble led the attack with four assists while Luke Schofield added a goal and a helper. Ryan Brenton and Kaelan McDougald each score twice for the Applejacks.

Game 2 was a different story as Noble scored the game-winning goal on a powerplay just over four minutes into overtime with assists going to Hudson Parker and Rhys McCloskey. Tyler Chadwick gave Wellesley a 1-0

lead seven and a half minutes into the third period, but Hespeler tied it up nine minutes later, forcing the extra period.

### Firebirds even series with Merchants

New Hamburg evened its series with Norwich with a 3-2 road win on Saturday thanks to Jordan Jacobs' game-winner just under three minutes into the second period. Ben Oliver scored twice for the winners, who received an outstanding performance between the pipes by Connor Harmon who stopped 36 of 38 shots, including all 17 he faced in the third period.

The Firebirds dropped Game 1 at home on Friday by a 4-2 count. Owen Bruder's goal at the 14:22 mark of the third period pulled New Hamburg to within one, but Norwich sealed the win with an empty net goal. Jyden Fischer also scored for the Firebirds, who were outshot 41-28.

Game 3 in the series was played on Wednesday night in New Hamburg after the Gazette went to press.

Woodstock has taken a 3-0 lead over Dorchester as the Navy Vets have outscored the Dolphins 17-5. Woodstock can complete a series sweep with a win on home ice Friday.

### Remaining Doherty Division schedules

**Tavistock vs. Paris**  
Game 5\* - Friday, Feb. 27 in Tavistock @ 7:30 p.m.  
Game 6\* - Saturday, Feb. 28 in Paris @ 7:30 p.m.  
Game 7\* - Wednesday, March 4 in Tavistock @ 8:40 p.m.

**Wellesley vs. Hespeler**  
Game 4 - Friday, Feb. 27 in



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTOS)

Keaton Bartlett fires a shot on goal during Game 1 of the Tavistock Braves' first-round playoff series against the Paris Titans on Feb. 20. Bartlett has scored two goals and four assists through the first three games of the series.



Keaton Bartlett fires a shot on goal during Game 1 of the Tavistock Braves' first-round playoff series against the Paris Titans on Feb. 20. Bartlett has scored two goals and four assists through the first three games of the series.

Wellesley @ 8 p.m.  
Game 5\* - Saturday, Feb. 28 in Wellesley @ 7:30 p.m.  
Game 6\* - Sunday, March 1 in Hespeler @ 3:30 p.m.  
Game 7\* - Wednesday, March 4 in Wellesley @ 8:30 p.m.

**New Hamburg vs. Norwich**  
Game 4 - Friday, Feb. 27 in

Norwich @ 8 p.m.  
Game 5 - Saturday, Feb. 28 in New Hamburg @ 8:30 p.m.  
Game 6\* - Tuesday, March 3 in Norwich @ 8 p.m.  
Game 7\* - Wednesday, March 4 in New Hamburg @ 7:30 p.m.  
\*if necessary

## Royals to face first-place Centenaires in OEHL semi-final

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The Tavistock Royals will face the Seaforth Centenaires in an Ontario Elite Hockey League (OEHL) South Division semi-final series beginning Friday, Feb. 27.

The two teams battled three times during the regular season. Seaforth took all three by scores of 4-1, 5-1 and 5-1.

Head coach Tyson Zehr is expecting a tough series against the regular-season champions.

"Seaforth is a very good team and they finished first for a reason. They're

structured, disciplined and limit opportunities. We know it will be a big test, but we like our group and the way we're playing right now. It should be a solid series."

He added the three losses earlier in the season mean nothing and the playoffs are a whole new ballgame.

"Playoffs are a clean slate. The regular season gives you information, but it doesn't decide a series. Our team has grown since those games and we're playing a different brand of hockey right now. The focus is on what we do moving forward. We need to be disciplined. Seaforth has strong special teams and will take advantage of their opportunities when given."

Zehr added the Centenaires have skilled players throughout their lineup, and the Royals will have to be aware of who's on the ice.

"But at the same time, our focus is more on execution than on overthinking matchups. I think the guys are really looking forward to playing playoff hockey against Seaforth again. Our two teams always have good battles in the postseason."

**Schedule - Tavistock vs. Seaforth**  
Game 1 - Saturday, Feb. 28 in Seaforth @ 7:30 p.m.  
Game 2 - Sunday, March 1 in Tavistock @ 1:30 p.m.  
Game 3 to 7 - TBA



# Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigade honours Blaine Bechthold with lifetime membership

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

At its Feb. 18 monthly meeting, the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigade recognized longtime supporter Blaine Bechthold with an honorary lifetime membership.

Bechthold has dedicated more than 30 years to the museum, from its earliest concept to the operation of the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades Museum in Baden.

Brigades president Peter Gingerich said the museum began with little more than an idea.

“It was started with absolutely nothing except an idea,” Gingerich said. “Today, the museum is bursting at the seams with so many artifacts that we can’t even store everything on site anymore.”

The museum currently houses six antique fire trucks, with a seventh recently purchased. The newest addition was originally bought by the New Hamburg Fire Department in 1948, prior to its incorporation into Wilmot Township in 1973. The truck is now being returned to Wilmot from Alberta.

In addition to the fire trucks, the museum features thousands of artifacts, including photographs, antique firefighting equipment and historical uniforms.

Bechthold, who served with the Wilmot Township Fire Department for more than 25 years and retired as fire chief at the Baden station, was the driving force behind establishing the museum. After retiring, he approached several fellow retired firefighters and, following a series of meetings, the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades and Museum was formed and incorporated as a not-for-profit registered



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

**Blaine Bechthold receives an honorary lifetime membership in the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades from president Peter Gingerich.**

charity in 1995.

Over the past three decades, Bechthold has spent countless hours maintaining and promoting the museum. He has served as secretary and treasurer for most of that time.

In recognition of his dedication, the brigades’ directors presented him with the museum’s first-ever honorary lifetime membership. The award came as a complete surprise, and to date, no other lifetime memberships have been granted.

Bechthold noted the museum is always looking to grow its membership and emphasized that fire-service experience is not required. Several current members have no firefighting background but share a passion for preserving local history.

Those interested in joining or learning more can contact the heritage brigade at [wilmotfiremuseum@gmail.com](mailto:wilmotfiremuseum@gmail.com).



Members of the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades gather for the lifetime membership presentation to Blaine Bechthold. Pictured in the front row, from left, are Lyle Shantz, Elmer Koenig and Laverne Schwartzentruber. In the middle row, from left, are Murray Gingerich, honouree Blaine Bechthold (secretary-treasurer) and president Peter Gingerich. In the back row, from left, are Harold Ruby, Haydn Wiley, Doug Ferguson (director), Kyle McGrath (director), Randy Hoffman and John Howling.

# Gazette Puzzles

FEBRUARY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

W J I S E H G Y Q B Z M U S G H M H G D  
 G U Y O A G N E N A J T S K O S I F N Z  
 D Y Y B I N B N U E D C A W R A K I I B  
 G A J Y U X K M L W J S H A D R A B T L  
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- |                            |                         |                             |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Bad Bunny</b>           | <b>Mens Curling</b>     | <b>Steven Dubois</b>        |
| <b>Curling Controversy</b> | <b>Megan Oldham</b>     | <b>Tumbler Ridge</b>        |
| <b>El Menco</b>            | <b>Mikael Kingsbury</b> | <b>USA Hockey Golds</b>     |
| <b>Gordie Howe Bridge</b>  | <b>Nancy Guthrie</b>    | <b>Winter Olympics</b>      |
| <b>Lindsey Vonn-crash</b>  | <b>Seattle Seahawks</b> | <b>Womens Speed Skating</b> |

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## Pet of the Week

### TUCKER

Tucker is a five-year-old retriever that has lots of energy and likes to play any kind of sport. With baseball spring training underway for the Blue Jays, Tucker is ready, willing and able to lend a paw in the outfield and retrieve all the baseballs that are hit his way. I'm sure he can run down a ball faster than any Blue Jay outfielder trying out for a position. Tucker was submitted by Mike Grummett of New Hamburg.



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# Mama's Mobile Village supporting local parents when they need it

## HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Expecting a new baby is exciting and life-changing, but it can be overwhelming.

It doesn't take long before both parents are running on empty. They say it takes a village to raise a child, but not everyone has a strong support system in times of need. Mama's Mobile Village is the answer.

Meet the girls behind the small but mighty mobile business. Keisha Post and Chloe Anderson know firsthand the challenges of

raising children. It's rewarding, yes, but extremely exhausting. After endless, sleepless nights, the long list of unfulfilled to-dos becomes daunting. With four children, and extremely confident she wasn't the only new mother who longed for post-partum support, Post took a leap of faith.

Her now-partner, Anderson, loved the idea and jumped onboard. The gal-pals set out to be a modern-day village for families for those days when they

need an extra set of hands. The dynamic duo is the two smiling, high-energy momma bears behind Mama's Mobile Village. Yes, they come to right to your door offering support without judgement.

Post and Anderson, both 27, have a strong sense of family and community. Post's caregiving started early. By the age of 10, she was helping raise her sisters. She went on to study community service and then mental health and addictions, graduating from both programs at TriOS College.

With a solid foundation of empathy and patience, Post combined her love of working at her own children's daycare, strong work ethic and a slew of skills. Anderson works alongside her when she isn't attending classes at Conestoga College. The girls are on a mission, helping families navigate the ins and out of managing the addition

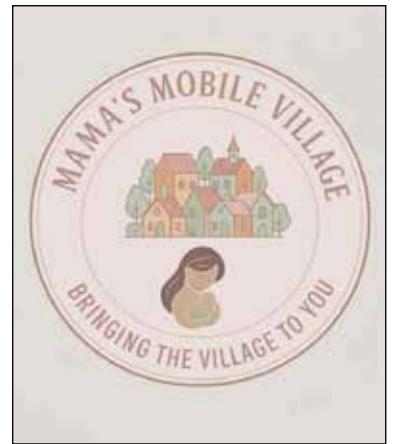
of a new baby.

Life is busy. With extended families living far apart, grandparents delaying retirement, work commutes and long hours, much-needed support systems decline. According to Post, the biggest reason parents call Mama's Mobile Village is because people are "overwhelmed and burnt out."

Mama's Mobile Village offers a wide range of services from light tidying to a whole-house reset. The girls don't offer medical advice or support, but rather an extra set of hands to make life manageable; a smiling face to take care of the tasks that are put on the backburner.

For a few hours, a day or a set weekly schedule, the team quickly resets, refreshes and realigns daily life. Parents don't need to do this alone; there is a support system waiting.

"Mama's Mobile Village was



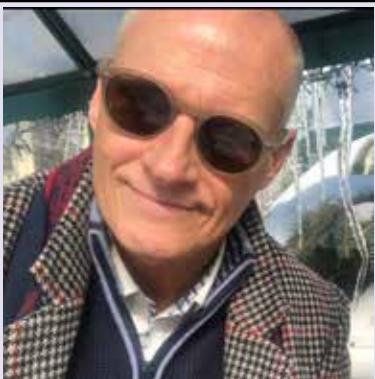
created to be the village so many parents are missing," Anderson said. "It does not take a village to raise a child, but rather it takes a village to support the parents raising the child."

For more information, find Mama's Mobile Village on Facebook. Don't worry, the fab friends have Wilmot-Tavistock, Wellsley and East Zorra on their route for support stops.

# She said. He said – style wars at the Dunstalls

## DRESS SHARP. SPEND SMART.

By Scott Dunstall and Lillianne Dunstall



I thought it would be interesting and maybe a little fun to include my wife, Lillianne Dunstall, in this week's piece. So, I mentioned the idea to her, and she quickly came back with some smart ideas for a concept. The one we both agreed on is her unique and private perspective of my fashion life. She started citing different occasions, behaviours and opinions, and started laughing harder with each one.

And to make this even more fun, she is writing her perspective of something, (She Said) then I will follow with mine (He said).

### Shoes:

**She said:** Living with a fashion columnist teaches you many things; mostly that shoes apparently have emotions. Once when we moved houses and our boxes were delayed overnight, he was genuinely worried his shoes were sitting in a warehouse somewhere,

lost and lonely, whimpering in their moving box while waiting to be reunited with him.

**He said:** That's preposterous. First of all, I don't think they were whimpering. I asked them. And second, just because you don't let me celebrate their birthdays anymore, it doesn't mean I don't give them a little buff on the side.

**She said:** He devotes a whole 24-inch spinning suitcase for his shoes when we travel, especially down south. Good lord, the man has over 70 pairs; I stopped asking him why because his comeback is always the same – options. He needs options because he never knows what kind of mood he will be in on any given day. Some days, it's Mr. Yacht Rock and others, it's Mr. Beach Bum.

**He said:** Shoes make the man baby. I don't know how many times I will look at a gentleman and have some interest in what he

is wearing until my eyes get down to the floor. Shoes are the wrong colour or style and the cuffs are all bunched up; it's a complete look, ladies and gentlemen. The story doesn't end at the knees. And the only reason she comments on my shoes is because it takes up real estate in the house she wants to use for her massive collection.

### Going out

**She said:** I learned a long time ago to no longer put my shoes on until the car is started and he is halfway down the front walk. We have a floor-to-ceiling mirror in our front hall (guess whose idea that was). He'll walk and give it a parting glimpse before heading out the door. And then you can see it happen – the look. Something's not right. Then he freezes. It's the coat. He's not feeling it with the rest of the outfit. He'll try on another coat. And then another. And then he'll turn to me and say, "Just give me a minute." As soon as he says that, I know in an instant that it's a full project tear down. The oxygen leaves the room so quickly the airbags drop out of the ceiling. And that's my queue to take my shoes off and start surfing new releases from Netflix.

**He said:** Well, all I can say is monkey see, monkey do. I mean, I learned from the best when it comes to maintaining a fashion standard and what it takes to maintain it. I will also say that you

were my top promoter and advisor when I began my fashion awakening. However, I will take this opportunity to let readers know that I show you my clothing items when I purchase them. I don't tear the price tag off and throw it under the bed for a month only to whip it out a month later and say, "This old rag? You haven't seen it because I haven't worn it for years." Hey, if we are throwing people under the bus here, then so be it.

### Gotta have a spare

**She said:** You know he carries a spare outfit in the car. No one is allowed to touch the spare. I call it his understudy. It actually started when he went through his transformation into his style quest. Back then, he would have two or three shirts, pairs of jeans, belts and matching shoes. The coats were the worst. They would take up the whole trunk.

**He said:** That's right. And if you think that's weird, you should try folding her laundry. You need some kind of app to work out complex angles and a crew of eight to assemble it and put it on her. In all seriousness, I was so unsure of what I was doing when I first started experimenting with full flashes (my term for outfit), I would leave the house wearing clothes I have never considered before, and I thought everyone was looking at me like I was a freak.

So, I would literally go change

in my car or a bathroom into something different, thinking that would eliminate my anxiety. It didn't and nobody was looking at me, hence the three "spares" I would carry with me. Now I am down to one and that is neatly packed in a small suitcase in the trunk. I don't do it for the anxiety; I do it in case I spill coffee down my front (it happened) or my grandson threw chocolate ice cream at me in a restaurant (it happened).

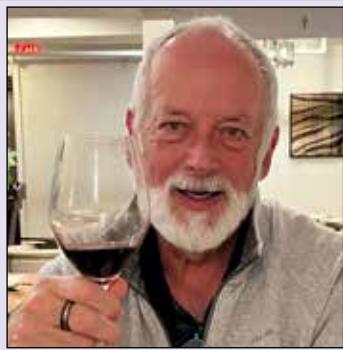
Well, that's it. We may do another one of these in reverse next time where it's the classic He Said. She Said. Stay tuned.

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

# Art and imagination on display at the Clay and Glass Gallery

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



Let's be honest: you may have never heard of the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. Or, if you have, you probably have never visited the place.

Well, I am here to suggest that you rectify that situation, immediately, because there are a large number of special things about the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery that truly make it worth a visit.

First, it's unique. Located near Uptown Waterloo, it is the only art gallery in the country that is exclusively dedicated to exhibiting and collecting contemporary Canadian glass, ceramic, enamel and stained glass works of art.

Second, the folks at the gallery are brilliant at staging exhibitions. If you are a museum goer who is just a bit tired of crammed display cases and claustrophobic exhibition rooms, you are going to love the Clay and Glass. The building, which opened in 1993, is the very definition of spacious. More about this later.

Third, the exhibitions are always fresh. Clay and Glass PR director William Hlowatzki told us that the exhibitions are changed up every season. Right now, there are four exhibitions that will be on display for the next few months only.

Fourth, the gift shop offers a spectacular array of handcrafted glass and clay jewelry and other giftware made by Canadian artisans, many of them local to the southern Ontario region.

Fifth – and this may seem too good to be true – admission is free. Yes, anyone can enjoy the unique works in the Clay and Glass any time it is open – and it's open six days a week, closed only on Mondays.

I asked William how free admission could be possible, since clearly this is a professionally managed institution with staff, acquisition budgets and operating costs. He pointed to the list of donors – private people, corporations, foundations and government bodies – that keep this amazing institution afloat and moving ahead.

According to the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery's website, the museum owes its existence to Canadian ceramic artist Ruth

Gowdy McKinley, a founding member of "Ceramics Canada." When she died in 1981, her colleagues in that organization began to envision an art gallery honouring her memory that would focus on works created in clay, glass and enamel. The plan quickly moved forward; ground was broken in 1989 and the new gallery opened in 1993. The building was designed by Patricia Patkau of Patkau Architects of Vancouver and was honoured with a Governor General's Award for design. What makes that an even more significant accomplishment is, as William told us, the Clay and Glass was Patkau's first public building.

In parallel with the construction of the physical building was an endowment campaign led by the late Winifred Shantz and former board chair Ann Roberts, herself a ceramic artist of note and a professor in the University of Waterloo fine arts department.

Right now, there are four exhibitions on display at the Clay and Glass. The most extensive is the utterly captivating "Fabled Clay," featuring the work of four artists: Janet MacPherson of Hamilton, Lindsay Montgomery of Toronto, Amélie Proulx of Lévis, Que., and Annette ten Cate of Grey County. The shared focus of these wildly diverse works is "story telling." Visitors will be enthralled by the stories inherent in the works – and will also be drawn into creating their own stories as they contemplate ornate teapots embraced by demons; a bear in bunny slippers; or a beer-swilling, naked "Shepherdess."

Nicely displayed in a smaller gallery room is the exhibition, "Frogs' Return," by Melanie Barnett of Treaty 7 Territory in Medicine Hat, Alta – a series of complex, whimsical ceramic creations involving said amphibians.

"Weathered Rock," a multi-faceted, multi-media work by D'Andrea Bowie of Whitchurch-Highlands, Ont., occupies another exhibition area. All three of these exhibitions will continue through mid-May. The fourth current exhibit is "Material Syntax: 3D Printed Masonry Façade Systems," a display by University of Waterloo architecture students. It

closed March 27.

The latter is just one example of how the gallery interacts with the community. In 2025, the gallery hosted 478 workshop sessions attended by 14,514 people. That is twice the number that attended workshops in 2024. Through community outreach programs, the gallery also staged 65 workshop sessions through the Region of Waterloo, reaching 3,000 participants.

I'm writing this feature because we quickly realized that the Clay and Glass Gallery offers a variety of day-trip options. Would-be visitors can investigate workshops, offered at a reasonable fee (see the website for details); or they can simply visit the gallery at no charge and spend as much time as they would like exploring the imaginations of these creative artists.

And some added good news: the gallery, located at 25 Caroline St. N in Waterloo, is on the edge of Waterloo Park, a perfect place for strolling and picnicking (in warmer weather, of course), and is also a block away from Uptown Waterloo. If good food is part of your daytrip agenda, high-end restaurants like Solé and Proof; good pubs like Beertown and McCabe's Irish Pub; and many other dining options are minutes away.

So, after a highly entertaining visit, I happily recommend the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery as a centerpiece for an intriguing day out.

*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.*



"When There Were No Frogs," 2025, by Melanie Barnett.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

"Hibernation Mode," 2025, by Annette ten Cate. ten Cate is one of four artists whose works form the "Fabled Clay" exhibition. The work facing the camera in the background is "Goat and cohort" by the same artist.



The fantastical work, "Demon Teapot," by Lindsay Montgomery.



A view of the very spacious and welcoming exhibition area. In the foreground, "Fish Monk," 2025, by Janet MacPherson.

# Kindness builds community – a message from our new director of community engagement

AMANDA NELSON

*Director of Community Engagement*

I was always the kid who was told I was “too sensitive” or “too nice.” Even now, people still tell me I should be more direct, tougher, or “show them who’s boss,” but that has never really been how I move through the world.

Many readers know I began my career as a nurse. Later, during the pandemic, I finally followed my dream and began taking journalism courses through the University of Toronto, hoping to become a writer in some capacity one day. That leap changed my life in ways I never expected.

I’ve always preferred a good book or a small group of friends over loud parties or big crowds. I love meeting people one-on-one in little cafés across the region, learning who they are and where they’ve come from.

Ten years ago, I might have thought that kind of sensitivity was a weakness. But writing for a local newspaper taught me the opposite. It’s actually what allows me to connect, to listen and to build relationships – and those relationships don’t just help me grow, they help our whole community grow too.

That’s why, when I was offered the opportunity to take on a new role at Grant Haven Media, I felt genuinely excited. Not only is it a position the company needs, it’s one that feels as though it was made for someone like me.

As the new director of community engagement, I see my role as a bridge

between our company, our communities, our supporters and, most importantly, you – the readers. It’s a chance to help shape how Grant Haven Media is seen across southwestern Ontario, and to make sure local voices are heard, valued and reflected in the stories we tell.

Through this journey, I’ve learned a few things: I love writing, I love my community and, yes, I really do love my job (I’ve also been told I use the words “I love” far too often – guilty as charged).

What makes this even more meaningful is finding a workplace filled with people who feel a little like me. The kind ones. The observant ones. The people who might once have been labelled too soft, too eager, or too sensitive. Somehow, in this company of writers and storytellers, I found a kind of family – people who notice things, care deeply and believe in lifting others up rather than pushing them down.

We don’t have to bully our way to the top. We don’t have to be the loudest voice in the room to matter. Sometimes simply showing up as you are – kind, thoughtful, curious and sincere – is enough to move you exactly where you’re meant to be.

I’m finally realizing that being the sensitive, friendly woman who loves people and stories might not just be okay – it might be exactly what is helping shape the world we need.

If you have a community event coming up, a story to share, or just want to say hello, I’d love to hear from you. Please email me at [amandajnewwriter@gmail.com](mailto:amandajnewwriter@gmail.com).

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Water-permit application another assault on beleaguered system

Dear Editor,

The application for a water-taking permit that has been filed by the owner of the Wilmot’s Hallman Pit is one more assault on Waterloo Region’s already beleaguered water system. It is especially concerning when, just recently, the decision was made to divert water from wells in Wilmot to the Mannheim treatment plant.

Water is not an unlimited resource, especially in Waterloo Region, where groundwater is the main source for our needs. The Hallman Pit does not have a separate source for the water it wants to use. Adding another straw to the glass will only use up the water faster.

The decision to grant the water-taking permit rests with the province. The province is aware of the region’s water

situation but does not seem to be taking it seriously. Recently, MPP and Natural Resources Minister Mike Harris said, “Housing development should not be slowed by the water-supply crisis in the region.” That kind of remark shows a total lack of appreciation for the need to thoroughly address the long-term sustainability of our water resources before committing to housing developments and granting water-taking permits.

Failing to do that is shortsighted and will cause untold suffering in the future because of a lack of sufficient water.

*Dorothy Wilson,  
New Hamburg*

## SHOW US YOUR WILMOT



(PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOW US YOUR WILMOT)

Debbie Sangster-Linseman shared this photo of a beautiful, frosty morning sunrise to the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook page.



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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR - FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026

### TUESDAY, MARCH 3

**Tree Trust at the New Hamburg Arboretum**  
10 a.m.

Contact information: afleming@reepgreen.ca  
(reepgreen.ca/events)

New Hamburg Arboretum  
470 Waterloo St, New Hamburg

**Perth East council meeting**

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

**Ostomy Support Group Meeting**

7 p.m.  
Speakers – Jamie Church and Colleen McConnell from Best Buy Medical. They will inform us of their services for ostomates. Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome.  
(519)273-432793 Morgan St., Stratford

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4

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

Council Chambers  
89 Loveys Street East, Hickson

### FRIDAY, MARCH 6

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**

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

### SATURDAY, MARCH 7

**Optimist Club of Petersburg Bottle Drive**

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

### TUESDAY, MARCH 10

**Wellesley Council meeting**

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

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18

**Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship**

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

### SATURDAY, MARCH 21

**Oxford Philatelic Society OXPEX & OTEX**  
2026 Stamp Show

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

### MONDAY, MARCH 23

**Wilmot Council meeting**  
7-10 p.m.

Council chambers  
60 Snyder's Road W., Baden

### TUESDAY, MARCH 24

**"LIFE WORTH LIVING"**

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

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

**Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship**

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

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25 CONT

**Community Solar Forum**  
6:30 – 9 p.m.

A collaborative discussion featuring local stakeholders & experts. Free admission.  
Wilmot Recreation Complex,  
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

### SATURDAY, MARCH 28

**The Nith Valley EcoBoosters are hosting another Repair Café**

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

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**Read the Bible in a Year in Community**

Morning meeting 6:00 a.m. daily

Evening meeting 6:00 p.m. daily

Contact Arthur Rosh if interested.

Phone number: 226-899-1551

Email address: arthur.rosh@gmail.com

Location to be determined in New Hamburg, Tavistock, Baden, Wellesley, New Dundee, St. Agatha, Shakespeare, Petersburg, Hickson, Punkeydoodle's Corner and area

### EVERY WEDNESDAY

**TOPS - Taking off Pounds Sensibly**

Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

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St James Church, Baden

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**TAVISTOCK MENS CLUB MEETINGS**  
Dinner at 6.15

No meetings in July and August  
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78 Woodstock St N

### STAMP CLUB

**Oxford Philatelic Society**  
Meetings: 2nd Tuesday (2-4 p.m.) and 4th Tuesday (7 to 9 p.m.)

September to May

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Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com

Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>  
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### FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

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

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**Pickleball** Monday, Wednesday and Friday

afternoon, 12-4 p.m. Contact: Don Junker

519-535-7052

**Cards** Monday, Wednesday afternoon 1-4

p.m., euchre, crib (bring board), etc. Just drop

in to play, good to bring someone. Contact:

Bob Routly 519-301-2118

**Inside walking** Monday & Wednesday morn-

ing 8.30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Contact: Larry Brown

519-240-6715

**Crokinole** Monday, Wednesday morning

8.30 a.m. - 12 p.m., Just drop in to play, good

to bring someone. Contact: John Schultz

519-655-2346

**Shuffleboard @ arena,** Wednesday 12:30-4

and Thursday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Contact: Don

Junker 519-535-7052.

**VON Smart Seniors Exercise,** Tuesday and

Thursday morning 9 - 10 a.m.; Village Manor

10:25 - 11:25 a.m. Contact: 519-539-1231 x 6285

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Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.

Contact: [thewtgazette@gmail.com](mailto:thewtgazette@gmail.com)

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

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

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Russia & Belarus          | 7. Animals   |
| 2. True                      | 8. A bag of money, hen that lays golden eggs, & a magical harp |
| 3. Golden Hawk               | 9. 1980  |
| 4. Sir Isaac Newton          | 10. United States  |
| 5. Baron Pierre de Coubertin |  |
| 6. The sartorius muscle      |  |

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