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(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Sprucewood Tack Shop owners Dennis and Heather Ropp, who founded the business in 1987 on their farm on Sebastopol Road (Line 29), are joined by their son and daughter-in-law, Nathan and Sarah Ropp, and their children Paisley, seven, and twins Lillian and Lochlin, five along with staff and East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer at the grand opening and ribbon cutting for the company's new store and warehouse at the corner of Woodstock and William streets in Tavistock. Full story and more photos on page 14.

Wilmot approves shared sustainability manager position with Wellesley

Wellesley council likely to approve position at its April 14 meeting

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

The townships of Wilmot and Wellesley are moving forward with plans to jointly fund a 12-month municipal sustainability manager position, aimed at advancing local climate action initiatives and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions across both municipalities.

Wilmot council approved the shared position at its March 23 meeting, while Wellesley council voted unanimously in favour of the proposal during its committee of the whole meeting March 24. Final approval in Wellesley is expected at the township's April 14 council meeting.

"There are excellent ideas out there for reducing emissions if we choose to embrace those initiatives," said Betsey Daub, a St. Agatha resident, a representative from Green Development Standards Waterloo Region and one of two delegates who spoke in favour of the joint sustainability manager position at Wilmot council's March 23 meeting.

"If Wilmot is to come close to fulfilling its 50 (per-cent emissions reduction) by (2030)

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Ontario tables big spending budget

Local reaction mainly positive

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Ontario's finance minister tabled the 2026 provincial budget last week, and reaction from a pair of area Conservative MPPs has been positive.

The 231-page document lays out plans for a record \$226 billion in program

spending while projecting a deficit that is expected to reach \$13.8 billion this year, up from the \$7.8 billion projected last year. Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Mike Harris called the spending budget a safety net for Ontarians.

"When you look at what's happening with the U.S., trade, tariffs and jobs, it's to make sure we are bolstering the

manufacturing sector, jobs in the trades and housing – all of the things that employ a lot of people, especially in our area here – to be able to make sure if the economic slowdown continues and if we still have a president in the United States who is hellbent on making life difficult for Canadians, that we're there to support

TIM LOUIS
Member of Parliament for Kitchener-Conestoga

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Province unveils record budget, gains support from area MPPs

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Ontarians as much as we can.”

Harris admitted it is an intentionally big budget to help the industries going through hard times. He added processes are built into funding streams to ensure only those who need the money will get it.

“They’ll have to apply for it ... and there are a lot of checks and balances. If the programs are there, we hope they are taken advantage of. It’s a good plan for Ontario and for our area.”

One of the funding streams available is the Tariff Impacted Industries Fund, a provincial financial support program aimed at supporting businesses hit by international trade tariffs. Harris added removing the HST on new homes sold up to \$1 million will also make a big difference.

“It could save up to \$130,000 off the purchase price, which is fantastic. There is also a small-business tax cut, and almost 90 per cent of Ontarians are employed by a small business. This will help owners reinvest or put a little bit more money in their pockets.”

The small business corporate income tax (CIT) rate is being cut by more than 30 per cent, from 3.2 per cent to 2.2 per cent, effective July 1. The government claims over 375,000 Ontario small businesses would benefit from the \$1.1 billion in tax relief over the next three years.

The Gazette asked Harris if there was anything in the budget Wilmot residents could be excited about. He pointed to funding to connect more people in the township to primary care through Woolwich Community Health.

“It will connect several thousand patients with primary care in Wilmot Township. I know it is a big issue here, not just in the township, but in the region as a whole. We



(PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTERN ONTARIO WARDEN'S CAUCUS)

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan (centre) attended the Ontario budget announcement at Queen’s Park in Toronto last Thursday along with Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman (left) and Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae.

have some of the longest wait times in the province, so we are doing what we can to help with that.”

Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman said he doesn’t always like spending so much money, but at this point, the government needs to help build a strong economy.

“It doesn’t just happen. We are going to build a lot of new infrastructure and that means there will be a lot of people earning a good paycheque. Building at a time when we need to increase employment is a

great way of dealing with it.”

Hardeman said the government is investing in transportation, education and health-care infrastructure, and added the budget is about protecting the people of Ontario.

“We have to find a way to make life more affordable and there are two ways we can do that. One is to make sure people have jobs to go to, and also to make sure we don’t have products being more expensive than they need to be.”

Oxford County’s top politician said the budget appears to address current economic uncertainty, with an emphasis on building a resilient economy and supporting families. Warden Marcus Ryan added he’s hopeful the document will make life a little easier for county residents.

“The budget acknowledges the infrastructure challenges for municipalities related to growth, an area of discussion and advocacy recently identified by Oxford County council. We’re also optimistic about additional funding for supportive housing and long-term care operating funding, both of which are key needs in Oxford.”

He added that it does not address long-term municipal fiscal sustainability.

“That was something we were hoping to see. As a municipality, we’re committed to working with the provincial government to address this issue to ensure we truly are building strong and resilient communities.”

Waterloo regional Chair Karen Redman also weighed in on the budget, releasing a statement last week.

“I am pleased to see investments to support small businesses, critical housing-enabling infrastructure, hospitals and long-term care in Budget 2026. As we continue to grow as a community, our needs deepen. It’s important that housing-enabling infrastructure, well-paying jobs and health-care support remain at the forefront as we remain committed to ensuring wellbeing, affordability and prosperity for all in Waterloo Region.”

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Wilmot, Wellesley partner on shared sustainability manager

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commitment, we need the township to become seriously involved. Wilmot has been offered an opportunity to do just that – to get involved in the future of the township, to embrace these ideas. This is the possibility of hiring a municipal sustainability manager.”

The following evening, at the Wellesley committee of the whole meeting, local environmental advocates Neil and Linda Lackey also spoke in favour of the contract position.

“Sustainability addresses how we relate to and rely on (our natural) resources, how we use them and how we protect them from overuse,” Linda Lackey said after commending Wellesley council and staff for the sustainability initiatives already undertaken in the township. “We strongly support the proposed partnership between Wellesley Township, Sustainable Waterloo Region and Wilmot Township. Having a municipal sustainability manager for Wilmot and Wellesley townships will provide a single point of contact to drive climate action goals.

“Township council, staff and residents will benefit from a manager focused on climate initiatives and will also advance sustainability communications. This will be a huge step forward for the township.”

The one-year contract position will be hosted by Sustainable Waterloo Region (SWR) and shared equally between the two municipalities, allowing both townships to access expertise and resources to help implement environmental sustainability initiatives at both the corporate and community levels.

Funding support from Enbridge Gas will cover half the cost of the position through its Municipal Staffing Offer program, which supports municipal energy planning and climate-change policy initiatives.

The remaining costs will be shared between Wilmot and Wellesley, with each township contributing approximately \$17,500 toward the position, resulting in a total annual salary of \$70,000. During the Wellesley committee of the whole meeting,

councillors approved an additional \$5,000 for incidental costs that may arise through the sustainability manager’s work.

According to staff reports presented to both councils, the sustainability manager will lead the implementation of corporate and community climate-action initiatives aligned with regional strategies such as TransformWR, which sets a target of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 and by 80 per cent by 2050.

The position will focus on developing a corporate climate-action work plan, identifying opportunities to reduce emissions related to municipal operations, and supporting initiatives related to energy use, waste reduction and water conservation.

Responsibilities will also include engaging with residents, businesses and community partners to support broader climate-action efforts, as well as identifying funding opportunities to support projects such as building retrofits and other sustainability initiatives.

Staff noted neither municipality currently has the internal capacity or expertise required to fully implement climate-action strategies on their own, making a shared position an efficient way to move forward while maximizing available resources.

“The TransformWR listed 34 action items municipalities should be looking at in order to further reduce greenhouse-gas emissions,” Wellesley CAO Rik Louwagie said in response to a question from Coun. Shelley Wagner about what the sustainability manager would do to advance climate actions above and beyond what municipal staff are already doing. “We’ve been able to, off the corner of our desks, pick off the low-hanging fruit – the easy things like the LED streetlights, going to a couple electric vehicles, things like that.

“It’s going to be the other actions that are going to take a little more research, need some additional funding, things like that where we really have to start creating a roadmap for how we’re going to get there. That’s what this position will do; they’ll

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Shared hire offers cost-effective path to climate action for Wilmot, Wellesley

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research the various items, determine what we can do in the short term, medium term, long term, and put some costing to those things, as well, to know how much money we're going to need for this and look for grant opportunities to actually achieve the goals we want to achieve."

By hosting the position through SWR, the sustainability manager will also have access to the organization's broader network of technical expertise and regional partnerships, helping both municipalities align their environmental initiatives with broader regional climate goals.

In addition to supporting internal municipal operations, the sustainability manager will help develop community climate-action plans, build local awareness and encourage participation in initiatives designed to reduce emissions and improve long-term environmental sustainability.

Staff reports indicate the shared position will also support collaboration between neighbouring municipalities, improving efficiency by coordinating sustainability initiatives that benefit the broader region.

"While I share concerns ... about constraints in our budget, this is a great opportunity for us to basically add a position that I think can potentially enhance some

cost savings and identify opportunities for this township," Wilmot Coun. Kris Wilkinson said at the March 23 meeting. "On a one-year, contractual basis, the cost is a no-brainer.

"This is one of those situations we have to jump at, and I also like the prospect, ultimately, because it's going to give us insight into how we will be able to share resources with our neighbouring townships moving forward. I think there's a lot of potential positions ... where we might be able to share resources and gain the knowledge from the professionals."

If approved by Wellesley council April 14, the CAOs for both municipalities will finalize an agreement with SWR and complete the Enbridge funding application. The position is expected to begin in the second quarter of 2026 and run for a 12-month term.

During the contract period, the sustainability manager will work with municipal staff to collect data, identify priority actions and develop implementation plans tailored to each township's needs and resources.

Further details regarding implementation timelines and specific initiatives are expected as the position is finalized and work begins later this year.

Wellesley council pay totals \$118,730 in 2025

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Wellesley council received its annual report detailing pay and expenses for members of council during its March 24 committee of the whole meeting, with compensation and reimbursed expenses for 2025 totalling \$118,730.99.

The report, prepared by the township's corporate services department, provides an itemized breakdown of salaries, taxable benefits and reimbursed expenses paid to the mayor and councillors in accordance with the Municipal Act.

Mayor Joe Nowak received \$33,737.64 in salary and \$657.84 in Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Employer Health Tax (EHT) contributions, along with \$2,147.50 in reimbursed expenses, for a total of \$36,542.98 in municipal compensation in 2025.

In addition, Nowak received \$8,126.64 in remuneration from Enova Energy Corp. and Enova Power Corp. for serving on those boards.

Each of the township's four councillors – Derek Brick, Claude Hergott, Lori Sebben and Shelley Wagner – received \$18,291.84 in salary and \$1,236.72 in CPP and EHT contributions.

Total compensation for councillors, including expenses, ranged from \$19,757.88 for Coun. Wagner to \$21,366.35 for Coun. Brick.

Expense reimbursements for council members totalled \$4,736.59 in 2025, covering costs such as conference attendance, mileage, meals and mobile-phone expenses incurred while carrying out municipal duties.

Brick claimed \$1,837.79 in expenses, primarily related to conference attendance and cellphone costs, while Hergott claimed \$261.06, Sebben claimed \$260.92 and Wagner claimed \$229.32 in cellphone costs.

Councillors Brick and Wagner each claimed \$280 for sitting on the Township of Wellesley's committee of adjustment. In total, the committee's five members were paid \$1,484.68 in compensation, which includes meeting stipends and mileage reimbursements.

The report was received for information, and there was no discussion among councillors on the item.

The township is required under provincial legislation to annually disclose remuneration and expenses paid to members of council and local boards.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Municipal election 101 session held in Woodstock

All Oxford municipalities represented as nominations open in May

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Anyone interested in running for a spot on one of the eight Oxford County lower-tier councils later this year attended an information night in Woodstock. They learned not only how to get there, but also what happens if elected.

Two representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing presented to a full Oxford County council chamber, attended by current and prospective elected officials, along with municipal staff.

Nigel Bellchamber, a well-known municipal consultant, recruiter and trainer, was on hand to explain to attendees how the municipal system works. He spent over 30 years in municipal government, including roles such as chief administrative officer for counties like Middlesex and Huron, and commissioner of finance and administration for the City of London.

"I think it was a great night," said EZT Mayor Phil Schaefer, who is planning on running for his seat in October.

"Nigel Bellchamber does a great job communicating what being a member of a municipal council entails in plain language," he added.

When asked what his advice is for anyone thinking about throwing their hat in the election ring, he wanted people to know it takes time.

"Make sure you have the time to do your job on council. Council meetings are just the start. There are committee meetings, public boards and other commitments that may be required as well. In past elections, I have had people reach out for advice, but none for this year's election at this point."

The future of the Ontario school board system remains in the air as Education Minister Paul Calandra promised system reforms by the end of 2025 but has yet to table new legislation.

Anyone interested in running must complete what's called a Form 1 nomination paper and submit it to a municipal clerk with a filing fee of \$200 for the head of



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

Dozens of Oxford County residents packed county council chambers in Woodstock recently for an information night to prepare candidates for the Oct. 26 municipal elections.

council and \$100 for all other offices. The clerk may require candidates to show proof of eligibility or fill out a declaration that the individual is eligible to run.

To be eligible, candidates must be a resident, owner or tenant of land in the municipality or the spouse of someone who does, be a Canadian citizen of 18 years of age or older and not be legally prohibited from voting and not disqualified by any legislation from holding municipal office.

Occasionally, a candidate changes their mind and decides to run for a different position but can only run for one spot at a time. If a candidate files a second nomination, the first one is automatically withdrawn.

Woodstock Mayor Jerry Acchione was also present and said the turnout was very encouraging.

"It's great anytime you have standing room only during an information night. I think democracy is exactly that. Everybody should come out and at least investigate if they are interested, find out about the process and how to contribute to their communities."

Acchione is in his 12th year as an elected official and added he's been asked for advice many times from people interested in a political career.

"I have had dozens of people sit down over different terms. Most of them are surprised at the amount of dedication the job takes. It is what you make it, and I've always been one to put that extra effort in. You can always see those who do."

He added someone with a history of community involvement is a better fit than a candidate leaping straight into a position

on a council. "If you are jumping into it and have never volunteered, take a look at your commitment level and your family support. This is a job that is all hours of the day, mostly evenings and weekends, so you want to make sure you have the support of your family."

The nomination for an office must be endorsed by at least 25 people using Form 2 - Endorsement of Nomination Form. This step is not needed in municipalities with fewer than 4,000 people. Anyone endorsing a nomination must be eligible to vote within the municipality.

Anyone planning to run for mayor, council, or school board trustee in Ontario can officially file their nomination with their local clerk starting May 1 up until 2 p.m. on Aug. 21.

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Region of Waterloo in violation of water-pumping agreement with Wilmot

Report coming to April 8 meeting as councillors and the public demand answers

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Wilmot Township is in a water crisis, and the municipality isn't alone.

Kitchener, Waterloo and other communities have been in a development freeze because there isn't enough water for proposed massive new construction projects, both residential and industrial.

The aquifer at Mannheim has reached critical levels, while private wells and other groundwater sources are in the same situation.

Most recently, residents have expressed shock and anger after Region of Waterloo water management staff admitted they have been diverting 30 litres per second of water from the Wilmot Centre wellfield and sending it to Kitchener and Waterloo.

"This happened in violation of a current existing policy," said Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen.

A 1980 policy, still in place, restricts the amount of water permitted to be taken from underground aquifers in Wilmot so the township could support its own current and future needs.

The issue was a hot topic of debate at Wilmot council's March 23 regular meeting. Each member of Wilmot council is on the same page with the ever-growing water concerns, including Coun. Lillianne Dunstall, who referred to the 1980 deal as a gentleman's agreement. She feels betrayed by the region's actions.

"The region has been taking water without permission. I understand (it) was not a policy or a bylaw or anything that was binding, but we trusted the region was going to keep their word. At this point right now, they haven't."

Dunstall understands Salonen is fighting for the township in her seat on regional council, but she added she is one of 15 voices around that table, 11 of which represent urban centres.

"They are growing, and they want our water," Dunstall said.

Coun. Harvir Sidhu said the situation amounts to a breakdown of trust, something that, to him, doesn't come as a surprise.

"Yes, the region and the province have authority over the water, but having jurisdiction doesn't mean secrecy. Our residents expect us to know what's going on in our backyard, and right now, we have been put in a position by the region where we don't know what's going on."

More Wilmot water started being sent to larger urban centres in 2019 without Wilmot's knowledge, something Sidhu said is completely unacceptable.

"I am on board with Coun. Dunstall. We need to send a strong message to the region that we're not going to lay over and take it. They can't keep pumping one of our best

resources in water, since there is not an infinite supply," Sidhu said.

While he understands the region wants to grow, Sidhu said it is inappropriate to go back on a promise.

"It's going to take a lot for me, personally, to regain the region's trust after this."

Coun. Kris Wilkinson explained Wilmot had an agreement which was to be respected but feels betrayed by the region's increased water pumping.

"We tried to be good neighbours a month or two ago by saying we could suspend this for a year or so. With the new details that have come out, I am hearing from some of the residents in my ward who are even further outside the Shingletown and Mannheim area who are seeing some wells go absent."

He explained homeowners may need to pay out of pocket to deepen their wells.

"The long-term effects of this could be devastating to our residents and those folks who rely on the wells or aquifers for drinking water."

Coun. Stewart Cressman said he has heard from constituents who have drilled new wells at their own expense, and voiced concern over the lack of data on well-water level monitoring across the township.

"We are operating blind in terms of the impact of the pumping and the water being taken out of our township for the needs of the greater region. I would strongly suggest that monitoring information is public knowledge that should be supplied to this township on a continuing basis."

Salonen, who has a seat on regional council, spoke to bring clarity to the situation. She said the phrase agreement has been thrown around often, but she has yet to see it for herself. She added there was a Region of Waterloo motion passed in 1980 that has never been reconsidered.

"It was amended in 1984, but it still stands. It has a cap on how much water the region is allowed to pump out of

Wilmot that has been violated. It was made clear through further questioning in addition to the motion I brought forward in the spirit of what this council had asked."

She added the motion will be on next Wednesday's meeting agenda, and she expects it to be deferred a second time.

"Regional staff have not provided the aquifer information, and a lot of us, myself included, want to understand the health of the aquifer before making long-term implications to our water resources, especially in light of further information that has been provided by residents."

Salonen is encouraging residents who have had or believe they have had well interference to report it to the region by calling its direct regional help line at 519-575-4400.

"Sorry it's not an easier process, but it's the one that currently exists. Please do continue to reach out to regional councillors and delegate at the meetings," she said.

Wilmot council unanimously passed a motion asking the region to make well-monitoring data available. It passed unanimously and will be tabled at next week's meeting.

Salonen added water take permits are a provincial responsibility but added the region should have everybody's best interests in mind.

"That includes the impacted residents around these wells and not just the areas they want to grow. Water is a finite resource, as we know."

The Gazette reached out to Regional Chair Karen Redman for an interview but instead received a statement.

"We have a report coming to council on April 8 that will address this topic. The report will be available online next week. Happy to set something up once the report is available," said the region's manager of corporate communications, Lynsey Slupkis.

The report will be available on the region's website later this week.



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Wilmot approves traffic bylaw updates, defers McFadyen Street parking changes

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Wilmot council approved two of three proposed amendments to the township's traffic and parking bylaw at its March 23 meeting, while deferring a decision on parking restrictions along a curve on McFadyen Street in Baden after hearing concerns from area residents.

The approved amendments include the installation of an all-way stop at the intersection of Puddicombe Road and Bridge Street, as well as a heavy-truck prohibition on Witmer Road from Sandhills Road to a point 1,600 metres east of Sandhills Road. According to a staff report prepared by the township's infrastructure services department, the proposed changes aim to improve road safety, enhance traffic flow and align municipal regulations with provincial standards such as the Ontario Traffic Manual and Highway Traffic Act.

"At the (March 2) committee of the whole (meeting), the traffic and parking bylaw was presented," Wilmot director of infrastructure services Ken VanderWal told councillors March 23. "At this meeting, council noted a discrepancy regarding the McFadyen no parking. As such, the bylaw was revised, removing McFadyen Street to allow for prompt attention to Bridge and Puddicombe, and the other changes within

the bylaw.

"Staff have provided an update on the request for McFadyen Street, and as such, we are looking to pass a bylaw ... excluding McFadyen. The changes for McFadyen can be brought back to council in 2026 at your timeframe, or they can be included in the 2027 revisions to the traffic and parking bylaw."

Staff had recommended adding no-parking restrictions on both sides of McFadyen Street between approximately 66 and 109 metres south of Wagler Avenue to address sightline concerns along a curved section of the roadway.

The report notes the curve has an approximate nine-metre radius and limited visibility for vehicles exiting driveways when cars are parked along both sides of the road, narrowing the roadway by nearly 50 per cent and potentially creating challenges for emergency vehicles navigating the turn.

Staff indicated the recommendation was consistent with guidelines in the Transportation Association of Canada's geometric design standards, which note parking restrictions are sometimes required on curved roadways to maintain adequate sightlines and ensure safe vehicle turning movements.

Council ultimately chose not to proceed with the proposed no-parking amendment

for McFadyen Street after hearing from residents of the neighbourhood who expressed concerns that removing on-street parking could encourage drivers to travel faster along the street.

Residents described McFadyen Street as being used as a through route, with vehicles in some cases travelling at higher speeds around the curve, creating safety concerns for pedestrians and increasing the risk of collisions with parked vehicles.

"Many drivers using our street will travel too fast and cut the corner across the street from my house, well over on the other side of the road in the opposing traffic lane," said Dave Emrich, a longtime resident of McFadyen Street and one of three delegates from the neighbourhood who spoke at council's March 23 meeting. "This happens frequently, and during the summer, it is common to hear wheels squealing as traffic goes around the corner. The drivers then resume speeding up again after the corner in both directions.

"This is a major safety concern as there are ... families with children on the street. ... In November of 2022, my car, which was parked in front of my neighbour's house at 31 McFadyen St., was written off due to a collision with a car travelling too fast around the corner. ... There were no other cars parked on the road impeding traffic at that time."

Emrich and the other neighbourhood residents who spoke before council – Nick Demelo and Penny Collins – urged the township to research the history of collisions in the neighbourhood and analyze traffic-speed data before coming back with a solution that wouldn't encourage more speeding – something they said the previously proposed no-parking restrictions would do as drivers would no longer have to contend with parked cars on either side of the road.

"I respect staff's point of view of saying there could be potentially sightline issues, but peeling it back and looking, I see that the real concern is speed," Coun. Harvir Sidhu said. "One of the unintended consequences of having no parking there and not doing anything else is potentially increasing that speed because if there's no vehicles on the road, they can hammer down from Stuckey (Avenue) and Hunsberger.

"... The more I think about this, I think it is the unintended consequences of more speed, and I don't like the idea of punishing the homeowners there that have already had accidents on their vehicles simply for just parking on the street."

While CAO Jeff Willmer argued the point of introducing no-parking restrictions along McFadyen was to ensure emergency vehicles could safely travel through the neighbourhood, and VanderWal said township staff had collected speed data, which showed speeding was not a concern

on the street, they admitted they hadn't actually consulted with emergency services or neighbourhood residents for their input on the bylaw amendment and had only reviewed the area through a technical lens based on requirements in the Highway Traffic Act.

The McFadyen Street proposal was originally identified by way of a public complaint through the township's traffic-calming process, which allows residents to request reviews of roadway conditions related to speed, visibility and safety concerns.

"We did not receive the complaint directly from emergency vehicles," Coun. Kris Wilkinson said. "... I did chat with a couple residents who reached out ... and they shared there had been opportunities where those vehicles were able to pass. I would even go further back to what our delegator was talking about. Ms. Collins suggested that if we look at the narrowing (of the road on the curve due to snowbanks in the winter), I can think of probably multiple bends in multiple neighbourhoods across that township that probably need to have this potential (no-parking) remedy applied to it (if we were to approve it here).

"With all of that said, I think what we learned here tonight, at least from the delegates and the conversations that have happened, is that this is, in essence, a speeding problem and the ... residents in this neighbourhood want a stop sign to dissuade people from using the road to exit the neighbourhood. If you look at the layout, it makes sense that folks in the northwest of that neighbourhood jump onto Hunsberger into McFadyen – it's a straight line."

Wilkinson pointed to stop signs installed at Hunsberger Drive, Stuckey Avenue and Michael Myers Road just up the street that had a traffic-calming effect for vehicles travelling through that part of the neighbourhood, and suggested a similar result could be achieved with a three-way stop at Hunsberger and Wagler.

Instead of implementing the parking restrictions, council directed staff to consult with affected residents as well as emergency services to determine whether fire trucks and other emergency vehicles are able to safely navigate the curve when vehicles are parked on both sides of the street.

Council also asked staff to explore the potential installation of a three-way stop at the intersection of Wagler Avenue and Hunsberger Drive as a possible traffic-calming measure intended to discourage drivers from using the street as a shortcut through the neighbourhood.

Staff will report back to council at a future meeting with additional information related to parking, sightlines and potential traffic-calming options before any further amendments to the township's traffic and parking bylaw are considered.

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

A welcome splash of spring, these vibrant purple crocus blooms, shared by Linda L Roth on the Show Us Your Wilmot page, signal the colourful season ahead, with daffodils no doubt coming soon.



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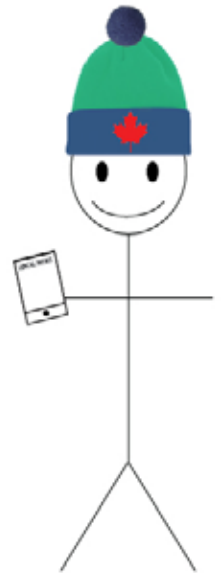
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Ontario Agri-Food Discovery Centre releases early concept drawings for future STEM-based learning centre

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

At the Ontario Agri-Food Discovery Centre's 2026 annual general meeting March 26, board chair Steve Dolson introduced the team from Moriyama Teshima Architects, which developed concept designs for the future 10-acre site in Listowel.

The Ontario Agri-Food Discovery Centre aims to become a place for learning and play that showcases the innovation and importance of the agriculture and agri-food sector across Ontario, while highlighting what Huron and Perth counties have to offer.

Though still in the conceptual phase, the centre is already drawing attention and praise from local politicians, including Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae.

"This centre will showcase the strength of Ontario's agri-food sector and the people behind it," he said. "It's an industry that drives our economy and puts food on our tables every day."

The STEM-based centre is envisioned as a hub for science, education and community engagement, promoting curiosity and bridging the gap between consumers and agricultural practices. It will also highlight diverse career opportunities in the agri-food industry.

At the meeting, plans were discussed for an expanded facility, growing from 20,000



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Pictured from left, Ehsan Naimpour, Diarmuid Nash and Olivia Keung from Moriyama Teshima Architects, and Steve Dolson, board chair, announce new concept designs for the Ontario Agri-Food Discovery Centre at the 2026 annual general meeting in March.

square feet to 34,000 square feet, with estimated costs increasing to \$38 million.

The board secured \$100,000 in grants from the Gay Lea Foundation and the

Agricultural Adaptation Council, allowing the project to move forward with architectural proposals and the concept phase.

A total of 41 proposals were received

before selecting Moriyama Teshima Architects. The overall project is expected to raise \$40 million to \$50 million,

Continued on page 11



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Continued from page 10

including \$100,000 for concept design, \$300,000 for planning and \$150,000 for fundraising support.

The firm has worked on a number of civic and cultural institutions, including the Canadian War Museum, the Aga Khan Museum, the Discovery Centre and the Honey Bee Research Centre. They are currently leading new design work at Science North, as well as the Rouge National Urban Park Visitor, Learning and Community Centre.

Their approach to the project focuses on helping the public better understand Ontario agriculture and making food systems more visible.

“Food is everything. Food is national security. Food is economy. It’s employment. It is energy, history. If we approached many of today’s issues understanding the importance our food makes, we would be making much better decisions,” said Diarmuid Nash, a partner with Moriyama Teshima Architects. “Food is infrastructure, it’s climate resilience, it’s economic strength and it’s community stability, and yet, for something so fundamental to our lives, much of this food system remains invisible to the public.”

He reiterated the centre is about making the agri-food system visible to everyone, including those in urban centres like Toronto.

“It’s a place for agriculture, technology, sustainability and education to come together – a place where Ontarians can better understand the land that sustains them, the systems that support it and the

innovation shaping its future,” he said. “While the building is about agriculture, it’s also a civic institution about stewardship. It reflects resilience and it’s about the future of food in Ontario.”

Olivia Keung, director of sustainability with the architectural firm, said the concept will focus not only on the agri-food sector but also on sustainability and land use.

“Our projects focus on public engagement, learning and connections to the landscape,” she said. “We were inspired by the conversations during the tour and throughout the months we have been working together with the board, and we are deeply committed to sustainability and innovation.”

Keung said sustainability is a top priority for the concept.

“Architecture must embody environmental sustainability. That same belief – that buildings can actively demonstrate stewardship, innovation and responsibility to the land – is central to how we approach the Ontario Agri-Food Discovery Centre,” she said.

The project began in 2020 with a feasibility study conducted for the Municipality of North Perth. A non-profit organization was formed in 2021, gained charitable status in 2022 and developed a strategic plan in 2023. In 2024, the Municipality of North Perth committed 10 acres of serviced land as the project expanded to a provincial scope.

The board plans to launch a capital campaign next year.

More information is available at oafdc.ca.

Oxford MP’s Jail and Bail Act voted down in second reading

JEFF HELSDON

Gazette Correspondent

Oxford MP Arpan Khanna’s Jail Not Bail Act was among four justice-related private member’s bills voted down last week.

The bill, which was co-sponsored by Brant MP and Shadow Minister for Justice and the Attorney General Larry Brock, aimed to put an end to repeat offenders who are released on bail and commit another crime. Khanna garnered victims’ testimony from across the country to back his position.

“That would have been a full crack-down, full stop,” he said. “It would have taken those repeat offenders off the street.”

The bill was defeated 193-136, with the Liberals, NDP and Green Party voting against it.

“Law enforcement came out and said it was a sad day,” Khanna said, adding victim advocacy groups were also disappointed.

Khanna said he had widespread nationwide support for the legislation.

“The calls and emails I have been getting are insane, saying we need some rule of law back in our country,” he said.

With the Jail Not Bail Act, three other Conservative bills intended to help victims and justice were also defeated. These bills would have ended discount sentencing for sexual predators, ended lighter sentences for rapists and child predators who were non-residents, and ended the practice of parole board hearings making victims relive the horror of their traumatic ordeals.

“They didn’t want to work with us on these and collaborate on these,” Khanna said, explaining all four were defeated in 40 minutes.

While the Liberals brought some changes



(ARPANKHANNAMP.CA PHOTO)

Arpan Khanna, Member of Parliament for Oxford, whose proposed Jail Not Bail Act was defeated in the House of Commons last week.

through Bill C14, which the Conservatives supported, Khanna doesn’t believe it went far enough.

“C14 a step in the right direction, but won’t get us to the end destination,” he said. “If Liberals bring good policy forward that will protect Canadians, we will support it. We did that with C14. We expect the same and them not to vote down a bill.”

Khanna said the Conservatives will keep on fighting and will continue to be a voice for victims and law-abiding gun owners. He hinted other caucus members have more justice bills in the works.

CORRECTION NOTICE:

In last week’s edition, the advertisement for Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy’s vehicle raffle was missing an important detail. Please note that only 9,000 tickets are available.

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Tavistock's 'Little German Band' part of local musical history

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A historic photograph from the early 1950s is offering a glimpse into Tavistock's rich musical past and the community spirit that surrounded local celebrations at the time.

The photo, shared by Dorothy Wilker of Tavistock, shows the community's "Little German Band" serenading newly elected Oxford County Warden Robert Rudy following his election.

Local bands were an important part of community life throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, frequently performing at public celebrations, gatherings and special occasions throughout Tavistock and surrounding areas.

Along with the Little German

Band, other popular musical groups of the era included the Home Circle Orchestra and the Fred Funk Band, all of which contributed to the strong tradition of live music in the community.

At the time, the election of an Oxford County warden from Tavistock was considered a significant achievement and reason for local celebration. The photograph capturing the band performing for Rudy is now displayed on the wall at Quehl's Restaurant, where it continues to serve as a reminder of the town's history and the role music played in bringing residents together.

Many of the family names associated with the musicians in the photograph remain familiar in Tavistock today, reflecting the deep roots many local families continue to have in the community.



(DOROTHY WILKER PHOTO)

Members of Tavistock's Little German Band perform for newly elected Oxford County Warden Robert Rudy in the early 1950s. Pictured from left are E.C. Seltzer, Otto Wilker, Fred Weston, Lorne Yausie, Mayne Klein, Spencer Weston and Harry Boyd. In front is Warden Robert Rudy.

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Sprucewood Tack Shop celebrates grand opening in Tavistock

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Hundreds of visitors attended the grand opening and ribbon cutting for the newly expanded Sprucewood Tack Shop in Tavistock, marking an important milestone for both the business and the local community.

The celebratory event welcomed customers, local dignitaries, family and friends to the company's new facility, located in the former Sommer's Building at the corner of Woodstock and William streets. Many visitors lined up prior to the 8:30 a.m. opening to take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony and to get an early look inside one of Canada's leading equestrian tack retailers.

Sprucewood Tack Shop owners Heather and Dennis Ropp began the business in 1987 with a riding school on their dairy farm east of Tavistock in Sebastopol. Over the years, the business has grown steadily, building a reputation for offering a wide

selection of high-quality equestrian equipment, riding apparel and related products.

Today, Sprucewood Tack Shop markets its products from locations in Tavistock and London (Arva), while also serving customers online across Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe.

The company currently employs between 15 and 20 people from the local area and continues to expand its role within the Tavistock and East Zorra-Tavistock business community.

East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer, who attended the ribbon cutting, said local business growth plays an important role in strengthening rural communities.

"It is always a plus when area businesses like Sprucewood Tack Shop expand locally, as they continue to contribute to the fabric of small communities like Tavistock and help keep the town vibrant and growing in a very positive way," Schaefer said.



Visitors to the new Sprucewood Tack Shop browse a wide selection of boots, saddles, bridles and high-quality clothing for riders and non-riders alike.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Family members and staff of Sprucewood Tack Shop take part in the grand opening and ribbon cutting for the company's new store and warehouse at the corner of Woodstock and William streets in Tavistock.



Early visitors to Saturday's grand opening received gift bags courtesy of Sprucewood Tack Shop owners and staff as they lined up to explore the new retail space.



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Perth County continues discussion on invasive-species strategy

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth County council is continuing its discussion on how best to address the growing threat posed by invasive plant species, including whether funding set aside for giant hogweed eradication could support a broader, coordinated approach across the county.

After hearing from Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) forestry and restoration supervisor Rob Davies about the conservation authority's collaborative invasive-species program at its March 5 meeting, council revisited the topic during discussion of the county's 2025 weed report at its March 19 meeting.

Councillors considered whether some or all of the \$25,000 included in the 2026 budget to address giant hogweed could instead be used to support broader efforts to map, monitor and control invasive species across the county.

"This is probably an opportunity to address what was carried over from a few meetings ago with regards to the money we had set aside for invasive species," Coun. Walter McKenzie said, tabling a motion proposing the funding be used, in whole or in part, to support invasive-species control on public lands and roadsides, particularly to address the spread of giant hogweed, phragmites and Japanese knotweed – three of the most concerning plants currently affecting Perth County.

"... There may be other invasive species, but those are the three that we talked about, and those are the three that seem to be an issue in, certainly, the southern part of the county. ... I'm not looking to spend the whole \$25,000; let's take what it needs and spend up to \$25,000, but if we don't need it, we wouldn't spend it. I think we still have to have a follow-up (report) at some point in time to make sure this program is working."

According to public works director Bill Wilson, however, Perth County already has a roadside-vegetation management program that allows its weed-control contractor to identify and treat invasive species along county roads, including phragmites. Council heard this work could potentially be expanded to include local municipal roads in the future as mapping efforts improve.

The UTRCA program aims to create a coordinated strategy to identify, map,

monitor and control invasive species across the watershed, with a focus on the three of most concerning weeds mentioned by McKenzie. These species are considered particularly problematic due to their environmental, economic and human-health impacts.

Giant hogweed, for example, produces a toxic sap that can cause severe skin irritation, blistering and long-term sensitivity to sunlight when it comes into contact with skin. The plant can also reduce biodiversity and limit recreational use of natural areas.

Japanese knotweed is known for its aggressive root system, which can damage infrastructure including foundations, bridges and drainage systems, while also crowding out native vegetation and reducing biodiversity.

Phragmites, an invasive grass species, spreads rapidly in wetlands and roadside ditches, forming dense stands that disrupt water flow, increase fire risk and create challenges for municipal infrastructure maintenance.

The county's weed report notes that complaints in 2025 included issues related to giant hogweed, sow-thistle and dog-strangling vine, as well as growing concern about invasive species not currently listed as noxious weeds under provincial legislation, including phragmites, garlic mustard and Himalayan balsam.

The UTRCA's program is designed to address these concerns through a collaborative, multi-year effort involving municipalities, conservation authorities, industry groups and private landowners. The approach emphasizes early detection and rapid response, as well as prioritizing areas where coordinated treatment can produce long-term results.

"I think we do need to seek clarity ... on whether we're going to give some money to the conservation authority or whether we're going to essentially keep it for our own team's purposes and focus our efforts on our own land, leaving the ratepayers to pay their own bills on their land in terms of weed control," Coun. Todd Kasenberg said. "I do have vague concern about that notion that if we leave the ratepayer to handle it, those who don't actually do it exacerbate the problem."

"I think that we should take a serious look at education because I think there are a lot of ratepayers who really don't

know how big the issue is with some of these weeds," added Coun. Bob Wilhelm. "Perhaps we need to educate them."

A key challenge in controlling invasive species is a significant portion of affected land is privately owned, making cooperation from landowners essential to any long-term strategy. According to the UTRCA presentation, fragmented efforts are often ineffective because invasive plants can quickly spread from untreated properties into neighbouring lands, undermining progress made elsewhere.

"Our new approach is a collaborative, coordinated approach to identify, map, monitor, prioritize and control invasives within the Upper Thames River watershed," Davies told county councillors at their March 5 meeting. "Specifically, we're going to target giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and phragmites because we know these species are significant issues across our watershed. The local awareness and local action will get efficient results. We're looking for partnership between private landowners, municipalities and (conservation authority) lands, and we're hoping for a sustained, multi-year program."

"The collaborative support of our partners with either access to lands, landowner contacts, identification, monitoring, mapping or control efforts will result in effective, efficient, informed decisions at both

the local and regional levels, and it also gives us the ability to leverage those funds to make any investments go that much further."


Ultimately, council referred McKenzie's amended motion back to staff for further analysis on how much funding the county could or should contribute to the UTRCA's program, whether similar services are available through the county's other conservation authorities (Maitland Valley and Ausable Bayfield) and whether a portion of the \$25,000 should remain dedicated to internal control efforts on county and lower-tier land.

"We already pay into the conservation authorities through our lower tiers, so I have a problem if we're going to give them more money, especially if this program is not one that's mandated," Coun. Rhonda Ehgoetz said during the discussion. "To me, it's over and above. Yeah, it might be a problem; it sounds like we're already addressing it here at the county. So, I'm not in favour. If Walter's motion only pertains to the county ... I can support that, but I cannot support giving more money to the conservation authority."

Staff are expected to report back to council with additional information to help guide future decisions about how the county will approach invasive-species management moving forward.

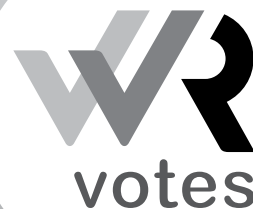
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CORRECTION NOTICE:

An error was printed in the story, "Remembering Wilton 'Willy' Elzinga, a beloved fixture of the Tavistock community," on page A18 of the March 26 edition of the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette. The story incorrectly states Ron Rudy

was a former Tavistock police chief when, in fact, he served as a police constable in Tavistock from 1978-1999, but never as chief. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

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WIRIWG to host screenings on Indigenous-led Grand River events

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

The Wilmot Indigenous Relations Interfaith Working Group (WIRIWG) is hosting an evening focused on two local, annual Indigenous-led water events on April 23 at Zion United Church, 215 Peel St., New Hamburg, at 7 p.m.

Screenings of the documentaries, *Two Row on the Grand* and *The All Nations Grand River Water Walk*, aim to educate through video and guest speakers.

“We aim to teach people how to build relationships of respect, equality and fairness,” said Melissa Miller, communications officer with WIRIWG. “It’s also about honouring the Grand River and everything it means to Waterloo Region, as well as remembering our history and our current relationship with the Grand River and its peoples.”

The first screening, *Two Row on the Grand*, is about the annual *Two Row on the Grand* paddling trip and explores the embodiment of the *Two Row Wampum* – the original peace treaty between Indigenous and settler communities.

The paddle is an annual canoe trip where participants, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, build mutual respect and understanding of individual values and cultures by sharing the river, meals, campgrounds,



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TWOROWONTHEGRAND.COM)

Paddlers take part in the annual *Two Row on the Grand* canoe journey, which promotes mutual respect and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. The event is featured in one of two documentaries being screened by the Wilmot Indigenous Relations Interfaith Working Group on April 23.

mutual aid, cultural and environmental teachings, friendship and summer fun.

“It’s based on the idea of the *Two Row Wampum*, which is an early treaty made among Indigenous peoples in the Waterloo Region and beyond about how people

would live together in peace,” Miller said.

“When the Dutch and English later came into the area, they became signatories to that treaty, along with the Crown. We’re all part of the *Two Row Wampum Treaty*, which means we each have our own boats – our own canoes – and we paddle alongside one another. I don’t interfere with your progress and you don’t interfere with mine. We travel side by side.”

The second screening, *The All Nations Grand River Water Walk*, highlights an Anishinaabe ceremony based on the teachings of the late Josephine Mandamin, who walked around the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River carrying a copper pail of

water in one hand and an eagle staff in the other. She brought global attention to the sacredness and value of water.

The screenings, along with guest-speaker presentations, aim to educate non-Indigenous people about truth and reconciliation, foster relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents, and promote learning.

All are welcome, especially those interested in learning more about the Grand River from Indigenous perspectives, past and present.

There is no fee to attend; however, donations are gratefully accepted to support WIRIWG’s work.

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VOL. 8 ISSUE 8 APRIL 2026

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 **Region of Waterloo Public Notice**

Region of Waterloo **Notice of New Procedural By-Law**

The Region of Waterloo is proposing to pass a new Procedural By-law to replace Procedural By-law 22-051, as amended. The proposed changes focus on addressing procedural silence and codifying past practices to ensure consistent meeting practices.

The Region’s Procedural By-law will be considered at the Council meeting on April 22, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at 150 Frederick Street, Kitchener.

For more information or a copy of the proposed by-law, please contact the Regional Clerk’s Office at RegionalClerk@regionofwaterloo.ca or 519-575-4400

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

Spring field work begins across southern Perth County

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Spring field work is underway across southern Perth County as farmers take advantage of favourable weather conditions to prepare for the growing season.

Mouldboard plows and chisel plows have been active in fields south of Shakespeare and north of Tavistock, completing work that was left unfinished when winter arrived quickly last fall.

Some corn fields that were not harvested before the early snowfall are also now being combined, as farmers take advantage of improving field conditions to bring in crops that remained out over the winter.

When overnight temperatures dropped to about -9°C last weekend, some local hog and dairy farmers used the frozen ground to apply nitrogen to fall wheat fields. Frozen ground can provide an opportunity to move heavy equipment without causing soil compaction or damaging fields that would otherwise be too soft during warmer daytime temperatures.

Some farmers are also applying liquid manure to fields, providing a valuable source of nutrients, particularly nitrogen, which supports strong crop growth. Organic producers in particular rely on manure as a natural fertilizer because they do not use synthetic fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

A local farmer south of Shakespeare applies liquid manure to a fall wheat field while the ground remained frozen during the morning hours. Liquid manure provides a strong source of nitrogen to support crop growth ahead of summer harvest.

By midday, warmer temperatures softened field conditions, limiting how long heavy equipment could operate without causing ruts or soil damage.

Input costs remain a concern for farmers

heading into the growing season, particularly with uncertainty surrounding global fertilizer supply and fuel prices. Rising costs for fertilizer, fuel and other farm inputs can have downstream impacts on food-production costs.

Despite these challenges, farmers continue to make progress as conditions allow, taking advantage of short windows of favourable weather to complete important spring field work.

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B-W Feed and Supply donates \$500 to support Perth County food banks

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A New Hamburg agribusiness is lending its support to efforts to address food insecurity in Perth County.

B-W Feed and Supply recently donated \$500 to support local food banks through an initiative aimed at helping ensure families in need have access to essential food items this spring.

The multi-generational, locally owned company has a longstanding reputation for supporting community causes in Waterloo and Perth counties. Co-owner and president Dave Bender said the decision to contribute was an easy one when approached

about helping address the growing demand facing local food banks.

Organizers Bruce Whitmore of Walton and Richard Smelski of Shakespeare have been working together to rally support from agricultural businesses across the region after learning more about the challenges facing local food banks, particularly during the spring months when supplies are often at their lowest.

Through their research, Whitmore and Smelski identified a need for approximately 2,500 boxes of cereal to help meet demand across Perth County food banks. They noted that cereal is often an essential staple for families facing affordability

challenges, sometimes serving as an evening meal when budgets are tight.

They also pointed to the importance of school breakfast programs supported by local egg farmers, emphasizing the role proper nutrition plays in helping children succeed in the classroom.

Drawing on their backgrounds in agriculture, Whitmore and Smelski reached out to seed companies, farmers, fertilizer suppliers, grain elevators and grocery stores, encouraging them to contribute toward the effort.

The response from the agricultural community has been strong, with donations of both funds and cereal products totalling

approximately \$10,900 to date.

Funds and donations are being coordinated through House of Blessing food bank in Stratford, which will issue charitable receipts and distribute proceeds among 13 food banks serving communities across Perth County.

Whitmore and Smelski said the positive response from local agribusinesses has been encouraging and reflects a shared understanding of the need to support families experiencing food insecurity.

Individuals or businesses interested in supporting the initiative can contact Whitmore at 519-527-1491 or Smelski at 519-625-8811.



Representatives of B-W Feed and Supply present a \$500 donation in support of Perth County food banks. Pictured, from left, are Amanda Gofton, Matt Bartlett, Marco Van Zuilen, Bruce Whitmore, Dave Bender (co-owner and president of B-W Feed and Supply) and Richard Smelski.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

At the B-W Feed and Supply mill in New Hamburg are Matt Bartlett, Margaret Whitmore, Richard Whitmore, Dave Bender and Richard Smelski.

New Hamburg resident wins March Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades 50/50 draw

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A New Hamburg resident is celebrating a win in the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades' March 50/50 draw, which organizers say produced the largest prize awarded through the fundraiser to date.

Wayne Simpson recently received \$640 after purchasing tickets in support of the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades and Museum in Baden. Brigades members say participation in the monthly draw continues to grow, helping support the organization's ongoing activities while also providing participants with the chance to win a

cash prize.

Organizers say the 50/50 draw has become an important fundraiser for the group, with proceeds helping to sustain the brigades' operations and community initiatives.

Residents interested in participating in the monthly draw or learning more about the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades are encouraged to contact president Peter Gingerich or any brigades member for additional information. Tickets are available through rafflebox.org.

Simpson said he is happy to continue supporting the organization and its efforts within the community.

Pictured right: Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigades president Peter Gingerich presents a cheque for \$640 to New Hamburg's Wayne Simpson, winner of the brigades' March 50/50 draw. Simpson says he is pleased to support the organization and its work in the community each month.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF WILMOT HERITAGE FIRE BRIGADES)

Shakespeare Presbyterian Church brings Easter story to life with production of *The Table*

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Shakespeare Presbyterian Church was filled to capacity for two nights last weekend as audiences gathered to experience an Easter play titled *The Table: Bread, Wine and Betrayal*.

The 70-minute production, written and directed by Stratford's Rev. Gail Fricker, drew strong community support and offered a dramatic retelling of the Easter story as told in the Bible.

While the church is accustomed to welcoming worshippers each week, the pews were filled on this occasion with audience members eager to take in the local production, which blended faith, storytelling and community spirit during the Easter season.

Organizers Richard and Jean Smelski said the play grew from a simple idea into a major production involving more than 50 volunteers from the congregation and surrounding community.

They noted the many hours of preparation contributed by cast members, volunteers and supporters helped bring the production to life, creating a meaningful experience for audiences attending the performances.

Special recognition was given to Fricker for her work in writing and directing the play, as well as stage director Shelley Jeary (Gingerich) of Shakespeare for her role in coordinating the production.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Following Saturday's performance, director Gail Fricker and stage director Shelley Jeary were presented with flowers in appreciation of their efforts in bringing the Easter production to the community.

Organizers also acknowledged the support of church minister Rev. Rob Congram and members of the congregation, whose encouragement helped the project come together successfully.

Admission to the performances was by donation, with proceeds supporting the Stratford General Hospital Foundation.



Cast and crew members of *The Table* receive a standing ovation from the audience following one of two performances held at Shakespeare Presbyterian Church last weekend.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AND STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT OFFICIAL PLAN

The Township of Wilmot has released the **DRAFT** of the new Official Plan for public, Indigenous, agency, and stakeholder review. A series of engagement events are planned to provide the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed new Official Plan.

The Official Plan is a roadmap that will guide growth within the Township to the year 2051. It applies to all lands within the municipal boundary of Wilmot and sets out where and how different land uses may occur. The purpose of the Official Plan is to focus new growth to ensure efficient use of land and infrastructure, support livable communities with a range of housing options and protect the Township's cultural and natural heritage and farmland.

TAKE NOTICE that the Township of Wilmot invites all interested persons to attend a Public Open House and Statutory Public Meeting for the purpose of providing feedback on the draft New Official Plan for the Township of Wilmot, held pursuant to Section 17(16) and Sections 17(15)(d) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended.

COMMUNITY MEETING
Wednesday April 15, 2026
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
New Dundee Community Centre
1028 Queen St, New Dundee, ON
N0B 2E0

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE
Tuesday, April 28, 2026
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Wilmot Recreation Complex
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, ON
N3A 3H2

STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING OF COUNCIL
Thursday, May 21, 2026
7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Council Chambers
60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden Ontario
N3A 1A1



A copy of the proposed Official Plan is available digitally on the Township of Wilmot's New Official Plan Engage Page or in person at the Township of Wilmot municipal offices at 60 Snyder's Road West, Baden Ontario N3A 1A1.

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

Visit the Township of Wilmot's YouTube Channel to watch the Council

Meeting. The meeting will be archived on the same webpage for viewing after the event: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcA8fcRx03H8zYkFLIQMjow>.

HAVE YOUR SAY

You are invited to provide input and participate in the Statutory Public Meeting on May 21, 2026, either in person or online. To participate in the Statutory Public Meeting virtually, please pre-register with the Township Clerk by submitting a delegation request online at forms.wilmot.ca/Clerks/Delegation-Request-Form or emailing the Township Clerk at clerks@wilmot.ca before noon on May 21, 2026. Attendance in person does not require pre-registration. You may also provide written comment through mail to 60 Snyder's Road West, Baden, ON N3A 1A1 or send an email to WilmotOP@wilmot.ca.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Township of Wilmot on the proposed Official Plan, you must make a written request to the Clerk of the Corporation of the Township of Wilmot at 60 Snyder's Road West, Baden, Ontario N3A 1A1 or by emailing clerks@wilmot.ca.

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Township of Wilmot to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Township of Wilmot before the proposed Official Plan is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Township of Wilmot before the proposed official plan is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

For more information about this matter, including information about appeal rights, contact the Township of Wilmot Planning Division at 60 Snyder's Road West, Baden, ON N3A 1A1, T: 519-634-8444, or email WilmotOP@wilmot.ca.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please visit the Township of Wilmot's New Official Plan Engage Page at [engagewr.ca/new-wilmot-official-plan](https://www.engagewr.ca/new-wilmot-official-plan), or contact the project team with any questions at WilmotOP@wilmot.ca or by reaching out to the staff listed below.

Andrew Martin, MCIP, MPP
Director of Development Services
519-634-8519 ext. 9245

Rachel Greene,
Senior Policy Planner
519-634-8519 ext. 9237

OBITUARY

CAPPLEMAN, JAMES "Jim"



With heartfelt sorrow, the family of Jim Cappleman announces his passing on March 25, 2026.

Jim was a loving, devoted grandson, son, brother, husband, uncle, father, & grandfather. A man of integrity with a lot of living packed into his decades on earth.

Jim worked in Information Technology for 25 years at local companies such as General Spring, Babcock & Wilcox, & Canadian General Tower. He realized his dream of owning his own business with the purchase of McDougall Signs in Waterloo, in 1994. As owner/manager he successfully operated this business until his retirement.

Jim was a dedicated hockey, figure skating, & dance Dad & Granddad, a photographer, a purveyor of maple syrup, handyman extraordinaire, & a proud, passionate dog lover, & birder.

As an involved community supporter; he was a member of the New Dundee Volunteer Fire Department for twelve years, manager of the New Dundee Boy Scout Paper Drive, an auditor at his church, & a keen member & volunteer at KW Gem & Mineral Club, & Waterloo Region Nature. A most notable achievement was his activism, instrumental to the establishment of the New Dundee Municipal Water System.

Jim enjoyed many travels: Europe, the Caribbean, South America, most of North America, many visits to Florida, & Canada coast to coast to coast. His memory will live on through his family, but he will be deeply missed.

Thanks for the memories, Jim! Your family appreciates all of your endeavors, your sincere character, happy disposition, & unwavering spirit & support. We pledge to Keep Calm & Carry On, as your legacy continues. Your life was your blessing to us.

By request, a private family celebration will be held. Jim's memory can be honoured by acts of kindness, or donations to Waterloo Region Nature.

OBITUARY

RIDDLE: Christine Anne



A Memorial Service will be held at the Francis Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Friday, April 10, 2026 at 3 pm for Christine Anne Riddle (Schwartz) who passed away in October 2025. She was the daughter of Ken and Adella Schwartz of Tavistock.

If you plan to attend please advise Francis Chapel (519-655- 2431 or infot@gffh.ca) Please do not wear black.

OBITUARY

HALLMAN: David John



Passed away suddenly on Saturday, March 28, 2026 at the Stratford General Hospital. Dave Hallman of RR#2 Tavistock in his 72 year.

Beloved husband of Bonnie (Wilhem) Hallman whom he married July 17, 1976. Loving and proud father of Drew & wife Stephanie of Woodstock, Paige Dart of Woodstock and

Lane Hallman of Aylmer. Sadly missed by his grandchildren Lyla, Emry, Briar, Thea, Edith, Eliot, Charlie, Reed and Jett. Dear brother of Ross & Darlene, Barry & Pam and Keith & Penny all of Baden. Remembered by the "Wilhelm" family and many nieces and nephews.

Dave never missed an opportunity to show up for his grandkids!

He was an avid sports enthusiast all his life which included playing, coaching in both Minor and Junior Hockey. A passionate Harley owner and rider never missing a chance to go for a ride. Also a die hard Leafs and Blue Jays fan.

Predeceased by his parents Orval and Jean (Strycker) Hallman and in-laws Harry & Lyla (Herlick) Wilhelm.

Relatives and friends will be received in the Francis Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Friday from 1-5pm. Funeral Service will be conducted at the Trinity Lutheran Church, Sebastopol-Tavistock on Saturday, April 4, 2026 at 11:00am.

Weather permitting, if anyone wishes to ride their Bike to the funeral there will be a area designated for them to park to honour Dave's love of riding.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Sakura House, Humane Society of Stratford-Perth & Kitchener-Waterloo or Heart & Stroke Foundation would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING A LOVING HUSBAND, FATHER AND PAPA WHO PASSED AWAY 10 YEARS AGO
APRIL 4, 2016

Bruce Baechler

Someone Special

In moments shared, both small and grand,
You gave with heart, a guiding hand,
Like quiet waves upon the sand,
Your love would ripple through the land.

A gentle laugh, a knowing smile,
Strength endured through every trial,
Someone special, all the while,
You walked with grace in every mile.

In morning light and soft winds too,
We feel the quiet strength of you,
Your spirit shines in all we do,
A legacy forever true.

Now you rest where stars shine through,
In peaceful realms beyond our view,
We miss your voice, your warmth, your cheer
and keep you in our hearts, so near.

Your loving wife Linda, children
and grandchildren.



by PeterS 2026

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ANSWERS FOUND ON THE CLASSIFIED PAGE

Reality? **Reality check**

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QUIZ TIME

BY JAKE GRANT

1. What is the birthstone for April?
2. Who is the newly elected leader of the NDP?
3. The Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling and Wake takes place annually in which country?
4. Children born from 2025 to 2039 will belong to which generation?
5. What are the three main macronutrients?
6. Who stars as the lead role in Shutter Island(2010)?
7. Canada's federal minimum wage grew April 1st, 2026. What is minimum wage?
8. Angkor Wat is the largest religious monument in the world found in what country?
9. How far is 1-light year in kilometers?
10. How many sides does a heptagon have?

Answers found on the classified page

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

The Old Gazettes

By Sydney Grant

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

March 31 - April 7, 2021, Edition (5 years ago)

Ontario's newest multi-millionaires have some valuable advice for anyone purchasing a LOTTO MAX ticket for any lottery ticket – put it in a safe place and check it as soon as possible! Chad and Christa Breyer of Tavistock, who won the \$50 million LOTTO MAX jackpot from the March 16, 2021, draw, unknowingly drove around with the jackpot-winning ticket in their vehicle cupholder for about a week before checking it and changing their lives forever. “I bought the LOTTO MAX ticket on Sunday for the Tuesday, March 16, draw and put it in the cupholder as I usually do, and went about my business – going to work or running errands – never locking my car,” said Chad Breyer.

Scott Shewfelt has always been a big fan of the television game show, Jeopardy! He grew up watching the show's iconic Canadian host, Alex Trebek, and dreamed of a chance one day to play on his show and meet him. Recently, Shewfelt qualified for the show which aired on April Fool's Day, 2021, but it was too late to meet Mr. Trebek, who died in 2020. Scott brought home the win, earning \$17,199. After that win, he immediately moved on to the Friday show and once again proved his mettle by winning another \$29,601 for a two day total of \$46,800.

March 30 - April 6, 2011, Edition (15 years ago)

Grade 8 students at Tavistock Public School are now accepting bids for silent auction items at Scotiabank in Tavistock. About 37 students are raising funds to attend Camp Celtic this spring and have set up a great variety of items for auction in the lobby at the Tavistock branch. By far, the biggest item on the block is a 16-foot Prospector canoe from Jeff Hill's H2O Canoe Company. The state-of-the-art canoe is 58 pounds and made of fibre-light, resin-infused construction with a list price of \$1,695. Other items include gift certificates, hats, steak knives, a clock, gift baskets, a sweater, candles, a carbon monoxide detector, flood lights with motion sensor, and a barbecue tool set.

At the league championship tournament in Oshawa this past Sunday, April 3, the Hyde Construction Tav-

istock Midget Junior Jets lost a hard-fought semi-final battle to Tillsonburg by a score of 3-2 on a penalty shot. In the bronze-medal game, the Jets came out flying to hammer the Picton Legionettes 7-0, giving Rachel McKay another shutout. Members of the team are Rachel McKay, Brittany McKay, Desiree Brenneman, Cassie Drinkwalter, Chelsea Hyde, Brittany Bell, Robyn Lichti, Jennifer Newcombe, Alex Glencross, Leah Balfour, Jillian Ross, Robyn Schieckoff, Lisa Duivestyn, Sydnie Hyde, Emily Shantz, Lacy Jantzi and Mikaela Malson.

March 27 - April 3, 1996, Edition (30 years ago)

The Tavistock Opti-Mrs. held their annual meeting in the newly renovated Arlington Hotel suite on Thursday evening, March 14. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Opti-Mrs. Of the Year Award as presented by last year's recipient Gail Lange. Sharing the honour for 1995 are Donna Swartzentuber and Trish Wettlaufer, who were always available and ready to help when called upon for the many and varied activities of the club this past year.

Shoppers in Tavistock will soon enjoy “a new face in town” as the grocery store located at 70 Hope St. becomes the Tavistock Knechtel Food Market. After a short absence from the community, Knechtel brought back to Tavistock a large array of weekly specials and an aggressive merchandising program. “We are excited about returning to Tavistock,” say store owners Robert and Sandra Taylor. “Knechtel is dedicated to competitive pricing, high quality in the fresh departments, good old-fashioned service and is proud to offer our shoppers the Our Compliments, Knechtel Brand and Smart Choice lines of private label.

March 30 - April 6, 1966, Edition (60 years ago)

The development of prosthesis (artificial limbs) has taken giant strides in the past few years for the benefit of the crippled children. A few years ago, a six-month-old baby wearing an artificial limb would not have been considered practical, but today this child would be fitted with a prosthesis in only a matter of months. Research and establishment of amputee training programs with Easter Seal funds has encouraged the earlier fitting of prosthesis, particularly for the upper-limb amputee, to assist in the establishment of balance, to encourage acceptance, to avoid frustration in the process of normal growth and development, thereby preventing further disability.

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Pastor Julie Ellison White

131 Wettlaufer St., Tavistock 655-2581

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with coffee and fellowship to follow at 11am.

All ages Junior Sunday School will follow
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Wellington Street, Tavistock

stpaulstavistock@gmail.com

Pastor Rev. Michael Mayer

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Pastors Ray Martin & Mike Williamson

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New Hamburg

Weekly Sunday services at 10:15 am.

All are welcome.

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Please join us for Holy Week:

April 2 Maundy Thursday

7pm Service of Holy Communion

April 3 Good Friday

10am Ecumenical Service

at Trinity Lutheran, with Zion United

April 5 Easter Sunrise Service

6:30am Ecumenical Easter Service

above the Nith River, parking lot

behind Office Pro; with Trinity

Lutheran and Zion United

April 5 Easter Service

10:15am Service of Holy Communion

St James Chapel of Ease

4339 Huron Rd Wilmot Township

All are welcome.

Contact Carol Massel: 519-502-8648

carol@masselsmarine.com

ST AGATHA MENNONITE CHURCH

1967 Erb's Road St Agatha 519-634-8212

Pastor Jim Brown

Worship service 10am followed by coffee hour

and sermon discussion.

All are welcome

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette **SPORTS**

Local curlers win OFSAA championship with undefeated run for SDSS

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) girls curling team returned home with gold medals and the OFSAA championship banner after an impressive undefeated performance at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations championship in Thunder Bay.

The SDSS squad finished the tournament with a perfect 7-0 record to capture the school's first-ever OFSAA girls curling championship title.

Skip Addison Hyatt and vice Brooklyn Hyatt – both of whom live on their family farm south of Poole – and second Deanna Halls and lead Hailey Peters – from the Tavistock and Stratford areas – combined strong shot-making and teamwork throughout the multi-day competition, defeating teams from across Ontario to secure the gold medal.

The Stratford team dominated round-robin play, outscoring opponents 42-8 while earning wins over St. Mary's College from Sault Ste. Marie, Bishop Allen Academy Catholic Secondary School from Toronto, Milton District High School and Norwell District Secondary School from Palmerston. SDSS entered the playoff round ranked first overall.

In the quarterfinals, SDSS defeated Nantyr Shores Secondary School of Innisfil by an 11-6 score to advance to the semifinal.

Saturday's semifinal against Frontenac Secondary School from Kingston proved to be one of the closest games of the tournament. The two teams had previously met twice at OFSAA, with Frontenac winning both matchups.

According to the coaching staff, the semifinal was a back-and-forth contest that



(SHANE RESTALL PHOTOS)

The Stratford District Secondary School OFSAA championship team includes, from left, head coach Brian Anderson, second Deanna Halls, lead Hailey Peters, vice Brooklyn Hyatt, skip Addison Hyatt and teacher-coach Shane Restall. Missing from the photo is coach Paul Hyatt.

came down to the final end. Holding two stones in scoring position, SDSS narrowly secured the victory when Frontenac's final draw attempt caught a guard and rolled into the rings. A measurement determined the Stratford team had won by less than a centimetre, avoiding an extra end and advancing to the championship game.

In the final, SDSS faced Ecole secondaire catholique Thériault from Timmins in another tightly contested match. With last rock advantage in the eighth end, the Stratford rink relied on precise teamwork to secure the winning point.

An accurate line call from vice Brooklyn

Hyatt, combined with strong sweeping from Peters and Halls, allowed skip Addison Hyatt's final shot to move the opposing stone just far enough to score the single point needed for the win.

Coaches Brian Anderson and Shane Restall said the team appreciated the support they received throughout the season from the school community, families and supporters, as well as the hospitality shown by the Thunder Bay host community.

Coach Paul Hyatt was unable to attend the championship but shared his pride in the team's accomplishment after years of curling together.



Vice skip Brooklyn Hyatt and lead Hailey Peters sweep a shot by second Deanna Halls while skip Addison Hyatt calls the line during semifinal action at OFSAA in Thunder Bay on Saturday, March 28. The SDSS team won the game to advance to the final.



Vice skip Brooklyn Hyatt and lead Hailey Peters sweep a shot by second Deanna Halls while skip Addison Hyatt calls the line during semifinal action at OFSAA in Thunder Bay on Saturday, March 28. The SDSS team won the game to advance to the final.

PJHL roundup: Navy Vets force Game 7 of PJHL series with Braves

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The back-and-forth Doherty Division championship series between Woodstock and Tavistock will be decided in a seventh game.

Road teams have won four of the six games in the series to date, and the Braves hoped that trend would continue on Wednesday night, one day before the Gazette goes to print.

The Braves have outshot the Navy Vets 244 (41 per game) to 142 (24 per game) but have only outscored Woodstock 20-19. Navy Vets goalie Tyler Bouck has posted a

2.61 goals against average with a .928 save percentage in 16 playoff games. Blake Richard has been no slouch for the Braves with a 2.32 goals against and a .910 save percentage.

After a scoreless first, Woodstock jumped out to a 2-0 lead by the nine-minute mark of the second period of Game 6 and earned a 7-3 win to force Game 7. Goals by Tavistock's Keaton Bartlett and Yann Raskin tied it up after 40 minutes, but the Navy Vets scored three consecutive markers in the first 15 minutes to take a 5-2 lead.

Tavistock pulled Richard 13 seconds later, but Cooper Vickerman scored on the

empty net to take a four-goal lead. Keegan Metcalf added a powerplay goal for the Braves, but another empty net marker by the Navy Vets rounded out the scoring.

"Everything here is simple. We have outplayed them five on five in almost every game," said Braves general manager Brent Lange. "We're still very confident. (Tuesday) night was just a couple of bad turnovers and a couple of empty net goals. We will be fine."

Lange added all the statistics and trends so far in the series mean nothing heading to Game 7.

"It's simple here. We win, we move on. We score one or two more goals than them,

we win."

Game 5 on Sunday saw Tavistock jump out to a 4-1 lead after 40 minutes as they earned a 5-2 victory. Raskin and Ethan Stover led the attack with a goal and two assists each while Evan Palubeski scored a pair.

Woodstock skated away with a 3-0 road win on Friday as Bouck stopped all 53 shots he faced. Owen Ireton picked up a goal and an assist to lead the Navy Vets.

The winner of Game 7 will advance to the Provincial Junior Hockey League's (PJHL) South Division final against the Dundas Blues, who eliminated the Niagara Riverhawks in five games.

Local breeders recognized at Perth County Holstein Breeders Cup



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Winners of the Perth County Holstein Breeders Cup competition are pictured following this year's event. From left are Perth County Holstein Club president Luis Velazquez; Trevor Willows of St. Pauls, breeder of reserve champion Terrylea Legend Bravo; grand champion and Breeders Cup winner Spruceafton Sidekick Roxanne, bred by Corey Nafziger and family of Brunner; and club director Sjoerd Kemmer.

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Mental-health resilience with a few caveats

INTERFAITH COUNSELLING CENTRE

By John Dinner

If there is one encouraging takeaway from recent data on Canadians' mental health, it's this: many of us appear to be doing better than we feared we might after the pandemic years.

Given the scale of disruption Canadians experienced between 2020 and 2022, that is no small thing. Lockdowns, economic uncertainty, isolation from family and friends, and the general anxiety that accompanied a global health crisis created conditions most of us had never encountered in our lifetimes. It would have been reasonable to expect the psychological aftershocks might linger for years. And yet

the data suggests a somewhat more hopeful story.

Recent national polling indicates that in 2025, 86 per cent of Canadians reported good mental health, while 11 per cent described their mental health as poor. Among those reporting positive mental health, 31 per cent rated their mental health as "very good," and 17 per cent said it was "excellent."

Those numbers represent a noticeable improvement compared with the darker days of the pandemic. In December 2020, only 79 per cent of Canadians reported good mental health, while 19 per cent said their mental health was poor.

In other words, while the pandemic unquestionably strained Canadians psychologically, the long-term harm appears less severe than many experts initially feared.

That improvement speaks to something worth acknowledging: resilience. Individuals and communities found ways to adapt. Social routines returned. Workplaces stabilized. Families reunited. The simple rhythms of everyday life resumed. Good for us.

But there's an interesting tension in the

data.

While most Canadians say their personal mental health is good, many still feel uneasy about the broader environment. When respondents were asked to select words that best describe the current moment in Canada, 40 per cent chose "uncertain," 37 per cent selected "turbulent," and 31 per cent said the word that best described the year was "exhausting."

That contrast is telling. It suggests many Canadians may be navigating an internal balance: managing reasonably well in their own lives, while simultaneously feeling unsettled about the wider social, economic and political climate. And understandably so given recent news headlines from Tumbler Ridge to Tehran.

There are also important nuances beneath the headline numbers. Younger Canadians continue to report lower levels of positive mental health than older adults, a pattern that has been evident for several years. Financial pressures, housing affordability and the influence of social media are frequently cited as contributing factors.

And despite overall improvement, access to care remains a challenge. In Cana-

da, 41 per cent of adults with a diagnosed mental-health disorder report having unmet mental-health-care needs, highlighting the continuing gap between need and available services.

So, the picture is mixed, but encouraging. Most Canadians are doing reasonably well psychologically, even after a period of profound disruption. That speaks to our capacity to recover, adapt and move forward.

At the same time, the lingering sense of uncertainty many people report is a reminder that mental health is shaped not only by our private lives, but also by the world we inhabit.

In other words, resilience is real but so is fatigue. Perhaps the most honest description of this moment is that both can exist at the same time.

John Dinner is a registered psychotherapist who works as a counsellor at Interfaith Counselling Centre in New Hamburg. He tries to remember we have, as humans, the luxury of choosing our thoughts and where we focus our attention.

Easter without the added sugar

JESSIE CAMPBELL

Gazette Columnist

Spring is in the air! The snow piles have melted, the ice storms are over, the hydro stays on (except on those really windy days) and the robins and geese have returned. With the changing seasons comes a pent-up energy after a long, cold winter – an eagerness to get outside and enjoy the bounty of creation.

Change is constant – it happens daily.

Speaking of change, did you know your taste buds regenerate roughly every 10 to 14 days? That can make it easier to adjust to new eating habits over time – especially when reducing grains and sugar.

There are two ways to change the way you eat: cold turkey (which is what we did 12 years ago) – this can be a shock to your system depending on your current sugar intake – or slowly over time, little by little, so your body does not fully realize what it is missing.

Let me tell you our story about porridge. We used to eat a lot of oats. In fact, we would buy a 50-pound bag and keep it in the cold cellar. We always let the children add brown sugar at the table. My husband suggested putting the sugar at the stove instead, and over the course of the next few weeks, I added less and less. One day I asked, "How is the porridge?" Everyone said it was fine. I replied, "I stopped adding sugar two weeks ago!"

Your taste buds do change, and once you get the sugar out of your food, you may



(VECTEEZY PHOTO)

Rich, homemade dark chocolates made with simple, sugar-free ingredients offer a wholesome alternative to traditional Easter treats.

be amazed at how rich real food can taste.

Of course, with spring comes Easter – a time of celebration, renewal, family and sugar! One of the most challenging things about eating no grain and no sugar is navigating the holidays. These festive times are filled with sweets, chocolates and special desserts, making it a challenge to stick with whole foods.

In our food journey, I have found a number of replacements for those special dishes and want to share two here for the

Easter celebration ahead:

Homemade chocolates

Ingredients

- 1 part unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 part coconut oil, melted
- 1 part cocoa powder
- ½ part natural peanut butter (no sugar added)

Directions

Mix thoroughly, pour into candy molds or silicone ice cube trays and freeze. Remove

five minutes before serving. You can also omit the peanut butter and use cream for a "milk chocolate."

Warning: these are not sweet, but a very rich, dark chocolate. Get creative – add nuts or other favourites.

For your Easter supper, try this rich, bright orange soufflé without added sugar or flour:

Carrot soufflé

Ingredients

- 1 pound carrots, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs
- ½ teaspoon salt

Directions

Cook carrots in boiling water until soft, then drain.

Mix together the remaining ingredients and purée in a blender.

Pour into a greased pan and set into a water bath. Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes, or until firm to the touch.

Your guests may not believe there is no sugar in this dish!

Happy Easter! Don't let anyone make you feel bad about not eating certain foods. Food is the primary building material our bodies use to strengthen the immune system, build solid bones, regenerate cells, connect tissues, balance brain chemistry and more.

Take time to make meal plans and get to know your kitchen again – it can have a huge impact.

*"The only constant in life is change."
– Heraclitus*

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Tree giveaway takes root for fourth year in a row

Wilmot residents can register for a free tree starting April 7

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

The Township of Wilmot is giving residents a chance to support local reforestation efforts this spring.

Starting at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, April 7, Wilmot residents can register to receive a free tree through the Wilmot Roots program.

Now in its fourth year, the tree giveaway initiative is made possible through donations from Enova Power Corporation and support from Let's Tree Wilmot volunteers. Residents can choose from six native tree species, including:

- Autumn Blaze Maple
- Eastern Redbud
- Red Maple
- Sugar Maple
- White Birch
- White Spruce

Quantities are limited to approximately 60 trees per species. Orders will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, with only one tree allowed per household. If an address is registered for more than one tree or is located outside of Wilmot, the order will be cancelled without exception.

To participate in this initiative, registrants must live in Wilmot and be available to collect their tree on Saturday, April 25, at the Wilmot Recreation Complex parking lot. Trees will not be held. Registrants must also agree to plant and care for their tree at their own private residence in Wilmot (not on Township boulevards or property).

Additional information, including tree pick-up details, is available at www.wilmot.ca/wilmotroots. Questions about the program can be directed to 519-634-9225 or wilmotroots@wilmot.ca.



(WILMOT.CA PHOTO)

A budding Eastern Redbud offers a splash of early spring colour—one of six native species available to Wilmot residents through the township's Wilmot Roots tree giveaway program, with registration opening April 7.

Gazette Puzzles

MARCH NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

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Pet of the Week

FRED AND MAISIE

Fred, on the left and his girlfriend, Maisie have been the best of friends for the last six years. They enjoy walks together and sitting on porches watching the world go by. They were nominated by owner Joan Bilinsky

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A happy, hoppy and healthy Easter

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



The Easter bunny is coming to town, bringing a bountiful basket of rainbow-coloured candies and chocolate treats. Of course, this holistic nutritionist hopes you skip the corn syrup, food colouring and scary chemicals, seeking out the all-star alternatives available.

As a grandma of two, my goal is to teach my mini loves how Mother Nature's homegrown goodness is the best thing to eat. Spending time in the kitchen with my grandma is something I cherish to this day. Watching her roll pastry dough, placing the jam in my favourite thumbprint cookies with TLC as she sipped coffee and asked her little helper, me, to pass her what she needed. I believe the greatest gift you can give your family is feeding them healthy, nutrient-dense food and the tools to recreate the magic on their own.

This spring season and in honour of everybody's favourite bunny, I present good-for-you carrot cake muffins.

Carrots are full of gut goodness thanks to fantastic fibre. The outrageous orange veggie is chock full of immune support and eye-boosting beta carotene. Once cooked, carrots also supply sweetness.

Oat flour is gluten-free goodness. Pineapple contains bromelain, easing inflammation throughout the body. Skipping conventional sugar is a snap when fabulous fruit is substituted.

Eggs are a sphere-shaped superfood. The yolk contains choline, linked to cognitive and the power of protein is not to be disputed. Healthy fats are essential, so please avoid all seed oils. Invest in your health and reap the benefits.

Looking for a healthy cupcake and no one has nut allergies, stir in oodles of omega-3 fatty acids with wondrous walnuts and indulge in the cashew icing.

Crazy for carrots muffins

Ingredients

- 2 cups of oat flour

- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp Himalayan Sea salt
- 2 tsp Ceylon cinnamon
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp ginger powder
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup of avocado or olive oil*
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups of Pfenning's Organic carrots grated
- 1 cup of unsweetened crushed pinea

Directions

1. Set the oven to 350°F.
2. Combine all the dry ingredients and set aside.
3. Whisk the 3 eggs into a large bowl.
4. Add all the wet ingredients to the eggs.
5. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and mix well.
6. Pour into silicon baking cups or your favourite muffin pan.
7. Bake for 14-18 minutes or until golden brown on the top and spring back when touched.
8. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Icing ingredients

- 1 cup of cashews soaked in water overnight
- 1 lemon
- 1 tsp of lemon zest
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons of unpasteurized honey or maple syrup***



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Try baking these healthy carrot-cake muffins this Easter weekend.

- ½ tsp Himalayan Sea salt organic fresh-pressed coconut oil melted

Directions

1. Wash and zest the lemon.
2. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze.
3. Drain the cashews.
4. Add all the prepped ingredients into a high-powered machine and whirl until smooth.
5. Refrigerate the icing for a minimum of 60 minutes. No cutting this short please.
6. Spread over the muffins.

*For a tropical twist, use

**Walnuts optional
***Show local love; Roth's Maple, Winding Road Maple Products, Maple Tap Farm or Wagler Maple Products. "Bee" in love with local honey by Nith Valley Apiaries and Riverside Bee Yard Apiaries

For a speedy cashew icing mix, use equal parts cashew butter, water, maple syrup, lemon juice with a pinch of sea salt. Don't forget you can bake a loaf rather than cupcakes.

The jury is in; social media is killing our kids

LOREENA MCKENNITT

Submitted to the Gazette

Last week's verdicts in two U.S. court cases (New Mexico and California) must have been bittersweet wins for the parents whose children took their own lives as a result of some connection to social media. The cases showed Meta and YouTube to be gravely negligent and are now being considered this era's "tobacco moment": the day the world finally woke up to the fact that they are harming and killing our children.

In the New Mexico case, jurors found that Meta (parent company to Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Threads) had misled consumers about the safety of its platform, enabling sexual exploitation of young users, fining them \$375 million USD. In California, the court found Meta and YouTube (parent company Google) deliberately designed their platforms to be as addictive as cigarettes or online gambling, fining Meta \$4.2 million USD and YouTube \$1.8M. Snapchat and TikTok

apparently settled out of court, unconvinced they could win.

And yet, these dark interactions occur not only through social media sites where bullying, suicide, image manipulation and human trafficking occur, but through pornography channels and gaming portals, which are implicated in loss of privacy, radicalisation, or inducing psychosis as a result of spending more time in virtual worlds than the real one – all before the introduction of AI.

Unwittingly, and perhaps through our own addictions to devices, we've allowed our children to be exposed to content in ways we would never have dreamed of in an analogue setting. Which one of us would leave our doors wide open for the world to come in and engage with our children without our knowledge, permission, protection, or approval, hour after hour, day after day, for nearly two decades?

The digital parental controls which have been sold to us as our responsibility have proven to be patchy and insufficient.

The verdicts of these court cases are

saying it is the tech companies' responsibility to make products safe, not ours.

When new consumer products enter the market without adequate research and testing – as happened here – problems can arise, and it often takes a long time for the full effects to become clear.

But this has been the long-held strategy adopted by tech, what Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg spoke of in the early days of Facebook: "Move fast and break things." Well, they've broken our kids in the process while moving faster than our democratically elected representatives could table and ratify legislation to protect our children and families from their predatory behaviour.

While we wait for the Canadian government to retable its long-awaited online harms bill, we can take some comfort in knowing that many other countries and states are well on the path of legislation. Too, there are more than 1,500 court cases yet to come, including four put forward by Ontario schoolboards.

The trend is confirming what most

parents, teachers and doctors, have long seen with their own eyes. Childhood has changed drastically since the advent of smartphones and social media in the past 15 years, and it has not been good.

Clearly, our children are in a medical and mental-health emergency, and we want to see every level of government – federal, provincial, municipal and even down to school boards – adopting the posture of urgency and duty of care while we await legislation to address the threats. Just as we would no longer send our children into a room full of tobacco smokers and wait for the law to step in, our children need rescuing now.

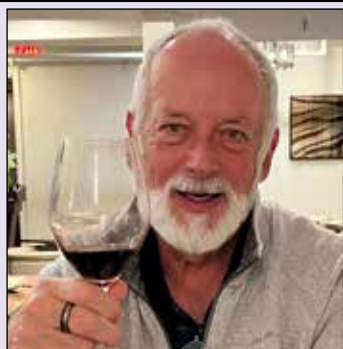
Each and every family has their own, unique experience, and I welcome hearing from anyone who wishes to share or reach out to info@wisecommunities.org.

Loreena McKennitt is a member of The Order of Canada, Director of The Falstaff Family Centre (Stratford) and founder of The Stolen Child Project and Wise Communities.

A tasty Perth County craft brewery day trip

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



The beer was very good, but what I was really interested in was the story behind the brand.

Let's face it, the life of a travel writer is hard, slogging work. Take this day for example. I had decided to write a feature about a day trip to two Perth County craft breweries. I asked three buddies if they would like to come along as I visited Black Donnellys Brewing Company in Russeldale and Black Swan Brewing in Stratford. They were understandably reluctant – it took up to 15 seconds for them to agree – and off we went. As I said, I have a very demanding job.

I've been interested in the Black Donnellys brand for quite a while. Having grown up in southern Ontario, I knew the story. Early in my life, I read the harrowing accounts (some more or less true) about this family, their reportedly nefarious deeds and the massacre that occurred when their neighbours attacked them in their Lucan area home. There are now books, plays, songs, a TV program and a museum about the Donnellys.

I'm not going to go into all the controversy about the Donnellys, their alleged crimes, the conspiracy against them and the Feb. 3, 1880, night when their Biddulph township neighbours slaughtered five Donnelly family members. What interested me is how craft brewer Neil Douglas was able to use the brand, "Black Donnellys," and various terms associated with the story when he opened his brewery on Highway 23, 10 minutes south of Mitchell.

Turns out, he simply did it! Nobody owned rights to the names. He told me, "I wondered if there would be push-back," because of the gruesome nature of the story, but that didn't happen. People were more intrigued than concerned.

So, after naming the brewery, he followed up by naming the various beers after details of the story: Roman Line Lager (from the road where the Donnellys lived); Dark Horse Ale; 1880 Mile Stout; Biddulph Township Haze IPA; Shillelagh Law Belgian Quad; Seven Sons Amber Lager; and Vigilante IPA, to name a few.

Some of those names – like

"Seven Sons" – actually arose from contests Douglas conducted with his customers.

My friends and I sampled flights of Douglas' beer, and the consensus was this is good stuff. Personally, I tried the Seven Sons, Roman Line, Dark Horse and Shillelagh Law, and would be hard pressed to choose one over the other – although the eight per-cent Shillelagh was really tasty. The four of us chose four different beers as our favourites, but agreed they were all excellent brews.

Douglas buys hops and grain from western Canada, England, Germany, Austria and some hops from the Tavistock area, but he says the real key to the taste of his beers is the pure well water from his property.

"That makes the beer," he told us.

In total, Douglas and brewmaster Scott Jacobs produce 10 beers. They are served at the brewery (with a comfortable interior, a patio in the warm months, live music every couple of weeks and pizza and snacks available), and at 10 pubs across an area stretching from the Scran and Dram pub in New Hamburg to the shores of Lake Huron.

Our flights consumed, and information gathered, we headed east to Stratford to visit Black Swan Brewing on Downie Street. It was mid-afternoon on a Wednesday in March, so there were few customers, but within an hour or two, the place was full.



???? The Black Donnellys brewery on Highway 23, south of Mitchell.

The Black Swan is owned by Ryan Stokes, a teacher by day. We were enthusiastically greeted by one of his former students, Sierra Sauv , who provided us with lots of information and some really fine flights of beer.

The Black Swan opened almost 12 years ago, and in an era where some craft breweries are struggling, both it and the Donnellys seem to be thriving, building on excellent products, friendly service and a loyal customer base.

Sauv  told us that while the warmer months bring lots of Stratford visitors to the brewery, the key to year-round success lies with their regular, local clients.

And here's a tasting tip from those regulars: it's common for those in the know to order a blended beer, combining a couple of the brews on tap to make their own special beer.

It's an interesting idea, but after tasting the beers in our flights, we all agreed it would not be difficult to choose a favourite straight from the taps. But as usual, we couldn't agree as to what that favourite would be. Votes were cast for Road Trip Golden Ale, English Pale Ale and New Vienna Lager. And our cast of enthusiastic amateurs also liked the Wild Child Sour (the sour beers are changed seasonally). The list of beers not enjoyed was blank.

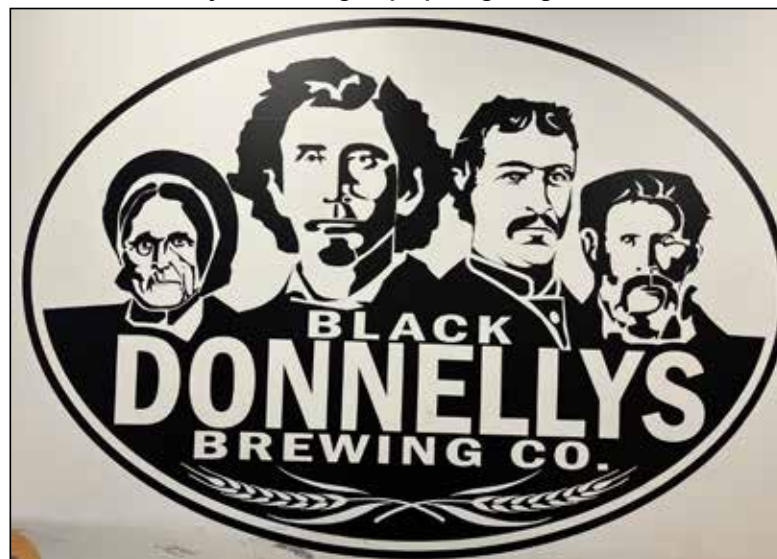
The seating area in the brewery is not enormous, but the Black Swan has a patio out front (in typical Stratford style) in the warm months. But if you opt to sit outdoors, be sure to pop in and see the large Black Swan painting by Drew Simpson, an impressive adaptation of the 17th century work by Jan Asselijn called "The Threatened Swan." Cheers!

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The Black Donnellys' Neil Douglas preparing a flight of beer.



Neil Douglas designed the Black Donnellys logo, featuring stern images of the ill-fated family.



Black Donnellys' brewmaster Scott Jacobs.

Threatened farmland in Wilmot, two years in

A. S. COMPTON

Submitted to the Gazette

Editor's note: A longer version of this article was originally published in the March 2026 edition of Rural Voice. It has been republished here with the author's permission.

Two years ago, local farmers and residents were blindsided.

On March 9, 2024, two representatives of Canacre, an American company, visited six farms and six residential properties in Wilmot Township, Waterloo Region. They told landowners they would need to sell their property and offered compensation below market value. Those approached were also told that if they did not sell voluntarily, their land would be expropriated. They were given 10 days to decide.

At first, many could hardly believe what they were hearing.

The municipal council of Wilmot had long been known for its strong stance against development on prime farmland. Waterloo Region itself had earned a reputation across Ontario for responsible land-use planning that protected agricultural land while guiding growth toward existing urban areas.

Central to that planning approach was the countryside line, a firm boundary identifying where development could occur and where farmland would remain protected. Farmers located beyond the line understood that development could eventually reach their land. However, the farms now under threat were located within the protected area, where the expectation had long been that agriculture would continue.

Neighbours quickly began contacting one another to confirm what they had heard. Within days of the visits, affected landowners began meeting to better understand the situation. Regional council had provided few answers to questions from residents or local media, leaving many uncertain about what was planned.

Through discussions, landowners determined the region appeared to be attempting to assemble approximately 770 acres of land bordered by Highway 7/8, Wilmot Centre Road and Bleams Road, with Nafziger Road running through the property. The land includes Class 1 and Class 2 farmland, considered among the most productive agricultural soils in the province.

Landowners responded with a unified refusal to sell and began meeting regularly to share information and coordinate their response. The group adopted the name Fight for Farmland.

I had recently finished seasonal work on a cabbage farm where I grew up. Our family farm sits across Bleams Road from the land in question. Although I now live in the city about 20 minutes away, I remain connected to the farm and continue helping when I can. My parents, who recently retired, still live on the farm and assist



(PHOTO COURTESY OF RORY FARNAN)

About 100 landowners and supporters showed up at Wilmot Township Council meeting on March 25, 2024 to support those opposed to the Region of Waterloo's proposed land grab. Two years later, the issue continues to affect local landowners.

with the sauerkraut business now operated by a colleague.

My father told me neighbours had received notices indicating their land could be expropriated. Because a hydro corridor runs through our property, there was speculation our farm could also eventually be affected.

Waterloo Region is among the fastest-growing regions in Canada. Regional officials have been planning for significant population growth through the "One Million Ready" initiative, anticipating a population of one million residents by 2051. With that growth comes a need for employment lands and industrial opportunities.

Regional council chair Karen Redman later stated the proposed land assembly was intended to create a "mega-industrial site." At the time of the announcement, there was no confirmed end user for the land. Redman also indicated council was limited in what it could disclose publicly due to a non-disclosure agreement related to the project.

Waterloo Region has long been viewed as a leader in planning innovation. The region pioneered curbside recycling programs more than 40 years ago, prioritizing waste reduction and farmland preservation. It also developed Ontario's first light-rail system in a mid-sized community, encouraging urban density and limiting pressure on rural land.

For many residents, the proposed expropriation of prime farmland appeared inconsistent with the region's longstanding approach to protecting agricultural resources.

Fight for Farmland has been led by Alfred Lowrick and Kevin Thomason, both of whom have strong connections to the affected lands and experience in environmental advocacy. The group has also worked closely with representatives from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the National Farmers Union, including NFU president Jenn Pfenning, who farms nearby.

Participants agreed early on that decisions would be made collectively by affected landowners, with supporters assisting in advocacy efforts.

In June 2024, members of Fight for Farmland submitted numerous Freedom of Information requests to both the Region of Waterloo and the Township of Wilmot seeking more details about the project. All requests were denied or returned with no responsive records.

Community members have continued to attend regional council meetings to speak about the importance of protecting farmland, safeguarding water resources and ensuring transparency in decision-making.

During the early months of the process, three residential properties were sold to the Region. In July 2024, one farm was also sold.

Later that month, approximately 160 acres of immature corn on the property were destroyed to allow for environmental and engineering studies. The crop had an estimated value of \$160,000.

The destruction of the crop generated strong reaction from neighbouring farmers and residents, many of whom viewed the action as unnecessary given ongoing concerns about food security.

Fight for Farmland organized a protest that included a tractor parade travelling from the proposed land assembly site along Highway 7/8 to the regional council chambers. More than a kilometre of tractors participated alongside hundreds of supporters.

Following the protest, regional officials stated crops would not be destroyed again as part of site preparation.

Later in 2024, provincial officials confirmed the Ontario government would fund acquisition of the land, indicating provincial involvement in the project. Provincial representatives also stated communities hosting major industrial sites should be willing participants.

Opposition within the community has remained visible, with lawn signs and public discussions continuing across the region. Environmental groups have also raised concerns about potential impacts on groundwater supplies, as Wilmot relies heavily on aquifers that have shown signs of declining water levels.

In May 2025, two additional farms entered agreements allowing the region access to complete studies, with ownership transfers expected to occur in the near future.

Two years after the initial notices were delivered, no farms have yet been expropriated, though uncertainty remains for affected families and neighbouring residents.

For many involved, the experience has brought community members together in unexpected ways. Meetings held in kitchens and barns have created opportunities for discussion, planning and mutual support among people with differing perspectives but a shared goal of protecting farmland.

The debate surrounding the proposed land assembly continues to raise broader questions about food production, land-use planning and the balance between economic development and long-term agricultural sustainability.

At its core, the issue highlights the importance of farmland as a vital resource and the role it plays in feeding growing populations.

As discussions continue, affected residents remain committed to advocating for the preservation of agricultural land they believe is essential to the region's future.

A.S. Compton is a writer based in Waterloo. She grew up on a vegetable farm in Wilmot.

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THURSDAY, APRIL 2

Shakespeare Optimist Club's Rib, Sauerkraut and Pig tail Stag
Take out: 6 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
For tickets call Murray Schlotzhauer at 271-3330 or Gary West at 272-9140.
Shakespeare & District Optimist Hall
Galt St Shakespeare

SATURDAY, APRIL 4

Brocksden Country School Museum Easter Egg Hunt
10-11 a.m.
NO CANDY in the eggs, just schoolhouse trinkets. To ensure enough eggs for all please sign up at: forms.gle/DvPejmx5qDTaM7Xg6.
Sign up Deadline April 1.
2719 Line 37 (Vivian Street) between Roads 110 and 109, one road north of Highway 7&8

TUESDAY, APRIL 7

Ostomy Support Group Meeting
7 p.m.
Speaker - Denise Strasser from Action Health Care. She will update us on assistive devices, mobility aids, other home health products, and the Assistive Devices Program, (ADP) Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome.
For more information call (519)273-4327.
93 Morgan St., Stratford
Navigating Family and Farm Dynamics hosted by Oxford WSA
7 p.m.
See ad on page 30 for full details
Innerkip Community Centre
695566 17th Line, Innerkip

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Please register by April 3 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900
Wellesley Recreation Complex,
1401 Queen's Bush Rd., Wellesley

Tavistock Community Health (T.C.H.I.) annual meeting
7 p.m.
Guest speakers are Ron Harrison and Barb Myer, talking about Ron's ongoing battle with Parkinson's Disease. New board members are needed. Please Contact Frank Meconi at 519-655-2178 or email fameconi@rogers.com. Everyone welcome.
Tavistock Men's Club Hall
78 Woodstock St N, Tavistock

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

SATURDAY, APRIL 11

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

MONDAY, APRIL 13

Garden Wilmot presents "Gardening with less pain"
7 p.m.
Free event; lug a mug.
Wilmot Rec Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

TUESDAY, APRIL 14

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

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Please register by April 10 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900
Wilmot Rec Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

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

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

Tree Planting
9 a.m. to 12 noon
Let's Tree Wilmot is partnering with Wilmot Township in a new special project, Mannheim Carolinian Corner. A two hectare site at the NW edge of Mannheim will become a wooded area with a trail system. <https://letstree-wilmot.ca/events/>
Milne Drive, Mannheim

TUESDAY, APRIL 21

Our Water - Challenges & Solutions
7-9 p.m.
Guest speaker - expert hydrogeologist, Dr. Hugh Simpson, followed by a Q&A. Free online and in-person event. Register at nvecoboosters.com under upcoming events. Questions? Contact nvecoboosters@gmail.com
Zion United Church,
215 Peel St., New Hamburg

TUESDAY, APRIL 21 CONT

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Please register by April 17 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900
Linwood Community Centre,
5279 Ament Line, Linwood

MONDAY, APRIL 27

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

MORNING & EVENING BIBLE READING

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

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

3RD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

TAVISTOCK MENS CLUB MEETINGS
Dinner at 6.15 p.m.
No meetings in July and August
Welcome to attend. Phone: 519-655-3573
Website: tavistockmensclub.ca
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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Tavistock Seniors Activities @ Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St. Tavistock ON, except Shuffleboard
Pickleball Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon, 12-4 p.m. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052
Cards Monday, Wednesday afternoon 1-4 p.m., euchre, crib (bring board), etc. Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118

Inside walking Monday & Wednesday morning 8.30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Contact: Larry Brown 519-240-6715

Crokinole Monday, Wednesday morning 8.30 a.m. - 12 p.m., Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: John Schultz 519-655-2346

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

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

TAVISTOCK & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Museum Hours: Third Saturday of each Month 1-4 p.m. (other times by appointment)
Email: info@tavistockhistory.ca or call 519-655-3334

Travelling Museum Display: The theme is "Heritage of Hickson Public Central School" - history of School from 1885 to present along with photos, artifacts, school and art work. TDHS partnered with the Hickson 4-H Club for this display that runs until April 27, 2026.

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm
Location: EZT Township Administration Building (lobby), 89 Loveys Street, Hickson
Travelling Museum Display: "Easter Traditions & Egg Business in Tavistock" - history of the 1919 Tavistock Egg Circle and 1946 Tavistock Produce along with advertisements, artifacts & Easter decor. This display runs until April 27, 2026.

Hours: Open 7 days a week
Location: Tavistock & District Recreation Centre (arena lobby), 2 Adam Street, Tavistock

CAREGIVER CONNECTION

Free Caregiver Connection peer support groups

Date: Third Tuesday of each month
Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Are you worried about your child or youth? Parents and Caregivers for Mental Health (PCMH) is here to listen, support, and walk alongside you on this journey. Our free Caregiver Connection peer support groups offer parents and caregivers a community of support. Can't make it in person? Join one of our virtual or hybrid groups! Visit family.cmho.org or email oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca for more information.

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

Quiz Time Answers

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Diamond | 6. Leonardo DiCaprio |
| 2. Avi Lewis | 7. \$18.15 |
| 3. England | 8. Cambodia |
| 4. Gen beta | 9. 9.46 trillion km |
| 5. Carbohydrates, proteins, & fats | 10. Seven |



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Speakers: Kim Siegers-Robinson & Liz Campbell


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Tickets are FREE. Reserve your seat on Eventbrite by scanning the QR code or email oxfordwsa@hotmail.com

Refreshments provided. Speaker to start at 7:30 p.m.

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