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(SHOW US YOUR WILMOT PHOTO)

Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group member Ed Sonnenburg recently shared this photo of a sunrise over frigid, barren farm fields in rural Wilmot to the Facebook page.

Area fire departments receiving provincial cancer-prevention funding

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Ontario government is investing \$30 million over three years to provide 374 municipal fire departments with funding to support cancer-prevention initiatives. Locally, departments in East Zorra-Tavistock and Wilmot will benefit to the tune of just under \$25,000 each.

The funding through the Fire Protection Grant will be used to purchase equipment

and make infrastructure upgrades to help reduce the long-term effects of exposure to fire-related contaminants and chemicals. It was made available to both volunteer and full-time departments.

Wilmot fire chief Rod Leeson said this grant will go a long way toward supporting the department's cancer-prevention strategy.

"We will be purchasing 12 sets of bunker gear over three years in generic sizes that firefighters can use while they decontaminate their issued gear," he said. "Twelve

sets will reside at each station. When gear is contaminated, it takes 24-48 hours to get a firefighter back into service. The second set will allow our valued firefighters to remain in service during the decontamination process."

One bunker suit runs between \$3,500 and \$4,000 and there were several cancer-prevention purchases eligible as part of the grant request. Leeson said the leadership team settled on the gear and added they are

Continued on page 2

Townhome development approved for Tavistock

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Thirty-four townhomes will be built in Tavistock in the near future, but not all of them are going to have for-sale signs until 2027.

Oxford County council recently approved a plan that will see the residences built on an empty parcel of land between Optimist Park and Village Manor. The homes will be built on six residential blocks.

"We need this type of home. I like the density of this type of application. I like the fact that it is infill," said East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor and county Coun. Phil Schaefer. "These are the type of homes I think are going to be needed in the village so I wholeheartedly support this application."

Oxford County deputy warden and Ingersoll Mayor Brian Petrie agreed with Schaefer.

"I think it's amazing we're going to see the upper ends of the medium-density spectrum in a small, urban area. It's a great sign for the future and certainly, that is something I can support."

Apple Homes is the company behind the development and partner Brian Wilhelm said the prices will be reasonable.

"The final number of units should be 34 or very close. We have a basic floor plan and front elevations in the works. Originally, we were hoping to be under \$600,000 for a purchase price but with changes in permits etc., we assume they will be above that but

Continued on page 3

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Area fire departments receiving provincial cancer-prevention funding

Continued from page 1

grateful the province is on board to make the profession safer.

“Our leadership team discussed the scope of the grant and determined the second set of gear would be our priority,” Leeson said. “This type of funding is new to the fire service. The province recognizes the challenges we face and stepped up with funding to help us. We are very grateful to the Province of Ontario for providing this funding opportunity. The fund will be divided over three years and we will certainly be applying when the next window opens to continue adding 12 sets per year.”

The ministry of labour has a checklist fire departments follow that includes on-scene procedures and laundry facilities at each station. When a fire has been extinguished, firefighters remove their gear, bag it and take it back to their respective fire stations for decontamination. All contaminated gear, hoses, and equipment are taken back in pickups or exterior compartments in fire vehicles.

“At no time is any contaminated gear taken back inside the cab of a fire apparatus or pickup. We keep expired gear on the apparatus for them to wear during cold weather back to the station or to continue with cleanup that is not considered hazardous,” Leeson said. “This expired gear is labeled to ensure no firefighter wears this gear into a burning building or used during hazardous incidents.

“We are extremely grateful that the province recognizes how important the health and wellbeing of our valued volunteer firefighters is and look forward to continued funding support.”



(WILMOT TOWNSHIP FACEBOOK PHOTO)

Wilmot Township is receiving a provincial grant to help pay for new bunker gear. The municipality's fire department is getting close to \$25,000

East Zorra-Tavistock will be using its funding to pay for a self-contained-breathing-apparatus project from the 2024 budget.

“We have been saving funds in our reserves over the past four years to do a full replacement of aging equipment and these funds will assist us in those replacements,” said CAO Karen DePrest.

“Firefighters put service over self each and every day, facing dangerous situations to protect their communities,” said Ontario solicitor general Michael Kerzner in a press release. “Our government has been a leader


in protecting them, while they're protecting us. Today's announcement is another concrete step to make sure these heroes get the care, resources and support they deserve.”

These funds will see fire services across the province purchase specialized washing and drying equipment to decontaminate bunker gear and wildland-firefighting coveralls. It will also allow for facility and infrastructure upgrades to allow for proper air purification and ventilation systems.

“Public safety is about more than just equipping our first responders with the tools

they need on the job, it's about ensuring they are looked after and supported both on and off the job,” added finance minister Peter Bethlenfalvy in the release. “That's why this \$30-million grant is directly supporting the health of countless firefighters who put their safety on the line every day to protect our communities.”


Firefighters are more likely to experience health problems because of exposure to hazardous chemicals. In Canada, 50-60 firefighters die of cancer every year, and half of those are from Ontario.

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Townhome development approved for Tavistock

Continued from page 1

under \$650,000.”

Work on the site started several years ago, but Wilhelm explained getting to this point has been a slow process.

“We started on the project back in 2020 and were planning on having houses by now, but planning delays and red tape have taken a while. We hope to start building this year with possession for later this year through 2026.”

There was a drain across the property, which was improved and moved in the summer of 2023 for the site to be ready for servicing.

“As you can see on the plan, there will be a street off Woodstock Street South (Highway 59) with a circle at the north end. We feel that there is a good chance we will be allowed to service this summer and get the street in place,” added Wilhelm.

“There are lots of challenges, but we are

working through them to get affordable housing on the way. These developments are years in the making to bring them to reality.”

The proposed street would end in a temporary cul-de-sac, which would be extended down the road as development occurs on the north end. Nine of the 34 units will not be built for two years since there is only servicing available for 25 units. The remaining units will be built once the William Street pumping station upgrades are completed in 2027.

Oxford County’s population is expected to increase to 155,000 over the next six years, up from 126,700 in 2021. Many people from the Greater Toronto Area and other larger cities to the east are now making Oxford home and, as a result, some politicians feel the county isn’t ready for the potential growth.

“That makes higher-density housing all the more important,” said Schaefer.



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

Oxford County planning documents show a 34-unit townhome project coming to the south end of Tavistock near Optimist Park (pictured).

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100 Women Who Care Wilmot donate \$10,000 to Waterloo-Oxford Student Assistance fund

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A group of Wilmot women recently put together a \$10,000 donation to help Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School (WODSS) students from low-income families fully participate in school programming, regardless of financial barriers.

At their November 2024 meeting, 100 Women Who Care Wilmot members each contributed \$100 toward the WODSS Student Assistance Fund.

“This contribution will ensure all students have the opportunity to fully participate in their school experience,” said WODSS principal Carolyn Salonen in a press release. “These funds help provide financial assistance to cover extracurricular fees for families facing challenging times, removing barriers and fostering an inclusive environment. Whether it’s joining a sports team, participating in music programs, or attending school trips, this funding helps every student engage and thrive, regardless of financial circumstances.”

At the November meeting, the group of generous Wilmot women heard from three, randomly chosen local charities in need of financial support. After listening carefully to each presentation, the women voted to donate the \$10,000 collected that night to the WODSS Student Assistance Fund.

“The principal from the school is actually also a member of 100 women,” said



(100 WOMEN WHO CARE WILMOT PHOTO)

Students and staff from Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School accept a \$10,000 cheque for the school’s Student Assistance Fund from 100 Women Who Care Wilmot.

100 Women Who Care Wilmot co-chair Angie Hallman. “She also did the presentation, which I think was interesting. ... So, she got to wear two hats that night; she got to be a passionate community member

attended WODSS as a student or knows someone who has been or is currently a student at the school. The response was an overwhelming majority, with just about everyone in the room raising their hands. Following that up, Hallman said Salonen explained how the money in the Student Assistance Fund is used.

“It’s to fill the gaps. I’m a mom of three kids myself and I have two kids who go to (WODSS), and my son just joined the fishing club – that’s \$150 to participate,” Hallman said. “And there’s so many different clubs. Carolyn Salonen was explaining how there are some families that just don’t have the extra funds to give their children the full experience that can come from participating in everything at high school.

“Times are tough and that fund has dwindled completely. It was just kind serendipity that (WODSS) was chosen out of a hat and they were the successful recipient.”

Hallman says 100 Women Who Care Wilmot meets quarterly and she encourages local women who have \$100 to spare and want to give back to their community to consider joining the group. For more information and to join, visit www.100womenwilmot.ca.

Similarly, Wilmot men who would like to give back to their communities can visit www.100menofwilmotwhogiveadamn.com to learn more about that organization, which operates in the same way the women’s group does.

Restoring small-town journalism, one community at a time!

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Vehicle stolen from East Zorra-Tavistock home

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF
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Police are investigating the theft of a vehicle from a residence in East Zorra-Tavistock.

On Jan. 9, 2025, at approximately 8 a.m., members of the Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) were notified a vehicle had been stolen from a residence on 15th Line in the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock.

Sometime between 3 and 6 a.m., a 2005 black Cadillac Escalade was stolen from the property.

If anyone has information regarding this incident, they are asked to contact Oxford OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

Anonymous tips can be made by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or by leaving an anonymous online message at www.helpsolvecrime.com where tipsters may be eligible to receive a cash reward of up to \$2,000.

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Harris accepts nomination as Conservative candidate for Kitchener-Conestoga in next provincial election

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

Mike Harris, currently the Member of Provincial Parliament for Kitchener-Conestoga and Ontario's minister of red tape reduction, has accepted the Progressive Conservative Party's nomination to run for the seat in the next provincial election.

Harris first won the seat in 2018 and served on a number of standing committees. He became parliamentary assistant to the ministry of natural resources and forestry before moving on as parliamentary assistant to the ministry of legislative affairs. In 2022, Harris secured the seat again, continuing as parliamentary assistant to legislative affairs and then the Premier's office before being appointed as cabinet minister of red tape reduction in June 2024.

"I am extremely proud of the work I have undertaken in my tenure in office and very excited to accept this nomination with an eye on continuing to deliver for the families of Kitchener-Conestoga," Harris said in a press release. "We have done a lot of good work in our first two terms and I am

pleased to be given the opportunity to continue to expand on the foundations we have built."

"Mike Harris has been a vocal leader in our communities across Waterloo Region," added Kitchener-Conestoga riding president Jim Schmidt in the release. "I believe our party has delivered for families and businesses across Ontario, and this nomination cements our intentions to continue to build on our track record of success."

Throughout both his terms in office, Harris' influence has led to considerable service expansion and funding in the infrastructure, health-care, education, social-services, economic and manufacturing sectors.

In addition, Harris has made exceptional efforts to support the funding of a new hospital in Waterloo Region, facilitated the opening of new nurse-practitioner-led clinics for communities in need and secured funding to reopen the House of Friendship's facility in Kitchener. Additionally, Harris was a vocal proponent for the funding and building of the new Wellesley Recreation Complex and all the community services associated with that development.



(MIKEHARRISMPP.CA PHOTO)

Mike Harris, MPP for Kitchener-Conestoga and Ontario's minister of red tape reduction, has accepted the Progressive Conservative Party's nomination to run for re-election in the next provincial contest.

Police charge driver after fleeing from traffic stop in Wilmot Township

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

Officers from the Waterloo Regional Police Service's (WRPS) north patrol division have charged a driver after he allegedly fled from a traffic stop in Wilmot Township.

On Jan. 9, 2025, at approximately 2:50 a.m., police say officers attempted to stop a grey Dodge Caravan with licence plates that did not belong on the vehicle. The vehicle was initially pulled over on Wilmot Line near Wilby Road and then fled.

A short time later, officers located the Dodge in the area of Salzburg Drive and Munich Circle in Waterloo and placed the driver under arrest.

As a result of the investigation, the driver, a 42-year-old Waterloo male, was charged with several criminal and provincial offences, including:

- flight from peace officer
- dangerous operation of a motor vehicle
- take motor vehicle without consent
- operation while prohibited (two counts)
- failure to comply with an undertaking
- possession of a Schedule 1 substance
- driving while under suspension (two counts)

The accused party was held in police custody for a bail hearing.



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Tim Hortons raising money for local initiatives through Smile Cookie campaign

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Even though the Tim Hortons in Tavistock serves great coffee, food and pastries to those who live in the area, they also go above and beyond to help raise money for local initiatives.

In the recent Smile Cookie campaign, the total raised from cookie sales at the Tavistock store was \$2,336.58 with the money going to the Tavistock Public School nutrition program and to the Tim Hortons Camp Foundation.

The school serves snacks three times a week and every student has it available to them. This yearly campaign was also credited with raising over \$10 million right across Canada.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

At Tavistock's Tim Hortons presenting a Smile Cookie cheque for \$2,336.58 are, from left, store manager Stephen Parker, Tavistock School Nutrition Program representatives Danielle Framis and Laura Harold, Melissa Hubert and Jeff Walker.

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Large crowd attends High Noon Luncheon at Grace United Church in Tavistock

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

On the second Thursday of every month, the Tavistock Ministerial Association hosts a High Noon Luncheon in the auditorium of Grace United Church in Tavistock.

This month, members of Cassel Mennonite Church had the honour of

hosting the noon-hour gathering where residents of all faiths can come together and share in neighbourly fellowship and entertainment.

After the nutritious meal, the full crowd was entertained by the voice and accordion music of Bob Heywood.

Everyone in attendance thoroughly enjoyed Heywood's lighthearted songs,

limericks and stories only he could tell.

He said music came to him naturally since he is a cousin to the late Earl Heywood of CKNX Wingham fame, and entertainer Gordie Tapp, who spent years entertaining on the CBC.

Bob Heywood had everyone singing along to "This land is Your Land" and many more old favourites.

It's not everyday when a person can come to church while having a good fill of local food and be entertained by a world-class singer and comedian.

Mark your calendars for the next High Noon Luncheon and fellowship at Grace on Thursday, Feb. 13.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

The cooks from Cassel Mennonite Church who served those at the High Noon Luncheon at Grace United Church included, from left, Darlene Nicklas, Donna Zehr, Angie Bender, Shirley Brenneman, Louise Hamilton and Darolyn Gilmore. Dwight Zehr is not pictured.



High Noon Luncheon entertainment was supplied by the singing and storytelling of Bob Heywood from the Exeter area.

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North Easthope Antique Tractor Club working on donation for Mennonite Relief Sale

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

This Massey-Ferguson 35 diesel tractor is shown in its working clothes at the Calvin Schmidt shop near Wellesley.

This is a look at the donated tractor before it is transformed into what will look and run like a brand-new tractor off the assembly line when members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club (NEAT) finish refurbishing it.

The working members are all either mechanics or mechanically minded, and are busy this winter stripping down the popular model, sold new in the '60s, to make it look and run like brand new.

Leonard Schwartzentruber from Baden donated the tractor to the club, and members thank him for the donation. Once the total refurbishment is complete, it will be sold to the highest bidder at this May's Mennonite Relief Sale in New Hamburg.

One-hundred per cent of the funds raised at the sale will be donated to the Mennonite Central Committee on behalf of NEAT.



(CALVIN SCHMIDT PHOTOS)

There aren't many groups with members who can volunteer the way the NEAT members can. Members of the antique tractor club are working to make an old tractor look new again. Pictured from left are Murray Gingerich, Joe Detzler, Gid Jantzi, John Mohr, John Schyff and Wayne Gerber. Not shown are Bob Schlotzhauer and Calvin Schmidt.



Murray Gingerich of Baden and Gid Jantzi of Poole were busy last week making adjustments to the "torn-down" Massey 35 tractor in the Schmidt shop near Lisbon.



This Massey-Ferguson 35 diesel tractor, once refurbished by the North Easthope Antique Tractor club (NEAT), will be auctioned off during the Mennonite Relief Sale this May in New Hamburg.

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North Easthope Public School gets a boost in funding for a new playground

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

North Easthope Public School principal Charles Longston was the guest speaker at January's monthly dinner meeting of the Shakespeare Optimist Club.

He described to members the curriculum teachers in the Avon Maitland District School Board are teaching to the 185 students presently occupying kindergarten to Grade 8 classrooms at the school.

With an abundance of new houses in the catchment area of the school, the school board is estimating there will be an increase of 260 students for North Easthope school over the next five to six years.

He said one of the big changes in the province this year is students are no longer allowed to have cellphones in class, which was met with approval from the members

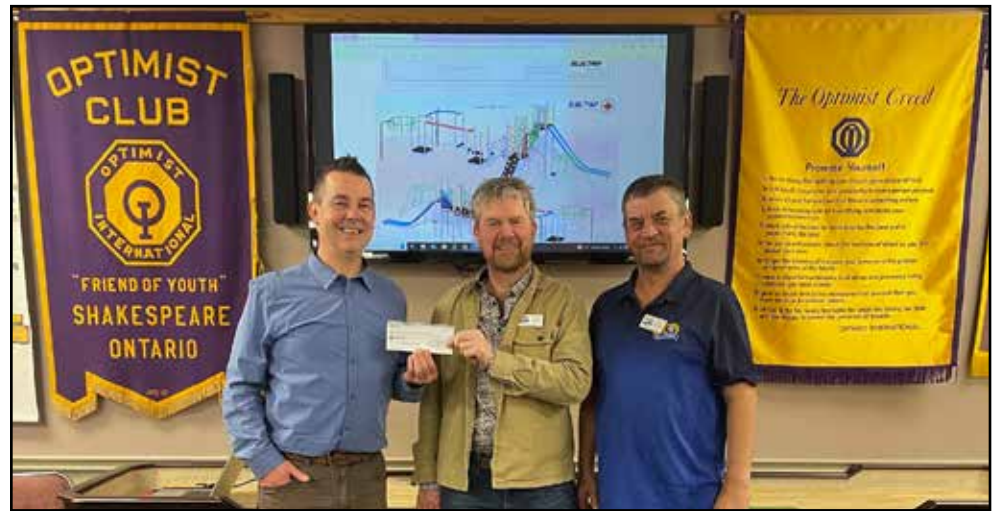
present.

The principal, is in his third year at the rural school, previously served as principal at Shakespeare Public School in Stratford.

He also thanked the club for purchasing whiteboards as teacher aids for classes in the past. He said they now have three Promethean boards in classrooms and explained to the group how these boards enhance teachers' ability to teach various subjects.

The club presented Longston with a cheque for \$3,000 as their donation toward the school's new playground to be built this year. This was the club's second \$3,000 donation in two years.

The fundraising committee has raised \$59,000 toward the goal of raising \$85,000 for the playground. The school hopes to have the playground completed once their goal has been met.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

North Easthope Public School principal Charles Longston accepts a \$3,000 cheque from Shakespeare Optimist president Mike McNeil and past president Pete Kreyger.

Tavistock's Optimist Club a vital part of the Tavistock and area community

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

There are many organizations in the Tavistock and outlying county communities that organize and sponsor many activities to make the Tavistock area a better place to live, work and play.

One of those organizations is the

Tavistock Optimist Club with volunteers organizing many area youth events throughout the year.

Last month, the Optimist Club of Tavistock hosted its annual Christmas dinner and get together, which saw 73 members and guests out for an evening of festive cheer.

The event featured a turkey dinner

catered by D & D Cuisine of Tavistock and provided the perfect opportunity to reflect on the past, busy Optimist year at the same time.

A highlight of the evening was the induction of the club's new executive and members.

The night was also one for the club to recognize Jesse Weicker with the

prestigious Optimist of the Year award for his outstanding contributions to the organization over the years.

Past recipient Steve Yantzi had the honour of presenting the award to Weicker, who was joined by his wife, Ashley, for the occasion.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Optimist of the Year award winner Jesse Weicker, along with his wife, Ashley, received his award at the Optimist Club of Tavistock's annual Christmas Dinner last month at the Tavistock Legion.



Tavistock Optimist's new members and sponsors are, from left, Mitch McKay (sponsor), Brad Wettlaufer (sponsor), Rick Van Griensven, Frank Stewart, Ed Danen, Marti van Griensven (sponsor), Kirkland Ramseyer, Ron Kauth, Jeff McCulloch, Ryan Yantzi (sponsor), Tim Roth (club president) and Greg Storey (lieutenant governor).



Tavistock Optimist's new executive committee members are, from left, Zone 1 lieutenant governor Greg Storey, Adam Weicker, Eric Stewart, secretary Marti van Griensven, Dennis Kuepfer, president Tim Roth, Rodney Ramseyer, vice president Jesse Weicker, treasurer Steve Kaufman and Henk Talsma. Absent are vice president Brady Roth and Frank Stewart.

A look back and ahead with EZT's mayor

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

It is a decades-old tradition for politicians to sit down with journalists at the end of a year and talk about not only the 12 months that was, but also the year that is yet to be.

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) Mayor Phil Schaefer agreed to chat with the Gazette about his thoughts on 2024 and what's coming in 2025. Schaefer said there were several accomplishments in EZT last year that stood out to him.

"Our first-ever strategic plan was completed, council meetings are now livestreamed, four new 'Welcome to EZT' signs were installed and the township declared itself an unwilling host (in a unanimous vote) for wind turbines. Sadly, we had to end the transit pilot," he said.

A strategic plan is a document that guides a municipality in its overall direction regarding policies. Schaefer explained it shapes everything they do.

"If you look at staff reports in our meeting agendas, each report indicates how the recommendations made by staff fit into our strategic plan."

EZT Transit was scrapped in September of 2024, a move made strictly for financial reasons. The project's annual cost would have been in the neighbourhood of \$100,000 annually and would not have

broken even, something council was not prepared to make the tax base spring for.

The township is close to completing its secondary plan, something used to strengthen existing development areas and to promote the orderly and appropriate development of vacant lands. Schaefer was hoping it would be approved last year, but the province created red tape.

"I would have liked to have had it completed in 2024, but it has been delayed a bit by the new Ontario Provincial Policy Statement being issued. County planning staff and our consultant are making sure the secondary plan coincides with the new policy statement," Schaefer said.

The City of Woodstock has made it well known it is in dire need of land on its northern border and has asked EZT to enter boundary adjustment negotiations – something delayed by the secondary plan not being completed.

The Gazette's sister newspaper, the Woodstock-Ingersoll Echo, recently spoke with Woodstock mayor Jerry Acchione regarding that city's need for land. He suggested EZT would also benefit from the process.

"There has to be growth, and growth also helps EZT residents with more grocery stores. There is so much going on in the north end of (Woodstock). I'd love to see good commercial development on those lands in addition to housing. It benefits

everyone," Acchione said.

The biggest order of business in 2025 is budget deliberations, which will begin shortly and include, for the first time in the township's history, a five-year capital budget.

"We still need to deal with our old office building and complete our new salt-and-sand sheds (being constructed just east of Hickson). The bridge on the 13th Line south of Tavistock will be replaced as well," said Schaefer.

Recreation has become a hot topic for residents of the township, particularly after the formation of a recreation advisory committee (RAC). While it has no decision-making power, it does advise elected officials on recreation priorities. Currently, EZT does not supply residents with programming, just the facilities.

"We will be discussing in our budget deliberations how we can take a bigger role in recreation programming," said Schaefer.

What that looks like on a budget line remains to be seen, but the RAC gave the township a wish list including a multi-use recreation facility and a spray pad in Innerkip.

He added one option he would like to see is more drop-in type events and said he is open to staff suggestions.

"The RAC has received feedback regarding what people want, and the public sessions were an avenue for ideas to be presented," Schaefer said.

As a result of his position as mayor of EZT, Schaefer has a seat at the Oxford County council table. That council recently approved a new townhome project for Tavistock, something he is looking forward to.

"I am pleased with the new townhouse development being planned for the property next to Optimist Park," he said. "I like its density and the fact that it is infilled, and I think there is a demand for these types of homes. I don't know what the price range will be yet, but I assume they will be more affordable than a single-family, detached



(TOWNSHIP OF EAST ZORRA-TAVISTOCK PHOTO)

EZT Mayor Phil Schaefer reflects on a year of milestones and looks ahead to the challenges and opportunities of 2025.

home. As for affordable housing, we need land for that and, right now, it is in short supply."

Schaefer added the upgrades at Punkeydoodles Corners were a much-needed project he was glad to see completed, as well as the all-way stop at County Road 28 and the 16th Line. He added a pair of infrastructure developments are also on the horizon.

"Even though completion won't happen until past 2025, the new Tavistock well plan and the upgrades to the William Street Pumping station are two very large projects being undertaken by the county to secure and grow a safe water supply, and also to deal with the growth needed in our wastewater infrastructure."

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the restructuring of Oxford County, which brought Tavistock and East Zorra together.

"Residents can find comfort that we will continue to practice fiscal prudence in this anniversary year," he added.

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Wellesley council officially passes 2025 budget with 3.94 per-cent levy increase

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Wellesley council has officially passed a more than \$12.3-million budget for 2025 with a levy increase, inclusive of growth, of 3.94 per cent.

At the Jan. 14 council meeting, no members of the public were present to speak for or against the budget before it was passed unanimously by council. The total tax levy to be collected this year is now just over \$8.06 million, roughly \$595,000 more than last year's levy.

The levy includes a 0.75 per-cent greening levy amounting to just shy of \$60,000 to be collected from ratepayers to combat climate change and support greenhouse-gas-emission reduction efforts locally, as well as a one per-cent infrastructure levy amounting to nearly \$80,000 to help the township replenish its capital

reserves and tackle its long-term infrastructure deficit.

While this year's tax levy is nearly eight per cent higher than what was collected from taxpayers last year, the township saw roughly 3.7 per cent growth to the tax base, amounting to an additional \$301,000 in property tax income for that township. That means property owners in Wellesley Township will only see a 3.94 per-cent increase to the township portion of their property taxes this year – an increase by roughly \$58 for properties with an average assessed value of just over \$397,000. Last year, the township portion represented just over a third of residents' annual property tax bill.

The 2025 capital budget includes nearly \$2.9-million in capital projects, the vast majority of which – nearly \$2.15 million – will be spent by the public works department on equipment and projects including

Ament Line roadwork, a cleanout of the Zinkann Crescent pond, culvert work on Posey Line and a truck replacement.

One hundred per cent of this year's capital projects will be funded through township reserves, meaning the capital budget does not have any impact on the tax levy. However, the township is contributing more than \$2.4 million to reserves through the operating budget this year.

"To put things into perspective, we researched taxes charged in neighbouring municipalities by dwelling type (in 2024)," Wellesley director of corporate services Jeff Dyck said at the Jan. 14 council meeting. "Wellesley taxes are lower than the overall average and median in each residential class.

"... (We also calculated) the taxes as a percentage of household income (in 2024). Looking at our close neighbours, Wellesley Township taxes as a percentage



of household income are in line with neighbouring municipalities and below the overall Waterloo-Wellington average and median. For Wellesley, we're at 3.18 per cent, North Dumfries is the lowest at 3.03 per cent, Woolwich is close behind at 3.09 per cent and Wilmot is the highest at 3.23 per cent."

Council will set the township's 2025 tax policy – the policy that determines how the levy is shared amongst the different property classes – at a future meeting.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

By Jake & Stewart Grant

1. What U.S. state begins with a U?
2. What was the original business of Netflix?
3. How many pieces does each player have in backgammon?
4. What actress played the role of Stifler's Mom in the movie American Pie?
5. What is the only fruit that bears its seeds on the outside?
6. What city was formerly known as Constantinople?
7. What is the name of the tallest grass on earth?
8. Who is the governor of California?
9. What is the birthstone for January?
10. In Shakespeare's Hamlet, what is "the soul of wit".

Answers found on page 23



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The Old Gazettes

By Stewart 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.

January 7-14, 2015 Editions (10 years ago)

The question was put out to readers, "Should the Gazette be offered online?"

A longstanding, highly respected member of Oxford County's proud cheesemaking heritage, the 140-year-old Bright Cheese and Butter, earned prizes at this year's Royal Winter Fair Cheese Competition, with first place in the hard-cheese category and third place in the feta category.

Tavistock residents now have access to a sheltered, outdoor skating area this winter as a group of local men have come together to install natural ice in the Queen's Park Centre. The young men responsible are Reid Yantzi, Terry Berg, Paul Brennehan, Brad Witzel, Dave Bailey, Dave Johnson, Jamie Rader, Chad Blum, Brent Lange and Doug Lamond. Not since the old show house or the 1923 arena has there been public skating in Tavistock on natural ice.

January 2-16, 1985 Editions (40 years ago)

At Don's Food Market, a 675-gram loaf

of Weston's 100 per-cent whole wheat bread sold for \$0.99 while a freshly baked 450-gram loaf of white bread was \$0.59. A head of lettuce was \$0.79.

The new addition to the factory at Tavistock Cheese Co. is taking shape with the recent arrival of two 12,000-gallon, upright storage tanks. The tanks will be used to store whey before it is transformed in the plant's new whey evaporation-process-control system.

The Tavistock Braves improved their record to 23 wins, three losses and two ties with a 7-4 win over Lucan. Bob Burgess and Terry Ross led the Braves with two goals each, while Rob Wiffen, Kevin Albrecht and Kevin Yantzi added singles.

Tavistock Jets players selected for the Southwestern Ontario Women's Hockey League All-Star game were Marg Matthews, Julie McNab, Kelly Stere, Donna Stere and Maryanne Wettlaufer.

January 1-15, 1975 Editions (50 years ago)

Cheese manufactured during the year ending last July 31 at the plant of the Tavistock Union Cheese & Butter Ltd. increased by 817,586 pounds. This was reported at the annual meeting of shareholders of the company at the Memorial Hall on Dec. 18 by Robert G. Rudy, secretary-treasurer. The

cheese had a retail value of \$2,461,119. Total cheese manufactured was 3,293,957 pounds.

The new East Zorra-Tavistock council held its inaugural meeting on Monday, Jan. 6 at the Hickson Township Hall. Council is comprised of Mayor Harold Vogt; councillors Kenneth Lichti, Robert Brodrecht, Donald Hartley, C.J. "Hap" Steinman, Martin Verkuyl, Leonard Seegmiller and Ronald Hill; councillor-at-large George Wilhelm; interim clerk-treasurer John Killing; deputy clerk-treasurer Walter Schaefer; and superintendent John Appleton.

January 6-13, 1965 Editions (60 years ago)

A minimum wage of \$1 an hour is being introduced for both men and women workers throughout Ontario.

Percentage of attendance at the Waterloo-Oxford District High School for the fall term was 95.86 according to figures released by N. S. Hill, board secretary. Enrolment at the end of the fall term was 808, comprising 399 boys and 409 girls.

It was announced by Premier John Robarts at a dinner to celebrate the 150th birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald that Highway 401 will lose its numerical title to be renamed the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway. The four-lane highway, when completed, will stretch from Windsor to the Quebec boundary.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

Tavistock's Houle improves MMA record to 3-1

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Director of Sports

Reeve Houle's budding mixed martial arts (MMA) career continued to progress when, on Dec. 14, the Tavistock native earned a second-round total knockout (TKO) win over William Gunn.

Houle spoke to the Gazette about his most recent fight, saying he found success thanks to his patience and consistency.

"I got the win because of my composure, wrestling and cardio," Houle said. "I remained calm when he came out with a superman punch and took him down. I didn't rush any positions. I stayed patient and didn't put myself in any hazardous positions. I had a significant wrestling and grappling advantage over him. My cardio has always been one of my greatest attributes and I was able to keep a good pace on him while he continued to slow down throughout the fight."

Houle transitioned to competing in MMA after years of competing as an amateur wrestler, which he noted was his long-term intention inspired by the path followed by many of the UFC's top fighters.

"Transitioning into mixed martial arts was always the plan for me. It is the reason I got into wrestling because most of the dominant UFC fighters at the time came from a wrestling background. My journey in MMA so far has been very positive. It has brought me into a community of people who have similar aspirations as I do."

"I've had the opportunity to train with professionals who compete in the UFC



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Reeve Houle has his hand raised following one of his wins. The Tavistock native has a 3-1 record in his burgeoning MMA career, most recently earning a second-round TKO win over William Hall on Dec. 14, 2024.

and other big promotions," continued Houle. "My passion for MMA has made me a more health-conscious person, taking my nutrition, sleep, exercise and conditioning seriously to perform better in my sport. My drive in MMA has made me a more disciplined and responsible person."

Houle's MMA journey includes valuable years training at his home gym, Niagara

Top Team, in St. Catharines, which Houle said was a crucial part of his growth as a fighter.

"Niagara Top Team has been crucial to my development. Having a lot of training partners, intense practices and a very knowledgeable and experienced coaching staff is obviously incredible for a younger fighter. Having the opportunity to train

with pros has helped me improve a ton. It has given me a lot more confidence when I compete against other amateurs. The coaches at Niagara are super invested in developing fighters and they have helped and continue to help me round out my game."

Meanwhile, as he attends university in Michigan, Houle also trains at the Primed Combat gym in Lansing, Mich., under UFC great Gray Maynard, a mentor who Houle said has been a great help in improving his skills.

"Training under Gray and the team at Primed Combat has had a massive impact on my growth as a fighter. He has helped me significantly improve my cage wrestling and top control. Many of my teammates at Primed took time out of their lives to come and help me prepare for my fight."

"I also train with the Murcielago fight team," added Houle. "I have many training partners around my size and the coaches there have helped me improve my striking, specifically with my hands."

Houle also shared his short- and long-term MMA goals.

"Right now, my goal is just to continue to get better and keep competing as frequently as possible to build up my fight experience. Ultimately though, my main goal is to compete in the UFC and build a legacy there."

Houle also mentioned his sponsors, Jantzi Tank Lines and Allaire Consulting, for their support, which helped him train for his most recent fight.

Thanks to all who contributed to successful 16th annual Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament

THERESA DIETRICH

Wilmot and Area Life Donation Awareness

The Wilmot Recreation Centre was buzzing again Jan. 10-12 for the 16th annual Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament.

Some of these fine ladies may be future players in the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL); this is where it starts. There were 26 teams that competed, some local and some from as far away as Windsor and Midland.

The administrators, Lisa Clifford, Val Sanderson, Darlene Vorstenbosch, Holly Bast, Brett Clifford and Brittany Vorstenbosch, lead more than 30 volunteers to make this weekend a success.

Kyla would have loved playing in this

tournament. She began playing with the boys at the PeeWee level in New Hamburg, and continued until Bantam. Kyla then moved on to women's hockey, joining the Plattsville Rage.

During Kyla's final year of Midget hockey, she underwent surgery to repair her knee. While recovering, she suffered complications from deep vein thrombosis – blood clots that form in the leg, blocking oxygen and blood flow. She died in November 2006 from blood clots in her lungs. Kyla became a tissue donor, giving sight and mobility to others. Her impact on the community was enormous and continues to be felt by those who knew her and through this tournament.

Wilmot Area Life Donation Awareness (WALDA) is a grassroots organization that believes in organ and tissue donation, just like Kyla. By advocating for beaonor.ca, WALDA encourages everyone to check and make sure they are registered to be a donor. Anyone 16 or older can visit beaonor.ca with their health card to confirm registration. Anyone who isn't registered can sign up right there. One can also register as an organ and tissue donor at a Service Ontario location or through the mail when renewing a driver's licence.

Communities in Ontario are ranked for their registration numbers. Since starting, WALDA has raised the local registration rate from 35 per cent to 57 per cent, now

ranking 11th of 170 Ontario communities, just 2 per cent shy of the number-one spot. Thank you to all who have registered and especially to those advocating for organ and tissue donation by encouraging others to sign up and become heroes. Way to go, Wilmot!

We would also like to thank local sponsors for the Wilmot Girls Hockey Association including the Optimist Clubs of Wilmot, New Hamburg, Petersburg and New Dundee, CVE Mortgage Group Inc., Mark Jutzi's Funeral Home Ltd., Gaia's Gardens, Imperial Market and Eatery, M&M Transfers and Design, Dolman Eyecare Centre, Nith Valley Construction and Cress-Ridge Machine Inc.

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PJHL Roundup: Three Firebirds reach personal milestones and shine in three weekend wins

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

Three members of the New Hamburg Firebirds reached impressive milestones during the team’s games last weekend.

Captain Owen Fischer reached the 200-career point plateau, moving into fifth place all-time with the club. He was acquired in a trade from the Hespeler Shamrocks in 2021 and has spent the last three and a half seasons as a Firebird. Tyler Randerson tops the list with 290 points. His father, Dave Randerson, a Stratford native, was drafted in the 10th round of the NHL draft by the New York Islanders in 1981.

Jake Thompson played in his 200th career game on Sunday in Hespeler. The over-ager started his career in 2019 as an affiliated player and has skated in 145 regular-season and 55 playoff games. He is the ninth player to be on the exclusive list.

Defenceman Matt Domm picked up his 100th career point against Woodstock last Thursday. He has been on the team since 2021 and retired from junior hockey after last season but decided to come back.

The Gazette reached out to head coach Shane Gerber who has been behind the

bench during the careers of all three young men for his thoughts on each of his veterans and their landmark seasons, starting with his captain who is just the fifth Firebird to reach 200 points.

“That is a big achievement in itself. It takes a special person to do it and there are a lot of factors that go into it. He has had a relatively healthy career, other than an injury this year, or he might have hit it earlier. To do it, you need to be healthy, have a good attitude and be consistent. Owen is all of those things.”

As for Thompson, Gerber said again it’s been health, consistency and a drive to win. He said 100 points by Domm is an incredible feat.

“Some of his points were pretty timely. One of them was an assist on a championship win (last season). Those three guys, I would group them all together. They are all good people, all consistent and that’s what it takes to have the success they have had. They are all a pleasure to be around.”

Gerber said all those factors contribute to team success, as was shown by last year’s deep playoff run by New Hamburg. He added the fact the three young men were able to achieve their milestones without hockey

during the entire 2020-2021 season thanks to the pandemic is even more incredible.

“All three of them missed an entire season. That just speaks volumes,” he said.

All three of the veterans played key roles in a six-point weekend that started with a 3-2 home win against Woodstock Thursday. Fischer scored the overtime winner on a feed from Owen Sculthorp. Keegan Metcalf and Domm also scored for the Firebirds.

New Hamburg travelled to Norwich on Saturday with first place in the South Doherty Division on the line. It was the Owen Fischer and Deklan Jermol show as Fischer scored all three Firebirds markers and Jermol stopped all 30 shots he faced for his second shutout as a member of the team since being acquired from Dorchester. He has a minuscule goals-against average of .080 and a save percentage of .974 with five wins in his five games.

The team completed the weekend sweep with a 7-3 win in Hespeler against the cellar-dwelling Shamrocks. Aydan Burns and Thompson had three points each while Fischer added two assists.

Gerber said it was a perfect weekend of hockey.

“It was playoff hockey against Woodstock

and we answered. The kids gave us everything we wanted. It was a well-played hockey game,” he said.

Norwich has one of the best attendance numbers in the entire PJHL and over 400 fans turned out for Friday’s game.

“Any time you can get a win there is an achievement, it’s not an easy place to play,” Gerber added.

Applejacks split two games

Wellesley started its weekend with a disappointing 2-0 loss at home against Hespeler but bounced back to beat Woodstock 3-2 in a shootout.

Stuart Sinclair was the only player to find the back of the net in the shootout. He also scored in regulation for the Applejacks.

Braves win at home and lose in Norwich

Tavistock started its weekend with a 4-1 win on home ice over Dorchester on Friday. Izac Blum led the attack with two points while Kaden Lange kicked out 19 of the 20 shots he faced.

The Braves travelled to Norwich on Sunday and dropped a 5-2 decision. Newly acquired Keaton Bartlett scored in a losing effort as did Grady Murphy, who also added an assist.

MILESTONE

CAREER STATS

193
GAMES

96
GOALS

104
ASSISTS

200
POINTS



ALERT

OWEN FISCHER

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

New Hamburg Firebirds captain Owen Fischer reached the 200-point milestone in his Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) career.

MILESTONE

CAREER STATS

200
GAMES

81
GOALS

96
ASSISTS

177
POINTS



ALERT

JAKE THOMPSON

Firebird Jake Thompson played in his 200th career game on Sunday in Hespeler.

MILESTONE


CAREER STATS

180
GAMES

26
GOALS

74
ASSISTS

100
POINTS



ALERT

MATT DOMM

Firebird defenceman Matt Domm picked up his 100th career point against Woodstock last Thursday.

PROVINCIAL JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE

PJHL

SOUTH DOHERTY DIVISION

STANDINGS

As of Tuesday, January 14

| South Doherty Division | GP | W | L | OTL | T | SOW | SOL | PTS | OTW | GF | GA | DIFF | PCT | PIM | RW | ROW | STK | GPCT |
|-------------------------|----|----|----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-----|----|-----|---------|-------|
| 1 New Hamburg Firebirds | 34 | 25 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 52 | 3 | 135 | 92 | 43 | 0.765 | 563 | 22 | 25 | 4-0-0-0 | 0.595 |
| 2 Norwich Merchants | 32 | 25 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 126 | 77 | 49 | 0.781 | 494 | 23 | 23 | 1-0-0-0 | 0.621 |
| 3 Woodstock Navy Vets | 34 | 21 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 45 | 0 | 124 | 98 | 26 | 0.662 | 464 | 20 | 20 | 2-0-1-1 | 0.559 |
| 4 Wellesley Applejacks | 33 | 19 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 40 | 1 | 98 | 86 | 12 | 0.606 | 654 | 13 | 14 | 1-0-0-0 | 0.533 |
| 5 Dorchester Dolphins | 32 | 15 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 32 | 3 | 91 | 100 | -9 | 0.500 | 522 | 12 | 15 | 1-0-0-0 | 0.476 |
| 6 Tavistock Braves | 31 | 11 | 19 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 107 | 128 | -21 | 0.371 | 747 | 10 | 10 | 0-1-0-0 | 0.455 |
| 7 Paris Titans | 34 | 8 | 23 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 1 | 89 | 130 | -41 | 0.279 | 531 | 7 | 8 | 0-4-0-0 | 0.406 |
| 8 Hespeler Shamrocks | 32 | 7 | 21 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 0 | 75 | 134 | -59 | 0.281 | 461 | 7 | 7 | 0-1-0-0 | 0.359 |

Royals win streak ends at four

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

In a game that could have easily gone either way, Tavistock dropped a 3-1 decision to Seaforth, the Royals' first loss since Dec. 7 of last year.

Despite the loss, they remain in a tie for third place with Minto.

Drew Gerth scored his 10th of the season on a setup from Patrick Vulcan and John McDonald. The powerplay goal came with less than four minutes remaining in the first period, but the Centenaires would tie it up just two and a half minutes later thanks to a solo effort from Cam Daigle with the man advantage.

Daigle, just 21 years old and in his rookie Ontario Elite Hockey League (OEH) campaign, spent the last four seasons with his hometown Stratford Warriors of the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League (GOJHL) where he picked up 163 points in 185 games.

After a scoreless second period, Carter Collinson gave the visitors a 2-1 lead before Daigle added his second of the game into an empty net with just under one minute remaining. Collinson's goal also came on a powerplay.

Tavistock was outshot 30-23 as Graham Noye kicked out 28 shots in a losing effort.

Royals veteran Drew Gerth said, despite the loss, the team is confident as playoff time approaches.

"It was a tough game, but splitting the season series with a top team like Seaforth is a solid outcome. They definitely took advantage of their powerplay, and that ended up being a key difference. But overall, it shows we're right there with one of the best teams in the league, and we can compete at that level."

He added the team could use some tweaking, mainly with the man advantage.

"Overall, I thought we played hard and well enough to win. For us, we know we need to work on our own powerplay



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Team Unity's Intermediate Synchronized Skating Team performed during the first intermission of the Royals 3-1 loss to Seaforth on Saturday night. The team has been together for six seasons and is made up of 18 dedicated skaters. They competed in Montreal in November and Woodstock in December where they earned fourth place. The team is coached by Tara Wilkins and Lauren Holdsworth, and managed by Lori Hartman and Candy Adam.

to make sure we're converting those key opportunities. There are definitely areas to improve, but with everyone clicking and tightening up a few details going into playoffs, we're going to be a tough team to beat."

Next action for Tavistock is Saturday night when they host the Lucknow Lancers. It's Ladies Night, meaning women get free admission and will be entered in a draw for a gift card from Tera Nova Nordic Spa. Game time is 7:30 p.m.

Wilmot Wolverines U11 Yellow take silver at 2025 Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament

GALEN SIMMONS

Gazette Correspondent

After what started as a bit of a mixed bag with a loss and a tie in the team's first two games of the 2025 Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament last weekend, the Wilmot Wolverines U11 Yellow came back to secure silver medals.

Hosted by the Wilmot Girls Hockey Association at the Wilmot Recreation Complex Jan. 10-12, the Wilmot Wolverines U11 Yellow started the 16th annual tournament with a 3-2 loss to the Waterloo Ravens and a 0-0 tie with Woolwich on the tournament's first day.

In Game 3 on Jan. 11 – the game that determined whether Wilmot would advance to the semi-finals – Wilmot downed Oakville 3-0. Wilmot finished second in Pool A, moving on to the semi-finals against the Lakeshore Lightning.

In their first game of the final day of the tournament, the Wolverines added another win to their record, defeating Lakeshore – the team that finished first in Pool B with an undefeated record – with a final score of 2-1. While

Lakeshore put up the first tally in that matchup, Wilmot's Emily Carter responded with two goals to secure the victory for her team.

In the final game of the tournament, the Wolverines once again faced off with the Waterloo Ravens. While the first period was back and forth, the Ravens managed to score before the period ended, putting them up by one. The second period was scoreless but eventful as Carter received a penalty for tripping. In the third, Wilmot was again penalized, this time for having too many players on the ice, giving Waterloo the chance it needed to score the team's second goal of the game with the man advantage.

Carter responded later in the third for the team's only goal of the match, resulting in silver medals for the home team.

Every member of the U11 Wilmot team worked hard to get the silver medal. Goalie Keira Forler made several incredible saves to keep her team in the game and showcase her exceptional skill and composure under pressure throughout the tournament.


Wilmot's Anna Bryson also won U11 fastest skater in the skills competition held Jan. 11 at 3 p.m.



(CANDICE GREENLEY PHOTO)

Pictured is the Wilmot Wolverines U11 Yellow, which secured silver medals at the 16th annual Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament at the Wilmot Recreation Complex Jan. 10-12. In no particular order, members of the team are Madison Busija, Clair Ally, Anna Bryson, Emily Carter, Harper England, Keira Forler, Isla Grant-Haight, Amelia Greenley, Vanessa Hynes, Sarah McLean, Alexandra Osinkowski, Hailey Schiedel, Blake Stevens and Tenley Weber. Leading the team was head coaches Kayla Dickie and Steve Carter, assistant/goalie coach Hayden Henry, and trainers Amanda Stevens and Jessica Forler. Photo courtesy of Candice Greenlee

| ONTARIO ELITE HOCKEY LEAGUE STANDINGS - SENIOR MEN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|----|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|--|
| TEAM | GP | W | L | T | PTS | OTW | OTL | P% | GF | GA | DIFF | PPG | PPGA | SHG | PIM | |
| Ripley Wolves | 16 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 2 | 0 | 1.00 | 91 | 41 | 50 | 16 | 9 | 8 | 410 | |
| Seaforth Centenaires | 17 | 13 | 4 | 0 | 27 | 1 | 1 | 0.794 | 79 | 41 | 38 | 14 | 10 | 3 | 228 | |
| Minto 81's | 14 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0.714 | 74 | 34 | 40 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 192 | |
| Tavistock Royals | 16 | 10 | 6 | 0 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0.625 | 70 | 53 | 17 | 23 | 11 | 2 | 230 | |
| Saugeen Shores Winterhawks | 18 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 1 | 0.528 | 82 | 81 | 1 | 29 | 21 | 6 | 234 | |
| Georgian Bay Applekings | 16 | 7 | 9 | 0 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 0.500 | 70 | 70 | 0 | 18 | 17 | 5 | 356 | |
| Creemore Coyotes | 16 | 7 | 9 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 0.469 | 62 | 55 | 7 | 17 | 14 | 2 | 272 | |
| Durham Thundercats | 15 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 0.467 | 61 | 71 | -10 | 11 | 18 | 6 | 215 | |
| Erin Outlaws | 16 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 3 | 0.406 | 64 | 84 | -20 | 12 | 14 | 4 | 321 | |
| Milverton Four Wheel Drives | 15 | 4 | 11 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 0.333 | 44 | 75 | -31 | 11 | 12 | 2 | 179 | |
| Lucknow Lancers | 17 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.000 | 24 | 116 | -92 | 1 | 33 | 1 | 411 | |



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Tavistock Curling Club continuing to gain traction in community, club president says

BOB REID

Tavistock Curling Club

When he moved to New Hamburg in the spring of 2018, Sam Boychuk was familiar with the various aspects of curling.

He had curled for seven years at his previous home in Red Lake, where he worked in the Northwestern Ontario lumber industry. So, when he was eventually asked by a member of the Tavistock Curling Club to give the club a try, he accepted the offer, joining in 2020.

"It was a good way to meet people," said Boychuk, highlighting the social aspect of the winter sport.

Meeting people at the curling club opened up an even wider introduction to the population of the surrounding southwestern Ontario community.

It also led him to become a board member of the Tavistock Curling Club executive and, most recently, the current club president.

"There is not enough snow here for snowmobiling and I am too old for ice hockey, so curling is a good winter activity for me," said Boychuk.

At 66, he is a bit older than the average age of club members, which he estimated at 50 years of age.

The club offers curling events in regular draws or rentals seven days a week.

Boychuk participates in several of the draws, either as a full team participant or a spare. That includes the mixed-doubles curling introduced at the club last year that requires no sweeping.

The club saw a significant drop in membership during the pandemic, from 160 down to 90 full membership equivalents.

Fortunately, due to volunteers filling all roles at the club, some financial assistance from government and a break in rent on the two-sheet curling facility provided by the landlord, the club came through that trying time and has rebounded to 150 members.

The Tavistock Curling Club is operated as a non-profit organization.

Ice makers, bar manager, janitor and accounting services are paid for with annual membership fees, which have helped to keep costs low.

The club is financially stable and has invested some of its cash reserves.

Boychuk acknowledged club member and retired professional accountant Randy Swartzentruber for the sound financial position the club finds itself in.

"Randy gives us a strict set of rules to follow," said Boychuk noting, as a non-profit, the club is required to have its financial records audited.

Boychuk gives similar praise to long-time club member and chief ice maker Bill Green, who has a few ice makers in training now, working with him to ensure there will be people to carry on that important role.

"Bill is like the patriarch of the curling club," said Boychuk.

He is also one of the teachers for the Learn to Curl program. That program has been a blessing to the club for introducing people not only to the sport but a means of filtering into the various club draws.

The positions offered in the program have been quickly filled over the past few years.

"Anybody that wants to curl; we can find a place for them," said Boychuk.

A website established for the club two years ago has also contributed to attracting new members.

Rentals of the facility have been very profitable for the club as well as a means to attract young curlers including students at a local high school, who periodically rent ice time.

The relatively low cost of curling equipment, reduced membership fees and the higher profile of the sport with more competitions shown on television have all contributed to more youth taking up the sport.

At the same time, the club occasionally loses older members because of the physical challenges that come with aging.

The delivering of rocks from the hack with the "stick" or curling broom rather than the low crouch position has extended the curling career of senior curlers, some of whom are approaching 80 years of age.

Senior members tend to be the ones wearing helmets in case a fall should occur on the ice, but all members are made aware of safety concerns, explained Boychuk, who is the health-and-safety coordinator at his workplace.

Two video screens have been added to the lounge area that show spectators what is happening with rocks at the far end of the curling rink. That installation, again, was carried out by a club member skilled in electronics.

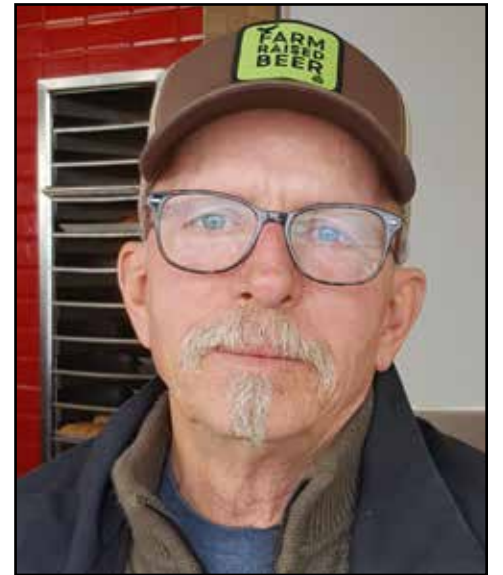
In a recent board decision, the \$20-fee per game for non-club members to participate as a spare has been waived.

The amount of money collected was not significant and the change will be yet another means of attracting new club members, suggested Boychuk.

The club's annual Men's Bonspiel will take place on Feb. 15. This year, there will also be a Women's Bonspiel on Feb. 1.

Boychuk likes the casual attitude that prevails at the club.

"I don't think someone telling me to move my broom an inch in calling a shot makes a bit of difference," said Boychuk. "We are not pros."



(TAVISTOCK CURLING CLUB PHOTO)

Tavistock Curling Club president Sam Boychuk.

That does not mean there are not some competitive curlers at the club. Curling is the only competitive sport Boychuk knows of in which the winner rewards the loser by buying him or her a drink at game's end, as is the case at many curling clubs including the Tavistock Curling Club.

"That tradition demonstrates how the social aspect of curling is as big a part of the sport as the game itself," said Boychuk.

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New Hamburg Legion continues search for family members of local veterans

NEW HAMBURG LEGION

Gazette Contributor

Again, the New Hamburg Legion is searching for family members of veterans from Wilmot Township, Wellesley Township and surrounding areas who wish to have their family members' military service documented in the 11th annual Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command Military Service Recognition Book (MSRB).

The purpose of the book is to recognize those who served from our small part of the world so we can collectively remember their service.

"I would be remiss if I didn't mention that we will also include veterans who are or were a neighbour or distant relative of local residents," said local MSRB coordinator Bob Berg. "A veteran is a veteran is a veteran."

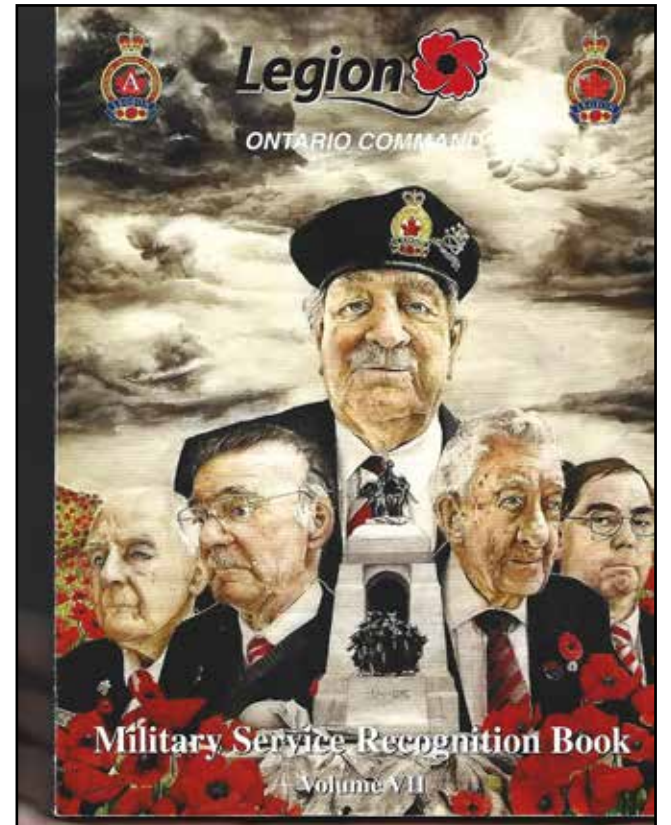
"We are not here to document or pass on the horrors of war; our mission is to emphasize the courage they so readily displayed to save strangers in a foreign country thousands of miles from home. By doing so, they prevented dictators

from attacking our own country. Many hands from all the corners of the world helped in one way or other. We will remember them."

Berg and the New Hamburg Legion are currently search for family members of the following local veterans:

- Dick, Harry
- Gardner, Walter
- Harding, Eric
- Harrison, James
- Katzenmeier, Dr. Harry
- Kraemer, Clarence
- Kraemer, Clarence
- Ramsay, Donald W.
- Reeves, Joseph M.
- Reid, Bernard,
- Reynolds, Kenneth
- Reynolds, Moyna
- Rhodes, William F.
- Richards, Alfred
- Sanderson, William
- Sartorelli, Peter
- Sauve, Gladys N.
- Sauve Rene
- Schaefer, Walter John
- Schaefer, Willard B.
- Scherer, Clayton M.
- Schmidt, George F.
- Schroeder, William H.
- Schwoob, Donald J.

- Schnarr, Richard O.
- Scott, John R.A.
- Sherrer, Douglas R.
- Schilliday, Robert
- Skuce, Ruth J.
- Stuebing, Robert A.
- Stumpf, Harold D.
- Summers, Leonard
- Swatman, Kenneth R.
- Swatman, Michael
- Sweet, Fred R.
- Thiesson, Jacob
- Thomas, Herbert J.
- Thomas, Newton A.
- Thompson, Terrence
- Tribe, Stanley
- Valentin, Adolf
- Vargo, Eugene
- Van Trigt, James A.
- Veitch, Harris C.
- Wakelin, Charles E.
- Walker, Clifford F.
- Wallace, Kenneth M.
- Way, Sidney G.
- Weber, Norman H.
- Weichel, William M.
- Wescott, Kenneth S.
- Wismer, Clarence H.
- Willis, Harvey
- Wiebe, Claire H.
- Wrzesniewski, Victor



(NEW HAMBURG LEGION IMAGE)

The Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command Military Service Recognition Book, Volume 7.



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Local service club donates to playground fundraiser



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Tavistock Opti-Mrs recently donated \$3,000 to the Tavistock Home and School Association's playground fundraiser to replace equipment at Tavistock Public School. The funds donated came from the proceeds of recent fundraising events – Lulu's Dance 2024 and the Taste of Asia Ladies Brunch. The club would like to thank the community for supporting its fundraising events. Pictured from left to right are Fiona Patten and Ashlie Weicker from Tavistock Home and School and Monica Schultz and Janet Churchward from the Tavistock Opti-Mrs.

Tobogganing on Optimist Hill in Shakespeare



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The Optimist tobogganing hill in Shakespeare beside the Optimist Hall was a busy spot on Saturday and Sunday as dozens of area tobogganers enjoyed a perfect, snow-packed run – the best it has been for many years. Both parents and kids alike commented that with temperatures at -3 degrees Celsius, snow conditions couldn't have been better.

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Gazette Puzzles

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

| | | |
|-------------|------------|----------|
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| Change | Melancholy | Sadness |
| Connection | Mood | Stress |
| Doldrums | Optimism | Support |
| Hope | Outreach | Winter |

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Staying fit while on vacation

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Winter has arrived in full force. The first scenic snowflake has long left our memory, leaving many of us dreading bundling, backbreaking shovelling, sprinkling salt, and warming up the car.

Baby Boomers are ready to run for their favorite tropical state or country by October. Budgeting yearly for sunny and sandy escapes is not always possible and many of us start the springtime countdown by the first of January. If you are on team blessed, travelling for some rest and relaxation, please pack your fitness wardrobe. Staying fit is a lifestyle for life. Consistency is key to maintaining healthy habits.

Studies are inconclusive, leaving the experts to ponder the exact number of days it truly takes to create good or bad habits. There are just too many variables. As a wellness expert, it's disheartening to realize just how people fall off the wellness wagon. Please stop finding excuses. Avoiding the gym and proper meal planning only hurts you. Of course, it's much easier to pick up food or call Uber Eats than cook at the end of

the day. Good habits are easily undone.

Think back and recall how challenging implementing lifestyle changes were. Medical doctors and naturopaths work side by side with dietitians and nutritionists helping you live your best life. Whether you are advised to lower sodium, skip sugar, work out, eat healthier, limit alcohol or all of the above, change is overwhelming.

Do you want to start over? Even one week away from a regular routine increases the chances of packing on the pounds. Between buffets, exotic drinks, desserts and late nights, cortisol and sugar skyrocket.

Most people gain seven to 14 pounds on vacation? Yes, the statistic is staggering yet avoidable. Learning your basal metabolic rate or BMR is one effective tool for offsetting weight gain. This number is key. BMR tells us exactly how many calories we burn at rest. The number increases once you move your body. Keep in mind, consuming 3,500 calories or taking time off from burning calories through movement is the

fast track to fat gain.

Renting a condo or villa is an easy way to maintain a marvelous mindset. Shopping at local markets, produce stands or big-box supermarkets is one way to avoid restaurant indulging. Just as you would back home, choose nutrient-dense options and be your own home chef. A small kitchen means sensational snack prep, allowing you to save money and avoid huge servings of local fare.

Most vacationers give themselves permission to try everything on a vacation. I'm all for local cuisine, but skip the ooey gooey and deep-fried favorites. Simply stay strong and share satisfying, sweet and salty taste bites without sacrificing health.

Your own space also enables you to enjoy short, low-impact or high-intensity bodyweight workouts on YouTube. This is one proud trainer when clients pack resistance bands, sliders and a skipping rope, or book me for Zoom appointments in far-away lands. No excuses. Fitness is earned. Bring runners. Open that door and run, walk or head to the water and swim! Options are always available to stay on top of health goals.

Resorts and cruise ships are heavenly for those who love sweating with a superb view. They offer both state-of-the-art equipment, fresh towels and fresh citrus- or cucumber-infused water. Personal trainers offer free tips but are available to hire. Classes range from Zumba to cycle fit, water aerobics to sunrise yoga.

Buffets can be problematic. Stick to three main meals or grazing, but all-day buffet snacking is self-sabotage. Yes, there's chocolate chip pancakes, waffles and buttery croissants, but there's also fabulous fresh fruit and egg-ceptional eggs. Bread, cheese, pastas and deep-fried options should not be the focus of meals. Grilled fish is protein perfection and lean beef and lamb loins are luckily a buffet staple.

Plant-based lovers have more than a salad bar in 2025; the vegetarian options are culturally




(MERCEDES KAY GOLD PHOTOS)

Regardless of what you might think, there are plenty of healthy snacking and mealtime options available at resort buffets to keep your diet and health goals on track.

diverse and tempting even to this true carnivore. Granted the chocolate waterfall is sinful to say the least, and, yes, cakes and pastries are impossible to resist, but vow to eat few bites of just one a

night. Don't sample one at every opportunity.

Love yourself inside and out even on vacation. It's not a time-out from healthy eating and exercise. Stay on track!



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Amazing murals bring Sherbrooke's history to life

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



We were to meet our guide, Chantal Turgeon, in the lobby of the Grand Hotel Times, our very temporary place of residence in Sherbrooke, Que. The plan was to do a walking tour of the unique murals located around Sherbrooke city centre.

We knew that was not going to happen – it was pouring rain, a deluge so persistent the streets were running with water and some patios had turned into small ponds.

But never underestimate the determination of a tour guide. Turgeon showed up with umbrellas and a smile, and by the end of the tour, soggy shoes, wet pantlegs and all, we were very glad she did, because the 18 Sherbrooke murals are amazing.

The murals are gigantic, genuine works of art beautifully executed, full of local detail and often painted with a lot of humour. They cover entire sides of buildings and feature the clever “trompe-l’oeil” (“to deceive the eye”) style, which creates optical illusions suggesting three dimensions.

The mural project has been ongoing for more than 20 years. The first was completed in 2002, Sherbrooke's bicentennial. It features a scene depicting life in 1902, but perhaps the best place to start is with a mural near the Sherbrooke Tourist Information Office, a scene dating back to 1867.

The murals are not all historic in theme. There are recent and modern scenes, right up to the 2019 mural, “The Fifth Element,” a visionary, modernistic image depicting a family viewing huge symbols of fire, earth, water and air – the fifth element being the spectators themselves.

One of the murals, dubbed “Nékitotegwak,” depicts the junction of the Magog and St.-François rivers. The title means “where the rivers meet.” It's especially appropriate because, as we discovered during our wet and wild tour, visiting the murals includes walking the dramatic, metal boardwalk along the river that surges through the city.

Visitors to Sherbrooke should pick up one of the free guides to

this open-air art gallery. They recommend two possible walking routes, one a half-circuit that takes you to 11 of the murals, the other, the full circuit of all 18.

The pamphlets add to the fun of the tour, suggesting a number of items included in the murals that kids – and whimsical adults – can find as they enjoy the art.

For instance, at the “Heart, Culture and Education” mural that is a building-sized bookshelf, visitors are invited to spot one apple, one pregnant woman, one dog, one owl, two butterflies, one blue jay, one fairy, one dragonfly, one mole, one happy face, 10 ladybugs and one grasshopper. What is not mentioned is the books on the shelves are the works of local authors, including Louise Penny, whose Inspector Gamache thrillers are situated right here in the Eastern Townships.

All of the murals are fine pieces of artistic achievement. A few of our favourites included:

- “Canada Games 2013,” a mural comprising 224 panels so full of life that the main figure, a female athlete in full motion, is leaving panels scattered in her wake.
- “Tradition and Prevention,” a commemoration of Sherbrooke's fire-prevention history that is nonetheless filled with humour and nostalgia, from the shopper in very hip '60s fashions to a young boy about to wreak havoc with a garden hose.

This mural is located very close to St. Michael's Cathedral- Basil-

ica, a Gothic Revival masterpiece that has been very much in the news of late; it is the resting place of St. Marie-Léonie Paradis, founder of the community of the Little Sisters of the Holy Family. This local hero was canonized by Pope Francis in October 2024, a cause for huge celebration in Sherbrooke as well as in Rome. Her story, memorabilia and relics are all on display in the cathedral.

As we waded through temporary ponds and unsuccessfully dodged raindrops, we soon realized that seeing the Sherbrooke murals was more than worth the effort in any weather. We were also very grateful to be accompanied by Turgeon, as well as Shanny Hallé, a Sherbrooke native who is the very hospitable, Eastern Townships' media liaison.

Our recommendation? At the very least, get the guidebook. It includes QR codes that let you learn more on your phone. The best option, if possible, is to get a living, breathing, fast-paced human guide like Turgeon. You will appreciate the works of art that much more.

For example, we stopped at “We Are In the Movies,” and at “CHLT-TV, 50 Years Of Looking At It Our Way.” Both murals feature a cast of local characters, a few named in the brochure, but each one was identified for us by Turgeon and Hallé, all of which made the experience of visiting Sherbrooke's amazing murals all that more intriguing.

As you do the trek to see the murals, you will also be passing coffee shops, restaurants, boutiques, museums and more, all of which can make for a fascinating day out in this rather special capital of Québec's Eastern Townships.

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



The “Sherbrooke 2002 Bicentennial” mural includes 23 characters from 1902.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The mural, “Tradition and Prevention,” was unveiled in 2007. The only figure in the photograph that is not part of the painting is our terrific guide, Chantal Turgeon.



The “Canada Games” mural commemorates the games coming to Sherbrooke in 2013.



“Heart, Culture and Education” celebrates the literary legacy of the area.

We bought a house

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Galen Simmons



For a couple of millennials just starting out together, my fiancé, Julia, and I have managed to do the unimaginable.

We bought a house.

If you had asked me a year ago whether we'd be buying a house now, I would have laughed a little too hard (and maybe a single tear would have rolled down my cheek). For my entire adult life, the idea of owning a house seemed so far out of reach, I'd stopped

considering it as even a remote possibility – a feeling so many other millennials without any serious financial backing from their families are familiar with.

In fact, I don't even think we would have begun looking for a home when we did if our landlord hadn't decided to try and sell the house we're currently renting, listing it out of the blue back in October. While that was a nightmare of mine come true, I'm glad we were forced to consider pur-

chasing our first home together as the Government of Canada's introduction of 30-year amortizations for first-time homebuyers made our monthly mortgage payments more affordable. Combined with the expectation that house prices will increase this spring, it really does feel like the right time.

It still doesn't feel real to me, but somehow between the money my grandmother left me and what Julia has managed to contribute to her RRSP over the years, as well whatever we could beg and borrow (definitely not steal) from our family members, together we had enough for a downpayment on a house in Stratford.

Now, don't get me wrong, we didn't have enough money saved to buy our dream home. The house we've purchased is at the absolute bottom of the market. It's small – a story and a half with a little over 1,200 square feet of us-

able floor space and an unfinished, half-height basement – but it is in a great neighbourhood, right behind the old Grand Trunk Railway shops in downtown Stratford where the city is looking to build a community hub and develop the surrounding property.

So, we are excited about the potential for our property value to increase after shovels hit the ground, likely in 2026.

The house needs a lot of work, one, to make it livable and, two, to maximize our investment. And that's how we're looking at it, as an investment. If we do everything we're planning for this house – redoing the kitchen and upstairs bathroom, putting in a back door and maybe a deck, installing new insulation, drywall and flooring, and sealing the basement from moisture as much as possible – we're hoping that when we're ready for our next home in

five or 10 years, we'll have built up enough equity to take us up to that next rung on the housing ladder.

One lesson I think Julia and I have both learned as first-time homebuyers is it's okay to settle for a home you're not entirely happy with. Throughout our house hunt, we saw the best and the worst of homes in and around the mortgage range we qualified for. From wet basements and mold to absolutely bizarre layouts and renovations, it quickly became clear that for those of us at the bottom end of the housing spectrum, this house is really just a steppingstone toward what we truly want in a home.

It'll also be a great training ground to learn all those home-re-no skills my parents never taught me, so look forward to future editorials about how that goes, good and bad.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Laying blame for the recent townhall-meeting disruption in Wilmot

It's discouraging to read the article in the Jan. 9 Gazette stating that Coun. Dunstall places the blame for the foolish disruption at her townhall meeting on Jan. 4 squarely on councillors Sidhu and Wilkinson. The letter to the editor that appeared in the same Gazette suggests Sidhu and Wilkinson were "disrespectful and delayed the start of an important meeting."

The facts show that Coun. Martin was clearly the cause of the problem. Martin told us at the meeting he was concerned about facing legal action from the ombudsperson if the meeting continued with five councillors present. If Mr. Martin had made the correct interpretation of the Municipal Act, the problem would not have arisen.

Maybe the heightened emotions and resulting distrust about the proposed budget stem from the fact that we do not have access to the information we need to contribute positively to the decision-making process. This was made clear at other townhall meetings and at the council meeting on the budget on Jan.

7. Accountability for that absence of information rests with the chief administrative officer (CAO).

It's interesting to note that both Martin and Dunstall, along with Coun. Cressman, voted on Monday night in favour of a revised council-staff relations policy that would have given the township's CAO an inordinate increase in authority. Why this policy revision was brought to council in the midst of our horrible financial situation is something we should question. Had the CAO and staff concentrated on producing a budget that included details about 10-year forecasts, comparative spending and other critical information, we might have seen a budget proposal that would have enabled a far more productive discussion.

Fortunately, wisdom prevailed on Monday night and the proposed council-staff relations policy was defeated.

Don Kasta
Baden

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Mayor Salonen is the only person who can and must stop the 770-acre land assembly

The only way the 770-acre land assembly project can be shelved is for Wilmot to say it is an unwilling host.

Mayor Salonen keeps saying that the Region is the decision maker, that Wilmot has nothing to do with it. The regional council has no interest in stopping the project. If it fails and there is a huge financial impact, it will be Wilmot's problem. Nor does the provincial government have any interest in stopping the project or in helping to finance any development costs. The province has already refused to help Loyalist Township with costs related to an "indefinite pause" of an EV battery plant project. The only member of regional council that might care about the financial impact of the land assembly project is Wilmot's mayor.

Furthermore, the current Wilmot budget proposal for a 51 per-cent increase in municipal taxes has no provision for infrastructure upgrades to support any mega-industrial site; nothing for roads, water, sewage, etc. Any business that

would set up a mega factory would insist on tax relief and incentives, and a break on development charges. The province has only admitted that it will fund the purchase of the land. Unless the project is shelved, the township needs to increase taxes even more to make sure there is enough money in reserves to cover these expenses.

Mayor Salonen understands that she is the key decision maker. At the Jan. 7 special council meeting on the budget, she only made rebuttal comments to one delegation – Steve Palmateer's. After he said that Wilmot should say it is an unwilling host, she jumped in and forcefully said that Wilmot has nothing to do with the project, it is up to the region. I think he hit a nerve. The reality is that it is up to her.

Andrew Wilson
New Hamburg



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Wilmot tax hike likely driven by land assembly

Dear Editor,

The proposed 51 per-cent property tax increase in Wilmot Township's 2025 budget has left many taxpayers outraged, and rightly so. During recent townhall meetings, councillors claimed the industrial mega-site and associated land assembly had no bearing on this budget and the hike is necessary to build up reserves for infrastructure and capital projects. However, this explanation is both inadequate and contradictory.

It is implausible to suggest that the infrastructure improvements cited in the budget are entirely unrelated to the industrial mega-site. Large-scale industrial developments inevitably require massive investments in transportation networks, utilities and other servicing. Ignoring or downplaying this connection raises serious concerns about the council's transparency and long-term planning.

If the industrial site truly has no impact on the budget, as claimed, then the council must explain how it plans to fund the necessary infrastructure upgrades. Furthermore, what specific projects are

included under the reserves for infrastructure and capital projects that warrant such a dramatic tax hike? Taxpayers deserve clear answers, not vague assurances.

By failing to provide a comprehensive analysis linking the industrial mega-site with its financial implications, the council undermines public trust and fuels skepticism about its motives. Residents are left to wonder whether the council is deliberately avoiding a difficult conversation or simply unprepared to address the realities of this development.

Wilmot taxpayers deserve honesty and clarity. The council must revisit the proposed budget to include a transparent accounting of all current and anticipated projects, including the industrial mega-site. Only then can the community have confidence that their hard-earned money is being spent responsibly.

Sincerely,

Anne Loeffler,

New Hamburg

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PRAYER TO ST. JUDE

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Oh Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us; St. Jude worker of miracles, pray for us; St. Jude helper of the hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer nine times a day, by the eighth day this prayer will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. S.F.

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Weekly Quiz Answers

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Utah | 6. Istanbul |
| 2. DVD rental service by mail | 7. Bamboo |
| 3. 15 | 8. Gavin Newsom |
| 4. Jennifer Coolidge | 9. Garnet |
| 5. Strawberry | 10. Brevity |

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Oxford County Development Charges

Public meeting pursuant to the *Development Charges Act, 1997*, to be held February 12, 2025

Oxford County is holding a public meeting pursuant to Section 12 of the *Development Charges Act, 1997*, as amended, to present and obtain public input on proposed amendments to the County's development charges (DC) by-law and underlying background study.

County Council employs a hybrid meeting model. The public may attend the meeting in person or participate virtually. Public meetings and Council meetings may be viewed through a live stream feed at www.oxfordcounty.ca/livestream should you wish to view the meeting but not participate.

If you would like to participate in the public meeting virtually, please contact the Office of the Clerk by February 10, 2025. Staff will provide participation options and details. There is no need to register if you wish to participate in person.

The meeting is to be held:

- 📅 Wednesday, February 12, 2025 | 9:30 a.m.
- 📍 Oxford County Council Chamber
21 Reeve Street, Woodstock

In order that sufficient information is made available to the public, copies of the 2025 Development Charges Background Study addendum and proposed Development Charges By-law are available through the County's website at www.oxfordcounty.ca and on Speak Up, Oxford!: www.speakup.oxfordcounty.ca/development-charges-update

Copies of the Development Charges Background Study addendum and proposed By-law are also available from the County Clerk by calling 519-539-9800 ext. 3017 or 1-800-755-0394. If you require an alternate format or communication support, please contact the Office of the Clerk with at least seven days' notice prior to the meeting.

How to comment

Any person may attend the public meeting and make written or verbal representations relating to the DC Background Study addendum and proposed By-law. Written submissions are invited and should be directed to the County Clerk prior to February 5, 2025:

Lindsey Mansbridge | Clerk, Oxford County
clerksoffice@oxfordcounty.ca
21 Reeve Street, PO Box 1614
Woodstock, ON N4S 7Y3

More information

Written comments received prior to the meeting and submissions made at the public meeting will be considered by Council prior to the enactment of amended development charges by-laws. Technical inquiries should be directed to:

Jennifer Lavallee | Manager of Capital Planning, Oxford County
519-539-9800 ext. 3022 or 1-800-755-0394
jlavallee@oxfordcounty.ca

This notice issued January 15, 2025

Information collected will be used in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

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NOTICE OF STUDY COMPLETION

William St. Sewage Pumping Station - Tavistock Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study

Oxford County has completed a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) study to identify the most appropriate sanitary servicing solution to support ongoing sanitary servicing needs and anticipated community growth to the year 2046 in the William Street area of the Village of Tavistock.

About the study

The William Street Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) receives sewage from homes, businesses and institutions within the William Street SPS study area (refer to Study Area map). In March 2023, Oxford County initiated a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study to consider a wide range of servicing alternatives in order to identify the most preferred solution to support ongoing wastewater servicing needs to the year 2046.

The Class EA study was carried out in accordance with the planning and design process for Schedule B projects as outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (2023), which is an approved process under *Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act*.

Public comment period

An Environmental Study Report (ESR) summarizing the Class EA Study process and findings has now been posted for a 30-day comment period starting January 15, 2025. The study document is available on the Oxford County website and on Speak Up, Oxford!: www.speakup.oxfordcounty.ca/william-street-sps-tavistock

Interested persons may provide written comments by mail or email regarding the ESR **between January 15, 2025 and February 14, 2025** to:

Don Ford, BA, CMM III, C.Tech.
Manager, Water and Wastewater Services
Oxford County
519-539-9800 ext. 3191
water@oxfordcounty.ca

In the event that there are outstanding concerns, a request may be made to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) under Section 16 of the *Environmental Assessment Act* requiring a higher level of study (i.e., requiring an individual/comprehensive EA approval before being able to proceed), or that conditions be imposed (e.g., require further studies), only on the grounds that the requested order may prevent, mitigate, or remedy adverse impacts on constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights.



Requests on other grounds will not be considered. Requests should include the requester contact information and full name for the Ministry. The request should be sent in writing by mail or email to:

Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
minister.mecp@ontario.ca

And:

Director, Environmental Assessment Branch
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
135 St. Clair Ave. W, 1st Floor
Toronto ON, M4V 1P5
EABDirector@ontario.ca

This notice issued January 15, 2025

Information will be collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

NOTICE OF STUDY COMPLETION

New Well Supply - Village of Tavistock Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study

Oxford County has completed a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study to explore potential opportunities for a new well supply to improve the security and supply of drinking water in the Village of Tavistock in the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock.

About the study

The Village of Tavistock currently receives water from three wells located at the same site in central Tavistock. This study explored opportunities for an additional well location to serve community water needs.

Two Public Consultation Centres were held that identified the preferred site for a new well on Hope Street West (see map). The preferred design concept includes a new well with decentralized (on-site) treatment and an equalization water storage tank at the rear of the property. The on-site storage configuration and site footprint will be further refined during detailed design.

Oxford County intends to start detailed design in 2025 and proceed to construction, subject to obtaining all necessary approvals and funding.

The Class EA Study was completed in accordance with the planning and design process for Schedule C projects as outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Document (2000, as amended in 2007, 2011, and 2015) in effect at the time of initiating this project, which is an approved process under Ontario's *Environmental Assessment Act*.

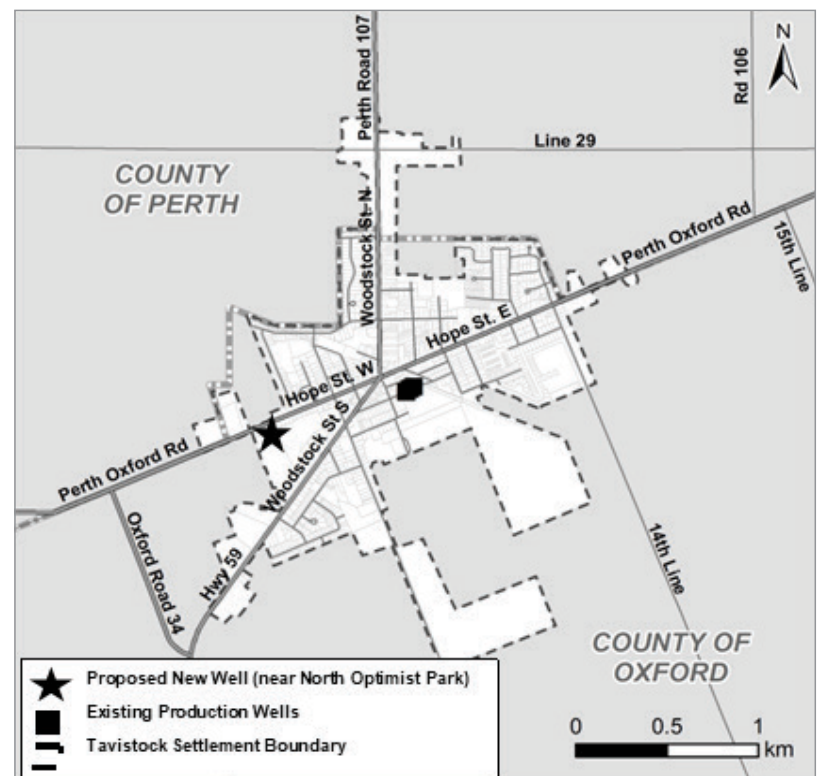
Public comment period

An Environmental Study Report (ESR) summarizing the Class EA Study process and findings was originally posted for a 30-day comment period starting May, 30, 2024. Based on submissions received during this comment period, the ESR has been updated to include a cultural heritage investigation. The updated study document is available on Oxford County's website and on *Speak Up, Oxford!*: www.speakup.oxfordcounty.ca/new-well-supply-tavistock

Interested persons may provide written comments by mail or email regarding the ESR **between January 15, 2025 and February 14, 2025** to:

A.R. (Tony) Lotimer, Oxford County
21 Reeve Street, P.O. Box 1614
Woodstock, ON N4S 7Y3
water@oxfordcounty.ca

In the event that there are outstanding concerns, a request may be made to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) under Section 16 of the *Environmental Assessment Act* requiring a higher level of study (i.e., requiring an individual/comprehensive EA approval before being able to proceed), or that conditions be imposed (e.g., require further studies), only on the grounds that the requested order may prevent, mitigate, or remedy adverse impacts on constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights.



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Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
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minister.mecp@ontario.ca

And:

Director, Environmental Assessment Branch
Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
135 St. Clair Ave. W, 1st Floor
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5
EABDirector@ontario.ca

This notice first issued May 30, 2024
Reissued January 15, 2025

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

Wilmot 2025 Budget Meeting
2-10 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

Optimist Club of Petersburg Bottle Drive
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Bechthold Home Improvements
1239 Notre Dame Drive, Petersburg

Pickleball for Parkinson's Fundraiser
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
More info from Barb Myers- bamyers@rogers.com
Pinnacle Field House,
533 Romeo St. South, Stratford

MONDAY, JANUARY 20

FREE Programs for 55+
No Registration Required. Provided by The Township of Wilmot, The Government of Ontario and Community Care Concepts of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot.
9:30-11:30 Painting Class with Julie, all supplies provided.
9:30-11:30 Coffee Club.
1:00-2:00 SMART Exercise Class.
2:00-3:00 Fall Prevention - Muscle and Bone Health.
3:00-4:00 Line Dancing Class with Sandra from Fairytale Parties.
New Dundee Community Centre
1028 Queen St, New Dundee

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

TOPS - Taking off Pounds Sensibly
10:30 am
TOPS is a non-judgmental weight loss support group that meets on Wednesdays. For info call Cathie 519-662-9273
St James Church in Baden

MONDAY, JANUARY 27

FREE Programs for 55+
No Registration Required. Provided by The Township of Wilmot, The Government of Ontario and Community Care Concepts of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot.
9:30-11:30 Coffee Club.
10:00-11:00 Joy and Mental Health Workshop.
11:00-12:00 Tech Device Support.
1:00-2:00 SMART Exercise Class.
2:00-3:00 Fall Prevention - Blood Pressure.
3:00-4:00 Line Dancing Class with Sandra from Fairytale Parties.
New Dundee Community Centre
1028 Queen St, New Dundee

Wilmot Council meeting
5-10 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29

Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship
12:00 p.m.
Please register by Jan 24 by calling 519-664-1900 or toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Linwood Community Centre, 5279 Ament Line, Linwood

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

"Hicktown Hoedown"
9 p.m. - 1 a.m.
Raffles, prizes, food, local beer, line dancing and you can even ride the bull. (Wicked Wesley). This is a fundraiser to support the Wellesley Township "Fall Fair". More info at: marlenekoster@gmail.com
Bill Gies Recreation Centre in Wellesley

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

East Zorra-Tavistock Council meeting
9 a.m.
Council Chambers
89 Loveys Street East, Hickson

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Optimist Club of Petersburg Valentine's Drive Thru Pork Schnitzel Dinner - Pick up at New Hamburg Legion
For tickets contact 519-465-1157 - please leave a message.
New Hamburg Legion
65 Boullee St, New Hamburg

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Cards Monday, Wednesday afternoon 1-4, euchre, crib (bring board), etc. Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118
Crokinole Monday, Wednesday morning 8:30-12, Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: John Schultz 519-655-2346
Shuffleboard @ arena, Wednesday 12:30-4 and Thursday 10-4. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052.
VON Smart Seniors Exercise, Tuesday and Thursday morning 9-11:30. Contact: 519-539-1231 x 6285
Tavistock Memorial Hall
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