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(LORIE YANTZI PHOTO)

A bird stretches its wings on a cold, misty morning, perched atop the dam in New Hamburg.

Tavistock-area equine operation wins another award

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Alisha Wilson is accustomed to bringing home the hardware, and she was recently recognized again for a program she offers at Transitions Equine Assisted Learning.

The Cowgirl Kickback Experience won the Best New Tourism Product award at the Oxford Tourism Awards of Excellence celebration at the Innerkip Highlands Golf

Club last Tuesday.

"It's when a group of girlfriends come out and we walk the horses through a series of obstacles, and we try to make them a lot of fun. We want people to enjoy themselves and not have it feel therapeutic," said Wilson.

The obstacle course takes about 90 minutes. Wilson believed she won the award because it is such a unique tourism offering.

"There's not another experience like this

in Oxford County. Some other venues offer ladies' nights, but they don't offer the board or the fire. We want our guests to experience what it's like to be on a farm, experience the sunset and work with the horses."

She added enjoying time with one's tribe is crucial.

"That connection is huge; whether you are connecting with your friends or the

Continued on page 2

New Hamburg writer sees her play, *Dancing on the Elephant*, on the silver screen

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After 15 years of starts and stops, high hopes and minor setbacks, New Hamburg playwright Lisa Hagen is enjoying her time on the red carpet as her play about two women reclaiming their freedoms and their lives from the constraints of old age is taking its rightful place on the silver screen.

Starring Sheila McCarthy (*Women Talking*) as Nora, Mary Walsh (*This Hour Has 22 Minutes*) as Edna and Amanda Brugel (*The Handmaid's Tale*) as Nurse Barbara, *Dancing on the Elephant* had its world premiere at the Atlantic International Film Festival in Halifax, N.S., on Sept. 13, where it won two awards – Outstanding Performance for Walsh and Best Editor for Angela Baker. Since then, the film has been making the rounds at film festivals across Canada.

And while Hagen is finally getting the chance to revel in the success of the film she wrote and had a hand in shaping, she told the Gazette it was a hard road to get to this point.

"Fifteen years ago, I wrote a one-act play and it won a contest in Kitchener. We were able to produce it and I had three lovely friends help me out, and one of them happened to have a theatre in Cape Breton," Hagen said. "She said, 'Please turn it into a full-length play and I will put it on.' So, I wrote it out as a full-length play and she was very helpful ... in developing it. At

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Transitions Equine's Cowgirl Kickback Experience rides off with Oxford Tourism Award



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured at the Oxford Tourism Awards of Excellence ceremony are Ingersoll Coun. Mike Bowman, Blandford-Blenheim Mayor Mark Peterson, East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer, Alisha Wilson of Transitions Equine Assisted Learning, Alexandra Swanson and Cheryl Haskett of Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life, Stephanie Conron and Olivia Sidwell of the Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum, and Oxford Tourism specialist Meredith Maywood.

horses, it's important. I think that's why it stood out to the judges."

According to Wilson's website, the experience offers plenty of laughs, "aha" moments and a huge boost of cowgirl confidence.

"It's very humbling. I just do this because I love it, and I love the fact people are recognizing it is such a unique and wonderful experience for people. When I win an award, it does fuel my drive to continue to grow and morph my programs into something that everyone can and does enjoy. It's nice to be recognized for the hard work my team and I put into this place."

Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life pulled in a pair of honours, the Tourism Partnership and Special Event of the Year. The

operation collaborated with several businesses, organizations and individuals to tell a love story that captured hearts around the world. The same event also grabbed one of the two Special Event of the year awards, with the other one going to the Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum for its Mystic Market.

The cow wedding between Muriel and Rhett, miniature highland cows, made international headlines, featured on major broadcast channels like CNN and gained attention from influencers with over one million followers.

The Mystic Market was a paranormal-themed event featuring psychic and magical experiences unique to Oxford County.

The event offered a welcoming environment to explore spirituality, connect with others and seek personal insight. Local vendors, artists and food purveyors contributed to the experience, with many selling out due to strong attendee interest.

The 2024 Oxford Tourism Award program recognized the region's tourism businesses, organizations and individuals who have displayed excellence in product development, partnerships and collaborations, innovation, inclusiveness, leadership, sustainability, and attraction to the region. It also recognizes partners who work collaboratively with Oxford Tourism to grow regional tourism and offer exceptional visitor experiences.

"Oxford's tourism industry is

thriving, with amazing experiences available throughout the county," said tourism specialist Meredith Maywood. "The judges faced a tough decision with so many outstanding nominations from a growing number of tourism businesses that help us to 'embrace our rural routes' and keep guests returning to Oxford County."

Winners were chosen by a panel of external judges with representatives from provincial tourism organizations outside of Oxford County.

For more information about categories and award winners, visit www.oxford-county.ca/Business-in-Oxford/Tourism/Tourism-Awards.



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Lisa Hagen's "Dancing on the Elephant" takes flight after fifteen-year journey

Continued from page 1

the same time, I thought, 'I'm going to write this as a movie as well.'

"It was getting a favourable response when we put it on, for sure."

While the play went on to be produced for Theatre Baddeck in Nova Scotia, and it was performed in New Hamburg for Hagen's hometown audience, the screenplay began picking up steam, winning numerous awards, and ultimately got picked up by a production company out of Colorado in 2018. For two years, the company held exclusive rights to produce the screenplay while it tried to raise the money. In 2020, Hagen got the call that the money had been raised and they were looking to shoot in New York state with leading lady Olympia Dukakis onboard as the star.

As pandemic restrictions made shooting more costly, Dukakis' unexpected death in May 2021 put the production on hold. In 2022, Hagen said she convinced the directors to shoot the film on Cape Breton to take advantage of both the lower cost for film production and the filming subsidies offered by the Province of Nova Scotia.

Finally, in the early months of February 2024, shooting began on Cape Breton and production was underway. Unlike some film producers who don't involve writers beyond the creation of an original screenplay, Hagen said the directors and producers kept her involved every step of the way.

"We shot it March of 2024 and I went out there for a few days, just because I was nosy," Hagen said. "After 15 years, this was my baby. Nova Scotia was beautiful and the people were so hospitable, as we all know, and it was very interesting to watch how it's put together."

"I have a background in corporate video, so I had been around shoots before, but this was just up a notch."

After the film finished shooting, Hagen said it took almost a year to edit before it could be packaged up and sent to as many film festivals as possible for consideration. Now that it is having its initial screenings, Hagen says audiences are really



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF LISA HAGEN)

New Hamburg writer Lisa Hagen on the red carpet at the Atlantic International Film Festival in Halifax, N.S., for her film, Dancing on the Elephant.

connecting with the story.

"It's about two old ladies who try to escape their retirement home with themes of dementia, themes of living your life to the fullest at whatever stage you're at, and a theme of agism – that people are still the same inside, they're just older – and having self-agency," Hagen said. "... They go out and have one more big adventure."

"Now that they've seen it, people are saying, 'Yeah, I've had to do that with my parents or grandparents.' It seems to catch a wide swath of people from younger people who identify (with this story) because of their grandparents, people who are dealing with their parents and also people who are looking at (moving to a retirement home) in the face. (I want people to come away from this film thinking) we have to do better than just warehouse our seniors. We're kind of standing on their shoulders – we're here because of them – and we have to have a better system than what we have currently."

Once the film has completed the festival circuit, Hagen said the producers will use the buzz generated to find a distributor, at which point it will become available to watch commercially.



The poster for Dancing on the Elephant, written by New Hamburg's Lisa Hagen and starring Sheila McCarthy, Mary Walsh and Amanda Brugel.

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Township in mourning following death of former East Zorra-Tavistock councillor

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The flags at the East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) municipal building in Hickson have been lowered to honour the passing of past council member Mike Routly.

He served on EZT council from 2014-2018 and recently passed away at the age of 49. Routly, an Innerkip resident, was also a longtime volunteer firefighter in Innerkip, serving his community for 17 years. He was the station's deputy chief for the past 10 years.

"The mayor, council and staff extend their deepest sympathies to the Routly family, and we ask that the community keep Mike's family in their thoughts as they navigate this difficult time," said a social media post from EZT.

Former member of council Maureen Ralph said she was deeply saddened to learn of Routly's passing.

"I had the pleasure to serve with him on the East Zorra-Tavistock municipal council. Mike was a passionate advocate for his community who brought heart, integrity and a healthy dose of common sense to every conversation and decision, always putting people first. Our views were often aligned on many issues, and I enjoyed working alongside him immensely. Though taken from us far too soon, his commitment to community and the people



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EZT)

Mike Routly, a former East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) councillor and volunteer firefighter and member of the Woodstock Police Service, passed away recently at the age of 49.

he served will never be forgotten. Rest in peace, my friend."

Current EZT Mayor Phil Schaeer also released a statement.

"I was saddened to hear of Mike's passing at such a young age. I am grateful for his many years of service to the township, and I pray for his family to find strength in this time of grief."

Mike was also a dedicated 17-year police officer with the Woodstock Police Service, serving his final seven years as a detective constable. He also served as the president of the Woodstock Police Association.



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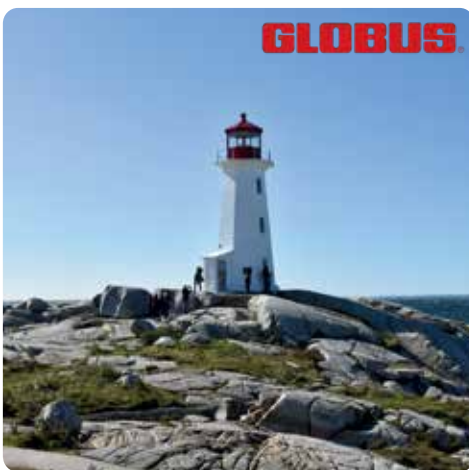
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Shakespeare's seven-year-old Carter Kuchma fighting to beat cancer

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

There's a young family in Shakespeare facing a challenge no parent ever wants to imagine. Seven-year-old Carter Kuchma, the son of Tyler and Diane Kuchma, was diagnosed in August with Type B Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia — a form of blood cancer.

The family, who moved to Shakespeare from Baden four years ago, noticed Carter was unusually tired and pale on Aug. 1. A blood test quickly revealed the devastating diagnosis, and Carter was admitted to London Health Sciences Centre on Aug. 8 where he remained for nearly two weeks undergoing surgeries, blood transfusions and the first rounds of chemotherapy.

"The induction month was very hard on him," said Diane Kuchma. "The daily steroids caused mood swings, appetite loss and major changes to his body."

Tyler Kuchma added that Carter was unable to walk for three weeks early in his treatment, but he has since regained his strength.

Now in the consolidation phase of his treatment, Carter is able to walk again and continues to take chemotherapy medication daily, along with weekly spinal injections. His parents say he misses being a kid — playing with his friends, going to school and spending time at the Shakespeare ball park, where he's been a fixture on the fastball diamond since the family

moved to the village.

Carter loves baseball, soccer, fishing, rollerblading, Lego, camping and video games, and says math is still his favourite subject in school. His loyal dog, Cali, rarely leaves his side and provides comfort through the hardest days.

The Kuchmas have been inspired by the support they've received from friends and neighbours, including Julie and Kyle Wynette of Tavistock, whose son, Nash, faced a similar diagnosis and is now healthy and active again.

"Their guidance and kindness have meant so much to us," Diane Kuchma said.

When members of the Shakespeare Men's Club heard about Carter's battle, they knew they had to help.

"We already had the perfect event to rally the community," said club member Barry Nowack, "so we decided to turn it into a fundraiser for Carter and his family."

This year's Caring for Carter Halloween fundraiser will be held Saturday, Oct. 25, from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the Shakespeare Optimist Hall. Tickets are \$15 and available at Shakespeare Brewing Company, or by calling Barry Nowack at 519-276-9849 or SCAA member Amy Taylor. Those who wish to donate directly can email info@shakespearemensclub.com.

All proceeds will go to the Kuchma family to help with medical and travel expenses.

"Every dollar we raise will go straight to them," said Nowack.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

The Kuchma family of Shakespeare, from left, includes mom Diane, nine-year-old Hailey, 11-year-old Natalie, seven-year-old Carter and dad Tyler.



The Gazette photographed the U9 Shakespeare Falcons with their championship medals in early August. Just two days later, Carter (far right) was diagnosed with leukemia. He hopes to rejoin his teammates soon.



"Courageous Like Carter" — a poster made by friends and family — captures the spirit of love and support surrounding the Kuchmas. Pictured from left are dad Tyler, sisters Hailey and Natalie, and mom Diane. Carter was not feeling up to being photographed that day.

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IT expert urging Canadians to focus on cybersecurity 12 months of the year

October is Cyber Security Month in Canada

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

October is Cyber Security Month across Canada and this year's theme is "Get cyber safe – for future you."

The federal government's campaign aims to set Canadians up for a safer and easier future by shedding light on the practical benefits of cybersecurity that can prevent people from becoming victims. Carmi Levy is a leading IT expert and said setting aside 30 days to highlight safety in the cyber world is great, but it isn't enough.

"What do we do for the other 11? The reality is cybersecurity awareness needs to become not just something we do once a year, but something we incorporate into our habits every single day of the year. We have to shift from awareness to accountability."

He added accountability means people being responsible for their own digital security 365 days a year.

"Once you do that, make it part of your daily routine and it becomes a lot easier to ensure those lessons from Cyber Security Month aren't forgotten."

Those lessons include securing online accounts, educating ourselves about current cyber threats and ensuring our devices have the latest security and software updates. Levy explained human error is almost always involved in successful attacks.

"We're not going to solve this by



installing new technology. We are going to fix this by changing behaviours, and we do that by exposing people to resources, raising their training level. The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, for example, is great for learning how to recognize threats when we see them in our inbox or when we are online."

It can be overwhelming for the general public to decide what supports to purchase. There are VPNs and anti-virus and security platforms. Levy said they do serve a purpose but added everyone needs to do more.

"We can reduce the risk by going into our settings and turning on features that aren't normally activated by default; things like

dual-factor or two-factor authentication, sometimes known as multi-factor authentication. That adds an additional lock on the door in addition to your password. You can use a fingerprint, voice authentication or a PIN, so even if your password is compromised, the bad guys aren't getting into your account."

The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre advises people to implement strong passwords that don't come from a pet or family member's name. Levy said the best course of action is to have different passwords or passphrases unique to each system and changed at least once every three months.

"Ideally, once a month. If that's too difficult, use a password management app like

One Password to manage those passwords in one central place."

Levy added it's also a good idea to share less personal information on social media as it is harvested by criminals and used against people in targeted attacks.

"Look at your online activity and ask yourself if you are oversharing. If the answer is yes, you are putting ammunition into the hands of cybercriminals to use against you."

Municipalities also need to be prepared for attacks as they are constantly targeted by cybercriminals. Experts like Levy say it isn't a matter of if, but when.

"It has taken these institutions months, if not years, to recover from attacks, and in many cases, they may never recover and the cost to taxpayers is significant. We are already seeing the victims list pile up, and no one wants to be the next one."

Stratford and St. Marys have both been victims of ransomware attacks in recent years. The Festival City was attacked in April of 2019 when several of its servers became unresponsive and unavailable. The city shut down its servers' internet connections and disconnected computers, laptops and printers from the network to contain the damage.

The attacker demanded 10 Bitcoins as ransom. At that time, each Bitcoin was worth about \$7,500 Canadian, making the demand total roughly \$75,000. The city complied and paid the ransom in exchange for decryption keys.

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Tavistock's seniors' activities offer something for everyone

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

There are many retired and semi-retired residents living in the Tavistock area, and for those looking for something to do this fall, winter and spring to get out of the house, there's plenty to choose from.

A wide range of leisurely activities have been organized locally, all happening just minutes from home. Here are some of the options available:

- **Shuffleboard:** Second floor of the Tavistock Arena. Wednesdays from 12:30-4 p.m., and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, contact Don Junker at 519-535-7052.
- **Walk and Social / Crokinole / Cards (Euchre and Crib):** Monday and Wednesday mornings from 8:30-11:45 a.m. at the Tavistock Memorial Hall (main floor, wheelchair accessible). Bring your crib board and a friend. Activities begin Oct. 20. Contact Larry Brown at 519-655-6880 or larryjb1950@gmail.com.
- **Pickleball:** Monday, Wednesday and

Friday afternoons from 12-4 p.m. at the Memorial Hall (main floor). Contact Don Junker at 519-535-7052.

- **Cards:** Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. (Crib – bring your board). Just drop in to play. Contact Bob Routly at 519-301-2118.
- **VON SMART Seniors Exercise:** Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9-10 a.m. at the Memorial Hall, and from 10:25-11:25 a.m. at Village Manor. For details, call 519-539-1231 ext. 6285.

Matt Lamers, supervisor of parks and recreation for East Zorra-Tavistock, said he's pleased to see local organizers keeping seniors' programs going strong.

"I'm happy for the organizers who are keeping programs available for seniors," Lamers said. "I hope they continue to use Memorial Hall for better health, relationships and community events. Recreation is vital to Tavistock and the surrounding area, and I hope people take advantage of these programs. Volunteers work hard to ensure everyone has a chance to take part in activities they're interested in."



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Three Tavistock seniors who help organize programs to keep the community active and connected are, from left, Connie Junker and Larry and Nancy Brown.

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Halloween in Perth County's South Easthope Township



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

With Halloween just around the corner, this eerie 1930s coupe parked along Forest Road near Little Lakes in South Easthope Township could take the prize for one of the spookiest sights in Perth County. Travellers between Shakespeare and Stratford might do a double take – but the homeowners say they're not easily scared. As for this ghoulish group, they say they "ran out of gas" before making it to the Festival Theatre.

Fall colours paint a picture-perfect landscape near the Perth-Oxford border



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

A scenic view across the green fields of Paul Epp's farm west of Tavistock showcases brilliant fall colours and rolling clouds – a reminder at Thanksgiving of how fortunate we are to live in such a beautiful part of the country.

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Photographs are wonderful, but it's hard to truly capture the beauty of the vibrant fall colours near the Perth-Oxford

border this week.

With Thanksgiving now behind us, the trees and bushes have taken on a whole new brilliance – a reminder of nature's artistry, even as cooler autumn weather moves in.

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



THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT WILL HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Monday November 17, 2025 at 7:00pm

**Council Chambers,
Township Administration Complex
60 Snyder's Road West, Baden**

You are invited to attend a Special Meeting of Council on Monday November 17, 2025 at 7:00pm. This Special Meeting is being held at the early stages of preparation of a new Official Plan for the Township of Wilmot in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended. Public input is being sought to inform Council and the Project Team of community priorities that should be considered through the development of Wilmot's new Official Plan.

WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL PLAN?

An Official Plan is a document that guides and shapes the future of a community by identifying where, and under what circumstances, specific types of land uses can be located within the Township's Municipal Boundary. An Official Plan applies to all lands within the Township. The purpose of the Official Plan is to direct development in a way that makes efficient use of land and infrastructure, creates attractive and livable communities with a variety of housing options, and protects the Township's cultural and natural heritage and agricultural lands.

WHY DOES WILMOT NEED A NEW OFFICIAL PLAN?

Township's current Official Plan was approved in 2004. It was updated in 2017 with approval in 2019. The new Official Plan will build on the Township's long-term vision for growth in the community to the year 2051.

As of January 1, 2025, the Region of Waterloo is an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities. The Region's Official Plan has become the responsibility of the Township as it applies to lands in Wilmot. Wilmot's new Official Plan will replace the existing Township and Regional Official Plans with one document and align with the new 2024 Provincial Planning Statement.

HAVE YOUR SAY

You are invited to provide input and participate in this Public Meeting, either in person or online. The meeting will be streamed live at www.wilmot.ca/YouTube. To participate in the Public Meeting virtually, please visit www.wilmot.ca/delegations as pre-registration is required before 12:00pm on November 17, 2025. Attendance in person does not require pre-registration. You may also:

- Provide written comment through mail to 60 Snyder's Road West, Baden ON N3A 1A1 or send an email to WilmotOP@wilmot.ca.
- Complete our surveys, polls and/or comments section throughout the duration of the project on the Township of Wilmot New Official Plan engage page at engagewr.ca/new-wilmot-official-plan.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, and for ongoing opportunities to offer your comments during the project, please visit the Township of Wilmot New Official Plan's engage page at engagewr.ca/new-wilmot-official-plan, or contact the project team to ask questions or learn more about the new Official Plan.

Contact Information

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

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

Email: WilmotOP@wilmot.ca

Fruit tasting at Silver Creek Nursery in Wellesley

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Wellesley Fall Fair Ambassador Program doesn't end when the fair wraps up in August – it continues throughout the year as part of the ambassador's educational experience.

This Thanksgiving weekend, 2024-2025 fall fair ambassador Katie Musselman – who also serves as director of the Junior Ambassador Program she founded herself – took 2025-2026 Junior Ambassador Chloe Scott on a special tour of local farms around Wellesley to experience the region's fall harvest firsthand.

One of their stops was Silver Creek Nursery's Thanksgiving Fruit Tasting Event, where guests were invited to sample apples, nuts and berries grown onsite. The Muma family, who operate the nursery, also demonstrated how apple cider is made and offered free samples to visitors.

Scott said her favourite part of the tour was "being able to see all the different varieties of apples produced, and taste them all to see the differences."

Both ambassadors described Silver Creek Nursery as "picturesque and plentiful," perfectly situated between Wellesley and Bamberg on Gerber Road near St. Agatha, where the surrounding forests look like something straight out of a postcard this time of year.



Junior Fair Ambassador Chloe Scott samples local apple varieties at Silver Creek Nursery, discovering that each has its own unique flavour. She said she felt right at home with Ambassador Katie Musselman guiding her along the way, learning about different aspects of local farming.



(WENDY RICHARDSON PHOTO)

Pictured from left, 2024-2025 Wellesley Fall Fair Ambassador Katie Musselman shares the Wellesley Pumpkin Experience with 2025-2026 Junior Fair Ambassador Chloe Scott at Fall Harvest Farm's Thanksgiving Open House, where hundreds of pumpkins were available for purchase.



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Fire Prevention Week marked with educational displays at Shakespeare Fire Station

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Perth East Fire Department marked Fire Prevention Week last week with interactive displays and demonstrations at the Shakespeare Fire Station.

The department operates out of three stations – Milverton, Sebringville and Shakespeare – each staffed by 22 firefighters, including a station chief, deputy chief and four platoons made up of a captain and four firefighters.

Shakespeare station chief Greg Ankenmann, who has served in the fire service for 35 years and as station chief for the past 10, said Fire Prevention Week plays an important role in keeping the public informed about fire safety. Deputy station chief Steve Marriott has also served in his role since 2015. The Shakespeare platoon captains are Matt Neumeister, Jeff Forthhuber, Barb Myers and Dave Bell.

Fire Prevention Week is held annually during the week of Oct. 9 to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Organized by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), it focuses on educating the public about fire prevention and safety in the home.

“Our goal is to reduce the number of preventable fires and keep fire safety top of mind,” said Ankenmann. “No fire is a good fire.”



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Shakespeare firefighters who welcomed the public to last week's Fire Prevention Week open house included, from left, Capt. Matt Neumeister, firefighter Jamie Simons, firefighter Kyle Soetemans, firefighter Zach Lindner, station chief Greg Ankenmann, deputy chief Steve Marriott, Capt. Dave Bell, firefighter Ayden Gautreau and firefighter Brayden Pines.



Firefighter Ayden Gautreau helps young Darwin Lindner learn how local firefighters use the jaws of life to extract victims from vehicles after collisions on Highway 7/8.



Firefighter Zach Lindner gives future firefighter Jaxx Soetemans a few hose-handling pointers as he aims a high-pressure spray of water at a target behind the fire hall.

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Shakespeare Optimist Club celebrates outgoing president Mike McNeil

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Members of the Shakespeare Optimist Club gathered recently to honour retiring president Mike McNeil, whose years of leadership and enthusiasm left a lasting mark on both the club and the community.

When McNeil first accepted the role of president, he wasn't sure what the journey would bring, but his energy and ideas helped revitalize the club and its connection with local youth. Under his leadership, the club reintroduced Chocolate Bar Bingo nights, organized its 50th anniversary celebrations and saw the completion of the newly paved walking track and exercise area.

He also helped the club strengthen its community partnerships, budgeting for donations to Sprucedale and North Easthope Public Schools, and ensuring the continuation of key youth programs such as the annual bike rodeo and the popular youth fishing derby.

Throughout his term, McNeil worked alongside his wife, Cheryl, and their two teenage daughters, balancing family life with an unwavering dedication to the Optimist mission of supporting youth and community wellbeing.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

The newly elected Shakespeare Optimist Club executive for 2025-2026 includes, from left, Jeff Skubowius (treasurer), Ted Danen, Hugh McDermid, Pete Kreyger, David Croskill, Jeremy Witzel (newly elected president) and Greg Storey from the Mornington Optimist Club (zone lieutenant-governor).



Shakespeare Optimist charter member Murray McTavish presents a Special Recognition Award to outgoing president Mike McNeil for his years of hard work and leadership, particularly during his three-year term as club president.



Guest speaker Jeremy Whitlock shared his expertise in nuclear energy during the club's President's Night event. With 30 years of experience in nuclear non-proliferation and reactor physics, Whitlock discussed how nuclear reactors operate, how power is produced at Bruce, Darlington and Pickering plants, and the history of Chalk River Laboratories, founded in 1944 and known for producing medical isotopes used in cancer treatment. Learn more at www.OttertailConsulting.ca.

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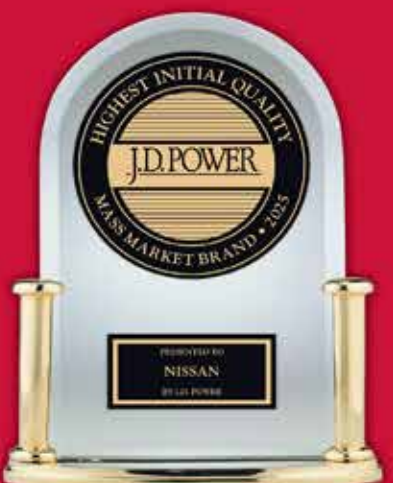
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STRATFORD NISSAN



The History of Tavistock's family doctors and the College of Family Physicians of Canada

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Many years ago, members of Tavistock's Medical Board – now known as Tavistock Community Health Inc. (TCHI) – worked hand in hand with the community's doctors to maintain the local medical facility and equipment while caring for their patients.

At that time, Anne Gregory served as chair of the medical board. During a recent cleanup at the Tavistock clinic, a letter from former board chair Anne Gregory's files was rediscovered – written by the late Dr. Bruce Halliday. The letter highlights the remarkable history of Tavistock's doctors, who contributed not only to their community but also to provincial and national health care.

The following is the letter from Dr. Halliday, presented in its entirety:

"Over the years, Tavistock doctors have been involved in various community activities, some of which developed into commitments at the provincial and federal levels.

Back in the first half of the 20th century, doctors in rural areas and non-specialists in urban centres were known as 'general practitioners.'

Changes began to occur in the early 1950s, led in large part by a general practitioner from Lucknow, Ont., named Dr. Victor Johnston. Although the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and Ontario Medical Association (OMA) existed at that time, Dr. Johnston felt there should be a College of General Practitioners of Canada, with provincial chapters, since healthcare was largely a provincial responsibility.

With the assistance of Tavistock's Dr. Harold Taylor in the Stratford area, Dr. Johnston planned a meeting of local general practitioners. It was held in the basement of the nurses' residence at Stratford General Hospital one evening in late 1953



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Dr. Bruce Halliday was not only a popular Tavistock physician for 23 years but also served as president of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and as member of parliament for Oxford County for 19 years.

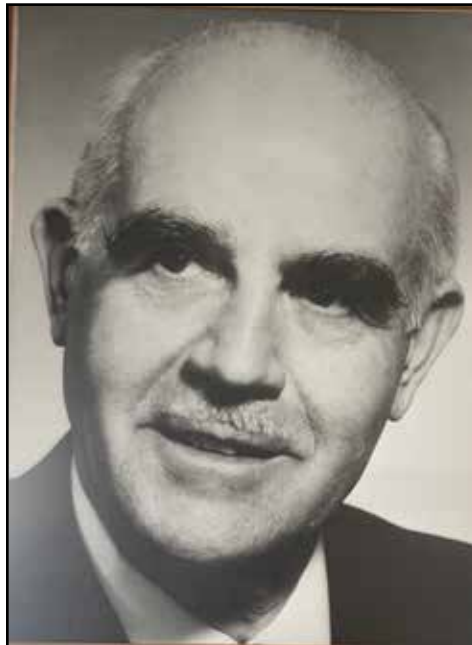
or early 1954.

There was general agreement at that meeting that the idea was worth pursuing, and similar support was found across the country. A national meeting was then held in Vancouver in 1954, which Dr. Taylor attended. That became the founding meeting of the College of General Practice of Canada.

It was agreed that general practitioners in each province could form their own chapters. After a few years, Dr. Taylor became the fourth president of the Ontario Chapter in 1959-60.

As my mentor, Dr. Taylor encouraged me to get involved with the Ontario Chapter, where I eventually served as president in 1966-67. Around that time, the name was changed to the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Ontario College of Family Physicians.

After my work with the Ontario Chapter, I joined the board of directors of the



Dr. Harold Taylor was a true medical pioneer, serving as president of both the Ontario and Canadian medical associations.

national college, later serving as chair and, in 1971-72, as president of the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

As if two Tavistock doctors weren't enough, Dr. Ken Hook was also persuaded to get involved in the Ontario College, where he became president in 2000-01.

So, three presidents of the Ontario College of Family Physicians – and its predecessor – over a span of about 30 years is quite an accomplishment for a small village like Tavistock, which at the time had only four to six physicians.

These same doctors, and others from Tavistock, have also served in roles within the Ontario Medical Association, on hospital committees and boards in Perth County and Stratford, and even in parliament.

Dr. J.P. Rankin practised in Tavistock from 1879 to 1888 before moving to Stratford. He later served as MP for Perth-Wellington from 1908 to 1911 and again from 1921 to 1925, before being named a



Dr. Ken Hook continued Tavistock's proud legacy of leadership, serving as president of the Ontario College of Family Physicians in 2000-2001.

senator in 1925, serving until 1934.

Dr. Michael Steele practised in Tavistock for 34 years and served as MP for South Perth from 1911 to 1921.

I, myself, practised in Tavistock from 1952 to 1974, before being elected member of parliament for Oxford, a position I held from 1974 to 1993.

Many Tavistock doctors have made major contributions to the community, serving on school boards, municipal councils and volunteer organizations. For example, Dr. Paul Bartlett devoted countless hours, with help from Gazette editor Bill Glading and others, to recording Tavistock's history in his 1996 book, *Raising the Rafters*."

If Dr. Halliday were alive today, he would no doubt encourage residents seeking family medical care to support Tavistock Community Health Inc. in its ongoing fundraising efforts to maintain a modern, well-equipped medical centre in the village.

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Tavistock Community Health board installs fundraising syringe at town's five corners

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The flagpole at Tavistock's five corners has a new neighbour — a giant syringe marking the community's ongoing efforts to raise funds for much-needed upgrades to the Tavistock Medical Building.

Members of the Tavistock Community Health Inc. (TCHI) board were on site last week installing the fundraising syringe, which will track donations toward their \$500,000 goal. The display serves as a visible reminder of how close the community is to reaching its target and how important local health care remains to Tavistock's growing population.

The medical building on Maria Street, now home to four family doctors and their staff, has served the community for 47 years and needs major updates. This past spring and summer saw the installation of a new standby generator and HVAC unit, as well as renovations to the reception and office areas. The next priorities include new medical beds, updated equipment and improved examination rooms.

"These upgrades are not only necessary for patient care," said board member Frank Meconi, "but they'll also help us attract another doctor

— something Tavistock urgently needs."

So far, the campaign has raised more than \$160,000 thanks to contributions from individuals, businesses and community organizations.

Meconi says anyone wishing to contribute can call him directly at 519-655-2178, noting that donations of \$20 or more are eligible for tax receipts.

"I'll personally deliver donation forms and pick up contributions," he said. "That includes local companies who want to support the effort."

With regular mail delivery now resumed, the TCHI board will be mailing donation forms to residents. Anyone who doesn't receive one can contact Meconi or another board member to make arrangements.

"This fundraising effort is not a sprint but a marathon," Meconi added. "We want to make sure Tavistock continues to have access to quality medical care for decades to come."

The 11-member board expressed gratitude to everyone who has already donated, emphasizing that their goal is to strengthen health services — not to compete with other local charitable causes.

"We truly appreciate all the individuals and groups who are helping make this vision possible," the board said in a statement.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Members of the TCHI board were busy last week installing the new fundraising syringe at Tavistock's five corners. Pictured from left are Frank Meconi (past board chairman) and Brett Zehr (Tavistock Home Hardware owner and bucket operator). Below and in behind are Russ Huber (TCHI board chairman) and, out front, Dennis Kuepfer (board member).

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EZT's recreation committee releases survey results

Decision on programming options to be made in December

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock's (EZT) recreation advisory committee (RAC) is one step closer to recommending sport and leisure options for residents.

The committee was created almost two years ago. To date, no recommendations have been made to council, but that is expected to change at the group's next meeting on Dec. 10.

Close to 300 EZT residents took the survey, and exercise classes topped the list of activities, followed by maker classes, drop-in indoor recreation options, outdoor movie nights and drop-in outdoor options. When it came to specific activities, pickleball topped the list and most respondents said they would be willing to pay for service.

Township CAO Karen DePrest said the municipality will offer specialized programming on a cost-recovery basis, following the same approach used by the City of London during her tenure there.

Councillor and committee member Scott Rudy asked if the township would be able to run activities with current staff.

"Without tipping our hand for the 2026 budget, staff think we can work a system with the complement of staff we have, plus or minus a lead hand in that area," said DePrest. "Because it's more of an administrative function to dabble in programming right now because we don't have any expertise, I would like to see (recreation operations supervisor) Matt (Lamers') role be characterized by the sampling and trying of programming and then give him an operational lead hand at the arena who can take responsibility of the arena."

Rudy added he would like to see the township pick a firm number of activities and see how residents react.

"If we find out we only have a class size for two of the six, that will tell you something before we get too far down the staff. I'd rather see us do it with current staff on some of the fixed numbers. If it takes off, I think we can add to it as opposed to biting off more than we can chew."

DePrest said her hope is the RAC will pick activities that could be easily facilitated to find out how the community responds.

"I think there's lots of opportunity for drop-ins. Pickleball was repeated, and it's obviously a very popular sport. I think it's great there are volunteers in the community who want to organize it, but the township (could) advertise drop-in pickleball for beginners for two dollars or whatever at the Tavistock Memorial Hall on whatever nights."

She added staff need direction from the committee and then council to come up with specific recreation activities to be offered for residents. After some discussion, the committee agreed to have a brainstorming session before its official meeting in December.

The committee and township will also have to work through logistical issues, such as what events need outside help and where to hold them.

"Pickleball isn't something we are going to farm out; we don't need an instructor

for drop-in pickleball. I think it would help staff a lot more to know where you think we should target that. We can't offer multiple courts at the ICC (Innerkip Community Centre), so it's one court, potentially two there, but multiple courts if we do it in the Queen's Park Pavilion when the weather is nice."

Cooking courses would likely be held at the ICC since it is the biggest and best kitchen available in EZT.

"Staff could give that feedback to council, but it would be nicer if the committee gave that suggestion to council and then council directed staff," added DePrest.

The December meeting will create a road map for what recreation options will be piloted where in the township, either Hickson, Innerkip or Tavistock. The RAC will meet before the official committee meeting to produce recommendations for council to consider in the 2026 budget. The 6 p.m. portion will be open to the public but not livestreamed. The regular 7 p.m. meeting will be available online.

Waterloo County 4-H members heading to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Nine 4-H members from Waterloo Region have been selected to compete in the TD 4-H Dairy Classic Show this November at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto.

The prestigious show, now in its 103rd year, brings together top young dairy enthusiasts from

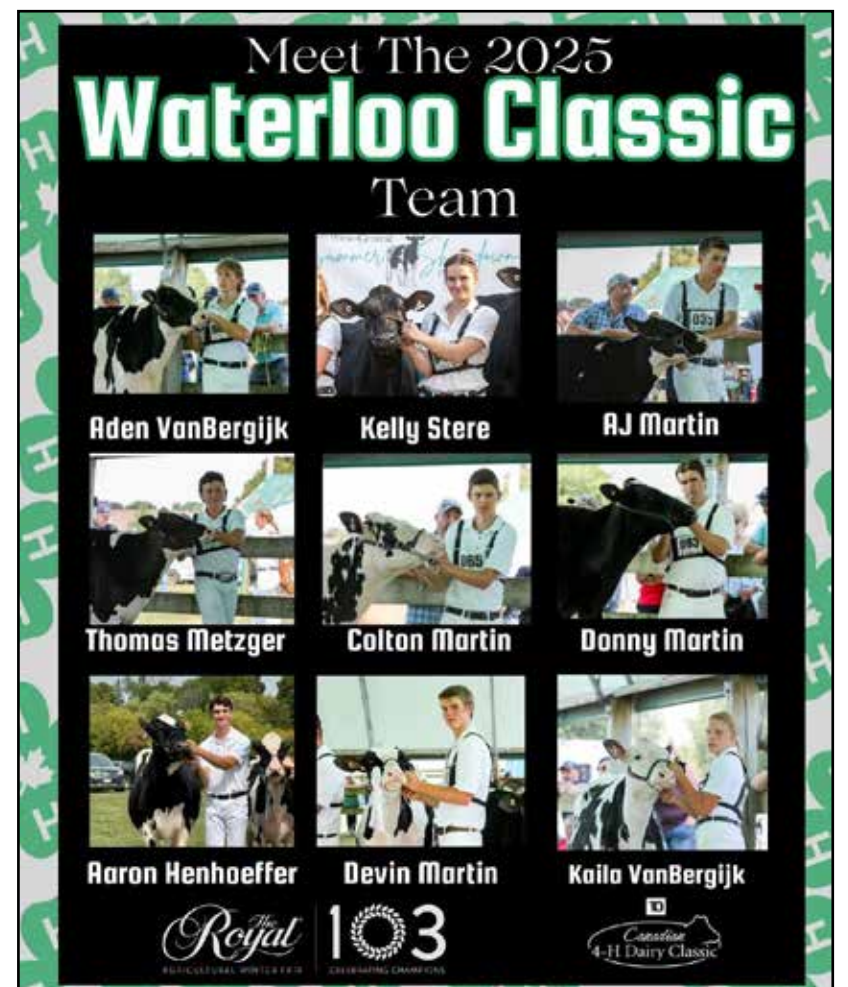
across Canada to compete in both showmanship and calf conformation classes. For many, it's the highlight of their 4-H careers – a chance to represent their home clubs and showcase months of dedication, training and care for their animals.

Throughout the summer and fall, these members participated in numerous dairy shows across the region before being chosen to represent Waterloo Region at the Royal.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

This lineup of Waterloo County 4-H members spent part of their summer learning the art of fitting, clipping and showing their dairy projects at the New Dundee farm of longtime 4-H dairy leader Val Jones, pictured with husband Shane and their boys. The Waterloo County 4-H program has a long history of success at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.



Following a busy season of local 4-H dairy shows, these nine members were selected to compete at the 103rd Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. Top row from left: Aden VanBergijk (New Hamburg), Kelly Stere (Ayr) and A.J. Martin (Elmira). Middle row from left: Thomas Metzger (New Hamburg), Colton Martin (Wellesley) and Donny Martin (Elmira). Bottom row from left: Aaron Henhoeffer (Ayr), Devin Martin (Elmira) and Kaila VanBergijk. The nine members expressed their gratitude to sponsors and supporters and said they look forward to representing Waterloo Region with pride.

Grace United Church selling trees to mark United Church of Canada's 100th anniversary

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the United Church of Canada, members of Grace United Church in Tavistock are launching a special tree sale next Saturday, Oct. 18, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Church member Wayne Shewfelt said the initiative is part of several community projects undertaken this year to mark the national centennial.

"The United Church of Canada came together in 1925," said Shewfelt. "To mark this centennial, members of Grace United Church have initiated several projects, including hanging a 100th anniversary banner on the church building, collecting 100 boxes of pens and markers for northern communities and donating 100 personal care items for Shelterlink in Stratford.

Now, we're offering 100 trees for sale to church members and the Tavistock community."

The trees – sourced from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority – include a variety of native species such as Freeman's maple (a cross between silver and red maple), sugar maple, paper birch, tulip, white pine, black cherry, red oak and white cedar.

Each tree comes in a one-gallon pot with hardwood varieties standing roughly four to five feet tall. Trees will be available for purchase for \$25 each (cash only) from the front parking lot of Grace United Church, 116 Woodstock St. S., Tavistock.

Shewfelt encourages residents to arrive early for the best selection, noting the project is not only a fundraiser but also a way for the church to give back to the environment and community.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Grace United Church member Wayne Shewfelt stands beside some of the trees that will be available for purchase Saturday, Oct. 18, from 9 a.m. to noon in the church parking lot at 116 Woodstock St. S. Trees are \$25 each. Come early for the best selection.



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Grace United Church hosts High Noon Luncheon and speaker in Tavistock

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Tavistock and Area Ministerial Association holds a community lunch at Grace United Church every month called the High Noon Luncheon.

The program, which began in 2017, offers not only a meal shared among friends and neighbours but also a guest speaker or entertainment, making it a well-loved community tradition.

This month's topic was Home and Heart Cancer Care, presented by committee member Pat Csinos, who spoke about the organization's work providing care bags for those undergoing cancer treatment.

Founded in 2020 by Holly Bucholtz, Home and Heart creates and distributes hand-sewn and crafted care bags filled with comforting and practical items such as lap blankets, neck pillows, hard candies, puzzles and books. Every item is thoughtfully chosen and donated by volunteers.

Recipients of these bags often express how deeply the gesture has touched them during their cancer journey,



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Guest speaker Pat Csinos speaks to a full hall at Grace United Church last week about the Home and Heart Cancer Care Bags program, which supports individuals undergoing cancer treatments. For more information, contact hollybucholtz@live.com.

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offering comfort and encouragement at a difficult time.

As the host for this month's luncheon, Grace United Church donated \$150 to the Home and Heart initiative. In addition, a basket of donations collected during the event brought in another \$519 to support the project.

The High Noon lunches operate on a freewill-donation basis and are not intended as fundraisers but as opportunities to bring the community together. The gatherings

OBITUARY

Renate Monika Taylor



went to be with her Lord on Sunday October 12, 2025, after a courageous battle with cancer. She was surrounded by her loving family.

Born March 29, 1951, in Pirna Saxony Germany. She came to Canada at the age of 19 and it was while working at J M Schneider that she would meet her future husband. Survived by her husband Douglas and blessed to recently celebrate 50 years of marriage. Also survived by children, Michelle, Jeffrey, Stephanie (Chris) and a loving Oma to Avery, Rowan, Iain and Emma. she will also be missed by nieces and nephews in Canada and Germany.

Also survived by sisters, Christel of Kitchener, Regina (Franz) of Knittelsheim Germany, and in laws Charles (Sheila) of North Bay and Ray (Kim) of London.

Predeceased by parents Franz (1970) and Ruth (1990) and brother in law Richard (2018).

She was a faithful member of Rosebank Church for many years and will be missed by her church family. She also enjoyed activities at the Wilmot Recreation Centre and made many friends there.

Special thanks to the staff of the Rotary Hospice in Stratford for making her final days as comfortable as possible.

Relatives and friends are invited to the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg, on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, from 5 – 8 p.m. and again on Thursday, October 16, 2025 from 1 until the time of the service at Rosebank Be In Christ Church.

Funeral service will be held at Rosebank Be In Christ Church on Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. with Pastor James Cober to officiate. Interment will follow in Rosebank Cemetery.

Donations in Renate's memory can be made to Rosebank Brethren in Christ Church or to Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, and can be done through the funeral home website.

Personal condolences can be posted for the family at www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca

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



run monthly until next April, with meals served at Grace United Church on Woodstock Street South. Area churches take turns providing the meal and speaker each month.

The next High Noon Luncheon will take place Nov. 13, again at Grace United Church. Members of Tavistock Mennonite Church will serve the meal and the featured guest will be the Worm Wrangler. Everyone is welcome to attend.



by PeterS 2025

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			9	2	4	1	5	

**ANSWERS FOUND ON
THE CLASSIFIED PAGE**

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What musical is the sequel to "The Phantom of the Opera"?
2. Who saves the girl in the first printed edition of Little Red Riding Hood?
3. What is the Hawaiian word for "hello"?
4. How many days are there in a fortnight?
5. What was Norm's last name on the TV show "Cheers"?
6. What rock band is led by Bob Dylan's son, Jakob?
7. Acadia was the original name of which Canadian province?
8. Which four US states share a border with Mexico?
9. What was the first video game to be played in space?
10. What was London Airport renamed to in 1966?

Answers found on the classified page

The Old Gazettes

By Sydney Grant

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

October 14-21, 2020, Edition (5 years ago)

There are not many things more symbolic of our rural area than quilts, crokinole boards and tractors. All three will be available when the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale (NHMRS) holds its second round Fall Auction on Saturday, Oct. 17 starting at 9 a.m. The online sale will feature stunning quilts, vintage tractors, handmade crokinole boards, limited edition MCC Centennial memorabilia and more. For the men, a restored 1948 Cockshutt 30 tractor has been donated to the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale Fall Auction by the North Easthope Antique Tractor Breakfast Club.

"Colour me orange" is what Richard Smelski was saying over this Thanksgiving weekend. With over five acres of pumpkins and squash and 12-15 varieties of pumpkins alone, this Shakespeare area farmer enjoys all the visits from young and old alike from all over the area. The Smelski farm donates, from cash collected, over \$2,000 every year to local food banks, along with all the squash not sold. Richard says this could be their last year for the backbreaking job that it entails, but smiles when told that "we've heard that before." One thing about it – Thanksgiving would not be the same without the "sea of orange" on the Smelski farm's front lawn every year!

A young Shakespearean man, Corporal Tade Ankenmann, was recently inducted as a new member of the Shakespeare Optimist Club. At the same time, he spoke to members of how he will represent Canada with the Royal Canadian Regiment following training at Pedawawa. Upon his return from deployment next fall, Ankenmann plans on resuming his third year of studies at the University of Guelph. Ankenmann is the son of Greg and Kristene Ankenmann of Shakespeare and spent his time growing up being involved with Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, and has always been interested in the armed forces and in serving his country!

October 13-20, 2010, Edition (15 years ago)

Tavistock veterinarian Dr. Chris Hutchinson read Oh the Pets You Can Get by Dr. Suess at Tavistock Public School last Wednesday, Oct. 6, and answered questions from students about

his job. As a part of Animal Health Week, Dr. Hutchinson went into the JK/SK classes to help promote healthy pets. From cats and dogs to birds and hamsters, the children had lots of stories to tell. One student's cat does somersaults while one dog drinks out of the kitchen sink.

The Oxford County OPP is investigating after a school bus in Tavistock was vandalized over the weekend. Sometime Saturday evening or early Sunday morning, a school bus that was parked in a lot at the intersection of Centennial Drive and Hope Street West was entered. Two of the bus windows were smashed with beer bottles and vandals climbed through the roof escape hatch to open the doors to gain entrance. Extensive damage was done to the interior of the bus. The two-way radio was torn from its holder, the rear-view mirror bent and broken, the fan ripped from its moorings, the driver's logbook and papers strewn around the bus, and the first aid kit smashed and tossed to the back of the bus.

Plowing 25 acres of land in five hours is certainly not a record, but considering it was done with 50-year-old tractors and two and three-furrow plows, it's not bad. "It was a good day," said Howard Roth, one of the organizers of an antique tractor plowing day held east of Tavistock on Saturday, Oct. 9, 2010. About eight tractors owned by members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor Breakfast Club gathered at the farm of Tim and Melody Roth to give their "toys" a good workout.

October 18-25, 1995, Edition (30 years ago)

The local area technician with Western Ontario Breeders Inc. (WOBI) has recently achieved the 100,000 First Insemination milestone in animal breeding. Mr. Bob Kern, who has been a Technician with WOBI for over 33 years, bred his 100,000th cow on Saturday, Sept. 23, 1995 on the farm of Mr. Willy Koot. Bob Kern is the seventh WOBI Technician to achieve the prestigious 100,000 Cow Award and the 11th Technician in Canada.

The canvassing and fundraising committees for the Tavistock Arena Project have been working diligently over the past week to gather accurate figures for donations and pledges received following their door-to-door campaign. The latest report shows \$665,000 has been brought in; very close to the fundraising goal of \$800,000. The committee still shows 25 per cent of overall canvassing to report and, with continued effort, the goal will be reached.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

PJHL Roundup: Highly anticipated Braves vs. Applejacks matchup will have to wait

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

It was supposed to be the game of the season to date in the Provincial Junior Hockey League's (PJHL) Doherty Division. What it turned out to be was a disappointment, as ice issues at the relatively new Bill Gies Recreation Centre led to the postponement of the Tavistock versus Wellesley matchup, with first place on the line.

Witnesses told the Gazette that a large hole had formed in the ice before the game, and Wellesley Township staff were unable to repair it. As a result, the game was called off and will be rescheduled at a later date.

"Saturday was disappointing for everybody," said Tavistock captain Marc Dionne. "It was a big game to get up for coming off a big win in New Hamburg Friday night. We were excited to have a chance to take over first place in the division. Everyone was focused and energized, but (it's) one of those things we have to forget about."

The Braves will have to wait until Saturday, Nov. 1, to get their shot at the Applejacks. Tavistock already has six wins this season after only managing 12 regular-season victories during the entire 2024-2025 regular season. Dionne said the biggest difference is mental toughness.

"We don't quit. We don't hang our heads and count ourselves out early. We're in the game all 60 minutes and we've done a really good job scoring goals and playing offensively. Our powerplay has been doing well and, with the early signs of what we could potentially look like at the end of the season, it's pretty exciting."

On paper, the Braves have the best offence and defence in the division and have a goal differential of plus 18. Despite having an offensive blueline core, the captain said there is a focus by all players on taking care of their own end.

"We are very strong at both ends of the ice. A big thing for all of us is blocking shots, laying our bodies on the line. That's an aspect of my game I love. I've broken a bone doing it, but it's the aspect of getting

the boys hyped up because of it."

He added the team's early season success is a result of doing the small things like being first in the corner and taking a big hit when necessary.

"It's having the heart and the grit when needed. Our goaltenders have also done an amazing job so far this season. They are standing on their heads every night and it gives us confidence and a boost, and makes us want to play stronger in front of them."

Dionne's first cousin is 17-year-old netminder and Baden native Andrew Torchia, who is sporting a goals-against average of 2.00 and a .944 save percentage in two starts this season.

Dionne also credited an increased focus on discipline, something lacking with last year's team.

"It's been a big issue since I started with the team four years ago. Trying to understand that retaliation isn't the answer all the time," Dionne said. "It happens during a game and tempers flare, but retaliation penalties were a big problem last year. It's something we haven't been doing so far

this year. It allows us to win more hockey games."

Dionne added his role as captain is to lead the pre-game warmups on and off the ice, as well as talking to his teammates once the coaches have completed their pre-game instructions.

"There have been times I have spoken up about things we need to improve during games. I hold people accountable, but I also love when people hold me accountable. If you don't communicate with your teammates, then improvements aren't going to happen."

Dionne is employed at Crescent Ridge Services in Tavistock, an electrical company that does a lot of solar projects in the agricultural, commercial and residential sectors both locally and out of region.

"For something that I didn't really expect myself to be in, I was given the opportunity to work there last year and I've been loving it ever since."

The Braves did travel to New Hamburg on Friday and came away with a 3-2

Continued on page 21



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

New Hamburg Firebirds' goalie Deklan Jermol makes a save and covers the puck as Tavistock Braves' forward Jacob Reid-Brant rushes the net. Reid-Brant contributed a goal in the second in Tavistock's 3-2 win on Oct. 10, which held up as the game-winner.



New Hamburg Firebirds' defenceman tries to poke check the puck off the stick of Tavistock Braves' forward Evan Palubeski as he carries the puck into the offensive zone.

PJHL CURRENT STANDINGS																					
South Doherty Division									GP	W	L	OTL	T	SOW	SOL	PTS	OTW	GF	GA	DIFF	PCT
1	Wellesley Applejacks	8	7	1	0	0	0	0	14	3	32	23	9	0.875	0.000	149	4	7	7-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.582
2	Tavistock Braves	7	6	0	1	0	0	0	13	0	34	16	18	0.929	0.000	150	6	6	6-0-1-0	0-0-0-0	0.680
3	Woodstock Navy Vets	10	5	3	2	0	0	0	12	1	44	34	10	0.600	0.000	140	4	5	4-0-1-0	0-0-0-0	0.564
4	Norwich Merchants	10	5	4	0	0	0	1	11	2	32	36	-4	0.550	0.000	162	3	5	0-1-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.471
5	New Hamburg Firebirds	9	3	3	3	0	0	0	9	0	33	27	6	0.500	0.000	178	3	3	1-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.550
6	Paris Titans	9	4	5	0	0	0	0	8	1	32	41	-9	0.444	0.000	127	3	4	0-2-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.438
7	Dorchester Dolphins	9	3	4	1	0	1	1	8	0	30	33	-3	0.444	0.000	141	2	2	1-0-1-0	0-0-0-0	0.476
8	Hespeler Shamrocks	10	3	6	1	0	1	0	7	1	13	40	-27	0.350	0.000	237	1	2	1-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.245

Minor hockey in Tavistock in good shape despite new player-movement rules

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The success of any minor hockey system is based first and foremost on its numbers. The Tavistock Minor Hockey Association (TMHA) has increased enrolment for the 2025-2026 Ontario Minor Hockey League season despite the Ontario Hockey Federation allowing any player to play in the centre of their choice.

As of December 2024, the Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) approved a series of updates to its player-movement rules to take effect for this season.

Players from the U10 age group up to U18 were no longer bound by where they live to play for a given association. In other words, they can try out or play for any

association in the OHF regardless of their home address.

For players in U9 and younger, if they are playing house league, the rules are mostly unchanged and they can play anywhere in the OHF. For minor development (MD or AE) and select levels in U9 and under, the boundary rules still apply.

TMHA president Brad Witzel said the organization's numbers are up substantially.

"We are over 300 registrations and you can add another 45 once First Shift gets going in November. What we are seeing is some really big numbers at our younger ages. The U5 and U7 programs are over 70 each, the U8 and U9 combined are pretty good, so we are seeing overall growth in the organization."

First Shift is an introductory or beginner hockey program in partnership with the NHL/NHLPA, Hockey Canada and local minor hockey associations. It's designed for kids who are new to organized hockey and are between the ages of six and 10 years old.

Despite the increased numbers in the younger age groups, Witzel said TMHA has seen older players take advantage of the increased migration opportunities.

"We saw the biggest impact at the competitive U13 and U15 predominantly, not to the same degree at U18, where we saw a good number of players take the option to go elsewhere through the open borders.

Time will tell where those teams are going to land in their new competitive structure."

Witzel said they have to find out how competitive Tavistock teams are in the Southern Counties league as the season proceeds.

"Are we still all relatively balanced or did some centres get stronger and some get weaker. We will need a little more time to tell."

Part of the reason for the hike in registrations is the presence of more non-resident players, those who chose to come to Tavistock from other centres.

"There were some in U9 and up to U15, so there were players from other centres looking for a change or who were potentially displaced through their tryout processes. Others came here for tryouts, had great things to say and ended up staying for our Local League program."

Some of the organization's top players, particularly at the U13 and U15 levels, have left Tavistock (a B centre) to play BB or A elsewhere, but Witzel hopes they will, at some point in their careers, decide to come back home.

The Gazette asked Witzel how he would rate the overall health of the TMHA, from one to 10, in light of the many changes occurring not only this year, but in recent years.

"Well, I would like to think it's pretty high on the scale. Financially, we are in very good shape. We do a very good job of monitoring that very closely, ensuring our registration rates are set appropriately, and we are maintaining that fiscal responsibility. We are very fortunate to have some members on the board who have that fiscal acumen."

He added the lofty registration numbers at young ages bodes well for the

organization's future.

"It's promising to see the younger players progress up and if we can backfill the U5 to U7 ages with another group of 75 kids, you can appreciate how that dominoes throughout the system."

Witzel added he's pleased with the coaches at the representative and local-league levels. He said what remains to be seen is what open borders does to the organization when it comes to being competitive at the rep level.

"At this point, it's too early to comment on that. If we have a great year, obviously, we are very healthy from that competitive standpoint, but (if we) have a down year in comparison to the past, it's the new normal and we will have to monitor what it looks like in uncharted territory."

One criticism of hockey bodies like the Ontario Minor Hockey Association and the OHF has been the absence of opportunities to provide meaningful feedback on existing and new policies and processes. There are some opportunities, but overall, minor hockey associations are largely on the receiving end of what comes down the pipe from those above.

"There are ways to provide feedback, but we are a very small fish in a massive pond. We share what we can through our local OMHA representative, but some things are administratively difficult and we do our best to manage them," Witzel said.

Witzel explained the association does what it can to deal with the new rules and regulations.

"At the end of the day we do our absolute best to manage all of that administration through the executive and let the players and parents enjoy the on-ice product. There is a lot to manage and make sure we are on top of."

Continued from page 20

victory. Tavistock jumped out to a 3-0 lead by the 7:25 mark of the second period on goals from Dionne, Blair Stokes and Jacob Reid-Brant.

The game turned a bit ugly at the 6:14 mark of the third period when Tavistock's Nolan Miller dropped the gloves with New Hamburg's Justin McManus, while the Braves' Blair Stokes tussled with the Firebirds' Connor Varley. Stokes and Varley were hit with a second fight during the same stoppage penalty, while McManus was hit with an instigator/aggressor minor. New Hamburg's Zachary Rolson also picked up a five-minute major for boarding late in the first period.

The fights turned the momentum around as Owen Sculthorp and Kayden Livingston scored two minutes apart for the Firebirds but a scoreless third period carried Tavistock to its fifth win in a row.

The Braves have a pair of games next weekend as they travel to Norwich on Friday and Dorchester on Saturday. The Applejacks also have two road games coming up, Friday in Woodstock and on Saturday in Paris.

New Hamburg bounced back on Saturday with a 5-2 victory in Norwich. The Firebirds jumped out to a 2-0 lead by the 12-minute mark of the second period, but the Merchants scored twice in 29 seconds to tie it up. New Hamburg scored the next three goals to earn the win. Josh Sulliere scored twice to lead the attack while Evan Wallace added a goal and an assist.

The Firebirds host Dorchester on Friday night for their lone weekend matchup.

League announces 50/50 draw

The PJHL is excited to announce the launch of its Online Top Shelf 50/50 Draw, giving fans the chance to win while supporting grassroots hockey across the province.

"Every ticket purchased offers a shot at the grand prize, with all proceeds going directly back into the PJHL. Funds raised will help support more than 1,500 players, fund league initiatives, strengthen local communities and create opportunities for the next generation of PJHL hockey stars," a league press release stated.

"Every dollar raised helps grow our league and ensures young athletes have the resources to excel both on and off the ice," said Terry Whiteside, PJHL commissioner.

Tickets are available online throughout the entire season via the PJHL website at www.thepjhl.ca, participating team sites and other digital channels. Fans can follow the PJHL's official platforms for updates and prize announcements, and draws will take place throughout the season.

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MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Warren Benbow fires a quick shot on net during this past Monday's U11 LL Boys Three Tavistock Titans game.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Angela Wilson launches a quick shot on net during the U11 LL Girls Wilmot Wolverines game last Wednesday.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Noah Vance backhands a shot on goal from in tight during the U13 LL Boys One Tavistock Titans game this past Monday.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Nyla Vinke fires a heavy wrist shot on target during last Tuesday's U15 BB Wilmot Wolverines game.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Jackson Fulton releases the puck from the blueline during the U15 LL Boys Two Tavistock Titans game last Saturday.

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The Erb Group raises over \$20,000 for local charities

THE ERB GROUP

Submitted to the Gazette

The Erb Group hosted its 32nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament at Rebel Creek Golf Club last month, uniting 130 employees, partners and suppliers for a day of friendly competition, connection and giving back.

This annual event is a longstanding tradition at The Erb Group, raising essential funds to support organizations that make a meaningful difference in the local community. This year's tournament raised over \$20,000 in support of The Wilmot and Wellesley Resource Centre, Tri-County Mennonite Homes and Interfaith Counselling Centre.

These three local organizations are dedicated to improving lives and strengthening the neighbourhoods The Erb Group proudly serves. This year's donations bring total contributions to more than \$600,000 since the event's inception in 1994.

With the generous support of attendees and sponsors, the donations raised will enable these organizations to continue delivering vital services, including food security initiatives, mental health support, and community building programs that benefit

residents throughout Waterloo Region.

"The generosity and spirit we see at this tournament every year truly represent what our company and industry are all about; people coming together to make a difference," said Erb Group CEO Wendell Erb.

"We're so thankful to everyone who joined us and for helping us continue this meaningful tradition."

As a family-owned company with a mission to "bring food to families' tables," The Erb Group is proud to continue supporting charitable initiatives that align with its core values of community, care and connection.

Founded in 1959, The Erb Group is one of North America's largest privately owned refrigerated transportation providers. The Erb Group specializes in the timely, protected distribution of temperature-controlled perishable goods across Canada and the U.S. The Erb Group is a family owned business, hosting over 1,500 employees, 1,000 trailers and 650 power units. Its head office is based in New Hamburg with additional Canadian terminals in Baden, Toronto, Thunder Bay, North Bay, Ottawa, Montreal, Trenton, Winnipeg and a U.S. terminal in Elverson, Pa.



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ERB GROUP)

The Tri-Country Mennonite Homes team at Rebel Creek Golf Club for The Erb Group's 32nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament.



Volunteers from The Erb Group at the golf registration table.



Participants heading to holes at Rebel Creek Golf Club for The Erb Group's 32nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament.

Stop looking for ways to be critical

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Director of Sports

For the past several years, in the St. Marys Independent Newspaper, we have run a weekly feature called the Minor Sports Scrapbook, where we would publish four to six photos from minor sports games every week.

Recently, the Gazette was thrilled to bring on a co-op student with a passion for sports photography who has taken up the role of bringing the same Scrapbook feature to the Gazette, which will highlight various teams from the Gazette's coverage area. This student has been a wonderful addition to the Gazette, and we couldn't

be happier with what this student has delivered so far.

Last week's edition of the Gazette saw the first of many Scrapbook pages, and this week, another one is in the Gazette.

Unfortunately, we received a complaint about the first Scrapbook page because it happened to be from Wilmot and New Hamburg teams.

So, let me stand up for our co-op student, who did exactly what was asked of them, and did a phenomenal job. The Gazette will run this Scrapbook feature every week for as long as possible, and we will cover teams from all around our coverage area.

The fact there were no Tavistock teams in last week's edition wasn't a shameful

act of ignoring Tavistock; it was a matter of scheduling. It happened to be that the four games our student could attend were Wilmot and New Hamburg teams, and the two Tavistock games our student had planned to attend got listed as cancelled on the online schedule, so they didn't go.

There may be some weeks where there are five Tavistock photos and one Wilmot photo. It's not a matter of favouritism; it's a matter of what works schedule-wise every week. We couldn't fit in a photo from every team, every week. We can't take photos of every game, every week, but we will do our best to spotlight as many different teams and kids as we can.

To get one week into this project and

have someone complain and call what we published "shameful" when we obviously will be covering Tavistock as well as New Hamburg and the rest of Wilmot is the kind of thing that makes me want to say, "Forget about it, we won't cover any minor sports at all," and could cause our co-op student to lose some of their passion and enjoyment for sports photography. Would that really be better?

If you honestly looked at a collection of youth sports photos and all you thought was to complain, then maybe it's time to reconsider your outlook on life. And please, for the sake of everyone else who just wants to enjoy their day, stop looking for things to be critical about.

Wellesley council approves guiding principles for redevelopment or repurposing of old Wellesley arena and community centre

Guiding principles are based on community feedback and will inform two to three options

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Wellesley council has approved a set of 10 guiding principles that will help the township's consultants move ahead with developing between two and three options for the future use of the property on which the old Village of Wellesley arena and community centre currently sit.

At its Oct. 14 committee of the whole meeting, councillors heard from GSP group president and senior planner Steve Wever, who presented the findings of recent public engagement around what residents would like to see the township do with the old arena and community centre now than that new Wellesley Recreation Complex is open and fully operational.

"The overall purpose of step 1 for this process is really to lay the foundation for coming up with some options in the next step," Wever said. "Before we get into starting to draw things on the map or identifying some potential layout options or repurposing of the site or buildings, we really wanted to get back to the basics of what are the principles, what are the overall words and phrases people use for creating a vision for guiding the future use of

the land."

According to Wever, the planning consultants from GSP group conducted an exhaustive consultation that included feedback from an online survey with 406 responses, two open houses with a total of 80 attendees, 78 online comments and consultations with more than 10 local stakeholder organizations. Those who attended the Wellesley Backyard BBQ in June were also consulted.

The majority of the respondents to the online survey and attendees at the open houses, Wever later told council, live within the Village of Wellesley and in the neighbourhood adjacent to the community centre and arena.

Based on the results of the public-engagement process, Wever told councillors the majority of those who provided feedback were strongly opposed to the township selling the land and buildings, and strongly in support of public, recreation or community uses for the site. Locals also indicated they'd like to see the arena and community centre preserved as festival and event space, and they'd like to see year-round, community-focused mixed uses at the site with space for amenities like a library, child-care centre and seniors'

or youth programming among others.

Additionally, those who provided feedback said they wanted to see any new or existing buildings on the site designed or repurposed with accessibility in mind, that parking and operations onsite support use of the adjacent parkland and baseball diamonds, and that the site be operated sustainably and efficiently from a financial perspective.

From that feedback, Wever presented the following guiding principles for the site's potential redevelopment, should council choose to move ahead:

- Public stewardship and recreation-led use: Keep the lands in public ownership and prioritize outdoor public, recreational and community uses; repurpose existing assets where feasible.
- Community-oriented, inclusive and safe: Design and program the site to reflect Wellesley's community spirit; ensure it is welcoming and comfortable for all ages and abilities.
- Universal accessibility by design: Integrate accessibility from the outset, including continuous barrier-free paths, accessible entries, seating, washrooms and parking so

all users can navigate and enjoy the site independently.

- Year-round activation and everyday use: Plan for four seasons and balance major events with daily, informal use. Provide durable surfaces, weather protection and amenities that support regular community activity.
- Distinct and complementary community amenities: Provide community and cultural amenities that add to, rather than duplicate, township recreation services centralized at the Wellesley Township Recreation Complex.
- Community-serving housing: Limit residential uses to small-scale, village-appropriate forms that address local needs and co-locate ground-floor community services where appropriate.
- Height, massing and village fit: Shape any new or retained buildings to reinforce Wellesley's small-scale character and to respect adjacent parks and neighbours through sensitive height, massing and transitions.
- Access, parking and operations for

Continued on page 25

A photographer is coming. Dress up!

VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

Tavistock and District Historical Society

Photography was still a novel technology up to the introduction of mass-produced, handheld small cameras of the 1920s, so when the schoolmaster announced that a professional photographer was coming, it was a special and infrequent occasion where parents wanted their children to represent their families in their smartest attire. Dress-up group photos at schools were common; individual ID photos were unknown at the time.

When commercial photography became popular around 1860, a camera was a big, box-like apparatus that was always held atop a sturdy tripod. The camera could be partially disassembled to carry in a large case and the tripod folded to transport under arm. Cameras used in studios were sometimes considerably larger and designed to only be used where their heavy glass negatives could be handled, sometimes as large as 14 by 18

inches (36 by 46 centimetres).

The field camera that was used to take this picture had a glass negative that measured a very standard-at-the-time eight by 10 inches (20 by 26 centimetres). One side of the glass was coated with light-sensitive silver halide – yes, real silver; the other side was not coated. After the photographer focused the upside-down image while standing under a dark hood at the camera's back, he (usually male) inserted the negative, got everyone's attention and took the picture. The photographer could not look through the camera while the photo was taken, so he had to stand beside it, sometimes with a small toy bird on a finger to hold children's attention.

This is where the expression, "Watch the birdie," comes from. "Say cheese" came decades later when it was thought that pronouncing this word causes people to smile.

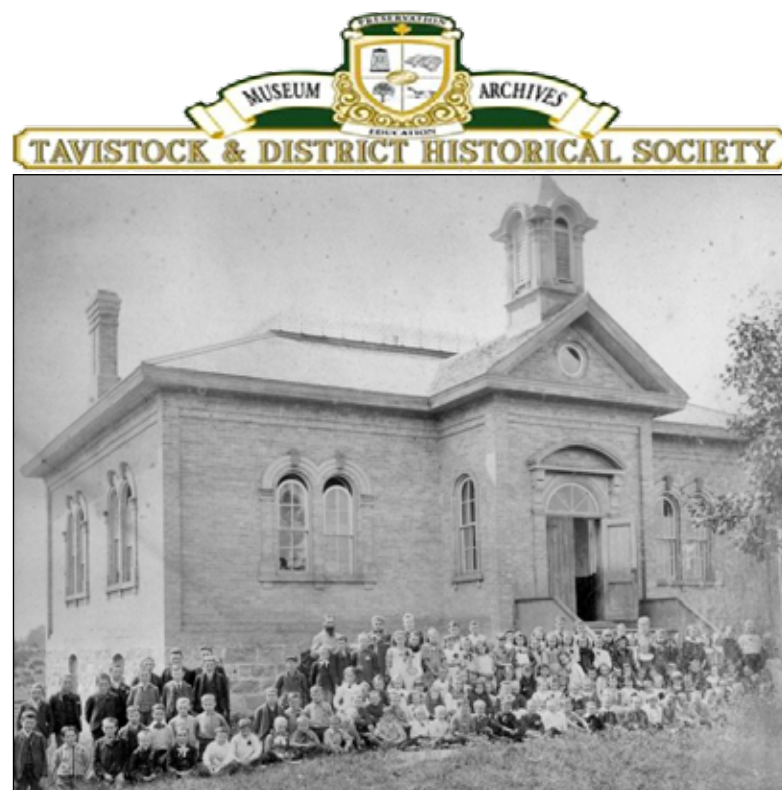
So, when the photographer arrived to take photos of the group assembled in front of the school, it was an unusual sight and clearly a special occasion. Note how some of the boys are wearing long ties, jackets and even vests. The girls would wear their prettiest dresses. There appears to be only three staff members in this picture, one of whom is very likely the prin-

icipal and 124 pupils. Lots of other photos of school groups show boys and girls not wearing shoes and much more casually dressed, likely because they were playing 'hooky' when the announcement was made to "Dress up. The photographer is coming tomorrow."

It's not recorded who the photographer was. There were about five itinerant photographers setting up shop for one or two days per week in Tavistock for about two decades, until John "Jack" Lemp arrived in 1905, built a photo studio and darkroom and shot and developed the vast majority of pictures in the Lemp Studio Collection, along with his pharmacy business. This picture clearly pre-dates Mr. Lemp.

Darkrooms, rolls of film and trays of liquid chemicals are now largely things of the past. One of the largest companies in the world, Kodak, based in Rochester, N.Y., dominated the western world's roll film (analogue) business for over a century, but is now a shadow of its former self. They didn't invest heavily in the new digital photo medium that's common today and were left in the dark.

The last history mystery: The Oct. 2 Vintage Views article question was "Why are there two colours of brick, as you can see between the first and second



(PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN; LEMP STUDIO COLLECTION #5049.)

"Watch the birdie" might have been shouted by the photographer to the group assembled for this warm-weather local school photo taken between 1879 and 1898.

floors of the main (Tavistock Public) school building, but a single colour in the two-storey, front entrance part?" Connie Hitzeroth of Tavistock was the first reader to answer this correctly. It's because bricks of the same colour were no longer available when the second storey was constructed two decades later.

This week's history mystery: is open to readers up to and including age 14. What school is in this article? Send your answer to tim_mosher@hotmail.com by 9 a.m. Oct. 28. The first reader to forward the correct answer will have their name and community name or rural route number published in the next Vintage Views article two weeks from now.

Continued from page 24

events: Maintain sufficient onsite parking and efficient circulation to support adjacent ball diamonds, splash pad, playground and major events while improving walking and cycling access.

- Financial responsibility and operational realism: Advance options that are feasible to build, operate and maintain over their full lifecycle. Avoid duplicative capital or operating burdens and focus resources where they deliver the greatest public benefit.
- Community first partnerships and co-location: Where appropriate, co-locate community-serving uses (i.e. library, daycare, youth/seniors' hubs) to activate the site and meet local needs, with clear agreements that protect public access and community-first programming.

With these guiding principles in mind, Wever said GSP group would begin developing two to three concepts for the future of the arena and community centre lands that would then be presented to the public and council for feedback and revised or combined if necessary. A preferred concept will likely be presented to council for a final decision by the end of summer or early fall next year, prior to the current council entering its "lame duck" period ahead of the township's October municipal election.

Wever also noted that the proposed concepts for consideration would likely incorporate options for repurposing one or both of the existing buildings on this site, building new, or a combination of repurposing and building new.

"Based on your report, it seemed to me that there was not one item that really stood out that people absolutely had to have," Mayor Joe Nowak said. "I mean, a lot of the percentages (of people in support or opposition) were in the 50 or 55 range for various options. Do you not think this is going to make it awfully difficult for this council to make a decision when the time comes?"

"That's a good point; there wasn't a lot of answers that were in the 80 or 90 per cent where everybody aligned in the same direction," Wever responded. "There is a bit of a split in the community around the future opportunities and how the site should be reused in the future. So, we're not going to please everybody with the plan that we ultimately come up with. Hopefully, though, we can narrow that down more specifically once we start to use images and plans and show them what the various options could look like."

The horses of Perth County's North Easthope Township



Two horses graze in a fall pasture on the Mohr family farm in North Easthope Township. The Mohrs – Brad and Erica, with sons Mackenzie and Marshal – also operate a pork-farming business as proud Perth County Pork Producers.

GARY WEST
Gazette Correspondent

Two horses on a farm near Perth Road 105 in North Easthope Township, northwest of New Hamburg, appeared to be enjoying the green fall pastures last week. With the weather holding steady, farm

owners Brad and Erica Mohr, along with their sons Mackenzie and Marshal, know this lush, green field won't stay that way for long before the "white stuff" blankets it in the coming months.

The Mohr family is active in the pork-farming business, proudly continuing the tradition of putting "Pork on Your Fork" as Perth County Pork Producers.

Gazette Puzzles

DELICIOUS AUTUMN PIES

M	D	A	X	A	Y	M	J	S	L	N	W	P	R	W	B	A	G	P	D
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E	T	S	U	R	C	N	E	D	L	O	G	S	A	R	S	L	G	M	O

Apple	Homemade	PecanFilling
CaramelDrizzle	LatticeTop	Pumpkin
Cinnamon	MapleSyrup	SweetPotato
FlakyPastry	Nutmeg	WarmSpices
GoldenCrust	OvenFresh	WhippedTopping

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She adores attention and will lean right in for pets, giving you her irresistible "love me forever" eyes. While she's still deciding how she feels about other dogs, Penelope is looking to be your one and only, and with her big heart, that's all you'll need. Visit kwsphumane.ca to adopted Penelope today!



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Stamp out sugar

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Food is powerful. There are a million memes with catchy quotes reminding us the importance of fueling the body with nutrient-dense whole foods. There's no magic bullet and yes, you are what you eat, but Jim Rohn said it best.

"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live."

It's crucial for a fit and fabulous life to say so long to sugar. Sugar is enemy number one. It's that simple.

Any kind of sugar – and that includes everything from granulated and raw to coconut and the toxic, highly processed high fructose corn syrup, to the myriad found in Mother Nature, whether coconut, date, honey or the magic of maple and agave syrup – can sabotage your diet. Some contain trace minerals, antioxidants, are lower on the glycemic index, less processed or not genetically modified, but at the end of the spoon and fork, the

outcome remains the same.

The pancreas produces insulin to lock the glucose into cells. High insulin is problematic for reams of reasons. First off, sky-high insulin slows the metabolism by shutting down fat burning. The body reacts to the roller coaster effect of sugar by driving hunger hormones and creating a vicious cycle centered around out-of-control cravings.

Sugar disrupts hormones starting with dropping testosterone levels in men and, in women, hormonal dysregulation. Cortisol, the hormone released in times of stress, can become out of control, and sugar addicts often experience overwhelming emotions and bouts of fatigue due to a sugar crash.

Sugar is linked to digestive distress, and those with a sugar addiction may experience bloating, gas and even suffer from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Sugar lovers tend to struggle with maintaining a healthy weight due to overindulging in a wide variety of mainstream options on the Standard American Diet typically low in nutrients and fiber, but insanely high in worthless calories. Since our bodies break down simple sugars super speedy, snacking satisfaction is an epic failure and overeating is inevitable due to intense cravings.

It doesn't take long for those with a sweet tooth to develop heaps of health issues from type-two diabetes to heart disease to chronic inflammation. Sugar is toxic.

Struggling to sleep? Sugar disrupts sleep.

Sugar is the driving force in fatty liver disease. Cutting out all sugar, even the one teaspoon in the morning coffee or tea, can change your life, let alone the specialty holiday favourites or cold brews with as much sugar as a can of pop. No artificial sweeteners please. Flooding the body with chemicals creates new problems, but the body remains confused, still craving sugar.

How much sugar is too much? The official daily value listed on Canada's Nutrition Facts Table is 50 grams or 12 teaspoons, based on a 2,000-calorie diet, which in this certified holistic nutritionist's opinion is too high. The sad truth



(VECTEEZY PHOTO)

Cutting out sugar can transform your health. Even small daily doses add up, fueling cravings, hormone imbalances, and chronic illness. Be sugar savvy—your body will thank you.

is the average Canadian eats even more than the recommendation. A 2019 Statistics Canada study found the average daily intake was 57.1 grams of added sugars. Added sugar is deadly, and it's hidden in plain sight; barbecue sauces, salad dressings, electrolyte drinks, and would you believe balsamic vinegar has two grams in a tablespoon? Nobody needs added sugar to live.

Be sugar savvy. Read labels, reduce sugar in recipes and limit

processed foods. Sugar is a drug. Diabetes and fatty liver are on the rise in children. It's time to set a good example. Type-2 diabetes does not run in families, it runs in the habits families share.

The best investment you can make is in yourself and teaching your family the value of eating fresh, garden goodness over packaged foods with unproduceable ingredients and an expiration date.

Love yourself inside and out.

The horrors of deviating from set plans

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Galen Simmons



Now that Thanksgiving is behind us and we turn our full attention to spooky season, I'd like to share with you, dear reader, something that frightens me above almost everything else.

No, it's not spiders or puppets – though I'm not fond of either –

and it's not the notion that we'll all die some day. For me, the thing that scares me more than anything else is a sudden and unexpected change in plans.

I don't think I'm alone in this. You know when you're planning a trip, be it a trip across town or

one halfway around the globe, and you've got everything planned down to the most minute details. You know what time you need to wake up, when you need to hit the road, where you'll stop for coffee, what the parking situation is and what to expect when you arrive at your destination.

It's all planned out and you've even budgeted time in case something doesn't go exactly to plan, but then you hit construction or an accident on the highway and that time you budgeted slowly and painfully ticks down until you know there's no way you'll make it on time.

Or maybe at the last second, somebody falls ill or hurts themselves and they can't make it.

Perhaps your babysitter calls and cancels right as you're ready to head out the door. Then, your train is late or it doesn't arrive at all.

Sometimes, it seems the world is throwing every little inconvenience it can muster at you until your precious plans are nothing more than a distant hope, smashed to pieces on the floor of your flooded upstairs bathroom. There's no way you can fix a toilet and make your flight on time, right?

If I had to design a haunted house for adults, I wouldn't include ghosts, goblins and ghouls covered in blood and guts, I'd include missed deadlines, unexpected home repairs, forgotten bills, sudden trips to the hospital and so

much backed-up traffic on the 401 even Google Maps' best reroutes can't turn the clock back enough to make it where you're going on time.

I guess that's why traditional horror movies and haunted houses don't really scare me all that much. How can I be afraid of those things when I face my true fears head on every day?

I guess what I'm saying is if you really want to scare me this time of year, don't jump out of a closet and shout "Boo," call me at the last minute and change a meeting time from 11 a.m. to noon.

I'm already here. What am I supposed to do with that extra hour?

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Standing in the footsteps of Vincent Van Gogh

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



Over the years, I have become increasingly intrigued by the paintings of Vincent Van Gogh. His story is a terribly tragic one, as the artist struggled with mental illness and almost complete failure in a commercial sense. There is a myth that he sold none of his approximately 2,000 works while he was alive, but that's undoubtedly an exaggeration. But he most certainly was not a highly successful artist.

Multiplying the tragedy, he died, perhaps of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, at age 37. More of this below.

Today, of course, it's a whole other story. Van Gogh is recognized as perhaps the most important Post-Impressionist artist and his paintings have sold for more than \$150 million, none of which goes to Van Gogh's estate, of course.

The finest collection of Van Gogh paintings is on display at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam – which seems appropriate enough since Van Gogh was born in the Netherlands. If you are in Amsterdam, it's a must see.

But I have enjoyed seeing Van Gogh paintings and sketches in locations as diverse as the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto and a very surprising small gallery in Solothurn, Switzerland,

among other cultural institutions. Outside of Amsterdam, the best place to enjoy Van Gogh's work – and that of other Impressionists and Post-Impressionists – is the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, which we had the chance to visit a couple of weeks ago. (Hint to travellers: use the Paris City Pass, a great deal that admits you to many wonderful attractions).

My biggest surprise, though, was that I really felt I touched Van Gogh's life and times in a city in southern France, where no gallery, or anyone for that matter, owns a Van Gogh.

The city is Arles in Provence where Van Gogh lived for more than a year, creating a new painting or drawing nearly every day. Many of his best-known works, including two of the three "Starry Night" paintings, were created right here. We visited Arles as part of a wonderful Viking cruise on the Rhone River.

Our guide on the unusual, almost disjointed city tour – lots of Roman stuff and then lots of Van Gogh – explained that Van Goghs have become so expensive that there would be a taxpayer revolt if public money was used to purchase one. So, Arles has none.

But what Arles has done, and done well, is create a Van Gogh route, erecting poster boards with the images of his paintings in the precise locations where he placed his easel. And for anyone who is a fan of the artist, there is something magical in standing in the actual footsteps of Van Gogh.

Easily, my favourite location

was Le Jardin de la Maison de Santé a Arles. It's an enclosed garden and the municipality has restored it to look precisely like it did when Van Gogh painted the scene in 1888. I could not resist grabbing my smart phone and trying to replicate the painting. Van Gogh did it better. (I will admit, it's wise to consider the scene from Van Gogh's perspective. If you walk to the other side of the garden, the view includes a plethora of souvenir shops.)

There are plenty of other explanatory plaques along the route. Van Gogh's famous painting of his own house, "La Mainse Jeune" (The Yellow House), is erected at a busy corner. The house, sadly, is gone, but the other buildings in the painting remain, including a café that Van Gogh often frequented.

The locale that has changed even more is the site where he painted the hugely famous "La Nuit Étoilée" (The Starry Night). The view when we visited (admittedly not at night) showed mostly the top decks of docked cruise boats, impeding the view of the Rhone. But nonetheless, Van Gogh had produced his fabulous work right here.

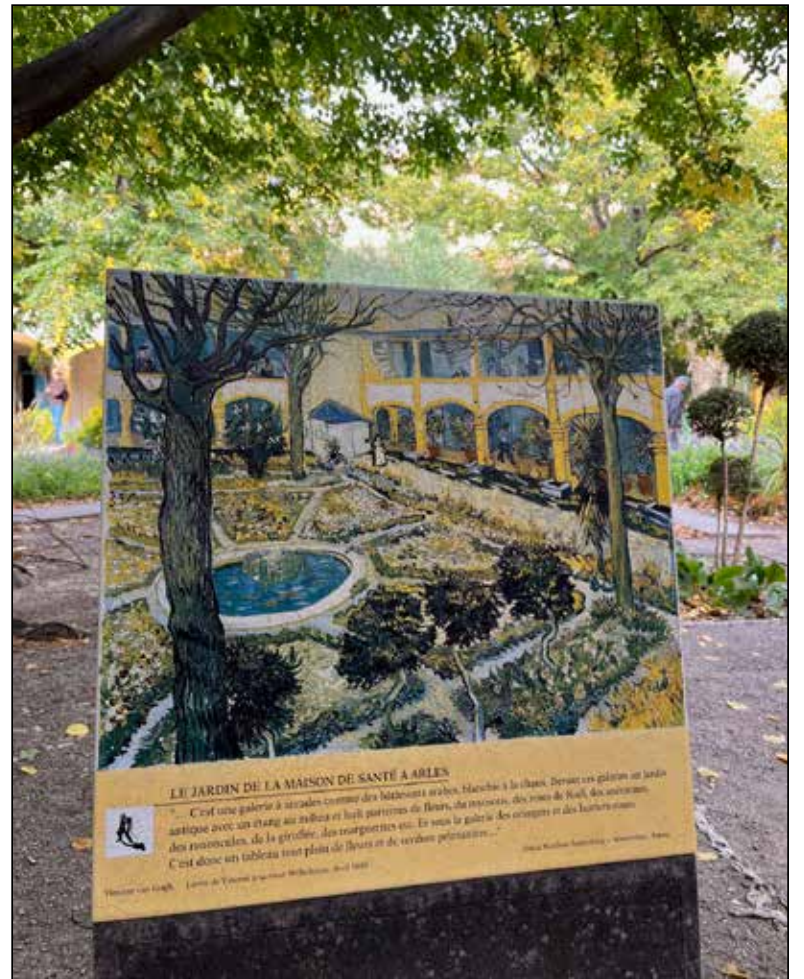
Our very well-informed guide told us two stories that really caught my attention. First, despite overwhelming consensus, she said Van Gogh's death might not have been suicide. She suggested it could have been an accident involving some children playing with a gun.

The other story is both rather sad and rather amusing. She had led us to the exact café depicted in the artist's "Café Terrace at Night." It's now the Café Van Gogh, but it's closed. Why? Because after years of the owners asking to be paid in cash because "our credit card machine is broken," the authorities cottoned on, examined their books and the owners went to jail for tax evasion.

Our guide is sure the café is awaiting some clever entrepreneur as one of the most visited sites in Arles, but she cautioned there is undoubtedly red tape involved – which is something of a national sport in France.

Until then, art lovers can enjoy the scenes that inspired this brilliant, troubled, artistic icon. To quote songwriter Don Mclean, "But I could have told you, Vincent, This world was never meant for one as beautiful as you."

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Panels identifying Van Gogh's precise location when he made his now-famous paintings abound in Arles. This is the garden of the institution where he stayed, dealing with mental illness.



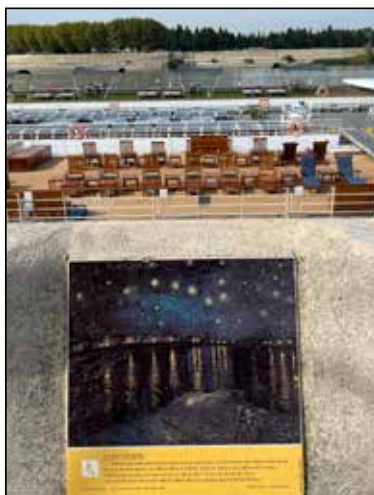
The author's attempt to recreate Van Gogh's creation in 2025.



The Arles guide explains the odd story behind what is now known as the Café Van Gogh – closed because of tax evasion!



"L'Entrée du Jardin Public" was painted exactly where the public garden path takes visitors today.



The locale where Van Gogh painted Starry Night has been altered to allow river cruise longships to dock.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Strategic planning for fire service delivery and fleet management in Wilmot Township

Dear editor,

I am writing to express my appreciation for your ongoing commitment to fire safety and the provision of efficient, effective fire services for all residents of Wilmot Township. As our community continues to grow and evolve, it is essential that we carefully consider the future needs of our fire department, particularly in relation to fleet management and capital expenditures.

One key issue for consideration is the value proposition of purchasing two, 75-foot aerial trucks versus a single 100-foot. With a fleet of 13 trucks, the probability of continual replacement is high. I am curious what the current age profile of our entire fleet is, how many are approaching maturity within the next decade and the estimated replacement cost over the next 10 years. It would be prudent for council to outline a clear plan to address the capital expenses associated with these replacements, especially in the context of Wilmot's growth strategy and the fire service requirements of future developments that are in queue.

Additionally, I would like to express my

interest in Wilmot exploring a 100-foot aerial partner agreement with neighbouring fire departments. Could there be financial benefit to paying for actual usage under a fee-for-service agreement, rather than maintaining our own 100-foot aerial? For example, if we were billed for 24 service calls in a calendar year, what would be the comparative cost of a fee-for-service contract versus cost of ownership? This option could still provide the township with additional capacity, while ensuring further investment is made in higher use cases.

I suspect that in most cases, a 75-foot aerial would be sufficient and more cost-effective. Purchasing two such trucks would not only support future growth but also provide operational flexibility, allowing for simultaneous deployment to multiple locations, improved maneuverability and backup capacity if one truck were to be out of service.

Our community is being asked to further increase our capital funding at an accelerated pace, with a proposed nine per-cent capital increase for 2026. I urge council to consider any new apparatus procurement within the 2026 budget fall within

the proposed capital budget and does not result in further tax-levy increases or the introduction of new debentures.

Finally, I recommend a broader discussion around the service levels we wish to provide in fire service delivery. Other communities have structures that exceed the capabilities of aerial-ladder service, and it is important for Wilmot to define the standards and expectations for our fire services moving forward. Another example of service review is Mannheim. Located near Kitchener, a fee-for-service partnership might enable access to additional resources, as Kitchener Station 7 has the potential of providing a quicker response time to that of New Dundee or Baden.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. I look forward to your leadership in ensuring Wilmot Township remains safe, prepared, and fiscally responsible.

Sincerely,

Rory Farnan

Petersburg

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Logistics Specialist – Food Ingredients NA

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FNF Ingredients is a full-service marketing organization and supplier for various feed and food ingredient producers. Our goal is to become a lifelong partner for end-users in the US and Canadian food, feed, and cosmetics industries. We achieve this by fully supporting our customers with the procurement and total delivery of quality products at competitive prices.

Within North America, we connect our customers with reliable manufacturers through exclusive agencies, consignment stock, and other attractive terms. We provide end users with prompt deliveries, eliminate their risk of price fluctuation, and solve their supply chain challenges. We are the ultimate partner for our customers — and help them succeed!

Over the past eight years, we have experienced tremendous growth globally, and we are continuing this expansion in the US and Canada. As an FNF Logistics Specialist, you will be an important part of building our shared future.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

Coordinate logistics with carriers, customs brokers, and warehouses to ensure smooth product distribution.

Serve as the main contact for customers, providing updates and support.

Source, negotiate, and book freight as needed, while tracking shipments globally.

Manage sales orders, purchase orders, invoicing, and cashflow tracking within our ERP system.

Collaborate with our warehouses and China team to streamline logistics processes.

Support regulatory and customs documentation requirements.

WHAT YOU OFFER:

Experience in logistics, supply chain, or international trade.

Strong organizational and communication skills with attention to detail.

Ability to manage multiple priorities in a fast-paced, global environment.

A proactive, solution-driven mindset and team-oriented approach.

WHAT WE OFFER:

Full flexibility in working hours and location — we value a healthy work-life balance.

No fixed cap on holiday leave.

Laptop, smartphone, and full reimbursement of business expenses.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2025

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

**Optimist Club of Petersburg
Bottle Drive**
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Your empty bottles and cans allow us to raise funds to help organizations and youth in the community. Fo'Cheezy Food Truck will be here with proceeds from every grilled cheese going directly to the Bottle Drive.
Bechthold Home Improvements
1239 Notre Dame Drive, Petersburg

Tavistock Fall Expo

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
20 vendors and lunch booth, free admission with lots of parking
Handicap accessible building
marjoriehwilson@gmail.com
Tavistock Missionary Church
77 Mogk Street, Tavistock

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

Stratford 62th Annual Coin Show
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Admission \$3.00 (under 16 free). 65th Anniversary Cake Celebration at 2 pm.
Best Western Arden Park Hotel
552 Ontario St. Stratford

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Perth East council meeting
7 p.m.

Council chambers
25 Mill Street East, Milverton

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

Oxford Philatelic Society Circuit Book Fair
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Free Admission & Parking
Stop in and buy some stamps and meet fellow stamp collectors. About 8 participating stamp clubs. Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com
Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>
Church of the Epiphany,
560 Dundas Street, Woodstock

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27

Wilmot Council meeting
7 to 11 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road W., Baden

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

Wellesley Council meeting

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

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1

**Free Repair Cafe hosted by Nith Valley
EcoBoosters**
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Get help with fixing items that are broken or need mending. For more details contact nvecoboosters@gmail.com
Zion United Church
215 Peel Street, New Hamburg

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

East Zorra-Tavistock Council meeting
9 a.m.

Council Chambers
89 Loveys Street East, Hickson

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9

**The Plattsville & District Heritage Society
Annual Remembrance Service**
11:30 a.m.

Chesterfield Cenotaph
816661 Oxford Road 22, Bright

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

**Tavistock Men's Club Sauerkraut & BBQ
Pork Chop Supper**

4 to 7 p.m.
Pick Up Only. Call 519-655-3573 or email: info@tavistockmensclub.ca
or online tavistockmensclub.ca
Tavistock Memorial Hall
1 Adam St. Tavistock ON

STAMP CLUB

Oxford Philatelic Society
Meetings: 2nd Tuesday (2-4pm) and 4th Tuesday (7 to 9pm)

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

MUSEUM/ARCHIVES EXHIBIT

The Museum/Archives will be open for viewing of **Remembrance Displays and Memorabilia** on the following **Saturdays of November 1st, 8th, and 15th, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**
All are welcome
816661 Oxford Road 22, Bright

MORNING & EVENING BIBLE READING

Read the Bible in a Year in Community

Morning meeting 6:00am daily

Evening meeting 6:00pm daily

Contact Arthur Rosh if interested.

Phone number: 226-899-1551

Email address: arthur.rosh@gmail.com

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

EVERY WEDNESDAY

TOPS - Taking off Pounds Sensibly

Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

TOPS is a non-judgmental weight loss support group. Need help on your weight loss journey. For info call Cathie 519-662-9273.
St James Church, Baden

EVERY WEDNESDAY CONTINUED

**Wednesday Night Euchre at the New
Hamburg Legion**
Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

65 Boulee St., New Hamburg

FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

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

Pickleball Monday, Wednesday and Friday
afternoon, 12-4. Contact: Don Junker

519-535-7052

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

Inside walking Monday & Wednesday
morning 8.30-12. Contact: Larry Brown

519-240-6715

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

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

519-535-7052.

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

The
Wilmot-Tavistock
Gazette

Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.
Contact: thewtgazette@gmail.com

PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

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

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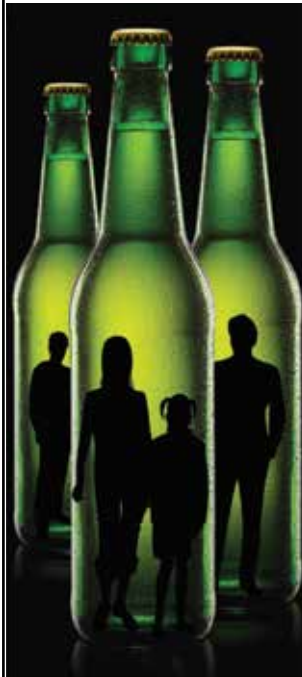
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1	7	3	4	9	6	2	8	5
5	2	9	1	8	3	4	7	6
2	4	1	6	7	5	3	9	8
7	9	5	3	1	8	6	4	2
3	8	6	9	2	4	1	5	7

Weekly Quiz Answers

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Love Never Dies | 7. Nova Scotia |
| 2. Nobody | 8. Arizona, |
| 3. Aloha | California, New |
| 4. Fourteen | Mexico, Texas |
| 5. Peterson | 9. Tetris |
| 6. The Wallflowers | 10. Heathrow Airport |

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