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(PHOTO COURTESY OF WILMOT TOWNSHIP)

Wilmot Township participated in the recent ROMA conference. Pictured from left to right are Jennifer Bouzane, executive officer for mayor and council; Steven Martin, Ward 4 councillor; Dr. Steven Harrison, CEO, Tri-County Mennonite Homes; Mayor Natasha Salonen; Rick Bresee, MPP for Hastings-Lennox and Addington; and Stewart Cressman, Ward 1 councillor.

## Area municipalities take part in ROMA conference

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The annual Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) Conference was held last week in Toronto, and many area politicians attended the three-day event.

ROMA is the rural voice of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). A number of its executive

members serve on the AMO board of directors. Policy, research and advocacy activities are undertaken by ROMA through AMO.

Scott Zehr was one of three members of East Zorra-Tavistock council to attend, and he highlighted a session on rural land management.

"I had a number of different areas that were working on at that. One that stands

out is Essex, and how they are trying to contain farmland and make sure it continues to exist; kind of working with farmers and how to deal with small roads and big equipment, and all of these things."

He added two other items caught his eye, including the need for long-term care beds.

"The thing that was concerning for me,

## Motor-vehicle collisions in Oxford up substantially this winter

OPP offers advice on staying safe

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

This winter has been the most volatile and dangerous for Oxford County and Wilmot Township motorists, leading to a record number of collisions. But, according to one member of the Oxford Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment, it doesn't need to be that way.

Const. Randi Crawford said the OPP doesn't have rankings of causes for winter collisions, but the top few are very obvious: driving too fast for the conditions and following too closely.

"It happens all the time and with any type of vehicle, be it a commercial motor vehicle, a small car, an SUV or a pick-up truck. All types of vehicles seem to be driving too fast for the conditions," Crawford said.

When it comes to being too close to the vehicle in front, Crawford said tractor-trailers aren't always at fault.

"When one jackknifes, people may jump to the conclusion that the truck was going too fast for the road conditions, which could have been a contributing factor. But people sometimes cut them off and those trucks take time

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# OPP asks drivers to rethink winter travel as collisions climb

Continued from page 1

to slow down, and if they have to slam on their brakes in this weather, they are going to jackknife.”

Crawford added driving distracted and in a hurry can also cause collisions in winter weather.

“If the world were an ideal place, we could all drive properly and not have to be defensive, but when you are driving in unpredictable weather, you have to prepare yourself to deal with unpredictable behaviours by other drivers.”

Crawford said there has been about a 40 per-cent increase in collisions this winter compared to the last two.

MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISIONS IN OXFORD COUNTY	
DATES	# OF COLLISIONS
NOV. 1, 2023, TO JAN. 27, 2024	475
NOV. 1, 2024, TO JAN. 27, 2025	465
NOV. 1, 2025, TO JAN. 27, 2026	616
Statistics from Oxford Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police	

“Those are a lot of collisions we have to deal with. It takes a lot of our frontline officers’ time to respond to so many of them,” she added.

Crawford said winter driving courses

offered by some drivers-education companies are a great option for unsure or inexperienced drivers, as well as tractor-trailer drivers.

“Maybe some companies can reflect and ask if we have given our drivers winter driver training or even if they have any experience driving a big truck in the snow. The time and the cost it takes to get a tractor-trailer out of the ditch is high, and often main highways need to be shut down for hours as a result.

“If you are someone who doesn’t feel confident driving in snow, that’s something to look into. People also need to do that self-reflection. Do you feel prepared to drive in this weather today? Do I need to? Sometimes we convince ourselves we really need to get to whatever it is, but when you really assess it, do you really need to do it that day?”

She added having a safety bag with a flashlight, blanket and snacks is also a good idea, along with a full tank of gas.

“Or, if you have an electric vehicle like I do, make sure you have it charged before you head out. If you’re out there and you don’t feel comfortable or safe, turn around and think about cancelling where you’re going. Is it worth it? You could hurt yourself or someone else.”

Crawford explained winter tires are an

important part of being safe on the roads in inclement winter weather but admitted the cost can be a barrier for some people. She added having winter tires doesn’t mean people can drive like it’s a bare road.

“Just because you have them doesn’t mean they’re magic tires. It doesn’t mean you can go faster than everyone else on the road.”

One situation seen on urban streets and rural roads during this winter’s heavy snow is vehicles driving with immense amounts of snow on them, many times obscuring a driver’s view. Crawford said a little effort goes a long way.

“Wipe off the hood, the back and the top of your vehicle. You might be able to see out your windshield momentarily, but when that snow starts shifting, it’s going to slide down in front of you or fly off on the vehicle behind you. It’s part of being a responsible driver and making sure your vehicle is safe.”

Ontario’s Highway Traffic Act prohibits drivers from operating a vehicle with a dangerous accumulation of snow or ice that could pose a hazard to other road users. Upon conviction, fines range from \$50 to \$500 for private vehicles and from \$100 to \$1,000 for commercial vehicles.

Crawford said some people may not be able to reach the top of their vehicle to clear snow off, but using a leaf blower is one way to get around the situation. It’s also important people know to refrain from using their four-way flashing lights while driving in challenging weather conditions.

“I can appreciate people wanting to let others know they are driving slower than the expected speed, but when you have your four-ways on, it interferes with your brakes illuminating properly to let people behind you know you’re slowing down or stopping.”

She added it’s also a good idea to have your entire headlight system on during inclement weather.

One trend on social media in recent years has been people looking for driving advice. It is common to see posts in this area asking how the drive on 59 is from Tavistock to Woodstock or the conditions of Highway 7/8 from New Hamburg to



(PHOTO COURTESY OF OXFORD OPP)

Jackknifed tractor-trailers and passenger vehicles in ditches have been a common scene this winter, but one member of the Oxford OPP is sharing her expertise to keep drivers safe.

Kitchener. Crawford said a far better idea is to go to [www.511on.ca](http://www.511on.ca) for updated driving conditions.

“It is a great resource, and when I had to drive to London the other day, I also checked Google Maps and Waze. They are often updating their road situations and will let you know where there is a slow-down or collision.”

She added drivers have different opinions on road conditions and when it’s safe to venture out on the roads.

“You might be more comfortable driving in bad weather and I might be petrified but I head out because someone said it was fine. By the time people read a comment, the conditions could have changed.”

Crawford said it all comes down to self-awareness.

“How do I feel today? Can I get out there and make that drive? Do I really need to go to where I am supposed to be? If not, treat yourself to a pyjama day and a hot chocolate. Talk to your employer to see if you can work from home or even adjust your hours.”

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# ROMA conference puts rural land use, health care and infrastructure in the spotlight

Continued from page 1

having aging grandparents and parents, is many homes in Toronto; I think there were six homes that were shut down. Those residents are being moved out of the City of Toronto.”

He added those residents will bump people in their own communities out of beds close to home for them.

“That kind of leads to those folks not having their social supports and things like that. I think that was a concern.”

Mayor Phil Schaefer said while the township had no specific asks going in, a few issues stood out to him.

“I attended plenary sessions on community safety and well being plans, codes of conduct, long-term care needs in rural Ontario and increased energy needs and procurement in the coming years.”

He added the ability to network with provincial politicians and staff is an important part of these conferences.

“As well as the opportunity to speak to our peers in similar municipalities and discuss common issues, problems and solutions. After speaking with many mayors and councillors, it certainly made me appreciate how fortunate I am to lead such a well-managed municipality with a strong balance sheet.”

Coun. Jeremy Smith also attended the conference.

Wilmot Township was also well represented at ROMA with Mayor Natasha Salonen, Ward 1 Coun. Stewart Cressman and Ward 4 Coun. Steven Martin attending.

The township said in a press release Wilmot’s delegation participated in meaningful discussions on rural priorities, including accessible housing opportunities with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility and aggregate zoning approvals with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The delegation also joined representatives from neighbouring townships in meetings about rural transit with the Ministry of Transportation and municipal spheres of jurisdiction with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Also top of mind was the Rural Investment Readiness Strategy with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness and

the Ministry of Rural Affairs, along with infrastructure grant programs targeted to municipalities with a population of 50,000 or less with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Infrastructure.

As a ROMA board member, Salonen chaired a session examining how public health supports a healthy economy through evidence-based strategies and partnerships with local community groups.

“ROMA was a productive opportunity for Wilmot to move key priorities forward,” said Salonen. “Meeting directly with provincial partners allowed us to clearly communicate our community’s challenges and focus on practical, achievable solutions.”

The delegation will build on the insights and strategic connections established at ROMA to continue advancing key initiatives and ensure a strong voice for Wilmot Township.

This year’s ROMA conference featured speeches by Ontario Premier Doug Ford, party leaders and various provincial ministers. Delegates participated in two Minister’s Forums and workshops on corporate sponsorship, waste management, economic development, housing, arts and culture, community safety, health care, and reconciliation.

The Western Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (WOWC) also had a presence at the event, engaging with provincial leaders to advance priorities that strengthen communities across Western Ontario. The conference provided a platform for WOWC to share municipal perspectives, address pressing challenges and explore collaborative solutions with provincial partners.

“Western Ontario municipalities are dealing with complex challenges that affect residents’ daily lives, from staffing shortages in essential services to the need for robust municipal infrastructure that supports growth, community safety and wellbeing,” said WOWC chair Marcus Ryan. “ROMA provides a vital opportunity to bring these local realities directly to provincial leaders, ensuring decisions reflect the needs of our communities and support practical, sustainable solutions.”

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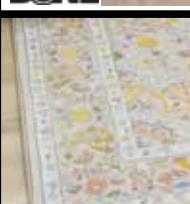
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# Wilmot receives funding to fight battery fires

## Money will be used to purchase new gear to keep firefighters safe

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As part of its plan to protect Ontario and keep communities safe, the provincial government is supporting firefighters in Wilmot Township with a \$49,560 investment through the Fire Protection Grant.

The funding is helping municipal fire departments expand cancer-prevention initiatives and strengthen emergency response to lithium-ion battery-related incidents.

“Our Firefighters put their lives on the line to protect our community, and they deserve the very best equipment to do their jobs safely,” said Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Mike Harris in a press release. “The Fire Protection Grant is helping Wilmot invest in additional turnout gear so firefighters can stay protected, remain in service and continue responding when our community needs them most.”

Wilmot has purchased additional turnout gear for each station, phased over three years. It provides a second set while primary gear is being decontaminated or repaired, ensuring firefighters can remain in service and ready to protect the community.

“We are purchasing 12 sets for each station over the next three years,” said Wilmot Fire Chief Rod Leeson. “We are currently in year two of the project. This allows firefighters to properly decontaminate their primary PPE to remove/reduce exposure to potential cancer-causing agents. The Province of Ontario has provided this valuable grant beginning in 2025 and was budgeted for three years.”



(PHOTO COURTESY OF MPP MIKE HARRIS)

Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Mike Harris joined Wilmot Fire Chief Rod Leeson and Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen recently to celebrate the receipt of a nearly \$50,000 Fire Protection Grant from the province.

Lithium-ion batteries are in most rechargeable products found in many areas of daily life including personal electronics such as smartphones, laptops, digital cameras and headphones; household items such as cordless power tools, electric toothbrushes and cordless vacuums; electric vehicles such as cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles, E-bikes, scooters and drones; and energy storage such as home energy storage systems (Tesla Powerwall), grid-scale battery storage projects and portable power banks. Lithium-ion batteries can also be found in various medical devices

such as portable medical equipment used for monitoring and more.

Leeson said his department has encountered fire events where lithium-ion batteries were the cause.

“We should note that some fires where the cause remained undetermined may have been caused by lithium-ion batteries during a time when fire services across Canada were still learning about this newer technology and some of the issues. Lithium-ion batteries and other new battery technologies continue to develop with new education provided as this evolves.”

Ontario Solicitor General Michael Kerzner said firefighters are always there when we need them, running towards danger to protect homes and our communities.

“That is why we’re doubling this year’s Fire Protection Grant, giving even more firefighters across the province the tools they need to stay safe and effectively respond to life-threatening emergencies.”

This year’s Fire Protection Grant will support all 380 municipal fire services in Ontario, helping the approximately 33,000 firefighters who protect Ontario and keep our communities safe.

Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen said the extra funding is welcome news to protect those who step into dangerous situations so the rest of us don’t have to.

“It’s our responsibility to ensure they have the right equipment to keep them safe. Thank you to the province for this important investment, which helps keep our firefighters protected and ready to respond in an emergency,” she said in a press release.

Leeson echoed the mayor’s comments and said the funding directly strengthens the department’s ability to protect the community by ensuring firefighters have the high-quality equipment they need to stay safe, ready and in service.

Anyone who sees a lithium-ion battery overheating, smoking, or catching fire should move away immediately and call 911. These batteries can enter thermal runaway, causing rapid flare-ups, dangerous toxic smoke and the potential for explosion.

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# Township looks to build on 2025 successes with continued community improvement funding

## Wellesley's community improvement plan delivers visible results in 2025

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Township of Wellesley's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) continues to play a role in supporting local businesses, heritage properties and community spaces with several projects completed in 2025 through the program's financial incentive grants.

Senior planner Bobby Soosaar presented council with an annual update on the CIP during the township's Jan. 27 committee of the whole meeting, outlining how the program was used over the past year and recommending council continue offering the same suite of incentives in 2026. Council ultimately voted to approve the staff recommendation.

"Township council approved an update to the community improvement plan back in the spring of 2025 and, with that, we opened it up to the community and got some uptake from local businesses and property owners," Soosaar said. "So, this report is essentially a summary of the projects that we funded and fulfills the monitoring aspect of the CIP, which was

recommended in the community improvement plan."

The updated CIP builds on the township's original 2017 plan while expanding eligibility and introducing new grant streams. Enabled under the Planning Act, a community improvement plan allows municipalities to offer grants and incentives aimed at revitalizing designated areas, improving building stock and encouraging economic growth.

According to the report, the township received four complete CIP applications in 2025, three of which have already resulted in completed projects, with a fourth still underway. While council approved \$30,000 for CIP grants last year, \$15,000 in grants was paid out for eligible projects with an additional \$2,500 committed once the remaining project is finished.

Among the completed projects was a façade improvement at the Heidelberg Motel on Lobsinger Line, where traditional-style columns were added to better reflect the village's architectural heritage. The project received a \$5,000 façade improvement grant.

Another \$5,000 façade grant supported

exterior masonry repairs and repainting at Hunke Homes on Queen's Bush Road in the Village of Wellesley, a building designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Apple Butter and Cheese Festival also received \$5,000 through the signage improvement program to replace its long-standing sign on Queen's Bush Road, helping promote tourism and strengthen the village's identity.

A landscaping improvement project at Galick Packaging on Gerber Road, which includes new tree planting, river rock and relocating waste receptacles away from public walkways, remains in progress and is expected to receive \$2,500 upon completion.

The township's CIP includes several incentive programs designed to support a wide range of improvements. These include rebates to offset planning application and building permit fees, grants for façade, signage and landscaping improvements, funding to improve building safety and accessibility, and support for converting or expanding existing buildings for commercial or housing use.

Newer programs introduced with the updated CIP include grants for additional dwelling units, agri-tourism projects, placemaking and pedestrian improvements, and a small sustainability top-up grant aimed at encouraging energy efficiency and green initiatives.

Staff recommended council authorize up to \$30,000 in CIP funding for eligible projects in 2026 and continue offering the same programs, citing steady interest from property owners and the visible results achieved in 2025. At the end of last year, the CIP reserve fund sat at approximately \$63,600, with a \$20,000 contribution approved in the 2026 budget.

"I'm a little curious; we've got \$30,000 that you've identified to use this year. There's a balance in that account of \$60,000. ... I guess I'm just kind of confused as to why we wouldn't use that entire

amount of money?" Mayor Joe Nowak asked during the committee of the whole meeting.

Beyond the fact that council's \$30,000 allocation for CIP grants in 2025 wasn't fully depleted, Soosaar told Nowak staff like to keep a larger balance in the CIP reserve fund for two reasons – to fund updates to the CIP when necessary and in case a larger project is brought forward that would require all or more funding than what council allocates to the program each year.

"We keep money there in case of situations where there is maybe a project that comes in that's unforeseen that might create a pretty significant benefit to the community," Soosaar said. "So, perhaps there's a property that comes in and they're in a core area somewhere, and they want to redevelop. We say, 'That's a great idea, but we don't have enough allocated this year.' In those cases, we would come back to (council) and say, 'This is a pretty important project to the community, would you be willing to increase that allocated amount?'"

"... We can designate this as a priority site ... and we can up the amount of funding for priority sites. ... So, let's say one of the grants is worth up to \$5,000; if we designate a priority site, it can double to \$10,000."

By bringing a larger CIP grant application back to council, Soosaar said councillors have the opportunity to review the project, determine the scope of funding and allocate additional funding to ensure other eligible projects don't miss out.

Township staff will continue to report annually on CIP uptake and promote the program through the township's website, social media and direct outreach to businesses and property owners. Following the approval of this year's \$30,000 CIP allocation, Soosaar said staff will advertise the program directly with businesses to encourage uptake.



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# Tavistock IDA Pharmacy donates \$10,000 to support local health care

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

One of Tavistock's longest-established businesses is giving back in a big way to support local health care.

The owners of Tavistock IDA Pharmacy recently presented a \$10,000 donation to Tavistock Community Health Inc. (TCHI), supporting the organization's ongoing fundraising efforts to update and improve offices and examination rooms at the Tavistock medical clinic.

The cheque was presented at the downtown pharmacy on Friday by owners Heather Konstant, Hilary Bald and Cathy Stokes to members of the TCHI board.

The owners said it is important for them not only to continue providing pharmaceutical services to the community, but

also to support and strengthen the health-care services offered by local physicians, including those practising in the nearby Tavistock medical building.

Tavistock's pharmacy has a long history in the community. Pharmaceutical services in the village date back to the 1880s when apothecary and druggist services were provided by Mr. Zoeliner. Over the years, as the Tavistock Medical Group relocated to its current site, the pharmacy also moved to 80 Maria St., where it shared space with the doctors' offices. At that time, a small dispensary operated within the medical building and was managed by Sinclair Pharmacy of Stratford.

Many residents will also remember the current pharmacy location as the former Don's Grocery Store. After the grocery store relocated, the building housed a

sports shop and later a workwear store. In 1983, the building was purchased by Sinclair Pharmacy of Stratford, operated by John Sinclair and Ray Cornish, with Lyn Schlotzhauer and Elizabeth Ariss later managing the Tavistock store.

Following extensive renovations, the location reopened as Tavistock IDA Pharmacy. Another major renovation took place in 1995, introducing a new merchandising concept and the store's longstanding motto, "Care You Can Count On." In addition to prescription services, the pharmacy continues to provide patient counselling and personalized care.

TCHI president Russ Huber thanked the pharmacy owners and staff for their generous contribution and reminded residents that TCHI's annual meeting will be held in Tavistock in early April, with details to

be announced in upcoming editions of the Gazette.

TCHI is still accepting personal and business donations toward the \$500,000 fundraising goal.

Donation forms are available from any board member or visit TCHI.ca and click on "donate" to view options. Consider the donation of securities through Canada Helps, through which residents can donate the securities without having to pay the capital gains tax, and TCHI gets a full value of the proceeds of disposition again without any tax.

Also save the date for TCHI's annual golf tournament to be held on Friday, June 19, 2026, at River Valley Golf Course near St. Marys.

More information will be available in future Gazettes.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Russ Huber, president of Tavistock Community Health Inc., thanks Tavistock IDA Pharmacy owners Heather Konstant, Hilary Bald and Cathy Stokes for their \$10,000 donation in support of local health care initiatives.



Staff and board members gather at Tavistock IDA Pharmacy to celebrate the donation to Tavistock Community Health Inc. Front row, from left: Dianne Harris, Tammy O'Toole, Darlene Nicholas and Monica Uribe. Second row, from left: Russ Huber (TCHI president), Heather Konstant, Hilary Bald, Cathy Stokes, Lisa Zehr, Andrea Sproule and Amanda Pavey (TCHI board member).



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# EZT council briefs: Fire chief announces retirement

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock's (EZT) Fire Chief has announced 2026 will be his last year at the helm.

Scott Alexander provided his resignation letter to Mayor Phil Schaefer, who read it out loud at last week's regular council meeting.

"It is with mixed emotions that I wish to advise council and the staff of East Zorra-Tavistock that 2026 will be my final year as fire chief for the township. I am grateful for the opportunities I have been fortunate to be a part of, but after careful reflection over the last few months, I feel that after almost 20 years, it is time for a fresh perspective for the administration of the department and someone to look 10 years into the future rather than 20 years to the past."

The statement went on to say that announcing the retirement before the end of 2026 provides ample time to recruit for the position and allows for a smooth transition over time to new management.



"I wish to thank council for this wonderful opportunity and all the firefighters, past and present, that I have had the privilege to serve with. Most of all, I wish and need to thank my family, my wife, Heather, our sons, Nick, Mack, Dean and Jay, for all the sacrifices they have made during my tenure here at the township."

Schaefer thanked Alexander for his service and wished him the best going forward. Coun. Scott Zehr, a longtime volunteer firefighter in the township, expressed his words of gratitude for the outgoing chief.

"As one of his firefighters for almost 15 years now, I appreciate his care and compassion for us as firefighters. All the long

hours and the work he puts in; I am glad he mentioned his family because I'm sure they were woken up by that radio going off way too often. Thanks, Chief Alexander, for all you have done for our community."

### EZT looking for IT help

The township is accepting applications for an information technology (IT) coordinator. The newly created position will support all departments and will manage the daily operation of IT support for all township offices, council, staff and facilities, as well as install, maintain and support servers, workstations, telephony and copiers.

The full-time position requires a 35-hour work week and includes a comprehensive benefits package and OMERS pension

plan. The 2026 salary range is \$44.67-\$52.56 per hour, or a range of just over \$81,000 per year up to just under \$96,000.

"The IT position is not an additional FTE position in the 2026 budget but rather a part of the overall restructuring of responsibilities amongst the existing complement of staff from the 2025 realignment of departments and duties," said EZT CAO Karen DePrest.

"The county does a fantastic job of providing overall network support to most of its lower-tier partners, including EZT. However, EZT does have several software systems that are not county supported, including our financial system, iCity, our recreation software, Univerus Rec and MESH, our public works software to name a few."

She added having an onsite IT coordinator will allow the support and maintenance of those systems to be centralized in an expert's area while allowing the staff currently supporting software to focus on their departmental responsibilities.



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# Wilmot Township's 2025 traffic calming report highlights data-driven approach to road safety

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Township of Wilmot's 2025 traffic calming report, presented to council on Jan. 26, offers residents a detailed look at how local roads are performing, where concerns are being raised and how staff are responding using traffic data rather than assumptions.

Prepared by township infrastructure staff, the annual report summarizes all traffic studies and reviews conducted throughout 2025 and is intended to provide both transparency and accountability, according to Wilmot director of infrastructure services Ken VanderWal, who presented the report to council.

"Township staff present an annual traffic calming report to keep council and the public informed as to how our roads are operating," VanderWal said. "The report also provides transparency on the locations of traffic calming concerns and the results of any investigations."

In total, staff received 84 traffic-related

requests last year, including 70 submissions through the township's online portal covering 20 locations, along with 14 additional requests through other forms of communication. The most common concerns involved speeding, cut-through traffic, parking restrictions and intersection safety.

To respond, staff conducted 39 traffic-data collections using radar-based monitoring devices to measure vehicle speed, volume and movement. The data was then assessed against the township's traffic calming policy, approved by council in 2024.

One key point emphasized during the council discussion was the distinction between the annual traffic calming report and the policy itself. While the policy sets specific thresholds — including minimum traffic volumes and roadway characteristics — staff explained those thresholds do not prevent investigations outside the policy framework.

"Some of the tools in the traffic calming

policy have limitations," VanderWal said. "While the policy does have a traffic-volume threshold, staff still investigate traffic speeds and volumes on areas that don't meet that threshold to determine if actions are warranted outside of the policy."

Those actions can include increased enforcement by the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) through its Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP). In 2025, WRPS dedicated 58 hours of targeted enforcement on township roads, resulting in charges related to speeding, impaired driving, failure to stop and other offences. Additional enforcement hours were also spent on regional roads within Wilmot.

The report also confirmed there are currently no locations in Wilmot that warrant permanent speed cushions. VanderWal clarified this conclusion is not related to cost, but rather to measured driving behaviour.

"Permanent speed cushions are not needed because speeds are generally within the

anticipated range," he said.

Temporary speed cushions were used on Mannheim Road during 2025 due to detour-related traffic increases tied to nearby regional construction. Once traffic volumes returned to normal, the temporary measures were removed.

Beyond speed management, the report includes collision data, signage reviews, intersection studies and future recommendations, including an all-way stop being brought forward for council consideration in early 2026 at the intersection of Puddicombe Road and Bridge Street following a sharp increase in collisions.

The report underscores a data-driven, case-by-case approach to traffic safety — one that balances resident concerns with engineering standards, enforcement tools and long-term planning.

The full 2025 Traffic Calming Report was published as part of the Jan. 26, 2026, council meeting agenda, which is available electronically on the Township of Wilmot website.

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# Milverton youth Wyatt Westman-Frijters donates more than \$31,000 to local organizations

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

If there were a supersized trophy for a young person who truly gives back, it would belong to Milverton's Wyatt Westman-Frijters.

Over the past several months, Westman-Frijters has helped distribute more than \$31,000 to community organizations across Perth County and beyond, supporting causes that are close to his heart and to those of his family.

Westman-Frijters won a purebred, registered Holstein heifer calf through a Listowel radio contest held during National Dairy Day in 2025, recognizing the importance of the dairy industry in Perth County,

Ontario and across Canada. With the support of his parents and many local farmers, the calf was later auctioned at the Ontario Livestock Exchange in Waterloo, where bidders generously raised more than \$31,000.

Several area farmers contributed \$1,000 or more each, bidding not only on the calf but with the intention of helping Westman-Frijters support organizations he and his sister, Willow, have been involved with over the years. Some earlier donations were previously reported.

Additional donations made from the proceeds include:

- \$10,000 to ensure every school in Perth County received chocolate milk, distributed with

help from the Perth County Dairy Producers Committee

- \$1,000 to Stratford Special Olympics (fun baseball)
- \$1,200 to the Milverton Red Seal Youth Band
- \$1,000 to Stratford Special Olympics
- \$1,000 to the Perth County 4-H Association
- \$8,000 to the Woolwich Sun Rays hockey team, of which Westman-Frijters is a member

Westman-Frijters said it was important to him that all the money raised through the calf draw be directed back into the community, supporting programs that help young people and families thrive.



Wyatt Westman-Frijters takes a moment to relax after distributing thousands of dollars to area organizations that have supported him and his sister, Willow.



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF HEATHER WESTMAN)

From left, Wyatt Westman-Frijters and his sister, Willow, present a \$1,000 cheque to Sharon Flanagan of the Mitchell Optimist Club for the club's Challenge Baseball program.



Listowel-area dairy farmer Dave Johnston accepts a \$1,000 cheque from Wyatt Westman-Frijters in support of the Perth County Dairy Producers and the promotion of future World Milk Day events.



From left, Willow Westman-Frijters, program manager Sierra-Lynn Moreira and Wyatt Westman-Frijters present a \$1,500 cheque to the Building Bridges adult day program, which both Wyatt and Willow participate in.

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# Perth County council approves 2026 budget in principle

## Draft budget carries proposed 8.75 per-cent tax-rate increase following review of operating budget

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Perth County council has concluded the bulk of its 2026 budget deliberations and has now approved the full draft budget in principle after county council reviewed its draft operating budget on Jan. 22., resulting in a proposed levy increase, inclusive of growth, of 8.75 per cent over the county's 2025 levy.

As part of council's review of the draft operating budget, which originally included roughly \$64.4 million in spending this year, councillors were asked to consider four budget requests totalling an additional roughly \$205,000.

They included a \$50,000 request in support of the development of the Ontario Agri-Food Discovery Centre in North Perth, an additional \$100,000 to support a countywide sign and wayfinding project to be undertaken by the county's economic development and tourism department, \$30,000 to support other special projects aimed at supporting economic development in the county, and \$25,000 in support of the eradication of the invasive plant species, giant hogweed, in collaboration with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA).

While councillors ultimately included all four budgetary requests in the draft 2026 operating budget, deputy warden Sue Orr and Coun. Rhonda Ehgoetz, representing Perth South and Perth East respectively, weren't sure the full \$25,000 for the eradication of giant hogweed across the county was necessary, and asked staff to arrange

a presentation by UTRCA on how exactly the county would support those efforts with this funding.

"I know it's out there, I know it's a problem, I still think there has to be some onus on the property owners," Ehgoetz said, referring to who will be expected to cover the cost of hogweed eradication on private property. "We can't expect the county and the conservation authority to come in and look after it all. If there's going to be costs, the farmer or the landowner has to participate in that somehow. That's my concern, that we're not going to start taking over looking after hogweed for everybody in the county and it's just going to get bigger and bigger and bigger as a program."

Coun. Walter McKenzie, meanwhile, warned his fellow county councillors that West Perth has been contracting the UTRCA to help the municipality deal with its issues surrounding giant hogweed – a noxious weed that can cause skin burns and other injuries to both humans and animals – along portions of the North Thames River south of Mitchell. That work, he said, takes months or even years to eradicate giant hogweed completely and he said it cost the municipality \$6,500 last year.

"Giant hogweed is considered a noxious weed both here in Ontario and in B.C. due to its toxic sap that causes skin burns and blisters upon some exposure. ... It is out there and it is a problem, and I don't think it's just a problem in West Perth, but it is a problem in West Perth," McKenzie said, adding West Perth has little chance in eradicating the weed completely without expanding efforts to the rest of the county.

Given the need for more information on the UTRCA's giant hogweed program and the county's role in it if funding is provided, county council voted to leave the door open for adjustments to the giant hogweed budget line should councillors determine the full \$25,000 is not needed after the conservation authority's presentation and before the 2026 budget bylaw is passed.

"Just to put it into context, what was requested for asks would increase our tax rate 0.82 per cent to 8.75 per cent total tax rate, essentially adding \$8.20 to the (average assessed) single-detached home (with a 2016 assessed value of \$284,000), which still brings us to a total increase of just under \$90 (to the upper-tier portion of residents' property tax bill for the year)," county treasurer Corey Bridges told council, comparing the impact of the new proposed levy increase to the impact of the 7.93 per-cent levy increase included in the original draft of the budget.

Orr and Ehgoetz also requested a review of the Perth County Stewardship program, budgeted at \$100,000 as part of the county's 2026 grant program, to determine if grant funding can more be more effectively allocated elsewhere, which staff agreed to bring back at council's Feb. 5 meeting.

Looking at the 2026 draft operating budget as a whole, Bridges told council much of this year's levy increase from \$25.1 million in 2025 to \$27.5 million has to do with increases in operating expenses in both the public works division and paramedic services.

In total, the public works division is expected to see a net increase in operating

expenses by roughly \$547,000 across its administrative, roads, facilities and fleet departments, primarily resulting from increases in the costs of overhead, winter maintenance, the amortization and operation of the county's connecting link expansion at the Perth County Courthouse, transfers to capital reserves for the future replacement of county vehicles and inflation.

In paramedic services, the county's operating expenses are budgeted with an increase of \$473,000 over last year, primarily driven by increases to wages and benefits, including a planned increase in staffing by 1.83 full-time-equivalent positions to allow for the hiring of part-time paramedics to cover parental and maternity leave.

Accounting for COLA and non-COLA salary and wage increases this year, the total salary and benefits cost increase across all divisions in the draft 2026 operating budget is roughly \$1.7 million.

The county has also budgeted an additional \$652,000 for its portion of the costs for shared services this year – services run by a different municipality or a separate board including Stratford Social Services, Huron Perth Public Health, Spruce Lodge and the Stratford-Perth Museum.

A final draft of the Perth County 2026 budget will be considered at a council meeting in February, at which point any last-minute amendments can be made before council officially adopts the 2026 budget bylaw.



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# Perth-Waterloo egg farmers review strong demand at annual Zone 6 meeting

GARY WEST

*Gazette Correspondent*

Egg farmers from Perth and Waterloo counties gathered last week at the Stratford Golf and Country Club for the annual Zone 6 meeting, where producers heard encouraging news about demand for Ontario-farmed eggs and re-elected their local representative to the provincial board.

Re-elected Zone 6 director Sally Van Straaten said consumers can expect grocery store shelves to remain well stocked with a wide variety of Grade A eggs, including free-run, free-range, nest-laid and Omega-3 options produced locally by area farmers

Producers were told demand remains strong across all egg categories, with Grade A large white eggs continuing to be the most popular choice at under \$4 per dozen. By comparison, eggs were selling for \$5.49 U.S. per dozen in parts of Florida on Jan. 25. Brown and organic eggs also remain popular, giving consumers the variety they have come to expect.

Ontario egg sales continue to grow, with 37.3 million dozen shell eggs sold across the province last year – an increase of 9.7 per cent over the previous year.

Scott Helps, chair of Egg Farmers of Ontario, attended the meeting and assured producers that cost-of-production reviews remain a priority to ensure Ontario-farmed

eggs remain competitive on both quality and price.

He said ongoing provincial and federal inspections help maintain high standards and consumer confidence, particularly through the Egg Quality Assurance logo and the Start Clean, Stay Clean program administered by Egg Farmers of Canada.

Helps added that industry leaders want consumers to know their eggs come from laying hens housed with comfort and natural behaviours in mind. This includes access to perches and scratching areas, darkened nesting spaces, adequate room, proper ventilation year-round, and fresh, tested water and balanced feed to produce eggs rich in protein, vitamins and minerals.

Van Straaten, who farms near Sebringville with her husband, Mike, was re-elected to represent Perth and Waterloo counties on the Egg Farmers of Ontario board for another year. She has served in the role for four years.

The couple raise their four children on the family farm, where everyone helps with barn chores alongside egg and field crop production. They also operate an on-farm grain drying, handling and storage facility nearby. Both Van Straaten and her husband come from multi-generational Perth County farm families and hope the next generation will continue the operation.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Front row, from left: Sally Van Straaten (Zone 6 director, Egg Farmers of Ontario) and Scott Helps (chair, Egg Farmers of Ontario). Second row: Julie Wynette, Erin Gerber, Rita Reynen, Paul Neeb, Scott Graham, Brett Graham and Kayla Veldman. Back row: Mike Ready, Clarence Martin, John Erica DeWeerd, Tyler Harper, Gary Wagler, Delmar Schultz, Henry Groenestege, Andy DeWeerd, Josh Veldman, Anthony DeWeerd and Rick Roes. Absent were Amanda Cook, Allan Drost, Adam West and Jeff Rundle.

Following her re-election, Van Straaten said serving as a director has been an “incredible journey” that has deepened her understanding of the egg industry, along with its challenges and opportunities.

She said she remains committed to strong representation for Zone 6 producers while supporting a sustainable and successful egg sector across Ontario.

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# WRPS continues to investigate serious collision in Wellesley Township

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF  
 thewtgazette@gmail.com

The Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) is continuing to investigate a serious collision in Wellesley Township.

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

While the Ford and Buick were on the shoulder of the roadway, a second collision took place involving two transport

trucks. During this secondary collision, one of the transport trucks struck the vehicles involved in the first collision.

As a result of the collisions, a 25-year-old male driver from the initial crash was transported to an out-of-town hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. A 58-year-old male transport truck driver was taken to an out-of-region hospital with serious injuries.

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

The investigation remains ongoing by members of the WRPS traffic services unit.

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



(PHOTO COURTESY OF WATERLOO REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE)

Following a minor collision on Perth Line 86 near Chalmers Forest Road in Wellesley Township Jan. 22, two transport trucks collided, striking the vehicles involved in the first collision and sending the 25-year-old driver involved in the first collision as well as a 58-year-old transport truck driver to hospital.

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<p><b>2024 Nissan Sentra SV</b>                  PRICE DROP                  iQ GREAT PRICE FWD  <b>\$21,495</b> OR <b>\$154 B/W</b>                  LOW KMS - 24,730 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>	<p><b>2020 Toyota Corolla SE</b>                  iQ GREAT PRICE FWD  <b>\$23,999</b> OR <b>\$224 B/W</b>                  LOW KMS - 69,632 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>	<p><b>2025 Nissan Sentra SV MOONROOF</b>                  PRICE DROP                  iQ GREAT PRICE FWD  <b>\$24,495</b> OR <b>\$176 B/W</b>                  MILEAGE - 17,893 KM</p>		
<p><b>2023 Honda Civic EX</b>                  PRICE DROP                  iQ GREAT PRICE FWD  <b>\$25,999</b> OR <b>\$187 B/W</b>                  LOW KMS - 56,295 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>	<p><b>2023 Nissan Rogue PLATINUM</b>                  PRICE DROP                  iQ GREAT PRICE AWD  <b>\$31,495</b> OR <b>\$226 B/W</b>                  LOW KMS - 62,249 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>	<p><b>2024 GMC Terrain DENALI</b>                  PRICE DROP                  iQ GREAT PRICE AWD  <b>\$34,999</b> OR <b>\$251 B/W</b>                  LOW KMS - 71,507 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>	<p><b>2021 Ford Transit 250 Crew Van</b>                  PRICE DROP                  iQ GREAT PRICE FWD  <b>\$34,999</b> OR <b>\$283 B/W</b>                  LOW KMS - 44,896 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>	<p><b>2024 Jeep Wrangler Sahara</b>                  PRICE DROP                  iQ GREAT PRICE 4WD  <b>\$44,999</b> OR <b>\$323 B/W</b>                  LOW KMS - 46,603 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>

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# Perth County warden and councillors reflect on 2026 ROMA annual conference

## Perth County delegation advocates for rural priorities

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Perth County Warden Dean Trentowsky, county councillors and staff joined more than 1,900 municipal and provincial representatives from across Ontario at the 2026 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference at the Sheraton Hotel in Toronto Jan. 18-20.

At the Jan. 22 Perth County council meeting, Trentowsky reflected on how the conference and the sessions the local delegates attended went, and how Perth County was able to advocate for rural needs across two official delegation meetings with representatives from the provincial government.

“For our part, we had two delegations from the county to the province,” Trentowsky told council. “One was on planning matters related to trying to find some methods to be innovative in finding efficiencies within the planning-submission

requirements, asking the province for some funding assistance towards that goal of streamlining the applications.

“We did get some recommendations on how to pursue that further, so staff will be following that up. Thanks to Andrea Hachler, director of planning services, for putting that delegation together, and thanks to councillors (Walter) McKenzie, (Todd) Kasenberg and deputy warden (Sue) Orr for attending and supporting that delegation.”

While the first delegation was with Laura Smith, the parliamentary assistant to the minister of municipal affairs and housing, the second delegation was heard by Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness Trevor Jones and revolved around agribusiness growth, investment successes and opportunities in the region.

“Meredith Forget, our economic development and tourism director, in cooperation with (communications officer) Sarah Franklin and the rest of staff put together

a package that we presented to Minister Jones highlighting the wins, celebrating the successes of provincial funding towards agriculture and also the ag. tourism sector in Perth County, reaffirming with the province that their programming is successful – it’s having a definite positive impact within the county.

“We highlighted some local agricultural and ag. tourism businesses that were direct benefactors of provincial funding, and we offered to work together with the province to continue getting the message out, getting provincial-funding programming to our residents and ratepayers, helping these ratepayers find these programs and facilitate their participation in these programs.”

Trentowsky said the delegates invited Minister Jones and his staff to visit Perth County in the fall and see firsthand the benefits of the provincial funding extended to local farms and agribusinesses – an invitation Trentowsky said Jones eagerly accepted.

This year’s conference theme was ROMA 2026: Ontario’s Rural Leaders Conference. The three-day event served as a key moment for municipal and provincial officials to connect on the unique challenges faced by rural municipalities.

Sessions focused on topics covering the breadth of rural municipal matters, including rural access to health care, Indigenous relations, codes of conduct, Community Safety and Wellbeing plans, infrastructure, waste management, housing, and road safety in rural communities.

“It’s a very worthwhile conference to attend with a range of really important municipal topics and a chance to connect with colleagues across the province,” said county CAO Lori Wolfe.

“Warden Trentowsky did an excellent job in the presentations and I’m very grateful that he took the lead,” deputy warden Orr added.

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# OBITUARY

## SIMPSON: Blanche Rose



It is with loving hearts and cherished memories that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Blanche Rose Simpson at Nithview Community Care, New Hamburg at the age of 93 on January 18, 2026.

Beloved wife of the late James (Jim) Simpson (January 17, 2001). Precious memories are left with her

children, Elizabeth (Stan) Platz of Kingston, Joy (Tim) Swartzentruber of New Hamburg, Heather (Grant) Poll of New Dundee, Scott Simpson of Plattsville, Patricia (Paul) Bowman of New Dundee. Loving Grandmother of Ben (Christa) and Holly Platz, Nathan (Stefanie), Kristin, Tyson (Melissa) and Jonathan (Alysha) Swartzentruber, Michelle Swartzentruber, Joshua (Cassy) and Daniel (Amy) Poll, Scott (Sasha), Michael and Jacob Simpson, David (Theresa), Zachary and Matthew Bowman. Special Great Grandmother of London and Kirche Platz, Dylan and Luke Swartzentruber, Eden and Clara Swartzentruber, Mason and Layla Poll, Allie and Breanne Poll, Aurelia, Elise and Chloe Bowman, Owen and Corbyn Bowman. Also remembered by her sister-in-law Diana Simpson and by her many nieces, nephews and their families.

Predeceased by her parents Herbert and Millie (Stuart) Hiller, her sister Jean (Ralph) Michalofsky, father and mother-in-law James and Hilda Simpson, brothers and sisters-in-law, Howard and Loretta Simpson, Wesley and Margaret Simpson and Peter Simpson.

Blanche was born July 26, 1932 at Perry's Corners, Ontario where she grew up. Blanche and Jim were school sweethearts, they married July 14, 1951. Together they lovingly built their home and life in New Dundee where they raised their five children. Blanche was a faithful member of Bethel Missionary Church, a lifetime member of the New Dundee Womans Institute and contributed to the Prayer Blanket Ministry. Mom found great pleasure in knitting and giving away many pairs of slippers. Blanche was employed at the former New Dundee Creamery for 28 years where co-workers became lifetime friends. Family was most important to her, and she found much joy sitting in the bleachers of ball parks and arenas cheering for her children and then grandchildren.

We deeply mourn mom's passing, but we celebrate her life and count ourselves blessed to have shared it with her. Mom was grateful for God's love, grace and forgiveness and now lives in the presence of her Lord.

Relatives and friends will be received at Bethel Evangelical Missionary Church Saturday January 24, 2026 from 1:00 - 2:45 p.m. Funeral Service will be conducted at Bethel Evangelical Missionary Church, 1531 Bridge Street, New Dundee, on Saturday, January 24, 2026 at 3:00p.m. Reception to follow. Private interment will take place at a later date.

Family and friends can watch livestream by going to the funeral home website to Blanche's obituary and there will be a link to click to watch the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Canadian Bible Society or Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at [www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca](http://www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca).

# OBITUARY

## EBY, Marion Jean (Bauman)



Marion Jean (Bauman) Eby passed away peacefully with her family at her side on Monday, January 26, 2026, at AgeCare West Williams, Kitchener in her 97th year.

Loving mother of Darryl (Gail) Eby of New Hamburg, Karen (Larry) Buchanan of New Hamburg, Lynn (Ray) Gibson of Tavistock, and Paul (Michele) Eby of Baden. Cherished grandmother of Jason Eby, Christina Roesler, (partner of the late Ryan Eby), Chris (Jade) Buchanan, Tanya (Darren) Rooney, Terri (Ross) Lynch, Nick (Amanda) Gibson, Shannon (Matt) Armstrong, Brendan (Nicole) Eby, Colin (Leah) Eby, Jordan (Kylie) Eby. Will be remembered by sister in law Betty Bauman. She will be lovingly remembered by her 23 great grandchildren. Also, by her many nieces and nephews.

Marion is predeceased by her husband Floyd Eby (1981), a grandson Ryan Eby (2021), her parents Abram and Vera Bauman, her in laws Edwin and Ida Eby, brother Glen Bauman, sister Doris Eby, brothers in law Clarence Eby, Orton Eby, and Keith Eby, sisters in law Pearl Eby, Ruth Eby, Delores Eby, and Joan Bauman.

Marion was a member of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church for 83 years.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to the staff at AgeCare West Williams for the kind and compassionate care Marion received during her time there.

Relatives and friends will be received at the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg, on Thursday, January 29, 2026, from 6 – 8 p.m. A Service of Remembrance will be held in the chapel of the funeral home on Friday, January 30, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor Kim Penner to officiate. Private family interment to be held at Woodland Cemetery at a later date. For those unable to attend, a live stream link will be available on the funeral home website.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Wilmot Family Resource Centre or Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church would be appreciated and can be done on the funeral home website.

Personal condolences can be posted for the family at [www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca](http://www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca)

# IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of  
**Shirley Roth**  
 our dear mother, grandmother and great grandmother, who passed away February 2, 2025.  
 Forever loved, never forgotten, and always in our hearts.  
*Phil and Joyce, Tim and Melody, Debbie and Fred, Wanda and Doug and families*

# QUIZ TIME

BY JAKE GRANT

- Alex Honnold solo climbed Taipei 101 on Jan. 23, 2026. What country is that in?
- What does WEF stand for?
- What does China's Terracotta Army protect?
- What animal species did Jane Goodall study?
- How many years ago did the Ice Age end?
- Williams and Bosc are varieties of which fruit?
- Which basketball team became the first to reach the milestone of 3,000 wins in 2010?
- In beer, what does IPA stand for?
- The gopher is a member of what order of mammals?
- What vehicle is used to smooth an ice rink?

Answers found on the classified page

4 3 8  
 2 5 9  
 1 6  
**SUDOKU**

by PeterS 2025

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

ANSWERS FOUND ON THE CLASSIFIED PAGE

# IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of  
**Deborah Junker**  
 who passed away 10 years ago January 31, 2016.  
 When we lose someone we love we must learn,  
 not to live without them...  
 But to live with the love they left behind.  
 Let your attitude be gratitude.  
 Always loved by friends and family  
 Don, Carrie, Amanda, Jessica and families

# 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.*

**January 20-27, 2016, Edition (10 years ago)**

The shelves were being emptied almost as fast as they could be restocked on Friday, Jan. 15, 2016, as the New Hamburg Thrift Centre celebrated their ninth anniversary. The Thrift store surpassed 385 volunteers with many of them from Tavistock and area. The community support has been overwhelming with people buying the items for Christmas. Support for the Syrian Refugee fund was also well-received. "We definitely did have a good response," Karla said. Many people purchased the \$25 dollar gift cards to be redeemed at the Thrift Store.

The first news reporting assignment for Mrs. Nancy Marenger's Grade 3 class was to attend a Tavistock Tigers basketball game and write a short story. The results of this and other endeavours are expected to be published in the class's first school newspaper. The class of 20 students is learning about current events through local newspapers. Student Xin-En brought a range of newspapers from her parents' variety store for each student to study.

On a blustery Monday morning, Jan. 18, 2016, members of the Stratford on Avon Shrine Club, a longtime supporter of Children's Hospital in London, showed their dedication to also aiding children's care in smaller communities by handing over a \$10,000 cheque to the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Foundation (SMMHF). The money will be directed towards oxygen-saturation monitors, plus other yet-to-be-determined equipment.

**January 18-25, 2006, Edition (20 years ago)**

There's a light that shines in the window of an East Nissouri church that reminds passersby of the plight of Christian peacemakers around the world. It not only shines for the four hostages taken last November and the other detainees, but now for an area farmer who

leaves for Iraq on Friday to help with the team's work there. Allan Slater, the St. Marys area farmer who has already experienced three volunteer missions in Iraq, was welcomed Sunday to Tavistock Mennonite Church for a commissioning and sending service.

The Raedon Excavating/Schultz Plumbing Atom L.L. #2 team won the B Division Championship in the Walkerton Tournament this past weekend. The final game against Mitchell proved to be a tough match. Tavistock skated to a 2-1 win with the superb goaltending of Taylor Dronfield. Scoring for Tavistock was Mitch Gingerich assisted by Kaylee Kaufman, and Tyson Schieckoff, unassisted. Members of the team are Rachel Luckhardt, Kaylee Kaufman, Taylor Dronfield, Lisa Duivesteyn, Robbie Saunders, Griffin Zehr, Tyson Schieckoff, Joel Kalbfleisch, Aaron Miller, Mitch Gingerich, Justin Erb, Carson Lamond and Colton Zehr.

**January 22-29, 1986, Edition (40 years ago)**

Winners of the OV Sunbowl, based on pins over average for three games, are Larry Zoeller, 260 over, Carl Hyde, 119 over, Mike Campbell, 119 over, Perry Wilker, 118 over, Nelson Cumming, 95 over, Brian Mohr, 83 over, Dianne Herold, 125 over, Gina Schurink, 56 over, Sonya Tuer, 55 over, and Louise Caspell, 51 pins over. Bowlers will move onto the Zone Round Feb. 16. High/Low Double winners are Dennis Pepper and Paul Steinman; Cathay Erb and Elaine Young; Lynda Huber and Fern Wickenheiser; and Nelson Cumming and Ivan Henning.

Four young ladies were invested into the First Tavistock Pathfinders on Monday, Jan. 20, as part of a special evening at the home of leader Mrs. Ann Twyman. A part of the Girl Guides of Canada, Pathfinders was established here in Tavistock in September to accommodate the growing number of interested girls. The group meets every Tuesday evening. The Pathfinders are shown here with one of the new flags and brass trefoil staffs donated by the Men's Club and Board of Trade. The girls are Treva Job, Heather Yanzti, Krista Houle and Tara McDonald.



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Pastor Rev. Michael Mayer

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Pastors Ray Martin & Mike Williamson

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Pastor Jim Brown

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# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette **SPORTS**

## PJHL Roundup: Applejacks hanging on to second place

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Wellesley sits just two points behind Woodstock for top spot in the Provincial Junior Hockey League's (PJHL) Doherty Division.

The Applejacks won their only game of the weekend, a 6-4 victory over last-place Dorchester on Saturday. Hudson Parker led the offence with a goal and three assists while top-scorer Ian Speiran added three points. Rhys McCloskey and Jake L'Heureux added a goal and an assist each.

Head Coach Derek Lebold was asked by the Gazette if his team could be described as the sneaky, quiet squad in the division after a consistent season to date.

"That's probably a pretty good way of describing us. We are very focused on our internal processes and haven't watched the standings much at all," he said.

Despite a lack of focus on who sits where, Lebold admitted having home-ice advantage in the playoffs is a big deal.

"Finishing one to three is key, but we haven't been trying to monetize that in the room. We're just trying to be consistent and deliver a consistent message to the boys and they've been executing. We don't really care about outside noise."

The Applejacks offence is led by Speiran who has 44 points to lead the team. He's followed by one of the league's highest-scoring defensemen in Riley Noble with 37 points. The team has improved offensively since the Christmas break but continues to get contributions from many players.

"Everybody knows who our big players are within our division. Lately, the depth scoring, the middle order of our lineup have stepped it up – guys like Hudson Parker, who's only in his second year, McCloskey, who has been fantastic for us all year."

Lebold added guys like Kaelan McDougald, with just three points in 25 games, play an important role with the



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Tavistock Braves' forward Keegan Metcalf drives to the side of the net for a scoring chance against New Hamburg Firebirds goaltender Deklan Jermol. The Braves defeated the Firebirds 5-2.

team.

"If you come to a game, you'll see that kid log tonnes of minutes that allows better matchups for us to let guys like Speiran and those guys out the door. We have more of a depth mentality since the break. We've got to win with all four lines, as cliché as that is to say, but it's crucial for us."

Lebold said the offence has been able to score more because they can roll four lines, something that tires the opposition out.

"The points are awesome and you're always going to credit those guys, but the guys on the fourth line do yeoman's work. They keep pucks deep, tiring defences out, allowing some of our bigger and older guys over the walls to finish things out."

Lebold, in his second season as head

coach after three years as an assistant, said depth will be key going into the post-season.

"I've never been on any type of winning team, playing or coaching, that has won anything significant without the use of all four lines. I have yet to see it done. Our management group this summer focused on depth as opposed to a top-heavy offensive structure."

New Hamburg played just one of its two scheduled games as Sunday's tilt in Paris was postponed due to another blast of winter. On Friday, the Firebirds hosted Tavistock and suffered a 5-2 loss as the Braves held a 42-19 edge in shots.

Ethan Stover scored twice in the first period to give the Braves a quick 2-0 lead with Carson Bernhardt assisting on both

and Jack Hodge on one. Owen Bruder cut the lead to 2-1 in the second, but Tavistock scored three times in the final frame as Yann Raskin, with two, and Hodge found the back of the net. Ezra Fischer added a Firebirds goal in the third for New Hamburg who sit three points behind the Braves with one game in hand and have lost three straight games.

New Hamburg took to social media to thank its fan base for their loyalty this season.

"With only four home games remaining ... we have felt the support and the love from our fan base here in New Hamburg and Wilmot Township. Out of 61 PJHL teams, your Firebirds rank fifth in the entire league in attendance, averaging 435 fans per game."

### **PJHL** CURRENT STANDINGS

South Doherty Division		GP	W	L	OTL	I	SOW	SOL	PTS	OTW	GF	GA	DIFF	PCT	PCT	PIM	RW	ROW	STK	IN-DIV	GPCT
1	<u>Woodstock Navy Vets</u>	34	23	7	3	0	0	1	50	2	138	87	51	0.735	0.000	567	21	23	3-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.613
2	<u>Wellesley Applejacks</u>	35	24	11	0	0	2	0	48	6	140	115	25	0.686	0.000	632	16	22	2-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.549
3	<u>Tavistock Braves</u>	34	21	11	1	0	0	1	44	1	148	108	40	0.647	0.000	706	20	21	3-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.578
4	<u>New Hamburg Firebirds</u>	33	18	10	4	0	0	1	41	2	122	106	16	0.621	0.000	822	16	18	0-3-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.535
5	<u>Norwich Merchants</u>	34	19	12	2	0	0	1	41	4	122	119	3	0.603	0.000	584	15	19	3-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.506
6	<u>Hespeler Shamrocks</u>	34	13	17	4	0	2	0	30	3	80	129	-49	0.441	0.000	688	8	11	1-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.383
7	<u>Paris Titans</u>	34	11	20	3	0	0	0	25	1	126	162	-36	0.368	0.000	624	10	11	0-1-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.438
8	<u>Dorchester Dolphins</u>	36	8	24	3	0	1	1	20	1	114	164	-50	0.278	0.000	508	6	7	0-7-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.410

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# New Hamburg skaters capture medals at recent events



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Pictured on the left is Alyssa Logan, who placed second in the Gold Women Artistic YA at the Provincial Series No. Two Adult Event in Erin on Nov. 14-16, 2025. Logan then took the top spot in the same category at the Provincial Series No. Six December Classic in Stratford on Dec. 18-21, 2025. Pictured in the middle is Lauren Berg, who earned the gold medal in Star-Three Freeskate at the Dec. 6-7, 2025 Star One-Four Niagara Classic in Fonthill. Pictured on the right, from left to right, are Isabella Di Carlo and Samantha Robinson. Di Carlo and Robinson both brought home gold medals in their respective Star-Three Freeskate events.

## Royals win streak snapped with losses to two top teams

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Tavistock had won four straight games heading into last weekend, but two tough matchups brought the streak to a grinding halt.

The Royals travelled to Petrolia on Friday and, despite a ferocious comeback, dropped a 6-5 overtime decision to the second-place Squires. Trailing 5-3 with just over two minutes left in the third period, Lucas Bast scored a shorthanded marker at the 2:10 mark, followed by an even-strength goal by Drew Gerth 30 seconds later to force overtime.

Kyler Keating ended the game with a power-play goal while Bryan Foster was serving a tripping minor to give Petrolia their fifth straight victory.

Greg Noyes, Lucas Bast, Mitch Atkins and Erik Robichaud each had a goal and

an assist for the Royals who were outshot 47-33.

On Saturday, the Royals hosted Seaforth and dropped a 4-1 decision. The first period was scoreless despite Tavistock outshooting the Centenaires 12-5. Seaforth led 2-1 after 40 minutes and scored only two goals in the third period to earn their third win in a row. Robichaud scored his second of the season for the Royals, who outshot the visitors 39-36.

Head Coach Tyson Zehr said his team was guilty of not putting in two full 60-minute games.

“We knew how important this weekend was for us against two of the top teams in the division, and to come away with just one point is disappointing. I thought our effort was there, but at this level, effort alone isn’t enough. We have to execute and play a full game. It was a good

reminder of where our standard needs to be heading into the playoffs.”

Zehr added while he was impressed with the comeback on Friday, the Royals made too many mistakes.

“I thought we did a lot of good things and battled hard to push it to overtime against a very good team, but at this level, you have to bring it for a full 60 minutes. We had stretches where we were really strong, and others where we let them take control. Cleaning up those lapses is the difference between a close loss and a win.”

Tavistock gave up shorthanded and power-play goals on Saturday, but Zehr said part of the blame for the loss falls on him as coach.

“Special teams definitely hurt us, but five-on-five, I actually liked a lot of what we did. A big lesson for myself and our staff is the utilization of our fourth line. We have some of the best depth in the league,

and I didn’t do a good enough job getting our fourth line involved and keeping everyone fresh. Going into the playoffs, that balance is going to be really important because you can’t lean on the same guys every shift, especially when you have big games on back-to-back nights.”

The Royals first-round playoffs opponent hasn’t been decided yet, but odds are either Elora or Erin will be the matchup. Zehr said whoever they face, he’s confident.

“Over the last month, we’ve been building strong habits and sharpening our game heading into the playoffs, and I like where our game is at. After testing ourselves against the top two teams in the division this weekend, I feel confident we can compete with anyone.”

Tavistock plays its final regular-season game in Erin on Saturday night.

OHL CURRENT ONTARIO ELITE HOCKEY LEAGUE SOUTH CONFERENCE STANDINGS																										
RK.	TEAM	GP	W	L	I	OTW	OTL	SOW	SOL	PTS	PP	PK	GF	GA	DIFF	STK	PIM	PPG	PP%	SHGA	PP%	TSH	SHG	PPGA	PK%	
1	Seaforth Centenaires	19	15	3	0	2	0	1	1	31	.816	12	14	101	45	56	Won 3	276	67	11	3	0.164	63	2	6	0.905
2	Petrolia Squires	19	14	5	0	1	0	1	0	28	.737	12	13	96	59	37	Won 5	306	61	11	2	0.18	72	9	9	0.875
3	Erin Outlaws	18	11	4	0	1	1	1	2	25	.694	9	10	85	63	22	Lost 4	400	65	12	2	0.185	83	2	11	0.868
4	Tavistock Royals	19	11	7	0	0	1	0	0	23	.605	11	11	95	73	22	Lost 2	293	74	13	5	0.176	67	6	13	0.806
5	Elora Rocks	17	11	6	0	0	0	1	0	22	.647	10	10	99	66	33	Won 1	219	63	14	3	0.222	50	1	8	0.84
6	Tillsonburg Thunder	20	8	11	0	0	0	1	1	17	.425	7	7	79	76	3	Won 2	406	73	18	2	0.247	85	5	10	0.882
7	Dunnville Aeros	16	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	16	.500	8	8	78	73	5	Lost 2	257	65	16	4	0.246	59	4	11	0.814
8	Milverton Four Wheel Drives	19	5	10	0	0	2	1	2	14	.368	4	4	58	90	-32	Won 1	399	85	14	4	0.165	73	2	15	0.794
9	Delhi Flames	19	0	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	21	167	-146	Lost 18	291	70	5	6	0.071	71	0	31	0.563

# MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Lakelyn Bouwmeester skates the puck up the ice during the U9 B Wilmot Wolverines game last Tuesday.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Wyatt Laidman fires a shot on goal off the rush during last Wednesday's U11 LL 3 Tavistock Titans game.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Lily Beavis launches a wrist shot on target during the U15 BB Wilmot Wolverines game last Tuesday.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Tatum Gaudun-Gies plays the puck behind her net during last Tuesday's U18 BB Wilmot Wolverines game.

## WGHA presents 17th Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament

**THERESA DIETRICH**

*Wilmot and Area Life Donation Awareness (WALDA)*

While the January thaw was warming things up outside, the Wilmot Girls Hockey Association (WGHA) was turning up the heat on the ice for the 17th Annual Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament Jan. 9-11.

Thirty-two teams across southern Ontario showed up to compete and share their love of hockey. Tournament director Lisa Clifford and committee members Holly Bast, Val Sanderson, Darlene Vorstenbosch, Brittany Vorstenbosch and

Brett Clifford hosted another successful weekend of hockey at the Wilmot Recreation Centre.

Each year, Wilmot Girls Hockey partners with Wilmot Area Life Donation Awareness (WALDA) to help get the message out that registration saves lives. It takes just two minutes to go online at [beadonor.ca](http://beadonor.ca) with a health card to register consent for organ and tissue donation. One donor could save up to eight lives through organ donation and improve the lives of many others through tissue donation.

That's what Kyla did. Two young women were given the gift of mobility and the

opportunity to walk, two men were given the gift of sight and others received bone and connective tissue transplants. Tissue donors can also be lifesaving for burn victims.

Trillium Gift of Life is a provincial organization that is responsible for organ and tissue donation and transplant. Today, 35 per cent of Ontarians 16 or older are registered donors. Through the efforts of groups such as WALDA and Wilmot Girls Hockey, our local registration rate is 57 per cent, ranking us 10th out of 170 communities.

Thank you to everyone who has stepped

up and registered their consent, thank you to those who have encouraged others to register and a heartfelt thank-you to those families that have faced the tough decision to honour their loved ones' wishes and became heroes by helping others.

Check your health card; if it says "DONOR," you're registered. If it doesn't, it's easy to go to [beadonor.ca](http://beadonor.ca) and sign up. Should you have health challenges yourself, registering consent shows your support and encourages others to do the same. Let's all help improve the lives of others who need us.

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# GJ's Harvest Centre marks opening of expanded Perth East location

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

GJ's Harvest Centre officially opened its new farm and lawn equipment facility one mile south of Milverton on Perth Road 119 last week, marked by a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by area farmers, customers and local dignitaries.

The family-owned company has operated for many years near Milverton but outgrew its former location and required larger service bays, expanded sales space and a bigger parts department to support its growing business. GJ's has also operated a location in Burgessville in Oxford County for many years.

Perth East Mayor and past county warden Rhonda Ehgoetz, who helped cut the ribbon, said the new facility is a welcome addition to the community.

"It's exciting to have GJ's build a new facility and continue their bustling farm-equipment business in the Perth East area," Ehgoetz said. "For area farmers, it's convenient to have a dealership close by

for service and new equipment purchases, and it's a great addition to the new industrial park Percon is developing south of Milverton."

Owner Gary Klyn said the company was committed to staying in the area where farmers have supported the business for decades.

"We simply outgrew our former Milverton location, but we wanted to remain in the same area where all types of farmers have done business with us for years," Klyn said. "Once you have a dedicated customer base, you do everything you can to provide expert sales and parts service that keeps them working."

Klyn said the company services customers throughout central and southern Ontario and employs qualified service technicians both in the shop and on the road, equipped with up-to-date tools and service vehicles.

GJ's carries a full lineup of Claas and McCormick farm equipment, including tractors of all sizes, harvesters and



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

The ribbon cutting at the new GJ's Harvest Centre facility one mile south of Milverton on Perth Road 119. From left are Tory Hadlaund, vice president of Claas North America; Darren Campbell, Milverton facility manager; Tim Conrad, president of finance for Claas America; owners Gary and Corrie Klyn; Brandon Klyn, Burgessville shop manager; Perth East Mayor Rhonda Ehgoetz; and Wes Kuepfer, Perth East building inspector.

combines, as well as a wide selection of lawn and garden equipment. Short-line products include Lemken, Ferris, Echo, Salford, Horst wagons and other equipment lines.

Klyn invited anyone who was unable to attend the grand opening to stop in, have a coffee and see what the new location has to offer as the 2026 growing season approaches.

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<p><b>2022 Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross</b></p>  <p><b>\$22,995</b> OR <b>\$83/wk</b> + HST &amp; lic LOW KMS - 51,389 KM STOCK #: DS26169A</p>	<p><b>2025 Nissan Sentra SV</b></p>  <p><b>\$23,495</b> OR <b>\$84/wk</b> + HST &amp; lic LOW KMS - 11,550 KM STOCK #: P22643</p>	<p><b>2024 Nissan Altima S</b></p>  <p><b>\$25,995</b> OR <b>\$93/wk</b> + HST &amp; lic MILEAGE - 36,918 KM STOCK #: P22635</p>		
<p><b>2025 Nissan Kicks SV</b></p>  <p><b>\$28,495</b> OR <b>\$102/wk</b> + HST &amp; lic LOW KMS - 8,401 KM STOCK #: DS25271A</p>	<p><b>2025 Kia Niro EX</b></p>  <p><b>\$31,995</b> OR <b>\$115/wk</b> + HST &amp; lic LOW KMS - 6,383 KM STOCK #: S26137A</p>	<p><b>2025 Kia K4 GT-Line Turbo</b></p>  <p><b>\$31,995</b> OR <b>\$115/wk</b> + HST &amp; lic LOW KMS - 279 KM STOCK #: P22659</p>	<p><b>2023 Kia Carnival SX</b></p>  <p><b>\$44,495</b> OR <b>\$160/wk</b> + HST &amp; lic LOW KMS - 68,605 KM STOCK #: S26196A</p>	<p><b>2023 Lexus RX 350</b></p>  <p><b>\$51,995</b> OR <b>\$187/wk</b> + HST &amp; lic MILEAGE - 50,866 KM STOCK #: P22668</p>

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# A wakeup call in gratitude and style

**DRESS SHARP. SPEND SMART.**

By Scott Dunstall



On Jan. 5, I had emergency surgery on my abdomen. It was done laparoscopically. I was out in three days, and the incisions are almost invisible. So, I should be able to get away with the Speedo this summer. Relax and put away the Grivol. I don't own a speedo.

Why am I telling you this? Because I am grateful to be writing this and for the nursing staff at the Stratford General Hospital, and for the brilliant Dr. Parrington and the surgical team assembled post haste at nine o'clock on a Sunday night. Dr. P told me another day and it would have been a much different story.

And in the emerge it was a circus. I have passed two kidney stones and the pain was 50 times

worse. I feel bad for the poor guy that wheeled me to the CAT scan machine. I was screaming I was going to die and he kept rubbing my head saying, "You're being so brave, you're not going to die." I realized the next day it sounded like it was being said to a toddler – then again, I was acting like one. I received two hits of Hydromorphone and then two hits of Fentanyl. Didn't make a dent. Had blood work (nothing). X-ray (nothing), ultrasound (nothing), CAT scan (bingo). A twisted bowel causing an obstruction. How did it happen? Let me say the details are not pleasant and include something called epiploic appendages if you want to google it.

Anyhow, that is the gross part

over. Gratitude was one emotion that I felt after this. I was in the right place at the right time with the right people. But what if I wasn't?

It made me think about the events 14 years ago that pushed me towards being more self-aware of my appearance and my style. Lil had just taken a role where she was travelling every week to Cleveland and spending the weekends at home. I was on my own for 70 per cent of the time. Around the same time, my close cousin that was born three months before me had just passed away from an aggressive form of Sarcoma. It was a wakeup call that made me realize we are not here for a long time and that I had to do everything I could to stretch this run out as long as I could.

Because Lil was away so much, I battled loneliness (you can only call your friends and kids so many times before you start going to voicemail) by walking the local malls – at the time, Fairview was the closest. Funny what walking and not eating do – the weight comes off. I dropped about 40 pounds in about three months. Another funny thing about walking

around a mall; you walk by the same mannequins 100 times. That led to the next thing: "Hey I'm going to try that jacket on next time I walk by that mannequin wearing that jacket." That was it. More walks. More jacket try-ons. And jeans. And shoes. And coats. And boots. And shirts. And sweaters, scarves, gloves, wallets, pocket squares. The die was cast.

Ok Scott, great stories (well except for that surgery gore) but what the heck do they have to do with each other? I guess this event was a wakeup call. I was getting a little complacent when it came to fashion, and I kind of stopped nurturing it. A shoe would lose a sole and I would just throw it to the back of my closet. I've got 67 other pairs. I'd lose a glove and not bother to look for it – got another pair in the same colour. Salt stain on my boots? Leave it, nobody will notice.

I forgot the excitement I had all those years ago when I was learning my own style. I settled into a rut and stopped going to malls – maybe it was the pandemic, maybe it was the Bay closing. Whatever it was, I started to neglect something important to me. Not that I left the

house like I just rolled out of bed, but I was settling and not growing in the way I did when I began this metamorphosis years ago.

It's funny how a life event makes you reflect in this way. So, I guess this is a gift. And for me, maybe I should inject something new into my style. My only advice from all of this is don't wait until you lose someone before you realize you need to change the path you're on, and don't wait for a life crisis to appreciate that chosen path.

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

## Local Jersey breeders recognized in All-Ontario awards

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Following the conclusion of dairy shows at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, breed organizations across the province have announced the results of their annual All-Ontario competitions, with several local Jersey breeders earning top honours.

The All-Ontario contest recognizes outstanding animals shown throughout

the year, with breeders submitting photographs of eligible cattle for evaluation by a panel of judges. According to Jersey Ontario secretary-manager Beverly Spriel, breeders from Oxford County, including those near Tavistock and Hickson, were well represented among this year's winners.

Glenholme Jerseys Inc., operated by the Mellow and Ruta families east of Tavistock near Punkeydoodles Corners, enjoyed a

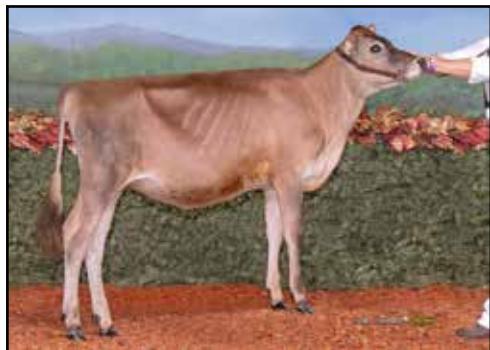
particularly strong year, earning multiple All-Ontario awards for their Jersey herd. Their success reflects a consistent show season and years of focused breeding.

Also recognized were animals bred by Brian and Linda Raymer from east of Hickson, whose cattle come from one of the highest-rated Jersey cow families in Canada. Their breeding program received top honours in the junior cow classes.

The Morningmist Jersey herd, owned

by Cathy, Jim and George Mason near Hickson, also earned All-Ontario recognition with calf nominations, adding to the strong local showing in the provincial competition.

The annual All-Ontario awards highlight both show-ring success and long-term breeding excellence, recognizing the quality and consistency of Ontario's Jersey cattle and the dedication of the breeders behind them.



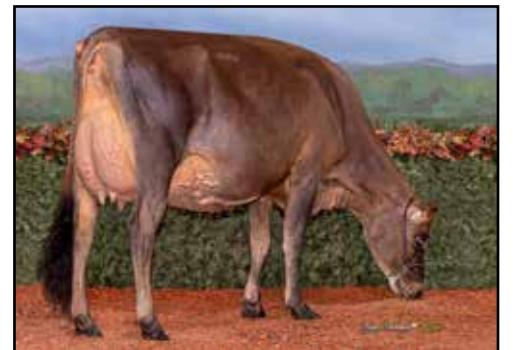
(PHOTOS BY VICKI FLETCHER, ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR)  
Glenholme J Twist & Shout, owned by Glenholme Jerseys Inc., was named All-Ontario Summer Calf.



Glenholme Video Aftershock, owned by Glenholme Jerseys Inc., was named All-Ontario Senior Calf.



Bri-Lin Victorious Shimmer, bred by Brian and Linda Raymer near Hickson, was named reserve All-Ontario junior two-year-old.



Bri-Lin Victorious Spring, also bred by Brian and Linda Raymer east of Hickson, was named All-Ontario junior two-year-old for 2025.



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# Ukrainian painting workshop



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Viktoriia Makarova, an artist from Ukraine, leads a painting workshop, the second in a series of workshops being offered at the Ukrainian Guest House in New Hamburg. Twelve guests participated in the event held on Tuesday, Jan. 27. The next workshop, a cabbage roll cooking class, will be held on Feb. 26 from 5-7 p.m. Anyone interested in participating in upcoming workshops or arranging a workshop for friends or community organizations can contact Olga Strasburger of Grassroots Response to the Ukrainian Crisis at 519-778-6401 or [marketing@grassrootsresponse.ca](mailto:marketing@grassrootsresponse.ca). More information about Grassroots Response can be found on its website at [www.wrgrassrootsresponse.ca](http://www.wrgrassrootsresponse.ca).

# Gazette Puzzles

## GROUNDHOG DAY

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

<b>Bill Murray</b>	<b>Groundhog</b>	<b>Spring</b>
<b>Burrow</b>	<b>Marmot</b>	<b>Sunrise</b>
<b>Early Spring</b>	<b>Prediction</b>	<b>Superstition</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>Shadow</b>	<b>Tradition</b>
<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Six More Weeks</b>	<b>Wiarthon Willie</b>

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# Pet of the Week

## SAGE

Sage is an incredibly affectionate cat with a tender heart and a gentle spirit. She may be shy and a little nervous when she first meets new people but she'll warm up quickly with patience and kindness. Once she feels comfortable, Sage is a loving, devoted companion who enjoys snuggles, soft pets, and simply being near her favourite humans. If you're looking for a sweet, loyal friend who just needs a little time to shine, Sage could be the perfect match. Learn more about Sage at [kwsphumane.ca](http://kwsphumane.ca)!



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# Colours of the rainbow: Holistic helper or hokey?

## HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Nutritionists are famous for telling clients to eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables daily. Each colour offers an array of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.

Do you eat the entire rainbow or gravitate to eating heaps of the same hues day in and out? The mind, body and spirit are interconnected and linked to whole-body holistic happiness. What if I told you our spirit feels at one aligned with the right colour. Does colour impact your emotion or does emotion impact one's colour choice? Maybe the reason you love cherries and strawberries starts with the ravishing red but just maybe the body unconsciously chooses

produce based on what it needs to thrive? Holistic or hokey?

Research indicates colour may boost mood, change energy levels and improve focus. Match your mood to colour and antioxidants align the body? Hokey or holistic?

There was a time I was obsessed with carrots, mango and butternut squash; the staple of my menu planning. Interestingly enough, I soon learned of a vitamin A deficiency. Amazing coincidence? The yellow and orange colors provided me a bounty of beta-carotene, in turn converting to usable vitamin A. Hokey or holistic helper?

Let's take a deeper delve into the colour connection with health.

Some experts suggest colour is linked to overconsumption. Red and orange are bright, like a police siren attracting attention, and food appears amazingly appetizing. Nutritiously, red is loads of lycopene, linked to a reduced risk of heart disease. Add in another antioxidant, anthocyanin, and red is an astounding anti-inflammatory.

Yellow can elicit comparisons to the energy of the sun and happiness. In relation to food, loving yellow is tied to overindulging.

Blue and purple are soothing, and stellar colours supporting appetite suppression. Blueberries, blackberries and purple cabbage are low calorie and one cup satisfies. Maybe it's more than the fiber? Holistic or hokey?

White signifies simplicity and a fresh start. A low contrast colour such as white is wondrous for heart help and controlling cholesterol. Think mushrooms and cauliflower. Do you eat off white dishware? Apparently, white leads to overconsumption. What's on your plate? Buyer beware. Pasta, mashed potatoes and rice need to stand out on a



(VECTEEZY PHOTO)

**Eating the rainbow isn't just pretty, each colour of fruit and vegetable brings its own nutritional benefits, from boosting mood to supporting overall health.**

black background to negate big portions. Could the white rice signal in the white bowl trigger the brain to go overboard eating? On the other hand, going to town on cauliflower is a great thing. Cauliflower is cancer prevention. Holistic or hokey?

Green is linked to nature, reducing stress and attracting money and luck. Eating gads of green goodness is chlorophyll, vital vitamin K and fabulous folate. Green is overall body-boosting but go for the gusto. Growing green goodness adds in

the earthing element. Gardening saves money, digging in the dirt lowers blood pressure and eating essential leafy loves is nutrient dense. Green is a go on every level. Holistic or hokey?

Colour attracts or repels us. Next time you're perusing the produce aisle, be open to the power and pull of colour. Taste sensation or body-booster, whether this piece is holistic or hokey, eat a rainbow and reap the benefits inside and out!

On a side note, serve meals on smaller plates and avoid filling the huge plate.

# What's going on with Great Lakes water levels?

## SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO OUTDOORS

By Jeff Helsdon



What happened to all the water?

That's the big question from anyone who spends much time on the Great Lakes, including boaters, anglers, waterfowl hunters and kayakers. In short, the Great Lakes have fallen dramatically from record-high levels only six years ago.

Lake levels are a combination of local precipitation and water coming from other lakes. In the case of Lake Erie, this means water feeds it from Lakes Superior, Huron and Michigan. Looking in more detail, Erie's water levels are determined 21 per cent by local precipitation and runoff, and 79 per cent from water fed from the upper lakes. Moving to Lake Ontario, these numbers slide to 15 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively. This means the levels

of the lower lakes are influenced by those of the upper lakes.

Frank Seglenieks, a water resources engineer with the National Hydrological Service, reported all five of the Great Lakes are below average when he was interviewed in November. He noted the upper lakes, Superior and Huron-Michigan, are much lower than lakes Erie and Ontario. Seglenieks explained that a drought encompassing the American Midwest was hitting the western Great Lakes.

The current levels are the lowest since 2013 and are nothing out of the ordinary.

"When you look back at the history, going back 100 years, it's been lower," he said. "It's not like they are historically low or anything."

Since Seglenieks said that, lake

levels continued to decline in December. Predictions, based on ranges that cover extremely wet and extremely dry years, show Lake Huron staying below average across all scenarios. With Lake Erie, extremely wet conditions could raise the lake slightly above the long-term average, but most scenarios for the next few months keep Erie below average.

At Long Point, the lower water is clearly visible. Water levels on the sea walls in the marinas tell a tale of where the water is and has been, and are three feet below the high-water marks from a few years ago. At the Long Point Waterfowl Unit, staff told hunters they would need a mud motor to access many blinds due to low water.

Angie Woodward of Marina Shores said she has never seen the levels this low. This is something marina owners need to keep an eye on as erosion increases when the water levels are low and closer to the bottom of the sea wall.

Although the numbers show the level was lower in the last 20 years, Woodward said that could have happened for a short time, but not for such a long period.

Glen Rohrer of Tillsonburg,

who owns Coletta Bay Guides and has hunted Long Point Bay since 1989, also hasn't seen levels this low. He hunts several different places on Long Point Bay and said he couldn't reach two or three of his spots this fall.

"Back in the mid- to early 1990s, the water was low, but not as low as it is right now," he said, adding his log showed the low water in the 1990s lasted a couple of years.

Seglenieks said siltation or wind could be impacting shallow bays such as Long Point beyond the broader lake levels.

With water levels dropping quickly through the fall in many years, many swear there is some control over Lake Erie's water levels, but this is not the case.

"There is no control of the majority of the flow out of Lake Erie; most of it goes over Niagara Falls," Seglenieks said, adding the Welland Canal is emptied each year after Jan. 1 for maintenance. "This has a negligible impact on the water levels of Lake Erie. There is also some flow of the Niagara River that is diverted to be used in hydroelectric plants, but this water is released back to the river a few hours later. So, the overall daily outflow from

Lake Erie is not affected by this diversion."

Having written stories about water levels for more than two decades, I can recall the days of lower water levels as well. In the last low-water spell, Lake Erie fared better, and Lake Huron-Michigan (the lakes have the same level as they are joined in the Straits of Mackinac) was the lowest. Looking back in my files, I wrote this in 2015:

"Levels in Lake Huron and Michigan have been below average since December 1998. The level was low enough that docks were left high and dry, wetlands dried up and cottagers were clamoring for an investigation into what caused the levels to dive. The lowest point was in January 2013, when the level was 73 centimetres below average."

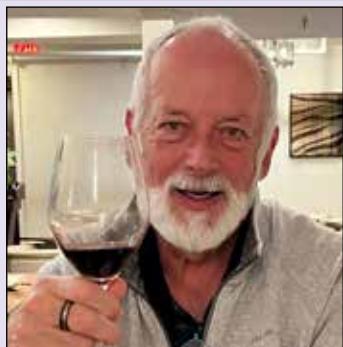
I also recall cottager's associations on Lake Huron were calling for measures to slow the water in the St. Clair River with the hope it would bring the water levels back up. That changed less than five years later as record highs were seen.

What the near future holds is uncertain, but water levels will rise as part of an endless cycle.

# My first and last trip to the Dominican Republic

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



There are obviously a number of ways to experience the Dominican Republic. A lot of visitors opt for the all-inclusive-resort approach and spend a relaxing (and often well-lubricated) holiday at the beach and poolside in one of the hundreds of such resorts. Others go for more excitement, choosing on-water and underwater adventures, motorized buggy expeditions, zip-lining or waterfall experiences. And still others spend their time on some of the more than two dozen golf courses (a relative rarity in the Caribbean, where some islands have only one or two).

I went with plan C, golf, while staying at an all-inclusive. A buddy of mine who has previously spent cold months in Florida was looking for another option, and we decided to spend eight days at the Meliá Caribe Beach resort in Punta Cana. Our package there (and yes, I paid full freight, unusual for a travel writer) included half-price golf at the nearby, 27-hole Cocotal Golf course.

My post-trip assessment? Well, to adopt a well-worn cliché, there was the good, the bad and the ugly. (Let me be clear; we're not talking about the lovely island of Dominica.)

Let's start with the good. That would be the golf. The course was in quite good shape, except for the bunkers, some of which had been turned into mud or something close to concrete by recent rains, but the fairways and the often tiny, tricky greens were good.

We played six days straight – which was a lot, to be honest. The 27 holes allowed us to play a different combination most days. And the courses were essentially empty; we played 18 on several days without waiting for other golfers or seeing anyone behind us. That is a golfer's dream.

The final day of play was a Saturday and it was busier, so we actually skipped by a couple of lined-up holes, and then added make-up holes on the third nine, so we got in an 18-hole layout of our own devising.

But be warned, golf there isn't cheap. We paid just under \$150 Canadian per round, and that was on our half-price deal. We talked to other golfers who were

paying \$300 Canadian. That's a pretty hefty price tag for a golf course that is okay, but certainly not a signature golf destination. As well, we were told the courses were not crowded because it was January – November, December, February and March see a lot more visitors, and much busier golf courses.

Now, the bad – or at least, the disappointing. Our resort is rated 4.5 out of five stars. Nope.

Start with my room. All of the drawers on the dresser were broken in some way; one would never close properly. I personally fixed the perpetually running toilet and tightened the toilet seat. My one bar of shower soap was not replaced once in eight days. The air conditioning roared like a 747 on takeoff. There were two straight-backed chairs in the room, and instead of a couch, a single daybed, so nowhere actually comfortable to sit. My safe didn't work until a staffer came to fix it.

When we checked in, we were given little or no helpful information. For example, no one mentioned there were tablets located in two places on which you could book reservations at the usually busy restaurants. There was also one concierge desk which always had a lineup at least half an hour long.

We discovered you could get certain services – like a golf-cart ride to your room – but only if you asked. No one had told us to ask.

The only bar or lounge where you could get a drink after dinner on this gigantic resort was the lobby bar, where loud, disco-style music was a mainstay.

None of these are life-changing problems. If the resort was rated three stars, it would make sense, but not 4.5.

The ugly? We both got sick. Sick enough that on a couple of days, golfing was a challenge, but we'd paid the big bucks, so we mostly stuck that out, but some meals were skipped, evenings were spent in our rooms and the trip home was on two wings and a prayer we would get back to Canada without any health crises.

I know not everyone would agree. I have talked to a number of friends since returning, and they have been surprised by my

stories. They love the Dominican Republic and would return there in a moment. We also met a lot of Canadians there who had made the trip to the DR many times and are big fans.

By the way, my observation was that there were a lot of Canadians, some Europeans including British folk, a lot of Spanish speaking guests and almost no Americans. The one person from the U.S. we talked to was wearing a button which read, "I didn't vote for him." I commended her for her courage.

I don't think travel to the Dominican Republic is going to decrease because of this particular article, but if you do choose to go, feel free to ask for my room – I won't be using it.

*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.*



A beautiful portrait mural on the wall of a shop.



My unit, top right. Nice from the outside.



The lobby of the resort gives little clue of how tired the rooms are.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The Cocotal course was beautiful and generally in good shape.



The course was well-populated with beautiful, tropical birds like this egret.



Flowers abounded on the course, including lots of bougainvillea. In fact, one of the three nines was named for that plant. (The others were hibiscus and benjamina).

# Looking ahead to the coming year

## INTERFAITH COUNSELLING CENTRE

By John Dinner

Just one month ago, a third of Canadians responding to a national poll indicated they had increased optimism about 2026 this after a year marked by economic upheaval, global conflict and climate change-induced natural disasters. Perhaps this optimism was rooted less in confidence and more in fatigue; a belief that things surely could not get worse.

A lot has happened in the last month, making those numbers dated at best and possibly irrelevant. Stock markets remain

volatile, geopolitical tensions persist and extreme weather events continue to disrupt communities and livelihoods. But polls, like headlines, capture only a moment in time. They reflect not just conditions, but culture – and ours is one that places a high value on certainty, control, comfort and convenience. It's no coincidence these are the very things marketers promise most aggressively. But when certainty and control feel out of reach, anxiety finds fertile ground.

Anxiety thrives on uncertainty, especially the kind that feels relentless and uncontrollable. We wake up to news alerts that redraw the future overnight, reinforcing the sense that stability is fragile and temporary at best. For many, this produces a low-grade, constant unease – a background hum of worry that feels unavoidable. Over time, people begin to normalize it. "This is just how I'm wired," they say. "I've always been anxious." The anxiety can become part of our identity.

But anxiety is not a fixed personality

trait; it's a response. And responses can change.

The opportunity exists to step out of the anxiety trap by shifting attention from an imagined future to the present moment – from what might happen to what we know for certain right now. This is not denial or naïve optimism. Rather, it is a deliberate shift toward reality. In this moment, most of us are safe; in this moment, we are breathing, functioning and capable of responding to what's in front of us. When attention returns to the present, anxiety often loosens its grip.

This shift requires challenging the stories we tell ourselves. Anxiety is fueled by narratives built on "what ifs" and worst-case scenarios. These stories feel compelling because they feel like we're managing our expectations. More often they are rehearsals for disasters that never arrive. Replacing them with facts – what is happening now, what is within our control and what has not yet occurred – grounds us, releasing the grip that anxious thoughts

may have on us.

Optimism, then, does not come from believing the future will be easy or predictable. It comes from trusting our capacity to meet whatever does come our way. History shows humans are remarkably adaptable, even when circumstances are harsh. When we focus less on predicting the future and more on engaging fully with what's happening right now, we are primed for resilience rather than rumination.

In uncertain times, the most stabilizing force available to us is not certainty, but presence, and that may be the kind of optimism worth cultivating – one moment at a time.

*John Dinner is a registered psychotherapist who works as a counsellor at Interfaith Counselling Centre in New Hamburg. He tries to learn from the past so he can plan for an uncertain future. In the meantime, he tries to remind himself that things are usually pretty good.*

## Canada lives

PETER RICE

*Submitted to the Gazette*

Our prime minister, Mark Carney, delivered a speech on Jan. 20 at the 56th annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. He received a standing ovation from the world leaders in attendance. The prime minister warned about the world's "rules-based order" fading, and called for the middle powers to unite.

The next day, Trump accused Canada of being ungrateful. He disrespectfully called our prime minister by his first name and said in a low, threatening tone, "Canada lives because of the United States." I assume he wants us to be grateful for the punishing tariffs he has imposed which are designed to bring our country to our knees, forcing us to become the 51st state.

Canada lives because we are a country that celebrates its diversity and gives refuge to those who are escaping war and strife. Canada does not fill our cities with masked ICE agents roaming our peaceful neighbourhoods and arresting citizens and noncitizens alike based mainly on the colour of their skin, or the fact they are legally protesting injustice.

ICE agents have now been given immunity for whatever action they take on their own citizens, allowing them to use tear gas and tasers along with live rounds. A five-year-old preschool boy was arrested and used as bait in his own driveway on the way home from school. I can only imagine the horror of this happening to my own grandson of the same age. Two people have been shot and killed. They were instantly labelled as instigators by the

federal government before any investigation had taken place. Those investigations will be strictly controlled and will only proceed with those chosen by the ruling party. Other local law enforcement will be shut out. Can we guess what the conclusions of the investigations will be?

Canada lives because we have gun-control laws. The U.S. had 408-425 mass shootings in 2025 with 420 dead and 1,898 wounded. Australia has set an excellent example on how to take positive action after their Bondi Beach tragedy. New gun restrictions and anti-hate laws have come into effect quickly. Thoughts and prayers only go so far, America.

Canada lives because we don't attack and censor the mainstream media. We don't try to control it by insulting and bullying the people who are hired to ask the tough questions.

Canada lives because we don't ridicule and bully others if they have different opinions than us. We also don't mock the disabled for our own personal gain, rather we accept them with open arms as valuable and contributing members of our society.

Canada lives because we accept the decisions of the electorate. We don't try to overthrow the government in violent insurrections. In Washington on Jan. 6, 2021, a number of people died as a result and the justice system has failed miserably to hold the instigator and other participants of this deplorable incident responsible. In fact, they had a great idea, let's make him president again!

Canada lives because we don't persecute the political opposition in personal vendettas after gaining power.

Canada lives because we mobilize without hesitation to help our neighbours. We deployed hydro workers in ice storms in the American northeast and sent water bombers and firefighting personnel when California wildfires were out of control.

Canada lives because a small town, Gander, Nfld., opened its hearts and homes to over 6,500 people on 38 airplanes. The United States Federal Airport Administration shut down international airspace after the 9/11 attacks. RCMP officers first made their presence known to assure all the passengers they were safe. Then the town of roughly 12,000 mobilized. They put their lives on hold to house and feed strangers who numbered half of their entire population. That's what neighbours do. Their kindness will never be forgotten by the passengers, but sadly it appears to have been forgotten by this administration.

Canada lives because we believe in the threat of climate change on the health of the world's fragile environment. Though we aren't perfect in our response, we are not shaming other nations by proclaiming that the issue is a hoax and a sham. Trump's beliefs are based on oil greed and ignoring proven science and facts.

Canada lives because we don't invade independent countries. The U.S. disregards international law and does so only on the moral authority of one person, without congressional approval. That would usually label that leader a dictator.

Canada lives because we don't flaunt international law. We don't murder human beings in small boats off the coast of their own country with lethal drones fired

from thousands of feet in the air. The U.S. military did this without due process and committed an indisputable war crime by circling back and murdering the survivors near the wreckage of their vessel.

Canada lives because we work cooperatively with other nations for the benefit of all. We don't punish friends and allies economically for our own imperial gains and status.

Trump has also mentioned that he doesn't need Canada, and NATO has done nothing for the United States. Yet NATO's Article 5 was only used once, and that was after the 9/11 attacks.

Canada lives because we lost men and women in battle in Afghanistan, joining the NATO alliance to fight the Taliban after the 9/11 attacks. Canadian soldiers who had friends die in battle find Trump's words disgusting and insulting.

Canada lives because we are peacemakers and have donned the blue helmets to participate in over 50 United Nations peacekeeping missions since 1954.

Canada lives because we are innovators and inventors. Think about how the discovery of insulin, the invention of the telephone, the pacemaker, the alkaline battery, the Canadarm and even one of America's favourite sporting pastimes, basketball, just to name a few, have all enriched the world.

Sorry, Donald, (we are polite as well) but Canada lives because we are Canadian! I wish America well and hope that you can solve the mess that you are now in. You are much better than this. We wouldn't want to lose our best friend.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR - JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

**Wilmot budget meeting**  
5:30-8:30 p.m.  
Council chambers  
60 Snyder's Road W., Baden

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

**Nith Valley Ecoboosters Repair Cafe**  
9:30 am to 12:30 pm  
Free event where community members can bring broken or damaged items and volunteer 'fixers' will walk them through repairing them. There will be fixers for small household mechanical and woodworking repairs, mending for clothing, knit and crochet items, jewelry, and book repairs. Contact details - nvebrepaircafe@gmail.com  
Zion United Church  
215 Peel Street, New Hamburg

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

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

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

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

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**Hicktown Hoedown 2.0**  
8 p.m. - 1 a.m.  
Raffles and prizes, food and local beer, line dancing. Event is 19+, proceeds go to Wellesley Fall Fair  
Bill Gies Recreation Centre,  
1401 Queens Bush Rd, Wellesley

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9

**"Jumping Worms & Other Invasives"**  
Garden Wilmot meeting  
7 p.m.  
Free event  
Wilmot Rec Complex, Meeting Rm A (upstairs)  
1291 Nafziger Rd Unit #1, Baden

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

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



Saturday, February 14



### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23

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

### MORNING & EVENING BIBLE READING

**Read the Bible in a Year in Community**  
Morning meeting 6:00 a.m. daily  
Evening meeting 6:00 p.m. daily  
Contact Arthur Rosh if interested.  
Phone number: 226-899-1551  
Email address: arthur.rosh@gmail.com  
Location to be determined in New Hamburg, Tavistock, Baden, Wellesley, New Dundee, St. Agatha, Shakespeare, Petersburg, Hickson, Punkeydoodle's Corner and area

### EVERY WEDNESDAY

**TOPS - Taking off Pounds Sensibly**  
Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.  
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

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



### STAMP CLUB

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### FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

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**Pickleball** Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon, 12-4 p.m. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052  
**Cards** Monday, Wednesday afternoon 1-4 p.m., euchre, crib (bring board), etc. Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118  
**Inside walking** Monday & Wednesday morning 8.30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Contact: Larry Brown 519-240-6715  
**Crokinole** Monday, Wednesday morning 8.30 a.m. - 12 p.m., Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: John Schultz 519-655-2346  
**Shuffleboard @ arena**, Wednesday 12:30-4 and Thursday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052.  
**VON Smart Seniors Exercise**, Tuesday and Thursday morning 9 - 10 a.m.; Village Manor 10:25 - 11:25 a.m. Contact: 519-539-1231 x 6285

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

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

Dear Editor,

A discussion about the proposed amalgamation of conservation authorities took place at the Wilmot council meeting on Jan. 26. Mayor Salonen indicated at the Dec. 22 meeting that she would inform council in January about the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) motion opposing the proposal.

In response to a question from Coun. Dunstall, Mayor Salonen confirmed that a motion had been sent to the province and that many municipalities were strongly opposed. Information was also shared about the recent Rural Ontario Municipal

Association (ROMA) conference which some members of council had attended. Widespread opposition to the proposed amalgamation was evident at the conference and attendees relayed their concerns to members of the Ontario legislature that were present.

This was good news as members of Wilmot council have expressed concerns about this proposal both at the Dec. 22 and Jan. 26 meetings.

Their concerns are justified as the proposed amalgamation undermines the initial reason for the conservation authorities to be set up – protect people and property

from flooding and conserve natural resources including lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater. The last one is especially important for Waterloo Region in light of the recent water supply problem.

Flood control is of major importance to Wilmot because of the Nith River's susceptibility to flooding. An important role for the conservation authorities is regulating development to minimize risks of flooding and other environmental impacts by issuing permits only to those who will not endanger water sources or property.

Amalgamation would impede the local

perspective which is essential to facilitate their job being done properly in order to prevent water shortages, contaminated water sources and homes damaged by flooding.

It is important for the citizens of Wilmot and, in fact, all of Ontario to voice their opposition to the proposed amalgamation by phoning or writing their MPP without delay.

Dorothy Wilson,  
New Hamburg

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## Quiz Time Answers

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Taiwan                  | 6. Pears                  |
| 2. World Economic Forum    | 7. The Los Angeles Lakers |
| 3. The tomb of Emperor Qin | 8. India Pale Ale         |
| 4. Chimpanzees             | 9. Rodents                |
| 5. 11,700 years ago        | 10. Zamboni               |

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

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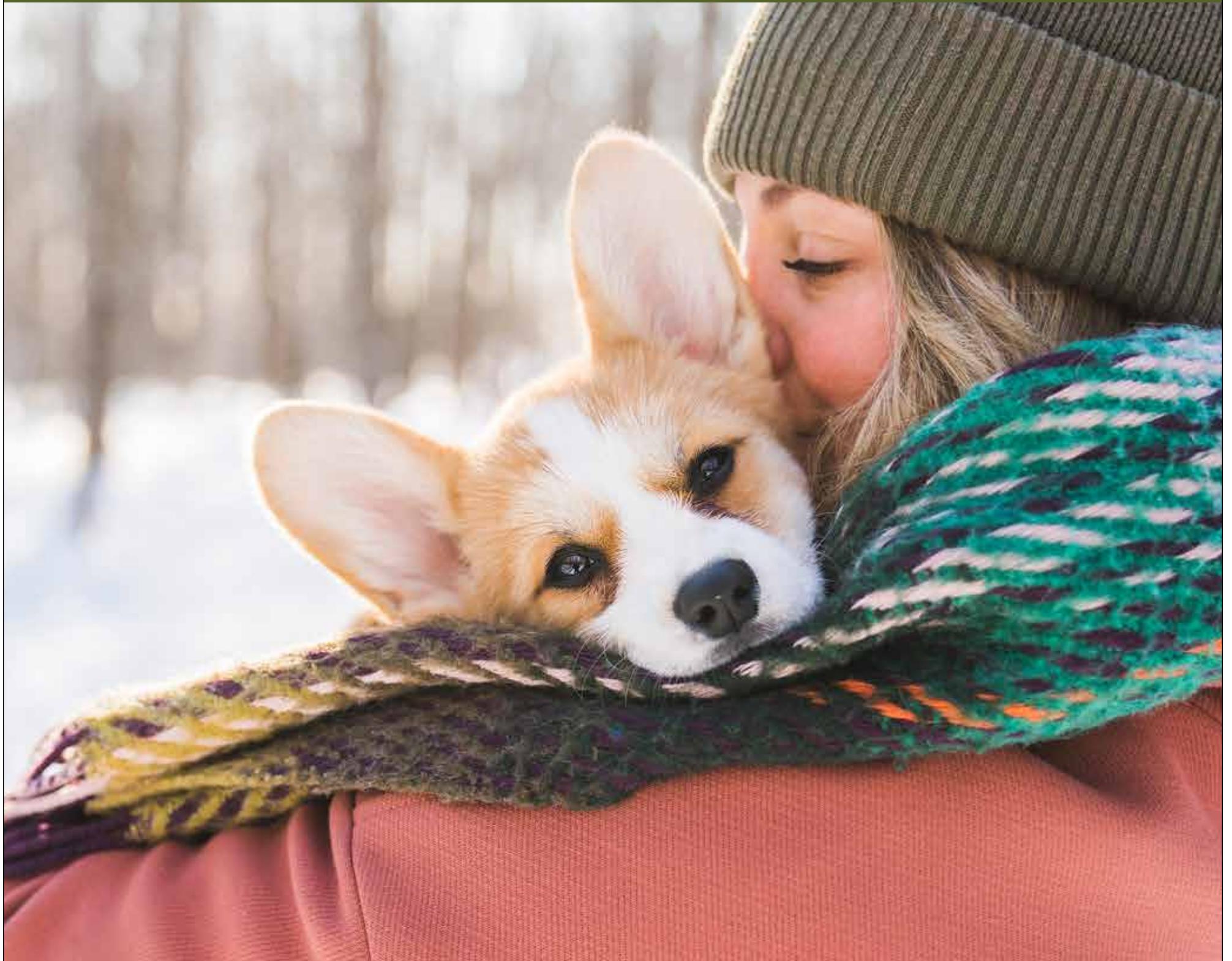
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