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THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025

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GARY WEST PHOTO

Volunteers at Tavistock's Missionary Church on Mogk Street were busy flooding their rink from a tanker truck supplied by the Raymer Group. Pictured from left are Ken Perkins, Mark Raymer, Josiah Klaver, Jessie Lange, Ben Domm, Sam Sauvé and Ken Gunn. Everyone in the area, both young and young at heart, are invited for a skate on what the church is calling "a welcoming community rink that is meant for everyone." See full story on page 2

Wellesley council approves 2025 draft budget, in principle, with 3.94 per-cent levy increase, growth inclusive

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

At its final budget meeting of the year on Dec. 18, 2024, Wellesley council approved in principle the township's draft 2025 budget with a 3.94 per-cent levy increase – down more than one per-cent from the initial 4.99 per-cent levy increase proposed in the budget's original draft.

Township staff first presented the draft 2025 budget at council's kickoff budget

meeting at the end of the November. The budget was initially presented with an \$8.14-million property tax levy increase – nearly \$672,000 or nine per-cent higher than what was levied from property owners in 2024. However, the township also saw roughly 3.7 per-cent growth, representing an increase by roughly \$301,000 to the tax base. That growth will lessen the burden of this year's levy increase on ratepayers.

At the Dec. 18 budget meeting, council approved three cost-saving measures to reduce

the overall budget impact on ratepayers by 1.05 per-cent or roughly \$82,000. The first and most impactful of those cost-saving measures is the deferral of hiring new staff in the recreation and finance departments until April 1, shifting nearly \$61,700 in new staffing costs from the 2025 budget to 2026.

"We've modelled out the three-month (deferral), which seemed to be council's preference in the last meeting and that would save

Wilmot councillor leaves his own townhall

Procedural questions arise on whether the meeting became an official town affair

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

No one knows if the recent Ward 4 townhall meeting should be considered legitimate township business. What is certain is Saturday's event created controversy among councillors.

Coun. Steven Martin asked fellow councillors Harvir Sidhu and Kris Wilkinson to leave Saturday's townhall at the New Hamburg Community Centre. When they said they wouldn't, Martin left instead, leaving Coun. Lillianne Dunstall to face an emotional crowd worried about the proposed 50-plus per-cent tax increase and other controversial issues. Coun. Stewart Cressman also attended but vacated the event, concerned about potential ramifications.

The Gazette reached out to Kaitlyn Bos, the township's clerk, and was given the following explanation on what creates an official meeting of council:

"The Municipal Act, 2001, s. 238(1) defines 'meeting' as any regular, special or other meeting of a council, of a local board or of a committee of either of them, where:

- A quorum of members is present, and
- Members discuss or otherwise deal with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the council, local board, or committee.

The Ontario Ombudsman would investigate any complaint made about a meeting being held without proper notice, procedure

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Wilmot councillor leaves his own townhall

Continued from page 1
etc.

To determine whether a discussion materially advances council business or decision-making, the ombudsman considers the extent to which the discussions moved forward the business of the municipality. Discussions, debates or decisions intended to lead to specific outcomes are likely to materially advance business or decision-making, whereas mere receipt or exchange of information is unlikely to do so.

Dunstall wasn't convinced having five members of council present was an issue, but she also didn't know for sure it wasn't. She added there is a definite possibility a complaint will be made against Sidhu and Wilkinson with the township's integrity commissioner and/or the ombudsman responsible for municipal affairs. Despite the uncertainty, she said the pair should have left.

"In what world would you not leave? If I came up to you and said, 'Hey, there may be a problem with quorum and I can't start the meeting if there is. Would you mind going home and watching the livestream?' I would have said absolutely. Why would I mess with your meeting? It doesn't make sense to me."

She added her constituents were very upset because Martin was put in a position where he had to leave his own townhall. The

event was also livestreamed on Dunstall's Facebook page.

"I feel so bad for them. Right now, they think we are incompetent and with that display, it has gone through the entire town. People are asking why they would do this. What was the purpose? I would love to know. They weren't going to ask any questions and they could hear all the questions from home, so why were they there when the person hosting the meeting asked them to leave privately at the back of the room."

Dunstall added she is concerned Ward 4 residents weren't able to hear from both her and Martin because of the disruption at the meeting, and residents don't need any more reasons to doubt their municipal government.

"We already have an issue with confidence in this council. We have dealt with so many contentious issues and if you watched any of that meeting, you will see people are extremely angry."

Every councillor hosted or will host a townhall meeting to allow residents to weigh in on the budget and other issues. The final event will be hosted by Ward 1 Coun. Stewart Cressman on Thursday, Jan. 9 from 7-9 p.m. at the New Dundee Community Centre. Dunstall said she would have liked Mayor Natasha Salonen to take more of a leadership role regarding the public meetings.

"I don't know why, when this thing

dropped, the mayor didn't say to councillors let's get together, get some dates out there. How do you guys want to deal with this rather than have each of us do something and I say something and other councillors say something else."

Wilkinson told the Gazette he had no concern about potential Municipal Act violations.

"The short answer is no. We were not materially advancing the business of the township and not engaged in a council discussion."

He added there was no reason for him and Sidhu to leave.

"First, I'm a citizen. Additionally, I was there in support of my family who live in New Hamburg as well as supporting my constituents who chose to attend."

The Gazette asked Wilkinson if he felt a split was developing between some members of council, particularly after Saturday's confrontation with Martin.

"My colleagues and I don't always agree on policy and I wouldn't want that. I think it's natural and healthy in a democracy to have differing opinions. Ultimately, I have my constituent's best interests at heart and I will work together with my colleagues to ensure we find agreement while discussing business in council."

Wilmot Township staff have come under scrutiny as a result of the proposed budget and that issue was at the forefront on



(FACEBOOK PHOTO)

Ward 4 Coun. Lillianne Dunstall and acting CAO Greg Clark faced an emotional crowd of nearly 300 Wilmot residents Saturday afternoon in New Hamburg.

Saturday. Wilkinson said it is worrisome.

"I am concerned about the misinformation out in public right now. I have heard loud and clear that citizens are frustrated and tired of how things have been running. They want us focused on providing excellent service while also respecting their hard-earned tax dollars. I feel the exact same way and I am approaching this budget with cuts and changes in mind."

Tavistock's Missionary Church ice rink is ready for skaters

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Church volunteers in Tavistock, who are busy creating an outdoor ice rink, were singing praises for the frigid cold of

-15 degrees Celsius windchill in making ice this year, as 2025 gets underway for skaters in the area.

The side yard of the Tavistock Missionary Church saw the plastic installed on Tuesday afternoon, with quick work by seven church members and helpers to weight it down before the transport truck load of water was delivered and unloaded.

With snowflakes in the air, it was feeling more like an old-fashioned winter than it has the last couple of years.

Church volunteers said they have tried the last two years, but the weather never fully cooperated.

"It looks like this year could be a game changer in a good way, to finally get to make ice on an outdoor rink," said volunteer Mark Raymer.



GARY WEST PHOTO

Outdoor rink volunteers were laying down the plastic minutes before the tanker water truck arrived from the Tavistock water tower for the first flood of the year at the Missionary Church ice rink.

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Wellesley council approves 2025 draft budget

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us about \$62,000 in 2025, which translates into a levy impact of -0.81 per cent," said township director of corporate services Jeff Dyck. "If we do two months versus three months, that results in savings of \$41,000 and a levy impact of -0.53 (per cent)."

"And then correspondingly, the amount we lower it by this year, that is what you add next year," added township CAO Rik Louwagie. "So, if you do a two-month deferral, we automatically start with a 0.53 (per-cent) increase in 2026."

"I understand the implications in 2026 – that's how it is – but we don't know what 2026 is going to be like," Mayor Joe Nowak said of deferring the new hires until April. "Maybe it will be easier to manage. Maybe it won't. We can't see the future."

Council also opted to reduce the proposed wage increase for non-union township staff from 2.8 per cent this year to 2.3 per cent, saving the township \$15,558 or another 0.18 per cent of the proposed levy. While council landed on that reduction, Coun. Lori Sebben suggested reducing that increase even further.

"Whether you're an employee of the municipality or a corporation or a small business, I think all employees must be accountable to their customers and, in this case, that would be the Township of Wellesley residents," Sebben said. "... With the complaints I've heard over the past year, I feel like giving the 2.3 (per cent) CPI (Consumer Price Index) increase would be unfair to our residents. If the addition of staff helps with the customer-service end of things (in 2025), then I think that 2.3 (per cent) or whatever the CPI is next year would be fine, but until that time, I have a hard time saying we should give that 2.3. I think a half a per cent less or (a) 1.8 (per-cent increase would be better)."

In response to Sebben's suggestion and without offering specifics on the complaints Sebben spoke of, Coun. Shelley Wagner said she didn't think customer complaints in one area of the township's operations warranted a reduction to the wage increase for non-unionized employees across the board. Though she said she felt the original 2.8

per-cent increase proposed by staff was too high, she didn't think a 1.8 per-cent increase was justified for the township's otherwise hardworking staff.

"We're dealing with two different things," Coun. Derek Brick said. "We're dealing with wages and we're dealing with customer service. Yes, we have to look at that together and I think we can ask council (to have staff look at) better customer service, but I don't think we can punish based on customer service. I think 2.3 (per cent) fits within our policy and I know we've knocked it down in other years, so I wouldn't support going below 2.3."

Brick said he would support a review of the customer service policy in the new year, which he said would address the complaints from the public and the concerns raised by council. Nowak also noted its important to maintain competitive wages for staff to ensure the township can attract and maintain top talent.

The final cost-saving measure approved by council was reduction in spending on HR software by \$5,000 or 0.06 per cent of the proposed levy.

The 2025 draft budget also includes a proposed 0.75 per-cent greening levy amounting to just shy of \$60,000 to be collected from ratepayers to combat climate change and support greenhouse-gas-emission reduction efforts locally, as well as a proposed one per-cent infrastructure levy amounting to nearly \$80,000 to help the township replenish its capital reserves and tackle its long-term infrastructure deficit.

The total tax levy to be collected next year is now at just over \$8.06 million, roughly \$595,000 more than last year's levy.

If the township's 2025 budget bylaw is passed at an upcoming regular council meeting, Wellesley township property owners will see a 3.94 per-cent increase to the township portion of their property tax bills. For an average home assessed at just over \$397,000, that would equate to an additional \$58.19 this year.

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

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Renowned Wellesley bronze sculptor with connection to Stratford Festival appointed to Order of Canada

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With her extended family from across the province and in the U.S. once again gathered at her rural Wellesley home over the holiday season, renowned bronze sculptor Ruth Abernethy had a lot more to celebrate this year than Christmas and New Year's.

In October, Abernethy received a phone call out of the blue from the governor general of Canada's office. The staffer on the other end of the line told the sculptor, known across the country and beyond for her work memorializing in bronze important Canadians from the past and other historical figures from around the world, that she would be appointed as a member of the Order of Canada as part of the 2024 cohort.

"It's a real honour and, to be fair, it's lovely to share the news at last because we were notified in October, and we were sort of sworn to silence. I wasn't terribly good at that," Abernethy said. "But there weren't that many people to tell. I have a few repeat clients who waited on news and mostly it was just a mention to family, but lovely to share that news at last and indeed an honour.

"... To be honest, it sounds a bit grand, but that's not wrong. I tend to just take forward steps and I'm not one to really look back. I think the career is something

you end up with, not something you hunt down."

For more than three decades, Abernethy has been commissioned to memorialize in bronze Canadians of note who have made an outsized impact well beyond their home communities. From Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister John A. Macdonald to Oscar Peterson and Margaret Atwood, Abernethy's incredibly lifelike sculptures give visitors to and residents of villages, towns and cities from coast to coast a reason to pause and consider their lasting legacies, good and bad.

While working in the prop department for the Stratford Festival in the 1990s, Abernethy started her career as a bronze sculptor with the commission of "Raising the Tent," a sculpture that sits outside the Festival Theatre in Upper Queen's Park. Since then, she has carved and cast numerous sculptures of Canadians wearing the Order of Canada pin on their lapels.

Now, she can consider herself as worthy of being among their ranks.

"I'm working with people who are a humbling lot," Abernethy said. "They are overachievers in their own right ... and they are hoping I can portray Canadians whom they admire. The company I keep either theoretically as portrait subjects or collaborate with in the doing are a pretty humbling lot of overachievers. The people I'm sculpting and the people that I'm

talking to; you meet them at a reception here or there and there's usually a couple of pins in the crowd.

"It's a bit of an adjustment to imagine that I'm on the same guest list now. In a curious way, it is a good fit in that I was lucky enough to have family and acquaintances across the country. ... When you go from one region of Canada to the other, you always represent from that which you come. ... I have felt that over travels for a lifetime and if I'm at an international conference or I'm in Europe, people are kind of knocked sideways by the portfolio and I do kind of represent Canada. ... You carry that with you, and it really is an honour to have that recognized in any other way beyond my own musings."

Last month, Canadian Governor General Mary Simon announced 88 new appointments to the Order of Canada, including one companion, 24 officers and 63 members. Three appointments are promotions within the order.

The Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honours System. Thanks to nominators across the country, it has celebrated the outstanding achievements and wide-ranging contributions of over 8,000 people since its creation in 1967.

"Members of the Order of Canada are builders of hope for a better future," Simon said in a press release. "Each in their own way, they broaden the realm of



(RUTH ABERNETHY PHOTO)

Wellesley bronze sculptor Ruth Abernethy, who got her start in bronze sculpting with a commission for the Stratford Festival, will be appointed as a member of the Order of Canada at a ceremony in Ottawa later this year.

possibilities and inspire others to continue pushing its boundaries. Thank you for your perseverance, fearless leadership and visionary spirit, and welcome to the Order of Canada."

Though a date for the official Order of Canada appointment ceremony has not yet been announced, Abernethy says she plans to travel to Ottawa to receive the honour in person.

Rushing Waters of New Hamburg



(MIKE GRUMMETT PHOTO)

The New Hamburg dam through the trees running full out after the rain and snow over the Christmas holidays.

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Gazette still going strong after 130 years

STEWART GRANT

Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Publisher

"People will always want local news."

It's something that I say often when I'm asked about the state of the newspaper industry. There's no doubt that the former Tavistock Gazette, now named the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette, has stood the test of time thanks to the support of its readers and advertisers.

The Gazette was founded in October 1895 by J. W. Green in Tavistock's former Commercial Block. In the nearly 130 years that have followed, many different publishers (Frank H. Leslie, Charles Fraser, N.E. Dopp, William Appel, Lorne W. "Chick" Appel, George K. Brown, K. Hart Brown, Robert Gladding, Bill Gladding and I) have kept the tradition going.

As the newspaper industry experienced its greatest changes, the first being to computerization and the second regarding the massive impact of the internet, the Gladding family (Bob and Doris, then the next generation, Bill and Sheri) deserve much credit for keeping the Tavistock

Gazette going strong while many newspapers in other communities failed to survive. The Gladding family owned the Gazette for exactly 51 years (1969-2020).

I was honoured when Bill Gladding approached me in 2020 to inquire about my interest in leading the Gazette into the next era, and on July 1 of that year, it became a sister newspaper of the St. Marys Independent which I purchased in 2014.

Getting to know the Tavistock community was a positive feeling that was infectious to me, and thus began a journey of starting newspapers in other communities, starting in New Hamburg with The Wilmot Post in October 2020. In late 2021, we combined the Wilmot and Tavistock newspapers into the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette that you know today, feeling that readers would appreciate a larger newspaper that incorporated news and stories from throughout these neighbouring areas.

The below photograph, taken last month, shows that our team has grown dramatically in recent years, giving us greater opportunity to provide interesting local content to our

readers. Specifically at the Gazette, I'm most grateful to our editor, Galen Simmons, for coordinating each week's news, to salesperson Sharon Leis for connecting with local businesses, to Lee Griffi for his inspired civic issues coverage, and to Gary West for sharing the interesting personal stories of local families.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of all the amazing people who make the Gazette what is, and I hope our list of local contributors continues to grow into the future. After all, a community newspaper is at its best when it shares perspectives from a cross-section of the community.

If you would like to contribute to the Gazette, or have ideas on how to improve your local newspaper, please email Galen or myself at galen@granthaven.com or stew@granthaven.com, or call Jen at 519-655-2341. We'd love to hear from you.

From its earliest days in 1895 to the internet age here in 2025, it has been a privilege at the Gazette to serve the community and as we begin this new year, we look forward to continuing the tradition of bringing you interesting local news and information.



(JEFF TRIBE PHOTO)

As seen in this recent photo, the Grant Haven Media team has grown substantially over the last five years as owner and publisher Stewart Grant continues to start and support community newspapers across southwestern Ontario, an effort started in earnest following his purchase of the Tavistock Gazette.

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New Hamburg Legion continues search for family members of local veterans

NEW HAMBURG LEGION

Gazette Contributor

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

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

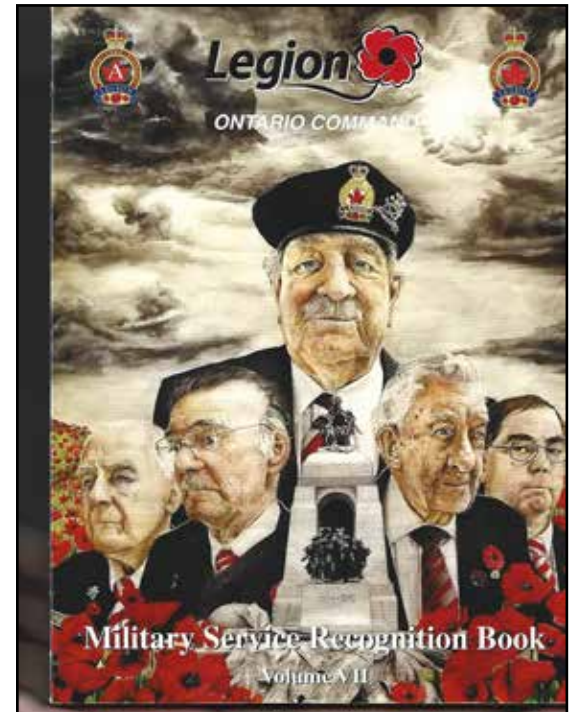
"I would be remiss if I didn't mention that we will also include veterans who are or were a neighbour or distant relative of local residents," said local MSRB coordinator Bob Berg. "A veteran is a veteran is a veteran."

"We are not here to document or pass on the horrors of war; our mission is to emphasize the courage they so readily displayed to save strangers in a foreign country thousands of miles from home. By doing so, they prevented dictators from attacking our own country. Many hands from all the corners of the world helped in one way or other. We will remember them."

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

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- Kraemer, Clarence
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- Reeves, Joseph M.
- Reid, Bernard,
- Reynolds, Kenneth
- Reynolds, Moyna
- Rhodes, William F.
- Richards, Alfred
- Sanderson, William
- Sartorelli, Peter
- Sauve, Gladys N.
- Sauve Rene
- Schaefer, Walter John
- Schaefer, Willard B.
- Scherer, Clayton M.
- Schmidt, George F.
- Schroeder, William H.
- Schwoob, Donald J.
- Schnarr, Richard O.
- Scott, John R.A.
- Sherrer, Douglas R.
- Schilliday, Robert

- Skuce, Ruth J.
- Stuebing, Robert A.
- Stumpf, Harold D.
- Summers, Leonard
- Swatman, Kenneth R.
- Swatman, Michael
- Sweet, Fred R.
- Thiesson, Jacob
- Thomas, Herbert J.
- Thomas, Newton A.
- Thompson, Terrence
- Tribe, Stanley
- Valentin, Adolf
- Vargo, Eugene
- Van Trigt, James A.
- Veitch, Harris C.
- Wakelin, Charles E.
- Walker, Clifford F.
- Wallace, Kenneth M.
- Way, Sidney G.
- Weber, Norman H.
- Weichel, William M.
- Wescott, Kenneth S.
- Wismer, Clarence H.
- Willis, Harvey
- Wiebe, Claire H.
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(NEW HAMBURG LEGION IMAGE)

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



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Wilmot residents have their say at budget meeting

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

To say members of Wilmot Township council heard an earful from residents Tuesday night would be a severe understatement.

As residents face a proposed 51 per-cent increase in their property taxes, 19 delegations presented to elected officials while dozens of residents sent their concerns to councillors via email. The message was consistent throughout the night; passing a budget of this magnitude would not be in the best political interest of members of council.

Rory Farnan was the second delegation and was concerned about the cost of living for himself, his family and other residents.

"I am a father of three young, growing children. Food prices are projected to increase this year by three to five per cent. I live in a two-tier municipality where the upper tier just increased its share by 9.48 per cent. I live in a country where a carbon tax is going to further increase the cost of filling up my family minivan and operating my home appliances."

He added taxpayers are being nicked and dined for government to spend at an unsustainable rate. While Farnan understands the need for "corrective action" due to the mistakes of previous councils, he has concerns with burdening the tax base with such a huge tax hike all at once.

"It is important we approach this

situation with a fair and balanced plan, considering both the added burden to the taxpayer and the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of (the township's) finances," he said.

He added many Wilmot residents are struggling and having to choose between paying their bills or feeding themselves.

"Residents with lower wages and fixed incomes are finding it increasingly difficult to pay their rent or remain in their home. It is your duty to ensure any financial decisions made to not intensify these hardships."

Councillors also heard from Lorie Le Riche, a 17-year resident of the township who said a one-time boost to capital-infrastructure investment does not seem realistic.

"A long-term plan would be better, as mentioned by others. One of my concerns is if you get this cash injection, could the funds be spent somewhere else? Is it possible to ensure the funds collected for capital investment are only used for that purpose? I have been told it is not," Le Riche said.

A total of 49 residents provided their concerns by emailing the township, and many of them expressed concern over the hiring process of a new CAO in 2025 and burdening the current tax base with a massive tax hike as opposed to a phased-in approach. Here are some excerpts:

- Rosaleen Kelly-Cinc – "Hire a municipal finance expert to conduct a complete audit to identify

finance-protocol concerns and recommend best practices to be implemented to avoid future financial dilemmas."

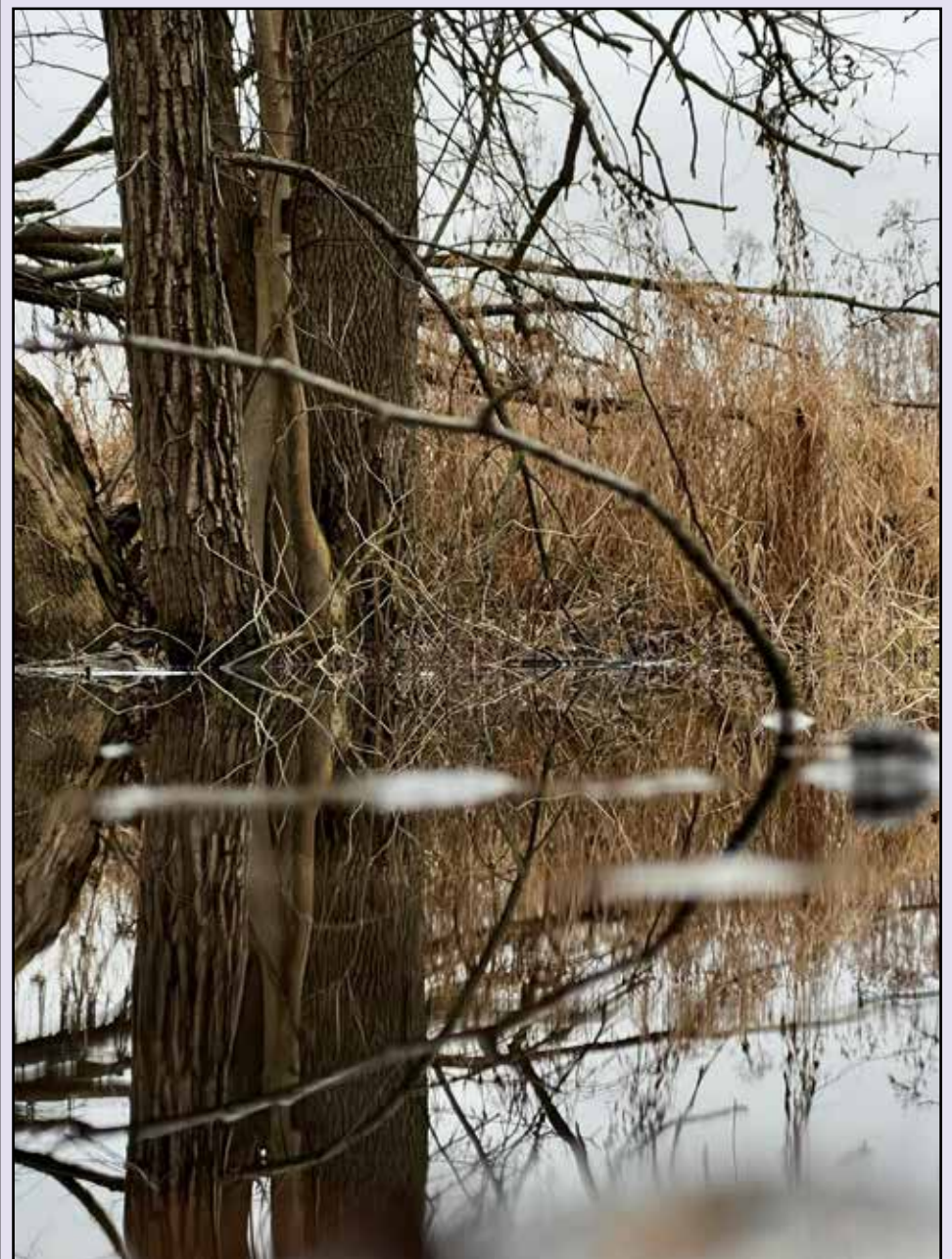
- Scott Flemming – "Look very carefully at how decisions are made and at the advice and information provided by staff, especially the CAO, whose job it is to make available all the information required for the council to make sound decisions. Ensure the screening process for hiring the CAO is appropriate and clarifies the role of the CAO vis a vis the mayor and council.
- David Sisco – "As a 30-year resident and taxpayer, I wish you to consider that past township councils over the last 10-15 years gradually buried us into near financial bankruptcy where we now find ourselves. The fix can not be resolved in one single hit to the taxpayers (at 51 per-cent increase). You need to seek a recovery plan that is fiscally responsible, intentional but gradual, i.e. over four to seven years.

- Richard Jacques – So where are the proposed cuts in this draft budget? Trees don't grow to the sky and, as a pensioner, I don't have unlimited funds. In fact, I don't have the lucrative benefits and pensions of municipal employees that you are asking me to pay for. This has to stop and we need to get a handle on the spending of this municipality and the region. It's high time that we start to balance the approach to the budget process and start looking at how and where we cut expenses like any household is needing to do.

Many residents are also concerned about five new, full-time positions included in the budget and instead want the township to implement a hiring freeze until the financial situation improves.


The next budget meeting is scheduled for Jan. 16 from 2-10 p.m. in council chambers where councillors will have the opportunity have their say. If the document isn't passed then, an if-needed get-together is set for Jan. 27 from 5-10 p.m.

SHOW US YOUR WILMOT



(SHOW US YOUR WILMOT PHOTO)

Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group member Steph Lemont recently shared this reflective photo of a roadside ditch with crystal-clear water she took on Tye Road.



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January is Crime Stoppers Awareness month

JEFF HELSDON

Gazette Correspondent

The more eyes the better could be seen as an underlying philosophy of the Crime Stoppers program.

This international program started in 1976 in Albuquerque, N.M., when police were unable to find any tips about a murder. The idea of reenacting the crime on local television, allowing anonymous tips and paying for tips that led to an arrest was born. The program spread and encourages anonymous tips from the public about crimes and criminal activity.

In Tillsonburg, Crime Stoppers was a part of Haldimand-Norfolk Crime Stoppers until about a decade ago when Tillsonburg was grouped with Oxford Crime Stoppers. Now, during Crime Stoppers Awareness Month, the local connections to the program are working to raise awareness of the valuable program.

"It's a public, media and policing partnership," said Jan Hauck, a South-West Oxford resident and a member of Oxford Crime Stoppers board of directors since 1998.

The board is charged with raising funds for tips and deciding on how much rewards



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Taking the Crime Stoppers vehicle in local parades is one way of raising awareness about the organization. Oxford Crime Stoppers board member Laura Curtis, left, and some of her helpers were ready for a Santa Claus parade.

should be. Potential tipsters should know the entire system is anonymous, rather the tip is left through the 1-800-222-TIPS line or on the web at oxfordcrimestoppers.com. Tips are passed on to police and if the tips results in any arrests or charges laid,

a reward of up to \$2,000 can be paid. The amount of suggested tips is generated by a computer program, but the board can pay that amount, increase or decrease it.

"In my experience, we increase it because we want to keep those tips coming,"

Hauck said.

In Oxford, 85 to 90 per cent of the rewards are not claimed, which she said means the community is reporting crime for the right reason.

As of the end of November, Oxford Crime Stoppers received 329 tips. Those tips led to 15 arrests, 66 charges laid, \$135,540 in narcotics seized and 45 cases cleared.

Board members also work to increase awareness about the program. One of the big, annual fundraisers is the golf tournament at Ingersoll Golf and Country Club. The group is looking for another fundraiser.

"We can't just sit back," Hauck said. "If tips come in, we need to pay those rewards."

Crime Stoppers is about more than assisting in major crimes. The program also aids in solving fish and wildlife infractions such as poaching, breaking environmental regulations and people driving with a suspended license.

Oxford Crime Stoppers is seeking new board members. The group meets monthly. Anyone interested can contact board member Laura Curtis at 519-983-9300 or laura.curtis@century21.ca.

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Ontario 

Perth East victim loses \$320,000 to fraud; Computer "security breach" scam on the rise

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

The Perth County OPP has received multiple reports of computer pop-up scams lately and a Perth County resident recently lost a significant amount of money after they received a notification on their computer indicating there was a security breach of their personal information.

In November 2024, a Township of Perth East resident noticed a pop up on their computer directing them to call a provided number due to a security breach. The person on the other end claimed to work for Microsoft, and remote access was granted to the victim's computer. The victim was told their finances had been compromised.

The victim was directed to withdraw cash from their financial institution, totalling \$80,000, and to purchase over \$240,000 worth of 100-gram gold bars from an online company. The gold was delivered to the victim's house by a delivery company, and on five separate occasions over the next two weeks, unknown people attended the residence to pick up the cash and gold.



(PERTH COUNTY OPP PHOTO)

A Perth East resident is out \$320,000 after falling victim to a computer security breach scam through which scammers posing as computer support convinced the victim to purchase gold bars, which they then picked up from the victim's home.

The persons of interest are described as Asian men between 25 and 35 years of age with short, dark hair. They are described as short in stature. The vehicles of interest

involved in this fraud are described as a white Lexus sedan and dark-coloured, small sedans of unknown makes and models.

The investigation is ongoing.

The Perth County OPP encourages the public to stay alert and educated to reduce the risk of being a victim of fraud. Anyone who receives an unsolicited phone call or message asking for personal information (name, birthday, address, phone number, bank information, SIN number) or payment via gift cards for a product should not provide the information and hang up the phone and block the phone number. Legitimate organizations do not receive payments by gift cards of any type.

Warning signs to look out for when receiving unsolicited messages include emails, text messages or phone calls sent at odd times of the night, creating a false sense of urgency, spelling errors, lack of punctuation or capitals in sentences, automated messages, random links or attachments, and generic business or company names.

Anyone with information on this or any other crime can call Perth County OPP at 1-888-310-1122. Anonymous tips can also be submitted to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or online at www.P3tips.com.



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Waterloo Regional Police release 2024
Festive R.I.D.E. program results

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

Between Nov. 15, 2024, and Jan. 1, 2025, Waterloo regional police held Festive R.I.D.E. (Reducing Impaired Driving Everywhere) programs throughout Waterloo Region.

The campaign aimed to raise awareness regarding impaired driving and ensure motorists were driving sober.

During the Festive R.I.D.E. programs, police checked 8,157 vehicles and administered 76 roadside breath samples with an approved screening device. Police also laid numerous charges, including:

- Three impaired-driving-related charges
 - Nine three-day suspensions
 - 24 Highway Traffic Act charges
 - One Cannabis Control Act charge
- "Our members conducted R.I.D.E.

programs in all three cities and four townships across the region and checked over 8,000 vehicles this holiday season," said S/Sgt. Griffiths of the Waterloo Regional Police Service's (WRPS) traffic services unit in a press release. "Our members will continue to be on the lookout for impaired drivers throughout 2025 and we ask drivers to please make the right decision and not drive if you choose to consume alcohol or drugs."

The WRPS is reminding motorists about the dangers and risks associated with driving impaired. All young drivers, novice drivers and commercial drivers are required to have zero presence of alcohol and/or drugs in their system while driving.

All motorists are encouraged to plan ahead and arrange for a safe ride home. Anyone who suspects a motorist is driving impaired should call 911.

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Hickson Lions Club visits Maples Home and PeopleCare residents at Christmas

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

There were smiles all around as residents of two of Tavistock's seniors' homes were visited by members of the Hickson Lion's Club at Christmas time.

All residents at the new PeopleCare and the Maples Home for Seniors homes were each given a Christmas gift courtesy of the members of the Hickson Lions Club.

According to longtime Lion Bradley Smith, the club provided a small gift for every resident at PeopleCare. For the Maples Home, they made up larger gift bags for residents in the long-term-care area that do not have family left, or for those whose family are not available at Christmas time. The club has been doing this annually for many years and hopes to continue for many years in the future.



(BRADLEY SMITH PHOTOS)

At the Maples Home for Seniors are, from left, Hickson Lions Club member Heather McKim, Maples Home executive director Joan Hergott, lions club gift committee chair Geraldine Claessens and Val Smith.



Hickson Lions Club members present gifts to residents at PeopleCare in Tavistock. The residents include, from left, Joyce Pearson, Yvette Richard, Cheryl McRae, June Cox, Bruce Hilderly and Mary Hopkins. Beside the tree are Lions Valerie Smith, Geraldine Claessens and Heather McKim.

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Wildwood Labs releases first-ever hemp stick to be sold on recreational market

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A local hemp producer and manufacturer of CBD topicals officially launched its flagship hemp-stick product on the recreational cannabis market during a special event at Little Leaf Cannabis Co. in Stratford last month.

In honour of this milestone product launch, Wildwood Labs of Lakeside in Oxford County, just a short drive from St. Marys, celebrated at the Stratford pot shop on Dec. 13, 2024. At the event, members of the media and those who visited the store that day were invited by Wildwood Labs representatives to learn more about hemp sticks and the company that makes them.

“A lot of people are under the impression that cannabis can get you high, and of course it can if you’re smoking it or certain edibles can have a psychoactive effect if they have THC in them,” said Shane Wiebe, managing director and co-owner of Wildwood Labs. “But our product is very rich in CBD and in CBC and in CBN and CBG and all these other cannabinoids that specifically target inflammation and pain, restless muscles, these kinds of thing.

“Our product is a full-spectrum hemp product – it’s not made from marijuana; it’s made from hemp. It’s a full-spectrum product, so we do not isolate the different cannabinoids after we’ve extracted this healthy crude oil from the hemp. The benefit is now instead of just having one cannabinoid in there – maybe it’s CBD, maybe it’s CBC or maybe a little bit of both – in this case, we’re actually using the crude oil as part of the product. You could almost use it before we put it into its format as a topical cream. ... Instead of having one or two cannabinoids, I always joke we have between nine and nine million in there because there’s only about 20 (cannabinoids) we can test for right now.”

While Wildwood Labs’ four varieties of hemp sticks – lemongrass and lavender, cool menthol, warming cinnamon ginger, and extra strength – have been available on the medical cannabis market for some time, the product launch last month marked the first time customers could purchase a hemp stick without first seeing a doctor and obtaining a prescription, something Wiebe said is a huge step toward making the product more accessible to people who may benefit from it.

“We’ve really wanted to target people who are grandma’s and great grandma’s age because there’s so much that is not known about the cannabis market; they really do think of it as a recreational (drug) ... to get high, and that’s not at all what our ethos is about. For us, why it’s a big deal is because now we can just talk to people (about it),” Wiebe said.

“Let’s say we had a conversation about it with someone at Walmart. ... Now we can educate people around us and say, ‘No, this is not going to get you high, but it will



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTOS)

Representatives from Wildwood Labs and staff from Little Leaf Cannabis Co. celebrated the launch of Wildwood Labs’ hemp stick on the recreational cannabis market in Canada Dec. 13 with a product-launch event at Little Leaf in Stratford.

help you get moving.’ We can say, ‘Hey, order it on the (Ontario Cannabis Store) online or order it here at Little Leaf.’”

Wildwood Labs is a homegrown business started by a group of local farmers and families who planted 60 acres of hemp in Lakeside in 2020. The company not only grows the hemp it uses in its products, it also extracts the hemp oil and processes it into the hemp sticks. For Leanne McPhie, CEO of Little Leaf Cannabis Co., being able to support a local business that is innovating in the cannabis industry is an important partnership for the Stratford pot shop.

“Like us, they are a family-run business, they’re local, they truly believe and are passionate about what they are doing, and the product they have put out is an all-natural product; it’s just incredible,” McPhie said. “I’ve been using it for a while now and it works so well. I find it more effective than anything else I’ve tried. Because they are local, family owned, we need to support each other.”

According to McPhie, about 30 per cent of Little Leaf’s customer base come into the store looking for wellness products.

“It’s always important for us to be looking for products that are going to be effective for our customers that are as natural as possible,” McPhie said. ... Wildwood Labs came to us about a year ago and said, ‘This is a product we are looking to put on the market,’ and I thought it would be great for our customers.”

Currently, only the warming cinnamon

ginger hemp stick is available at Little Leaf and through the Ontario Cannabis Store, however Wiebe said Wildwood

Labs is hopeful the other three varieties of hemp stick will be available on the recreational market soon.



Wildwood Labs co-owner and managing director Shane Wiebe speaks at a product-launch event for the company’s hemp sticks at Little Leaf Cannabis Co. in Stratford Dec. 13.

Shakespeare's Schafer family on Parkinson's journey

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

There are many organizations throughout the area that raise money year after year to continue with research and development to find a cure for those diseases that shorten a person's life or at least make everyday life a challenge.

Every year in September, many in the area walk to find a cure for one of those diseases, namely Parkinson's Disease.

A Shakespeare family can speak firsthand about this debilitating disease. The Schafer family, which includes Bill and Kathy along with their daughters, Laurie Schafer, Heather Briese, Angela Schafer and their families, have been dealing with Kathy Schafer's Parkinson's diagnosis since 2003.

The following is her journey as told by her three daughters.

"Mom's journey with Parkinson's began subtly," said Angela Schafer. "She noticed her right arm wasn't swinging during her daily two-mile walks, a sign that something was amiss. This small change led to a life-altering diagnosis that would shape her and her family's lives."

Parkinson's Canada reports that over 100,000 Canadians live with Parkinson's,

with 30 new diagnoses every day.

The World Health organization highlights that the prevalence of Parkinson's disease has doubled in the past 25 years. Despite extensive research, the cause of Parkinson's remains unknown, and each patient's experience with the disease is unique.

For Kathy Schafer and her family, the diagnosis was a daunting revelation.

"It impacted all of us as a family when we learned about Mom's illness; we didn't know what to expect," said Angela Schafer.

Initially, Kathy Schafer's life continued with minimal changes. She and her husband celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with a European river cruise, enjoyed a family trip to Cancun and even visited New York and Yankee Stadium, and Boston's Fenway Park with her siblings to watch the visiting Blue Jays play.

As the Parkinson's progressed, Kathy Schafer's lifestyle gradually changed. Vacations became less frequent and spending time with extended family grew more challenging. Everyday outings turned into significant efforts. Yet Kathy Schafer remained a Parkinson's superstar, living at home for 20 years and actively

participating in medical trials, exercise regimes and working with a naturopath alongside her physician.

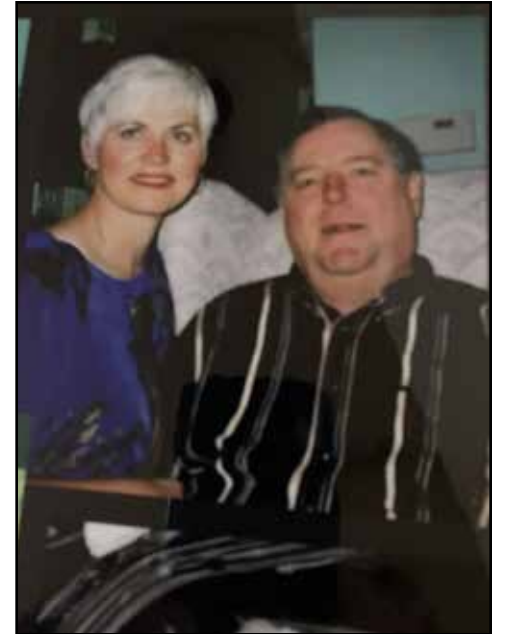
A pivotal moment in her journey came in 2014 when she underwent deep brain stimulation (DBS), which significantly reduced her tremors.

"This was a life-changing experience," Angela Schafer said, expressing gratitude to Dr. Mandar Jog and his team at London's University Hospital for their unwavering support.

In addition to Parkinson's, Kathy Schafer battled scoliosis, which progressed more rapidly due to her condition, necessitating back surgery in 2016. Dementia, a common symptom of advanced Parkinson's, only affected Kathy Schafer in recent years, leading to her move to a long-term-care home in Stratford.

The Walk for Parkinson's every year in Stratford in September brings in thousands of dollars and also raises awareness about the challenges faced by those living with Parkinson's.

The Schafer family's dedication and Kathy Schafer's resilience serve as an inspiration to the community, highlighting the importance of support, family, community, research and hope in the fight against



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Kathy and Bill Schafer are pictured in their family home in the years before Kathy Schafer's Parkinson's diagnosis in 2003.

Parkinson's Disease.

For more information on programs and support for people living with Parkinson's Disease, visit the Parkinson Society of Southwestern Ontario website at PSSO.ca.



Team Schafer was out in full force in September raising thousands of dollars for Parkinson's research at the annual Walk for Parkinson's in Upper Queen's Park. The Stratford team also included Shakespeare's Barb Myers, who with her partner's team, Ron's Racers, were able to raise \$160,000 over two years.



The day after the Parkinson's walk in Stratford last September, the Schafer family held a family reunion at the Shakespeare Optimist Hall. Kathy and Bill Schafer's immediate family include, in the first row from left, Norah Bradley, Avery Briese, MacKenzie Langdon and Bennett Langdon. In the second row from left, are Angela Schafer, Heather Briese (Schafer), Bill and Kathy Schafer and Laurie Schafer. In the third row from left are Cory Briese, Gord Bradley, Blake Bradley and Jared Langdon. Absent is Regan Briese.



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OBITUARY

CULL, John Anthony



Date of death: December 29, 2024

Arrangements: no visitation, no funeral service

Donations: Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth

Please Note: Dear Friends,

If you have the time and the inclination, please drop in and say "Hello" at my new 'digs' in St. James Churchyard, Wilmot Township, Waterloo County. John

Funeral arrangements entrusted to the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, New Hamburg. Donation information can be found on the funeral home website at www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca

OBITUARY

BEAN, Norman Earle



Passed away Wednesday, December 18, 2024, having just celebrated his 83rd birthday, at Nithview Home, New Hamburg, of kidney failure.

He leaves to mourn, his wife of 46 years Lorene (Martin) Bean and stepchildren Brenda (Horst) Ziemann and Gary and wife Nancy Horst. He is also survived by step-grandchildren Rowan,

Holland, and Carina Ziemann, Kristine and Ashley Horst and step great-grandchild Hazel Ryersee.

Predeceased by parents Oliver and Marg Bean, brother John Bean, and in-laws Martha and Lawrence Martin.

Survived by his in-laws Laverne and Elizabeth, Edmund and the late Joyce and Esther, Ellen and the late Carl Dettweiler, Howard and the late Doris, Maurice and Phyllis, James and Ruth.

Earle was a long-time employee of New Dundee Creamery and an avid Master Bowler.

Visitation was held at the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg, on Monday, December 23, 2024, from 3 – 6 p.m. Interment was held on Tuesday, December 24, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. at Union Cemetery New Dundee when a funeral service followed in the chapel of the funeral home at 11:00 a.m. with Pastor Catherine Hunsberger presiding. For those unable to attend the funeral service; a link to the livestream was available on the funeral home website.

Memorial donations gratefully accepted for Youth Bowl Canada or the Kidney Foundation and can be made through the funeral home.

Personal condolences and donation information available at www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca

OBITUARY

WEITZEL: Verna Idella



102, of Tavistock passed away peacefully at People Care on Monday, December 23, 2024.

Verna was born on October 15, 1922, the eldest of 4 children, to the late Edward and Laura (Pletsch) Schmidt.

She married Lloyd Philip Weitzel, September 15, 1945. He predeceased her on January 26, 2002. Verna is

survived by her two children Keith Weitzel and wife Carol, Lori Ann Schmidt and husband Allan. She was predeceased by her son Laverne Weitzel (Anne) and granddaughter Ashley Weitzel. Sadly, missed by her grandchildren, Ryan (Nicole), Kelly (James), Brandon (Crista) and Devon, great grandchildren McKenna, Cassey and Wesley, sister-in-law Betty Schmidt.

She was predeceased by brothers and sisters-in-law Maurice Schmidt (Illa), Robert (Shirley), Bruce.

Verna was a member of Grace United Church in Tavistock where she was a member of the United Church Women and the former Loyalty Bible Class. She farmed alongside Lloyd in South Easthope township until moving into Tavistock in 1983. She was sure to have a large garden whether living on the farm or in Tavistock.

Sincere thank you to all the caring and compassionate staff of People Care Tavistock.

Relatives and friends were received at the Francis Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Saturday, January 4, 2025 from 1-2pm. Memorial service followed in the Chapel at 2:00pm. Interment will have taken place in Grace United Church Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Grace United Church or the Alzheimer Society would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

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



Sorry For Your Loss

IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of

Don Roth

who passed away on
January 1, 2020

Always loved and cherished in our hearts,
Forever missed each day.

Mary Alice, Chris, Dave, Dale and families

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OBITUARY

ALEXANDER: William James "Bill"



Passed away peacefully surrounded by family on Saturday, January 4, 2025 at PeopleCare, Tavistock. Bill Alexander of RR#2 Tavistock in his 87th year.

Beloved husband of the late Donna (Cameron) Alexander who predeceased him October 29, 2021. Dear father of the late Jamie (2008) and wife Brenda of

Woodstock, Scott & wife Heather of RR#2 Tavistock and Sheri and husband Paul Gareau of Dartmouth N.S. Sadly missed by his grandchildren Laura (Mike), Paul (Amber), Nick, Mac, Dean, Jay, Alex, Sophie and great grandchildren James and Emily. Survived by his sisters-in-law Merna Alexander of RR#3 Woodstock and Norma Stanhope of Woodstock.

Predeceased by his parents William & Flossie (Reason) Alexander, brother Fred and brother-in-law Stan Stanhope.

Bill did many things during his life that included driving feed truck, and volunteering with the Hickson Fire Dept, but his real love was farming. He moved to the farm on the 10th line in 1969 and remained and farmed there the rest of his life. He and Donna loved to dance, attending different dances over the years, and of course following the grandchildren and their sporting endeavors.

Relatives and friends will be received in the Francis Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St., N., Tavistock on Friday, January 10, 2025 from 2-4pm and 6-8pm. A private family service will be conducted at the funeral home on Saturday, January 11, 2025. Interment in Oxford Memorial Park Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Canadian Cancer Society or the Lung Association would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

HAVE A STORY IDEA?
SEND IT TO OUR EDITOR GALEN SIMMONS
AT GALEN@GRANTHAVEN.COM

BIRTHDAY

Happiest 80th Birthday Ross Roth

Love from your family

Ross Roth, pictured here holding a Coca Cola calendar with all the pages, was born on Jan. 1, 1945 at Punkeydoodles Corner. Dr. Ross came from Baden on the bus and was then picked up by a neighbour in a horse & sleigh. There was so much snow the doctor had to stay for a few days. That's why he's named after the doctor.



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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. How many combined years have Pierre Trudeau and Justin Trudeau been Prime Minister of Canada?
2. How do you spell the last name of the current Conservative Party of Canada leader?
3. What are the two zodiac signs for January?
4. How do you write 2025 in Roman Numerals?
5. What four countries comprise the United Kingdom?
6. Hydrogen is the most common element in the universe. What is the second most common element?
7. What is the Japanese word for "hello"?
8. What has been the most common baby girl name in Canada for three years in a row?
9. What has been the most common baby boy name in Canada for three years in a row?
10. True or false: the rate of left-handedness in Canada is higher than the world average of 10%.

Answers found on page 26

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Pastor Julie Ellison White

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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 8-15, 2020, Edition (5 years ago)

Seventeen Grade 8 students from Tavistock Public School held their annual Bottle Drive fundraiser on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020. With the help of their parents, the students raised \$2,512.70 by collecting 15,171 cans, 5,246 beer bottles and 2,482 liquor bottles. It was a great response and a great addition to the fundraising efforts for their trip to Camp Celtic at the end of school year in June. The Grade 8 students said they really appreciate the local support given for this annual event.

The Tavistock Skating Club held their annual Pop Concert on Sunday evening, Jan. 5, to showcase the talents of their synchro teams and individual skaters who are preparing for their programs in upcoming competitions. The program began and ended with the Synchro Team 2 performing their routine, which all teams will be performing at Winterfest 2020 to be held this upcoming weekend, Jan. 10-12, 2020, in Brampton. Also performing were the Intermediate and Juvenile Synchro teams. The Junior Canskate members put on a show and, later in the event, Aiden Dotzert and Nicole Bolender performed their pairs routine.

On Jan. 2, 2020, at approximately 10:15 a.m., the Oxford County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) responded to a theft that occurred from a business on Highway 59, Tavistock. The investigation determined that sometime between Dec. 20, 2019, and Jan. 2, 2020, unknown people attended the property and removed two trailers. The first trailer is described as a white 2020 enclosed, double-axle trailer and the second trailer is described as a white, 2012 enclosed, single-axle trailer. Inside the trailers were several field carts with approximately 120 Almaco stainless steel seed magazines.

January 6-13, 2010, Edition (15 years ago)

The Dordan Mechanical Bantam Reps had a successful run at the Kincardine Silver Stick over the Christmas Break, placing second in their difficult pool by a 0.046 percent difference to Ayr and then advancing to the Silver Stick final. The team includes Bryn Wagler, Eric Lobsinger, Justin Wettlaufer, Derek Wagler, Travis Ramseyer, Angus Rowland, Riley Stock, Kyle Nicklas, Dan Rogers, Terran Rogers, Aaron Jutzi, Mitch Schurink, Jared Yantzi, Tyson Zehr, Kieran Van Boekel, Shawn Schultz, Deven Kropf, Tristan Hohl, Micheal Albrecht and Brad Witzel.

January 4-11, 1995, Edition (30 years ago)

Effective Jan. 1, 1995, Ontario's general

minimum wage will increase 15 cents an hour to \$6.85.

Two accidents, five minutes apart, took place on the same stretch of the highway just west of Tavistock on New Year's Day. The first accident happened around 1 a.m. when a westbound 1981 Dodge driven by Ray Berg, 64, of RR 2 Tavistock, and an eastbound 1984 Pontiac driven by Larry Seyeau, 20, of Kitchener, collided on the icy road, four kilometres west of Tavistock on County Road 23. Both vehicles were severely damaged in the collision but the drivers were not injured.

Then at 1:05 a.m., an eastbound 1991 GMC Jimmy driven by Jennifer Seyeau, 30, of Kitchener, went out of control after she swerved to miss the vehicles involved in the first accident, just over the crest of a hill. The Jimmy entered the ditch and rolled over causing severe damage. The driver escaped unhurt.

Students of Tavistock Public School begin the new year, 1995, with a new principal. Mrs. Barbara Bellinger has taken over the top position at the school from Mr. William Ebel, who had been at Tavistock for the past three and a half years. "It's a friendly and inviting atmosphere," she said, "where the students are delightful, eager and bright." In the first week, she has learned that at Tavistock, "students are given a lot of responsibility, and have risen to the occasion."

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

PJHL Roundup: Braves on modest two-game win streak

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

Tavistock kicked off 2025 with a 6-4 win over Woodstock last Friday night.

Jacob Reid-Brant led the attack with a pair of goals and two assists. Jack Hodge and Trent Davies added two points each while Kaden Lange stopped 35 of the 39 shots he faced including a penalty shot in the third period when the Braves led by a goal. The Navy Vets went two for 10 with the man advantage while the Braves went zero for five.

Tavistock's last game before the Christmas break was an 8-6 come-from-behind victory in Paris. Liam Gorman scored three times to up his season total to seven. Ethan Sharpe, Davies, Tyler Brezynskie, Grady Murphy, Blair Stokes and Reid-Brant had two points each.

Braves general manager Brent Lange said the team has been heading in the right direction the past few weeks.

"We started out slow in Paris being down 3-0, 10 minutes into the game, and then were down 4-2 after the first period. The coaches flicked a switch, I will say, between periods that lit a good fire under the players. We came out and scored six goals in the next two periods to take an 8-6 win and go into the (Christmas) break with a win."

Brent Lange added last Friday night's efforts was solid from between the pipes out to the forward lines.

"Big goals at big times in the game, and big saves when needed and a big penalty shot save as well late in the game for a big win against Woodstock."

Brent Lange said Gorman has been a solid addition for the team, averaging a point per game since joining in November.

"He's been able to put up decent number of points. And even if there is a game or two when he doesn't score, he still plays a big role for us in other areas that make us



(TAVISTOCK BRAVES PHOTO)

Jacob Reid-Brant has six points in his last two games for the Braves.

a better team. He plays both special-team roles for us and does a great job, and will be a big help down the stretch here."

Gorman started well for the team but went on a five-point, scoreless drought. He came up big with three goals against Paris, yet Brent Lange said he doesn't need to score to be a factor.

The GM added the play of Reid-Brant has also been solid recently.

"He can be a game changer game in and game out when he plays motivated like he has of late. He's been with the team for a couple of years now and getting in a good groove of late. Hopefully, that continues with him, as he is a great player on and off

the ice."

The Braves continue to lead the Doherty Division in penalty minutes with 706, one of the highest in the entire Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL). Tavistock gave Woodstock 10 power plays and took 44 penalty minutes in the game with Paris. Brent Lange said those numbers aren't doing the team any favours.

"They do not help, obviously. We have a few players that will likely find themselves in the stands soon if they continue to take dumb, unnecessary penalties. We have been trying to stay on top of it and it will be a major topic for us in the second half."

He added when chatting with other

teams in the league, they are all on the same page in saying the refereeing has been inconsistent.

The Braves hosted one of the four PJHL All-Star games on Dec. 28 as the Doherty Division battled their Bloomfield Division rivals. Normally, all-star games don't mean much, but home-ice advantage in the playoffs was on the line.

"It was a good back-and-forth game, lots of great players out there making and creating plays which generated a lot of offence and some big saves from the goal-tenders. We were down early in the game but battled back to take a commanding lead and a 7-3 win."

Four-hundred fans took in the game, something Brent Lange said was a win for the Braves and everyone in attendance.

"It was a great day for our club and a big success all around for the players and their families who all came out to support them all. It did take a good amount of work to pull off, but with scheduling help from the arena staff and minor hockey's help, we pulled it off," said Brent Lange.

The PJHL trade deadline is this Friday at 7 p.m. and the Braves general manager said he is in shopping mode.

"My week will be very busy as calls started last week. We have 13 games left down the stretch here and heading into the playoffs, so we want to keep pushing forward and getting better each game. So, we're in a good groove going into the playoffs. The fan support and support from the town will be greatly appreciated moving forward here."

Firebirds split weekend games, Applejacks drop a pair

New Hamburg dropped a 5-2 decision to division-leading Norwich at home Friday but bounced back with a 3-1 win in Paris on Saturday.

Wellesley had a tough weekend, losing 3-2 to Dorchester and 2-0 to Woodstock.

| <div><div><div><div>PROVINCIAL JUNIOR HOCKEY LEAGUE</div><div>PJHL</div></div></div><div><div>SOUTH DOHERTY DIVISION</div><div>STANDINGS</div></div><div>As of Wednesday, December 4</div></div> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-----|----|-----|---------|--------|
| South Doherty Division | GP | W | L | OTL | T | SOW | SOL | PTS | OTW | GF | GA | DIFF | PCT | PIM | RW | ROW | STK | GPCT |
| 1 Norwich Merchants | 30 | 24 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 48 | 0 | 121 | 72 | 49 | 0.800 | 443 | 22 | 22 | 6-0-0-0 | 0.0627 |
| 2 New Hamburg Firebirds | 31 | 22 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 46 | 2 | 122 | 87 | 35 | 0.742 | 533 | 20 | 22 | 1-0-0-0 | 0.584 |
| 3 Woodstock Navy Vets | 31 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 41 | 0 | 115 | 89 | 26 | 0.661 | 430 | 19 | 19 | 1-0-0-0 | 0.564 |
| 4 Wellesley Applejacks | 31 | 18 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 38 | 1 | 95 | 82 | 13 | 0.613 | 634 | 13 | 14 | 0-2-0-0 | 0.537 |
| 5 Dorchester Dolphins | 30 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 30 | 3 | 86 | 94 | -8 | 0.500 | 495 | 11 | 14 | 0-1-0-0 | 0.478 |
| 6 Tavistock Braves | 29 | 10 | 18 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 21 | 0 | 101 | 122 | -21 | 0.362 | 706 | 9 | 9 | 2-0-0-0 | 0.453 |
| 7 Paris Titans | 32 | 8 | 21 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 1 | 84 | 121 | -37 | 0.297 | 496 | 7 | 8 | 0-2-0-0 | 0.410 |
| 8 Hespeler Shamrocks | 30 | 6 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 16 | 0 | 70 | 127 | -57 | 0.267 | 437 | 6 | 6 | 2-0-0-1 | 0.355 |

Royals move into third thanks to four-game win streak

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

Tavistock overcame a slow start Saturday night and rallied to down Erin 7-2 in Ontario Elite Hockey League (OEHL) play. The visiting Outlaws led 2-1 after 20 minutes but the Royals scored four times in the second period and took a 5-3 lead. Tavistock had a balanced attack with five

players earning two points each. Tavistock hosted Minto the previous Saturday and earned a 3-2 win. Deven Kropf scored two goals including the game-winner just 16 seconds into the third period. Jeremy Munro also scored while Trevor Sauder added a pair of helpers. Goalie Graeme Noye stopped 25 of 27 shots for the win. He also earned an assist on Kropf's first goal of the night.

"A lot of little things have come together during this run," said head coach Tyson Zehr. "We've been disciplined, limiting penalties and staying focused for the full 60 minutes. Our special teams have been a key factor, with both the power play and penalty kill stepping up." The Royals last two games have been at home and, in the OEHL, that can be a big advantage with many road trips well over an hour. Zehr said playing in Tavistock is always a plus. "Playing at home has been a big boost for us. The energy from the crowd creates a great atmosphere, and it's been a confidence-builder for the team." Zehr added the home-ice advantage will be needed this Saturday as the Royals host the Seaforth Centenaires. "Seaforth is a strong, well-coached team with a lot of talent. They play a physical and fast-paced game, and every matchup with them feels like a playoff battle. As

one of our biggest rivals, we know they'll come out hard and we'll need to match their intensity from the start of the game." Deven Kropf continues to put up big numbers offensively for Tavistock, but Zehr explained they are getting a balanced attack. "Dev has been outstanding, but what's been really encouraging is how many guys are contributing offensively. That kind of depth makes us harder to defend and gives us options in different situations." Number-one goaltender Jensen Van Boekel suffered a lower-body injury earlier in the season, something that has him sidelined indefinitely. Zehr said there is no timeline for his return.

"Jensen is making progress, but we're still taking it week by week. Right now, we're not ruling anything out, but his health comes first. If he's ready to return at some point, that will be a big lift for us, but we won't rush him or the process."

Braves sign Tavistock native



(TAVISTOCK BRAVES PHOTO)

The GOJHL's Keaton Bartlett will be joining the Tavistock Braves.

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

The Tavistock Braves have acquired Keaton Bartlett. He joins the Braves after playing 77 games with the Ayr Centennials and Stratford Warriors of the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League (GOJHL) where he tallied 14 points. "We're extremely excited to bring him

home. He is a strong young stable defenceman who will really shore up and help out our backend for the rest of this year down the stretch and into the playoffs as well as the next three years of his eligibility. He's a great kid who comes from a great family," said general manager Brent Lange. Keaton is the son of Jeremy and Donna Bartlett.

Ice in Tavistock's pavilion is ready for skaters

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Reid Yantzi, who has seen his share of ice time while playing hockey in Tavistock, now helps make ice and recently helped set up the ice rink in the Tavistock park pavilion for those young skaters and hockey players who just show up and participate in the game they love. He says their group of volunteers started flooding a couple days ago and with freezing cold temperatures, skaters were enjoying their first skate on Tuesday evening. Beside Yantzi, members of the winter ice makers and maintenance committee in Tavistock's Pavilion include Doug Lamond, Brad Witzel, Jamie Rader, Nick Pearson, Dave Johnson, Evan Bechtold and Matt Lamers.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Volunteer Reid Yantzi puts the final flood of water on the ice in the Tavistock Park Pavilion in the late afternoon Jan. 7 and skaters were enjoying their first skate by 7 pm. that evening under the lights.

| ONTARIO ELITE HOCKEY LEAGUE STANDINGS - SENIOR MEN | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|----|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|--|
| TEAM | GP | W | L | T | PTS | OTW | OTL | P% | GF | GA | DIFF | PPG | PPGA | SHG | PIM | |
| Ripley Wolves | 14 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 2 | 0 | 1.00 | 78 | 35 | 43 | 15 | 7 | 6 | 366 | |
| Seaforth Centenaires | 16 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 25 | 1 | 1 | 0.781 | 76 | 40 | 36 | 12 | 9 | 3 | 218 | |
| Tavistock Royals | 15 | 10 | 5 | 0 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0.667 | 69 | 50 | 19 | 22 | 9 | 2 | 220 | |
| Saugeen Shores Winterhawks | 18 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 19 | 0 | 1 | 0.528 | 82 | 81 | 1 | 29 | 21 | 6 | 234 | |
| Minto 81's | 13 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0.692 | 71 | 32 | 39 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 186 | |
| Creemore Coyotes | 15 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 0.500 | 60 | 52 | 8 | 16 | 14 | 2 | 266 | |
| Georgian Bay Applekings | 14 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 0.536 | 63 | 61 | 2 | 17 | 16 | 5 | 310 | |
| Durham Thundercats | 13 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0.385 | 44 | 63 | -19 | 9 | 17 | 3 | 168 | |
| Erin Outlaws | 14 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 0.357 | 54 | 74 | -20 | 11 | 14 | 4 | 265 | |
| Milverton Four Wheel Drives | 13 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 0.308 | 37 | 66 | -29 | 9 | 12 | 2 | 134 | |
| Lucknow Lancers | 15 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.000 | 21 | 101 | -80 | 1 | 30 | 1 | 369 | |



TEAM
UNITY

INTERMEDIATE WILL BE
PERFORMING DURING
THE INTERMISSION



Tavistock
Royals

VS

Seaforth
Centenaires



SATURDAY, JANUARY 11TH
AT 7:30PM
TAVISTOCK & DISTRICT
RECREATION CENTRE



Local minor hockey coach in need of kidney donor; Girls hockey tournament aims to raise awareness

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A hockey tournament and the search for a kidney may not seem to have much in common, but the two will come together this weekend in New Hamburg.

The annual Kyla Kowalik Memorial Hockey Tournament is hosted by the Wilmot Wolverines Girls Hockey Association. While it has raised awareness for organ donation for 15 years, this year's event will also spread word about one of the association's coaches and his need for a kidney. The tournament runs from Jan. 10-12 at the Wilmot Recreation Centre.

Fifty-two-year-old Matt Bell has been behind the bench of his daughter's teams for nearly 10 years, but isn't able to participate on the ice during practices due to his health issues. Bell said it has been a difficult task to find a kidney match.

"There are a lot of people in the same situation as me and I am what is called a common blood type, O-positive. People think that makes it easier to get a transplant but because it is so common, more people are looking for that same kidney. It's a long wait list."

Bell has been on dialysis since December of 2023. He is able to dialyze at home five days a week.

"Hats off to the home hematology department at Grand River Hospital in Kitchener. They set it up and I did some training for six weeks. I have a machine here at my house. There's a lot of people afraid of it since I have to do my own needles, but it works well for me and allows me to still coach."

Bell is on the coaching staff of his 17-year-old daughter's U18 team and he previously helped out with his 21-year-old daughter when she played. While he said he is hoping to find a match as soon as possible, the goal of the weekend is to get the word out about organ and tissue donation.

"Just awareness. There are a lot of people in the same predicament as me, like a lot. It's important people realize they have the ability to give."

According to the Kidney Foundation of Canada, there were 817 people in Ontario waiting for a kidney transplant as of Feb. 16, 2024. There were 722 transplants conducted in 2022 with 31 per cent of those from living donors. The median wait time



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Matt Bell is seen receiving dialysis at his Wilmot Township home recently. Bell is hoping to raise awareness at this weekend's Kyla Kowalik Memorial Hockey Tournament this weekend at the Wilmot Recreation Centre.

to receive a new kidney in the province is four years.

Kowalik was a Wilmot resident and hockey player who passed away at the age of 17 due to complications from ACL surgery. After her passing, she was a tissue donor. Booths will be set up at the tournament all weekend telling people how they can get screened to become a living donor or how to sign up to be a tissue or organ donor.

"She died of blood clots 11 days after the surgery," said Kyla Kowalik's mother, Cecily Kowalik. "Statistically, that's really late. Usually, if someone has a deep vein thrombosis, it's earlier in the recovery."

She added while there wasn't a conversation with her daughter about being a donor, it seemed like the natural thing to do.

"She was composting and recycling since the age of two. She would even bring Tim Horton's cups home from the arena because she hated the fact there was no recycling at the time. She knew my background as a kinesiologist and working with cadavers, just that respect. To me, it was a no-brainer."

Donating tissue may not save someone's life like the transplant of a major organ, but Cecily Kowalik says it can give greater value to a person's life.

"We found out through Trillium Gift of Life Network that two girls, both in their 20s, were given the gift of mobility with knee- and ankle-joint transplants. They both suffered traumatic injuries and were unable to walk. God only knows what the mental and emotional health of those girls

would be had they not been given an opportunity to live as close to their regular life as possible."

She also discovered two men who had lost their sight received corneal transplants and now can see.

"Four other people received bones and connective tissue transplants, just from Kyla. I was asked by a grief counsellor what her legacy is and I sat there and had no clue. But this helped initially and still helps with healing."

Anyone interested in being screened as a potential donor can call the London Health Sciences Centre at 519-663-3552 or email livingkidneydonation@lhsc.on.ca. More information is available at www.lhsc.on.ca/livingkidneydonation.

PLEASE SEND YOUR

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North Easthope's Alexis Hinds making a name for herself in competitive women's basketball

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

In the summer of 2023, word was circulating around Perth County's North Easthope Township about a teenage farm girl who was lighting up the dragster racing circuit.

Fast forward to the summer of 2024 and that same teenager, Alexis Hinds, was burning up the stats sheet in basketball. Recently, she signed on with Lambton College's women's basketball program. According to her mother, Melissa Hinds, Alexis Hinds found the love of basketball by watching her younger sister, Avery Hinds, who has always been a star basketball player herself.

It all started with the Heavenly Hoops program offered by Stratford's Bethel Church 10 years ago.

It was the start of the Hinds family's journey to loving the sport of basketball. According to her mom, after watching younger sister, Avery Hinds play her first season, "Alexis was hooked and joined the following year."

"Her first coach, Katie Kneider, was amazing and always encouraging and helped to anchor the importance of team," Melissa Hinds said.

Alexis Hinds loved playing in this program that was made up of boys and girls of all different abilities.

Her mother said she soon blossomed and she realized that both girls really enjoyed the sport, so they signed them up for the Hoops for Fun program in Stratford as well.

The following season, they tried out for the Stratford Revolution's club teams and, under coaches Tracy James-Britton and



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Pictured in August 2023 after winning championship trophies with her junior dragster are, from left, Alexis, Melissa and Avery Hinds with their two farm pets looking on. It just shows from dragsters to basketball, Alexis Hinds excels in whatever she sets her mind to.

Jennifer Yantzi, Alexis Hinds began to find her space as a point guard developing her ball-handling and ability to read the court at the age of 13.

St. Michael Catholic Secondary School's senior basketball coach, Steve Goforth, watched her play a game, and had her convinced to attend St. Mike's the following year and play for the senior team under his tutelage.

From Grade 10 until this year's final high-school basketball performance as a fifth year, Alexis Hinds has become a force on the court, according to her coach. The connection and relationship she has formed with him has contributed very much to her success.

He is her biggest fan and he knows how to coach her in a way that encourages her to continue striving for improvement. Alexis Hinds has always been noticed on the court. She has earned captain status for

her teams and, in tournaments, she is often rewarded with the MVP award.

College coaches have approached Alexis Hinds since Grade 10, but it was Lambton College and coach Janine Day that held her heart. Day made a point of staying in contact with Alexis Hinds throughout her basketball career, often coming to games at St. Mike's and reaching out about results or offering tips.

Once Alexis Hinds focussed on her career path in firefighting, the decision became easy. Lambton College offers one of the best fire programs in Ontario and their women's basketball team is one of the top-ranked teams as well.

On Monday, Dec. 16, 2024, Alexis Hinds, accompanied by her family and Goforth, gathered in the Lambton Lions gym as she signed to play for the team next season. A dream come true and, according to her mother, they are beyond proud of Alexis Hinds as her lifelong dream has come true.

Mom says she truly eats, breathes, sleeps and loves basketball.

From racing dragsters to sinking basketballs, a North Easthope farm girl is making Perth County proud!



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

In a photo from a day she will never forget, Alexis Hinds stands with her proud parents, Shawn and Melissa, after signing to play basketball next season for Lambton College's women's basketball program.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The two Hinds sisters, Alexis and Avery, playing for St. Michael Catholic Secondary School and having fun, celebrating their gold-medal win last fall.

Stratford and District Ostomy Association support group looks back on 40 years

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

There are many groups formed in Stratford and Perth County over the years that support those residents who need help in life.

We all know about support for Alzheimer's, cancer, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy and many more debilitating diseases, but perhaps the work of the Stratford and District Ostomy Association is less well known.

The ostomy association is a support group for people who had bowel or bladder surgery and now have a colostomy, ileostomy or urostomy.

They wear a disposable appliance (pouch) on the outside of their abdomen to collect either stool or urine. In Canada, there are an estimated 150,000 people living with an ostomy. There are 1.3 million people living with an ostomy around the world, and in Canada, about 13,000 new ostomy surgeries are performed every year.

The Stratford and District Ostomy Association was founded in October 1983 with the bare minimum support of 12 members.

The chapter became a registered entity in 1984, and now numbers over 30 members.

Ray and Sybil Rynor of Stratford were

early leaders of the chapter and promoters in the community whenever they got a chance.

The volunteer-based group is dedicated to assisting people facing life with a temporary or permanent ostomy by providing information, assistance and emotional support.

This support is also provided to families and friends of those with an ostomy, and ultimately promotes a better public understanding of ostomies and related surgeries.

Janet Heinbuch from R.R.# 2 in Tavistock is an enterostomal therapist and has been president of the local chapter since 2004.

She encourages those who are interested in ostomy to come to their monthly meetings held at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Morgan Street in Stratford on the first Tuesday of each month except in July, August, January and February. There is a speaker arranged for each meeting, usually a health-care professional or representative of an ostomy product supplier or manufacturer.

All are welcome at the meetings.

Going forward, it is hoped the chapter will continue to provide the support greatly needed as evidenced by those who attend meetings from London, Goderich, Woodstock, Listowel, Exeter, Grand Bend, Tillsonburg and Strathroy.



(STRATFORD AND DISTRICT OSTOMY ASSOCIATION PHOTO)

Members of the Stratford and District Ostomy chapter who recently gathered following their luncheon together. They include, in front row from left, Therese Newman, John Aarts, George Wicke, Marilyn Robinson and Janet Heinbuch. In the second row from left are Betty-Ann Brown, Susan Hamilton, Shirley Jones, Cathy Hutson, Dan Kerr, Rae Mavor and Ron Jones.

Members say it is important to promote awareness and loosen the stigma of life-saving procedures and ostomies.

For more information, email Heinbuch at jphainbuch@outlook.com.



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The art of fall plowing in southern Perth County

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Even though there is still a plowing match in various areas of Perth County every year, not to mention the provincial match known as the International Plowing Match every September, many farmers have gone to various other fall tillage methods as opposed to the moldboard method of plowing from our forefathers.

A young Tavistock-area farmer, Andrew Danen, still loves the art of plowing and stopped his John Deere and seven-furrow Keverland plow for a few minutes in late December to discuss the job he was finishing up for the year.

With only a skiff of snow and very little frost, he said it was close to a perfect day to complete the job.

Most farmers from past decades would say late November or, at the latest, Dec. 1, was usually the last date turning over soil in the fall could occur because of frost and frozen ground. Due to global warming however, the season has now extended beyond Christmas.

With his recent marriage, the young, third-generation dairy farmer works along with his sister, Isabel, and parents Rob and Linda Danen west of Sebastopol on Perth Line 29 in a new robotic-milking and free-stall facility where 200 Holstein cows are milked.

His paternal grandparents, Tony and Jane Danen, immigrated to Canada in the



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Andrew Danen is striking out another seven furrows of top soil with an eye for a smooth-and-even, perfect plowing job as he takes his time to do the job, the way he was taught by earlier generations.

1950s and there are now many Danen family members who have taken up the art of modern dairy farming and crop growing in southern Perth and Oxford counties.

Even though Andrew Danen knows of many other methods of fall tillage, he still says there's nothing more relaxing than heading into a field to see the beautiful

topsoil of South Easthope Township turned over to the rich soil southern Perth County has become known for.



Compared to moldboard plowing from years ago when most farmers had three-furrow plows and 40-horsepower tractors, this young dairy farmer still takes the art of fall plowing very seriously with careful consideration for doing a neat and meticulous job, and never being in a rush while making a near perfect furrow.

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ReImagine Senior Living

Tavistock doctor headlines men's club's annual Ladies Night

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Members of the Tavistock Men's Club, along with their wives and partners, were able to hear firsthand from a former Tavistock Doctor on advanced care planning at their annual Ladies Night in the men's club Hall on Dec. 19, 2024.

Dr. Ken Hook was a physician for 44 years treating patients for the Tavistock Medical Group (Star Family Health) and, for 30 of those years, also cared for the residents of the Maples Home for Seniors.

He underscored the need "to designate a decision maker for your future health care, should a person become unable to make their own decisions." This is also known as

power of attorney and it's wise to designate two people in case one is unavailable.

Hook is well versed on this planning as he served as a doctor in Tavistock for all those years, and he also explained the legal ramifications to all medical treatments, which cannot begin without proper consent.

He said the Ontario government has the ability to designate a decision maker whenever there is a need.

Hook said he was thrilled to be back in Tavistock and met many familiar faces during the evening who he hadn't seen for many years. He and his family now reside in Stratford.

The evening dinner was catered by Oxford 4-H as a club fundraiser under the direction of leader Shonna Ward.



Thanking guest speaker Dr. Ken Hook are Tavistock Men's Club past president Ken Kropf and club vice president Brian Boland.



Wayne Ropp was on guitar and Charlene Zehr on keyboard providing Christmas music entertainment for the annual Tavistock Men's Club Ladies Night.

Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW

| | |
|---|------------|
| Dec. 15 Clayton Lewis, Embro | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 16 Ross Marshall, St. Marys | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 17 Mary Arnett, Ilderton | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 18 Rod Shantz, Stratford | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 19 Patricia Skinner, Stratford | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 20 Carolyn Klomp, St. Pauls | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 21 Donna Kittmer, Lakeside | \$200.00 |
| Dec. 22 Sandra Hammond, St. Marys | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 23 Edna Black, St. Marys | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 24 Nancy French, Sebringville | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 25 Lynn Ann Van Middel Koop, St. Marys | \$1,000.00 |
| Dec. 26 Darryl Ehnes, Shakespeare | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 27 Jolene Parr, St. Pauls | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 28 Brad & Michele Polley, Ilderton | \$200.00 |
| Dec. 29 Lula Koert, St. Pauls | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 30, Russ Barker, St. Marys | \$50.00 |
| Dec. 31 Barb Dawson, Dresden | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 01 Phil Elliott, Woodstock | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 02 Cleo Smith, Stratford | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 03 Ann Marie Hunt, Stratford | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 04 Joe Pickering, Stratford | \$200.00 |
| Jan. 05 Lynne Darling, St. Marys | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 06 Glen Shackleton, St. Marys | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 07 Sue Bain, Stratford | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 08 Jamie Turvey, Embro | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 09 Daniel Dunsmore Jr., Tavistock | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 10 Benny Langlois, Bowmanville | \$50.00 |
| Jan. 11 Peggy Parks, Clinton | \$200.00 |

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(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Longtime Tavistock doctor Ken Hook spoke to a large audience at the Tavistock Men's Club Ladies Night on Dec. 19, 2024.

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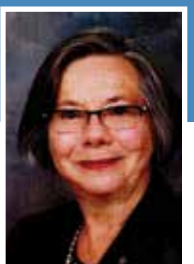
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The Maples Home for Seniors donates to Sprucedale Public school



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)
Showing the boxes of donated food are, from left, Nicole Zandstra, Joan Hergott, Madison Elliott, Teagan Glaab, Max Hughes, Cohen Saville and Cameron Faulhafer. In front is Nora Maloney and Sloane Bender.

GARY WEST
Gazette Correspondent

The Maples Home for Seniors in Tavistock means so much more to the community than offering a place for seniors to spend their later years. The proof of their generosity could be found at Sprucedale Public School in Shakespeare recently when Maples Home executive director Joan Hergott and her caring staff delivered \$500 worth of food for students who might not have the balance in their diet they need.

The donations consisted of granola bars, yogurt tubes, small boxes of cereal, cookies, cheese, applesauce, crackers and drinking boxes. Hergott says the food items went toward the school’s nutritional food program, which is needed and appreciated by students and parents alike. The food items were delivered by Hergott and all her staff to principal Lisa Cairncross and office manager Nicole Zandstra and all the students at Sprucedale.

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Gazette Puzzles

STAYING WARM ON A COLD DAY

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Securing the perfect home when the search isn't going your way

EXPERT REAL ESTATE ADVICE

By Isabel Livingston



Navigating the market as a buyer can be challenging. Not seeing anything on the market that feels right? Do you keep losing out on multiple-offer situations? Don't give up! This week's article is for you.

Here are my top tips for securing the perfect home when it feels the search just isn't going your way! My name is Isabel Livingston and I am a licensed real estate agent with The Jennifer Gale Real Estate Team and Gale Group Realty Brokerage Ltd. serving Wilmot Township, Oxford County and

surrounding areas.

First thing I want you to do is have a look at that wish list you have created; you know the one that has all the details that you may want in a home – three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a garage, open-concept living, fenced backyard, a pool. Now, I want you to go down that list and mark each item with an “N,” a “W” or a star for need, want, or non-negotiables (don't abuse this last one, this is for things like a garage for a snowmobile or motorcycle that aren't quite a need but are more than a want).

Do you see where I am going? Just humour me and send your realtor a text or give them a call and give them this “new” list with all of the things marked with an “N” or a star such as three bedrooms, fenced backyard, garage. I can't count how many times someone wanted a garage and ended up purchasing something that wasn't within that guideline of what they initially thought they wanted.

The next thing I want you to do is watch the market. Having a healthy understanding of the value of a home and knowing what is realistic to your budget will help you have a realistic approach to finding a home. I always tell my buyers to have a look at the market and how homes in the area they are searching in are priced before they create that list. Knowing what you can afford and what sorts of things fit into your budget is essential to creating a healthy and realistic approach to shopping for a home.

To go along with this, have

your realtor keep you up to date on what the homes you view sell for, even if they are homes you're not interested in. Not to sound like a broken record here, but having an understanding of what things sell for will better your understanding of what is happening in the market and ultimately benefit your home search.

Now you have finally found a home that feels just right and you are ready to make an offer. There are two scenarios I want to talk about here. First is when your offer is the only offer, you have no competition but you also don't want to offend the seller. I want you to take that knowledge you have gathered through looking at the homes that are coming up, the information your realtor is sharing about sold prices and the expert advice they are giving you about the home's value (friendly reminder, your realtor is on your team, they won't want you to overpay for a home either). Create your number based on the

facts you have gathered!

The second scenario has a similar approach but this time, the seller is receiving another offer on the home as well. Use the same techniques to get you your ballpark number and then work to create the most appealing offer that still protects you and your best interests. Your realtor will be able to guide you through this process. There may not be a chance to negotiate here, so make sure you are putting your best foot forward with your initial offer.

There is a ton more where this came from. If you are looking for more tips about buying or selling real estate, I would love to chat! For questions, comments or article inquiries, don't be shy. Call 226-232-4236 or email ilivingstonsells@gmail.com.

Isabel Livingston is a sales representative with Gale Group Realty Brokerage Ltd. and the Jennifer Gale Real Estate Team.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Transparency is a moral imperative

To the editor:

Transparency is not just a procedural obligation for governments – it is a moral imperative that underpins accountability, democracy and respect for the taxpayers who fund public operations. Yet, in the case of the Wilmot land assembly, the Region of Waterloo has failed to meet this critical standard, leaving taxpayers frustrated, disillusioned and shut out of meaningful dialogue.

For nearly a year, affected farmers and residents of Wilmot Township have been seeking clarity on the region's plans for the proposed industrial development. Despite repeated requests, we have received little to no detailed information about essential issues such as water supply, wastewater treatment and transportation infrastructure. Instead, the region has hidden behind vague assurances and confidentiality agreements, leaving taxpayers in the dark

about the reasoning behind its decisions.

Most concerning is that in recent months, the region appears to have stopped communicating in any meaningful way with residents. Letters from concerned citizens and community groups have gone unanswered, public engagement has been superficial at best and critical issues remain unaddressed. This silence is unacceptable. Governments owe their constituents transparency and honest communication, especially when livelihoods, communities and public resources are at stake.

Governments have a moral obligation to be transparent because they are stewards of public resources and are entrusted with power by the people they serve. When public funds are being spent, and when livelihoods and communities are at stake – as they are here – the region owes taxpayers more than empty statements and silence. The lack of transparency and

engagement in the Wilmot land assembly process violates the principles of accountability and respect for public trust.

Democracy thrives on informed citizens who can engage with and challenge decisions that affect their lives. By withholding technical reports and critical data such as environmental impact assessments and infrastructure evaluations, the region is denying taxpayers the ability to fully understand and scrutinize its actions. This secrecy undermines the democratic process and creates suspicion instead of trust.

In the Wilmot land assembly case, transparency would mean openly sharing comprehensive technical information such as studies on water and wastewater capacity and assessments of transportation infrastructure. Instead, we are left with sweeping claims like, “There is enough capacity in the water and wastewater system to support an industrial project at this location,”

without evidence to support them. This approach is not only dismissive but also deeply disrespectful to the people who live in the affected community.

The region's refusal to communicate openly and honestly with residents has eroded its moral authority to govern in this matter. This silence must end immediately. To restore trust, the region must prioritize transparency by releasing detailed information, responding to citizen concerns and engaging meaningfully with Wilmot's residents. Anything less is a betrayal of the democratic principles and ethical standards that should guide our public officials.

Sincerely,

Anne Loeffler,

New Hamburg

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Wilmot town hall meeting demonstrates lack of cohesion among councillors

Many thanks to Wilmot councillors for arranging town-hall meetings to provide an opportunity for their constituents to ask questions and comment on the proposed tax increase and other township issues.

It was great to see so many Wilmot residents at the two meetings that I attended. However, the disturbance at the beginning of the Ward 4 meeting being hosted by councillors Martin and Dunstall on Saturday, Jan. 4 certainly illustrated a lack of cohesion among the members of

Wilmot council.

Five councillors were present and, when Coun. Martin, cohost of the meeting, reminded his fellow councillors that only three councillors could stay because of quorum rules under the Municipal Act, 2001, only Coun. Cressman offered to leave. Coun. Cressman was hoping to attend in preparation for his upcoming town-hall meeting on Jan. 9. Seeing as neither Coun. Wilkinson nor Coun. Sidhu were leaving despite the fact that their

town-hall meetings had already taken place, Coun. Martin had no choice but to leave his own meeting in order to comply with the rules. Coun. Dunstall was left to handle the Ward 4 meeting on her own.

At this time, when Wilmot Township is dealing with significant issues like the proposed tax increase and the threat of 770 acres of prime farmland being expropriated for a yet-to-be-determined mega industry, the members of council need to be respectful of each other and work

together to serve their constituents.

Councillors Sidhu and Wilkinson's refusal to comply with Coun. Martin's request for the quorum rules to be honoured was disrespectful and delayed the start of an important meeting that was intended to be productive for our community, not divisive.

Dorothy Wilson,

New Hamburg

Warm up with cozy comfort food this winter

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Winter warm-up is in full effect. Whether you are snuggled up under a blanket sipping hot cocoa or bundled up outside enjoying Canada's winter wonderland, comfort food is a wealth of whole-foods for whole-body wellbeing.

When the temperature plummets, hearty, starchy carbohydrates, full fats and power-packed protein dishes are ancestral.

Dinner doesn't have to be difficult. My middleborn son is king of having breakfast for dinner and this recipe fits the bill. This eye-catching meat pie is perfect for prepped breakfasts on the go, bougie brunches or a dreamy dinner due to minimal prep. It's absolutely perfect for cold nights.

There is some thought that we crave starchy, more sugar-stocked

foods in the winter due to the longer, darker days. Sugar releases endorphins and seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is very real. Feeling down during the winter can be linked to the longer days, less sunlight and the lack of sunshine. Vitamin D is a huge mood changer and the happy hormones are produced when sunlight is absorbed through the skin.

Feeling down can lead to sugar cravings. It's not uncommon to gain weight in the winter, but before you reach for dessert, increase starchy carbohydrates, which are nutrient dense and full of fibre, yet still comforting with less chance of packing on the pounds as the snow falls.

This recipe is easy on the eyes, wallet and a breeze to prepare, and it freezes well.

Potatoes, bacon, eggs, cheese and milk. Simple! Of course, you can tailor this to suit your individual needs but with three grown sons, this is old school with no trendy, over-the-top transformations. This potato pie is a staple in many countries, and old fashioned but back to basics is timeless.

Potato pie perfection

Ingredients:

- 4 pounds of Yukon gold potatoes
- 1 pound of plain bacon or ground poultry of choice
- 6 large eggs
- ½ cup milk of choice
- 200. g r a m s Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees



There's plenty of hearty goodness in this potato pie; more than enough to warm up in the colder months of winter.

Fahrenheit.

1. Cut the bacon into ½-inch pieces and fry on medium until cooked. If you are using ground chicken or turkey, fry until cooked. Set aside
2. Fill a large pot with water.
3. Wash and cut the potatoes into chunks. No need to peel. Place the potatoes into the water and bring to a boil. Turn down to medium, cooking the potatoes until very soft when pierced.
4. Drain and set aside.
5. Line the bottom of a nine-inch springform pan with parchment paper allowing it to come up the sides an inch or two. Drizzle olive or avocado over the parchment paper.
6. In a bowl, whisk 6 eggs, ½ cup of milk (I used goat), 100 grams of cheese and the bacon, plus half of the bacon grease for the added flavor.
7. Place potatoes, one at a time onto the parchment and flatten with the bottom of a drinking glass. Don't leave any gaps.
8. Pour the mixture on top of the potatoes.
9. Top with the remaining cheese.
10. Bake in the oven for 50-60 minutes or until set.
11. Cool and cut into pieces. Serve with your favorite roasted root vegetable.

Happy Hibernation and a full belly of love all winter long!



(MERCEDES KAY GOLD PHOTOS)

This cozy, potato, egg and bacon pie is full of protein, easy to put together and perfect for breakfast, brunch, or breakfast for dinner.

Living in the here and now

INTERFAITH COUNSELLING CENTRE

By John Dinner

As we find ourselves at the start of another new year with all of its potential and possibilities still intact, it can still be tempting to pine for the good old days – to wish that things could return to the way they once were. Weren't the days of our youth safer, more predictable, less complicated? Weren't we all in agreement on the big issues? Wasn't everyone happier?

We can all conjure up memories of simpler times, gentler politics, more respect for authority and greater harmony. During those same years, however, many of us endured the threat of the Cold War when nuclear annihilation loomed. Those happier times came wrapped in a dark and foreboding reality.

As has been the case with every generation that has come before us, we live in a different world relative to the one in which we grew up. My first trip across Canada at age seven took four days by train. Today, we routinely crisscross the country in mere hours. The news was already stale by the time the headlines reached us. Today, we see world events unfold in real time and in high definition colour, with horrors unfolding in the comfort of our homes. Perhaps life back then was just different than it was better.

It's important to adopt a balanced perspective

on history, acknowledging both the positive and negative aspects of the past, as well as recognizing the progress that has been made over time. The challenge is to avoid being stuck pining for the past or being emotionally paralyzed by it.

Equally important is to not allow ourselves be caught up in the fear of what the future may or may not hold. Even as I write this, there is renewed hope in parts of the world where despair has prevailed for decades. The future holds both promise while also appearing bleak. And so it goes, just as it has been since the beginning of time for everyone.

It can be helpful to consider where we tend to focus our minds: on our past or the future. It is common for people to live with regret or anger about their past or to fear the uncertainty and lack of control over what the future holds. Instead of being trapped by these negative emotions, the

past can be viewed as a place where we learn to prepare ourselves for whatever the future might bring.

Our culture encourages us to be unsatisfied and want for more. But as we shift to learning from the past and planning for the future, the goal is to find ourselves content in the present – in the here and now. It is usually only in the present moment we can say that, as imperfect as things might be, our basic needs are being met. Being thankful for things that sustain us in the present is the best way to fight back against the anger and fear we might otherwise feel. May we all be thankful in 2025.

John Dinner is a registered psychotherapist who works as a counsellor at Interfaith Counselling Centre in New Hamburg. He skis downhill, likes hiking across frozen lakes and loves winter ... until about mid-March.

The challenges of an historic town at the confluence of three rivers

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



There is a well-worn cliché about travelling in Europe: “I’ve seen enough castles and cathedrals!” Well, I am a pretty big fan of castles and cathedrals, but I do understand there can be too much of a good thing. And there is no lack of either castle or cathedral in the historic towns and cities of western Europe.

And yes, the German town of Passau does have a castle and, in fact, a cathedral, but don’t let that stop you from including it on your itinerary. There is so much more here, including a long and dramatic history of coexisting with the three rivers that meet, right here, and the frequent crises arising from that uneasy coexistence.

We were in Passau as part of our excellent Viking River Cruise, Romantic Danube. It’s probably true that the Danube can be very romantic at a time when it is flowing peacefully through Passau, but when we were there, the Danube and the other two rivers that meet here, the Inn and the Ilz, were in flood and the lowest parts of the town were already underwater.

But that, believe it or not, is one of the most interesting reasons to visit this historic town located just west of the Austrian border.

The story here is one of perseverance and community co-operation. Passau has existed for more than two millennia, founded because of the trade

benefits of the three rivers that occasionally become its enemies. In medieval days, the number-one trade commodity was salt. Today, it’s tourists.

Like many of the towns located along the Danube, the community rises quickly from the riverbank into the hills round about. So, while the homes and businesses nearer the river are very vulnerable to high water, the upper levels of the community are impervious to flooding.

We saw dramatic examples of both realities when we toured Passau. Our guide admitted that, since the river had just started to rise, he could take us around the town – skirting some streets that were turning into streams – but that a day or two later, he personally would be temporarily confined to his three-floor apartment, as water would have risen a metre or two against his building. We saw many nearby homes and businesses barricaded with sandbags and metal flood barriers.

But then we ascended some rather steep but scenic cobbled streets to the square where St. Stephen’s Cathedral is located. And no, cathedral cynics, this is no ordinary church. St. Stephen’s is home to the largest pipe organ outside the United States, an instrument that includes 17,974 pipes, 233 stops and four carillons. I have heard it played and it is truly worth the trip. The temporary bad

news is I didn’t hear it on this visit because the organ is being refurbished, a project that will extend into next year.

But the cathedral is magnificent in its own right and while you won’t hear the organ in 2025, you may be fortunate enough to hear the eight bells in the cathedral’s bell tower.

One of my favourite streets in lower Passau is the Artists’ Alley, where local artists have their shops and studios, and where they paint the cobblestones in bright colours and hang whimsical pieces of art above the street.

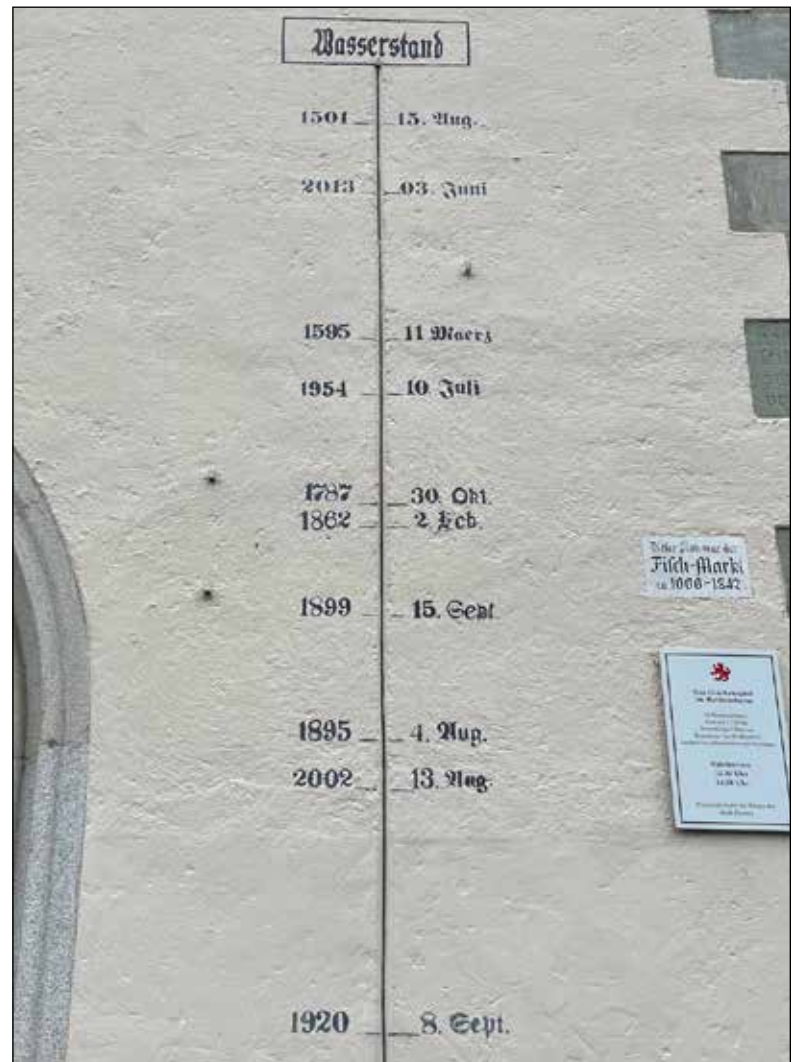
You can get a great view of Passau and its rivers from the Veste Oberhaus, the castle high atop the hillside on the opposite side of the Danube from the cathedral. Other popular photo stops include the Roman Tower, the Bishop’s Palace and the oldest church.

But be sure to spend time on the river front, contemplating the dual nature of Passau’s situation – ideal for trade in times gone by, for transportation during the days of the Roman Empire and for river-cruise stops today, but also, subject to the whims of nature and the temperament of the Danube and its sister rivers.

It’s definitely appropriate the Danube was named for the great river goddess of the Celtic tribes. We learned that from Isis-Sybille Frisch, an expert on the Danube who gave an amazing lecture onboard the Viking Var. When you sail on the Danube, she told us, you are travelling on “the major river of mainland Europe,” a waterway that stretches 2,896 kilometres from the Black Forest and to the Black Sea, and passes through 10 European countries. We visited four of them on our cruise.

As we sailed on a Danube swelled by heavy rains upstream from Passau, Frisch observed, “Despite all human intervention, we cannot control the river.” The great river goddess will have the last say, and the historic high-water markings on the buildings of Passau offer dramatic documentation of her more violent moods.

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Flood heights are marked on the walls of waterfront buildings in Passau, the German town at the confluence of three rivers.



St. Stephen's Cathedral square.



Passau's Castle, the Veste Oberhaus.

New board members needed for Tavistock Community Health Inc.

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Tavistock area continues to have good professional doctors, nurses and medical care at their clinic location at 80 Maria St. in Tavistock.

The situation the Tavistock Community Health Inc. (TCHI) board members are immediately dealing with is filling the board positions that will be vacant as of March 31.

Board chair Frank Meconi is putting a call out to area residents who might be interested in joining the board.

He says it would only be a commitment of a couple hours every month and the

organization needs to have a board that is willing to continue to operate and supply the facility to bring important health-care services to the area.

As the figures show, there are still over one million residents in Ontario who do not have a family doctor, and those who are served by Tavistock Community Health should feel privileged to have the kind of medical services locals have come to depend on.

The TCHI board consists of 10 elected members with two members retiring on March 31.

For more information or inquiries, contact Meconi at fameconi@rogers.com.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Tavistock Community Health Inc. is seeking two new board members before two current board members are set to retire at the end of March.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - JANUARY 2025

MONDAY, JANUARY 13

Garden Wilmot will have a short AGM followed by The Region of Waterloo giving tips on "Green Bins & Yard Waste"

7:00 p.m.

Wilmot Rec Complex
1291 Nafziger Rd., Baden

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

Wellesley Council meeting

6:45p.m.

Council chambers
4805 William Hastings Line, Crosshill

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship

12:00 p.m.

Please register by Jan 10 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Wellesley Recreation Complex, 1401 Queen's Bush Rd., Wellesley

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

Special Council Meeting - 2025 Budget
2-10 p.m.

Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

Optimist Club of Petersburg Bottle Drive

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Bechthold Home Improvements
1239 Notre Dame Drive, Petersburg

Pickleball for Parkinson's Fundraiser

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

More info from Barb Myers- bamyers@rogers.com
Pinnacle Field House,
533 Romeo St. South, Stratford

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29

Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship

12:00 p.m.

Please register by Jan 24 by calling 519-664-1900 or toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Linwood Community Centre, 5279 Ament Line, Linwood

MONDAY, JANUARY 27

Wilmot Council meeting

5-10 p.m.

Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

"Hicktown Hoedown"

9 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Raffles, prizes, food, local beer, line dancing and you can even ride the bull. (Wicked Wesley). This is a fundraiser to support the Wellesley Township "Fall Fair". More info at: marlenekoster@gmail.com

Bill Gies Recreation Centre in Wellesley

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Optimist Club of Petersburg Valentine's Drive Thru Pork Schnitzel Dinner - Pick up at New Hamburg Legion

For tickets contact 519-465-1157 - please leave a message.

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65 Boullee St, New Hamburg

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

PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

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

Heading to the U.K. this year? Read this first

STEWART GRANT

Stonetown Travel

There's an important new step to complete before packing your suitcase and heading overseas to the U.K.

As of this week, beginning Jan. 8 to be exact, Canadians are among those who will be required to apply for and get approval for the new Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) before entering the United Kingdom.

This new requirement applies not just to those who are visiting

the U.K., but also to those who are connecting through a U.K. airport.

The intended benefits of the program are to strengthen border security and to use modern technology to expedite the arrival process of those entering the U.K. The cost of applying for the ETA is £10 per person, but the ETA is valid for a period of two years (or until your passport expires, whichever is sooner) and is good for unlimited trips to the U.K. during that time.

There are two ways to the apply for the new U.K. ETA, but it is

strongly recommended to apply through the UK ETA app rather than through the government website. In fact, if you visit the government website at www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta, they will also push you towards the app, which is available through your app store on Google or Android.

Using the app is preferred because the camera function on your phone is helpful to take photos of your passport and of your face during the application process. The estimated time required to complete the appli-

cation is 10 minutes, and most approval decisions are rendered within three business days but could be as fast as just a few minutes.

Whether you're heading to England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, it is a great time to visit the United Kingdom. Just make sure that you avoid problems at the border by applying for the new Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) in advance of your travels.

Stewart Grant is owner of Stonetown Travel Ltd., with offices in St. Marys and New Hamburg.



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

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Weekly Quiz Answers

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. 25 | 6. Helium |
| 2. Poilievre | 7. Kon'nichiwa |
| 3. Capricorn (until Jan. 19) and Aquarius (Jan. 20 onward) | 8. Olivia (2nd place is Amelia) |
| 4. MMXXV | 9. Noah (2nd place is Liam) |
| 5. England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland | 10. True. Nearly 13% of Canadians are believed to be left-handed |

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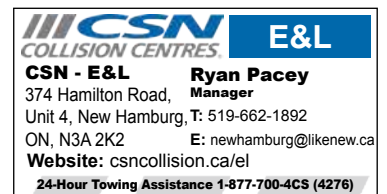


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