ELECTION-READY THIS OCTOBER PAGE 6

BRAVES REMAIN UNDEFEATED PAGE 16

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Connor and Owen Hachborn are building a growing beef herd near Amulree while continuing their family's agricultural traditions. Full story on page 2.

AI and municipal elections in Ontario

It's the Wild West as province has no rules over its use or abuse

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence in literally every facet of life is upon us amid warnings of how powerful the technology could become. Now, there are warnings AI has landed in municipal election campaigns.

Ontario's Municipal Elections Act has no provisions addressing AI-generated content, synthetic media, or deepfakes in campaign advertising.

Carmi Levy is one of Canada's top tech experts and said there isn't a sector anywhere immune to the encroachment of AI and we all would have had to have been naïve to think politics would escape its spread.

"The sad reality is we are seeing more and more AI being incorporated into political messaging up to and including the dissemination of misinformation and disinformation and deep fakes. The

Continued on page A2

Yantzi's celebrates 75 years in Tavistock

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

For 75 years, Tavistock families have turned to Yantzi's Home Building Centre for the materials, advice and service needed to build their homes, farms and businesses.

The family-owned business, located one mile east of Tavistock and known to many as Yantziville, celebrated its 75th anniversary last Friday and Saturday with sales, raffles, prizes, a silent auction and a barbecue, bringing together family members, past employees, customers and friends of the business.

Doris and Andrew Yantzi started the retail business in 1951, although the family's roots in construction began even earlier.

Andrew and his brother Omar worked together building houses, barns and sheds throughout the area, including Oxford, Perth and Waterloo counties. Andrew eventually moved into the retail side of the business, establishing what was originally a Timber Mart.

Over the years, Yantzi's has grown from a lumber and building centre into a business offering kitchens, baths, flooring and home décor, along with the knowledge and advice of its staff.

Today, the third generation of the family is carrying on the business.

Continued on page A3



AI brings new challenges to municipal campaigns

Continued from page 1

use if synthetic assets within political advertising and the use of social media for non-legitimate content is designed to sway political opinion."

He added voters can no longer believe what they see and can't assume the message in their inboxes or social media feeds are legitimate. Levy said it's hard to figure out who to trust these days.

"It's pretty much a buyer beware and voter beware scenario where we literally have to mistrust at first glance what we see and consume until it is proven otherwise."

Levy admitted it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell the difference between something legitimate and something AI generated. He added we need to look for the origins of an asset.

"When you receive a message that is politically motivated and you want to look at who sent it, is it a recently created account? Does it use original assets or were these assets scraped off existing accounts? Who is interacting with this account, is it part of a large network or is it known as a zombie account which doesn't have a lot of interaction but has a significant amount of content posted recently."

He said legitimate accounts have a years long footprint and others will post and react on the content whereas fake accounts show none of those signs. Levy added humanity is very difficult to recreate in a human space and with a little bit of investigation it is easy to determine all is not what it seems. He also offered some advice to eager voters.

"Verify before you engage. Make sure you are absolutely certain it is in fact a legitimate account, human, and political candidate before you decide to engage with them. By responding to non-synthetic content you amplify the algorithms of others and make it easier for non-legitimate content to be distributed and find its audience."

Levy said everyone can be part of the solution by simply changing behaviours, very slightly, in the digital space.

"By verifying first we ensure false content doesn't find an audience and others are not duped. By reporting content to the platforms they are on we also ensure the algorithm dials them down so they don't find an audience."

He added it is better to not respond and instead click in those three dots to report questionable content that tells the social media platform to reduce its priority in the algorithms so it won't find an audience.

"That is an absolutely critical step toward ensuring we do not give power to the benevolent actors who use misinformation to misinform us. Unfortunately, as the tools become more powerful, accessible and easier to use, they are going to become more widespread and we are going to have our eyes wide open."

Some municipal candidates are not overly savvy in the ways of IT but Levy said everyone on a ballot needs to keep their eyes wide open for bad actors in the race who will use digital tools against their opponents.

"Make sure you are scanning social media platforms for signs your content is being lifted and misused. In many cases we have seen ghost accounts created by political opponents made to look like the original one but spewing content that increases the likelihood of them being perceived in a negative manner."

He added candidates need to keep an eye out to make sure they are not being targeted as they run their campaigns and skills needed as candidates build their campaign team.

"Its bad and its going to get worse. I hope voters are smart enough to see through this," added Levy.

The Next Generation of Local Beef Producers

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Brothers Connor and Owen Hachborn have established a beef herd near Amulree that would be the envy of most farmers. The brothers started their herd a few short years ago and are already reaping the benefits of good calves coming from good mothers at a good price.

Their parents, Chad and Tracy, and grandparents, Ron and Carol Horst, are happy the boys are the newest addition of young farmers providing good, wholesome beef for the buying public to enjoy.

The pair also boil maple syrup in the springtime in their family's hardwood bush, providing another local product that is as Canadian as Canadian gets.

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Yantzi's celebrates 75 years of building community

Continued from page 1

Steffan Yantzi, whose father Jim previously ran the business, now owns and operates Yantzi's alongside his two aunts, Darlene Yantzi and Joyce Ropp.

For Steffan, the 75th anniversary was an opportunity not only to celebrate the business, but also to hear stories about the family members who built it.

"It was great to see family members, past employees and family out on the weekend," Steffan said. "It was nice to hear stories about my dad and grandpa from people who knew them."

One story in particular stood out to him.

"I heard lots of stories about my grandpa and how he built houses," he said. "One person told me he couldn't afford to pay right away, so grandpa allowed him to pay him back over time."

Stories like that are part of what Steffan says makes the anniversary meaningful.

While the business has changed significantly since 1951, its connection to the surrounding community remains an important part of Yantzi's.

The company supports local children's sports teams and regularly volunteers its services throughout the community. That commitment was also evident during the recent storm, when the business lost power but remained open because staff knew people in the area needed access to building supplies.

"The community has supported us for 75 years, and we love giving back in any way we can," Steffan said.

That spirit of giving was also part of the anniversary weekend. Along with sales, raffles, and prizes, the family held a silent auction to support breast cancer fundraising, including a pink Barbie vanity.

With the third generation now at the helm, the Yantzi family says the same commitment to serving its community remains at the heart of the business.



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

From left: Darlene Yantzi, Steffan Yantzi and Joyce Ropp, owners of Yantzi's Home Building Centre, are celebrating 75 years of serving the community.



Wilmot Junior Gardners recognised for their love of nature

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Garden Wilmot youth were recognized at an awards night at the Wilmot Recreation Complex on Sept. 15 for their participation in the 2026 Junior Gardens program. Participants were recognized for their dedication and hard work, as well as their creativity, imagination and love of nature.

The Junior Gardeners program is for those ages 6 to 18 who are interested in gardening. Youth grow their own gardens, make friends, and win prizes for gardens they create at their homes or local properties.

This year, 27 youth participated, with 11 first-time members. The seeds provided for the 2026 program included cherry rose sunflower, white cosmos and their choice of carrots or beets.

The Junior Gardeners' herb planters were also on display at the New Hamburg Fall Fair.

Garden Wilmot 2026 awards for Outstanding Creative Gardeners went to Katelynn Cressman, Chloe Thompson, Cole Schwartzentruber and Zach Schwartzentruber.

"Their gardens were an amazing reflection of sustainability, growing fresh food for dinner and reconnecting with nature. Colour Paradise provided gift cards for each of them," said Janice Wagler, Garden Wilmot member.

Seven youth have been growing a Junior Garden for five years and were recognized with a trophy and a certificate from Mayor Natasha Salonen and MP Tim Louis. The youth were also awarded a cash prize from Garden Wilmot to encourage their continued horticultural interest. The recipients of this award were Eliza Baer, Leah Finnie, Joshua Foster, Ellie Penfold, Hunter MacLaren, Matthew Kuepfer and Hailey Thompson.

Junior Gardeners had also prepared all season for the 118th Ontario Horticultural Association Convention in Oshawa from July 24 to 26. Garden Wilmot was proud to bring 39 entries from 10 youth for the youth competition.

Garden Wilmot would like to thank those who generously supported their 2026 Garden Wilmot Junior Gardeners program: Ontario Seed Company, Garden Wilmot, Listowel Florist, Domino's Pizza, Waterloo County Dairy Producers, Colour Paradise, Meadow Acres, Wellesley Home Hardware, Dentistry on Lawrence, MP Louis, Salonen, Turkey Farmers of Ontario and Egg Farmers of Ontario.



(JANICE WAGLER PHOTOS)

Outstanding Creative Gardeners, from left: Mayor Natasha Salonen; Janice Wagler, youth leader; Chloe Thompson; Katelynn Cressman; and Sandra Cressman, youth leader. Absent: Cole Schwartzentruber and Zach Schwartzentruber.



Five-year trophy recipients, from left: Hailey Thompson, Leah Fannie, Joshua Foster and Hunter MacLaren. Absent: Eliza Baer and Ellie Penfold.



Ten youth received a plant from Meadow Acres in recognition of their participation in the program and to encourage their gardening interests.



Garden Wilmot Junior Gardeners' exhibits at the 2026 New Hamburg Fall Fair, receiving several awards across many categories.

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Through a Different Lens: Wayne Richardson Turns Everyday Images into Art

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

For New Hamburg's Wayne Richardson, photography has been a part of his life for as long as he can remember. Like many people, his early photographs focused on family, friends and the places he travelled. Over the years, photography became a way for him to see the world through texture, form, shape and colour.

Richardson is sharing his work with the local community through his first month-long solo exhibition. His fine art photography is on display at the Belvedere Gallery at Castle Kilbride in Baden, with the exhibition running until Oct. 4, 2026. With only a few days left, visitors still have a chance to stop by and take in his work. The gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Richardson's years in the trucking industry gave him plenty of opportunities to take photographs, although most of his early pictures were mainly of the trucks he drove. He never received formal training in photography, but a friend who was a freelance commercial artist encouraged him to explore his natural eye for composition and his interest in abstract images. That encouragement helped Richardson see his photographs in a new way and recognize the artistic qualities he had previously overlooked.

His interest in photography grew as his travels expanded. In 1994, Richardson took his camera with him while visiting his daughter in Japan. He considers some of the photographs from that trip to be the beginning of a creative and artistic sense that would continue to develop over the years.

Travel took him to many places, including Scotland and Wales, Italy, Nova Scotia and the Bahamas. He also travelled along the Intracoastal Waterway on the eastern coast of the United States, venturing as far south as the Florida Keys.

Richardson's journey as a photographer took a turn after a trip to Tuscany, Italy, in 2006. He had taken a colourful photograph of terracotta roof tiles and decided to have the digital image printed on canvas. The result, however, was disappointing.

"The printed result was very disappointing as colours were not vibrant and the whole feel of the original picture was gone," he recalled.

With his background in the trucking industry, Richardson was familiar with vinyl, which is commonly used for vehicle identification, wraps and signage. He knew the material was designed to withstand sunlight, weather and everyday wear. He took his image to one of the industry suppliers he had worked with and asked to see it printed on vinyl.

The result was exactly what he had been looking for. The vibrant colours, sharpness and character of the original photograph had been retained. The printer then suggested mounting the digital image printed on vinyl onto a coated aluminum plate.

Richardson found the process to be lightweight, weather-resistant and cost-effective. He has been using this process for his photographs ever since.

Richardson said that while seeing his work displayed in exhibitions has been rewarding, the recognition and encouragement he has received from fellow artists has been especially meaningful.

"It's special to me," he said, "having other artists express their acceptance and appreciation of my photographic artwork."

The month-long solo exhibition has given Richardson an opportunity to share his photography with the local community and offer visitors a glimpse into the way he sees the world.

With only a few days left to see the exhibition, Richardson is inviting area residents who haven't yet had a chance to visit to stop by the gallery and experience his work for themselves.

"Come, see and enjoy what I have put my heart, eye and energy into," he said.

MIRTHIN PHOTO ART is available online at mirthinphotoart.com.



(CONTIBUTED PHOTO)

Wayne Richardson stands beside one of his photographs on display at the Belvedere Gallery at Castle Kilbride in Baden.

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A VOTER'S GUIDE TO THE
2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
EAST ZORRA-TAVISTOCK, TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT AND PERTH EAST

Wilmot voters encouraged to be election-ready this October

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

With no acclaimed candidates the races for mayor and four wards are alive and well in the township.

With the 2026 municipal election just weeks away, Wilmot Township reminds residents to be ready to cast their ballots. Online voting opens Oct. 16, and in-person voting is available on Election Day, Oct. 26.

Before heading to the polls, voters should:

- Check your eligibility. To vote, you must be a Canadian citizen, be 18 years of age or older, and live in Wilmot, own or rent property in Wilmot, or be the spouse of someone who owns or rents property in Wilmot. You must also not be prohibited from voting.
- Check the Voters List. Visit www.wilmot.ca/voterslist to confirm that your information is accurate. To add or update your information, bring proof of name and address to the Township Administration Complex at 60 Snyder's Rd. W. in Baden.
- Check your Voter Information Letter (VIL). VILs were mailed in September to those on the Voters List and include voting locations and online voting instructions. If you did not receive a letter, bring proof of name and address to the Township Administration Complex.

A Voter Information Letter is not required to cast a ballot, but having one ready can make the process faster and easier. Voters without a VIL on Election Day should bring proof of name and address to their voting location, where election workers can assist.

Vote online

Online voting will be available from Oct. 16 at 10 a.m. to Oct. 26 at 8 p.m.

You can vote online from any location with internet connection during the voting period, including on Election Day, using the information provided in your Voter Information Letter.

You can also vote online using the Voting Kiosk at the Township Administrative Complex at 60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden:

- Friday, Oct. 16, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Monday, Oct. 19 to Friday Oct. 23, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- Monday, Oct. 26, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Vote in person

You must vote at the designated voting location for your ward if you choose to vote in person on Election Day, Oct. 26.

In-person voting will be available from 8 a.m. to 8 pm. Remember to bring your Voter Information Letter, as well as proof of your name and address.

For more information, including a list of voting locations by ward, visit www.wilmot.ca/elections.

Township of Wilmot
CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

MAYOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Candidate's Name	Contact Information	Website (if provided)
Stephanie Goertz	519-242-8524 stephanie4wilmot@gmail.com	www.stephaniegoertz.ca
Natasha Salonen	election@natashasalonen.com	https://natashasalonen.com/election/
Kristopher Wilkinson	kris4wilmot@gmail.com	www.kris4wilmot.com
Clive Woolner	519-580-3402 votecliveformayor@gmail.com	https://www.clivewoolner.ca/

WARD 1 COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Candidate's Name	Contact Information (if provided)	Website (if provided)
Stewart Cressman	519-572-8214 stewart4wilmot@gmail.com	
Kiera Upward	226-789-1405 kiera4council@gmail.com	https://kieraupward4ward1.squarespace.com/
Peter Varga	519-505-7157 pvarga7773@rogers.com	https://npps.ca/about-peter-1

WARD 2 COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Candidate's Name	Contact Information (if provided)	Website (if provided)
Alan Dicknoether	alanD4ward2@gmail.com	https://sites.google.com/view/aland4ward2
Lucy Lantz	lucylantzward2@gmail.com	http://lucylantz.ca/
Michael Roth	519-501-5719 mgroth4684@gmail.com	
Heide Guil (withdrew Aug. 21)		

WARD 3 COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Candidate's Name	Contact Information (if provided)	Website (if provided)
Tammy Gaudun Gies	tammygaudungies@gmail.com	https://tammygaudungies.wixsite.com/tammy-gaudun-gies-ca
Harvir Sidhu	519-591-3402 harv4council@gmail.com	
Kevin Sundberg	519-894-0618 ward3@kevinsundberg.ca	kevinsundberg.ca

WARD 4 COUNCILLOR (2 TO BE ELECTED)

Candidate's Name	Contact Information (if provided)	Website (if provided)
Jeff Bell	jeffbell4wilmot@outlook.com	
Scott Dunstall	226-753-6009 scottdunstall4wilmot@gmail.com	https://scottdunstall4wilmot.ca/
Sam Hiemstra	226-339-0901 samhiemstra7@gmail.com	www.samhiemstra.ca
Steven Martin	519-662-9923 mail@stevenmartin.ca	www.stevenmartinwilmot.ca
Krista Straus	straus4council@gmail.com	www.kristastraus.com

Four races for East Zorra-Tavistock council roles

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

With only one position acclaimed for the upcoming municipal election, voters in the township will have to decide who to vote for in their ward councillor race along with the mayoral battle. Deputy Mayor Brad Smith will sit in the same chair for the next four-year term.

Make Sure You're Ready to Vote

The most important thing you can do right now is make sure your voter information is up to date.

Elections Ontario is responsible for maintaining the Permanent Register of Electors for Ontario, also known as the Voters' List. It is a list of individuals eligible to vote in provincial and local municipal elections in Ontario. Online voter registration through Elections Ontario has now closed.

Eligible voters can confirm their voter registration status with our Am I on the Voters' List form at https://form.jotform.com/262304800778256.

To add or remove a name or correct information on the Voters list, fill out the Application to Amend Voters List form at https://www.ezt.ca/media/be4gsn1o/el15-application-to-amend-the-voters-list.pdf and submit it to the Township Administration building for further processing with the Clerk.

Voting Period

The Voting Period runs from Oct. 13, 2026, at 9 a.m. until Oct. 26, 2026, at 8 p.m., utilizing internet and telephone voting.

If you require assistance in person or need to submit an Application to Amend the Voters' List, you can visit the Voter Assistance Centre at the Township Administration Building, 89 Loveys Street, Hickson at the following times:

- Tuesday, Oct. 13 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Oct. 14 to Friday Oct. 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Monday, Oct. 19 to Friday, Oct. 23 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Monday, Oct. 26 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Voter Information Letters

Voter Information Letters will be mailed in late September. When yours arrives, be sure to keep it in a safe place, as it contains important information about your voting options, including everything you'll need to cast your ballot online.

Didn't receive a Voter Information Letter?

If you do not receive your Voter Information Letter, or if it is lost or damaged, you can request a replacement during the voting period.

You must bring an acceptable piece of identification showing your name and qualifying East Zorra-Tavistock address.

Voter Information Letters are being sent out this week and next week, and the township said there will likely be a joint news release from Tillsonburg being released on behalf of all the five municipalities in Oxford County using Internet and Telephone Voting coming out soon.

A VOTER'S GUIDE TO THE
2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
EAST ZORRA-TAVISTOCK, TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT AND PERTH EAST

Township of Wellesley voting online and by phone only

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF
thewtgazette@gmail.com

Voters in the township only have one decision to make as all four ward candidates have been acclaimed. The only check residents will have to make is for mayor where incumbent Joe Nowack is taking on Chris Martin.

For this election, the Township of Wellesley will be using Internet and Telephone Voting only. This means:

- Vote anytime, anywhere – You'll be able to cast your ballot online from your computer, tablet, smartphone or landline telephone.
- 10 days to vote – Voting will open 10 days before Election Day and remain available 24/7 until polls close on Oct. 26 at 8 p.m.
- Easy to use and secure – Step-by-step guides, online tutorials, and support from township staff will be available.
- Help Centres – Visit our Election Help Centre during regular business hours at the Township Administration Office or one of the Ward specific Election Help Centres if you'd like in-person assistance or to use a voting kiosk.
- Paper ballots will NOT be available at any time or location.

On April 22, 2025, council passed a motion to proceed with an alternate voting method of internet voting. At the Feb. 24, 2026, Committee of the Whole council supported a motion to also provide telephone voting for the 2026 election.

The internet voting method has been available to municipalities for more than 20 years and allows voters to access the voting process from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, for as long as the voting period is open. Telephone voting is comparable to telephone banking and is like internet voting, but voters make their selections by touchtone phone. Telephone voting is not compatible with rotary phones.

Eligible electors are able to vote anytime during the 10-day Voting Period from anywhere they can access a telephone or internet connection. Voters will need their Voting PIN and their full date of birth (month, day and year) to vote. The Voting PIN, along with the voting website address and the telephone voting number, is included in the Voter Information Letter mailed to voters in early October.

Each voter accepts an Oath of Qualification in order for the system to provide their ballot. The ballot shows the race (the position you are voting for), the maximum number of selections, and a list of candidates to choose from. Acclaimed Candidates (where a candidate is the only one in a race) are not on the ballot. You cannot vote for more than the maximum number of candidates, but you are able to cast a blank ballot or cast a ballot where one or more races are blank.

Voter Security

Wellesley Township will never call or email you asking for your Voter ID or PIN. To ensure secrecy, confidentiality and privacy while voting, ensure no one else is listening on the same phone line while voting, and do not use public Wi-Fi if you are unfamiliar with the security settings.

More information can be found at https://www.wellesley.ca/council-and-administration/election/.

Township of Wellesley CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

MAYOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Joe Nowak	519-656-2466	joebarb.nowak@gmail.com
Chris Martin	519-502-7158	c1065martin@gmail.com

WARD 1 COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Shelley Wagner (acclaimed)	519-699-5814	shelleywagner7@hotmail.com

WARD 2 COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Chris Van Bargen (acclaimed)	519-588-1970	chrisvanbargen@gmail.com

WARD 3 COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Derek Brick (acclaimed)	226-753-5823	dbrickoutdoors@gmail.com

WARD 4 COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Claude Hergott (acclaimed)	519-897-0080	claudehergott@gmail.com

East Zorra-Tavistock CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

MAYOR (1 to be elected)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Don EDMISTON	519-788-0640	donedmiston@yahoo.ca
Philip SCHAEFER	519-274-4038	schaeferphil60@gmail.com

DEPUTY MAYOR (1 to be elected)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Bradley SMITH (acclaimed)	519-535-7051	bwsmith0859@gmail.com

WARD ONE (2 to be elected)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Nicolas FAYE	416-558-4584	faygar@me.com
Jon ROSS	519-502-3995	jon@madmash.ca
Steven VAN WYK	519-320-0580	steven.w.vanwyk@gmail.com

WARD TWO (1 to be elected)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Angie BRENNER	519-502-0317	angelabrenner33@gmail.com
Scott RUDY	519-535-8624	scott.mg.rudy@gmail.com

WARD THREE (2 to be elected)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Don CHOWAN	519-741-6564	Donchowan.ezt@gmail.com
Matthew GILLESPIE	519-533-8556	matthewgillespie83@hotmail.com
Sheri KARELSEN	226-988-1166	karelsen26ward3@gmail.com
Jeremy SMITH	519-536-6363	votesmith@rogers.com

Township of Perth East CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE

MAYOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Jerry Smith	519-595-8790	smithx6@cyg.net
Hugh McDermid	519-274-9113 519-271-6293	hugh4mayor@outlook.com

DEPUTY MAYOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Andrew MacAlpine	519-275-1617	andrewdeputy2026@gmail.com
Bob McMillan	519-616-2838	mcmillan@cwisp.ca

ELLICE WARD COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
Matthew Livingstone	226-338-2825	electmatthew2026@gmail.com
Johanne Groenestege	519-393-5532 519-276-7704	southviewacresltd@gmail.com

MILVERTON WARD COUNCILLOR

Name	Phone Number	Email
Jeremy Matheson (acclaimed)	519-301-3858	jeremymatheson@hotmail.com

MORNINGTON WARD COUNCILLOR

Name	Phone Number	Email
Tim Dowd (acclaimed)	519-292-1244	

NORTH EASTHOPE WARD COUNCILLOR

Name	Phone Number	Email
Adam Wilhelm (acclaimed)	519-949-8663	willyaw@hotmail.com

SOUTH EASTHOPE WARD COUNCILLOR (1 TO BE ELECTED)

Name	Phone Number	Email
G. Bruce Holst	519-703-6054	gbruce.holst@gmail.com
Daryl Herlick	519-276-9627	darylherlick@hotmail.com
Albert Arnott	226-666-5629	albert4pertheast@gmail.com
Barry Nowack	519-276-9849	barrynowack@gmail.com

YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR VOICE, YOUR FUTURE – MAKE IT COUNT AND GET OUT TO VOTE!

Perth East splits acclamations with races

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF
thewtgazette@gmail.com

Residents of the Milverton, Mornington and North Easthope Wards will not be choosing a candidate this election as all three have been acclaimed. There are run-offs for the positions or mayor, deputy mayor, and Ellice Ward Councillor.

All residents of Perth East are encouraged to confirm that they are on the Voters' List and that their information is accurate as soon as possible to help ensure a smooth voting experience. In order to check, update, add, or remove information, please visit the Municipal Office in person with valid identification so that the necessary changes can be made.

Ballots have been mailed out and the township said if you haven't received it by the end of the day on Friday, Oct. 9, please contact the Perth East office.

Voting Period

It will take place from Oct. 19 at 8:30 a.m. to Oct. 26 at 8 p.m. Perth East residents will be able to vote online or by telephone. Online Voting will be found at https://pertheast.simplyvoting.com while Telephone Voting can be conducted by calling 1-866-402-7179.

Voter Assistance Centres

The township will set up three centres to provide assistance as needed:

Administration Building (25 Mill St. E. Milverton)

- Oct. 19 to Oct. 23 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Oct. 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Shakespeare Fire Station (2174 Line 34)

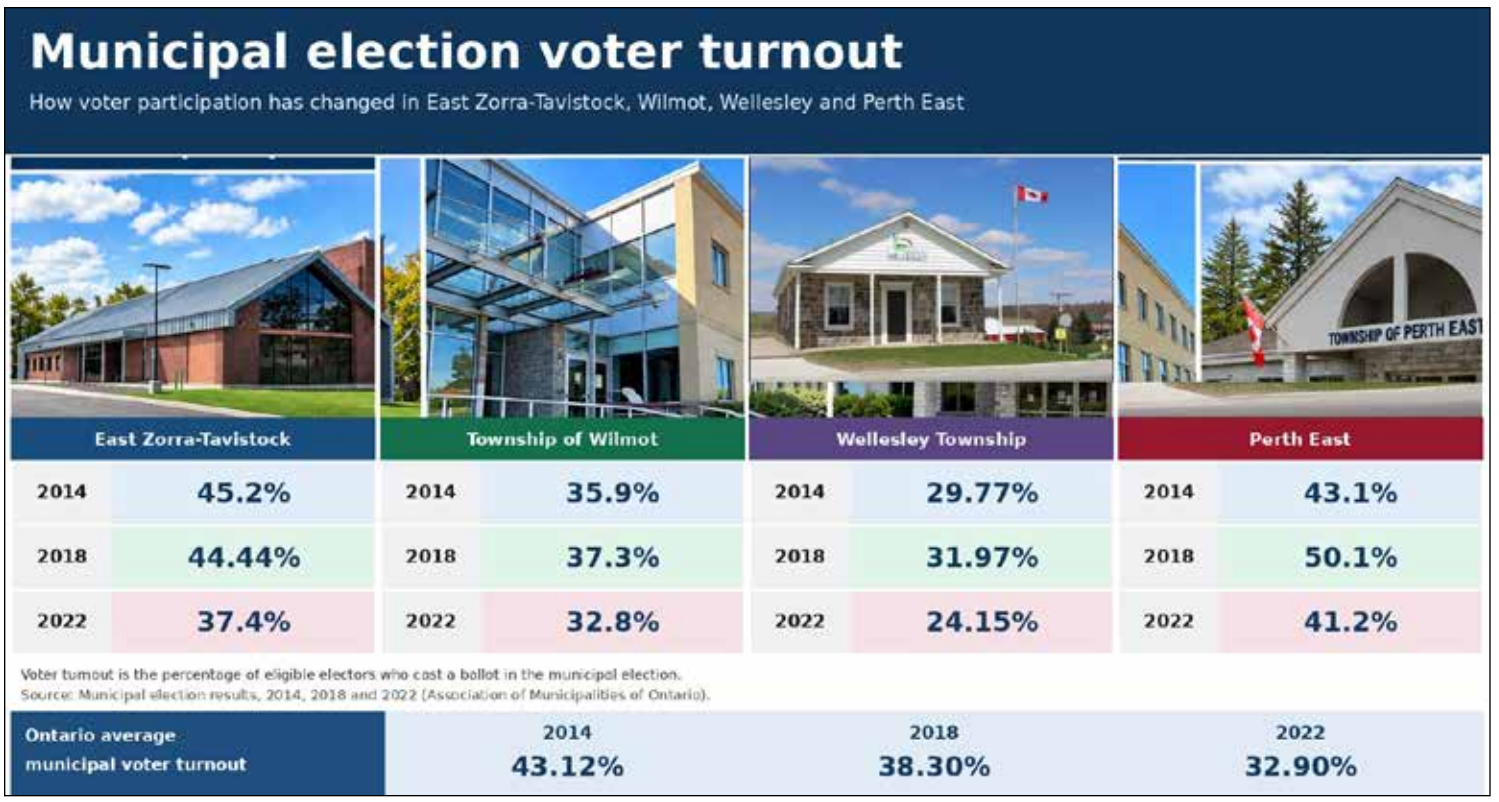
- Oct. 21 from noon to 8 p.m.

Sebringville Fire Station (66 Road 130)

- Oct. 21 from noon until 8 p.m.

The township is also offering free access to the internet and/or a computer at the Perth East Public Library at 19 Mill St. E. in Milverton from Oct. 19 to Oct. 26 during regular business hours.

Qualified Voters must be 18 years of age or older, a Canadian Citizen, a resident of the Township of Perth East, or an owner or tenant of land in the township or the spouse of an owner or tenant.





Stratford NISSAN

2001 Ontario Street, Stratford ON
519.273.3119
www.stratfordnissan.com

STRATFORD NISSAN

STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thurs. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00
PARTS AND SERVICE: Mon.-Sat. 8:00-5:00. FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, OUR SERVICE DEPT IS NOW OPEN ON SATURDAYS

Gaudun Gies running for Ward 3: 'For farmland. For families. For our future'

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Tammy Gaudun Gies is running for Ward 3 in Wilmot Township because, she says, she is concerned about recent discussions on land acquisition and the threat of an AI Data Centre.

"Five years ago, my husband and I moved from Kitchener to Wilmot with our three daughters. We wanted a small-town community where our kids could grow up knowing their neighbours, playing sports and being part of the community," said Gaudun Gies.

"The land acquisition changed things for me. Seeing farmers facing the possibility of losing their land, and seeing how much uncertainty surrounded what was being proposed, made me realize I couldn't just watch from the sidelines."

Since then, she has witnessed rapid development, pressure on farmland and water, and decisions that could fundamentally change Wilmot's character- all things she didn't expect to see once she moved to the region.

"I believe Wilmot can grow without losing what makes it special," said Gaudun Gies. "But that requires people at the Council table who will ask hard questions, demand transparency and stand up for the community. That's why I'm running."

Although the mother of three has not previously served on municipal council, she said she brings a lifelong interest in public service, strong communication experience, and a willingness to learn.

"My grandmother, Sadie Dempsey, was involved in Premier Bill Davis' 1971 campaign," she said. "I grew up believing that participating in your community matters. I'm now ready to take that next step myself. I'm not coming to council assuming I know everything. I'm coming prepared to listen, learn, ask a lot of questions and do the work."

Her experience spans technology, business, communications and education. She has worked with organizations including OpenText, Michelin, BlackBerry, the Perimeter Institute, the University of Toronto and CBC.

Gaudun Gies also said her corporate communications work taught her to take complicated information, understand different stakeholder perspectives, and communicate clearly, a skill she believes will help her excel on council.

"As a teacher, I learned something equally important: listen first, understand the problem and find practical solutions," she said. "I'm also a parent and an active member of the community. Our family is involved in hockey and softball, and I've coached soccer."

Resources, community and heritage are at the forefront of Gaudun Gies campaign. She says that protecting water, farmland and the natural environment are her priorities.

"Wilmot's water and agricultural land are finite," she said. "Growth needs to be based on evidence about what our environment and infrastructure can actually support. I want major developments to answer basic questions first: How much water will they use? What will they cost? What infrastructure is required? And who pays?"

"Manage growth without losing Wilmot's rural and small-town character," continued Gaudun Gies. "I'm not opposed to growth. I am opposed to growth without a clear purpose or a clear understanding of its long-term impact."

She says that she will focus on helping Wilmot invest in the things that make the region a great place to live.

"That means recreation, trails, safer connections between our communities, opportunities for youth and seniors, local businesses and the community organizations and events that bring people together," she said. "Growth should strengthen our community—not simply make it bigger."

Gaudun Gies plans to address the issues as a member of council by asking questions, getting to the root of the issue and then maing financial decisions.

"Then I want to turn those answers into action," she said. "I will push for growth to be phased with infrastructure, protect water and farmland, demand transparency around major decisions and make sure residents understand what Council is being asked to approve."

"Wilmot is home because of its people, from young families starting out to active seniors who chose to retire here," said Gaudun Gies. "Keeping every generation healthy, active, and engaged is a top priority: the Fall Fair, the Mennonite Relief Sale, sports and recreation programs, community organizations and the volunteers who make them happen."

Gaudun Gies will continue to advocate for building more recreation and summer programming, opportunities for youth and seniors, better use of the facilities and more ways for people to connect and participate.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Tammy Gaudun Gies

"I want to give residents a reason to care about this election and a reason to head to the polls," she said. "My campaign will be honest, positive and focused on ideas for Wilmot's future."

For those looking to connect with Gaudun Gies, she is available by email at tammygaudungies@gmail.com or on Facebook.









Lantz running for Wilmot Council Ward 2

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

With a background in politics and farming, Lucy Lantz brings a range of experience as she runs for Wilmot Council, representing Ward 2.

"I have a political background, which has given me a real interest in and knowledge of political and legislative processes," she said. "I previously worked for a federal member of Parliament in Ottawa, studied political science in my undergrad, and have worked in a number of other policy and communications roles since."

Lantz says she wants to run for council because she loves the town and wants to see good things happen for community members.

"I see running for council as a way to invest back into this community, and to help shape its future. I want to be a strong representative for rural residents, for farmers, for young families, and for the next generation to live in Wilmot," she continued.

As fourth-generation farmers, Lantz and her husband are raising their daughters to always think about the land and live with the next generation in mind.

"My husband and I are chicken farmers here in Wilmot, where our daughters are the fifth generation to live on our family farm," she said. "As farmers, we are often thinking about doing our work to a high standard, about caring for our land, and about the next generation.

"I think these values lend themselves well to the work of council, and I would look forward to the opportunity to apply them in that role," she continued.

The lack of transparency in council and the financial stress on Wilmot residents are what led Lantz to run. She said she also feels frustrated with the lack of trust.

"Wilmot is in a time of financial stress. Property taxes have risen significantly, and residents are feeling the impact. This is the number one issue that I'm hearing about at the doors. I also think Wilmot residents are feeling frustrated with a lack of transparency from council," she said.

"In the past four years, our township has experienced the shock of the Wilmot land assembly, heard increasing concern about water access and the region taking more water than we thought, and seen taxes rise significantly."

She says each of these concerns has come with secrecy and surprise, which has contributed to a lack of trust in local government.

"Wilmot's council owes its residents a debt of transparency," she continued. "Council needs to make fiscal responsibility its number one priority."

As a councillor, Lantz plans to analyze town spending and focus on waste or improper use of funds.

"This is not the time for Wilmot to dream big, or fund pet projects. It is the time to buckle down, keep tax increases low, and spend every dollar as efficiently as possible," said Lantz.

"As councillor, I will lead with clarity and honesty, engaging and informing residents to the best of my ability. I will work hard to earn back trust in the community."

Lantz believes councillors are representatives, policy-makers and stewards, and to do their role well, they need to represent residents' voices and interests.

"You need to assess and create good policy for the municipality, and you need to oversee the proper use of the township resources, ensuring they're used as efficiently as possible," she said.

You can find Lantz at the upcoming debate at Wilmot Rod and Gun on Oct. 1, at 7 p.m. She is also available by social media and by email at lucylantzward2@gmail.com.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Lucy Lantz is running for Wilmot Council in Ward 2 in the upcoming municipal election.

CMHA offering education and support for municipal election candidates

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is offering municipal election candidates in Ontario education when it comes to mental health, addictions and homelessness. They are also worried about the mental health of candidates hitting the pavement on the campaign trail.

CMHA Ontario is launching what is calls the CMHA Briefing Room, available at cmhabriefingroom.ca. The resource includes wellness tips to help candidates navigate the demands of a campaign, along with practical information about mental health, addictions and homelessness, and how community-based supports like CMHAs can help address these challenges.

"This isn't anything we have done before," explained CMHA Thames Valley CEO, Pam Tobin. "It was created really to support candidates during this campaign. There is a lot of persistent misinformation out there about mental health, addiction, homelessness, encampments, community safety, all those things."

She added the association felt it was important to provide candidates with evidence-based information candidates can use to answer questions they receive on the campaign trail. Tobin said there has been some interest shown by some candidates in Oxford County.

"They can enter the site and look at different fact sheets we've created. We don't necessarily take questions from them but they can look at a wide range of information we have available. Some of those thing may be supporting your own mental health on the campaign trail. It could be about housing and homelessness in the region or community safety and services. There are also fact sheets about encampments and housing crisis."

Information is also available on the topic of involuntary treatment for addicts, something Ontario Premier Doug Ford has said he isn't ruling out.

""I'd be open to it as long as we can help them and help the communities," Ford said recently. " There has to be a point with some good consultation with the mayors. Do we force these people into treatment? We have a duty as a society to take care of these people and make sure they get the help that they need, but I want to have that discussion with the mayors right now because they're very, very frustrated," he added.

Text box (if possible)

"Running for municipal office means answering questions about mental health, addictions and homelessness. Some you'll expect; some you won't. So, this election, we'll make sure you're prepared."

The Briefing Room is intended to be a practical resource for candidates, municipal leaders, media and the public. It provides accessible information about:

- Mental health and addictions: What communities are experiencing and what the evidence tells us about effective responses
- Homelessness and housing: The relationship between housing, homelessness, mental health and addictions
- Community safety: How mental health and addictions intersect with community safety and what approaches are supported by evidence
- Solutions and policy: The role of community mental health and evidence-informed approaches on key policy issues

"The resource will help municipal candidates understand how they can take action and where broader provincial and federal support is needed, recognizing that municipalities can't address these challenges alone. Municipalities, the province and the federal government – along with the mental health and addictions sector – bear responsibility, and effective responses require co-ordination, sustained investment and strong community-based services," explained Tobin.

When a candidate accesses the site, they are able to leave their email address in order to receive weekly updates from the CMHA.

"They could be new and evolving issues in the community or just keeping them informed as they go," said Tobin, who added forced treatment does currently exist but isn't successful although it comes from a place of compassion and sometimes desperation. "Theres no evidence (it) is effective. What some of the research actually shows is there is potential harm and a higher risk of overdose after treatment."

She said there are many addicts looking to receive treatment voluntarily but there are no spaces available.

"To move straight into involuntary treatment without support for folks who are looking to get into treatment, there has to be a strong foundation put in place before involuntary treatment can be legislated. That may be new facilities or expanded facilities."

Adults in Ontario can be detained for up to 72 hours at a psychiatric facility under what is called a Form 1 Application. A 14-day hold refers to a Form 3 Certificate of Involuntary Admission, which permits detention for up to two weeks if the statutory requirements are met.

"Mental health and addiction are health care issues, but municipalities have been pressed to play a key role in their communities. Across Ontario, municipal leaders are doing their best to respond to these challenges, often working with limited resources and within complex systems," explained a CMHA press release.

According to the Association of Municipalities in Ontario, 85,000 people were estimated to be experiencing homelessness in Ontario in 2025. Municipalities contributed approximately 67 per cent of housing funding and nearly one quarter of homelessness funding last year, while total spending on homelessness programs across governments reached $2.3 billion.

Visit cmhabriefingroom.ca to learn more.

Local non-profit group releases Wilmot Township candidate survey on water issues

Some positive progress being made but group calls out engineering firm's participation

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Citizens for Safe Ground Water (CSGW) wants to make sure groundwater protection and well interference are election topics on Oct. 26 in Wilmot Township.

The organization has released a briefing after asking all municipal candidates a set of standardized questions. Each entry highlights verbatim quotes addressing rural water security, well interference oversight, and proactive groundwater management.

"We wanted to make sure this survey was not just looking for checkboxes. When we had done a survey back in 2018 for candidates, we did that," explained CSGW President Samantha Lernout. "This year we wanted to do something that wasn't just fluff and would allow candidates to actually think about it and come up with some thoughtful, actionable answers we can hold them to."

She added the group was very impressed with the answers they received and the response rate.

"Virtually all candidates responded and were incredibly thoughtful with a lot of great ideas. I had some time to meet some of them and I am quite impressed with the work they are putting in to learn about Wilmot and the history of water issues with municipal water taking and general concerns as we grow."

The Region of Waterloo has recently made some changes to its water interference process, shifting the burden of proof off residents and onto the region. Lernout admitted it is a big step forward but a conflict of interest remains.

"The region has reinstated the well interference committee, and they've changed the way they respond interference claims, but they still hire the same engineering firm that modelled those well fields to evaluate private well claims."

She added the biggest remaining issue is allowing Stantec to examine its own work.

"Essentially, they are letting the contractors audit their own hydrogeological models. It's like allowing student grade their own exam. That's a conflict of interest. The region is saying it is trying to procure a new consultant but that won't be done until January. It's a real issue."

Lernout said aside from the technical detail controversy, CSGW wants to ensure the region isn't relying on what she called distant desktop models, but instead they need physical wellhead testing.

"We need public, real-time data portals to be able to see the monitoring data live in a way a layperson can understand. We need hard, operational trigger levels and the region to respect historic lows and consider them as operational trigger levels where they allow the aquifer to recharge which they have not been doing."

She added the final ask from the group is to implement mandatory baseline testing before water pumping rates in Wilmot are increased.

"What would have been wise for the region to do before they started experimental testing in 2018 would have been to get baseline tests of the local wells which is what they had done in the past. They would do their homework so they knew what the situation was before the increased pumping."

CSGW is not endorsing any candidates but are doing what they call evaluating actions against technical realities.

"For example, Mayor (Natasha) Salonen's motion to pause new pumping until water supplies return is an important upper tier safeguard. Stephanie Goertz focused on focused on local official plan amendments targeting lower-tier land use authorities is also a great idea. Both tiers must act but groundwater management isn't about political promises. It requires enforceable pumping limits and baseline testing before drill rigs ever turn on."

She added leaders at the township and regional levels need to act proactively to stop water loss before taps run dry, rather than relying on computer models to explain the damage after its done.

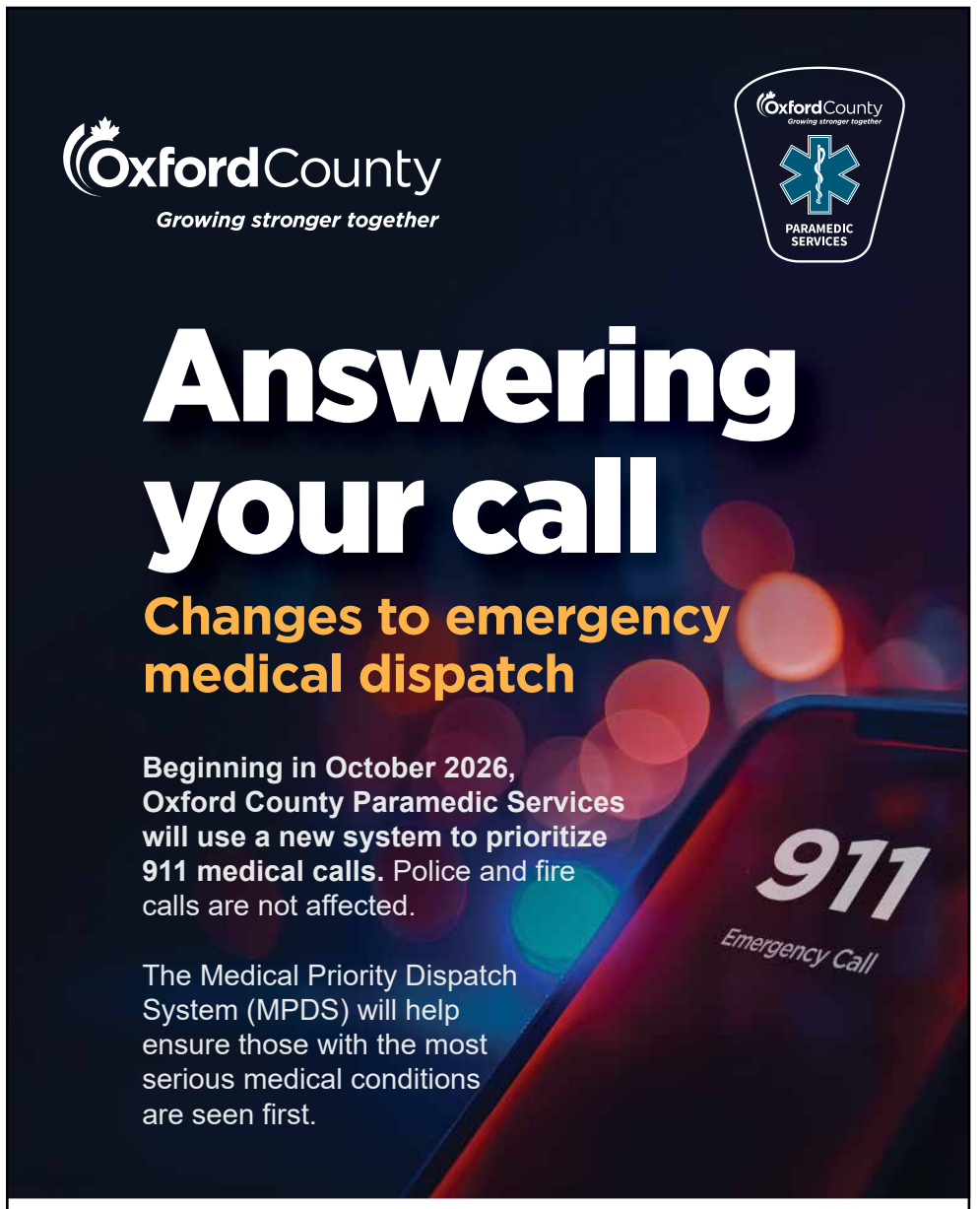
"A policy is only as strong as its enforcement."

Despite how slowly change has come to the water file in the township Lernout said she and her group remain hopeful or more positive change, particular when new Region of Waterloo and Wilmot Township councils begin sitting in the fall.

"We're actually seeing real momentum. A couple years ago water was barely on the radar, and now almost every single candidate is giving us clear commitments in writing. We aren't just hoping for change after election day; we've established the paper trail to hold whoever wins accountable."

A summary of responses from candidates can be found at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gsPPn8USH2FNXzT_VeCzZ96nshWvSGXP/view?usp=drivesdk and the full version at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wvtXTIZNVhSI7Vpry1M_wNmwGIPAtBv-/view?usp=drivesdk.

CSGW is also recommending Wilmot residents watch a video of a conversation on Radio Waterloo (CKMS-FM 102.7) on the water issue with host Bob Jonkman ("Meet The Candidate"), and his guests Dr. Hugh Simpson and Bob Burtt. The entire broadcast is available at https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=zu0vUXH4oeg, beginning just under 34 minutes in.



WHAT STAYS THE SAME

- When you call 911 for a medical emergency, an emergency communications dispatcher will be there to take your call.
- Calls involving life-threatening emergencies, such as cardiac arrest, stroke symptoms, severe allergic reactions or unconsciousness, will continue to receive the highest priority response — as they do now.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT

- When you call 911 for a medical emergency, you may be asked a few more questions to help dispatchers understand how serious or severe your condition is.
- If your needs are less urgent (flu-like symptoms or sprains) and the demand for paramedic services is high, you may wait longer for an ambulance to arrive.
- You may receive basic guidance over the phone while paramedics are on their way. You may also get a call back to check on your status during longer waits.

LEARN MORE
www.oxfordcounty.ca/medical-dispatch

A Double Win for Morgan Woolner



The top three finalists in the ABC Idol youth singing competition included, from left, Morgan Woolner of Petersburg, who was declared the winner and received $500 for first place; Claire Sachs, who placed third and received $200; and Nora Parks of Wellesley, who placed second and received $300. The ABC Festival organizers provided the cash prizes.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Morgan Woolner, winner of the People's Choice Award at this year's Wellesley Fall Fair, receives a $125 cheque from Wellesley Fall Fair Junior Ambassador Riley Purdie. The prize money was donated by members of the Wellesley and District Lions Club.

Lions/Lioness Show Their Community Spirit



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Members of the Wilmot Lions/Lioness Club enjoy dinner at the Wilmot-Wellesley Resource Centre's Community Poor Boys Luncheon on Thursday, Sept. 24. The luncheon coincided with the club's business meeting, allowing members to dine together, conduct their meeting and support the Wilmot-Wellesley Resource Centre.

QUIZ TIME

BY JAKE GRANT

1. What is the traditional birthstone of October?
2. Who bet Eddie Murphy $100,000 he couldn't make a hit song?
3. Who was selected 1st overall in the 2026 NFL draft?
4. What is the name of the famous clock tower in Ottawa?
5. In what year did ABBA win Eurovision?
6. What disease used to be called consumption?
7. What brand introduced the first-ever fully automatic drip coffee maker in the 1970?
8. What is the color of an emerald?
9. The offspring of a polar bear and a grizzly is a what?
10. Montana shares a northern border with which 3 Canadian provinces?

Answers found on classified page

SUDOKU

by PeterS 2026

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Answers found on classified page

OBITUARY

SCHWASS: Linda Jean (nee Neeb)



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Linda Jean Schwass, age 82, of Tavistock, who passed away peacefully on Sunday, September 27, 2026 at Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth.

Linda was the beloved wife of Vernon Schwass, with whom she shared 61 years of marriage. She was a loving mother to Ken Schwass and Sandra (Jeff) O'Neill, and a cherished grandmother to Hailey O'Neill, Brianna O'Neill, Jacob Schwass, and Kayla (Travis) Schwass.Linda will also be dearly missed by her siblings Nancy (David) Kains, Cheryl (John) Fenton, Brenda Neeb, and Leonard (Linda) Neeb, as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends.

She was predeceased by her parents, Leonard and Jean (Jackson) Neeb; her sisters Mary Neeb and Lenore Neeb; and her niece Marie Mckone.

Linda was a very social person who had a special gift for making connections with people wherever she went. She greeted everyone she met with a big smile. She treasured friendships that reached all the way back to elementary school, as well as the many friendships she formed throughout her various careers. She loved spending time with friends, whether it was going for a walk, meeting for coffee, or enjoying a lunch together. Linda was also very involved in her community and church, volunteering for events such as the Tavistock Crokinole tournament, Meals on Wheels, Tavistock Fall Fair and Sauerkraut Supper, and many others. Her warm and welcoming nature left an impression on everyone she met.

Linda was also an incredibly creative and talented woman. She loved knitting and created hundreds of baby hats, which she generously donated to the maternity ward at Stratford General Hospital. She also enjoyed reading and tole painting, always finding joy in creating something beautiful with her hands.Linda and Vern shared a love of travel and enjoyed many adventures together over the years. Their travels took them throughout Canada, including both the east and west coasts, as well as to the United States and Europe. Linda especially enjoyed travelling by cruise ship and bus tour, making wonderful memories along the way. Above all, Linda will be remembered for her warm heart, creativity, generosity, and the many friendships and memories she created throughout her life. She will be deeply missed by her family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing her.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the wonderful staff at Stratford General Hospital and Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth for the compassionate care and support they provided to Linda and her family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Stratford General Hospital or Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth in Linda's memory. Personal condolences can be shared at www.gffh.ca

Relatives and friends are invited to the Francis Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral home, 77 Woodstock Street North, Tavistock, Ontario on Sunday, October 4, 2026 from 11:00am - 1:00pm. A private family service will be held in the funeral home chapel with a burial to follow at Trinity Lutheran Church Cemetery.

Thinking of you with heartfelt sympathy during this difficult time.

OBITUARY

Ronald P. Schlegel, OC, PhD, LLD, FCAHS



Passed away peacefully on Saturday, September 19, 2026 surrounded by family and his grand-daughter singing to him, at WRHN @ Queens Blvd. in Kitchener. He was 83 years old.

Family - Beloved husband of the late Barbara Schlegel (Becker), who passed away in 2022. Loving father of Rob and his partner, Jennifer; Brad and his wife, Heidi; and James and his wife, Juliana. Much-loved Grampa to Naomi, Nicholas, and Jackson.

Ron was predeceased by his parents, Wilfred and Emma Schlegel; his parents-in-law, Max and Florence Becker; his brothers, Wayne and Ernie; his brothers-in-law, Carl Gingerich and Bruce Becker; and his sisters-in-law, Marilyn and Linda. He is survived by his sisters, Marilyn Gingerich and Jan (Art) Mueller, and his sisters-in-law, Pauline Becker and Joyce Schlegel.

Ron was first and foremost a loving husband, father, grandpa, brother, cousin and friend. He was married to Barb who he met at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. They were married for over 58 years and created a wonderful life and home with much joy, happiness and love. They stood together through life's ups and downs, and with faith they always persevered. Barb's unconditional support made it possible for Ron to fully pursue his calling of sharing his gifts. Ron was very proud of his three sons, deriving great joy from working together with them in the family organization. He cherished his three daughters-in-law and was grateful for their efforts to make sure he was well cared for with visits, food, hearing aids and hugs. One of his biggest joys came from his three grandchildren. He was their biggest cheerleader. He treasured the time with Naomi singing songs and attending her performances, and watching Nicholas and Jackson playing various sports and celebrating their accomplishments. Having his family gathered around a table with a homecooked meal and sharing stories and many laughs was always a precious time for Ron.

Early Life and Values Foundation - Ron was born on the family farm at Punkeydoodles Corners, into a family who was committed to the community and their Mennonite faith. Ron's parents, Wilfred and Emma, were progressive in their farming practices and also in their approach to the church, community service and leadership. These qualities were the impetus for them to lead a group from East Zorra to Ailsa Craig, in Middlesex County, when Ron was 5 years old. Wilfred was not only the minister of the new church, he was also the innovator and driver of many projects to meet social needs that he had identified. Wilfred was a pastor, farmer, businessperson and social entrepreneur, all woven into one. He was the greatest influence on Ron's life, teaching by example not words. Working alongside his father, Ron learned the values of hard work, positivity, humility, creativity, common purpose and, most importantly, serving others. Ron's commitment to community building through servant leadership was inspired by his father and rooted in his strong faith. These values guided him in all his future endeavours.

Education and Academic Career – Ron's gift and interest in learning led him to earn degrees from Western University and the University of Illinois, and a PhD in Social Psychology from Ohio State University. He shared his academic gifts first as a high school math teacher, then as a professor at the University of Windsor, and later, in 1972, as a professor at the University of Waterloo where he spearheaded the development of the Department of Health Studies and Gerontology. In addition to lecturing, he led many research projects including for smoking cessation which were implemented around the world, leading to the formation of RBJ Health Management Associates.

Ron also embraced lifelong learning before the concept was mainstream. He was deeply and genuinely curious about every person he met and the life experiences that shaped them. He had a remarkable ability to relate to people, learn from them, encourage them and make lasting connections.

Areas of Calling – Ron's motivation and dedication to community building, fueled by his entrepreneurial spirit, led to a multitude of pursuits within the broader RBJ Schlegel organization. The goal was not to accumulate personal wealth but rather to advance projects for social good. Capital was simply one tool of many required to achieve the objective.

Ron's farming roots and interests led him to create a substantial agribusiness, Schlegel Poultry, committed to producing healthy, nutritious and local food.

Dedication to community building was the motivation for Ron to create Schlegel Urban Developments and its mission to intentionally design and build neighbourhoods which are walkable, age and family friendly, environmentally sustainable and where neighbours get to know one another. The Williamsburg Town Centre in Kitchener is the original community designed by Ron based on 'new urbanism' principles, learned from conferences, books and mostly by many site visits he made around the world. Another component of Schlegel Urban is St. Jacobs Farmers' Market, with the priority of continuing it as a place of commerce and connection.

Ron also had a passion for mental health and addiction care. Homewood Health, which includes the Homewood Health Centre in Guelph, became part of the Schlegel organization in 2010, building a continuum of education, prevention and treatment services across Canada to restore healthy minds and helping people return to work and their lives.

The calling for which Ron is probably best known is his dedication to Seniors Care and Living and his creation of Schlegel Villages. His passion for this field started as a young boy when he carried food trays in a small nursing home his father had started. This sparked a lifelong interest in seniors and their care and quality of life. Ron pioneered the 'Village' model which incorporated a continuum to provide various levels of care under one roof and organized around a main-street design, with the intent of promoting social connection and a sense of belonging for residents. Ron envisaged the Villages as caring communities where residents live a life of meaning, purpose and active life engagement. Schlegel Villages now serves seniors in 24 cities across Ontario.

All these callings were undergirded by Ron's dedication to building strong and healthy communities.

Research and Innovation – A believer in using research to drive innovation, Ron used his unique combination of expertise in business and academia to integrate research, education and practice to improve quality care and quality of life for seniors everywhere. He brought together University of Waterloo and Conestoga College in this shared pursuit. He passionately undertook to create and fund the now internationally recognized Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging in 2005 with the focus on applying research driven innovation to benefit seniors in Ontario, across Canada and beyond. Ron also revitalized and funded the Homewood Research Institute which undertakes much needed research in the field of mental health and addiction treatment, in partnership with McMaster University.

Community Service and Recognitions - A generous community builder and philanthropist, Ron gave his energy, expertise, ideas and financial resources to countless organizations locally and around the world. He had a special interest in the work of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), creating business solutions to poverty globally. He served on the boards of the University of Waterloo, Conrad Grebel, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Toronto Stockyards Land Development and several provincial health research task forces and councils, amongst others.

Ron's contributions were recognized through induction into both the Communitech Entrepreneur and Waterloo Region Halls of Fame, and honours including K-W Citizen of the Year, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Waterloo Region's Barnraiser Award, International Innovator of the Year for Seniors Care, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the King Charles III Coronation Medal, amongst others. Ron received honorary degrees from Waterloo, Western and McMaster universities and Conestoga College. He also was made a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. In 2012, Ron was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in recognition of his lifelong commitment to improving elder care in Canada and his founding vision of the Research Institute for Aging.

In response to these many accolades, Ron always emphasized to the broader RBJ Schlegel organization that these were 'WE' awards, not 'ME' awards.

Notwithstanding a very hectic schedule, Ron was never too busy to take as much time as needed to comfort, mentor, counsel and walk with many people who came to him for advice and assistance during difficult times or decision points in their lives.

Gratitude - The family would like to thank the compassionate team members at The Village of Winston Park for their dedicated service and care for Ron over the past several years. The family also thanks the care teams at WRHN with special appreciation for Dr. Claus Rinne, Anita Cressman (NP) and the Heart Function Clinic team, and Dr. Kassem Ashe and the Cardiac Care team. Special mention to Dr. Paul O'Byrne at the Firestone Clinic in Hamilton. The steadfast support of all Ron's personal caregivers throughout, especially Elizabeth, Ruth, Jalea and Sunja, will always be remembered.

We are immeasurably grateful for Ron's values-based life, rooted in his faith and dedicated to serving others and for his willingness to share his many God-given talents to make a positive impact in this world.

Arrangements

Visitation - Ron's family will receive friends and relatives at Erb & Good Family Funeral Home, 171 King St. S, Waterloo, on Thursday, October 1, 2026, from 6:00pm – 9:00pm and on Friday, October 2, 2026, from 2:00pm – 5:00pm and from 7:00pm – 9:00pm. Please find **overflow parking details** on the Erb & Good website: erbgood.com.

Funeral Service - The funeral service to celebrate his life and faith will be held at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, 57 Stirling Avenue North, Kitchener, on Saturday, October 3, 2026, at 11:00am. Limited parking is available at the church. **Overflow parking provided** at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium (please enter off Stirling Ave., Kitchener) Lot F and G, with shuttle service provided to the church. For those unable to attend the service, it will be livestreamed at The Village of Winston Park (address below). A livestream link will be provided at erbgood.com on Ron's tribute page and will remain on the funeral home website for future viewing.

A private family interment will be held at Williamsburg Cemetery, Kitchener, at a later time.

Reception - A light lunch and a time to visit with the family will immediately follow the funeral service at The Village of Winston Park, 695 Block Line Rd., Kitchener. Enter through the main Town Square entrance facing Westmount Rd. **Overflow parking available** at the nearby Williamsburg Town Centre TD Bank, 1187 Fischer-Hallman Rd, where shuttle buses to Winston Park will be provided.

Donations in memory of Ron may be made to the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging and the Homewood Research Institute through the funeral home at erbgood.com or (519) 745-8445.

Students get hands-on dairy education at annual event



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Dr. Jeff Sommers demonstrates to Grade 3 and 4 students how a stethoscope is used to listen to a yearling heifer's heart. The Wellesley veterinarian was one of five presenters at the annual Dairy Education Day, held last week and organized by the Wellesley-North Easthope Fall Fair and Agricultural Society. The event has been held for 17 years and gives local students a hands-on look at dairy farming.



(KAREN SCHLUETER-WEISS PHOTO)

Feed specialist Nicole Follings of Jones Feed Mill in Linwood shows Grade 3 and 4 students the types of feed used to raise dairy calves and feed milking cows. Follings explained the importance of quality feed and balanced rations, including corn silage, haylage, hay, grain and protein supplements.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Wellesley dairy farmer Brad Brenneman and Kasja Bowman demonstrate how cows are milked to Grade 3 and 4 students during the annual Dairy Education Day. Students learned about Brenneman's Holstein herd and the care required to produce milk.



(KAREN SCHLUETER-WEISS PHOTO)

Waterloo County dairy farmer Val Jones talks to students about nutrition and the dairy products they enjoy. Her presentation covered the many products made from milk, including cream, butter, cheese and ice cream, and the role dairy products can play in a balanced diet.

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UPCOMING EVENT

HIGH NOON LUNCH RETURNS THIS FALL!

Thursday, October 8 at 12 noon

Zion Hall, Grace United Church

116 Woodstock St. South, Tavistock

Socialize over a homestyle lunch from 12 to 1 PM
Stay to hear Richard & Joan Hryniw speak about their project "The Story of Little Boxes" - Bring used greeting cards

Cost: Free will Offering

High Noon Is sponsored by the Tavistock and Area Ministerial

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.

September 23 - 30, 2021, Edition (5 years ago)

The community came together in spirit and in person to raise at least $31,000 for cancer research. It was a busy weekend of activities and fundraising leading up to the Wilmot Terry Fox Run on Sunday, September 19. This year marks a quarter century since the first run was held in the township. On Friday, September 17, Township councillor Angie Hallman invited local run co-organizer Nigel Gordijik to join her under the big bucket at the Wilmot splash pad in Baden. For the third year, the pair got drenched together in exchange for Hallman's donation to the cause. "60 gallons of water on my noggin for charity," she said on Twitter.

At the September 13th meeting, Wilmot council members voted to suspend rental fees for the use of Township facilities by Indigenous groups on September 30th when they hold National Day for Truth and Reconciliation ceremonies. Similar resolutions were recently passed by Kitchener and Waterloo councils, as well as the Waterloo Region. The new federal statuary holiday highlights the history and legacy of Canada's residential school system, and is one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.

About 42 people made it out to Sir Adam Beck Park in Baden on a rainy afternoon, Tuesday, September 21, for a tree planting project that saw 90 native trees and shrubs planted. The event was the collaboration of Let's Tree Wilmot, New Hamburg Home Hardware, Yantzi Home Building Centre, and Tree Canada, and celebrate National Tree Day. Meme's Cafe restaurant in New Hamburg provided food for attendees.

September 28 - October 5, 2011, Edition (15 years ago)

Saturday, September 24, 2011 was a busy day at the Tavistock Public Library as 43 people toured the facility as part of Doors Open Oxford. The annual event also included a tour of Danensview Farm Inc. at the corner of the 16th Line of East Zorra and the Townline (Perth-Oxford Road). More than 140 people made their way to the second-generation, family operated dairy farm, the home of Jack and Jane Danen and family. Complimentary coffee, chocolate milk and cheese strips were handed out with donations accepted for T.A.P.

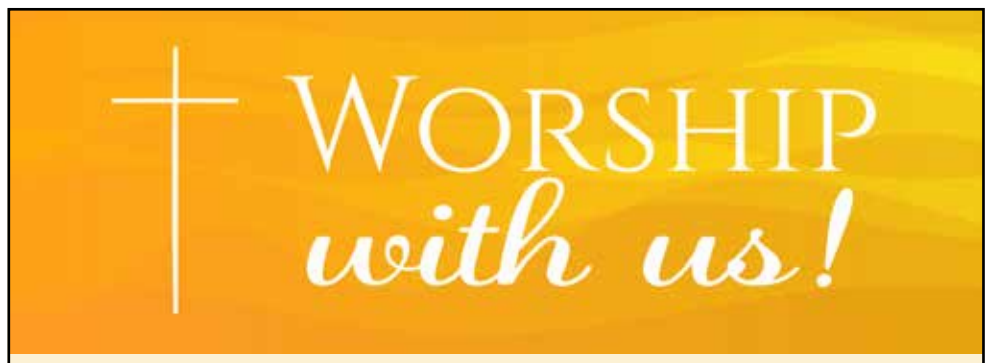
Over 22,000 runners from over 50 countries are expected to take part in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on Sunday, October 16, 2011, aiming to raise $3 million for over 150 local and deserving charities. Tavistock's John Schultz and his son, Eric, will be participating in this year's event to raise funds for the Huntington Society. Eric will run in the full marathon 42.2 km while his father will enter the 5 km race.

September 25 - October 2, 1996, Edition (30 years ago)

The third annual Terry Fox Run for Cancer Research was held at Tavistock Public School on Friday morning, September 20th at 11:15. About 300 students and staff from every grade participated by walking, running, or jogging around the school's backyard area under the direction of physical education/Grade 8 teacher Mr. Ron Becker. Prior to the Run, Mr Becker explained to the children that they were a part of an immense puzzle, of which they were only one piece, the puzzle would not be complete. He suggested that the students run a number of laps corresponding to their grade level. Many youngsters were glad to run more than double their level.



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Pastor Jim Brown
Worship service 10am followed by coffee hour and sermon discussion.
All are welcome

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66 Mill Street, Baden, ON
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Worship service at 11:00 AM
Pastors: Richard Bean and Gabriel Jantzi
www. oasismennonite.com

To have your place of worship listing included here, please contact thewtgazette@gmail.com

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

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

PJHL roundup: Braves remain undefeated while Applejacks split and Firebirds win only weekend game

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The perfect start to the 2026-27 Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) season continues for Tavistock, but they aren't alone – a total of eight teams have yet to lose, including the defending Schmaltz Cup champions, the Fergus Whalers.

Tavistock started the weekend with an 8-2 drubbing of Paris on home ice Friday. The Mounties opened the scoring five minutes into the game, but the Braves roared back with five straight goals on 27 shots. Tavistock scored three goals in the second period on 17 shots and ended the night with 60 shots on goal. Leading scorer Jacob Skuta scored three times and added an assist, while Tucker Otto had two points on a goal and two assists. Blake Richard stopped 32 of 34 shots to earn his third win of the season.

The Braves travelled to Hespeler on Sunday and skated away with a 4-1 victory on the strength of a pair of goals from Owen Yagar. Liam McHugh and Even Palubeski added single markers while Andrew Torchia kicked out 17 of 18 shots.

Tavistock has one of the stingiest goals-against averages in the PJHL, allowing just 1.89 per game, something head coach Zac Berg said has been a team effort.

"Both forwards and defencemen have been committed to defending the high danger area in front of our net and are doing a great job of keeping everything to the outside. On top of that, everyone is willing to put their body on the line for each other, blocking a lot of shots. With the goaltending that we have, if we stay committed to team defence, we should be able to win a lot of hockey games this year."

Offensively, the line of Palubeski, Skuta and Yann Raskin have combined for 33 points in five games. Berg said the trio clicked instantly this season and are sharing the puck well, and they have constant movement in the O-zone, which makes it very hard for other teams to defend. But he added the team is deep when it comes to scoring, and everyone is contributing.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Former Tavistock players were on hand for a recent Braves game for the ceremonial puck drop. Here, former captain Marc Dionne readies for the faceoff.

"Absolutely. When you can have all four lines contributing on the scoresheet, then you are definitely in a good spot. You can't always rely on two or three guys to carry the load. When you can spread the ice time out throughout all four lines, it keeps everyone engaged, and I think that has been a key for us to start the year."

The team's goalie tandem of Richard and Torchia have also played solid to date, something Berg said doesn't come as any surprise to him.

"They have been unbelievable for us this year. They both put in a lot of work over the summer and you can definitely tell with the way they have played right from the start of training camp. They give us a very good chance to win on a nightly basis. They are the type of goalies on the ice and off the ice that you want to play hard for and lay it all on the line."

He also said the team is blessed by an incredible group of leaders in the locker room, something that makes it easy for he and his staff to do their job.

"I think it stems from last year. The players created not only a winning culture, but a culture that makes it fun for everyone to show up to the rink every night. The returning players, along with the experienced players who came from other organizations, have carried that culture into this year. It's the type of team everyone wants to be a part of. This group has a chance to do something extremely special this year. We just can't stray from what we know. We need to keep improving and moving in the right direction."

The Braves have a pair of home games next weekend, beginning with Wellesley on Friday night, then Norwich on Saturday. The puck drops at 7:30 p.m. both nights.

The Applejacks started their weekend with an impressive 6-2 home-ice win over Norwich, thanks in large part to a three-goal, one-assist effort by Cooper Vickerman. The teams were tied after 40 minutes but Wellesley exploded with four third-period goals highlighted by Vickerman's natural hat trick. The Applejacks held a 38-13 edge in shots on goal.

They weren't as fortunate on Sunday, dropping a 5-4 decision in Dorchester despite outshooting the Dolphins 49-26. Hudson Parker scored twice for Wellesley with single markers coming from Luke Schofleid and Rhys McCloskey.

In addition to Friday's game in Tavistock, Wellesley travels to Paris on Saturday.

New Hamburg played just once over the weekend, outshooting Hespeler 49-23 in a 6-2 victory. Mannheim product Aydan Burns scored two times and added an assist while Joshua Soulliere picked up a hat trick. Deklan Jermol stopped 21 of the 23 shots he faced to earn the win.

The Firebirds host Paris on Friday at 7:30 p.m. and travel to Hespeler Sunday afternoon

SOUTH - DOHERTY

gamesheetstats.com

RK	TEAM	GP	W	L	T	OTW	OTL	SOW	SOL	PTS	PCT	RW	ROW	GF	GA	DIFF	STK	PIM
1	Tavistock Braves	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	1.00	5	5	28	7	+21	Won 8	76
2	Wellesley Applejacks	6	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	8	.667	3	4	27	18	+9	Lost 1	163
3	Paris Mounties	6	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	7	.583	3	3	26	26	0	Won 1	136
4	New Hamburg Firebirds	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	.600	3	3	20	19	+1	Won 1	75
5	Norwich Merchants	6	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	6	.500	2	2	17	23	-6	Lost 1	127
6	Dorchester Dolphins	7	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	.286	2	2	27	38	-11	Won 1	191
7	Hespeler Shamrocks	5	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	.100	0	0	9	23	-14	Lost 6	114

Tavistock Firefighters Raise More Than $6,300 for Muscular Dystrophy

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Tavistock Fire Department raised $6,307.16 during its annual boot drive over the Labour Day long weekend at the five corners of Tavistock.

Every year, during the first weekend in September, members of the local fire department take off their firefighting rubber boots and ask motorists for donations to help find a cure for muscular dystrophy.

This year's amount was more than a year ago. Vicki Drohan, fundraising and firefighter relations officer for Muscular Dystrophy Canada, dropped in to pick up the cheque at Tavistock's fire station Tuesday afternoon.

Drohan said the organization cannot thank Tavistock's firefighters and the motoring public enough for the good work they continue to do year after year in Tavistock.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Vicki Drohan, fundraising and firefighter relations officer for Muscular Dystrophy Canada, accepts a $6,307.16 cheque from the Tavistock Fire Department following its annual boot drive.

Grace United Church honours a day of truth and reconciliation



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

On Sunday, most of the Grace Church congregation, some wearing orange, paused for a photo at the front of the church at the end of the service, honouring indigenous survivors of residential schools.

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Last Sunday morning's service at Grace United Church in Tavistock invited the congregation to wear orange to recognize and honour a day of Truth and Reconciliation.

Rev. Marilyn Arthur spoke about the meaning behind Every Child Matters and how the orange shirt symbolizes the loss of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by many Indigenous children.

She discussed the importance of the day and working to repair the harm caused by residential schools as co-creators with God.

Chapters from Psalm 78 were read by long-time church member Keith Weitzel and referred to by Reverend Marilyn in her message, honouring those Indigenous Children who did not survive residential school.

Sept. 30 was the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which was established in response to Call to Action 80 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which called on the federal government, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, to create a statutory holiday recognizing Survivors, their families, and communities while ensuring the history and legacy of residential schools are publicly remembered.

Gazette Puzzles

SEPTEMBER NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Z	E	A	X	R	L	M	E	H	O	S	C	E	G	N	L	C	Y	S	K
I	D	L	S	X	C	X	C	Q	G	I	Q	N	H	S	A	X	R	N	Z
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Pet of the Week

BINKY



Meet Binky, a handsome two-year-old ginger boy with a playful spirit and a soft, affectionate side. In his foster home, Binky has truly blossomed, spending his days exploring, playing, and cozying up with the people he trusts. Affectionate and impossibly charming, Binky adores people and has a special talent for making a house feel like home. Sometimes he can become unsettled and stressed in unfamiliar environments. He's looking for an adult-only home with experienced cat owners who understand that he may need a little extra patience, time, and space. Given the opportunity to settle in at his own pace, Binky forms strong bonds and becomes a loving, loyal friend. You can meet Binky by contacting our Kitchener Centre or visiting our website at kwsphumane.ca/adopt/cats.

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Crazy for Kale

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



Health experts across the globe encourage eating a rainbow of fresh garden goodness every day. Ideally, fresh over frozen or canned, and yes, in a perfect world, organic over conventional. Organic can literally break the bank. As a holistic nutritionist, I am frequently asked how to know which ones to eat and avoid. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) puts out a yearly list, referred to as the 'Clean Fifteen' and 'Dirty Dozen'. The 12 superfoods fall short, containing PFAS pesticides. More often than not, I buy conventional foods due to supporting local and lower price point. A wide range of foods is key to avoiding vitamin and mineral deficiencies in the diet. Simply soak conventional kale in warm water and aluminum-free baking soda, rinse, and pat dry. Store in the fridge on paper towels to absorb moisture, and ta-da. Kale is one long-lasting leafy green.

Spinach, Popeye's favourite power plant, has more pesticide residues by weight than any other fruit or vegetable, and even though kale comes in second place, keep eating. The health benefits are a bonanza, so soak, rinse, and go crazy for kale!

Kale, also called leaf cabbage, belongs to the species Brassica oleracea. It may be part of the cabbage family, but the purple or green leaves do not form a head. The origins are unknown but date back to the Middle Ages, and there's reams of reasons the kale has stood the test of time. Would you believe there are around 150 known types, but 10 to 15 common varieties?

My top picks are classic curly kale, Lacinato kale, often called dinosaur kale, red Russian kale and baby kale, which is just harvested young.

Curly kale is frilly and full-bodied with a peppery flavour, and a favourite in soups. Curly kale became famous as a healthier alternative to chips. Small, torn pieces of kale are sprinkled with loads of nooch, a nickname for nutritional yeast, and baked in the oven until crispy. Still a go-to snack for many plant-based eaters.

Lacinato kale is dark, textured and sweeter, but it's tough and, like curly kale, a super swap in salads, but the key is the magical massage. Remove the stems and thinly slice. In a bowl, add a spoonful or two of extra-virgin avocado or olive oil, a squeeze of fresh lemon, sea salt and, for the next few minutes, massage the leaves. This short and simple step will have all the kale haters finally fall in love with kale. Of course, pile in other produce, but grated Parmigiano Reggiano or pecorino and a handful of pine nuts is enough for a sensational salad, pairing well with roasted chicken for easy meal prep.

Last but not least, Russian kale offers a mild flavour, and is super sautéed or steamed with fresh garlic, lemon juice, a touch of zest, and your favourite non-seed oil. Look for baby kale partnered with the peppery perfection of astounding arugula in boxes of greens for a gut-boosting support.

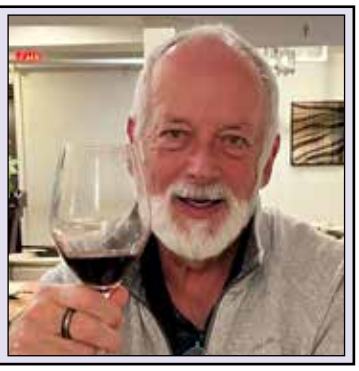
Why kale? Kale is low in calories, and I mean low. With just 7 to 8 calories in a cup and literally no carbohydrates. The one gram of fibre cancels out the one gram of carbohydrates. This gorgeous green is 84 per cent to 90 per cent water, helping satiate and hydrate. Kale is high in immune-boosting vitamin C, and with the cold season headed our way, kale is a great way to load up without the sugar found in fruit. C is also heaps of help for hemorrhoids, varicose veins and bleeding gums. Looking to maintain a youthful glow? C is crucial for collagen support. As the leaves fall and the days are shorter, sunshine will soon be a luxury. This is Mother Nature's sign to eat more vitamin D foods: mushrooms, cold-water fatty fish like wild salmon, trout and sardines. Vitamin D is essential for combating seasonal blues, mineral balance, immunity and bone strength, but there's a catch. The key to absorbing vitamin D is K, and two cups will keep you in good standing. Kale is crazy in K, and key to blood clotting, beta-carotene, the precursor to vitamin A, a vital eyesight helper.

Step outside mealtime humdrum and go crazy for kale as a sidekick, in lieu of lettuce, swap for spinach in an omelet, and a green boost in smoothies on-the-go. Don't forget to show local love to all the farmers and, for organic produce, local health hero Pfennings Organic Vegetable Inc., for a wide range of fabulous veggies, key for optimal health. All hail kale!

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"Forest bathing" is a great experience, but not what you think

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO



By Paul Knowles

One key difference between travelling as a tourist, and travelling as a travel journalist, is that as a tourist, you get to choose your own activities. As a travel journalist, I do get to consult with my hosts, but usually, the itinerary will include a number of destinations or activities that are not my idea.

And that's how we ended up "forest bathing."

When I tell friends that we went "forest bathing," I'm usually met with a combination of bafflement and false assumptions. Many of which, I must confess, we shared before we headed out on this newest adventure.

We were staying at Le Baluchon Eco-Resort, a terrific getaway in the Mauricie region of Québec. We were hosted by "Québecauthentique," the regional tourism association that represents Mauricie and the neighbouring region of Lanaudière.

I will write more about Le Baluchon in a future feature, because this is a hidden gem, easily accessible from southern Ontario, and a fabulous destination for a couples' getaway or a family holiday.

But for this week… back to the forest.

Our "forest bathing" guide began our experience by noting all of the misconceptions the term engenders.

There is no actual "bathing." You don't get wet. You don't wear a bathing suit. You don't need a towel.

Instead, forest bathing is a rough – and admittedly confusing – translation of a Japanese term, "Shinrin-yoku", which can also mean "forest therapy."

The concept is, participants take time to immerse ourselves in the atmosphere of the forest. Guides will suggest activities that will help us to focus on our immediate surroundings, thus leaving stresses of the outside work behind, at least for an hour or two.

"Sure," I thought, with considerable skepticism. As is not uncommon, I was wrong. It was a wonderful experience.

The first bit of our slow stroll along a river and through the woods took us across a wooden bridge that spans the Rivière du Loup (an ancient name for the local waterway, unrelated to the Québec city of the same name). Our guide invited us to cross the river, one at a time, taking all the time we wanted to take in the view.

That was a good hint of what was to come. Forest bathing is anything but rushed. And honestly, as I stood in the middle of the bridge, gazing at the river, I could already feel a sense of relaxation.

We then were directed through a series of voluntary exercises. They're voluntary, because being forced to do something would be antithetical to the purpose of the whole thing, right? But we did them all.

We walked slowly down a path in the forest, simply observing the trees, plants, and occasional birds around us. Then our guide stopped, produced some padded matts, and invited us to sit on rocks beside the river and, simply, be. It was incredibly peaceful.

That lasted a while, and then we resumed our stroll. A few minutes on, she reached into her back pack and pulled out magnifying glasses. That exercise involved looking closely at whatever we chose to observe: flowers, leaves, insects, anything that drew our attention.

I have to tell you, you cannot be focused on a tiny green spider, almost invisible to the naked eye, as it explores a flower, and still think about your job, your to-do list, or anything else. You are truly immersed in the moment. I could have carried on with this exercise for a long time, flower to flower, bug to bug. It was lovely.

After our guide collected the magnifiers, she produced blindfolds. We took turns – my partner was blindfolded, and I led her to touch plants, even a clump of soil. Then she led me on the same adventure, and the impact of being denied sight while experiencing sound, touch, and smell was very powerful.

Finally, we were invited to collect something – a flower, a twig, a pebble, anything that caught our attention – and then we sat on logs and had a form of tea ceremony, during which we shared our reactions to the experience.

I know – this may sound very airy-fairy. But we found it to be a clearly practical way to de-stress.

Turns out, there are plenty of credible medical and psychological studies that attribute significant benefits to forest bathing. They have found that the experience can help relieve high blood pressure, heart conditions, skin conditions and asthma. There is no doubt that it alleviates stress.

The technique was developed in Japan in the 1980s and is widely practiced there, today. And it is more common in Canada than I had imagined. As just one example, the Ontario Parks website has a section on forest bathing.

If you think this is something you could do on your own, without a guide, you are probably right. But I believe a guided experience, like ours at le Baluchon, is better – because your guide has the experience and the means to draw you away from your own daily concerns, and give you an hour or two of stress-free peace. What a gift!

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Forest bathing is essentially a directed stroll through nature... and a terrific stress reliever.



Our guide, seated beside the Rivière du Loup as it passes through the le Baluchon Eco-Resort.



Participants in forest bathing are encouraged to focus on the details of the natural setting.



A view of the Rivière du Loup.

Milverton celebrates 163 years of fall fair fun

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Milverton Agricultural Society celebrated its 163rd Milverton Fall Fair this year.

The annual fall event brought out people from across the Milverton area to take part in this year's theme, "Blue Jeans and Country Dreams."

On Thursday, entries arrived at the Agri Centre as exhibitors submitted their preserves, baking and crafts for judging.

On Friday, entries continued to pour in, including sewing, handmade items, such as scarecrows, photographs and field crops. Later in the day, the royalty competition took place at the Perth East Recreation Complex at 7 p.m.

Winners included Sweetheart Alexandria McDermott-Blakely and Prince Charming Alarik Streicher. The mini ambassador was Grace Sage, and the junior ambassadors were Nadine Egger and Kelsey Shiell. The 2026 Milverton ambassador was Hayley Schiell.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

From left: Alarik Streicher, Prince Charming; Grace Sage, Mini Ambassador; Nadine Egger, Junior Ambassador; Kelsey Shiell, 2026 Fall Fair Ambassador; and Sweetheart Alexandria McDermid-Blakely.

New this year was a $1,500 scholarship for post-secondary students. Nine applications were received, and Leona Egger was presented with a cheque to support her studies in the Bachelor of Science program at the University of Guelph.

On Saturday, the fair's programming ran from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and was jam-packed with activities for families, including a very popular baby show. At 11:30 a.m., the Red Seal Legion Youth Band took to the stage to perform several musical numbers.

Other activities included the pedal tractor pull, harvest plate bingo, all-ages line dancing, a farm toy table and an agricultural craft corner.

Outside, on the grass paddock, Four Paw Flying hosted two dog agility shows, while the cornhole tournament was a big hit again.

In the horse ring, the Milverton Horse Club held its final show of the 2026 season, with plenty of inquisitive spectators on hand.

The Perth County Beef Farmers bookended the event by hosting their annual and very popular beef barbecue at the Milverton Agri Centre in partnership with the Milverton Agricultural Society and the Milverton Lions Club.

Agricultural Society directors, led by President Helen Dowd, would like to thank everyone who exhibited, competed, sponsored, volunteered and attended this year's 163rd edition of the Milverton Fall Fair. Without you, none of this would have been possible.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2026

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3

Native Tree Planting with Let's Tree Wilmot
9 a.m. - 12 noon
Join us for phase 3 of creating a future forest here. For details and registration: https://letstreewilmot.ca/events/
Mannheim Carolinian Corner

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

Garden Wilmot presents " Growing Backyard Fruit: the Glory and the Grief"
7 p.m.
Featuring fruit tree expert Fred Lichti.
Free admission.
Wilmot Rec Complex, Mtg Room A
1291 Nafziger Rd Unit 1, Baden

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6

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

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

Ostomy Support Group Meeting
7:00 p.m.
Speaker – Jaci Sinclair, of Gentle Awakenings. Learn about Chair Yoga and it's healing supports. Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome. For more information: (519)273-4327
93 Morgan St., Stratford

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

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

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

High Noon Lunch and Speaker
12 noon
ATTENTION SENIORS! Featuring Richard and Joan Hyrniw of "The Little Boxes Story." Please bring used greeting cards.
Grace United Church Tavistock
116 Woodstock St. South

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

Pumpkinfest '26
9 a.m. - 12 noon
Free admission and hot cider. Live music, no crowds, Pumpkins, Bake Table, fresh flower centerpieces, small & bulk root veg, apples, kale, Squash.
Morningside Adult Community,
10 Homstead Place, New Hamburg

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14

Tavistock Men's Club are hosting a CANDIDATES NIGHT for the 2026 Municipal Election - East Zorra Tavistock
7:30 p.m.
Tavistock Men's Club Hall
78 Woodstock St N, Tavistock, ON

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

Let's Tree Wilmot is partnering with Stonecroft
9 a.m. - 12 noon
Join us to add more trees to their community and increase Wilmot's tree canopy. For details and registration: https://letstreewilmot.ca/events/
StoneCroft, New Hamburg

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

Flag Raising Ceremony hosted by Royal Canadian Legion Branch 532 New Hamburg
10 a.m.
You are cordially invited to attend a Flag Raising Ceremony in honour of Canada's Veterans and active service members. The ceremony will include brief remarks, a moment of reflection, and the raising of the Royal Canadian Legion Lest We Forget poppy flag.
Castle Kilbride
60 Snyder's Rd W, Baden

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

Let's Tree Wilmot is increasing the tree cover on a rural property
9 a.m. - 12 noon
Join us in planting 100 trees offering some of the best opportunities for increasing the tree canopy in our township. For details and registration: https://letstreewilmot.ca/events/
Perth Street, New Hamburg

Tavistock Fall Expo: Market & Carnival
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Shop local this fall with our amazing vendors, and join us for our FREE family carnival. We will have games, candy prizes, Bouncy Castle, and more. Lunch is also available to be purchased at the market. For more information, find us online: www.facebook.com/tavistock.church
Tavistock Missionary Church
77 Mogk St, Tavistock

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24 CONTINUED

Oxford Philatelic Society Circuit Book (Stamp) Fair
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Free Admission & Parking
Stop in and buy some stamps and meet fellow stamp collectors.
About 8 participating stamp clubs.
Contact: dheaton3e3@gmail.com
Website: http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford
Church of the Epiphany,
560 Dundas Street, Woodstock

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

Rescue Junction: Gospel Bluegrass Concert
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Free Will Offering taken.
Rosebank Church
1434 Huron Road, Petersburg

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Wilmot Council meeting
6-7 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road W., Baden

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Free "Explore Your Future" career expo for Gr 7-12 students/parents
5-8 p.m.
bepwr.ca/eyf
Tapestry Hall,
74 Grand Avenue South, Cambridge, ON

EVERY WEDNESDAY

TOPS - Taking off Pounds Sensibly
Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.
Contact Cathie 519-662-9273
St James Church, Baden

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

FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

Tavistock Seniors Pickleball
Monday, Wednesday & Friday 12-4 p.m.
Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.
Tavistock Seniors Card Games
Monday drop in 1-4 p.m.
Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.
VON Senior Exercise Drop-In Standing Class
Tuesday and Thursday 9-10 a.m.
To register contact 519-539-1231 ext. 6319
Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St.
VON Senior Exercise Drop-In Sitting Class
Tuesday and Thursday 10:25-11:25 a.m.
To register contact 519-539-1231 ext. 6319
Village Manner, 98 Woodstock St., Tavistock

TAVISTOCK & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM DISPLAYS

Travelling Museum Display: "Heritage of Hickson's Sports Teams"
Check out the earliest Hickson baseball teams and the display full of vintage equipment. History and photos of the Hickson Baseball teams dating back to the early 1900's complement the display.

TAVISTOCK MEN'S CLUB SAUERKRAUT & BBQ PORK CHOP SUPPER

Supper Date: Wednesday, November 11, 2026
Supper Time: 4:00 7:00 pm
Pick Up Only
TAVISTOCK MEMORIAL HALL
3 Adam St., Tavistock

Tickets are available from club members or call 519-655-3573 or at Tavistock arena booth or email: info@tavistockmensclub.ca or online at www.tavistockmensclub.ca.
Starting on October 10th until November 10th tickets will be available at Men's Club Hall (78 Woodstock St N) every Wednesday from 4-6 pm and Saturdays from 11am-2pm

WILMOT ALL CANDIDATES MEETING - YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR QUESTIONS, YOUR VOTE

Wilmot Ward 1 & 2: Wilmot Rod & Gun, 2607 Bleams Rd., October 1, 7:00pm
Wilmot Ward 3 & 4: New Hamburg Community Centre, 251 Jacobs St., September 28, 7:00pm
Wilmot Mayor Candidate Debate: New Hamburg Community Centre, 251 Jacobs St., October 7, 7:00pm
Live Stream available.
Contact nvecoboosters@gmail.com

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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

PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

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

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CANDIDATES NIGHT

2026 Municipal Election East Zorra- Tavistock

Wednesday, October 14, 2026
7:30 pm

Tavistock Men's Club Hall
78 Woodstock St N, Tavistock, ON

Quiz Time Answers

1. Opal
2. Richard Pryor
3. Fernando Mendoza
4. Peace Tower
5. 1974
6. Tuberculosis
7. Mr. Coffee
8. Green
9. Groaler or a pizzly bear
10. BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan

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6	3	2	4	8	5	1	7	9
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