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(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Members of Grace United Church's Middle Aged Pews unloaded all 110 trees in minutes at the Kaufman property. From left: Mike Kaufman, Beth Kaufman, Marcia Bender, Bill Green, Wanda Brown, Eugene Bender, Wayne Shewfelt, Carol Shewfelt, Gary Zehr, Elaine Green, Tory Zehr and Bill Brown. Full story on page 4.

Former EZT building off the market for now

Studies to be completed to assess condition of structure and land as history unveils multiple uses

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) Township's first attempt to sell its former office was unsuccessful, prompting the municipality to pay for a pair of studies at 90 Loveys

St. in Hickson.

EZT has hired separate consultants to complete a record of site condition (RSC) and a designated substance survey (DSS).

"We got our three quotes and the project is being split between two consultants," said CAO Karen DePrest at last

Wednesday's regular council meeting. The inspections are expected to cost between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

"Those two projects will begin soon and are expected to be completed by early spring, I would suggest."

Continued on page 2

WRCF report says Wilmot Township growing at slower rate than rest of region

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Gazette Reporter

The Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) presented its Vital Signs report to Wilmot council at the Nov. 24 meeting, showing the township is growing at a much-slower rate than the rest of the Region of Waterloo.

The focus was on social infrastructure, highlighting that Waterloo Region has been the fastest-growing region in the country over the past decade (33 per cent) and has one of the youngest demographics, with an average age five years below the national average.

Wilmot Township, however, grew at just 11 per cent. The report found that frequent use of social infrastructure, such as gyms, parks and community centres, correlates with better mental health, higher life satisfaction and stronger community bonds throughout communities in the region.

Presenter Eric Avner, WRCF president and CEO, said Wilmot is older and has been aging more rapidly than the rest of Canada, while the region overall is becoming more diverse.

"Interestingly enough, while the region has grown quickly over the last decade – 33 per cent – Wilmot has actually grown smaller compared to the region," Avner said.

Avner also noted that along with the rising

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Environmental, hazard checks underway after township office sale falls through

Continued from page 1

There were no bids received to purchase the property at the time of closing. Several individuals and businesses asked for the sale documents, but no actual offers on the property were received.

Council passed a resolution at last week's regular meeting to complete the studies.

"This will provide additional information about the property for future sale opportunities. Based on our preliminary work getting quotes for that RSC work, the process can take between six to eight months to complete, so we will now be including 90 Loveys St. as an item of unfinished business on future agendas so that staff, council and the public will receive updates on the process as they are available," said DePrest.

"The RSC will help potential buyers in that it may remove some of the unknowns they were facing in considering the property. Any alternate use of the property will require an RSC, which will dictate what types of use would or would not be allowed, including a daycare, among others," said Mayor Phil Schaefer.

An RSC is a legal document that summarizes the environmental condition of a property, something required under provincial law when certain types of land-use changes occur. It provides protection and adds transparency.

A DSS is an assessment required before construction, demolition, or renovation work begins on a building. Its purpose is to identify whether any of Ontario's 11 designated substances, such as asbestos, lead, silica, mercury or benzene are present in the workplace.

These substances are regulated under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act because they can pose significant health risks. Owners, in this case EZT, must determine and disclose the presence of designated substances to contractors so they can plan the work safely and take appropriate precautions.

It is normally required when a building



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The view of W.S. Rowe's store, 86 Loveys Street, Hickson in the early 1900s.

is being renovated, demolished, or repurposed, a contractor will be disturbing building materials that may contain hazardous substances, or when a municipality sells or transfers a building and needs to provide environmental due diligence. It will include a visual inspection of the site, laboratory testing of suspect materials and a report outlining remediation tools, if necessary.

"The RSC will determine if there are contaminants on the site and if contaminants do not exceed the maximums, that a more sensitive use, residential or daycare, for example, could be considered. The DSS would identify any hazardous materials within the building," said Schaefer.

The Gazette asked Schaefer why studies weren't done prior to the tender process. He said nothing was done out of the ordinary.

"It is not uncommon to offer properties like this for sale in an as-is condition, which is what we initially did. Obtaining the studies will provide a clearer picture of the property and could potentially increase the pool of interested parties, as well as favourably affect the value."

He added not having more information about the condition of the site could have been a barrier, but the township is ready

to deal with whatever comes out of the studies.

"There are probably a multitude of reasons why any interested bidders did not follow through with an offer. The lack of an RSC and/or DSS may have been among them. Once the studies are completed, council will meet to discuss a marketing plan, using those results as a guide."

The former township building was constructed in 1975. The Gazette contacted the Oxford County Archives to explore what was previously on or close to the location in Hickson.

According to the Hickson Women's Institute Tweedsmuir, 86 Loveys St. was originally a general store, operated by James Vance, before being bought by Wilfred Rowe. Apparently, after 1911, a

small barn or shed was added and used as an icehouse that burnt down in 1912.

"Eventually rebuilt, the business was sold in 1917 to Andrew Calder and operated along with A. Clarence Parker," said archivist Liz Dommasch.

"They had a small, shed-like building at the immediate south corner of the building where kerosene, oil, etc., were kept. I've attached three early photographs of the building, which show the lot next door where 90 Loveys St. would be situated, and it appears that a small shed-like building is visible."

Ninety-two Loveys Street is believed to have been built by the Hickson Cheese and Butter Company, formerly known as the Strathallan Cheese and Butter Company. The building also served as the milk plant manager's residence, with William Bowthwell recorded as living there as early as 1895.

"The company was taken over by Canada Milk Products Limited in 1916, which specialized in powdered milk, a product in high demand during WWI. In 1925, Borden bought the company and continued to make powdered milk until 1928, when it became a receiving plant. Milk was delivered to the factory and then trucked to Tillsonburg or Belmont for manufacturing. The factories were on the east side of the home," added Dommasch.

The Tweedsmuir mentions the manager was expected to board single employees, so it's possible the smaller building would have housed people or was used for storage purposes.



Loveys Street, Hickson, in the early 1900s.



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Vital Signs report urges Wilmot to boost cultural engagement

Continued from page 1

age across Wilmot Township, diversity is also lagging.

“While the region itself has been getting younger, the township hasn’t. It’s a little bit of an outlier in that respect – it has been aging more rapidly than the rest of Canada. Similarly, the rest of the region is getting more diverse and this is not quite the trend in the township. The racialized population in the rest of the region has gone up dramatically. By comparison, the numbers in the township are lower than that, and people moving in from outside of Canada are lower than the region as a whole as well.”

The report also looked at arts and culture and library usage throughout the region, again noting that Wilmot Township is not rebounding post-pandemic as strongly as other areas.

“Libraries are one of the few areas where we could actually get consistent data across the region,” Avner said. “At this point in time, the township libraries were actually at a lower use rate. They weren’t coming back as quickly as the libraries in the other parts of the region.”

Despite the concerns, Avner noted one positive: volunteerism.

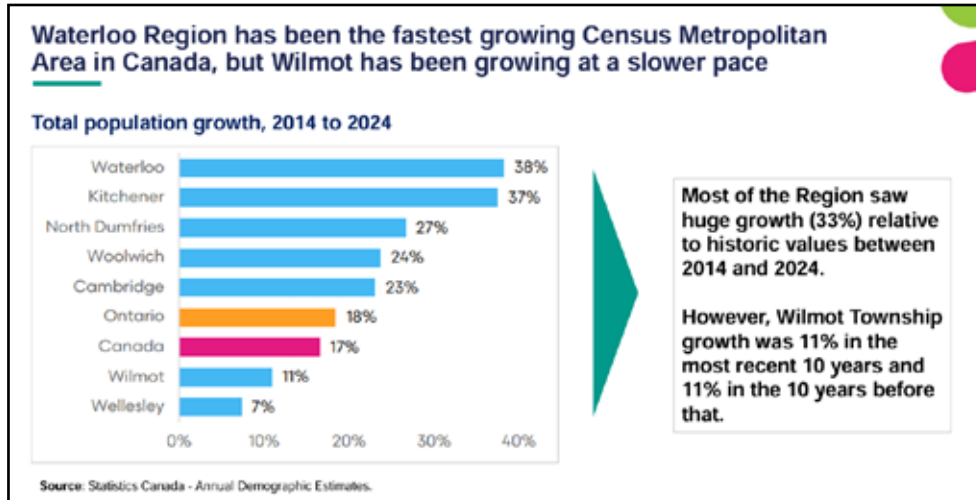
“For the township, some good news is

that the percentage of volunteers is actually a bit higher than the region as a whole,” he said.

Coun. Kris Wilkinson said he is interested to learn more about the data, but he is hesitant to say it’s all bad news, noting that Wilmot scored higher in life satisfaction and sense of belonging – something he believes should be celebrated.

“I don’t think it’s an accident that we score so well on satisfaction and belonging,” Wilkinson said. “I think we’re a very tight-knit community and we’re pretty deliberate about how we grow. It’s interesting to me that we are older on average than everybody else, and that might even dictate why our volunteer rate is a little bit higher. ... I fear that if our numbers eventually flip and we start to get younger, will our volunteer numbers go down, and does that potentially affect happiness? I don’t know, but there’s certainly some interesting information you can take away from this.”

Avner’s final recommendation was for Wilmot council to explore ways to engage younger residents and more diverse populations in arts and cultural activities to attract a younger, more diverse population in the years to come.



(SCREENSHOT TAKEN FROM WRCF PRESENTATION)

A recent report from WRCF was presented to Wilmot council on Nov. 24 noting that Wilmot is not growing as fast as others in the region.

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Tavistock's fresh-cut Christmas trees arrive for the season

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Real Christmas tree lovers can rejoice – Tavistock's annual shipment of fresh, fragrant Balsam Fir trees has arrived once again.

The trees, sold as a fundraiser for Grace United Church's Middle Aged Pews (MAP) group, are available for \$65 each, cash only, with payment deposited into the

cash box beside the driveway.

A total of 110 trees were delivered Tuesday morning to their usual sales location at the home of Beth and Mike Kaufman on William Street North. The MAP group, known for their enthusiasm and efficiency, had the entire load off the truck in under 20 minutes. Members say this year's batch may be "the best trees yet."

The trees – now commonly referred to

as Canaan Fir – were freshly cut from Fox Hollow Farm south of Delhi. The grower, Paul Kapai, maintains more than 500 acres of Christmas trees on a rotational schedule and sells roughly 3,000 trees annually. Delivery driver Dave Marcoux said demand is strong each year across southern and central Ontario, with none of their trees crossing the border into the U.S.

Marcoux noted the operation is well into its busiest season, having started deliveries

to nurseries and greenhouses three weeks ago. With multiple trucks running daily until Christmas, he called the MAP group's quick work "a huge help," adding that the company is in full swing during the short holiday window when, as he put it, "you have to make hay when the sun shines."

The MAP group extends thanks to all who support the annual sale and wishes the community a "faithful and Merry Christmas."



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Once unloaded, the netting is removed from each fresh Balsam Fir before the trees are offered for sale at \$65 each.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Editor

Galen Simmons • galen@granthaven.com

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Erin Parsons • thewtgazette@gmail.com

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Billing Administrator

Cindy Boakes • boakescindy1576@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant

Wendy Lamond • wendylamond74@gmail.com

Contributors

Lee Griffi, Gary West, Paul Knowles,
Mercedes Kay Gold, Julia Paul, Amanda Modaragamage

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2
thewtgazette@gmail.com | 519.655.2341 | granthaven.com



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Wilmot Lions/Lioness Club prepares for 42nd annual Tree of Light celebration

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The holiday season in Wilmot always seems to begin the same way – with music in the air, families gathering downtown and a tree lighting that has become one of the community's longest-running and most heart-warming traditions.

That moment returns Friday, Dec. 5, when the Wilmot Lions and Lioness clubs host their 42nd annual Tree of Light ceremony beside the Centennial Fountain in New Hamburg. The celebration begins at 6:30 p.m. and everyone is invited. As always, volunteers will be handing out complimentary hot dogs and apple cider, and the evening will feature singalongs, performances and the crowd-favourite lighting of the tree. A \$5 donation lights a bulb, with all proceeds supporting Wilmot families, charities and community groups.

For the Lions and Lioness clubs, this event is far more than a festive gathering – it is part of the township's identity. Organizer Paul Mackie said the ceremony has become “the start of the Christmas season in our community,” something residents have counted on for more than four decades.

“Once the tree lights up, after

42 years, it sets the tone for the season and adds some colour and cheer to the downtown core of New Hamburg,” he said.

The Tree of Light has evolved over the years. From 1983 onward, six natural pine trees served as the centrepiece of the celebration, but keeping live trees healthy became more difficult. In 2022, the clubs introduced a new 18-foot, flagpole-style tree adorned with more than 30 strands of multi-coloured lights. The structure was designed and built locally by Cress Ridge Machine and Tool, and Mackie said the company continues to play a key role each year in setting up the landmark display.

The heart of the ceremony, however, lies in what it gives back. Through corporate sponsorships and individual donations, the event has raised more than \$375,000 over 41 years for organizations such as the Wilmot Family Resource Centre, Interfaith Counselling Centre, Camino Wellbeing and Mental Health, HopeSpring, the New Hamburg Firebirds, local soccer and skating programs, and the New Hamburg Concert Band. Funds have also supported community projects including the Wilmot Recreation Complex, the splash pad and the LYNC – Love Your Neighbour – initiative.

The night will again feature a beloved tradition: a recitation of “’Twas the Night Before Christmas.” For years, the poem was delivered from memory by Robert Edwards, whose gentle voice became familiar to generations of families. Edwards passed away earlier this year. To honour him, Mackie said a new volunteer – “another very proud, gentle man” – has been practicing for months so the tradition can continue.

Children will have their chance to get involved, too. The Snow Angel colouring contest returns with pages available through local schools, the New Hamburg and Baden libraries, and both post offices. Participants are asked to bring their coloured pages to the ceremony and drop them into a wrapped box near the stage. Five names will be drawn with prizes awarded on the spot.

Music will be a major part of the evening. The New Hamburg Concert Band will return with a selection of seasonal favourites and, joining them for the first time, will be Mixology Acappella, a group of up to 15 singers from Kitchener, Waterloo and Wilmot.

“They’ll be bringing an exciting and entertaining blend of Christmas songs and carols,” Mackie said.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF WILMOT LIONS/LIONESS CLUB)

A beloved annual holiday tradition, Wilmot's Tree of Light celebration, returns to downtown New Hamburg on Dec. 5.

Donation jars will be available for anyone wishing to contribute and the clubs are hoping for what Mackie described as “a perfect

evening – not too cold, not windy and a light snowfall” to welcome the 2025 Christmas season in true Wilmot fashion.

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Perth County council approves phased-in pay raise for warden, deputy warden and councillors

Phased-in approach to begin with new slate of councillors in 2027

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As of 2027, after next year's municipal elections in all four of the county's lower-tier municipalities usher in new councils, members of Perth County council will begin seeing an increase to their base pay.

Based on a market review of pay for the wardens/mayors, deputy wardens/deputy mayors and councillors of 11 comparator municipalities – Lambton, Lennox and Addington, Dufferin, Grey, Bruce, Middlesex and Peterborough counties, as well as all four of Perth County's lower-tier municipalities – Marianne Love of ML Consulting recommended the county increase the base pay for warden, deputy warden and councillors to the 45th percentile of its comparators – the same percentile target used by the county to adjust pay for non-union management staff.

"The 45th percentile is ... the dollar amount where 55 per cent of the (comparator pay) values are above and 45 per cent are below," Love said. "So, this is not the highest, this is not the lowest, it's not the middle; it's below the middle of that group. ... The base-pay rates for the

council elected officials in the County of Perth are low, and it's something for council to consider as you move into the next year of council."

In 2025, the warden is paid a base salary of \$31,614 and councillors are paid \$14,490 with no distinction for the position of deputy warden. Following her remuneration review, Love recommended increasing the warden's base pay to \$39,606 plus inflation and cost of living adjustments (a 25 per-cent increase); increasing the deputy warden's pay to \$25,114 plus inflation and cost of living (a 73 per-cent increase); and increasing councillor pay to \$22,771 plus inflation and cost of living (a 57 per-cent increase).

While councillors saw the need to increase council pay, each spoke in favour of reducing the impact of a council pay increase on the taxpayer, opting for a phased-in approach from 2027-2029.

"It probably does need to be adjusted and, if you're going to adjust it, I think you have to phase it in over a period of time; I don't think it's something you can do in one or two years," said Coun. Walter McKenzie, who represents West Perth on county council. "I think you have to phase

it in even over a whole term of council. There's no question, as it's been said, (Perth County has) the lowest (pay) of all the (comparator) counties, so that tells you something."

"I think to continue to get quality representatives on council, you've got to (pay them) properly."

Ultimately, council voted in favour of the pay increase beginning with 50 per cent of the total increase in 2027 to bring council pay in Perth County closer in line with other counties, and then 25 per cent of the increase in 2028 and the final 25 per cent in 2029. Council opted to phase the pay increase over three years instead of the four-year term of lower-tier councils so the increase will be fully implemented before the next review of council pay set for 2030.

Though Love did not recommend any increases to council benefits, allowances and meeting or event per diems, councillors had a few suggestions of their own.

"The professional development (allowance) was set maybe 10 years ago next year, in 2016, and obviously, the hotel rates, the registration rates have increased," said Coun. Jerry Smith, who

represents Perth East on county council. "That would be the spot where I think an increase would be needed."

"I think if we increase anything, I would like to see the per diem increase if we go to an event because for all of us, especially if you work for another person, if you give up that pay and if you have a family, some of the councillors can't afford to do that," added Coun. Rhonda Ehgoetz, also a representative of Perth East. "If they only get, say, \$130 from us or \$240, whatever it is, they're actually leaving their full-time job. They're making, I'm sure, more at that job in that same time period. I'm wondering if we should just be upping that."

Currently, the warden is provided a maximum of \$6,000 per year and councillors are given a maximum of \$4,000 per year toward professional-development costs. All members of council are offered per diems for conferences, workshops and other training events at \$210.18 for a meeting that lasts over four hours and \$138.84 for meetings under four hours.

Council voted to have staff review the professional development and per diem rates with Love's assistance to determine potential increases to both.

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Woman scolds regional councillors over land acquisition

Region still hasn't purchased every acre of Wilmot land needed

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Updates have been scarce on the Region of Waterloo's plan to acquire 770 acres for a future mega-industrial project, leading one opponent to accuse members of maintaining a troubling lack of transparency.

"Good evening, chair Redman and councillors. I am here for my fourth time because you continue to ignore our farmers," said Amy-Susanna Compton. "I'm here again because the 770 acres of farmland in Wilmot should remain farmland."

Compton delegated to council at last week's regular meeting, her fourth time doing so, pleading for more information to be released. Now a Waterloo resident, she grew up on the cabbage farm across the road from the land assembly and worked there until she was well into her 20s, and still helps out sometimes. The Gazette spoke with her following the meeting.

"I decided to delegate last week because it's been a little over six months since I last did. I know some people think the land assembly is a done deal, and I wanted to speak to that. I consider it important to remind council that we're still not okay with how this was handled or with the decisions they've made."

No council members asked Compton a question or commented, something not surprising to her.

"They never have in my four delegations. I wish they would and I look forward to when they will communicate with the farmers and community in a meaningful way."

She also pointed to statements made by



(SCREENSHOT PHOTO)

Pictured is a screenshot of Amy-Susanna Compton and her supporters as she addressed the councillors at the Region of Waterloo's regular meeting on Nov. 19. Compton said the region continues to show a lack of transparency over its plan to assemble 770 acres of farmland in Wilmot for a proposed mega-industrial site.

Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Mike Harris that the province was in no way involved in the land assembly decision.

"This council is not comfortable with me saying that we were lied to, so why don't you tell me what word I should use instead? Whatever way you frame it, our trust in this council is damaged."

The region claims it has purchased about 70 per cent of the 770 acres, a process that started in March of 2024. In July, the region confirmed a purchase of about 256 acres to be used for technical and environmental studies as part of due diligence to make the site shovel ready.

Compton said her fiery speech came from a place of frustration over a sense of limbo opponents of the situation find

themselves in.

"I took that tone because it's been almost two years and we honestly know very little more than when this first began. How is that acceptable? The entire community in Wilmot is in limbo waiting for answers, for a solid plan, for an apology and some respect, for anything."

Her emotional delegation came to a head when she challenged councillors to be transparent.

"Be courageous enough and find a way out of it. Show us your plan, the plan you should have proposed to the community before you began shoving people off their land. Let us see it!"

Compton said her first three delegations focused on why the land is important as

farmland within the broader regional context, while also highlighting council's history of innovation and sound decision-making. She added the region has traditionally balanced rural and urban interests, making this land assembly a sharp departure from that legacy.

"They know there are better options. My tone changed this time because I get to see in real time how this affects the farmers in Wilmot, and it's time council stopped toying with those farmers' futures. I also think the members of council need to think hard about how they want to enter the next election, and what they bring to the next election."

Ultimately, Compton hopes council will decide, as a group, to break the non-disclosure agreement (NDA) that currently binds them.

"I've been told that if a single person breaks it, they will probably get in trouble, but if the entire council broke the NDA together, I don't think the province could do a whole lot. I imagine if that unity went alongside a township statement of being an unwilling host, this thing could be over. I hold out hope that wise people could make the right decision."

Compton added she realizes the land acquisition is a complicated situation, but she said everyone involved can work with "complicated" without disrespecting our farmers and neglecting rural communities.

"I believe that strong leaders will push back against outside pressure to do what is right by our community. And if our current council isn't strong enough to do that, I look forward to (next October's) election when we'll find leaders strong enough."

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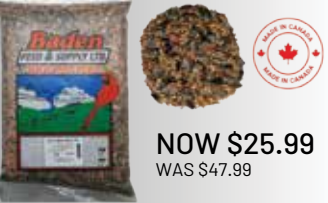
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Council delays \$3-million Petersburg water upgrade to 2026 to allow for public input

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Gazette Reporter

At the Nov. 24 council meeting, the proposed upgrade to the Petersburg water system – estimated at more than \$3 million – was discussed, but the decision was deferred to January 2026 to allow time for public input.

The proposal includes road upgrades as part of the watermain project to improve storm conveyance and extend road life.

Council was asked to approve the following budget allocations:

- \$1,136,530 from the Annual Roads Resurfacing Program over two years
- \$1,447,310 from the tax levy for storm sewer, curbs, gutters and sidewalks over two years
- \$2,463,260 through a Local Improvement Act levy on affected properties

Coun. Kris Wilkinson raised concerns about expanding the service area and its impact on residents.

“Out of fairness to the residents who want to weigh in and want to be a part of this, given that it directly affects them in a massive way, we’re looking to move a motion to defer this decision and refer it to the committee of the whole on Jan. 5,” Wilkinson said.

“If we could move that to Jan. 5 in order to give the residential neighbourhood an opportunity to weigh in, have some conversations with their councillor and then potentially also put together a list of questions that we can refer over to the various departments for answers, that would be much appreciated,” he continued.

Wilmot staff are currently assessing and completing the design of the Petersburg Watermain Replacement Project, as required under a provincial order directing the municipality to assume responsibility for the system.

Staff have investigated opportunities to expand the scope of the reconstruction to include the urbanization of Redford Drive, Alice Crescent and Deerfield Avenue to address pavement degradation and provide overall efficiencies that could reduce the financial impact on local residents.

Staff also recommended that building and plumbing permit fees be covered by the township throughout the project to encourage the replacement of existing service connections that may be poorly located or made of substandard material.

Wilkinson’s recommendation to defer the decision to Jan. 5 was seconded by Coun. Stewart Cressman and passed unanimously.



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New Hamburg cultural hub invites Canadians to connect With Ukrainian newcomers

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Gazette Reporter

Grassroots Response to the Ukrainian Crisis is hosting cultural gatherings at its Ukrainian Cultural Hub in New Hamburg.

These events are meant for Canadians who want to learn more about the Ukrainian lifestyle and share their own experiences as Canadians. Olga Strasburger, marketing and donor relations coordinator, says hundreds of Ukrainian newcomers have chosen the Waterloo region as their new home, and for them, building friendships in their community is as important as finding housing or work.

"We are trying to connect with the New Hamburg community because for Ukrainians, this is just as important as finding housing in Canada," said Strasburger. "We need these community connections. We want to learn how to be involved in our Canadian community and we can do this by sharing our stories and our culture. Then, Canadians can share their stories and their culture with us. We like to see it as a cultural exchange."

Grassroots Response to the Ukrainian Crisis aims to foster cultural exchange between Ukrainians and Canadians through shared meals, art workshops and Ukrainian history sessions. The aim is to



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Students from a local Woolwich neighbourhood participate in Taste of Ukraine as they work together to make a traditional Ukrainian meal at a recent event.

help connect Canadians and Ukrainian newcomers through sharing food, stories and traditions.

The hub has been operating for three

months, offering events like Taste of Ukraine, where traditional dishes are shared, and art workshops led by local Ukrainian artists.

"Food is one of the most powerful ways to understand another culture," said Strasburger. "At the Taste of Ukraine event, we cook our traditional beetroot soup together. We also make pierogi with potato and mushroom filling, which is another one of our main meals from Ukraine. We also make Napoleon, which is like a cake filled with lots of layers of cream and pastry."

Individuals are welcome to attend any of the events listed on the website. Businesses, churches, or community groups are also welcome to sign up for the events at the New Hamburg Guest House.

"Newcomers want to learn about you – Canadian culture, local traditions and community life. At the same time, you'll hear about their journeys – what it means to restart work, family life and community in Canada after leaving everything behind," said Strasburger.

These conversations create friendships that make Canada feel like home for newcomers, while giving Canadians a deeper understanding of resilience, hope and the challenges of settling.

Participation in any of the events is free, however donations are welcome. Learn more and register for upcoming sessions at wrgrassrootsresponse.ca.

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Wellesley community mourns loss of nine-year-old Christopher Franklin

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Wellesley area is grieving the heartbreaking loss of nine-year-old Christopher Thomas Franklin, who died in a car accident on Nov. 10 in West Virginia while returning home from a family vacation.

Christopher is the son of Chris and Carly Franklin, and the proud big brother of Owen and Emma. His parents

described him as a vibrant, energetic boy who loved travelling with his family and was always eager for the next adventure.

He is deeply missed by grandparents Chris and Diane Franklin and Michelle Terry, along with great-grandparents Elaine McIlmoyle, Jimmy and Barb Terry, and Lloyd and Cindy Booth.

Christopher loved sports and was an active young athlete, playing basketball with the Blitz and baseball with

the Mahoney Bears. His enthusiasm, kindness and warm smile left a lasting impression on teammates, coaches and friends.

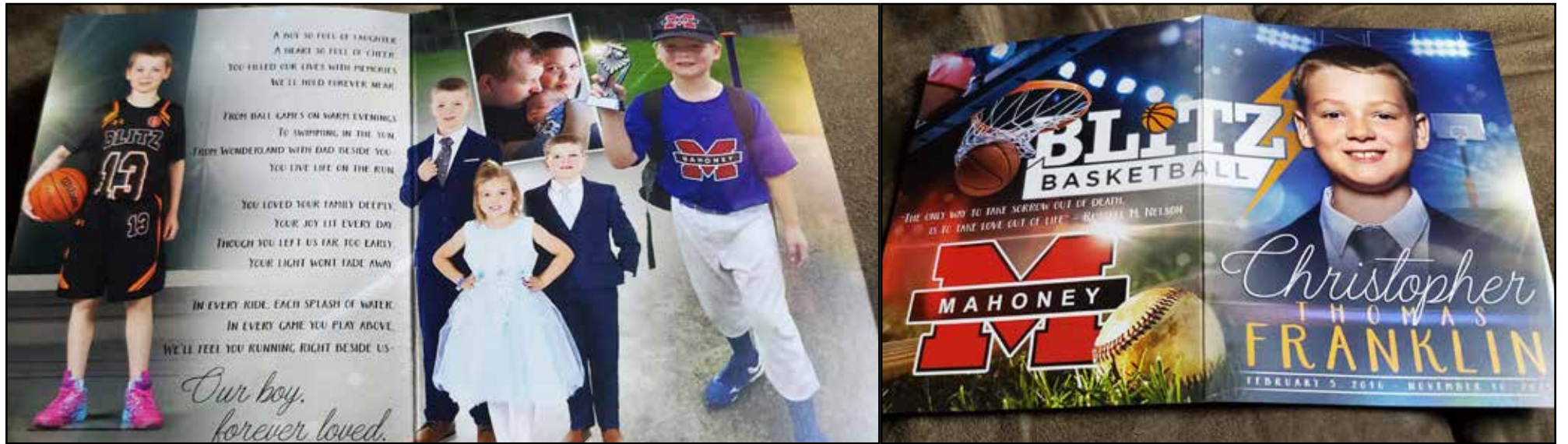
The Franklin family has extended their heartfelt gratitude to the community for its prayers, compassion and comforting words during an unimaginable time of loss.

Interment took place Nov. 22 at St. Mark's Cemetery on Nafziger Road in Wellesley.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Wellesley businesses and homes have tied blue ribbons on storefronts and porches to show support and sympathy for the Franklin family. This ribbon display was photographed outside Schmidtsville Restaurant in Wellesley.



Family, friends and the wider Wellesley community are mourning the loss of nine-year-old Christopher Franklin, who died in a car crash in West Virginia on Nov. 10.

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Oxford school board trustee opens up about being shut out

Cripps concerned about rural voices being lost

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

David Cripps wasn't allowed to talk to the media as a vice chair and trustee of the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB), but the Ingersoll resident said nothing is holding him back now.

The province assumed control of the TVDSB in April 2025, and on May 1, appointed supervisor Paul Boniferro to oversee all financial and operational decisions. According to the government, the intervention was prompted by longstanding concerns about financial mismanagement, including persistent deficits and several spending decisions it deemed unacceptable, leading the province to conclude direct oversight was necessary.

Even though Cripps and his fellow trustees aren't being paid and have no access to their email accounts or any other information, he is still doing what he can to help.

"Director of Education Bill Tucker will take my calls, so if someone approaches me, I am still able to relay information to him, but that's really the extent of my role. There's been no guidance other than the minister's musings, I'll call them."

The Ingersoll resident and small business owner acknowledges change is needed

within the school board system, but emphasized it must include local, trustworthy and accessible with people who can support education on the ground – especially in Oxford and other rural communities. Cripps admitted trustees are not always the best positioned to solve every education issue but said having a local voice is an important starting point.

"As a parent, it always brought me comfort and faith in the system, knowing there was someone in Ingersoll or Woodstock or East Zorra-Tavistock I could reach out to and have a conversation with to at least get some direction on how to navigate the system. In my opinion, we are at risk of losing that."

The Ontario government recently passed Bill 33, granting the minister of education significantly expanded powers to investigate school boards and intervene in their operations. Under the new legislation, the minister can launch probes into board governance, issue binding directives and, in certain circumstances, assume control over a board's decision-making authority. Supporters argue the changes will improve accountability and strengthen public confidence in the education system, while critics warn the bill undermines local democracy by weakening the role of elected

trustees and centralizing power within the provincial government.

The minister would be able to issue binding directives to boards in the "public interest." If boards fail to comply, the province could assume their powers, in effect, overriding democratically elected trustees as has occurred at the Thames Valley District School Board.

Education Minister Paul Calandra has said he will bring forward a plan by year's end to eliminate school board trustees "100 per cent." Cripps takes the minister at his word but is concerned about a lack of transparency and clarity from the province. He would also welcome a conversation with Ontario's top brass.

"I would appreciate the minister or the premier, the folks saying all trustees are horrible, to come and take a look at what (Oxford trustee) Leeanne (Hopkins) and I have done here. I think we were changing the game for the people in Oxford."

Every fall, when schools are back in session, there are transportation issues that arise, some of which have tremendous effects on students and families. Cripps remembered one instance in the Norwich area where he was able to lend a hand.

"The mayor had called me up and said there was a student with a disability who

had to walk three kilometres to catch her bus and she's on a back road. I was able to work with the superintendent and we were instantly able to recognize there was a data problem with the bus company."

Cripps, a father of four, decided to run for office after having positive experiences with the education system when his children were in school.

"I have four kids and during my time there were all kinds of things that cropped up and I felt super supported by principals and board staff, but there were also occasions when it was a bit of a challenge."

He added the trustees he reached out to were always open and accessible.

"I wanted to continue that openness and lots of folks in Oxford feel we sort of play second fiddle since everything is in London. I made it part of my mandate to open up that accessibility."

Cripps believed he and Hopkins were making progress and the pair addressed each municipal council in the county in recent months.

"A number of the mayors reached out directly to us with issues they had directly experienced, and we were able to help those folks. I think we were going down the right path."



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Three Wilmot property owners seeking alternate fencing for TCMH project

Project will revitalize the Nith River flats

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

“Fences make bad neighbours.”

That was the title of a news release sent by Lisa Hagen, a New Hamburg resident concerned about an outdoor development by Tri-County Mennonite Homes (TCMH). It includes a yet-to-be-erected fence on the non-profit’s property.

Some neighbours have been asking for a meeting with the organization for more than a month to discuss their concerns about a fence around the floodplain.

TCMH is working with Wilmot Township on an initiative to revitalize stormwater management and enhance access to the river flats with an accessible trail system. The trails will connect to barrier-free pathways at Nithview Community and preserve the flats’ natural grasslands while protecting wildlife habitats.

Hagen has written several emails to the board and the CEO, suggesting options ranging from cedar rail fencing to hedges that would reduce the environmental footprint and be paid for by the landowners themselves on the first three properties.

TCMH has not directly responded to the



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The photo looks down the approximate proposed fence line toward Peterson’s Hill (the mown area). Three homeowners are hoping for an environmentally friendly and natural alternative to fencing their property on one side

suggestions.

“We are legally at their mercy regarding the fence, but we just want to help out financially so we can get one that fits in with the natural look of the floodplain and has the least impact on wildlife and the environment,” Hagen stated. “There’s a big difference between a metal chain-link fence and a cedar rail one, and to date, we don’t know what we’re getting.”

Hagen applauds the future pathways in the natural area, but is cognizant of the regular flooding of the field. She said the

proposed cedar rail fence would be above the usual flood line for the first three houses and would be maintained by the homeowners.

“Further information is needed for plans beyond those lots,” added Hagen’s release.

“The fence will be erected, but it could benefit both Nithview Home residents and the wider community functionally, aesthetically and financially if they allowed the neighbours to defray the cost in exchange for a natural fence,” Hagen explained.

Nithview Community sent a registered

letter to adjacent homeowners on Nov. 25, inviting them to participate in a Zoom meeting on Dec. 2.

The Gazette reached out to TCMH and was provided with a written response.

“TCMH and the board of directors met on Nov. 18 to discuss fencing along TCMH’s property line on the Nith River flats,” read the response. “The board of directors felt it would be prudent to meet with affected landowners to provide information about the upcoming fencing project and other developments on TCMH’s land. An invite letter was sent to homeowners with property adjacent to TCMH’s land and who will be immediately impacted by the first phase of fencing.”

The response added that, with impending developments in stormwater management in the area, clearly defining access points and creating accessible pathways are crucial for everyone’s safety.

“Once stormwater management developments and the pathway project are complete, the fence will not only provide clear boundaries for use, but it will also prevent accidental access by trail users to all neighbouring private properties bordering TCMH’s land,” continued the response.

Christmas spirit shines bright in Sebastopol’s north end

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Families in the south end of Sebastopol, just outside Tavistock, are getting ready for the real Santa Claus – and for Rence and Kasey Dietrich, the excitement has already begun.

Rence, who is three, and his 11-month-old brother Kasey were thrilled when their uncles, Bob and Glen Dietrich, pulled a life-sized Santa out of storage for the first time in 30 years. Their mom, Jordanna, said the boys could hardly contain themselves when the familiar figure appeared beside their home.

“Their late grandpa, Larry Dietrich, helped make this life-sized Santa,” Jordanna Dietrich said, “and he would have been so proud to see his grandsons enjoying it.”

Their Nanna, Linda Dietrich, was just as delighted to see the old Santa back on display.

The boys’ excitement comes as Tavistock prepares for this Saturday’s Men’s Club Santa Claus Parade, which begins at 1 p.m. Rence and Kasey waved enthusiastically as I left – proof that Christmas still brings that warm feeling to young families and gives area children something special to look forward to.

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(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Rence Dietrich smiles alongside his mom, Jordanna Dietrich, and younger brother, Kasey Dietrich. Dad Scott Dietrich was busy at either the corn harvest or in the family’s laying-hen barn, where Grade A eggs are produced — a favourite place for the boys to visit when they get the chance to help gather eggs with their mom.

Ahead of budget deliberations, Wellesley council approves 2026 fees and charges bylaw

Council may revisit community centre rental rates to encourage more rentals

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

In preparation for the start of 2026 budget deliberations on Nov. 27, Wellesley council set the township's schedule of fees and charges for 2026, which includes a number of cost reductions to bring rates more in line with those charged by other municipalities and encourage use of township facilities.

At its Nov. 25 meeting, Wellesley council reviewed township staff's proposed changes to fees and charges for next year. Among those changes is a reduction to daily rental rates for all community centres in the township except the Bill Gies Recreation Centre from \$513 this year to \$500 next year, as well as a reduction to the daily rental rate for the Bill Gies Recreation Centre community centre or gym from \$667 to \$550.

"That rate (for the Bill Gies Recreation Centre) is quite a bit higher than our

other community centre rates; that's why that one was recommended to be brought down, to be a little more comparable to some of our other facilities and to try and rent it out a little more," Wellesley director of recreation Danny Roth said.

"... Every year, we've been increasing (the rental rates for the other community centres) by the cost of living — one per cent, two per cent, whatever it's been — and we've just noticed that those rates are starting to get up there, a little higher than our comparators. Yes, it's not a big decrease down to the \$500, but it does keep them a little more in line."

Coun. Claude Hergott questioned whether a \$13-per-day reduction to the rental rates of community centres across the township would do anything to encourage rentals, and instead suggested council consider reducing rates by as much as \$50 per day for 2026.

Speaking to his suggestion, Coun. Derek Brick asked township staff to bring back

a report on facility usage and proposed rates so council would have more context before deciding to reduce the community centre rental rate further.

Other changes approved as part of next year's fees and charges bylaw include:

- A new fee of \$250/hr to have a fire crew on standby for large events;
- A new fee for fire extinguisher re-fills and training at \$40 per unit;
- New fees of \$575 for a large fire lock box and \$400 for a medium fire lock box at local businesses, churches, organizations etc. that would contain onsite fire plans and keys the fire department would have access to in the event of a fire;
- A new fee of \$60 per 1,000 gallons for fire reservoir refilling;
- No change to the prime ice rental rate, but a decrease to the minor sports discount from 35 per cent to 33 per cent;
- A decrease to the rental rate for

arena floors (no ice) from \$724 to \$700;

- An increase to the daily rental rate for the Linwood Community Centre small hall (no kitchen) from \$196 to \$201;
- A change in the range for drop-in program fees from \$0-20 to \$2-20;
- A decrease in daily courtyard rental rates from \$120 with no hall rental to \$100, and \$75 with a hall rental to \$50;
- An increase to daily picnic shelter rental rates from \$64 to \$75, and the addition of a half-day rental costing \$50;
- Dropping the lost-key charge from \$50 to \$25; and
- Increases to the advertising rates for the St. Clements Arena wall boards from \$225 to \$300, and from \$375 to \$500 for advertising on the wall boards at the Bill Gies Recreation Centre.

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Provincial police in Oxford begin body camera rollout

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Oxford OPP detachment is now equipped with body-worn cameras (BWC).

In a news release, the OPP said it supports the implementation and use of any tools or technologies that enable improved evidence collection, demonstrate greater accountability and transparency, and enhance public and officer safety in Oxford County and beyond.

"After a successful rollout of in-car cameras (ICC), which incorporated an automated licence plate recognition (ALPR) system, the Oxford OPP, along with other detachments within the West Region, are rolling out BWCs for each officer," the news releases says.

BWCs are positioned on the front of an officer's vest and are clearly visible to anyone the officer interacts with. When the camera is in standby mode, it shows a green ring with flashing lights; once recording begins, the lights switch to flashing red.

"The full deployment of the BWCs in Oxford is expected to be complete as soon as possible, though officers who have finished training will begin using them immediately," the release

continues.

Oxford OPP Const. Matt Foster said all officers have or will receive training.

"Training is currently underway, and once training is completed, they will be worn by all officers. When an officer attends training, they are required to wear the BWC immediately afterwards."

As part of a broader investment in technology for Ontario police services, the provincial government is funding the OPP's acquisition and implementation of BWCs and in-car camera systems.

"The total cost is approximately \$4 million, which will be covered through the OPP's annual operational budget," said Foster, who added adopting new technologies is an example of the provincial police's commitment to accountability, transparency and professionalism among its front-line members.

"ICC systems deliver added benefits from a public-safety and investigative perspective, particularly in light of the OPP's mandate for policing provincial highways. The Oxford OPP remains dedicated to ensuring public safety and providing proactive, innovative policing in partnership with our communities."



(PHOTO COURTESY OF OXFORD OPP)

Pictured is one of the new body-worn cameras being rolled out by the Oxford OPP.

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Thistle Theatre leaves audience in stitches with *The Perils of Persephone*

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A night out at a small-town theatre can offer some of the best entertainment around, especially when the script comes from celebrated playwright Dan Needles.

That was certainly the case on the weekend in Embro, when Thistle Theatre staged the uproarious comedy, *The Perils of Persephone*.

The production, set in a farmhouse kitchen “somewhere north of Toronto,” is classic Needles; sharp wit, rural charm and a cast of characters who feel as familiar as your neighbours. The Embro production also marks a milestone as Thistle Theatre celebrates 30 years as a “Theatre with Heart.”

In the play, trouble begins when barking dogs send the Currie family scrambling to the window to see who’s coming up the

lane. A delivery van slides off the driveway, prompting fears it may be hauling tanks of plutonium – a mix-up that spirals into comic chaos. After much panic and debate, the truth comes out; the van is simply delivering nitrogen and bull semen.

Local actors embraced their roles with perfect timing, earning steady laughter from the crowd. Several cast members have ties to the theatre’s early days, bringing added nostalgia to this anniversary

season.

Thistle Theatre first opened its doors with the same Needles production on Nov. 8, 1995, a gala evening attended by charter members and celebrated with ribbon cutting and a reception at the community centre followed by the challenge of driving home through the winter’s first blinding snowstorm.

Three decades later, the spirit of community theatre is as strong as ever.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Doug Turvey as Eldon Currie, Heather West as Marj Currie, Becca Potter as Wendy Currie and John Hazeleger as Orval Currie during a lively kitchen scene.



From left: D’Arcy Irvine as MPP Henry Burford, Shrirang Raval as Francis Hinkley, Heather West as Marj Currie and Doug Turvey as Eldon Currie share a hilarious moment on stage.



The cast in a group scene with Becky Issenman at far right as Skip Fuller.

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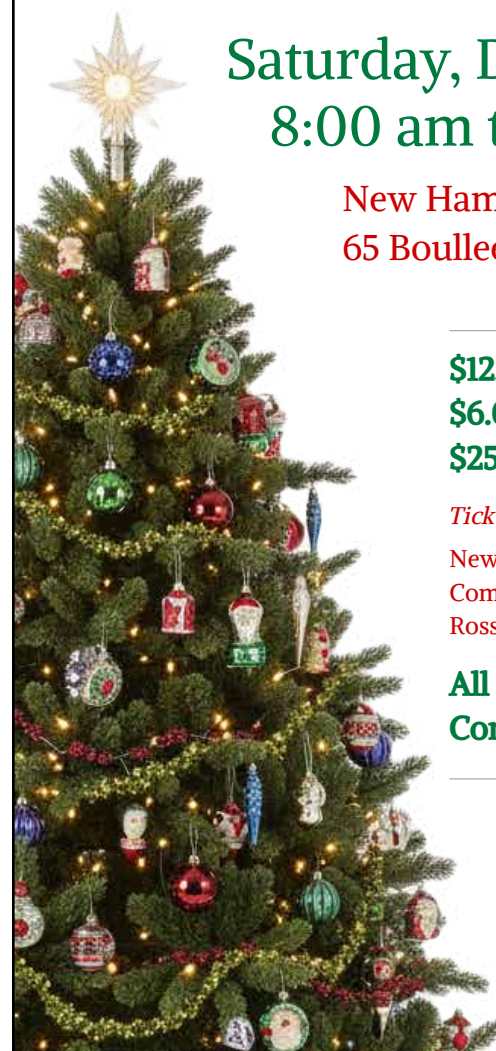
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A visit with former New Hamburg and Tavistock dairy farmers Don and Joanne Russel

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

There are many longtime farm families in the New Hamburg and Tavistock area who will remember Don and Joanne Russel, a couple whose determination and innovative thinking helped them build a dairy operation against the odds.

Their story starts close to home, but today, the Russels are well-known in Renfrew County, northwest of Ottawa, where they have spent more than two decades milking cows and developing what may be one of the most forward-thinking barn designs in modern dairying.

Their journey in agriculture began on Feb. 28, 1995, in a rented tie-stall barn near Punkey Doodles Corners. Don and Joanne Russel were young, ambitious and determined to enter the quota system at a time when many believed it was nearly impossible to get started. After submitting 26 cash-flow plans to six major lenders, it was Farm Credit Canada that finally agreed to loan them enough money to buy 20 kilograms of quota.

Don Russel laughs when he remembers how it happened.

"I found a loophole in their policy and showed it to our MP. Three days later, we had the money. FCC closed that loophole after that."

To scrape by in the early years, they bought dry cows – many three-quartered – calved them out, sold the calves, milked the cows for a lactation and then shipped them for



Cows rest comfortably in the pasture barn, designed to mimic the feel of being on pasture year-round.



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(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

The DoJo purebred Holstein herd of Don and Joanne Russel is housed in their innovative pasture barn near Cobden in Renfrew County.

beef. Their advisor visited weekly at the beginning, convinced they wouldn't last four months.

"Thirty years later, we're still milking cows," Don Russel said with a grin.

After outgrowing their first rented barn, they moved to Walter and Valerie Kropf's farm west of Tavistock. By 1998, they had saved enough for a down payment on a farm of their own – more than four hours north-east in Renfrew County where land prices were more

manageable. Alongside milking cows, Don Russel balanced dairy rations for Master Feeds and took up hoof trimming after travelling to Wisconsin for training. At the time, his hydraulic tilt table was the first of its kind in Eastern Ontario.

Those experiences sparked an idea; cows deserved better comfort than what he saw in typical free-stall barns. By 2000, he began researching an entirely different barn concept. After "many tries and lots of mistakes," the breakthrough came on Nov. 30, 2013, when he finalized the design for what he calls the Pasture Barn – a system he stresses is not a pack barn, but something entirely its own.

In 2006, their perseverance earned them recognition as Ontario's Outstanding Young Farmers, followed by the national award later that year. The encouragement they received pushed Don Russel to continue refining the pasture barn idea. In 2019, their new barn – with year-round comfort that mimics pasture conditions – became a reality. Since then, their Holstein herd has achieved top-tier milk quality, high per-cow value and exceptional longevity scores.

Today, their barn design holds patents in Canada, the U.S. and 54 European countries, and is drawing attention from farmers and animal-welfare advocates in Ireland and Wales.

Now in their late 50s, Don and Joanne Russel are preparing for the next chapter. Their beautifully renovated home, 300 acres and innovative barn are on the market. Their daughters have started careers of their own and Don Russel is eager to devote more time to promoting pasture barn designs around the world.

"A day without learning isn't very productive," he says.

More information is available at pasturebarndesigns.com.



Don and Joanne Russel with their Ontario and Canadian Outstanding Young Farmer awards, earned in 2006.



Don Russel's belt buckle from the national Outstanding Young Farmer competition, an honour he still proudly wears.



When he isn't working with cows, Don Russel enjoys fishing on the many lakes of Renfrew County.

Hickson's Alyssa Lupton nears chartered accountant designation

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Young people in East Zorra-Tavistock often grow up surrounded by the work ethic and responsibility that come with farm life – qualities that can shape impressive careers. One such example is Alyssa Lupton of Hickson, who is now just 10 months away from writing her final exam to earn her Chartered Professional Accountant designation.

Lupton, the daughter of Terry and Jody Lupton, grew up on the family farm just north of the Hickson stoplights. Her early education began at Hickson Central

Public School, followed by Huron Park Secondary School in Woodstock. She began university studies during the onset of COVID-19, completing coursework online through Athabasca University.

Her strong academic ability, particularly in mathematics, helped guide her toward accounting.

"She has always been excellent at math," her mother, Jody Lupton said. "It just came naturally to her."

Alyssa Lupton's determination led her to BDO Canada in Woodstock, where she was first hired as a junior accountant and recently promoted to senior accountant – an advancement that reflects both her skill

and dedication.

She credits her work ethic to her parents and grandparents, Barry and Deb Lupton, and Clarence and Donna Herlick of South Easthope. Her siblings – Emily, Hailey and Austin – have also shown the same commitment, with all three girls having worked at Quehl's Restaurant to help fund their education. Austin Lupton supports the family's broiler and crop operations, helping with corn, soybeans, coloured beans and wheat in both Oxford and Perth counties.

All four Lupton children grew up deeply connected to Grace United Church, where they have been active youth leaders.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Alyssa Lupton, who says she "loves her job," is now within a year of earning her Chartered Professional Accountant designation. Her mother, Jody Lupton, adds that Alyssa Lupton's natural talent for math helped guide her toward a career in accounting.

Kinna Sohna celebrates 25 years of craftsmanship and ethical fashion in Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Gazette Reporter

Kinna Sohna, the boutique space at 55 York St. in Stratford, is celebrating 25 years of traditional craftsmanship and ethical fashion with 15 per cent off most items from Dec. 4-7.

Kinna Sohna translates to "how beautiful" or "how handsome" in Punjabi – a fitting name for a shop built around handmade artistry. Owner Sartaj Kaur moved her boutique from Toronto's designer district to Stratford eight years ago. With the rising financial pressures of the city, she knew it was time for a shift and set her sights on finding the right home for her work. Stratford ended up being exactly that.

"I really was just following my heart," said Kaur. "I wanted to leave Toronto. I wanted to be in a small town. This location became available and some of my customers from here kept saying I should move to Stratford, and it worked out for me; the timing was just right."

In her 30s, after stepping away from the corporate world, Kaur found herself drawn to textiles. She began exploring the craft more deeply, learning everything she could about fabrics, production and the global textile landscape. Coming from a family with a strong business background, she knew entrepreneurship was where she was headed – but doing it ethically was non-negotiable.

"I wanted to do something creative," she said. "I would talk to anybody who was doing what they loved. I talked to them and asked, 'How did you get to do what you loved?' to learn from them. I started this business when I was 35, so I did a lot of soul searching. I went through the book, *Artist's Way*, about three times. A book that really impacted me was *Creating a Life Worth Living*. I spent a lot of time figuring out what gives me joy."

Today, her clothing line is produced through an ethical textile cooperative in India, where artisans earn fair wages, have democratic input and have access to essentials like health care and clean water. Kaur chooses her partner communities based on personal experience and meaningful relationships, travelling yearly to work and learn alongside the makers themselves.

"I feel like I've been successful all this time because I'm present while all of the work is being done," she said. "I'm (in India) on the floor, packing boxes and I get to be there while they're sewing. I buy the fabric and sometimes I'm the one going to the block printers and bringing fabric to them."

Kinna Sohna offers something rare: slow-fashion pieces created with intention. The clothing is vibrant, unique and thoughtfully designed – a mix of bold patterns,



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Kinna Sohna owner Sartaj Kaur stands inside her Stratford boutique, surrounded by the handcrafted, fair-trade garments and textiles she designs and sources from artisans across the world.

memorable colours and timeless silhouettes. Kaur says the shop is for anyone looking to elevate their style while still being mindful of what they're purchasing and where it comes from.

"My stuff is truly slow fashion – it's sustainable," said Kaur. "There's the person who washes the fabric, the person who prepares it for printing, then the block printer, then another person washing it again and someone else laying the fabric out in the fields. There are so many people involved – the ones I buy buttons and thread from, as well as the embroiderers themselves. It's almost like supporting a whole village."

Most pieces in the store are designed by Kaur and crafted from natural, handmade fibres. The collection includes clothing for both men and women, ranging from XS to 4XL, with each item created as a one-of-a-kind piece.

The shop also carries globally sourced carpets,

handcrafted jewellery and other artisan-made items. Everything in the store – every pattern, print, stitch and textile – comes with its own story.

Kaur is deeply involved in every step of the process and is on site to help shoppers find the right fit, colour and style. Her knowledge of the craft, paired with her personal approach, is part of why her customer base has stayed loyal over the past 25 years.

Being a woman in business hasn't always been easy, Kaur says. From selecting textiles abroad to unpacking new arrivals in the shop, the work is hands-on and often labour-intensive. But the reward is in seeing people wear and cherish pieces that are made to last.

In a culture dominated by disposable fashion, Kinna Sohna offers something different – clothing meant to be loved, cared for and passed down through generations.

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Hickson United congregation donates electric piano to Grace United Church

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

When members of the former Hickson United Church joined the congregation at Grace United Church in Tavistock, they wanted to express their appreciation

for the warm welcome they received. On Sunday, they did just that by presenting Grace United with a special gift – their church’s electric piano.

The instrument was brought to the service and officially donated for permanent use in the Grace United auditorium. In the

past, when a piano was needed for summer services, concerts or family gatherings, volunteers had to move one from an adjacent room. With this donation, the auditorium now has a dedicated instrument that will remain in place for years to come.

As the announcement was made during

the service, the Grace United congregation responded with enthusiastic applause, grateful for a gift that will support worship, community events and musical programming well into the future.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Members of the former Hickson United Church presented their congregation’s electric piano to Grace United Church on Sunday. From left: Kim McLaren, Kathy and Fred Chilvers, Nancy Weicker, Nathaniel Cook, Allison Cross, Ruth Ross, Ross Struthers and Anne King. In front is Marilyne Nystrom, music and choir director at Grace United Church.



The electric keyboard donated to Grace United Church will become a regularly used instrument for services and concerts. Music director Marilyne Nystrom says it “will be used extensively in years to come, bringing music to everyone’s ears who attends events at the church.”

OBITUARY

MCLEAN: Angus Turnbull “Gus”



Passed away peacefully on Thursday, November 20, 2025 at the Woodstock Hospital. Angus “Gus” McLean of Woodstock in his 98th year.

Beloved husband of Carol (Bricker) McLean whom he married August 31, 1956. Dear father of Janet McLean

of Ingersoll and Bonnie McLean of London. He is survived by many nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by his parents Miles & Nellie McLean, his brothers Miles & Joyce McLean, Alex McLean and Donald & Mildred McLean.

Angus was proud to be the Store Manager of UAP Ingersoll for 30 years.

Relatives and friends will be received in the Francis Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Friday, November 28, 2025 from 12 til 1:45pm. A Celebration of Angus’s life will follow at 2:00pm. Interment later in Grace United Church Cemetery, Tavistock.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Alzheimer’s Society would be appreciated by the family. Personal Condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca



by PeterS 2025

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

ANSWERS FOUND ON
THE CLASSIFIED PAGE

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz By Jake Grant

1. What is the street address of the White House?
2. What kind of dog is Scooby-Doo?
3. The practice of drawing electoral district boundaries to give one political party an advantage is called?
4. What is the main body of an aircraft called?
5. What is the largest country in Africa by area?
6. What does DNA stand for?
7. Who is Katy Perry currently dating?
8. What is Warren Buffett’s company called?
9. Who is Bluey the dog’s sister?
10. True or False. A group of geese is called a gaggle.

Answers found on the classified page

The Old Gazettes

By Sydney Grant

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

November 25 - December 2, 2020, Edition (5 years ago)

Emily Danen has been taking it one step at a time. Em's Bakery, her home bakery business, has been keeping her busy and she plans to further her education as a bakery and pastry chef when she attends George Brown College next May. Since launching her online business several months ago, Danen has been busy filling orders for friends, relatives and acquaintances who have heard about her new endeavour. Danen recently opened a stall Saturday mornings at the Stratford Farmers' Market for baked goods. She has also secured the use of a commercial oven at Terra Nova Spa and Café in Hickson.

The Tavistock Public School 2019-2020 Grade 8 graduating class held a bottle drive fundraiser to raise money for their year-end trip. They weren't able to go on the annual trip to Camp Celtic, west of Lion's Head, due to the COVID-19 pandemic closing school early. After purchasing sweatshirts for themselves as a keepsake of their school year, the class of 2019-2020 had approximately \$1,300 remaining. It was decided this past week by parents and student organizers to donate half of the funds to the school for walkie talkies and the other half to the Tavistock Assistance Program (TAP).

With Canadian snowbirds staying home this season, and limited activities through the winter, Golf North has launched winter golf at two local courses to fill the void. Rebel Creek in Petersburg and Foxwood Golf near Baden will be open year-round for golf and disc golf at the latter track. "It will be walking only and weather dependent," said Foxwood manager Ron Knight. "It will provide a needed, safe activity in COVID times."

November 24 - December 1, 2010, Edition (15 years ago)

The snow came just in time on Saturday morning, Nov. 27, to get everyone

in the spirit of Christmas. It also put the perfect seasonal topping on the annual Tavistock Men's Club Santa Claus Parade. At 1 p.m., the New Hamburg Concert Band led an assortment of colourful floats, pedestrians and animals from Woodstock Street North to the main corner along Hope Street West, as a brief stint down William Street to Woodstock again, then back up to the main corner. Hundreds of children gathered here, just east of the post office, in the warm sunshine to meet with Santa and collect goodie bags from members of the Tavistock Men's Club.

The Tavistock Junior Jets won the Midget C International Silverstick Tournament in Port Elgin on Sunday, Nov. 28, 2010. Sponsored by Hyde Construction, the Jets were undefeated for the weekend. The Jets came out flying and soared by Kincardine, TCDMHA Rebels and Georgian Shores to take first place in their pool, outshooting their competitors 8-1. Champions include Lisa Duivesteyn, Sydnie Hyde, Cassie Drinkwater, Chelsea Hyde, Desiree Brenneman, Alex Glencross, Jennifer Newcombe, Emily Shantz, Robyn Schieckoff, Robyn Lichti, Jillian Ross, Brittany McKay, Mikaela Malson, Leah Balfour, Lacy Jantzi and Rachel McKay.

November 29 - December 6, 1995, Edition (30 years ago)

The 1995 Tavistock Santa Claus Parade was another successful undertaking with lots of floats, horses, the citizen's band, the cadet corps and many other lively entries. Sponsored by the Tavistock Men's Club, the parade began in Taylor Heights and made its way down Woodstock Street North to waving and cheering crowds of onlookers massed at every corner of the parade route. Led by the local volunteer firefighters and the citizen's band aboard a wagon, floats were entered portraying the theme of an "Old Fashioned Christmas."

Over 200 North/South Easthope and Stratford/St. Marys 4-H members gathered at the Shakespeare Optimist Community Centre on Tuesday evening, Nov. 28, for their annual Awards and Recognition Night hosted by Perth County 4-H Club Leader's Association president Bill French of RR 2, Mitchell.

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December 14 @ 10:15am - Third Sunday of Advent

December 14 @ 7:00pm - Nine Lessons & Carols with fellowship and refreshments

December 21 @ 10:15am - Fourth Sunday of Advent with Christmas pageant and potluck

December 24 @ 6:30pm - Hymn Sing

December 24 @ 7:00pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

PJHL Roundup: Applejacks hang on to top spot as Braves ready for big player signing

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

Wellesley solidified its hold on first place in the Provincial Junior Hockey League’s (PJHL) Doherty Division thanks to a 5-3 victory in Tavistock on Friday night.

After a scoreless first period, the Braves took a 1-0 lead early in the second on a goal from Ryan McKellar. Luke Schofield tied it up four minutes later but goals from Yann Raskin and Tyler Brezynskie gave Tavistock a 3-1 lead heading into the third.

Wellesley exploded for four goals in six minutes, including the game-winning marker by Ian Speiran at the 9:20 mark. Spencer Davidson, Riley Noble and Boden White also found the back of the net for the Applejacks. Keaton Bartlett chipped in with two assists in a losing effort.

“We had a good 40 minutes, but we let off the gas for the last 20,” said Tavistock general manager Brent Lange. “It was a period I’d like to forget, but still some positives to take away. It just shows we have to play a full 60 minutes, especially on a one-game weekend.”

The Braves are sitting in third place in the division, five points behind the first-place Wellesley Applejacks with two games in hand.

“I would say the team is playing at a seven, maybe eight out of 10 level. There are always things to improve on, whether it’s a couple of things up front or on the back end,” said Lange, who added he likes what he sees off the ice with the team.

“We have a close, tight-knit group in the dressing room. It’s refreshing, it’s fun and everything is positive.”

He added the mood following Friday’s loss shows exactly how much his team wants to win.

“I love it when the kids hate to lose. You don’t like hearing laughter after a loss, and there isn’t any more. All we hear is what we can do better next game.”

Just six points separate first from fourth in the division, and 15 points from first to



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Wellesley Applejacks’ defenceman Riley Noble battles with Tavistock Braves’ forward Nolan Miller for a loose puck during the Applejacks’ win over the Braves on Nov. 21. Noble scored one of Wellesley’s four third-period goals as they came back from being down 3-1 to beat the Braves 5-3.

last. The West Yeck is the only other division as tight, with a 17-point difference from first to last.

The Braves are expected to make a major player signing announcement late this week. Lange said he can’t release any details, but he’s excited about who’s coming.

“It’s going to be very good for our team. He’s a hell of a player who is going to provide a really good 200-foot game for us and he’s got some good buddies on our

team. It all came together and everything is positive there.”

Wellesley rounded out the weekend with a 5-4 overtime win in Dorchester on Sunday. Rhyse McCloskey scored the winning goal 63 seconds into the extra period to give the Applejacks their fourth straight victory. Wellesley led 3-1 after 20 minutes but the Dolphins scored three straight times to take a 4-3 lead until Hudson Parker’s late third-period goal

forced overtime.

New Hamburg split its two weekend games, starting with a 6-2 loss in Woodstock on Friday. Ben Oliver scored twice for the Firebirds in the losing effort, but on Saturday, they bounced back with a 6-2 victory in Norwich. Oliver led the way again with a goal and two assists while captain Andrew Gear had two points. Deklan Jermol stopped 45 of 47 shots from the Merchants to earn the win.

PJHL CURRENT STANDINGS																					
South Doherty Division										GP	W	L	OTL	T	SOW	SOL	PTS	OTW	GF	GA	DIFF
1	Wellesley Applejacks	21	15	6	0	0	0	0	30	5	92	73	19	0.714	0.000	397	10	15	4-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.558
2	Woodstock Navy Vets	20	12	4	3	0	0	1	28	1	83	53	30	0.700	0.000	333	11	12	6-0-1-1	0-0-0-0	0.610
3	Tavistock Braves	19	12	6	1	0	0	0	25	1	76	61	15	0.658	0.000	402	11	12	0-1-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.555
4	New Hamburg Firebirds	19	10	5	4	0	0	0	24	1	72	61	11	0.632	0.000	409	9	10	1-0-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.541
5	Norwich Merchants	19	9	8	1	0	0	1	20	4	57	64	-7	0.526	0.000	301	5	9	0-1-0-0	0-0-0-0	0.471
6	Hespeler Shamrocks	20	9	9	2	0	2	0	20	3	41	69	-28	0.500	0.000	397	4	7	3-0-1-0	0-0-0-0	0.373
7	Dorchester Dolphins	20	6	10	3	0	1	1	16	1	70	84	-14	0.400	0.000	318	4	5	1-0-1-0	0-0-0-0	0.455
8	Paris Titans	20	6	11	3	0	0	0	15	1	72	98	-26	0.375	0.000	295	5	6	0-3-3-0	0-0-0-0	0.424

Royals drop third straight game

LEE GRIFFI
Gazette Correspondent

Tavistock dropped its third straight Ontario Elite Hockey League (OEHL) matchup last weekend but still managed to hang on to a tie for third place in the South Division.

Royals netminder Zach Shomphe allowed nine goals on 28 shots as Tavistock lost 9-3 to the visiting Erin Outlaws on Saturday night.

Tavistock trailed 2-1 after the first period and 5-2 after 40 minutes before being outscored 4-1 in the third frame. Mitch Atkins, Jeremy Munro and Deven Kropf scored for the Royals. Atkins also added an assist.

The Royals have this weekend off before hosting Elora on Saturday, Dec. 6

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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1	 Seaforth Centenaires	10	8	2	0	1	0	1	0	16	.800	6	7	50	23	27	Won 3	139	35	4	2	0.114	32	1	3	0.906
2	 Petrolia Squires	8	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	12	.750	6	6	39	17	22	Lost 1	117	26	7	0	0.269	29	2	1	0.966
3	 Elora Rocks	8	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	12	.750	6	6	47	25	22	Won 4	79	31	5	1	0.161	20	0	2	0.9
4	 Dunnville Aeros	9	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	10	.556	5	5	52	38	14	Won 3	149	38	10	0	0.263	32	3	7	0.781
5	 Tavistock Royals	9	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	10	.556	5	5	41	36	5	Lost 3	118	37	6	1	0.162	32	2	5	0.844
6	 Erin Outlaws	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	.800	4	4	25	14	11	Won 4	89	14	3	0	0.214	30	0	3	0.9
7	 Milverton Four Wheel Drives	10	2	6	0	0	1	0	1	6	.300	2	2	33	54	-21	Won 1	177	42	9	3	0.214	33	0	7	0.788
8	 Tillsonburg Thunder	8	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	.250	2	2	21	30	-9	Lost 6	194	29	4	0	0.138	35	1	3	0.914
9	 Delhi Flames	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	12	83	-71	Lost 9	176	28	2	2	0.071	37	0	19	0.486

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MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Caleb Ropp plays the puck up the ice from the defensive zone during the U9 MD Tavistock Titans game last Wednesday.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

James Wolfe fires the puck on target from the slot during last Tuesday's U10 Minor A New Hamburg Huskies game.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Riley Ferguson blasts a shot on goal from the faceoff circle during the U11 B Wilmot Wolverines game this past Sunday.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Scottie Evens shoots the puck towards the opposition's net during last Saturday's U11 C Wilmot Wolverines game.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Sidney Dryngiewicz flings a shot from the blueline during the U13 A New Hamburg Huskies game last Tuesday.



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

Chase Farrell launches a long-range wrist shot during last Wednesday's U18 LL Tavistock Titans game.

Waterloo Regional Police respond to spike in impaired driving calls over weekend

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE

thewygazette@gmail.com

Waterloo Regional Police are reminding motorists to drive sober following a significant increase in impaired driving incidents across Waterloo Region last weekend.

Between Nov. 21 and 23, officers responded to 14 impaired driving-related calls, resulting in multiple charges. This represents a 250 per-cent increase compared to the previous three-day period, which saw four calls.

Of the weekend incidents:

- Six occurred in Cambridge, three in Kitchener, three in Waterloo and one each in North Dumfries and Wilmot townships.
- Four involved alcohol and collisions.
- Two involved drug impairment with collisions.
- One involved a novice driver with blood alcohol above zero.

These incidents included dangerous driving behaviours that put lives at risk.

On Nov. 22, just before 5 a.m., officers stopped a vehicle travelling eastbound on Highway 401 after receiving reports of it swerving and slowing to speeds under 90 km/hr. The driver was arrested and charged with operation while impaired by

alcohol and drugs, and failure to comply with demand.

Later that day, around 5:30 p.m., a driver in Kitchener struck a parked vehicle and continued driving erratically – swerving into oncoming lanes, nearly hitting other cars and a GRT bus, and speeding through a parking lot before stopping. Multiple witnesses reported the vehicle was out of control and causing traffic hazards. The driver was charged with operation while impaired by alcohol and drugs, failure to stop after accident, and dangerous operation.

As part of ongoing efforts to keep roads safe, Waterloo Regional Police conducted a Festive RIDE program on Nov. 22 in the area of Dundas Street North and Roxboro Road in Cambridge. Officers checked 950 vehicles and issued:

- One three-day suspension
- Two seatbelt charges
- One improper turn charge
- One insecure load charge

Waterloo Regional Police continue to participate in Festive RIDE programs throughout the holiday season to help keep our roads safe. Driving impaired is never worth the risk. Anyone who suspects an impaired driver should call 911 immediately.

Police investigating serious collision in Wellesley Township

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE

thewygazette@gmail.com

The Waterloo Regional Police Service is investigating a serious collision in the Township of Wellesley.

On Nov. 18 at approximately 6:32 p.m., members of regional ambulance services and Waterloo Regional Police responded to a head-on collision on Gerber Road.

The driver of a Honda, a 27-year-old female, was airlifted to an out-of-region hospital with life-threatening injuries, police say. The driver of a Hyundai, a 59-year-old

female, was transported to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Gerber Road remained closed for several hours while officers conducted the investigation. The collision remains under investigation by the WRPS traffic branch.

Anyone who witnessed the collision or has dash camera footage is asked to contact the Waterloo Regional Police Service traffic services unit at 519-650-8500 ext. 8856. Anonymous tips can be provided to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or on-line at www.waterloocrimestoppers.com.

CORRECTION:

An error was printed in the story, “Wilmot’s Donald Mohr reflects on his father,

Clayton Mohr’s service in the First World War,” on page 11 of the Nov. 20 Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette. In the last paragraph, the author of the article

indicated Clayton Mohr had died before his son, Donald Mohr, was born. In fact, Clayton Mohr was alive and active for many years with Donald Mohr and the rest of his family. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

Gazette Puzzles

GIVING TUESDAY

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Loving Local: A New Hamburg happy holistic gift guide

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



A traditional holiday turkey dinner with all the sides from The Garden Stand.

We are less than a month away from Christmas, and party planning, gift shopping and decorating are full steam ahead. What type of Christmas are you celebrating? It's not a trick question. In reality, there are three types.

Christmas can be categorized into religious, commercial and friends. Some families focus on the birth of Jesus, while others put the emphasis on family, friends and being part of a bigger picture, their community. Last but not least, we have the gift givers who live to shop. Not everyone celebrates the birth of a baby in manger but social and a side of shopping are one delightful duo.

As a lover of all things holistic, I am excited to highlight some ideas to help bring all things healthy to your unique holiday festivities. Of course, nourishing the mind, body and spirit is always top priority.

Start with making a list, check it twice. Sorry, that's a tad cheeky. Ready, set, shop! Supporting local is the driving force behind every article.

Exercise is essential. Pain and injury put a kybosh on being fit as a fiddle. W Physiotherapy & Sports Performance is new to Peel Street and rave reviews by local resident Deborah West. Once owners Matt and Claire Wardrop have you feeling fabulous, the next step is working out with the dream team.

The Zen Den Light and Healing is one of my personal favourites.

Just 30 minutes in the infrared sauna and the radiant heat holistic healing effects soothes achy joints and tired muscles, detoxifies and I can breathe better. The salt cabin is Himalayan heaven and the cedar experience is the perfect mock trip outdoors while decreasing inflammation indoors. If a touch of the winter blues has you feeling down, a quick lay down in the tanning bed and, ta-da, a glow and a side of vitamin D. Sole therapy is still on the menu and pedicures are perfection.

The spa at the Puddicombe House is your first-class ticket to rest, relaxation and renewal. Pamper yourself and your loved ones head to toe this holiday season.

A gym membership to Anytime Fitness or Evoke will have you ringing in the new year with building healthy, body-boosting habits geared to longevity.

Give the gift of fun at every age with bowling passes to New Hamburg Lanes or time at the Wilmot Community Centre. Swimming and ice-skating liven up any day.

Food is phenomenal, and a gift certificate for pick-up prepped meals is magical. MeMe's Café and Food Shop is stocked with an array of local love, perfect perked coffee and a slew of soups, scones, sandwiches and salads.

After the long wait, The Garden Stand is open, expanding into a new retail location and offering even more options. Their wide

range of Christmas gift ideas, including curated baskets and bags, are always a huge holiday hit. Adam Brenner and his team continue to bring you their turkey dinners, traditional side dishes and comforting seasonal offerings. There is a new pastry chef and the already decadent dessert menu has grown. Stay tuned, foodies, 2026 promises to be exciting.

On-the-go busy bee mornings are caffeine powered for the average joe, and nothing says love like a grab-and-go java and a beautifully crafted authentic and traditional baked good from A Portuguesa Bakery.

A happy, festive home wakes up the senses. Riverside Flowers and Gift Studio offer gorgeous gift baskets stocked with candles and an array of beautiful bath products. Send a vase arrangement or hand-tied bouquet, bringing life and love to any space.

Nothing says a one-of-a-kind present for the unique people in your life like building a basket. As a foodie and lover of easy meal prep, extra-large mason jars soup mixes with all the ingredients is easy and appreciated. Handwritten cooking instructions and a holiday ornament give jars a personalized touch. Stock their soon-to-be soup with lentils,



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Claire and Matt Wardrop at W Physiotherapy & Sports Performance.



A holiday floral arrangement from Riverside Flowers and Gift Studio.

beans, dried mini pasta, rice, barley, split peas and a slew of spices from dried bay leaves to onions and garlic.

Chili is a cold-weather comfort. Build a chili starter jar. Fill the jar with black beans, chili powder, onions and garlic. Adding tomato sauce and a gift certificate to Nith Valley Butcher & Deli for the ground meat of choice builds a bountiful basket.

Make this Christmas a

"Craftmas." For all the DIY lovers in your life, from tiny tot to teenager and beyond, both Dollar Haven & Discount as well as Dollarama have an astounding aisle of everything you need to paint, glue, stick and sew the day away. Think puzzles, stickers, colouring books and blocks, and even the baskets and wrap to package the prettiest present.

Here's wishing you a serene shopping season! Shop local; love always.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Cachet Development approval will cost taxpayers

The Nov. 24 edition of the Waterloo Region Record has reported that the local New Hamburg business, Nachurs Alpine Solutions Inc., is appealing Wilmot Council's Oct. 6 approval of Cachet Development's applications for an official plan amendment, a zone change and a draft subdivision plan.

I expect Wilmot will be on the hook for legal costs to defend their decision. Wilmot could also be facing a significant expense if Nachurs seeks

compensation if it is forced to make changes to their business or to relocate. That's unfortunate when this situation could have been avoided by Wilmot council voting no to Cachet's applications at the Oct. 6 council meeting.

*Dorothy and Andy Wilson,
New Hamburg*

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Walking in the footsteps of first-century Romans

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



In Canada, it's pretty common to find a busy hockey arena at the centre of town. In many British and European cities, it's more likely a football (i.e. soccer) stadium. But in Vienne, a French town on the Rhone River, it's a theatre, and the unusual thing is this theatre is about 2,000 years old.

The Vienne amphitheatre was just one of a number of amazing Roman finds we explored during our visit to Vienne. This was a fascinating stop on our Viking Rhone River cruise, which took us from Lyon to Arles in southern France.

Vienne is a quiet French town; its population, listed at about 30,000, has been pretty much constant for the past 50 years.

But those 50 years are just a short paragraph in a long, long story that goes back to an era well before Christ. The community was a key Gallic capital until the apparently omnipotent Romans arrived around 47 B.C. during the reign of Julius Caesar. The Romans made Vienne a provincial capital and built a great many impressive structures in the town. What is even more impressive is how many of them still stand, or have been restored, today.

We did a walking tour of Vienne. As is often the case on Viking cruises, we were offered a choice of a "leisurely" tour, a regular tour, or an "active" tour. I have to admit that our active tour in Vienne was far and away the most active of any of the thus-named tours during our cruise. That's because our guide led us on foot up a one-kilometre trek – I swear it was at a 90-degree angle – to an amazing vantage point overlooking the town and, most interestingly, the amphitheatre.

Okay, maybe it wasn't 90-degree tough, but it was worth the effort anyway.

The amphitheatre seated 13,000 people and it is used today, for the extremely popular Vienne Jazz Festival, which attracts huge crowds of music-lovers each year. A famous player who performed here many times was Miles Davis, and you can find as much Miles Davis memorabilia for sale in the shops as you do Roman images.

But reminders of the Romans abound. Early in our tour – before the tortuous trek to the top (did I mention that?) – we saw still-standing Roman walls, aqueducts, drain systems and archways. The people of Vienne have created a beautiful, park-like garden among ruins beside one of the most impressive remaining walls.

We then walked past the ground level of the theatre, which, from that perspective, could only be viewed through openings in a fence. Thus, the climb to the top of the town.

There, we enjoyed amazing views of the theatre, of the entire town of Vienne, and of the Rhone. We also visited the Chapel of Notre Dame de Pipet – more of this later.

As we strolled back down the lengthy path, our guide assured us the best was yet to come. Having just seen the impressive Roman theatre, that seemed unlikely. But it was true. Nonetheless, right in the heart of Vienne stands a restored Roman temple, an enormous structure featuring everything you might expect – mighty columns, lots of fancy architectural details. It's the Temple of Augustus and Livia, constructed at the command of Roman Emperor Claudius, who ruled Rome in the middle of the first century AD. And it is breathtaking, especially as it sits right in the middle of a modern French town.

There are more surprises from the Roman era here, as well. I am

familiar with European and British roads of today that follow the same route as roads built by the Romans. They say, if you find a straight motorway anywhere in Britain, for example, the route was laid out by the Romans. In Vienne, in a lovely park close to the Rhone docks, they have excavated a portion of a genuine Roman road; you descend several steps to get to that level, but then you are free to walk in the exact footsteps of Roman women and men from the first century. Amazing!

Now, let's make that climb back to the top of the town, to the height called the Mount Pipet because, in addition to the incredible view, this is the site of the Chapel of Notre Dame de Pipet, an elegant church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, especially connected to the story of an appearance of Mary to two children. That event – known as "Our Lady of La Salette" – occurred in a community about 170 kilometres south of Vienne. The Vienne chapel – which features statues of Mary and the two children – is one of several in the region dedicated to this "Marian apparition."

The Christian history of Vienne is almost as old as the Roman story; and by the time Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in 312 AD and brought the whole Empire with him, Vienne was already a place of Christian worship. Its first bishop, it is claimed, was a disciple of Saint Paul. Today, there are churches in Vienne whose founding date back to the fifth century.

In short, seldom have I visited a destination that so immersed a visitor in its fascinating history.

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.



The Temple of Augustus and Livia sits in the heart of Vienne.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The Roman amphitheatre, as seen from Mount Pipet in Vienne.



A Roman archway and part of a drainage system.



Local residents practice Tai Chi among 2,000-year-old Roman ruins.



A Roman road, available for visitors to walk on today.



Newly landscaped gardens among ancient ruins.

J. G. Field's Woolen Mill - spinning a yarn!



VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

Tavistock and District Historical Society

One of Tavistock's premier employers for more than a century was the woolen mill at 199 Hope Street East. It provided steady work for numerous local people and woolen products for the nation and beyond from 1868-1987.

When a Mr. Preston first operated his two-and-a-half storey frame mill one year after Confederation, the four employees produced horse and bed blankets, tweeds, coverlets and stocking yarn. The machines were powered by a 115-horsepower engine, which supplied electricity to the village for decades.

In 1869, Preston sold the business to John Steinman and John Gerhardt who built the first addition in 1870. Mr. Steinman bought Mr. Gerhardt's interest in 1873 and operated the concern until 1877 when he sold it to Messrs. Hetherington and Field for \$1,000. They grew the business and constructed additions. By 1883, Field bought out his partner and the mill employed 15 hands 12 months of the year, turning 12,000 pounds (5,443 kilograms) of wool into 40,000 yards (36,576 metres) of cloth. In 1903, J. G. Field's woolen mill was producing 12,000 pairs of socks per week.

During World War I, they switched entirely to woolen socks. One very large order from the American Army for gloves and heavy socks was said to be worth over \$100,000 (over \$2 million today). To fill this order, the plant ran 24 hours a day for six

months. By 1934, they had almost 100 knitting machines, producing almost 400,000 socks a year. Much of the wool that was used was shipped by container from New Zealand due to its superior quality.

Field's sold the business in 1953 to Sam McDougall and his son, Ron, took over at a later time. They retained the well-established name as Field's had a very solid reputation in the North American hosiery business.

Memories of the woolen mill

Summer jobs at J. G. Fields for local youth, including me, were available at "the woolen mill." In July and August of 1976, I worked there. My supervisor, Henry Hallam, called me "the yarn foreman." A big title for this skinny teenager.

I was grateful for the work but the conditions were, um, character building. The various wool-making and knitting machines large and small produced a lot of heat, plus the summer humidity and inhaling wool fibres in the non-air-conditioned factory were the standard working conditions of the time.

Five days a week I collected handwritten orders in code on small papers from all the sock knitting machine workers, mostly women, on the ground floor. Then I'd go upstairs to where the spools of yarn made on site were stored. I'd fill a cart with the spools – each as big as a turnip but cone-shaped – checking the colour codes on their base. The codes were creat-



(ERNEST DENTON, SCAN #5008)

The entire staff of eight men and 48 women from J. G. Field's posed for this panoramic photo. No doubt there wasn't a lot of traffic on Hope Street East that day, June 14, 1934.

ed by the worker gently holding a wax crayon against the spinning spool creating a pale circle of colour and perhaps a second or third colour as well.

Two concentric red circles and a yellow one meant that this spool consisted of a specific wool blend. A yellow and green circle meant that it was a different blend. I'd then push my cart of about 60 spools to a large chute where I'd drop them to the ground floor filling another cart there. I'd wheel it around to all the knitters depositing whatever yarns they ordered earlier, along with their original paper slips.

The 1.5-kilometre bike ride home every day after my shift was a relief. I was paid minimum wage: \$2.65 per hour (currently it's \$17.60) saving it for my college photo studies.

J. G. Field's woolen mill closed in 1987; the building and 3.5 acres of land was sold in 1989 to Hanson Mohawk, a machine manufacturer. Later, it was mostly demolished but partly preserved around which "The Renaissance" condo building was constructed. Today, it provides modern accommodations on two floors with virtually no visible vestiges of its industrial past.

Photos from the past

The Lemp Studio Collection of historic photos consists of about 98 per-cent pictures taken by John "Jack" Lemp between 1905 and 1950, but the large group photo was not. British-born Ernest Denton of Kitchener (1883-1957) was hired to set up his specialized panoramic camera to take this ultra-wide scene. He was often hired by a wide variety of organizations in southern Ontario – especially schools – to take these unique photos with his very

unusual camera.

There are two types of panoramic cameras. One that was popular with amateurs was a small handheld device with a lens that rotated from one side to the other. These cameras captured such a wide scene that the photographers had to be careful to keep their fingers from appearing in the pictures on either side of the photo.

The second was a professional model on a tripod, where the entire large camera swung from one side to the other sweeping the scene and exposing celluloid film (an early plastic) on a curve in the back of the camera through a slit. Some models rotated 360 degrees capturing the entire location, but the photographer had to sit on the ground beside the camera, reach up to trip the shutter and then quickly withdraw his arm and crouch out of the sight of the lens or he would be in the picture too!

Large groups of people were arranged in a curve so that the entire group was an equal distance from the camera, instead of the two ends of the group being farther away, which would have resulted in a disappointing bowed look to the finished picture. I do the same thing these days, taking photos of very large groups, curving them so everyone is the same distance from the camera and so is equally sharp.

This is the type of camera that Mr. Denton used. After taking and developing the photo with liquid chemicals in his darkroom, he hand-lettered his name onto the negative with an opaque writing liquid akin to White Out correction fluid. Compared to today's digital technology, this was a very laborious method but up to date for its time.

Denton's negatives were large,

which produced finely detailed black and white photos that are treasured today because he was very often hired to capture important celebrations and historic moments. Luckily, he signed and dated them all.

J.G. Field's legacy today

There's a company in Toronto that's benefiting from the long history and good reputation of J. G. Field's called "J. B. Field's". The Great Canadian Sox Company produces hosiery of many types and its website includes a very dubious history connecting its J. B. Field's brand to the Tavistock plant with text and photos including Mr. Denton's panoramic picture, claiming its origins are with the village mill.

This tells me that J. G. Field's socks and its long local history are of high regard and worth imitating, albeit it's spinning a very long yarn.

Last week's history mystery:

The question was "What clue in this article (celebrating the end of WWI) is a strong hint as to what day of the week it was when the photo was taken?" The correct answer was forwarded first by Marilyn Pearson of Tavistock, which is that it was most likely a Monday because it's the traditional wash day and you can see laundry on the line on the left of the picture.

This week's history mystery:

What's the relationship between wax and wicks and the phone that Mr. Field is touching with his right hand in his office? This question is open to all ages. The first reader to send me the correct answer will have their name, the name of their community or rural route number published in the next Vintage Views.



(JOHN LEMP, SCAN #6104)

ohn Gerhardt Field and his son, Jim Vipond, in the factory office in June, 1933 (as the calendar on the map attests). They were agents for the Canadian Pacific Railroad, which is no doubt why they have the map of Canada on the wall above a row of socks. Field's hosiery was shipped by train across Canada.

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

Shakespeare Mills Inc. upgrades equipment to keep feed moving

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

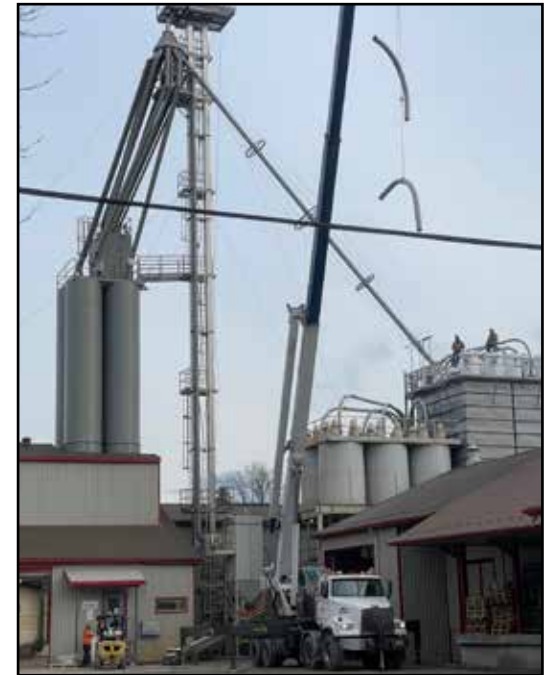
Shakespeare Mills Inc. continued its ongoing modernization this week as crane operators from Signature Crane Service and crews from Dynamic Millwrights Inc. spent Monday upgrading worn feed-mill piping at the downtown facility.

Co-owner and manager Jeff Sparling said maintaining reliable equipment is crucial for a business that serves hundreds of livestock farmers across the region. With feed trucks on the road six days a week,

he said any component that shows its age is replaced as quickly as possible.

"We have farmers with pigs, cows, sheep and goats, and their animals never stop eating," Sparling said. "Service is SMI's number one priority – always has been and always will be."

The latest upgrades include new piping and bin connections designed to keep the mill running smoothly and safely. With cranes lifting materials high overhead and millwrights working at significant heights, the job required precision and experienced hands.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

While installing new piping and connecting it to updated bins at Shakespeare Mills Inc., crews from Dynamic Millwrights Inc. and Signature Crane Service worked at heights where only seasoned millwrights are trained to operate safely.

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Email: info@tavistockmensclub.ca or call 519-655-3573 or online: tavistockmensclub.ca for entry and details. Monetary donations collected for TAP along route.
Downtown Tavistock

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

Perth East council meeting

7 p.m.

Council chambers

25 Mill Street East, Milverton

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Wellesley Council meeting

6:45 p.m.

Council chambers

4805 William Hastings Line, Crosshill

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

Wilmot Council meeting

7-11 p.m.

Council chambers

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519-535-7052

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

519-240-6715

Crokinole Monday, Wednesday morning

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

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

519-535-7052.

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