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A red fox pauses near its den along Arnold Street in New Hamburg, where it has become a frequent and welcome visitor. Amanda Stewart shared this close-to-home wildlife moment to the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook page, noting the fox is often seen playing in the yard with its mate and pups.

## Local MPs discuss floor crossers, a majority government and gasoline prices

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Oxford Conservative MP Arpan Khanna and Kitchener-Conestoga Liberal MP Tim Louis are normally on opposite sides of the fence when it comes to federal issues. What has happened recently is no exception – a reduction in gasoline taxes, floor crossers and now, a majority government after recent byelections.

The Gazette spoke with Khanna just as a party caucus meeting finished last week. He said the party remains focused and stands behind its leader.

“We talked about the path forward. Obviously, the Liberals were able to manufacture a backroom, secret majority Canadians did not elect. I always believe the people are right when they go to the ballot box, but some of our MPs crossed the floor for personal gain,” Khanna said.

Khanna was particularly critical of Sarnia-area MP Marilyn Gladu, who served 10 and a half years with the Tories.

Continued on page 2

Continued on page 3

## Wellesley council approves pay increase for next term of council

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Wellesley Township council has approved an increase to base pay for the mayor and councillors that will take effect at the start of the next term of council on Nov. 15.

According to a report presented by clerk Amy Harron, the mayor’s annual base salary will increase by \$5,340.86 to \$39,078.50, while councillors’ base pay will increase by \$4,312.63 to \$22,604.47.

“As council is well aware, the responsibilities of council members are

far greater than the legislated duties,” Harron said. “A council remuneration review was last completed in 2017 by a consulting firm with a modest increase that was phased in over three years. The recommended increase is reflective of the



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# Wellesley council approves pay hike for next term

Continued from page 1

current comparator median, using the 50th percentile, which has been used in the last market salary review for staff.

“... Maintaining market rate remuneration for members of council and performing the review during the last year of the council term helps prevent large increases to catch up when the review is completed.”

The increase follows a review of council compensation conducted in advance of the 2026 municipal election, a process typically completed once per term to ensure remuneration remains in line with comparable municipalities and reflects the responsibilities of elected officials.

Staff compared Wellesley’s current remuneration levels with those of similar lower-tier municipalities, including those without strong mayor powers like Wellesley, taking into account factors such as population, council composition and number of meetings annually. The review found both the mayor and councillors were being paid below the median compensation level among comparable municipalities.

The approved increase is intended to bring Wellesley council’s remuneration in line with the 50th percentile of comparator municipalities, helping maintain consistency with neighbouring jurisdictions and supporting transparency for individuals considering running for municipal office. Recently discussed or approved pay increases for the councils of neighbouring Wilmot and Woolwich, however, will mean the compensation for members of Wellesley council will remain roughly \$10,000 less for the mayor and about \$3,000 less for councillors.

“I like to see this because I like to think

that we shouldn’t sell ourselves short with the work we put in and the time that we spend with the constituents, and the time we spend doing meetings and whatnot,” Coun. Shelley Wagner said. “There were years where I felt like I paid the township instead of the township paying me. We do a lot of good work and we put a lot of time in.

“You don’t necessarily run for the money ... but it is also nice to be recognized for the amount of time you commit to the betterment of the township on behalf of taxpayers.”

According to the report, council remuneration is not typically included in staff market salary reviews, making periodic council-specific reviews important to ensure compensation remains appropriate and competitive.

The financial impact of the increase will be phased in beginning late in 2026, with an estimated cost of approximately \$2,396 for the remainder of that year. The annual budget impact beginning in 2027 is projected to be \$19,170.30 for all members of council, excluding any future cost-of-living adjustments.

Council remuneration will continue to be adjusted annually based on council-approved cost-of-living adjustments, and a further review of council compensation is expected to take place in 2030 ahead of the next municipal election.

Coun. Claude Hergott was the only member of council to vote against the council pay increase, stating he was satisfied with his current level of pay as a councillor and would be satisfied with annual cost-of-living adjustments only.

“We’re not talking about what you’re

receiving right now; we’re talking about what the next council will receive,” Mayor Joe Nowak said in response to Hergott’s comments, later noting that appropriate compensation for members of council is an important factor for those considering

running as candidates in this year’s and future municipal election.

The pay increase will apply only to the next term of council following the Oct. 26 municipal election and will not affect the current term.

## High water levels seen along Nith River in New Hamburg

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Heavy rainfall across parts of Ontario last week led to reports of flooding in several communities, with some areas experiencing road closures and evacuations.

While New Hamburg did not see that level of impact, water levels along the Nith River rose noticeably as the river moved swiftly through the town.

Local conservation authorities issued warnings urging residents to stay away from fast-moving water, particularly reminding parents and children to exercise caution near riverbanks while travelling to and from school.

Though the elevated water levels did not result in significant damage locally, the high river served as a reminder of the potential risks associated with spring runoff and heavy rainfall.

It was not an ideal day for a picnic at the park gazebo as the Nith River flowed high nearby.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

High water levels along the Nith River in New Hamburg last week prompted conservation authorities to remind residents to keep a safe distance from fast-moving water, particularly near low-lying areas and riverbanks.

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# MPs clash on gas taxes and floor crossings

Continued from page 1

“She said in an interview this was a good move for her personally. When you put your name on a ballot, nothing you do should be good for you personally. It should be about doing good for your constituents and your country,” Khanna said.

Louis said the floor crossings could be the result of MPs being frustrated at being in the opposition seats for 11 years.

“The Conservative leader lost his own seat and is now losing members of his own caucus. With a majority government in place, their party has to decide what to do with their leader at this point,” Louis said. “We have welcomed MPs from the Conservatives and NDP who are already working and contributing to our caucus.”

Louis was first elected in 2019 and has only served in minority Liberal governments. He said while he is looking forward to having a majority, it will be business as usual for him.

“It doesn’t change the work I am doing. I still represent Kitchener-Conestoga and I am fulfilling my responsibilities in Ottawa. But it does change the tone, and it does change the pace.”

He added there will still be hearty debate and disagreement on issues of the day, but he expects the conversations will now be more focused.

“As a government, we are still willing to work with all parties, and good ideas come from them all. There is more posturing, grandstanding and obstruction in a minority situation. Now, as long as the government is willing to work across party lines, and I know we are, I think we can get more done.”

Khanna added the official opposition will continue to hold the government accountable when it comes to issues important to Canadians.

“The cost of living, crime, supporting our farmers and auto sector, and the fuel-cost discussion we had last week was a Conservative idea.”

The opposition pushed to remove all

federal taxes on gasoline and diesel for the rest of the year. Specifically, they wanted to eliminate the federal fuel excise tax, the Clean Fuel Standard costs and the GST on fuel. Altogether, they argued this would cut prices by about 25 cents per litre.

The Carney government, instead, eliminated the federal fuel excise tax on gasoline and diesel, starting on April 20 and ending on Sept. 7. The move means a reduction of about 10 cents per litre for gasoline and four cents per litre on diesel.

Louis said gas prices have surged as a result of the Iranian-American conflict in the Middle East and his government is providing Canadians with a hand up.

“I think this is a temporary and responsible measure. It’s going to help families,” Louis said.

He added that, as a net exporter of oil, government coffers will be fuller, helping to offset the cost of the move.

“We’re going to take that money and basically give it back to Canadians. I think that is the responsible thing to do.”

Khanna said that while any relief at the pump for Canadians is welcome, the Liberals could have gone further and acted more quickly.

“We will take any tax relief, and we are the party of lower taxes,” Khanna said. “This should have happened a long time ago. We called for a gas tax holiday last summer because when energy costs are up, it forces people to decide if they want to visit loved ones and drives up the cost of food.”

He added the government should have taken the opposition’s advice and totally removed all gas taxes for the remainder of 2026.

“It would have saved the average family \$1,200 by the end of the year. They cherry-pick our ideas, which is fine since imitation is one of the best forms of flattery, but this is not what Canadians want. They want to afford to fill up their cars and buy groceries.”

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# New Hamburg Board of Trade aims to expand membership through new business forum

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Lillianne Dunstall, president of the New Hamburg Board of Trade, announced at the monthly meeting on April 20 the board of trade is actively working to gain new members, but she says this can't happen without offering members more value for what they're getting.

Dunstall notes she's actively working with connections across the region to bring more value to members, including Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen, Conestoga College and groups such as Kiwanis Transit and the Grassroots Response to the Ukrainian Crisis.

The board of trade is looking to expand by seeking members from the manufacturing sector, trades, service providers and agriculture to broaden its reach and influence.

She notes that although the New Hamburg Board of Trade has several members from the manufacturing sector, they don't seem to get as much value from their memberships as she would like.

"They belonged to the board of trade to be good corporate citizens and support the town their business is in, but other than that, there really wasn't much we offered them," she said. "We have done a great job supporting our downtown businesses to keep our downtown open and vibrant, and

we will continue to do that."

In response to this, Dunstall said the New Hamburg Board of Trade is launching the New Hamburg Business Forum, beginning with three roundtable/think tank discussions focused on manufacturing, trades and service providers.

She says these roundtables are where people can come together to share ideas, discuss challenges and develop practical solutions around a specific topic or issue.

"It means bringing business leaders, the township and regional partners together to have an honest conversation about what businesses need, where the gaps are and how we can better support them," she said.

Each roundtable will bring together

business leaders from that sector, along with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), senior township staff, the mayor, commercial banking and past board of trade presidents.

Though this is just the beginning of what's to come to broaden the reach of the New Hamburg Board of Trade, Dunstall says she's excited to see who is showing up to support the board of trade.

"We are fortunate that, through our discussions with these different sectors, prominent business leaders have stepped up and said they want to be at that table," she said. "We're thrilled to have them there."

# Rain forces postponement of Thames River Clean Up as UTRCA urges caution around high, fast-moving waterways

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

As a result of rainy weather last week, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) rescheduled the Thames River Clean Up to Saturday, April 25.

According to the conservation authority, rescheduling the event was intended to help ensure the safety of participants and enable a more effective cleanup once water levels recede.

The public is strongly advised to stay away from all watercourses and flooded areas. Stream banks may be slippery and unstable, and the water is very cold and fast-moving, the UTRCA advised in a press release issued

last week. Never attempt to drive through flooded areas and remember to keep children and pets away from waterways.

Volunteers who have registered for the cleanup are encouraged to check in with their local site coordinators regarding the new date, as some locations may opt to reschedule for a different day based on local conditions.

The UTRCA said it will continue to monitor conditions closely and operate flood control reservoirs, including Fanshawe, Wildwood and Pittock conservation areas, to help reduce downstream flooding.

For more information about the Thames River Clean Up or to confirm local event details, contact Todd Sleeper at td.sleeper@hotmail.com or call 519-275-1351.

(CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

The 27th annual Thames River Clean Up was postponed last week due to rainy weather and rising water levels.

# Oxford County residents asked to apply for election audit committee

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The municipalities of Oxford County – Blandford-Blenheim, East Zorra-Tavistock, Ingersoll, Norwich, Southwest Oxford, Tillsonburg, Woodstock, and Zorra – are looking for a few good people.

A press release from the municipality said, “Experienced professionals will be considered for appointment to the 2026-2030 joint compliance audit committee.”

Compliance audit committees are required by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, to consider applications from electors requesting audits of candidates’ and registered third-party advertisers’ campaign finances.

While it may not sound very exciting, the committee is responsible for reviewing applications to see if an audit request should be granted. If it is, an auditor will

be appointed to determine if legal proceedings are required.

Committee members must be able to understand and apply the election-campaign finance provisions of the Municipal Elections Act, and should be considered impartial in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Preferred qualifications include a demonstrated knowledge and understanding of municipal elections, including campaign-finance rules.

“Analytical and decision-making skills, experience working as part of a committee or task force, and excellent oral and written communication skills are also key requirements,” said Blandford-Blenheim clerk Sarah Matheson, who is leading the process.

“Preference will be given to candidates who possess applicable experience in accounting, auditing law, election

administration, public administration and academic studies in related fields.”

Each Oxford municipality will appoint the same compliance audit committee. The clerks pool their resources, with one municipality spearheading the process, but each having a say.

Successful applicants will be appointed for the term of the next council and will be remunerated at an established per-diem rate, plus mileage.

“The clerks are currently working on the terms of reference for the committee, including remuneration. Last term, there was a per-diem plus mileage and training. The 2022-2026 per diem is \$150, but is under review,” said Matheson.

The committee must include between three and seven members. The clerks will determine the final number after reviewing applications and considering any members

who choose to return.

“Members of council, employees or officers of the municipality or local board, any persons who are registered third parties in the municipality in the election for which the committee is established or any persons who are candidates in the election for which the committee is established, are not eligible for appointment,” Matheson said.

The committee has a four-year term, as it may be called upon in the event of a by-election at any point during that period.

Anyone interested in being considered for appointment to the joint compliance audit committee can submit a resumé or written summary outlining their qualifications and experience by Friday, May 8, at 12 p.m. to Matheson at smatheson@blandfordblenheim.ca.

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# Community Players return to *Into the Woods* with mix of past and present performers

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

More than 30 years after first bringing *Into the Woods* to the stage, the Community Players of New Hamburg is returning to the beloved musical, this time blending seasoned volunteers with a new generation of local performers.

Performances run May 7-10 at the Trinity Theatre in the New Hamburg Community Centre.

First staged by the group in 1993, not long after the musical's Broadway debut, *Into the Woods* by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine weaves together familiar fairy tales, including *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Rapunzel* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*, all with humour, heart and a few unexpected twists along the way.

"We really want the story to tell itself," said director Aaron Balzer. "It's a fantasy, it's fantastical, it's mystical, it's a fairy tale. I think that the story speaks for itself. We are doing some fun things, as far as effects, costumes, magic and sets. It's going to be really immersive and magical. It'll really draw people in."

This year's production is directed by Balzer, who has been with The Community Players since 2004. This will be his fourth show with the group and his second musical. The production features a cast of 35, an orchestra of almost 20 musicians and a large team of volunteers working behind the scenes to bring the show to life.

"I started with The Community Players in 2004 when I was still in high school," said Balzer. "I did my first show with them

then, and then intermittently over the next number of years, when I was living back in the area, I would do shows with them, and then since 2017 I've been involved in some way ever since."

Interest in the show was strong, with close to 100 people auditioning. The final cast and crew represent a wide cross-section of the community, from students and retirees to professionals in a variety of fields. Ages range from 10 to 68, with both experienced performers and many stepping on stage for the first time.

"This show really reflects the community it comes from," said Balzer. "We have people who were part of this story over 30 years ago sharing the stage with performers who are just beginning. That mix brings a lot of energy, perspective and fun to the production."

Among those returning is longtime company member Wendy Wagler, who played Rapunzel in the original 1993 production. She now steps into the role of Cinderella's stepmother.

"What has really changed this time around is my age," Wagler laughed. "What we can do with props and scenery and things like that is vastly different from the original performance as well. The original stage had about 200 chairs, so all of the action happened in about one-quarter of the size of the stage we have now."

Wagler says she's looking forward to continuing to work with the cast and crew to bring new life to *Into the Woods*.

"I don't think anyone has been involved with Community Players as long as I have," she said. "We have an amazing



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Cast members from the Community Players of New Hamburg's production of *Into the Woods* bring together past and present performers, including one actor returning more than 30 years after appearing in the group's original 1993 production.

group of volunteers who have so much experience and have been part of a lot of shows over the years."

The production also features emerging performers taking on lead roles including Jack, Cinderella and Little Red Riding Hood, along with local flight attendant David Hohl, who returns to the stage as the Baker after time away from theatre.

Each spring, volunteers transform the old New Hamburg arena into a 600-plus-seat theatre, creating a unique and immersive performance space.

"Our volunteers mean everything," said Balzer. "I have the vision in my head, but all of the volunteers are the ones who bring that vision to life through set, costume and props. Those people make the vision into magic on the stage."

This production is closer to the original Brothers Grimm fairy tales and not quite the same as the Disney version. Due to its darker themes, the production is recommended for ages 10 and up.

Tickets are available at [www.thecommunityplayers.com](http://www.thecommunityplayers.com).

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# Community gathers to celebrate New Hamburg's Gwen Zarnke's 102nd birthday

DIANE DANEN

Gazette Correspondent

Friends and neighbours gathered at the home of Gwen Zarnke in New Hamburg to honour her on her 102nd birthday.

The surprise was organized by friend and neighbour Joan Stafford. Zarnke's sons, Martin and Ian Drake, took their mom out for a birthday lunch, returning home to an unexpected welcome. As guests waited, neighbour Judy Brown reached out to many in the community, inviting them to join the celebration.

Soon, the back deck was filled with well-wishers including the community choir, The Stonecrofters, also known as the Warblers. Neighbours enjoyed sharing

stories and the chance to connect while awaiting the guest of honour.

When Zarnke arrived home, she was greeted with a beautiful rendition of "Happy Birthday" and warm wishes from a crowd of familiar faces.

Born April 17, 1924, in Essex, England, Zarnke moved to the Stonecroft community in New Hamburg 16 years ago at the age of 86. As a young woman in England, she trained in office work, learning shorthand, typing and bookkeeping. However, her plans changed with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Hoping to join the air force, she instead took a position in a munitions factory after her parents expressed concern, especially following the loss of her sister, who had

been serving in the army.

"It was a difficult time," Zarnke recalled.

At 21, she married and became a homemaker and devoted mother to her two sons. She was left on her own to raise her sons after her husband passed away. Her son, Ian, moved to Canada and in 1993, Zarnke and son Martin moved to Canada to reunite the family. Zarnke lived with Ian in Baden for a year while searching for a home before eventually settling in New Hamburg in a house of her own.

Zarnke shared that she eventually met a nice man. Her granddaughter introduced her to Dr. Don Zarnke, an optician in downtown New Hamburg. The couple married in 2007 and moved to the Stonecroft community in 2010. Sadly, Dr. Don Zarnke passed away 14 years ago.

When asked about the secret to her longevity, Zarnke credits a simple lifestyle.

"Routine," she said with a smile. "My boys laugh at me because I am so routine. I go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time."

She also points to healthy habits.

"I like good food, no sort of rubbishy food. I don't drink – well, I will have a glass of wine."

Over the years, Zarnke has enjoyed gardening and spending time outdoors, along with memorable trips to the Canary Islands, Portugal, Gibraltar and Spain. Today, she spends her time relaxing on her back deck or indoors, where she enjoys working on puzzles.

Zarnke continues to enjoy life in her home and hopes to remain there as long as she is able.

"I have two wonderful sons who take



(DON STAFFORD PHOTO)

**Gwen Zarnke of Stonecroft Place in New Hamburg credits routine and a simple lifestyle for her longevity as she celebrates her 102nd birthday.**

care of me," she said, noting the additional support she receives from Community Care.

Family remains at the centre of her life, with her sons visiting several times each week and, as Zarnke adds with a smile, "The boys call me every night."

Surrounded by caring neighbours and supported by a close-knit family, Zarnke's steady routine and positive outlook continue to serve her well. Those who gathered to celebrate her milestone birthday share the hope that she will enjoy many more happy times in the Stonecroft community.



(DIANE DANEN PHOTO)

**Gwen Zarnke is surrounded by friends and neighbours following a surprise rendition of "Happy Birthday" by the Stonecroft Community Choir.**

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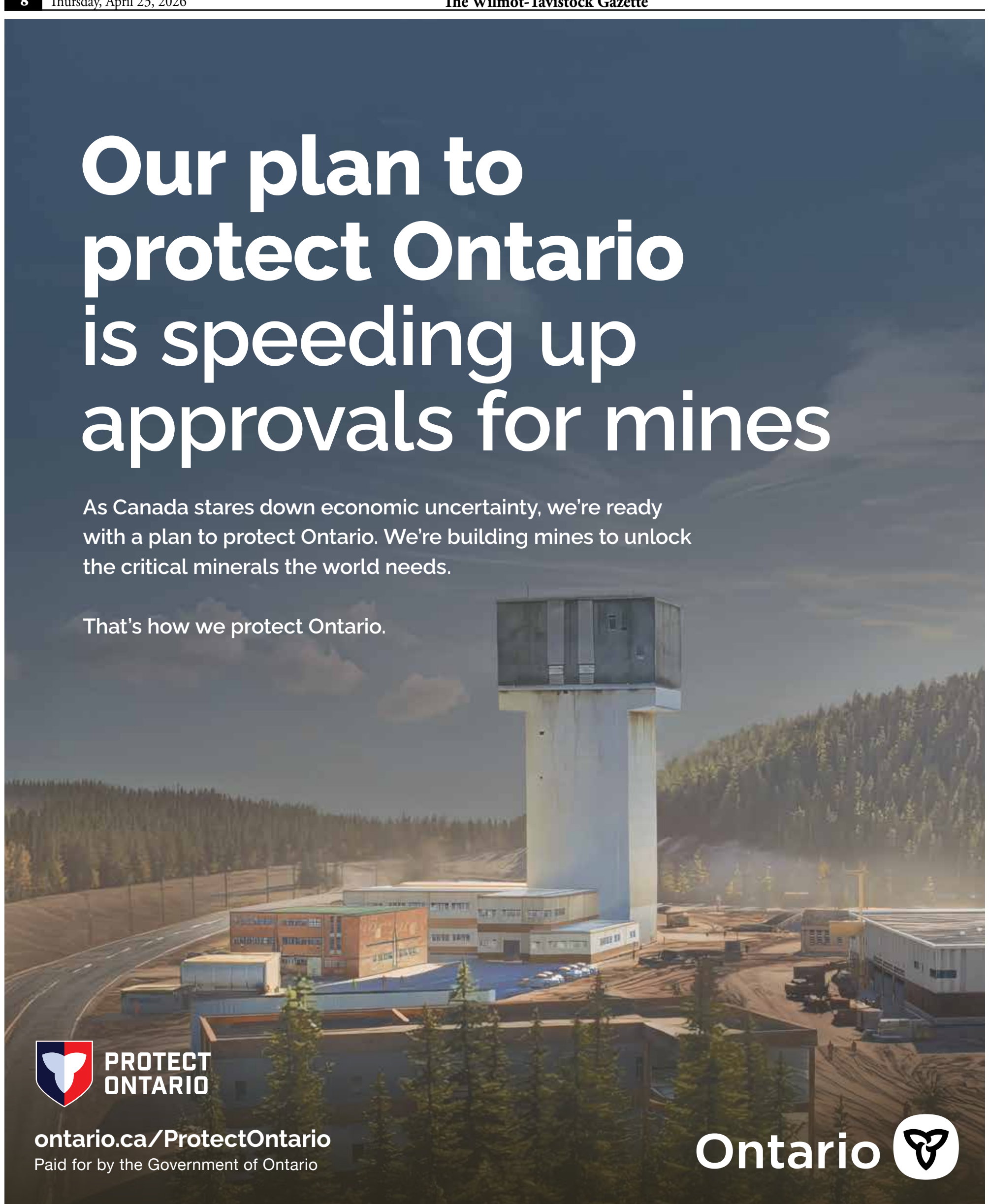
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**26**  
INTERNATIONAL  
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YEAR 2026



# Volunteers continue to strengthen Wilmot, Wellesley, East Zorra-Tavistock and Perth East

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Volunteers play a vital role in sustaining the programs, services and community spirit that define Wilmot, Wellesley, East Zorra-Tavistock, Perth East and surrounding communities.

From local service clubs and recreation programs to arts, culture and social supports, many of the amenities residents rely on are made possible through the dedication of volunteers who give their time and energy to help others.

As part of National Volunteer Week, running April 19-25 across Canada, the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette and other Grant Haven Media newspapers are highlighting the importance of volunteerism and the people who make a difference in their communities. This year's theme, Ignite Volunteerism, encourages residents to reflect on the value volunteers bring to daily life and consider how communities can inspire more people to get involved.

Local political leaders say volunteers are essential to maintaining the strong sense of connection that defines rural communities. Several of them shared their thoughts on the importance of volunteers to our communities. Here's what they had to say.

## Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen

"In Wilmot, volunteers don't just support our community, they create it. Many of the events, programs and spaces that bring people together. From our fall fair and Mopar Fest to fishing derbies, youth sports and community groups, these exist because residents choose to give their time. No level of government can replace what volunteers create. They are the fabric of our community.

"We are already seeing the impact when volunteerism declines. Traditions like Santa Claus parades and other beloved local events become harder to sustain, and with them, we risk losing the shared experiences that build connection and belonging.

"If we want to ignite volunteerism, we need to remind people that these moments don't happen on their own. They exist because someone steps forward. Encouraging more people to get involved means making opportunities visible, welcoming new participants and showing that even small contributions make a meaningful difference.

"Some of my most formative memories growing up in Wilmot are from community events to youth groups that were made possible by volunteers. Sustaining that for the next generation starts with all of us. And to those who currently volunteer, thank you for making our community that much better!"

## East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer

"Volunteers in a community do a lot of heavy lifting in ensuring we have activities and amenities that positively benefit our municipality. Every day, invariably you will come in contact with something that was either built and maintained by volunteers or was being put on by a volunteer group.

"There are many forms to volunteering in a small rural community, from joining a service club or fraternity, minor sports organization, church management or choir membership, and countless other organizations.

"It cannot be denied that the number of volunteers has fallen in the past few years. New residents are encouraged to step forward and offer their services. The township website includes a list of organizations and their contact person.

"We know volunteering can benefit your community. It also offers benefits to the volunteer such as learning new skills, meeting friends, experience building for your career, keeping active and above all, making a difference."

## Wellesley Mayor Joe Nowak

"The value of volunteerism and those contributions to our communities cannot be overstated.

"Wellesley Township promotes volunteerism at our annual Volunteer Fair, which connects residents with local clubs and groups to learn about exciting opportunities and ways that they can get involved. Residents can drop in to chat, explore and take the first step toward making a difference in their communities. Whether people have a little or a lot of time to give, there's a place for everyone.

"The suggestion that membership in service clubs and volunteer organizations continues to diminish may not reflect the reality in Wellesley Township, which has a rich history of volunteerism. We have a large compliment of volunteers throughout our township involved in a wide range of community groups and events.

"A group that comes to mind is our Apple Butter and Cheese Festival committee. They work throughout the year planning for the big day and when that day comes, they have recruited resident volunteers that contribute to the success of the festival. The pay-off is funds raised to advance programs and needs throughout our township.

"Our three Lions Clubs work collaboratively not only with our township, but also with other community groups, contributing financial support. Their involvement reduces costs, increases community resilience and extends the reach of public and non-profit services.

"We are blessed to have hockey and

soccer parents participating in sports programs by mentoring, coaching and encouraging our youth to stay active and to follow their dreams.

"I would be remiss not to include the incredible and constant contributions by the fair board and their volunteers along with the groups under their umbrella such as the Taste the Culture organizers and Christmas Tyme in Wellesley.

"All ages from teens to seniors are participating and contributing to the success of these varied organizations. Youth step up because they are encouraged by their parents and are welcomed and valued for their enthusiasm and willingness to do the labour tasks.

"Overall, volunteers foster civic pride, demonstrate collaboration and play a critical role in creating inclusive, caring and sustainable communities now and for future generations. They are the glue that binds us together by strengthening social connections and making Wellesley Township a great place to live, work and play."

## Perth East Mayor Rhonda Ehgoetz

"Volunteers are the backbone of our communities. Perth East is very appreciative of all the time our volunteers put into the community to make it a great place to live. They make a huge difference in our communities. Perth East celebrated our volunteers on Wednesday, April 22, with a gathering recognizing each group and to thank them for all they do. Keep up the good work.

"People will help but I think the best way to get people involved is have a current member of the group invite people to their meetings and events so they can see what it is all about and then possibly they will join."

## Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Mike Harris

"Volunteerism is at the heartbeat of our communities. From local events and service clubs to youth sports and community care, volunteers are the reason so many of the things we value continue to thrive.

"As we look to the future, it's essential that we inspire the next generation to get involved. That means making volunteer opportunities more accessible, flexible and family-friendly so parents and children can give back together. When young people see the impact they can have, they build a lifelong connection to their community. By encouraging youth and families to get involved, we ensure our communities remain strong, connected and vibrant for years to come."

## Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louis

"Under this year's theme, Ignite Volunteerism, Volunteer Week celebrates the heart of our community: volunteers.

"These are our neighbours. They are the friendly faces who step up when someone needs a ride, a meal, a place to call home, or a caring professional to talk to. Their dedication doesn't make headlines most days, but it makes a world of difference in Kitchener-Conestoga and across our nation. We are Canadian, we celebrate those who strengthen our communities through compassion, service and the belief that we are all better when we lift each other up.

"I encourage everyone to get involved; volunteer your time, lend your skills, or simply reach out to a local nonprofit to ask how you can help. Sometimes, the smallest gesture becomes the moment someone remembers most. To all who already volunteer, thank you. Your commitment reflects the very best of who we are as Canadians."

## Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman

"Volunteer Appreciation Week is a time to recognize the people who quietly give their time to make Oxford a better place, lending a hand wherever it's needed. The province honours these individuals through programs like the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards, which celebrates their contributions and inspires others to get involved and make a difference. During this Volunteer Appreciation Week and all year round, I want to thank every volunteer for the incredible impact they make each and every day."

## Oxford MP Arpan Khanna

"Volunteerism is woven into Oxford's fabric. It's the early risers, sports coaches and those who quietly help at food banks, park cleanups, or community events. Many seniors and veterans continue to give back long after their working years, motivated not by recognition but by a shared responsibility for their home.

"When many in our community are struggling, we rely on one another. Volunteers lead by example through acts of care and service, showing what real support and compassion look like in action. Even when the world feels overwhelming, there is always someone, an organization, a neighbour, ready to step up. That helping hand is what holds us together as a community.

"That's why, during National Volunteer Week, I encourage everyone in Oxford to lend a hand if they can. And if you need support, please reach out. We are here for each other.

"To everyone who volunteers: thank you. Your time, experience and dedication help keep Oxford strong and prosperous."

Throughout National Volunteer Week, the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette and other Grant Haven Media newspapers invite readers to continue reading and sharing stories of the people and organizations whose contributions help make our local communities stronger.

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# No small parts: A variety of volunteer opportunities found within Theatre Wellesley

EMILY STEWART

Gazette Reporter

Theatre Wellesley runs two shows a year with the help of several volunteers.

The community theatre group has put on several productions since its inception in 1997. Rhonda Caldwell, chair of Theatre Wellesley, said in addition to acting on stage, there are several behind-the-scenes opportunities.

Volunteers can become directors, stage managers and producers, assist with the building, design and decorating of sets, create costumes, help with hospitality operations, social media, marketing, photography and ticket sales, and join a committee like the script-reading committee, a community events committee, or the executive committee.

"All of those things require different amounts of time and different skillsets, and it's not like everybody

has to come in and know what they're doing because most of us came in not knowing anything, and have developed the skills by people mentoring them or trial and error. So, there's lots of opportunity also to learn and contribute," Caldwell said.

A typical show at Theatre Wellesley involves about four to 15 actors and 20 to 30 people on the production team. Plus, there are about seven people on the script committee and one to three people on other teams like social media.

Caldwell added there are plenty of reasons to become involved with Theatre Wellesley.

"It's a nice community to be a part of; it's a great chance to learn new skills, to use your skills," she said. "If you love theatre, it's a chance to be involved onstage or behind the scenes. You get to know new people. You get to connect with the community."

Theatre Wellesley's spring production, *The Gentleman Clothier*, runs from April 23 to May 3 upstairs at the Wellesley Library. The Norm Foster play will be directed by Al Cook and is about a clothing shop owner named Norman who discovers what happens when his wish to be born in a different era comes true.

The community theatre group will also have an audition workshop for youth between 10 and 18 years old on May 6 from 7-9 p.m., and a Production Team 101 Workshop with Joe Shiek on May 23 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The youth audition workshop is \$5 per participant, and the production workshop costs \$25.

Anyone looking to become involved as a volunteer can send an email to [contact@theatrewellesley.com](mailto:contact@theatrewellesley.com). More information, including ticket purchases for *The Gentleman Clothier*, can be found online by visiting [theatrewellesley.com](http://theatrewellesley.com).



(PHOTO COURTESY OF RHONDA CALDWELL)

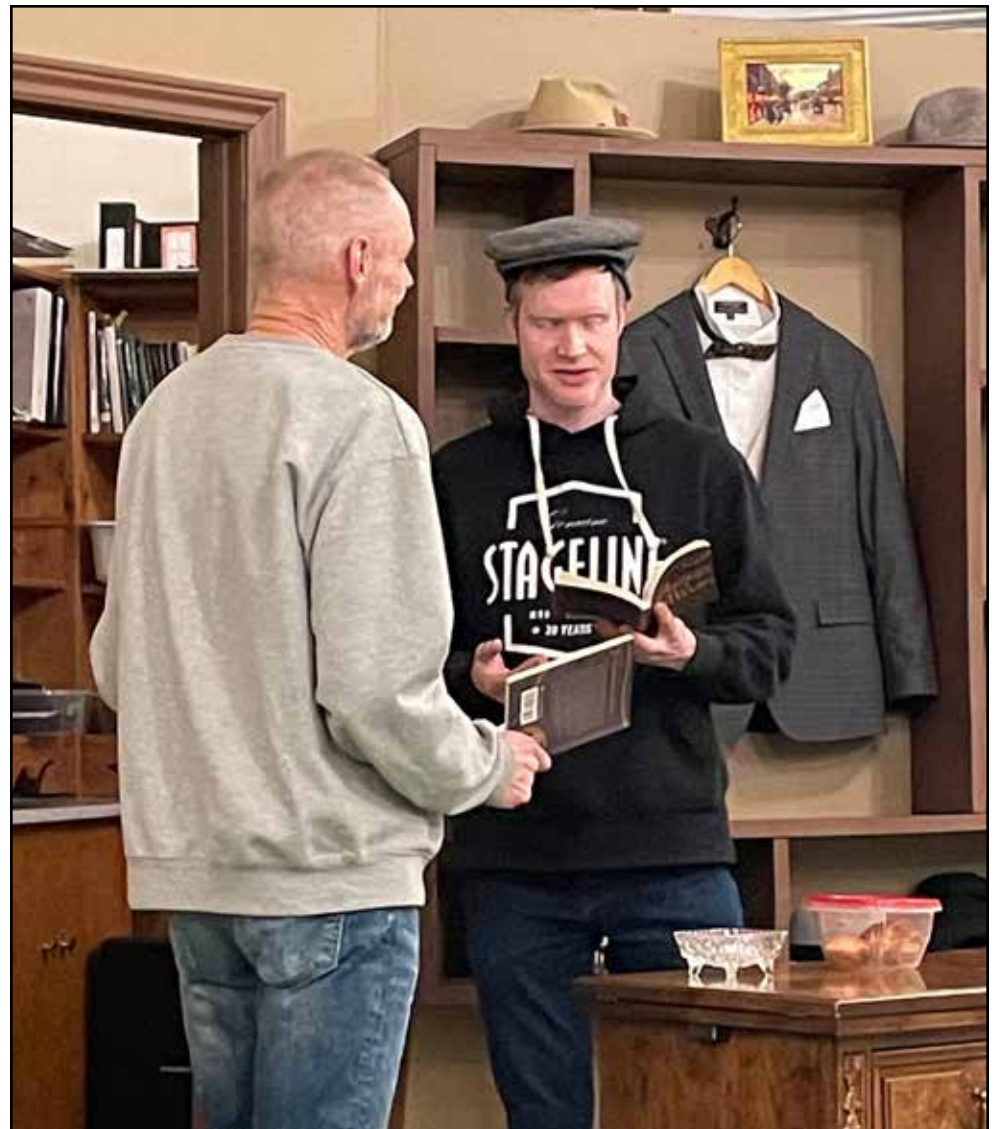
In addition to onstage roles, Theatre Wellesley has lots of opportunities to volunteer behind the scenes to bring the plays to life.

## MIKE HARRIS

MPP Kitchener-Conestoga

Thank you to those who help make our community great!

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[mikeharrismpp.ca](http://mikeharrismpp.ca)




Theatre Wellesley is always looking for actors to perform in their shows, including the upcoming spring production, *The Gentleman Clothier*.



# Where would we be without volunteers?

**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

By Galen Simmons



In the course of our everyday lives, between work and family, it can be easy to forget how fortunate we are to live the communities we call home. Unlike many places in the world, most of us have everything we need to live happy, healthy and productive lives.

But why is that? Have you ever stopped to think about how a community provides for its residents? Sure, local government does its part in keeping critical services running, and the business com-

munity ensures we have access to the products and services we need (or think we need), but what about everything else – all those little things that, together, create the quality of life we have come to expect?

The answer to that question is, undoubtedly, volunteers; the people who give their time and energy to improve their communities and provide for friends, neighbours and total strangers without a second thought or the expectation of compensation.

And the evidence is everywhere.

I stepped outside the other day and noticed the trash that had piled up over the winter around the municipal drain down the street and in the playground just around the corner had all been cleaned up. Volunteers did that.

I then had to drive to the hospital for an appointment. Though I'm not great with directions – especially when I'm indoors – a woman with a wonderfully reassuring smile helped me figure out where I was going. And when I got there, a kind man pointed me in the direction of the reception desk, where I was able to check in. They were volunteers.

As I was driving home, I noticed new trees had been planted along the roadside, not only bringing some added natural beauty to my drive but potentially protecting drivers from the reduced visibility of blowing snow in the winter once they're fully grown. Volun-

teers did that.

I passed a school along the way and saw local farmers delivering fresh eggs and milk for the school's breakfast program – a program that ensures all students have the best start to their days, regardless of what's going on at home. Those farmers weren't being paid for their time or their product. They are volunteers. They do it for the good of the community.

That evening, I stopped at a local church to enjoy a community meal. Together with people from all walks of life – some of whom only get this single opportunity each week to break bread with others in the community – we ate, we talked and we laughed, enjoying each other's company and the wonderful meal cooked and served by volunteers, and paid for with donations.

After dinner, I enjoyed a concert in the park. The music, played by a community concert band, was

the perfect cap to my day, and I didn't have to lift a finger or pay a cent to sit and listen to it. The musicians and everyone who set up the concert and cleared the park afterward were volunteers.

Now, think for a moment what it would be like if we lived in a community where everyone just looked after themselves and their families, where people didn't feel the need to give back to the place they call home in whatever way they could.

The theme for National Volunteer Week this year, April 19-25, is "ignite volunteerism." To me, that's a call to action. Let's recognize all the wonderful things volunteers do that benefit our communities, share their stories far and wide and lead by example. Let's keep that spirit of volunteerism alive and well this week and every week by giving back to our communities and not asking anything in return.

## HAPPY VOLUNTEER WEEK!

Thank you to all the volunteers who selflessly donate their time at the agency.



**"Volunteering is at the very core of being a human. No one has made it through life without someone else's help."**  
 – Heather French Henry

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## Tavistock Minor Hockey celebrates two longtime volunteers

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

It has become an annual event in Tavistock to hold a coaches and volunteer dinner at the end of a long hockey season, but this year's event might just have held a bit more importance.

Two longtime executive members, Arnie Schwartztruber and Paul Matresky, were honoured for their combined 70-plus years of service.

Schwartztruber started coaching about 50 years ago in Tavistock, then decided to become an executive member, where he attended various league meetings and was the official Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) representative for decades.

He has seen a tremendous number of changes in minor hockey, but at this point, he doesn't feel the sport is going in the right direction.

"The OMHA is great with saying 'Hometown Hockey,' but when you open the borders, kids are going and coming from all over the place. We lost local goalies this season at U11, U13 and U15 to play somewhere else. We had to bring in kids from elsewhere to fill the holes."

Schwartztruber added the OMHA, in his mind, wants any level of hockey below AAA, AA or A to become local league.

"Maybe the kids playing at the B level hockey aren't as skilled, but they still play hard at their level and deserve to be recognized."

Matresky, who has done just about everything there is to do at the association, including refereeing and being the treasurer, also doesn't like the direction minor hockey is taking in the province and recalled a game where Tavistock hosted a team from Stirling about a dozen years ago for an OMHA Playdown game.

"I walked into the rink with a guy who asked what was going on at the school



(LEE GRIFFI PHOTO)

**Paul Matresky, left, and Arnie Schwartztruber, right, were honoured at last week's Tavistock Minor Hockey volunteer banquet for their decades of service to the association.**

because there were so many cars. I said there was a hockey game going on, and he said there can't be that many people in Tavistock to watch a minor hockey game."

Matresky said they parted ways but met up with the gentleman at the end of the second period.

"He said when he refereed AAA in Guelph, the parents were the only ones watching, maybe about 30 people. Our barn was packed that day, and I said this is what small-town hockey is all about. This is a regular occurrence here."

He added registration numbers in Tavistock are strong, and if kids leave, they leave.

"At the end of the day, a lot of kids who left here look back and realize they had it pretty good here."

Matresky remembered a night timekeeping decades ago when Paul Kablfleisch,

one of the town's most talented players ever, was playing what was then called midget hockey when a referee asked him why the hell he was playing in a small town.

"I said he wants to play with his friends. That's what it's all about. Ninety per cent of the kids just want to play with their buddies and have fun."

Matresky added the loss of the Additional Entry, or AE program, has also hurt players' development in smaller centres.

"It was a stepping stone and a training ground for kids to move up to rep hockey. They've done away with that over the years, and I'm with Arnie, they have this idea that AAA is where it's at."

He added another former executive member, Grant Hutcheson, said several years ago this is the end of minor hockey in Ontario.

"Unfortunately, he was right."

Minor hockey president Brad Witzel said volunteers are the backbone of any non-profit organization.

"To run an organization of our size takes a lot of volunteers, so this is something we have been doing as long as I have been here. It's a way to get everyone together to say thank you. We need coaches, trainers, managers and everyone behind the scenes to keep our operation going."

Witzel added he and the rest of the hockey community are well aware of the efforts of longtime volunteers like Schwartztruber and Matresky.

"That level of service and dedication is hard to replicate. It is getting harder and harder to find volunteers, so on one hand, we're so lucky to have people like that, but we need to encourage the next generation to get involved."

Witzel said the organization has volunteer recruitment on the radar, something that is not an easy proposition.

"People have less time to give back, but if you are in a position to, it's very rewarding and we have a great group here."

Tavistock Minor Hockey's annual general meeting is set for Wednesday, May 6, which is a perfect opportunity for new volunteers to step up.

"Some are considering putting their hat in again while others may be moving on with where they are in their lives, but we are always looking for help, whether it's coaches, board members, or a dedicated parent committee doing our fundraising."

One misconception is minor hockey organizations only offer volunteer positions to parents of players, something Witzel couldn't be further from the truth.

"Arnie and Paul, their kids are long through the system. Paul has a grandchild now playing, so it's come full circle for them, and we have a great group of coaches who are non-parents."

## Wellesley Fall Fair offering plenty of volunteer opportunities, flexibility

EMILY STEWART

Gazette Reporter

The Wellesley Fall Fair will be offering lots of flexible options for volunteers with a new sign-up system.

Mary Litchy-Neeb, secretary-treasurer of the Wellesley-North Easthope Agricultural Society, said during the last conference for the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS), the Wellesley Fall Fair board learned more people would rather see what's available and pick and choose what they'd like to do.

The new system, being developed by volunteer coordinator Christine Hayter, will provide plenty of options so anyone

interested in volunteering can look at what positions they're interested in and apply online. Volunteers will also have a chance to sign up for whatever two-to-three-hour time slots work best for them.

"We know that some people can give more time and some people, maybe three hours is what will fit into their time schedule and they feel valued by saying, 'I can go for those two or three hours. I can't do a full weekend. I was able to help them for two hours,'" Litchy-Neeb said.

There are plenty of ways to get involved with the Wellesley Fall Fair, including ticketing, recording information for the Horse Show and setting up equipment. The fair will also need volunteers to lead

exhibitors to their designated spot within the complex.

"When walking and carrying some baking and carrying some veggies and carrying your artwork, it's going to be little different spots, so we need volunteers to help them get to those spots," said Litchy-Neeb.

The Wellesley Fall Fair will also need volunteers to help with recording the judging results and the Horse Show results, as well as providing refreshments such as water to those watching the Horse Show. Prior to the event, volunteers are needed to review prize lists.

Litchy-Neeb added volunteers are essential to the Wellesley Fall Fair operations.

"Without any volunteers, nothing's

going to happen. If the community wants the things, we need the people to put a large or small amount of time in to make those things successful," she said. "There's a core group of us that do a lot of the planning with the board of directors, but we need the other people to make a success and make it fun for everybody to come."

The 173rd annual fall fair will return to the Bill Gies Recreational Centre on Aug. 28 and 29. More information about the fair can be found online by visiting [wellesleynehfallfair.ca](http://wellesleynehfallfair.ca). Anyone looking to get involved with the fair can send an email to [wellesleyfallfair@gmail.com](mailto:wellesleyfallfair@gmail.com) or call 519-504-6761.

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**CIVIL ACTION MONTH** **IGNITE VOLUNTEERISM**

# Middle Grand Chapter of Freshwater Conservation Canada wins Oxford Stewardship Award

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE STAFF

thewtgazette@gmail.com

Local volunteers were recently recognized for environmental leadership and restoring cold-water habitat along Horner's Creek in Oxford County.

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan presented the 2025 Oxford Stewardship Award to the Middle Grand Chapter of Freshwater Conservation Canada this morning, honouring their contributions to land improvement and sustainability.

The Middle Grand Chapter of Freshwater Conservation Canada, a passionate volunteer group, unites behind a vision to renew and protect the health and biodiversity of cold-water tributaries along the Middle Grand River.

Over the past three years, the Middle Grand chapter has planted over 2,000

trees along a stretch of Horner's Creek in Oxford County, between 8th and 10th Concession, just outside of Bright. The group pursues a simple goal: healthier water. Cool, flowing water equals healthy water. By planting trees, they create a buffer around the stream, reduce runoff and sediment, and, as the trees mature, provide shade that helps keep water temperatures down.

With support from the Oxford Clean Water Program, the group furthered these efforts by organizing a community planting event at a farm property along Horner's Creek last spring, where 250 potted and bareroot trees were added. The chapter collaborated closely with the Grand River Conservation Authority, Enbridge and local landowners, who provided access to their properties to assist with tree planting

and the implementation of this project.

Three short-listed candidates were finalists for the award, chosen from a pool of projects supported by the Clean Water Program. The program, funded by Oxford County and administered by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Grand River Conservation Authority, promotes water quality improvement and woodland and wetland conservation and enhancement. The finalists undertook various land improvements this year to protect the local environment.

Oxford County is honouring this year's Oxford Stewardship Award recipient with a \$500 gift certificate to purchase original artwork commissioned from an Oxford County artist of their choice or an experience at a local destination featured through Tour Oxford. In addition to this prize, the Middle Grand Chapter has been added to the recognition wall at the Oxford County administration building, designed to honour all past and future recipients of the Oxford Stewardship Award.

The winner of the Oxford Stewardship Award is chosen by representatives of local stewardship organizations, with Marinda Gras of the Soil & Crop Improvement Association and Cher Sprague of Stewardship Oxford leading the judging process.

The Oxford Stewardship Award recipient is chosen by Stewardship Oxford and the Oxford Soil & Crop Improvement Association from the pool of projects that received financial

and/or technical assistance through the County-supported Clean Water Program the previous year.

The Clean Water Program, administered by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Grand River Conservation Authority, with direct funding contributions from the county, helps to fund and support the conservation and enhancement of natural heritage resources in Oxford County.

In 2025, a total of 42 Clean Water Program projects were funded in Oxford County. This reflected over \$348,400 in total project value and \$214,700 in grants. Oxford County committed \$140,000 to the program. Technical guidance for most of these projects was provided by the conservation authorities with a number of partners providing funding support.

The Oxford Stewardship Award was established in 2009 to recognize county landowners who have made outstanding contributions to protecting natural heritage, such as woodlands, wetlands, streams and meadows and builds on the legacy of the former Landsaver Award, which was awarded between 1982 and 2003. The current stewardship award acknowledges the vital role that all landowners can play in preserving and enhancing the county's natural environment.

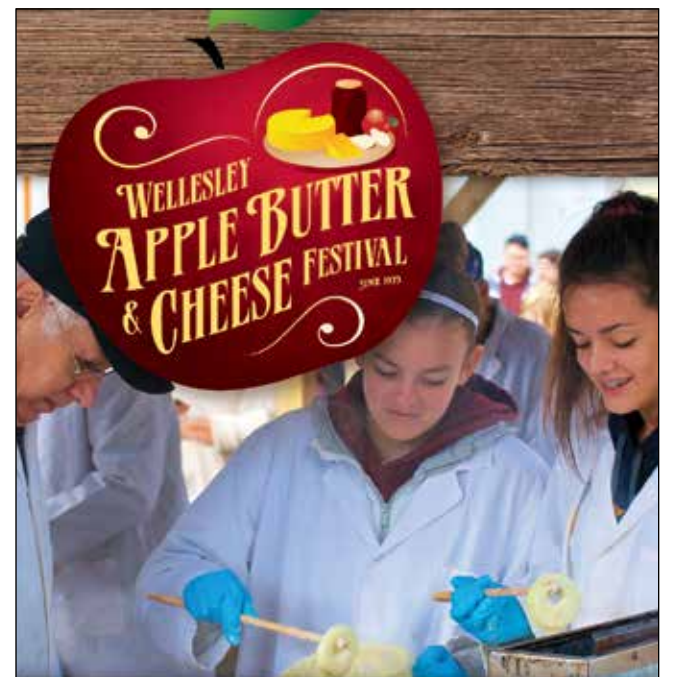


(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Pictured from left to right are Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan, Middle Grand president Hajnal Kovacs, Middle Grand project director Scott Puillandre, Gord Ross and director of community planning for Oxford County Paul Michiels.



Pictured from left to right are Hanne Yager from Oxford County, Cher Sprague of Stewardship Oxford, Middle Grand president Hajnal Kovacs, Middle Grand project director Scott Puillandre and Louise Heyming of the Grand River Conservation Authority.



**Thank You Volunteers!**

We couldn't do it without you.

Interested in helping? Sign up today at [wellesleybcfestival.ca/volunteer](http://wellesleybcfestival.ca/volunteer)

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# Busy schedules, time constraints can limit volunteering commitments

EMILY STEWART

Gazette Reporter

Volunteers are the backbone of many organizations, but not everyone is available to commit for the long term or outside of their personal schedule.

The New Hamburg Lions Club is able to recruit plenty of volunteers for their events in New Hamburg and Wellesley Township just for the day of, but finding long-term volunteers who are involved with the planning is more difficult.

"Once the event itself is organized, we can have volunteers who look after things," said Paul Mackie, head of membership at the Lions Club. "What we're finding is it's difficult to find volunteers who not only want to participate in an event that suits their motivations, but also to come back to the club and help organize other events and take on the responsibilities."

Mackie said that the variety of events available, from a social perspective, and the busy schedules of today's families make it difficult to recruit longtime

members committing to the bi-monthly Lions meetings. He's been a member for 30 years and said that back in the day, there wasn't too much to do after returning home from work.

"Nowadays, life has changed, life is very, very different. You've got moms and dads both going to hockey games with the kids three days a week. You've got moms and dads going to soccer practices or you've got three kids and two of them are going in this direction, one's going the other direction. That didn't exist years ago," Mackie said.

Carol Massel, a longtime volunteer since the late '60s, loves being able to give back to the community through Lions Club initiatives. She also said there are fewer long-term volunteers doing the planning, organizing and other administrative duties leading up to the events than there are those volunteering the day of the event.

"It always seems that there are a certain core of the organization that do a lot of the volunteering," she said.

The Wilmot and Wellesley Resource

Centre (WWRC) has plenty of volunteer opportunities to support events and initiatives like free clothing drives, foodbanks, special events, sitting as a board and/or sub-committee member, and programming. Trisha Robinson, executive director, said that volunteerism at the resource centre has remained the same over time, but that commitment can fluctuate seasonally.

"There are certain periods during the year like our holiday hampers; we have more volunteers applying then than we have spaces for and some of the volunteers are only available after hours and on weekends. Usually, staff don't work on weekends so we can't fill some of those requests," Robinson said.

Robinson said after the initial interview and screening, the WWRC will try to find a position that best matches each volunteer's schedule. If a volunteer cannot commit to the times the centre has available, the centre will seek out other opportunities from other organizations that may better fit their schedule. Still, the volunteers keep the WWRC running.

"We couldn't survive without our volunteers, and we can do so much more with

volunteers and that's one of my strategies is to bolster the volunteer roster," she said. "For instance, if we lost funding on one of our departments, we could rely on volunteers so we don't have to shut the program down. Volunteers play an integral part in the programming and the amount of people we can serve."

Mackie said regardless of whether someone is volunteering for a day, a week, a month, or years, those depending on their efforts need to acknowledge them and express gratitude for their help either through a thank-you card or a shout-out in an email.

"Try and recognize them," he said. "Don't let too much time go by if they were there and they helped out and they showed up on time. This could be young people, old people, students, that type of thing; just a thank you, some kind of recognition goes a long way."

Anyone interested in becoming involved with the Lions Club can send an email to Mackie at paulmackie@swencolimited.com. To inquire about WWRC volunteer opportunities, send an email to Robinson at info@wilmotwellesleyrc.ca.

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(PHOTO COURTESY OF TRISHA ROBINSON)

The Wilmot and Wellesley Resource Centre has plenty of volunteer opportunities available, including serving lunches.

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER  
WEEK APRIL 19-25**

**20  
26**

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**26**  
INTERNATIONAL  
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YEAR 2026



## Royals thankful for senior team volunteers

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

The Tavistock Royals have been a consistent, high-performing team in the former Western Ontario Athletic Association (WOAA) Senior Hockey League and now the Ontario Elite Hockey League (OEHL) under the umbrella of the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA).

Either way, the team's president is well aware of how important its volunteers are, not only to the success but also to the survival of the team.

"The Royals are a community-owned, not-for-profit organization, which means without volunteers, we could not operate. We're grateful to have a strong executive team of dedicated volunteers who are all equally committed to the success of our program," said Royals president Kyle Wynette.

Anyone who has been to a Royals home game or one of their games on the road can blatantly see how many people it takes to run the show.

"We have volunteers working as coaches, trainers and equipment for our on-ice activities, while others perform roles like door/tickets, bartending, timekeeping, announcing, treasurer, secretary, sponsorship, meal prep, promotion and social media. It's quite surprising when I add all the names up, but we have 28 volunteers who help run this club, which is essentially one volunteer per carded player," Wynette said.

Tavistock has had so many longtime volunteers, most recognizable around town. Wynette said the longstanding volunteers are the heart of the team.

"One volunteer has been here since day one. I'm sure there are others, but that's Ken 'Tooke' Zehr, who founded the club back in 1982. Tooke is always eager to talk



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

**Top row (left to right): Grant Meadows, Marti van Griensven, Pauline Bender and John Bender. Bottom row (left to right): Heidi Danen, Rodney Ramseyer, Jack Danen and Cletus Ditner are among the many dedicated volunteers who help keep the Tavistock Royals running both on and off the ice, playing vital roles behind the scenes of the community-owned club.**

about the Royals. His love for the team flows through everyone he meets. 'Big' John Bender is another long-serving member, having served as an equipment helper for decades."

Wynette said Bender often arrives at the rink several hours before puck drop, getting the room ready and anxiously awaiting the arrival of the players and staff.

"Our treasurer, Heidi Danen, is another dedicated volunteer, and I can't tell you how much we value her role on the team. Often unseen is the work she does behind the scenes, resupplying the Blueline Club, balancing the books and never asking for help. She always ensures we're ready to go for our next home game. When she's not managing the Blueline, Heidi has one

of the most important jobs, making sure our accounts remain healthy and the club is on firm financial footing for the years to come," Wynette said.

He added there are so many examples of things the team's volunteers do behind the scenes, and the players appreciate their efforts and all they do to help behind the scenes.

"We're lucky to have some new blood join our executive over recent years. With new members come new ideas, and with that comes ways we can make our club better and more successful. For all our dedicated volunteers, there's not a day that goes by they aren't thinking about the team or being excited for what the future holds."

Despite the team being able to keep

long-term helpers, there's always room for new ones.

"We're always looking for new volunteers to help with our program. We're fortunate that we operate in a great community full of selfless people who recognize the importance of giving back to the community they live in. We welcome anyone who wants to join our team, whether they want to help on ice or off. I guarantee that if you have a skill set to offer, we will find a role for you," said Wynette.

"I know I don't say it enough, but I can't thank our volunteers enough for all that they do. The Royals are a second family for all of us. From the top to the bottom of the organization, we all bleed Royals blue."

## Wilmot seeks volunteers for annual Canada Day celebration

AMANDA NELSON

Gazette Reporter

Wilmot's annual Canada Day event takes place July 1 and features a range of family-friendly activities.

The event will be organized this year by Township of Wilmot staff but also relies on community volunteers to bring it to life.

"Volunteers play a critical role in bringing the event to fruition; we truly could not do it without them," said Lacey Smith, supervisor of recreation programs at the township. "They are the people power behind the event and are involved at every stage, from planning to implementation."

The event includes an Indigenous sunrise

ceremony, live music, games, inflatables, vendors, food and a fireworks display once the sun goes down.

Smith says working with the township to bring the Canada Day celebrations to life offers a sense of connection to the community and a way to connect with others in the area.

"Volunteering for Canada Day gives residents an opportunity to give back to their community," said Smith. "It inspires a sense of purpose and pride, builds connections with family, friends and neighbours, and most importantly, it's fun."

Vendors, community groups and organizations are also invited to promote their offerings at the event each year. Those

with local crafts and goods can apply on the website to showcase their small businesses at the Canada Day celebrations.

There will also be seven food trucks this year, with four food and three dessert trucks based on space and layout.

Though the township is working to bring the event together, officials say they wouldn't be able to do it without their local volunteer base.

"Our volunteers play a key role in making sure the event truly reflects what our community wants and needs," said Smith. "We rely on their support to deliver this event each year, so continuing to build our volunteer base and maintain positive, respectful relationships is essential to its

ongoing success."

Volunteer roles include attendants for parking, the gate, the kids' zone, youth zone, dunk tank and inflatables. Shifts range from four to six hours, beginning at 12:30 p.m. until the fireworks display in the evening.

Volunteers of all ages are welcome to connect with the township regarding Canada Day opportunities.

"We are offering some family volunteer opportunities this year with our gate attendants and in both the kids' and youth zones," Smith said.

Anyone interested in volunteering can apply at [www.wilmot.ca](http://www.wilmot.ca) under events in the recreation and culture section.

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER  
WEEK APRIL 19-25**

**20  
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# Keeping hockey players safe one game at a time

## Longtime team bus driver reflects on driving the Braves

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Bruce Schwartzentruber has had a big responsibility since 2018 – making sure young men get to and from junior hockey games safely.

He drove big rigs for over 30 years at Erb Transport after starting his career at Yantzi Feed and Seed.

“The first year (driving) the Braves, I split it with Dave Zehr from Topping, but he was busy farming in the fall and I kept on going from there. I haven’t missed too many games, but Cletus Ditner has filled in once or twice, and I’ve filled in for him too for the Royals.”

Schwartzentruber drove a transport truck for a living, and his brother-in-law, Steve Hohl, has been a part of the Braves for decades, and he just happened to know he still had his Class A license.

“He asked me, and I said I would like to consider it because at that time, the Humboldt Broncos tragedy was still fresh in the media, but I said yes. I’m glad I did and the kids have been wonderful. It’s been a good run, but I am going to be 75 before next season.”

Besides focusing on driving to other Doherty Division cities, he said the job has been pretty easy.

“I have enjoyed the friendships with the kids. They were always polite and I have never had to pick up after them. When we get home from a road game, it doesn’t take much to clean up for the next one because they know where the trash bucket is.”

He added the players were always helpful when it came to loading and unloading the bus.

“Sometimes I would start loading the bus, but when the kids showed up, they would take over. Same thing with unloading.”

Schwartzentruber said his worst memory was driving home from a game in Wellesley where the road conditions weren’t ideal.

“The road was covered in snow, I couldn’t see the lines, but other than that, it’s been pretty easy.”

And yes, he made sure the team was home safe and sound in Tavistock. He added this year has been special thanks to the Braves’ deep Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) run. While he wouldn’t predict the outcome of the current series, he expects a close one.

“I just read the Gazette this morning about both teams, and it should be a close series, just like Woodstock and Dundas were. We’ll see which way the puck bounces.”

While he won’t be travelling to many of the team’s road games in the future, Schwartzentruber said he’ll be around the arena.

“I think I’ll just be going to watch; not as many away games. This past winter, I thought a few times it would be nice to stay home, but once I got going, I was fine.”

When asked what he would miss the most about stepping away from his role behind the wheel, he said he’ll miss the kids most.

“I will miss everything, especially the kids. I should also mention that Paul Brenneman has spoiled me for years. When it’s snowy and cold for an away game, he’d park it in his shop before I got there.”

Brenneman’s farm is located just south of Tavistock on Highway 59.

“Bruce is one of the most kind-hearted human beings in the world,” said Braves general manager Brent Lange.

“His dedication and commitment to the organization and the community are absolutely amazing. He has served in many roles over the years with the Braves, even dating back to 1969-1970 as a player, and



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TAVISTOCK BRAVES)

**Bruce Schwartzentruber recently took his last ride as the official Tavistock Braves team bus driver. Last weekend, he was able to enjoy being a passenger on a coach bus instead.**

he was the general manager when we won the junior D championship in 1982-1983. He was also the best driver you could ever ask for.”

Schwartzentruber’s volunteerism doesn’t stop with hockey. He has been a member of the Tavistock Optimist Club and a board member at Tavistock Community Health for years.

“I can’t say enough good things about Bruce. The players, the staff and former players just love him. You know it says a lot when you see former players at our current games who ask where Brucey is and chat with him. That speaks volumes about how much we and they all love him,” Lange said.

“The boys love him, we all love him and will miss seeing his smile as we got onto the bus and off the bus and having him cheering us on during the games.”

Lange added he has a special connection with Swartzentruber.

“The 1982-1983 team was playing when I was born, and my father, Steve Hohl, and

Terry Quehl were all on the team as players. Now with myself as the GM, Steve as president and Terry on the executive, us winning the Doherty and South Conference Championships with Bruce a part of it is amazing.”

Current head coach and former player Zac Berg said “Brucey” always showed up with a smile and got the team to and from the games safely.

“His dedication to this team has been amazing and he is a part of this team and past teams just as much as anybody else. I just want to thank him for all of his hard work. Everyone appreciates it, and it doesn’t go unseen. He will be missed, but I am sure he will still see him around the rink.”

Schwartzentruber’s time with the Braves has come to an end, at least as a driver, but he was more than happy to ride on the coach bus to Lakeshore for Game 1 of the series.

“I have really enjoyed it, or I would have never done it this long,” he said.

## Volunteering makes our community stronger!

For National Volunteer Week and all year long, let's appreciate all the amazing work volunteers do.



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# Piecemakers Quilt Show returns to St. Marys this weekend

## Stitching together tradition and creativity

LYNNE GODKIN  
*Submitted to the Gazette*

Quilting enthusiasts, art lovers and community members alike should make plans for this weekend as the Huron Perth and Stonetowne Quilt Guilds present the highly anticipated Piecemakers Quilt Show taking place over three days from April 23-25 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in St. Marys.

Established in 1994, the show celebrates the timeless art of quilting while showcasing the innovation and passion of today's quiltmakers. The upcoming show promises to bring together a stunning array of traditional patterns, modern designs and everything in between with over 300 quilts and other quilted items crafted by our Quilt Guild members ranging from hand-stitched heirlooms to contemporary textile art.

There's something magical about seeing hundreds of hours of work stitched into a single quilt and each piece tells a story about the maker, the fabric and the tradition it carries forward. Visitors can expect to see a wide variety of styles, including patchwork, appliqué, paper piecing, plus national award-winning quilts

from the recent Canadian National Juried Show at Quilt Canada 2025 in Toronto. The Guild members are an accomplished group with exceptional talent.

In addition to the quilt exhibit, the show will include a Merchant's Mall, a Boutique and a luncheon/tearoom. Come for the day and take some time to explore the beautiful town of St. Marys. In addition to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, St. Marys boasts beautiful walking and hiking trails that take in the lovely rural landscape, as well as a vibrant main street where one might also spot some heirloom quilts in downtown store windows.

Whether a seasoned quilter, a beginner, or simply curious, this show is a wonderful opportunity to be inspired. Organizers hope people walk away not just with admiration, but with ideas and a deeper appreciation for the craft.

The event is being held Thursday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, April 24, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre at 317 James St. S, St. Marys. The cost is \$10 admission, with cash only accepted.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Local St. Marys quilters (from left) Wendy Anderson, Joan Robinson and Darlene Roger recently won national awards at the 2025 Quilt Canada National Juried Show in Toronto. Their award-winning quilts will be on display at the 2026 Piecemakers Quilt Show, running April 23-25 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in St. Marys.

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# OBITUARY

## PELLOW: Edward Thomas



Passed away peacefully on Sunday, April 19, 2026 at Sakura House Woodstock. Edward Pellow of Tavistock was in his 85th year as he was born on Friday, June 13th, 1941.

Beloved husband of Susan (Bennett) Pellow

whom he married September 1, 1961. Dear father of David & Stacey Pellow of the Cayman Islands, John & Gail Pellow of Fonthill and Glen Pellow of Tavistock. Sadly missed by his grandchildren Adam & Jackie Pellow, Alexandra Pellow-Bartlett & Dan Bartlett, Matthew Pellow, Katelyn Pellow & Matthew Ellis, Meghan Pellow, Brock Pellow and by great grandchildren Logan, Maverick, Cooper and Snow Pellow-Bartlett. Survived by his brother Fred of Goderich.

Predeceased by his parents Thomas & Vera (Tabor) Pellow, mother & father inlaw Dora (Purchase) & George Bennett, sisters and brother Elsie & Wayne Bartondale, Lila & Keith Roberts, Leonard and Carol Pellow, Doris & Mac Elliot, sister-in-law Mary Pellow and two sons in infancy..

Edward thoroughly enjoyed time with family as he and Susan were inseparable all around Tavistock in his retirement. The outdoors were always part of Ed's life in many ways from the early days of walking and hunting in the Sweaburg Swamp on which the family farm backed onto to birdwatching and carving.

Ed started his career at Beaver Lumber rising up the management ladder in the late 1950s in Alymer & Sarnia and then in the early 1960s in Whitby and Ottawa. Then, Ed was hired first as Asst. Secretary on January 1st, 1965, then as Manager of South Easthope Farmer's Fire Mutual Insurance Company. He retired on June 30th, 2003 after nearly 39 years of service. He introduced many advancements and innovations during his tenure and actively contributed to the Canadian mutual insurance system. To this day, he remains the only individual to have served as Chair of the Ontario Mutual Insurance Association (OMIA), Chair of the Farm Mutual Reinsurance Plan (FMRP), and the first Chair of the Canadian Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (CAMIC). Ed was awarded the Presidential Merit Award by the OMIA. Ed developed and innovated early Mutual Insurance software from learning to program to leading the development team which this software from the late 1980's continues to manage and operate many mutual insurance companies throughout Canada today. Ed was well known in the Mutual Insurance Industry as he taught many agents to prepare for their licensing exam after co-writing the curriculum in the 1970's. Ed and Susan were the instigators of the purchase, restoration & return to Tavistock of the original 1926 Tavistock Fire Department's Model T firetruck by South Easthope Mutual Insurance Company.

Ed was a strong community supporter by his participation in many organizations in the Tavistock Area including President and Founding Member of the Tavistock Rod & Gun Club, Tavistock Library Board, Member of Tavistock Recreation Board, Chairman and Member of Knox United Church, Grace United Adult Fellowship, Master of Tavistock Lodge No. 609 (1980) and received his 50 Year Pin, coached Tavistock Minor Hockey & Baseball, Chair & Board Member of Tavistock & District Historical Society, Member of Tavistock Legion No. 518, Pan-American Torch Bearer (2015), Member of Tavistock Men's Club and faithful Member of Grace United Church.

A Celebration of Ed's life will take place in Zion Hall at Grace United Church on Sunday, April 26, 2026 from 1-4pm. A private family burial and service will take place at the Woodstock Anglican Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Sakura House or Tavistock's Assistance Program (TAP) would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be shared at [www.gffh.ca](http://www.gffh.ca)

Funeral arrangements entrusted to the Francis Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock.

# OBITUARY

## HEROLD: Dianne Edna



Passed away suddenly at her home on Thursday, April 16, 2026. Dianne Herold of Shakespeare in her 76th year.

Dear sister of Marjorie & John Mason of Kingston, Chuck & Kathryn Ann Herold of RR#4 Stratford, Shirley & David Wilhelm of Shakespeare and Janet Herold of Stratford.

Survived by her sister-in-law Mary Ann Herold of Stratford, aunt and uncle Elaine & Gerry

Mohr of Stratford, by her 8 nieces and nephews and 21 great nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by her parents Howard (1974) and Verna (Mohr) (2021) Herold, brothers William (1969) and Harvey (2021).

Dianne was a member of Grace United Church in Tavistock and formerly Lingelbach United Church. She was active church member serving on worship and session committees. She enjoyed watching her Maple Leafs. She was also a big supporter of watching baseball, hockey, soccer and skating. Dianne had a long career of playing softball and then once done playing, coached softball for many more years.

Relatives and friends will be received in the Francis Chapel of the Glendinning Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Monday from 2-4 and 6-8pm. Funeral service will be conducted in the Grace United Church, Tavistock on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 11:00am. Interment to follow in Lingelbach Cemetery. Reception to follow at Grace United Church.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Shakespeare Community Athletic Association or the Grace United Church would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be shared at [www.gffh.ca](http://www.gffh.ca)



by PeterS 2026

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**QUIZ TIME**  
BY JAKE GRANT

1. What is the dot over the letter "i" called?
2. What is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea?
3. Which country has won the most World Cups?
4. What pizza flavour was famously invented in Canada?
5. What was the original name of the search engine "Google"?
6. Where is the strongest human muscle located?
7. What is the only food that can never go bad?
8. What is the only mammal capable of true flight?
9. What was the first toy advertised on television?
10. True or false - The color orange is named after the fruit.

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.*

**April 13-20, 2016, Edition (10 years ago)**

The Grade 1 class of Mrs. Michelle Nahrgang at Tavistock Public School has been touring the village to find out more about businesses and the community. The community visits are part of their social studies curriculum this semester. The class took a nature walk on Friday, April 1, around the village to see trees and animals native to the area. They visited Mike's Valumart grocery store on Tuesday morning, April 5, and then The Maples Home for Seniors on Friday, April 8. They will learn how pizzas are made on Friday, April 29, when they visit New Orleans Pizza.

The Ontario StarSkate Provincial Championships were held in Sudbury March 18-20, 2016. Pier Nauta is the Star 5 Men's provincial gold medalist. Together with his partner, Shannon Woods, they were bronze provincial medalists in Senior Bronze Dance. Woods sakes with the Thamesford skating club and Nauta with the Plattsville skating club.

Players and executives of the Tavistock Royals WOAA Senior AA Hockey Club held their annual awards night and banquet at the Tavistock Men's Club Hall on Saturday evening, April 16, 2016. Special recognition was given to retiring head coach Ben Ruthig after being with the Royals as a player and then as a coach for the past 11 years. Ried Yantzi was honoured for 10 years on the team and assistant coach Brent Lange was also presented with a gift. Doris Gladding received the "biggest fan" award for her steadfast attendance at games.

**April 12-19, 2006, Edition (20 years ago)**

The sixth Agricultural Awards of Excellence took place on Thursday evening at the Oxford Auditorium. President John Gal welcomed everyone, and the

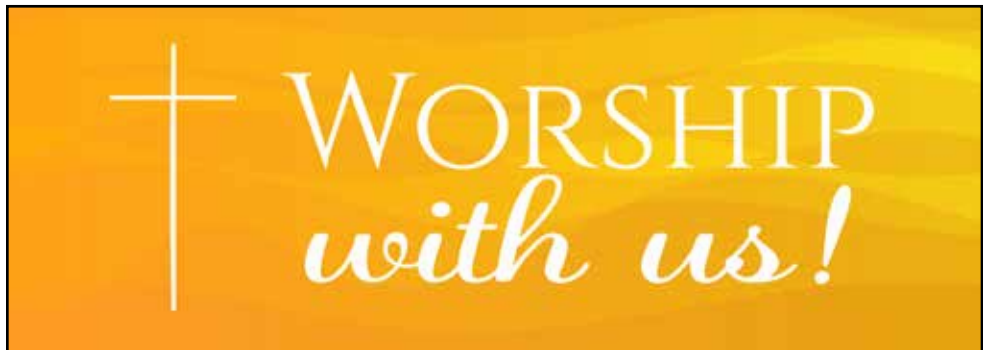
meal was catered by Rendezvous Catering of Burford. Master of ceremonies Kevin Stewart, owner of AgVision TV, hosted the event. Nancy Walther introduced the keynote speaker, Maria Van Bommell, assistant to the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Ontario minister of agriculture, food and rural affairs and president of the Rural Caucus.

It was 25 years ago that an MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) thrift shop opened in New Hamburg. Since this beginning, the work has expanded into two distinct businesses – what is now known as the Clothing and More and Furniture and More stores. Plans are in motion now to construct a new 15,600 square-foot building, starting this spring, on Heritage Drive, incorporating the two stores and workroom areas. A sod-turning ceremony is planned for Sunday, April 23, at 2 p.m. at the new site. The new building will be next to the existing thrift shop which is on land behind the Hanson Motors car dealership.

**April 16-23, Edition (40 years ago)**

The Tavistock Braves Jr. D Hockey club held their annual Awards Night and Dance last Friday, April 11, to honour the team's top achievers for the 1985-1986 season. Six trophies were presented during the evening. John Noble received the Tavistock Gazette trophy for most points (62) for the season as presented by Bill Gladding. Rob King was voted the most sportsmanlike player and received The Laverne Yantzi Memorial Trophy from Ross Yantzi.

It was Christmas in April for the Stratford General Hospital Building Fund last week. For the past 20 years, the members of the Grace United Church Adult Fellowship Group and former Knox Church group have been selling Christmas trees at Christmas time and the profits go to some worthwhile cause to whatever is in need at the time. This year, the members decided they would contribute \$300 to the Stratford hospital's campaign to raise \$17 million dollars for improvements to the hospital and the replacement of the RECU.



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# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette **SPORTS**

## Braves roar back with a come-from-behind victory to even up Schmaltz Cup semi-final

### Tavistock makes a strong statement after Game 1 loss

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

Similar to Game 1, the Tavistock Braves found themselves trailing 2-0 in the first period of Game 2 of their Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) semifinal Tuesday night, this time on home ice.

In the second game of the Schmaltz Cup semi-final series against the Lakeshore Canadiens, the Braves bounced back, earning a 5-2 win over Lakeshore to tie the series at a game apiece in front of over 500 fans at the Tavistock and District Recreation Centre.

The Canadiens jumped out to a two-goal lead just over 14 minutes into the first period, both markers coming off the stick of Vaughn Truppe.

Ethan Stover brought the Braves to within one on a powerplay two and a half minutes later, knocking in a rebound off a Keaton Bartlett point shot with Evan Palubeski earning an assist. Carter Arseneault took a tripping penalty three minutes later, but Tavistock was able to kill it off and head to the locker room trailing 2-1.

Nicholas Hambly tied it up with his first goal of the playoffs just over four minutes into the second period, a shot he blew over Canadiens goalie Boe Piroski's left shoulder on a two-on-one. Ryan McKellar and Marc Dionne earned assists on the play.

The Braves dominated the rest of the frame and took the lead on Keegan Metcalf's goal four minutes later. Ethan Stover made it 4-2 on the powerplay followed by another man-advantage goal off the stick of Carson Bernhardt, while Lakeshore's Aedan Sullivan was ejected after being assessed a five-minute major for checking Tavistock's Jacob Reid-Brant into the boards. He was helped off the ice



(ALEC RICHARD PHOTO)

**Jackson Andrews takes the puck down the wing during Game 1 of the Tavistock Braves' series against the Lakeshore Canadiens.**

and did not return.

McKellar finished with three assists while Stover added a helper to his two-goal night as Tavistock outshot Lakeshore 37-23.

Braves defenceman Jack Hodge was shaken up in the third period after taking a shot to the head in the neutral zone, an infraction missed by the officials.

Tavistock forward Yann Raskin said the entire team knew they had to step it up in order to compete with a really good opponent.

"Right after the first period, we knew we had to make some changes. We did and played Tavi hockey. We didn't do that in Game 1."

He added the game's physicality is a part of playoff hockey

"We can play physically, and we know they can. It will just come down to who works the hardest. I am not surprised this team has gotten this far and we have a team deserving of making a run."

Lakeshore head coach Brent Walker said he didn't think the series would be easy.

"We knew they would be a good team and we knew this would be a six or seven game series. We had a good start and we let off the gas, got into penalty trouble and shot ourselves in the foot a bit."

He added they were a disciplined team during the season, but emotions can get the better of any team.

"Players take liberties, but at the end of the day, we have to be better. We have to be more disciplined, and they have an excellent powerplay and we can't give them those types of opportunities."

The Braves capitalized on three of their

nine powerplay opportunities while the Canadiens went zero for four.

Eight of the current Lakeshore players have won a Schmaltz Cup and Walker said they will be ready for the pair of weekend games.

"We will bounce back and we have had to bounce back in the playoffs a couple of times. It's Game 2. These are two great teams competing, and it will be a battle the rest of the way."

The Canadiens survived a ferocious Braves comeback in Game 1 at home on Sunday, earning a 3-2 victory. Lakeshore took a 2-0 lead into the first intermission on goals from Julian Gignac and Michael Kobcok, who recorded his 15th of the playoffs. Connor Costello made it 3-0 just after the five-minute mark of the second period before Carter Arseneault gave Tavistock life six minutes later. Ryan McKellar made it 3-2 five and a half minutes afterward, but Canadiens goalie Boe Piroski shut the door the rest of the way.

Each team fired 30 shots on goal, with Lakeshore going one for four on the powerplay while Tavistock went zero for two.

Game 3 is set for Friday night in Lakeshore at 7:30 p.m., with Game 4 back in Tavistock on Sunday at 1:30 p.m.



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# Opposing mayors wager on PJHL semi-final series

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer and his counterpart from Lakeshore have agreed to a jersey bet based on the outcome of the Provincial Junior Hockey League's (PJHL) semi-final series between the Braves and the Lakeshore Canadiens.

The Gazette reached out to each mayor to provide a prediction on the series.

"Hey, Mayor Schaefer, I'm taking Lakeshore in six. Looking forward to seeing how my Canadiens jersey looks at your council meeting," said Lakeshore Mayor Tracey Bailey.

While Schaefer wouldn't offer an exact prediction, he is confident the Braves will make it to the Schmaltz Cup final against either Fergus or Frankford.

"Throughout these playoffs, the Tavi boys have been up for any challenge. They will be up for this one, too, and they will prevail."

The losing mayor will be required to wear the opposing team's jersey at the first council meeting after the series.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Lakeshore Mayor Tracey Bailey (left) and East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer (right) have placed a friendly wager on the outcome of the Provincial Junior Hockey League's (PJHL) semi-final series between the Tavistock Braves and the Lakeshore Canadiens. The losing mayor will be required to wear the winning team's jersey at their first council meeting after the series.

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<p><b>2023 Volkswagen Tiguan TRENDLINE</b></p>  <p>IQ GREAT PRICE</p> <p>AWD</p> <p><b>\$24,495 OR \$176 B/W</b></p> <p>MILEAGE - 90,849 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>	<p><b>2023 Nissan Rogue SV MOONROOF</b></p>  <p>AWD</p> <p><b>\$24,999 OR \$180 B/W</b></p> <p>LOW KMS - 59,082 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>	<p><b>2025 Toyota Corolla SE</b></p>  <p>PRICE DROP</p> <p>IQ GREAT PRICE</p> <p>FWD</p> <p><b>\$29,999 OR \$215 B/W</b></p> <p>LOW KMS - 16,111 KM +HST &amp; lic</p>		
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# Perth County agriculturalist Sheldon Hahn receives Paul Harris Fellow recognition

GARY WEST

*Gazette Correspondent*

Perth County agriculturalist and farm equipment businessman Sheldon Hahn was presented with the prestigious Paul Harris Fellow recognition during the Stratford Rotary Club's annual Rural-Urban Dinner last week.

Hahn, a prominent farmer in North Easthope and South Easthope townships, was honoured for his lifetime of service and contributions to both the agricultural community and the broader region.

The Paul Harris Fellow distinction is named after Paul Harris, founder of Rotary International in 1905. The recognition reflects Rotary's core values of service, integrity and community leadership, and is considered one of the highest honours a Rotary club can bestow.

The award is typically granted to individuals who demonstrate a commitment to helping others and improving their communities, often through quiet acts of generosity and leadership.

Hahn's contributions over the years have included providing opportunities and support to those in need.

On one occasion, he sponsored a young Dutch

couple who were new to Canada, helping them secure employment and establish themselves in their new country. The couple went on to build successful businesses in Woodstock, employing hundreds of people and contributing to the local economy.

Hahn also helped a young man struggling with alcoholism who had experienced legal difficulties and served time in the Stratford jail. Hahn made a point of driving into town each day to pick him up for work at Hahn Farms, providing steady employment and support during a difficult period in the man's life.

After the man completed his sentence, Hahn offered him a rental home near the farm, allowing him to walk to work and regain a sense of independence and stability.

Former Stratford Rotary Club president and district governor Katherine Hahn made the presentation to her father, noting his longstanding commitment to helping others and exemplifying the values represented by the Paul Harris Fellow recognition.

Sheldon Hahn, now in his 90s, received a standing ovation from those in attendance at the Rural-Urban Dinner in recognition of his contributions to the Stratford and Perth County communities.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Sheldon Hahn, right, receives the Paul Harris Fellow recognition during the Stratford Rotary Club's Rural-Urban Dinner last week. Presenting the award is his daughter, Katherine Hahn, a longtime Rotarian. Sheldon Hahn, now in his 90s, received a standing ovation in recognition of his lifetime contributions to the Stratford and Perth County communities.

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## SPRING ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE AND STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING TOWNSHIP OF WELLESLEY OFFICIAL PLAN

The Township of Wellesley is creating a new Official Plan - a roadmap that will guide land use planning in the Township to the year 2051.

TAKE NOTICE that the Township of Wellesley invites all interested persons to attend a Public Engagement Session, Public Open House and Public Meeting of Council for the purpose of providing feedback on the new draft Official Plan for the Township of Wellesley, held pursuant to Section 17(16) and Section 17(15)(d) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13, as amended.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSION**  
Wednesday, May 13, 2026  
6:30-8:30pm (presentation at 6:45pm)  
Crosshill Mennonite Church  
2537 Hutchison Road, Crosshill, ON

**STATUTORY PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE**  
Wednesday, May 27, 2026  
Drop in between 6:30-8:30pm  
Crosshill Mennonite Church  
2537 Hutchison Road, Crosshill, ON

**STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING**  
Thursday, June 18, 2026  
5:45-7:15pm  
Council Chambers  
4805 William Hastings Line, Crosshill, ON

The Township of Wellesley has released its Draft Official Plan for review. A copy of Draft Official Plan is available digitally at <https://www.engagewr.ca/official-plan>, or in person at the Township of Wellesley municipal office at 4639 Lobsinger Line, St. Clements ON N0B 2M0.



**HOW TO PARTICIPATE:**

Attend the public meeting virtually or in person. To participate virtually, please pre-register with the Township Clerk by sending an email to [aharron@wellesley.ca](mailto:aharron@wellesley.ca) before 12:00pm on June 18, 2026. All registrants will receive instructions on how to participate using the electronic platform. The Statutory Public meeting can be streamed live or after the meeting at <https://www.youtube.com/@TownshipofWellesley>.

Send written comment by mail to 4639 Lobsinger Line St. Clements ON N0B 2M0 or email to [tvanhinte@wellesley.ca](mailto:tvanhinte@wellesley.ca).

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Township of Wellesley on the proposed Official Plan, you must make a written request to the Clerk of the Corporation of the Township of Wellesley at 4639 Lobsinger Line St. Clements ON N0B 2M0 or by emailing [aharron@wellesley.ca](mailto:aharron@wellesley.ca).

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Township of Wellesley to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Township of Wellesley before the proposed Official Plan is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Township of Wellesley before the proposed official plan is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.



### WELLESLEY ARENA LANDS - WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

GSP Group has developed concept options for the future of the arena lands, and they will be presented to Council on May 12, 2026. The Township will be seeking public input on these ideas. Read more about the Arena Lands Project by scanning the QR code, or visiting: <https://www.engagewr.ca/reimaging-wellesley-arena-and-community-centre-lands>

**ONLINE ENGAGEMENT OPENS**  
May 13, 2026  
Engage Wellesley (link above)

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPEN HOUSE**  
May 19, 2026 - 6:30-8:30pm  
Bill Gies Recreation Centre

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPEN HOUSE**  
May 21, 2026 - 6:30-8:30pm  
St. Clements Community Centre

# Perth County farm groups share priorities at spring forum with MP, MPP

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) held its annual spring forum in Mitchell, bringing together local farm commodity groups with Perth-Wellington MP John Nater and MPP Matthew Rae to discuss key issues affecting the agricultural sector.

All PCFA directors volunteer their time, and the annual forum provides an opportunity for commodity representatives to share priorities directly with federal and

provincial officials.

Participating organizations included milk producers, egg farmers, beef producers, sheep farmers, chicken producers, pork producers and grain farmers, along with a presentation of the PCFA's own brief.

Each commodity group provided an overview of its sector and outlined current challenges and opportunities affecting local producers.

Newly elected PCFA president Julie McIntosh said the meeting fostered

collaboration across a wide range of agricultural sectors.

"It was a fantastic day for the commodity organizations and many diverse types of farmers coming together in one room," McIntosh said.

She noted the groups found common ground despite representing different commodities.

"They had more in common than different and had great discussions with MP John Nater and MPP Matthew Rae, as well as municipal representatives who were

also in attendance," she said.

Common concerns raised during the forum included trade, rural infrastructure, processing capacity and the availability of labour.

McIntosh emphasized the importance of continued dialogue among farm groups and government representatives.

"By working together and keeping this conversation going, we can hopefully drive solutions in the future for farmers and the safe, local food they continue to produce 365 days a year," she said.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

PCFA president Julie McIntosh thanks Perth-Wellington MP John Nater (left) and Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae for listening to concerns raised by farm organizations during the recent Spring Forum meeting in Mitchell.



Perth County Federation of Agriculture directors gather with the local MP and MPP during the recent Spring Forum meeting. Front row, from left: Laura Good (vice president), John Nater (MP Perth-Wellington), Lindsay Roosendaal, Laura Barker (executive member), Julie McIntosh (president), Ethan Wallace (OFA zone director and OFA vice president), Julie Danen and Tim Halliday. Back row, from left: Pete Nyenhuis, Ian Riddell, Matthew Rae (MPP Perth-Wellington), Eric McLagan and Gerald Kolkman.

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# Smelski family, Harvey Ische inducted onto Stratford-Perth Museum Agricultural Wall of Fame

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A farming couple from Shakespeare and a pioneering Mitchell-area dairy farmer were honoured last week with induction onto the Stratford-Perth Museum's Agricultural Wall of Fame.

The 2026 inductees were recognized during the Stratford Rotary Club's annual Rural-Urban Dinner, held April 16 at the Rotary Complex before a large crowd.

Richard and Jean Smelski were honoured for their longstanding commitment to agriculture and community service. For many years, the couple sold wagonloads of pumpkins from their farm along the Highway 7 and 8 corridor, east of Shakespeare, donating all proceeds to the Stratford General Hospital Foundation.

Their efforts raised more than \$10,000, helping sponsor a room in the cancer wing at Stratford General Hospital.

In addition to their fundraising efforts, both Richard and Jean Smelski were active volunteers with the Ontario Pork Congress, Optimist and Opti-Mrs. clubs, Probus and Friendship clubs. They also participated in humanitarian trips to Nicaragua and other developing countries to assist with school-building initiatives, reflecting a lifelong commitment to giving back.

Also inducted this year was Harvey

Ische, a Mitchell-area dairy farmer remembered for his innovation and leadership within the agricultural community. Writing under the pen name "Rusticus," Ische shared agricultural knowledge and ideas that helped advance farming practices in Perth County.

Farming on concession 3 of Ellice Township, north of Seebach's Hill, Ische and his family of seven children played an important role in introducing new technology to local dairy operations.

Among his many contributions, Ische was the first dairy farmer in Perth County to operate a milking machine powered by a vacuum pump. According to family members, neighbouring farmers travelled from miles away to observe how the technology reduced the labour required compared to milking cows by hand.

Ische also served as a school board member and was involved in planning the construction of Mitchell District High School.

John McIntosh of RR 7 St. Marys, chair of the Stratford-Perth Museum Agricultural Wall of Fame committee, announced the inductees during the Rural-Urban Dinner. McIntosh has served as committee chair for several years, helping recognize individuals who have made lasting contributions to agriculture in the region.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

From left: Stratford-Perth Museum general manager Kelly McIntosh, Jean and Richard Smelski, and committee chair John McIntosh. The Smelskis were inducted onto the Stratford-Perth Museum Agricultural Wall of Fame for their contributions to agriculture and community service.



Members of the Harvey Ische family accept the Agricultural Wall of Fame induction on behalf of their late father and grandfather. From left: Linda Winteringham (granddaughter), Wayne Ische (son), John McIntosh (committee chair) and Kelly McIntosh (Stratford-Perth Museum general manager).

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# Ontario farmers renew investment to grow local impact at farmers' markets

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

Submitted to the Gazette

Ontario farmers are continuing to invest in stronger local food connections, with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) approving funding for another year of program support to Farmers' Markets Ontario (FMO).

The OFA board has committed \$50,000 to a cost-share program delivered by FMO, building on the momentum and measurable impact achieved over the past two years. The program supports local farmers' markets in promoting Ontario-grown food and the farmers behind it, helping drive traffic, awareness and sales at markets across the province.

"Farmers' markets are one of the most direct ways Ontarians can connect with the people who grow their food," said OFA director Marnie Wood. "Continuing this program means more support for farmers who sell locally and more opportunities for consumers to choose fresh, Ontario-grown products."

This year's funding will again be delivered through a shared-cost model, with participating markets matching 50 per cent of eligible project costs, up to \$2,500 per initiative. Projects can include marketing campaigns, onsite promotions, special

events and other activities designed to demonstrating the ripple effect of invest-



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE)

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture has committed \$50,000 on a cost-share program delivered by Farmers' Markets Ontario that supports local farmers' markets in promoting Ontario-grown food and the farmers behind it.

highlight local farmers and their products.

The decision follows a strong year for the program in 2025. With OFA's \$50,000 contribution, 33 markets took part in the initiative, supporting projects with a combined value of \$155,863. Those efforts generated an estimated provincewide economic impact of more than \$500,000,

ing in local food promotion.

"This partnership continues to deliver real value for farmers, for markets and for communities," said Elmer Buchanan, FMO chair. "By supporting local promotion and innovation at the market level, we're helping markets grow their reach, strengthen customer loyalty and showcase

the important role farmers play in feeding our communities."

The program aligns with OFA's broader commitment to strengthening Ontario's local food system and increasing visibility for agriculture through initiatives such as Home Grown, Local Food Week and Ontario Agriculture Week.

More information about funding criteria and how to apply is available at farmers-marketsontario.com.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture represents 38,000 farm families across the province and serves as the leading advocate and strongest voice of Ontario's farmers. As a dynamic farmer-led organization, the OFA represents and champions the interests of Ontario farmers through government relations, farm policy recommendations, research, lobby efforts, community representation, media relations and more.

FMO is the only official provincially recognized organization representing farmers' markets. Since 1991, FMO has been advocating with municipalities, regulators and potential funders to help ensure the health and sustainability of Ontario farmers' markets. With over 180 members across the province, FMO continues to support the growth of farmers' markets for the benefit of local farmers, local food and Ontario consumers.

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# 4-H members lend a hand at Rotary Rural-Urban Dinner



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

4-H members and leaders assist with meal service during the Stratford Rotary Club's Rural-Urban Dinner. Front row, from left: Austyn Lindner, Corbin Lindner, Alex Neeb, Brooklyn Hyatt, Addison Hyatt, Deanna Halls and Julie Danen (leader). Back row, from left: Brandy Bundschuh (leader), Heather Peters (leader), Elliott Peters, Cam Faulhafer, Nash Follings and Max Hughes.

GARY WEST

*Gazette Correspondent*

Held at the Rotary Complex, the event drew hundreds of attendees, with 4-H members playing a key role in helping the evening run smoothly.

Many of the participating youth have already begun their 4-H season, meeting regularly with club leaders to learn about feeding, managing and preparing their dairy calf projects for competitions throughout the year.

The 4-H program provides hands-on learning opportunities for youth aged nine

to 21, focusing on dairy calf management and broader agricultural skills tied to farm production.

Club leaders, all volunteers, dedicate significant time to mentoring young members. Many are themselves graduates of the 4-H dairy program and understand the value of developing the next generation of farmers in Perth County.

Through initiatives like the Rural-Urban Dinner, 4-H members not only gain practical experience, but also help bridge the connection between rural agriculture and the wider community.

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## Public Notice 2026 Municipal Election Filing of Nominations and Candidate Campaigns

The "Municipal Elections Act, 1996" (herein "the Act"), as amended, provides that every eligible person who wishes to be a candidate in the 2026 Municipal Election, to be held on **Monday, October 26, 2026**, shall file a Nomination Paper with the Municipal Clerk of the municipality responsible for the office they plan to run for.

**Nomination period opens on Friday, May 1, 2026, and closes on Friday, August 21, 2026, at 2 p.m.**

Under the Act, a candidate's election campaign period begins on the day they file their Nomination Paper. Candidates cannot accept or make contributions, and cannot incur any expenses, until their Nomination Paper is filed. Money, goods and services given to and accepted by, or on behalf of, a candidate for their election campaign are considered contributions.

### Offices Open for Nomination

The following offices are open for nominations across the Region of Waterloo and its school boards:

- **Regional Chair**
- **Regional Councillor for Cambridge, Kitchener or Waterloo**
- **Mayor**
- **Ward Councillor**
- **Waterloo Region District School Board Trustee**
- **Waterloo Catholic District School Board Trustee**

For School Board (Public, Separate, French Public, French Separate):

- Please consult the municipalities website for the school trustee position you wish to represent to confirm where nominations are to be filed.

For Regional Municipality of Waterloo Offices:

- **Regional Chair and Regional Councillor:** File in person with the Regional Clerk at 150 Fredrick Street, Kitchener, Ontario.

### Nomination Procedure

Nomination procedures, required forms, and filing locations may differ between municipalities. Candidates are responsible for ensuring they follow the correct process and meet all legislative requirement such as endorsement signatures and a filing fee.

All interested candidates should contact the appropriate Municipal Clerk to obtain detailed instructions on how and where to file their Nomination Paper, confirm required documentation, and the office's hours of operation.

For region-wide election information, visit: <https://www.wrvotes.com> or contact the Clerk's Office for the municipality where you plan to file your nomination:

Julie Hale Deputy Clerk Returning Officer Region of Waterloo <a href="mailto:jhale@regionofwaterloo.ca">jhale@regionofwaterloo.ca</a> (519) 575-4400 <a href="http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/elections">www.regionofwaterloo.ca/elections</a>	Ashley Good Municipal Clerk Returning Officer Township of North Dumfries <a href="mailto:agood@northdumfries.ca">agood@northdumfries.ca</a> (519) 632-8800 ext.122 <a href="http://www.northdumfries.ca/elections">www.northdumfries.ca/elections</a>	Amy Harron Municipal Clerk Returning Officer Township of Wellesley <a href="mailto:aharron@wellesley.ca">aharron@wellesley.ca</a> (519) 699-3968 <a href="http://www.wellesley.ca/elections">www.wellesley.ca/elections</a>
Amelia Jaggard Municipal Clerk Returning Officer Township of Wilmot <a href="mailto:amelia.jaggard@wilmot.ca">amelia.jaggard@wilmot.ca</a> (519) 634-8444 ext. 9228 <a href="http://www.wilmot.ca/elections">www.wilmot.ca/elections</a>	Jeff Smith Municipal Clerk Returning Officer Township of Woolwich <a href="mailto:jsmith@woolwich.ca">jsmith@woolwich.ca</a> (519) 669-6010 <a href="http://www.woolwich.ca/elections">www.woolwich.ca/elections</a>	Jennifer Shaw City Clerk Returning Officer City of Cambridge <a href="mailto:election@cambridge.ca">election@cambridge.ca</a> (519) 239-3280 <a href="http://www.cambridge.ca/elections">www.cambridge.ca/elections</a>
Amanda Fusco City Clerk Returning Officer City of Kitchener <a href="mailto:Amanda.fusco@kitchener.ca">Amanda.fusco@kitchener.ca</a> 519-741-2203 <a href="http://www.kitchener.ca/election">www.kitchener.ca/election</a>	Julie Finley Swaren City Clerk Returning Officer City of Waterloo <a href="mailto:elections@waterloo.ca">elections@waterloo.ca</a> (519) 747-8798 <a href="http://www.waterloo.ca/elections">www.waterloo.ca/elections</a>	

# Opinion: EZT mayor floats interesting ideas at chamber event

## Upcoming boundary adjustment conversations top of the list

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) Mayor Phil Schaefer isn't nearly as talkative as his Zorra Township counterpart, Marcus Ryan, who is also the Warden of Oxford County. However, Schaefer's comments at a breakfast sponsored by the Tavistock Chamber of Commerce last week were the most interesting this journalist has heard him say since he was first elected three and a half years ago.

I've been somewhat of a thorn in the side of East Zorra-Tavistock Township since joining the Gazette, but I will always give credit where it's due. Schaefer impressed me with how he carried himself. Mark Peterson, Mayor of Blanford-Blenheim, was also in attendance, and both he and Schaefer can struggle to have their voices heard with the warden present. No offence to Mr. Ryan, whom I respect professionally, but this column focuses on Schaefer's candid perspective on the township, especially its future. Sorry, Marcus!

Part of my role as a journalist is to hold elected officials to account, but believe it or not, I have a soft side and feel those who have the difficult job of representing us should be praised when it's deserved.

The chamber's Andrew Raymer moderated the event and the first topic of discussion was growth in the three municipalities.

"To encourage new growth, commercial, industrial, residential, you need to have

the appropriate land, and that's what we're working on right now with our secondary plan, which should be finalized this year," explained Schaefer.

There is a considerable amount of residential development underway in East Zorra-Tavistock Township at the moment, but he added further growth is limited by servicing capacity.

"Right now ... we are trying to get our ducks in a row so we can have available, properly zoned land to provide growth to the township in Innerkip and Tavistock."

Schaefer, recognizing the competition between municipalities to attract development, said part of his role is to make EZT a place where people want to do business.

"Part of that is your tax rates, and all three of us are blessed with reasonable tax rates compared to a lot of folks, but it's hard. You look at downtowns, you look at ours, and it's really difficult to attract them. One word - Amazon. It has killed a lot of retail in small towns."

He added municipalities need to create an atmosphere where businesses want to set up shop, and they need to provide the necessary workforce to staff them. Oxford County has some of the best farmland in the province, something that Schaefer described as a balancing act.

"When we do use it, we have to be respectful of the fact it's very valuable. We can do our part by insisting on higher densities, promoting infill and trying to maximize every square inch that we have."

The number one issue facing the next

version of the East Zorra-Tavistock council will likely be a knock on the door from Woodstock for more land, or what's known as a boundary adjustment.

"It will be up to that council to proceed with those discussions. There has to be a minimization of how much land will be considered, mechanisms in place to protect people affected by it, and thirdly - this is the big one - there's got to be significant compensation paid to EZT if we agree to it."

A municipal boundary adjustment in Ontario is a formal, provincially regulated process, and success depends heavily on politics, economics and regional alignment - not just whether a proposal makes sense. Adjustments are governed under the Municipal Act and typically require an agreement between the municipalities involved or a provincial decision if there's disagreement. In most cases, the proposal is reviewed or decided by an Ontario Land Tribunal, unless the province steps in directly.

Schaefer added everyone living in the township should benefit if some land is lost to Woodstock.

"The last boundary adjustment was approved in 2006. Under the deal struck at that time, EZT collects \$115,000 per year from the City of Woodstock. No inflation protection. We get the same amount of money now as we got in 2006. At this point, that won't even buy us a pickup truck."

Each mayor was asked by Raymer to predict the future in their townships, and

Schaefer's first mention was a much-needed boost to recreation.

"Within three to five years, I think you'll see a multi-use recreation facility in Tavistock. You'll see our wastewater systems completely upgraded and we'll see some additional seniors' apartments."

One thing he doesn't want to see but worries it may come is a monumental change in how local government is delivered.

"I think Oxford County will end up being a single-tier municipality where Mark won't be the mayor of Blanford-Blenheim but will be a ward councillor instead. Or, we have a new municipality called North Oxford, which is the three of our townships put together."

He added the provincial government has been reducing the number of elected officials in many areas, such as school boards and conservation authorities, and said Oxford has just one MPP but many more local officials.

"It's a prophecy I hope doesn't happen."

There are 48 elected members at lower-tier councils, including Woodstock, with 10 of those members on Oxford county council.

I wish he would talk this candidly at and after EZT council meetings, and although it is an election year, I believe he is heading in the right direction. Strong leadership is crucial, no matter what the size of the municipality. Schaefer will be running for his second mayoral term in October.

### Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

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Apr. 6 Sara Sicilia, London	\$50.00
Apr. 7 Helena & Brad Loggan, Mitchell	\$50.00
Apr. 8 Katie Louwagie, Fullarton	\$50.00
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Apr. 11 Margaret Archer, London	\$200.00
Apr. 12 Bill & Ruthann Flack, St. Marys	\$50.00
Apr. 13 Dan Scheerer, Dublin	\$50.00
Apr. 14 Michele Polley, Ilderton	\$50.00
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# Cleanup underway at site of former Woodstock Street North house fire in Tavistock

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

Cleanup work began last week at the site of a house fire on Woodstock Street North in Tavistock that destroyed a two-storey brick home several months ago.

Crews from JoBi Construction Ltd. of Lucan were onsite Thursday using heavy equipment to demolish and remove the remaining structure.

Workers expected the cleanup to be completed by the weekend, bringing an end to a lengthy process following the devastating fire.

Neighbours said they were pleased to see progress at the property, noting the damaged building had become an eyesore and raised safety concerns, particularly for youth in the area.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)  
Crews from JoBi Construction Ltd. of Lucan use heavy equipment to demolish the remains of a two-storey brick home on Woodstock Street North in Tavistock last week. Neighbours welcomed the cleanup, saying the fire-damaged structure had become both an eyesore and a potential safety concern.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: The downsides of a new fence at Nithview

Dear Wilmot,

Why should you care about a fence that isn't in your neighbourhood? When it has a huge environmental footprint on an important, local landmark, impacts at-risk turtles and wildlife, and potentially affects your pocketbook, it may be worth a look.

In a curious irony, Nithview Homes New Hamburg is creating a much-welcomed natural space behind their new building but immediately encasing it in an unnatural, half-kilometre-long, six-foot-high chainlink fence. If plastic coated, it could take up to 500 years to deteriorate around the environmentally sensitive Nith River floodplain.

A quick, online search comes up with a conservative estimate of \$50,000 for the half-kilometre fence. In the middle of Nithview's fundraising for the new nursing home, which we should all generously support, I will need clarification on allocations of funds before I donate.

Most importantly, at-risk turtles come up the banks of the floodplain annually to lay eggs on the high ground, which this fence will all but obliterate. Less than two

per-cent of hatchlings survive to adulthood. Inhibiting their habitat will hasten their demise. The fence will also cut off hundreds of migrating deer, coyotes and foxes, and smaller animals seen daily on the floodplain. Urbanization is pushing animals to the limit and although we can't always prevent this, a six-foot fence (when other alternatives exist) seems like an overwhelming obstacle to wildlife who use the floodplain as their home and thoroughfare.

Neighbours have offered to pay for a cedar rail fence to allow animals easier passage and add a more organic look, but have been dismissed by Nithview Homes. The important floodplain that saves downtown New Hamburg from further flooding will be turned from a picturesque, authentic area currently, to an urban-looking blight of chain link fence not unlike many cityscapes.

With many environmental issues beyond our control these days, there is a simple (and free) solution to protect this little corner of our world if we speak up.

Lisa Hagen,  
New Hamburg

Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are that of their authors and do not reflect the opinions of the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette or Grant Haven Media.

# Gazette Puzzles

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

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

### CYRANO DE BERGERAC

Named after a poet, philosopher and swordsman, this cat truly is a force to be reckoned with.

While he loves to play and relish in people's affection, he can get overstimulated easily and he may require some downtime to relax. He loves playing with finger traps, licking this lick-mats, and even though Cyrano is a bit of a tough guy, he is ready to find a loving and calm home.

If you are looking for a fierce, energetic cat to be your loyal companion, and are able to provide a patient, understanding, child-free place to stay, Cyrano de Bergerac may be your purrrfect match! Apply at the Stratford Perth Humane Society today! kwsphumane.ca



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# The power of the Pilates ring

## HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



The power of the ring is real, but this fitness fanatic is not referring to Lord of the Rings. This certified personal trainer is obsessed with the Pilates ring. Some coaches call it a ring of fire, but to me, it's truly a magical ring for any level and any age.

Pilates was invented by Joseph Pilates, a German physical trainer back in the 1920s. The method of Pilates is a series of controlled movements that, when done properly, are essentially the perfect workout.

Why? Pilates improve strength, endurance and flexibility, the point to physical activity. Pilates sees the body as one, putting emphasis on breathing and

alignment. Pilates is a sure-fire way to improve the core, crucial to coordination and balance. Pilates is an effective way to rehabilitate after an injury or surgery. Whether mat-based or using studio apparatus, Pilates is a gentle, all-over, body-boosting series of movements to expand your body awareness and improve overall health.

Hopefully, this article will inspire you to start today.

A Pilates ring is an inexpensive 14-15-inch flexible circle made of durable foam with two padded handles on opposite sides. The ring will last a lifetime. Have fun choosing a colour. The ring takes up little space, making it

perfect to pack away for holiday vacation workouts.

The ring can be used to target all muscle groups. It's especially top notch for thighs, great for glutes and absolutely amazing for arms. The ring is an effective tool for engaging the core. The ring is also a great tool for sensational stretching. Beginners, don't be surprised if you feel muscles working right away.

"The Pilates method of body conditioning develops the body uniformly, corrects posture, restores vitality, invigorates the mind and elevates the spirit," according to Joseph Pilates.

### Let's begin!

Take a short walk or march on the spot for a few minutes and have water nearby. Find space, set up a mat and start squeezing.

Repeat all exercises eight to 15 times. Do as many as three sets with up to a minute break in between.

### Bridge

This exercise is ideal to tone a tushy, hit the hamstrings and slowly strengthen the lower back. Lie on your back with feet shoulder width apart. Place the

ring between your knees, holding it there. Lower hips to the ground and raise up again.

### Inner-thigh squeeze

Lie on your back and place the ring between your knees. Squeeze to compress the ring. To make the exercise more challenging, hold your hips high and pulse for as long as possible.

### Russian twist

This movement is all about activating the core.

Sitting on the tailbone with heels against the floor, decline a smidge while tucking the belly button inwards. Shoulders are back and chest open and proud. Holding the ring, twist, alternating sides but pausing in the middle. To make this more challenging, pause at each side and squeeze the ring.

### Lateral shoulder press

Stand in alignment. Feet shoulder width apart, drawing the belly button towards the spine while extending the arms. Simply squeeze the ring and release. Pulsing is powerful for those looking to level up.

### Lat love for the back

Standing tall with feet shoulder



(IMAGE COURTESY OF MERCEDES KAY GOLD)

**The Pilates ring is the perfect addition to your home fitness routine.**

width apart, place one handle of the ring on your hip. Your arm is extended and proceed to pulse. Switch sides.

These five fabulous exercises above are just a drop in the bucket. Give them a go a few times a week for a month and I bet you will be searching social media for more moves.

Always check with your physician and a fitness practitioner before adding anything new to your exercise routine.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Trust is earned, not assumed

The Editor

The front page of the April 16 Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette reports on a meeting held by Wilmot's present mayor giving her opinion about the "State of the Township." Hiring the CAO who introduced her and KPMG to propose a budget for her were examples of her use of strong mayor powers.

Delegations to the mayor at council meetings attempted to explain to her that the strong mayor powers are not a tool to be arbitrarily used by a mayor. The legislation states, "It is a local responsibility to determine the scope of a head of council's powers and how they apply in the municipality's particular circumstances." The legislation directs a mayor in coordination with councillors and citizens to determine the scope of powers and how they apply in specific situations. It is not unilateral.

I asked the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the legal interpretation of the legislation. Ian Kerr, the regional director located in London, gave me this reply.

"I appreciate you taking the time to share your concerns regarding the strong mayor budget process and other matters in Wilmot Township. Under the Municipal Act, 2001, the implementation of the strong mayor framework is a local responsibility. Decisions related to its use rest with the head of council, council and the municipality, in accordance with the legislation and associated regulations."

Any use of the optionally available strong mayor powers may only be used

after consensus among the head of council, the council as a body and the municipality – that's citizens.

The mayor is extensively quoted in the Gazette article about change and trust. She accurately observed that the rules that govern decision making have potentially changed with the optional availability of strong mayor powers, and if and when a mayor chooses to change the rules of governance, local voices disappear.

However, this is not a necessary result. The loss of local voices, the lack of trust, are directly connected to the mayor's persistent over-ride of the voices of others.

The mayor is reported as taking credit for the 2026 budget process. Let's look at some specifics:

- The Jan. 9 proposed budget was approved and signed by "Her Worship, the Mayor, Natasha Salonen."
- KPMG was unilaterally hired by the mayor at a cost of \$130,000, plus.
- The final decisions about what was in and out of the Jan. 9 proposed budget were made by two from KPMG, the newly appointed CAO and the mayor.
- None of the four final decisionmakers pays property taxes in Wilmot Township.
- The strong mayor's Jan. 9 proposed budget had a table showing four sources of revenues totalling \$26,185,061, and three expenditures categories totalling \$31,699,081. The mayor tabled a budget which was in deficit by \$5,514,020.

- The strong mayor's Jan. 9 proposed budget showed capital expenditures of \$12,042,395. Support documents were in an attached Appendix A, with 44 expensed items totalling \$14,218,435. The mayor tabled a capital budget which was in fact in deficit by \$2,176,040.

- Strong mayor powers were intended to achieve provincial goals. Not one additional housing lot was approved or home built as a result of her unilateral budget.

The Gazette reported, "Salonen said in moments like this, trust may erode, and at times, elected officials contribute to that erosion." She was directly quoted as saying, "I know I have. But precisely for that reason, its importance intensifies. And more critically, trust must be built ... how we engage and how we lead."

The mayor is correct when she says she has contributed to the erosion of trust. She has ignored the factual input of informed citizens. She has contravened her own rule that current data being considered at public meetings is accurate as it appears on the website.

She has delegated responsibility for critical decision-making processes to people who do things because, "We've always done it that way."

She has failed in her due-diligence responsibilities to supervise hired staff per the Ontario Municipal Act, to check the accuracy of documents she signs.

She has acted unilaterally in contravention of the local decision-making process

for optional use of strong mayor powers. The problem is not that citizens have totally given up speaking, it's that the present mayor has failed to listen. At any given meeting of council, the smartest people in the room are not sitting in the chamber. They are the citizens outside the closed echo chamber of the castle.

I trust that on Oct. 26, Wilmot voters will choose a candidate who can provide a unifying vision for Wilmot, who is committed to consultation with councillors and citizens before implementing any of the optional strong mayor powers potentially available. A candidate who has the skills to search out and attract new faces for redefined staff role places, such as the next CAO, an economic development officer to enlarge and diversify our tax base.

Trust is not based on words. Trust is an earned relationship based on competence, practical experience, sensitivity to others' life experiences and decision making that reflects the voices of fellow councillors and the citizens who pay the bills. Trust is earned by acting correctly, predictably, consistently.

The election is Oct. 26. I trust that the present mayor will be returning to gaining more life experiences, in some role with the political party of her choice, in Toronto.

Respectfully submitted,

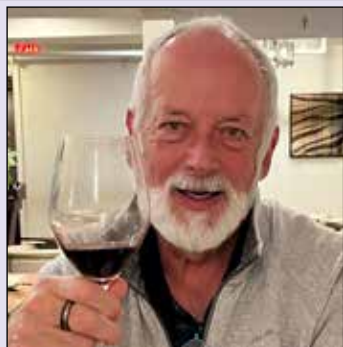
Barry Wolfe,

Baden

# The mystery and wonder of Mount Etna

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



The sky was blue and the clouds white, though they did not obscure our view of Mount Etna as we began the coach trip from Messina to the slopes of this active volcano. And this was all just as well because by the time we were well on our way to the highest point of our trip, the clouds and mist were rolling in, and when we reached our final destination, the most prominent feature was fog.

But that was okay. The thing about Mount Etna is its unique and mysterious – the only active volcano on the island of Sicily, and one of three active volcanos in the Isole Eolie chain of islands that stretches north from Sicily. Those volcanic islands include two others that are still active – Stomboli, the easily identified triangle that can be seen from the western shores of Calabria, and Volcanu (the volcano from which the name, “volcano,” derives).

But Mount Etna is the big guy. In fact, it's Europe's largest and most active volcano, ejecting huge amounts of lava every year.

But, say the experts, this Etna is carefully monitored by scientists, so it is safe to visit when “they” say so. And since “they” said so, and we had the chance to go to Mount Etna during our Senior Discovery Tours visit to Calabria, we were in.

The main reason a visit to Mount Etna is considered safe was explained to us by our Sicilian guide. Volcanos fall into two categories – explosive and effusive. Effusive volcanos tend to erupt often or continually, but in more moderate fashion, “moderate” being a relative term. Mount Etna is an effusive volcano.

So, we joined the early morning queue to board our coach in Siderno, on the east coast of Calabria, and took the one-hour-plus trip across the toe of Italy to reach Villa San Giovanni, the port for the ferry to Sicily.

The ferry ride across the Straits of Messina is brief, perhaps 20 minutes, but there is nonetheless something magical about sailing toward the legendary island of Sicily for the first time.

We docked in Messina and began the hour-and-a-half ride south to the slopes of Mount Etna.

Mount Etna is 3,400 metres

high. We went just over halfway up, to the 1,800-metre level, stopping on route in Zafferana Etnea for scrumptious pastries and espresso. The guide said this was to help us to acclimatize to the altitude, but I suspect it has more to do with the passion all Italians have for pastries and coffee.

Back on the coach, we continued the climb, passing through fascinating layers of topography and plant life. Before long, the predominant feature of the landscape was lava – many hectares of lava flow border the roadway up Etna. It's a stark, dark landscape, though hardy plants begin to grow not long after the lava has cooled. In fact, as lava breaks down, it becomes one of the most nutrient-rich soils anywhere.

And as we rose higher, the temperature plunged, and snow appeared. By the time we reached the top, snow covered almost everything. People were skiing and snowshoeing.

The lava fields and the views of the mountain were increasingly obscured by cloud as we climbed toward our 1,800-metre destination. And when we reached the parking lot, visibility was a few dozen metres.

But we persisted because we had disembarked at the site of five craters, and were still able to view some of them. As the mist swirled, the views opened briefly and then were again shrouded in fog. As I said, the entire adven-

ture had a certain air of mystery.

Visitors can go higher than 1,800 metres – there are cable cars and specially outfitted vehicles that head further up, as far as 2,900 metres, the highest point anyone is allowed to go. But all the literature says, “Go with a guide,” and there are factual accounts of foolhardy folk who ignored this advice, and died in an eruption of lava.

While at maximum height, we were invited to dine (Italy, right? Amazing food, right?). The restaurant is La Cantoniera, and it, too, has a Mount Etna story. During a dramatically large eruption in 1983, the original La Cantoniera was consumed and buried by lava flow. Today, the restaurant where we dined is built on top of the lava that contains the remnants of the former building.

And in the main floor dining room, there is a video screen showing that story, as well as wildly dramatic videos of previous Etna eruptions. It tends to inspire visitors to check the view out the windows every few minutes as you dine, just in case.

Our lunch at La Cantoniera, by the way, was a lavish buffet spread with all the great Italian – and specifically Sicilian – tastes. Sausages, pasta, gnocchi, bruschetta, sundry mushrooms, eggplant, bacon, cheese, wine by the bottle and then, of course, pastries – all the pastries.

So, did we get a perfect, close-up view of Mount Etna? No, but we did experience the mystery and the wonder of finding ourselves on the slopes of Europe's largest active volcano. And did I mention the pastries?

*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](mailto:pknowles@golden.net).*



La Cantoniera, a restaurant built atop the lava flow that destroyed its predecessor.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Our clear view of Mount Etna before the clouds obscured the scene.



A lava field on Mount Etna.



One of five craters visitors can view at the 1,800-metre level.



A brief moment when the sun broke through to illuminate a peak.

# A bird's eye view of Tavistock's centre, circa 1912



## VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

*Tavistock and District Historical Society*

In the last Vintage Views article about the construction of Tavistock's first water tower (1911), I explained that Mr. John "Jack" Lemp climbed the new tower with his heavy equipment: a very large camera with a bellows, tripod, negative holders, glass negatives and a dark cloth to put over his head, to take photos of the community and beyond. There were no such things, yet, as small, professional cameras and Mr. Lemp – surprisingly – even used that monster camera as late as 1948, when much smaller professional cameras were available.

This photo was taken from the same water tower looking northwest over the centre of Tavistock.

In the bottom-left is Valentine Stock's general store with an odd,

six-sided belvedere poking up towards its back. Odd because these small towers were usually built for observation from a high point on tall houses, but there's not a lot to see from here and this was not a house. Castle Kilbride in Baden has an excellent example of a belvedere.

Close to the left edge are two buildings that are there today, but at the time were Lemp's Pharmacy on the left and the smaller Bank of Montreal on its right, both with awnings.

Almost in the centre is the stationmaster's house and behind it are sheds for livestock and lumber up close to the railway tracks for ease of loading on and off of trains.

On the far right in the centre is

Tavistock's train station (moved in 1968 and converted into a house nearby). The three-storey structure close to the centre was the Commercial Hotel, rebuilt from an earlier two-storey hotel, which in turn was built on the site of Tavistock's first structure erected by Henry Eckstein.

Captain Eckstein was the community's founder in 1848 when he named it Freiburg after his hometown in Germany (later Inkerman in 1853 and finally Tavistock in 1857). In 1934, the Commercial was reconfigured into a two-storey gas station, first Miesner's, then Schaefer's, including a lunch room, with a few vestiges still visible from this grand building.

Today, the same corner is the wholly reconfigured Esso gas bar, Hasty Mart, Subway and New Orleans Pizza shops.

Mr. Lemp started his pharmacy and photo services in 1905, and new hydro poles and wires were set up in late 1911, which are visible in this picture. I suspect this photo was taken in 1912.

**The last History Mystery:** The question was, "What was Mr. Lemp, the photographer, standing on to take the 1911 photo of the



(PHOTO BY JOHN "JACK" LEMP)

John "Jack" Lemp had an invigorating climb up the new water tower with his heavy camera and accessories to take this excellent, high view of the village that we enjoy about 115 years later.

water tower?" Craig Wilker of Kitchener was the first reader to respond with the correct answer: "He was standing on the roof of the flour mill building." This was a substantial structure after being rebuilt following a fire in 1893. It was three and a half storeys tall with high ceilings. It's very likely that Mr. Lemp was on the roof. Today, this is W.S. Feed and Supplies.

**This week's History Mystery:** What important thing is missing from one of these buildings that a short time later had a direct impact on this Vintage Views series? The first reader to forward the correct answer to me at [tim\\_mosher@hotmail.com](mailto:tim_mosher@hotmail.com) will have their name and community's name or rural route number published in the next Vintage Views article.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR - APRIL/MAY 2026

### SUNDAY, APRIL 26

**Tavistock Mennonite Church is hosting a Syrian Fundraising Meal 12:15 p.m.**  
Featuring the finest Syrian dishes prepared by the Al Younes family. Proceeds go to the Tavistock Refugee Sponsorship. RSVP by April 19th to: [louisech3@hotmail.com](mailto:louisech3@hotmail.com)  
*Tavistock Mennonite Church*  
131 Wettlaufer St, Tavistock

### MONDAY, APRIL 27

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

### TUESDAY, APRIL 28

**Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction 5-7 p.m.**  
Fundraiser for the Red Seal Youth Band. Band will play at 6:30 p.m. Take out available with ticket. Tickets available in advance from band members, at the Legion or donations accepted at the door. Ages 5 and under eat free. For more information email: [redsealyouthband@gmail.com](mailto:redsealyouthband@gmail.com)  
*Milverton Legion*  
24 Temperance St, Milverton

### SATURDAY, MAY 2

**Let's Tree Wilmot Tree Planting 9 a.m. - 12 noon**  
Join us to establish a new wetland by planting about 225 trees. Details and to register: <https://letstreewilmot.ca/events/>  
*South of Haysville on Bridge St beside the Nith River*

**Twin City Harmonizers presents Celebrating 80 Years of Harmony 2:30 p.m.**  
For tickets, visit [www.twincityharmonizers.com](http://www.twincityharmonizers.com), email [tickets@twincityharmonizers.com](mailto:tickets@twincityharmonizers.com) or talk to a member.  
*Community Christian Reformed Church*  
1275 Bleams Rd, Kitchener

### TUESDAY, MAY 5

**Ostomy Support Group Meeting 7:00 p.m.**  
Speaker - Kathy and Bonnie from Wellspring, Stratford. Learn about the support and services for Cancer patients and loved ones. Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome. For more information, call (519)273-4327  
93 Morgan St., Stratford

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

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

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

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### FRIDAY, MAY 8

**Hammerlock Wrestling Charity Show Doors open at 7, show starts at 7:30**  
Professional wrestling comes to Waterloo-Oxford D.S.S. with an evening of high flying action for a good cause! To buy tickets, visit: [events.frontdoor.plus/event/2035](https://events.frontdoor.plus/event/2035). For more information contact: [contact@hammerlockpurewrestling.com](mailto:contact@hammerlockpurewrestling.com) or [alec@amoorephoto.ca](mailto:alec@amoorephoto.ca) (kids under 12 free)  
All proceeds will be donated to W-O to support athletics and other programs!  
*Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School*  
1206 Snyder's Rd W, Baden

### MONDAY, MAY 11

**Garden Wilmot presents Garden Design and Plant Selection that's for the Birds! 7-9 p.m.**  
With Kevin Kavanagh from South Coast Gardens. Lug a mug. Free event.  
*Wilmot Rec Complex*  
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

### TUESDAY, MAY 12

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

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

**Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship 12 p.m.**  
Please register by May 8 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900  
*Wellesley Recreation Complex*,  
1401 Queen's Bush Rd., Wellesley

**YOUR VOICE FOR NATURE 1:30 p.m.**  
Brian Craig will examine the ways you can influence and ensure the conservation of nature in The long Point Biosphere Region which is essential for the quality of life on our planet. To confirm attendance email [libwiz@hotmail.com](mailto:libwiz@hotmail.com)  
*Ingersoll Centre for Seniors*,  
250 Ingersoll St S, Ingersoll

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

**Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship 12 p.m.**  
Please register by May 15 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900  
*Wilmot Rec Complex*,  
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

### SATURDAY, MAY 23

**Let's Tree Wilmot Tree Planting 9 a.m. - 12 noon**  
Let's Tree Wilmot is partnering with Wilmot Township in a new special project, Mannheim Carolinian Corner. We are planting the second phase of the two hectare site at the NW edge of Mannheim which will become a wooded area with a trail system. <https://letstreewilmot.ca/events/>  
*Milne Drive, Mannheim*

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 27

**Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship 12 p.m.**  
Please register by May 22 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900  
*Linwood Community Centre*,  
5279 Ament Line, Linwood

### MORNING & EVENING BIBLE READING

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

### EVERY WEDNESDAY

**TOPS - Taking off Pounds Sensibly Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.**  
TOPS is a non-judgmental weight loss support group. Need help on your weight loss journey. For info call Cathie 519-662-9273.  
*St James Church, Baden*

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

### 3RD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

**TAVISTOCK MENS CLUB MEETINGS Dinner at 6.15 p.m.**  
No meetings in July and August  
Welcome to attend. Phone: 519-655-3573  
Website: [tavistockmensclub.ca](http://tavistockmensclub.ca)  
78 Woodstock St N

### STAMP CLUB

**Oxford Philatelic Society Meetings: 2nd Tuesday (2-4 p.m.) and 4th Tuesday (7 to 9 p.m.) September to May**  
If you have never belonged to a stamp club, now's the time. Meet new friends, grow your knowledge and collection.  
Contact: Don Eaton [dhef@silomail.com](mailto:dhef@silomail.com)  
Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>  
*Church of the Epiphany*  
560 Dundas Street, Woodstock Ontario N4S 1C7

### FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

**Tavistock Seniors Activities @ Tavistock Memorial Hall, 1 Adam St. Tavistock ON, except Shuffleboard**  
Inside walking Monday & Wednesday morning 8:30-12. Contact: Larry Brown 519-240-6715 (October to March)  
Pickleball Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon, 12-4. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052  
Cards Monday, afternoon 1-4, euchre, crib (bring board), etc. Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118

### FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES CONT

**Shuffleboard @ arena, Wednesday 12.30-4 and Thursday 10-4.** Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052. (October to April)  
**VON Smart Seniors Exercise, Tuesday and Thursday morning 9-10; Village Manor 10:25-11:25.** Contact: 519-539-1231 x 6285

### TAVISTOCK & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Museum Hours: Third Saturday of each Month May Date: Saturday, May 16 1-4 p.m. (other times by appointment)**  
Email: [info@tavistockhistory.ca](mailto:info@tavistockhistory.ca) or call 519-655-3334. All welcome.  
*37 Maria Street, Tavistock*  
**Travelling Museum Display: "25<sup>th</sup> Tournament of the Tavistock World Crokinole Championship".** The display features a very early handcrafted crokinole board, buttons, history on the cancelled Tavistock World crokinole postage stamp, newspaper articles, and logoed clothing prizes. This display runs until June 22, 2026.  
**Hours: Open 7 days a week**  
*Location: Tavistock & District Recreation Centre (arena lobby), 2 Adam Street, Tavistock*  
**Travelling Museum Display: "The Glasgow Warehouse".** Resembles a Lemp Studio Photo of the original storefront at the center of Tavistock in 1874. The storefront is filled with oil lamps, chinaware, gramophone, and the history of a raisin & currant cleaning machine. The owner Fred Krug, owner and operator from 1874-1917 is prominently displayed. This display runs for a month or two.  
**Hours: Can be viewed anytime**  
*Location: Front window of Tavistock Home Hardware, 24 Woodstock Street S., Tavistock*  
**Travelling Museum Display: The theme is "Heritage of Hickson Public Central School" - history of School from 1885 to present along with photos, artifacts, school and art work.** TDHS partnered with the Hickson 4-H Club for this display that runs until April 27, 2026.  
**Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm**  
*Location: EZT Township Administration Building (lobby), 89 Loveys Street, Hickson*

### CAREGIVER CONNECTION

**Free Caregiver Connection peer support groups**  
**Date: Third Tuesday of each month**  
**Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.**  
Are you worried about your child or youth? Parents and Caregivers for Mental Health (PCMH) is here to listen, support, and walk alongside you on this journey. Our free Caregiver Connection peer support groups offer parents and caregivers a community of support. Can't make it in person? Join one of our virtual or hybrid groups! Visit [family.cmho.org](http://family.cmho.org) or email [oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca](mailto:oxfordcounty@pcmh.ca) for more information.  
*Revel Realty Woodstock*,  
111 Huron Street, Woodstock

**The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette COMMUNITY CALENDAR**  
**DEADLINE: TUESDAY PRIOR TO 3 P.M.**  
**CONTACT: THEWTGAZETTE@GMAIL.COM**

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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## Quiz Time Answers

- |                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. A tittle.                     | 6. The jaw.         |
| 2. Sicily.                       | 7. Honey.           |
| 3. Brazil.                       | 8. A bat.           |
| 4. Hawaiian (ham and pineapple). | 9. Mr. Potato Head. |
| 5. Backrub.                      | 10. True.           |

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

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