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2025 HERITAGE EDITION



(SHOW US YOUR WILMOT PHOTO)

Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group member Lou Divita shared this striking photo on Feb. 15 in celebration of National Flag of Canada Day. It not only highlights the beauty of the Canadian flag, but also the abundance of snowfall we have been experiencing.

Oxford, Wilmot and Perth declare significant weather events

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The most consistent, volatile winter weather we have seen in years led to most of us staying home all weekend and early into this week.

At the same time, it meant long hours for area municipal staff who were plowing streets and roadways, and who, at times, were not able to keep up.

A significant weather event falls under

the province's minimum-maintenance-standards legislation and is defined as an approaching or occurring weather hazard with the potential to pose a significant danger to users of the highways within a municipality. The declaration suspends the maintenance quality standards timelines required for municipalities to meet winter-maintenance objectives and remains in place until a municipality ends it.

"The township declared a significant

weather event and snow event Thursday into Friday last week," said Jeff Molenhuis, Wilmot Township's director of infrastructure services.

"A snow event was declared on Saturday and extended to Sunday; in addition, we added another significant weather event Sunday into Monday. These events were coordinated activities with the area municipalities."

Molenhuis said it was a busy long weekend for winter-control staff as they battled

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Truck purchase comes with tariff concerns for Wellesley council

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Though Wellesley council has approved the budgeted purchase of a new tandem roll-off truck, council had some concerns about how the truck's purchase and delivery might be impacted by threats of tariffs from American President Donald Trump.

Council approved the purchase of the truck at its Feb. 11 meeting for a total cost of just over \$649,000 including HST. As part of this year's budget, public works staff identified a need to upgrade one of the township's dump trucks to a roll-off style truck to perform both summer and winter maintenance duties as well as increase the department's capacity to provide service. As such, this roll-off truck, will be funded from the township's roads equipment reserve up to the replacement value of the current dump truck, nearly \$456,000, and the remainder – a little more than \$193,000 – will be funded from the township's development charges reserve.

"I'm supporting this – there's no question it's going to be a useful unit for us – but I'm a little bit concerned with what's happening down south with the potential of that 25 per-cent tariff," Mayor Joe Nowak said. "That tandem truck, if I understand it, is built in the states. It will have to come up. Would we pay a 25 per-cent tariff when it comes up here?"

Having previously spoken with representatives from Freightliner, the American

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PROTECT ONTARIO

ONTARIO PC

Authorized by the CFO of the Mike Harris Campaign



Oxford, Wilmot and Perth declare significant weather events

Continued from page 1

the elements.

“Drifting and blowing snow in the rural areas was a challenge and required continuous operational attention over the weekend.”

Municipalities take care of higher-volume roads before tackling lesser-travelled roads, and Molenhuis said his staff was out in full force, though not as many were available over the long weekend.

“We had nine operating routes active daily over the end of last week, the weekend and on Monday. A lower staff complement was available to us with the long weekend, and we had some challenges with equipment and vehicle breakdowns and downtime with the heavy workload. It certainly was an unprecedented volume and timeframe for the events experienced this past week.”

Oxford County declared its significant weather event Monday at 1:30 p.m. Frank Gross is the county’s manager of transportation and said it was a tough few days for county staff.

“The crews worked hard all weekend and have been working hard for most of the winter. Just based on the



(FACEBOOK PHOTO)

Roads across the area were closed over the weekend and even Tuesday. Perth Line 33 from Stratford to Perth Road 107 and Perth Road 107 from Tavistock to Line 56 were closed as late as Tuesday afternoon.

conditions in the rural areas with the high winds, it was a losing battle as they made a path through an area, it quickly drifted in behind them. It was a challenge for them to keep up in those conditions.”

Gross added the lower-tier municipalities, including East Zorra-Tavistock, also made declarations and were focusing on their busiest roads which meant they weren’t able to get to some of the lower-volume roads.

EZT declared its event on Monday afternoon.

“This means that we’re working hard to clear snow, but the severe conditions are making it difficult to maintain roads and sidewalks to the minimum standards set out by the (province),” said township CAO Karen DePrest.

“We may be required to plow high-volume roads multiple times before being able to address lower traffic routes, subdivisions and sidewalks. We’re asking residents to postpone any non-essential travel and to use extreme caution if you must leave your house.”

She added the safety of the travelling public throughout

the township is a responsibility staff takes very seriously.

“We appreciate your patience and understanding as staff complete their work. The public is asked not to park on township streets while plowing activities are being performed, and to refrain from depositing snow on municipal roadways or sidewalks.”

Perth County was the hardest hit of any area municipality as it first declared an event on Wednesday, Feb. 12.

“We are aware of a large weather system that will move through the Perth County region beginning this afternoon. This weather system is anticipated to bring heavy accumulation in a short period of time with gusty winds,” said John McClelland, executive director of public works.

“All non-essential travel throughout the region is strongly discouraged. If citizens must travel, leave plenty of additional time and give snow plows extra space and distance to operate.”

Perth County’s event continued through Wednesday morning, Feb. 19, after several roads were closed – some due to accidents and others as a result of poor visibility.

The good news is Environment Canada is not forecasting any major snow events anytime soon.

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Truck purchase comes with tariff concerns for Wellesley council

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manufacturer of the truck's cab and chassis, and Viking Cives Ltd., the Canadian manufacturer of the truck body located in Mount Forest, Wellesley director of public works Chris Cook clarified that the threats of tariffs made by Trump would only apply to Canadian goods exported to the U.S. However, if the Government of Canada opts to respond with retaliatory tariffs of its own, he said that could further inflate the price of just the cab and chassis, which currently represents accounts for \$230,000 of the total cost of the truck.

"There are thousands of components that go in to (the cab and chassis being built in the U.S.); some are from China, some are from Mexico, some are from Canada, some are the U.S. — they're from all over the place," Cook said. "So, I have no idea what the percentage of any type of tariff would look like. It's still way to early to determine how it would affect a purchase like this. ... When we're talking about a piece of equipment that has an 18-24-month lead time, basically everything comes into play.

"Anything can happen in that time and there is a catch-all line at the back (of the purchase contract) that says any unforeseen prices increases due to model change, monthly exchange rate increase, supplier annual increase etc. are not included in this price quote and will be passed on to the customer as incurred. That's a standard

line that's in all of these quotes we've been provided for the dozens of trucks we've purchased in the past."

In response to a question from Coun. Lori Sebben about whether the township could get out of the purchase agreement should any increased costs be "astronomical," Cook said it would be possible, but the township would be on the hook to pay a small cancellation fee. He also warned that any deferral of the purchase of this truck would likely lead to a higher price for it in the future.

Roll-off trucks have become a staple in municipal fleets and are utilized year-round for a variety of tasks from plowing, sanding, salting and snow loading in the winter to hauling materials for projects such as shoulder maintenance, culvert replacement, ditching and asphalt repairs during the construction season. This truck will also allow the township to apply salt brine to the roads ahead of major winter-weather events by utilizing the anti-icing and water tank attachment to spray the roads.

Last week, Trump removed the exceptions and exemptions from his 2018 tariffs on steel, meaning that all steel imports from countries including Canada, Brazil, Mexico and South Korea will be taxed at a minimum of 25 per cent. Trump also hiked his 2018 aluminum tariffs to 25 per cent from 10 per cent.

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Kitchener mortgage agent running under the Liberal banner in Kitchener-Conestoga

LEE GRIFFI
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Kitchener resident Joe Gowing is the Liberal candidate in the Kitchener-Conestoga riding for the Feb. 27 provincial election.

Gowing was born and raised in Cambridge but moved to Kitchener about 15 years ago.

“I have lived and worked here ever since. I have been in the financial industry for over 23 years. I am a community volunteer as I sit on many boards and committees such as the Kitchener Citizens Resource Group for the Meadowlane Park Development. I am the current president of the Royal Canadian Legion and have volunteered there for 30 years,” he said.

Gowing lives in Forest Heights with his wife, Ann-Marie, and his two adult step-daughters that are enrolled at post-secondary schools.

“Growing up, we never really had much. My dad hurt himself at work and my mom worked minimum-wage jobs to help support three kids. That meant we needed assistance here and there from food banks and we lived in social housing. I know the need is great for these programs and I know firsthand what they mean to people. I was lucky enough to break that cycle

and, with the help of OSAP, I was able to attend Conestoga College. I worked odd jobs here and there until I found banking and finance and I never looked back.”

He added the main reason he decided to get into politics was to make sure the programs that helped his family get by years ago are protected.

“I want to be able to help form an Ontario that our girls and their kids can live and prosper. My financing background gives me a great opportunity to help guide our government in respect to housing and balancing investments in our social programs, as well as being fiscally responsible.”

Gowing noted there are four issues top of mind in his campaign and they are health care, education, housing and the cost of living.

“We need to look at the types of homes we are building in Ontario. As a mortgage agent, I have been involved in new build sites and the minimum price for a single detached was \$950,000. That is without upgrades. What first-time homebuyer can afford that?”

He added society needs to get back to basics and rethink the types of homes being built.

“My girls will be graduating soon and starting careers, and I want to make sure they will have places to live and raise

families and not have to rely on social assistance programs.”

Gowing explained the cost of living continues to rise thanks to supply and demand.

“We need to attract and bring in more grocery chains to build our competition with the two major players in Loblaws and Sobeys. I’d like to see more and more competition so we can see a reduction in prices.”

When it comes the one issue that specifically stands out to him in Wilmot Township, he didn’t hesitate in saying farmland must be protected.

“As most of you are aware, the provincial government has tried to expropriate 770 acres of land from farmers in Wilmot. I would put a full restart on the land acquisition and make the process how it should have been from day one – open and transparent.”

He conceded there is a need for development but not at the expense of our farmland.

“We are being threatened by tariffs from the U.S. and we are looking at ways to combat that. One way is to be self-reliant. If we take away our farmlands, it goes against that narrative. We need to feed ourselves before we look across our borders.”

Gowing concluded he is an open and honest person and would work hard for the



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)
Joe Gowing is the Liberal candidate in the Kitchener-Conestoga riding for the upcoming Feb. 27 provincial election.

residents of Kitchener-Conestoga no matter what party affiliation they have.

“I will be Kitchener-Conestoga’s voice in Queen’s Park, not the other way around. I am committed to making myself available at all times to my constituents.”

Restoring small-town journalism, one community at a time!

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Harris seeking re-election in Kitchener-Conestoga

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Mike Harris has been the Conservative MPP in Kitchener-Conestoga since 2018 and is looking again to represent Wilmot, Wellesley, Woolwich and Kitchener at Queen's Park for a third term.

Harris said since being elected, he has championed local initiatives around health care, transit and infrastructure including a new regional acute-care hospital, nurse-practitioner-led and community care clinics, the Wellesley recreation complex, improved GO Train service along the Kitchener line and road and bridge infrastructure in the townships.

"I have also served as Ontario's minister of ted tape reduction, helping people and

businesses save over \$1 billion annually in compliance costs and 1.5 million hours on paperwork."

Prior to being elected, Harris was a small-business owner and entrepreneur and said he saw firsthand how the Liberal government had made life difficult for business owners.

"When you own and operate your own business, you want to be able to grow and reinvest in your employees and operations. However, if your costs keep rising and you have to spend hours on paperwork, you can't do that. I wanted my children to be able to have the opportunity to be successful business owners and give back to Waterloo Region, so I made the decision to run for MPP."

Harris explained the number-one issue he is hearing at doors right now is concern around what President Trump's tariffs will mean for Waterloo Region.

"Locally, many of our businesses have connections and operations in the U.S. We need strong leadership to stand up for those businesses and jobs to protect them. Doug Ford is the only leader who has a plan to protect Ontario and protect people's livelihoods. We will invest to keep people working and support impacted businesses."

He added building on more access to better care in the riding is also a priority in addition to previous investments that have been made.

"We added new medical seats to train more Ontario doctors for the first time in a decade, but there is still more to do. We have a plan to invest \$1.8 billion to connect everyone in Ontario to a family doctor and primary care."

Harris said ensuring local businesses can remain competitive, especially right now, is also top of mind.

"We've seen the Liberals push their job-killing carbon tax, which has increased the cost of everything, from the gas needed to drive your kids to school to food at the grocery store. We have never raised a single tax in Ontario and want to lower the costs of doing business so we can continue to attract investment and create jobs close to home."

Harris also explained critical infrastructure is a huge challenge for Wilmot Township and added working with the mayor and local township officials, together they have been able to address key projects the provincial government can help support.

"Over the last few years, we embarked on one of the largest infrastructure spends



(FILE PHOTO)

Incumbent Mike Harris is the Ontario PC Party's candidate for Kitchener-Conestoga in the Feb. 27 provincial election.

in Ontario's history, catching up for years of neglect by the 15 years of Liberal governments that viewed rural Ontario as a no-man's land. I plan to continue to work together with the local municipality to build roads and bridges that are suited to today's farming implements so that communities can stay connected and we can continue to feed the hardworking folks of Ontario."

He said if he is re-elected, he would continue to fight for rural communities at Queen's Park.

"We have seen so much reinvestment into small towns across Ontario from the Ontario PCs and we need to keep moving that momentum forward."



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ERNIE HARDEMAN

PC CANDIDATE FOR OXFORD

Authorized by the CFO of the Ernie Hardeman Campaign

Grant Haven Media partners with Paris Independent

Paris' online newspaper will launch print edition in March

STEWART GRANT

Grant Haven Media

"Start the Presses!" was the big headline in the Saturday, Feb. 15 online edition of The Paris Independent, as managing editor Casandra Turnbull broke the exciting news to her hometown that their newspaper would be available for the first time in print format on Wednesday, March 19.

Effective March 1, the Paris Independent becomes the 11th newspaper under our Grant Haven Media banner as we continue to follow our mandate of "restoring local journalism, one community at a time."

I have admired the work of the Paris Independent for over a year; ever since our company expanded into Brant County in January 2024 with the purchase of the Brant Farms publication. The Paris Independent, like the St. Marys Independent in my hometown, developed locally in response to failures of the media conglomerates to safeguard local news reporting. Three years after St. Marys saw the closure of its Journal-Argus, Paris lost its Star.

Paris Independent founder Chris Whelan wrote in his history column this week about the rich history of journalism in Paris.

"The Paris Star, a stalwart publication, stood as a testament to the town's commitment to news dissemination. ... Had fate been kinder, the Paris Star would have celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2025. Alas, the echoes of its presses fell silent in 2020, hushed by the hand of Postmedia."

Though Postmedia had closed the Paris Star during the pandemic, along with 14 other community newspapers, a grassroots campaign began the following year to fill this void.

"Throughout the majority of 2021, our community endured a notable absence of a vital communication channel precisely when it was most needed," said Whelan, who put a call on social media hoping to find likeminded people to help launch a new digital publication. "The outpouring

of support was truly overwhelming, notably from key figures such as Casandra, the former editor of The Paris Star until 2011."

The first edition of the online Paris Independent was launched in September 2021. For each of the last 180 weeks, Whelan, Turnbull and the rest of their Paris based team have put out a digital newspaper, building up a loyal following of over 2,000 readers. Still, an online paper has its limitations. It's not something that you can see or be aware of when you are walking the streets of Paris and visiting the stores, restaurants, or coffee shops.

Last month, I met with Whelan for lunch at the Cobblestone Public House in Paris and suggested we establish a partnership with the goal of converting the Paris Independent into a print publication so it may make an even greater impact to its community, with a more visible presence and a powerful new distribution model.

Following our meeting, Whelan, who I've found quickly to be a kindred spirit, consulted with Turnbull who agreed this was the perfect time to take their newspaper in this direction.

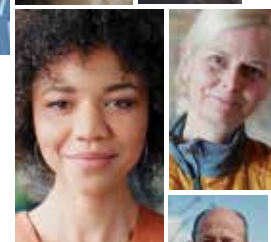
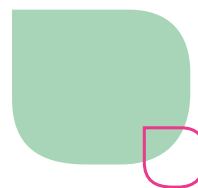
"This was always our end goal," said Turnbull of a print edition. "When we started the Paris Independent, we promised the community that if it was viable, one day we would roll out a print edition. With a strong online presence and digital footprint, it's only natural that we take that next step in growth and publish a weekly edition that will reach stores, businesses and community centres across Paris. Even as the community has adjusted to digital news, we still get the occasional question, 'Where can I pick up a copy?' There will always be a longing for a print edition, something tangible to hold in your hands and flip the pages as you digest what is happening in your own backyard."

The presses will begin to roll soon, with the first print edition being delivered to Paris on March 19 while also being available online at www.granthaven.com.



(CINDY WHELAN PHOTO)

Some of the Paris Independent team got together at the Paris Inn recently to plan for the first print edition and beyond. Pictured from left to right are George Le Gresley (sports reporter), Michelle Malvaso (photographer), Stewart Grant (publisher), Casandra Turnbull (managing editor) and Chris Whelan (editor).



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Elections Ontario

The annual Optimist Family Day in Shakespeare a popular event again this year

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

It has been a few years since the Optimist Club of Shakespeare had enough snow and freezing temperatures to have an abundance of outdoor activities when they sponsored a Family Day event for the youth in and around the village.

This year was exceptional for skating and hockey in the park pavillion, with lots of snow on the nearby Optimist toboggan hill for sledding.

The club also organized floor hockey, basketball and pickleball as well as a craft table for the younger set in the Optimist hall.

With over 120 free hot dogs and hot chocolate served, club members felt it was a very successful Family Day for parents and kids alike, despite the cold and stormy weather.

For the first time, they served fresh, homemade snow cones dipped in maple syrup, which became very popular.

The club would like to thank Sebastopol's Carmen Wettlaufer for the donated maple syrup and the Perth County Dairy Producers for their donation of the chocolate and white milk.



(MIKE MCNEIL PHOTO)

In the Shakespeare Optimist Hall on Monday was a large gathering of local youth having fun on Family Day.

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Get to Know Your Local Candidate

The Ontario Provincial election on February 27th, 2025, is fast approaching. Patrick Doucette is a resident of Elmira and is campaigning to become the Member of Provincial Parliament for Kitchener-Conestoga. Together with his wife, Kiki, they relocated from Kitchener, where they lived for the past 15 years. Kiki is now the co-owner of Market Café Elmira, where you may find Patrick enjoying a cappuccino and trying to solve the Sudoku from the Observer.

Patrick attended the Freedom Protests in Ottawa and has been a vocal supporter of responsible government and common-sense policies ever since. Representing the Ontario Party, he hopes to serve the citizens of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmont.

Question: How would the Ontario Party reduce the cost of living and help the citizens of Ontario?

We would cut Provincial Sales Tax by 3%, resulting in paying 10% HST instead of the current 13%. This would immediately reduce the cost of goods and services for all citizens of Ontario.

The Ontario Party would eliminate Provincial Income Tax completely for anyone under the age of 30 and making less than 200k per year.

The Ontario Party is also planning a 65% Property Tax Reduction for Seniors; ensuring elderly Ontarians can afford to stay in their homes. The Ontario Party will subsidize municipalities for this and use cost-cutting measures and revenue generation in other areas to support this.

Question: That sounds very ambitious. What other revenue generating opportunities are available to the province?

We would work to support provincial infrastructure projects such as the James Bay Port project. We would work to eliminate inter-provincial trade barriers. We would eliminate the practice of 'health-care tourism' and require visitors to Ontario to have their own private medical insurance in place prior to taking advantage of our health care services. This alone could save the province a significant amount of money. Ontario is such a rich province, there is no reason we cannot reduce taxes for everyone. Instead, government corruption and wasteful spending have caused taxes to continually rise.

Question: How has the campaign been going since you have had short notice and bad weather?

Sometimes there is a lack of awareness amongst the voters. Many people think that the federal Conservatives are essentially the same as the Provincial Progressive Conservatives, when, in fact, they are totally separate. Voters like Pierre Poilievre so they think they should vote for the Progressive Conservatives and Doug Ford. They don't realize that Doug Ford more closely aligns with the policies of Justin Trudeau and is not really 'conservative' at all.

Then you have the younger generation who want to be liberal because they like the sound of the name. They like to see themselves as 'liberal' and think the term

'conservative' describes someone who is old. They don't realize the damage the Trudeau Liberals have inflicted upon Canadians. They don't realize the circumstances surrounding the Lavalin inquiry, the 'We Charity' scandal details and so on and so forth. I could go on and on about how the federal Liberals have failed Canadians.

Yet most voters are aware that Doug Ford is trying to pull a fast one by calling a snap election. In fact, as we countdown towards February 27th, I am seeing a remarkable thing. Voters are communicating by word-of-mouth and telling their neighbours about the Ontario Party. It is becoming a genuine awakening among the community.

The mainstream news seems to only want to focus on the 'big three' parties but I am seeing more and more buzz from the community. "Hey, how about this Ontario party? They have sensible policies, and they are getting candidates with faith and family values joining them. What a concept!"

The other parties seem to be coasting through the campaign period with a few photo ops and a few meetings with their own small circle of supporters. Meanwhile the Ontario Party is leapfrogging into prominence and soaring in popularity!

This sentiment is spreading like wildfire. It is quite exciting to see people realize that their political choice is important, that their vote is powerful, and that they can make things change for the better. I always say, "When the people have faith, change happens."

Any last comments to the voters before the election next week?

The Ontario Party stands for Freedom, Family, & Faith. We are a party that openly stands up for righteousness and truth in government. Residents can see the policies we stand for at the website, ontarioparty.ca. The policies on education and healthcare are very important. We want to fight against indoctrination in our schools. We want student success to be based on best practices, not a radical curriculum. We want to provide funding for greater hospital bed capacity and more health-care workers. If residents agree that these policies make sense, and will benefit our communities, then they should vote for me and vote for the Ontario Party.



Authorized by the campaign to elect Patrick Doucette



Baden's Ray Stagat the latest 50/50 winner in the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigade Draw

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigade came up with a great idea months ago to help gain support with a licenced raffle to raise funds in helping to maintain the antique fire trucks, all of the old pumps and equipment and memorabilia associated with the Baden Fire department of the past.

The latest winner, as shown, is Ray Stagat from Baden who has been supporting the 50/50 raffle from the beginning and every month had been asking (with a grin) why his name hadn't been picked?

This month, the computer generated his name and, guess what? Stagat is a happy man. He wasn't even sure he could believe Peter Gingerich from the Heritage Fire Brigade when he called to let him know that he was this month's winner.

Gingerich says the winner is picked each month by a computer-generated, random draw.

They have a company in Nova Scotia that operates the raffle technology and the

winner is chosen by the random draw system from the tickets that have been sold that month.

Everyone in Ontario over the age of 18 is welcome and encouraged to have a little fun and, at the same time, support the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigade with what they call their "little museum."

They are a registered not-for-profit, charitable group with no affiliation with Wilmot Township, other than the museum was started by some retired volunteer firefighters that wanted to preserve the history of firefighting in Baden.

Gingerich said with the help of the ticket sales as well as the odd donation they receive from the public, their monthly can and bottle drive and also their scrap-metal collection that they sort and sell, they hope to someday expand and have a permanent facility that will house the entire antique collection.

They thank everyone who has helped so far and good luck to all those who purchase tickets in the future.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Peter Gingerich is shown presenting \$227.50 to Baden's Ray Stagat on behalf of the Wilmot Heritage Fire Brigade for his share of the 50/50 money from a recent monthly draw.

Woolwich businessman running for Ontario Party in Kitchener-Conestoga

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Patrick Doucette has tossed his hat in the ring for a seat in the Ontario Legislature as the Ontario Party's candidate for Kitchener-Conestoga.

The real-estate broker and investor has lived in Woolwich with his wife since 2022 and before that, lived in Kitchener for 15 years.

"During the pandemic, I travelled to Ottawa to support those whose businesses were being forced to shut down. That experience inspired me to get involved in politics," he said.

Doucette said there are three main issues the Ontario Party wants to address during the election – immigration reform, better health care and improving affordability for all Ontarians.

"In terms of immigration, we would work to drastically reduce it. We are seeing so many newcomers to Canada unable to find work; it hurts everyone. Under current conditions, the numbers need to be cut."

He added improved health care is vital for the Kitchener-Conestoga region.

"The Ontario Party wants to incentivize doctors to serve rural communities. We have numerous plans to improve health

care that we detail on our website at www.ontarioparty.ca.

To address affordability, the Ontario Party said it would cut the Provincial Sales Tax by three per cent, resulting in paying 10 per cent HST instead of the current 13 per cent.

"This would immediately reduce the cost of goods and services for all citizens of Ontario."

Doucette added the Ontario Party would eliminate the annual Provincial Income Tax completely for anyone under the age of 30 and making less than \$200,000 per year.

"The Ontario Party is also planning a 65 per-cent property tax reduction for seniors, ensuring elderly Ontarians can afford to stay in their homes. We will subsidize the municipalities for this and use cost-cutting measures and revenue generation in other areas to support this. For example, we would support provincial-infrastructure developments such as the James Bay Port project that would result in long-term increased prosperity for the province," he explained.

Doucette said his party would also eliminate the practice of "health-care tourism" and require visitors to Ontario to have their own private medical insurance

in place prior to taking advantage of our health-care services.

"This alone could save the province a significant amount of money. Ontario is such a rich province, there is no reason we cannot reduce taxes for everyone through better management. Instead, government corruption and wasteful spending have caused taxes to continually rise."

The biggest local issue for Wilmot Township during the campaign has been the potential acquisition of 770 acres of prime farmland for a future mega-project. Doucette he would like to fight for more transparency.

"The regional chair of Waterloo said she was working in 'lockstep' with the province and they were instructed to keep everything confidential. But when the residents rose up and complained, then suddenly, the province tried to shift blame to the Region of Waterloo. I made a detailed video about this mismanaged scenario and published on my Facebook page."

Doucette explained the Ontario Party stands for freedom, family and faith.

"We are a party that openly stands up for righteousness and truth in government. Residents can see the policies we stand for on our website. The policies on education and health care are very important."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Patrick Doucette is the Ontario Party candidate for Kitchener-Conestoga in the Feb. 27 provincial election.

He added they want to fight against indoctrination in our schools and believe student success should be based on best practices, not a radical curriculum.

"We want to provide funding for greater hospital bed capacity and more health-care workers. If residents agree that these policies make sense and will benefit our communities, then they should vote for me, Patrick Doucette, and vote for the Ontario Party."



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Gather 25 to be held at East Zorra Mennonite Church

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The members of East Zorra Mennonite Church on 16th line are holding a community gathering called Gather 25 on Feb. 28 and March 1.

Gather 25 is an event that is bringing Global Churches together to livestream messages for 25 hours across the world.

East Zorra and its members are going to have its doors open for the full 25 hours and is offering breakfast and hosting a community potluck meal.

It will prove to be a lot of fun and they would like the community to be involved. According to community event organizer Amy Yantzi, it is a free event and all are welcome with no registration needed. Just show up on Feb. 28 or March 1 and take part with other church members from around the world.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

East Zorra Mennonite Church members hope everyone in the area will join them for Gathering 25 Feb. 28 and March 1st.

OBITUARY

REMPEL, Allen Bruce



Passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, February 13, 2025, at Hamilton General Hospital with family by his side. Allen of New Hamburg, at the age of 71 years.

Beloved husband of Helen (Gardiner) Rempel with whom he has cherished 38 years of marriage. Al will be missed by his sisters Leona Rupkowski (Dave)

and Darlene Green, by brothers in law; Ron Gardiner (Bernie), Gary Gardiner, Paul Gardiner (Donna), sisters-in-law Pat Singler, Andrea Tomiczek and by his many nieces, nephews and friends. Al will be especially missed by his special long time friends Lori and Larry Struck, Tom and Linda Ryan, Dan and Fran Moriarty and their families.

Predeceased by his father and mother John and Anne (Martin) Rempel, by his father-in-law and mother-in-law Andrew and Polly (Usher) Gardiner, brother Don Rempel, brothers-in-law Mel Green, John Michael Tomiczek, and sister-in-law Sharon Smith.

Allen was a lover of cars, cars, and cars... which showed in his choice of career, working for 10 years at Stedelbauer Motors, and Orr Automotive, and retiring from Heffner Lexus Toyota after 35 years of service. He was fascinated in rebuilding, restoring and fixing them. He spent many days and nights at car shows, sitting around with his buddies talking about cars and offering advice. Al also was a collector of classic scale cars. Along with his passion of fixing, building and restoring, he enjoyed working on his guitars and playing guitar with his brothers-in-law. He had a passion for woodworking, building many cabinets that will be cherished in his home forever. Al enjoyed the outdoors, travelling the open roads on his many Harley Davidsons over the years, he enjoyed the peacefulness of his fish pond, camping and travelling with Helen.

A special thank you to all staff at the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre, Grand River Hospital, St. Mary's General Hospital and Hamilton General Hospital – Neuro Trauma ICU, for the compassionate care to Al and his family.

Cremation has taken place. Relatives and friends are invited to the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg, on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, from 10:30 – 12:30 with a time of refreshments and memory sharing at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 532, New Hamburg from 1 – 4.

As expressions of sympathy and in lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre or a Charity of One's Choice.

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

OBITUARY

STEIN: Richard Allan



Passed away peacefully with his family by his side on Sunday, February 16, 2025 at Sakura House, Woodstock. Richard Stein of Woodstock and formerly of Tavistock in his 79th year.

Beloved husband of Diane (MacDougall) Stein. Dear father of Elizabeth Stein of California, Brittany Stein of Woodstock, Michael & wife

Joyce of Weyburn, SK and Ben & wife Veronica of Woodstock. Sadly missed by his grandchildren Caleb, Cooper, Wyatt, Charlie, Xavier and Liadan. Survived by his sisters Joyce Jones of New Westminster, B.C., sister-in-law Rosemary Stein of Tavistock and by many MacDougall brothers and sisters-in-law.

Predeceased by his parents Werner & Olive (Corp) Stein and brothers Warren and another in infancy.

Richard along with his brother Warren founded Thames Bend Farms in Tavistock. Richard enjoyed the farming and all the travel that it also allowed him to do.

A private family graveside service will take place later in McTavish Cemetery. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Francis Funeral Home, Tavistock.

The family would like to thank Dr. To from London hospital and all the doctors and nurses at Woodstock hospital.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Sakura House or Woodstock Hospital would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

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Sorry For Your Loss

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.

February 19-26, 2020, Edition (5 years ago)

Eight local teams enjoyed a morning of curling as they competed in the annual Men's Bonspiel at the Tavistock Curling Rink on Saturday, Feb. 15, 2020. The early draw of Don Campbell, Chris Campbell, Mike Campbell and Jaw MacPhee were winners while the team of Bob Reid, Adam Winchester, Colin Yantzi and Glen Weitzel won the late draw.

The Tavistock Braves have moved on to the Doherty Division semi-finals series after eliminating the Burford Bulldogs in four straight games. The Braves took care of the Bulldogs 7-0 on Friday night in Tavistock then earned a 4-1 win on Sunday night in Burford.

The board of directors of Tavistock Community Health Inc. (TCHI) were pleased to receive a donation at their February meeting from the Trillium ROOTS Community Fund in the amount of \$2,000. TCHI consists of a network of health professionals providing a full range of health-care services to over 7,000 patients. The funding has been put towards much-needed equipment at the clinic.

It was not the first time, but it is a rare occasion when exotic birds take flight in The Maples Home for Seniors. On Friday afternoon, Feb. 21, Jack Flock Productions of Kitchener came to roost in The Maples Nursing Home dining room for a meet and greet with residents. Owner Brie Renfrew and her daughter, Riley, brought four unique birds to the home to visit with residents and put on a show.

February 17-24, 2010, Edition (15 years ago)

After 94 years in its current location, the Tavistock Public Library is moving. The new, larger space on the first floor of the former Oxford Hotel at 40 Woodstock St. S opens up many new opportunities. People can drop in for a cup of coffee, find a comfy chair

and read the newspaper. Six computers will also be available for public use or you can bring your own laptop and tap into WiFi. Books, magazines, movies and CD's will be easy to find in the new Chapters-like set up. And there will be a new program room for movie showings, gaming and special events.

After participating in over a dozen marathons in the last two years, Woodstock's Cal Dolson has reached a plateau and is headed for the summit. He's qualified for the 114th Boston Marathon and will be one of an estimated 25,000 runners in this year's event.

Sometimes our most treasured possessions are right under our noses, or in this case, right under our feet. Through the inquisitiveness of Mrs. Sherrill Calder, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church's resident historian, another piece of history has been uncovered and restored. On one of her rare visits to the basement of the 125-year-old house of worship, Sherrill found two altars covered in layers of dust and still more layers of paint. One was the junior Sunday school altar painted in hues of pink and blue while the other was the original altar from the chancel area of the main sanctuary.

February 1-8, 1995, Edition (30 years ago)

Jeff Zehr, a product of the Tavistock Minor Hockey system, is providing hockey fans in Stratford and area with some exciting hockey. Jeff is currently playing for the Stratford Cullitons of the Mid-Western Junior B league. Currently, he has recorded 22 goals and 29 assists for a total of 51 points in 45 games, with just three games left in the season.

At their last monthly meeting held last Thursday, Feb. 16, the Tavistock Men's Club voted to raise \$50,000 for the Tavistock Arena Fund. Club president Paul Roth read a letter from the Tavistock Arena fundraising committee stating that \$700,000 must be raised in the community for the project. In response, Don Schwartzentruber moved and Ed Matresky seconded the motion to pledge \$50,000 to the fund on behalf of the club.



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All are welcome

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What is the world's oldest known currency that is still in use today?
2. What is the tallest building in the world?
3. What tool is used to measure angles?
4. The Brooklyn Bridge spans which river?
5. What was a "garderobe" in a medieval castle?
6. A mule is a cross between which two animals?
7. Who wrote Alice's Adventures in Wonderland?
8. What country has the most pyramids in the world?
9. What ingredient makes bread rise?
10. Who founded the technology company Microsoft?

Answers found on the classified page

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Shakespeare's Optimist members tour New-Form Tools in Stratford

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

A large number of Optimist members from Shakespeare were invited to tour one of the more progressive industries in Stratford last week.

New-Form Tools Ltd. at 232 Lorne Ave. E left the members in awe as to what this company, which ships their products worldwide, can do.

Company president and founder Jim Jantzi took the time to tour the members through the company's facilities which,

over the last number of years, has been through many upgrades and expansions.

Their products include HSS circular saw blades and plates, TCT circular saw blades, tube cutoff blades, tube cutoff jaws, slitter knives, rotary disc cutters and dozens more.

The company also supplies sharpening services and reconditioning services available for all their clients worldwide.

Jantzi said he started informally in the basement of his Milverton house and garage in 1983. His first jobs were sharpening

cutting tools for various businesses, farmers and individuals throughout the area. Through various ventures, his business grew and he expanded in several areas over many years while gaining valuable experience in business at the same time.

Once the business moved to Stratford, he and his wife, Carolyn, worked many hours throughout their married years being 50-50 partners in the venture together. Their three sons, Andrew, Tyler and Jarrett, are now full-time in this particular growth cycle, producing high-quality blades for the

steel cutting of tubes and solid steel.

They each have their own level of expertise in engineering, sales, and product development, creating an exceptional foundation for the future of the company.

They are an organization that employs 65 local workers. Jantzi says they had zero turnover in the company over the last number of years, except for retirements.

They are a progressive worldwide company that Stratford and Perth County can be proud of.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

Jim Jantzi, president of New-Form Tools Ltd. on Lorne Avenue is now one of Stratford and Perth County's major leading industries, revolutionizing and delivering the highest-quality metal-cutting solutions.



Many members of the Shakespeare Optimist Club were more than impressed with the tour of the expanding facility of New-Form Tools in Stratford.



One of the 65 workers among the many machines, who helped form the workforce at New-Form Tools in Stratford. They spoke very proudly and positively of their employer, the Jantzi family.



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2025 HERITAGE EDITION



Oxford County celebrating multiple historic landmarks

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Each and every detail hasn't been confirmed yet, but Oxford County is getting ready to celebrate several historical milestones in 2025.

Liz Dommasch is Oxford County's archivist and told the Gazette about four major milestones in the county's history:

- 175 years since the incorporation of Oxford County (1850)
- 60 years since the formation of the current Oxford County Library system (1965)
- 50 years since the county restructured (1975)
- Oxford County Archives 25th anniversary (2000)

Dommasch, obviously very passionate about history in the area, said Oxford County had a vast and fascinating history even before 1850.

"We were the District of Brock from 1842-1849 and earlier on when we were part of the London District, you look at our population and industry growth and the personalities and people, there is such a wide past and I think it's important we celebrate all of it."

There is currently a historical display at the Oxford County administrative building lobby, but Dommasch said the big project is an upcoming book.

"The archives are going to be publishing a history book and we are hoping to have that out later in the spring. That will include a variety of different stories, not just from the archives but community contributors. It covers topics like people, government, crime, health, disasters and businesses. You name it, it's going to be in there."

She added the hope is to capture some new stories people may not know about, including an entire section on folklore and some interesting tales from the East Zorra-Tavistock area.

"Dr. Paul Bartlett from the Tavistock District Historical Society had submitted an article about the history of the German population in Tavistock. We also have an article on the East Zorra Township bylaw about public health from the 1870s."

Dommasch explained it touches on historical pandemics and a 1914 tornado that tore through East Zorra. She added it is her hope both longtime and new residents will take an interest in learning more about where the county came from.

"Just in terms of the reference questions we are receiving (at the archives), property histories seem to be on the rise. People want to know about where they are living. I think this is a great opportunity to discover that kind of history. They want to know who lived here; were there any businesses here?"

The county is going to be putting interesting local stories on its social media. Oxford County Archives also has its own Instagram page which is always full of interesting material. An exhibit will also be available for the public to view at the Woodstock Art Gallery in the spring and summer.

"We get to see some neat, early architectural drawings of some of the county buildings like the courthouse and the jail. There will also be interesting artifacts relating to county council. It will be an interesting one for people to come and see."

Dommasch, a London native, has been with the archives since 2003 and exploring Oxford County history every day has been a rewarding experience.

"I love it. So many great little stories and I never stop learning. I hope people are going to enjoy what we put out there."

The Gazette asked Dommasch one last question before we let her go; what is one

story she has come across that wowed her? The answer was interesting.

"There was one we put on Instagram recently. In 1862, Oxford County appointed its first bowling alley inspector. At the time, there were a lot of different rules for them – you had to be a certain age to enter, there were rules around drinking and swearing."

James Izzard, who was the appointee in 1862, was also the inspector of weights and measures."

"Well, apparently soon after, the county received a number of complaints about his inspection methods. He was not only inspecting people's weights but also inspecting people's liquor. Needless to say, he didn't last very long in the position. I have lots of them; we could talk for hours."

More information will be available on the Oxford County website in the near future.



Embracing Our Past Preserving Our Heritage For The Future

As your Member of Parliament, I am proud to advocate for our Arts and Heritage sectors.

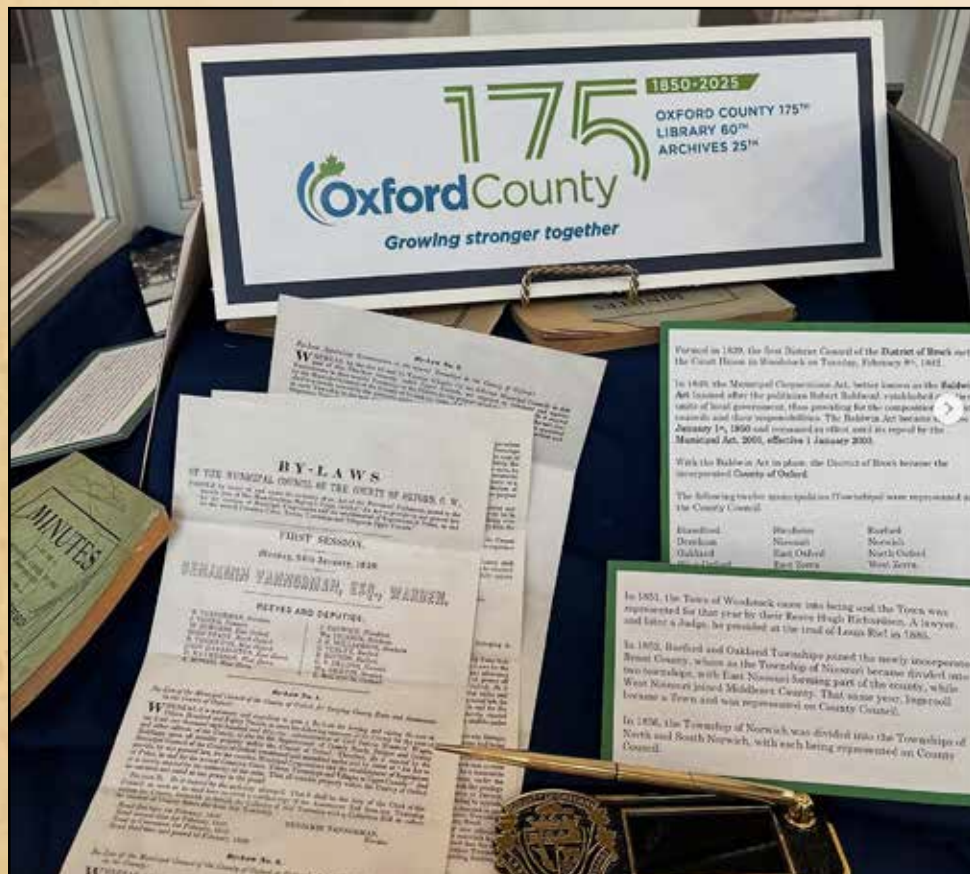


TIM LOUIS

Member of Parliament, Kitchener-Conestoga

Tim.Louis@parl.gc.ca (519) 578-3777

@TimLouisKitCon



(OXFORD COUNTY ARCHIVES INSTAGRAM PHOTO)

Oxford County is celebrating its 175th year since incorporation and the Archives is celebrating its 25th year since being established. To honour these milestones, there is a new exhibit at the County's administration building.

Tavistock and District Historical Society brings monumental local clock home

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Members of the Tavistock and District Historical Society (TDHS) took advantage of a rare opportunity to purchase at auction one of only five enormous grandfather clocks designed and built by one of Tavistock's well-remembered residents, John K. Lemp.

TDHS became aware of the clock coming up for auction at Miller & Miller Auctions in New Hamburg early this month. Believing the clock's display of craftsmanship should remain in Tavistock, the society members ultimately bid on and purchased the clock for \$6,000.

Donna Dickson, an avid clock collector and a member of both the Southwestern Ontario Chapter 92 of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors (NAWCC) and TDHS, began research on the clocks in October last year as part of a presentation for the clock association.

"It has been a fantastic journey learning about the Lemp family and the five clocks," she said. "The start began with John K Lemp; he is the person who created four of the clocks, with the last in conjunction with grandson, Ernest Piehl."

Initial online research started with a Facebook clock group posting a picture of one of the Lemp clocks. The journey for this one clock ends now with it installed in its current home at TDHS.

The focal of the presentation (to NAWCC) was "Where the five clocks are today?" Dickson visited the original home of John K. Lemp, currently owned by Gwen and Dan Matthews. Many of the homes unique features, attributed to Lemp's skilled craftsmanship, are also exhibited through the craftsmanship of the clock cases. The visit to the Matthews home was significant in bringing forth more information on the clocks up to 2007.

Thanks to information collected by TDHS member Tim Mosher and a collection of articles about Lemp Clocks saved by society members over the years,



John K. Lemp.

Dickson learned one of the Lemp Clocks is at the Queen's Inn in Stratford, currently in storage as the hotel is being renovated; one is at the Canadian Museum of History in Hull, Que., one is now at the TDHS and society members are continuing to search for the current locations of the other two.

Circling to the day of the auction, Feb. 8, Dickson said some of the members gathered to wait with anticipation for the call from Miller & Miller Auction.

"As bidding progressed, it felt like time stood still waiting for the auctioneer to bring down the gavel, but finally – success – we won the clock," Dickson said.

On Feb. 14, TDHS officially paid for the clock and had it delivered back to Tavistock where it will be displayed proudly at the TDHS museum (37 Maria St.) Plans in the works to showcase the clock, as well as the Lemp Studio Collection already part of the TDHS collection.

This particular clock was made by John K. Lemp for his nephew, W. J. Leonard, in 1931. Lemp was a machinist and carpenter in Tavistock and made five large clocks for his family, all of his design and of monumental size.

At just under eight feet tall, this clock has a mahogany case, inlaid and embellished with carved rosettes and has two large dials (clock and date) stacked vertically over a glass door showing the pendulum. The base consists of two small drawers flanking a bowed middle drawer over two doors having inlaid panels. This clock has descended in the original family for three generations and was deemed by the auction house to be in excellent, working condition with its original finish.

"It's unique as a clock just because of its sheer size and the fact that it was made by hand by a man who cut all of the gears, made everything himself," Dickson said. "He did the case and his woodworking skills alone, when you see pictures of it, you'll understand the detail and skill that went into it, the different types of wood inlay, ... and they were made by a man who was not a clockmaker."

In his early life, Lemp manifested exceptional skill in the woodworker's craft and opened a shop on Woodstock Street North in 1886, where he sold and filed saws.

At 30, he had built a grandfather clock which took him about four years to complete. Some time before the turn of the century, he constructed his family home which features beautiful inlaid wood floors, carved bannister and newel post on the main stairway, and relief carving below the windows in the sitting room.

He was also an outstanding mechanic, manufacturing Tavistock's first horseless carriage in 1908 for Mr. W. E. Ratz, owner of the local milling company.

He maintained steam engines and, with the advent of gasoline power, welcomed the new technology with wonder and excitement. At 70, he had built four



(PHOTOS COURTESY TAVISTOCK AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

The Lemp Home in Tavistock.

additional grandfather clocks as gifts for members of his family. One of his clocks recorded the days, hours and minutes that passed in the local public library where it was on loan for many years. This clock is the one currently in possession of the Queens Inn in Stratford.

To help TDHS pay for the Lemp Clock, they will be launching a fundraising campaign at its annual general meeting on April 5, where Dickson will share her presentation on the clocks. She said she may have more information on where the last two clocks are to share at that meeting.

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John K. Lemp with two of his clocks.



Tavistock and District Historical Society members Paul Bartlett, Donna Dickson and Bob Rudy standing with the Lemp Clock the society purchased at Miller & Miller Auction in New Hamburg.



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The Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street

MARIE VOISIN AND KRISTEN HAHN

Gazette Contributors

This excerpt was lifted from Marie Voisin and Kristen Hahn's five-volume book series, "The Historic Buildings of New Hamburg and the People Who Lived in Them," which is set to release this year.

The building at 291 Huron St. is still very much a grand house maintaining its original elegance and opulence.

Very little has been changed throughout its life. Ornate window and door trim and a sweeping staircase are only a few indications of its appeal. The structure boasts 12-inch-thick brick walls – the first floor has triple brick and the second floor is double-bricked.

There was a wrought-iron fence around the property, but it was removed many

years ago. The windows are lavish and ornamented with the style of grape key-stones that may also be found on 73-75 Peel, 112-120 Peel, 75-79 Huron, and 121 Peel St.

Some original features still in the house are wooden corner protectors, Arts and Craft door hinges, an elaborate transom above the front door, ornate heating vents, a newel post and staircase and stained-glass windows. There is a closed-off fireplace in the basement.

Joseph Hartman Sr., one of the first settlers in New Hamburg, owned this property until 1881 when Jacob Ernst and his bride, Clarissa Merner (daughter of Frederick Merner), built a small house here. In 1883, they added to the building, increasing its value from \$800 to \$3,000. Jacob ran successful dry goods-grocery-produce store in the Ernst Block at 55-59 Huron St.

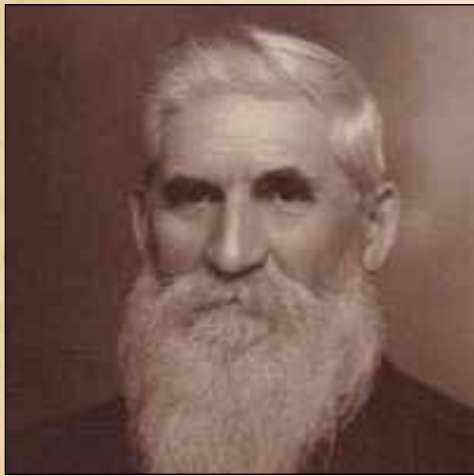
By 1883, Jacob's brother, Henry, and his wife, Jennie Sterling, became the second owners. Sadness overtook their lives when their only son, George, died at age four of Hodgkin's lymphoma. Jennie died in 1924 after an operation for a brain tumour. Two years later, Henry remarried Fannie Puddicombe. Henry died of a stroke in 1931 and Fannie remained in the house until 1945 when she sold it to Garner and Ethel Hodgin, who set up a hair salon in the house.

In 1949, Pat Futher and Bruce Omand



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARIE VOISIN)

An undated early photo of the house.



Joseph Hartmann Sr.

Continued on page 16



Jacob Ernst, 1908.



Bruce and Josephine Omand.



Mark and Karen Jutzi, 1988.



Omand family, 1958.



This 1872 hotel was totally restored from 2014-2016 and now contains 12 elegant one-bedroom apartments for seniors; the main floor features commercial space for A Portuguesa Bakery, Peel Street Beverages [Brewery], Imperial Market & Eatery and Stonetown Travel.

Continued from page 15

purchased the building, changing it to a funeral home. Bruce and Josephine Omand became the sole owners in 1956.

The Omand children, Elizabeth, Vivian and John, grew up in this house. An addition designed by local Ross Steckley was built onto the rear of the original building. It provided more living space for the family's living quarters on the second floor and operational space on the main floor.

The Omands were one of the first families in town to install air conditioning – a necessity for their business. The children helped unload new coffins, vacuum, set up chairs, answer the telephone etc. Marguerite Geiger was hired to play the

organ at funerals and hairstylist Millie Faruzel, who lived across the street, styled the hair of the deceased.

The Omands sold the house and business to Mark and Karen Jutzi Funeral Home in 1977. They, in turn, raised their two children, Trevor and Traci, upstairs. In 1992, Jutzi built a large addition onto the front and east side of the house. Trevor and Ellen Jutzi took over the business in 2013 and continued the excellent service and community engagement that had begun with the Omands.

As of 2017, the house and business are owned by Ainslee Hackett and Jeffrey and Michelle Glendinning.



Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 2013.

Tavistock Reflections.... Preserving Our Past



Photo by Lemp Studio Collection

The Founder's Cairn

Originally built in 1930 as a memorial tribute to Tavistock's founder, Capt. Henry Eckstein and located at the corner of Maria and Adam Streets. The structure was damaged when hit by a motor vehicle and rededicated in 1948 during the Centennial Celebrations. Today, the Cairn is located at the corner of Maria and Hope Streets by the post office.

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251 Huron Street, New Hamburg



This land was originally part of the Ray Baechler property (225 Huron Street) where his barn was located. Ray sold the property to Ted Stock and in 1963 Ted built a new structure which housed a creamery to the rear and a Fattum's grocery store to the front. During those years, Ray picked up and delivered eggs to Loblaws and Dominion stores in Toronto. In 1963, Ray sold his egg route and truck to Vernon Erb from a newspaper ad.

Later, Frank Erb and Merv Roth bought the property and turned it into an egg grading station, Erb's Eggs.

In 1987 fire destroyed the egg grading station and Erb's Eggs sold the business to LH Gray in Strathroy.

Merv Roth renovated the building and turned it into what it is now.

In 1993 Dr Betty Fretz remodeled the rear part to become an optometry office.

And in 1994, Drs. Howard and Kim Dolman purchased the clinic.

Today, Drs. Howard & Kim Dolman continue to offer residents of the area "state of the art" eye care services.



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S.S. #10 Shakespeare Public School

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The information for this article was taken from "Country Roads, the History of South Easthope 1827-2000."

The first school in Shakespeare was built in 1858 to create a union school section number 10, which meant pupils from both North Easthope and South Easthope townships attended.

The red-brick structure was built on land purchased from Peter McTavish at Lot 21, Concession 1 South Easthope Township and, a few years later, the trustees bought playground property from Jane Gofton and Jeannie Munro. The school building was located on the Thompson

Street site in Shakespeare.

The settlers in North Easthope were mainly of Scottish ancestry and, in South Easthope, mostly German.

The spacious 40-by-60-foot building had two huge doors on the north side that opened into a hall that pupils used as a cloak room.

As with most schools of the day, a large cast-iron stove occupied the centre of the room and cord wood was used as fuel for heating.

In 1875, the large north doors were closed up because of cold north winter winds, and the new doors faced east.

A decade later, the interior room was divided into two

classrooms, the junior room on the south and the senior room on the north.

The heavy board desks accommodated six pupils at each desk. In those early years, almost 100 pupils attended S.S. #10 Shakespeare Public School because some of the pupils were up to 20 years of age.

In 1876, older pupils stopped attending. It was about that time that the large, cumbersome desks were replaced with double desks. The first teacher was Mr. Malot.

A mini-cyclone blew the roof off the school in 1915. As repairs were made and the roof replaced, the walls and ceiling were lowered to help with heat. The building did not change much in the next few years, but there were a number of different teachers. The outdoor toilets were located south of the school and because the land was low in that area, getting to and from the "little house out back" usually meant a few steps through water sometimes ankle deep when it rained. The problem was solved in 1935 when indoor toilets were installed and an indoor water pump in 1938.

By 1942, hydro was installed in the school and, at that time, the two classrooms were combined into one classroom for a few years during the Second World War.

A new basement was dug under the building and a new furnace replaced the old wood stove. Mrs. Rita Bell was the teacher at



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

This class is from 1945 at S.S. #10 in Shakespeare. In the front row from left are Irwin Steckley, Laurie Hahn, Ed Schmidt, Ron Trachsel, Jerry Gooden, Bob Blowers, Gord Cossey and Don Gooden. In the second row from left are twins Joan and Joyce Lotz, Jean Wilhelm, Audrey Taylor, Helen McNab, Eva Kennel, Gwen Oehm, Inez Schmidt and Shirley Wilhelm. In the third row from left are Angus Lotz, Alex McNab, Bernie Clarence, Don Roth, Wray Bell, Eddie Lange, Sheldon Hahn, Harold Wilhelm and Grant Gable. In the fourth row from left are Reta Bell (teacher), Ruby Cossey, Betty Roth, Don Dopp, Clayton Wilhelm, Bruce Garner, Rodwell, Glenn Capling, Harold Daub and Harold Arnold.



The senior class at S.S. #10 in Shakespeare in 1961. In the front row from left are Gary West, Gerry Lantz, David Reider, John Armstrong, Peter Baechler, Glen Trachsel, Randy Farrell and Dale Winhold. In the second row from left are George Sloan, Dave Walkom, Terry Winhold, Hans Geiger, Larry Dietrich, Earl Anderson, Bernard Gauler, Pat Trachsel and John McTavish. In the third row from left are Darlene Cook, Janet Schellenberger, Debbie Malcho, Cathy Trachsel, Nancy Wettlaufer, Linda Causton, Donna Wagler, Peggy Pines, Rona Schellenberger and Gerry Wettlaufer. In the back row from left are Grace Walkom (teacher), Dianne Lott, Lynn West, Susan Meadows, Lorraine Stock, Judy Armstrong, Norma Wilhelm, Elaine Scheerer and Joan Wilhelm.

W-O District Secondary School alumni reflect on decades of memories

EMILY STEWART

Gazette Correspondent

Waterloo-Oxford (W-O) District Secondary School's slogan is "W-O Excellence – Believe It!" and those who used to be members of the school community can attest to it.

W-O District Secondary School opened 70 years ago in 1955. Some alumni of the high school at 1206 Snyder's Rd. W in Baden were eager to share memories of their time in high school.

Stephanie Szusz, who graduated in 2003, was involved in several activities such as soccer, choir, basketball, DECA, athletic banquets and Student Activity Council. She also remembers heading to OFSAA (Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association) with her soccer team and their trips to Hawaii and Cuba.

"Even beyond those memories, the best part of W-O was the community that existed," Szusz told the Gazette. "Not only

with my friends, but with the staff and the community."

Szusz is also thrilled to hear W-O reached its 70th anniversary.

"My Mom went to W-O, as did my brother and I, and my oldest is less than five years away from attending as well," she said. "I think it's fabulous to have a school be such a staple in the community."

Mike Devries, part of the 1994-1995 graduating class, also spent his time at W-O with a variety of activities such as stage building for the school musical productions and hanging out with his friends in the hallways. He spent the majority of his time in technical classes such as electrical, woodworking, automotive and machine shop. Devries, who now works in the auto industry, credits his teachers for influencing him.

"They pushed me to become the best I can be in the class," he said. "Got me enrolled in Skills Canada Competitions and the rest is history. Won first place

for Waterloo region in automotive skills and, from there, went on to place third in provincials."

Devries was also amazed that the school had been around for 70 years.

"Now a days, it's lucky for a school to survive 20 years," Devries said, "but being a rural school back then, it was the only place to go. I still remember having some kids getting tractor rides in when they finished chores at home, and it was the only local school with a snowmobile parking lot."

Author Nancy Silcox taught at W-O District Secondary School between 1980 and 1999, starting as an ESL teacher shortly after the Vietnam War. There were several displaced students from Vietnam attending W-O.

"Many of them were coming to Mennonite-based churches, so there were a number of teenagers whose parents were settled in Baden, New Hamburg, Tavistock, wherever," Silcox said.

She also became a guidance counsellor, an English media teacher and special education teacher with the gifted program. Silcox also co-ran the successful Reach for the Top Team and wrote a book about notable W-O alumni called "Star Quality: 50 Waterloo-Oxford Graduates who soared." Alumni of note include dancer Andrea Ziegler, boxer John Kalbehn and author Graeme Smith, the latter of whom won an Emmy for his "Talking to the Taliban" docuseries for the Globe and Mail.

Silcox said as W-O Secondary School was in a rural area with no sidewalks and no Tim Horton's nearby to walk to for coffee runs, the students focused on their studies, which in turn built the school's reputation for excellence in academics and community.

"At W-O, you pretty well had to focus on what was going on at the school and that made for exceptional school spirit and that made it very, very special," Silcox said.

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Murray's Clothing and Footwear, 95 & 101 Peel Street

MARIE VOISIN AND KRISTEN HAHN

Gazette Contributors

This excerpt was lifted from Marie Voisin and Kristen Hahn's five-volume book series, "The Historic Buildings of New Hamburg and the People Who Lived in Them," which is set to release this year.

The casual stroller along Peel Street may not realize that Murray's Clothing & Footwear is one of the oldest commercial buildings in New Hamburg as it was originally built in 1864.

The exterior of the building looks crisp and new, with its restored local, yellow bricks and heritage signage, thanks to the Murray family, who cleaned and repointed the bricks in 1994. No one would guess that the building is 161 years old and still in excellent condition.

William Hunter, who had immigrated to Canada in 1841 from Scotland, purchased lots on Peel Street in 1851 and built a two-storey frame building where he sold dry goods, clothing, groceries, crockery, boots, shoes and china. He replaced the frame building in 1864 with a brick building and maintained ownership of this department store until 1877 when he sold it to Jacob Becker. Becker and his sons, Daniel and Herman, grandson Oliver Herman and great-grandson Robert Browning maintained ownership for 78 years until 1955.

Under Jacob Becker's ownership, the building was modified. In May 1901, he demolished the frame building which held their dry good department and added a two-storey 24-by-60-foot brick addition to 95 Peel. There were a variety of departments on both floors of the store: women's millinery, boots, staples, dress goods, clothing, silks, hardware,



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARIE VOISIN)

William Hunter Department Store.

plumbing, tinsmith, funeral and undertaking, furnishing, delivery and groceries. Many residents began their working careers at Becker's. Jacob died in 1906, his sons Herman in 1909, Daniel in 1925, and grandson Oliver in 1948.

In 1955, William E. Murray purchased 95 and 101 Peel Street from Hazel Becker (widow of Oliver) and their son, Robert Browning Becker. Murray opened a grocery store on the north side of the building in 1958 and he retired in 1965. His sons, Robert and James, took over the business. The brothers built an addition onto the rear of the building in 1967 and a second one in 1974 that included a rear entrance. The commercial area encompasses 10,000 square feet on the main floor and around 5,000 square feet on the second floor.

Meanwhile, Western Tire and Auto

Supply purchased 101 Peel and a furniture store was established in 105 Peel. In 1980, when Western Tire closed, the Murrays purchased it and opened a women's clothing store.

In 1988, Robert built a grocery store in his new plaza on Mill Street where he and his sons, Rob and Steve, managed it; James established Murray's Clothing & Footwear in 95 and 101 Peel.

The basement floor is dirt in some parts and bricked in other parts. It was used primarily for storage for the grocery store. A vault from the Becker store is still onsite and has been moved to an interior wall. They found a tin ceiling in 95 Peel that is in fair condition. The Murrays installed oak hardwood floors over the Becker's pine floors, removed wall partitions on the second floor and in the basement, exposed some original brick walls, and continued to use many of the Becker display tables

and counters.

The second floor has been unused for a few decades and is an open area. James Murray carried out a major renovation on the interior of the building in 1994. At the front of 95, facing Peel Street, there is evidence that someone once lived in a small apartment. The baseboards, window trims etc. indicate it was finished in the early 1900s. Perhaps later, it was used as an office; the only way to access it is to walk over narrow boards covering the first-floor ceiling joists.

After James passed away in 2013, his widow Gywinith and son, Mark, took over the management with Mark's daughter, Katie, joining the sales team. When online shopping began to infringe upon clothing sales in 2018, Mark decided to close his business on Nov. 17, 2020, during COVID. Sadly, Mark did not have time to enjoy his retirement; he died suddenly of cancer on Nov. 25, 2020, at just 58 years of age. His daughter, Katie Murray, retains ownership in 2025.

The third part of the original building, 105 Peel, was purchased by William Murray in 1958 and sold to Ivan and Miranda (Rusty) Wilhelm in 1968 where they ran Rusty's Billiards and Tobacco. They removed the upper-brick parapet and covered the façade with sheet metal.

Subsequent owners were Ross and Elva Trussler (1968-1970); Frederick Wigle and Bernard Pellar (1971); Frederick Wigle (1971-1986). He closed his billiards room in 1975 and leased the property to the Becker Milk Company (no relation to the Jacob Becker family); Adrian and Anastasia Bodea (1986-1990, Anastasia's Charcoal Restaurant); Tom and Mary Papadopoulos (1991-2004, The Old Country Restaurant); Jim and Susan Mantas (2004-2021); and Raam Siva (2021-present).

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Becker Department store, 1908.



Mark, Gwyn and Katie Murray, 2014.



Murray's Clothing & Footwear, 2014.



Employees at D&H Becker Department Store.



Interior of Becker's Department store.

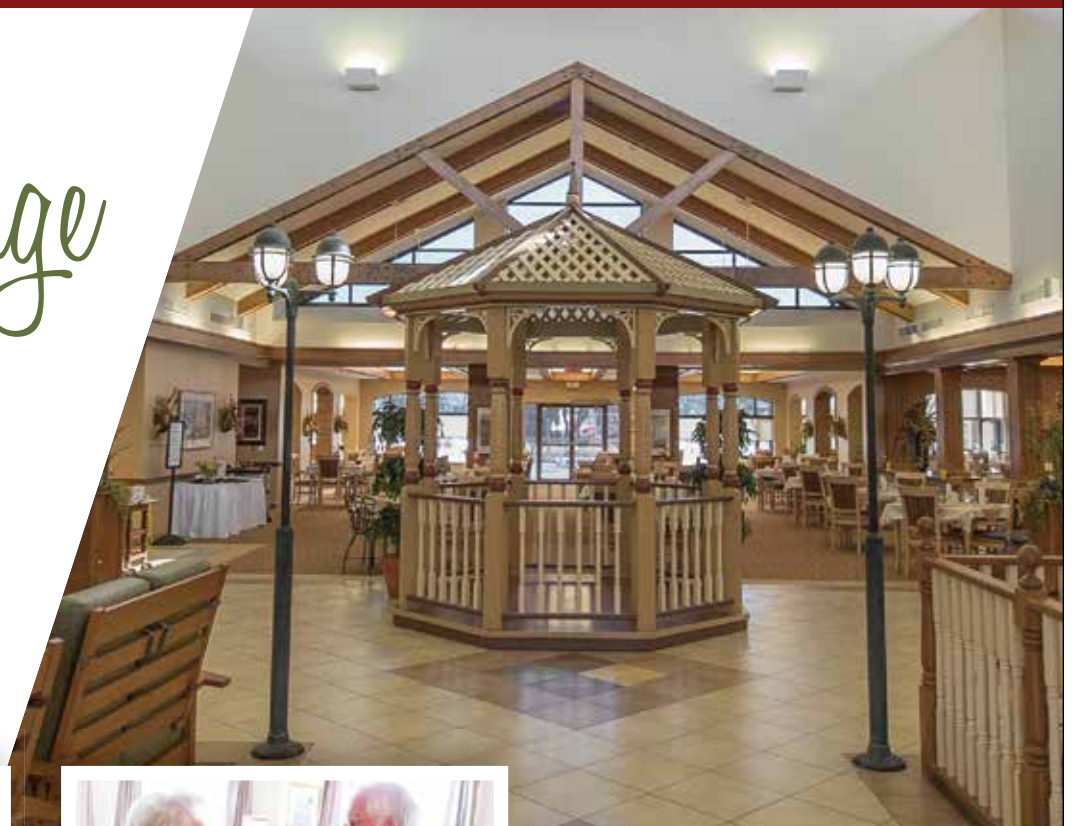


Murray's store before brick restoration.

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Early settlers of Wellesley Township honoured by bridge name in 1934

NANCY SAUNDERS MAITLAND

Interim curator, Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society

James and Robert Dewar were among the earliest settlers of Wellesley Township. They appeared on the Walker Survey of 1843, the first survey of the township living on Lots 10 and 11, Concession III (Western Section).

Robert faded from local public records after that, and it was James who founded the Dewar dynasty in the township.

James Dewar was born in about 1798 in the parish of Logierail, Perthshire, Scotland. The 1841 Scottish census listed him as a blacksmith, living with his wife Margaret (née McDonald) and their three sons, Peter (age eight), Thomas Buchanan (age three) and Duncan (age one). They must have emigrated soon after that census to appear two years later in Wellesley Township on the 1843 Walker Survey.

They next appeared in public records in the 1851 census of Upper Canada: James (age 53) and Margaret (age 48) and their three sons (age 19, 15 and 13).

The 1854 tax assessment rolls show James owning 200 acres on Lot 11, Concession III (WS). After his death in 1873, the property was split evenly between James and Thomas.

In 1895, bachelor Duncan Dewar, age 55, married Catherine “Kit” McGillawee, age 21. They had two sons in quick succession, James Alexander in 1896 and Archibald Anderson in 1898. These changes necessitated a move. A 1918 map shows Duncan on Lot 3, Concession IV (WS) and Thomas still living on Lot 11, Concession III.

It is on Duncan’s property that the family has been memorialized by the naming of a bridge in 1934. The “Dewar Bridge” (also known as Bridge No. 5) is located on the southern edge of Duncan’s property on Chalmers-Forrest Road between Deborah Glaister Line and Streicher Line where the road crosses a tributary of the Nith River.

The Dewar Bridge was one of the earliest and more



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF WELLESLEY TOWNSHIP HERITAGE AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

The Dewar Bridge before rehabilitation.

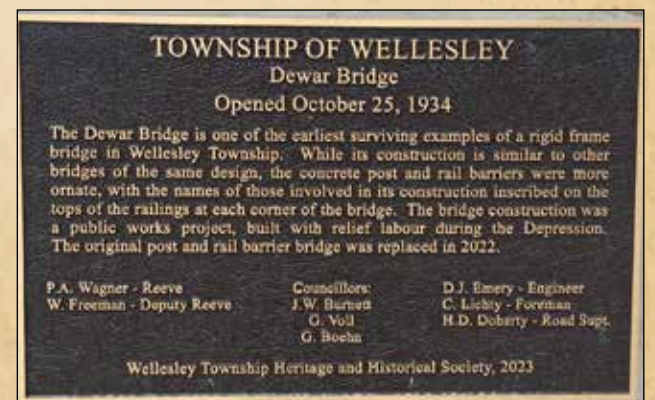
ornate examples of a rigid-frame bridge in Wellesley Township. While its construction is similar to other bridges of the same style, the names of the politicians and engineers involved in its construction were engraved on the tops of the railings at each corner of the bridge. The bridge was a public-works project built with relief labour during the Great Depression. It was opened on Oct. 25, 1934.

In 2022, the bridge was rebuilt for safety reason and the Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society arranged to have a plaque installed to record the information

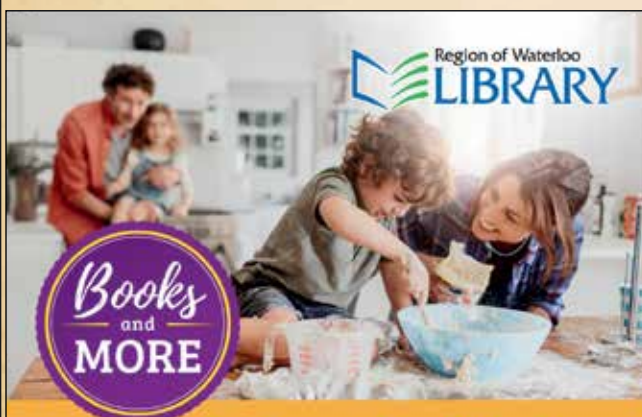
that had been engraved on the original bridge. A ceremony was held on May 9, 2023. It is a fitting recognition of the Dewar family’s long association with Wellesley Township.



The Dewar Bridge plaque unveiling in May 2023.



The Dewar Bridge plaque.



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Bell's School, S.S. #2 North Easthope

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The information for this article was taken from the "Hill's of North Easthope" history book.

Like many of the schools in Perth County' past, Bell's school (S.S. #2) in North Easthope was first made of logs.

The school situated a mile north of Shakespeare was built in 1841 by John Kelly Senior and other members of the community on the northeast corner of Lot

21 Concession 2, and also became a community centre for the area at the time.

Because the land had been donated by David Bell, the school came to be known as Bell's School. It also became a place of worship and the forerunner to St. Andrews Church, which was erected in 1850, just a short distance to the west.

At a cost of 70 pounds, the log building was replaced by one made of brick and, later that same year, St. Andrew's Church was built.

The new school was 27 feet long and 25

feet wide and, at times, also served as a meeting place for the township council.

As time passed and after a few phases of building, the 1922 school trustees, Valentine Hohner, James Innes and Donald Mein, bought one and a half acres across the road to the east of what is now Perth Line 107 from the farm of Archie McMillan and moved the school east. The school was put on a well-constructed wall with a basement and was bricked with red brick. The building remains where it was to this very day, only now it is a residential

home.

The school's first teacher was Alexander Campbell in 1841 followed in 1844 by James Trow, who later became better known as a land speculator and member of parliament.

Some of the last teachers to teach there were Mrs. Winsome Kipfer (1953-1961), Beverly Hyde (1961-1963), Gail Hyde (1963-1964), Marjorie Neeb from (1964-1966) and Janice Acheson (1966).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The students of Bell's School in 1949-1950. In the front row from left are George Neeb, Ruth Hyde, Grace Bender, John Lantz, Ross McMillan, Alex Horne, Doug Fulton and Susan Sherlock. In the middle row from left are Alex McMillan, Wray Bender, John Kelly, Paul Bender, Bev Hyde, Ward Binkle, Thelma Hyde and Marion McTavish. In the back row from left are Audrey Hyde, Marjorie Kelly, Marion Campbell, Bonnie McMillan, Jean Campbell, Norma McMillan, Laura McTavish and Pearl Hammer. The teacher was Donna Lilly.



In the '60s, these four kids of Bill and Emmaline Bell, who farmed one and a quarter miles west, decided to beat walking by taking their horses to Bell's School in North Easthope. Pictured from left are Brian with Dimple, Joe with Jim, Darlene with Cyclone and Donna with Bonnie.

Hartleib's School, S.S. #2 South Easthope

GARY WEST

Gazette Correspondent

The information for this article was taken from "Country Roads, the History of South Easthope 1827-2000."

South Easthope's School Section No. 2 was Perth County's first school located at Lot 11, Concession 2 of South Easthope Township at the southeast corner of the Peter Zehr farm.

It was built in 1869 and became known as Hartleib's School when John Hartleib settled across the road on lots 9 and 10.

For most of the 1800s, teachers changed every two or three years, though some stayed longer.

The schoolhouse remained the same with its large woodstove in the middle of the classroom, the water pump outside and the outdoor toilets. These conditions were not considered hardship since they were the same as they were at home for the students.

In 1920, a basement under the school was dug out and the floor cemented, and the exterior of the building was covered with clapboard. As well, a new wood furnace was installed at about that time. The trustees were Charlie Hartleib, Peter Baechler and Andrew Zehr.

Among Hartleib's School alumni who had a great influence on the lives of many citizens were Emery Zehr, who founded Zehr's markets, Henry Yantzi, who became



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

All eight grades in one room at Hartleib's School in 1932. Pictured in the front row from left are Laverne Lichti, Floyd Baechler, Floyd Kropf, Robert Wilhelm, LaVone Zehr, Hazel Wilhelm, Melvin Cook, Ken Wagler, Emmaline Wagler, Magdalene Lichti, Lloyd Reibling and Melvin Witzel. In the middle row from left are Delmer Zehr, Howard Herold, Stanley Wagler, Adeline Steinman, Alice Wagler, Annie Marie Helmuth, Annie Mae Zehr, Reta Schlegel, Shirley Horst, Catherine Hartleib, Leola Zehr and Doris Wagler. In the back row from left are Gilbert Martz, Annie Lichti, Hilda Weicker, Edith Baechler, Martha Brand (teacher), Violet Weiss, Lillian Wilhelm, Clayton Reibling, Lester Wilhelm, Carl Niebergall, Willis Lichti, Curtis Helmuth, Marie Zehr, Bernadine Martz and Earl Reibling.

the bishop of East Zorra Mennonite Church, Delton Reibling, who grew natural foods without chemicals, and Lester Wilhelm, who became owner and operator of the Feed Mill in Shakespeare and sold Swift feeds to local mixed farmers.

Some of the later teachers included Mrs. Margaret McGillawee, Mrs. Margaret West, Mrs. Stevenson, Mrs. Grace Scott, L.H. Doering, Miss Williamson, Miss Hitzroth, Mr. Vogt, Mr. Martin and Mr. Morris to name a few.

Diane Herold, who still lives in

Shakespeare, remembers there was the long mile-and-a-quarter walk back the side road to and from school from their home on Highway 7&8.

She remembers walking with the Ankenmanns, Hamiltons, Glaabs and Lichtis. She also remembers a wonderful feeling of camaraderie when the pupils were all together in one big classroom. The Christmas concerts were very special times for the pupils of Hartleib's School back then.

Herold remembers one unforgettable

winter storm when a snow storm turned to a blizzard and, by 4 p.m., the roads were impassable.

A neighbour, Louise Lichti, came to the school with a tractor and a clean manure spreader, and he took the pupils who lived on Highway 7&8 to the safety of his family's home where Mrs. Lichti had a large pot of stew on the stove, awaiting the arrival of those kids.

Herold mentioned it was a sleepover she would never forget.

In 1964, Hartleib's School was becoming seriously overcrowded. The school trustees realized it had only three pupils in grades 7 and 8 who would be moving on in the next two years.

Meanwhile, there were 15 ready to start school. Similar overcrowding was happening in other South Easthope schools, so S.S. #2 Hartleib's, U.S.S. 10 in Shakespeare and U.S.S. 9 Elmhurst trustees decided to form a five-member school board and build a new central school in Shakespeare. Harmony and Blooms schools would also be part of discussions later.

Hartleib's School closed in June 1964, and the school and its contents were sold at public auction in Sebastopol later that year.

The school building still stands and has since been transformed into a residential home.

Handcrafted history at Castle Kilbride

SHERRI GROPP & TAYLOR HYNES

Curator & museum assistant at Castle Kilbride

Castle Kilbride is the jewel of Wilmot Township. Its outstanding Italianate architecture is distinct and distinguished.

Built in 1877 for flax entrepreneur James Livingston, it has graced the landscape of Wilmot Township for close to 150 years. Castle Kilbride's main exhibit for 2025 is called Handcrafted History from A to Z featuring local artisans from items dating from 1820 to today, from fashion to furniture, from functional to fun; every item has a story to tell.

This exhibit highlights the hard work and love that has gone into creating works of art, whether it was for practical reasons or just for show. For this article, we have chosen to highlight the artisans who helped to craft Castle Kilbride.

Architect David W. Gingerich (1836-1915)

Gingerich was one of the first professional architects to practice in the Waterloo County region from 1860 onward.

Catering to the German-speaking community in Berlin, Ont., he succeeded in obtaining commissions for public, institutional and commercial buildings, as well as private residences. Gingerich operated as both an architect and builder from his office and residence in Waterloo, Ont.

After 1890, Gingerich left Canada and moved to Dayton, Ohio and he appears to have practiced architecture there for at least two years. He later returned to Waterloo County and remained there for the duration of his career. Gingerich died in New Hamburg on May 15, 1915 and was buried at Riverside Cemetery.

Some of his work includes:

- 1861- Public School House Waterloo
- 1873-74 – Town Hall, Waterloo (Albert and Erb Street)
- 1873- Residence for Henry Huber, Berlin
- 1877- Residence for James Livingston, Castle Kilbride, Baden
- 1878- Waterloo County Gaol, additions and alterations, Berlin
- 1878- Residence for the Gaoler, at the Waterloo County Gaol, Berlin

Artist Henry Scharstein (1826 - ?)

Scharstein was born in Germany and



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF CASTLE KILBRIDE)

The earliest photo of Castle Kilbride.

immigrated to North America Around 1855. He made his living as an itinerant painter in Kentucky and Ohio before ending up in Preston, Ont.

How Livingston met him or viewed his work remains a mystery. What we do know is that he was highly skilled.

Scharstein began painting the interior of Castle Kilbride in 1878. The style he used was called trompe l'oeil which is French for "trickery of the eye" or "to fool the eye". These paintings are almost 150 years old and are deemed one of the finest examples of interior painting in a home in Canada. The key rooms in the castle are the main hallway, the upper hallway and oculus, and the main room, the library.

Woodworkers Herner Wood Products

In 1993, the Township of Wilmot purchased Castle Kilbride for the township's administration complex. Council made the important decision to make the historic house a museum and build the administrative complex to the north of the home.

To bring the house back to its former glory, local craftspeople were hired. Herner Wood Products of Baden was tasked with the replication of the intricate, exterior woodwork. They paid attention to every detail and expertly recreated each element.

This project was near and dear to the company owner, Harley Herner, as he originally worked as chauffeur to the second generation of Livingstons and later as an employee for The Dominion Linseed Oil Co. Ltd. before opening Herner Wood Products.

Artist Lori Le Mare

Craftspeople continue to contribute to Kilbride's artistic legacy. The latest was created by restoration artist Lori Le Mare.

In 2020, she recreated the oil floorcloth for the main hallway, taking inspiration

from the alcove that Scharstein painted in 1878 and creating a template. Le Mare created a masterpiece that looks too nice to walk on. It is made from one seamless piece of canvas and has layers of linseed oil-based paints applied.

We have only just scratched the surface when it comes to the artists who helped make Castle Kilbride the jewel of Wilmot Township. Learn more about the artists that worked on building and furnishing Castle Kilbride, and a variety of local Wilmot artists, in this year's exhibit, Handcrafted History from A-Z. The exhibit opens March 12 and runs all year.



Herner Wood Products installed the front porch in 1994.



Oil floorcloth installation in 2020.



Artist Henry Scharstein painted the interior of Castle Kilbride beginning in 1878 in the trompe l'oeil style.

Fryfogel Tavern Inn a community gathering place since the very beginning of local colonial settlement

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A popular rest stop for Perth County's earliest settlers, Fryfogel Tavern Inn on Highway 7/8 two kilometres east of Shakespeare remains both an important historical landmark and a community gathering place nearly 200 years after the first log tavern was constructed on the property.

The tavern harkens back to the earliest European settlement of what was known as the Canada Company's Huron Tract, an immense tract of land that included Perth County and all the property between Guelph and Goderich. Constructed by the county's first settler, Sebastian Fryfogel, the red-brick building Fryfogel built in 1844-1845 is situated on the Huron Road, a colonization road which bisected the tract and marks the site of the earlier 1828 log tavern. Established by the Canada Company, a number of these wooden taverns were constructed along the road to provide a place of rest and entertainment, and were instrumental in facilitating area settlement.

"It was on the grounds where a surveyor's shanty was, so, for the longest time – about 16 years – Sebastian Fryfogel and his wife, Mary Eby, ran the tavern and inn out of this little log cabin," said Rachel Bedic, a member of the Stratford Perth Heritage Foundation board of directors, which operates, maintains and restores the Fryfogel Tavern building today. "... Then the log tavern was replaced in 1845 with the brick building we see today.

"The Canada Company was a land-development company trying to get people to move into the southern area of Ontario, so their

advertisement to people was, 'If you bought a plot of land from us, we would make sure there would be an inn and tavern to stay at every day's journey.' That's every walking day and you would have a roof over your head."

Now the only remaining tavern initially established along the Huron Tract by the Canada Company, Fryfogel Tavern and Inn served its original purpose until the Grand Trunk Railway opened in 1856, which ran parallel to Huron Road and allowed settlers to hop on a train and hop off close to their destination much quicker than travelling by foot, making the rest stop somewhat obsolete. The business closed in 1860 and was then converted into a family home for the Fryfogels.

The home was passed down from one generation of the family to the next until it was taken over and used as storage for a cheese factory in South Easthope Township in 1923. It served that purpose until 1937 when Sebastian Fryfogel's great grandson, Amos Fryfogel, rented the building out to two sisters, the Rankin Sisters (no relation to The Ranking Family music group), who opened and operated the Green Acres Tearoom – a tearoom and restaurant. Later on, the restaurant was renamed to the Old Homestead.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the tavern building served as a banquet hall for weddings, and then in late '60s and 1970s, it was declared a heritage site, thus beginning restoration efforts that continue to this day.

"At that point, the property was turned over to the Perth County Historical Foundation and that's when it was decided there was a lot of history, especially from the time period, 'Let's honour this history from when it was a tavern back in the day,'" Bedic said.

"At one point, there was a Juliet balcony that was put up on the second floor, the hallway where the door faces the road. That was actually never supposed to be put up; Sebastian Fryfogel was the tax collector of the local area and he knew you would have to pay the full tax for every finished floor you had. He actually planned it where there would be a door on the second floor that was supposed to lead out to a balcony, but he never wanted to have the balcony built

because then he would have to pay that full tax on the second floor. So, we've taken off that balcony since then."

Other restoration work over the years includes stripping layers and layers of paint, replacing newer doors with original-style windows and vice versa, and attempting to replicate unique artistic and design features that would have been seen in the original tavern building.

While a number of local heritage organizations have taken up the mantle of restoring Fryfogel Tavern over the last five and a half decades – some running out of money or into restrictive heritage-preservation rules and passing the torch to the next group of willing volunteers – Bedic says the tavern and inn is very close to looking like it once did.

"In today's day and age, the Ontario Heritage Trust ... realizes these buildings are falling apart if we have to wait to restore them in the same technique as the time period, so they've kind of relaxed their regulations," Bedic said. "Now, it's can you restore to that so safety is being kept in mind for the visitors and can it look as historically accurate as possible?"

"Our board, over the last three years, has done the most amount of restoration work and we've almost completely finished the first floor, so the rooms have been stripped of their paint, they've been repainted in historical colours. We've been doing a variety of things like that to finish the building."

Bedic said the building has been recognized as one of the best-preserved buildings from the time period in Ontario that has been relatively untouched, meaning when layers of paint were stripped away, the original plaster, which was made using horsehair, has been preserved.

A local artist, Emily Coyne, has even been working to recreate the tavern's faux design work.

"Back in that time period, marble was extremely expensive and it was not able to be carted over hundreds of miles of wilderness. So, when the building was being built, Sebastian Fryfogel hired an itinerant painter from the area to paint fake marble tiles on the walls. We have that being preserved and then Emily Coyne has actually recreated it in a couple of the rooms where there



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF STRATFORD PERTH HERITAGE FOUNDATION)

Fryfogel Tavern Inn.

was hardly any left on the wall," Bedic said.

As a summer student in 2020, Coyne also discovered faux wood panels along some of the interior walls, which she has since worked to recreate in other areas of the building. Also, in previous years, two murals – one of Niagara Falls and one of a seaside scape – were discovered under layers of wallpaper and paint above two of the tavern's fireplaces, where murals at that time were usually painted.

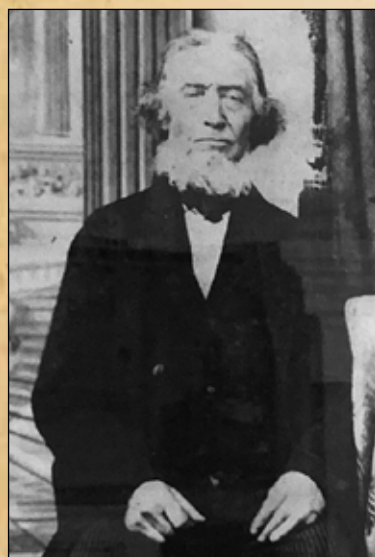
While the Stratford Perth Heritage Foundation has rented out the first floor of Fryfogel Tavern to smaller groups for meetings and other small events, the goal is to ultimately reopen the space as a full event venue.

The full building is open to

the public in the summers, from the beginning of June until the end of August usually from Wednesdays to Sundays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The heritage foundation also operates a summer camp annually to immerse local children in the ways of Perth County's early settlers.

The arboretum on the surrounding property, which includes many trees like black walnut trees planted by the Fryfogels to produce food, clothing dye and hardwood for building, as well as the arboretum garden, also planted by the Fryfogels to supply the family and visitors with food, are open year-round.

For more information on the Fryfogel Tavern Inn, visit www.fryfogeltavern.com.



Sebastian Fryfogel.



The Fryfogel family outside their home some time before the building was rented for cheese-factory storage in the early 20th century.

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Restoring the Past!

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette SPORTS

PJHL Roundup: Playoff picture set; Braves battle Firebirds while Applejacks take on Dolphins

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

The Provincial Junior Hockey League’s (PJHL) first-round playoff matchups are set and what that means for Tavistock is a date with geographical rival New Hamburg.

The second-place Firebirds and seventh-place Braves will kick their series off in New Hamburg on Friday at 7:30 p.m. Tavistock won the first matchup between the two teams back in September by a 9-6 count but New Hamburg took the next five matchups.

Tavistock started a three-game weekend with a 3-2 home win over Hespeler. The teams traded goals until Liam Gorman put away his tenth of the season with five and a half minutes remaining in the third period. Ethan Sharpe scored twice for the Braves.


On Saturday, the last-place Shamrocks took the second half of the home and home with a 3-0 victory.

Tavistock concluded its regular season with an 11-2 Family Day loss on home ice to Norwich despite outshooting the first-place Merchants 41-24. Gorman and Marc Dionne scored for the Braves while Kaden Lange stopped 13 of the 24 shots he faced in a losing effort.


Tavistock general manager Brent Lange said while the weekend didn’t go as well as he had hoped, the 42-game regular season is behind them.

“We will go into Wednesday night’s practice and start preparing for a whole new season and fresh start. New Hamburg has a really strong team and they have earned it along with the respect they get.”


Lange added while he accepted the underdog role in round one, his team didn’t help itself over the last month or so by winning just one of the last 10 games.




SOUTH DOHERTY DIVISION QUARTER FINALS




Wed. Feb 19, 2025 - 7:30PM - DOR @ WEL
Fri. Feb 21, 2025 - 7:30PM - WEL @ DOR
Sat. Feb 22, 2025 - 7:30PM - DOR @ WEL
Sun. Feb 23, 2025 - 7:00PM - WEL @ DOR
Wed. Feb 26, 2025 - 7:30PM - DOR @ WEL
Fri. Feb 28, 2025 - 6:30PM - WEL @ DOR
Sat. Mar 01, 2025 - 7:30PM - DOR @ WEL



Wed. Feb 19, 2025 - 7:30PM - WNV @ PAR
Fri. Feb 21, 2025 - 7:45PM - PAR @ WNV
Sat. Feb 22, 2025 - 7:30PM - WNV @ PAR
Tue. Feb 25, 2025 - 7:45PM - PAR @ WNV
Fri. Feb 28, 2025 - 7:45PM - PAR @ WNV
Sun. Mar 02, 2025 - 7:30PM - WNV @ PAR
Mon. Mar 03, 2025 - 7:45PM - PAR @ WNV



Wed. Feb 19, 2025 - 8:30PM - HES @ NOR
Fri. Feb 21, 2025 - 8:00PM - HES @ NOR
Sun. Feb 23, 2025 - 3:30PM - NOR @ HES
Wed. Feb 26, 2025 - 7:30PM - NOR @ HES
Fri. Feb 28, 2025 - 8:00PM - HES @ NOR
Sun. Mar 02, 2025 - 3:30PM - NOR @ HES
Tue. Mar 04, 2025 - 7:30PM - HES @ NOR



Fri. Feb 21, 2025 - 7:30PM - TAV @ NHF
Sat. Feb 22, 2025 - 7:30PM - NHF @ TAV
Mon. Feb 24, 2025 - 7:30PM - TAV @ NHF
Wed. Feb 26, 2025 - 8:30PM - NHF @ TAV
Fri. Feb 28, 2025 - 7:30PM - TAV @ NHF
Sun. Mar 02, 2025 - 2:00PM - NHF @ TAV
Tue. Mar 04, 2025 - 7:30PM - TAV @ NHF

“We will start to prepare Wednesday night and get the guys ready, focused and motivated, as well as put the last 42 games behind us as anything can happen in play-offs. We have a great, young group here with some strong veterans as well that will be challenged in the first round here.”

Lange said now is the time for all the players to step up and show the coaching staff, management and fans who really wants it and who wants to move onto the

next round. It is also a showcase for some of our players who might not have had a great season to bounce back and show us they belong back here next season.”

Consistent goaltending has been an issue for the team this season, something Lange admitted both he and the goalies themselves know.

“But it’s not all on them completely, either, as there are usually five other guys on the ice with them who can prevent a

turnover, cover an open guy in the slot, or tie up a guy in front of the net. We don’t know for sure who will be starting in Game 1 yet. Both of them are equally deserving and both have won us big games this year.”

New Hamburg finished its regular season with a pair of 4-3 overtime road wins in Dorchester and Woodstock. Ayden Norley scored the winner against the Dolphins while Owen Bruder’s 25th of the season was the difference in Woodstock in front of over 900 fans on Family Day. Bruder scored three times and finished the regular season with 25 goals.

Applejacks face Dolphins in round one

Wellesley dropped a 4-3 decision on home ice Friday to Dorchester in a first-round preview. Dimitri Eleftheriadis scored twice and Langon McGrath scored once in a losing effort. Tavistock native Connor Roth, a member of the Titans U21 team and an AP for the Dolphins, earned an assist in the game. He has two points in five appearances this season.


The Applejacks bounced back Monday at home in front of a Family Day crowd of 215 to down Paris 8-5. Anthony Pede had a goal and an assist to lead the attack while Tyler Wagner scored twice.

Wellesley took the season series against Dorchester, winning four of the six matchups.

The other series

First-place Norwich will take on Hespeler and, despite the wide difference in the standings, the first three Merchant wins were by one goal. The next three Norwich victories resulted in a goal differential of 16-3.

Woodstock won five of its six games against Paris as they head into their series.



SOUTH DOHERTY DIVISION FINAL STANDINGS

As of Wednesday, February 19

South Doherty Division	GP	W	L	OTL	T	SOW	SOL	PTS	OTW	GF	GA	DIFF	PCT	PIM	RW	ROW	STK	GPCT
1 Norwich Merchants	42	34	8	0	0	2	0	68	1	183	99	84	0.810	703	31	32	9-0-0-0	0.649
2 New Hamburg Firebirds	42	32	8	0	0	0	2	66	5	171	112	59	0.786	664	27	32	5-0-0-0	0.604
3 Woodstock Navy Vets	42	27	11	2	0	1	2	58	1	155	122	33	0.690	598	25	26	0-1-1-0	0.560
4 Wellesley Applejacks	42	23	17	1	0	5	1	48	1	131	117	14	0.571	805	17	18	1-0-0-0	0.528
5 Dorchester Dolphins	42	19	19	2	0	1	2	42	3	119	133	-14	0.500	678	15	18	1-0-1-0	0.472
6 Paris Titans	42	13	25	3	0	0	1	30	1	120	158	-38	0.357	639	12	13	0-2-0-0	0.432
7 Tavistock Braves	42	12	28	2	0	1	0	26	0	128	187	-59	0.310	902	11	11	0-2-0-0	0.406

Royals one loss away from elimination

LEE GRIFFI

Gazette Correspondent

Overtime was not kind to Tavistock on the weekend as they dropped a pair of games to Saugeen Shores in extra time, 4-2 on the road and 5-4 at home.

The Royals now trail the Winterhawks three games to one with a must-win matchup set for Friday at the Tavistock and District Recreation Centre.

At home on Saturday, the Royals twice held two-goal leads before the visitors roared back with a pair of third-period goals to force the extra period. The winning goal came four and a half minutes into overtime. Tristan Hohl and Drew Gerth scored first-period goals as the Royals led 2-1 with Jermy Munro extending the lead to 3-1 early in the second. The Winterhawks cut the lead to one two minutes later before Mitch Facey's marker restored a two-goal lead.

Erik Robichaud added two assists for Tavistock while Graeme Noye stopped 27 of 32 shots in the losing effort.

The Royals travelled to Port Elgin Friday where they held leads of 2-1 after 20 minutes and 3-2 halfway through the third period. The Winterhawks forced overtime with a goal at the 1:20 mark of the third and buried the game-winner.

Saugeen Shores took the only four minor penalties of the game as the Royals went one for four with the man advantage. Despite taking the loss, Zach Shomphe was solid between the pipes kicking out 42 of 46 shots.

Royals head coach Tyson Zehr admitted the OT losses were tough to swallow.

"We had our chances to close out both games, but sometimes that's just the way



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAVISTOCK ROYALS)

Tavistock forward Sean Kienapple dekes Saugeen Shores goalie Clayton Fritsch as he scored in game three of the series.

the game goes. We had a bunch of good looks and their goalie made some big saves. It feels like missed opportunities, but it also speaks to how tight and competitive this series is."

The Royals peppered 92 shots on the Winterhawks goal across the two weekend games, something Zehr said was encouraging.

"Yeah, the shots tell the story; we've been generating plenty of chances, but we haven't been able to convert at the rate we'd like. Their goalie's been solid, but

we need to find ways to capitalize."

The mood in Tavistock's locker room was obviously disappointing but Zehr said his guys will be ready come Friday night's Game 5.

The confidence is still there. The guys know we're right in these games. We've been playing good hockey, and if we stick to our structure and finish our chances, we can turn this around."

He also expects playing at home to be a big advantage.

"Playing at home gives us that extra

energy from the crowd and we're comfortable in our own rink. We know we need to bring our best effort to force a Game 6 and having that home-ice advantage should help us do that. This group isn't going to go down without a fight. We've battled all year and we believe we can get the job done. The guys are excited for the challenge and ready to leave it all out there."

The puck drops at 8:30 p.m. Friday for Game 5 while Game 6, if necessary, is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. in Port Elgin on Saturday. If a Game 7 is needed, it will be Sunday afternoon in Tavistock at 3:30 p.m.



Royals goalie Zach Shomphe makes one of his 42 saves during the Royals' loss on Friday night.

TAVISTOCK ROYALS SR. "AA" HOCKEY
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Wellesley council amends parking bylaw to improve student safety during school-bus unloading and loading times in St. Clements

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Resulting from concerns over student safety from parents at St. Clements Catholic Elementary School, Wellesley council has amended the township's traffic and parking bylaw to include a no-stopping provision on the north side of Church Street between Hergott Road and Charles Street in St. Clements from 8-10 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

According to a report to council, township staff have heard from parents of school-aged children attending St. Clements Catholic Elementary School about the potentially dangerous situation during drop-off and pick-up times on Church Street around the school.

"Our bylaw officer and myself met with the parent-teacher association at the school (Feb. 4)," Wellesley director of public works Chris Cook said. "There have been a lot of concerns raised around student safety with them running across the road, and a lot of it, I believe, stems from the road being fairly narrow, and obviously that situation is exacerbated in the winter when the road is narrower due



(VECTEEZY PHOTO)

New no-stopping rules aim to improve safety during busy drop-off and pick-up times at St. Clements Catholic Elementary.

to snow. With stopping on both sides of Church Street and parents letting children out of their vehicles on the north side of the street, children have to run across the street, and with a lot of cars around it's really difficult to see them.

"Also, it being narrow, it doesn't allow vehicles to exit, so essentially there's not enough room to get out, so they have to wait for the entire line of vehicles to move forward before they can move out."

By introducing a no-stopping zone on

the north side of Church Street between Hergott Road and Charles Street during the specified hours, Cook said the drop-off and pick-up will only occur on the south side of Church Street and children will not have to cross the road. This will also ensure the width of the road will be maintained so vehicles overtaking the parked vehicles will have sufficient space to do so.

While the township bylaw officer and school staff have attempted to persuade parents to stop on just the south side Church Street during drop-off and pick-up, Cook said the street was previously only designated as no-parking, which meant the bylaw officer had no recourse for those who didn't abide.

By amending the township's parking and traffic bylaw, the bylaw officer can now ticket drivers who stop on the north side of the road during school drop-off and pick-up.

While Cook said he expects this bylaw amendment to be effective in improving student safety and traffic flow along this section of Church Street, if it doesn't work as expected, township staff may consider making that street one way.



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SHOW US YOUR WILMOT



(SHOW US YOUR WILMOT PHOTO)
Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group member Anne Loeffler shared this photo of a cardinal in flight from a birdfeeder south of Haysville.

Ice fishing on the Nith



(LORIE YANTZI PHOTO)
A group of ice-fishermen on the Nith River recently, taking advantage of the frozen river for the chance at a fresh catch.

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Gazette Puzzles

PINK SHIRT DAY - FEBRUARY 26, 2025

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Pet of the Week

MINNIE

Minnie is a sweet senior who's had a tough start but is ready for a stable, loving home. This 60-pound couch potato adores people, gives endless kisses, and enjoys lounging more than long hikes. She thrives in a house or townhouse (no apartments) as the only pet, as she prefers all the attention and has a strong prey drive. Minnie is house-trained, crate-trained, and knows basic commands, though she'll need some training to help with reactivity and manners. She's good with calm, respectful children and would suit a patient, dedicated owner ready to help her feel secure. Could Minnie be your new best friend? Visit KWSP Humane Society to meet her today!



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Say goodbye to seed oils in honour of Heart Month

HEAPS OF HEALTHY TIPS

By Mercedes Kay Gold



February is Heart Month! What are you doing to live your best life?

As a holistic nutritionist and personal trainer, I love seeing people implement lifestyle changes. Creating new positive habits leads to longevity. This month, celebrate the heart and put the kybosh on a very common cooking ingredient. There is an onslaught of oils that have no place in the diet.

Carbohydrates, protein and fats are the foundation of building and repairing a strong body inside and out. I'm not saying no to the mega-magical macro of fat. A kind reminder; fat doesn't make you fat. Excess calories are the reason we pack on the pounds. Yes, fats are caloric dense with an average of 100 calories in a tablespoon, but still necessary in the diet for supporting overall health. That being said, certain oils can lead to heaps of health problems. Inflammation leads to disease; it's as simple as that.

Experts often disagree on the best oils, but with growing evidence, seed oils top the list. Mother Nature lovingly provides all the fats required. Aim to choose

the whole food form whether it's wild fish or nuts. Our problems began once man stepped in, and seed oils became the new normal.

When referring to fats, omega-3 and omega-6 are referenced. Our body appears to function best with a healthy ratio of these two polyunsaturated fats, and the magic number appears to be between one-to-one and four-to-one, but the Standard American Diet (SAD) suggests we consume as high as 17:1 ratio. Overconsumption of a highly processed diet, high in omega-6, is slowly killing us. Plant- or meat-based lifestyles are both bombarded with pre-packaged, takeout and drive-through options containing an excess omega-6.

The eight industrial seeds to toss out today are canola (aka rapeseed oil), corn, cottonseed, soy, sunflower, safflower, grapeseed and rice bran. These eight offenders are often a blend of several oils, containing harmful additives and genetically modified. Most seed oils go through a refining process, which includes bleaching and deodorizing. These oils are unstable, oxidize easily, regularly rancid and absent of



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Ditch the unhealthy seed oils for better alternatives like sunflower seed oil.

awesome antioxidants.

Once healthy plants now contain no real benefits, just reams of risks. To make matters worse, the SAD favours refrying oils, creating more toxic byproducts. To the lose-it list, add cottonseed and vegetable oil plus avoid hardened oils known as trans fats or hydrogenated fats such as margarine and vegetable shortening.

Conventional peanut butter is unfortunately a supersized no. Natural peanut

butter is up for debate but baby steps for now.

Excess consumption of all these oils can trigger the body, producing pro-inflammatory chemicals. Acidic foods, over time, lead to inflammation and result in disease. The list of chronic inflammatory diseases ranges from autoimmune to diabetes to osteoarthritis to this month's national nod to heart disease.

There's no health evidence to support seed oils, just scads of studies showing the harmful effects. Swap seed oils for olive oil and avocado.

A strong heart is crucial to pump nutrient-rich blood throughout the body. A healthy heart has a low resting heart rate and recovers quickly after intense bouts of physical exercise. A healthy heart thrives on wild salmon, mackerel, sardines and anchovies. Plant-based lovers load up on fabulous flaxseeds, walnuts and chia seeds. Nuts are everybody's favourite snack on the go and high in omega-6 but are whole foods. Just 100 grams daily of raw walnuts, sunflower seeds or almonds is enough to stay in balance. Swap seed oils for olive oil, avocado or coconut oil and choose extra-virgin, cold-pressed organic versions. Flax and hemp are fabulous with a nutty flavor

but avoid heating.

Happy heart health starts with purging the pantry.

For a busy bee snack on the go with fabulous fats, fall in love with sunflower seeds!

Heart-healthy energy balls

Ingredients:

- ½ cup sunflower seed butter
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin coconut oil
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- ¼ cup coconut flour
- ½ cup sulphite-free raisins
- ¼ cup coconut sugar
- ½ tsp Ceylon cinnamon
- Pinch sea salt
- ½ cup raw sunflower seeds plus a bit extra for rolling
- ¼ cup unsweetened sulphite-free shredded coconut

Directions:

1. Combine the first three ingredients in a food processor and pulse using the s-blade until smooth.
2. Add the flour, coconut sugar, cinnamon and salt. Pulse again.
3. Add the sunflower seeds, shredded coconut and raisins. Pulse to combine.
4. Roll into one-inch balls and roll in sunflower seeds.
5. Freeze until ready to serve. They thaw quickly.

Nutrition: Recipe makes 24 balls. Each one contains 93 calories.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Wilmot council's draft capital plan ignores industrial mega-site costs

Wilmot Township's recently released draft 10-year capital plan has left many residents scratching their heads. While the plan outlines various projects, it shockingly excludes any mention of the transportation or servicing infrastructure essential for the proposed 770-acre industrial mega-site. This glaring omission reveals an appalling lack of foresight and accountability from local leaders.

Let's be clear, a development of this magnitude cannot proceed without substantial upgrades to roads, utilities and other critical infrastructure. These upgrades come with enormous costs, yet the draft plan fails to acknowledge them. By excluding these

costs, the council appears to ignore the financial realities, leaving taxpayers to shoulder the burden when the true expenses inevitably come to light. Ignoring these realities is not just irresponsible, it's reckless.

Advancing this industrial development without a realistic financial plan for the necessary infrastructure is a gamble with the community's future. Does the council expect infrastructure to materialize out of thin air? Or are they deliberately withholding the true costs to avoid public backlash? Either scenario is unacceptable and further erodes trust between taxpayers and their elected officials.

If Wilmot council cannot even

include basic infrastructure considerations in a long-term capital plan, how can residents trust them to oversee a project of this scale? Taxpayers deserve transparency and accountability, not vague assurances and evasive governance.

It's time for Wilmot Township to either provide a detailed financial strategy for the infrastructure required by this mega-site or reconsider its commitment to a project that increasingly appears to be a fiscal disaster in the making.

Anne Loeffler, New Hamburg

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A snowbird alternative in southern France

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO

By Paul Knowles



Let's be honest, politics has suddenly made a huge impact on tourism. Every day, it seems I hear from a would-be (or has-been) snowbird debating the question of travelling to somewhere warm in the United States.

Many have gone south or plan to go. More than one has told me, "But this is the last time, at least for now." And many others have stayed home or are seeking out alternatives – they still want to spend all or part of our Canadian winters somewhere warm and welcoming.

In the midst of this, I was invited to spend a morning with a large group of tourism representatives from the Côte D'Azur, a region of France on the Mediterranean Sea. I arrived a bit skeptical; the key cities here are Nice and Cannes, both reputed to be expensive and, in the case of Cannes, jam-packed for the world-famous film festival.

It turns out, both things are true at times. The Côte D'Azur is expensive in high season – the summer months. In the colder months and shoulder seasons, not so much.

And yes, Canne is crammed with celebrities and celebrity-watchers from May 13-24. Other than that, again not so much.

In fact, the folks from Nice and its neighbours have no interest in enticing Canadians to come visit in the summer. They're already full. But the rest of the year, the months when Canadian snowbirds are looking for a warmer and sunnier place to nest, the Côte D'Azur may well be worth considering.

The temperatures in February and March are similar to Myrtle Beach. When I checked the second week of February, the daily highs were around 15 degrees Celsius. Pleasant, sunny and no snow.

No snow, that is, until you finish your espresso and croissant on your terrace in Nice and then head up into the nearby Alps to ski all afternoon.

And that's a clue as to why Canadians might consider the Côte D'Azur as a good, late-winter option because, unlike some Carib-

bean resorts for example, there is a lot to do here. There always has been because, as Bertrand Pous, General Consul of France, told us, "The concept of tourism was created in Côte D'Azur. Tourism is our history." And today, it represents a full 30 per cent of the region's GDP.

I chatted at length with Rudy Salles, a long-time Member of Parliament in the French government and now president of the Metropolitan Nice Office of Tourism. A resident of Nice, he is also a huge fan of his community. His job, he says with a smile, "is a pleasure for me."

Rudy practically bubbled over as he described all the great things awaiting Canadians: inexpensive skiing, about \$60 Canadian a day; history, the entire city is classified as a Unesco World Heritage Site; and easy transportation, including the international airport. "Many things to do all year long."

There is a special focus on art, architecture and cuisine; art galleries include the Matisse Museum. Both Henri Matisse and Marc Chagall were long-time residents of Nice. In fact, one of the highlights of the region is, literally, the light. There are postcards celebrating the "pure light," and innumerable artists have visited the Côte D'Azur, captivated by this unique natural phenomenon.

Rudy also pointed to the unending variety of experiences available to visitors. Metropolitan Nice includes 52 communities, seven of which are Mediterranean ports. It stretches from the sea to mountains topping out at 3,000 metres.

Charlotte Cejudo is internation-

al senior sales manager for the Cannes Visitors Bureau. She told me that, apart from the 11 days in May of the film festival, Cannes is "a city of easy lifestyle," with hundreds of events, all very accessible, throughout the year. She lauded the historic old town with a castle open to visitors and also the daily food market. In fact, it seems that open markets offering food, crafts and more are commonplace in the Côte D'Azur. Of course, since this is the French Riviera, shopping opportunities range from craft tables to the highest-end brand names.

A 20-minute boat ride from Cannes takes visitors to either of two unique islands – Ste-Marguerite or St-Honorat, the latter owned by monks who are expert winemakers.

Mélanie Paul-Hus summed up the appeal of the Côte D'Azur for me. "It's the perfect place for people who want to escape Canadian winters." She pointed out that "everything is open year-round" – restaurants, attractions, shops and festivals.

Melanie is the Canadian director of Atout France, the France tourism development agency. She added, "In the winter, it's not expensive and it's very, very safe." It's popular with people looking to learn French, though Melanie told me English is spoken everywhere. It's also a hit with golfers; the shoulder seasons offer a wide variety of great golf.

She notes that the Côte D'Azur is a day trip away from popular destinations like Monaco and Saint-Tropez, and, in fact, that from here, "You can go anywhere in Europe."

But, given the huge menu of attractions right here, including temperatures that allow you to dine outdoors year-round, why would you want to go anywhere else?

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



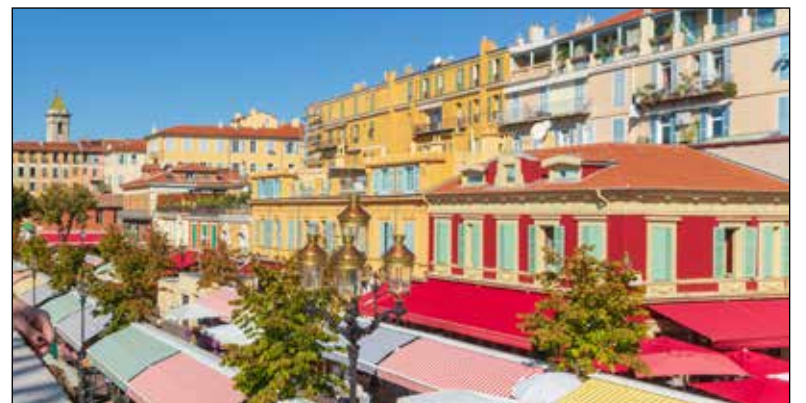
(AURON-COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE TOURISME; GEORGES VERAN PHOTO)

Great skiing is less than two hours from the Mediterranean coast in the Côte D'Azur.



(COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE TOURISME; CAMILLE MOIRENC PHOTO)

The monk's island of Saint Honorat near Cannes.



(COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE TOURISME PHOTO)

Nice's Cours Saleya near the harbourfront.



(COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE TOURISME PHOTO)

A famous part of local cuisine, the Nicoise salad.



(COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE TOURISME PHOTO)

The Port de Nice.



(COTE D'AZUR, FRANCE TOURISME; GEORGES VERAN)

The village of Touët-sur-Var in the mountains, only an hour's drive from the coast.

I hate paper straws, too

CLIMATE CORNER

By Ashley Ropp,
Nith Valley EcoBoosters



When you hear the words “green,” or “eco-friendly,” what do you think of? Tesla’s that you could never afford? Soggy paper straws ruining your drink? Companies trying to install towering windmills in our fields?

I believe these mainstream ideas of being eco-friendly are part of the reason many people are put off by environmental and climate action; they’re unaffordable, inconvenient and invasive. These might be the reasons you oppose “going green.” Before you write this article off, don’t worry, I’m not going to try and convince you otherwise. In fact, I’m going to tell you a secret: I hate paper straws, too.

This isn’t because of cognitive dissonance. It’s because I believe in a different picture of sustainability; a world that’s not only green, but also doesn’t suck.

The mainstream perspective

tells us that there’s only one path forward, where we switch out all gas vehicles for electric, fossil fuels for renewables, plastic for paper and we’ll be on our merry way. Many people oppose this path because it’s a huge pain in the butt. What you may not realize is that it’s not only a pain in the butt, it’s also not a genuine solution.

This is because of a number of reasons. One of these reasons being that it is literally impossible for us to switch out all non-renewable energy sources for renewables. And yes, I’m aware of the headlines boasting about the increase in renewable energy such as the article from the World Economic Forum stating that, in 2023, global renewable capacity increased by 50 per cent.

That’s a lot! But what those headlines don’t mention is that while the usage of renewable en-

ergy is increasing, so is our overall energy demand. If renewable energy capacity doubles in a year, but so does total energy demand, the ratio of renewable to non-renewable stays the same – and that’s exactly the case. According to the Energy Institute’s Statistical Review of World Energy, “global fossil fuel consumption and energy-related emissions hit record highs in 2023, as demand for fossil fuels increased despite a large increase in renewable generation.”

And while this is progress, it is still miles behind where we need to be.

Another issue with this mainstream perspective is that we also need to account for the energy and resources needed to produce the infrastructure that is needed for these renewable solutions. Electric vehicles are a great example of this. EVs are viewed as a holy grail sustainable solution; all we need to do is make more! And while EVs produce less emissions while driving, they still need to be manufactured.

Imagine we build enough plants to manufacture enough EVs to replace all gas vehicles currently being used as well as keep up with the growing demand. Now, imagine the energy demand that would come with that.

EVs also need specific min-

erals, namely cobalt, for the batteries. The mining of these minerals is another factor contributing to biodiversity loss and emissions, in turn, worsening climate change. And that’s not even talking about the humanitarian crisis that is the cobalt-mining industry.

As for paper straws, come on, I don’t even need to explain this one. Why are you giving me a paper straw in a plastic cup?

All that’s to say, it’s okay if you don’t agree with the mainstream ideas of fighting climate change. There are so many “solutions” out there that aren’t really fixing the problem, just pretending they are.

But we can’t just leave it there! There’s still a problem to be solved! And lucky for us, there are tons of solutions that would not only actually work but would also improve our quality of life. Some of these solutions include lowering energy demands, filling the remaining demand with renewables, caring for our ecosystems, boycotting and divesting from unsustainable industries, and adjusting our infrastructure.

Instead of imagining a world with EVs and soggy packaging, imagine a world with lower energy demand because we don’t have eight pizza places in one town. Imagine a world with ac-

cessible, good-quality public transportation so not everyone needs to drive all the time. A world where food is grown locally, making it more affordable and higher quality. A world where the local ecosystems are maintained and cared for, increasing air quality, encouraging biodiversity and giving the community beautiful spaces where we can spend time enjoying nature.

I certainly don’t have all the answers, but I do know this: sustainability does not have to be a dreadful thing. So, what I encourage you to take from this article is permission to imagine a better future, a future that makes you excited. Think about the green solutions you agree with, and the ones you don’t. What are our other options? What does your sustainable future look like?

Climate Corner is a public-outreach effort of the Nith Valley Eco Boosters (NVEB), a local group committed to achieving and supporting a long-term, healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley townships through education, action and collaboration. To help envision and create your sustainable future, visit nvecoboosters.com. Climate Corner will include NVEB updates and how you can get involved or support us.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: A vision for Wilmot

Too often we do not hear the stories of others. We do not get to know enough about the figures who played significant roles in others’ histories, of others’ experiences. Too often, through ignorance of others’ values, we assume that it is our stories alone that bear the “truth.” Our self-centredness can create divisions among all of us.

I have a vision for Wilmot Township. It is a strategy for how we might provide opportunities for increased mutual understandings among all of us by talking and listening to each other through a revised project, a “Walk Through Wilmot.” (Don’t get hung-up on my title, it’s just one way to expand the project)

The Prime Ministers Path concept started in 2013. Twelve years have passed. There is no emergency or even urgency to have a final product of a revised project concept ready for public presentation in totality. Time, like a knowledge of our histories, may be our friend.

My optimistic suggestions below can evolve over years as funds provide, but it needs to start with an approved concept by Wilmot’s citizens and its council.

1. Create a fundraising foundation as an organization to raise money to support a charitable cause – an educational project that also has some

life-sized statues, etc.

2. Enlist Wilmot expertise to place skilled people on the foundation’s board. (Volunteers are most affordable). The board needs a lawyer, real-estate broker, certified professional accountant, member of Createscape Waterloo, historian, etc.
3. Decide whether it will be structured as a corporation or a trust foundation with a purpose to advance education and cultural understandings.
4. Solicit Wilmot citizens to name the project.
5. Register the foundation as a legal entity.
6. Apply for charitable status to the Canada Revenue Agency.
7. Apply for a charitable tax number.

My personal vision for next steps:

1. Acquire a suitably sized parcel of land in Wilmot, preferably in Baden and close to Castle Kilbride and the museum. (Charitable donations can leverage willingness to give by those with resources to donate)
2. Consult with identifiable groups in Wilmot who have had predecessors with grievances and successes.
3. Identify potential ways to expand the visitation sites placed on the

property. Start with ice age (first peoples’ arrivals, various origins stories). Time-sequential dioramas and tableaux: small group of earliest arrivals, early housing (long-house, etc.), early food acquisition (hunting, gathering, cultivating, etc.), Chinese labourers on CPR, Jews turned away at B.C. coast, individuals playing significant decision-making roles through our history, etc.

4. Construct a “cultural centre” of suitable size to accommodate tour groups of 30-40 tour-bus riders. Could be in the form of a long-house? Cultural centre would have audio-visual displays that rotate on a schedule or can be booked ahead of time by tour groups that make pre-paid reservations to visit.
5. The A.V. presentations scripts would be created by content experts such as universities, cultural experts and converted to professional-grade product funded through grants.
6. Resource list handouts with further reading suggestions.
7. Visitors desk where reproductions of visual, sculpture, carving artists are sold. Annual fundraiser raffle of original art.

8. Create a communications strategy for promoting tourist visits to Wilmot’s project site. Link to co-ordinate with Stratford Festival events.
9. Consider traffic routes and parking especially for tour buses.
10. Board of Trade plans long term for provision of support services required by tourists: food, local transportation to Castle Kilbride and the museum (rickshaws pulled by university students in season?), local historical buildings, alternate bus tour spin-off to New Hamburg to view homes in Marie Voisin’s books with accompanying local guides on the bus, paid admission for scheduled cultural lectures/discussions by experts at community centres in New Dundee, St. Agatha, etc.

I have submitted this to the editor because I have been unable to find the township’s page where all the suggestions from citizens interested in this project have been compiled for review by all. Find my entire document at thisiswilmot.ca/?page_id=6264

Respectfully submitted,
Barry Wolfe, Baden

Dressing Sharp Without Going Broke: Mastering end-of-season clearance sales

DRESS SHARP. SPEND SMART.

By Scott Dunstall



When it comes to looking sharp without torching your wallet, end-of-season clearance sales are the unsung heroes of style.

Some guys think great fashion requires big bucks, but I'm here to tell you that's just not true. The key? Knowing where to hunt, what to snag and how to make those finds look like a million bucks, even if they cost less than lunch at Timmies.

The hunt for hidden gems

Shopping the clearance section isn't always glamorous. It takes patience, a keen eye and sometimes a bit of luck. It's like fishing; you might have to wade through a sea of neon-coloured disasters before reeling in that perfect catch. But when you do, that's when the endorphins start flying for me.

Right now, as retailers clear out winter inventory, you can score high-quality wool coats, sweaters and boots at a fraction of their original price. Just last week, I came across an amazing full-length burgundy dress coat at The Bay in Conestoga Mall for less than half price!

And let's talk about shoes. While Winners has pretty well forgotten about men, squishing the department into some cubbyhole in the corner (you can't even buy scarves or gloves in many of them anymore), Marshall's has not forgotten us. I picked up a pair of grey flock top Cole Haan (every good brand) with broguing (punch-hole design) in the top for \$39. These shoes are \$120 normally. Being

gray, they go with most things I wear.

Know when to strike

End-of-season sales happen like clockwork and knowing when to strike is crucial. Right now, stores are desperate to clear out winter stock to make room for spring arrivals. This means massive markdowns on coats, sweaters, boots and even layering essentials like sweaters, scarves and gloves.

Ever heard of "January Jacket Season?" Retailers slash prices on outerwear in late January and February, meaning you can find a quality wool overcoat at 70 per cent off. My best score? A camel-coloured, double-breasted coat from Zara (bought it online) – originally \$250, mine for \$60. It instantly elevates everything I wear.

The power of a good tailor

Here's a pro tip: Don't get hung up on minor fit issues. If a quality piece is a steal but fits a bit off, take it to a tailor. A few bucks spent on alterations can turn a clearance-rack misfit into a custom-like masterpiece.

I once found a designer blazer that was just a little too roomy in the waist. Instead of passing on it, I spent \$25 at the tailor to have it taken in. Now? It looks like it was made for me and it cost less than a full-price Bay brand.

Labels vs. quality

I don't chase brand names, but a real style enthusiast knows quality beats hype every time. A lesser-known brand with solid

construction and timeless design will always outshine a trendy logo that screams, "I spent too much on this." Look for fabric, stitching and versatility – three markers of a piece worth owning.

For example, a \$40 merino wool sweater from an underrated brand will serve you better than a \$150 cotton-blend sweater from a luxury label. I once grabbed a 100 per cent cashmere sweater from The Bay's clearance section for \$30 that's outlasted and outperformed a designer sweater that cost triple. Shhh don't tell The Bay – that had to be a mistake.

Build a wardrobe, not just a collection

Impulse buying is the enemy. Sure, those velvet pants might look cool in theory, but are you really going to wear them? Probably not. Instead, focus on timeless essentials – great-fitting jeans, crisp button-downs and versatile

blazers. Then, when you do find a clearance gem, you'll already have the foundation to make it work.

Think of your wardrobe like a puzzle. If you buy a random flashy piece with no plan, it won't fit. But if you build with intention, clearance finds become assets rather than accidents. A versatile navy blazer from a clearance rack can be dressed up or down – pair it with jeans for dinner, or with trousers for a formal event.

Clearance rack pitfalls to avoid

Not all clearance finds are worth it. Here's what to steer clear of:

- **Trendy pieces that won't last a season** – That neon green bomber jacket might look fun now, but will it still be stylish next year?
- **Damaged goods** – Missing buttons? Small tears? Check if it's fixable before buying.
- **Questionable fit** – Some

things aren't worth tailoring. If it needs a complete overhaul, it's probably not a bargain.

Happy Hunting!

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

The snow keeps piling up



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

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Wilmot Council meeting
7-11 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Road West Baden

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Community Dining for Seniors in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships
12:00 p.m.
Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please register by Feb 21 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Linwood Community Centre
5279 Ament Line, Linwood

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

Community Pancake Supper
5 - 7 pm
Hosted by the Junior Optimist Club of Wilmot. Contact Kathy Gray at cagey1@sympatico.ca for more information.
Wilmot Rec Complex
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

TUESDAY, MARCH 4 CONT

Ostomy Support Group Meeting
7:00 p.m.
'What's New with Convatec Ostomy Supplies' with Inge Prey, Territory Manager. Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome. (519)273-4327
93 Morgan St., Stratford

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

Community Dining for Seniors in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships
12:00 p.m.
Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please register by March 7 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Wellesley Recreation Complex, 1401 Queen's Bush Rd., Wellesley

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

Community Dining for Seniors in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships
12:00 p.m.
Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please register by March 14 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Wilmot Rec Complex
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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

Community Dining for Seniors in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships
12:00 p.m.
Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Please register by March 21 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
Linwood Community Centre
5279 Ament Line, Linwood

SUNDAY, MARCH 30

Tree Pruning with Mike Yost
1:30 - 3:30 pm
Free workshop will cover all aspects of tree pruning. For details and registration go to letstreewilmot.ca/events.
Mannheim Community Center
1467 Mannheim Road

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9

Tavistock Community Health Inc. (TCHI) Annual Meeting
7 pm
For more info contact chairman Frank Meconi; fameconi@rogers.com
Tavistock Men's Club Hall
78 Woodstock St N, Tavistock

FREE SENIORS ACTIVITIES

Tavistock Seniors Activities
Inside walking Monday & Wednesday morning 8:30-12. Contact: Larry Brown 519-240-6715
Pickleball Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon, 12-4. Wednesday night 7-9. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052
Cards Monday, Wednesday afternoon 1-4, euchre, crib (bring board), etc. Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: Bob Routly 519-301-2118
Crokinole Monday, Wednesday morning 8:30-12, Just drop in to play, good to bring someone. Contact: John Schultz 519-655-2346
Shuffleboard @ arena, Wednesday 12:30-4 and Thursday 10-4. Contact: Don Junker 519-535-7052.
VON Smart Seniors Exercise, Tuesday and Thursday morning 9 - 10; Village Manor 10:25 - 11:25. Contact: 519-539-1231 x 6285
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Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.
Contact: thewtgazette@gmail.com

PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

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

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GARDEN WILMOT

Wilmot Horticultural Society presents The Importance of Native Plants with Rick Gray on Sat, March 8, 11:30 a.m. at New Dundee Community Centre. Tickets (\$25) include lunch at noon; speaker at 1 p.m. Contact Yvonne (519-662-6778), Lisa (519-662-1278) or email wilmothortsociety@gmail.com for tickets. For details, visit www.wilmothortsociety.ca

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| 2. Burj Khalifa, Dubai | 7. Lewis Carroll |
| 3. Protractor | 8. Sudan |
| 4. East River, New York City | 9. Yeast |
| 5. A medieval toilet | 10. Bill Gates and Paul Allen |

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