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Wilmot Aquatic Aces swimmer Ameira Black competes at the Special Olympics in Waterloo Region recently. Contributed photo

Rural Oxford EDC hands out local business awards

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A total of 11 outstanding Oxford County businesses were honoured last week as the Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation (ROEDC) held its 10th anniversary award event at the Otter Creek Golf Club.

Three area operations took home awards including Quehl's Family Restaurant and owners Cindy and Brian Larsen, who were honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award. The pair have owned the restaurant for 32 of its 90-plus years and said they had no idea the award was coming but added it was a pleasant surprise.

"I feel very blessed, especially in this area. When you look at the restaurant starting in 1931 and all the external events that have occurred since then like the war, the Great Depression and then COVID, the community is really something," said Cindy Larsen.

She added there are many factors leading to the restaurant's success including regular customers and location.

"Word of mouth is important and I feel we are in the middle of everything; London, Toronto, close to Stratford and close to Woodstock."

While the Larsen and Quehl's names are on the award, Cindy Larsen said it is a shared honour.

"Quehl's wouldn't be here, whether it's us or someone else owning this place, it would not be here if it wasn't for the community. We like to have new people coming in, but it is our customers that keep it alive. We see new generations of families coming in and the recipes have been handed down over so many years."

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Local swimmer medals at Special Olympics pool events in New Hamburg

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Stratford swimmer Amiera Black was excited to compete in the South-Central District's Special Olympics last week. Not only did she compete, but she also won. Lots.

Black is a member of the Wilmot Aquatic ACES Swim Club and was participating in her first Special Olympics where she hit the pool in four events. She brought home three gold medals and one silver. Despite bringing home a barrage of hardware, Amiera said for her it was about the fun.

"It was amazing. I met lots of new friends and I swam really well," she told the Gazette.

The competition wasn't the only part of the event as Amiera played a big part in the opening and closing ceremonies. There was also a dance for competitors when the event wrapped up.

"She was up at 5 a.m. that morning, so it was a very long and busy day. They were all extremely tired, but they loved it when the music started. I think about an hour into the dance everyone said let's go home," laughed Jennifer Black, Ameira's mom.

Amiera was also excited to have swimmers from across the region compete in her home pool, and while the competition was about making friends and having fun, she said winning did feel good.

"I love the medals," said Amiera.

"They were pretty heavy around her neck," added Jennifer Black.

Not only did she win three golds and a silver, but she was able to perform with personal-best times in all four races including the 800-metre freestyle.

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COMMUNITY —

ROEDC honours local businesses with awards

Continued from page 1

Bright Cheese and Butter also received the second of four Lifetime Achievement Awards handed out. General manager Stefan Cartmale has been at the helm for just over a decade and said, on a personal level, the award means a lot to his team.

“It is recognition of the long-term perseverance of a business that has spent decades bucking the trends of making food less expensive and less nutritious by providing high-quality products at reasonable prices. The cheese industry is a tough business with very low margins and very high competition not only from Canada but now from all over the world.”

He added his team constantly looks for innovation without sacrificing quality or food safety and continues to develop products that are inclusive of diverse dietary requirements.

“It is an honour to work for a business that is so highly recognized locally and refuses to bend from its core values even though so many of our local Ontario competitors have closed their doors against the pressures of competing against imports and highly modified food ingredients.”

Anyone involved in small business in Oxford County knows there is a one-of-a-kind comradery. Cartmale explained the more he becomes involved in the community in Oxford County, the more impressed he is with how well the community supports each other.

“There are several events and initiatives led by organizations like ROEDC and having the ability to easily network with other local businesses is invaluable. It is truly amazing when you realize just how diverse the manufacturing base and business community in Oxford is. You could decide tomorrow to open a company and you’d be surprised to find that almost everything you need is within 30 minutes.”

He added at last week’s award ceremony, the sense of appreciation everyone had for one another was on complete display.

“Businesses are truly supportive of one another and I was personally so happy for every one of the award recipients. It was a remarkable event.”

Terra Nova Spa in Hickson received the ROEDC’s Starter Company Award, something owner Jodi Pendry said came out of the success the business had since opening in 2022.

“I think they were so impressed that when we started it just took off running and kept evolving.”

Thanks to exceptional growth last year, the business employs 30 people and has increased revenue by 100 per cent.

“We are really working hard to create a collaborative team and it was fun for me when I came to work and said look what we won. My staff said congratulations, you won another award. I said, ‘I didn’t. We did.’ I can’t do this on my own.”

She added everyone at Terra Nova works hard to create the ultimate guest experience.

“If we didn’t do that, then we never would have been nominated,” added Pendry.

Among the dignitaries on hand was Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman who said having so many incredible small businesses in the same place at once is what makes Oxford County an incredible place to do business.

“When I look at the places across the country I get involved with in my job, I’ve never thought of any area better than Oxford and tonight proves that.”

Many of the award nominees and winners are part of agri-tourism, a growing part of the county’s economy. Hardeman said the sector is expanding more rapidly here than anywhere else.

“It’s all part of how we have changed and grown economically. When I first started in politics no one even talked about tourism let alone try and develop it in our rural area. The way agriculture is changing, we have to make special efforts to protect our culture by encouraging people to go for awards like tonight.”

He added when agriculture is discussed, the conversation is normally about increasing yields, farming more efficiently and being more competitive globally, something that wasn’t the case at the awards banquet.

“When you look at tonight’s awards, they were almost all directed at how we are building the agricultural community, not how much more efficiently we are fixing our food. This is about how we can protect our rural communities.”

The other award winners were:

- Oxford Fresh Farm Gate – Berrylicious Fruit Farm



Quehl’s Family Restaurant was one of four recipients of a lifetime achievement award at a ceremony near Otterville last week. Pictured (left to right) are Crystal Van Roekel from the Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporate (ROEDC), Brian and Cindy Larsen, owners of Quehl’s, and ROEDC board chair Nancy Demarest. Photo courtesy of Custom Concepts Photography



Terra Nova Nordic Spa and Café earned the Starter Company Award at the ROEDC 10th Anniversary Awards Banquet last week. Pictured (left to right) are Brenda Tait from the Woodstock Small Business Centre, spa owner Jodi Pendry, her husband Pete Overdeest, and ROEDC board chair Nancy Demarest Photo courtesy Custom Concepts Photography

- Oxford Fresh Farm Gate – Deep Purple Lavender Farm
- Business Leadership – Willow Grove Animal Wellness Centre
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COMMUNITY —

Black shines in her events at the Special Olympics

Continued from page 1

"She swam that race a month ago and took off 51 seconds, and last weekend she won gold in 11 seconds less than that. Those are big chunks of time to take off," added Jennnifer Black, who was allowed to be one of her daughter's coaches at the competition.

"Her sister, father and grandparents all came to watch. Even her old coach when she was four came from Goderich to watch. It was really cool to have everyone in the stands there cheering her on," she added.

Amiera also stayed at the athlete's village at Laurier University with a roommate, something that was a first for her.

"It was funny at nighttime. She made me laugh all night," she said.

The 18-year-old swimmer may or may not be moving on to the 2026 National Summer Games in Medicine Hat, Alta. Jennifer Black said there are several factors in making that decision.

"That's our hope but we don't know for sure. Special Olympics does things a little differently. It's not just by times, it's by community and coaching endorsement. I don't completely understand how they choose but we are in a waiting game now to see if she carries on."

The event was special for everyone involved, be it the athletes and their families, coaches, volunteers, or organizers. Jennifer Black said the opening ceremonies were her highlight.

"We participated in the flag-bearing ritual. Just having that many athletes with different challenges be welcomed into the community with open arms. The excitement and support was incredible. At any Special Olympics event, it doesn't matter what level, they always remind me of what's really important. It doesn't matter if they win, they are so excited to be there. They cheer for their friends, they cheer for people they don't even know."

She added the athletes are there to just



Amiera Black is seen smiling with her three gold and silver medals following the Special Olympics competition in Waterloo Region. Contributed photo

enjoy what they are doing at the moment and, in turn, everyone around them is supporting the community as a whole. The event sponsors, the Waterloo Regional Police get top marks for their involvement.

"It was overwhelming how many people were there to cheer the athletes on. We were emotionally moved by the whole experience at every level. The Waterloo Regional Police were phenomenal. They were amazing with the athletes and wanted them to feel comfortable. Amiera even got to sit on one of their motorcycles. It was so uplifting," said Jennifer Black.

Over 750 athletes from across Ontario came to the Waterloo Region to compete in five diverse and exciting sports during the event - basketball, powerlifting, rhythmic gymnastics, swimming and 10-pin bowling.

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COMMUNITY —

Grapes, goats and good times at Perth Farmhouse Winery

By Lisa Chester

Perth County's first winery has opened its doors to wine and cider enthusiasts' delight.

The Perth Farmhouse Winery, located a short, 20-minute drive from Stratford, is the perfect outing on a sunny afternoon to discover new wines in a family friendly setting with, who would guess, goats.

The 1860's farmhouse property is owned by Steve and Casey Howanyk who describe themselves as first-generation farmers. Their vision of the vineyard evolved over time as they learned how they loved to live there. Sharing the property with family and friends was a joy and they found they wanted to share even further.

"We moved here in 2018 with zero clue about farming. We just loved the property and the house and when it happened to have barns on site, I saw cute, baby goats on Instagram and the rest is history. Our friends and family really enjoyed coming here and we thought we really wanted to share with others that genuine farm hospitality," said Casey Howanyk, owner.

They launched their goat social signature experience and planted a test acre of grapes in 2022, and then they started on the winery. They took their 100-year-old timber barn and transformed it into a warm and welcoming tasting room with an adjacent patio. There are picnic tables beside the pasture where the goats are.

"We switched our five-acre hay field to a five-acre vineyard of cold-climate grapes. We have five varietals. We have Vidal, Petite Pearl, Ithasca, Frontenac Blanc and Marquette, so all of the wines that we have made on site have our blend and they all include those cold-climate grapes," said Casey Howanyk

Because they are expecting their first full harvest of their own grapes this year, they also use grape growers in Huron County and Niagara to supplement in the making of wines and ciders. The Sip and Graze experience, just launched, allows guests to sample flights of four different wines and ciders on offer.



Pictured from left are Steve Howanyk, Steve Byfield and Casey Howanyk with bottles of their white, red and rosé wines now available at Perth Farmhouse Winery. Contributed photo

"It's an hour-and-a-half-long experience where you get to taste some of our wine or ciders, and you get a grazing box which is curated by our neighbours at Lynn River Farms. It's all fresh from-the-farm ingredients, then at the end of your visit our goat nanny takes you in to visit the goats and take pictures," she said.

The grape-growing experience has been extraordinary. Their expert winemaker, Steve Byfield, comes with a wealth of experience and knowledge while the Howanyks bring a hard-work ethic and good humour.

"That first, one-acre test plot was planted on a few weekends with our friends and families and our kids, and it was a memory we will never forget. We're learning how to prune them and what to look for and how to train them up the trellis, and things like when to harvest them, even to weed control. We got some cool, new tools because we don't use pesticides.

"There's a preconceived notion that we can't grow grapes here in Perth County, but I think we've proven everyone wrong," laughed Howanyk.

The grape varietals differ from others grown in vineyard hotbeds like Niagara-on-the-Lake, with the obvious exclusion of Chardonnay. Prince Edward County is another example of where cold-climate grapes are grown.

"We have to give all the credit to our winemaker, Steve Byfield. He makes such smooth, fresh wines and ciders. We've had great feedback on everything including those that are not usually a rosé drinker, but love the rosé and leave buying two bottles to take home. I think it's nice for folks in the area not to have to drive far away to Niagara-on-the-Lake and Prince Edward County for a wine-tasting experience," said Casey Howanyk.

This family friendly experience is open Saturdays and Sundays. There are juice flights for the younger crowd and non-alcoholic mimosas for the pregnant visitors to leave no one out. Reservations are recommended and can be made on their website at thepertfarmhouse.ca or by calling 519-807-3774. The Perth Farmhouse is located at 4596 Wilmot Easthope Rd. in New Hamburg.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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COMMUNITY —

Record-high registrations for Saturday's World Crokinole Championship in Tavistock

By Stewart Grant

"It's the most ever by a long shot," says Nathan Walsh of the World Crokinole Championship (WCC) organizing committee regarding this year's registration figures.

"We were selling out the singles category by the start of April."

The WCC committee will have a record 140 boards in play during singles competition this Saturday, up from last year's high of 133 boards.

"Crokinole is continuing to reach new people," Walsh told the Gazette.

Walsh said people like Jeremy Tracey are doing a lot to grow the game in the United States. Tracey's company, Tracey Boards, sells hand-crafted crokinole boards which are sold at shows throughout North America and the company's YouTube channel is growing all the time, now with nearly 4,000 subscribers.

Though the majority of players in the World Crokinole Championship come from the home of crokinole here in southwestern Ontario, some participants are making a long trek to get here. Canadian

players will be here "from coast to coast" with provinces such as British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Quebec all represented. There are players signed up from 15 different American states including Alaska, California and Washington. There's even a player who is flying in from Japan to compete in the Worlds.

Last year's champion, Connor Reinman of Grosse Pointe, Mich., will be returning to defend the title he won in 2023. Walsh says nearly all of crokinole's top players will be there hoping to win it all in Tavistock.

The World Crokinole Championships take place this Saturday, June 1 at Tavistock Arena. Registration for the Doubles categories (competitive, recreational, cue and youth) opens at 7:15 a.m. with play commencing around 8 a.m. For those interested in catching the finals (admission to watch is free), the Doubles Championship round takes place around 12:45 p.m.

Playing in the Singles categories begins at 1:45 p.m. with the World Championship title ultimately decided around 7-8 p.m.

For more information on this Saturday's event, visit www.worldcrokinole.com.



The photo above was taken prior to play at last year's World Crokinole Championship. This year, more boards than ever will be used to accommodate the growing number of participants. (Photo courtesy of World Crokinole Championship)

Snyder's Road West reconstruction project in Baden underway

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette staff

Snyder's Road West from Mill Street to Christian Street is closed, allowing local traffic and pedestrian traffic only during the two-phase project.

Through traffic is being detoured. Pedestrian access will be indicated with signage in place.

The Snyder's Road West project includes a full road reconstruction with new sanitary and storm sewers, a sidewalk and separated cycling lanes.

The contract for the work was awarded to Steed and Evans Ltd. from St. Jacobs.

Grand River Transit is rerouting Route 77 during the road closure.

The first phase of the reconstruction is scheduled to be completed in late fall 2024, weather permitting. The second phase, scheduled to begin in spring 2025, includes Foundry Street from Snyder's Road to Charles Street and the remaining section of Snyder's Road West from Foundry Street to Mill Street.

Normal working hours during construction are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with occasional weekends.

The project has a budget of \$8.7 million.



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COMMUNITY —

Remembering the oldest members of Perth County's- North Easthope Antique Tractor Club (NEAT)



Close to 50 antique tractor club members and their machines took up an invite for breakfast at the famous Quehl's Family Restaurant in Tavistock last week. As usual, many of the retired farmers enjoyed visiting under blue skies and bright sunshine once their tractors were parked to discuss the state of the local farming community and, of course, the weather. Pictured are the most senior members of the North Easthope Antique Tractor club. From left are Marvin Musselman from New Dundee, Paul Yantzi from Punkey Doodles Corners, Floyd Neeb from North Easthope Township, and Raymond Ruby from Tavistock. Photos by Gary West



Ken Dechert left his antique tractor in the shed and showed off his fully electric mobility scooter at the rear parking lot of Quehl's. He says he can drive on roads around the county of speeds up to 40 km/hr and doesn't have to worry about stopping for gas or changing oil, or even having a driver's licence. His new mode of transportation was purchased at Wagler Small Engines in Millbank.



The Kitchen cooks who also own Quehl's Family Restaurant are always happy to welcome the North Easthope Antique Tractor Club members for breakfast. Pictured from left are Emily, Brian and Cindy Larsen with a Massey-Ferguson 65 in the background.

St. Marys Independent The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Goderich Sun

STRATFORDTIMES Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

PUBLICATION DATES:

WOODSTOCK INGERSOLL ECHO: JUNE 7

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT: JUNE 6

WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE: JUNE 6

GODERICH SUN: JUNE 13

STRATFORD TIMES: JUNE 14

Introducing our Seniors Month feature, celebrating the remarkable seniors who enrich our communities during Ontario's Seniors Month in June. This annual nationwide celebration is more than just a tribute—it's a recognition of the invaluable contributions seniors make to the vibrancy of our community.

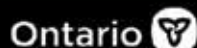
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Shakespeare hosts annual village garage sale, with visitors from miles away



Even though the day started out wet and rainy, later on the rain stopped and the sun came out and Shakespeare was abuzz with the different households taking part in the annual village garage sale. The day even drew some Mennonite visitors from as far away as Kingwood, north of Shakespeare. Pictured is the wagon and team of horses hitched up behind the Shakespeare fire station. Owners of the Bauman and Martin families had made their rounds to observe and purchase some items for sale at various garages. Before heading for home, they stopped in for sausage on a bun cooked up by members of the local fire department. Photo by Gary West

COMMUNITY —

New historical storyboard plaque commemorates life cut short, town history

By Hannah Kavanagh

The rain cleared for a sunny day, perfect for the just over 20-person turnout at the corner of Lichty Road and Schummer Line for Thomas Huber's commemorative storyboard plaque.

On May 25, Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society held the ceremony to unveil the plaque of the blacksmith and wagon maker from the 1900s. Huber had announced the opening of a new cider mill set for Sept. 15, 1908, but on Sept. 14, the boiler exploded, killing Huber and his business partner, William Attig.

The chairman of the Society, Andrew Jacobson, was there to give a brief history of why the site was being commemorated and then turned it over to the man they have to thank for the extensive research and commitment to the task, Leonard Horst.

Longtime Linwood resident Horst was there to present his extensive findings on the details of his research into why the boiler plate malfunctioned along with pieces of the original boiler. He was able to get the Braendle cider boiler from Heidelberg with owner permission and relocate it near the site of the explosion. He brought along apple cider, apple butter and cheese to complement the event. His speech included the details he

managed to find out about the event, and why it remains pertinent to the lives of his descendants.

"I don't know what else to say except that it has interested me," Horst said.

His work also included landscaping the area in which the plaque stands. Among the crowd was Robert Huber, the great-nephew and descendant of Thomas Huber.

"I'm really pleased that everyone is here, and that it turned into a pretty nice day," said Huber.

The plaque was a final project for former curator of the society Nancy Maitland, who was joined by other members to commemorate the event.

"Our group decided that putting up some historic plaques in the township would be a good use of our time and resources," said Maitland.

Thanks to the help of dedicated residents and gracious landowners, the storyboard now stands near the site of the Huber explosion and, according to Maitland, stands as a true testament to the township's need for its history.

The next project for the plaque committee may include sites of a plane crash in the township.



Members of the Wellesley Township Heritage and Historical Society stand in front of the new storyboard plaque for the Huber cider mill explosion. Photo by Hannah Kavanagh

NOTICE OF STUDY COMPLETION

New Well Supply – Village of Tavistock

Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Study

Oxford County has completed a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Study to explore potential opportunities for a new well supply to improve the security and supply of drinking water in the Village of Tavistock in the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock.

About the study

The Village of Tavistock currently receives water from three wells located at the same site in central Tavistock. This study explored opportunities for an additional well location to serve community water needs.

Two Public Consultation Centres were held that identified the preferred site for a new well on Hope Street West (see map). The preferred design concept includes a new well with decentralized (on-site) treatment and an equalization water storage tank at the rear of the property. The on-site storage configuration and site footprint will be further refined during detailed design.

Oxford County intends to start detailed design in 2024 and proceed to construction, subject to obtaining all necessary approvals and funding.

The Class EA Study was completed in accordance with the planning and design process for Schedule C projects as outlined in the Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Document (2000, as amended in 2007, 2011, and 2015) in effect at the time of initiating this project, which is an approved process under Ontario's *Environmental Assessment Act*.

Public comment period

An Environmental Study Report (ESR) summarizing the Class EA Study process and findings is available online for a 30-day comment period starting **May 30, 2024**. The study document is available on Oxford County's website and on Speak Up, Oxford!: www.speakup.oxfordcounty.ca/new-well-supply-tavistock.

Interested persons may provide written comments by mail or email regarding the ESR **between May 30, 2024 and June 28, 2024** to:

A.R. (Tony) Lotimer
Oxford County
21 Reeve Street, P.O. Box 1614
Woodstock, Ontario N4S 7Y3
water@oxfordcounty.ca

In the event that there are outstanding concerns, a request may be made to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) under Section 16 of the *Environmental Assessment Act* requiring a higher



level of study (i.e., requiring an individual/comprehensive EA approval before being able to proceed), or that conditions be imposed (e.g., require further studies), only on the grounds that the requested order may prevent, mitigate, or remedy adverse impacts on constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Requests on other grounds will not be considered. Requests should include the requester contact information and full name for the Ministry. The request should be sent in writing by mail or email to:

Minister of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks
Ministry of Environment,
Conservation and Parks
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
minister.mecp@ontario.ca

And:

Director, Environmental
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Toronto ON, M4V 1P5
EABDirector@ontario.ca

Information will be collected in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

This notice first issued May 30, 2024

COMMUNITY —

Grace United Church annual Garage Sale this Saturday

By Gary West

If readers are looking for fabric, in fat 1/4's or fat 1/8's (if you're a sewer you'll know the means), also toys, housewares, puzzles or books, come to Grace United Church this Saturday.

It's the annual garage and yard sale and has been a community staple for longer than organizers can remember.

The fundraiser helps with not only church activities but many other community organizations who need help financially.

The sale is outside the church and also in the auditorium from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., rain or shine. Come hungry for the barbecue of Herlick's sausage on a bun, hotdogs and drinks.

Pictured right are church organizers. From left to right are Anne Gregory, Mary Boland and Susan Pellow who are shown getting all the fabric in order for Saturday's Sale. Photo by Gary West



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COMMUNITY —

Fly-In Breakfast at the Stratford Municipal Airport this Sunday


By Gary West

Anyone who has never been to a Fly-In Breakfast at the Stratford Municipal Airport is in for a treat Sunday, June 2 from 8 a.m. to noon.

Organizers from North Easthope Township and many from New Hamburg, Woodstock, Listowel and St. Marys are inviting locals to their fly-in, drive-in, annual breakfast.

All donations from the pancake, peameal bacon and maple syrup breakfast, which includes coffee, tea and juice, goes to the Stratford General Hospital Foundation.

Organizers say those who attend will see planes coming in from all over with all makes and sizes and it will be a real treat to have breakfast with those flying in from a distance away.



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COMMUNITY —

OBITUARY

BIESEL, Carol Eva



Passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on Monday, May 20, 2024, at the Royal Victoria Regional Hospital, Barrie at the age of 64 years. Carol resided in Innisfil and was formerly of New Hamburg.

Carol will be deeply missed by her spouse Wolfgang Lausch whom she's cherished 20 years with.

Stepmother of Matthew (Sarah), and Anthony (Shawna), grandmother of Charlotte. Carol will be missed by her sisters Dianne Snider (Jim), Jean Roth, Brenda Biesel (Bruce Lindsay), brother John Biesel, brother-in-law Klaus Springer and by her many nieces and nephews. She was the cherished God daughter of Aunt Eva Wagner and will be missed by Aunts Betty Schramm and Nancy Biesel.

Carol is predeceased by her father and mother Earl and Idula (Brodrecht) Biesel, sister Linda Springer and brother-in-law Earl Roth.

Carol was a true lover of animals, her budgie Robert will miss her dearly, she loved all animals, none were forgotten about in her heart. Carol worked in her early years at LuLu's where she grew a passion for music and pop culture.

Cremation has taken place. Memorial visitation to be held at the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, from 6 – 8 p.m. and again on Thursday, June 6, from 2 until the service begins at 3 p.m. in the funeral home chapel. Interment will take place at a later date in Riverside Cemetery, New Hamburg.

As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations can be made to the Humane Society, Canadian Cancer Society or the Heart and Stroke Foundation and can be done through the funeral home.

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

OBITUARY

PEAT: Jairus Lorne



Passed away peacefully on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at the Hamilton General Hospital. Jairus Peat of RR#1 Bright in his 63rd year.

Beloved husband of Colleen (Epp) Peat who he married December 28, 1991. Loving son of Shirley (Bray) Peat and the late Lorne Peat (August 23,

2011) of RR#1 Bright. Dear brother of the late Jane (1997) and Janice Zarzycki of Waterloo. Son-in-law of Irene Epp and the late Wilfred Epp (2001) of New Hamburg and brother-in-law of Paul Epp & wife Dianne of Tavistock. Remembered by his nephews and nieces Brent (Michelle) and their children Connor and Brooklyn, Vincent (Taylor) and Jacalyn (Chris).

Jairus lived and farmed all of his life at RR#1 Bright. He served his community on the Bright Fire Department for 33 years. He was a member of the Ratho Presbyterian Church and the care taker of the Ratho Cemetery. In retirement Jairus enjoyed driving school bus for Sharpe Bus Lines .

A Celebration of Jairus's life will take place at the Tavistock Memorial Hall, 3 Adam St. Tavistock on Sunday, June 9, 2024 from 1-5 pm with food and refreshments provided. Burial took place in Ratho Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Ratho Presbyterian Church would be appreciated by the family. Personnel Condolences can be posted at www.gffh.ca

WORSHIP IN WILMOT TOWNSHIP

St George's Anglican Church

Corner Waterloo St. and Byron St., New Hamburg
In-person service and online worship Sundays at 10:15 a.m.
Programs each Sunday for children during service.

St James Chapel of Ease Annual Anniversary Service Sunday June 9 at 3:00pm

St James Chapel
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Come join us to celebrate 170 years of Anglican Worship in Wilmot.
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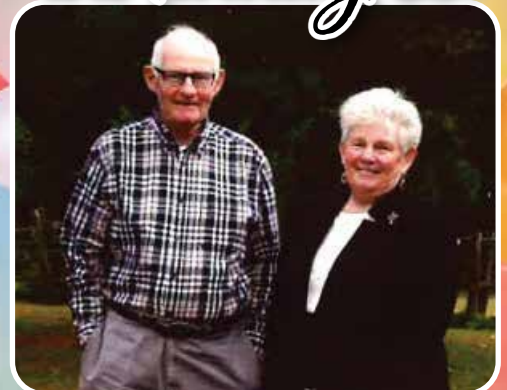
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Current health and safety protocols are followed.

St Agatha Mennonite Church

1967 Erb's Road St Agatha 519-634-8212
Pastor Jim Brown
Worship service 10am followed by coffee hour and sermon discussion. All are welcome

CELEBRATION

*The Coulthard twins
are turning 85!*



Please join us in celebrating
**Norma Howe & Gordon
Coulthard's birthday**
Sunday, June 16th
from 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
at the Downie Optimist Hall in
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COMMUNITY —

The Wilmot-Tavistock
Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. What is the birthstone for May?
2. How many milliliters are in a liter?
3. Who composed the Brandenburg Concertos?
4. Who is the Prime Minister of the UK?
5. Where was the 2014 Winter Olympics held?
6. An unintentional error regarded as revealing subconscious feelings is known as a ____.
7. Hz is short form for what?
8. When was the electric guitar invented?
9. Who was the first person to win 2 Nobel prizes?
10. What two countries border Uruguay?

Answers found on page 22

BIRTHDAYS AND
ANNIVERSARIES

Does someone in your family have a special day coming up? Let us know at thewtgazette@gmail.com to appear in our Birthdays and Anniversaries listing or to arrange for a special announcement ad.

May 30: Happy birthday to Carter Cook (13), Arielle McGregor (17), Grace Bender (20), and anniversary for James and Bonnie Kropf (32nd).

May 31: Happy birthday to Ruth Wallace (102), Karsen Ankenmann (22) and Jessica Clemmer, and anniversary for Trevor and Sheri Britton (21st).

June 2: Happy birthday to Evelyn Kalbfleisch (10) and Mac Alexander (20).

June 3: Happy birthday to Hannah Cressman (13) and Kayle Roth (15).

June 4: Happy birthday to Erin Baechler (17) and anniversaries for Ralph and Irene Baker (64th), Mark and Jennifer Ropp (13th), and Kevin and Susan Luckhardt.

June 5: Happy birthday to Beau Witzel (18), Emma Michaels (19) and anniversaries for Bill and Fran Eekhof (59th), Gerald and Judy Zehr, and Terry and Jill Berg.

The Old Gazettes

By Jake 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.

May 28- June 4, 2014, Edition (10 years ago)

On Jan. 1, 1964, 122 independent Ontario hardware retailers bought Hollinger Hardware Ltd. Of St. Jacobs, Ont. to form Home Hardware. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the company that has become a Canadian icon.

Tavistock Athletics second baseman Tyson Zehr, 19, has been selected for Softball Canada's national team. The team will compete at the ISF Junior Men's World Championship in July in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Happy 175th anniversary Christ Church, Huntingford. On June 7 and 8, Huntingford ACW prepares for their 175th celebrations with Wayne Gretzky items for auction, live entertainment and sandwiches.

VON Canada announced last Friday that Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada has made a new commitment to VON Sakura House, the only residential palliative care hospice serving the people of Oxford County and surrounding community. Toyota's \$355,000 donation is the single largest cash gift ever received by VON in Oxford County.

May 26- June 2, 2004, Edition (20 years ago)

Tavistock Queen's Park was a classroom in itself for 250 public school students from Tavistock, Hickson, Shakespeare and Tollgate who attended C.A.R.E Day on May 19, 2004. With equipment demonstrations, Sparky the fire dog and emergency vehicles for the children to run around and enjoy.

A Tavistock girls' team played in a three-on-three tournament in Woodstock this past weekend. They were division champions playing four games and dominating them all. The team consisted of Brianna Gribble, Emily Sanderson, Des Brenneman, Steph Baril, Chelsey Cambell, Rebeca McKay, Chelsea Hyde, Brooke Jutzi, Jackie Zehr, Carly Kowalik and Morgan Thomson.

For the sixth year now, hundreds of fierce competitors from across the world will battle it out in the village of Tavistock for the World Crokinole Championships. To document this year's competition, local filmmakers and cousins, Joshua and Jonathan Steckley, will collaborate to produce "Crokinole: The Documentary".

Ken Ferguson of Hickson earned two gold medals at the 2004 National Trampoline and Tumbling Championships at Humber College in Toronto May 19-21. His first gold was in Novice Men's Double Mini-Trampoline and his second came as a member of Team Ontario whose members earned the four highest scores.

May 30- June 6, 1984, Edition (40 years ago)

McCain Foods Ltd. announced last Friday that it has acquired controlling interest in Tavistock Union Cheese and Butter Ltd.

Over 50 of the community's young people took part in the annual Rotary Talent Night held at the Tavistock School this year.

On Friday, June 1 the Tavistock Public School held its Annual Field Day with over 125 competitors taking part. Two records were broken and one tied. Marsha Mohr established a new high-jump mark of 1.31 metres, breaking the existing height of 1.28 metres by Kathy Hohner in 1975. Anna Losching reset her senior girls' high-jump mark by marking 1.38 metres. And Scott Ramseyer tied the junior boy's 50-metre record with a heat time of 7.5 seconds set by

Greg Yantzi in 1979.

The Tavistock Men's Club satisfied over 300 fish lovers when they held their annual Fish Fry last Wednesday night. The fish lovers consumed about 110 pounds of flounder fillets and some 250 pounds of French fries.

May 27- June 3, 1964, Edition (60 years ago)

The 10th anniversary of the Nith Valley Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star was marked at Grandview School, New Hamburg, with Worthy Matron Mrs. Doris Hyde presiding, assisted by Associate Patron Wilfred Schneller, the latter also being chairman for the program.

With more than 130 registering from the 12 branches of the Perth Centre Women's Institute, the 15th annual meeting for the Women's Institute was held at the Memorial Hall last Wednesday morning and afternoon. Mrs. William Anderson, RR 4, Stratford, president, conducted the sessions.

Edward Bergey, 17 and a student at the Waterloo-Oxford District High School, was one of 241 Canadian students in Ottawa last week for the 14th annual "Adventure in Citizenship", a project of the Rotary Club of Ottawa. He was sponsored for the trip by the Tavistock Rotary Club.

A potluck supper, served buffet style, was enjoyed by the Loyalty Class and their families of Zion Evangelical United Brethren Church Tuesday night in the church basement with the class president, Roy Facey, in charge. The grace was invoked by Mrs. Willard Gerber and following the supper program was enjoyed, convened by Mrs. Facey assisted by Mrs. Percy Wettlaufer.

Attendance at the Well Baby Clinic held at the Memorial Hall last Friday afternoon was 60 of which 58 were immunized by Dr. O. C. Powers, assisted by Ms. M. Charlton.

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Interim Pastor Harold Schlegel.

131 Wettlaufer St., Tavistock 655-2581

Sunday Worship services begin at 9:45am, with coffee and fellowship to follow at 11am.

Masks welcomed but not required.

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Pastor Hugh Rutledge 655-3611

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SPORTS —

Embroy Senior C Highlanders hockey team wins gold in Toronto

By Gary West

Women's hockey in Canada has certainly come to the forefront over the last year with the professional women's hockey league.

Locally, women's hockey has also been causing that same kind of excitement.

It was a thrilling weekend for local women's hockey in Toronto in the middle of April.

The Embroy Senior C Highlanders hockey team took home gold at the provincial championship in double overtime with a thrilling finish to end a weekend of exciting hockey for the hardworking and talented team.

Organizers said the team consists of a few local Tavistock girls and many others with connection to the Oxford County community.

The Highlanders placed first in round-robin play, which qualified them for provincials. That round robin consisted of six teams, but started out with a total

of 16 senior C teams participating in the weekend.

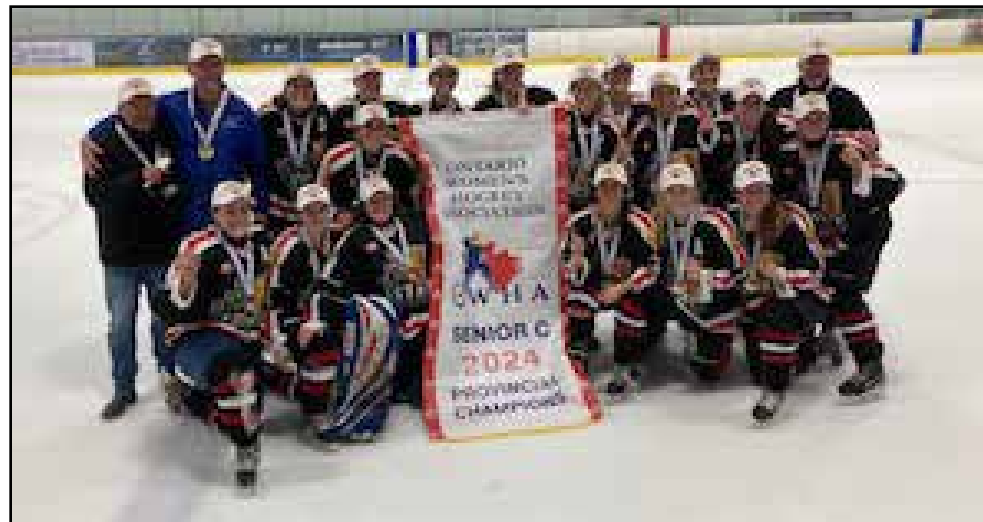
They finished first in their pool at the provincials, which included Orillia Hawks, Toronto Leaside Wildcats and the Bluewater Hawks.

It was a strong showing from the small metropolis of Embroy as the Highlanders competed in the quarterfinals against the Embroy 97's hockey team.

In the semifinal game, they defeated the Norfolk Hurricanes, which put them in the finals against Orillia.

According to the team's coaches, the double-overtime win was a sweet ending to a very successful year.

In a press release, the team thanked "the tremendous coaching staff," team captain and coordinator Megan Veldman, ice scheduler Shawna McIntosh, and the many local fans who supported the team during the provincials, and also enduring the home ice time of 9:30 p.m. on Fridays during the whole season.



Pictured following their gold-medal win are members of the Embroy Senior C Highlanders. In the front from left are Emily Bertens, Kyra Prekup, Megan Jackson, Brooke Hartwick, Carly Wouters and Paula Wouters. In the middle row from left are Kayla Veldman, Megan Veldman, Katie Whetstone, Alyssa Habel and Jaime VanNes. In the back row from left are Tim Whetstone, Paul Prekup, Brooklyn McNab, Celina Murray, Haleigh McIntosh, Julie Van Nes, Alicia Young, Kately Sykes and Mike Oliver. Absent are Jocelyn Innes, Claire Hazeleger and Ella Wouters. Photo courtesy of Jayne Whetstone

Take a Hike Oxford returns this weekend

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

June 1 is International Trails Day and the Oxford County Trails Council is inviting the community to participate in Take a Hike Oxford.

The event will take place on four trails across the county where people can learn more about the county's network of trails and participate in a wide variety of activities designed to bring nature and the shared responsibility to protect it, deeper into people's lives.

Council board member Cher Sprague said the day will feature much more than just walking trails for participants.

"We've organized various activities on each trail. The Hickson one has raptors, Ingersoll a photography walk, Beachville features a guided hike and creating fishing lures while the trail in Woodstock has face painting. Each trail will have other children's activities as well."

Sprague added the event is meant to encourage families to get out and enjoy the outdoors and experts will be available to provide tips on taking pictures in nature.

The four locations are:

- **Woodstock** - Herbert Milnes Park Woodlot Trail, 545239 Pattullo Avenue
- **Ingersoll** - John Lawson Trail, Wonham St. South (by the river)
- **Hickson** - Hickson Trail North, 99 Loveys Street (Hickson Park)
- **Beachville** - Oxford Thames River Trail, 454779 45th Line (east of Beachville)

"People can come to learn more about our wonderful trails network and participate in a wide variety of activities designed to bring nature and our shared responsibility to protect it deeper into our lives," said council president Dan Molinaro.

"Combining knowledge and physical and mental health is vital to our wellbeing and

we recognize this starts from an early age and can last a lifetime. So, the activities at our four public sites will feature fun for kids and parents while catering to those who wish to explore each trail with or without a guide, and perhaps capture their experiences with their camera or other mobile device," he added.

The group has teamed up with several partners to allow up-close, personal and hands-on experiences to encourage a broader understanding of local nature, the environment and the many local resources available.

Each location will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., rain or shine, and will feature sanitation and hydration facilities. Bring your

own water bottle, snacks, bug spray, sunscreen and outdoor footwear. Free parking will be available.

The Oxford County Trails Council is a reference committee and, if a group is interested in creating a trail, it will provide assistance.

"We provide interested groups with the people to contact and help them get organized. We've assisted various new trails like Harrington which goes around the pond, and the Thames River Trail which brought together organizations like Ducks Unlimited and Stewardship Oxford. It was a large coordination effort," said Sprague.

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COMMUNITY —

Jackie Noble Memorial Trophy awarded to local music students

By Gary West

Music students from various grades at North Easthope Public School west of Amulree brought home the hardware to the school after the recent 96th annual Kiwanis Festival of the Performing Arts in Stratford.

Music teacher Colleen Rothwell said the school entered four choirs into the festival, including a girls choir and three classroom choirs – grades 1, 2 and 3/4.

According to Rothwell, the dedication and focus of each student was evident at the competition and their hard work resulted in first-place standings for each group.

Additionally, the girls choir was awarded the Jackie Noble Memorial trophy in memory of Jacqueline Candice Noble of St. Marys who died in 1989 of Leukaemia at the age of 14. She was a talented singer and brought joy to her family, friends and to all who knew her.

At the Stars of the Festival evening, North Easthope was presented with two more awards, including the Ida Kollman Memorial Scholarship and the Bottomley Trophy for the highest average score in three or more Elementary School vocal classes.

The winning singers from North Easthope thanked Mitchell area farmer Dave Murray as their dedicated accompanist during this year's festival.

Rothwell also sends out many thanks to the school's parent council, which supported this effort by providing funding for entrance fees and busing.



Music Teacher Colleen Rothwell with award winning musical students at North Easthope Public School with their trophies on full display last week. They were proud to be showing off their four wins at this year's Kiwanis Festival of the Performing Arts in Stratford. Photo by Gary West

Hickson and District Lions Club makes a major donation to East Zorra-Tavistock

By Gary West

It was a big day for the Hickson and District Lions club on May 15 as the club honoured its commitment of \$10,000 to the township of East Zorra-Tavistock.

The money had been given to the club as part of the prizes awarded from the Van Boekel family, when they won Pioneer Seeds' "Here's to our Hometown" video competition in 2019.

At that time, the club had said they would use the funds to build a community/meeting room.

The club had also approached the township at the same time with a plan to enclose a larger part of the pavilion for a meeting room. The cost of this proposed project was too large for the club to go it alone, so it asked the township for some help.

The Lions were told of plans to include a room as part of the new township administration building.

The club has used the new community room for their business meetings since January 2024.



Pictured with a donation cheque of \$10,000 are, from left, Lions Diane and Laurence Clark, Heather McKim, EZT CAO Karen DePrest, Mayor Phil Schaefer and Lions Valerie and Brad Smith. Contributed photo



Lions president Valerie Smith presents a \$500 cheque to township public works manager Tom Lightfoot to purchase and plant trees in East Zorra-Tavistock on the Lions Club's behalf. Contributed photo

COMMUNITY —

Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford-Perth

By Alex Hunt

The local humane society prioritizes providing our furry friends their forever home.

Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth will host their Adopt-a-Thon at their Stratford and Kitchener locations on June 1 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at both centres.

"The majority of the animals are strays. There might be a few that have been surrendered with owners trying to re-home them, so we have taken them in to help them out but the majority that we have on site here are strays," said Nicole Swartzentruber, animal-care manager at the Stratford Perth Humane Society.

Swartzentruber says most of these animals have been at the facility for around three to four months and are classified as long-term-care residents, while others have only been in care for a couple of weeks.

"Things have slowed right down. People are just not adopting these animals. They are with us longer than we would like to see," said Swartzentruber. "I think the economy has a lot to do with it. The cost of living has increased. People are just not able to take on the responsibility of another mouth to feed and owning an animal is not cheap."

Swartzentruber says the centres care for 170 animals with 51 of them available for adoption at the Adopt-a-Thon. Thirty-five animals will be available for adoption in Kitchener-Waterloo and 16 in Stratford

Perth.

All online-adoption applications will be suspended and replaced with paper copies on site in both facilities.

Swartzentruber said overpopulation has been a prominent issue due to slow adoption rates and hopes that all animals will be brought to their new homes on the day of the event so more can be admitted and cared for.

On event day, cats and other small animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs will be displayed in the atrium, visible for all visitors.

"Because we have so many dogs available for adoptions, they do not all sit in our canine adoption area and we generally do not let the public go back there because it is very stressful on the animals," said Swartzentruber.

"We will have pictures of all the dogs and if somebody would like to meet a dog, all they have to do is fill out an application and one of our adoption counselors will bring the dog out to meet them and every member of the household must be present to adopt the dog."

Swartzentruber said if a visitor has a dog and is interested in adopting another, then they must bring their dog with them to ensure both canines are compatible.

"We are not giving up," said Swartzentruber. "We will continue to promote these animals online and continue to have these Adopt-a-Thons until they find their forever home."



Adoptable dogs ready to be brought to their forever home at the Stratford Perth Humane Society. Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth photos



A previous adoption event at the Stratford Perth Humane Society.

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Tavistock

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Baden

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New Dundee

New Dundee Village Market

Wellesley

Pym's, Schmidt's Bulk Pantry, Cook's Pharmacy Schmidtsville Restaurant, Wellesley Service

Shakespeare

Shakespeare Brewery, Shakespeare Variety

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OPINION —

EXPERT ADVICE: *Condo living in today's real-estate landscape*



By Isabel Livingston

In today's growing economy and real estate market, condominiums have become a sought-after option for home ownership, captivating buyers with the ease of living, comfort and amenities they provide.

As a realtor, I have not only been exposed to the growing appeal

of condos, but also the unique financial structure that they offer. Today, I aim to empower you with the knowledge required to confidently grasp this unique home ownership option and make an informed decision when choosing to buy a condo.

Condo ownership can serve as a tangible asset to an individual's financial portfolio and act as a valuable investment for future goals. Like any Real Estate investment, condos have historically shown a steady appreciation over time. Locality, rising market demand and property upgrades should all be considered in order to gain the most equity for purchasers over time.

When considering condo ownership, prospective buyers often question the concept of condo fees. Why would I pay a fee

for something I can do myself? Condominium living provides a unique lifestyle, with lower maintenance at the cost of a monthly condo fee. Oftentimes condominiums may include additional amenities that otherwise owners may not be able to afford. The monthly fee fronts a share of the costs for maintenance, repairs and insurance of the building and shared amenities. While this may seem like a financial burden, this fee provides peace of mind and less time spent ensuring that essential services and upkeep are taken care of. When purchasing a condo, the corporation's reserve fund must be closely examined. A reserve fund acts as a safety net for anticipated repairs and maintenance that the building will require over time.

There are certain indicators to

look for when reviewing the corporation's financials that can signal to purchasers whether or not the building is a good investment. Despite best efforts of maintaining a healthy reserve fund, buyers should be aware of potential unforeseen expenses that can result in necessitating special assessment. When damage or repair costs exceed the amount of money that is in the reserve fund, corporations will sometimes bill the owners directly in a one-time payment. Although a special assessment may come as an unwelcome surprise to residents, the event is vital to maintain the viability and structural integrity of the complex.

Practice your due diligence as a buyer and inquire about recent or upcoming special assessments to gauge the financial structure of the building and

corporation. Beyond the unique financial structuring and practical advantages, condos foster a unique opportunity and lifestyle that is often lacking with other ownership forms.

From a sense of community to connecting with fellow residents in communal areas and bonding over similar interests and hobbies throughout the building, condos offer a compelling pathway to homeownership for those ready to embark on the journey of home ownership or real estate investment.

For questions or future article suggestions feel free to reach out anytime to connect; ilivingstonsells@gmail.com

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

EXPERT ADVICE: *Our propensity to compare*

By John Dinner

In taking over the writing of this column, I'm aware that a whole series over many years has preceded my taking on the writing of this monthly article. These have been written with a focus and style that have drawn readers in and created an audience who has appreciated my predecessor and the perspectives he has shared.

This change in authors reminds me of the propensity for many of us to compare ourselves with others. It's easy to self-assess my approach relative to my forerunner, Chip Bender. And, in doing so, to question my ability to effectively and entertainingly engage, connect and be relevant.

I say many of us when it's more accurate that we all are susceptible to comparing ourselves almost daily in both profound and subtle ways.

As the area's golf courses open this spring, we'll soon be comparing our scores, our equipment, our attire and the number of games we play against other golfers. When we get to the 19th hole, the brand of beverage we order will say something about us relative to others around the table and we may then compare the putts we missed, the fairways we hit or missed and the vacations taken during the winter just past. Then, we'll head home in a car and drive to a home that we hope says something about us

relative to those around us – how new, how expensive, how big. You get the point.

Comparison is the world we live in. It gets exploited by the society we inhabit. The dissatisfaction that often accompanies comparison may spur us on to fill the void or unworthiness we can feel, often with mixed or unsatisfactory results. So how might we respond?

Consider for a moment that, against incredibly low odds, each of us are here to live the lives we have been given with all of its ups and downs. It has been calculated that the odds of anyone ever being born are one in 4 trillion. And yet, here we are, each of us a miracle. But what does one

in 4 trillion look like?

Imagine if there was one life preserver thrown somewhere in some ocean with exactly one turtle in all of these oceans swimming underwater somewhere. The probability that any of us came to be is the same as that turtle sticking its head out of the water and into the middle of that life preserver on one try.

What might be our response to winning this lottery of life? The choices are almost endless given that life is often wonderful yet hard at the same time. But living a life of gratitude for what we have been given and being happy for the good fortune of others is one way to short circuit the temptation to compare and find

ourselves wanting. By adopting a posture of gratitude amidst life's disappointments and hardships makes this journey of life more enjoyable and the pain points a little less sharp.

So, how did I do with this first column (compared with previous articles?). A better salutation might be to simply thank you for taking the time to read my offering. I'll go with that.

John Dinner is a Registered Psychotherapist (qualifying) who works as a counsellor at Interfaith Counselling Centre in New Hamburg. During the recent solar eclipse, he found himself comparing his experience with that of others.

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Time for council to take action on increasing power outages**

It appears to me an alarming number of power outages occur and have occurred in my approximately nine months as a resident of this community.

Having lived in rural areas in past years, I am not alien to such an issue and I understand that wind, snow, ice and human error can be factors in service interruption. I cannot attribute these causes to the many service interruptions I experience here.

Is it not past time for our council to invite this service provider to meet and explain the frequency of outages, and if there are

means to harden the systems to provide a more reliable service to its customers?

This oversight, I'm sure, will be welcomed both by paying customers of the service provider and taxpayers of the community they are privileged to serve.

Sincerely,
James McMyler, Tavistock

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OPINION —

EXPERT ADVICE: *Picking sensational strawberries at Pinehill Farms*



By Mercedes Kay Gold

Strawberry season has arrived and Pine Hill Berries has two roadside stands already open and selling out fast!

Mark your calendar for June 7 and meet me at Pinehill Farms. I will be sporting my sunhat, shades, SPF-30 and a supersized smile in anticipation of an afternoon of personally filling those cute, green baskets with fresh-picked berries.

Rob and Stacey Musselman, owners of Pinehill Farms, lovingly planted their first strawberry crop in 2015. Rob grew up on the family farm in Tavistock and, after marrying Stacey in 2012, the couple settled on his grandparents' farm in Pinehill. With a strong desire to farm the land and discovering strawberries suited the sandy land conditions, their adventure began.

Strawberries are synonymous with sunshine, but in reality, they are a 365-day labor of love requiring constant attention. During the coldest winter months when the rest of us hibernate, the Musselman's are protecting the plants with straw. As the snow melts, planting begins. Summer-time is all about keeping a watchful eye on insects dining on the sweet nectar of the lovely white flowers.

The stunning strawberry is a flowering plant with over 20 species belonging to the rose family. The garden strawberry is a hybrid species of the genus *Fragaria* and each variety is unique. They vary in

size, flavour, texture, sweetness and each favour different growing conditions. Pinehill Farms listened to their clients' personal preferences and grows three varieties.

Pinehill is proud to have seven acres of sensational strawberries ready to harvest this season, and another three acres of transplants for 2025. With the warm spell in March, an early harvest seemed inevitable. Wendy and Annapolis are ready first, followed by Brunswick, Cavendish, Evelyn, Kate and Valley Sunset, a "real crowd pleaser," according to Stacey.

Aside from Strawberries being beautiful and juicy sweet with a scintillating scent, they are a bounty of body boosting benefits. It's hard to fathom this mouthwatering fruit contains less than one teaspoon of sugar in a whole cup. The carbohydrates are super low thanks to fantastic fiber, fabulous for keto-diet lovers. This juicy jewel-coloured berry is first class for controlling blood sugar, scoring 40 on the glycemic index, and therefore considered a safe fruit option for diabetics. With approximately 60 calories a cup, they are an awesome add-on to any meal. Strawberries are a hydrating helper. Their 91 per-cent content is a water-intake wow! Say so long to summer colds with immune boosting benefits of chart-topping vitamin C content. Like all fruit or Mother Nature's candy, strawberries contain various vital vitamins and mega minerals, but the array of antioxidants is absolutely amazing. The ravishing red color comes from high concentrations of anthocyanin, helping reduce inflammation, offer cancer protection and heart disease for starters. Carotenoids are also key to the intense hue are fat-soluble pigments naturally present in plants and powerful for disease prevention overall.

Strawberries are stupendous! Ready set and pick your own for \$3.25 per pound. Pinehill Farm's fabulous team is ready to point you to the perfect patch for hand-picking-holistic heaven.

Take a country drive and stock up on a one-litre basket for \$6 or a family sized six-litre flat for \$32. There are two road-



Get ready for strawberry season with Pinehill Farms in New Hamburg. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold

side-stand locations. One is on Pinehill Farms, located at 2662 Huron Road in New Hamburg. Alternately, visit the roadside stand at the Punkeydoodles Corner locat-

ed at 3880 Perth Road 101, New Hamburg. Follow on socials @pinehillfarms for upcoming hay rides and bouncing good times in the castle.



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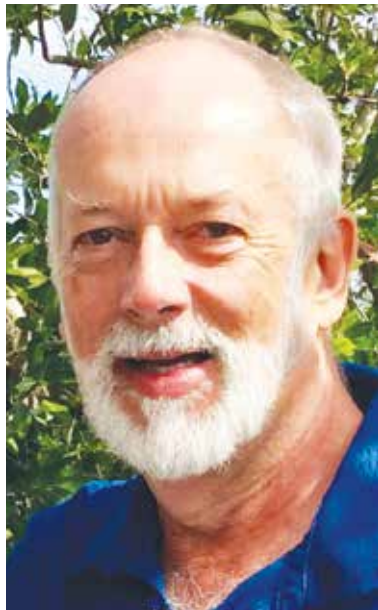
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TRAVEL —

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: *Robbie's* – an unusual, eclectic destination, and mind your fingers.



By Paul Knowles

If I were to try to describe Robbie's of Islamorada in one or two words, I would give up. Because Robbie's is one of the most unusual, eclectic destinations anywhere, it's impossible to sum up with a single adjective.

At this popular spot in the Florida Keys, you can dine on pub food right by the docks or inside the Hungry Tarpon surrounded by hundreds of fluttering American one-dollar bills that adorn the ceiling, walls and occasional posts.

You can feed tarpon by hand, an activity more fraught with peril than you might expect given the number of people who eagerly hold out bait fish for these giant game fish to grab. From time to time, they also grab a hand – or forearm (they have very large mouths). No one has

lost body parts that I know of, but I also know firsthand how poor tarpon are at discerning between bait fish and the skin on one's arm. It is, shall we say, an adventure.

And adventure is what Robbie's is all about – that and perhaps beer and tacky tourist items. At this destination, right on the Overseas Highway, you can rent jet skis, kayaks and paddleboards. Robbie's is on Florida Bay on the Gulf of Mexico side of the Keys, but just on the other side of the Lignumvitae Channel Bridge – one of many that link the islands of the Keys – is the Atlantic Ocean.

That's where the newest Robbie's adventure will take you – the Transparensa glass-bottom boat.

The 46-foot Transparensa sails during the day, and also at night, to offer a unique view of the ocean floor lit by under-boat LED lights. The crew told us the creatures you see after dark are very different than those during the day. Apparently, they spoke the truth – we spotted sea turtles, nurse sharks, lobster, as well as yellow snapper and other fish.

The trip takes you to part of the coral reef that runs the length of the keys off the Atlantic Coast, so day trips are likely to treat those on the boat to the brightly coloured fish that populate the reefs but hide from predators at night.

Either option will be an intriguing experience, but one piece of advice: pray for a calm day or evening. Wind and waves can significantly lessen one's en-

joyment of a glass-bottom boat, which rolls with the waves as it hovers over the sea bottom. This, even though the Transparensa is fitted with state-of-the-art stability equipment.

If you want to get even more up close and personal with the denizens of the coral reefs, Robbie's offers snorkeling and "SNUBA" diving. The latter is a combination of snorkeling and SCUBA. Divers don't wear breathing equipment. Instead, they are connected to an air supply that remains in the boat. SNUBA divers can descend to about 20 feet below the surface.

Robbie's also has sunset cruises on a catamaran – a popular feature everywhere in the Keys – and eco-tours through the islands of Florida Bay, which borders on the southern end of the Everglades.

But come back to Robbie's on land for a moment. As well as the restaurant, there's a gift shop and other kiosks, a beach bar and about two dozen potential selfie spots where visitors pose with statues of pirates, giant replicas of tarpon, fluttering dollar bills or the ever-present pelicans, egrets and herons.

The pelicans, by the way, are eager to compete with the tarpon for the fish being offered by the would-be tarpon feeders. This inevitably leads to ambushes by the birds on the folks focused on the fish. All of this is genuine entertainment in its own right. I could watch this drama for hours.

That's the thing about Robbie's. It's clearly a place that does not take itself very seriously, em-



The Hungry Tarpon restaurant at Robbie's of Islamorada. All photos by Paul Knowles

braces its inner tackiness and welcomes all and sundry to do whatever they might enjoy doing on a given day.

By the way, there is a lot more to do in Islamorada in addition to the eclectic mix of activities at Robbie's. The Morada Way Arts and Culture District is worth an article of its own – so I will provide one to you a few weeks from now.

And as is true all the way down the Keys, from Key Largo to Key West, there are lots of places to stay. This time around, we booked into the Hadley Resort and Marina and found it to be delightful. Our apartment had a balcony overlooking the re-

sort's docks and beyond them, the Atlantic Ocean. There was a welcoming pool, free ice cream on offer all the time and a significant number of shy lizards roaming the property. It was a great place to stay, and I'd recommend it as your headquarters as you explore this fascinating part of the Florida Keys.

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.



Great spot for a selfie – a pirate and fluttering dollar bills.



Some of the guests on the glass-bottom boat tour.



A sea turtle, spotted on the night-time Transparensa tour.



Read for the attach of the tarpon!

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Small water falls on the Nith in New Hamburg. Mike Grummett photo



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STRATFORD NISSAN



OPINION —

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR:
Wilmot is not a willing host for
770-acre land assembly**

This evening, I was part of a rally at the Wilmot Township offices where several residents of the community managed to speak with Mayor Salonen and some of the councillors to let them know that Wilmot is not a willing community regarding the plan to assemble 770 acres of prime farmland for the purpose of industrial development. Recently, Premier Ford indicated that land assembly plans should only proceed with willing communities.

Later in the council meeting, a motion was put forth about Wilmot Township needing to establish rules to prevent dumping of contaminated fill. When Stewart Snyder, a farmer affected by the land grab, tried to equate the disastrous consequences of uncontrolled dumping

with those of destroying prime farmland in favour of an industrial complex, he was prevented from continuing. When he asked how he could arrange to speak with the council on this subject, he was told to contact the Region.

I find it very upsetting that the premier leads us to believe that communities have say in how their land is managed and yet, when the community is not willing to agree with a proposed plan, their elected leaders do not stand up for them. Isn't it their responsibility to advocate for their constituents not to pass the buck?

*Dorothy Wilson,
New Hamburg*

Gazette Puzzles

WELCOME JUNE

H H L O G M S T K D K E T D X I N O I Y
L P D T R U J O N M Q S N L A Z J S L R
P U K D A M W Q R I Y K D I O J D V Q U
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Beach Day
Class Trips
Father's Day
Gardening
Graduation

Hello Summer
Indigenous Peoples Day
Midsummer Day
Pool Party
Pride Month

Schools Out
Solstice
Sunshine
Vacation
Weddings

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Agricultural plastics

RECYCLING PILOT PROGRAM

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Local farmers can dispose of agricultural plastics like bale wrap, fertilizer bags, and bunker covers at the Waste Management Facility for only \$50/tonne.

Learn more about the agricultural plastics pilot program at www.wasteline.ca.

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Pet of the Week



LOUIE

Louie is a 4-year-old mini daschund with a big personality! His favourite activities include basking in the sunshine, barking, racing the golf cart and cuddling on the couch while watching hockey. Louie is a loyal, loving boy who is always eager to share hugs and kisses with his people, the Bender family.

Nominate your Pet of the Week by emailing: thewtgazette@gmail.com



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COMMUNITY —

Oxford Tourism award winners announced

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Oxford's tourism innovators and collaborators were on hand last Thursday night at Otter Creek Golf Club for the third annual Oxford Tourism Awards of Excellence.

Presented as part of Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation's 10th Anniversary Banquet and Awards Event on May 23, the 2023 Oxford Tourism Awards of Excellence winners were announced.

Responsible Tourism Award - Golspie Dairy

Golspie Dairy has carried a sustainable mindset for its business since day one of operations. Golspie Dairy sourced local materials, including fallen ash trees, for use in the aging room. It increased biodiversity on the farm by planting a native-species meadow and incorporating consumer education. Golspie Dairy's refill program for milk and soft cheeses has reduced plastic consumption for its customers. In addition, it has ensured its building is accessible and inclusive and has supported cycling tourism, installing bike racks and seating.

Tourism Partnership Award first recipient - SixThirtyNine, Thames River Melons and Canada Grills

Local restaurant SixThirtyNine recently teamed up with Thames River Melons and Canada Grills for the highly successful Farm to Dinner Table event. The sold-out event enhanced the tourism sector and profile of Oxford County, celebrating the many Oxford County and Ontario producers featured on the menu. This event included visitors from Toronto and travel media. SixThirtyNine, Thames River Melons and Canada Grills plan to continue



Pictured from left to right are Nancy Demarest of Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation, Ron and Wendy Marshall of Golspie Dairy and Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan. Contributed photo

working together by offering new and exciting experiences in 2024 and beyond.

Tourism Partnership Award second recipient - Indigo Lounge Wellness and Eatery

The "It Takes a Village" mantra has always been at the root of everything they do at Indigo Lounge Wellness and Eatery in Tillsonburg. Indigo Lounge's mission statement focuses on collaboration and partnerships, and it is always looking to make new local partners. Throughout the year, it hosted dinners and cooking classes with Cool Convenience, Sizzling African Cuisine, Punjabi Chef Jasjit Kaur

and Nigerian Chef Khadjiah Haliru. It also partners with farmers for farm-to-table dinners. Partnership goes beyond the kitchen, including Bollywood dance and Henna nights with Sahar Zaidi, and special events with Oxford County Pride. It even offers up space every Sunday for a new restaurant start-up, Sizzling African Cuisine.

Best New Tourism Product Award - Orange Door Acres

Orange Door Acres started as a small, farmgate operation for people to buy pasture-raised chicken. Over the years, the

business began to take flight by expanding with innovations, recently completing a major expansion by adding a kitchen allowing it to expand products offered to visitors. Visitors are always welcome to tour the Orange Door Acres farm, as farm education is an essential aspect of the business. The onsite processing allows visitors to see firsthand how food from the garden, strawberry patch and barn winds up on the table. This investment has created new employment opportunities and allowed more people to discover Orange Door Acres.

"We had some incredible submissions once again this year, and it gets harder and harder every year we host these awards for our panel of judges to select a winner" said Meredith Maywood, Oxford county tourism specialist. "We have so many businesses in Oxford County going above and beyond to support local tourism and keep guests coming back to the county.

"I'm pleased that the Tourism Award provides a forum to recognize their efforts and amplify their successes."

The 2023 Oxford Tourism Award program recognizes the region's tourism businesses, organizations and individuals who have displayed excellence in product development, partnerships and collaborations, innovation, inclusiveness, leadership, sustainability and attraction to the region. The program also recognizes partners who work collaboratively with Tourism Oxford to grow regional tourism and offer exceptional visitor experiences.

Winners were chosen by a panel of external judges with representatives from Ontario's Southwest, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario and the Culinary Tourism Alliance.



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - MAY/JUNE/JULY 2024

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

World Crokinole Championship
8 am. to 9 p.m.
Free Admission (Registration fee for players). For more Information: worldcrokinole.com
Tavistock Arena,
1 Adam Street

Tavistock Fire Department Drive Thru Chicken BBQ
3 time slots: 4-5 p.m., 5-6 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.
\$25 per meal. Includes BBQ chicken, potatoes, veggies, coleslaw and dessert. For tickets call 519-221-6414.
Tavistock Fire Hall
260 Woodstock St. S., Tavistock

Tavistock Optimist Club Parkfest
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Free Event
Bouncy castles, Wagon rides, Face painting, Food trailer, Freezies, Cotton candy
Tavistock Optimist Park
250 Woodstock St. S., Tavistock

SUNDAY, JUNE 2

St Andrews Cemetery Decoration Service
11 a.m.
4200 Perth Road 107
Stratford, ON N5A 6S2

New Hamburg Legion Decoration Day
2 p.m.
Riverside Cemetery
83 Bergey Ct., New Hamburg

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5

Township of East-Zorra Tavistock council meeting
9 a.m.
Council chambers
89 Loveys St. Hickson

Explore the Baden Hills Trail
7 - 8 pm
Register at letstreewilmot.ca/events
Baden Hills Regional Forest
2733 Sandhills Road Wilmot

Tavistock Men's Club Fish Fry
Serving 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Adults \$30 Children (6-12) \$15
Pickerel dine-in or take out.
For tickets call 519-655-2286 or 519-655-3573 or email: info@tavistockmensclub.ca
Men's Club Hall,
78 Woodstock St., N

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

KAIROS Blanket Exercise
7 p.m.
Experience history from an Indigenous perspective by participating in a KAIROS Blanket Exercise. A free event hosted by the Wilmot Ecumenical Working Group on Indigenous/Settler Relationships. Register at: <https://bit.ly/WilmotBlanketExercise>
Questions? Contact: ecumenicalworkinggroup@gmail.com
New Hamburg Community Centre,
251 Jacob Street

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Tavistock Optimist Club Friday Night Fries
4 - 8 p.m.
Tavistock Optimist Park
250 Woodstock St. S., Tavistock

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Shakespeare Field Day and Fish Fry
All day
SCAA Park and Optimist Hall
3974 Galt St., Shakespeare

MONDAY, JUNE 10

Township of Wilmot council meeting
7-11 p.m.
Council chambers
60 Snyder's Rd. West Baden

TUESDAY, JUNE 11

Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp & Retreat Centre's 57th Annual Chicken BBQ & 16th Annual Pie Auction Fundraiser
5 - 7 p.m.
\$20 Small meal / \$24 Regular meal. Pie Auction will happen during the meal. Please visit hiddenacres.ca for more details and to order your tickets (tickets must be purchased in advance).
Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp & Retreat Centre
1921 Line 37, New Hamburg

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

THURSDAY, JUNE 13

Food Truck Night
4:30-7:30 p.m.
North Easthope Public School
4672 Road 108, Stratford



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19

Explore Downtown New Hamburg's Pageant of Trees
7 - 8 p.m.
Register at letstreewilmot.ca/events
Kirkpatrick Park
122 Wilmot Street New Hamburg

Interfaith Counselling Centre's 40th Anniversary Gala
Doors open at 6 p.m.
For more information or to buy tickets call 519-662-3092 or visit interfaithcounselling.ca
Puddicombe Banquet Hall
145 Peel St., New Hamburg



FRIDAY, JUNE 21

TCP Presents: Auditions for "Our Town"
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Due to the casting requirements of the show the audition panel will be seeking people 16+. Visit www.thecommunityplayers.com/onstage/auditions/ for more information and book your audition today! Callback HOLD - Sunday June 23 from 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.
New Hamburg Community Centre
251 Jacob Street, New Hamburg, ON



SATURDAY, JUNE 22

TCP Presents: Auditions for "Our Town"
9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Due to the casting requirements of the show the audition panel will be seeking people 16+. Visit www.thecommunityplayers.com/onstage/auditions/ for more information and book your audition today! Callback HOLD - Sunday June 23 from 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.
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251 Jacob Street, New Hamburg, ON

MONDAY, JULY 1

Township of Wilmot Canada Day
11 a.m. opening ceremony
William Scott Park
84 Bleams Rd. W, New Hamburg

FRIDAY, JULY 5

Tavistock Optimist Club Friday Night Fries
4 - 8 p.m.
Tavistock Optimist Park
250 Woodstock St. S., Tavistock

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

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Weekly Quiz Answers

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Emerald | 6. Freudian slip |
| 2. 1000 | 7. Hertz |
| 3. Johann Sebastian Bach | 8. 1932 |
| 4. Rishi Sunak | 9. Marie Curie |
| 5. Sochi, Russia | 10. Brazil and Argentina |

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