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FREE

WO students obtain funding for two innovative ideas, including outdoor cafeteria and waste management program



WO students Samantha Ryan, Chloe Bochart, Janet Hungerbuehler and Nezza Jermol around the future site of the outdoor cafeteria on Friday, May 5. (Photo credit: Veronica Reiner)

By Veronica Reiner

Students at Waterloo Oxford District Secondary School (WO) were successful in obtaining funding from Smart Waterloo Region (SWR) for two innovative ideas, including an outdoor cafeteria and a school waste management program.

As a result, there will be about 15 wooden picnic tables constructed outside the school near the new turf field. Each would comfortably seat six to eight people, for a total of 90-120 additional seating spots. SWR contributed about \$5,000 to supply the picnic tables. The outdoor

cafeteria is expected to be completed by the end of May.

In addition, a green bin recycling program is now implemented, primarily designed to handle food waste as well as some fibre/paper products. Smaller bins are located in classrooms, along with larger bins around the back of the school. Funding received from SWR for this project went to purchasing those green bins, along with marketing and promotion.

Both projects were selected last semester for funding. Pitch day took place in January at the Waterloo Region

Museum, alongside students from Elmira District Secondary School, Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute, Southwood Secondary School and Jacob Hespeler Secondary School. There was a wide range of ideas presented by WO students at the event, such as an accessible playground.

"They did two to five minute elevator pitches to a panel of judges - the judges were representatives from Smart Waterloo Region," explained Sandy Millar, Vice President at WO. "The panel then evaluated the pitches and then

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Tavistock's 'Barn-Dance' Intersection Getting New Traffic Lights

By Lee Griffi

The infamous five-corner intersection in Tavistock is getting an upgrade to its traffic signals. Oxford County has awarded a contract to EARTH Holdings Ltd to complete signal upgrades at the intersection of Hope Street (Oxford Road 24) and Woodstock Street (Oxford Road 59).

Construction is set to begin on May 15 and will take approximately two months to complete. Frank Gross, Oxford County's Manager of Transportation and Waste Management, says the project is in conjunction with a similar one at the south end of the county. "Just with some different pieces, and they are doing similar work to the lights in Norwich, so it's both locations together in one project. Tavistock itself may not take that long."

Gross says most of the work will be done above the ground, aside from some sidewalk modifications. "We will be making the sidewalks AODA compliant so they will have the ramps with the (yellow) tactile plates. They will have to rip out part of the curb and the sidewalk to make that modification, so just a little bit of excavation at the edge of the asphalt."

He adds there is another aspect of the project that will help people with sight issues. "The objective is to add audible pedestrian signals for those who are visually impaired. We have to relocate some of the poles, so they meet accessibility requirements. We will add some shorter poles with the pushbuttons on them." One wish by Tavistock residents has been to add blinders to the lights, as often-times people are confused about which light is actually theirs. Gross says that is also a part of the improvements. "We are going to look at replacing the one head with one that has blinders. You can only see it if you are directly facing it so traffic from the other lanes won't be distracted from other signals."

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NEWS —

WO students obtain funding for two innovative ideas, including outdoor cafeteria and waste management program

Continued from page 1

determined who would get funding at each site."

During the program, participating classes were split into small groups. Each group would identify community and global problems, and then come up with innovative solutions to these problems.

Educators in the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) worked in partnership with Smart Waterloo Region Innovation Lab (SWRIL) to teach WRDSB students design thinking by using tools from the Global Innovation Management Institute's (GIMI) Impact Program.

Samantha Ryan, a Grade 12 student at WO, came up with the idea for an outdoor cafeteria along with group members Janet, Nesia, and Chloe. Samantha said there was no room for students in the current cafeteria due to the COVID-19 pandemic

and spacing issues.

"There's not enough space in our indoor cafeteria for kids to sit, so they sit out in the halls, or they roam in the parking lot," she said. "So I thought maybe we could build a cafeteria outside for everybody so they could hang out with their friends."

The process of implementing this outdoor cafeteria will involve students from various classes. Construction students will be building the tables and the Eco Club will help to clean up garbage and litter from the outdoor cafeteria. Art students will help to paint the tables with different themes.

"We're going to have each table with a different theme," said Ryan. "We are known as a country school, so some paint ideas will be farm themed, like flowers, or movies and music. Along with some social justice art, like a Black Lives Matter flag, or the pride flag, things like that. Themes

that we know a lot of students in our school are interested in."

"One of the goals of getting the art class involved to paint some designs was to use it as an opportunity to demonstrate visually what we value as a school and as a community," said Millar. "So focusing on the values that are important to us as a rural country school like community, inclusivity and welcoming, ensuring that all students feel safe and welcome in our school community."

WO teacher John Schmidt, who has participated in SWR events before, said that one of the benefits of the program is that it allows students to take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it to real world scenarios, taking abstract concepts learned in class and turning it into a concrete idea out in the real world.

"Based on what I witnessed in my class, SWRIL is a really good opportunity for the

kids to develop a lot of transferable skills," said Schmidt. "Whether that's presenting, or how to manage a group, or surveying, for example - creating forms and walking through other classrooms, gathering data, and then analyzing that data.

"I'm sure everyone will carry that forward and find that useful, whether that's for university or college or in a workplace."

The SWR organization was formed in 2019, with the aim of creating the best community in Canada for children and youth. There are more than 800 young people and adults in its membership.

The WRDSB and SWRIL will continue to offer this program to a new cohort of students in the second semester, with students from Waterloo Collegiate Institute joining in. This will be the third cohort of WRDSB students to participate in the program.

'Barn-Dance' Intersection Getting New Traffic Lights

Continued from page 1

The town has a history of construction projects that have caused great inconvenience to downtown businesses, but Gross says it will be minimal this time around. "We just wanted to let them know there will be working happening there, but we don't expect any significant disruption." There may be short periods when the construction crews are working immediately in front of a business entrance or driveway when access may temporarily be restricted. County staff and the contractor will make every reasonable effort to maintain access for residents and businesses within the active construction zone.

From time to time, lights have malfunctioned at the intersection, which is one reason why they are being replaced. Gross says despite the construction, motorists won't be affected other than maybe when the new system is started up. "There might be one day when they are

commissioning everything, and they'll have a police officer present if they need to if the lights aren't working."

Gross is also asking motorists to take extra caution during the project. "We wanted to ask the public to proceed through there slowly and respect the worker's safety."

On garbage and recycling collection days, downtown businesses will continue to place waste at the roadside as usual. The contractor will be responsible for collecting garbage and recycling and moving it to a central area for pick up when access is restricted in certain areas. The county is asking people to mark their business address or house number on containers to ensure they are returned to the correct address.

The total cost of the traffic signal upgrade is about \$150,000.



Frank McKay from Hickson area receives prestigious conservation award for his UTRCA work

By Gary West

A local Hickson construction operator has recently received the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) award, for his outstanding work with the authority in preserving and conserving water quality in the Upper Thames River watershed.

Frank McKay was presented with the award at the recent annual meeting of the UTRCA.

The award given McKay recognizes his commitment to improving the environment and embodies the spirit of conservation through his actions to create a more livable and resilient watershed.

He has worked with the authority staff for more than 40 years on a wide range

of projects.

One of McKay's recent local initiatives was to help shore up the river banks of the Avon river in Stratford to prevent further shore erosion, and also methodically was able to complete the job in a timely fashion.

In accepting the award, McKay said it has been a great experience over the years, working with the authority and learning there is a better way to look after the water and land in the future. He said "we have to leave the land and water in a better condition than we found it in," and that he is "proud of working with the conservation authority team for improvement of the natural environment in the Upper Thames River watershed."



UTRCA's director Brad Blasman, presenting Frank McKay with the Conservation Award for his outstanding work in improving the environment with the authority, along with longtime UTRCA manager Craig Merkley.

COMMUNITY —

Wellesley runners raise month for mental health



Some of the runners who participated in the Wellesley Move-A-Thon run last week, smiling in the community centre parking lot around 1,000 Catherine Street. (Photo credit: Woolwich Counselling Centre)

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

Shauna Johnston and Carrie Harman, Wellesley Jingle Run coordinators, organized a three kilometre (km) and five km a run for mental health around the village last week in support of the Woolwich Counselling Centre. "Glad to see so many children taking up the challenge," said Wellesley resident Wendy Richardson. "We started with a rainbow and ended with a few drops of rain."

The event was part of a Move-A-Thon, a community-wide fundraising and awareness campaign in support of mental health in local Wellesley and Woolwich communities.

During Mental Health Week from May 1-7, Move-A-Thon Movers walked, wheeled, jogged or ran for each donation made to the Woolwich Counselling Centre. Donations support no cost mental health workshops and subsidized small group therapy

and individual/family counselling in the community.

"Mental health impacts every area of our lives significantly and is so important," said Johnston and Harman, describing what mental health means to them.

"We can be healthy and physically strong but if our mental state is not a positive one it can be overwhelming, consuming and make the day to day feel impossible. Having proper tools and resources in our lives is so important and can make a good mental state more manageable. You are never alone!"

Woolwich Counselling Centre is a non-profit counselling agency facilitating emotional and mental wellness, mainly in Woolwich and Wellesley townships. The organization was started more than 45 years ago and now serve more than 1,000 adults, youth and children annually.

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COMMUNITY —

Confirmed septic issues at Hickson Public School leads to more orders

By Lee Griffi

The Thames Valley District School Board has been hit with four new orders from East Zorra-Tavistock in relation to the school's septic system.

E-coli and fecal matter have been found in the pooled water in the yard at Hickson Central Public School. This area is currently fenced off to students and has been since the fall. The information came to light after the board was ordered by building inspector John Sherer to complete a study on the condition of the septic bed. That report shows it is failing.

Scherer says the board has some work to do. "It is an order to remedy an unsafe building. It is a stepped process. The first step will be to expand the fenced area and an additional three items that they will have to meet in order to keep the school open. They have to arrange for a septic pump out, and they have to provide me with some sort of proof or path forward to not discharge any more sewage into that bed." He adds despite the e-coli and fecal matter, any risks to the health of students are minimal. "Of course, there are going to be health risks. If a student jumps over the fence into that area, that is a health risk. But if everyone abides by the fenced off area, there is no risk."

The Gazette has requested copies of the engineer's report and the testing results, but board spokesperson Cheryl Weedmark

says that will take several days. "Our team is still reviewing the reports, and there are actually several different teams reviewing as well as outside vendors. As soon as I am able, I will send those to you." She adds the issue does not affect drinking water, and the school will remain open to in-person learning.

Geoff Vogt is the board's Superintendent of Facility Services and Capital Planning, and says they are committed to following the orders and replacing the septic system. "We have been working on the septic system for some time. We can confirm now that it is showing signs of failure. We have been working on what's going on with the existing system in partnership with the municipality as well as third-party engineers on both what short-term mitigation looks like as well as a fulsome solution which is the replacement of the system." The system was originally scheduled for replacement in 2024. Vogt can't say how soon the work will be done.

He adds the work will be done as soon as possible, but getting to that point will take a while, mainly due to the involvement of the Ministry of Environment. "We will move this as expeditiously as we possibly can. We are in the design phase of this. The timeline challenge here is there are really two approval authorities for this work. One is the municipality, and there will be no concerns there with timelines. But the other is we have some provincial

regulatory requirements that we need to walk through. Those timelines we don't have as much control over." Some parents believe the septic system has failed due to the large increase in enrolment over the last number of years. Vogt says the board doesn't know what has caused the sewage breach.

The first order laid down by the township was to expand the fenced area around the septic bed to 15 metres which has been completed. The second order is to complete a septic tank pump out, removing all waste, and also provide confirmation to the building department. The third order requires the board to provide EZT with a plan on how the issue will be dealt with until the end of the school year in June. "What we will be doing is moving towards daily pumping of the system, and that work will happen this week. We are working with our vendors right now and really, the final part of that order is the replacement of the system," adds Vogt. "We will always prioritize the health and safety of students and staff. We are moving forward with an abundance of caution, and we will be communicating again on the next steps to all families. As we have facts and information, we will be communicating with the school community. This needs to be transparent." Vogt says he appreciates that this is a challenging situation for everyone. "This is important work to resolve, and we are grateful that we have such a great

working relationship with the municipality on resolving this." The fourth order is a report to explain what the school board is doing to deal with the problem in the 2023-24 school years. That is due by the end of the month.

The board says they are committed to keeping parents informed of each step in the process. Weedmark says everyone will be kept up to date. "We are going to send out a communication to update families and sending them a copy of the order as well to show we are being completely transparent, and once we have firm timelines in place for when the work will be done, or any work for that matter, we will be communicating that out to families." She adds their priority is the health and safety of staff and students. "We want to make sure we keep them in the loop on everything we are doing. We are working closely with the mayor, working closely with the province, and conversations are happening daily."

Bryan Weldrick is the parent of a student at Hickson Public School and is one of many who sounded the alarm about a potential sewage problem. He's pleased the issue is finally being dealt with, but he questions the timing involved. "If somebody hadn't finally said something in public about it, how long would it have gone just status quo? But it's good, I'm glad it got attention, and I'm glad it is getting looked after."

Pet Valu Walk for a good cause to take place in Wellesley and Wilmot on May 28

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

A fun event will take place in Wellesley later this month, with the opportunity to give back to the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides (LFCDG).

LFCDG is a not-for-profit that relies on its largest fundraising event, the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides, to empower Canadians Living with disabilities by providing dog guides at no cost and supporting them in their journey together.

"With 1 in 5 Canadians living with a

disability, Dog Guides are in high demand," explains Andrea Stevens, Manager of Events at LFCDG.

"Each Dog Guide team costs \$35,000, however none of that cost is passed down to the applicant. LFCDG relies on the success of all Pet Valu Walks for Dog Guides that take place across Canada, to continue to create an impact for Canadians through Dog Guides. With this year's goal set to \$1.4 million, the organization needs the public's support now more than ever."

The Wellesley Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guide is taking place on Sunday, May 28 at 1:30 p.m. at the covered picnic shelter in Wellesley at 1 Catherine Street, with 100 per cent of the proceeds going directly to the seven Dog Guide programs: Canine Vision, Hearing, Service, Seizure Response, Autism Assistance, Diabetic Alert and Facility Support.

A Wilmot version of this event will take place on the same day at the Wilmot Recreation Complex. Registration will take place at 11 a.m., while the walk will

occur at noon.

Located in Oakville, the LFCDG provides highly trained dogs across Canada and relies on public support to match Dog Guides teams at no cost. Each Dog Guide takes about \$35,000 to breed, train and place with qualified applicants.

To make a difference today, register or donate your local Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides at www.walkfordogguides.com. If a walk is not taking place near you, join the National Virtual Team when you register.

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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Owner/Publisher: Grant Haven Management Inc. / Stewart Grant

Editor: Stewart Grant

Graphic Designer: Tyler Carruthers

Office Administrator/Billing: Wendy Lamond

Sales Representative: Sharon Leis

Contributing writers: Veronica Reiner, Lee Griffi, Jessica Harvey, Nancy Silcox, Gary West, Chris Ehrat, Al Junker, Paul Knowles

Annual subscription:

Canada: \$49.00 (\$46.67 + HST)

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COMMUNITY —

Council awarded watermain relining project to Toronto based company for \$966,980

By Veronica Reiner

Wilmot council awarded a project for the relining of a watermain on Nafziger Road as well as Casselholme Crescent to Fer-Pal Construction Ltd. of Toronto for \$966,980.

The decision was made during a council meeting on May 8.

Both watermains have been identified as in need of replacement or rehabilitation under the Drinking Water Quality Management System due to the age of the asset, and the amount of watermain breaks. The Nafziger Road watermain is located on Nafziger Road, north of Snyder's Road / Waterloo Street, while the other is located on Casselholme Crescent in New Dundee.

In December 2021, the project was tendered, as a traditional full reconstruction only including the Nafziger Road

watermain. Submissions received from contractors ranged from \$955,901 to \$1,207,419, with eight bids received. Because this exceeded the budgeted amount, the project was delayed for further review.

"Based on the need of rehabilitation or replacement for both of these watermain sections, staff reviewed a common industry practice of relining the watermain to extend the useful life of the asset, reduce breaks or other major maintenance costs and reduce service delivery interruptions for the asset," wrote Infrastructure Services Director Jeff Molenhuis in his report.

He added that relining the watermain typically extends its useful life by 50 years. Further, relining the watermain rather than full reconstruction would cut down on costs and road impacts.

Therefore, staff issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the relining. There were six plan takers with one completed proposal by the closing date. "The low volume of plan takers and bidders was not unexpected as this work requires special and specific construction expertise; the goal of the RFP was to ensure quality of work had a component for consideration in the award recommendation," wrote Molenhuis.

"Staff reviewed the proposal as well as the representative references and recommend moving forward with the Fer-Pal Construction Limited at an overall cost for the projects at \$585,875.00 plus \$15,100 in provisional scope for Nafziger Road and \$418,105.00 plus a provisional scope of \$7,850 for a total project cost of \$966,980.00 plus provisional for both projects."

Township staff completed design and tender documents for the project, and staff intend to oversee construction, and provide contract administration services for the project.

There is total budgeted funding of \$600,000 for the Nafziger Road project, which is expected to cost \$669,074.81 total. There is also a budgeted amount of \$1,112,640 cost for the Casselholme Crescent project, with total costs estimated to be \$464,638.82.

"The result is a slight overage on Nafziger Road watermain project, and substantial cost savings on Casselholme Crescent watermain," wrote Molenhuis. "As noted, staff are conducting inspection and contract administration for these projects, which will reduce project costs using staff resources."

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COMMUNITY —

Wilmot council awarded a Nith River Promenade trail and lighting enhancement contract for \$847,838

By Veronica Reiner

The Township of Wilmot awarded a Nith River Promenade trail and lighting enhancement contract to Lyncon Construction Inc. for \$847,838. The company was awarded an upset limit of \$105,000 net of harmonized sales tax (HST) rebate.

The decision was awarded during a meeting on Monday, May 8. The proposed timing from Lyncon includes 18 weeks of construction, starting the week of June 12 and wrapping up around the week of October 16.

"The objectives of the project include addressing erosion challenges, improving the slope and construction of the pathways to make them more accessible, improving access to the Nith River for watersports and pedestrian use, which is expected to encourage pedestrian use in the adjacent commercial district," said Community Services Director Sandy Jackson during the meeting.

Other enhancements include information and planting details, addition of guardrails to top edges of both headwalls, a designated garbage/recycling collection space and designing gathering spaces to include a circle design within the surfacing. Other requests such as adding birdhouses and butterfly areas will be considered in the future.

Lyncon Construction was the sole bidder of the project when it was tendered this year. The company is based in Hamilton and formed in 2021. The three partners



have more than 50 years of combined experience excavating, concrete forming, general contracting, and landscaping.

In her report, Jackson said Wilmot staff contacted two references supplied for Lyncon, which included a Region of Waterloo municipality for a trail project, and a private condominium owner for a land project. "References were very positive regarding quality of work, completion timelines and working relationship with the client," wrote Jackson.

Councillor Harvir Sidhu asked whether it has been past practice for township staff to move light fixtures, or if that is something that would be left to the contractors.

"It could be done in house; we're certainly not electricians," responded Jackson. "But it is something that staff could do if you prefer to leave that piece out of this estimate. It's just a lot safer to have one contractor working without staff trying to do that in the midst of a project. But it is a

possibility, if that is council's preference.

"We're not super loaded with staff time this time of year because we're opening all of our fields and getting all of our horticultural beds prepared, so it would be helpful if we didn't have the additional work, but they can do it if that's council's preference."

Councillor Kris Wilkinson reiterated that this project is good news, and echoed Councillor Sidhu's thoughts. "It would be nice to maybe explore down the road what we have staff doing to potentially mitigate the costs that are associated with projects, in the sense that there is pre-work or advanced work that could be done to lower costs, then I think we should be pursuing that."

Director Jackson said that there were a number of projects that staff fully complete without any contractor work, depending on the skill set required. "Just with such a large scope project, it's easier and safer just to not segregate pieces of it.

But there's been many projects where staff either work with contractors or do full projects on their own."

Project expenses to date include Grand River Conservation Authority permits, which totaled \$66,681.75. There is an estimated total expense cost of \$929,442, factoring in the 10 per cent contingency granted to Lyncon Construction. The combined cost came out to be \$105,000 below budget.

Funding sources will come from the rural economic development fund (\$48,000), infrastructure reserve fund - facilities (\$112,000), 2022 levy funding (\$35,000), Canada community revitalization fund (\$200,000), trails trust fund (\$90,000), Ontario community infrastructure fund (\$50,000) and debt financing (\$500,000). This report also marked Jackson's last council report with the township before her retirement on Friday, May 12.



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COMMUNITY —

Poillievre visits Oxford to support Khannah's By-Election bid

By Lee Griffi

The by-election for the federal riding of Oxford hasn't been called by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau yet, but you would never know it based on the leader of the Conservative Party's visit on Saturday.

Pierre Poillievre made his way around the county beginning with an election style rally at the Woodstock Fairgrounds in front of nearly 1,000 boisterous supporters. Conservative MPP Ernie Hardeman introduced Arpan Khannah, the Conservative candidate for the by-election that will be held at some point this summer. The Liberals and New Democrats, along with other parties, have not held their nomination meetings yet.

Khannah introduced the party leader but not before getting some pot shots in at the current Liberal and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. "Thanks to the Liberals and their costly coalition (with the NDP) we have started to lose that Canadian dream. Canadians are working harder and harder but barely getting by. He is attacking our farmers and going after our hunting rifles."

"But despite the many challenges our country is facing I believe deep in my heart that better days are ahead. With the right leadership I know we can turn this around. And that leader is Pierre Poillievre."

Poillievre appears to be taking a page from the Mike Harris playbook. The former Ontario Premier ran on a "Common Sense Revolution" when first elected in 1995. The federal Conservative leader



Oxford Conservative nominee Arpan Khanna introduced federal leader Pierre Poillievre at a party rally in Woodstock Saturday as Khanna kicked off his campaign for an as of yet uncalled byelection in the riding.

mentioned common sense a number of times in his half hour speech, and he is also proposing a government spending cap. "We are going to cap government spending. We are going to bring in a common sense, dollar for dollar that requires every new dollar of spending be matched with a dollar of savings to pay for it." He adds it's the same thinking a single mother must do when trying to balance

her budget. "If she wants to spend more here, she spends less there."

The Conservatives say they will kill the carbon tax if elected and Poillievre brought up an example of how it affects Canadian produce, specifically a greenhouse operation in his riding. "Trudeau is charging a tax on CO2 that they release into the greenhouse even though

it is absorbed into the plants. He missed that day in science class. It costs more money for a Mannitic tomato than a Mexican tomato." He adds Trudeau is essentially telling the customer to buy the Mexican tomato even though it leaves a much larger carbon footprint. "It had to be trucked and trained all the way from Mexico while burning diesel across North America. Why don't we stop importing food we can grow on our own, let's axe the tax, and lower the cost."

Canada is rich in natural gas reserves and much of Europe relies on supplies from Russia which has proven problematic during the Ukraine war. Poillievre says when Trudeau took office there were 15 liquified natural gas projects and none have been completed. "He says there's no business case. The Japanese Prime Minister and German Chancellor came to Canada and said we need your natural gas. Well, nobody told that to Qatar. They more than doubled their gas production. Nobody told the Americans. They built seven plants." Poillievre says if elected his government will get the gatekeepers out of the way, approve natural gas plants, and get projects built with private money.

He also committed to eliminating all vaccine mandates, a pledge that drew a raucous response from the crowd. Khanna and Poillievre knocked on doors across Oxford and met with local farmers, business owners, and politicians for a dinner at The Mill in Tillsonburg.

Show Us Your Wilmot



Each week, the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette will publish interesting photos from around the community. The inspiration for this came from the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group. This one depicts one of the first gosling broods of the year being taught to stay on the sidewalk under mom and dad's watchful eyes on Forrest Avenue on May 1. (Photo credit: Tom Burnard)

Canada geese and mallard families in Walker Woods



Geese and mallard duck nests have been spotted in Walker Woods in New Hamburg. This photo was submitted by Alice Rice. (Photo credit: Alice Rice)

COMMUNITY —

EZT Budget Deliberations Set to Begin

By Lee Griffi

East Zorra-Tavistock Township has released its 2023 draft budget and before council has a stab at it the proposed tax increase sits at 4.55 percent. What that means in financial terms is a \$400,000 residential property would see an increase of \$90.08 on their tax bill while a \$1,000,000 farm property would see a hike of \$49.03. Anyone wanting to look at the 90-page document can do so by going to the township's website.

Members of council have an opportunity to ask staff to analyze items they would like more information on prior to today's (Thursday, May 11) working session and then a public meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 17 at 7:00 p.m. as part of a regular council meeting where anyone can request to make a delegation to council to discuss the budget.

There are several new spending lines proposed in the document including one that, if approved, would see the township complete its first ever strategic plan. "It will allow Council to build some consensus on the direction the township wishes to take as we move forward, and to set long term goals and how we plan to make progress toward those goals," says Mayor Phil Schaefer. "I think it is a very valuable exercise for our councilors, as well as the public, to come together toward a common vision." Schaefer says it is a forward-looking plan and he adds it wasn't done during the last council term because of a Municipal Government Review, and the pandemic. He wants to assure taxpayers they will have a role to play. "Part of the consultants' responsibility will be to hold public consultation



and input meetings. Timing of the plan is to be determined by council, subject of course to budget approval."

The township's building department has an electric vehicle on the wish list to trial. The money would come from the building reserve and it would be charged at the new township office once completed. "We have a couple of hybrid vehicles currently in our fleet and they have been extremely well received. We will be adding two Level 2 charging stations at the new admin building so it was an ideal time to try a fully electric vehicle and the proceeds for the pilot were available in the building reserves," says CAO Karen DePrest.

East Zorra-Tavistock has benefited from a traffic enforcement standpoint by what is called an enhanced OPP officer posi-

tion. The budget draft keeps the position in place but the way it is paid for will likely change. "In the first year of the enhanced officer position (in the 2022 budget) the funding for the officer was fully covered by a drawdown from our policing reserve. Staff have proposed to reduce that drawdown by one-third of the cost so that by the end of the contract the policing reserve is at a healthy \$200,000 and the end of the term of the contract happening in 2024. This approach would see that by 2025 if the contract was renewed it would be 100 percent tax supported," says DePrest.

The biggest change in terms of township departments is happening with Public Works and Parks and Recreation as a result of Ken Wettlaufer no longer being a private contractor in charge of the

arena and surrounding property. "The hours and funding are really a transfer from public works with three staff and their equipment and labour time. Previously those staff worked out of the public works budget, but they are now being split between parks and facilities instead of directly on roads. Snow plowing at our facilities was contracted in prior years but with the increased cost of insurance for private contractors at municipal facilities our contractors had withdrawn their services, so the Township has slowly taken over the plowing of our parking lots and sidewalks," says DePrest. There will be some charge back to roads for the sidewalk plowing but the facility services will be properly recorded and budgeted for in parks and recreation going forward. "In addition, while we await the finalization of our Asset Management Plan, staff have increased contributions to the parks and recreation reserves for capital replacement, refurbishment, and additions in future years."

The corporate services department's portion of the draft budget is \$300,000 over the 2022 figure and while part of that is for strategic planning, some is for a county-wide development charge study. DePrest says the team approach will work best for all Oxford County municipalities. "With changes to the Development Charges Act resulting from new legislation, the county along with its lower-tier partners issued a joint request for proposals for a consultant to assist in the review and update of the current development charge background study. The collaborative process ensures that we are assessing fees and exemptions in a consistent fashion."

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COMMUNITY —

Rural counselling services get \$165,000 investment

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

Several local organizations, including Interfaith Counselling Centre (ICC) and the Wilmot Family Resource Centre (WFRC), will benefit from a \$150,000 investment from the Region of Waterloo.

With this money, a full-time rural planner will be hired to take a bird's eye view of the system to map out services, facilitate community conversations and inter-

actions to co-design a rural strategy that sets a foundation for moving forward.

In addition to the ICC and the WFRC, the Woolwich Community Health Centre will work on this with the following organizations: Langs, Woolwich Counselling, Community Care Concepts, Porchlight Counselling and Addictions Services, and Woolwich Community Services.

"We need to determine what services al-

ready exist and what's missing," said Executive Director of Woolwich Community Health Centre Rosslyn Bentley. "As a collective, we will explore new partners and find hidden voices that otherwise may not have been heard."

An additional eight thousand dollars will also enable Woolwich Community Services to organize a conference and outreach plan for the Family Violence Pre-

vention Program to better foster connections in rural communities.

The Woolwich Community Health Centre and Woolwich Community Services are among 41 recipients of the first round of Upstream and Community Capacity Building funding. Combined, recipients received four million dollars total this year to improve community safety and wellbeing.

Results of region's study on the New Dundee water supply system

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

The Region of Waterloo completed a study to look for iron and manganese treatment upgrades for the New Dundee water supply system.

The system is located at 156 Alderview Road in the town of New Dundee, in Wilmot Township. The study, called a "municipal class environmental assessment study," reviewed and provided recommendations related to iron and manganese treatment upgrades based on cur-

rent industry standards and new technologies.

Following consultation with the community, the region said the preferred treatment solution is oxidation and filtration. A backwash equalization tank with supernatant recycling and haulage of settled solids is the preferred residual management approach to minimize waste from the treatment system. The preferred location for the iron and manganese treatment facility is next to the

north side of the current site.

This study was completed under provincial legislation requirements. A project file has been placed on public record for a 30-day review period starting May 10, ending on June 8.

The project file is available at: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/currentwaterprojects.

Anyone interested can provide written comments to the region's project team

by June 8. All comments and concerns with the project should be sent directly to these contacts: Kaoru Yajima, Senior Engineer at the Region of Waterloo at 519-575-4757 extension 3349 or kyajima@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Alternatively, you can reach out to project manager Kirk Worounig at 416-497-8600 extension 1246 or kworounig@rvander-son.com.



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COMMUNITY —

Shakespeare's Optimist Club holds their annual bike rodeo on Saturday



New bikes were some of the prizes presented to three happy winners following the Optimist bike rodeo. Front left to right, 10 year old Cam Lindner from North Easthope public school, Lilah Elliott and Michael Missio, both seven years old from Sprucedale Public School. Making the presentation were Optimist member left Jordan Bowles and right, club president Mike McNeil.

By Gary West

More than 50 bike riding enthusiasts from Shakespeare, along with those in South and North Easthope townships, were at the pavilion at the ball park in the village on Saturday, May 6, competing for prizes

in the Shakespeare Optimist Club annual bike rodeo.

The competition included a safety course for those to learn hand signals, bike control through pylons, along with learning about bike safety and some of the rules of



The large bike rodeo crowd waiting to see if their ticket numbers were drawn to win prizes at the annual Optimist event in the park pavillion in Shakespeare on Saturday.

the road when operating near traffic.

Youth program chair, Greg Ankenmann, who is also the fire station chief in the village, covered the rules of bike safety with those riders who ranged in age from four to 16.

He was very pleased with the large turnout and the attention received from both the bike enthusiasts and their parents. Greg hoped to see them all throughout the summer as the Optimist club has many activities planned for the clubs 50th anniversary year.

NEWS BRIEFS

Two reports of break and enter in Wilmot

A police investigation is underway after two incidents of break and enter that occurred in Wilmot Township on April 23 and April 30.

On April 30 at about 6:10 p.m., police responded to a report of a break and enter on Bleams Court in Wilmot. Sometime between April 29 at 11 a.m. and April 30 at 5 p.m., an unknown suspect(s) entered a home and stole personal property.

In another incident on April 23, police responded to a report of a break and enter on Erhardt Wagner Place in Wilmot Township at about 5:25 p.m. Sometime between April 19 and April 23, an unknown suspect(s) entered a home and stole personal property.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) at 519-570-9777. Anon-

ymous information can be provided to Crime Stoppers at www.waterloocrimestoppers.com.

Wellesley Township resident charged in stunt driving incident

The Perth County Ontario Provincial Police has charged a St. Clements driver for stunt driving on April 29.

At about 6:59 a.m., police stopped a vehicle on Wellington Road 86 in North Perth municipality, after it was found to be travelling 145 kilometres per hour (km/h) in an 80 km/h limit zone.

As a result, a 19-year-old St. Clements resident has been charged with "drive motor vehicle - perform stunt - excessive speed."

Police initiated a 30-day driving suspension and 14-day vehicle impoundment. The accused is scheduled to appear at the Ontario Court of Justice in Stratford on June 27 to answer to the charge.

Anyone with information about this incident should call the Perth County OPP at 1-888-310-1122. Those who

wish to remain anonymous can call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or leave an anonymous online message at www.p3tips.com.

Single vehicle collision in Wilmot

A Perth County woman was transported to hospital as well as charged after a single vehicle collision in Wellesley Township on April 20.

At about 2:55 a.m., police received a report of a single vehicle collision in Wellesley. A blue Honda was travelling north on Hutchison Road when it left the roadway on a curve, entered a ditch and struck a tree.

Emergency services attended and the driver was extracted from the vehicle by firefighters. The driver was subsequently arrested for operating a motor vehicle while impaired and transported to a local hospital by Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services.

A 38-year-old woman from Perth County was charged with "operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs," and "operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration."

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COMMUNITY —

Wellesley & District Lions to plant a new tree to represent tree of lights

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

The Wellesley & District Lions Club got the green light to plant a new tree to replace the current tree of lights in Wellesley village, off the northwest shoreline of the pond near the Albert Erb parking lot.

The matter was discussed during a council meeting on Tuesday, May 2. Recreation Director Danny Roth said that the local Lions club approached staff several weeks back about potentially replacing the tree of lights.

“The current tree of lights is an older tree and it’s getting pretty thin in its growth,” explained Roth. He added that the Lions Club had an arborist, Steve Martin of Mar-

tin’s Tree Service, examine the tree. “The recommendation was to not take the tree down, but to leave it standing and plant a new tree in front of it.”

The new tree will be an evergreen tree, likely a spruce of some type, between 10 to 12 feet tall, according to Wellesley & District Lions Club President Blair Cressman. The Wellesley & District Lions Club plans to work with local contractors and cover associated costs for the transplanting of the new tree, thus no additional cost to the township.

The tree of lights is decorated each Christmas season in conjunction with the Christmas Tyme in Wellesley and the Wellesley Parade.



At right, the red circle represents where the current tree is planted, and the blue circle represents where the new tree will be planted. The location is Albert Erb park near the Wellesley pond.

Waterloo/Wilmot WRDSB school board trustee resigns

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) trustee Marie Snyder resigned from her position effective Monday, May 8th.

On May 1st, trustee Snyder submitted a letter requesting to resign from the board

and trustees accepted her resignation at a recent committee of the whole meeting.

Waterloo/Wilmot constituents elected trustee Snyder in October 2022. “It has been an honour to represent Waterloo/Wilmot,” said trustee Snyder. “I wish the trustees and staff the best in their continued work to improve the educational ex-

periences for the next generation.”

An inability to fully participate due to health concerns was cited as her reason for resigning. During her tenure, trustee Snyder put forward a motion to encourage continued masking in WRDSB schools.

This resignation has been handled accord-

ing to the education act and the WRDSB bylaws. The board will discuss filling the vacancy at a future meeting in accordance with the bylaws.

“I want to thank trustee Snyder for her lifelong commitment to education and her service to the WRDSB. I wish her well,” added Chairperson Joanne Weston.

Wilmot committee members selected

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

The Township of Wilmot appointed 20 members to different committees, including committee of adjustment, Heritage Wilmot and Castle Kilbride advisory committee, and property standards appeal committee / dangerous dog designation appeal committee.

The decision follows a closed meeting on Monday, May 8. “We had a pretty good intake of people wanting to be part of our committees, so that was great,” commented Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen.

Christine Koehler, Louise Lalonde, Steve Miller, Tyler Bowman and Wayne Roth were appointed to the committee of ad-

justment.

Al Junker, Alan Doherty, Colleen Herner, Donna (Patty) Clarke, Marg Rowell, Nicolas Bogaert, Rene Eby, Susan Hammer, Wade Brown and Yvonne Zyma were appointed to the Heritage Wilmot and Castle Kilbride advisory committee.

Blain Bechthold, Dennis Mighton, Joseph

Henhoeffler, Rachel Klingenberg and Richard Pfeifle were appointed to the property standards appeals committee / dangerous dog designation appeals committee.

Mayor Salonen thanked all that applied to the committees, and noted that those who were selected would receive correspondence as to how to proceed.

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COMMUNITY —

OBITUARY

BINGEMAN, Stephanie Anne



Passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, April 8, 2023, at her residence in Toronto, Ontario. Stephanie was born 37 years ago in Kitchener, Ontario and grew up in New Hamburg with her family.

Beloved daughter of Kevin Bingeman (Kathy Shaw) and Tammy (Dow) Spruce

(Ian). Stephanie will be remembered by her brother Scott Bingeman, daughter Isabelle Konrad, stepbrother Mathew Shaw (Danielle) and their son William, and stepsister Kayla Shaw. Missed by her grandmother Betty Dow and Isabelle's adoptive family – sister Chloe Konrad and parents Cliff Konrad and Kathy Lepp. Stephanie is also survived by her many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Predeceased by her Paternal grandparents Robert and Genoeva Bingeman and Maternal grandfather Ron Dow.

Cremation has taken place, all were welcome to the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg on Friday, May 12, 2023, for a time of Memorial visitation from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. A memorial service followed in the chapel of the funeral home at 2:30 p.m. with Pastor Tanya Varner officiating. Interment to take place at Riverside Cemetery, New Hamburg.

As expressions of sympathy, donations would be accepted to the Canadian Mental Health Association or Family and Childrens Services and can be done through the funeral home.

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

“Those that touch our lives stay in our hearts forever. Stephanie, you are home now. May you rest in peace.”



Please join us in celebrating the **85th & 90th birthdays of Mary & Bruce Brenneman** along with their **63rd Wedding Anniversary** on **May 28, 2023 2pm-4pm** at **East Zorra Mennonite Church** 16th line Tavistock
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COMMUNITY —

The Wilmot-Tavistock
Gazette Weekly Quiz

- 1) The U.S. actress Kate Hudson is the daughter of which famous mother?
- 2) Mother Theresa found her missionary in which Indian city?
- 3) Who is called the Mother of Modern Physics?
- 4) What flower is associated with Mother's Day?
- 5) Mother's Ruin is the other name of which alcoholic drink?
- 6) Who is the mother of Prince William and Prince Harry?
- 7) "Mamma Mia" is a hit by which pop group?
- 8) In 1972, who had a hit with "Sylvia's Mother"?
- 9) What was Pebble's mother's name in the Flintstones?
- 10) Who recorded the hit single "Mother and Child Reunion"?

Answers found on page 22

BIRTHDAYS &
ANNIVERSARIES

May 11: Happy birthday to Nash Munro (12), Emry Hallman (13), Sawyer Brennan (19), anniversaries for Bryan and Polly Kalbfleisch and Walter and Connie Scholz (60th)

May 12: Happy birthday to Liam Odette (11), Tom Odette (11), Ainsley Koch (14), Amaya Snyder (15), and anniversaries for Scott and Heather Alexander (22nd), and Chad and Kaitlin Gerber (16th).

May 13: Happy birthday to Naomi Puklicz (12), Delaney Zehr (20), Owen Hill (20), and Tanner Horst (22).

May 14: Happy birthday to Henry Trachsel (3), Michael Fuller (6), Michael Griffioen (21), and Jakob Hill.

May 15: Happy birthday to Maverick Keller (8), Levi Wiegand (12), Alexander Hammer (16), and Nicholas Raymer (19).

May 16: Happy birthday to William Lindner (6), Jaxon Hyde (22), Tara McGlynn (45) and Marieke VanRooyen.

May 17: Happy birthday to Luke Herold (6), Jacob Kobe (21), and Robert Brodrecht, and anniversary for Darryll and Candice Hopkins (15th).

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

The Old Gazettes

By Stewart 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 1-8, 2013 Edition (10 years ago)

It may be the crystal red metallic paint that people love about 81-year-old Mel Zehr's Chevrolet Volt but it's really a green car. His 2011 electric car is one of a kind in the area. He purchased the slightly used demonstrator car last December at a dealership in Listowel. It was the only dealer nearby that was licensed to service and sell this new vehicle.

For the second year in a row, a contest is being launched to select one farmer or farm family to appear in the 2014 edition of the Faces of Farming calendar. The calendar, now in its ninth year, has featured the faces and stories of about 125 farmers and farm families since it was first published in 2005. The goal of the project is to break down stereotypes of who Ontario's farmers are and what they look like.

Greg Virgo was named the Tavistock Royals' Most Valuable Player for 2012-13. Jeff Roes earned the Heart and Spirit Award along with his 5-year service medal. Shawn Geerts was named the Best Defensive Player and Kyle Roes the Best Defenceman. Craig Thomson is the Most Improved Player for the season and Chad Swartzentruber took the award for the Most Valuable Player in the Playoffs.

April 30-May 7, 2003 Edition (20 years ago)

The Tavistock Royals Senior A hockey club held their annual awards banquet on Friday, April 25 at the Tavistock Legion. Tyler Heimpel was the big winner for the night as he collected four of the team's nine player awards.

It's been some years since the residents of Hickson have had a male postmaster. Jean Channon held the position briefly in 1967 before Mabel Lattimer took over until 1971 when Elaine Todd was named postmaster and operated the outlet from 1971 to 2002. Last August, 24-year-old Keith Graydon assumed the postmaster's role at the Hickson Post Office.

May 4-11, 1983 Edition (40 years ago)

Johnny Bower, well known goalie with the Toronto Maple Leafs for many years, was guest speaker at the Tavistock and District Minor Hockey banquet last Wednesday night. Spurred by their elders, the young people asked Bower about playing with the protection of a goalie mask, who had the hardest shot, how he made his way into pro hockey and what he is doing today. Currently, Mr. Bower is a scout with the Leafs.

Members of the Tavistock Optimist Club elected a new slate of officers for the coming year. The eighth president of the club is Mr. Willis Swartzentruber of RR 1, Tavistock. Paul Haase and Brian Swartzentruber have been named the club's vice presidents and Wayne

Stock, Earl Nickolas, Wayne Wettlaufer, Marlin Bender, Ken Meadows and Al Blum will serve as directors.

This past week has been a very busy one for the area schools with Hickson and Tavistock Public Schools each presenting their operettas: "Oliver Twist" and "The Mikado", respectively.

May 1-8, 1963 Edition (60 years ago)

Directors of the Tavistock Agricultural Society were informed Friday night by its secretary, Robert Rudy, who is also president of the Tavistock Arena Company, that the Arena will not be available for the 1963 Fall Fair to be held September 6-7. Mr. Rudy said that following the wind storm of several weeks ago, an inspection had been made of the huge structure, and it was found that considerable roofing material had been torn from the building. During recent rains, further on-the-spot inspections had been made, and it was learned that "it was raining harder inside the building than outside."

The smaller midwestern Ontario villages, those with populations under 100, have generally declined in size in the past five years. Larger villages, however are generally growing. The last 1961 census shows population for nearby communities as follows: Bright 301, Hickson 151, Innerkip 371, Plattsville 456, Amulree 63, Sebastopol 102, Shakespeare 309.

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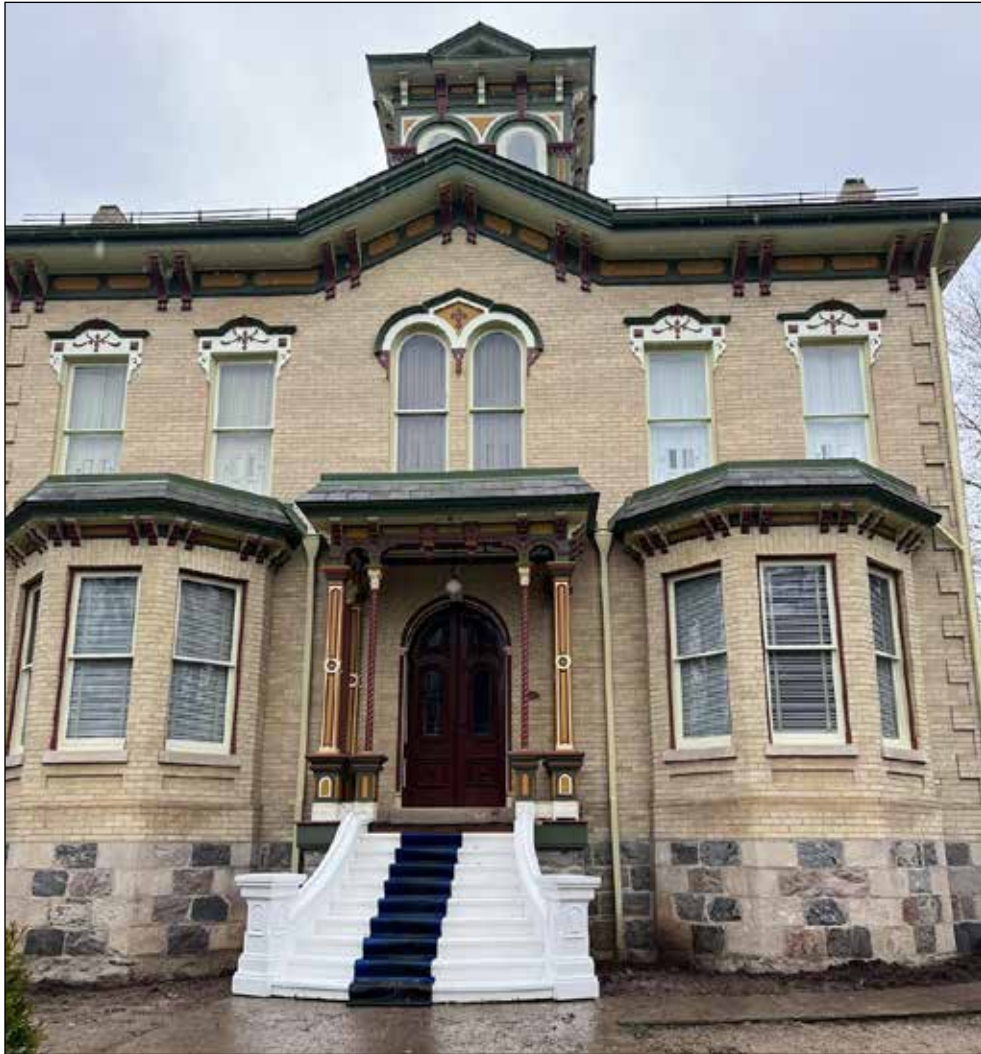
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COMMUNITY —

New steps at Castle Kilbride



The new wooden steps have arrived from Homestead Woodworks of Hawkesville at Castle Kilbride as of Wednesday, May 3. The next step is to replace the west porch steps and painting steps and exterior trim. (Photo credit: Sandy Jackson)

Sir Adam Beck PS donates 452 pounds of food to WFRC



Sir Adam Beck Public School delivered 452 pounds of packaged up food around late April to the Wilmot Family Resource Centre. The school has two more focuses for giving this year: Jump Rope for Heart and a menstrual product drive later this spring. (Photo credit: Sir Adam Beck PS)

Double rainbow spotted in St. Agatha



Some good came from the rainy weather this past week - a beautiful double rainbow spotted in St. Agatha on Erb's Road facing Waterloo on Thursday, May 4. It was taken by Marj Haid and posted in the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group. (Photo credit: Marj Haid)

World Crokinole Championship returning to Tavistock



This banner advertising the World Crokinole Championship (WCC) is now displayed at the Tavistock & District Recreation Centre at 1 Adam Street. The tournament will take place on Saturday, June 3, and will be the first WCC since 2019. At the last event in 2019, the youngest person playing crokinole was age 8, while the oldest person playing was age 87. The total number of registrants playing crokinole throughout the day exceeded 575. (Photo credit: Wendy Lamond)

COMMUNITY —

Stratford Farmers Market - one of the longest running farmers markets in Ontario



Right, market manager Heidi Danen and treasurer Ruth Moore with Orval and Jordan Zehr, who sell their farm's fresh graded eggs and produce every week at the Stratford Farmers Market.



Apples right from his Scotland farm is William Van Brugge of Scotview farm with right, market manager Heidi Danen along with market treasurer Ruth Moore.

By Gary West

The Stratford Farmers market is one of the oldest farmer's market in Ontario and the Stratford and District Agricultural Society is excited about the incoming warmer

weather, because that means a return to summer for vendors and visitors at the weekly destination at the Rotary Complex in Stratford.

Farm vendors from Perth County and beyond sell a variety of their products over the winter inside, but the addition of the summer vendors certainly adds to the excitement of buying fresh fruit and vegetables along with meat products and fresh baking, right from farmers in

surrounding areas around Perth County.

The market also offers visitors pizza, popcorn, and homemade wood and knitted products.

Tavistock's Heidi Danen, who is also an Ag. Society director, manages the busy market and says "there's something for everyone at the Stratford farmers market open 7 a.m. to noon every Saturday," all year round.

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COMMUNITY —

WO Says So: Future Grade 9's - Uninformed or Uninterested?

When in grade eight, high school can seem like a daunting next step. From a new building, new people, and new classes, grade nine is vastly different from elementary school. Every year, hundreds of grade nine students from over fourteen different schools are welcomed to Waterloo-Oxford.

One of these feeder schools is Baden Public School, where we interviewed some select eighth-grade students about their thoughts surrounding high school. Overall, the interviewed students seemed excited about the new experiences high school will bring.

An increase in social life seemed to be a highlight throughout the entire group. They were looking forward to meeting new people, fostering relationships that they had already made, and reconnecting with peers from other schools. They were also eagerly anticipating the wide variety of course options that are offered in high school.

Physical education, visual art, and business studies were among the top elective choices for new grade nines. This interest in gym also translated to the extracurriculars the students were most excited about joining. There was a lot of interest in sports teams like volleyball, soccer, and hockey, and very little knowledge on the other clubs W-O had to offer. Despite all the fun experiences the interviewed students were looking forward to, they also had some doubts.

The grade eight students feared that this fun would be balanced out by an increased workload and higher levels of stress. Not only were they worried about the challenges that they would face throughout the year, but the first day as well. It

seemed like the grade eight students were not very well informed about what to expect when walking into W-O for the first time, and had many apprehensions.

Navigating a much larger school and making it to class on time are worries that were frequently voiced by these students. Because of this, most new grade 9's aren't very keen on joining any extracurriculars, especially ones with a lot of commitment.

Is this just part of the teenage experience? Possibly. But we feel that it could be helped with a little bit more discussion about all clubs for our new grade nines. Having a relationship with the school where you're going to be spending the next four impressionable years of your life is extremely important, and lacking in the intermediate students that we talked to.

There should be more excitement about "the next step" and much more hype about attending W-O, especially with the amount of events that the school runs. W-O should be promoted and made interesting to not just grade 8's, but to every grade past grade 4.

The key to getting more participation and enthusiasm out of next year's grade nine's does not lie in icebreaker activities or information nights - because those already should have been happening throughout their grade 8 year. By the time they get to grade 9, it's too late to persuade them to participate in much. W-O needs to start cementing a legacy of involvement and interest, and the only way to do that is to start with the students that aren't here yet.

Informing them about what is waiting for them after they graduate can only help their excitement toward coming to W-O.

Student contest takes place at New Dundee Community Centre



By Scott Dunstall

The Midwestern Ontario District Optimists held their final competition of their annual student oratorical and essay contest.

The event was held at the New Dundee Community Centre on Saturday May 6. Contestants spoke about optimism and

what it means to themselves and each and every speaker did an excellent job and were well prepared. Congratulations to Leann Jean as the winner. The next level of competition is the Regional Worlds and will be held in St. Louis Missouri from July 20-22. The winners of the Regional Contests compete in a World Finals.

COMMUNITY —

Celebrating the Prayer Blanket Ministry

By Peter Lade, member of St. James Lutheran Church

On Sunday, May 7th, a special service was held at St James Lutheran Church New Dundee to recognize the philanthropic contributions of the St James Prayer Blanket Ministry! This group of 60 ladies, led by founder, and local artist, Jan Cressman Weiss (ably assisted by Phyllis Montgomery & Miriam Gole), has produced over 700 hand-knitted/crocheted blankets to date, which they have donated to recipients, on request, over the last 16 years.

The prayer blankets are requested by friends and families on behalf of recipients who are dealing with major illness, physical or emotional crises, or mourning the loss of a loved one. The purpose of the blankets is to let the recipients know that others care, and that others are thinking of them and praying for them in their time of need. The ladies attempt to incorporate colours and themes (profession, sports, hobbies) dear to the recipient, as well as their name, into the blanket. Twenty to twenty-four 12-inch squares of different colours and themes are produced and assembled into a reasonably symmetrical / attractive pattern and then



crocheted together into a blanket. Some of the squares are quite artistic (praying hands, long names knit by hand with wool/yarn as neat as any computer printer, sports team logos, tractors, etc), requiring great skill to create. The blankets are then placed in an attractive carrying bag along with a typed sheet (in a plastic sleeve) providing the names of the contributing knitters on one side, and a brief history & mission statement

of the Ministry, on the other side. Prior to delivery, all blankets are blessed at a Sunday service at St James ELC.

Pastor James Koellner of St James ELC led the service Sunday, and blessed six blankets in the process. In his sermon entitled "Working Together to Accomplish Great Goals," pastor Jim was able to draw distinct parallels between Nehemia's return to Jerusalem to lead his people in rebuilding the wall around the city, long before the time of Christ... and the mission of the Prayer Blanket Ministry.

As a tribute, Winston Burrill performed an a cappella solo version of "Jesus," while Julie Dopko & dad Don Poth performed a duet version of "Count your Blessings" during the service. During snack time following service, Phyllis

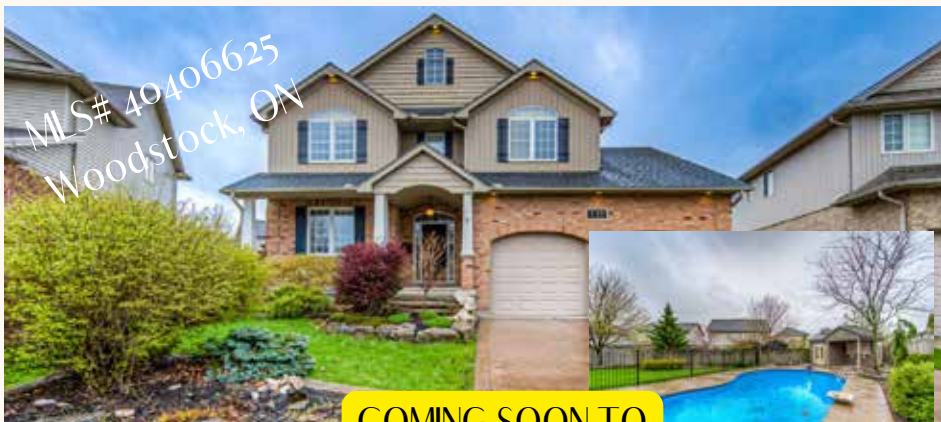
and Ron Montgomery offered up a lovely self-written musical tribute to the Prayer Blanket Ladies, performed to the tune of "There's a Kind of a Hush."

There were some particularly moving parts in the service. One was when the blankets were blessed. Two of the recipients or their families were present to take part, and chose to say a few words to express their heartfelt thanks for the blankets. Another was when a sampling of thank-you letters from past recipients were read. And a third, was when all members of the Prayer Blanket Ministry in attendance were asked to stand and receive applause. The appreciation, pride and sense of community was so self-evident you could not help but leave the service "feeling positive," despite the remorse and compassion you felt for the blanket recipients and their families.

In February, the New Dundee Optimist Club presented the St James Prayer Blanket Ministry with its Adult Hero Award for Volunteer Service. In conjunction with that award presentation, the club suggested a special service in May to which all knitters and supporters would be invited, and the Optimist Club would provide snacks and refreshments following the service. The service Sunday resulted from that suggestion. Special thanks to Lynn Perrin for providing snacks, Don Poth for his presentation on behalf of the Optimist Club, and the Worship Committee from St James ELC for making certain everything ran smoothly.

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COMMUNITY —

Grace United Church members raising money on Sunday for the Lincoln Richard's education fund



Church members auctioned off baked goods to the lively crowd of church members and guests for a great cause.



The many baked goods donated by the church congregation on Sunday in Tavistock at Grace United Church to raise money for the Lincoln Richard's education fund.

By Gary West

It was a bake auction sale like no other at Grace United Church on Sunday when members of the church along with many

guests helped to raise money for the Lincoln Richard's education fund.

Six-year-old Lincoln's mother, Reverend Young, conducted the ministry of the

church throughout the last year, and his father, Reverend Jason Richards recently passed away after battling cancer.

He was the minister at St. Mary's United

Church.

When all was said and done, \$3,300 was raised for Lincoln's future education.

Hickson 4-H dog club report

By Lexi Dill

The second meeting of the Hickson 4-H dog club started at 6:45 p.m. at the Canada Outdoor Farm Show site to see the Woodstock police dog with Officer D. Skillings.

Shonna opened the meeting with the 4-H pledge, then Gavin read the minutes, and Lexi read the press report. Grace gave us the Roll Call which was "what do you think a police dog does?" Then officer Skillings and his partner talked about police dogs and what they are used for. We saw what equipment they use every day for training.

Then the officer took questions. Lastly the officer did a demonstration with his partner in a bite suit and showed how he commands the dog while working. The meeting ended at 8:45 p.m., the next meeting will be at 6:45 p.m. at the Tavistock veterinary services.



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STONETOWN TRAVEL



COMMUNITY —

Wool Production and Sheep Farming brought farmers together recently in Perth County



Megan Cleland explained that she lived and worked on a sheep farm in the wool sheds in Australia for 10 years. The sheep farmers in attendance were keen to hear how she operates with her line of fibre business, and how she is a self taught artist, with a passion for felting. She explained and demonstrated the various work she has produced with wool.

By Gary West

Perth County is known as a very diverse area for agriculture and food production in Ontario. Whether it be dairy, pork or beef production, chicken, turkey or eggs, or corn, beans or wheat, this area is well known for the products they produce.

Sheep and wool production is also now making its mark as a growing farming business in this part of Ontario.

At a recent District 3 sheep producers meeting, a large cross section of area sheep farmers visited the sheep farm of Jim Sebben and family, in South Easthope Township, east of Stratford.

The day was organized by district chair for sheep producers, Susan Martin, and the topic for the day was All Things Wool.



Bonnie DeWeerd, district 3 sheep representative and sheep farmer Jim Sebben who hosted the informative day All Things Wool in his modern sheep housing facility, on the outskirts of Stratford in South Easthope township of Perth County.

The former two storey broiler chicken barn has been transformed into pens for lambs and ewes. It was an ideal area on the second floor for demonstrations of trying to explain to the large group of producers, how there might be more uses for their sheep's wool, that could cover more than just the cost of shearing.

Romy Schill from the Wallenstein area, gave an informative talk on her up and coming wool business, called Revolution Wool, and demonstrated, through wool skirting, how sheep farmers could ready their fleece for market, in order to obtain a higher price for their wool products.

Romy along her husband, Ryan, own and operate Circle R Lamb farm, and also discussed feeding management and how to set up for successful sheep shearing.



Jennifer Osborn from the Ayton area, who's company is called Eco Wool, which uses the wool from sheep to produce a fertilizer pellet to be used in gardens and flower beds when mixed into the soil. The pellets have an N.P.K of 10-0-3 and her company calls the product natural, sustainable and renewable. Osborn says wool pellets, absorb three times their weight in water and they are a source of slow release nitrogen. They also work as a mulch, a weed barrier and fertilizer all in one and also contains calcium, magnesium, sulphur, iron, potash, and other nutrients for soil and plant health. She also stated the product is 50% carbon to assist drainage in clay soil and helps retain water in sandy soils, and can also be applied as a mulch. More info is available at www.ecowool.ca

Letter to the Editor:

The coronation's come and gone
our history was alive,
pomp and pageantry prevailed
when our new King arrived.
Tradition was upheld today
religion played its part,
the people stood out in the rain
to honour with their hearts.
God Save the King.
David Taylor, Baden

MPP Mike Harris fails to deliver!

On March 3rd the Nith Valley EcoBoosters met with MPP Mike Harris to express our concerns about Bill 23. MPP Harris felt it was inaccurate to simply state that Bill 23 decreases developer fees so we asked him the following questions: (1) What developer fees are changing as a result of Bill 23? What are the specific changes? (2) What fees are not changing? We were informed that we would receive the answers to our questions by March 17th and we looked forward to using the answers to help correct any misunderstandings about this issue in the community. Unfortunately,

ly, seven weeks later, we still have not received any answers. MPP Harris's office is blaming the delay in responding on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Are we left to assume that perhaps they simply do not wish to confirm the bad news that Bill 23 is in fact reducing all developer fees? This will result in a significant loss of revenue and negatively impact Waterloo Region's ability to provide the services necessary to support growth over the long term. Perhaps MPP Harris will respond to this letter?

Tom Knezevich

Chairperson, Nith Valley EcoBoosters

COMMUNITY —

Laura Secord's historical walk retold

By Laura Green

Two Women's Institute (W.I.) branches pondered the question – What if Laura Secord didn't arrive in time to warn the British troops at about the American plans of invasion of Beaver Dams June 1813? "In the heat of June 22, 1813, Laura Secord trekked 20 miles through countryside and swamp to warn the British of an American attack. With her advance notice, native warriors and British officers captured the entire force, marking the downturn of the American invasion of Upper Canada." (National Parks Service)

Guest speaker for the twinning meeting of Braemar and Anna P. Lewis branches was Laurel Beechey a local historian and columnist for the Norfolk & Tillsonburg News. The afternoon meeting was held at the Christ Church,

Huntingford on May 2nd, 2023.

Laurel Beechey was a great historical story teller and made Laura Secord a real person who was very patriotic and courageous woman. Beechey told us about Laura's life as a daughter of Thomas Ingersoll and her marriage to James Secord and the mother of five children. She described Laura's 20 mile trek in great detail and her life after the War of 1812. Beechey also described the key battle locations of the War and the heroes. There are many important historical sites of the War of 1812 that are not far from Oxford County.

Members were reminded of the Vendor's Market host by Oxford District W.I. on Saturday May 6 at the Beachville Museum and the Oxford District 107th Annual meeting on Wednesday May 24 at the Beachville Museum.



At right, local Historian Laurel Beechey (left) from Tillsonburg retold her research compiled on the Canadian heroine Laura Secord to the Braemar and Anna P. Lewis W.I. branches on May 2. What a patriotic and brave woman Laura was! Braemar member Bernice Marsland thanked Laurel with a treat bag from Laura Secord a Canadian chocolatier, confectionery, and ice cream company which was founded in 1913.

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SPORTS —

Applejacks Split First Two Games in Schmaltz Cup

By Lee Griffi

The Wellesley Applejacks are 1 and 1 in the round-robin portion of the tournament and have one game remaining against the Stayner Siskins before being seeded in the four-team competition for a semi-final matchup.

The Applejacks earned a dramatic come-from-behind victory over Clarington Friday night in a game played in Elmira because of a problem with the ice in Wellesley. Tristan Romany gave the home team a 1-0 lead with his first of the playoffs just three and a half minutes into the first, but the Eagles would take a 2-1 lead before Curtis Butler's fourth of the postseason tied it with four minutes left in the opening frame. The teams combined for six goals in a wild second period, three each, but Wellesley scored the last two to erase a 5-3 deficit setting the stage for Carson Wickie's game-winner just over

12 minutes into the third. Isiah Katsube added an insurance marker, his team-leading fifteenth, 4 minutes later. Noah Bender stopped 35 of 41 shots to earn the win in net, and both teams were 1 for 4 on the powerplay.

The team travelled to Lakeshore Saturday for a 4 p.m. game and dropped a 4-1 decision to the Canadiens. The Applejacks found themselves down 3-0 fourteen minutes into the second period before Evan Silveira cut the lead to 3-1 with about 6 minutes remaining in the third. It was his third of the playoffs, with assists going to captain Justin McCombs and Katsube. Bender stopped 31 of the 34 shots he faced as Wellesley went 0 for 9 with the man advantage.

The Applejacks battle the Siskins Friday at 5 p.m. with their semi-final game at either 2 p.m. or 5 p.m., depending on where they are seeded.

Tavistock minor ball skills clinic



By David Nahrgang

Tavistock Minor Ball opened the season with their annual skills clinic on Sunday. Players from our U11 and U13 programs braved some rainy weather, but had a great day on the diamond.

Special thanks to members of our U23 Ladies' team, and the Junior Merchants for

leading our clinic this year. We are fortunate to have so many former members of our program come back to help out. These former Athletics are Canadian Champions, National team members, and have played for Ontario Colleges and Universities. We are thankful that our current players have such a great talent base to learn from!

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COMMUNITY —

Restored Massey Ferguson 65 to be auctioned off at MCC Relief Sale



By Gary West

This is a Massey Ferguson 65 completely restored. It runs and looks like new, and will be auctioned off to the highest bidder Friday evening on May 26 - in person or online - at this year's Mennonite Central Committee's annual relief sale in New Hamburg.

The entire proceeds from this tractor along with a John Deere 2120 has been do-

nated to the M.C.C. by the members of the North Easthope Tractor Club (N.E.A.T), who have raised thousands of dollars the last number of years to support the work of the Mennonite Central Committee.

The Tractor pictured can be seen at President John Mohr's address in New Hamburg at 247 Good Street.

For more info call John Mohr at 226-747-5533 or Ron Neeb at 519-801-5747.

Gazette Puzzles

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Pet of the Week



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Nominate your Pet of the Week by emailing info@wilmotpost.ca



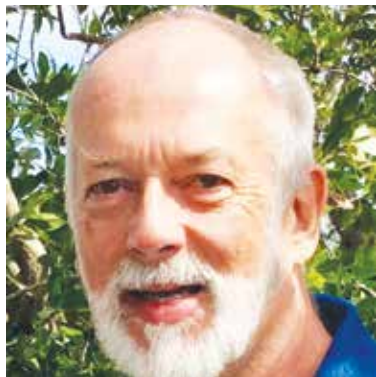
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TRAVEL —

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: When alligator bites are a good thing



By Paul Knowles

The plan was to spend one night and one day in the Orlando area en route to destinations further south. So is there anything for visitors to do in Orlando?

Okay, I am well aware of the obvious answers. The world's greatest collection of theme parks for starters. And yes, I plan to return some day to take in some or all of them.

But we opted for something different. We chose alligators, to be precise. We saw alligators in captivity, alligators in the wild and alligators nicely prepared, in small bites, on our plates.

We were at Boggy Creek Airboat Adventures, a destination a few kilometers south of Kissimmee/Orlando, located on Lake Toho. And if you happen to be planning a visit to Disney or its theme park neighbours, I suggest you set aside half a day to visit Boggy Creek.

The airboat ride is the highlight of the visit but there is plenty

more to do here as well. There is a small exhibition of animals, including a congregation (yes, that is the proper collective noun) of alligators.

Newly constructed is a small but charming butterfly enclosure which also has turtles, ducks and lizards in house.

There is an eatery called the Boggy Bottom BBQ where the menu includes, of course, "alligator bites". In this case, it is human biting alligator – my preferred option. And they are tasty.

The airboat ride through the shallows of the lake, part of the "Central Florida Everglades", gets you up close and personal with dozens of species of birds as well as unexpected beasts, the most unlikely of which were beef cattle, standing in fairly deep water, munching on water plants. Apparently, the cattle spend a significant amount of their browsing time in the lake. And it would seem that the alligators and the cattle have negotiated some kind of truce.

Because there are alligators. The pilot of our airboat suggested the lake is home to some 8,000 of them although it isn't clear who does the census. We saw baby gators and some adults. The males can reach up to 14 feet long; females, closer to nine feet. Either is entirely big enough to be avoided.

I'm a bird lover. Although not an official "birder", I was delighted to spot over two dozen species

of birds during our trip – green herons, great blue herons, egrets of various types, limpkins, moor hens, coots, bald eagles, ibises, kingfishers, anhingas and more. I mentioned to our driver that I had noticed all these birds and he said with a grin, "Good for you. You spotted about a quarter of the 85 or so species that live here."

Boggy Creek Airboat Adventures was launched almost 30 years ago with one airboat. Today there are 12 boats and the site's executive director, Nick Romeo, told me there are more on order.

He says that the attraction is constantly seeking to improve and expand. The place now includes a native Indian Village where resident Native Americans offer demonstrations and educational events. Boggy Creek is focused on developing more programs that focus on environmental activities. One example – the inhabitants of the butterfly enclosure include a small flock of bobwhite quail which are endangered in Florida.

The park is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day; there are a variety of ride packages, the least expensive a half-hour tour for \$35. I suggest trading up at least to the one-hour adventure.

There are also after-hours tours – sunset and night-time options. Nick says the night-time tours are the most dramatic as the pilots shine lights on the wetlands and the light is reflected in hundreds of eyes!



The least likely inhabitant of Lake Toho! (All photos by Paul Knowles)

I admit that I became a fan of Boggy Creek Airboat Adventures and would strongly recommend a visit. Even if, like us, you only had one day or just a few hours to spend in the area.

And I would also happily recommend the hotel we stayed at – the Drury Plaza Hotel in the Disney Springs Area of Orlando.

Being in the midst of a road trip, we were really only looking for a bed for the night. We did have a very comfortable bed in a lovely suite but we also got much more. A view of the Disney fireworks, for example. And the generous on-site dining. Your room includes a more-than-ample breakfast buffet and, more surprisingly, a complementary "light supper" that may not be gourmet

food, but is certainly good stuff – pulled pork sliders, baked potatoes, veggies, salad, hot dogs and more. Fast food, but done right. Plus, a drinks ticket. When I went to collect some wine from an admittedly limited selection, I discovered the ticket actually covered three drinks per person. Adequate wine and free!

All in all, our stop-over in the Orlando area which lasted only about 19 hours turned out to be a road trip highlight.

Go see the alligators. Bite one for me.

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@gold-en.net.



An airboat at Boggy Creek Airboat Adventures, south of Orlando, Florida.



A congregation of alligators.

COMMUNITY —

Flowers in bloom



Spring is here, with blooming flowers such as tulips and grape hyacinths spotted all over local areas, including along Parkview Drive in Wellesley village. (Photo credit: Leanne Reiner)

Farmers in the area hoping for warm dry weather to get seeds in the ground mid May approaches



By Gary West

Sunshine was finally peeking through the clouds after a long week of rainy cool weather in Perth County west of New Hamburg.

Farmers in the area are hoping for warm, sunny and dry weather in order to get

seeds in the ground for what, only weeks ago, looked like an early spring with exceptionally warm, dry weather.

With Oxford, Perth and Waterloo counties being some of the best land in the province and country for growing exceptional crops, the weatherman is still in charge whether farmers like it or not.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - MAY/JUNE 2023

May 12th	Wellesley Mennonite Church at 2537 Hutchison Road, Millbank. Co-created and presented by individuals living in poverty, Living Below the Line is a stereotype-busting dramatic presentation celebrating resilience and hope. For more info, visit www.mcco.ca/events .	Optimist Club of New Dundee holding community fireworks event around 4 p.m. Bring together families and friends from all over the region to celebrate the Victoria long weekend with fun and a spectacular fireworks display.	From 8:30 a.m. to noon at Petersburg Park. The Optimist Club of Petersburg is once again hosting Breakfast in the Park. Enjoy scrambled eggs, pancakes, bacon, home-fries, toast, juice and coffee. Adults are \$15; 10 and under is \$10	Taking place at Morningside Retirement Village from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Open to the public - all are welcome.
May 13th	May 15th	May 27th	May 29th	June 3rd
Greenwood Rod & Gun Fish Fry Taking place at 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Greenwood Rod & Gun at 2596 Notre Dame Drive in St. Agatha. Fish, fries and coleslaw. Cost is \$20. Dine in or take out.	Blood Drive Taking place at the Steinmann Mennonite Church at 1316 Snyder's Road West in New Hamburg. Booking times are available from about 3 p.m. until about 8 p.m. on www.blood.ca .	Stonecroft Community Garage Sale Taking place at 1476 Haysville Road in New Hamburg from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Multiple homes are participating in this year's community garage sale. Lots of great items being offered. Rain or shine event.	Wilmot Council Meeting Hybrid council meeting taking place at 60 Snyder's Road West in Baden at 6:45 p.m. Also streamed on the Township of Wilmot YouTube page.	Wellesley Community Garage Sale Taking place at the Wellesley arena from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. To reserve a free space, email wellesleygaragesale@gmail.com . Town wide from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. To add your house number to a map of sales, visit the Facebook event page: Wellesley Community Garage Sale.
May 13th	May 17th	May 28th	May 30th	June 10th
Baden Hill Regional Forest Tree Planting From 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Baden Hill Regional Forest. This project is Let's Tree Wilmot's biggest to date - adding several acres to the Baden Hills Regional Forest. No experience necessary, but advance registration is requested. Instructions and refreshments will be provided. Register on EventBrite. Rain or shine event.	East Zorra-Tavistock Council Meeting In-person council meeting taking place at 695566 17th Line in Innerkip starting at 9 a.m.	Wellesley & District Lions Club Pet Value Walk for Dog Guides Taking place at the picnic shelter at 1 Catherine Street at 1:30 p.m. To raise money for the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides.	Wellesley Council Meeting Hybrid council meeting taking place at 4805 William Hastings Line in Crosshill at 6:45 p.m. Also streamed on the Township of Wellesley YouTube page.	Shakespeare and Community Athletic Association Field Day Taking place at Shakespeare park. Kids games and midway during the day along with a parade at noon. Annual fish fry later in the afternoon. For info or tickets, call Deb Bell at 519-276-8109 or Kristene Ankenmann at 519-274-2744.
May 13th	May 21st	May 28th	June 3rd	
Living Below the Line Taking place at 2 p.m. at Crosshill Mennonite Church, hosted by	New Dundee Community Fireworks	Breakfast in the Park	Morningside Community Yard Sale	

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- 1) Goldie Hawn
- 2) Calcutta
- 3) Marie Curie
- 4) Carnations
- 5) Gin
- 6) Princess Diana
- 7) ABBA
- 8) Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show
- 9) Wilma
- 10) Paul Simon

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