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Enbridge donation provides EZT fire department with training materials



Mayor Phil Schaefer, left, holds one of the fire training DVDs while EZT Fire Chief Scott Alexander is presented with a \$5000 cheque from Doug Chapman from Enbridge and Jamie Kovacs, Executive Director of the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council.

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Enbridge Gas Inc. is helping the East Zorra-Tavistock Fire Department purchase required firefighting training materials. The money comes from the Safe Community Project Assist, a program with the Fire Marshal's Public Safety Fire Safety Council that supplements existing training for Ontario volunteer fire departments in the communities where Enbridge operates.

"At Enbridge Gas, safety is at the core of what we do. Providing support to Ontar-

io firefighters with emergency response training, we are equipping the heroes of tomorrow to better protect the communities we live and work in, keeping them healthy and vibrant," said Doug Chapman, the company's St. Thomas Operations Supervisor.

EZT Fire Chief Scott Alexander said the donation is invaluable to the more than 60 men and women who are volunteer firefighters across East Zorra-Tavistock. "Whenever you do training for Firefighter One and Firefighter Two, this is every

single module our volunteers have to pass. Now we can not only have an instructor, but we can also use our own videos and they can do it on their own time or on practice night. It's convenient and it's really focused on trying to help our older firefighters get their certifications because it's mandatory now."

Four recruits are entering the ranks of volunteer firefighters in EZT. Alexander said they will attend education sessions before starting on the job. "At the end of training in June they will have passed every sin-

Continued on page 2

Oxford County approves 2024 budget

Ratepayers are on the hook for a nearly 17 percent tax hike

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Some heated debates emerged at last week's Oxford County Council meeting, but next year's budget was approved. A 16.7 per cent tax increase was passed by a vote of 7 to 3. What this means for the average homeowner is a \$154 increase on a single-family detached residence with a current value assessment of \$275,022. The rate of inflation used was 3.8 percent.

East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer, the local representative on county council, voted in favour of the budget but admitted it wasn't an easy decision. "It is difficult to raise your hand in support of a 16.7% budget increase. It is also difficult to ignore the growth the county is experiencing, and the increase in support required for social services, paramedic services, long-term care, and infrastructure needs." He admitted that no one likes to pay more taxes, but added more is necessary to fund what the county needs in the future. "Based on the average assessment of a single-family home in the County, the typical homeowner would see an increase of approximately \$154 per year. That is less than \$13 per month. For that additional tax, the county is investing in services that are desperately needed. Also, we are funding our reserves as needed to ensure we have sufficient capital to maintain and grow our infrastructure, and we are doing this in a period of high inflation and increasing WSIB and insurance costs."

Among the new spending in the document is \$2.1 million to expand transitional housing, which offers temporary accommodation to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent living quarters. The township will not be

Continued on page 2



TIM LOUIS
Member of Parliament
Kitchener-Conestoga

*Wishing you Peace & Joy
this Holiday Season*

COMMUNITY —

Enbridge donates provides training materials

Continued from page 1

gle one of these (training videos). We have our own school we run, and our instructors do this so it's hands-on. Every municipality hosts a weekend hosting and then they will write their exams to be certified." He added volunteers can then work their way up the ladder with other courses including Officer One and Instructor One, all of which are mandatory now under provincial legislation. The training videos represent every task that a new firefighter will have to do throughout his or her lifetime. "It talks about putting up ladders, wearing PPE properly, how to run a hose line, those types of things."

Alexander explained there are a few different opportunities for funding sources every year, something his department is always hoping to take advantage of. "I am always looking. Every year we apply for three to

five grant applications. Enbridge has always been there for us. Some of the other ones, there are so many municipalities applying for them, we have just never been successful. Enbridge has pipelines right here and they have always been a great corporate partner."

Mayor Phil Schaefer was also in attendance for the cheque presentation and said the company has been a valuable corporate sponsor for the township's fire services. "We really appreciate Enbridge's support. This is just part of what they have done for us this year and in previous years." He added any amount of money EZT can save the taxpayer helps come budget time. "It's \$5 thousand we don't have to come up with. You'd want to come up with it because of the importance of the training program so this is a great win for everybody."

17 per cent tax increase in Oxford County

Continued from page 1

a site for any housing of this type, something Schaefer said is part of being in a two-tier government. "Housing is a county responsibility, regardless of whether there are needs in Woodstock, Tavistock, or any other community in Oxford for that matter. Any resident of EZT that avails themselves of any service that the county provides from highways, water and wastewater needs, libraries, garbage collection, paramedics, social services, etc. will benefit from the services this budget enhances or maintains."

Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan was a supporter of the budget and said there are some big things in it for residents. "There is a brand new strategic plan and we just had an election a year ago. Those councillors heard a lot from a lot of people about things they want." Ryan added one of the driving forces behind the increase is the county's population growth. "It has doubled to over two percent. That is going to require more service. For instance, to keep the ambulance response rate what it is, you're going to have to buy another ambulance and staff it. To supply the housing Oxford County is legally obliged to offer under the Municipal Act it's going to require more investment when your population is growing."

The budget's approval wasn't without controversy as Woodstock City/County Councillor Deb Tait made her displeasure known as she took exception with some of the numbers. "The only amount we added for homelessness was \$500 thousand so to say a 16 percent increase was to do with homelessness, it wasn't. The way I expect a budget to come forward is to be cut as much as it can by staff before it gets here.

I want to see a budget that is acceptable to the taxpayer." She added the extras, and the wants of each department should be listed separately. "I find this irresponsible, and I will not support this. I don't know if you understand how difficult it is for people right now. They can't afford groceries, they can't afford their utilities, and we are putting another burden on them. I was not elected to be irresponsible with taxpayer money." Along with Tait, Woodstock Mayor and Deputy Warden Jerry Acchione and Tillsonburg Mayor Deb Gilvesy voted against the budget. Tait did bring forward a motion to defer the hiring of three new positions at paramedic services which was defeated.

Other big ticket items include \$14.5 million for construction work to maintain bridges and culverts on Oxford County roads, \$1.72 million for maintenance and upgrades at social housing sites, and \$756,250 at the three Woodingford Lodge sites. Oxford County's funding share for Southwestern Public Health increased by a whopping 56 percent to \$4.4 million. Higher costs for supplies and construction are also reflected in the budget. The county is also hiring 41 new full-time positions across various departments.

The next task at hand for Schaefer is the East Zorra-Tavistock budget which will be tabled in February. He said residents can be assured council will be responsible with their money. "While it is too early to discuss numbers, our ratepayers can expect we will deliver a budget that delivers the services our residents require, at a reasonable cost. East Zorra-Tavistock has the second-lowest tax rate in Oxford County."

EZT council meetings won't be available

Fire at local honey operation

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

No one was injured after an early-morning fire at Nith Valley Apiaries on Wednesday. The well-known honey producer took to Facebook to let customers know what happened.

"We are closed today due to a fire that took over our workshop. The honeyhouse and retail store as well as our bulk honey storage have not been affected. We are closed today and will keep you posted regarding reopening the store before the holiday. We are grateful nobody was hurt," the post said.

"At approximately 6:30 this morning we received a call of a shed on fire that had spread to a larger building. When crews

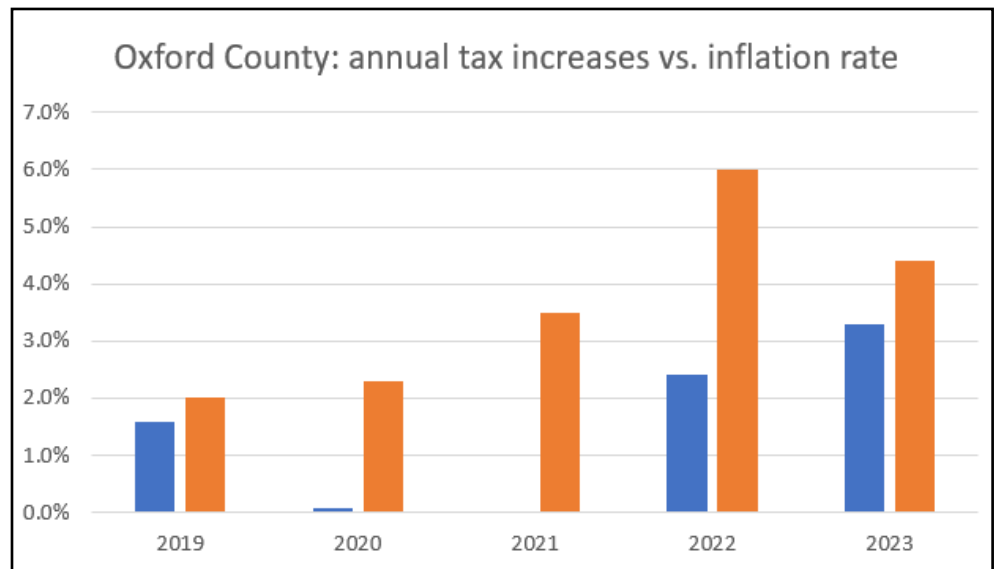
arrived on the scene the shed was fully involved, and the fire had spread through a window into a larger shop and it was also fully damaged."

Leeson added there was no one inside either of the structures at the time and there were no injuries. He explained the investigation is continuing. "I don't have an exact cause at this time, and I don't have a value of the damage established yet. We are a little too early into the investigation process to determine that."

Waterloo Regional Police were called to the scene to provide traffic control and to close down Christner Road for safety reasons. Fire crews were still on the scene late in the morning to perform the over-haul process.

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Illustrated above is the comparison of the inflation rate versus the tax increase in Oxford County over the last five years.

online for several months

It was expected the township would have the technology installed in January for residents to watch council meetings both live and on-demand, but some issues with the new office have surfaced. CAO Karen DePrest said there have been some issues with security hardware.

"We are hoping by the end of the first quarter we will have the technology installed. As of yet, we have held off on the hardware order and delivery until the deficiency items on the new building can be completed. Some of the deficiencies include door and locking hardware on some of the storage and office spaces so we don't want to have critical technological infrastructure on site until the building

has all of its security features up and running." DePrest added everyone wants the ability to be more transparent and available for ratepayers. "I will keep you posted, as I know it is a key feature and desire for the public, the media, staff, and council alike. We want to make sure the transition is as seamless as possible."

Hickson Trail bridge closed

The township announced on Tuesday that the pedestrian trail bridge on the Hickson Trail at Braemar Sideroad has been closed. The closure is due to safety concerns after an engineering inspection. EZT wants to make it clear no use of the bridge is permitted and they said they are working on a replacement plan.

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COMMUNITY —

Baden speed camera vandalized for the third time



(Photo credit: Josh Goeree/City News Kitchener)

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

A police investigation is underway after a speed enforcement camera in Baden was vandalized for the third time.

On Sunday, December 17, at about 9:55 a.m., the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) responded to a report of mischief to a speed enforcement camera in Wilmot Township. The camera is located on Snyder's Road and monitors the speed in areas around Waterloo Oxford District Secondary School and Sir Adam Beck Public School.

Police believed the incident took place at about 2:19 a.m., and noted that this is the third incident of mischief involving the same speed enforcement camera since July 2023. They believe the act is intentional.

The investigation is ongoing, and the WRPS General Investigations Unit is asking anyone with information to contact police at 519-570-9777, extension 6344. Anonymous information can be provided by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-8477, or submitted online at www.waterloocrimestoppers.com.

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COMMUNITY —

**Hickson school gift drive
a huge success**

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Hickson Central Public School community continues to give to those who need extra support during the Christmas and holiday season. The annual gift drive has again provided much-needed supplies for three charities thanks to the generosity of the school community.

Jill Baker, an organizer and teacher at the school, said this is her seventh year helping out and what started as strictly a toy drive has turned into something else. "I do a leadership group with the grade sevens and eights and our social justice group heads up the gift drive. We have changed it up over the last four or five years where we have collected more than just toys." She added they used to donate strictly to Ronald McDonald House, but they've expanded the scope of help. "We also donate to more local charities as well and we collect new and used clothing, perishable food items, toiletries, all of those things."

These are difficult times for some people and families as the economy continues to struggle. Baker said despite that the school community came together to donate an enormous amount for some great causes. "We also asked for gift cards and the amount we received for stores like Walmart, Dollarama, or grocery gift cards, the response was amazing. We probably have over \$300 worth of them." Not only does the gift drive provide much-needed supplies for those in need, but she also explained it teaches the students involved some valuable life lessons. "They learn empathy, and I think it really shows them privilege. A lot of students don't recognize or take for granted what they are given around the holiday season, but I think overall it teaches them that



The Hickson Central Public School community collected gift cards, toys, and other items for several charities this Christmas season. (Contributed photo)

empathy piece. I think that's incredibly important for everyone to recognize."

Baker said she had a group of about a dozen students who were incredibly passionate about social justice, giving back to the community, and making sure that everyone feels valued and respected. "Not only are we helping our school community, but we are also reaching out. A lot of that is on them in organizing this and helping spread the word among the school and showing a leadership side for themselves."

The three charities on the receiving end of the school's generosity are Ronald McDonald House, Operation Sharing, and Ingamo Homes. Operation Sharing is a non-profit organization that provides services to the homeless community through a donation-based homeless shelter. Ingamo Homes is a non-profit organization, committed to ending gender-based violence by providing second-stage housing, outreach, and programming to women and their children, serving Woodstock, and Oxford County.

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Owner/Publisher: Grant Haven Management Inc. /Stewart Grant
Editor: Veronica Reiner
Graphic Designer: Erin Parsons
Office Administrator/Billing: Wendy Lamond, Cindy Boakes
Sales Representative: Sharon Leis
Contributing writers: Lee Griffi, Nancy Silcox, Gary West, Paul Knowles, Mercedes Kay Gold

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WRDSB encourages support for Nutrition for Learning this holiday season

Programs provide nutritious meals for thousands of students across Waterloo Region

By Veronica Reiner

This holiday season, the Waterloo Region District School Board is inviting the community to come together to support Nutrition for Learning.

Nutrition for Learning is a charity that provides universal food access in 106 of WRDSB schools all across the region, including Wilmot and Wellesley townships, along with Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Woolwich and North Dumfries.

The WRDSB has had a long-standing partnership with Nutrition for Learning, according to Scott Miller, Associate Director of Education.

“Food insecurity in our region is at a very high level, so this program right now is probably more important than ever,” he said.

Food bank use across Ontario remained at an all time high this year, marking the seventh year in a row of food bank use increases. According to a report by Feed Ontario, 800,822 adults and children accessed a food bank in the province between April 1, 2022 and March 31 this year. This was an increase of 38 per cent over last year, and 60 per cent over pre-pandemic levels.

Meals provided by Nutrition for Learning aim to be healthy, such as fresh fruit and vegetables. The average cost of a Nutrition for Learning program is \$15,600, with some of the high school programs costing more than \$40,000.

Schools under the WRDSB consumed more than double the amount of food than the year prior through the program, which amounted to about \$1-million in food costs alone. Nutrition for Learning has programs in over 150 schools and helps about 23,000 students daily.

“Because of the way the programs are set up in our schools, and there is that universal access, what people really appreciate is that it’s non-stigmatizing,” said Scott. “We also have many thriving programs throughout our region and district - parents will also help and volunteer.”

He added that the program has received “overwhelmingly positive” feedback from students and parents alike. “Any feedback that we as a district are able to provide to Nutrition for Learning - they’re very open to it, and very accommodating to meeting our needs, while still prioritizing an

accessible program for all students with high nutritional value.”

These programs occur daily in schools - some schools have a breakfast program, others have a variety of healthy snacks, and others have lunch programs as well.

“It’s important to note - often I think people may believe or feel that these nutrition programs are fully funded by the government. But the reality is that the programs cost - the government does only provide about 15 per cent of what that funding looks like,” said Scott. “Our schools really depend on the generosity of our community, and the many donors that we have.”

Whether it is a \$1 or \$100 donation, the contribution will fund a student nutrition program that removes the barrier to access healthy and nutritious food. A one time gift of \$20 can provide 15 meals featuring fresh produce, protein and whole grains.

Donations are being accepted until tomorrow, Friday, December 22. Those interested can contribute at this link: www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/95440?v2=true. 100 per cent of the proceeds donated through this link will go to WRDSB schools.



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- Ainslee Hackett and Jeffrey & Michelle Glendinning

COMMUNITY —

OPP provides tips for a safe holiday shopping season

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

The Ontario Provincial Police are urging holiday shoppers to take a few precautions to protect themselves and their hard earned purchases from ending up under a thief's tree.

Here are some tips to ensure your shopping trip is a merry one:

- Keep wallets and purses safely always secured on your person.
- Don't carry large amounts of currency. Instead, use debit and credit cards.
- Protect and shield your Personal Information Number at point-of-sale terminals.

- Get cash from recognized banking machines instead of stand-alone Automated Teller Machines (ATM). Thieves use card-skimming devices to target stand-alone units.
- Carrying large amounts of gifts makes you a target. Take them to your car and put them in a trunk, or in the case of sport utility vehicles or pick-up trucks, place them on the floor and cover them with a blanket.

Theft-proofing starts in the parking lot, so remember to take a few smart steps before braving the crowds at local stores.

- Always make sure your vehicle is locked. An unlocked vehicle door or an open window is an invitation to thieves seeking a crime of opportunity.
- Park your vehicle in a well-lit area.
- Roll up the vehicle's windows.
- Keep valuables out of sight.
- Lock your doors and pocket your keys.

Following these easy shopping tips will go a long way towards making your holiday season safe and fun for everyone on your list.



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COMMUNITY —



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Festive decorations around Tavistock



These festive inflatables, including Santa Claus and polar bears, can be spotted around Tavistock as the community prepares for the holidays. (Photo credit: Elaine Townsend Leadston)



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~ Randy, Alea, Jelene and Joellah



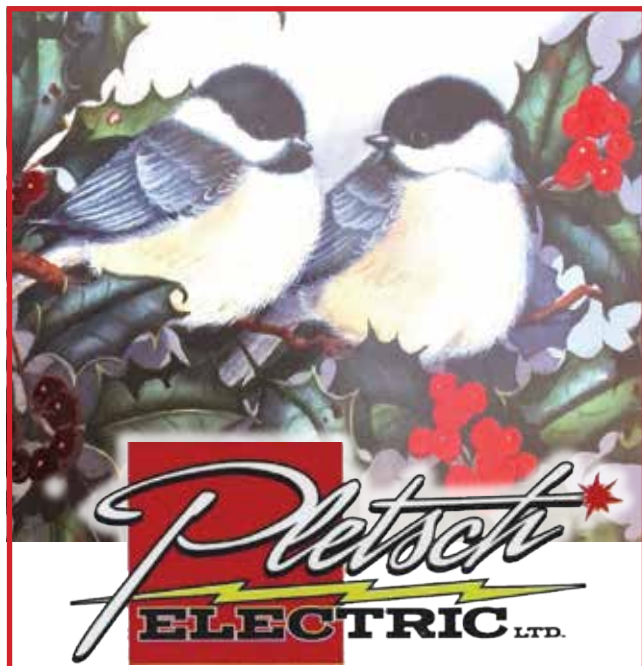
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COMMUNITY —

OBITUARY

WETTLAUFER, Lynda



Lynda Lou Wettlaufer, 75, of St. Marys, formerly of Tavistock, passed away on Sunday, December 10, 2023 at Stratford General Hospital. She was born on November 19, 1948 at Stratford, daughter of the late Percy John Wettlaufer (1979) and the former Ruth Marie Hinz (2021).

Lynda is survived by her sisters-in-law, Claudette Wettlaufer and Gloria Wettlaufer; nieces and nephews Fred Wettlaufer, Marianne Ruby (Dale), Charlie Wettlaufer (Chris), Scott Wettlaufer (Erika), Angela Wettlaufer; great niece and nephews, Emily & Josh Wettlaufer, Riley & Travis Wettlaufer, Jayden & Simon Ruby.

She was predeceased by her brothers, Bob Wettlaufer (2017), Jack Wettlaufer (2022), Bill Wettlaufer (2022) and niece, Yvonne Claudia Wettlaufer in infancy (1967).

Lynda received her Legal Secretary Diploma from Fanshaw College and was employed as a Legal Secretary for three different law firms for over a span of 40 years. She loved long car rides in the countryside enjoying the birds and wildlife along the way. Lynda was an avid dart player many years ago at the Tavistock Legion.

Friends and family were received at Grace United Church, Tavistock on Sunday, December 17, 2023 from 2 – 2.45 pm where the funeral service was held at 3 pm. Interment in Grace United Cemetery. Reception followed.

Francis Funeral Home entrusted with the arrangements.

Donations to St. Marys Memorial Hospital Foundation, St. Marys ON would be appreciated.

Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

OBITUARY

BRENNEMAN: Ronald Wayne



Passed to his eternal rest December 18, 2023. Ron drew his final breath peacefully at home surrounded by the love of his life and their children.

Ron was born at home on the farm August 19, 1940. It was here that his love of the land grew. He married Donna, May 29, 1964 and they established Donron Farms. Ron loved the fact that for nearly 60 years they were able to raise their children and make their living together. Simple pleasures in Ron's life brought great joy, especially being surrounded by his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was a quiet and proud cheerleader of all his children and grandchildren's activities. Ron was affectionately known as the Eggman and the Wagonman.

Best friend and husband of Donna (Neeb) Brenneman. Dear father of Kim Brenneman of Tavistock, Karen & husband Greg Bender of RR#6 Woodstock, Sandra McLaren of Shakespeare, Jayne & husband Tim Whetstone of Embro and Paul & wife Katherine of RR#6 Woodstock. Sadly missed by his grandchildren Dylan, Reis & Britt, Luke & Jo, Hilary & Chase, Jacob, Shelby, Hannah & Mikey, Isaiah & Rachel, Katie, Caleb, Larissa, Nathan, Morgan and great grandchildren Emmett, Ollie, Parker and Sage. Survived by his sisters Merle & husband Allan Gerber of Wellesley, Joyce & husband Dan Gascho of Stratford, Carol & husband Jim Schumm of RR#1 Tavistock, by brothers Keith & wife Marilyn and Ken & wife Karen all of RR#2 Tavistock, by sister-in-law Donna & Irwin Pudrycki of Regina and by many nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by his parents Lorne and Selma (Zehr) Brenneman, infant brother Larry, mother-in-law Isabella (Riehl, Neeb) & George Satchell, brothers and sister-in law Ken & Joyce Roth and Vic Neeb.

Over the years Ron was an active member of the Tavistock Mennonite Church, a member of the Tavistock Men's Club, the Oxford County Milk Committee, volunteered at the New Hamburg M.C.C. Thrift Store, at the Tavistock Men's Club Arena Booth, and was involved with Tavistock Minor Hockey and the Braves organization.

Relatives and friends will be received in the Francis Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. on Wednesday from 6-8pm and Thursday from 2-4 and 6-8pm. Funeral service will be conducted at the Tavistock Mennonite Church on Friday, December 22, 2023 at 10:00am. Interment to follow in the East Zorra Mennonite Church Cemetery 16th line.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Tavistock Mennonite Church or the Tavistock Minor Hockey would be appreciated by the family. Please honour Ron by greeting everyone with a smile, taking the time to talk and more importantly to listen. Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca. Love you more.

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Pastor Jim Brown

Worship service 10am followed by coffee hour and sermon discussion. All are welcome

IN MEMORIAM

Liz Livingston



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
LIZ LIVINGSTON
WHO PASSED AWAY ONE YEAR AGO.
JANUARY 5, 2023

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YOUR MEMORY WE TREASURE.
LOVING YOU ALWAYS
FORGETTING YOU NEVER

LOVE EDDY, BRAD, KERRY, STEVE,
AND GIRLS

IN MEMORIAM

Murray Deckert

In loving memory of dear husband and father
Murray Deckert who passed one year ago
December 16, 2022.

Not a day goes by that we don't think of you.

A heartfelt late thank you to Perth EMS, Tavistock Fire Dept., Stratford Hospital Emergency doctors and nurses for going above and beyond to help. All your efforts were greatly appreciated.

Suzan, Trevor & Tracey, Travis & Cathy and Trent & Mackenzie.

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COMMUNITY —

92ND BIRTHDAY

Reta Schumm



Happy 92nd Birthday
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Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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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.

December 21: Happy birthday to Josiah Halliday (5) and Quinn Witzel (13).

December 22: Happy birthday to Roy Baer.

December 23: Happy birthday to Laurie Jurchuk and anniversary for Thomas Houghton and Karen Duffield (5th).

December 24: Happy birthday to Addison Doehn (5).

December 25: Happy birthday Paul Mohr (54), Kathleen Hofstetter (100 years young).

December 26: Happy birthday to Sydnie Hyde. Donald Mohr (96)

December 27: Happy birthday to Ella Brown (21).

December 28: Happy birthday to Benjamin Cole and Bruce Ward.

December 29: Happy birthday to Nathan Raymer (15), Ava Neumeister (16) and Irene Baker, and anniversary for Adam and Lesli Spylo (12th).

December 30: Happy birthday to Emily Dolson (6), Alex Ehnes (13) and Rylee Kaufman, and anniversaries for Bryan and Jennifer Weldrick (17th) and Ian and Chelsea McMillan (11th).

December 31: Happy birthday to Hailey Ropp (4), Jane Elzinga and anniversary for Trevor and Stephanie Shantz (15th).

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.

December 12-19, 2018 Edition (5 years ago)

About 167 people were served on Wednesday, December 5th at Quehl's Restaurant for the Annual Spaghetti Dinner for the Tavistock Assistance Program (TAP), raising a total of \$2,850.

Tavistock Pre-School students once again stole the hearts of family and friends as they presented their annual Christmas Concerts at Tavistock Mennonite Church on December 10 and 11. This year's skit was "The Littlest Christmas Tree" followed by songs of the season with jingling bells, clapping hands and stamping feet.

December 10-17, 2008 Edition (15 years ago)

Jean Scott celebrated her 100th birthday as family and friends gathered on Saturday in Tavistock. She was born Mary Catherin Jean Swan at Bright on December 16, 1908.

The Saputo Atom Reps dominated the Silver Stick Tournament in Wingham last week playing four game to bring home the title of Regional Silver Stick Champions. The team includes Brodie Ross, Jacob Bender, Trent Jones, Sam Bauman, Grant Bickle, Zach Berg, Hayden Ramseyer, Jason Winhold, Jacob Bau-

man, Michael Johnson, Kirkland Ramseyer, Alexander Francis, and Gibson Lamond.

The Tavistock Public School girls' volleyball team continued their winning ways and became champions of the Thames Valley District School Board recently in London. The team includes Jenny Newcombe, Marlee Junker, Jordan Tomkins, Rachel Knetchel, Maddy Zehr, Taylor Wagler, Kristen Lupton, Ashley Smulders, Hannah McLaren, Emma Bender, Kaylee Kaufman, and Lacey Jantzi.

Scotiabank Tavistock has once again been able to deliver the Christmas bounty to dozens of people during the holiday season with the help of many, many Tavistock residents. Now in its eighth year, the bank's toy and clothing drive was able to provide Christmas gifts and much needed clothing for six families through the Woodstock Children's Aid Society. Branch Manager Phil Schaefer and employees loaded two vans on December 11 to be delivered to their Woodstock office.

December 16-23, 1998 Edition (25 years ago)

The primary classes of Tavistock Public School, Grades K-3, presented their annual Christmas program on Wednesday evening, December 16th. Ms. Trish Elcombe directed the all-class choir in presenting "The Little Bell That Could Not Ring".

Students of Tavistock Public School rallied their Christmas spirit recently to collect non-perishable food items to be donated to

the Salvation Army of Woodstock's annual Christmas food drive. In total, 1189 pieces were collected.

The Scotiabank branch in Tavistock held their official opening on Friday, December 18th.

December 19, 1973 Edition (50 years ago)

The Tavistock Rotary Club Christmas Party was transferred to the Memorial Hall, and it was bigger and better than ever with 200 sitting down to a turkey dinner. After each Rotarian had introduced his guests, the Schwartzentruber family, missionaries on furlough from Brazil, brought Silent Night and Away in a Manger to the group in Portuguese. It was a fine gesture along with description of Christmas in their adopted country, with the same Santa Claus but dressed in lighter costume owing to the hot season.

A delicious Christmas dinner was served by the Princess Elizabeth Women's Institute to 43 members and guests of the Tavistock Women's Institute. The Christmas meeting was held in the Library hall on Tuesday, December 11.

At the seventh annual meeting of the Tavistock Union Cheese and Butter Ltd., held in the Memorial Hall on Friday night, members were addressed by MPP for Perth, Hugh Edighoffer. Mr. Edighoffer told the members, "You are shareholders in the government and if we all give a little more of ourselves, we will receive just a little more."

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COMMUNITY —

About 40 participants make it out to Wellesley Jingle Run

By Veronica Reiner

About 40 participants came out to the Wellesley Jingle Run, which took place on a warmer-than-usual day on Saturday, December 9.

As published in last week's Gazette, the event raised \$805, which was split between the Wellesley & District Lions Club and the Woolwich Counselling Centre.

"The very first year that we did it was the biggest because it was during COVID and nothing else was interfering with people's schedules," said organizer Shauna Johnston. "So since then, it's been around the same number."

The 40 or so participants this year were similar numbers to the year before. The first year, there were about 70 participants, said Shauna. The event has gone on for the past four years.

Normally, the event is held around the end of November, but this year was held later due to the conflicting schedules of participants. "It worked out, because when you plan this so early, you could end up with lots of snow and ice on the sidewalks," said Shauna. "This year, it was green and dry with no slipping hazards."



Jingle Run participants made the event more festive by dressing in their best Christmas attire.

Runners did a different-than-usual route. The three kilometre and five kilometre runs went along the same route this year, unlike in previous years, where they were done in different directions. "I think that having the routes going along in the same direction for the three kilometres didn't look as sporadic," commented Shauna.

Shauna added that she got mugs made up with the Wellesley Jingle Run logo on it, and gave those to participants. "Every participant gets entered into a raffle draw, and local businesses donate the raffle prizes. So Mike's Tavern, Schmidtsville, and Cedar Rose Homes, they all donate gifts that people randomly win," she said. "We had about 12 local businesses participate."

Maples Home for Seniors donate to local School

By Gary West

Students at Sprucedale Public School in Shakespeare were the recipients of cash to support the school's "snack bowls ready" program.

The Maples Home for Seniors Executive Director, Joan Hergott, said every year they partner with their parent company, Caressant Care, to donate \$500 to the "snack basket program" at area schools.

Last year Tavistock Public School students were the recipients.

With this year's donation, Destiny Baker said, students will always have a chance to have food available to them with no questions asked.

Ms. Cairncross, principal at Sprucedale, says the Shakespeare and Tavistock communities are so giving throughout the year and she thanked Joan Hergott and Maples for the nourishment support this time of year.



Front row, Sprucedale students include from left, Savya Hobson, Sophie Herlick, Taylor Gauler, Aira Klooster and Sloan Bender. Back, Ms. Cairncross (principal), Joan Hergott (Maples - Executive Director), Destiny Baker (snack bowls ready), Nicole Zandstra (school office manager).

Christmas Worship

**For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given...**

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Welcome!

At This Time Of Year...

Thoughts turn to loved ones, both past and present,
Of happy childhood memories
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Remembering always their kindness and love.
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COMMUNITY —

Church groups sing for peace in the Middle East

By Gary West

While there was a winter wind chill on Tuesday, it did not dampen the spirits of church members from many churches in the Tavistock area, who gathered in the morning in the front of the post office, to sing for "peace" in the Middle East.



A group of Tavistock church members, lead by Ruth Steinman, sang for peace in the Middle East on Tuesday in Tavistock.

Over various cities and towns in Canada, events were being held not only in Tavistock, but in Abbotsford, Nelson, Winnipeg, Waterloo, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, and Toronto.

They were joined by thousands more in the United States, who are singing for a cease-fire, and an end to the occupation in Gaza, and it was the largest Christian lead day of action, since the violence began on October 7.

Opening and welcoming words came from Executive Director of MCC Canada, Rick Cober-Bauman.

He reminded the group, that as disciples of peace, we have no choice, but to speak up against the death and destruction in the holy land.

He said "church members all know that ongoing violence will not help the hostages Hamas took on October 7th - get home, but know that Israeli carpet bombing saves no one."

Sam Ramer, of a group known as Mennonite Action spoke on the 20,000 that have already been killed in Gaza that now lays in ruin.

"With over 80 per cent of the population displaced, the healthcare system has collapsed, and those who are still alive in Gaza face, dehydration, starvation, and

illness, which also includes thousands of children."

Interviewed after, Ramer stated it is impossible for him to be here and not reflect on the story of Nahida Antoun and daughter Samar, who were shot and killed inside the Holy Family Parish in Gaza three days ago. One was killed while carrying the other to safety. Seven more were shot trying to protect others in the compound.

He said "the Gaza Christian community, one of the first Christian communities in the world, is on the verge of extinction."

He also said, "in October, the Palestinian Christian community, put out a call to action to Western churches. This call came after an Israeli airstrike on a historical Greek Orthodox church in Gaza, leaving 18 killed, and even more injured and buried under the rubble."

The call reminded the Western Christian churches of Isaiah chapter 1, verse 17, that said "learn to do right, and seek justice, defend the oppressed, and that should be the mission of the group and all the groups who sang in unison for peace across the country and throughout the U.S."

May the Peace and Joy of Christmas be With You Today and Throughout the New Year.



~ from the Jon Witzel Team



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Merry Christmas

from Tavistock Men's Club,
President: Ken Kropf

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Romans 15:13

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COMMUNITY —

Wellesley to conduct survey on what to do with community centre

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

Now that the new Wellesley Township Recreation Centre is partially opened, Wellesley Township is conducting a survey to help determine what will happen with the original arena at 1,004 Catherine Street.

The property is about 16 acres in size and includes the arena, community centre, old Wellesley Fire Hall, ball diamonds, playground, splash pad, skateboard park and soccer fields. The land south of the potential Maple Leaf Street extension will stay recreation land, and the land to the north (about three acres) could be developed for another use.

There are currently no set or approved plans for the property. The township plans to begin a comprehensive review of the property at the start of 2024.

The survey will be available as of January 4, 2024 until February 1, 2024. After a review of the results, the township, along with consultants where necessary, plans to:

- Develop a few concepts and options for the property,
- Present and seek public feedback on the concepts/options at one or more public engagement meetings, and
- Report back to council members on what they heard from the public.

Based on the results of the public engagement process and staff recommendations, council will be in a better position to make an informed decision about what to do with the land moving forward. This process will take a significant amount of time and planning and will not be completed in 2024.

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LOW KMS - 55,509 KM

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\$39,495 + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 30,964 KM

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COMMUNITY —

Snowmobile volunteers are getting Perth County trails ready

By Gary West

There are volunteers in the Perth County area who like to think positively about winter activities.

Pictured are members of the North Easthope Snowmobile Association, who were busy installing orange "trail markers" on the weekend, beside Road #106, hoping for snow that will get their snow machines humming.

They were out on their four-wheelers setting up the winter trail to keep everyone safe, while running their machines, once snow arrives.

They were, at the same time, thanking all landowners and farmers for allowing their sport to happen in a safe and organized way.

The approaches at the roadways they will travel across, which include stop signs and trail maps, were installed



From left, Greg Ankenmann, Danny Schurink, Nathan Brenneman, Brad Wetlaufer, Bo Schurink, Alex Van Klaveren, and Kayde Eichler. Absent is Tooke Zehr. (Photo credit: Gary West)

by volunteers three weeks ago. As the markers were being sledged into the frost-free ground, the group

could be heard singing "Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow!"

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. What did the Three Wise Men bring as gifts?
2. In the song "Jingle Bells", what kind of sleigh is mentioned?
3. What brings Frosty the Snowman to life?
4. Who plays Elf in "Elf"?
5. "All I Want For Christmas Is You" is sung by who?
6. Which country does eggnog originate from?
7. Under which type of plant are people supposed to kiss?
8. Where does Santa Claus live?
9. How many sizes did the Grinch's heart grow?
10. In the song "12 Days of Christmas" what was given on the 11th day?

Answers found on page 42

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Tuesday December 26th,
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Merry Christmas from all of us at

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SPORTS —

Royals above .500 after four-point weekend

By Lee Griffi

For the first time this season Tavistock has a winning record after a pair of wins in Ontario Elite Hockey League action this weekend.

The Royals avenged a 9-4 drubbing at the hands of Minto last Friday in Palmerston with a 5-3 win over the 81s on home ice Saturday. Jeremy Munro's fifth of the season opened the scoring as the teams were tied at one after 20 minutes. Tavistock struck twice early in the second on goals from Matt Zilke, his fourth, and Collin Hartwick. Jon Jutzi earned an assist on Munro's goal, his first point as a Royal in his debut. Hartwick scored the game-winner, his second of the period and fifth of the campaign, to give the home team a 4-2 lead after two frames. Minto pulled to within a goal in the third but Drew Gerth scored a powerplay marker with 46 seconds remaining to seal the win after an 81s too many men on the ice penalty. Frank Boal stopped 35 of 38 shots to earn the win between the pipes.

On Sunday afternoon's Kids Day in Tavistock, the Royals jumped out to a 6-0 lead on Lucknow and led 7-1 going into the second intermission on the way to a 10-2 victory. Trevor Sauder led the

offensive barrage with three goals and an assist. Jeremy Munro and Sean Leslie each scored twice while Deven Kropf had three assists. The Royals outshot the Lancers 50 to 23.

Royals coach and general manager Brad Stere said the weekend was just what they needed. "We desperately needed a big weekend and our guys responded. It is always tough when you're the defending champs and you've had that high and teams are looking to boost their confidence by beating you. It is a very competitive league, and all the teams are a challenge every night."

He added picking up former semi-pro Jon Jutzi will add a new pillar to the team as they head toward the playoffs. "Acquiring him was big for us. He is a big talented defenseman with a very good pedigree. It's always great when you can get a hometown guy back playing and Jon will help us in the last few games of the season and into the playoffs. We are excited to get into this last month of the season and then have a good run in the playoffs."

Notes...Jutzi has an impressive hockey resume. The 32-year-old from Tavistock played three seasons with the GOJHL's Elmira Sugar Kings before heading to



Kid's Day Winners - Benson Hodgson shows off his Howies Hockey Tape bag (left) while Ryson Ramseyer holds his signed Tavistock Royals stick.



Riley Witzel (centre holding the box) shows off his new Gycopter Hoverboard with friends and teammates.

the British Columbia Hockey League in Powell River. He spent four seasons on a scholarship at Minnesota State University before a three-year stint in the East Cost Hockey League with four different teams...The Royals collected donations

for the Tavistock Assistance Program (TAP) on Saturday night. They were able to collect approximately \$800 in gas and grocery gift cards, as well as cash to help local people in need.

PJHL Roundup: Firebirds move closer to Navy Vets

By Lee Griffi

New Hamburg swept a pair of weekend games and are just four points behind South Doherty Division-leading Woodstock. The Navy Vets do have a game in hand.

The Firebirds jumped out to a 4-0 lead against Norwich at home Friday night. Owen Fischer scored his nineteenth and twentieth goals of the season while Owen Bruder and Jake Thompson added singles. The Merchants made it 4-1 before Justin McManus added an insurance marker late in the second.

In Tavistock on Saturday the Braves roared out to a 3-0 first-period lead on goals by Trent Davies, Ethan Sharpe, and Nicholas Hambly, his first of the season. Matt Domm gave New Hamburg some momentum heading into the break with a goal

at the 19:59 mark and from there it was all Firebirds. Tyler Reid scored the game-winner 13 minutes into the third on a feed from Fischer. Bruder and Justin McManus also found the back of the net in a game that saw New Hamburg outshoot Tavistock 49-26. Liam O'Leary took the loss in net despite making 45 saves.

The Braves did manage a split of their pair of weekend games thanks to a 4-2 home-ice victory over Paris on Friday. After a scoreless first Tavistock found the back of the net three times in the second off the sticks of Carter Arseneault, Jabob Reid-Brant, and Trent Davies. Stephen Peppas, with his ninth, made it 4-1 midway through the third. Jacob Roach added two assists and James Hopper stopped 35 of 38 shots to earn the victory.

Tavistock General Manager Jordan Zehr

said his team definitely had a letdown after building a lead against New Hamburg. "We obviously did a great job getting off to a fast start scoring 3 quick goals in the first 5 minutes. We took our foot off the gas and didn't keep the 0-0 mindset we like to have all game long. We took some penalties and let them get some momentum back going into the second." Zehr added the game was one of the team's poorest efforts in a very long time, "outside of O'Leary who battled all game."

The top three teams in the division are all solid defensively, but the Braves have scored 20 goals less than the top two. Zehr is confident that will improve. "I wouldn't say I'm worried about it. Of course, we would like to get our goals for average up, but I think that will come if we keep working on playing within our system." He added despite the split between the top three

and bottom three teams in the Doherty, he's still expecting a competitive post-season. "Not really any surprises this year. I think this year more than ever it's been a balanced division from top to bottom, obviously credit to Woodstock for the first half they have had but down the stretch and into the playoffs I think seeding and first-round playoff matchups will be very competitive, and exciting to watch."

Applejacks fall to Navy Vets

Wellesley's lone weekend game was a 5-3 loss in Woodstock to the division leaders. The Navy Vets led 2-0 after 20 minutes but the Applejacks would score the first three goals of the second thanks to a pair from Owen O'Donnell and a single by Carson Wicke but that was all the offense they could put together. Isiah Katsube chipped in with a pair of assists for Wellesley.



SPORTS —

Wilmot's pickleball program grows rapidly since its start

By Veronica Reiner

The Wilmot township-run pickleball program has grown rapidly since its inception in May 2018.

George Schertzer, a facilitator who has been a member of the program since the beginning, said it started out with around eight to 10 members, and four core players. Now, there are about 30 members that come out weekly, and 163 people total who have signed up.

"It's an easy sport to pick up. It's easier than tennis, or badminton," noted George, on the draw of pickleball.

"I think how pickleball started was for older people, and it was a sport that they could start, and do and move," said another member and facilitator, Sue Wagler. "Now it's taken off and that's why it's gone through the generations. Some nights I've had my grandkids here."

Both described the atmosphere as cooperative rather than competitive. As facilitators, they help new members understand the rules of pickleball. "We go over the rules, and we bring them out here, and they learn and

play," explained George. "Some are better than others; for some, it takes a little longer."

All sorts of participants sign up for the programs, with ages ranging from 30s to 80s; in addition, a variety of players from different skill levels have signed up, from beginner level up to competitive.

The majority of participants come from the Wilmot area, but there are some that attend from outside the township boundaries, such as Waterloo.

When the program started in 2018, it took place on Monday afternoons with a one-and-a-half hour timeslot. The township has since added Wednesday evenings in November of the same year. In 2019, timeslots were increased to two hours each. Over the past year, township staff have expanded both timeslots to three hours in response to increased demand.

"The sense of community within the pickleball participants is a strong connection. Participants show up weekly (or sometimes to both timeslots) and want to help," noted Donna Kells, the

township's manager of communications and strategic initiatives.

"They have a sense of ownership of the program, and they want to assist with the setup and getting the courts organized and ready. They are familiar with each other and know each other by name."

She added that the township's focus is to always create an environment where there is fun and healthy competition.

Some of the benefits of participating in the pickleball program that staff are seeing firsthand include reduced stress and boosted well-being, improved balance and coordination skills, increased social engagement, an opportunity to be physically active in the community, and a safe space for social interactions and to become part of a community.

The program is offered Monday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesday evenings from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the St. Agatha Community Centre, located at 1791 Erb Street in St. Agatha.



Attendees of the pickleball game at the St. Agatha Community Centre on Monday, December 18 include Jack Alerderia, Rick Yeung, Brenda Huschka and Ed Wagler. (Photo credit: Veronica Reiner)



Adam Schwartzentruber and Lois Syroteuk during a pickleball match. (Photo credit: Veronica Reiner)

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SPORTS —

Local grandparents excited to watch granddaughter compete in World's

Glen and Rhoda Baechler of Tavistock are proud of their granddaughter, Jessie Pellerin of Bowmanville, Ontario for being selected to play on Canada's National Women's Under-18 hockey team. Pellerin plays hockey for Durham West Lightning's U22 team. She will be leaving for Zug, Switzerland on December 29 to compete in the 2024 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship. Jessie just turned 17.

"Our love and prayers and best wishes to Jessie as she makes the trip with her teammates and parents and brother. Go Canada Go!" her grandparents said.

Canada is in Group A in the Championship tournament along with Czechia, Finland and Germany. The Canadians open the tournament against Germany on January 6 at 2 p.m. They will also face Czechia on January 7 at 2 p.m., before their preliminary-round finale against Finland on January 9 at 2 p.m.



Jessie Pellerin proudly shows off her Team Canada gear as she prepares to represent our country in the 2024 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship.

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COMMUNITY —

Christmas colours on the New Hamburg waterwheel



The New Hamburg waterwheel lit up with Christmas coloured themes downtown on December 7. (Photo credit: Lou Divita)



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Pet of the Week



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Our pet of the week is Wednesday, a former barn cat now living her spoiled life in Wellesley! Her favourite things are Churu treats, pom poms and watching the leaves fall.

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



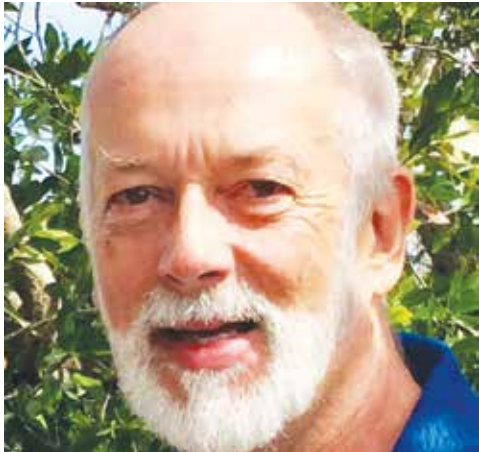
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TRAVEL —

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The imaginary barrier to travel



By Paul Knowles

Last month, I spent a few days in Ottawa, attending the annual congress of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC). I was there in my role as President of the Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC). I know, why are organizations so fond of acronyms... TIAC, TMAC, YIKES? I digress.

I had one job – I was there to present the award my organization sponsors, to the Travel Media Professional of the Year, and all three finalists were members of TMAC. I was very proud of my friends.

But the rest of the time, I could just sit and listen to a raft of excellent speakers. And one theme came up, again and again – the impact of negative news on travel.

There can be bad news. Wildfires in many Canadian provinces, for instance. But the point was made, again and again, that major media reports about wildfires in British Columbia or the Northwest Territories failed to identify where the danger was – and equally importantly, where it wasn't. And after the danger faded, even in the affected areas, none of the major media bothered to mention that it was now open for visitors. They didn't report the fact that, for the health of the economies of those areas, it was essential that visitors return.

So... a lot of potential visitors didn't visit. And that, in our post-pandemic world where tourism businesses are trying to claw their way back into viability, was very bad news.

The truth of this struck me even harder in the first week of December, when I learned of the murders of Canadian businesspeople and environmental pioneers, Daniel Langlois and Dominique Marchand. You may even have been following this story – Daniel and Dominique were the visionary developers of the luxury, off-the-grid Coulibri Ridge resort on the island of Dominica (not to be confused with the Dominican Republic). They were killed by a hitman who shot them and then burned their car, with their bodies inside.

A neighbour who had a legal dispute with the couple has been charged with hiring the hitman, who has also been charged. Both are in custody, and will appear in court in March.

This crime shocked me, especially because I spent several days with Dominique and Daniel, just a year ago. They had invited me – with four other travel writers – to stay at Coulibri Ridge. The place was, to say the least, astonishing.

But more amazing were these two people. Not only had they demonstrated that it was possible to build an entirely sustainable luxury resort, a place that actually improves the environment, but they had created and supported foundations that are working to restore coral reefs, they have built a school in the local community, they employ dozens of local people (including all the workers who built Coulibri Ridge), and much more. All Dominica is mourning their deaths.

All Dominica is also worried that potential visitors will see these headlines, conclude that their magical island is not a safe place, and choose to go somewhere else.

And that's why I had to write this piece. Just as all of B.C. was not destroyed in forest fires, so all of Dominica is not now closed to visitors because two lunatics apparently committed a horrible crime against neighbours.

Yes, there was a ghastly murder in Dominica, just as there are murders in Toronto, Waterloo Region, and once upon a time, in the house next door to my parents' bucolic rural residence in Elgin County. But the moral of the story



The view of a volcano, from one of the pools at Coulibri Ridge.

is such isolated happenings should not provide the paint with which we cover entire communities, let alone countries.

Dominica is still open, ready to charm visitors. So are British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. So are Canada's Maritime provinces, even though we mostly hear about storms or, there too, fires.

So is the area around Fort Myers and Sanibel Island in Florida, which recovered from 2022's Hurricane Ian in a miraculously short time, as I saw only six months after the storm.

At TIAC, the point was made that, due to global warming, there probably will be more extensive fire seasons in Canada in the coming years. And when it comes to person-to-person violence, there is no lack of reports from around the world. We do need to travel smart.

So the key, fellow travellers, is to do some homework before you plan to go anywhere. If an unspoiled Caribbean island is on your bucket list, don't make a decision based on news reports of an isolated incident – check out Dominica. Contact a travel agent and ask... or query the Dominica tourism organization. You will get honest answers – and then, you can decide, based on fact, not on dramatic but narrow-focused news coverage.

If Florida is your fancy, don't write off the Gulf Coast because the news reporters didn't believe "recovery" makes as good a story as "disaster." The same goes

for all those areas in Canada where our



Daniel Langlois and Dominique Marchand, at their beloved Coulibri Ridge resort. Photo taken by Paul Knowles, one year ago.

Canadian reporters falsely blanketed entire provinces as disaster areas.

I am very sad about the horrific deaths of two people I liked and I admired. But that will in no way discourage me from revisiting the island that they had fallen in love with.

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.



The unspoiled beauty of Dominica.



Knocked in pieces by Hurricane Ian, the bridge to Sanibel Island from Fort Myers was rebuilt in a month!

COMMUNITY —

Tim Hortons supports local school snack program with holiday cookies

By Gary West

If Tavistock and area coffee drinkers were lucky enough to get in on the one week of holiday cookies from Tim Hortons a few weeks ago, you might have also realized you were helping feed students healthy snacks at Tavistock's Public School.

The Holiday Cookie campaign raised \$2,263, which goes to support the nutritional snack offerings at the village's public school.

Organizers of the program were appreciative of the support from store owner Jeff Walker and general manager Melissa Hebert as they were at the store last week to present the cheque to support the student nutrition program.



Presenting a \$2,263 cheque from left, Aysha Nanasi, Danielle Francis (snack coordinators), Jill Shushkewich (school principal), Laura Harold (snack coordinator), Jeff Walker (store owner), Melissa Hebert (GM) and Steve Parker (Tavistock's Store Manager), holding thank you notes from students at the school, saying "thank you for caring" to Tim Hortons.



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024

December 21st	December 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th	January 6th	January 10th	January 15th
Get cozy in the Active Living Centre in the Wilmot Rec Complex! From 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., the holiday classic "White Christmas" will be played. Hot chocolate can be purchased for \$2. Registration is not required.	Full Beginner Driver Education Course From 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Wilmot Recreation Centre. Give someone you love the gift of safe driving. Hosted by Treadz Driving Academy, info@treadza.ca . Classroom and online courses available, practical hands on training. Register online at www.treadza.ca .	Sprucedale Public School Bottle Drive To help support the Grade 8 class trip to Camp Celtic. Drop off location is the Shakespeare Optimist Club donation, open from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Curbside pickup available. Leave empties at the road and they will be picked up.	Community Care Concepts lunch Taking place at 1,000 Maple Leaf Street in Wellesley at 12 p.m. Community Care Concepts invites you to join us for lunch and fellowship. Cost is \$14. Must register by January 5 by calling 519-664-1900 to toll free 1-855-664-1900.	Blood Drive Taking place at Wellesley Community Centre at 1,000 Maple Leaf Street, from around 3 p.m. until about 8 p.m. Booking times are available on www.blood.ca .
December 25th Community Christmas Dinner Will be alone or lonely this Christmas Day? Could you use some Christmas cheer? Wilmot Family Resource Centre (WFRC) has you covered. The dinner takes place at 12 p.m. noon at Steinmann Church, 1316 Snyder's Road West in Baden. Please register to attend by calling the WFRC at 519-662-2731.	January 3rd 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.	January 6th Trivia Night Do you have what it takes to be the ultimate trivia champion? This is your chance to show off your knowledge and have fun in a friendly competition. Doors open 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m. Cost to sign up, cash prizes. Taking place at the Shakespeare & District Optimist Club.	January 12th to January 14th 2024 Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament Taking place at the Wilmot Recreation Complex. Open to all local league U9, U11, U13, U15, U18 teams. Participation items and lunch for all players. Awards for the finalists and a guaranteed good time.	January 20th Applejacks Alumni Game NHL Scouts in attendance. Calling all Applejacks alumni players. Join in the alumni game at the Wellesley Rec Centre when they hang their banner. 6 p.m. is the alumni game, Jacks vs. Norwich at 7 p.m. Limited spots available. Contact Kevin Fitzpatrick fitz590@hotmail.com .

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email us at thewtgazette@gmail.com (200 words or less)

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COMMUNITY —

Shakespeare's Fire station gets a face lift

By Gary West

In Shakespeare last week, workers were getting the fire station ready for winter, with the installation of 12 new windows.

The newest company in town, that recently opened their village office, Linton Window and Door on Line 34, were happy to be chosen by the Perth East Fire Department to complete the job before the snow flies.



Window workers from left to right, Jon Duguay, Tyson Barnhardt, Tyler Rochon, and Jordan White.

Final days of 2023 Corn Harvest

By Gary West

With the corn harvesting season coming to an end, the Alex Hart family, from North Easthope township, in Perth County, were busy with only one day left before the corn harvesting equipment could be washed and put away till next year.



Alex Hart of Hart Family Farms last week, is shown combining 12 rows of corn at a time on the outskirts of Amulree, on the second to last day of the family's 2023 harvest.

Cameron Hart said that wheat, bean and corn harvest has gone well, with the weatherman co-operating for the final days of their harvest this year.



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COMMUNITY —

Holiday hours for Waterloo Region, Perth and Oxford counties

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Staff

Here is a list of municipal service changes for the Christmas and New Years' holidays:

Waterloo Regional Administrative Offices (Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge, and airport administrative offices) will be closed Monday, December 25, Tuesday, December 26 and Monday, January 1.

The Oxford County Administration Building will be closed for the holidays from December 25, to January 1, 2024, reopening on January 2, 2024.

The Perth County Administration Offices will be closed December 25, December 26 and January 1. The office will be open 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. on both December 22 and December 29. It will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on December 27 and December 28. **The Stratford-Perth Archives** will operate under these same hours.

Regional home child care is operating as specified by each provider. Offices will be closed December 25, 26 and January 1. For urgent issues, call 519-575-4400 and ask for Home Child Care.

Oxford County human services at Community Employment Services will be closed for the holidays from December 25 to January 1, 2024, reopening on January 2, 2024. For urgent matters, call 519-539-9800 and follow the prompts.

Welcome Spaces will be closed December 25, 26 and January 1.

Warming centres at 150 Main (Cambridge) and 150 Frederick (Kitchener) will be open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., including Saturday, Sundays, and holidays.

Grand River Transit will operate **winter holiday service** December 25 to January 7. GRT Customer Service Centres are closing early on December 24 and are closed December 25, December 26 and January 1. Check the **GRT website** for full details. All MobilityPLUS subscription trips are automatically cancelled on statutory holidays. Trips can be rebooked by calling 519-744-2241 seven days in advance.

Curbside waste: There will be no curbside waste collection on Monday, December 25 and January 1, 2024. During these two weeks, your collection day moves by one day:

- Monday collected on Tuesday
- Tuesday collected on Wednesday
- Wednesday collected on Thursday
- Thursday collected on Friday
- Friday collected on Saturday

For two weeks after Christmas Day, the region collects natural Christmas trees (which we chip into mulch). Cambridge and Waterloo transfer stations will be closed for residential access on December 25, 26 and January 1.

The Oxford County Waste Management Facility will be closed for the holidays on December 25, December 26, and January 1. Any bag tag purchases made online during this time will not be processed until offices reopen.

Region of Waterloo Library branches will be closed on December 25, December 26 and January 1. Branches will be open for regular hours on December 24, as well as December 27-31.

All Oxford County Library branches will be closed December 24 to

December 27 and December 31 to January 1, 2024. Any branches regularly open on December 28 to December 30, 2023 may have adjusted hours. For branch hours, please visit <https://www.oxfordcounty.ca/en/news/2023-holiday-hours.aspx>.

All of the county's online resources can be accessed 24/7 from home with your Oxford County Library card and PIN. If you have questions about your account please contact myaccount@ocl.net.

Seniors' Services administration will be closed December 25, 26 and January 1.

Sunnyside Wellness Centre will be closed December 25, 26 and January 1.

Community Alzheimer Day and Dinner programs and Young Onset Dementia Association will be closed from December 24 to January 1.

Seniors' Services Overnight Stay Program will be closed from December 24 to January 1.

Schneider Haus will be closed December 24 to 26 and January 1. **Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum** will be closed December 24 to 26 and January 1. **McDougall Cottage Historic Site** is closed for the season and will re-open on Family Day.

The Perth County Reading Room and Exhibit Gallery hours will be 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on December 22 and December 29; and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on December 27 and December 28.

Public Health clinics, including by-appointment vaccine clinics, are closed on December 25, 26 and January 1.

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The Wilmot Lions/Lioness Club extends a big, and sincere Thank You, to the entire Wilmot Community for the incredible support extended to our club, allowing our Lions / Lioness team, to continue to serve the important and essential needs within our community in 2023.

Our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a prosperous and enjoyable New Year to all our friends and neighbours.



As another year comes rushing in, we're grateful to be part of this fine community. Thank you to all of our friends and clients who make us feel so welcome here.

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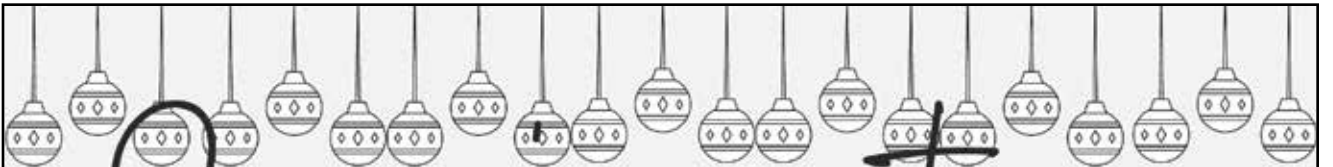
Prohibited driver charged after Wilmot Township collision

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Waterloo Regional Police are investigating a collision in Wilmot Township. Two vehicles were involved in the crash that occurred just before 6 p.m. on Monday near

the intersection of Huron Road and Sandhills Road. A Ford Escape travelling west on Huron Road was struck by a Honda Civic heading north. The driver of the Honda, a 66-year-old male, was transported to a local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. The driver of the Escape, a

63-year-old Kitchener female, was not injured. Area roadways were closed for approximately four hours. Police determined the female was a prohibited driver and was charged with operation of a conveyance while prohibited.



Season's greetings



May your world be filled with love and good cheer this holiday season.



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OPINION —

EXPERT ADVICE: *No Christmas in Bethlehem*



**By Chip Bender
RP(q)**

Apparently, Christians in Bethlehem have decided not to decorate their town for Christmas this

year to show their solidarity with the people engaged in the conflict raging in Israel-Palestine. On the one hand, it seems admirable for a group of people to recognize that the glowing lights of celebration could be seen as trivial or as an affront to the people experiencing the darkness and horror in that area of the world. On the other hand, it seems to feed into this perception that one is not allowed to display any pleasant emotions when suffering is also present.

People often think in binary terms, in which it is either day or night, good or bad, on or off. This type of mindset makes it

impossible to hold two seemingly opposing ideas at the same time, which, in turn, forces us to believe only one kind of emotion can be present in any situation. People grieving the loss of a loved one may feel guilty for their laughter when they know they should honour the departed one with tears and sadness.

Around Christmas, the same tension can also occur with emotions going in the opposite direction. The perception of Christmas being merry and bright is a pervasive one throughout our society. What happens when our own sadness and despair during this season bumps up against

the idea Christmas needs to be cheery and festive? Do we repress those unpleasant feelings because they seem inappropriate for the season?

The fact of the matter is seemingly contradictory emotions can co-exist. During the seasons of grief in our lives, we may occasionally experience laughter and delight. Likewise, during the holiday seasons, when we are expected to be joyful, we may experience a deep sadness. Experiencing emotions that seem contrary to the season is not a bad thing; it is human.

Pay attention to whatever emo-

tions are arising and allow them to be present and to be experienced as they arise. Longest Night services offered at this time of year give participants permission to grieve the losses that might be more acutely felt during this season. And even when there seems to be darkness surrounding us, it could still be appropriate to light a candle representing the potential for hope in even the darkest situations.

(Chip Bender is a counsellor at the Interfaith Counselling Centre in New Hamburg. Opinions expressed are those of the author.)

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year From
The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

We will not be publishing a paper on December 28th or January 4th. The first paper in the new year will be published on January 11th. The Gazette team wishes you a safe and happy holiday!

COMMUNITY —

Westwood Physiotherapy Unveils New Facility

East Zorra-Tavistock welcomed a new addition to its healthcare landscape as Westwood Physiotherapy unveiled its doors to the community in a memorable grand opening event on Saturday, Dec 9th 2023.

The event, held at their modern facility located at 18 Hope St W, was a celebration of community wellness and a testament to the dedication of the clinic's team to support the health and mobility of East Zorra-Tavistock residents.

The highlight of the day was the ribbon-cutting ceremony, officiated by esteemed Mayor Phil Schaefer, who honored the occasion with their presence and emphasized the importance of accessible healthcare services within the community. Mayor Schaefer commended Westwood Physiotherapy's commitment to supporting the health and well-being of East Zorra-Tavistock's residents.

The celebratory atmosphere was further enhanced by the presence of community members, families, and local leaders who came together to mark the clinic's inauguration. Attendees had the opportunity to tour the facility, meet the experienced professionals behind Westwood Physiotherapy, and learn about the diverse range of services offered to support



The grand opening event at Westwood Physiotherapy.

physical health and wellness.

"We're thrilled to be a part of the East Zorra-Tavistock community and to bring our expertise and personalized care to our

neighbors," expressed Malkeet Marahar, Clinic Director at Westwood Physiotherapy Tavistock. "Our goal is to not only provide exceptional physiotherapy services but to

foster a sense of community well-being and support."

The grand opening event was not only a celebration but also a platform for giving back to the community. The first 25 guests received \$50 gift vouchers, adding an element of excitement to the day. Additionally, various special giveaways delighted attendees, creating a joyful and engaging atmosphere throughout the event.

"We are immensely grateful for the warm reception and support we received from the community," Malkeet Marahar continued. "It's our privilege to serve East Zorra-Tavistock and contribute positively to the health and vitality of our residents."

Westwood Physiotherapy's grand opening was indeed a promising start, signaling their commitment to becoming an integral part of the community's healthcare journey. The clinic aims to continue fostering wellness, promoting mobility, and making a meaningful difference in the lives of East Zorra-Tavistock residents.

For more information about Westwood Physiotherapy and their range of services, contact them at 226-33-8116 or email tavistock@westwoodphysiotherapy.ca. Visit their website at www.westwoodphysiotherapy.ca.



Wishing Family, Friends,
Clients, and Colleagues a

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Happy Holidays

I would like to acknowledge all the friends, family members and clients who supported myself and my business this past year and throughout the last 18 years. I value the opportunity to serve my clients and look forward to the opportunity to work with you in the future! I cherish the friendships made and business relationships formed along the way. My sincere gratitude to you all. Wishing you and your family much happiness throughout the holiday season and into 2024.

Wishing you a Happy Holiday Season from our Home to Yours

*Alison, Randy, Ella, Nofa, Dante, Chris, Nicole, Kelsey
Hershie, Nofa*

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COMMUNITY —

Dr. Alicia Cundall spoke at Grace United Church in Tavistock

By Gary West

Area church members who filled the auditorium at Grace United Church in Tavistock last week for the high noon luncheon. Members were treated by a medical doctor, not for health issues, but for her beautiful singing voice - her own harp accompaniment, and a talk on her humanitarian work in Tanzania.

Dr. Alicia Cundall, who practices family medicine at Tavistock's Community Health, was invited to sing and give a talk on "EM Global."

The young Doctor, focused her presentation on inspiring service initiatives at both global and local levels.

EM Global is a registered, not for profit organization that aims to build capacity in emergency medical care in low resource settings.

Dr. Cundall is its founder and director. The group is a collaboration of physicians in Tanzania, Canada and the US.

The focus is on skills-based training courses (e.g. in portable ultrasound), as well as providing scholarships for local Tanzania physicians to obtain residency in emergency medicine.

In Tanzania, a country of 59 million people, there are currently only 61 trained ER physicians. She says "they are working to change that staggering statistic." For more information including how you can support, she would like everyone to go to www.emglobal.ca.



Dr. Alicia Cundall sang her own version of 100,000 angels while playing her harp and later spoke on the humanitarian work of EM Global, a not for profit organization she founded and currently directs.

emglobal.ca.

Alicia also spoke about a local initiative she has been supporting here in Tavistock. It is called the junior youth empowerment program.

"The program helps young people ages 10 to 14 to find their voice and to use their talents and energies to be of service to their local community and to their world," she said.

The group meets twice weekly and is run by two fantastic youth role

models according to Cundall. They are Ms. Carmel Farahani, and Ms. Isabella Mckay.

While this is the first junior youth group in Tavistock, the local group here, is one of thousands of similar groups across Canada and around the world. To learn more about this program go to www.junioryouth.ca or contact Alicia at aliciaruhicundall@gmail.com.

'Tis the Season!

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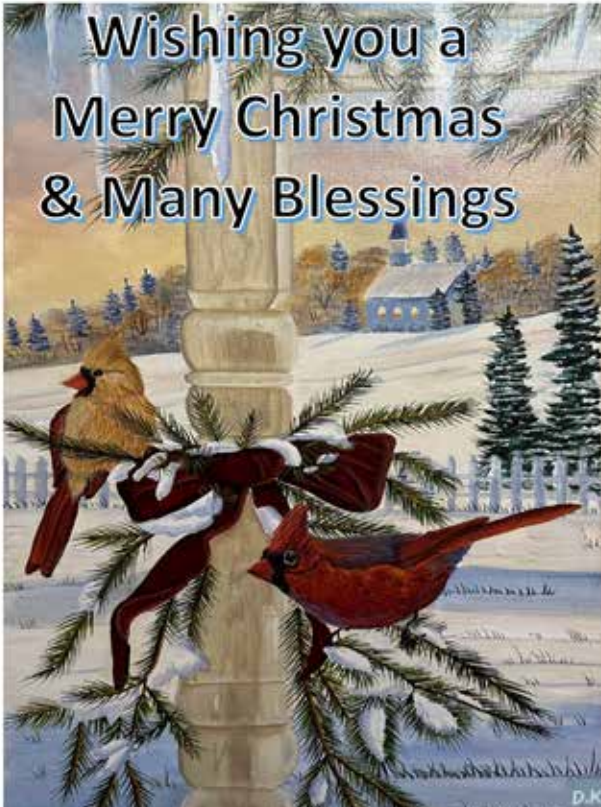
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COMMUNITY —

Building in Perth East is on an upward climb

By Gary West

There could be areas of southwestern Ontario that are witnessing a slow down in the building of agricultural structures including livestock barns, due to higher interest rates and a slowdown in the overall economy. That could also include residential homes.

The community of Perth East is NOT in that position, according to its Mayor, Rhonda Ehgoetz.

According to Ehgoetz, "they are experiencing a great boom in building in both the agricultural sector and homes in their area, that includes the townships of North and South Easthope, Ellice, Mornington and the town of Milverton."

She says she feels that "Perth East is a great place for current businesses to expand and new businesses to come. The county welcomes them with open arms and is happy they call Perth East home. They are experiencing growth, and it is great for the economy of the area."

She feels "farmers, are expanding their businesses by building larger barns for their livestock, and acquiring more land for cash crops. New businesses find Perth East attractive, because of their central



With agricultural construction in Perth East on the rise, the manure tanks continue to increase in size north of Stratford on this progressive dairy farm.

location to major centres and highways".

Mayor Ehgoetz also says, "they have several inquiries every week of a business looking for a spot in Perth East or a current business looking to expand."

On the residential side of things, she says, "many new homes are being built, and homeowners are wanting to move to

smaller locations and Perth East offers that. She said people are close enough to commute to work and get to enjoy the small town atmosphere, and they are looking for a slower pace, and the community that cares, and she said their county offers all that and more."

Wesley Reidt, Perth East's chief building

official, backs her comments by showing figures with an increase in approval of building permits.

So far this year, they have issued 352 building permits, 95 of those permits being agricultural and 98 being residential. Year to date construction value is \$83,065,708.

He goes on to say last year, from January 1 to November 24 the figure was \$65,986,830, so we are up over \$17,000,000 year over year.

The building official goes on to say that specific to agricultural permits from January 1 to November 24 for both 2022 and 2023, they had \$32,910,222 in 2022 and \$37,931,664 in 2023, so they are up \$5,021,442 for 2023.

Residential building compared similarly and has permits valued at \$28,725,408 in 2023 and \$23,463,500 in 2022, having Perth up \$5,261,908 in 2023.

The building official concludes that overall, it has been a very busy year for construction in Perth East. He says they understand many municipalities in the region are experiencing a slower year with construction, but this was not the case in Perth East.



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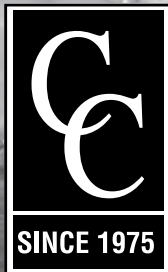
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Tavistock mom publishes children's activity book

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A young Tavistock mother has turned her stay-at-home with the kids time into a business venture. Kelli Groulx, a mother of two, has published a 72-page children's activity book called 'Fun at the Zoo' for children aged two to 10.

Groulx said being creative has always been a big part of her life, including art and writing. She explained the idea for the book is a result of several factors. "This came from being a stay-at-home mom and searching for ways that I could be creative and bring in some extra money. My kids also inspired me, mainly my two-year-old Ben, because he's just learning so much now, and I try and do little activities with him." The book offers activities like reading, writing, colouring, and drawing and she added it's something young siblings can enjoy working on together. Kelli and her husband Chris are also parents to seven-month-old Leo.

Kelli said the idea just kind of popped into her head one day. "I just kept creating page by page, coming up with more ideas. Ben recently started attending preschool, something Groulx said has given her more inspiration for further projects. "Dinosaurs are his favourite thing. I don't have any in the book, but I thought about doing a second edition with an

all-dinosaur theme." She added she is also looking at offering more books for different age groups with other themes and she's also started working on a baby milestone book.

Kelli utilized a free tool called Amazon KDP to publish the activity book, something she said made her work easy. "It's a free tool for small publishers to upload their books and they will publish it for you. They did the editing and all I paid for was the printing costs, and they take care of the shipping. I just had to upload my design and my ideas, then they showed me exactly what my book would look like." She took to social media to promote her book, something that is creating a bit of a buzz locally. "I had someone recognize me. They asked if I just wrote a children's book, so it's really weird." She has sold 31 books to date, a number she's pleased with. "I wasn't expecting to sell any if I'm being honest. I thought maybe my friends and family would support me, but 31 books is pretty good."

Groulx is a human resources professional by trade but isn't looking to go back into the field when she re-enters the workforce. "I loved it, but I don't think it's what I want to do for the rest of my life. I will go back to work eventually but I'm still not exactly sure what I want to do yet. This type of creative stuff is much more intriguing to me."



Tavistock resident and mother Kelli Groulx shows off her recently published children's activity book. It is available on Amazon for \$10.99.



Franklin & Donna Hinz

Do what makes you happy. Look upon what gives you joy. Listen to what lifts your spirit. Speak to those who warm your heart. Surround yourself with sights and sounds and people who make you smile during this 2023 Festive Season.

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If you are considering, either buyer or selling a house in the new year and would like more information on the buying or selling process, please call me to discuss.

From our family to yours, have a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year! Thank you for your support in 2023

Holiday Hours:
Saturday December 24th Open 8am - 5pm, Sunday December 25th - Closed
Monday December 26th - Closed, Saturday December 31st - Open 8am - 5pm
Sunday January 1st - Closed

Hot Deli will be closed at 2pm on December 24th & 31st for cleaning

OPINION —

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: *New Year, New Me*



By Veronica Reiner

A new year can bring about many changes.

That is the case for me, as I'll be departing from my current role as editor of the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette to pursue another opportunity.

I'm so grateful for all the con-

nections I've made over the past two-and-a-half years. I've reflected on all the changes the newspaper has undergone since I started in June 2021. First, long-time readers may remember the merger between the Wilmot Post (2020) and the Tavistock Gazette (1895) that occurred in October 2021.

This created what we know today as the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette, and combined a relatively newer paper with a century-old one. Further, the paper moved from a paid model to free, in order to make it more accessible to everyone.

I have loved writing stories that reflect the overwhelming generosity of the community - in particular, I wrote about two local experiences of kidney trans-

plants (New Hamburg's Jim Scott and Tavistock's Drew Wagler) that ended up saving their lives.

From covering the 2022 provincial election to writing the Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese (ABC) Festival guide (a festival I grew up attending) - there have been many meaningful and memorable moments over my tenure.

I was particularly proud when the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette won several Ontario Community Newspaper Association Awards, both in 2021 and 2022. Sometimes, when writing, it's not black-and-white, in order words... it's hard to know if you're doing the best job, but these awards always solidified in my mind that I was a competent writer.

In 2022, we won first place Best

COVID-19 Coverage out of 28 entries, second place Best Guest/Freelance Columnist out of 13 entries, and third place Best Website/Community Portal out of 15 entries (circulation under 9,999).

I've really appreciated connecting with my coworkers over a casual Schmidtsville lunch, including Sharon Leis, Gary West and Stewart Grant. These folks all care deeply for their community and have made my experience an amazing one.

Stewart, the publisher, has kept busy identifying areas that need a local newspaper, and creating one that effectively serves the community. Since I started, he has opened the Stratford Times, the Woodstock-Ingersoll Echo and the Goderich Sun. This pro-

vides a source for local people to get news relevant to them - while corporate companies shutter their print newspapers and cease local coverage.

Taking my place as editor will be Galen Simmons, who has over a decade of experience in journalism and graduated from one of Canada's most prestigious journalism programs - Carleton University in Ottawa. I'm confident he will do a great job.

As for me... once I get settled into these new changes, I am happy to continue writing stories for any of the papers, with a special attachment to the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette.

I hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Until next time!

Wishing you the Beauty, Blessings and Joy this Season Brings.



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Prayer to St. Jude May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Oh Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us; St. Jude worker of miracles, pray for us; St. Jude helper of the hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer nine times a day, by the eighth day this prayer will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised. S.F.

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Wanted

Two strong people to lift a hutch onto a buffet in my basement. 15 mins maximum. Tavistock. Call Jim 519 378 8556.

Wanted

Used greeting cards from the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's. Baby, Birthday, Get Well, Christmas etc. cards. 519-616-3379

Prayer to the blessed virgin (never known to fail)

Oh, most beautiful flower of Mt.Carmal fruitful vine, Splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the son of God. Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity, O star of the sea, help me and show me here in this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother, Oh Mary, Conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to thee. (three times).

Holy Spirit you who solve all problems, light all roads so that I can attain my goal you who gave me the Devine gift to forgive and forget all evil against me, I want in this short prayed to thank you for all things as you confirm once again that I never want to be separated from you the eternal glory. Thank you for your mercy towards me and mine. (The person must say this prayer three consecutive days. after Three days the request will be granted this prayer must be published after the favour is granted) C.V Jn31 Kevin Straus

NOTICE

Steinmann Mennonite Church Cemetery

Steinmann Mennonite Church has submitted by-laws to the Registrar of the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002. Any interested parties may contact Steinmann Mennonite Church at Tel 519-634-8311 for information, or to make copies. Bylaws or amendments may be reviewed or copied at 1316 Snyder's Rd West Baden Ontario.

These By-laws are subject to the approval of the Registrar, Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act 2002.

Telephone Bereavement Authority of Ontario 647-483-2645 or 1-844-493-6356



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CLOSED MONDAYS JAN THRU MARCH

Weekly Quiz Answers

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1) Gold, frankincense, and myrrh | 5) Mariah Carey |
| 2) One-horse open sleigh | 6) United Kingdom |
| 3) A magic hat | 7) Mistletoe |
| 4) Will Ferrell | 8) bThe North Pole |
| | 9) 3 sizes |
| | 10) 11 pipers piping |

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