

# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024

FREE

## EZT crossing guard may hang up her stop sign



Tavistock crossing guard Lea Wittig hands a candy cane to a student near Tavistock Public School. The 74-year-old said she was reprimanded by East Zorra-Tavistock as a result, something the township denies.

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Tavistock's most well-known crossing guard said she will likely resign her position after recent interactions with East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) Township employees.

Lea Wittig is famous for her antics at the corner of Maria and Adam Streets but after a recent township email that moved her post from the busiest crossing in Tavistock to the quietest one, she is ready to walk off the job. Normally she can be seen

hugging and high-fiving kids and playing music on a Bluetooth speaker to make the walk to and from school more enjoyable.

Wittig explained that being moved to another crossing was a form of punishment, something the township denies. She, along with her husband Kirk, met with EZT clerk Will Jaques and human resources director Jennifer Albrecht last Thursday afternoon at the Memorial Hall. She said she was reprimanded for handing out candy canes to children while off duty dressed as Mrs. Claus on the last day of school before the Christmas break. She said she was told it

put children's safety at risk.

"I was told they would give me my post back if I followed all the rules. I will be the first to admit I have not followed them. One of them is I cannot hug the kids, cannot touch them and I have been doing that. I am guilty," she said.

Wittig, who is paid for 15 minutes of work at a time, asked that if she did follow the rules while on paid time, could she then talk to, hug or high-five the kids while not working as a crossing guard. She said she

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## Wellesley Township launches survey on land use

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Now that the old Wellesley arena has been replaced by a new recreation complex, the township is looking for public input on what to do with the old barn and some surrounding property.

A large chunk of the old Wellesley arena and community centre lands located at 1004 Catherine St. was donated to the township in 1964 by the Wellesley North Easthope Agricultural Society. The facilities there have served the community for nearly five decades through renting the community centre or ice surface or enjoying a community event. The land south of the potential Maple Leaf Street extension will remain recreation land but the land to the north could be developed for another use.

Chief Administrative Officer Rik Louwagie said the township has no plans for the three acres that could be redeveloped.

"We are now beginning the first phase of a comprehensive review of the property. As a first step, we are asking residents through a high-level survey what they would or would not like to see happen with the portion of the lands north of Maple Leaf Street," he said.

The survey is available online at <https://www.wellesley.ca/en/living-here/new-recreation-land.aspx> until the end of the day Feb. 1.

Louwagie explained that at this point, the township is open to considering all avenues for development.

"This survey is very preliminary and is intended to gather feedback from residents of the township to assist council in determining options to explore further."

Once the survey closes, the next steps for the township will be to review the results then,

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**TIM LOUIS** Member of Parliament Kitchener-Conestoga

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# COMMUNITY —

## Popular crossing guard may leave post

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was given a flat-out no by Jaques.

"As long as I am employed by the township, I was told no. I am only allowed to do it if I invite them into my home."

The official word from the township tells a much different story than Wittig's. EZT CAO Karen DePrest provided written answers to several questions from the Gazette and said moving the crossing guard from her normal post was simply a way to cover all posts while Wittig is dealing with her health issues.

"As it pertains to the original matter, which was the re-assignment of Lea Wittig to an alternative location, the decision was made solely on ensuring there would be a regular, trained crossing guard at one of the township's busiest crossings in Ms. Wittig's absence while she is off on a self-confirmed medical leave into early 2024 since late November 2023," DePrest wrote. "Prior to this re-assignment between crossing guards, Ms. Wittig's husband had been acting as a temporary replacement at that corner."

DePrest also contradicts Wittig's statement surrounding off-the-job behaviour, saying there are no such rules in place.

"Municipal staff are not provided with any direction on how to manage themselves in any department, including crossing guards, within the scope of their personal lives and homes. However, it is understood that

when you are in your workplace, whether on duty or off, you should conduct yourself in accordance with the expectations of that workplace."

She explained that if a township employee went to their workstation on a Saturday to pick something up and ran into a co-worker or a member of the public, they would be expected to act as they would as if they were on duty.

Wittig said she asked EZT officials to fire her at the meeting last week, and she added that wasn't the first time.

"I told them at the meeting to fire me. I told them a year ago to fire me. An email came to me saying something about I am not supposed to hug the kids. I emailed back and said that'll be the day that I refuse a young child coming to me for a hug. And if that's wrong then maybe you should fire me," Wittig said.

The Gazette has obtained what's called a Guidance Bulletin for school crossing guards that states, "Do not have physical contact in any manner whatsoever with the children at your crossing" and "Do not give candy, etc. to children or let them reach into your pockets for anything."

The news has led to a firestorm of outrage by many parents and other members of the public.

"It's going to leave a big hole and it will hurt nobody but the kids," said Kelly Berg, whose

four-year-old son attends Tavistock Public School. "She's such a positive, uplifting personality to our community and those children. Now they're not going to have that."

Berg feels if there were any complaints about Wittig showing any type of love or warmth towards the children, the township should have brought it to her attention earlier.

"Does the original movement of her post have anything to do with the way she was displaying affection and care for the kids? Or was it what they said that she was putting the kid's safety at risk? That doesn't seem right," she said.

The township has not said if there were any complaints regarding Wittig's antics on the job.

Berg added she had never seen or heard of any parent upset with a hug from the 74-year-old. Wittig said the township did tell her there were complaints but didn't go into any specific details. In other words, people don't know if the objection came from parents, other members of the public or both.

"Doesn't she have the right to know what the complaint is? I'm sad for Lea. She loves her job, loves the children, and loves showing up for work every day. She goes above and beyond," added Berg.

Wittig appeared on CTV news to tell her story and following that she has been a

guest on several radio talk shows. When she is medically cleared to return to work, the township said they will have a follow-up meeting to discuss her availability and physical location including a return to her original post.

Wittig made it very clear to the Gazette that she would like her fellow crossing guards to be praised for their continued efforts as they perform their duties.

"They are all very good and do their jobs and keep the kids safe," she said. "They need to be recognized for that."



Dressed as Mrs. Claus, Tavistock crossing guard Lea Wittig hugs a parent at her post at the corner of Maria and Adam streets last month.

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COMMUNITY —

# Wellesley Township land use survey

Continued from page 1

in conjunction with consultants where necessary, develop concepts and options for the property. After that, presentations will be made and the public will have an opportunity to give their opinion on the options at one or more public-engagement meetings. Council will receive a report on what residents have to say.

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

The township is hoping to have a development plan in place sometime in 2025.

# Grant Haven gets back into farms



By Stewart Grant

Last week, Grant Haven Media got back to its roots in completing a transaction that brought two farm publications into the fold.

Effective Jan. 2, 2024, we acquired Norfolk Farms and Brant Farms, two newspapers that were founded by David Douglas of Waterford, Ontario. Mr. Douglas will remain with the newspapers for the next year as he plans for retirement and brings with him considerable knowledge and expertise that our team plans to soak up in the months ahead.

With the Norfolk and Brant publications, which are published quarterly and semi-annually respectively, we now have the beginning of a “farm division” within Grant Haven which I anticipate will grow and ultimately result in improved farm coverage here in the area, on top of the fine contributions that we already have from Gary West.

Something that we’ll be doing again this year is a special Farm section of the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette which will come out in March. Within this section, we’d like to focus on local stories of interest, including family farm features and

trends and innovations within the agriculture sector impacting area farmers. If you have ideas or nominations for interesting content in this edition, please reach out to Galen Simmons at galen@granthaven.com or call our office at 519-655-2341.

As I alluded to above, farming is where the name “Grant Haven” originated. Ironically, it was 81 years ago to the day, on Jan. 2, 1943, that my grandparents, Earl and Margaret Grant, bought their own farm near the Trafalgar Bridge in Fullarton Township. My grandfather told me that it was by good fortune that they had met a man by the name of Billy Nairn who agreed to give them a private mortgage (\$5,000 for the farm at 4 per cent interest) to allow them to buy the property that would become Grant Haven Farms.

My parents, Murray and June Grant, succeeded them as second-generation owners of Grant Haven Farms, which was honoured as a Master Breeder by Holstein Canada in the early 1990’s.

While I didn’t have the skillset or desire to continue the family tradition of farming, it does give me some pride and enthusiasm to see that Grant Haven will again have an association with the farming community.

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## COMMUNITY —

# Boil water advisory for Hickson residents ends

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Forty-eight hours after Southwestern Public Health issued a boil-water advisory, Hickson residents were once again able to use their tap water normally.

The advisory was issued on Jan. 4 due to the presence of bacteria in the water but, following two consecutive laboratory tests confirming the tap water is safe, the health unit informed residents.

Amy Pavletic, program manager of environmental health at the health unit, said municipal drinking systems are monitored by operators responsible for regular testing.

"They take samples routinely and if one comes back with any level of indicator

organisms or a potentially pathogenic organism, we will issue a boil-water advisory. It's what is in the water potentially, not necessarily what people are drinking or if someone is ill."

The health unit says one of the samples from Hickson did contain bacterial contamination. Pavletic said there are several possibilities as to the cause of the test result.

"It could be a sampling error, it could be contamination just at the local site. It's hard to know, but as soon as we get those results, we prioritize doing a boil-water advisory because we don't want to take any risks," she said.

She explained that if there was potential contamination that did get into the system, they would want people to know as

soon as possible.

The advisory was declared over once two tests came back negative over 48 hours as required by the Safe Water Act which was passed in 2002 following the e-coli outbreak in Walkerton that killed seven people and led to 2,300 people becoming ill. Public health also advises residents coming out of a boil water advisory to run their taps for five minutes.

"That's because people may not have been using their water as many people decide to use bottled water instead of boiling. The water would have been sitting there not used so it's good practice to let it run to make sure anything that could have potentially been in the water was flushed out," adds Pavletic.

From a communications standpoint, the

health unit has strong government guidelines to inform the public when an advisory is put in place following the tragedy in Walkerton. She said the county takes the lead on any water issues locally.

"The operators of the system are the ones responsible for notifying the users. In this case, it was a certain location that had 103 users and Oxford County is the operator of that system, so was required to tell users that a boil-water advisory was in place," she said.

She added that, from a public-health standpoint, if they are concerned not everyone will be notified or if there are restaurants, long-term care homes, or hospitals in the area, then the health unit would make those phone calls or do a news release themselves.

## Despite banner year, local corn harvest extended well into December



Matt Drummond is seen unloading shelled corn at his drying facility west of New Hamburg to bring the drying season at his farm to a close.

By Gary West

There are years when most crop farmers get to the middle of December and the corn harvest hasn't been completed thanks to the weather.

The summer and fall worked in most farmers' favour last year when compared to some years that may have been wetter than usual or when snow comes unexpectedly early.

Matt Drummond, who farms in the area between New Hamburg and Shakespeare, not only crops his own land but has now installed a weigh scale, an elevator, a corn-drying system, and stores other farmers' corn besides his own.

The local farmer and graduate of the University of Guelph is also a Pioneer

Seeds representative in the area and was asked about the most recent growing and harvesting season in comparison to past years.

"The corn crop was excellent (last) year as far as yields were concerned," Drummond said. "The test weights were down two to three pounds per bushel, on average, due to a cooler summer."

"For the most part, it was an ideal growing season for corn; not too hot and not too cold at night time with adequate moisture."

Shelled corn moistures were higher at the start of harvest time and farmers were glad there was not a killing frost until late October, which is ideal.

He says soybeans were average for the most part.



Even in the evening in darkness, unloading and drying continues at the Matt Drummond facility as the last corn is unloaded from this truck into the conveyor feeding the corn dryer.

White mould was noticeable in most fields last year due to the heavy rains at times. Yields in the area were usually mid 60 bushels per acre for most of the customers that he supplied seed for with a few exceptions on either side of average.

"Wheat that was planted this fall looks great heading into the winter and there are hopes for a fantastic crop again next summer," Drummond said.

With the question of harvest, Drummond says that for the most part, farmers have it wrapped up.

He says there are still a few corn fields to be harvested, and that may be for a few reasons with the high cost of drying and carbon tax as potentially contributing factors.

He says the carbon tax costs about 25 cents per tonne for every one percent increase in moisture. At 30 per-cent moisture, the corn crop will cost a producer \$4 a tonne just in carbon tax or \$20-\$24 per acre over and above their drying charges this year.

In the news, we have all heard about axing the tax, and the young crop and broiler chicken farmer says he hopes Huron County MP Ben Lobb is successful in having the carbon tax for corn dryers, vegetable growers and livestock barns that require heat eliminated.

As it stands, Drummond says the Canadian farmer is at a big disadvantage compared to the U.S. and other countries that do not impose a carbon tax on farmers.

## The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

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COMMUNITY —

# Psychotherapist hoping ecotherapy practice will take hold in rural Oxford County

By Galen Simmons

On Jenny Chou's farm in rural Oxford County, south of Hickson and a short drive northwest of Woodstock, the atmosphere is peaceful and quiet except, sometimes, for the sound of horses in a fenced-in pasture or a friendly dog racing to come say hello.

For Chou, a registered psychotherapist, the 100-acre property ensconced in wilderness and surrounded by pristine farmland is the perfect place to help her clients reconnect with nature and work on their overall mental health and wellbeing. Whether it's going for a walk in the woods, building a campfire, or connecting with Chou's onsite animal-support team – three dogs, three horses and a cat – Hope Valley Psychotherapy offers a nature friendly twist to the normal talk-therapy formula that Chou says helps her clients relax and open up.

"There really isn't another option for ecotherapy in the area, which is kind of an unfortunate thing because there are so many studies to show that humans and nature, when we are side by side, we actually end up with a physiological change," Chou said. "Being in nature will bring our stress levels down, it brings our blood pressure down and does all sorts of good

things.

"I'm a very biopsychosocial therapist, which means I consider the biological components, the psychological components and the social. It makes sense to see a person as a whole, not just the psychological. So, if I can take a person who is very, very stressed and anxious into nature, then nature will kind of be my co-therapist. Just being in nature will help those biological (walls) start to come down."

Also known as green therapy or earth-centred therapy, ecotherapy involves interactions with nature that contribute to healing and personal growth. At the root of ecotherapy is the idea that humans and nature are intrinsically linked. We impact our environment, and our environment impacts us.

"This goes back to Indigenous populations. They've done this for eons," Chou said. "When humans are in nature, there are studies to show it completely changes those stress levels. ... If I have somebody sitting here and they are stressed out of their minds and they're fidgeting; if I ask them to sit there, that adrenalin, that energy is not going anywhere. If I take them outdoors, simply being surrounded by nature automatically brings down blood pressure and regulates your breathing.

"On top of that, being out in nature; we often walk so the forward momentum will help to burn that adrenalin off. ... It just gives that energy – positive or negative – a direction to go instead of sitting in a chair and trying to overcome all of that. ... Every single person enjoys being in nature. If you don't want to sit indoors, let's take it outside. If you want to sit by a campfire, let's do it because even building a campfire gives your hands something to do while we're talking."

Though Chou was born in Taiwan and moved to Toronto with her family when she was five, she's always felt like a country girl at heart. After studying at the University of Guelph and being surrounded by agricultural students, she knew she wanted to set up her psychotherapy practice in a rural community.

Chou is a member of Agriculture Wellness Ontario's Guardian Network, a volunteer, peer-driven community of mental-health advocates and professionals that supports the mental health and wellbeing of Ontario farmers. Since opening up shop in Oxford County, Chou has tried to fill the serious gap in mental-health services for rural communities and, more specifically, farmers.

"It's tough. For a while, I was offering pro-bono mental-health services to farmers in the area. I posted it on a 519 Farmers Facebook page and I posted it (at local businesses). Nobody reached out," Chou said. " ... I'm wondering if the delivery of (mental-health services) is difficult because farmers already don't have enough hours in a day to get everything done. ... They hardly have enough time for family, so how do you carve 15 minutes out to sit with a therapist?"

" ... I know there's mental-health needs for farmers out here. Talking to neighbours in passing, they tell me all about some of the problems they're having. It's just taking that step and booking a session and sitting down to talk; I think that's still the hardest step. ... It's a norm for millennials to have a therapist. ... That generation seems to be doing good with understanding ... that having a therapist is quite helpful. But when you go to the farmers in the rural areas, it's almost like a step back in time, but you still hear stories of people struggling."

For more information about Hope Valley Psychotherapy and the services it offers, visit [www.hopevalleypsychotherapy.ca](http://www.hopevalleypsychotherapy.ca).



Registered psychotherapist Jenny Chou greets two of her support horses, Spirit and Copper, at Hope Valley Psychotherapy in rural Oxford County. Photo by Galen Simmons



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COMMUNITY —

# Oxford OPP announces new media relations officer

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Oxford Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police has a new media relations officer.

Const. Randi Crawford has just assumed the role, taking over for the outgoing Const. Patti Cote. She is a 10-year policing veteran and has held a variety of positions within the OPP, including front-line law enforcement duties, court officer, property management and community engagement.

In addition to keeping the media informed of what's happening with the criminal element, she will also be providing education for residents on, among other topics, trends in criminal activity.

The Gazette had the opportunity to sit down with Crawford for a conversation recently, and she said it was

an easy decision for her to apply for the role.

"I didn't even flinch. Anything that is community policing based, I am happy to do those roles," she said. "I put my name in, and I was selected to do this role."

Before joining the OPP, Crawford spent three years as a special constable with Halton Regional Police Service but previously worked in health care working with seniors for 10 years. She said that working as a physiotherapy assistant at a Stratford long-term care home has only made her a better police officer.

"The amount of empathy I learned in the field and seeing how everything affects everyone. The communication, the staff, the support and the caregiver stress. All of us age and my passion is to help people through that process and make sure they get the supports they need," Crawford said, adding police in Oxford have supports available including mental health and she's pleased to have the opportunity to promote them.

Her ultimate goal is to create a safer Oxford County for the people living here.

"My passion has always been to help as many people as possible to feel safe, healthy and happy wherever they are. My goal in this position is to share news and education within our communities to help make Oxford County an even safer place to work, live and play."

A priority of police forces across Ontario is to provide what is called proactive policing, something Crawford said is key to stopping crime from happening.

"It's about prevention and it means educating the public. I need the community to help me spread the word so we

can be stronger in numbers," she said, noting that scams and frauds are on the rise in Oxford and her role is to make presentations to people letting them know how to not get sucked in.

Crawford is also encouraging residents to lock their home and car doors. She said while it is unfortunate, it is the time we are living in.

"It's changing our mentality as far as being proactive in our own self-safety and the safety of those in our communities."

She welcomes members of the public to contact her to provide information to groups or individuals. She can be reached by email at randi.crawford@opp.ca or by phone at 1-888-310-1122.

In terms of the OPP's relationship with area media, Crawford said open communication is first and foremost in her mind.

"I am trying to let the public know about the good things we are doing but at the same time the things that are less than positive. I would love it if the media would help us showcase the good things police are involved in."

### Local Festive Ride Program results

Campaigns this holiday season started on December 16 and were completed by Jan. 1.

### Oxford

246 checkpoints were set up across the county with 26 people being charged with impaired driving offences. Three license suspensions were issued for a warning result. Oxford commander Tony Hymers says his officers remain committed to taking alcohol and drug-impaired drivers off the roads. "Oxford OPP will continue efforts throughout the year to get impaired drivers off the road. We would like to thank the community for their patience and support throughout the campaign and would like to remind everyone to call the police if they suspect someone is driving while impaired."

### Perth

Police say they had more than 180 checkpoints across the county. Officers dedicated over 430 hours to this campaign resulting in three license suspensions issued for a warning, and seven impaired driving offences.



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COMMUNITY —

# Wellesley council passes \$11.6-million 2024 budget with 3.6 per-cent levy increase

By Galen Simmons

Wellesley residents will see a slight increase to the township portion of their property tax bill this year after township council passed a 2024 budget with a \$7.3-million levy – up 3.6 per cent from last year – at Tuesday’s regular council meeting.

The result of three budget meetings in December, this year’s budget includes a \$4.2-million capital budget – a portion

of the budget that focuses on infrastructure and other projects funded through township reserves and grant funding that doesn’t impact the annual tax levy – and an \$11.4-million operating budget.

The budget also includes a more than \$55,000 greening levy to help the township mitigate the effects of climate change and a more than \$73,000 infrastructure levy to help the township close the gap in its core infrastructure shortfall as identified in a 2022 asset management plan.

This year’s tax levy is \$788,568 more than the township’s 2023 levy. Within the operating budget, the township’s public works has the largest budget at nearly \$3.8 million, recreation sits at nearly \$3 million, general government expenses are expected to cost more than \$2.1 million, and the fire department has a budget of more than \$1.5 million.

According to township treasurer Fiona Gilbert, a home in Wellesley with an average current value assessment of \$392,212

will see the township portion of their property tax bill jump by \$25.50 from \$1,382.28 last year to \$1,407.78. In 2023, 33 per cent of Wellesley property owners’ total property taxes went to the township, 14 per cent went to education and 53 per cent went to the Region of Waterloo.


There were no members of the public who spoke about the 2024 budget at Tuesday’s public budget meeting and there was no council discussion following that public meeting before the budget was passed.

## JANUARY BLOW OUT SALE

**2021 Subaru Crosstrek Limited**  
  
**\$32,995** + HST & lic All-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 53,627 km

**2019 Ford EcoSport SE**  
  
**\$23,995** + HST & lic Front-Wheel Drive  
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**2020 Ford Explorer XLT**  
  
**\$36,995** + HST & lic All-Wheel Drive  
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 57,544 km

**2021 Ford Edge SEL**  
  
**\$36,995** + HST & lic All-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 12,546 km

**2022 Honda Pilot Sport**  
  
**\$46,995** + HST & lic All-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 41,501 km

**2022 Nissan Rogue S**  
  
**\$30,995** + HST & lic Front-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 58,013 km

**2020 Chevrolet Blazer True North**  
  
**\$37,995** + HST & lic All-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 11,944 km

**2019 Lexus UX 250h**  
  
**\$36,995** + HST & lic All-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 22,869 km


**2023 Kia Telluride SX**  
  
**\$59,995** + HST & lic All-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 8,620 km

**2021 Kia Forte EX+**  
  
**\$26,995** + HST & lic Front-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 49,002 km

**2021 Jeep Compass Trailhawk**  
  
**\$32,995** + HST & lic All-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 31,277 km

**WINTER TIRE SPECIAL DEALS**  


**2022 Kia Forte EX**  
  
**\$27,995** + HST & lic Front-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 15,251 km

**2023 Chevrolet Malibu 2LT**  
  
**\$36,995** + HST & lic Front-Wheel Drive  
**LOW KMS**  
 210 km

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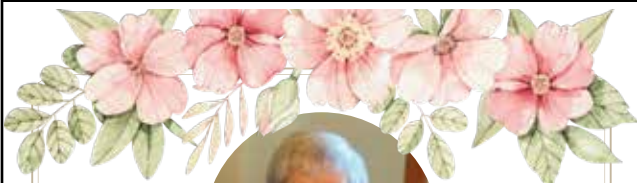


\*While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, we are not responsible for any errors and omissions. Please see your dealer for current pricing. Plus tax and licensing. Some terms and conditions may apply.

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# COMMUNITY —

## IN MEMORIAM



IN LOVING MEMORY OF

*Norma Ruby*

January 4, 1937 to December 21, 2018

On this fifth anniversary, we remember and celebrate our time together. You are in our hearts forever.

Raymond, Dale, Mary Lou, Karen, Grace, Joan

## IN MEMORIAM

*In Loving Memory of*  
**Beatrice Elaine Finck**

who passed away on January 9th, 2023.

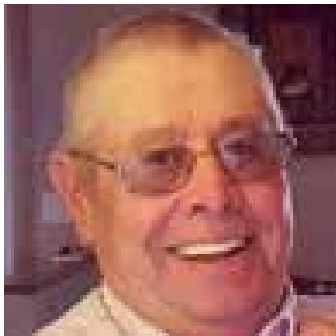
Deeply missed by Lorne, your Sons,  
Daughters-in-law, Grandchildren,  
Sisters-in-Law, Nieces & Nephews

*You will always live in our hearts  
and we are always thinking of you.*

*Rest in Peace.*

## IN MEMORIAM

*In loving*  
MEMORY OF



**DONALD COOK**

who passed away 10 years ago on  
Thursday, January 16th, 2014.

We thought of you with love today,  
But that is nothing new.  
We thought about you yesterday,  
And the days before then too.

We think of you in silence,  
We often speak your name.  
All we have are our memories,  
And your picture in a frame.

Your memory is our keepsake,  
With which we'll never part.  
God has you in his keeping,  
We have you in our hearts.

*Always loved and remembered by Shirley, Rick  
and Deb, and Lisa and Jeff and their families.*

## OBITUARY

### McCALL - HANLON: Shirley Isabel



Passed away peacefully on Saturday, December 23, 2023 at Sakura House, Woodstock. Shirley McCall-Hanlon of Tavistock was in her 78th year.

Shirley was one of a kind. She will be forever remembered as a loving Mom, Grandma, and a force to be reckoned with within the community.

Proud mother of Greg Hanlon of St. Marys and Kelly and husband Terry Gillis of Grand Bend. Sadly missed by her grandchildren Emma, Ethan, Evan, Zach, and Lauren. Survived by her mother Doris McCall of Lakeside, sister Margaret Marchant of Ingersoll, brothers George (Cheryl) McCall of Annan, Harold (Cindy) McCall of Lakeside, sister Barbara (Dave) Cussons of Ingersoll, and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Predeceased by her infant son, father Howard E. McCall, brother Howard Jr. McCall and brother-in-law Jim Marchant.

Relatives and friends were received in the Francis Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Thursday December 28, 2023 from 2-4 & 6-8 pm. Funeral Service was conducted from Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sebastopol-Tavistock on Friday, December 29, 2023 at 1:00 pm. Interment followed in the church cemetery.

Donations, in lieu of flowers, can be made to the Trinity Lutheran Cemetery Improvement Fund or to Sakura House, Woodstock (VON). Personal condolences can be posted at [www.francisfh.ca](http://www.francisfh.ca)

## THANK YOU

*Thank you!*

The family of the late Lynda Wettlaufer would like to thank all those who offered support during Lynda's passing in December. Thank you to Peter Francis and Francis Funeral Home for your caring guidance and arrangements. To Rev Marg Smith, thank you for your spiritual support for Lynda during her final weeks and for the beautiful service. Thank you to Dianne Ditner for your gift of music for Lynda. Thank you to the ladies of Grace for food and refreshments following the funeral. Heartfelt appreciation for the staff and caregivers at both St Mary's Memorial and Stratford General Hospitals.

Sincerely,  
The Wettlaufer Family

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WEDDING, NEW BABY,  
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They need our support, now more than ever.





COMMUNITY —

OBITUARY

**PETERS: Matthew Wilhelmus of Embro**



Passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family's love on Tuesday, December 26, 2023 at Victoria Hospital, London, in his 72nd year.

Beloved husband of Mieke (Fleuren) Peters whom he married June 2, 1977, Dear father of Menno (Rachel) and their children Audrey and Marcus; Dennis (Heather) and their children Hailey and Elliott; Jeroen (Ashley) and their children Robert, Scarlett and Antoinette; Eline (Herman) Terpstra and their children Mitchell, Mya, Allie, Emily and Hazel; and Ryan (Stefanie). Survived by his sister Antoinette (the late Henk) Janssen, Berti (Ria) Peters, Dini (Adriaan) Van den Broek, Pierre (Nelly) Peters, Willy (Genevieve) Peters, Jean (Jeanine) Peters, the late Jacky (Chantal) Peters, Hyacinthe (Gertrude) Peters, and Joseph (Irene) Peters.

Survived by his brothers in law Piet (Carola), Jan (Joke), and sisters in law Wilma (the late Harry), and Anny (Jan).

Predeceased by his parents Johannes and Allegonda (Hopman) Peters, and father and mother in law Gerrit and Grada (Euwens) Fleuren.

Matthew (Mathieu) was born in 1952 in rural France near the small town of Bonnat, the second youngest of 10 children on a family farm. His younger years growing up in France were dear and memorable to him.

During the summer of 1969 Matthew traveled to the Netherlands as a 17 year old to work on a farm, and there met the love of his life Mieke. A year later he moved to the Netherlands with his parents and younger brother Joseph to start another chapter of his life farming with them.

Matthew always had his eye on farming in Canada and worked on a farm in Westlock Alberta for 6 months in 1975. In 1977, Matthew and Mieke got married and started a laying hen and produce farm near Groesbeek, Netherlands. His love for Canada led Matthew and Mieke and their children to immigrate in 1986, arriving in Tavistock and starting a hog operation.

Matthew's motto of "work hard, play hard" carried through the years with many memorable family trips and growing the farm as a family. He was incredibly proud to pass down his passion for farming to his children, with all 5 farming today.

As his children became more involved with the farm, he applied his energy and innovative mind as a board member at Conestoga Meats. He was proud to be Chair of the Conestoga board for 4 years.

Matthew spoke 3 languages, which led to traveling around the world on many farm themed trips, even as a tour guide. His greatest loves in life were Mieke, his family, farming, traveling, Conestoga Meats and Formula One.

His passion for life will be missed by all.

Relatives and friends were received in the Francis Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Wednesday, January 3, 2024 from 2-4pm and 6-8pm. Funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Stratford on Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 11:00am. Reception followed. Burial will follow reception in McTavish Cemetery, Tavistock.

The Peters family would like to thank the many attentive doctors and nurses at Stratford General Hospital and Victoria Hospital in London who cared for him during his illness and his final days.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Canadian Cancer Society would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at [www.francisfh.ca](http://www.francisfh.ca).

OBITUARY

**STEINMAN: Vernetta**



Throughout her 92 years, Vernetta lived her life as best she knew how. She was the oldest daughter of Omer and Oleava Schlegel and had fond memories of times spent with her sister, Mary Ellen, and her Schlegel cousins. She also learned to knit, crochet, embroidery and quilt from her Grandma Zehr who lived on their family farm outside of Tavistock, Ontario. She met Olin Steinman at her neighbour's wedding. He later became her husband on November 14, 1953. Together they shared over 40 years of life: briefly in Kitchener but primarily on a farm outside of Tavistock and then later a smaller property outside of Baden. Although traditional in many ways, she also enjoyed many years vol-

unteering/working part time for the 10,000 Villages warehouse and running a quilting business. She was active in the Sewing Circle programs at Tavistock Mennonite Church and later at Steinmann Mennonite Church for many years. Her and Olin participated in many other aspects of church life as well. In 2002, Vernetta moved to the Garden Homes in Nithview, later to Assisted Living and eventually to Long Term Care. She had many happy years there with neighbours and friends.

Vernetta is survived by her children: Marjorie, Montreal; Sharon (Dave Neufeld), New Hamburg; Myron (Naveeda), Kitchener; Caroline (Mark Balcaen), Kenora; and Melody, New Hamburg as well as her grandchildren: Katie (Greg), Olin, Narmeen, Michelle (Blaine) and Austin (Meggan). She was the proud great grandmother of her name sake Susanna Mae. Vernetta is also survived by her sister, Mary Ellen Gingerich, Zurich and sister-in-law, Ruth Steinman, Stratford as well as brother-in-law, Wallace Steinman, Tavistock. She was predeceased by Olin in 1995, grandson Amanj Aras Saber and her brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law: Melvin Gingerich, Mahlon and Emma Steinman, Alvin and Ada Steinmann, Elda Steinman, Loretta and Elroy Litchy, Violet and Elroy Brenneman, Bob McCormick, Orval and Pat Steinmann and Laverne Steinman.

In the fall of 2020, she was diagnosed with dementia. She had to make many difficult adjustments with the COVID pandemic which accelerated her condition.

A strong faith in God helped Vernetta to cope throughout the challenges that came her way. How she lived her life testified to her belief in the truths in Psalm 121 which was one of her favourite Bible passages. "My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. The LORD watches over you—the LORD will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

Relatives and friends were invited to the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg on Saturday, January 6, 2024, from 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Interment held on Sunday, January 7, 2024, at Steinmann Mennonite Church Cemetery at 1:45 p.m. with a Celebration of Vernetta's life in the church at 2:30 p.m. Reception followed. For those unable to attend a livestream is available on the Steinmann Mennonite Church website.

As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations can be made to Mennonite Central Committee, Steinmann Mennonite Church or Nithview Community - Pastoral Care which can be done through the funeral home.

Personal condolences and donation information available at [www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca](http://www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca).

  
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**UPCOMING EVENT**

**Tavistock Agricultural Society**  
**ANNUAL**  
**GENERAL MEETING**  
**Monday, January 22, 2024**  
**at 8:00 p.m.**

In Person @ Tavistock Arena, Upstairs Hall  
 All Members are invited to attend.

# COMMUNITY —

## OBITUARY

### CAMPBELL, Elaine Louise



Surrounded by the love and warmth of family, Elaine passed away at the Woodstock Hospital on December 24, 2023 at the age of 68 years. Cherished wife and best friend to Allan, with whom she shared 47 wonderful years of marriage. Proud mother of Amy Campbell (Ronald Servant) of Ottawa, and Dale Campbell (Jennifer)

of Tacoma, Washington and grandmother to Dale's sons, Nathaniel and Owen. Elaine is remembered by her sisters, Donna, Julie, and Gloria, and by many nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her parents, Mac and Iva Dell Howe, and her brother, Ronald.

Elaine's career was spent with the Woodstock Hospital, 22 years in the Health Records department and 22 years in the IT department. In her retirement, she was heavily involved with volunteering for the South Gate Centre, where she used her expertise in IT to support "behind the scenes". In October 2023, Elaine was recognized for her work, being awarded the Older Adults Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) 50 for 50 Award, an honour bestowed upon volunteers who have been influential in shaping and operating of centres in Ontario.

Friends were received at the Brock and Visser Funeral Home on Thursday, December 28

from 1-2:30pm. A service in celebration of Elaine's life was held at 2:30pm in the funeral home chapel, followed by a reception. For those who wish, memorial donations in Elaine's memory may be made to the Woodstock Hospital, to the South Gate Centre Building Expansion or to the Canadian Cancer Society.

## IN MEMORIAM

*In loving memory of*  
**DON ROTH**

who passed away 4 years ago, January 1, 2020.

*Death leaves a heartache no one can heal.  
Love leaves a memory no one can steal.*

*Loved forever.*  
*Mary Alice and family.*

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## OBITUARY

### JACKSON: Hubert Elton April 11, 1935 - December 26, 2023



Hubert passed away peacefully at Trinity Village Care Centre, surrounded by family.

He was born in Vennachar, Ontario to James and Maude (Rosenblath). He was an identical twin to Delbert (deceased) and the last surviving sibling of 16 children.

He shared his life for the past 66 years with Joan (Behnke), married July 26, 1958. Most of these years

spent in New Dundee, with many, sometimes weekly, trips back to the beloved farm of Joan's parentson Bruceton Road.

He was the loving father to James (Pat), Edward (Lynn), Steve (Linda), Mark (Gigi), Scott (Fritzie) and Hannah and Leah (twins, deceased).

Fondly remembered by Grandchildren Robert, Amy (Josh), Brittany (Beau), Chad (Rebecca), Jade (Tim), David, Issac and Darren.

Great Grandfather to Hunter, Eddie, Eli, Everly, Immy and Florence.

He loved the north and worked in the bush from a very young age, cutting and skidding logs with horse and sleigh. He was known to be a hard, dependable worker. His love of the bush worked well as he became a skilled hunter and knew the bush so well. He was able to teach his sons and grandsons skills needed so they too have a love of the north, both for fishing and hunting.

He came to New Dundee in 1959 and shortly thereafter began work as a mechanic for Bechtel Motors. He eventually moved to work at Bob Starr Motors (a GM dealership) in New Hamburg for 30 years, specializing in transmissions. Even after he retired, he continued to work on cars for friends and family.

He is remembered for his hard work ethics, his story telling, his problem-solving skills, his thriftiness all reflected in the love of his immediate family, extended family and friends.

Visitation was held Saturday, December 30, 2024 at 1 - 2:30 pm, followed by a short Celebration of Life at 2:45 pm. Lunch followed. All at Mark Jutzi's Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg. For those unable to attend the funeral service a live stream link will be available on the funeral home website.

As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations can be made to the Alzheimer Society and can be done through the funeral home.

Personal condolences and donation information will be available at [www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca](http://www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca)

## WORSHIP IN WILMOT TOWNSHIP

### St George's Anglican Church

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

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[sgacnewhamburg@gmail.com](mailto:sgacnewhamburg@gmail.com)

Current health and safety protocols are followed.

### St Agatha Mennonite Church

1967 Erb's Road St Agatha 519-634-8212

Pastor Jim Brown

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

## OBITUARY

### DANKE: Gloria



It is with heavy hearts we announce the passing of Gloria Kyla Danke at the age of 52.

Gloria was a daughter, sister, aunt, great-aunt and friend. Predeceased by her father Friedrich and her infant brother Heinrich. Gloria is survived by her mother Jovenil, and her sisters Heidi and her husband Chris, Christine and her husband John, and Jovenil and her husband Tom. She was adored by her nieces and nephews; Joshua and his wife Sarah and their children Sophie, Chloe, and Jasper, Justin and his daughter Romee, Jasmine and her husband Justin and their sons Bentley and Brody, Mackenzie and Kelsie, Kennedy and McKenna, Michael and his wife Michelle and their children Rachel, Kayla, Emory, and Adrianna, Andrew and Megan, Natalie and her husband Adam and their son Maximus.

Gloria was active in the community participating in many activities such as the Special Olympics, Aldaview Connections, rhythmic gymnastics, swimming, dancing, and even taking orders for custom cakes. Her artistic side was displayed in rug hooking and painting. Her infectious smile and compassionate nature made her very popular with friends and family.

Gloria will be remembered in a celebration of life, with a pink theme (her favorite colour) at a later date. The family wishes to thank the Palliative Team and the people entrusted to her care. Expressions of sympathy in the form of donations can be made to Aldaview Services in Gloria's name. (Cards available at The Henry Walser Funeral Home, 519-749-8467.)

Visit [www.henrywalser.com](http://www.henrywalser.com) for Gloria's memorial.

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## COMMUNITY —

The Wilmot-Tavistock  
Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. 1) Who invented the first passenger elevator?
2. 2) A torx screwdriver, is designed for what kind head-shaped screw?
3. 3) What do you call a group of cranes (bird)?
4. 4) What do you call a group of mechanical cranes?
5. 5) In what year did Canada cease the production of pennies?
6. 6) Acrophobia is the fear of what?
7. 7) What branch of philosophy deals with morality?
8. 8) Who won the Golden Globe for best actor in a drama motion picture in 2024?
9. 9) In the 10 commandments, what is the 6th?
10. 10) When was the beginning and end of the American civil war?

Answers found on page 26

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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](mailto:thewtgazette@gmail.com) to appear in our Birthdays and Anniversaries listing or to arrange for a special announcement ad.*

**January 2:** Happy birthday to Ted Gladding.

**January 4:** Happy birthday to Cruz Kocher (8) and Stewart Grant.

**January 6:** Happy birthday to Rhett Ramseyer (6) and Nathan Zehr (17).

**January 7:** Happy birthday to Presley McCarten (10) and Brady Griffi (21).

**January 8:** Happy birthday to Quintin Parr (13), Julia Schwartzentruber (14) and Evan Hopkins (18).

**January 9:** Happy birthday to Elaina Tonelli (9), Amy Danen (21), and Jake Walker (22).

**January 10:** Happy birthday to Emma Roth (11), Avery Shantz (11), and Ada Bender (18).

**January 11:** Happy birthday to Aurelia Bowman (6).

**January 12:** Happy birthday to Audrey Zehr (12), Isabelle Ross (12), and Kirsten Stolk (23).

**January 13:** Happy birthday to Owen Burchatzki (19) and Evalyn Gardiner (20).

**January 14:** Happy birthday to Jared Jutzi (7) and Jordan Hopkins (21).

**January 15:** Happy birthday to Nathan Brenneman (19) and anniversary for Bill and Lynda Mark (53).

**January 16:** Happy birthday to Jacob Cook (7), Madilynn Cressman (17) and Keegan Riehl (21).

**January 17:** Happy birthday to Brody Charlton (14), Madison Haynes (21), and Tara Ramseyer.

## 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.*

**January 8-15, 2014 Edition (10 years ago)**

On Saturday, Jan. 4, six Tavistock Braves travelled to New Hamburg to participate in the first-ever Midwestern Hockey League Showcase. Goaltender Trevor Bloch, defenseman Jared Yantzi and forward Angus Rowland played in the Prospects game, while defenseman Matthew Lupton and forwards Mac Kalbfleisch and Dylan Yantzi earned spots in the All Star game.

Chuckee Zehr and Lit'l Chicago will represent the Great Lakes Blues Society at the 30th International Blues Challenge in Memphis, Tenn. from Jan. 21-25, 2014.

Members of the 2014-15 executive of the Tavistock Men's Club include president Greg Pye, vice president Duane Kropf, past president Richard Stein, treasurer Roger Bender, secretary Bill Gladding, past treasurer Al Calder, and directors Jim McGregor, Ron Brenneman, Wayne Schumm, and Harold Lange.

**January 7-14, 2004 Edition (20 years ago)**

Tri-County Mennonite Homes has recently signed a conditional agreement to purchase a 48-acre parcel of land at the east end of Tavistock, across from the Renaissance condominiums. The Rudy farm, which occupies the southeast corner of the village, has been in the Rudy family since the early 1900s. Glen Schumm, a director with Tri-County, said the sale is based on several conditions. The land is one of at least two parcels in the village that the board of Tri-County has been looking at for their proposed continuum of care complex.

The Kropf Forestry PeeWee Reps travelled to Port Huron, Mich. this past weekend and returned home as the North American Silver Stick PeeWee B Champions. The championship game was one that left all spectators shaking their heads as Tavistock scored four goals in the final four minutes to defeat the Ithaca, N.Y. Bears 4-2 and scoop the title. Members of the winning team are Nick Quehl, Blake Dionne, Josh Zehr, Christopher Newcombe, Kyle Wilhelm, Josh Wagler, Taylor Winhold, Mark Bickle, Mitch Dunn, Reis Bender, Charlie Rowland, Mackenzie Kalbfleisch, Jarris Jantzi, Jonathan Jutzi, and Matt McGonigle.

New postal prices were in effect this week where a standard letter mail stamp costs 49 cents, up to 30g.

Work is progressing on the new Amkad Metal Components Inc. manufacturing facility just southwest of Tavistock on Hwy. 59, located beside the AgraTurf John Deere equipment dealership.

**January 8-15, 1964 Edition (60 years ago)**

Two local firms are optimistic as to future prospects in 1964 despite stiff competition. The Tavistock Milling Company, which employs 13 people, reports that prospects are good for this year in the feed business. J.G. Field and Company, which has 75 staff, has reported a "good" year in 1963 despite a 50 per-cent increase in the price of wool on the world market.

At the inaugural session of the East Zorra Township council, assessor Carman Facey reported that the 1964 assessment is \$5,348,531, for an increase of \$57,589, and that the township population is now 4,116.

Tavistock's total population is shown as 1,221. The report was presented to the Tavistock council at its inaugural session this week.

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## TAVISTOCK MENNONITE

Interim Pastor Harold Schlegel.

131 Wettlaufer St., Tavistock 655-2581

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

Masks welcomed but not required.

All Ages JRSS will follow after the worship service.

Stream services online at  
[www.tavistockmennonitechurch.ca](http://www.tavistockmennonitechurch.ca)

## TAVISTOCK BIBLE CHAPEL

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COMMUNITY —

# Wilmot mayor visits New Hamburg girl guides

By Elaine Ballantyne

Wilmot mayor, Natasha Salonen, visited the New Hamburg Girl Guides this past Monday night at the Haysville Community Centre.

Unit leader, Janice Bechamp, had the visit set up as an opportunity for the girls to ask questions and for the Mayor to answer. Bechamp highlighted Salonen's accomplishment of winning the election at the young age of 27 and being the township's first female mayor.

"I don't promise anything," the mayor said when asked about her campaign.

She went on to say that being transparent with the community and encouraging community engagement is very important to her.

When asked why she initially ran for the position, Salonen shared that during the pandemic she would watch council and become frustrated as councillors were not asking the questions she wanted to see them ask. Also frustrating to watch was the breakdown of how the council functioned, she added.

A graduate of Oxford University in England, the Mayor shared that she likes and appreciates research and data, and



Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen visited and spoke with the New Hamburg Girl Guides Monday night. Contributed photo

she strives to make informed decisions.

One girl asked the mayor if she liked her job.

"I really enjoy the job," Salonen responded. It does have its challenges but I do enjoy the challenge. I really enjoy coming to events like this and serving our community. I love meeting all the wonderful people

of Wilmot."

Her least favourite part of the job?

"I don't like having to tell people no," she said.

The mayor got an ear full about the girls' concerns regarding the presence of graffiti in their schoolyards. One girl shared

how her cousin took it upon herself to find a cleaning recipe that removed black Sharpie pen and she removed the graffiti herself.

"Continue to be that loud voice," Salonen said when one girl expressed being discouraged because of her gender. "Keep trying."

When asked how long her term was and what her plans were after that, the mayor explained it is a four-year term and that she plans on running again.

However, the most pressing question of the evening was whether the mayor was a fan of Taylor Swift.

Thankfully she is, or who knows how the Girl Guides might have responded.

The girls were also very curious to know the names of the mayor's dogs. She has three: Champagne, Grace and Frankie.

At the end of the meeting time, Bechamp had all the girls close their eyes and envision themselves in 20 years. She asked them what they would want to see more of in Wilmot.

"More parks, trees, police presence, less littering, more public transit and more butterfly gardens," the group answered.



PARTNER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monteith Ritsma Phillips Professional Corporation is pleased to announce that Catherine McCorquodale and James Burns have each joined the partnership effective January 1, 2024.

Cate's practice will continue to focus on the areas of family law, real estate, wills and estates, and farm succession planning. James' practice will continue to focus on the areas of corporate and commercial law, real estate, and wills and estates.

We look forward to continuing to provide legal services to the communities of Southwestern Ontario through our partners and associates: Kathryn Ritsma, J. Andrew Phillips, Matthew Orchard, Ryan Bagnell, Cate McCorquodale, James Burns, Lori Millian, and Michelle Jowett.



Cate McCorquodale



James Burns

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COMMUNITY —

# New Tavistock People Care long term care home expected to be complete by October



A large crane is seen recently, placing pre-fab roof slabs, built by Oxford County's Stubbe's Pre-Cast of Norwich, into the new People Care long term care home in Tavistock. Photo by Gary West



A view from the south of the construction site at the new home of People Care long term care in Tavistock being built by Van Del Construction, which is celebrating its 50th year in business this year. Photo by Gary West

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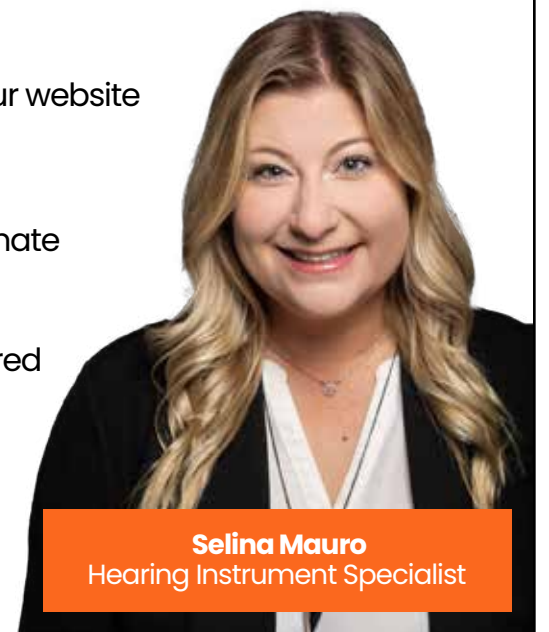
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FEATURE —

C & A Kitchen Refinishing offers an affordable alternative to kitchen renovations



Baden husband and wife team Cody and Andie Hanna offer locals an affordable alternative to kitchen renovations with their business, C&A Kitchen Refinishing. Photo by Danielle Mahoney

By Mercedes Gold

There is a new player in Oxford County's C & A Kitchen Refinishing, a business formed by Baden husband-and-wife Cody and Andie Hanna, is celebrating their one-year anniversary.

This power couple provides an amazing alternative for homeowners considering transforming the look of their kitchens. The Hanna's credit their success over the last year to their top-notch teamwork. They truly enjoy spending their days together onsite and coming home to their children each night. Their secret to balancing work and family life is turning off what they call their "work brains" when the day is done.

C & A Kitchen Refinishing is a family-owned business that focuses on kitchen refinishing and refacing rather than renovations. Refinishing is a more affordable option, less disruptive and yet the end result offers a new look. Refacing involves removing existing doors and replacing them with new ones. This is a smart

solution if the original cabinet design has lost its appeal over the years.

Cody and Andie are often asked whether it's possible to remove or reduce the graining in existing solid oak doors, or whether wear and tear on doors can be touched up. The short answer would be yes, but it depends on the extent of the damage. Setting up a free one-on-one consultation is your best bet to address any questions or concerns.

Kitchen refinishing is the fastest most economical way to bring a more modern look to the space. By changing the color, the look can be achieved with minimal disruption but maximum delight.

Over the years, styles have come and gone. The start of the 2000's saw a kitchen trend inspired by the rustic kitchens of Tuscany, Italy. The old-world charm was popular, as well as dark cherry wood, but both styles gave the kitchen a heavy old-fashioned feeling.

By the end of the 2000's, light and bright was the mood, and refinishing cupboards



C&A Kitchen Refinishing is celebrating one year of refinishing and refacing local kitchens and transforming outdated styles into fresh and modern spaces. Photos by Andie Hanna

in white was in full swing. People began opting for a more minimal less cluttered lifestyle. White opens up the kitchen space, ushering lots of fabulous light into the room.

Now is the ideal time to update handles and knobs, and a client's personality can be reflected in that. From classic to whimsical to a hobby or theme, have fun with the cabinet update. Not sure? There's a growing trend towards mixing gold, silver and brass accents, which can certainly add a touch of elegance and vintage charm as well.

All-white kitchens are still very popular, but there's a new twist according to Cody and Andie.

"We are seeing more of a two-tone approach," Cody says. "A two-tone kitchen is where a light colour, usually a shade of white, is used for the upper cupboards and a darker colour is used for the lower cupboards. By doing this, you can add interest, personality and style while still keeping your space elegant and refreshing."

Following the latest and greatest on social media, you may spot a surge in a more dramatic palette. Blues, greens, smoky blues and berry hues are gaining popularity. Covid showed everyone the heart of a house is the kitchen. Whether for cooking, homework, socializing or work from home days, the kitchen should reflect coziness, explaining the lean towards richer bolder colors. Interior decorators have hinted to be on the lookout for matte black.

Skip the drive-thru for coffee and start each morning stepping into a stunning space. Bring back the charm of kitchen tea time, coffee chats and helping the chef prepare meals. The heart of the home is the kitchen, and it's easy to hang out when the space reflects your fabulous personality and magical vibes. For a stress-free, fresh and fabulous facelift to your kitchen, schedule your free in-home design consultation with the dynamic duo of Cody and Andie. They are booking into February, so don't delay.

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SPORTS —

# Royals hitting stride as inaugural OEHL season winds down

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Tavistock Royals vaulted into third place in the Ontario Elite Hockey League regular season standings thanks to a late-season surge and two wins last weekend. The defending WOAA AA Senior Champions have won six straight and have a record of 13 wins and seven losses. They have also clinched a playoff spot in the 11-team league.

The Royals squeaked out a 4-3 overtime victory over the Georgian Bay Applekings Saturday night thanks to the heroics of Sean Kienapple. The 31-year-old Waterloo native scored with 81 seconds left into the third period to force overtime and then netted the game winner in the extra period. He is now tied for the league lead in goals with 15. Matt Zilke and Mitch Facey

also scored for Tavistock.

Sunday afternoon the Royals hosted the Erin Outlaws on Minor Hockey Day where one lucky Tavistock Minor Hockey player would win a free registration for next season. The home side didn't disappoint as they skated to a 6-1 win led by Callan Christner's two-goal performance. Trevor Sauder added four assists for the Royals in a game that saw three fighting majors, seven misconducts and a match penalty for spearing handed out to Erin's Jacob Tugnutt, the Outlaws starting goalie.

Jack Nanasi, a member of the Tavistock Titans U7 team, won the draw for a free season of hockey next year. Next action for the Royals is Jan. 20 in Milverton against the Four Wheel Drives before finishing the regular season in Erin against the Outlaws a week later.



Some of the Tavistock Royals played an exhibition game between periods on Sunday's Minor Hockey Day. Players from the Titans U9 AE team are seen shaking hands with a few members of the Royals after their battle. Contributed photo

## PJHL Roundup: Firebirds inching closer to first place

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The top of the Provincial Junior Hockey League's Doherty Division has tightened up thanks to a push by New Hamburg after six straight wins.

The Firebirds started the weekend with a 3-2 come-from-behind overtime victory over improving Norwich. Andrew Miele gave New Hamburg a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes, but the Merchants roared back to take a 2-1 lead just 37 seconds into the second period. Jake Thompson picked up his tenth of the season to tie the game at the 8:33 mark of the third period setting the stage for Owen Fischer's game-winning goal just 15 seconds into the extra period. Thompson picked up the assist, his 15th of the season. The teams combined for just four minor penalties as the Firebirds outshot the Merchants 39-31. The loss was the first in five games for Norwich.

On Saturday New Hamburg hosted Hespeler and dominated in an 8-3 win. The game was scoreless before a wild second period resulted in eight goals as the Firebirds led 5-3. Tyler Reid and Matt Domm led the attack with three points each while Riley Benko and Justin McManus scored twice. Jake Thompson and Brendan George added a goal and an assist. The Firebirds went 5 for 8 on the powerplay and killed all but one of the five Shamrock man-advantages.

New Hamburg is now just four points behind Woodstock and head coach and general manager Shane Gerber said his team has remained focused after a couple weeks off.

"You never know how a team is going to respond after a break," he said. "The only ice we had was a practice last Wednesday and Norwich is a tough opponent, so it was a good test in the first game back."

Despite being just one game above .500, Gerber knows the Merchants will be a force to deal with the rest of the season, particularly because of the return of starting goaltender Carter Spence.

"Their goalie was hurt for a good chunk of the year so that gives them a boost. I always thought

they were better than their record was. They play tough and have good team defense," Gerber said.

Spence is one of the league's best goalies with a 2.24 goals against average and a .931 save percentage in 13 games.

The standings don't reflect what coaches are thinking in the division, but Gerber said he knows full well that if a team doesn't show up to play, they will find themselves on the losing side of a game.

### Braves losing streak reaches three games

The start of 2024 was not kind to Tavistock as they dropped a pair of weekend home games. Friday saw Doherty division leading Woodstock leave town with a 3-1 victory. The Braves opened the scoring three minutes into the contest as Nicholas Thibodeau scored his ninth of the season from Will Schlotzhauer and Carter Arseneau, but the Navy Vets scored once in the second and twice in the third to earn the two points.

On Saturday Tavistock hosted Norwich and despite outshooting the Merchants 43 to 34, they dropped a 6-2 decision. Stephen Peppas and Jacob Roach scored for the Braves but Spence was the difference between the pipes for Norwich.

### Applejacks win streak at three

Wellesley outshot Hespeler 42 to 27 and outscored the Shamrocks 4-1 on a rare Thursday night game in Cambridge. Stuart Sinclair scored twice to lead the attack with Lincoln Walsh and Jake L'Heureux adding singles. On Saturday the Applejacks went into Paris and outshot the Titans 52 to 20 and picked up a 6-1 win. Connor Doerbecker had three goals and an assist with Logan Crans chipping in two helpers.

The Firebirds recognized two veterans who played their 100th game last weekend. Captain and leading scorer Owen Fischer and defenceman Tyler Reid are key parts of the New Hamburg mechanism. Fischer has 22 goals in 28 games while Ried is among the league's elite offensive blueliners with 32 points in 27 games.

### PJHL - South Doherty Division 2023-24 Point Leaders

Team	PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
WNV	Davin Gray	F	29	10	39	49
WNV	Nolan Brett	F	28	20	23	43
NHF	Owen Fischer	F	28	22	16	38
WNV	Ethan Szabo	F	24	12	21	33
NHF	Tyler Reid	D	27	13	19	32
HES	Boden White	F	22	13	19	32
NHF	Owen Bruder	F	30	15	15	30
HES	Jack Restauri	F	28	8	21	29
NHF	Jake Thompson	F	27	11	16	27
NOR	Joel Storoschuk	F	29	12	14	26
NOR	Brandon Balazs	F	27	13	12	25
WNV	Brodie Kearns	F	23	6	18	24
NOR	Malcom Scott	F	28	12	12	24
WNV	Chris Coulter	D	22	11	12	23
WNV	Tyler Smeda	D	29	9	14	23
TAV	Nicolas Thibodeau	F	28	9	14	23
TAV	Stephen Peppas	F	28	10	12	22
NHF	Matt Domm	D	25	3	19	22
WNV	Ty Crombie	D	24	10	11	21
HES	Andrew Harris	F	27	12	8	20
HES	Braeden Tyler	D	28	4	16	20
WNV	Nolan Burnsides	F	25	7	12	19
TAV	Ian Glendinning	F	28	6	13	19
TAV	Jacob Reid-Brant	F	27	7	12	19
NOR	Nathan Murphy	F	25	7	12	19
NHF	Antonio Pasqualino	F	27	5	14	19
HES	Justin George	D	26	3	16	19

### Tavistock Royals 2023-24 Point Leaders

PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
Sean Kienapple	F	15	14	11	25
Drew Gerth	F	17	9	8	17
Trevor Sauder	F	16	7	9	16
Deven Kropf	F	16	3	11	14
Sean Leslie	F	17	5	8	13
Jeremy Munro	F	16	8	3	11
Collin Hartwick	F	11	6	4	10
Mike Noyes	D	13	3	7	10
Lucas Bast	D	14	3	7	10
Adam Barr	F	15	1	8	9
Cam Leslie	D	18	2	7	9
Callan Christner	F	16	4	3	7
Matt Zilke	F	14	5	2	7
Erik Robichaud	F	5	3	4	7
Mitch Facey	F	10	2	5	7
Greg Noyes	D	15	2	5	7
Jon Jutzi	D	5	0	4	4
Patrick Vulgan	F	2	1	2	3
Geoff Killing	D	4	0	1	1
Reid Ramseyer	D	12	0	1	1
Tristan Hohl	D	15	0	1	1
Chad McIntosh	F	7	0	1	1
Zach Mark	F	3	0	0	0
Graham Kitching	F	4	0	0	0
Samson Walsom	D	11	0	0	0

### PJHL STANDINGS South Doherty Division

	GP	W	L	OTL	T	PTS
Woodstock Navy Vets	29	23	4	2	0	48
New Hamburg Firebirds	30	21	7	2	0	44
Tavistock Braves	28	15	11	0	2	32
Norwich Merchants	29	12	11	5	1	30
Wellesley Applejacks	25	11	13	1	0	23
Hespeler Shamrocks	28	8	19	1	0	17
Paris Titans	29	7	20	1	1	16

### W.O.A.A. Senior "AA" Hockey Regular Season Standings

	GP	W	L	OTL	PTS
Ripley Wolves	16	12	4	3	27
Creemore Coyotes	15	12	3	1	25
<b>Tavistock Royals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>
Minto 81's	16	10	6	1	21
Durham Thundercats	16	10	6	1	21
Saugeen Shores Winterhawks	17	9	8	1	19
Seaforth Centenaires	16	9	7	0	18
Milverton Four Wheel Drivers	16	5	11	0	10
Georgian Bay Applekings	16	4	12	2	10
Erin Outlaws	14	4	10	1	9
Lucknow Lancers	16	2	14	1	5



COMMUNITY —

# The New Hamburg Legion: A special day of thanks and recognition

By Scott Dunstall

The Royal Canadian Legion of New Hamburg Branch 532 celebrated one of the most anticipated and important dates on their calendar this past Sunday Jan. 7.

It was a combined ceremony that awarded contest winners from the annual Youth Education competition that honours veterans during the remembrance season, followed by the branch's yearly recognition of members and their years of service as well as those who have made special contributions.

The occasion was moderated by branch president Ross Eichler. Sitting at the head table were District C commander Dean Weir, Zone C2 honours and awards chair Bob Berg, as well as Wilmot councillors representing New Hamburg, Lillianne Dunstall and Steve Martin.

Eight schools participated in the Youth Education competition that saw little ones in grade 3 all the way up to high school students at Waterloo Oxford Secondary School participating. Three categories of submissions were created for the competition including colour poster, black-and-white poster and poetry.

First, second and third place winners were recognized with first place winners having their work automatically submitted for the upcoming provincial competitions. Winning selections from the provincial finals will then move onto the Nationals. Besides receiving certificates



The Royal Canadian Legion of New Hamburg Branch 532 recently celebrated the winners of the annual Youth Education competition that honours veterans during the remembrance season, as well as the branch's yearly recognition of members and their years of service, and those who have made special contributions. Contributed photo

of recognition, each child received a cash award.

Kyle Sutter, a teacher at Holy Family Catholic School, said his classes have participated in the competition for the past three years. He himself is a Branch 530 member of the Waterloo Legion and his grandfather was a veteran so, as a consequence, this event has special meaning for him.

He explained that he provides the kids with an outline of what kinds of things they can create for the competition and

for them to think about someone in their family that has served in some capacity. He said often it will be a grandfather or great grandfather they will use for inspiration.

Of particular note were the awards of appreciation that were bestowed on eight members of the Enova Hydro team that volunteered four days of their personal time to raise over 209 memorial banners on lampposts throughout downtown New Hamburg this past remembrance season. That award was presented to each member of the team by memorial banner chair

Marie Voisin.

There was also a very special award given to the 100 Men of Wilmot Who Give a Dam that acknowledged their recent decision to award the branch with a very substantial contribution to their annual poppy campaign. Lifetime membership is an honour that is bestowed only after many years of service to the Legion.

This year three members received this prestigious award: Brad Sword, Bill Pearson and Brian Miller. Bob Neubauer was recognized for his invaluable contribution to the memorial banner campaign with the much-respected Certificate of Merit award. Bob is currently the long-standing sergeant-at-arms with the branch and a long-serving member of the Canadian military.

Finally, it was a particularly emotional moment when membership committee co-chair Margret Nodwell read off the bounty of achievements made by Pam Hallman during her illustrious 50-year Legion career. She was honoured with the highest recognition any Legion member can receive, which is the Meritorious Service Medal. Very few in Canada have received this award and it was the first time it was presented at the New Hamburg Legion.

The New Hamburg Legion wants to give special thanks to membership chair Gail McMullen and youth education chair Jane Eichler for their dedication and hard work bringing this important day together.

## Sunflowers in memory of a hardworking colleague and friend



The Sunflower portrait, recently dedicated and created by Embro's Ruth Innes, hangs on the wall of the front dining room of Tavistock's Maples Home for Seniors in memory of Sadie Bender, a personal support worker who worked at the home.



Management and staff at the Maples Home for Seniors show their appreciation of the Sunflower Portrait during a ceremony in memory of Sadie Bender.

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## Tim Horton's Smile Cookies raise more than \$5,000 for Wilmot Family Resource Centre



From Nov. 13-19, 2023 Tim Horton's restaurants in New Hamburg, Baden and Tavistock raised a total of \$5,118 for The Wilmot Family Resource Centre (WFRC) through the first national Holiday Smile Cookie campaign. The campaign was created to give guests an opportunity to give back this past holiday season and help to continue making a difference in their communities. With each Holiday Smile Cookie sold, 100 per cent of proceeds went to local charities, community groups and youth in neighbourhoods across Canada. The funds donated to WFRC will be used to provide essential services and support to children, youth and their families including programming, food support and clothing support. Pictured, family resource centre executive director Trisha Robinson accepted the cheque from New Hamburg Tim Horton's Owner Jim Walker on Dec. 15.

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# COMMUNITY —

## Local Lions Club enjoys busy fall and holiday season



Kristene Leenders from Tavistock's People Care Home accepts gifts for all residents from Lion's senior gift chair Geraldine Claessens and Hickson Lions President Valerie Smith.

By Gary West

The Hickson and District Lions Club just completed a busy fall and lead up to the Christmas season.

The local Lions Club started in November with its annual poinsettia sales campaign in conjunction with the local 4-H club. Between the two organizations they sold over \$2,500 in poinsettias.

The Lions also donated numerous plants to Tavistock's People Care Home and the Maples Home for Seniors.

To keep the smiles coming, the club also donated plants to Hebron and Hickson Church congregations. The club provided flowers for the local post office and the new township administration building.

During December, they again sponsored two events.

A Christmas dinner, this year catered by the Southgate Centre in Woodstock, saw the Lions inviting all their volunteers

from the past year as a reward for their unwavering support.

On Dec. 16, in conjunction with the Hickson Post Office staff, they provided 15 dozen cookies and hot chocolate for the visitors that came to the post office to see Santa Claus.

Over 70 children and their families enjoyed the morning, and the cookies were purchased from the Hebron United Church Women's cookie walk.

To round out 2023, the Lions have provided free ice cream to the Tavistock Arena for the public on two separate occasions.

Before the end of the year, the Hickson Lions donated \$1,000 to the Tavistock skating club. The Tavistock Assistance Program (T.A.P.) also received \$1,500 from the club, the Tavistock Braves Hockey club got \$500, and the Upper Thames River Safety program received a cheque for \$450.



From left, Hickson Lions President Valerie Smith with Gift Chair Geraldine Claessens present gifts to Joan Hergott for distribution to the residents of the Maples Home for Seniors in Tavistock.

# Gazette Puzzles

Thoughts for a New Year

R	W	A	Q	T	Y	U	N	L	I	J	K	R	A	D	S	E	Z	R	P
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**Aspirations**  
**Change**  
**Fresh Starts**  
**Goals**

**Growth**  
**Hope**  
**Improvement**  
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## Pet of the Week



### WILLIE NELSON

Our pet of the week is Willie Nelson a 2 year old frenchie from Wellesley. His owners are big fans of the singer. Willie loves to be at the school when the bell rings at 3pm to walk the neighbourhood kids home and visit with the children. Willie is also on Instagram weenie\_nelsonthefrenchie

Nominate your Pet of the Week by emailing [info@wilmotpost.ca](mailto:info@wilmotpost.ca)



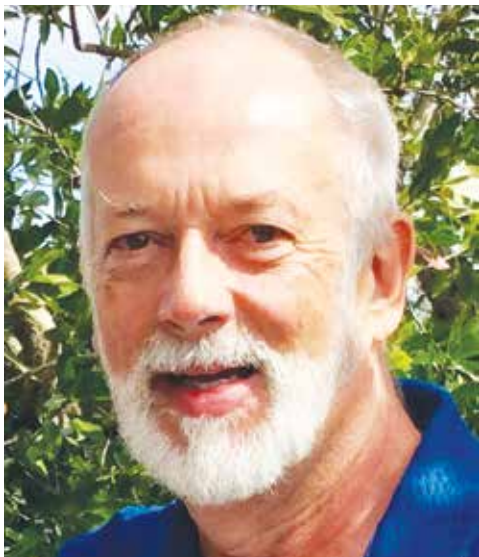
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## TRAVEL —

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Escaping over-tourism on the island of Carriacou



**By Paul Knowles**

If you read news articles about tourism, you will have noticed a sharp contradiction inherent in the coverage of this topic. First, since the panic about Covid has largely disappeared, travel is back in a big way.

The lost years, when travel was either impossible or less desirable, created a bucket list backlog. Travellers are outbound in large numbers.

But second, that reality has exacerbated something that was already a problem pre-pandemic: over-tourism.

One of my first encounters with the issue was when my friends at Parks Canada urged people to stop visiting places like the Grotto in Bruce Peninsula National Park during the busy season. There were just too many cars, too many people and too much human activity to be sustainable.

It's a universal problem. Just last week the always-popular European city, Venice, decided to ban guided groups of more than 25 people starting June 1. In Key West, the city has reduced the number of large cruise ships that can dock there down to one from three a day.

All of this to say, I will write from time to time about places that would-be travellers should consider visiting -- wonderful destinations where over-tourism is not an issue.

And that would include the Caribbean island of Carriacou, located in the south-eastern reaches of the Caribbean, not far north of South America.

You reach Carriacou by flying from Toronto (Pearson) to Grenada and then catching a 22-seater for a short flight to Grenada's sister island, Carriacou.

Once there, you are in simple, unspoiled, leisurely paradise.

Carriacou is part of the nation of Grenada. Grenada was a British colony -- now independent like Canada -- and a member of the Commonwealth governed by a parliament of elected MPs with a gover-

nor general who represents the British monarch. Unlike Canada's Parliament with 338 MPs and 105 Senators, Grenada's Parliament includes only 15 MPs and 13 Senators. Carriacou elects one of those 15 members as its prime minister, who represents the entire population of this volcanic island, a population that totals just 7,000. The total area of the island is 13 square miles.

But just because it is small in size and population doesn't mean that Carriacou is not open for tourism business. In fact, tourism is the number one economic driver on the island along with agriculture and fishing. Visitors will find there are five small hotels as well as guest houses in Carriacou, so planning a multi-day visit is easily accomplished.

And when you are there, what will you do? First on my checklist would be relaxing. This place is laid back. If you want nightlife, casino action or disco, this is not for you.

But if you love ocean-front dining, marine activities, snorkeling or diving, you're going to love Carriacou. The name means land of reefs in the language of the original inhabitants, the Caribs, and that may give you a hint of the quality of diving you will find here.

One unusual activity that you might consider; we hired a driver to give us a tour of the island. We set out from the main town, Hillsborough, and in the course of two hours or so, I am pretty sure we drove along every street and back road on the island, saw every building, every scenic look-out and every goat. Well, honestly, the latter is not possible. There are a lot of goats on the island -- and chickens.

Those goats come in handy in a local ritual. There are boat-builders on the island (you will see their work in progress on your tour) and when their work is done and the boat is about to be launched, a goat is sacrificed on the craft.

I am not condoning animal sacrifice (although I ate chicken for dinner last night), but I share this as an example of how non-touristy your experience can be at this more out-of-the-way destination. This is the opposite of an all-inclusive resort with a heavily populated beach.

But there are indeed beautiful beaches. You'll find them on Carriacou and also on Sandy Island, which is within reach via a short boat ride, where you can relax, swim, snorkel and experience a unique solitude that you won't find anywhere on the busier Caribbean islands. For much of the afternoon, our group of four was alone on the small island.

Back on Carriacou, across the bay from Sandy Island, is the Paradise Beach Club owned and operated by the genial Allison Caton.

Allison, a native of Carriacou, is like many of the folks I met in Grenada -- people who grew up on the island, moved to Canada or the US for a while, but missed the laid-back, warm and welcoming Caribbean lifestyle and returned home.

She runs a great restaurant and bar. I could not resist ordering a lobster pizza and, to go with it, a multi-coloured Rastaman Vibration drink made from rum, pineapple juice, orange juice and grenadine. It looked amazing and tasted like, "More, please."

In fact, that might sum up this whole, tiny island experience; it tastes like, "More, please." You'll want to go back.

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



This Rastaman Vibration drink at the Paradise Beach Club consists of rum, pineapple juice, orange juice and grenadine.



Allison Caton owns and operates the Paradise Beach Club on Carriacou.



Sandy Island is an ideal Carriacou destination where tourists can swim, snorkel and relax in relative solitude.

COMMUNITY —

# Sit 'n' Knit and Stay 'n' Crochet group continues to stitch for the needy in Tavistock

By Gary West

For more than a decade, there has been an enthusiastic group from Grace United Church in Tavistock whose members call themselves the Sit 'n' Knit/Stay 'n' Crochet group and meet every other Wednesday morning in Knox Parlour at the church.

The friendly group continues to bring together crocheters and knitters of different skill levels and a variety of experiences with coffee or tea that is always served with a smile.

They continue to expand the outreach to people within the church family and beyond.

Some of the projects in 2023 included prayer shawl and blankets for those in the church family and out in the community who are experiencing difficult times.

Items are also crafted to go to Optimism Place and the Christmas Place in Stratford, as well as slippers and hats for cancer-care bags with Heart and Home with Holly, and outerwear for Northern Love, an outreach program for residents in Nunavut.

Without even knowing who would receive them, the tangible gifts of prayer were made specifically for the person who will receive them. Each of these gifts were made to bring warmth to someone who feels a chill.

The gifts were made to bring comfort to



Pictured recently in the crafts room (Knox Parlour) at Grace United Church are, from left, Bev Vanderliet, Carol Weitzel, Rev. Marg Smith, Jane McKay, Marjorie Wisby, Mary Boland, Shirley Weicker, Anne Gregory, Carolyn Stock, Shirley Binkle, Jean Lowe and Carol Young.

someone who also feels alone. Each was made to bring peace to someone who needs a prayer and to remind the recipient that they are part of the family of God.

Organizers say the group is open to all, and if you have a desire to be part of these

projects, but cannot attend Wednesday mornings, they invite you to do projects at home on your own time.

They also reach out looking for yarn for projects or donations to buy yarn. Any help is much appreciated.

The group offers support, patterns, hooks, needles and yarn to those who wish to help.

More info is available from Carol Young at [tavistockyouth@gmail.com](mailto:tavistockyouth@gmail.com).

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**FRIDAY, JANUARY 12**  
St. Clements Public Skate  
1-2 p.m.

St. Clements Community Centre  
1 Green St. St. Clements

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 14**  
Wellesley Public Skate  
12-1:30 p.m.

Wellesley Township Recreation Centre  
1401 Queens Bush Rd. Wellesley

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 14**  
St. Clements Public Skate  
12-1:30 p.m.

St. Clements Community Centre  
1 Green St. St. Clements

**MONDAY, JANUARY 15**  
Wellesley Blood Donation Event  
2-8 p.m.

Wellesley Community Centre  
1000 Maple Leaf St. Wellesley

**MONDAY, JANUARY 15**  
Wilmot Council Meeting  
7-11 p.m.

Council chambers  
60 Snyder's Rd. West Baden

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17**  
St. Clements Parents and Tots Public Skate  
9-10 a.m.

St. Clements Community Centre  
1 Green St. St. Clements

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17**  
East Zorra-Tavistock Council Meeting  
Starts at 7 p.m.

Council chambers  
89 Loveys St. Hickson

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 19**  
St. Clements Public Skate  
1-3 p.m.

St. Clements Community Centre  
1 Green St. St. Clements

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 20**  
Bottle Drive  
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Optimist Club of Petersburg  
1239 Notre Dame Dr. Petersburg

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 21**  
St. Clements Public Skate  
12-1:30 p.m.

St. Clements Community Centre  
1 Green St. St. Clements

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OPINION —

**EXPERT ADVICE: Celebrate Veganuary with a body boosting bean chili**



**By Mercedes Kay Gold**

The holiday season is wrapped up, and we officially say goodbye to overspending and over-eating.

Hello 2024.

In the health industry, January is unofficially known as Veganuary. Back in 2014, a UK based non-profit organization launched a campaign challenging people to eat only plant-based meals for the whole month of January. This holistic nutritionist is not advocating you ditch dairy and meat forever but is definitely on board with adopting an animal-free menu for the month.

That being said, please focus on fresh and fabulous whole foods, not a month of processed plants pretending to be the real deal. Of course, my secret hope is after adding piles of powerful produce to your menu planning, the extra

servings of plant-based love remain.

Fruit and vegetables in an array of colors promote overall health and wellness. These powerhouses are essential to eat every day, preferably fresh, followed by frozen and canned in last place.

Experts may differ on the quantity, but according to Canada's Food Guide, starting at age two, children should be consuming four servings daily. Growing increases the need for the plethora of produce, and by adulthood, men need eight servings and women seven daily. Appetite may diminish with ageing, but servings remain unchanged and the health benefits more important than ever.

Unlike animal-based options, the entire plant kingdom supplies fiber and in turn provides satiety, sugar regulation and promotes a healthy weight. Plants are linked to heart health as well as blood pressure and digestive system benefits. Eating a plethora of plants provides all the amino acids found in animal-based protein, carbohydrates and health fats.

In honor of Veganuary, my recipe is a delicious plant-based family favorite. Chili is the quintessential make ahead, cozy and cost-effective wintertime meal

that freezes well. Fall in local love with legumes by family owned and operated Tavistock based organic brand, **Oak Manor Organic**.

**Body Boosting Bean Chili**

**Ingredients:**

- ½ cup **Oak Manor Organic** red kidney beans
- ½ cup **Oak Manor Organic** black turtle beans
- 1 tbsp unpasteurized apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp avocado or virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion diced
- 4 cloves of garlic crushed
- 1 large carrot grated
- 1 red pepper diced
- 1 medium zucchini chopped
- 1 medium sweet potato with the skin left on chopped in ½ inch cubes
- 2x 28-oz cans of crushed tomatoes
- 1 cup of vegetable stock or water
- 3 tbsp chili powder
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 small green jalapeño finely diced

- 1 tsp Himalayan Sea salt
- 1 tsp ground pepper
- 2 tbsp **Wagler Maple Products** maple syrup
- 1tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 cup frozen corn
- Chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 ripe avocado sliced

**Instructions:**

1. Cover the beans in filtered water and add 1 tbsp unpasteurized apple cider vinegar. Soak for 12-24 hrs. The apple cider vinegar helps diminish digestive distress! Drain and rinse.
2. In a large stock pot on low to medium heat fry the onion, red pepper and jalapeño in the oil for about 10 minutes or until softened.
3. Add the garlic and sauté another minute.
4. Add the grated carrot, canned tomatoes, zucchini, sweet potato, broth or water and all the spices.
5. Bring the mixture to a boil. Once it reaches a boil, turn it down to low and simmer for 90 minutes.
6. Add the frozen corn in the last 30 minutes.
7. Top with chopped fresh cilantro and sliced avocados. Serve

with corn bread or tortillas as a great dipping side kick.

My plant-based chili is a rainbow of health benefits, high in fiber and contains all the amino acids, making it a complete protein. The avocado on top provides healthy fats.

Chili stays fresh up to 6 days in the refrigerator or store in the freezer as a great go-to on busy days!



**This plant-based bean chili offers a rainbow of health benefits and is the perfect way to celebrate Veganuary and a healthy start to the new year. Photo by Mercedes Gold**

*Happy New Year* **From Staff & Management**

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OPINION —

**EXPERT ADVICE: *Getting to know community champion Lou Divita***



**By Scott Dunstall**

I recently discovered that Wilmot township could look a lot different today if Nick Divita had chosen a different fork in the road some 70 years ago. You see, around that time Nick and his good friend Salvatore were young living in their birthplace, Sicily. They were also anxious to find work and start building a life for themselves. There were few opportunities where they grew up to make their mark, so they decided to weigh their two options at the time: become a farmer in Australia or head to Ontario where there was an abundance of factory work.

Nick and Salvatore emigrated to Ontario and, more specifically, New Hamburg. They both stayed at the Imperial Hotel, which looked a lot different back then than it does today. But there was plenty of work for both of them, first picking tobacco and then working in concrete. They both finally found a spot at Hahn Brass Works, then located in the building where Riverside Brass currently is across the street from the Petro Canada at the corner of Arnold and Waterloo.

Just before they had left for Canada, Nick married his sweetheart, Angela. He had now put his stake down so Nick sent for Angela and many other friends and family from their region in Sicily, most of whom ended up working at Hahn. He and Salvatore were spearheading a small-scale wave of Italian immigration into our township. Nick and Angela worked hard and began to raise a family. Giving birth first to Charlie and then Lou. They saved

enough to finally purchase their dream home on Stone Street in New Hamburg.

Lou Divita has lived in New Hamburg his whole life and the home he and his lovely wife Janet currently live in is only a short walk from the family home he grew up in. His dad has sadly passed but his mom still lives in that home and shares it with Lou's son Ben and his new bride, Kassandra. Lou went to Holy Family and WO and when he left high school he went to college and excelled in a two-year computer-technology course. His career has led him down several paths including serving as general manager for an electronic component manufacturer in Wellesley for over 25 years and then quality control manager for a single sourced manufacturer supplying the automotive industry. He even ran his own computer troubleshooting and repair business as a side hustle for several years. Regardless of where his career has taken him, technology has always been at the heart of it.

Although Lou's parents worked extremely hard, there was little money left over for some of the typical extras that kids enjoy like being part of clubs. When Lou and Janet started their family, Ben came first then his little sister Mary (sings like a songbird by the way) followed a few years later. Wanting to give their kids some of the things he missed as a child, they enrolled both of them in the Beavers. As time passed both he and Janet became more and more involved helping out with the club to the point where they both became leaders not only for the Beavers but later on for the Cubs as the kids got older. They did all kinds of things as scout leaders including weekend camping trips, car Washes, apple days and book readings at the library.

Lou created 20 toy Beaver Buggy car kits one year made from wood. Each child assembled each kit then raced against each other. He did the same with boats and used pieces of eavestrough filled with water to race them in. Janet did everything including making each child's neckerchief each year.

Lou said that over this eight-year period he met a tremendous number of kids, par-



Lou Divita sits behind the machine that makes it all happen.

ents, grandparents, teachers and business owners from the community. He said that he also met a lot of people earlier in his life while working at Murrays after school and packing and loading groceries into customer cars. It was these times in his life when he found his love for the community and discovered the fulfillment he has received giving back to it.

So, it is not surprising to see what the latest chapter of this community champion's story has been. Almost two years ago, Lou noticed local residents occasionally posting pictures taken around the township on local community Facebook pages. He thought, wouldn't it be wonderful to have a local Facebook page that could be used exclusively as a repository for the sharing of images shot locally. This was the beginning of Show Us Your Wilmot. The page is on the brink of 2,000 followers and has created some amazing and incredible responses from the community. Here are some of the incredible things locals and visitors have posted.

"I am deeply moved by this gathering of Wilmot Photos; the beauty of the land we live in and the artist's eye behind the camera." "Thank you! It was so great to discover this group." "This is an amazing group! Happy to be part of it!" "Let me tell you, I am loving this group. I moved to the USA in 1990 when I married a Tennessee girl. To everyone who posts pictures of my hometown and surrounding areas, I really love seeing all of the posts and miss my beloved Canada all the more."

On top of this, Lou has been instrumental in leveraging the page to support local events. For example, he skilfully used the media tab on the page to organize photos and reactions for the Canada D'Eh home and business decorating competition. He

did similarly for the Halloween Decorate Your Place contest. He also used the page to showcase a video he made which was a beautifully assembled collection of every single memorial banner that was installed by the New Hamburg Legion in downtown New Hamburg last year.

One application that Lou has leveraged the page for that is near and dear to this writer's heart is the sharing of photos taken of the community coming together to show support for Melanie Austin, a local young woman only 17 years old battling Leukemia. Some of her neighbors tied orange ribbons around trees in the front of their homes to show support. Lou magnified that effort by displaying photos of that support on Show Us Your Wilmot which led to orange banners springing up all across the township.

This is just one page. He is also is lead administrator on What's Up Wilmot, which is a page that was created to focus exclusively on events and activities in and around the community. This page was created after Show Us Your Wilmot and in fact has over 2,600 followers! Regardless of which page it is, Lou has managed them in a way to keep them true to their charter. Besides being a major contributor of content on both pages, he also keeps them on the straight and narrow. While he is firm on maintaining these policies, he has always been respectful and courteous when enforcing them. That is another reason so many people love these pages. They rise above politics and conflict to deliver sanctuary and information with only positive feelings attached, not strings.

Thank you Nick Divita. This community thanks you for choosing that fork in the road so many years ago.

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OPINION —

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: *A return to my roots*



**By Galen Simmons**

For more than a decade – my entire adult life – I’ve worked in community news.

First in rural Saskatchewan and then in Stratford and Perth County, I’ve dedicated my life to telling the stories of the people, places and events in small towns and cities often ignored by media

in larger urban centres – stories that play a big role in helping locals understand how their community functions and who the major players are within it.

Yet while I’ve worked to ensure friends, neighbours and total strangers are well informed, the media companies I’ve worked for and many others across the country are focused on profits.

When I began my career in 2013 in Nipawin, Sask. – a town of 4,100 people – I worked in a newsroom with one other general assignment reporter. While there were only two of us, I felt as though we had the tools we needed to do our jobs and keep residents informed.

In 2017, when I began working at the Stratford Beacon Herald, I was hired along with two oth-

er news reporters. Even though it was a far cry from the 12-14 reporters and photographers that once worked out of the print newsroom in this city, with an editor that was onsite at least twice a week and another reporter focused on sports, I felt we had the tools to do our jobs.

Since then and in the interest of slowing the rapid decline of traditional advertising revenue, larger corporate media companies like my previous employer have stripped away resources from newsrooms across the country, large a small.

In Stratford, I lost my newsroom and I lost my co-workers as a result of cost reductions and downsizing. Our advertising and administrative staff was also laid off, leaving me to field questions

I don’t know the answers to and feeling like a one-man show.

I no longer felt like I had the tools to do my job – at least not at the quality Stratford deserves.

At the same time that large news organizations are stripping local newsrooms of their resources, trust in mainstream media continues to erode. Whether it’s real or perceived, many people don’t believe journalists and the companies they work for have their best interests in mind, leading them to seek their news from alternate and often much-less reliable sources.

As trust in traditional media shrinks, the dangers of weaponized misinformation become more of a threat to communities and a free and fair democracy.

So that’s why I decided to re-

turn to the world of independent community news.

As the new regional editor of the Stratford Times, St. Marys Independent and Tavistock-Wilmot Gazette, I’m looking forward to leading a team of talented, local journalists in gathering the news and reporting the stories locals want and need to read about in a way that is both transparent and accountable to our readers and our communities.

I am committed to developing and driving an editorial strategy collaboratively with our reporters and with feedback from readers that gives locals what they need to navigate their daily lives and gain a better understanding of the communities in which they live.

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**OPINION —**

**THE PUBLISHERS DESK: Watch and learn**



**By Stewart Grant**

I'm not going to lie, the political situation in the United States causes me considerable concern, and I'm keeping my fingers crossed that Donald Trump finally faces consequences for his lengthy list of crimes.

I care about this issue not just because I think it's a case of good vs. evil, but because whatever happens in the United States will have huge impacts on Canada as well.

This past Saturday marked the three-year anniversary of the appalling events of Jan. 6, 2021, when Donald Trump incited his followers to storm the U.S. Capitol with the

hopes of overturning the 2020 election, which was won by Joe Biden (this statement alone should be seen as fact, though there are likely a few readers who will question this due to being stuck in their own echo chambers).

It was last Friday, on the eve of the Jan. 6 anniversary, that Joe Biden finally spoke angrily yet eloquently about the current state of affairs in the United States – a state of affairs where Donald Trump continues to be the presumptive Republican nominee for President of the United States despite ... everything.

On Saturday, I walked into the living room where my wife and son were sitting. I sat down, turned on the TV and called up the Jan. 5 Biden speech on YouTube. To their credit, they stayed and watched the 30-plus minute speech with me in its entirety. I encourage you to do the same. It hasn't gotten near the attention that it deserved by the mainstream media – perhaps that's because they think it's "exciting" to have a close election in November. Yes, Joe Biden is very old to be running for president, but his speech was superbly delivered and needs to be heard by

both sides (though unfortunately, the people who need to hear it never will).

At the conclusion of Biden's remarks, I suggested to Laurie and Jake that to make a fair comparison, we should take the time to listen to Trump's remarks from the same day. There's always another perspective, right? So, we called up that on YouTube and listened to as much as we could bare, hanging in for about 10 minutes.

I've intentionally avoided getting too specific about what was said by either, not just due to space constraints but because I really think if you are interested in the subject, you should take the time and watch political leaders speak. This applies not just to Biden and Trump's speeches on Jan. 5 but to Canadian politics well. Listen to both sides with an open mind and then see what fits your ideals.

Determine for yourself if you like the way that Pierre Poilievre handles a question versus Justin Trudeau, or Chrystia Freeland for that matter. There's a lot to be learned and the stakes are high.

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