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FREE

Mother of autistic boy denied service by local dog rescue applauds Ontario human-rights tribunal ruling



Pictured are Mike, Henry (11) and Erin Doan, a Listowel family that was refused service by St. Marys-area Kismutt Small Dog Rescue because of a blanket policy not to adopt dogs to families with children on the autism spectrum. Last month, an Ontario human-rights tribunal ruled the policy is discriminatory and ordered Kismutt owner Kim Thomas to pay \$20,000 to the Doan family. Contributed photo

By Galen Simmons

The mother of a boy on the autism spectrum who was denied service by a St. Marys-area dog rescue is applauding a recent ruling by an Ontario human-rights tribunal that the organization's blanket policy against adopting dogs to families with children on the autism spectrum is discriminatory.

Last month, the tribunal released a 19-page decision ruling that Kim Thomas, owner of Kismutt Small Dog Rescue in Kintore, southeast of St. Marys in Oxford

County, must pay \$20,000 to the family of 11-year-old Henry Doan after they applied to adopt a dog in March 2022, but were turned down because the boy has autism.

“The decision was of significant importance not just for my son and I, but for the autism and disability communities as a whole,” Henry’s mom, Erin Doan, said following the ruling. “It sets a precedent for establishing future guidelines in cases like this, and it’s also crucial in debunking some of the stereotypes that are

out there and the misinformation.”

According to the tribunal decision, Erin Doan messaged the dog rescue on Facebook about setting up a meet-and-greet with a specific dog that was up for adoption to determine if it would be a good fit for her son, who she said at the time was on the autism spectrum, is non-verbal and communicates with an iPad, and can be a little aloof. Later that day, Thomas responded and told Erin Doan that Kismutt has a firm policy not

Continued on page 2

Township revisits statues recognizing former Canadian leaders

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Wilmot Township is taking another look at the controversial Prime Minister's Path.

The project, which was originally intended to include statues of Canada's Prime Ministers next to Castle Kilbride in Baden, was revisited at Monday night's council meeting.

Coun. Kris Wilkinson asked for the project to be tabled after the statues were placed in storage in 2021. The project stalled as a result of the controversy surrounding Sir John A. Macdonald and opponents even threw red paint in his statue several times.

The statues of William Lyon Mackenzie King, Sir Robert Borden, Kim Campbell and Lester Pearson were also placed in storage after the vote, along with the remaining Prime Ministers that had not been placed on the path.

Wilkinson said bringing the project forward again came out of engagements with constituents along with his desire to start a conversation.

“When I was campaigning, this was the number one issue at the door,” Wilkinson said. “I can say with confidence that over 90 per cent of folks who opened the door wanted to talk about it. It is something I felt strongly about. I even delegated the night the former council voted to take it down. I was in favour of a referendum then and I was in favour of keeping the project but maybe changing the scope.”

He added one of the reasons he decided to run for council was to raise the issue again, something in large part because of what he heard on the campaign trail.

“I get about an email once a week on this. I was out for dinner about three weeks ago with my family and I had three different citizens talk to me about this issue. I feel as

Continued on page 3

TIM LOUIS Member of Parliament Kitchener-Conestoga

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COMMUNITY —

Ontario human-rights tribunal rules dog rescue's policy discriminatory

Continued from page 1

to adopt dogs to any families with members on the autism spectrum – a policy stemming from two previous experiences when Thomas said Kismutt adopted dogs to families with children on the spectrum.

According to screenshots of the conversation shared during the hearing, Thomas said both dogs came back to the dog rescue with open wounds which she said the parents told her were a result of the autistic children being aggressive or violent with those dogs. Further, Thomas told Erin Doan that a teacher who volunteers with Kismutt and works with children with autism in her day job told her that children on the spectrum are violent or aggressive “99 (per cent) of the time,” leading Thomas to establish the discriminatory policy.

“There are some that do have violent tendencies – I won’t say that none of them do – but for the most part, people (with autism) are lovely people,” Erin Doan said. “They just want to be understood and they have rights just like anyone else. It’s terrible to box them into one thing. ... I think that people should be vetted (and) I think

that dogs should be matched – that’s not my issue – but we never even received an application form to do a proper vetting.”

In her decision, tribunal adjudicator Ramona Gananathan shared that sentiment.

“... The applicant’s disability was a factor in the respondents’ refusal to serve the applicant and his family by placing a rescue dog with the family,” she wrote. “The respondents appear to have a uniform policy of not adopting to families with autistic members which is discriminatory on its face. I accept that they refused the applicant the dog adoption services on the expressed basis of his disclosed disability.

“The respondents also did not attempt to engage in any communications with the applicant’s family to determine whether the disability-related needs of the child can be accommodated by the respondent to the point of undue hardship, and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the rescue animal.”

In addition to the monetary penalty, the tribunal also ruled that Thomas’ continued posting of derogatory comments about the

Doan family on social media amounted to harassment and ordered her to stop posting derogatory comments about the Doan family online and complete human-rights code training within three months of the Dec. 5, 2023, decision.

Gananathan ruled that many of those posts, some of which affirmed the dog rescue’s discriminatory policy and shared misinformation about people with autism, incited hate against people with autism.

“The respondents also continued to engage with the public by responding to posts that supported their position that rescue dogs should not be placed with families with autistic children, and suggest that families with autistic children abuse animals,” Gananathan wrote.

“... I find that the respondents’ actions intentionally incite hatred against families with autistic children. The respondents continued social media posts and detrimental public comments against the applicant and his family as a child living with autism constitutes a poisoned environment as set out (in the Human Rights Code).”

Throughout the tribunal’s human-rights investigation, Thomas refused to participate and she failed to submit a response to the Doans’ complaint.

Though Thomas or a representative of Kismutt Small Dog Rescue refused to comment on the ruling when reached for comment by Grant Haven Media, she told CBC News in a previous exchange that she would not pay the \$20,000 award and she stands by Kismutt’s blanket policy against adopting dogs to families with children with autism.

Though Thomas told CBC that she is now retired from running her dog rescue, the Kismutt Rescue Facebook page remains active with a post from Jan. 11 pinned at the top of the page directly referring to and affirming the dog rescue’s discriminatory policy.

In a response to a comment on the post about the \$20,000 monetary award to be paid to the Doan family, Thomas or another administrator for the Kismutt Rescue Facebook page wrote, “I won’t be paying anything.”

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COMMUNITY —

Wilmot Township reconsidering controversial statue

Continued from page 1

though the majority of folks want it back – young and old. There are some people steadfast in their position that they do not want to see it return and that's fine."

Wilkinson feels the underlying issue is people felt their voices weren't heard when the decision was made to pause the project.

"The report in 2021 was rushed and, if you read through it, a lot of consultation was done in the schools, which is not necessarily where you would want it when making a recommendation to council. I feel that was a bit of an affront to the general public. There were a lot of folks delegating over several nights indicating support for the project and it fell on deaf ears."

He added it was a knee-jerk reaction by the previous council and reflected the in-style politics of the day where historic statues were being taken down regularly.

The first-term councillor representing the township's Ward 2 said he wants to see the initiative completed but with a different scope than what was originally planned.

"It should be educational," he said. "There

should be plaques or some sort of component that will allow us to present history with the good and the bad. I think that was the original intent of the project, but for some reason was never implemented the first time."

At Monday night's township meeting, council voted in favour of having staff come up with a report on potential next steps. That will be presented at a future council meeting.

"I'm hoping to learn what staff have done since the initial motion was passed two and a half years ago and understand the current situation that is ahead of us," Wilkinson said. "I'd also like to see a variety of options on ways we can move forward."

He added that could include facilitated working groups or community-led conversations inclusive of a potential referendum.

"I want to hear from the public regarding their thoughts on how we can move forward to have a consultative and inclusive approach to hear from everyone who wants to have a say," said Wilkinson.



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COMMUNITY —

Perth-Waterloo egg farmers meet for their annual meeting in Stratford

By Gary West

Area egg farmers recently held their annual meeting in Stratford and came away with good news after learning an increase in egg production is needed.

Pullet and egg farmers in the Perth County and Region of Waterloo areas heard from their board members that consumer demand for eggs continues to be strong with sales trending higher than those average weekly sales in 2022.

Nielsen preliminary retail sales data is now available up to Dec. 2, 2023 and indications are that in the latest four-week period, 29 million dozen eggs were sold – an increase of 4.5 per cent in sales compared to the same period in 2022.

Nielsen retail sales in the last 52 weeks are up 2.4 per cent over the previous year.

Demand for eggs used for processing from the market continues to see fluctuations. This year, demand is predicted to continue to stabilize toward pre-pandemic volumes.

When it came to avian influenza, a report dated Jan. 2 stated there were 71 cases across Canada with no active cases in Ontario.

At the same time, there have been 73 confirmed flocks with bird flu in the U.S. over the past 30 days affecting 11.43 million birds in California, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kansas and Arizona.

Farmers at the meeting were urged to continue to be vigilant with their bio-security protocols to ensure they keep their flocks healthy and keep Ontario free from bird flu.

In December, Egg Farmers of Canada ratified a national allocation increase for eggs to meet growing demand in 2024.

Farmers were also told at the meeting that an increase in the price of eggs was held off even though the cost of production warranted it, as producers felt they would look at it in the coming spring depending on input costs at the time.



Egg Farmer elected councillors from the Perth-Waterloo Zone include (back row from left) Jeff Rundle, Mike Ready, Delmer Schultz, Brett Graham, Josh Gerber and Gary West, and (front row from left) Paul Neeb, zone director Sally Van Straaten, Amanda Cook, Julie Wynette and Scott Graham. Contributed photo

Egg farmers of Ontario board chair Scott Helps of Lambton County said the board is focusing on the strategic priorities of pricing, sustainable practices, supply management, stakeholder relations and stimulating continued market growth for eggs in the future.

The producer numbers for the Perth County and Region of Waterloo area are as follows:

- Number of egg quota holders: 67 (457 in Ontario)
- Number of laying hens: 1,003,918 (10,144,813 in Ontario)
- Number of pullet quota holders: 27 (146 in Ontario)
- Number of pullets: 1,736,378 (12,044,320 in Ontario)



Newly re-elected zone director Sally Van Straaten is congratulated by Egg Farmers of Ontario chair Scott Helps and Egg Farmers of Ontario CEO Ryan Brown. Contributed photo

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Shop Local: Anytime Fitness New Hamburg offers the personal touch needed to help achieve your fitness goals

By Galen Simmons

For Christian Beckner, manager of Anytime Fitness in New Hamburg, helping locals achieve their fitness goals isn't just a job. It's personal.

Beckner, who prides himself as the friendly face that greets gym members as they come in for their workouts each day, wasn't always in the healthy shape he's in today. At one point in his life, Beckner weighed upwards of 300 lbs and neither fitness nor healthy living was part of his lifestyle.

"I was close to 300 lbs when I started my fitness journey. My sister suffered a medical episode that forced me to take my health into consideration," Beckner said. "So, with that, I started my own fitness journey and I've been working in the industry professionally for about seven years now."

Having gone through his own personal journey from fat to fit, Beckner knows firsthand what it takes to achieve those goals many feel are out of reach. Fitness and overall health, he explained, isn't a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all endeavour, and that's something he says Anytime Fitness and the New Hamburg gym owners Josh and Jess Moore take to heart.

"We treat people as more than just a number. They're a member here," Beckner said. "It's all about trying to find new, creative solutions to help people reach their goals. We do have an app (AF App) for our members as well, which helps you build a workout program for yourself. Anytime Fitness is also the official gym and health partner of Apple Fitness now. It's a fairly new endeavour. All of our members get a free subscription to Apple Fitness+ and any Apple Fitness+ member gets a special, bonus membership here too."

Though members can set their own



Manager Christian Beckner and the team at Anytime Fitness in New Hamburg offer members the personal care and attention they need to reach their fitness and health goals. Photo by Galen Simmons

fitness goals and design a program to help them reach those goals with the help of the app and Apple Fitness+, the gym is also staffed with knowledgeable fitness experts from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Fridays, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

Beckner said Anytime Fitness New Hamburg has been working to build out its personal-training offerings over the past year, so those who need a little extra coaching to achieve their goals have access to it.

"We've brought in some amazing staff; kinesiologists, CCIP (Canadian Certified Inclusion Professional) certified trainers. We've been very selective with who we've brought in, and we've had nothing but positive feedback from all of the members so far," Beckner said.

"We've had some incredible transformations over the past year. It was really nice to hear from members who were like, 'Oh, personal training is a

thing now? I would like to do that.' "

And it's not just about exercising. Anytime Fitness also offers members nutritional meal-planning services that include shopping lists, recipes and everything else needed to maintain a healthy diet.

Beckner and the team at Anytime Fitness New Hamburg work hard to foster a friendly, inclusive and fun environment in which members have the opportunity to work towards their fitness and health goals in whatever way works best for them. Beckner said the gym invites members to offer feedback about how Anytime Fitness can improve its services and staff and management do their best to make those improvements whenever possible.

For more information about Anytime Fitness New Hamburg, visit www.anytimefitness.com/gyms/3904/new-hamburg-on-n3a-1t6, call 519-340-3242 or stop in at 338 Waterloo Street in New Hamburg during regular staffed hours.

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COMMUNITY —

Wilmot councillor looking for traffic calming measures at dangerous intersection

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The intersection of Sandhills and Gingerich Roads in Wilmot Township has seen several accidents over the past 12 months and Ward 4 Coun. Harvir Sidhu is having a hard time understanding why the Region of Waterloo hasn't acted.

Sidhu has been lobbying for traffic improvements since he was elected in November 2022 but hasn't been able to get the attention of the region.

"Since I have been elected there have been a handful of accidents at that intersection. The mayor has been advocating for it and staff have also been asking questions. The accident toll is piling up here so when are we going to get a four-way stop or at least flashing lights or some sort of remedy to help the situation."

Sidhu added he is at his wit's end since the township can't make any moves because the intersection is controlled by the region.

"All I can do is advocate. It's frustrating because it's in my backyard. Accidents are happening. It's a dangerous intersection and the region is dragging its feet," he added.

Sidhu is questioning the region's logic of not looking more closely at Sandhills and Gingerich.

"It doesn't make sense to me that a roundabout is being proposed at the intersection of Waterloo and Nafziger," he said. "I don't have the data in front of me, but I don't recall the last time there was an accident there. I am curious as to why they are spending their resources and money looking at other intersections where there may be issues but not multiple accidents and ignore others where accidents are occurring."

There can be head-butting in two-tiered governments in areas where the top layers make decisions in areas they control such as roads and other infrastructure, something Sidhu is becoming more frustrated about.

"I always say for the roads we know what's best for our township. It would be nice to have decision-making powers over roads in our municipality."

He added improvements at the intersection could be made quickly and at minimal cost.

"At the very least put flashing lights or a bigger stop sign on Sandhills. If that

doesn't work, then reduce the speed or put in a four-way stop. A four-way stop is just digging in two more stop signs. I don't see this as a large fiscal undertaking."

Once approved there were safety improvements completed at Punkeydoodles Corners within days. Sidhi said where there is political will things can be done quickly.

"You just need to push. How hard would it be to take off two bolts and throw up a bigger stop sign or install solar lights," he said.

He explained the closest three intersections on the stretch of Sandhills Road in question each have four-way stops. When the latest accident occurred at the intersection the first-term councillor reached out to township staff to ask the region if there was any traction on the file. He hasn't heard anything back.

"This is in my ward. I have people asking me; they asked during the election campaign. It's one of those issues that when an accident happens it is back on people's radar and they ask questions about what's being done. It's tiring to keep telling them we are advocating, we are pushing. We are trying but nothing is being done. It's

frustrating."

Sidhu added it shouldn't take a death to take this seriously.

The Gazette was provided a written statement from Wilmot Mayor Natasha Salonen.

"Intersection improvements are key for preventing more and significant accidents. Residents have identified many regional intersections in Wilmot that require review and updates to improve safety and the user experience. I look forward to hearing what regional staff will suggest for improvements at this location now that a review has been completed."

The statement added that the township does not make recommendations on items that are regional jurisdiction. The approach to items of local concern is to ensure the region is aware of the township's concerns.

The Gazette reached out to the Region of Waterloo for comment but did not hear back by press time. We also asked the Waterloo Regional Police for exact accident data but again, did not hear back in time.

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COMMUNITY —

Perth County teacher also a craftsman designer of charcuterie serving trays

By Gary West

In recent years, live edge tables and charcuterie serving trays made from locally grown lumber has become a popular in many area homes.

Gavin Albrecht, a local secondary school teacher, has found a hobby that he truly enjoys and keeps him busy when not educating area students.

Albrecht calls a rural-country property in South Easthope Township home and, over a couple of years, was able to find time to build a woodworking shop behind his house where he cuts, designs and finishes charcuterie trays along with other unique woodworking projects.

The young entrepreneur loves teaching math at Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School, but he also loves working with wood products in his woodworking shop. His finished products are sold in many area and local retail businesses, as well as from his own backyard shop.

Albrecht has hard work running through his veins as his father, Harold Albrecht, was the area's member of parliament in Ottawa for 14 years, as well as a dentist and a pastor. Gavin Albrecht's wife, Jennifer, and their three children are ardent supporters of his creative aspirations.

He's also recently taken on directing the high school's student co-op program, where students work in placements at

local businesses. There are 85 students in this latest semester who are engaged in this work-experience program.

Enthusiasm and keeping busy certainly does keep this young, energetic teacher and craftsman busy, but he says he thoroughly enjoys where his life has taken him.

"The co-op program is literally a chance for those young students to test drive their own future," Gavin Albrecht said.

Pictured is some of the completed work displayed by Gavin Albrecht in his backyard shop with various types of wood products he uses in crafting many unique charcuterie trays and live edge tables.



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COMMUNITY —

Homelessness, mental health and addiction: Oxford's warden on the year that was and the year to be

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Last year was an extremely busy and challenging year for elected officials and employees at Oxford County. The number of important issues municipalities are dealing with on an ongoing basis is growing so the Gazette asked to sit down with Warden Marcus Ryan to get his thoughts on what happened last year and what's next in 2024.

Ryan said the biggest challenges last year weren't something unique to the county but rather issues facing towns and cities anywhere in Ontario.

"When I talk to mayors, wardens and councillors across the province, I hear about the triple threat of housing, mental health and addiction. The terrible situation it puts our residents in, the immense pressure put on municipal employees be it housing staff, ambulance, police or fire, the demands have gone up tremendously."

Ryan adds that because people are experiencing homelessness, they have a disproportionate demand on emergency, human and housing services.

Another issue that plagued the county in 2023 was a growing population with a rate of tax assessment that isn't keeping pace. Ryan explained the population growth has more than doubled in the last five years, which is causing a few issues.

"We have more people needing more services, but the amount of property taxes we



Oxford Warden Marcus Ryan. Contributed photo

are collecting to pay for much of the services we provide is not keeping up with that."

Ryan said coming out of that is an increasingly challenging work environment for county staff who need to be motivated to deliver the services residents require.

At the same time, the warden, also mayor of Zorra Township, said he is optimistic about the future, largely due to the county's strategic plan which was approved last year.

"It puts us in a really strong position to

attempt to not only react to these pressures but attempt to get ahead over the next year or two and prevent more people from sliding into needing those services."

As 2024 begins, Ryan said the goal is to implement the strategic plan through the budget which was approved with a 16.7 percent increase to taxpayers. Two areas of focus will be paramedic services and housing.

"Some of them, frankly, aren't that exciting. A large part of the budget we passed was to get another ambulance and more paramedics to continue to deliver the response time we have. There is a big expense to that."

When it comes to housing, Ryan hopes improvements will be made this year on two fronts.

"We want to try and build more housing units to get people housed, but some of those units need to be transitional and supportive. When someone is experiencing homelessness or is in an emergency shelter and if they have unaddressed mental health or addiction issues, putting them in a home without supports won't help them move forward to being independent."

Long-term care is another form of housing that is also a priority for Oxford County. The municipality owns and operates three different Woodingford Lodge sites – a 160-bed facility in Woodstock and two satellite locations in Ingersoll and Tillsonburg. Those two homes house up to 34 residents

each. Ryan said the county will continue to focus on growing the number of beds available.

"We have made an application to the province to get more beds, specifically in Ingersoll, which would service all of Oxford. We need to continue negotiations with the province to try and do that."

Transportation and traffic safety are issues that came into the public eye in 2023, particularly as a result of the Punkeydoodles Corners situation and the tragic accident involving a police cruiser and school bus back in May on County Road 59 near Huntingford that killed both drivers.

Ryan said the county needs to continue to look at ways to make area roads safer but admitted it won't be easy.

"I'll be honest with you. There are a lot of terrible drivers out there these days. There is a lot of distracted driving. Trying to keep pace with our roads to try and make people pay attention is a particularly challenging thing, but very important. Council has heard from residents in many cases that they are not interested in the price tag for these things. They want their roads to be safer."

He added trying to address that in 2024 in a more constructive way that residents see when they are on the roads is going to be challenging.

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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. What is the largest island in the Caribbean?
2. In what century did the Boston Tea Party occur?
3. How many eyes does a cyclops have?
4. The deltoids are the muscles of what joint?
5. "Fore" is a warning shouted in what sport?
6. Adam and Eve were banished from what garden?
7. PhD stands for what?
8. Which country has not fought a war since 1814?
9. What do you call a meteor that has landed?
10. Where would you find an ISBN number?

Answers found on page 26

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COMMUNITY —

Mayor highlights last year's successes, looks ahead to new plans for EZT in 2024

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock (EZT) Mayor Phil Schaefer said it is difficult to rank the accomplishments of his council, but he was able to provide the Gazette with a list of his highlights from last year.

"I know staff and council are happy to have moved into our new offices. This happened in 2023, but the process dates back many years," Schaefer said in a recent sit-down with the Gazette. "I am also pleased that the spray pad-construction commenced. Credit for this goes to the spray pad-committee, our staff and the community at large for supporting and fundraising for it."

He added there are a few other areas worth mentioning including recreation enhancements.

"I am also proud of the initiatives we supported last year including the expanded use of our facilities for pickleball, our new alcohol policy and the successful takeover by the township of our recreation services (from former arena operator Ken Wettlaufer). Staff are working on a community flag policy and the commemorative bench and tree program and will be providing reports to council shortly on these items."



East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer. Contributed photo

He added upcoming technology upgrades to the new building will allow the township to livestream meetings soon. EZT CAO Karen DePrest recently told the Gazette she is hoping for completion at the end of the first quarter.

"I am pleased with the performance of our council members. They are all willing to work hard toward the betterment of their

municipality. I have absolutely no regrets," Schaefer added.

East Zorra-Tavistock created a recreation-advisory committee last year and, to date, has held three meetings. While there have not been any tangible results from the mix of elected officials and community members, Schaefer is confident that will change this year.

"This is a new-to-the-township committee, and the members are still feeling their way through the process. They have assembled a comprehensive list of suggested recreation ideas, and I am sure they will come to council with some items for further consideration, bearing in mind the township does not have a recreation-program department, and that community participation will be essential.

As the township navigates its way into the new year, Schaefer explained there are several important files on council's desk including the introduction of an EZ Transit pilot program that will be unveiled soon.

"We have also commenced our first-ever strategic plan exercise, and our secondary plan exercise is back in motion. The timing for completion of these is still uncertain. With respect to boundary adjustment discussions with the City of Woodstock, we have been very clear in our message

that we will consider their request when we have completed both above projects," he said

2024 municipal budgets have been a bone of contention at some municipal tables such as Oxford County, which recently passed a double-digit increase, something Wilmot Township is also grappling with now. The EZT budget will be put in front of council for debate in February, but Schaefer said they are in a solid financial state.

"In fiscal 2022 we enjoyed a budget surplus and are expecting another one for fiscal 2023," Schaefer said. "Discussion around our 2024 budget would be premature at this point."

Schaefer also wanted to mention some smaller achievements of the township including new signage.

"Sometimes, it is the smallest things that can have the biggest impact. I think our new 'Welcome to EZT' signs and our historic signs in Cassel, Strathallan and Braemar are examples of this. This was also a 2023 project and I have heard nothing but positive comments. It is clear to me the residents are proud of East Zorra-Tavistock and I will continue to work with council and staff to ensure they always will be."

OPEN HOUSES

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148 MAIN STREET NORTH SEAFORTH-MLS#40478625 \$774,900



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COMMUNITY —

OBITUARY

BENDER: Roger Milton



Passed away suddenly on Sunday, January 14, 2024 at the Stratford General Hospital. Roger Bender of Tavistock was in his 79th year.

Beloved husband of Rosanne (McKay) Bender whom he married September 26, 1969. Dear father of Daryl & wife Angela of RR#1

Tavistock, Tricia & husband Nicholas Hendry of RR#6 Woodstock and Leanne & husband David Pattinson of Cambridge. Sadly missed by his grandchildren Joshua, Blake, Lydianne, Annabelle, Myra, Jaida and Ella. Survived by his sister Daphne Neeb of Tavistock.

Predeceased by his parents Delton & Lavelle (Heinbuch) Bender and brother-in-law Allan Neeb.

Roger was an active member of the Tavistock community being involved with the Tavistock Men's Club, Tavistock Agriculture Society, Trinity Lutheran Church, Canadian Cancer Society and Meals on Wheels. Roger retired from Bell Canada after 30 years of service and having always kept a helping hand of the family farm for his whole life.

He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

Relatives and friends were received in the Francis Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Wednesday from 2-4 & 6-8pm. Funeral Service was conducted in Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sebastopol-Tavistock on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 11:00am. Interment followed in the Church Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Trinity Lutheran Church or the Heart & Stroke Foundation would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

OBITUARY

WEICKER: Shirley Mae



Shirley Mae Weicker, 93 of Stratford and formerly of Tavistock passed away peacefully with her daughters by her side on Tuesday, January 9, 2024. She was born at Toronto on March 22, 1930 a daughter of the late Harry Edward Nixon and the former Pearl Sophia Becker.

She was a member of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sebastopol-Tavistock where she had been a member of the E.L.W., the Alter Guild, the church council, a mission representative of London Conference and a Sunday School Teacher. She was active in supporting Tavistock Men's Club functions and had been active with the Tavistock Annual Sauerkraut Supper Committee for over 25 years.

At the young age of 3 she moved from Toronto to Tavistock where her grandparents (George & Caroline Becker) took in this spunky little girl, she loved her grandparents dearly, her grandma was a huge influence in shaping her life. She settled into small town life, on her first day of school she met her would be husband (the little boy crying in the corner because he didn't know how to speak English, only German) he had caught her attention. She married George and had the big family she always wanted, being an only child. The farm kitchen was the hub of the house and her kitchen table was the place for in depth conversations, debates and many, many noisy euchre games with their friends! Always providing everyone an endless supply of good food, drink and a lot of laughter (she was very humorous!). She is now reunited with dad who caught her eye years before. We were truly blessed to have her as our mom.

Shirley was predeceased by her husband George J. Weicker on February 24, 2006, sons George Weicker Jr. and Robert Weicker; her daughter-in-law Mary Ann Weicker; her son-in-law Patrick McBride; her brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Earl and Margaret Weicker and Katherine and Paul Morgenroth.

She is survived by her son David Weicker (in Alberta); her daughters, Caroline Routly (Bob) and Kathy Weicker; her daughter-in-law, Dale Weicker; grandchildren, Mandy Kutz (Andreas),

Rory Weicker (Christina), Adrienne Routly-Houle (Scott), Jennifer Routly (Harry), Lucas Ruby (Jenna), Colin McBride, Matthew Weicker (Sarah), Nathan Weicker and Adam Weicker and eleven great grandchildren

To honour Shirley's wish, there will be no visitation or funeral service. Interment will be in Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery, Sebastopol-Tavistock.

As expressions of sympathy, donations to Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides <https://www.dogguides.com> or the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

OBITUARY

RAYMER: Viola Marguerite (nee Middleton)



It is with profound sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of our mother, Viola Raymer of Tavistock. She passed quietly, surrounded by her loving family at Stratford Hospital on January 12, 2024 at 96 years of age.

She was predeceased by her husband, Donald (2006) after nearly 59 years of marriage. She is survived by her 4 B's and their families;

Bruce and Eleanor of Woodstock and their family – Lisa (Matt) Keller of Elmira, Julianne (David) Hallman of Thamesford, Mark (Becky) of Tavistock; Barry and Elizabeth of Bright and their family – Paul (Connie) of Stratford and Andrew (Heather) of Tavistock; Brian and Linda and their family – Jordan of Bright and Luke (Leah) of Cambridge; Brad and Marty of Sarnia and their daughter Kayla (Travis) McArde of Camlachie. She was predeceased by granddaughter Kristin (2012). She was a proud Great Grand of 15. Mom was predeceased by her Middleton sisters and brothers-in-law, Effie (Doug) Ogden of Agincourt, Melva (George) Irwin of Port Perry and Norma (Ray) Ingleton of Brooklin. Also by her Raymer in-laws, Myrle (Marg) of Simcoe, Elva (Willard) Brennan of Ajax and Ruby (Frank) Burkholder of Stouffville.

Vi was born in the village of Dollar, near Unionville. She met her future husband at Junior Farmers. After marriage, they settled on the home farm in BoxGrove. In 1969 they moved their family to Bright.

Friends and relatives were invited to join the family for visitation on Wednesday evening, January 17 from 6-8pm at the Brock and Visser Funeral Home, 845 Devonshire Ave., Woodstock. A service in celebration of Vi's life took place in the funeral home chapel on Thursday, January 18 at 2pm, with visitation from 12:30 until service time.

If you would like to honour Vi's memory, please donate to Hebron United Church, or to a charity of your choice. www.francisfh.ca

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Remember those you've loved and lost with an "In Memoriam" in The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette. We would be happy to personalize it with a photo, frame and verse that best represents your loved one.

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BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

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

January 18: Happy birthday to Briella Cressman (12).

January 19: Happy birthday to River Murray (7), Anna Mohr and Tyson Zehr.

January 20: Happy birthday to Kaden Ropp (7) and Brian Stere.

January 21: Happy birthday to Dylan Miller (9), Blake Miller (9), Beckett Francois (13), Isabella McKay (14), and Emily Lupton (19).

January 22: Happy birthday to Thomas Ropp (16).

January 23: Happy birthday to Leighton Lichti (15), Josie Walker (17), and Clara Roth (21).

January 24: Happy birthday to Brooks Durbin (9), Brayden Zehr (11), Nathan Wilker (17), Carter McKay (21), Scotty Zehr, Bryn Gladding, and anniversary for Steve and Beth Baechler (17th).



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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 2-9, 2019 Edition (5 years ago)

At the council meeting of East Zorra-Tavistock on Dec. 19, CAO Ruth Coursey presented her report regarding the legalization of cannabis, including the requirement that municipal councils confirm whether they wish to opt in or opt out of retail cannabis sales prior to Jan. 22, 2019. Council requested the clerk notify the AGCO registrar that the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock has chosen to opt out.

Members of the East Zorra-Tavistock Fire Department, Tavistock Station, held a "Wet Down" ceremony for their new truck on Friday afternoon, Dec. 21, 2018. The truck, built in Winnipeg, is based on a 2019 model Freightliner with a 6-cylinder, Cummins L9 330 EV hp engine. It replaces a 20-year-old pumper and joins the station's 2005 Rescue Van and 2013 Tanker Truck.

January 7-14, 2009 Edition (15 years ago)

In the midst of air strikes, ground battles and

a rising death toll, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partner organizations in Gaza are distributing food, water and blankets to Gazans who have lost their homes. On Jan. 6, MCC approved an emergency response package that brings the monetary value of MCC's humanitarian responses in Gaza in 2008 and early 2009 to almost \$345,000.

Seventeen-year-olds Matt McGonigle and Josh Zehr, members of the Waterloo Wolves Midget AAA hockey team, spent 10 days touring Germany, Austria, Italy and Switzerland from Dec. 27 to Jan. 6, playing against four international teams.

January 5-12, 1994 Edition (30 years ago)

Thirty-six years of dedicated service to his employers has netted Bill Glanfield of Tavistock a lifetime of memories and a chance to enjoy some of his favourite hobbies full time. Officially retiring as of Jan. 1, 1994, Bill Glanfield has been a funeral director and furniture salesman with Francis Furniture and Francis Funeral Home since February of 1958.

Letter to the Editor: "Regarding the council minutes of Dec. 19, 1993, and the 8-1 vote in favour of Woodstock police for Tavistock. This is indeed a sad day for Tavistock, when our lo-

cal East Zorra-Tavistock council decides to get rid of our police department". Another Letter to the Editor read, "How ironic that one month after a robbery at a local bank, our police services board is pursuing a way to contract our policing to the City of Woodstock."

January 2-9, 1974 Edition (50 years ago)

At a special meeting of council held on Monday, Dec. 17 the proposed Rudy subdivision, to the north of Hope Street East, was approved in principle by Tavistock council. The subdivision could involve 27 building lots.

Wallace Nesbitt, Progressive Conservative member of Parliament for Oxford for 20 years, died at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 21 in Woodstock General Hospital. He was 55. Nesbitt was in the hospital's coronary care unit and had not regained consciousness since he was admitted to the hospital Dec. 2 after he suffered a heart attack.

The National Farmers Union sent a telegram to Premier Wm. Davis on Jan. 2 protesting the announcement by Treasurer John White that he will recommend to the Cabinet that Ontario make daylight time mandatory in all municipalities Jan. 6.

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FEATURE —

Sweet Lights Company offers wide range of candle and artisan goods in Shakespeare

By Mercedes Kay Gold

Shakespeare is home to amazing antique stores, pie and world class handcrafted artisan chocolates, but it's also a super stopping spot for afternoon tea.

Harry Ten Shilling, the adorable house with the pink door offers an awesome array of steeped tea and a tower of homemade sweets and savories. A huge congratulations to owner Lynn Barber for expanding. She has filled the storefront space with a new candle shop and artisan collective courtesy of husband-and-wife dream team, Nathan Becker and Kayla Mason.

Sweet Lights Company began as a labor of love with the couple selling their handcrafted, one-of-a-kind creations at local markets hosted by the Shakespeare Brewing Company. Mason is the candle queen, hand pouring her paraben and phthalate-free

fragrance oil, plant-based clean candles into cork covered classic glass vessels with elegant labels.

With countless catchy, cute scents from hockey dad and blueberry muffins to cinnamon buns and this writer's personal favorite, coffeeshop, there's a fragrance note to soothe the soul in any space.

For those with kids and pets, Mason offers wax melts. Wax melts are a flame-free option, heated in the top of an oil burner, that release a beautiful, long-lasting fragrance. Becker, her life and talented business partner, is the king of kiln-dried cutting and charcuterie boards plus original, wooden home décor. Together they prove to be the perfect creative and business team.

In autumn 2023, the couple's vision became a reality, and upon signing a lease, embarked on a

new path and a brick-and-mortar small business within Harry Ten Shilling. Mason and Becker were on a mission and determined to help other homebased businesses grow their brand. Stepping into the space, there's slews of shelves lined with eye-catching, unique products, all hand-picked by Mason.

Sweet Lights Company is a store based on consignment. Local vendors are chosen on originality. At times, due to demand, they may carry multiple products in the same category but as Kayla points out, "They are all unique in their own way".

Home, bath and body products plus food, celebratory cards and the cutest baby items are available to peruse. Whether you want to spoil yourself or the ones you love, there's no shortage of practical or whimsical artisan awesomeness. Shopping local supports creativity and livelihood. There are 36 lucky brands showcased and with space to grow, local artisans are encouraged to reach out and apply.

It's only fitting to highlight three brands in our beloved neck of the woods.

Glimmer and Glow Gifts by JMC is bath and body magic. There are also hand-poured clean candles created by Jen and Madison Connolly, a mother-daughter team based in Baden. Skin is the largest organ in the human body, absorbing everything applied. Choosing natural ingredients was an important part of the teams' processes. Toss the conventional chemical-laden big box options and choose Mother Nature. Himalayan salt, shea butter, bees wax, vitamin E, almond oil, and a laundry list of other holistic ingredients equals a safe shower or soak, dreamy deodorant and luscious lip balm.

New Hamburg's Carrie Wheaton is the girl boss behind Carries ABC's. She created a lovely line



Nathan Becker and Kayla Mason are the power couple behind Shakespeare's newest candle shop and artisan collective shop inside Harry Ten Shilling. Photo by Kayla Mason

of handmade natural shower steamers, hair towels and specialty hairbands for an in-home spa experience. Her extensive line of handy dandy rollerballs is portable perfection. A quick swipe off holistic essential on the ear lobes, under the nose or on the wrist addresses a headache, increases alertness or brings peace quickly and naturally. Carrie also created a line for skin-care support. Using essential oils, Carrie replaced conventional, chemical-based car air fresheners with a divine diffuser.

Muddy Paws Boutique features cute tees with new themes and featured rescues. It's heartwarming to power shop knowing 20 per cent of all apparel purchases is donated to the rescue of the month. Coffeetime and water breaks couldn't be cuter. Embrace

your inner child and load up on mugs and tumblers showcasing your favorite furry friend.

Sweet Lights Company is a hidden gem, worth wandering in before afternoon tea at Harry Ten Shilling. Leave time to doodle. Becker and Mason have so many unique finds it's a joy to pick a personal, quirky, whimsical or classic gift. Whether it's a high-five for a new job, get-well token, baby or birthday surprise, the shopping experience is dramatically different from national chains. Supporting local talent with a special gift is in a class by itself.

Follow me on social @muddypawsboutique @sweetlights-company @harrytenshilling @glimmerandglowgiftsbyjmc @carriesabcs



Kayla Mason of Sweet Lights Company is the candle queen, creating such scents as hockey dad, blueberry muffins, cinnamon buns and coffeeshop. Photo by Kayla Mason

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COMMUNITY —

Oxford OPP officers speak on fraud awareness in the Tavistock area

By Gary West

There was a capacity audience in Zion Hall at Grace United Church last week for a "High Noon Fellowship Lunch" cooked up and served by members from the Cassel Mennonite Church and featuring a presentation on fraud awareness by Oxford County OPP.

Community safety officer Const. Randi Crawford and auxiliary officer Gareth Price explained that fraud can impact everyone and not just seniors, even though they are the demographic most targeted.

They stressed caution during threatening phone calls and gave examples of a caller saying they are the Canada Revenue Agency, requesting payment by credit card or prepaid credit or gift cards.

Common phone frauds involve callers claiming they are tech-support companies, bank inspectors or someone claiming to be a grandchild who is in trouble and needs money sent immediately.

If you are not sure who you're speaking with, hang up, the OPP officers said.

"Never send money ... before verifying details with police or the Canadian

Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501," the officers told attendees. "Fraud is a full time job for fraudsters and the new reality and new normal for vehicle and home owners, is to lock cars and homes and don't make it easy for break-ins and robberies to occur."

If an unknown person is at your door, they stress do not open it, but talk through it.

If approached in your yard, do not invite them in. If a suspicious sales person tries to rush you to buy something, refuse. If that sales person suggests they are working in your area, do not believe them and get estimates from local companies you know and trust.

They stressed, "Try your best to recognize fraud and remember the 3 R's- Recognize, Reject and Report".

The OPP have a 24-hour reporting service at 1-888-310-1122.

The Tavistock and Area Ministerial Group invites everyone to their "High Noon" lunch every month, featuring a nutritious meal served up by various area church members.

The next gathering is on Feb. 8 featuring the barbershop octet, One more Time.



Oxford OPP officers Gareth Price and Const. Randi Crawford present information on fraud awareness at the High Noon luncheon last week at Grace United Church in Tavistock. Photo by Gary West



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COMMUNITY —

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This photo posted to the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group was taken by Steph Lemont in her backyard along the Nith River in Haysville on New Years Day. Photo courtesy of Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group



This photo posted to the Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group was taken by Jill Fleming on Waterloo Street in New Hamburg during the recent snow storm that hit the region over the Jan. 13-14 weekend. Photo courtesy of Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group

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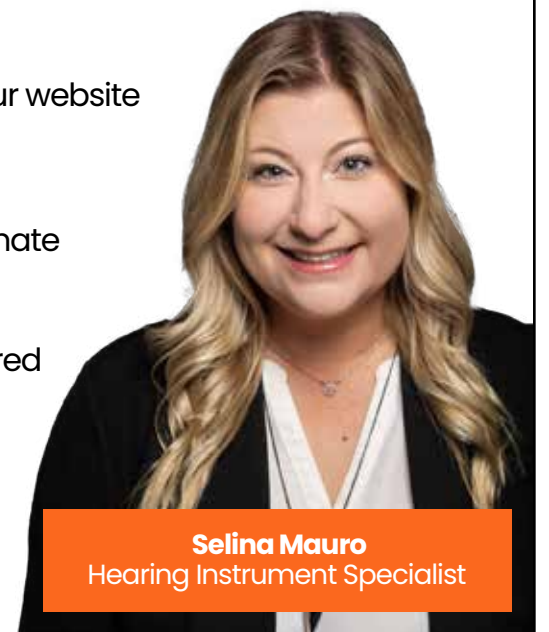
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COMMUNITY —

Perth County's Sue Orr outlines the workings of Sleeping Children Around the World for Shakespeare Optimists

By Gary West

Members of the Shakespeare Optimist Club were left in awe after listening to a talk on the work of Sleeping Children Around The World (SCAW) during a recent meeting.

Perth South resident and the township's deputy mayor, Sue Orr, outlined the reason behind her becoming involved in the volunteer organization.

There are small SCAW teams that travel to countries where young children are in need of the basic necessities of life that most in Canada take for granted.

During her presentation, Orr listed countries the SCAW teams already visited including Rwanda, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Philippines, Uganda, Honduras, Bangladesh and, in 2024, they will be distributing bed kits to children in South Africa between the ages of six and 12.

She said there are 22 items in those bed kits that are delivered to those in need including two bedsheets, a pillow, a mosquito net, two towels, two school uniforms, a t-shirt, a knapsack, pencils and notepads, a lunchbox, soap, and a toothbrush and

toothpaste among others.

The origin of bed kits started with an idea from Mary and Murray Dryden's experience - Montreal Canadians star goalie Ken Dryden's parents - during the great depression of the 1930s. The first bed kits were delivered in 1970 and were distributed in Pune, India.

The now-late Murray Dryden always said, "Every child deserves a comfortable night's sleep", and therefore started the "Sleeping Children Around the World" organization.

By 2018, more than 1.5 million bed kits had been delivered around the world.

What most impressed the Optimist members in attendance was the fact that 100 per cent of every dollar collected is used to purchase bed kits assembled for \$40 each.

Orr also said the bed kits are made locally in the country they are delivered in, helping to build the local economy as well.

In summary, Orr took a quote from SCAW saying, "The world is changed by your example, not by your opinion."

For more information, visit www.scaw.org



Guest speaker Sue Orr and Shakespeare Optimist president Mike McNeil show some of the articles that are included in bed kits distributed by volunteers with the organization Sleeping Children Around the World. Photo by Gary West

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SPORTS —

PJHL Roundup: Wild weather causes cancellations

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A total of six games were postponed last weekend in the Provincial Junior Hockey League thanks to a winter storm that brought snow and high winds to Southern Ontario.

The Tavistock Braves had their Friday night home game against division-leading Woodstock cancelled but they did travel to Hespeler Sunday afternoon and earned a 4-3 win.

Carter Arsenault gave the visitors a 1-0 lead, but the Shamrocks scored twice to take a 2-1 lead after 20 minutes. Nicholas Hambly and Ethan Sharpe's markers put Tavistock ahead 3-2 after the second but Hespeler would tie the game in the third setting the stage for Jacob Brant-Reid's heroics. He netted his eighth of the season with just over seven minutes remaining to give the Braves their fifteenth victory of the season.

They are tied with Norwich for third place in the Doherty Division, but Tavistock has two games in hand.

New Hamburg managed to play their lone game on the weekend just down the road in Wellesley. The Firebirds broke open a close game with a five-goal second period and went into the third leading 7-2 and wound up with an 8-4 win.

Keegan Metcalf and captain Owen Fischer had three goals each to lead the New Hamburg attack. Owen Sculthorp added a goal and three assists while Antonio Pasqualino had three helpers.

The Firebirds trail Woodstock by just two points although the Navy Vets have played two fewer games.

The Applejacks were scheduled to host Paris on Friday night, but that game was postponed due to poor driving conditions.

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TAVISTOCK BRAVES VS WOODSTOCK NAVY VETS
COME OUT AND ENJOY JUNIOR HOCKEY ACTION!

PJHL STANDINGS South Doherty Division

	GP	W	L	OTL	T	PTS
Woodstock Navy Vets	29	23	4	2	0	48
New Hamburg Firebirds	31	22	7	2	0	46
Tavistock Braves	29	16	11	0	2	34
Norwich Merchants	30	13	11	5	1	32
Wellesley Applejacks	26	11	14	1	0	23
Hespeler Shamrocks	29	8	20	1	0	17
Paris Titans	30	7	20	2	1	17

PJHL - South Doherty Division 2023-24 Point Leaders

Team	PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
WNV	Davin Gray	F	29	10	40	50
WNV	Nolan Brett	F	28	20	24	44
NHF	Owen Fischer	F	29	25	16	41
NHF	Tyler Reid	D	28	13	21	34
WNV	Ethan Szabo	F	24	12	21	33
HES	Boden White	F	23	13	19	32
NHF	Owen Bruder	F	31	15	15	30
HES	Jack Restauri	F	29	8	21	29
NHF	Jake Thompson	F	28	11	16	27
NOR	Joel Storoschuk	F	29	12	14	26
NOR	Brandon Balazs	F	28	14	12	26
NOR	Malcom Scott	F	29	12	13	25
TAV	Nicolas Thibodeau	F	29	9	15	24
WNV	Brodie Kearns	F	23	6	18	24
NHF	Matt Domm	D	26	3	20	23
WNV	Chris Coulter	D	22	11	12	23
WNV	Tyler Smeda	D	29	9	14	23
NHF	Antonio Pasqualino	F	28	5	17	22
TAV	Stephen Peppas	F	28	10	12	22
HES	Andrew Harris	F	28	13	8	21
TAV	Jacob Reid-Brant	F	28	8	13	21
WNV	Ty Crombie	D	24	10	11	21
HES	Braeden Tyler	D	29	4	16	20
TAV	Ian Glendinning	F	29	6	14	20
HES	Justin George	D	27	3	16	19
NHF	Owen Sculthorp	F	11	5	14	19
NOR	Nathan Murphy	F	26	7	12	19
WNV	Nolan Burnside	F	25	7	12	19

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
Tavistock Royals	18	11	7	0	22
Minto 81's	16	10	6	1	21
Durham Thundercats	16	10	6	1	21
Seaforth Centenaires	17	10	7	0	20
Saugeen Shores Winterhawks	17	9	8	1	19
Erin Outlaws	16	6	10	1	13
Milverton Four Wheel Drivers	18	5	11	0	10
Georgian Bay Applekings	16	4	12	2	10
Lucknow Lancers	16	2	14	1	5

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

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COMMUNITY —

Oxford OPP celebrates Snowmobile Safety Week with safety tips for riders

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette staff

The Oxford County OPP celebrated Snowmobile Safety Week Jan. 13-21 by sharing safety tips for riders while they're out on the trails.

Oxford OPP want to remind snowmobilers that driving too fast for the conditions, impaired driving and driving on frozen waterways are the leading causes of snowmobile fatalities in our province.

The OPP collaborates with the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) to provide safe and enjoyable snowmobiling on prescribed trails.

Oxford OPP would like to remind snowmobilers of the following tips to help them stay safe this winter season:

- Drive sober.
- Adhere to the open OFSC trails as they remain the safest terrain to ride

on.

- Treat any frozen waterway as though no ice is safe ice.
- Wear an approved helmet and appropriate clothing.
- Carry a small safety kit that includes waterproof matches, pocketknife, compass, whistle, ice picks and first aid kit.

- Obey the speed limits and municipal by-laws.
- Let someone know your intended route and keep your cell phone fully charged.

All motorists are reminded that occasionally snowmobilers cross the roadways. It is everyone's responsibility to stay alert and know the rules of the road.

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<p>2020 Ford Explorer XLT</p>  <p>\$36,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 57,544 km</p> <p>All-Wheel Drive</p>	<h3 style="margin: 0; color: red;">FIRST PAYMENT ON US!</h3> <p style="margin: 0; color: black;">Ask for details, some conditions apply.</p>			<p>2021 Kia Forte EX+</p>  <p>\$26,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 49,002 km</p> <p>Front-Wheel Drive</p>
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COMMUNITY —

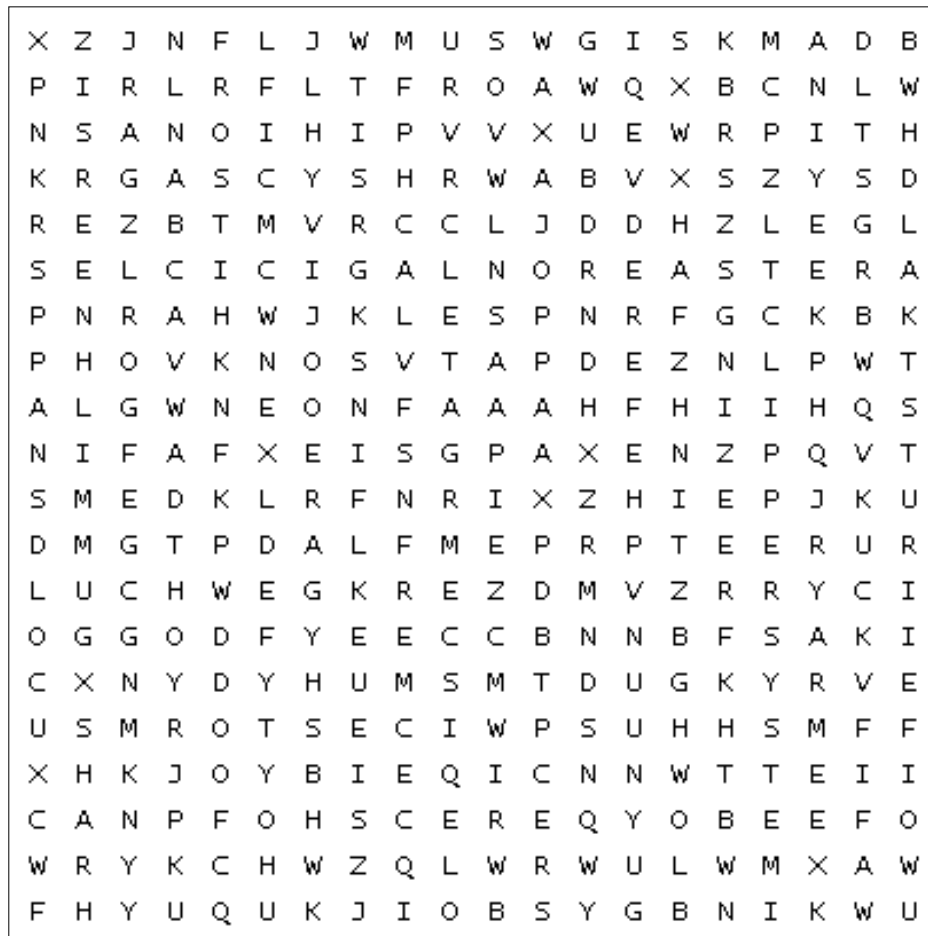
Scotiabank manager and staff raise funds for Tavistock Student Nutrition Program



There were winners all around as a result of the photographic artwork by Tavistock Scotiabank manager, Margaret Herlick, and the staff at the local bank. They would like to thank all those who purchased cards featuring photos of animals and area landscapes shot by Herlick and made into cards. All of the proceeds were donated to the Tavistock School Nutrition Program. Pictured, Blake Dallaway and his mom, Danielle Francis, accept a cheque for \$205 last week from Herlick at Tavistock Scotiabank. The donation will be used to purchase food for the Tavistock School Nutrition Program. Photo by Gary West

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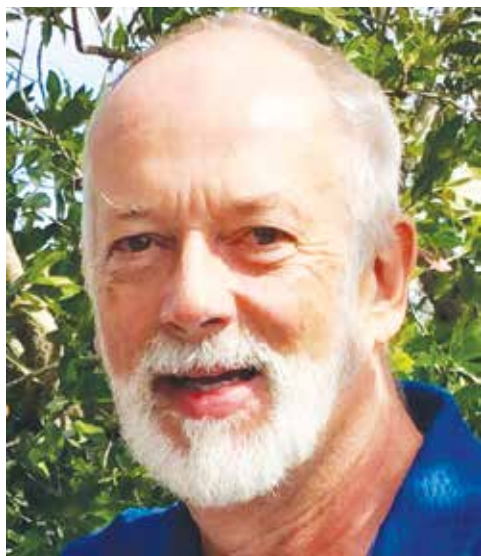
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TRAVEL —

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Dinner at the ICI is worth the multi-month wait



By Paul Knowles

"The best things in life are worth waiting for."

Google that quote and you will find it attributed to dozens of folks, from Winston Churchill to Danielle Steele to "anonymous."

So, when I use that line to refer to dinner at the International Culinary Institute (ICI) of Myrtle Beach, I am probably not stepping on anyone's copyright. When it comes to this amazing dining experience, the necessary patience implied in the maxim is true. On the culinary institute's own website, they state, "All reservations for International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach have been sold. Please check again soon."

I am told this is a very common occurrence at this amazing place, so I write this feature, not to encourage you to dine at the ICI any time soon, but to inspire anyone planning a future visit to Myrtle Beach to watch that site and reserve a table whenever possible.

It's an amazing culinary experience. In terms of tastes, you will experience five-to-seven unique and individually wonderful courses. In terms of price – well, to quote chef Stuart Ford, for \$45 dollars you can enjoy a \$250-plus meal. It's the culinary bargain of the century.

The institute is affiliated with Horry Georgetown Technical College. The ICI's executive director is the immensely talented and creative chef, Joseph Bonaparte. In addition to his genius in the kitchen, Bonaparte has also been named Educator of the Year in Myrtle Beach. He's been part of the ICI since the state-of-the-art centre for culinary education opened in 2017.

The mouth-watering menu is the work of the graduating students of ICI. The student body ranges right across the human demographic, including would-be chefs from as young as 18 all the way up to 73. Ford told me that the program welcomes "a lot of veterans" looking for a new and creative career.

Bonaparte and his team are committed

to excellence in food preparation, but they are also focused on the current sustainability trends in the food industry. The school boasts that, "Menus are created using a wide range of cooking techniques focusing on taste, texture, color and creativity using locally-grown vegetables, fruits, meats, seafood, cheese and eggs."

For example, says Ford, "We only buy sustainable seafood. Ninety-nine per cent of what we buy is caught by Murrells Inlet fishermen." Murrells Inlet is a quaint fishing village and dining destination, just south of Myrtle Beach. It, too, is well worth a visit.

Reservations are required to dine in the ICI's Fowler Dining Room and, as noted, you can't actually make a reservation right now. They're booked for the season.

But when you do find an opening in the coming months, here is a sample of what may be coming your way.

The fixed menu changes regularly but it will include such tasty delights as Beef & Oysters (beef carpaccio, fried oysters, roasted garlic aioli, shaved fennel, fried capers and pickled shallot). Or perhaps, South Carolina Chestnut & Caramelized Mushroom Soup (Indigo Farm chestnuts and shiitake mushrooms, duck confit, foie gras and black truffle croquette, celery and mountain apple slaw).

Entrees may include Pan-Roasted Fox Farm Chicken (Anson Mills Pencil Cobb grits, braised greens, glazed baby carrots, chicken jus, carrot caramel), Ember Grilled US Farm Raised Catfish Fillet (southern tomato gravy, Pencil Cobb grits, toasted sunflower seeds, sweet potato and banana pepper relish), or Crispy Carolina Heritage Farm Pork Belly (peach cider jus, Indigo Farm butter bean and corn succotash, pickled mustard seeds and sweet potato hay).

Desserts range from Pumpkin Chevre Cheesecake (poached honey pear, gingersnap crust, pear ginger caramel, blackberry curd) to Valrhona Dark Chocolate, Peanut Butter & Feuilletine Pie (Appalachian blue barley, banana fluff & watermelon syrup).

I know, that's a lot of detail about the menu. But be honest; at what point during the last couple of paragraphs did your mouth start to water? Mine, too.

By the way, when the menu suggests you will enjoy five to seven dishes, it's being a bit disingenuous. I chatted with one of the other faculty members supervising the servers and mentioned that I was sure we had been served something like nine courses. "Yes," she said, "they always like to add a few special things at the last moment."

Our experience at the ICI was remarkable from start to finish. We took a guided tour and were shown the classrooms, the bakery, the enormous, refrigerated areas and, of course, the open kitchen in the Fowler Dining Room focused

around the \$250,000 central island. This open concept means diners can watch the team of graduating chefs and their supervisors prepare their meals. You'll spot Chef Bonaparte right in the thick of it, supervising, cooking, finishing the plates.

One caveat: these terrific meals may call for a nice cabernet sauvignon or an un-oaked chardonnay, but it's not going to happen. Because the ICI is part of a public school, they are not allowed to serve alcohol. Honestly, that bugged me for about a minute until I had my initial taste of our first appetizer.

For more information, see www.hgtc.edu/academics/academic-departments/culinary-institute/index.html.

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



The ICI logo includes the tools of the trade – and each graduate leaves for their new job with a new, \$1,400 knife kit and chef's uniform. Contributed photo



A class of eager, would-be chefs, studying at the International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach. Contributed photo



Preparing seven-plus course meals is a full-on effort in the open concept kitchen at the International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach. Contributed photo

OPINION —

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Moving and starting a new job at the same time seemed like a good idea



By Galen Simmons

When the opportunity for my girlfriend and I to move into a new home together came up in the same week I was offered my new job as regional editor at Grant Haven Media, my

first thought was, "Wow, aren't I lucky?"

A new home and a new job were two things I'd been hoping for and working toward for a long time, and to have them both fall in my lap at almost the exact same time seemed like the kind of good fortune I hadn't seen in quite some time.

And don't get me wrong; I'm incredibly grateful for both these changes in my life. I'm enjoying my new job and getting to know the people I work with, and I'm so excited to move into a new home - a three-bedroom rental house we found almost right away that, somehow, was well within our budget - with the woman I love.

However, now that I'm in the thick of packing up my apartment while editing and writing stories for three newspapers - each with their own deadlines and expectations - I find myself just a tad overwhelmed.

Half-empty boxes and bins have really hammered home the point that my current apartment is much too small for everything I had in it, and trying to keep track of my reporters and what they're working on while also getting my own writing done amidst all the chaos of packing has made me feel a little like I'm running from one task to another without fully completing anything.

Needless to say, I've not yet

achieved my New Years resolution to be more organized in both my personal and professional lives. I think, maybe, I can start working on that in February.

I know this chaos is temporary.

Whether we're ready or not, my girlfriend and I have our friends lined up to help us move out this weekend and we'll be living full time in our new house as of Sunday.

And while I'm still getting a feel for my new job and the responsibilities that come with managing a team, I know that eventually what feels like a mad scramble to get the papers to press on time will soon become my normal routine.

Change isn't always easy - in fact most of the time it's the opposite - but it is necessary for personal growth. I'm moving onto a new stage in my life and I'm so excited to see what other challenges and opportunities come with that.

So, for now, I'll embrace the chaos and keep pushing forward. It won't be easy and I'm sure I'll make mistakes, but sometimes we learn our most important life lessons from our mistakes.

In other words, if you catch a typo in the paper this week, it wasn't a mistake. It was just me learning a life lesson.

CORRECTION

There is an email correction from last week's Wilmot Tavistock Gazette on page 21 -the Sit "n" Knit group have information at tavigraceyouth@gmail.com or contact Carol Young at Grace United Church.

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<p>FRIDAY, JANUARY 19</p> <p>St. Clements Public Skate 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p> <p>SATURDAY, JANUARY 20</p> <p>Bottle Drive 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Optimist Club of Petersburg 1239 Notre Dame Dr. Petersburg</p> <p>SUNDAY, JANUARY 21</p> <p>St. Clements Public Skate 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p> <p>WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24</p> <p>St. Clements Parents and Tots Public Skate 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p>	<p>THURSDAY, JANUARY 25</p> <p>Wellesley Parents and Tots Public Skate 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Wellesley Township Recreation Centre 1401 Queens Bush Rd. Wellesley</p> <p>Township of Wilmot Finance and Budget Meeting 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Council chambers 60 Snyder's Rd. West Baden</p> <p>Wellesley Seniors Skate 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Wellesley Township Recreation Centre 1401 Queens Bush Rd. Wellesley</p> <p>FRIDAY, JANUARY 26</p> <p>St. Clements Public Skate 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p> <p>SATURDAY, JANUARY 27</p> <p>Township of Wilmot Finance and Budget Meeting 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Council chambers 60 Snyder's Rd. West Baden</p> <p>SUNDAY, JANUARY 28</p> <p>Wellesley Public Skate 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. Wellesley Township Recreation Centre 1401 Queens Bush Rd. Wellesley</p> <p>MONDAY, JANUARY 29</p> <p>Township of Wilmot Council Meeting 7:00 to 11:00 p.m. Council chambers 60 Snyder's Rd. West Baden</p> <p>WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31</p> <p>St. Clements Parents and Tots Public Skate 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p> <p>THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1</p> <p>Wellesley Parents and Tots Public Skate 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Wellesley Township Recreation Centre</p>	<p>1401 Queens Bush Rd. Wellesley</p> <p>Wellesley Seniors Skate 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Wellesley Township Recreation Centre 1401 Queens Bush Rd. Wellesley</p> <p>FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2</p> <p>St. Clements Public Skate 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p> <p>Wellesley Public Skate 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Wellesley Township Recreation Centre 1401 Queens Bush Rd. Wellesley</p> <p>SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4</p> <p>St. Clements Public Skate 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p> <p>Wellesley Public Skate 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. Wellesley Township Recreation Centre 1401 Queens Bush Rd. Wellesley</p>
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OPINION —

EXPERT ADVICE: *Finding your WHY?*

By Scott Dunstall

Eleven years ago, my wardrobe looked very similar to the average guy at the mall or on the street. Mostly black, brown and blue. Two pairs of casual dress shoes, one pair of white running shoes, two pairs of jeans (one that kind of fit and one that I couldn't fit into), two pairs of casual dress pants that had been let out to the max, three shirts that did nothing for my protruding stomach except accentuate it, one suit jacket and two coats (hot out and not hot out). That's it. Oh yeah, one pair of boots, one reversible belt (hey honey it's a 2 for 1!) and one hybrid pair of gloves — the left from one pair and the right from another.

I was also nearly 250 lbs and really feeling it, but other than that I thought I was happy as a pig taking a mud bath. Sure, I went to work, weddings, kids' games, performances and volunteered,

but I wasn't doing anything for myself.

So what? I didn't realize it at the time, but my life was about to make a huge change in trajectory with two mitigating factors driving it.

My cousin Randy was just 3 months older than me. When we were kids, we were as inseparable as inseparable cousins could be. Our moms were close sisters.

He excelled in junior hockey and we all thought he was going to make it to the show until a shoulder separation that never healed prevented that. We learned to play hockey together, watched any sport together, hung out at the mall, went to the Ex and worked at the same place. We were joined at the hip until careers, geography and families slowly changed all of that. But we had a childhood that was more like a brotherhood than cousins.

In mid-2011, Randy was diagnosed with a rapid and aggressive form of Sarcoma. He was gone the following February. I still cry every time I think about our time together as kids.

Three months after Randy's passing, my beautiful wife was promoted from her role of customer service manager in Canada to director of North American business operations. This meant an office in Toronto and an office

in Cleveland. This also meant holding my breath every time she left on Monday and returned on Friday. We could write a book just on the travel perils she went through — more than just lost luggage stories.

When you're first introduced to the angst of someone you love being out of your range of help alone in a big U.S. city on a consistent and forever basis, you must find means and ways of dealing with that stress. She eventually rose to the rank of vice-president and earned a seat at the big table before she moved onto bigger and better things.

The personal journey I took through those two experiences and the lessons learned have stayed with me ever since.

Randy's passing taught me that every second in this moment is all we really have and my wife's traveling taught me to deal with everyday stress in ways that are engaging.

I hit the gym and I walked to deal with the stress of her travel but also to give myself the best life I could fashion (no pun intended) going into the fall of my own timeline. Walking is great in three of our seasons. The other one, which shall remain nameless, is not. The first winter after these two events saw me walking my local malls for exercise but also for human contact.

We are now empty nesters and there are only so many times you can phone or visit your kids before they phone your wife to tell you to stop. In any case, the walking and the gym led to a 40-50 lb weight loss that I have maintained ever since then. I say 40-50 lbs because it depends if I weigh myself before or after Christmas.

All foolishness aside, the walks in the mall and the weight loss combined with the need for human contact led me to visit stores, look around and make small talk with store staff. Eventually some of the same store folks started encouraging me to try on different things that I had never imagined wearing. I was blown away.

Having a store telling you look good is one thing — anything for the sale, right — but when total strangers come up to you and compliment you on a piece or a look you're wearing, it really is exciting and not for the reasons you might think. It's not for conceit or self-admiration. It never has been. What it is, however, is gratification in the same way you would feel respected and gratified when someone raved about a job you did well at work.

Discovering your style, brand and look takes time, but when you do get there, it enriches all your relationships and interac-

tions with the people in your life — family, co-workers and everyone in between.

Or not. These columns I write are not for everyone. Some of the great friends I have made in this community just see no value in what I talk about. That's why I thought this week, instead of blathering on about belts and shoes matching, I thought that I would take a step back and let everyone that reads this that it has to start with a "why" so that you're driven to find the Holy Grail of style. With that drive and my experience shared in these articles, we'll get you there. *"Style is just fashion filtered through your personality."*

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



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

There are many farmers who have made a difference in the East Zorra-Tavistock area over the last number of years. One of them would be a friend of mine named Ken McIntosh. He was a dairy farmer and raised his family north of Maplewood.

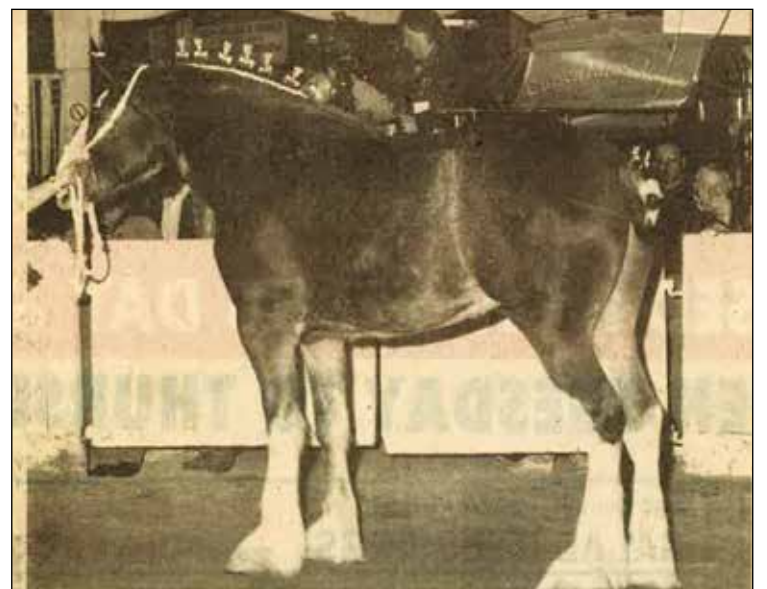
Since I was involved with Ken over the years in draft Horses, namely Clydesdales, I wanted everyone in the area to know, with his recent passing, how much he and his family meant to this popular breed and horses in general.

Ken loved showing horses at our local Tavistock Fair and the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. He brought home countless ribbons and one year won a silver tray in the Clydesdale Division at the Royal with his first-place entry of Thistle Ridge Argyll Gail. This registered Clydesdale won first in the two-year-old filly class and went on to be Reserve Junior Champion. She was also named the Best Canadian-Bred Clydesdale mare that year. The McIntosh family imported their first mare from Scotland in 1976 and were always proud of their accomplishments, raising and showing Clydesdales.

Ken is one area farmer I won't soon forget.

Sincerely:

Ken Mogk



A real winner

Embryo-area dairy farmer Ken McIntosh and his family recently brought home ribbons and a silver tray in the Clydesdale division of the horse show at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. Thistle Ridge Argyll Gail, pictured above, won first in the two-year-old filly class as well as reserve junior champion. She was also the best Canadian-bred Clydesdale mare. The McIntoshs went on to win third with their three-year-old filly and fifth in the

OPINION —

EXPERT ADVICE: Cranberry Citrus Bliss Times Two



By Mercedes Kay Gold

The holiday season has come and gone, but this nutritionist is still cranberry obsessed from morning to night.

Whole food, nutrient-dense options using local handcrafted brands is holistic happiness. These two recipes are gorgeous thanks to ravishing red cranberries and oranges add a squeeze of fresh citrus. Both recipes are cost effective, easy to make, taste amazing and freeze well.

Jumpstart the day with fresh baked granola goodness topped with yogurt or milk and fresh fruit for a wholesome power packed meal. No time for a formal breakfast? Granola is a high-fiber, stand-alone, grab-and-go food that helps stabilize blood sugar. Fresh cranberries are all-star antioxidants and anti-inflammatory thanks to anthocyanins and flavanols. Dried cranberries are higher in sugar, but fresh or frozen cranberries are low calorie, high fiber and contain minimal sugar. Cranberries are surprisingly 90 per-cent water with a bounty of beneficial bacteria boosting gut health.

Oranges are synonymous with immune supporting, stress-busting vitamin C, packed with potassium and a fabulous find for folate. Their natural sweetness pairs perfectly with the tartness of fresh cranberries, as well as the warmth of vanilla and cinnamon in the recipe.

Toss the table sugar. Mother Nature provided us honey and maple syrup for sweetness. Both of my recipes are gluten free, protein packed and contain heaps of healthy fats from seeds and nuts.

Cranberry Citrus Granola Goodness

Ingredients:

- 3 cups old-fashioned gluten-free oatmeal
- ½ cup raw pecans
- ½ cup raw sunflower seeds
- ½ cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup fresh cranberries rough cut
- ¼ cup virgin coconut oil, melted

- Zest of one orange
- ¼ cup liquid Nith Valley Apiaries Honey
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ½ tsp Himalayan Sea salt
- 1 tsp Ceylon cinnamon
- 1 tsp pure orange extract

Directions:

- 1) Preheat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 2) Combine all the dry ingredients.
- 3) Combine all the wet ingredients.
- 4) Mix dry and wet ingredients. Stir very well.
- 5) Spread out evenly on a baking sheet and bake 20-25 minutes or until golden. At the halfway baking point, stir the granola spreading out evenly and return to the oven. Be careful to not burn.
- 6) Remove and cool. Store in glass jars. Granola freezes well.

Cranberry Citrus Loaf

Ingredients:

- 2 cups oat flour
- ½ cup Wagler Maple Products maple syrup
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp Ceylon cinnamon
- ½ tsp Himalayan Sea salt
- 1 cup fresh cranberries
- 1 orange (1/2 cup fresh squeezed orange juice and zest of a whole orange)
- 3 tbsp virgin coconut oil, melted
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 tsp pure orange extract
- 1 tbsp ground flax + 3 Tbsp water
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- 2-3 Tbsp unsweetened sulfite-free shredded coconut

Icing:

Combine 1 can of sweetened condensed coconut milk and 1 tsp pure orange extract in a blender or whisk for a minute. Pour over completely cooled loaf. Sprinkle unsweetened sulfite-free shredded coconut on top and put in the fridge to set the glaze.

Directions:

1. Mix 1 tbsp of ground flax with 3Tbsp water and let it stand 5 minutes.
2. Mix the melted coconut oil, orange juice, zest, vanilla, maple syrup, and




These recipes for cranberry citrus granola and cranberry citrus loaf offer a whole host of health benefits and are a great way to start your day. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold



This cranberry citrus loaf includes a whole orange (juice and zest) and natural, local maple syrup for sweetness without the use of processed sugar. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold

- cranberries in a bowl.
3. Mix all the dry ingredients together.
4. Combine the wet and dry. Mix well.
5. Pour into a 9x5 loaf pan lined with parchment paper. It will be about half the height of the pan. Oat flour is much denser than white flour.
6. Bake for 35-45 minutes at 325 degrees Fahrenheit. It should bounce back
- when touched and edges golden. Insert a toothpick and remove. The toothpick should be clean.
7. Cool the loaf on a wire rack completely before icing or the sweetened coconut condensed milk will melt.

Happy holistic cooking this Veganuary. Follow me on social @waglermapleproducts @nithvalleyapiaries @mercedeskaygoldfitness



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COMMUNITY —

Show Us Your Ancestor: Swimming in January



Wilmot-Tavistock reader Angelica Thomas sent in these photos of her grandfather, George Thomas, and grandmother, Margaret Panchen, swimming in the pond that backs Wilmot Street in New Hamburg in the winter of 1932. Angelica says: "It seems 1932 was a very mild winter! Margaret Panchen (her grandmother) was born, bred and lived her whole life in New Hamburg. George Thomas came to town around 1928 and worked at The Hahn Brass at that time. They were married in 1934, so I can suppose swimming in The Nith River in January was a cheap date. They were probably accompanied by Margaret's father or brother. Margaret was 18 years old at the time."

Thanks for sharing, Angelica! If you would like to send a photo and description of one of your ancestors to be featured in Show Us Your Ancestor, email them to Galen@granthaven.com.




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| 3) One | 9) Meteorite |
| 4) Shoulder | 10) On a book |
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