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More than 200 people attended the Wilmot Heritage Day at the New Dundee Community Centre Feb. 17 to peruse collections of historical items and history displays from individual collectors and local organizations with a vested interest in local heritage including Heritage Wilmot, Castle Kilbride and others. Photo by Al Junker

## Perth County approves 2024 budget

**Includes double-digit levy increase**

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Another area municipality has passed a double-digit budget increase.

Perth County's approved tax-levy hike will see a 12.31 per-cent increase which amounts to just under \$22.2 million, up more than \$2.4 million from 2023. It includes a dedicated capital levy increase of 1.06 per cent to continue to move the county's asset-management plan forward. The county says the budget will maintain current service levels and address corporate priorities. Oxford County recently passed a 16.7 per-cent budget.

"Council is confident that this budget supports the continued excellent programs delivered by the county," said Warden Rhonda Ehgoetz. "I look forward to seeing the completion of some exciting projects in the county in 2024."

When it comes to the increased burden on the taxpayers, she explained council had its hands tied.

"Unfortunately, to keep the services we have, we need to put the budget up a little bit. Our expenses, like fuel, are coming in higher and that's just the reality of it. I know it puts pressure on some people, but hopefully not too much."

The document was given to councillors for input in December 2023. Capital and operating budget presentations were delivered by the treasurer over several meetings in January.

"We took a refreshed approach to the development of our streamlined budget package this year," said Corey Bridges, manager of finance and treasurer. "The county is

*Continued on page 3*

## Nine new Community Safety Zones arriving in Oxford County in 2024

**Photo radar also being considered**

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Oxford County is introducing nine new Community Safety Zones this spring.

The new zones, which were decided through an eligibility and evaluation

process, are located in six communities across the county including Tavistock. Oxford Road 24 - or Hope Street West - from Woodstock Street to the 50 km/h limit West, and Hope Street East from Woodstock Street to the 50 km/h limit East, has been approved.

Oxford County manager of transportation Frank Gross said the moves are part of the county's ongoing process to identify where community safety zones are needed based on a two-warrant system.

*Continued on page 2*





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# COMMUNITY —

## New Community Safety Zones in Oxford County

Continued from page 1

“Both warrants need to be met and the first one is identifying areas where there are schools, playgrounds, hospitals, senior’s homes and generally high-pedestrian volumes. We identify areas where there will be a higher presence of vulnerable road users.”

If that warrant is met, the second step involves the overall risk rating which includes several safety factors.

“Is there a sidewalk there? What is the traffic volume and percentage of trucks? How many pedestrians are crossing, and also (what are) the number of collisions per number of vehicles? We set a scoring matrix for that and if it meets the minimum scoring, then we recommend a community safety zone.”

If any Oxford resident feels there should be one in their area, staff can look to see if it meets the first warrant and proceed from there.

The county completed a review in 2022 of potential sites for community safety zones, implementing the first 20 in the fall of 2023. County council approved the nine additional zones at the Feb. 14 council meeting, bringing the total number of designated areas to 29 in Oxford County communities and segments of the county’s road network.

Part of the communications aspect of the zones is signage, and Gross said it will soon be coming to the new designated areas.

“Signs will mark the start and the end of the community safety zones and depending on the length there would be additional signs at a major intersection. Any vehicles entering midway through will know they are in a zone.”

There is no change to any area’s existing speed limit, but police can impose higher speeding fines – up to double the normal fee for guilty drivers.

“The intent is to deter motorists from speeding because of the potential risk of even greater penalties,” Gross explained.

Community safety zones are also eligible for automated speed enforcement, otherwise known as photo radar. The township will be looking at the potential of implementing the technology in Oxford.

“We are developing a business plan for council’s consideration as part of the 2025 budget submission in August or September. Council will look at what the cost may be for that program,” said Gross.

If the county decides to go ahead with photo radar, it will need to implement what is called a joint processing system. Any violations would be processed out of a Toronto office and sent back to the county where the tickets would be issued. Gross added the Region of Waterloo is considering launching a processing centre.

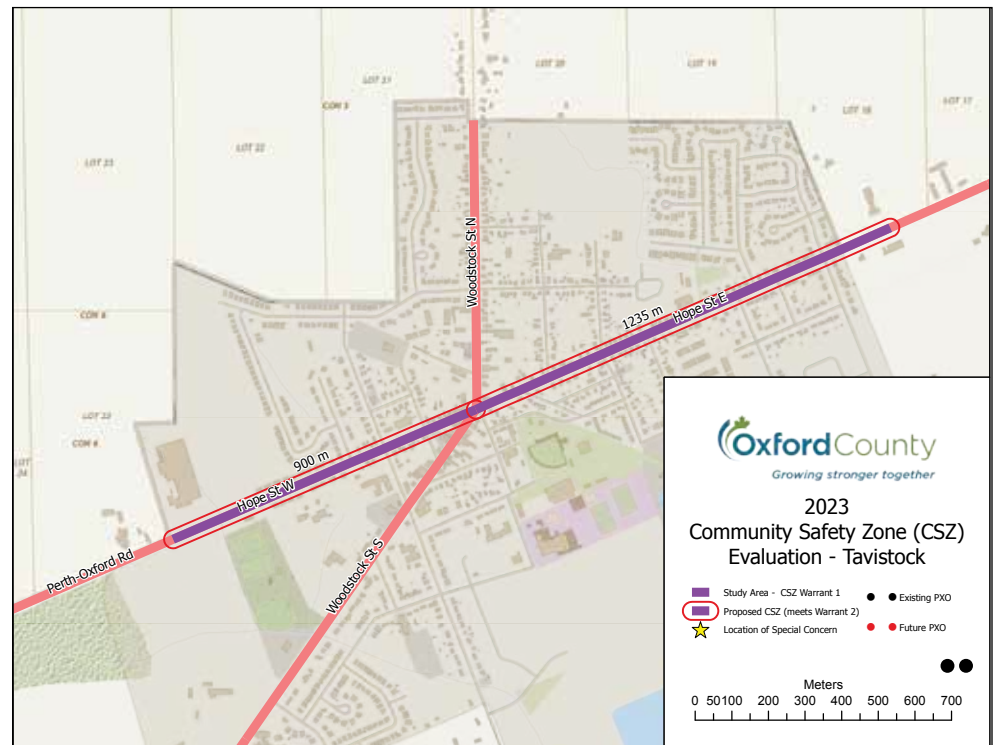
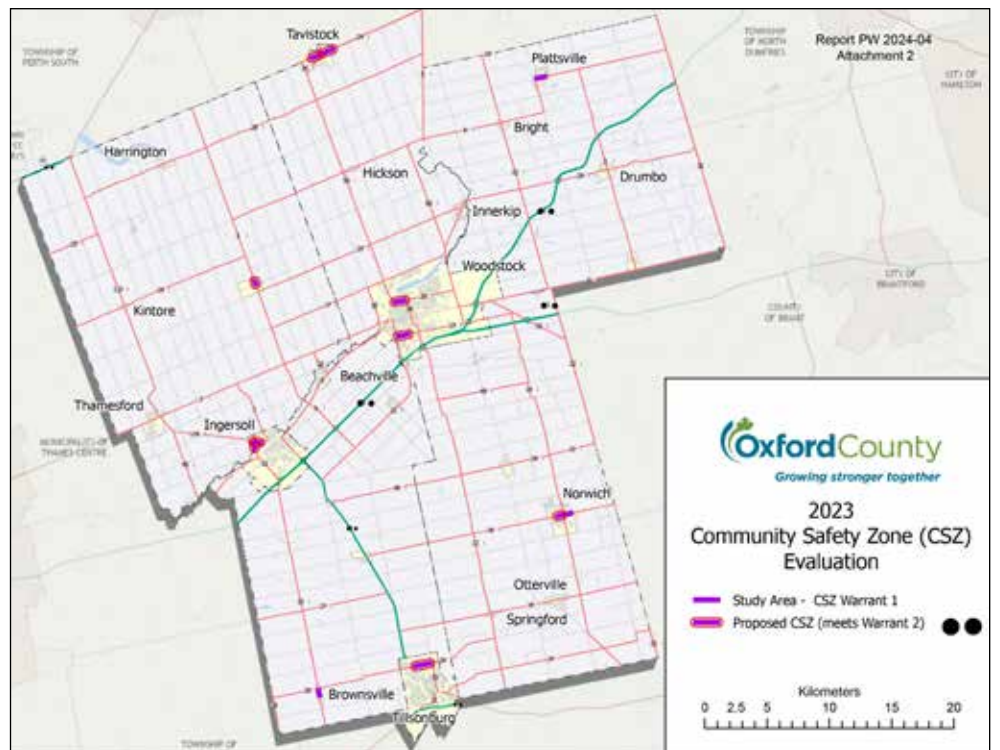
“Municipalities in this area could partner with them and that is something we will be investigating,” he added.

The equipment would be leased by the county through a third-party contractor and, at last look, one unit costs about \$250,000. Gross said photo radar is not meant to be a revenue source, but rather a deterrent.

“Now I understand it has gone to an AMP system or an administrative monetary penalty system like parking tickets. There may be an opportunity to reduce some of the court costs as a result. We will be looking at that too and it may be more economical to implement than it was initially.”

New community safety zones in Oxford County:

- Ingersoll: Oxford Road 10 (Ingersoll Street North) from Bell Street to Victoria Street, and Oxford Road 119 (Bell Street) from Ingersoll Street North to Cashel Street
- Woodstock: Oxford Road 15 (Parkinson Road) from Mill Street to Norwich Avenue, and Oxford Road 35 (Devonshire Avenue) from Vansittart Avenue to Huron Street
- Tavistock: Oxford Road 24 (Hope Street West) from Woodstock Street to the 50 km/h limit West, and Hope Street East from Woodstock Street to the 50 km/h limit East
- Norwich: Oxford Road 18 (Main Street West) from Florence Street to Stover Street
- Tillsonburg: Oxford Road 20 (North Street East) from Broadway to Tillson Avenue
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COMMUNITY —

# Double-digit levy increase for Perth County

Continued from page 1

experiencing similar budget pressures as other municipalities across the province. This year, inflationary pressures were the primary source of increased expenses across all service areas."

The county said the budget was guided by its strategic plan, which includes five main goals: growth and economic development, regionalization and service effectiveness, customer-service excellence, community development and planning, and corporate sustainability.

"Staff work hard each day to deliver efficient and effective services across Perth County," said county CAO Lori Wolfe. "All

of our programs and services are connected back to the goals and objectives of the county's strategic plan, and we appreciate council's support of that vision and the work we do."

Some of the major projects to be completed this year are the completion of the courthouse campus and the completion of the new official plan, as well as road, bridge and culvert-replacement projects. The public works and paramedic departments will see fleet-vehicle replacements and a regional Automated External Defibrillators (AED) program will be executed.

To view the budget, visit [www.perthcounty.ca/finance](http://www.perthcounty.ca/finance).

# TAP looking for governance help

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Tavistock Assistance Program (TAP) is accepting applications for new board members.

TAP is looking to fill two positions on its board of directors. The board meets once a month on a Tuesday evening to discuss the business of the day. The directors don't interact with people in need directly, as the program director develops and provides the service for people in need in our community. There could be a few events each year that require board involvement, as well as subcommittees for various business initiatives.

"This year in particular we are seeking someone with financial-management experience. Our current treasurer will be retiring in 2025 and we'd like to fill that role this year. We are also looking for someone with a passion for our mission. TAP is committed to mobilizing the community to help neighbours in times of hardship. Our mission is to provide confidential

assistance to ensure our neighbours receive caring support and guidance in the event of immediate need or duress," said board chair Jan Ramseyer.

The board reflects regularly on the gift that is TAP, given by the community to the community.

"Our friends and neighbours continue to support the organization and demonstrate a keen commitment to moving TAP forward. The demand for service continues to rise year over year, with food and other daily necessities, rent support and unexpected one-time expenses continuing to be the most common requests," said Ramseyer.

"We anticipate that the current economic climate will see 2024 bring more requests for support from individuals and families in our community. TAP will continue to serve people in a way that maintains confidentiality and serves our mission."

For more information and to fill out an application, visit <https://tapisforyou.com/board-application/>.

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COMMUNITY —

# New Dundee Optimist Club launches new, \$1,500 scholarship for youth volunteers

By Galen Simmons

Young people in New Dundee and the surrounding area who give their time in the name of community service could be eligible to receive up to \$1,500 toward their schooling through a new scholarship launched by the New Dundee Optimist Club.

According to New Dundee Optimist Club scholarship chair Beth Mehring, the purpose of the scholarship is to recognize a student whose volunteer commitment, over and above that required within the school curriculum, has benefited others in the school or community. This award is not based on marks and focuses on youth who have volunteered their time and their talents.

“(We want) to foster in youth the belief that the giving of oneself in service to others will advance the wellbeing of both the individual and his or her community,” Mehring said.

The Optimists are looking for a student who has been actively involved in voluntary service as a leader, coach, organizer, or contributor beyond the voluntary service required within the school curriculum or within the for-credit hours of a co-op work placement. They must either be graduating or have previously graduated from high school, be enrolled in or been accepted by a recognized post-secondary school for the coming year – college, university, trade school, etc. – and they must live in the New Dundee Public School

catchment area.

The successful student will be able to demonstrate diversity in their volunteering, benefit to the local community and a driving desire to assist. These skills will be evident not only in the hours that they have volunteered but by the people they have assisted.

The scholarship application form can be found online at [www.newdundeeoptimists.ca](http://www.newdundeeoptimists.ca). Student applicants will also need a letter of recommendation from one of either a teacher, guidance counsellor, principal or vice-principal of the applicant’s secondary school, and a letter of recommendation from an adult supervisor or coordinator from at least one organization with which they have volunteered.

Applications are due by March 31 and can either be emailed to Mehring at [beth.mehring5@gmail.com](mailto:beth.mehring5@gmail.com) or mailed to Youth Scholarship Committee Chair, Optimist Club of New Dundee, PO Box 1, New Dundee ON, N0B 2E0.

Mehring, New Dundee Optimist Club scholarship committee members and members of the New Dundee community will review applications and a member of the Optimist Club will present the scholarship to the successful student at their commencement.

The recipient’s name will be engraved on a plaque and permanently displayed at the New Dundee Community Centre.



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# The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette


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COMMUNITY —



The New Dundee Women's Institute served lunch to Wilmot Heritage Day attendees on Feb. 17. Photos by Al Junker



# Wilmot Heritage Day

Collections of local historical items like this one were on display at the Wilmot Heritage Day.

# Local Ladies Serve Up Community Lunches



There are many groups of ladies in the Tavistock, Shakespeare and New Hamburg areas that go above and beyond to serve lunches at various community and church events. The group pictured is from Trinity Lutheran Church in Sebastopol and was seen recently in the kitchen of the church preparing a fellowship lunch for over 100 patrons who were attending the High Noon church program. Pictured from left are Karen Wagler, Carol Grasby, Donna Swartzentruber, Kathy Wilker, Joan Ferguson, Arlene Wettlaufer and Sherri Negrazis. Photo by Gary West

# Consultants present draft recreation master plan to Wellesley council

By Galen Simmons

Wellesley council is considering the adoption of a plan that will dictate how recreational events and activities are administered for residents of and visitors to the township.

At Wellesley council's Feb. 13 meeting, councillors heard from principal planning consultant Tracey McQueen of MGA Group, who presented a draft recreation master plan for the township. The plan, which was informed by public and stakeholder feedback collected through in-person events and interviews, and an online survey with more than 500 responses, is focused around six strategic themes.

Those themes are financial sustainability, community development and partnerships, facilities and space allocation, parks, trails and open spaces, recreation administration, and communication.

"There are six strategic themes with 63 recommendations over 10 years," McQueen said. "All the recommendations were identified as short, medium and long suggested time frames. The reason for that is there is a lot of consideration put into those decisions, not only financial but human resources and capacity at the township, what the priorities might be for the township and to balance the needs of users.

"We did recommend there is a review by staff that looks at this on an annual basis, so it's a flexible document because there's always things that are changing, not only internally, but externally there's trends, capacity, there's grant opportunities that could change priorities (and) move them up or down (the time frames)."

Some of those recommendations include establishing additional recreational revenue streams to support the programming offered; formalizing written agreements and contracts with user groups and community and other partners; the

establishment of a centralized volunteer development and support system; tracking resident and non-resident facility use; determining long-term facility needs; improving on-road and off-road trail connectivity; establishing a dog park; developing space allocation, affiliation and cost-recovery policies; and improving public engagement when it comes to the development and delivery of recreational programs and services.

"Everything that you presented; I just thought this is really comprehensive. It's covered a lot of the issues we've been dealing with, and a lot of the wishes and the wants of the community ever since I've been here," Mayor Joe Nowak said. "... One of the concerns I had when I read through the report is it's very intense. There's an awful lot of recommendations that have to be done over the next number of years. ... There was a small suggestion in there with regard to more administration staff. Do you have any thoughts on that?"

In response, McQueen said that as the Bill Geis Recreation Centre officially opens later this year, there likely will be a need for additional program-administration staff at the township.

"As much as you have amazing service, they won't be able to provide all the programming that will be desired," she said, noting that the cost of additional staff could be offset through alternative revenue generation like sponsorships, rental fees and other opportunities outlined in the master plan.

Nowak also touched on the need to expand the township's volunteer-recruitment efforts to help support any expanded programming. To do that, McQueen said the town would need to work to increase the profile of local volunteers through various volunteer-recognition and awards programs to attract the number of volunteers needed.

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# COMMUNITY —

## Family Day activities bring families to Shakespeare Optimist Hall

By Gary West

Kids of all ages and their parents were kept busy and entertained by members of the Shakespeare Optimist Club on Family Day.

Various stations were set up around the hall including one where kids could build bird feeders, a balloon station, and several games that kept the youth in attendance,

interested and having fun.

Minute to Win It was a big hit with the kids, who were busy bouncing ping pong balls into egg cartons. Another crowd favourite was the egg-and-spoon races and the solo-cup stacking.

Over 200 hot dogs and juice boxes were handed out at the three-hour event.



Sisters Scarlet and Chloe Smith-Illman get lessons on how to make balloon animals from high-school students Summer Kollman, Annalise Glaab and Jaymee Witzel during the Shakespeare Optimist Club's Family Day event. Photo by Gary West



Shakespeare's Rachel, Emma, Blake and Colin Eby build a bird feeder at the Shakespeare Optimist Club's Family Day event. Photo by Gary West



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# COMMUNITY —

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Well our kids (Jason, Todd, Heather and Families) pulled the wool over our eyes surprising us on our 50th wedding anniversary.

We wish to thank all our friends and families that came with their well wishes.

When we look back and go over this night we are so blessed to see all the people who have been on our crazy journey.

Thank you doesn't seem enough so keep well, laugh often and know that you are special to us.

Rich & Kathy Wilker

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*Celebrating 60 years of marriage!*



Keith and Janet Bachert, of Auburn, ON formerly of Walton, were blessed with the attendance of ALL 64 ( n counting) of their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren at the happy occasion of their recent 60th Wedding Anniversary Celebration.

The bride and groom were married , in a country church near Tavistock, on Dec 21, 1963 , and resided in Stratford where Keith worked in a grocery meat department , and Janet taught elementary school in Oxford County.

They soon purchased a dairy farm east of Walton; and years later, on the farm, they also began, what grew into a successful meat business.

Keith & Janet now reside at their hobby farm near Auburn where they enjoy meeting old friends and a few new guests at their Bed & Breakfast .

On their actual Anniversary Date, they hosted a dinner at Anna Mae's Restaurant enjoying the company of their Bachert and Bender siblings.

They recognize that their 60 happy years are a blessing from God and they give praise to their Lord and Saviour.

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# COMMUNITY —

## The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. Worship of Krishna is observed by which Religious Faith?
2. From which country does Gouda cheese originate?
3. What was Disney's first animated movie?
4. What sport is dubbed the "king of sports"?
5. In little red riding hood, who does the wolf dress up as?
6. Area 51 is located in which U.S state?
7. What is the loudest animal on Earth?
8. In what type of matter are atoms most tightly packed?
9. Pikachu is from what fictional universe?
10. For what movie did Steven Spielberg win his first Oscar for best director?

Answers found on page 22

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

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

**February 22:** Happy birthday to Benjamin Church (13), Devon Smelski (15), and Lori Snider.

**February 23:** Happy birthday to Ivy Bender (6), Caitlyn Wirth (15), Courtney Wilker (22), and Cody Wood (23).

**February 24:** Happy birthday to Declan Mohr (12), Erin Breneman (22), and Madison Kuehl (22).

**February 25:** Happy birthday to Attwell Martin (7), Sophie Spicer (16), Ella Spicer (16), Max Harvey (17), Chloe Wilhelm, and Joshua Bender.

**February 26:** Happy birthday to Katelyn Yantzi (22).

**February 27:** Happy birthday to Arlo Churchward (4), Noah Puklicz (14), Sophie West (15), Caleb Kimpel (20), Sue Little, and Sonya Kollman.

**February 28:** Happy birthday to Matthew Phillips (3) and Skyler Riehl (18).

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## The Old Gazettes

By Jake Grant

*Slowly but surely, I'm reading through the past pages of the Tavistock Gazette (est. 1895). Within this weekly column I'd like to share with you some of my findings.*

**February 19-26, 2014, Edition (10 years ago)**

The Canadian Olympic spirit for the 2014 Olympic Winter Games being held in Sochi, Russia, has been demonstrated through artwork painted in snowbanks around Tavistock and the local area.

Crime Stoppers and Oxford County OPP are seeking the public's assistance in locating the person(s) responsible for a break and enter in Zorra Township. Entry was gained to the residence and once inside the thieves ransacked the home and stole a variety of electronics, silverware and jewelry. The approximate value of the theft exceeds \$30,000.

Students at the Tavistock Public School are learning rhythms with the help of hand drums over a two-week period under the guidance of music teacher Ms. Rachel Gander.

Thirty-three members of the Tavistock Men's Club gathered on Thursday, Feb. 20, 2014 for their regular meeting and a special presentation was made to Mr. Ken Lichti who has been a member of the club for more than 50 years.

**February 18-25, 2004, Edition (20 years ago)**

Petting a calf for the first time or sitting way up in the cab of a milk truck were some of the experiences nearly 1,400 Oxford County school students had at Dairy Days held for three days last week in the Oxford Auditorium.

The Tavistock Bluemont Farms Novice rep. team will head to Paris this Thursday with a 2-1 lead in the quarterfinals of OMHA. This series has turned out to be a battle of the goalies with outstanding goaltending by our Rory Weber and Derek Wagler who earned a shutout.

"For meritorious service to agriculture" reads the diploma received by Gerry Wettlaufer of Tavistock, who was honored recently by the Tavistock Agricultural Society for his many years of involvement in the local association.

**February 22-29, 1984, Edition (40 years ago)**

Cindy Saranchuk of Tavistock was chosen for this year's Optimist Scholarship and was presented with her award at the Oratorical Contest on Friday night.

Mr. Frank Jenner of Stratford addressed the Athlone Institute last week who was stationed on a mission in Saudi Arabia. A part of Asia where there is no fighting, it is a country run under the feudal system where the King owns everything and is the keeper of the state which is a holy land of Moslem religion. There are no tourists allowed in the country. Anyone who is required to enter must have a permit and there is very

little crime as the punishment for small offenses is very severe.

Mr. Clifford Winhold celebrated his 96th birthday on Saturday, Feb. 11, 1984, at the Bonnie Brae Nursing Home in Tavistock. Helping him celebrate was his wife Lottie (Wilker) who will be 89 years of age in May, and sixteen members of the immediate family.

**February 19-26, 1964, Edition (60 years ago)**

Increases in the premiums for hospital-care insurance, and in the tax on gasoline for motor vehicles, were announced Wednesday in Provincial Treasurer Allan's 1964-65 budget in the Ontario legislature. The gasoline tax went up two cents a gallon from 13 cents to 15 cents effective at midnight Wednesday. The hospital-care premium rate will go to \$3.25 a month from \$2.10 for single person, and \$6.50 from \$4.20 for family units.

A pancake festival was held Friday at Nuttall's Sales and Service, local International Harvester farm implement dealer, with close to 300 partaking of pancakes served by staff.

Charles E. Reider of Shakespeare, a machinery maintenance man at a Stratford plant, was taken to Stratford hospital when he suffered a broken leg, broken arm and chipped shoulder after an industrial mishap. Mr. Reider apparently became entangled in a metal milling machine which he was cleaning.

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131 Wettlaufer St., Tavistock 655-2581

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Pastor Hugh Rutledge 655-3611

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[www.tavistock.church](http://www.tavistock.church)



**FEATURE —**

# New Hamburg's Hillcrest Service Ltd., 58 years and counting

By Gary West

There are many companies in the Perth County and Waterloo region areas that have seen progressive changes over many years, perhaps none more than a business on the top of the hill in New Hamburg.

Hillcrest Services Ltd. is a second-generation family business that has grown and prospered by keeping vehicles running smoothly and offering a friendly tow to those drivers who need it.

Mike and Darolyn Gilmore took over Hillcrest from Mike's parents, Don and Carol, and step by step have progressively and carefully expanded the business into what it is today.

Hillcrest began in 1966 with Don Gilmore taking over the garage and buying an older tow truck. After rebuilding his truck, Don Gilmore was officially in the vehicle-towing and repair business.

He partnered with neighbour Ray Steinmann until he moved to Bleams Road to start his own auto-repair business.

Hillcrest service is most commonly recognized in New Hamburg and area as a towing company. Anyone who has ever required roadside assistance was likely



Hillcrest Service father-and-son team, Don and Mike Gilmore, pictured recently with one of their four tow trucks, on site and ready to roll. They have built a very successful business together over the last 58 years. Photo by Gary West

served by Hillcrest.

In a recent interview, Mike Gilmore says

Dundee and Tavistock in the south.

With their ever growing business, the Gilmores now have 12 employees and four tow trucks including two flat beds – the business is often called upon to float small machines for local farm-equipment dealers.

Mike Gilmore says much of the company's growth over the last number of years is a result of referrals by satisfied customers.

The business' four-bay garage is a modest facility, utilizing the latest in tooling and technology. Hillcrest's mechanics have factory training and specialize in transmissions, engine repair, electrical troubleshooting and general repairs.

Hillcrest is also in the business of selling late model cars and trucks. When a customer comes to Hillcrest and tells Mike Gilmore exactly what they are looking for in a late model car, he will search auto auctions, wholesalers and other dealers across the province to find the perfect vehicle. On average, Hillcrest sells upwards of 17 vehicles every month.

Hillcrest Service is located at the top of the hill at 1065 Huron St., New Hamburg, and they can be reached at 519-662-1750.

**CORRECTION:** Regarding an article about Hidden Acres that was published a few weeks ago, Hidden Acres wanted to clarify that United Way Perth Huron has noted that the support that Hidden Acres received was through the Community Services Recovery Fund and is not considered a grant but an investment by the Government of Canada."

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**FORM 6  
SALE OF LAND BY PUBLIC TENDER  
Municipal Act, 2001**

Ontario Regulation 181/03, Municipal Tax Sale Rules

**SALE OF LAND BY PUBLIC TENDER**

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT

**Take Notice** that tenders are invited for the purchase of the land described below and will be received until 3:00 p.m. local time on March 27, 2024, at the Township of Wilmot Municipal Office (Administration Complex), 60 Snyder's Road W., Baden Ontario.

The tenders will then be opened in public on the same day as soon as possible after 3:00 p.m. at the Township of Wilmot Municipal Office (Administration Complex), 60 Snyder's Road W., Baden.

**Description of Land:**

Roll No. 30 18 090 009 13500 0000; 2310 CARMEL-KOCH RD., ST. AGATHA; PIN 22176-0036 (LT); PT LT 11 BLK B CON 2 WILMOT AS IN 848556; S/T EXECUTION 02-00167, IF ENFORCEABLE; WILMOT; File No. 22-01

According to the last returned assessment roll, the assessed value of the land is \$1,985,000

**Minimum tender amount: \$35,300.98**

Tenders must be submitted in the prescribed form and must be accompanied by a deposit of at least 20 per cent of the tender amount, which deposit shall be made by way of a certified cheque/bank draft/ money order payable to the municipality.

**Except as follows, the municipality makes no representation regarding the title to, crown interests, or any other matters relating to the land to be sold. Responsibility for ascertaining these matters rests with the potential purchasers. Any interests of the Federal or Provincial Crown encumbering the land at the time of the tax sale will continue to encumber the land after the registration of the tax deed. The assessed value according to the last returned assessment roll may or may not be representative of the current market value of the property.**

Pursuant to the Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Act, S.C. 2022, c. 10, s. 235 (the "Act"), effective January 1, 2023, it is prohibited for a non-Canadian to purchase, directly or indirectly, any residential property, as those terms are defined in the legislation. Contraventions of the Act are punishable by a fine, and offending purchasers may be ordered to sell the residential property.

The municipality assumes no responsibility whatsoever for ensuring bidders/tenderers comply with the Act, and makes no representations regarding same. Prospective bidders/tenderers are solely responsible for ensuring compliance with the Act and are advised to seek legal advice before participating in this sale.

Transfers of properties that contain at least one and not more than six single family residences and are transferred to non-residents of Canada or foreign entities, are subject to the Province's Non-Resident Speculation Tax (NRST).

This sale is governed by the *Municipal Act, 2001* and the Municipal Tax Sales Rules made under that Act. The successful purchaser will be required to pay the amount tendered plus accumulated taxes and any taxes that may be applicable, such as a land transfer tax and HST.

The municipality has no obligation to provide vacant possession to the successful purchaser.

A copy of the prescribed form of tender is available on the website of the Government of Ontario Central Forms Repository under the listing for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

For further information regarding this sale and a copy of the prescribed form of tender, visit: [www.OntarioTaxSales.ca](http://www.OntarioTaxSales.ca)

or if no internet access available, contact:

Dan Elliott  
Interim Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer  
Corporate Services

The Corporation of the Township of Wilmot

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SPORTS —

# Royals one win away from OEHL semi-final berth

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Tavistock has taken a 3-1 lead over Durham in its Ontario Elite Hockey league quarterfinal series after sweeping a pair of weekend games.

Jensen Van Boekel stopped all 29 shots he faced on the road Friday as the Royals blanked the Thundercats 4-0. Callan Christner, Tristan Hohl, Geoff Killing and Collin Hartwick found the back of the net with Christner adding an assist.

Game four was back in Tavistock Saturday where the Royals jumped out to a 3-0 lead by the five-minute mark of the second period on goals from Trevor Sauder, Drew Gerth and Sean Kienapple before Durham was able to beat Van Boekel. Christner, Jeremy Munro and Sean Leslie added three more goals to begin the third to make it 6-1. Matt Zilke completed the scoring with five minutes left in the game after the Thundercats pulled to within four goals.

Coach Brad Stere said the team is playing some great hockey.

“Games one and two were tight, which is expected in playoffs, but we have made a couple of adjustments and I think our guys are getting into that playoff groove again. We had seven different scorers on Saturday night, which is a testament to our depth. Every line is clicking and we have everyone contributing.”

He added the defense is playing very tight and Jensen has been exceptional in net.

“We had a good weekend, but we have a long way to go.”

Crowds have been solid for the Royals in the postseason with 320 fans at game two, Super Bowl Sunday, while 384 attended game four.

“The fan support has been great for a first-round series and will get even bigger as we hopefully go deeper into playoffs,” said team president Kyle Wynette. “Win or lose, our fans can be confident our players will leave it all on the ice each game. I love

the encouragement we get from our fans, especially the young ones. They seem equally invested in our success and I love hearing them call out our player's names and cheer when we make a great play.”

He added the chuck-a-puck goes over well with the kids and is free to enter thanks to Sandra Eby, who sponsors the promotion.

The team has been entertaining fans with something other than hockey at times this year, including a figure skating team at game four.

“We had the Juvenile group from Team Unity perform at Saturday's home game. It's always nice to showcase and give exposure to other user groups when we can. It worked out great having them out to help them prepare for their provincial championships taking place in March. I think it helps both clubs when we do those types of promotions. Some of their fans get to see Royals hockey while our fans get exposure to a sport they might be unfamiliar with,” said Wynette.



Royal goalie Jensen Van Boekel stopped all 29 shots for a 4-0 shutout against the Thundercats Friday. Contributed photo

# PJHL Roundup: Firebirds three points clear in Doherty Division

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

New Hamburg has moved three points up on Woodstock for the division lead after a two-win weekend that included a 5-1 win over the Navy Vets Friday in front of over 700 fans at Southwood Arena.

The Firebirds' unbeaten streak has reached 13 games. Anthony Pede led the Firebirds with two goals and a pair of assists with single goals from Justin McManus, Riley Benko and Owen Sculthorp. The Firebirds outshot the Vets 35 to 18. New Hamburg hosted Paris on Saturday and earned a 4-2 win over the Titans. Pede and Benko had a goal and assist each while Justin McManus added two helpers. Owen Bruder and Matt Domm also scored for the Firebirds.

New Hamburg coach and general manager Shane Gerber said he's not sure why the team is playing so well, but he'll take it.

“I wish I could answer that. It's just this group. They are resilient and we have guys in and out of the lineup every night. It's just a good thing right now.”

The Firebirds won the Doherty Division regular season title with 67 points, one ahead of Wellsley, but couldn't translate that into playoff success, something Gerber said is probably in the back of the team's mind.

“The guys on the team last year, you only get so many chances to do it. You never know from year to year where you are. Here we are again, and I think now they start to believe.”

A big part of the team's success comes from the stick of Owen Fischer who has 31 goals and 24 assists in 36 games. The team captain and Kitchener native has one more year of eligibility left.

“He's been nothing but a positive influence in the dressing room and his work ethic is also what drives the team here. He's one of the last guys off the ice at practice,” said Gerber.

He added the team's depth has been a huge part of their success.

“You just don't know who it's going to be on any given night. It's fun to watch right now from where we are as a (coaching) staff. You always hope for things to be this way, and we will take the good.”

New Hamburg sees anywhere from 500 to 800 fans in the seats every home game, among the best in the entire Provincial Junior Hockey League and something Gerber said the kids on the ice notice.

“The community has been really supportive and it continues to get better.”

Gerber said earlier in the season that first place wasn't something on his mind, but now that it's so close, everyone wants it.

“Now that we have worked our way to this situation, I sure would like to clinch it. We need one win out of our last two games to get there. I am hoping for (the player's sake) they get rewarded for the work they've put in. It's been quite a run. We are only three points up, so without that run it doesn't happen.”

The 13-game unbeaten streak is among the league's best and, should the Firebirds clinch top spot, they have the option of taking a first-round bye or playing the lowest-seeded team. Gerber said there would be several factors going into that decision.

“I can't honestly answer that at this moment. There's a lot to consider when we do that.”

If they pass on the bye, it will be offered to the second-place team.

### Braves slump continues

Tavistock has lost three straight games and has just two wins in February after a pair of weekend losses.

The Braves were outshot 45 to 31 in a 1-0 loss in Hespeler on Sunday in what was likely a first-round playoff preview. On Friday night, Tavistock hosted Wellesley and dropped a 3-2 decision. The Applejacks led 2-0 on goals from Connor Doerbecker and Kian Harron before Ryan Suljack replied for the Braves late in the first period.

Isiah Katsube made it 3-1 for Wellesley with the second period's only goal. Kaden Brame pulled Tavistock to within one, but goalie Tyson Gustaw shut the door making 34 of 36 saves for the win.

Wellesley dropped a 4-2 decision to Woodstock on home ice Saturday. Katsube and Jake L'Heureux scored for the Applejacks.

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

Team	PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
WNV	Davin Gray	F	41	16	47	63
WNV	Nolan Brett	F	40	28	27	55
NHF	Owen Fischer	F	36	31	24	55
HES	Boden White	F	32	19	26	45
HES	Jack Restauri	F	40	14	28	42
NHF	Tyler Reid	D	35	15	26	41
NHF	Jake Thompson	F	37	20	20	40
WNV	Ethan Szabo	F	34	13	25	38
NHF	Owen Bruder	F	37	18	20	38
NOR	Joel Storoschuk	F	37	17	16	33
TAV	Nicolas Thibodeau	F	38	13	19	32
NOR	Brandon Balazs	F	32	16	15	31
WNV	Brodie Keams	F	31	8	22	30
TAV	Stephen Peppas	F	37	15	15	30
NHF	Matt Domm	D	34	6	24	30
WNV	Tyler Smeda	D	41	10	19	29
NOR	Malcom Scott	F	35	14	15	29
NHF	Owen Sculthorp	F	20	9	20	29
HES	Andrew Harris	F	37	17	12	29
WEL	Connor Doerbecker	F	24	17	11	28
TAV	Ian Glendinning	F	39	10	18	28
WNV	Chris Coulter	D	34	12	15	27
WEL	Isiah Katsube	F	31	11	15	26
TAV	Jacob Reid-Brant	F	37	10	16	26
WNV	Sam Barry	F	41	10	15	25
WEL	Carson Wickie	F	36	9	16	25

### PJHL STANDINGS

#### South Doherty Division

	GP	W	L	OTL	T	PTS
New Hamburg Firebirds	40	31	7	2	0	64
Woodstock Navy Vets	41	30	8	3	0	63
Tavistock Braves	40	22	15	1	2	47
Norwich Merchants	40	17	17	5	1	40
Wellesley Applejacks	39	18	20	1	0	37
Hespeler Shamrocks	40	12	26	2	0	26
Paris Titans	40	8	29	2	1	19

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**SPORTS —**

**Local group partners with girls hockey association to promote organ donation awareness**



Wilmot Area Life Donation has partnered with organizers of the Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament for the past 15 years to help raise registration rates for organ and tissue donors in the Wilmot area. Contributed photo

By Elysia Cook

This year marked the 15th anniversary of the Wilmot Girls Hockey Association hosting the Kyla Kowalik Memorial Tournament.

Kyla was a great ambassador not only for girls hockey but for other local sports like soccer and volleyball. She was an A student and a volunteer at the library. If you needed help, she was there.

Kyla passed away at the age of 17 as a result of complications from knee surgery. Still, she was there to help others by becoming a donor. This generous spirit is what drives the many volunteer tournament organizers to continue running one of the strongest girls hockey tournaments in southern Ontario.

This year, 22 teams descended on the Wilmot Recreation Centre to participate in one of Kyla's favourite sports, hockey.

Wilmot Area Life Donation Awareness (WALDA) is celebrating its 10-year partnership with this amazing group of volunteers. WALDA is a small, grassroots organization that aims to raise registration rates for organ and tissue transplants. By sharing Kyla's story and others like it, WALDA has helped raise the local registration rate with Be A Donor from 35 per cent to 56 per cent, consistently putting Wilmot in the top-20 communities in Ontario.

If you have registered your consent as a tissue and organ donor, thank you! Anyone thinking about registering can visit [beadonor.ca](http://beadonor.ca). You'll need your health card. Please consider registering your consent and become a hero just like Kyla.

Thank you to Lisa Clifford, Holly Bast, Darlene Vorstenbosch, Val Sanderson, Krista Boertien, Brett Clifford and Brittany Vorstenbosch for all of the time and effort dedicated to this year's tournament and many tournaments in the past.

**O.E.H.L. Senior "AA" Hockey  
Regular Season Standings**

	GP	W	L	OTL	PTS
Ripley Wolves	24	20	4	3	43
Creemore Coyotes	25	17	8	2	36
Minto 81's	25	16	9	1	33
<b>Tavistock Royals</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>
Seaforth Centenaires	25	14	11	1	29
Saugeen Shores Winterhawks	25	13	12	1	27
Durham Thundercats	24	13	11	1	27
Georgian Bay Applekings	24	9	15	2	20
Erin Outlaws	24	6	18	1	13
Milverton Four Wheel Drivers	22	5	17	1	11
Lucknow Lancers	22	3	19	1	7

**Tavistock Royals  
2023-24 Point Leaders**

PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
Sean Kienapple	F	21	15	16	31
Drew Gerth	F	23	12	10	22
Trevor Sauder	F	20	8	12	20
Deven Kropf	F	22	4	14	18
Erik Robichaud	F	10	4	10	14
Sean Leslie	F	23	6	8	14
Jeremy Munro	F	22	9	4	13
Collin Hartwick	F	16	7	6	13
Mike Noyes	D	19	3	9	12
Lucas Bast	D	19	4	7	11
Matt Zilke	F	19	7	4	11
Adam Barr	F	17	2	8	10
Callan Christner	F	21	6	4	10
Cam Leslie	D	24	2	7	9
Greg Noyes	D	20	3	6	9
Mitch Facey	F	16	2	5	7
Geoff Killing	D	10	2	3	5
Jon Jutzi	D	10	0	4	4
Patrick Vulgan	F	2	1	2	3
Tristan Hohl	D	21	2	1	3
Chad McIntosh	F	9	0	1	1
Reid Ramseyer	D	13	0	1	1
Zach Mark	F	5	0	0	0
Samson Walsom	D	11	0	0	0
Graham Kitching	F	5	0	0	0

**TAVISTOCK ROYALS SR. "AA" HOCKEY**

**Tavistock Royals vs Durham Thundercats**  
**Friday, Feb. 23rd at 8:30 p.m.**  
**Tavistock & District Recreation Centre**

**AA Quarterfinals Game 5**

**ROYALS LEAD THE SERIES 3-1**

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# SPORTS —

## Rotary Men's Curling Bonspiel hosted in Tavistock

By Gary West

The Tavistock Curling Rink was a busy place to be Feb. 17 as eight teams from the area played in two draws with eight ends for the annual Tavistock Rotary Men's Curling Bonspiel.

Brian Bennett, who chaired the event, said the bonspiel has been one that area curlers look forward to every February since 1996.

In the first draw of the day, Tavistock skip Glen Weitzel and his team of Andrew Weitzel, Ken Long and Murray Pink came away with the win with a score of 11-4.

In the second draw, the Green Team from Tavistock came

away with the win as lifetime Tavistock curler Bill Green, son Chris Green, son-in-law Mike Gilroy and son Dan Green defeated the Plattsville team skipped by Cecil Hofstetter in a hard fought game with a final score of 7-3.

Interested curlers are always welcome at the Tavistock Curling Club. For more information, visit [tavistockcurlingclub.ca](http://tavistockcurlingclub.ca) or email [curlingclub@gmail.com](mailto:curlingclub@gmail.com).

Lead Dan Green gets ready to throw his stone for the start of the final draw for team Green, which won its second draw with a 7-3 score. Photo by Gary West



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SPORTS —

# Zehr named OASA coach of the year

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Tavistock's Kevin Zehr has won the Ontario Amateur Softball Association's Gil Read Memorial Award.

The award is presented annually and pays tribute to outstanding coaches who embody the spirit of Gil Read, a revered figure known for his remarkable contributions to softball at various levels.

Zehr expressed gratitude for the recognition and emphasized the collective effort of his players, coaching staff and the softball community at large.

"It's very humbling to receive an individual award for a team sport. Without the hard work and dedication of the players, I would not have these accomplishments."

He attributed his success to the unwavering support and dedication of fellow coaches and those around him, echoing the sentiment that softball is truly a team sport, both on and off the field.

The Tavistock native joins a select group of coaches who have made a lasting impact on the sport of softball in Ontario and beyond. The criteria to win the award involves a range of qualities that reflect both the coach's individual achievements and the character and development of their teams.

Factors such as athletic accomplishments, sportsmanship, team development and overall character are carefully considered in the selection process. Letters of support from community members, association members, team members and officials further underscore the impact and influence of the coach on those around them.

One of the people to nominate Zehr was his son, Tyson,

who has been on both ends of his father's coaching.

"I've had the privilege of experiencing firsthand that my father's coaching philosophy extends far beyond the softball diamond as I played for him for over 15 years. He instills values such as discipline, sportsmanship and perseverance in all of his players, helping them become not only better athletes but also better individuals. His mentorship leaves a lasting impact on the lives of those he coaches as they carry these lessons with them into their future endeavors."

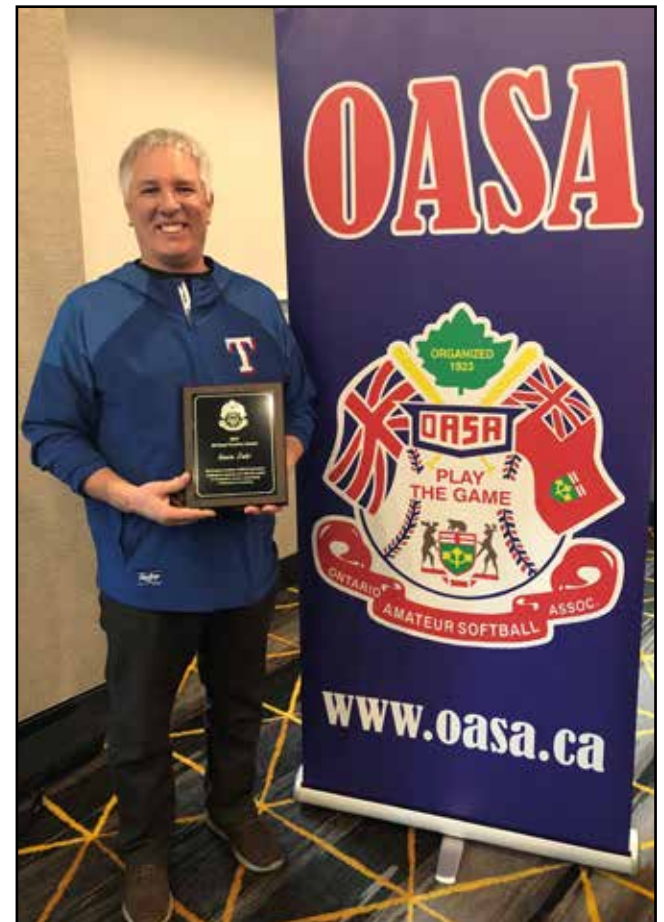
Tyson had the opportunity to coach alongside his dad for the Tavistock Merchants last season.

"Coaching alongside my dad has been an invaluable experience that has continued to teach me immeasurable lessons in leadership, teamwork and the true essence of sportsmanship. He is a true ambassador for the sport and a role model for coaches and players alike."

Zehr coached the Tavistock Merchants to victory in the 2022 and 2023 U23 Men's Fastpitch National Championship and guided the Toronto Batmen in a 1-0, 15-inning game to clinch the Senior Men's Fastpitch National Championship last year. He has seen much over his 30 years of coaching and has helped seven players reach their dream of being named to the Junior Canadian National Team.

In this first year of coaching, his team played in two tournaments on the same weekend because one was rained out. They were 75 km apart and they won them both.

Zehr received his award at the recent OASA annual meeting in Oakville, Ont.



Tavistock's Kevin Zehr recently won the Ontario Amateur Softball Association's Gil Read Memorial Award. Contributed photo

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

### Oxford Road 59 (Vansittart Ave) bridge in Woodstock

February - December 2024

Construction work on the Oxford Road 59 (Vansittart Avenue) bridge in Woodstock is ongoing from February until December 2024.

During construction:

- Oxford Rd. 59 from Devonshire Ave. to Tecumseh St. will be closed to southbound traffic.
- Northbound traffic will remain open in a single lane.
- Tecumseh St. will be open to local traffic only.
- Pedestrian access over the bridge will be maintained on one side of the street.

Detour routes for southbound traffic at Oxford Road 17 are:

- Detour 1 - OR 17 west to OR 30/11th Line
- Detour 2 - OR 17 east to OR 4

The map shows the project area around Oxford Road 59 and Oxford Road 17. A red circle indicates the project area. A solid red line shows the closed southbound route. A dashed red line shows the open northbound route. Two blue dashed lines represent detour routes: Detour 1 (OR 17 west to OR 30/11th Line) and Detour 2 (OR 17 east to OR 4). The map also shows other roads like Devonshire Ave, Dundas St, and Tecumseh St.

Help keep our community and workers safe: please respect work zones and obey traffic signs.

For more information, visit [www.oxfordcounty.ca/59bridge](http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/59bridge).

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# Thank you

To the Community for supporting our Drive-Thru Valentine's schnitzel dinner at the New Hamburg Legion on February 11th.

Thank you to Sandor, Seaford, and the New Hamburg Legion for helping us.

Our 50/50 winner was Julie Simpson winning \$630 on ticket #0650.

We look forward to meeting you again at our next food event or Breakfast in the Park.

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SPORTS —

# First-ranked U18A Junior Firebirds soaring into playoffs

By Stewart Grant

It's been quite a year so far, but this play-off season brings some unfinished business for the New Hamburg U18A Junior Firebirds, who look to go out on top.

With a record of 41-4-8 so far this season, the New Hamburg Junior Firebirds U18 A team is ranked first out of 210 teams in the 2023-24 Ontario U18 A/B+ category.

Head coach Zach Mark, 23, is one of five alumni of the Junior C Firebirds on this year's U18A coaching staff. This is Mark's second year coaching the U18s. He says he's so proud of this group of young players who have developed so much during the last two seasons. This year's team includes nine returning players from last season who finished third in the province.

Mark says the players have really embraced the systematic style of the game, and the overall philosophy that, "if you don't get scored on, you can't lose." With a team-wide commitment to defensive responsibilities, New Hamburg leads Ontario with a goals-against average of less than two goals per game.

"Evan Walter and Jack Cook have been a great tandem for us all season," said Mark of the Firebirds' two netminders.

This year has been full of achievements, but also learning points. Their achievements have included a first-place regular season finish in the Shamrock League (17-2-6) and tournament victories in Glancaster in November and at the Silver Stick Regionals in December. However, losing a 5-0 game against Cambridge to end their Silver Stick Final hopes in January was a learning experience that coach Mark thinks will benefit his team as they proceed further in the playoffs.

Heading to press time, New Hamburg is 3-0-0 in the 10-game Shamrock League playoffs. Should they ultimately advance as league champions, they will look to complete their unfinished business in the OMHA Championships in Whitby in late March when they play the best teams from Ontario's other five A leagues.

The U18A Firebirds comprise Evan Walter, Evan Walmsley, Cohen White, Aiden Klasnic, Jake Campeau, Liam Robertson, Kayden Livingston, Felix Isert Bender, Connor Farhood, Seth Wallace, Whitfield Hutchinson, Rhett Calder, Dylan Leis, Brett Bell, Ayden Burns, Jordan Jacobs, Logan Kroh, Lukas Etue, and Jack Cook.



Rhett Calder (#16), Brett Bell (#18) and Kayden Livingston (#9) celebrate one of New Hamburg's goals in a recent win over St. Marys. The team, coached by Zach Mark, is ranked first in Ontario with an overall record of 43-4-8. Photo by Spencer Seymour

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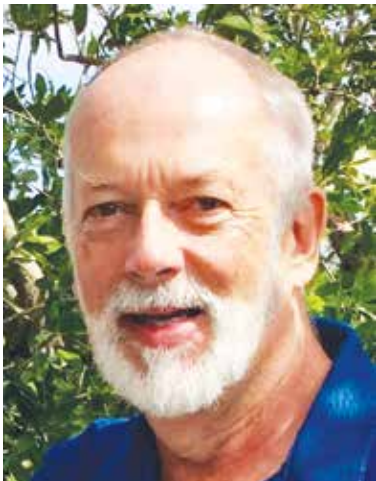


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## TRAVEL —

## OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Tourist attractions that open our eyes and minds



By Paul Knowles

It seems to me that travellers have a choice; we can travel with our eyes wide open, or we can travel with our eyes shut tight to the current realities of our world. I hope I am an eyes-wide-open guy who travels with an awareness of the environmental and social challenges that are ever-present dangers wherever I go.

But even if I keep my eyes open, I have to admit a new friend of mine, Jason deCaires Taylor, goes beyond keeping

his eyes open. In fact, he does everything he can to open the eyes of everyone else too.

I met Jason in Grenada a few months ago. He's a talented sculptor based in his home country of England, and is commissioned to create art installations around the world. But for Jason, his work as an artist is a means to an end. His wonderful sculptures, while art in their own right, always serve Jason's passionate commitment to saving our world.

"My sole focus is the environment. The number one issue is how we can stop destroying our planet," he told me.

Jason creates art in cooperation with environmental groups that help fund their projects. The goal of all his work is to open people's eyes to the environmental disasters we have created, and to force us to consider ways to stop the madness.

When we were in Grenada, Jason was supervising the installation of over 30 life-sized sculptures in an underwater sculpture park. It's a remarkable project. Jason had created

most of the original 40 underwater sculptures that were installed in a hurricane-ravaged bay in 2006. Now he was back to add new works that almost doubled the size of the installation.

The Grenada Underwater Sculpture Park was the first of its kind in the world. Jason has since created many more such sites all around the globe. In each case, the intention has been to attract visitors and, in the process, remind them of the damage global warming is doing to coral reefs, ocean-dwelling creatures and the oceans themselves.

I was very fortunate I got to snorkel all around the Grenada park before, during and after the installation of the new sculptures. I also got to spend time on a couple occasions with this visionary artist.

So, I was intrigued to get an email from Jason about a new project he has just unveiled near his home in Kent, England – an area I have visited frequently and as recently as last spring.

For a change, this multi-figure sculpture is not under water and the interpretation is not left to anyone's imagination. It is a clear and straightforward protest against the terrible damage being done by governments allowing the discharge of sewage into the ocean. It will attract visitors by the hundreds, I am sure, as effective an act of protest as any march on city streets.

The piece is called "Sirens of Sewage". It stands on Whitstable Beach, just north of Canterbury. Jason calls it "a focal point for one of the most persistent and insidious threats facing the UK's coastlines and waterways ... the release of untreated sewage" into these waters.

Now, before we start pointing fingers at our friends in the United Kingdom, let's remember Canadian cities dump billions – yes, billions – of litres of untreated sewage and storm water into lakes, rivers and oceans every year. Don't believe me? Just think about the number of times we hear beaches are closed because of high levels of E. coli. That means untreated sewage. We need to open our eyes to this reality. Maybe we need Jason to come to the seven Canadian provinces guilty of this environmental



The "Ocean Siren" – a warning about the damage global warming is causing to Australia's Great Barrier Reef.



The Sirens of Sewage sculpture by Jason deCaires Taylor – a powerful statement to inspire public concern.

crime, including Ontario.

Jason's life-sized people – all life casts modeled on local residents – carry signs that read, "End Sewage Pollution", "People Over Profit", "Save Our Sea" and the clever "Fishes not Faeces."

This installation is not the only "Sirens" piece by Jason. He is working with environmentalist partners to make similar statements around the globe. One such piece is the "Ocean Siren," a dramatic figure near Australia's Great Barrier Reef. This illuminated sculpture changes colour as the ocean's temperature reaches dangerous levels.

We should all have our eyes open to the threats facing our world and those of us who travel should be especially conscious of the need for action

now. But I admit I find it ironically amusing that Jason's "Sirens of Sewage" sculpture is located on private land because, as he explains, "the project encountered resistance from local authorities."

So, my fellow travellers, open your eyes and then open your mouths and tell those in power we need real action to save our world, and we need it now, and yes, to stop dumping raw sewage into the waterways that we so love.

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).



A sculpture, part of the Grenada Underwater Sculpture Park, is lowered into place. All photos by Jason deCaires Taylor



FEATURE —

# EXPERT ADVICE: Popcorn Perfection



By Mercedes Kay Gold

Wintertime has two teams. Whether you are on a kick to get fit or ignoring the number on the scale until the ice thaws, menu planning is always better than a grab-and-go lifestyle. Snacking is synonymous with couch surfing, but not a fast-pass to noshing on overprocessed junk. Love yourself enough to satisfy sweet and salty cravings with healthier options.

Pop, chips, tortillas and candy contain a laundry list of second-rate ingredients from high-fructose corn syrup, seed oils and crazy cancer-causing colours to additives and piles of preservatives. Yes, there are higher quality versions of the classics. Keep in mind all processed snacks, even plant-based, lack nutritional value. Old-school options that include a side of wholistic love is unequivocally the best way to love your body! Popcorn is a great go-to, but please stay away from super-scary, soy-based and sodium-stocked cinema popcorn.

Popcorn is inexpensive and easy to make on the stovetop, air-popper or air-fryer. Skip fancy store-bought microwave popcorn. The bags contain perfluorinated compounds or PFCs that keep oil from seeping through the packaging into the popcorn. Instead, use a brown lunchtime paper bag, a few tablespoons of kernels and ta-da, homemade, ready-to-microwave popcorn. Plain air-popped popcorn

is portable perfection. Bob's Brand is 100 per-cent Canadian-farmer grown by the Townsend family. Their non-GMO and pesticide-free kernels are widely available, and you can find them in New Hamburg at Greb's Chocolate & Nut Shop.

Popcorn contains a mere 31 calories in a cup. Yes, there's protein. Popcorn is low carb, full of fiber and a three-cup serving provides approximately 10 per cent of your daily fiber needs. Popcorn is super satiating, taking longer to chew than candy or chips.

Popcorn is amazing! Skip buying overprocessed, fake-flavoured popcorn and get creative in the kitchen with me.

Let's get the popcorn party started. All recipes can be made to suit a plant- or animal-based lifestyle.

My family's favorites all begin with eight-cups of air-popped popcorn. Choose a sweet or savory combination. If weight-management is a top concern, use a spray bottle to sparingly add avocado oil or use half of the serving of coconut oil. Feeling fiery? Add a ¼ tsp of cayenne pepper to the savory options. Top and toss your popcorn! Store in an airtight container.

**Savory**

- Delightfully Dill:** 4 Tbsp melted butter or avocado oil, 2 tsp dried dill and ½ tsp Himalayan Pink salt.
- A Vegan Taste of Italy:** 5 Tbsp melted butter or avocado oil with ¼ cup nutritional yeast, ¼ tsp garlic salt, ¼ tsp onion powder and 1 tsp dried oregano.
- Salt & Vinegar:** Put white vinegar in a kitchen spray bottle and spray the popcorn until slightly damp. Sprinkle with Pink Himalayan salt or Kosher salt. Combine well.
- Everything" Popcorn:** Combine 4 Tbsp melted butter or avocado oil, 1 tsp black sesame seeds, 1 tsp white sesame seeds, 1 tsp caraway seeds, ½ tsp flax seeds, ½ tsp hemp seeds, ¾

tsp garlic powder, ¾ tsp onion powder, and ½ tsp Himalayan Pink Salt.

**Sweet**

- Tropical Love:** Melt 5 Tbsp melted coconut oil. Pour over the popcorn. Sprinkle 5 Tbsp of unsweetened, shredded, sulfite-free coconut, ½ cup dried diced sulfite-free pineapple pieces and 2 tsp Wagler maple sugar over the popcorn. Combine well
- Crush Cravings:** Nature's candy begins with a cup of raw pecans. Combine 3 Tbsp maple sugar by Wagler Maple Products, ½ tsp ground cinnamon, ¼ tsp fine Himalayan Sea salt, ¼ tsp pure vanilla extract and 1 Tbsp water. Cook on the stove at medium heat, stirring often until the sugar melts into a bubbling sauce. This takes about a minute. Add in the pecans, stirring continuously for two to three minutes. They will appear

candied and shiny. Be mindful not to burn. Remove and place in a single layer. Once the nuts are cooled, break or cut. Pour the coconut oil and 1 tsp Wagler Maple Products maple sugar over the popcorn. Add the nut mixture. Chop ½ of your favorite 170-gram chocolate bar by Greb's Chocolate & Nut Shop. Add to the popcorn bowl and mix well.

Popcorn is a great snacking option to lose and maintain weight. Sugar in any form does increase insulin, and yes, the amount of sugar in the eight cups is dramatically lower than commercial brands of snack foods. Mother Nature's unprocessed sugar is healthier but any amount of sugar is concerning for diabetics. Stay sugar-safe and stick to savory snacking. Happy popping!



Add half of your favourite chocolate bar from New Hamburg's Greb's Chocolate & Nut Shop to your Crush Cravings popcorn for an even sweeter treat. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold



Wagler Products maple sugar is another excellent topping for any sweet popcorn creation. Photo by Wagler Maple Products

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# GRANT HAVEN REVIEW —

## Theatre Woodstock presents Cinderella



Theatre Woodstock is presenting its production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella until Feb. 25. Photo courtesy of Theatre Woodstock

By Mercedes Kay Gold

Woodstock, get ready to have a ball!

Cinderella is based on the French fairy tale by Charles Perrault, published in 1697. Disney's most famous princess made her movie premier on Feb. 15, 1950, leading to several sequels and an array of amazing adaptations starring countless celebrity crushes.

With a wave of the Fairy godmother's magic wand and great local sponsors, Theatre Woodstock presents Rodgers and Hammerstein's much-loved musical, Cinderella. Originally airing March 31, 1957, on television, a magnificently modern version opened at Woodstock's very own quaint theatre Feb. 16 and will run until Feb. 25. The fantastic fairytale is produced by Peter Rigby, directed by Emil Wijnker, and the catchy melodies brought to life by musical director Shannon Wijnker.

As the curtain went up on the Topher kingdom and the sweet-sounding instrumentals are replaced with dialogue, the audience was mesmerized, quickly falling in love with the 25-member cast.

Ella, the princess, was played to perfection by Kennedy Wilson. She radiated loveliness from the inside and out, endlessly enchanting in every scene. Cole Hill brought life and laughs to the prep-school-pampered Prince Topher, proving why he is the ultimate eligible bachelor. The stepsisters shone on stage as bright as their gleaming gowns.

From the craziness of Charlotte, played by Becky Tanton, to the genuineness of

Gabrielle, played by Maegan Hansen, the stepsister duo was delightful. Stephanie Mac Donald put the mean and unmanly in Madame, the evil stepmother, and Richard Klein added awesomeness to the advisor. Hear ye, hear ye! We cannot forget Lord Pinkleton, played by Jeff Sweete.

The sets, songs, costumes and endless energy from the ensemble set the stage for fireworks or, as Walt Disney's version coined, "bibbidi-bobbidi-boo". Ta-da and Marie, the Fairy godmother appeared in a dress worthy of the red carpet thanks to the creativity of costume designer Kristin Klein. Cassidy Davies radiated a rainbow aura, capturing the essence of the Fairy godmother and how all things are possible with faith.

It's not easy to pick a favorite scene, melody to hum or showstopping moment, but the pumpkin turned bedazzled coach, twinkling tiaras and magnificent masquerade ball are beyond breathtaking.

The story of Cinderella is a childhood favorite for many, and with so much unrest in the world today, may we all leave the venue blessed and see the good in others, sprinkle kindness and forgive whole-heartedly.

From pauper to princess, Cinderella romanticizes the notion of happily ever and it's endearing. Throw in a horsedrawn carriage, designer heels, a castle and talking animals, and this writer guarantees you sweet dreams after attending the much-loved fairytale. Cinderella is a first-class fun filled, family-friendly show, but it's closing Feb. 25. Visit theatrewoodstock.com to purchase tickets.

# Gazette Puzzles

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# COMMUNITY —

## Embroid Truck and Tractor Pull gives back

By Kelly De Bruyn

Oxford County Junior Farmers, the organizers of the annual Embroid Truck and Tractor Pull, would like to thank the community for an extremely successful 2023 event.

Strong community support through attendance, sponsorship and the help of over 250 volunteers allowed the organizers to support several causes across Oxford County. With funds raised from the 2023 Embroid Pull, \$15,000 was donated to seven Oxford County food banks, including Operation Sharing's Food for Friends.

The Food for Friends program gifts those in need with redeemable gift cards that can be used at local grocery stores. This was well received by Operation Sharing, as the need is incredibly high this year.

"We are so grateful for this donation to

our Food for Friends program," said Jess Cheyne, Operation Sharing's fundraising, marketing and volunteering coordinator. "These funds will be used to help families who are currently struggling with food insecurity. By offering food cards to local grocery stores, anyone can shop with dignity and get what they need."

"Operation Sharing does such great work in our community helping people access the food they need, and we are proud that our club can help them in a small way," added Oxford Junior Farmers president Julie De Bruyn. "We encourage others in the community to support Operation Sharing and our local food banks so that no one in Oxford goes hungry."

Oxford County Junior Farmers also donated \$4,000 each to the Stratford, Woodstock, Tillsonburg and Ingersoll hospitals for the purchase of new equipment.

Members of the Embroid Pull committee were also able to donate to a charity of their choosing, including those supporting the homeless, local church and youth groups, and the Thames Valley school nutrition program.

We thank all the volunteer groups who help make the 2023 Embroid Pull a success. We hope to see everyone out for the 2024 Embroid Truck and Tractor Pull on Aug. 2-3. Oxford County Junior Farmers is one of 16 Junior Farmer clubs across the province with the mission "to build rural leaders through personal growth, travel, experiences and community betterment."

We are a social group that strives to have fun through sporting, travel and agricultural events while also giving back to the community. New members between the ages of 15 and 30 are always welcome.

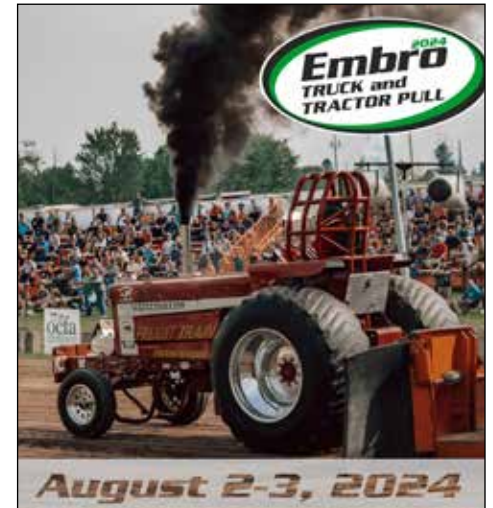


Photo from Embroid Truck and Tractor Pull Facebook page.

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FEATURE —

# Oxford OPP looking for youth citizen academy applicants

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Oxford detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police is looking for community minded teenagers interested in joining a Youth Citizen's Police Academy starting this spring.

The academy is an opportunity for youth to learn about policing. Chosen participants will hear presentations from members in specialty units within the organization such as crime, K9, emergency response team (ERT), tactics and rescue unit (TRU), in-service training, recruiting, civilian roles, and many others.

"Each session is an interactive, information-sharing evening similar to a night-school setting. Upon completion of the academy, participants will better understand the multitude of ways in which the OPP supports public safety in both their community and the Province of Ontario," said Const. Randi Crawford.

After a tight vote and long debate at a board meeting at the end of January, trustees at the Thames Valley District School Board decided not to introduce a pilot program that would have brought police officers back into schools after a three-year hiatus.

"It's a way for us to reach the youth in the county. We are trying to think outside of the box since we aren't able to be in the schools. We want to nourish the relationship with young people, and this is a perfect way to build that relationship," said Crawford. "This is also a way to show them what policing is all about and see if it is something they might be interested in turning into a career. At the end of the day, it's about having a strong community relationship with people of all ages, but it starts with our youth."

The program is looking for mature, motivated and community minded people between 16 and 18 years of age that

represent Oxford County's diverse communities. Crawford said other than that, there isn't much criteria to join.

"Anyone who wants to dedicate some time and see what policing is about; it is a chance to build a connection with the OPP. Even if some kids made a mistake or two in their lives, we aren't going to be punitive about that. This might be an opportunity for them to turn their life in a different direction."

The academy is scheduled to run in Tillsonburg every Wednesday for six weeks. The classes are from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and start on April 17, running until May 29. The deadline to submit applications is Friday, March 15. Participants must pass a security check before selection. A valid photo identification is also required, which should be attached to the application.

Applications are available at the front counter of the two Oxford OPP detachments. The detachment in Ingersoll is

located at 110 Mutual St. and the detachment in Tillsonburg is located at 90 Concession St. E. Crawford realizes it may not be easy for those in rural areas to pick up an application in person.

"This is our first time doing this and I am always someone to roll with the punches so to speak. I have gotten feedback that it is difficult for some to get to our offices, so I have done a video that is now on social media today. If someone is not able to get to a detachment, they can email me a request for an application, and I will send it."

The video will be available on the West Region OPP's Facebook, Instagram and X feeds.

Oxford OPP is also planning a citizen's academy for adults which may be coming in the fall. It would be for people 18 and over.

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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR - FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024

<p><b>THURSDAY, FEB. 22</b> <b>Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship</b> 12 p.m. Wilmot Rec Complex 1291 Nafziger Rd. Baden</p> <p><b>FRIDAY, FEB. 23</b> <b>St. Clements Public Skate</b> 1-2 p.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p> <p><b>Wellesley Public Skate</b> 1-2 p.m. Bill Gies Recreation Centre 1401 Queens Bush Rd., Wellesley</p> <p><b>New Hamburg home game vs. Hespeler Shamrocks</b> 7:30 p.m. Wilmot Recreation Complex 1291 Nafziger Rd. Baden</p> <p><b>SATURDAY, FEB. 24</b> <b>Wilmot Coldest Night of the Year</b> 4-7 p.m. New Hamburg community Centre 251 Jacob St. New Hamburg</p> <p><b>SUNDAY, FEB. 25</b> <b>St. Clements Public Skate</b> 12-1:30 p.m. St. Clements Community Centre 1 Green St. St. Clements</p>	<p><b>Wellesley Public Skate</b> 12-1:30 p.m. Bill Gies Recreation Centre 1401 Queens Bush Rd., Wellesley</p> <p><b>MONDAY, FEB. 26</b> <b>Township of Wilmot Council Meeting</b> 7-11 p.m. Council Chambers 60 Snyder's Rd. West Baden</p> <p><b>TUESDAY, FEB. 27</b> <b>Woodstock Agricultural Society Annual General Meeting</b> 7:30 p.m. Oxford Auditorium 875 Nellis St., Woodstock</p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY, FEB. 28</b> <b>Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship</b> 12 p.m. Linwood Community Centre 5279 Ament Line Linwood</p>	<p><b>SATURDAY, MAR. 2</b> <b>Free Family Skate Sponsored by Tavistock Missionary Church</b> 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Tavistock Arena 1 Adam St. Tavistock</p> <p><b>MONDAY, MAR. 4</b> <b>Township of Wilmot Council Meeting</b> 7-11 p.m. Council Chambers 60 Snyder's Rd. West Baden</p> <p><b>TUESDAY, MAR. 12</b> <b>Township of Wellesley council meeting</b> 6:45 p.m. Council Chambers 4805 William Hastings Line, Crosshill</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY, MAR. 27</b> <b>Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship</b> 12 p.m. Linwood Community Centre 5279 Ament Line Linwood</p> <p><b>THURSDAY, MAR. 28</b> <b>Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship</b> 12 p.m. Wilmot Recreation Complex 1291 Nafziger Rd. Baden</p> <p><b>Rib &amp; Tail Stag</b> 6 p.m. - Take out 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Shakespeare and District Optimist Hall Thompson St. Shakespeare</p>
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**LEAP YEAR**



**HAPPY St. Patrick's DAY**  
March 18, 2024



**Good Friday**  
March 29, 2024



# FEATURE —

## Finney's Auto Service and JR Auto Service announce business merge

By Ron and Kathy Finney

Two Wilmot Township auto services are merging businesses as one set of owners prepares to retire from owning their own business and the other owner looks to secure a permanent location.

As Ron and Kathy Finney of Finney's Auto Service in New Hamburg are set to retire, Scott Olheiser of JR Auto Service in Baden will move his business into Finney's Auto Service at 266 Bergey Ct. The plan is to be in full operation by March 4.

The current location of JR Auto Service had recently been sold and Olheiser was given short notice that he and several other businesses had four months to move out. Wanting to stay in the area with very few options brought Olheiser and the Finneys together. After several meetings, both business owners were able to work out the details of a sale that worked for each of them.

The Finneys first purchased the business in June 2001 from Ray and Anna Steinmann. Ray Steinmann had built the shop and ran a successful business there since August

1979. Ron and Kathy Finney have enjoyed serving the community of New Hamburg and the surrounding area. These past 22 years have been spent building relationships and the decision to retire has not been taken lightly. The Finneys have had several people interested in the building recently, however Ron was really hoping for the location to continue as an automotive service facility.

This transition will be a good fit. Olheiser has lived in Wilmot Township all his life. He has been with JR Auto Service for 13 years and he had the opportunity to purchase the business two years ago from Jim Roth.

Ron Finney will continue to stay on working with Olheiser during the transition and will take care of those customers who currently have their off-season tires stored with them.

During this transition, customers can continue to call JR Auto Service at 519-634-5986 and Finney's Auto Service at 519-662-3460.

Ron and Kathy Finney wish to thank their customers and this community for supporting their business over the past two decades.



Scott Olheiser, owner of JR Auto Service, shakes the hand of Ron Finney, standing next to wife Kathy Finney – owners of Finney's Auto Service. Photo by Galen Simmons

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|------------------------------------|----------------------|
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| 2. The Netherlands                 | 7. Sperm Whale       |
| 3. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs | 8. Solids            |
| 4. Soccer                          | 9. Pokémon           |
| 5. Grandmother                     | 10. Schindler's List |

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