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Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group member Donna Nolan recently posted this shot of a stunning sunset from Snyder's Road in Baden. Photo courtesy of Show Us Your Wilmot

Police investigate road rage in New Hamburg

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Officers from the Mississauga OPP in Cambridge are investigating a road-rage incident between the drivers of a motorcycle and a car.

Police were called around 5:30 p.m. March 7 to the intersection of Highway 7/8 and Nafziger Road after receiving reports of a motorcycle travelling at high speeds and weaving through traffic in the westbound lane.

"As it approached Nafziger Road, there was an interaction between the motorcycle driver and a passenger vehicle. As a result, there was a contact and a collision between (the two vehicles). The rider was airlifted to a trauma centre in Hamilton with possible serious injuries," said OPP Sgt. Kerry Schmidt.

An official from Ornge Air Ambulance confirmed the motorcycle rider was a male in his 20s.

He added the rider's injuries were downgraded to non-life-threatening and the driver of the vehicle was arrested at the scene and charged with dangerous driving and other related offences.

"If there is anyone with information, dash-cam footage, or saw the interaction or any actions of the motorcycle leading up to the crash, please call the Mississauga OPP's Cambridge office at 519-654-0150," said Schmidt who expects more charges to be laid this week.

Local MPs fight for Increased support for volunteer firefighters

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

There isn't anyone of any political stripe or level not in favour of giving our volunteer firefighters an improved tax break, but in the end, the federal finance minister has the final say.

The 2024 federal budget will be delivered by Chrystia Freeland April 16 and area politicians and fire chiefs are hoping the current tax break of \$3,000 will be more than tripled to support volunteers.

Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louis and Cambridge MP Bryan May are calling on Freeland to increase the credits for volunteer firefighting and search-and-rescue volunteers to \$10,000. Louis said our volunteers should be rewarded for the job they do.

"These are people who are stepping up from our rural communities and dedicating themselves to protect us. I'm hard-pressed to go to an event without seeing firefighters there so, in addition to keeping us safe, they are out there advocating."

There is a private member's bill in the House of Commons asking for the increased tax incentive, something Louis said has all-party support.

"I'm in support of the NDP bill. It has Conservative and Liberal support. The issue with it isn't the wording, it's the speed. It could take a year or more to pass. That's why I and others are lobbying to put the increase in this year's budget."

Louis recently sent a letter to Freeland in the hope it will be announced next month.

Continued on page 3




TIM LOUIS Member of Parliament
Kitchener-Conestoga

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COMMUNITY —

Support for volunteer firefighters

Continued from page 1

"I've been talking to her, her staff, the prime minister, I've brought it up as caucus meetings. It's just the right thing to do. The fact it is non-partisan, I think, sends a strong, positive signal."

Oxford's Conservative MP, Arpan Khanna, is lending his support to the cause.

"Absolutely. Oxford is fortunate to have so many volunteer firefighters serving our community. We rely on them quite heavily and I think if there is anything we can do to support not only their retention but also their recruitment, it will go a long way in running these essential services we need."

East Zorra-Tavistock Mayor Phil Schaefer is also on board with the proposal.

"I think this is an excellent idea and I hope this request receives a positive response. Volunteer firefighters and search-and-rescue workers perform extremely dangerous jobs and they merit this increased tax credit."

He added he has met several firefighters, and they enjoy the work and giving back to their community.

"If we could do a little more to support that, we should."

Schaefer's thoughts were echoed by EZT Fire Chief Scott Alexander who also provided some details on the fine print.

"We are very fortunate here in that we have usually been able to carry a full complement of firefighters, including auxiliary firefighters in training. However, in a lot of areas in Canada, departments are struggling to find new recruits and any incentives that can help with recruitment and retention are welcomed.

"This credit would come with some conditions, the main one being that the firefighter would have to commit to over 200 hours of combined training and response annually to qualify."

Considering these are volunteers who have responsibilities to full-time jobs and families, Alexander said it would be a gesture of thanks and respect for what these people



Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louis was asked to spend a day training with the firefighters at the Regional Training Centre in Waterloo last September. Contributed photo

give back to their community.

"It's a small ask in return for their commitment."

Louis said he was honoured to train at the Regional Training Centre in Waterloo last September, something that gave him an even greater appreciation for what firefighters do.

"You always know how hard they work and how committed they are. It was humbling, inspiring and terrifying at the same time. Suiting up and training with them made me appreciate even more what they do for us every day."

Canada has 90,000 volunteer firefighters who provide essential fire and emergency services to their communities, many of whom pay out of pocket to cover expenses associated with the life-saving services they provide. An additional 3,000 search-and-rescue volunteers also offer critical services.



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COMMUNITY —

Area health unit concerned about potential measles cases

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Southwest Public Health Unit is encouraging residents of Oxford County to find out their immunization status in response to an increasing number of measles infections.

Federal health Minister Mark Holland said in a press conference last week that he is deeply concerned about the emergence of measles outbreaks in Canada, a risk that experts say has grown as infections grow internationally and the country continues to struggle to meet vaccination targets.

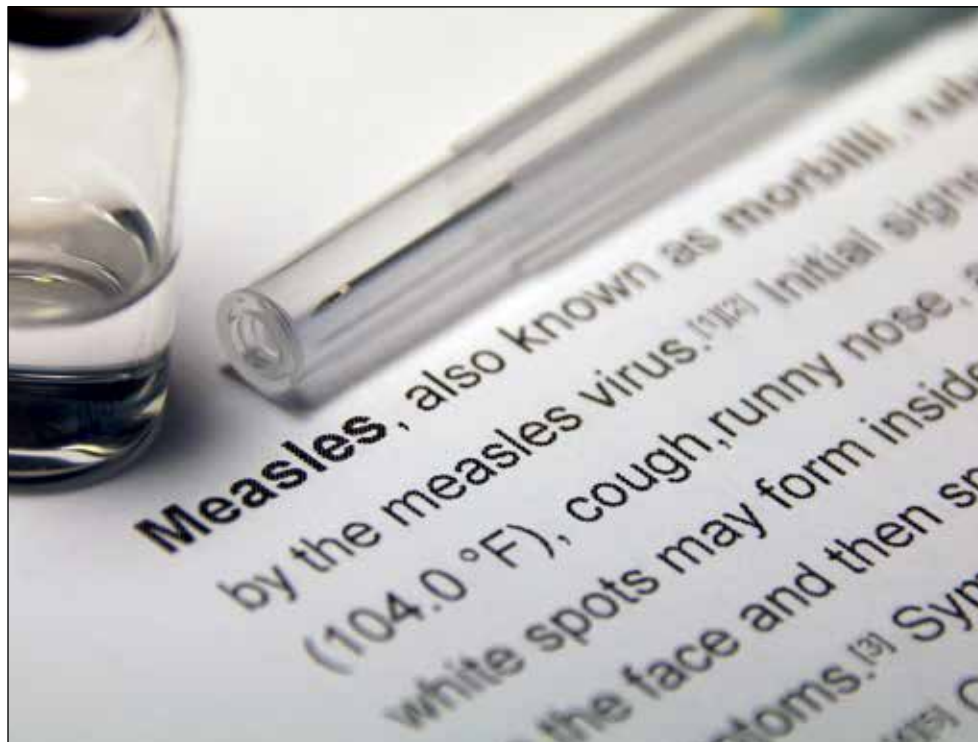
"Frankly, we're seeing a lot of illness that was almost rendered non-existent starting to come back because of vaccine hesitancy."

Joanne Andrews is the manager of infectious disease at Southwest Public Health and said the potential for an outbreak locally is a concern.

"Because we are such a mobile population these days and we know there is a risk of measles being acquired outside Canada, if people are not fully protected through immunization, there's the risk that someone could acquire it either overseas or somewhere else in Canada."

Children are required to be immunized for measles as a requirement to attend school, however there is an opportunity for people to opt out. Andrews said there are fewer people protected today than in previous years.

"If that is the situation, they need to complete a form to indicate the reason. I would say there is a decrease in the number of people getting routine immunizations and



unfortunately it does present a situation where we have people who are vulnerable to the diseases that are circulating."

The health unit has no statistics available regarding the number of students who aren't protected against measles but there is a provincial system and staff are in the process of checking student immunization records.

"Parents of elementary school children have been notified if we don't have a complete record. Sometimes the record might be incomplete or it could be the child is

missing immunizations. The vaccine team is completing that work right now, which is very timely because we want to make sure parents are aware if their child is fully protected against measles, which means two doses of the vaccine," explained Andrews, who is also encouraging adults to check up on their immunization status. "If they aren't aware, they should reach out to their health-care provider to see if they have a record or ask a parent if they were immunized as a child."

The health unit said parents of fully protected children don't need to worry about

the virus, but those not up to date on their shots are at an elevated risk despite there not being any new cases locally. Despite that, she said they have launched an education campaign.

"We are providing our local health-care providers with information so they can be diligent and also for the public to be aware of the importance of immunization and be prepared if they are travelling somewhere they could be at risk."

The Southwestern Middlesex-London health units recently had confirmation of a person who tested positive for measles. The person lives in London and works in Woodstock. Investigators concluded the illness was picked up while traveling outside of Canada. After their return, they had limited contact with others during the time they were infectious.

Measles is highly contagious and health officials are reminding the community to be aware of the signs and symptoms which include fever, cough, runny nose, red and irritated eyes, light sensitivity, small white, grey, or blue spots in the mouth, and a red, blotchy rash, which is the last symptom to appear. The rash appears on the face and then spreads down over the body and will begin to fade after about a week.

Measles is spread through the air and complications can include pneumonia, ear infections, brain infections, other infections and, in rare cases, death. Those considered to be most at risk of infection are people born in 1970 or later who have not received a measles-containing vaccine or have not had a previous measles infection.

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COMMUNITY —

Wilmot launches community services master plan consultations

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Township of Wilmot has launched a Community Services Master Plan process and wants to hear from the community about what matters to them in parks, recreation and recreation facilities.

The plan will guide decision making across all aspects of parks and recreation, from playgrounds to facilities and everything in between. The project will also include a robust service delivery review to ensure efficiency and alignment with community needs and staff capacity.

Mayor Natasha Salonen said the consultations are crucial to shaping the future of services in the township.

"The Community Services Master Plan will provide a roadmap to enhance and grow the township's parks and recreation

facilities, as well as services and events for residents, user groups and visitors now and into the future. The plan will guide decision making across all aspects of parks and recreation. I encourage everyone in the community to have your say."

Chris Catania is the township's director of community services and said, when completed, the plan will provide his department with a blueprint of what it needs to accomplish.

"Once the community has spoken, it will be up to our team to deliver on the services that matter to the community. Whether it's from a bricks-and-mortar facility perspective so we can create new programming opportunities or enhanced programming opportunities through to open park space and even touching on trails."

He added there are many natural areas in

Wilmot along with the indoor options.

Catania explained there are a few reasons the township is going through the consultation, including the pandemic.

"I've been in this position since June of 2023. We were one of the industries that took a hit in the sense that we had to close our buildings down and prevent people from congregating. Unfortunately, when you have three years with COVID, our last master plan was done, I believe, in 2017. When the pandemic hit, there was a three-year period where nothing could be accomplished."

He added the township wants to make sure they are hitting the mark over the next seven years when it comes to community services.

The township said community engagement is an essential part of the

project to ensure residents have their say in the future of the community services it provides. Residents are invited to an upcoming public workshop March 26 at 6:30 p.m. at the Wilmot Recreation Complex. More community consultation opportunities will be available in the spring including online at wilmot.ca/communityservicesmasterplan2024.

Key components of the planning process include evaluating existing parks, open spaces, amenities and recreational facilities for condition, accessibility, capacity and identifying the future needs for all types of recreational spaces. It will also review existing events, programs and partnerships to identify opportunities for enhancement and establish a vision based on the values and aspirations of the community.

Diesel spill closes road south of Shakespeare March 11

By Gary West

Perth Road 107 south of Shakespeare was closed Monday following a three-vehicle collision near the railway that resulted in a diesel spill on and around the road and railway.

In a press release, Perth County OPP said police, the Perth East Fire Department and the Canadian National Railway (CN) responded to the collision involving two commercial vehicles and a passenger vehicle shortly after 8 a.m. March 11.

No injuries were reported as a result of the collision and police subsequently charged a 48-year-old resident of Cambridge with careless driving. The Spills Action Center was alerted to the spill of diesel fuel. The road was closed for cleanup and removal of the vehicles from the road and railway but has since re-opened.

Witnesses who spoke with the Gazette at the scene said a tractor trailer that was full of diesel fuel went into the ditch beside the CN railway crossing and was leaking fuel into the steep embankment.

One lane of traffic was reopened early Monday afternoon as the cleanup of contaminated soil took place. Vacuum trucks from Green for Life Environmental Inc. were seen filtering the soil for most of the afternoon as cleanup continued.

Emergency crews and CN workers were on the scene most of the day.

Anyone with information regarding this or any incident is asked to call the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or online at www.opp.ca/reporting. Those who wish to remain anonymous can call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or leave an anonymous online message at www.P3tips.com.



Workers with Green for Life Environmental Inc. worked to clean up contaminated soil after a diesel spill occurred early Monday morning, the result of a three-vehicle collision south of Shakespeare. Photo by Gary West



Roads were closed at Highway 59 and Perth Road 33, south of Shakespeare, as emergency and cleanup crews cleaned a diesel spill caused by a three-vehicle collision near the railway in the area of Perth Road 107. Photo by Gary West




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COMMUNITY —

Tavistock Scotiabank helps local firefighters raise money for muscular dystrophy

By Gary West

Muscular Dystrophy Ontario was the real winner after all the money was accounted for from the Tavistock Firefighters' Boot Drive held last September.

Tavistock Scotiabank employees partnered with the local fire department which together raised a whopping \$10,242.94.

This total was a joint effort, with Scotiabank matching the funds their Tavistock employees raised.

The branch's customer experience lead, Margaret Herlick, said in total, over the years, the Tavistock Scotiabank team has helped the Tavistock Firefighters raise just over \$200,000 for muscular dystrophy.

Both the firefighters and Scotiabank thanked everyone who generously dropped off cash and cheques in the boots at Tavistock's main intersection, and made the day very special for those suffering from muscular dystrophy.



Pictured from left are firefighter Jacalyn Lange, Tavistock customer experience lead Margaret Herlick, Mucularl Dystrophy Ontario manager Stephanie Singeris and Tavistock district Fire Chief Mike Donaldson. The cheque shown is the matching funds donated by Scotiabank for Muscular Dystrophy Ontario. Contributed photo



South Easthope Mutual Insurance chairman Glen Blair is shown last week at the company's annual meeting presenting a \$1,000 cheque to East Zorra-Tavistock Fire Chief Scott Alexander.

The money is part of the company's ongoing contribution to Muscular Dystrophy Canada supported by area firefighters. The company has now contributed \$35,500 total to the fire department's ongoing work to support Muscular Dystrophy Canada. Photo by Julie McIntosh Photo



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COMMUNITY —

South Easthope Mutual Insurance Company reports banner year at annual general meeting

By Gary West

The South Easthope Mutual Insurance Company's 152nd year proved to be one of the Tavistock insurance company's best in recent memory.

Overall gross written premiums grew by 7.65 per cent while in 2023, total incurred claims were down by 12 per cent.

As board chair Glen Blair of Embro stated in his address at the company's recent annual meeting, "The company had an exceptional year financially and was able to avoid the significant-weather events that happened around us."

"The company continues to remain focused on loss prevention and appreciated all members' efforts in minimizing the chance of future losses."

Given the results, the good news was the directors have authorized a premium refund of 20 per cent on property policies in effect on December 31, 2023.

To qualify for the refund, policies must also be active and in good standing on the day the refund is issued. Refund cheques will be mailed out in April.

The board chair also reported that two significant retirements took place in 2023.

After 20 years as president and CEO, Frank Rider retired at the end of June. Jennifer Kearsey was promoted to the leadership role. She is a well-respected insurance professional with over 20 years experience in the industry.

Vice president and claims manager Daryl Stevenson also retired after 33 years. Dianne Beckett, assistant claims manager, was promoted to the role of claims manager, taking over from Stevenson.

In his closing remarks, Blair thanked the member shareholders for placing their confidence and loyalty in South Easthope Mutual, along with their continued dedication to the company's success and strength heading into its 153rd year.



Pictured is the South Easthope Mutual Insurance Company board of directors following its election at the company's annual general meeting last week at Tavistock's Grace United Church. Pictured from left in the front row are Marianne Cook, president and CEO Jennifer Kearsey, Linda Drost and Michael Munro. In the back row from left are newly elected board chair Jeffrey Schultz, Paul Heinbuch, Peter Thompson, past board chair Glen Blair, first vice chair Ken Yeoman and second vice chair David Crane. Photo by Gary West

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COMMUNITY —

OBITUARY

WALLACE: Joel Owen



Passed away suddenly as the result of an accident on Wednesday, March 6, 2024. Joel Wallace of RR#7 Woodstock in his 25th year.

Loving son of Owen & Pam (Brenneman) Wallace. Dear grandson of John & Linda Wallace of London and Keith & Marilyn Brenneman of RR#2 Tavistock. Joel is survived

by the love of his life Hailey Lance, his aunts and uncles Chris and husband Burton Hartmann of North Vancouver, Julie & husband Kyle Wynette of Tavistock, Darren Wallace & wife Jenny of Woodstock, Clayton Wallace of New Liskeard, Bradley Elgie & wife Julie of London, Robin & husband Jeff Willick of Huntsville, and by his cousins Cole, Lucas, Nash, Reid, Jacob, Caden, Fran, Sam, Matthew, Christopher, Brittany, Dana, Mason, Mya, Sydney, Courtney, Joshua, Annie and Greyson Joel. Joel will also be missed by his puppy "Dozer" and his friends who he loved like brothers.

Predeceased by his uncle Michael Keith Brenneman.

Joel was a proud Chicken Farmer and also fulfilled his passion to own and operate J. Wallace Excavating. He was happiest on his boat fishing or out snowmobiling the trails with his dad and friends.

Relatives and friends were received in the Francis Funeral Home, 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Sunday from 1-4 and 6-8pm. Funeral Service was conducted at the East Zorra Mennonite Church, 16th Line, on Monday, March 11, 2024 at 11:00am. Pastor Harold Schlegel officiating, Interment followed in the church cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Tavistock Assistance Program (TAP) or the Children's Health Foundation, London would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

OBITUARY

KIENAPPLE, Sharon Irene



Passed away peacefully on Friday, March 8, 2024, at Woodstock General Hospital, Woodstock. Sharon was a resident of Bright, Ontario and was born 73 years ago in Hamilton.

Sharon will be lovingly remembered by her devoted husband Joe

Kienapple. Sharon will be missed by her brothers Keith Hamilton (Kristy), Wayne Hamilton (Bonnie), by sister-in-law Cindy Holst (Paul), mother-in-law Bernice Kienapple, and brother-in-law Barry Kienapple (Denise). She was a special Aunt to Scott (Adean), Christopher (Hillary), Chelsey (Michael), Jason (Marsha), Stacey (Bert), Brooke (Jesse), Heather (Bo), and Aspen (Connor), great-aunt to Avery, Alexia, Ian, Colin, Avery, Austraya, Eustace, Carter, Malachi, and Harvey.

Predeceased by her parents Murray and Irene Hamilton, of Waterdown and her father-in-law Joseph Kienapple of new Hamburg.

Sharon enjoyed her time with her family and friends and the outdoors, snowmobiling, and boating. She enjoyed relaxing with a good book, watching her favourite shows and a good game of cards.

Relatives and friends were received at the Mark Jutzi Funeral Home, 291 Huron Street, New Hamburg, on Tuesday March 12, 2024, from 2 - 4 & 6 - 8 p.m. A Funeral Mass was held on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. with Father Robert Love officiating at Holy Family Roman Catholic Parish, New Hamburg. Interment followed at Riverside Cemetery with a funeral luncheon at the funeral home in the Waterwheel room.

As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations would be accepted to the Red Cross, Canadian Cancer Society or Parkwood Rehabilitation Centre and can be done through the funeral home.

Personal condolences can be posted at www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca

OBITUARY

YANTZI: Mary Jane (nee Roth)



Passed away peacefully on Sunday, March 10, 2024 at the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. Mary Jane Yantzi of Tavistock in her 86th year.

Beloved wife of the late Clair Yantzi who predeceased her November 16, 2002. Loving mother of Myron (Kelly) of River John, N.S., Mary Lou

Gingerich of New Hamburg, Brenda (Phil) Bowman of Tavistock, Bonnie (Greg) West of Woodstock and Grace Henderson of Breslau. Sadly missed by her 10 grandchildren Bradley & Melissa, Sarah & Adrain, Brandon & Jessie, Ben & Courtney, Corey & Bridget, Curtis & Rachel, Catrina & Nolan, Dylan & Breanna, Addison, Zachary and by her 15 great grandchildren. Survived by her sister Mae Anne (Verle) Bender of New Hamburg, brothers Ronald (Carol) Roth of New Hamburg, Paul (Glenna) Roth of Tavistock and sisters-in-law Belinda Roth, Katie Ann (Clare) Schumm, Loraine Bender and Debbie Yantzi and by many nieces and nephews

Predeceased by her parents Reuben & Katie (Bast) Roth, son-in-law Sam Gingerich (2017), brother Kenneth Roth (2024), brothers-in-law Glenn Yantzi, Howard Bender, Leander & Beatrice Wagler and nephews Aaron Yantzi and Jamie Roth.

Mary Jane was part of the organizing committee for the Tavistock Shuffleboard Group, was a seamstress and enjoyed piecing together quilts. She was the organist at East Zorra Mennonite Church for many years. She cherished her time spent with her grandchildren and loved visits with her great grandchildren.

Relatives and friends will be received in the Francis Funeral Home 77 Woodstock St. N. Tavistock on Thursday from 2-4 and 6-8pm. Funeral Service will be conducted at the East Zorra Mennonite Church, 16th Line on Friday, March 15, 2024 at 11:00am Burial to follow in the church cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth or the East Zorra Mennonite Church would be appreciated by the family. Personal condolences can be posted at www.francisfh.ca

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Friday March 29 at 10:15am: Good Friday Meditation on the Cross of Christ

Sunday March 31 at 7:00am: Easter Sunday Sunrise service

Sunday March 31 at 10:15am: Easter Sunday service of Holy Communion

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March 14: Happy birthday to Catherine Lebold (11), Aria Tonelli (11), Ruby Kalbfleisch (13), Natalee Wilhelm (23), Tom Pearson (72), and Kaitlin O'Brien.

March 15: Happy birthday to Greer O'Brien (6).

March 16: Happy birthday to Emery Roy (12), Peyton Zehr (13), Harlyn Lange (14), and Izac Blum (21).

March 17: Happy birthday to Danielle Campbell (17), Matthew Furlong (20), Lauryn Reibling (23), and Kristen Cook.

March 18: Happy birthday to Simon Ruby (16), Blake Zehr (16), Karlee Satchell (17), Reeve Hohl and Bruce Yausie.

March 19: Happy birthday to Lennix Graham (5), Oliver Smith (5), Charlotte Hunt (10), Aubree Diehl (11), Owen Bender (13), and Cindy Larsen.

March 20: Happy birthday to Kevin Zehr, Paul Heinbuch, Jack Holdsworth, and Brock Pellow, and anniversary for Clare and Brenda Wettlaufer (53rd).

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Come & Join the family

Schoolwide effort to bring Emma! A Pop Musical to Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School stage



Members of the cast rehearse for Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School's upcoming production of Emma! A Pop Musical running April 4-6. Photo by Galen Simmons

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. What is the maximum number of golf clubs allowed in a golf bag?
2. What is the name of the longest river in the US?
3. What is the most abundant gas in Earth's atmosphere?
4. Who is known as the "Father of Modern Philosophy"?
5. Who was the very first American Idol winner?
6. How many railroads are there in Monopoly?
7. What is the world's most venomous snake?
8. What is the biggest and fastest roller coaster in Canada?
9. How many degrees measures a semi-circle?
10. According to Chinese Zodiac, 2024 is the year of what?

Answers found on page 34

BREAKING NEWS!

**EXTRA!
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The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette is your local trusted news source and we welcome story ideas from our readers. If you have a local story idea, email it to Editor Galen Simmons at: galen@granthaven.com

By Galen Simmons

Students and staff from every corner of Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School (WODSS) are working hard to bring Emma! A Pop Musical to their school's main stage.

Based on Jane Austen's classic novel, the musical is a living, dancing and soul-warming jukebox musical that features hit songs of legendary girl groups and iconic female singers from The Supremes and Whitney Houston to Shania Twain and Katy Perry.

"WO (Waterloo-Oxford) has a history of jukebox musicals going back to the '80s and Disco Inferno, so we're following that tradition with songs the community already knows and enjoys," said WODSS English-drama teacher and the musical's director, Michael Kolodziej.

The story of Emma! A Pop Musical focuses on Emma, a senior at Highbury Prep and a matchmaking master who strives to find love for her classmates as well as her teachers. Her next pet project is to find the perfect boyfriend for the young and bashful Harriet by the end of the school year. However, Emma's pursuit often goes sideways in hilariously unexpected ways, not to mention her relentless efforts just might be getting in the

way of finding her own happiness.

"It's been inspiring working with this cast," Kolodziej said. "They're just very dedicated, they're taking everything we throw at them and more, and it's been fairly collaborative, surprisingly, too. We've had some of the cast choreograph some of the numbers and we've had different staff members (and students) from across the school being involved as well.

"... When we started, I didn't how this was going to turn out. I knew it was going to be great, but it was kind of fun to discover it along the way with (the students)."

The all-student cast includes Charlotte English, who plays rich, vending-machine heiress and prospective student at Highbury Prep Jane Fairfax, and Isaac Roth, who plays straight-A student and fill-in teacher Jeff Knightly, a character that clearly has a connection with Emma but is unable to express his feelings for her as she focuses solely on matchmaking.


"It's a lot of work," English said of the experience preparing a musical production of this calibre. "We do about two and a half hours of rehearsal Monday through Thursday after school. Some days are vocal, some days are choreography or acting or

a bit of everything. On top of that, you have to go through your lines and your songs at home. Personally, on top of playing Jane I'm also in the ensemble for scenes where I don't have a vocal-solo part, so I have to learn almost all the songs in different parts, and that's the same, I believe, for Isaac."

"It's been great," added Roth. "We're very appreciative not just of our cast-mates but also of the amazing group of directors, the costuming team and all the other teachers who have volunteered so much time to help us be the best we can be."

That team working to make this production a success also includes students and teachers from the construction-technology program who stepped in as set builders, students and staff from the art department designing costumes and painting sets, and even students and teachers from business classes who are working to market this year's production and, for the first time in school history, sell tickets online.

All proceeds from the show, which is slated to run April 4, 5 and 6 at the school beginning at 7 p.m., will go back to fund arts programming at WODSS. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit sites.google.com/wrdsb.ca/w-o-emma.



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COMMUNITY —

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.

March 13-20, 2019, Edition (5 years ago)

As of Friday, March 15, 2019, Hickson United Church will no longer be used as a meeting place for the congregation. The church has been sold, but the members will continue to hold services in Christ Anglican Church, Huntingford.

Canadian Senator Rob Black dropped in to Westlandyn Farms on Monday morning, March 4, to visit Gary, Brenda and Adam West at their egg farm located just outside of Shakespeare. Mr. Black is interested in finding out what the grassroots producers are thinking about the new USMCA agreement that will affect all Canadian farmers in supply management.

MCC executive director addressed the Tavistock Mennonite Church sharing his stories on his recent visit to North Korea. His delegation spent a week in North Korea in an attempt to monitor food-aid shipments that

are being sent to children's hospitals throughout the country.

Legion volunteer Rose Berg stands with student volunteers Melia Britton and her brother, Evan Britton, at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper held in the Tavistock Legion Hall on Tuesday, March 5.

March 11-18, 2009, Edition (15 years ago)

Janice Wagler, a leader with the North Easthope 4-H Clubs, was recognized for 30 years of service to 4-H Perth County. The award was presented by 4-H Ontario at the Monsanto Volunteer luncheon at the Waterloo Motor Inn on Saturday.

The Thames Valley District School Board elementary basketball finals took place on March 6 and 7, 2009, involving 48 teams at six different secondary school sites. Local schools competing in the Girls A division were Innerkip and Hickson, with Innerkip winning the bronze medal. Lord Roberts defeated Plattsville for gold.

The Princess Elizabeth Women's Institute held their February Meeting in the Village Manor common room to celebrate the group's 112 years since inauguration. The Women's In-

stitute history began in 1889 when Adelaide Hunter Hoodless' son died from drinking impure milk.

Back in 1908, The Eel, owned by Frank W. Entricken of Tavistock, set a pacing record that, at that time, was said to be "one of the most extraordinary exhibitions of speed and game-ness ever seen in the annals of the sport." The Eel may be headed for the Horse Racing Hall of Fame.

March 16-23, 1994, Edition (30 years ago)

The Schneider's Male Chorus of Kitchener sang the Canadian and American National Anthems at the Toronto Blue Jays exhibition game against the Atlanta Braves on Saturday, March 12, 1994, at the Skydome.

The Gladding Ice Devils advanced to the B Championship round of the playoffs with four straight wins. On the weekend they beat Wellesley 2-1 and Paris 2-1.

A Baden girl will spend a month-long summer session at the National Ballet School in Toronto in July after successfully completing an audition recently. From 1,000 aspiring dancers from across Canada, Angel Jutzi, daughter of Dean and Brenda Jutzi, was one of the 100 who were invit-

ed to attend the second phase of the audition.

March 13-20, 1974, Edition (50 years ago)

With the icy conditions on Friday morning, a mishap occurred at the corner of William and Woodstock Streets South just before noon. An automobile and a pickup truck with a pig in the back collided. Both parties were not injured in the accident and their vehicles required a tow. The condition of the pig was not mentioned.

Council approved an operating budget of \$12,900 for 1974 for the installation of a phosphorous-removal system for the sewage system, as well as adding alum to the lagoon this spring.

Russel Oliver, RR 6, Woodstock, an East Zorra farmer, was named Ontario Hay King along with the title of Ontario Silage King at the 27th Annual Oxford Seed Fair held in Woodstock March 6.

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SPORTS —

Royals denied broom finish to OEHL semi-final

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Tavistock had an opportunity to sweep first-place Ripley at home Sunday but dropped a 4-1 decision to the Ontario Elite Hockey League regular season champions.

The Wolves led 2-0 early in the second period before Drew Gerth potted his ninth of the playoffs from Sean Kienapple, but Ripley goalie Jason Hamilton shut the door, stopping 23 of 24 shots. Tavistock held Ripley to just 16 shots on goal.

Game three was a completely different story as the Royals embarrassed the Wolves 8-4. Tavistock led 4-0 after the first period on goals from Matt Zilke, Collin Hartwick, Gerth and Erik Robichaud. Ripley pulled to within two in the second, but Gerth added two more and Zilke a single to make it 7-3. Jon Jutzi completed the scoring with an empty net, shorthanded goal on a setup from goalie Jensen Van Boekel.

Despite the loss, head coach Brad Stere said they can take plenty of positives from game four.

“Our goaltending was incredible and our guys played hard. Ripley came out with a

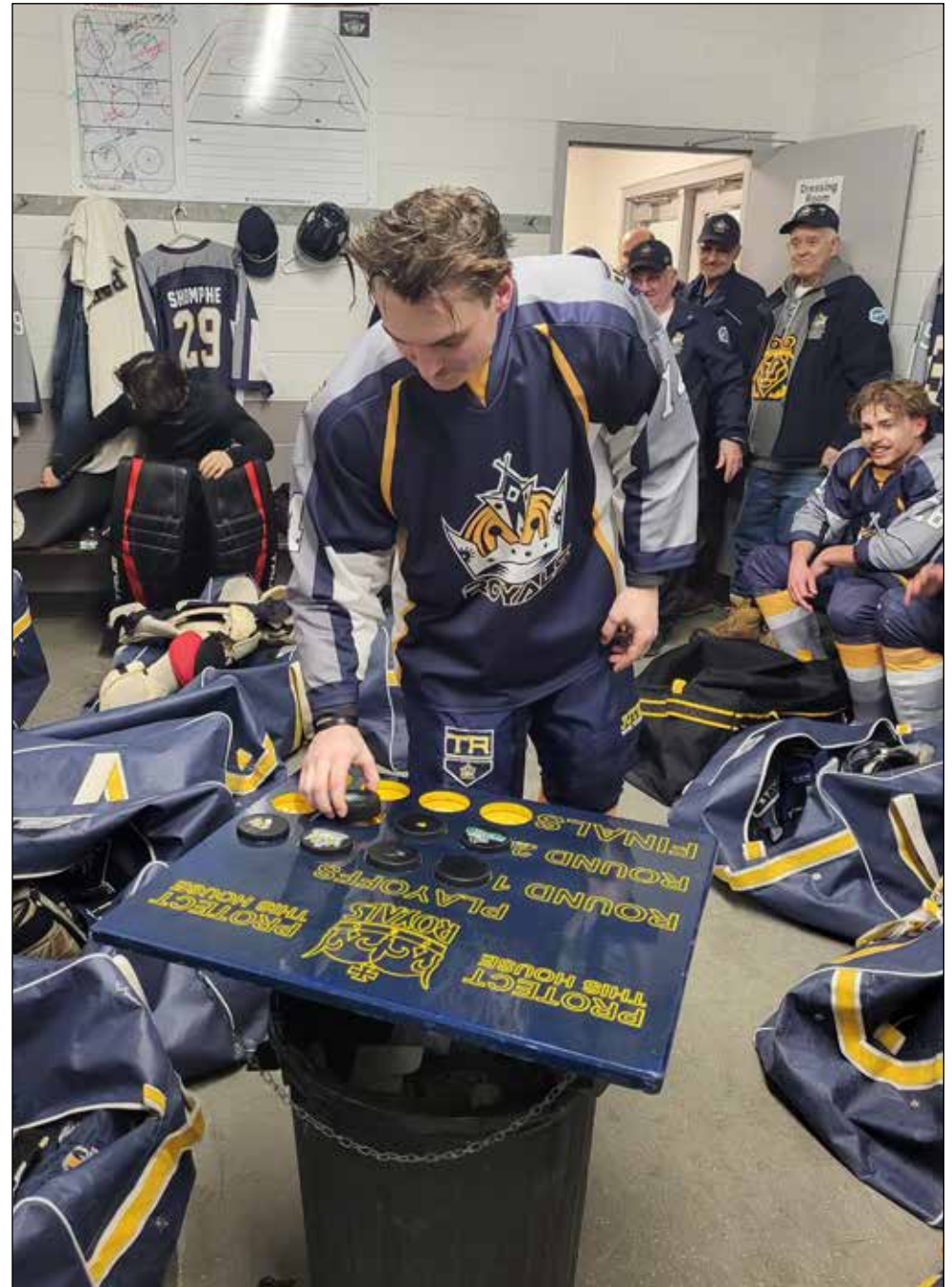
very tight game and we had trouble adjusting to the play. As I had said before, they are a very experienced team and if we let off even a little bit, they will take advantage.”

The Royals scored a combined 15 goals in games two and three, something that came to a sudden halt in game four.

“We have had our way with scoring in the last two games, so I think our guys expected the scoring to continue but a team like Ripley will not allow that. With that, we can definitely improve in all areas of the ice and we must be more disciplined. You cannot take double the number of penalties and expect a good outcome. I am still very confident that our group will respond on Saturday in Ripley,” added Stere.

“We are a very proud team and do not take losing lightly. Our game plan would be to get back to the hardnosed way we were playing and to battle for everything that we get. That is the only way to win in playoffs.”

Game five is Saturday night in Ripley at 7:30 p.m. and game six, if necessary, is set for 2:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon in Tavistock.



Drew Gerth places the game-winning puck in the Royals playoff tabulator after game three's win. Photo courtesy Tavistock Royals.

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SPORTS —

PJHL Roundup

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Braves bow out in first round

They almost did it.

Tavistock battled back from a 3-1 deficit to force a game seven at home against Hespeler, but dug an early hole for themselves in a 5-3 loss to the Shamrocks Monday night.

The Braves spotted their guests a 5-0 lead by the 13:28 mark of the third period before mounting a furious comeback that fell short. Nicholas Thibodeau, Ryan Suljak and Christian Bergmann all scored by the 19-minute mark of the third, but it would be too little, too late.

Special teams, again, played a big role in the game as Hespeler went 4 for 7 with the man advantage while Tavistock was 0 for 5. In the series, the Shamrocks were 12 for 43 on the powerplay for a 28-per-cent clip while the Braves were at 11 per cent with four goals on 36 chances.

General manager Jordan Zehr said his team came up short in a few areas.

"They were able to win the special-teams battle, which throughout a series is key to coming out on top. I think we didn't have the consistency we hoped for to start the series. We dug ourselves a big hole going down 3-1 losing games where we either gave up a late lead or just didn't have the effort to match Hespeler's. That being said, I'm proud of our effort to battle back and force game seven. It showed a lot of resiliency on our end."

The Braves forced game seven with a 7-1 drubbing in Hespeler Sunday. After trailing 1-0 by the halfway point of the first period, it was all Braves led by Ethan Sharpe's goal and three assists. Ian Glendinning chipped in with two goals and a helper while James Hopper stopped 37

of the 38 shots he faced to earn the win. The heated affair resulted in four 10-minute misconducts for each team in the third period, all for disrespectful or abusive behaviour.

Zehr said it's too early to talk about specifics for next season's team, but he does want to thank his overage players.

"Last night's loss is still fresh. Priority will be to evaluate this season and continue to scout the players in our system throughout the playoffs. Right now, I'd just like to put the focus on our four graduating players, Andrew Van Boekel, Ian Glendinning, Nic Thibodeau and Ryan Suljak. All four of these guys are a big piece of this team. They contributed on the ice in a big way, but their biggest impact was as leaders in the room. They will be greatly missed."

Despite coming up short of the goals and expectations the team put on themselves as the season progressed, Zehr said there were a lot of positives to take away.

"This was a great group to work with, with everyone but our four graduating players able to return, so the future is bright for sure."

Hespeler, who placed in the Doherty Division during the regular season, will now face the New Hamburg Firebirds who are well rested following a first-round bye.

Applejacks go down in seven to Merchants

Wellesley may not have been able to defend its Schmalz Cup from last season, but they battled to the end in their opening-round series. Norwich took the deciding game seven at home in front of 800 fans on Sunday by a 3-1 score. The Merchants took a 3-0 lead early in the second period before Connor Doerbecker found the back of the net, his first of the postseason. A scoreless third meant

the end of Wellesley's season while Norwich will battle the Woodstock Navy Vets in the second round.

The Applejacks forced the deciding game thanks to a 5-2 home win Saturday in front of 500 people. Taylor Bothwell led the attack with two goals and an assist while Doerbecker added a pair of assists. Norwich took game five in overtime by a score of 3-2.

Doherty Division Semi-Final Series

Hespeler vs. New Hamburg

Wednesday, March 13 @ 7:30 p.m. in New Hamburg

Friday, March 15 @ 7:30 p.m. in New Hamburg

Sunday, March 17 @ 3:30 p.m. in Hespeler

Thursday, March 21 @ 8:30 p.m. in Hespeler

Friday, March 22 @ 7:30 p.m. in New Hamburg *

Sunday, March 24 @ 3:30 p.m. in Hespeler *

Monday March 25 @ 7:30 p.m. in New Hamburg*

Norwich vs. Woodstock

Wednesday, March 13 @ 8:30 p.m. in Norwich

Friday, March 15 @ 7:45 p.m. in Woodstock

Sunday, March 17 @ 7:45 p.m. in Woodstock

Wednesday, March 20 @ 8:30 p.m. in Norwich

Friday, March 22 @ 7:45 p.m. in Woodstock *

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Tavistock Skating Club's Team Unity Intermediate places fifth at Canada Cup

By Teresa Weicker

The Tavistock Skating Club's Team Unity Intermediate finished their competitive season with a fifth-place finish at the Canada Cup Synchronized Skating Championships in Waterloo Feb. 25 and 26.

This team comprises 20 skaters between the ages of 13 and 18. The skaters started their season with a silver medal in Kingston, then qualified for the Canada Cup in Baltimore and earned a bronze medal in Oakville.

This team is coached by Tara Wilkins and Lauren Holdsworth. Thank you to all Team Unity sponsors for your support this season.



The Tavistock Skating Club's Team Unity Intermediate placed fifth after competing at the Canada Cup Synchronized Skating Championships in Waterloo Feb. 25 and 26. Contributed photo



Pictured are members of the Tavistock Skating Club's Team Unity Intermediate, which recently placed fifth at the Canada Cup Synchronized Skating Championships in Waterloo. From left are Clara Beamish, Hannah Bialik, Trinity Fridy, Kaylee Adam, Samantha Lawrence, Candice Dietrich, Annabelle Hendry, Natalie Dodd, Sophie Pullen, Eilish Moylan, Hannah Beck, Maddie Moylan, Kathryn Giles, Lilly Bender, Laina Berendsen, Hailey Minler, Madalyn Boyce, Megan LeBlanc, Emma Stankiewicz and Jenna Pickering. Contributed photo

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

FARM EDITION 2024

Terra Nova Dairy: A 280-head Oxford County dairy farm near Hickson

By Gary West

It was the early 1990s when a dairyman from Holland, who was only 24 years old at the time, decided to make the trip across the Atlantic Ocean to Canada to work on dairy farms southwestern Ontario.

Peter Overdevest eventually headed home to bring his parents back to Canada. The family then purchased the Raymer dairy farm on the Line 16 in East Zorra Township in Oxford County, the dairy capital of Canada.

As with most dairy farms, many changes have been made to the farm over the years where the Overdevest family now milk its Terra Nova herd of Holsteins with a robotic-milking system.

The family's five robots take the work and labour out of milking cows, a big step forward from when the cows were milked in a tie-stall parlour back in September of 1992 when the family first immigrated to Canada.

Peter Overdevest says it was a far cry from when they milked 23 cows in a small parlour in Holland, while also raising 200 sheep and growing potatoes.

His wife, Jodi, who was raised with horses near Hillsburgh, worked on dairy farms milking cows while going to school as a



Peter, son and calf manager Mitch and Jodi Overdevest in their newly renovated calf facility, where calves are raised in a clean, healthy environment. Contributed photo

teen. She says with a smile she was never going to marry a dairy farmer, but in later

years, grew to love their dairy-farming life.

Not only has farming been their life, but in November of 2022, the couple started a new adventure known as "Terra Nova Nordic Café and Spa Services" located two kilometres south of Hickson.

Jodi says business took off faster than they ever thought possible, and plans are already in the works for expansion in 2024. They have entertained guests from as far away as Kentucky and Michigan, but the bulk of their business is from London, Hamilton, Guelph, Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo and many from the immediate Oxford and Perth county areas.

She says the Nordic-thermal experience has become very popular with visitors.

Besides the dairy farm and spa, Peter is also busy as the newly elected member to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario board of directors, taking over from Plattsville area dairy farmer Murray Sherk, who represented Region 8 for 12 years.

The region includes 530 milk producers from Oxford County and the Region of Waterloo.

As a graduate from the 2016 Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, Peter feels privileged to be able to help lead the dairy industry and hopes his family will continue producing Grade A milk for many years into the future.



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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Gottlieb Bettschen: Progressive farmer and community leader

By Al Junker

Wilmot Township has had several progressive agricultural leaders over many years. These individuals pushed the envelope by adapting new techniques, equipment or crops, as well as promoting new methods of farming. One such individual was Gottlieb Bettschen of the New Dundee area.

Gottlieb farmed on the south half of Lot 6, Concession Two Block A, which today is the corner of Bethel Road, and Queen Street in Wilmot Township. Jacob

Bettschen, Gottlieb's father, took up the 150 acres around 1829. He had travelled extensively through the area and decided to establish an outpost on Lot 6 "in connection with the (family's) Dundas clock business."

Jacob, with the help of his two brothers, cleared a small section of land near Alder Creek and erected a log shanty which was 12 by 18 feet. He travelled back and forth on foot between Dundas and his shanty. On May 29, 1830, Jacob married Elizabeth Klopfenstein in Preston. The Klopfensteins lived on Lot 5 adjacent to Jacob's land. The young couple cleared their land and, sometime in 1830, they purchased a frame building in Waterloo Township, moved it by oxen to their land and erected what Gottlieb described as "the first frame house building in Wilmot." The young family moved back and forth between their land in Wilmot and Preston where Jacob had started a watchmaking business.

Gottlieb Bettschen was born in Preston on Sept. 3, 1841. The family moved back to Wilmot when he was six months old and they continued to clear their lot. When Gottlieb was old enough, his father purchased a small yoke of oxen for him. Gottlieb worked among the stumps and one of his main jobs was to haul logs back to the house to be cut and split for firewood. He did not attend school but received his education from his father in the evenings. At the age of seven, Gottlieb was a member of the New Dundee brass band playing the triangles. He worked in the nursery business from 1862 to



The first frame dwelling in Wilmot was purchased by the Klopfensteins in Waterloo Township in 1830 and moved by oxen to their property in Wilmot. Photos courtesy of Wilmot Township Archives

1867, grafting, pruning and selling trees in the winter for delivery in the spring. Following his deliveries, he worked at grafting trees, haying and harvesting. On Jan. 1, 1867, Gottlieb married Mary Copley who lived on a nearby farm.

Gottlieb purchased land in Hay Township near Zurich. His intention was to start a nursery growing fruit trees by taking advantage of the microclimate provided by the lake breeze from Lake Huron. At

the same time, Gottlieb rented an acre from his father for \$5 a year. He established a vineyard and a nursery on this acre to start stock for his larger nursery in Zurich. He introduced the Concord and Delaware varieties, which were the first sweet grapes to be successfully cultivated in this area. The grapes were used for winemaking and eating. Gottlieb's cultivation of grapes resulted in the Bettschen farm being referred to as the Vineyard

Continued on page 16



Gottlieb and Mary Bettschen.

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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Gottlieb Bettschen

Continued from page 15

Farm. Gottlieb wrote and published a pamphlet entitled, "A concise treatise on the culture, propagating and maintaining of the grapes as well as the making of wine."

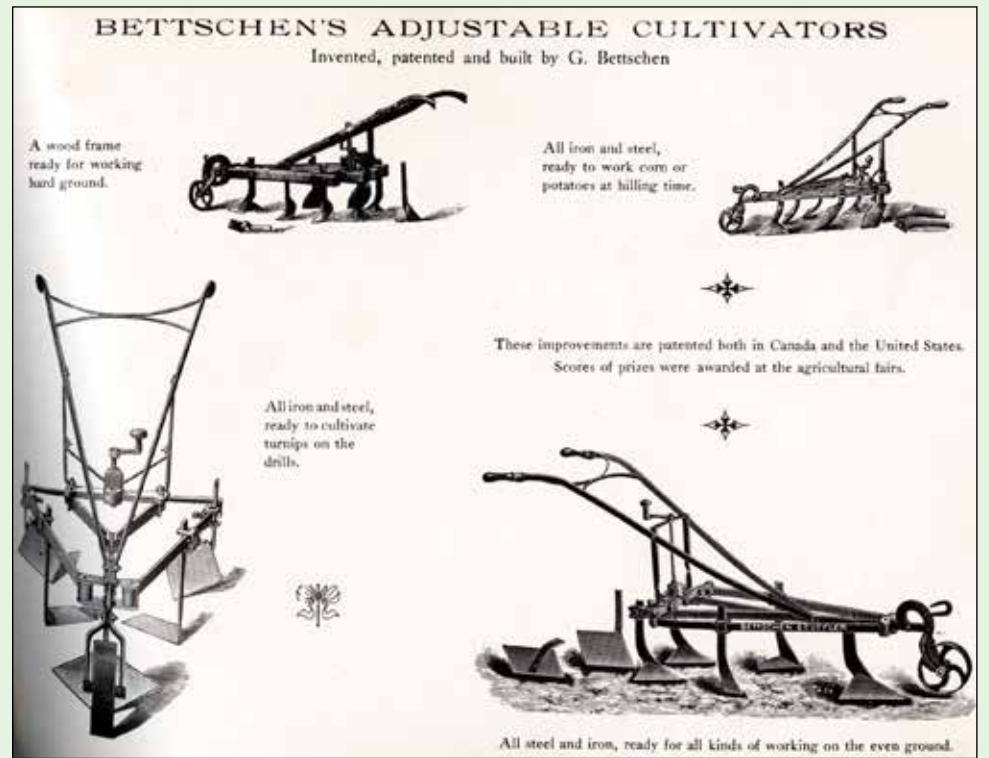
On July 23, 1869, Jacob Bettschen died suddenly and, as Gottlieb stated, "This changed everything." He moved to the farm and rented it from the estate. The farm required improvements and Gottlieb also needed to finalize his father's other business interests which included serving as the executor for a variety of estates in the area and a sawmill (now the Lyndon Fish Hatcheries Inc.). Gottlieb introduced "a new system of farming" which saw rutabagas used for animal feed. He grew them on a much-larger scale than was normal. Gottlieb soon learned a suitable cultivator for the growing of rutabagas did not exist so "he invented, built, and introduced the Bettschen adjustable corn and root cultivator." He was granted several patents in Canada and the United States, and the cultivator won many awards at farm exhibitions where it was displayed. Bettschen was a breeder of thoroughbred sheep, shorthorns and cattle and a member of the Dominion Short Horn Association.

In 1880, Gottlieb was one of the founders of the Farmers' Institute of South

Waterloo. The organization promoted improved agricultural practices. Gottlieb served as a longtime director. He wrote articles and made numerous presentations at Farmers' Institutes throughout the area. During the late 1880s, he also expanded the barn to improve conditions for the livestock and to double the number which could be housed.

Gottlieb purchased several building lots on the east side of Front Street in New Dundee. In 1887, he built the Jubilee Block named in honour of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee. A large addition was added the following year. In 1910, the block was purchased by Herman Kavelman who operated Kavelman's store until 1971. Today, it is the home of the New Dundee Emporium. In 1900, Bettschen played a prominent role in the establishment of the New Dundee Library. He offered rent free space in his Jubilee Block. The library remained there until 1962. Gottlieb also served as the president of the board of management.

In 1906, Gottlieb Bettschen retired from farming. He purchased the home on the corner of Front and Main streets in New Dundee. Vineyard Farm was taken over by his daughter, Alice, and her husband, Edwin Hallman. In 1909, Gottlieb played a prominent role in the establishment of the creamery operated by the Farmers



Gottlieb Bettschen designed, built and patented adjustable cultivators for corn and root vegetables when he started growing rutabagas as animal feed.

Co-operative Company of New Dundee. The following year, he researched, wrote and published Genealogical Biographical and Pictorial History of the Bettschen Family and Its Connections. The material for this article was gleaned from this very informative publication. Gottlieb

Bettschen passed away on Oct. 11, 1914, bringing an end to a very active career in the agricultural affairs of Wilmot Township. He and his wife Mary are buried in the New Dundee Union Cemetery.



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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Oak Manor Organic: From farming to flour production

By Emily Stewart

Oak Manor Organic went through several changes to the business since its inception and saw changes in demand for organic products.

Oak Manor, which sells flour, seeds, oat flakes and other baking essentials, first operated as a 12,000-acre conventional farm in the 1960s. Perry Reibling, general manager, said the now mill-store at 756907 Oxford County Road 5 in Tavistock cut back on its acre space in the early 1970s and switched to organic farming.

"Organic had a much different perspective on agriculture," Reibling said, "eliminating synthetic pesticides, herbicides, chemicals, fertilizers – all that kind of stuff – for more regenerative and natural processes. That was on the farm and at that point we thought, 'There's got to be a market for this organic product that we were actually producing.'"

Oak Manor added a stone mill in 1975 and sold flour to natural-food stores under the brand name. Due to several people focusing on adding whole grains to their diet, plenty of whole-wheat flour was sold, but there was a niche consumer base.

"It wasn't a big market by any means," Reibling said. "Over the years, it's slowly grown to be very mainstream."

Eventually, Oak Manor sold the farm and kept the mill.

"We focused on providing the finished product to customers," Reibling said. "There were a lot of other organic farms that have cropped up in the region over the years and they needed a place to market their grains. We couldn't do both anymore. We were running ourselves ragged."

Dealing with debt because of the high interest rates of the 1980s was also a factor leading to the change in priorities for Oak Manor.

Reibling said there are health and sustainability benefits to organic-agricultural products.

"Organic farmers don't spray or use inputs into the environment that are detrimental to the environment," he said. "It's healthier for people because those products are not in your food. Also, another facet of organic farming is no genetically modified seeds can be used in organic agriculture."

Along with holding the general manager position, Reibling took on several roles in the family-owned business. He's performed marketing, farming, bookkeeping and delivery duties.

"Being small, you kind of have your fingers on everything so you never get bored," he said. "It's not mundane,

that's for sure. Even with all of the stress that comes with running a small business, sometimes it still keeps you on your toes."

Oak Manor Organic is prepared for any new demands and changes within the industry. For example, whole-wheat flour is now something customers might add to their baking. The mill will also contract out some of its products to larger mills, such as white flour.

"One of the things we've always had to do is be willing to evolve, so we'll see where that takes us," Reibling said.

Oak Manor Organic Products can be bought online, at the mill site, at health-food stores, in bulk bins, Loblaws and some regional Sobey's. For more information and to order products online, visit oak-manor.myshopify.com.



Verna Bender has been part of Oak Manor Organic for 49 years. Bender, Perry Reibling's aunt, runs the business' sewing equipment. Contributed photo

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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Perth County farmers Greg and Staci Leis raise quality, organic broiler chickens

By Gary West

There have been many changes over the years on Ontario farms, but none have seen more positive changes than the broiler-chicken industry.

Greg and Staci Leis took over from Greg's parents, Dale and Elaine Leis, in 2012, carrying forward the Dalaine Poultry Farms tradition in Perth County's South Easthope Township, southeast of Shakespeare.

Since then, they replaced an older, two-storey barn with two single-storey barns that are each 21,000 square feet in size, placing their first birds in new barns in January 2017.

While considering different barn designs, the young couple visited a number of organic-broiler barns which put them on a path towards organic-chicken production.

After producing chickens for over 20 years, Greg said this was a very different challenge for the young entrepreneurs and a chance to fill a niche market that was growing, still under supply management.

Approximately 18,000 chicks are placed in each barn and the growing birds are in the barn for 37 to 38 days at 2.2 kilograms.



Greg and Staci Leis hold two one-day old chicks in one of their new broiler-chicken barns where they raise chickens for the Organic Market. Photo by Gary West

They arrive at the farm as day-old chicks weighing approximately 42 grams. The barn is thoroughly cleaned and prepped with clean bedding for every new flock.

The Leis' chickens are sold through Yorkshire Valley Farms and processed at the Farm Fresh Poultry plant in Harriston.

Under organic requirements, the birds need more space – 21 kilograms per square-metre is the maximum density. The birds are fed organic feed with no

prohibited substances in or around the barns. The birds are required to have natural daylight – one per cent of floor space needs to allow natural light – and eight hours of darkness.

When birds are 25 days or older and the weather permits, access to the outdoors is required. The pasture area needs to be the same size as the indoor space. If there are threats of avian influenza (bird flu), then no outdoor access is allowed.

The air inlets are equipped with fans, so when the outdoor-access doors are open, the ventilation system neutralizes the air pressure.

According to Greg, this helps maintain good air quality on the far side of the barn away from the access doors and reduces wind speed at the access doors.

He says the family joke is his grandfather built a barn in the 1950s with windows, and barns in the late 60s and 70s were built without windows.

"We've now progressed so far that we are now building barns with windows again. Everything old is new again," he laughed.

On the Leis farm, since it is a family farm, family members help with barn and field-work including growing organic corn, soybeans, wheat and some hay for a rotation in weed control.

Their daughter Elissa helps when not at her bakery business in nearby Stratford, Vann's Fine Bakery.

With 1,300 chicken producers in Ontario, consumers can be assured farmers like Greg and Staci Leis are in it for the long haul to produce quality, organic chicken for those who want to buy a very healthy local product.



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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Peel County dairy farmers move to Oxford County with herd of show-winning Jerseys

By Gary West

Oxford County is known as the Dairy Capital of Canada and, when dairy farm families are looking for a change in scenery from other farming areas in Ontario, the Oxford area is one they look to.

The family that owns Glenholme Jerseys Inc., the Rutas and Mellows from Peel County, recently moved its herd of show-winning Jerseys to a modern dairy farm southwest of New Hamburg near Punkeydoodle's Corner.

The family was able to purchase an active dairy operation from Martin and Erica Van Rooyen on the 18th Line of East-Zorra Tavistock Township.

They have decades of dairy experience from their century farm near Bolton where, in 1932, great-grandfather Stewart Mellow began farming with his herd of Jersey cows.

Now, his great grandson, Curtis Ruta, Curtis' mother Carol Ruta and uncle Bruce Mellow, along with grandparents Robert and Elaine Mellow, are managing and milking not only their herd of registered Jerseys, but also the Holsteins that were purchased with the Oxford County farm in early 2023.



From left, Curtis Ruta, Carol Ruta and Bruce Mellow of Glenholme Jerseys Inc., who recently moved from the Bolton Area of Peel County to the 18th Line of Oxford's East-Zorra Township Township and expanded their family's dairy operation, are pictured as one of their Jersey Cows looks on. Contributed photo

They are now milking 109 cows in their double-eight milking parlour, while their

cows housed in free stalls are fed a mixed ration of forages, grains and concentrates

balanced for maximum production and good health.

Curtis, 25, has always shown a keen interest in milking and exhibiting heifers and cows with his mother and uncle at various local fairs and even the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto.

While showing dairy calves in the 4-H program, he had always hoped he could follow in his family's footsteps to be a dairy farmer.

With their 170-acre farm on prime Oxford County soil, they hope to grow alfalfa and corn to feed their herd of registered cows and heifers.

Since making the move from Peel County, they are pleased with their production of 5-per-cent butterfat and high-protein content from their mixed Holstein and Jersey herd.

They are proud to offer their genetics in a TAG sale this weekend where they will offer for sale 38 animals off the top of their well-established herd of registered Jerseys.

For more information about the sale, email Curtis at cruta1932@gmail.com or call 647-201-7538.

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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Green Acre Farms producing high-quality milk and chicken in Perth County and Waterloo Region



Brendan, Samantha and two-month old Ava Wagler help manage the Perth County dairy herd of Green Acre Farms on the western edge of Punkeydoodle's Corners. Contributed photo

From left, Tim, Gary, David and Andrew Wagler are pictured inside their dairy barn south of New Hamburg. Contributed photo

By Gary West

If you were like me in the late 60s and watched the TV show, Green Acres, you might have thought of a farm south of New Hamburg that goes by the name Green Acre Farms Ltd.

The TV show was a success story and so is the farm. The Wagler family, which includes Gary, his two sons, David and Andrew, his brother, Tim, and nephew, Brendan, farm in a picturesque part of Waterloo Region near the Perth and Oxford county borders in New Hamburg.

Farming runs deep in the Wagler Family, which now milks registered Holsteins on two different farms in Waterloo Region and Perth County.

They not only milk more than 200 cows, but also manage thousands of broiler chickens and young chicken pullets that are raised to become laying hens for the egg market.

After graduating from Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School, both Gary and Tim came home to milk cows with their father and mother, Lloyd and Ruby, on their 100-acre farm on the Huron road.

Skip ahead to 2006 when the next generation came into the business and felt that expanding the dairy operation was in their future.

A new state-of-the-art dairy barn was built and, for 17 years, the double-10 parallel milking parlour and free-stall area worked well for this family farm.

In 2023, a major shift took place as milking robots were installed at both facilities to ease labour demands and also have their cows milked more than twice a day as their production was reaching 45 litres per day with a 4.4 butterfat test.

The family grows hundreds of acres of corn, soybeans, alfalfa and wheat, and what isn't fed to their animals is sold on the futures market.

They also serve their community in both church and as members of various committees.

If the future of producing quality milk and chicken can be attributed to the two local Green Acre farms, rest assured that the Wagler family will continue to take pride in what they do best.



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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Your Farm Your Family | Your Success

Recognizing Farmers During Canadian Agricultural Safety Week March 10 to 16, 2024



Celebrating Ag Safety Week: Safety is Our Heritage

By Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette staff

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week takes place March 10-16 and this year farmers, farm families, farm workers and farming communities are encouraged to consider how they plan for #FarmSafetyEveryday.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW) is an annual national initiative delivered by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) that raises awareness about the importance of safe agriculture.

Your Farm, Your Family, Your Success: Safety is Our Heritage is the final part of a three-year safety campaign. This year, organizers are focusing on providing practical safety advice and encouraging conversations about farm safety while showcasing how safety directly contributes to the success and sustainability of farming operations.

"There is no question that farm accidents can have a devastating toll with physical, psychological and financial consequences," said CASA CEO Andrea Lear in a press release. "But we also know that many on-farm incidents are preventable. That's why we want to provide Canadian producers with the tools and resources they need to protect the health and safety of everyone who lives and works on or visits farms and ranches.

"Canadian Agricultural Safety Week serves as a reminder that farm safety is important year-round and that by working together, we can ensure a safer agricultural sector."

Every year, CASA raises awareness about the importance of safety on Canadian farms through CASW, which takes place during the third week of March. This year's sponsors are CN, Syngenta Canada, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Fertilizer Canada and Parrish & Heimbecker.

Additional information about CASW, including the media kit and resources, is available at agsafetyweek.ca. The media kit contains feature stories, safety advice articles, public-service announcements, graphics and more.

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and safety of farmers, their families and agricultural workers. CASA is funded in part by the Government of Canada under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal, provincial and territorial initiative. For more information, visit www.casa-acsa.ca, find us on Facebook or LinkedIn, or follow us on X @planfarmsafety.



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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Nith Valley Apiaries: More than a century of local honey

By Galen Simmons

Since 1918, Nith Valley Apiaries has provided local honey to New Hamburg and area residents from the idyllic little farm at the bend in Christner Road on the banks of the Nith River.

Over the past century, the apiary has been handed down through four successive owners – each of whom learned from but were not related by blood to the beekeeper before them – until it landed in the hands of Mike and Erika Roth, who own and operate the 800-hive operation today.

“From father-in-law to son-in-law was the closest it got to being passed on to someone in the same family. I’m not related to (any of the previous owners),” said Mike Roth, who began working at Nith Valley Apiaries as an informal apprentice when he was 16.

“There is starting to be some ... certification to beekeeping now, but it has been a really antique industry in that sense. It’s a very small niche. Honey is a very safe product to work with, needing little oversight, and the industry as a whole has flown under the radar in many aspects. There’s basically just requirements for what needs to be (printed) on a jar of honey.”

While Mike Roth says the biggest threat to the honey industry in Canada is imported honey that has been cut with cane or rice sugar, beekeeping as a form of agriculture hasn’t scaled up to the industrial level like other agricultural practices have, leaving smaller businesses like Nith Valley Apiaries as the only options for local-honey lovers across the country.

Part of the reason beekeeping hasn’t been taken over by big business is the number of hard-to-control, outside influences that affect honey production and the overall health of honeybees.

“We had about 800 hives going into winter and, so far, it looks like we’ll have most of them this spring,” Mike Roth said. “By most, I’d say we’re looking at roughly 20 per-cent loss which, traditionally, pre 1990s, a 20-per-cent loss was quite high, and now 20 per-cent loss is pretty good.



Mike and Erika Roth (pictured) and the team at Nith Valley Apiaries in New Hamburg work hard year-round to ensure their 800 hives of honeybees are healthy and collect as much nectar from local flowers as possible each summer. Photo by Galen Simmons

Twenty to 30 per cent, I think, is considered average now and 40 and 50 per-cent losses are not unusual. They definitely hurt, but beekeepers seem to experience them in different pockets of the province every year.”

From the destruction of honeybees’ natural environment and local farmers harvesting crops before they go to flower, thereby limiting the bees’ available food sources, to extreme weather and changes in climate, and the dangers of disease and parasites, beekeepers like Mike and Erika Roth work tirelessly to ensure their bees have what they need to overcome all the threats they face.

“It’s a complicated situation where we’ve just added layer upon layer of stress for the bees,” Mike Roth said. “We don’t really know where they go and they’re exposed to unknown chemicals from industry. Their food source; we might say it’s wildflower honey, but what’s left that’s actually wild? It’s almost all cultivated and there’s way less diversity than what they would experience normally. So, you have a lot of exposures, a poorly balanced diet and then global pests and diseases like the varroa mites.

“Which straw broke the camel’s back, right?”

For the Roths, ensuring their bees are healthy enough to make it through the winter so they can collect nectar and turn it into honey through spring, summer and into the fall is the name of the game.

Beekeeping, Mike Roth says, is somewhat akin to gambling. It’s about knowing when to introduce a little extra food and probiotics in their diets to tide them over until the flowers bloom or to ensure they have enough calories to survive the winter; when to spray for varroa mites so the heat of the day won’t put the bees at risk by causing the time-controlled natural or chemical miticides to release too quickly; and when to divide a colony before it swarms and leaves the hive while minimizing the impact to the colony’s overall honey production.

The product of all that hard work put in by the Roths, their team and – of course – the bees, is a range of honeys as well as honey byproducts like beeswax, honeycomb and bee pollen turned into consumer goods and sold by the Roths from their on-farm shop.

From wildflower honey and clover honey

to buckwheat honey, basswood honey and huckleberry swamp honey, the latter of which is collected by bees from a wetland north of Stratford, the Roths and their team can tell where their bees are foraging by the taste and colour of the honey they produce, something they say many of their customers can discern, too.

“There’s three months to make your honey crop (June, July and August),” Mike Roth said. “Typically, we get 130-150 pounds of honey per colony, per year. That comes in fits and spurts. You’ll get a flush of dandelion nectar that comes in, then there’s the dogwoods and wild apples like hawthorns and locust (trees). Honey has colour grading to help classify it. It’s up to the beekeepers to determine the floral source as they want to.

“August, the last couple of years, has not been a big honey month, but it can be. June and July have a lot of natural flowers and August is basically all agricultural sources. If the hay fields aren’t left to bloom in August, there’s not much honey.”

While the world of beekeeping is certainly more complicated than it was 100 years ago, Mike Roth says he is thankful for the advances in apiary technology that allow the small Nith Valley team to manage the number hives they have.

“It’s easy to complain about the global, industrialized society, but ... (today) welders are so common, small farms – us included – have one in the shop and we can fix whatever broken, metal thing we need in a flash. Go back 50-100 years, if some piece of metal broke, you’d have to take it to someone to get it fixed. The technology we have at our fingertips is incredible. Consumer-accessibility to technologies that, 50 years ago, were reserved for industry and special training has grown exponentially,” Mike Roth said.

“It’s really hard to know if we’ve gone forwards or backwards (in beekeeping), but (the issues we face) are definitely different than they were in 1918.”

For more information about Nith Valley Apiaries and to see its full line of honey and honey products, visit nithvalleyapiaries.ca.

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FARM EDITION 2024 —

Zorra Township couple wins 2024 ag. award

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Cobi and Steve Sauder have dedicated their lives to outdoor education and conservation. As a result, the couple has been awarded the prestigious Oxford Stewardship Award.

The couple stood out to the award-selection committee for their long list of stewardship projects at their 100-acre farm in Zorra Township. They have planted an estimated 6,500 trees since purchasing their property nearly 30 years ago. Oxford County Warden Marcus Ryan presented the award at a recent Oxford County council meeting.

Cobi Sauder says they have always taken pride in being good caretakers and land stewards.

"We felt privileged to be afforded the opportunity to live on a 100-acre farm, so we just wanted to give back to it. Once you live within it and immerse yourself, you just get connected with all the different plant species and all the different possibilities, so it just made sense to us to be as kind as we could to the land."

Steve Sauder adds the farm is an extension of who they are.

"We met while teaching outdoor education and we just have a real love for the land. It was also an extension of who I was at work because we were always promoting conservation, and it was just a great opportunity to live the things about improving water quality and soil health."

The couple has been working towards improving their farm operation over time, performing no-till and minimal-till crop rotations since the 1990s and planting cover crops over the past six years. Steve



Oxford Warden Marcus Ryan presenting the award to Cobi and Steve Sauder. Photo courtesy of Oxford County.

Sauder says they always look for ways to improve soil health.

"We wanted a productive working farm, so our goal has been to continue to learn and take care of our soil as best as we can."

Tree planting has been an ongoing project over the years, and they estimate they have planted over 6,500 since purchasing the property. The couple has established a wooded area with tree diversity, buffered

a wetland, and planted windbreaks.

Cobi Sauder says they wanted to make the property accessible for their kids to give them room to explore.

"The kids were always playing outside in the bush or out back exploring and it just made sense to involve them in the process. All our girls are now working in the sciences, influenced by immersing themselves in nature from a young age. The property backs onto the conservation

area and there are lots of places to explore and learn."

Steve Sauder added they have also removed a lot of invasive species from the property and recently installed deer enclosure fencing.

"Species diversification is important to us. Working at reducing invasive species; we have worked with Oxford County to reduce glossy buckthorn from the farm as well as on the deer enclosures to help improve the woodlot health at the back and prevent the deer from eating all of the new vegetation."

Working with Oxford County, the Sauders installed deer enclosures to help reduce invasive species and help improve the woodlot health at the back of their property by preventing the deer from eating all of the new vegetation. They also plant cover crops at their farm, have decommissioned an old well, and created water and sediment control basins.

The couple received a \$500 gift certificate to purchase original artwork commissioned from an Oxford County artist of their choice. In addition to this prize, Cobi and Steve Sauder have been added to the recognition wall at the Oxford County administration building, designed to honour all past and future recipients.

The runner-ups were Paul Brenneman from the Township of East Zorra-Tavistock and Marsha and Gregg Litt from Zorra.

The Oxford Stewardship Award recipient is chosen by Stewardship Oxford and the Oxford Soil and Crop Improvement Association from the pool of projects that received financial and/or technical assistance through the county-supported Clean Water Program the previous year.

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FARM EDITION 2024 —



The Tavistock Hop Company

By Galen Simmons

For lovers of craft beer, there is always joy to be had when exploring a new town or city and discovering what local breweries have on tap.

For those who discover the myriad craft breweries in Tavistock, Stratford, Shakespeare, St. Marys and the surrounding region, that joy is doubled when they learn the hops that add that distinctive floral, spicy, piney, citrusy, herbal, tropical, woody, earthy or downright hoppy flavour to their favourite local brews were grown right down the road at The Tavistock Hop Company.

“We’ve got a small acreage. We’ve got 30 workable (acres) ... and we were looking for something we could do on a small bit of land,” said Kyle Wynette, who owns and operates The Tavistock Hop Company with wife Julie Wynette and business partners Jeremy and Donna Bartlett from their family farm, Brenwyn Farms, on Perth Line 26 in Perth East, just outside Tavistock. “We wanted to do something a little different. We were looking for a challenge. ... We decided, ‘Ok, let’s try growing hops on a small plot,’ and then friends of ours said, ‘Ok, we’ll go in. Do you want business partners?’

“Currently between the two (families), we have five boys who can all help. We’re lucky. We also get eight to 10 students who come from Tavistock and help out. They work a lot in May-June, and then nothing in July until harvest when we work straight for two weeks.”

In the midst of a massive resurgence as a crop

in Ontario thanks to the craft-beer movement, hops are the female flower cone of the plant, *Humulus lupulus*. These cones are used primarily in the brewing process to impart bitterness, aromas and flavours in addition to acting as a natural preservative.

First cultivated in Germany, hops are now farmed throughout Europe, in northeastern and northwestern parts of the U.S. and in parts of Canada including B.C., Quebec, the Maritime provinces and Ontario. Commercial hops are primarily grown on tall trellis systems reaching heights of 12-20 feet depending on the trellis design. The female flower of the plant is what’s used for the process of making beer and there are many different varieties (or cultivars), each with their own unique brewing and growing characteristics.

Like the grape-growing regions of the world and wine produced in those regions, hops take on the characteristics of their surroundings and may have unique flavours depending on the regions, soil and climate in which they’re grown.

Based on the soil on their farm and the local climate, the Wynettes and the Bartletts grow nine different varieties of hops including cascade, centennial, hallertauer, glacier, alpharoma, chinook, triple perle, nugget and heritage, the latter of which is a hop recovered from the former Preston Hop Yards in Waterloo Region and now grown only by The Tavistock Hop Company. While the more common cascade hops are standard in IPAs with their mango- and citrus-flavour

Continued on page 27

Tavistock Hop Company business partners Kyle Wynette and Jeremy Bartlett stand in their hops field on Perth Line 26 in Perth East, just outside of Tavistock. Contributed photo



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FARM EDITION 2024 —

A journey from farm to keg

Continued from page 26

profiles, New Zealand's alpharoma hop is commonly used in pale ales, lagers and IPAs for its aromas of stone fruit, red licorice and grassy notes.

"A cascade grown here is going to taste different than a cascade grown out in the Pacific northwest," Kyle Wynette said. "We've got a couple different soil structures on the property (including) a sandy soil (and one that's more) clay-loam. It was the luck of the draw when we bought the farm, but you have to cater to it. You might have to water more on your sandy soils and less on your heavier, clay soils."

Since hop plants are a perennial species, they require a period of dormancy of roughly six to eight weeks during winter. For The Tavistock Hop Company, the season starts in April – weather permitting – with field prep, trellis maintenance and fertilization followed by stringing the coir, a coconut-fibre rope that guides the hop plants to the top of the trellis as they grow.

"Once stringing is completed, usually by May long weekend, we begin training the hops onto the strings," Kyle Wynette said. "Most of the hops tend to do this themselves – they wrap clockwise around the coir – but some varieties benefit from additional help. Harvest gets underway mid-August and continues to the first week of September. Our hops are picked, dried (for 12-14 hours), pelletized and packaged on site before moving to cold storage to await brewer orders."

As one of only a handful of hop growers in Ontario, The Tavistock Hop Company's final product is in high demand by both local commercial brewers and those from farther afield. Locally, Tavistock hops

are used by Upper Thames Brewing in Woodstock, Black Swan Brewing in Stratford, Broken Rail Brewing in St. Marys, Shakespeare Brewing Company in Shakespeare, Peel St. Beverage Company in New Hamburg and Mad Mash Brewing in Tavistock.

Further out, Tavistock hops are used by commercial brewers in Elmira, Toronto, Petrolia, Goderich, Georgina, Caledon and even a few across the border in the U.S.

"We've sold hops as far south as San Diego, but we don't sell a lot in the states," Kyle Wynette said. "The biggest brewery we've worked with is probably Sleeman's. That was last year and we did a century pale ale with them. ... They're looking for two things. One, a brewer wants to support local, Ontario agriculture and Canadian agriculture because most of the hops come from the U.S. still. Also, you see breweries saying, 'We want a closer relationship with where our ingredients are coming from that we might not get through a broker. I think that appeals to some of them.'"

In addition to selling hops to commercial brewers, The Tavistock Hop Company also offers home-brewer packages with 4 ounces of the company's more popular, pelletized hops available for small-batch beers.

Regardless of whether they brew at home or in a large-scale commercial brewery, Kyle Wynette said The Tavistock Hop Company's customers often visit from far and wide to see and smell the hops growing in the field for themselves and, for some limited-run wet-hop beers, purchase them as soon as they're harvested.

For more information about The Tavistock Hop Company, visit www.tavihops.ca.



Hops are the female flower cone of the plant, *Humulus lupulus*, and are used primarily in the brewing process to impart bitterness, aromas and flavours in addition to acting as a natural preservative. Contributed photo

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OPINION —

EXPERT ADVICE: *Bring On the brownies!*



By Mercedes Kay Gold

Living a healthy life inside and out is about consistency. Whole foods are holistic, but from time to time, indulging in sweet tooth satisfaction is heavenly. Brownies are ooey goey and oh so good. The key is to treat yourself to a serving, enjoying guilt-free, but mindfully. Sit down and slowly savour the sweetness bite by bite. Your best bet is to bake my healthier brownies and eat two back-to-back! This batch of brownies is a bounty of body-boosting ingredients. Simple ingredients, big indulgence!

Open your mind to the possibility of sweet

potatoes, the superstar ingredient. Sweet potatoes, whether you choose orange, white or purple, are high in fantastic fibre. They contain mega-minerals, vitamins and awesome antioxidants, but some stand out. Most notably is immune boosting vitamins A and C plus manganese, copper and vitamins B5 and B6.

Maple syrup is magic. Sugar is nonessential, making it absolutely imperative to choose an unrefined natural source. Skipping sweeteners is spot-on, too. Zinc, copper, calcium, iron, magnesium and potassium are found in marvelous maple syrup, but manganese is the mineral with measurable quantities.

Chocolate is the language of love for many, tracing back to Mesoamerica around BCE 1900. The food of the gods is a superfood when the cacao content is a minimum of 70 per cent. The percentage of cacao you see on a label is the measurement of the bar's weight that comes from the cacao mass. Chocolate must contain at least 10 per cent cacao mass to be classified as chocolate, but aim sky-high for the most health benefits. Yes, it becomes a bit bitter but has boatloads of benefits. Choose chocolate that is minimally processed and, of course, chocolate free of chemi-

cals, colours, corn syrup and scary sweeteners. There's real science backing the mood-enhancing magic of chocolate, improved brain function and athletic performance. There's also increasing evidence to support positive effects on cancer and cognitive benefits in aging. Chocolate is a comfort food and for good reason.

Tahini is a top-notch, nutrient-dense food deserving mega mealtime attention. Tahini is made from toasted, ground, hulled sesame seeds. Ketchup is the chosen condiment in North America, but this power food is the chosen one in Middle Eastern countries. Plant-based eating has brought top-notch tahini to tempt our taste buds. Tahini has a nutty flavor and its smooth texture makes it the perfect replacement for nut butters. If you love hummus, tahini is hiding in this great veggie-dipping sidekick. This super seed is a healthy fat, fiber-filled and protein-packed. Trace minerals are this nutritionist's number one reason to nosh. Selenium, zinc and copper are a trio of thyroid health benefits, plus tahini is a great go-to for non-heme iron.

Eggs are low calorie and the perfect protein, about six grams per egg. The wondrous white sphere is also a super source of choline, linked to brain development and memory.

Brownie Recipe

These sweet-potato-powered brownies are grain-free, nut-free and vegetarian.

Ingredients:

- 1 large sweet potato or a cup and a half
- 1 cup of runny tahini paste
- 2 large eggs



This week's brownie recipe uses sweet potatoes that are high in fibre and vitamins A, B5, B6 and C, plus manganese and copper. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold



These brownies are a healthy and delicious alternative to the chocolatey, sweet dessert. Photo by Mercedes Kay Gold

- 1 cup cocoa powder
- ½ cup maple syrup
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp Ceylon cinnamon powder
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- ½ chocolate bar (40-50 grams) 75 per cent cocoa minimum

Directions:

1. Peel the sweet potato, chop and steam until softened or roast in a 400-degree Fahrenheit oven until soft and peel. Mash well.
2. Whisk the eggs.
3. Combine all ingredients. Stir well or combine using a hand mixer.
4. Chop the chocolate into small pieces and stir into the brownie batter or top the brownie before baking.
5. Line an 8 x 8* pan in parchment paper or oil lightly with avocado oil. Cook on the middle rack in a 350 Fahrenheit oven for 22-24 minutes. It will bounce back when cooked.

*8 x 8 pan or individual loaf or springform pans for smaller servings

Cool and cut into 12 squares. The recipe freezes fantastically for future cravings.



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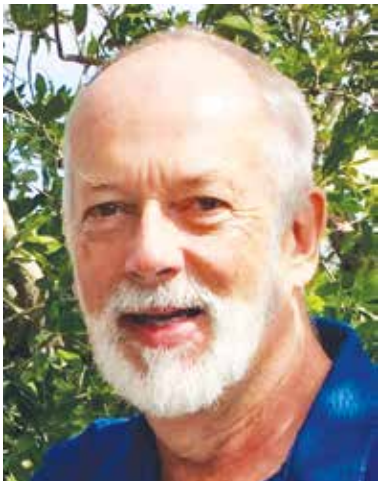
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TRAVEL —

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Where to find great wine and a warm welcome



By Paul Knowles

It's mid-March and we can't wait to turn off the TV, get out of our family rooms and do something just a tad adventurous. We want to head for the great outdoors, but the great outdoors has not put out its welcome mat just yet.

What to do? Well, there is one day-trip activity that is pretty terrific year round. Why not head to the Niagara Region and experience the tastes, the atmosphere and the invitation to relaxation at some Ontario wineries? Of course, if you opt not to head out this week or next, these wineries will be ready to welcome you warmly all year long.

Right now, I am told, there are over 100 wineries in the Niagara Region. That's a lot. And because I write about wineries from time to time, and also organize a winery coach tour for 30 good friends once a year, I often get asked about my favourites.

That's a long list, but I will say I try to avoid the big, industrial wineries – although some do make really good wine. I just find the experience of visit-

ing or touring most of these big boys very impersonal and I prefer a small winery where they are really glad to see you, will offer you great tastings and are happy to tell you all about their wines, their wineries, and their history.

Of the 100 wineries on the entire Niagara Peninsula, there are perhaps 20 that I really enjoy visiting. I won't list them all here, but I will mention a few that aren't my main focus today. You will never go wrong dropping in at Fielding, Palatine Hills, Ridge Road, Flat Rock, Vienni, Big Head, or Megalomaniac.

But today, let's visit just two. Both were included in the wine tour I led last fall and both treated our group like royalty. I'm talking about Sue-Ann Staff Estate Winery near Jordan, and Ridgepoint Wines near Vineland. They're actually only 10 minutes apart and close to several of the other wineries I mentioned earlier. So, there's your day-trip itinerary signed, sealed and delivered.

One of the many things I love about both of these wineries is the complete lack of pretention. Let's face it; when it comes to wine, there is no lack of wine snobs. And there are Niagara wineries which fit right into that category.

But at Sue-Ann Staff winery, the person in the shop or greeting you on the lawn may well be Sue-Ann herself if she is not busy among the vats since she is the winemaker of all the wines that carry her name. And her work has been highly recognized. Sue-Ann has won over 450 national and international wine awards, and she has been named Winemaker of the Year in Ontario and, internationally,

one of four Women in Wine.

And at Ridgepoint, you may have trouble identifying co-owner Mauro Scarsellone because he's the guy in the muddy, torn jeans driving the tractor.

They may be equally unpretentious, but Sue-Ann's and Mauro's roots in the wine business are quite different. The Staff family has owned the land that is home to the winery for 200 years. They have grown grapes there for 125 years. So, Sue-Ann has inherited her award-winning winemaking skills honestly. She's a fifth-generation grape grower.

Ridgepoint is not nearly that old. It was founded by Mauro and his sister, Anna Gottardo, in 1995. The winemaking history they brought to the endeavor had its roots in Italy – their parents came to Canada from that country. And their heritage is evident in their unique wines, produced with old-world wine techniques like Appassimento and Ripasso. They love working with unusual varieties like Nebbiolo and Corvina.

Ridgepoint also offers another great reason to visit the winery – their dining room, where the owners' Italian heritage meets the great market-gardening traditions of the Niagara Peninsula.

I enjoy almost all the wines at both of these vineyards. But most of all, I think I enjoy the atmosphere, which is the polar opposite of wine snobbery.

At Sue-Ann Staff, our group sat around tables on the lawn in front of the house that now holds the shop and enjoyed a tasting that featured equal parts wine and wit from our hostess.



Award-winning winemaker Sue-Ann Staff, who makes great wine on her family's historic estate. Photo courtesy of Sue-Ann Staff

At Ridgepoint, we tasted wine after wine and then were told if there was anything else we might like, just ask. Amazing!

Both wineries feature many of the varieties of wine you would expect in Niagara, but they also each have some special bottles. At Ridgepoint, I really enjoy their White Cab (with a white taxi on the label) – a white wine made unexpectedly from cabernet sauvignon with a distinctive peachy flavor.

Our wine-loving group fell in love with Sue-Ann Staff's collection of Fancy Farm Girl wines.

But frankly, all the wines are good at both these small, family-owned wineries. The tastes are terrific, the welcome is warm and, believe me, when you spend some time with Sue-Ann or Mauro, you will thank me.

A nice bottle of Nebbiolo would be appropriate.

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.



A happy group of wine lovers enjoy the ambiance and the flavours of a tasting at Sue-Ann Staff Winery. Photo by Paul Knowles



Ridgepoint Winery is the home of amazing, Italian-style wines and is another family-run business. Photo courtesy of Ridgepoint Winery

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New Dundee Women's Institute update

By Nancy Birss

Members of the New Dundee Women's Institute (WI) have been busy recently celebrating WI Day and the founder's birthday, making and serving soup at local Heritage Day and gearing up for an inter-continental journey from North America to South America.

Members made and served soup to visitors at the Wilmot Heritage Day event Feb. 17 at the New Dundee Community Centre. With the great turnout, we ran out of soup, but patrons enjoyed all the soup, especially the dill-pickle soup.

February's meeting at the New Dundee Community Centre heard some poems and history about

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, the organization's founder. Adelaide herself appeared (portrayed by Eleanor Berry) and was interviewed by a journalist portrayed by Nancy Birss.

Join us Tuesday evening March 19 at 7 p.m. at the New Dundee Community Centre to enjoy a presentation by member Emily Layng about her trip to Churchill, Man. last summer and a recent trip to Argentina. All welcome.

And save the date for Saturday April 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the Women Walk the World event and food-waste documentary at the New Dundee Community Centre. All are welcome to join us.



Eleanor Berry as Adelaide Hunter Hoodless. Contributed photo

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OPINION —

EXPERT ADVICE: *Just keep at it*



By Scott Dunstall

Well, we got down to Florida and it has been a battle of will just to keep myself from falling into a blackhole of gluttony.

First of all, Walmart should NOT be allowed to sell Little Debbie's mini donuts in a bag. I don't care if it's sugar coated or chocolate dipped. They should be banned. Just like cigarettes, there should be warnings on each bag. Warning: NUMBER OF MINI DONUTS CONSUMED AT 2 a.m. INCREASES RISK OF HUMILIATION AND SCALE STOMPING IN THE MORNING.

I was hoping to lose the remaining weight when I got down here. What a newb. Who was I kidding besides myself? No one, especially not Little Debbie. That means all the 14 belts I brought down here will not see the light of day unless I stop eating for the next five. That ain't going to happen. For gosh sakes, I have a Chilis, Olive Garden, Steak and Shake, Macaroni Grill, Chipotle and a friggin' Tasty Treat half a mile from my front door, not to mention WAWAs and RaceTracs every 200 yards. C'mon!!

When your diet gives you lemons, then you just have to make lemonade (with Splenda) and move on. I won't be tucking in those shirts and, to remedy that angst, I decided I was going to take this time away to post my daily flashes (outfits) on social media and finally get some content onto my Life & Style Facebook page.

I started out last week by laying those flashes out on the bed, stood on a chair and shot each staged outfit. Then my daughter came down a few days ago and saw what I was doing and told me I was all messed up in my approach. She told me that #ootd was trending on Instagram. Outfit Of the Day. She said all I had to do was not lay the outfit on the bed but instead I should wear it, have someone shoot the picture, point out the designers I'm wearing and hashtag it #ootd. Do that on Instagram and I would become

famous, she told me. I've done two and nothing happened. What the heck? I will keep at it.

That leads me to my thought for the week - one I believe is the secret to finding your style nirvana.

Just keep at it. In working with fashion to create your own style, you don't need any special gift. It's just a progressive layering over time. The only secret is just a sustained commitment. I started very slowly several years ago simply by going into a Bay store and trying things on. But I think before then I just began by casually noticing what other men were wearing that made them look sharp. And when I went to The Bay, I kept those pieces in my head as I looked through the racks and shelves. From there, it was pinpointing my size by designer. THIS was probably the thing that takes the most time, but like eating an elephant it's one piece at a time.

One of the first things I noticed about sharp-dressed men is their pants or jeans never bundled up at the bottom. So, I started with what has now become the foundation of most of my winter outfits, and those are jeans. I came to the conclusion my size is 34 or 36 waist, depending on the designer, and 32 inseam. For me the 32 inseam is critical because that will mean I virtually have no break at the bottom where the cuff meets the top of my shoes (called a vamp for all your hardliners). I like some spandex in the material as well so - you know - they span over my big ex. I have dark pairs for the winter and light pairs for the summer. All my jeans are either 34 heritage that I bought before Murrays closed or, believe it or not, RW & Co. That is where I have evolved with just one aspect of my flash and it really just started with observance then trial and error. If you follow that template for each piece, you will ultimately get to an overall look you will be proud of. Just keep at it.

"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.

Gazette Puzzles

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Pet of the Week



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 dining, family friendly layout, Barn,
 Pasture, A1 zoning, minutes to 401

MLS# 40524898 \$599,900
 10 Brown St. Stratford
 2 bedrooms plus nursery/home office, 3 baths, open concept main
 level layout, 1 1/2 car garage



For Sale



For Sale

MLS# 40542005 \$699,900
120 Jacob St. E. Tavistock
 3 +2 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 kitchens, fin. bsmt. w/ in-
 law potential, walk-out/up from bsmt., almost 1/2
 acre, indoor pool



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Why Join Us?

- Established and mid-sized construction company
- Comfortable family-style work environment
- Opportunity for remote work in emergency situations
- Fast-paced and growth-focused atmosphere

Responsibilities:

- Handle accounting/bookkeeping functions in collaboration with the accounting department
- Manage Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable (invoicing and collection), expenses, and receipts
- Ensure prompt payment by monitoring and following up on outstanding invoices
- Accurately and timely post and enter data (subcontractors & vendors)
- Prepare and maintain accounting documents and records
- Prepare bank deposits and general ledger/journal postings
- Reconcile accounts promptly
- Daily posting of key financial transactions
- Provide support to colleagues
- Address accounting or documentation problems and discrepancies
- Manage other administration tasks and reception duties
- Regularly update job-related knowledge

Requirements:

- Proven accounting experience in construction, considered a strong asset
- Demonstrated knowledge of GAAP accounting principles and procedures
- Strong computer skills in MS Office suite, Adobe Acrobat, Word, accounting software, and familiarity with JONAS (preferred)
- Hands-on/proven experience with Excel spreadsheets (intermediate/advanced)

We would like to thank all applicants for their interest; however, we will contact the most qualified applicants only. Send resume/qualifications to employment@nithvalley.com

- Accuracy, confidentiality, and keen attention to detail
 - Analytical thinking and skills
 - Ability to perform filing and record-keeping
 - Data entry and word processing skills
 - Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English
 - Well-organized and a fast learner
 - Ability to prioritize workload, meet (critical) deadlines, and work well under pressure
 - Ability to work independently or as a team member with minimal supervision
- Qualifications:**
- Post-secondary degree/diploma in accounting or related field preferred
 - 1-2 years of accounting or bookkeeping experience (in construction definite asset)
 - Knowledge of construction management software (Jonas) or equivalent
 - Strong organizational, analytical, interpersonal, and communication skills
 - Ability to perform accurate mathematical calculations
 - Problem-solving skills and ability to follow instructions
 - Effective interaction with people and ability to communicate ideas clearly
 - Flexibility to respond to changing priorities
 - Understanding of Provincial and Federal reporting
 - Adaptability to learn other financial systems as required
 - Enthusiastic with excellent organization and retention skills
 - Ability to excel at customer relations and clear communication with the team and customers
 - Excellent phone etiquette
 - Continuous learning mindset



Job Title: Health and Safety Coordinator

We're a medium sized construction company with a big impact. We are a general contractor involved in public tender, construction management, and design build. We focus primarily on the industrial, commercial, and institutional sectors of construction.

Job Description & Responsibilities:

- Develop action plans based off of project statistics and inspection information
- Conducting project safety inspections on a monthly basis
- Ensure safety compliance with fellow employees and any subcontractors
- Assisting with any incident investigations
- Conduct training and information sessions with all employees to ensure industry compliance
- Project administrative support in project start up (ie: safety control plans, NOPS, safety boards, subcontractor documentation, etc.) and close out (ie: development operation and maintenance manuals)
- Support and implement industry health and safety best practices
- Complete employee orientations, safety orientations, and quarterly company safety meetings
- Coordinate and schedule employee safety training as required
- Conduct and chair JHSC meetings, complete and distribute minutes, and track/ implement JHSC items
- Maintain the Health & Safety Manual, including any development and implementation of new policies based off of industry legislation
- Conduct, create, and track company safety records, project safety

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- records, and employee safety records
 - Maintain inventory records of company equipment and tools
 - Office administrative support including redirection of any phone calls, emails, personnel as required
- Requirements & Experience:**
- National Health & Safety Administrator (NHSA) or National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO) designation is an asset
 - Degree or Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety or related field
 - Thorough understanding of relevant legislation and how it applies to the construction industry
 - Experience submitting and working through a WSIB case
 - Ability to demonstrate superior communication in providing direction and the rationale for various safety policies and procedures
 - 1-5 years' experience in the field (preferred)
 - Valid Driver's license
- What We Offer:**
- Competitive industry wage based on experience
 - Access to a comprehensive benefits plan
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COMMUNITY —

Help the New Hamburg Legion find family members of First World War veterans

By Wilmot Tavistock Gazette staff

To help the local Legion find family members of local veterans so they can be honoured in the 11th edition of the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command's Military Service Recognition Book, the Gazette will regularly publish a list of names in future editions for which legion volunteers have been unable to find or contact family members. For this year's edition of the Military Service Recognition Book, the local legion has until May 15 to submit local veterans to the book's publisher.

This week's list of veterans served in the First World War:

Name	Birth	Born
Daub, Walter Joseph	Jan. 22-1895	- Kitchener, Ont.
Dewar, James Alexander	Jan. 3-1896	- Wellesley, Ont.
Dietrich, Robert Arthur	Oct. 11-1892	- Baden, Ont.
Doering, Adam Andrew	April 10-1897	- Philipsburg, Ont.
Erb, William Otto	Jan. 4-1893	- New Hamburg, Ont.
Fleischauer, Irvin Michael	Sept. 24-1894	- Wellesley, Ont.
Forler, Harry George	Dec. 18-1892	- Philipsburg, Ont.
Goebel, Norman John	May 4-1889	- New Hamburg, Ont.
Gourlay, Thomas Moore	Sept. 10-1891	- Manitowaning, Ont.
Halls, Robert James	April 5-1890	- Hepworth, Ont.
Hamilton, Cecil Alexander	Feb. 2-1894	- New Hamburg, Ont.
Hamilton, John Kelly	May 31-1897	- Shakespeare, Ont.
Hamilton, Gerald Musgrave	July 22-1888	- York (Toronto), Ont.
Hartung, Milton	Aug. 25-1895	- Gadshill, Ont.
Hartung, Edward George	Sept. 9-1898	- Gadshill, Ont.
Hebel, William Melvin	Nov. 7-1896	- Lisbon, Ont.
Hiller, Oliver Henry	May 11-1897	- New Hamburg, Ont.
Kropf, Lavina	Sept. 28-1885	- Baden, Ont.
Lipscombe, Thomas	June 17-1879	- London, England
Livingston, John Milton	March 3-1888	- Blythe, Ont.

If you are related to or know someone who is related to one of the above veterans or any local First and Second World War veterans and would like to have their name, story and photo included in the 11th Military Service Recognition Book, email Bob Berg at iceb-ev@hotmail.com.



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - MARCH 2024

SATURDAY, MAR. 16

Wilmot Optimist Annual St. Patrick's Day Sale
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
150 Charlotta St., Baden

Sauerkraut Sales
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Tavistock Men's Club building
78 Woodstock St. Tavistock

TUESDAY, MAR. 19

Wilmot Ecumenical Working Group on Indigenous/Settler Relationships' next film screening 7 p.m.
For a change of pace, we are showing 3 short films that highlight a variety of contributions to our national identity made by Indigenous individuals and communities. Free event. No need to register. Questions? Contact ecumenical-workinggroup@gmail.com
Zion United Church
215 Peel St., New Hamburg

New Dundee Women's Institute meeting
7-9 p.m.
New Dundee Community Centre
1028 Queen St. S. New Dundee

FRIDAY, MAR. 22

Pulled Pork Dinner and Games Night
6 p.m.
Grace United Church in Tavistock is sponsoring a pulled pork dinner and games night. It's a delicious meal of pulled pork on a bun and all the fixings, followed by games galore. (\$15)
Grace United Church - Church Hall
116 Woodstock St S, Tavistock

SATURDAY, MAR. 23

Optimist Club of Wilmot Annual Easter Egg Hunt
10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Sir Adam Beck Park
215 Snyder's Rd. E. Baden

Sauerkraut Sales
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Tavistock Men's Club building
78 Woodstock St. Tavistock

Swimming Easter Egg Hunt
3:30-4:30 p.m. and 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Wilmot Recreation Complex
1291 Nafziger Rd. Baden

MONDAY, MAR. 25

Township of Wilmot Council Meeting
7-11 p.m.
Council Chambers
60 Snyder's Rd. West Baden

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 27

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Linwood Community Centre
5279 Ament Line Linwood

THURSDAY, MAR. 28

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Wilmot Recreation Complex
1291 Nafziger Rd. Baden
Rib & Tail Stag
6 p.m. - Take out
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Shakespeare and District Optimist Hall
Thompson St. Shakespeare

FRIDAY, MAR. 29

Good Friday

SUNDAY, MAR. 31

Easter Sunday

MONDAY, APR. 8

Garden Wilmot (Wilmot Hort Society) Monthly Garden Talk
7 p.m.
Wilmot Rec Complex,
Meeting Room A (upstairs).
1291 Nafziger Rd. Baden

TUESDAY, APR. 9

Township of Wellesley council meeting
6:45 p.m.
Council chambers
4805 William Hastings Line,
Crosshill

CLASSIFIED ADS —

ATTENTION

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Weekly Quiz Answers

1. 14
2. The Missouri River
3. Nitrogen
4. René Descartes
5. Kelly Clarkson
6. Four
7. Inland Taipan
8. Leviathan (Vaughan, ON)
9. 180
10. The Dragon

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