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Love Your Neighbour Communities (LYNC) board chair Steve Wagler and co-chair Lisa Doherty stand in front of the former B-W Feed and Seed Co. mill in downtown New Hamburg, which the upstart charity has purchased so it can convert the building into a 31-unit mixed-housing development geared for people of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Photo by Galen Simmons

Love Your Neighbour Communities addressing local housing shortage

Innovative development coming to downtown New Hamburg

By Galen Simmons

A proposed mixed-housing development planned for a more-than-a century old mill in the heart of New Hamburg could set an example for other rural communities to follow when it comes to addressing local housing shortages.

Love Your Neighbour Communities

(LYNC) is a group of local community leaders and representatives from both the Interfaith Counselling Centre and the Wilmot Family Resource Centre that formed in early 2020 in response to the local housing crisis.

"We just started talking about our concerns about affordable housing in Wilmot

specifically and is there anything we could do to influence it or bring someone here to invest or work with us to try and solve (the problem)," LYNC board chair Steve Wagler said. "We spent that fall and spring working on opportunities, and we did ... a needs assessment. We thought we had an opportunity with a church in Baden to

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Wilmot landowners organize over potential land acquisition concerns

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

A private company is offering to buy land from farmers and landowners in a portion of Wilmot Township who say they do not know why the offers are being made and have concerns over what might happen if they say no.

The Waterloo Region Record newspaper recently broke a story claiming the Region of Waterloo wants to buy about 700 acres of land northeast of the intersection of Nafziger and Bleams roads in Wilmot Township. Based on the comments of an unnamed farmer, the article went on to say a representative of the management and consulting firm, Canacre, met with several farmers in person and told them the Region of Waterloo wants to buy their properties for a fair price, but if they refuse to sell, their farms would be expropriated.

One of the affected landowners in the area agreed to talk to the Gazette on the condition his identity remains anonymous because of the potential repercussions his comments could have. For the purpose of the story, he is being called John.

A source also tells the Gazette that councillors in Wilmot and the Region of Waterloo have signed non-disclosure agreements and, as a result, are not permitted to talk to the press or anyone else.

According to John, a group of residents and landowners in the area formed in response to this attempted land assembly by the region.

John, who says he is a spokesperson for the group, told the Gazette the response to a grassroots meeting on the subject earlier this week was overwhelming.

"It has been a devastating presentation to

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TIM LOUIS

Member of Parliament
Kitchener-Conestoga

 519-578-3777

 Tim.Louis@parl.gc.ca

 TimLouisMP.ca

 @TimLouisKitCon

COMMUNITY —

LYNC development to address housing shortage

Continued from page 1

acquire a property ... and that fell through at the last minute. ... We lost that opportunity and then the mill came up for sale literally within the week. We said, 'Hey, this is actually a great location right in the centre of town and walkable to everything. It's kind of ideal.' ... So, we put an offer in with a cover letter to the owners of the property, and they chose our offer."

"And that was a huge leap of faith for both those that put the offer in and the sellers who are also a local, community member, B-W Feed (and Seed co.)," board co-chair

Lisa Doherty said. "They now have a new mill. For them to accept an offer from an as-yet-to-be developed charity; they're really community champions for seeing the potential in this project."

Having since purchased the former Waterloo Regional Police station property next door to the former B-W Feed mill, plans are now in motion for LYNC to convert and build an addition onto the historic mill building - built in 1905 to replace the original wooden mill on the property - into a 31-unit, mixed-housing apartment building with one, two and three-bedroom units, numerous outdoor and community

spaces, and attainable and affordable housing for people of all income levels.

The idea, Wagler and Doherty explained, is to create much-needed housing in a way that celebrates New Hamburg's history going back to even before the town was founded, beautify and revitalize the town's downtown core, and provide a space where community members from all socio-economic backgrounds can live, learn and play together.

"We really want intentional intergenerational so we can bring families and seniors and young people together to learn from each other, and to become a community and support one another, and even mentorship in that regards," Doherty said.

"Rather than put people of one socio-economic class in one building, we want to provide an opportunity for (people of all backgrounds) to network, to find new opportunities, (and) maybe (provide) after-school care because there's going to be some seniors living here for single moms or working parents," Wagler added. "There's going to be some practical (benefits to having residents of all ages and backgrounds) without building formal programming to support them. It's all

right in this community."

Currently, the LYNC board is waiting for site-plan approval from the Region of Waterloo for what its calling the Mill Block Community. Once it gets that approval, Wagler said they will be able to get building permits, get shovels in the ground and begin applying for government and other funding.

In the meantime, LYNC will soon be launching a fundraising campaign to raise \$540,000 from the community to pay off the mortgage on the mill building.

"We've already paid half the mortgage down through donations and community impact, and we're looking (to pay the rest of it off) so we don't have that interest payment ... and we can apply for funding as fully owning the building," Doherty said.

"By eliminating our mortgage, it just tells the people we're going to get funding from that the community absolutely wants this," Wagler added. "It sends a big message."

LYNC is also looking for volunteers to assist with fundraising efforts. For more information on the project, to donate to the fundraising campaign, or to volunteer, visit lyncommunities.com.



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STRATEGIC PLAN OPEN HOUSE:


MONOPOLY NIGHT

 Tuesday March 26, 2024	Innerkip Community Center 695566 17th Line, Innerkip, ON NOJ 1M0
 Wednesday March 27, 2024	Tavistock Memorial Hall 3 Adam St, Tavistock, ON NOB 2R0

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Annual Meeting
will be held on
Saturday, April 20, 2024 at 1:30 pm
In the hall of Grace United Church, 116 Woodstock St South, Tavistock

Presentation: Growing Up in Tavistock in the 1960's

In 1964, the senior students of the Tavistock Public School produced a booklet entitled the "History of Tavistock" as a school project. They looked at the history of the village, its businesses and organizations, and some remarkable personalities. This booklet may have formed the basis for the later "Fact and Fantasy". On the 60th anniversary of the publication of the booklet, the authors and the audience will be invited to reminisce about Tavistock in the 1960's.



All are welcome. Donations gratefully accepted.

COMMUNITY —

Concerns over potential land acquisition



Continued from page 1

us. It feels like we are running a marathon. They are close to the finish, and we are just at the start," he said.

John said the meeting involved a presentation by representatives from Canacre telling owners they want to acquire their land. He said it isn't about the price being offered, it's about their rights as landowners.

"It takes all of your rights away and it's mind-boggling. We are still unsure if we have any rights and that is the biggest problem at this moment. The only thing I can say is, as a farm community, it is a devastating and a mental challenge because we are confronted with something that has come up that has no answers to our questions."

John said no one has explained why Canacre is looking to purchase their land.

"We have to keep doing the work we do normally, and this comes on top of that. Our hours of work have not been doubled, they have been tripled," he added.

John said his group has attempted to get answers from Wilmot and the Region of Waterloo with no success. He added no lawyers in the immediate area would take on their case because they had a conflict of interest, so the landowners group had to hire a firm from outside Wilmot.

Wilmot Township's next regular meeting is March 25 and John said the group is trying to get on the agenda. He said even if they aren't successful in delegating, members will still be in attendance.

"We have sent a letter to the township and I don't know if there would be any possibility to speak. I hope we get a chance to let them know what is happening."

At Wilmot Township's March 4 meeting, the following appeared on the agenda.

"That a closed meeting of council be held on March 4, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at the Wilmot Administrative Complex, in accordance with Section 239 (2) (h) of the Municipal Act, 2001, to consider the following: Confidential Information Supplied in Confidence from the Province of Ontario - Section 239 (2)(h) - Information explicitly supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board by Canada, a province or territory or a Crown agency of any item."

While not confirmed, it would appear this is the issue at hand.

Canacre's website said it "navigates complex projects through the regulatory process with an effective transition to construction, balancing stakeholder needs with best-management practices (to) ensure the right outcomes for our partners. Canacre brings reliability to the success of complex projects." The company has offices across North America including one in Mississauga. The Gazette reached out to the company but had not heard back by press time.

The Gazette reached out to Wilmot Township, the Region of Waterloo, and Conservative MPP Mike Harris for comment. All three released the exact same statement and refused requests for interviews.

"The Region of Waterloo and Wilmot Township are collaborating to prepare land for development, aiming to establish shovel-ready sites to attract economic investments and generate employment opportunities. The process of assembling land is ongoing to create these shovel-ready sites, facilitating significant economic investments and bolstering the vitality of Waterloo Region as it progresses towards accommodating one million residents by 2050."

John said the group has also reached out to municipal and provincial levels of government with no response.

The Gazette reached out to Premier Doug Ford last week as well as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and Canacre for their thoughts on the story, but has not received responses.

An online petition has been started on change.org by Cassidy Wagler. It states "If Waterloo Region does this to several local farmers, who knows, you or me could be next. It's time our community and surrounding towns (and) cities join us in taking a stand against the plans of the region and Wilmot Township. If we truly live in a free country, there would be no such actions. We can't let them take land from hardworking citizens that doesn't belong to them. Sign the petition and say no to the appropriation of farmland scheduled for Wilmot Township."

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COMMUNITY —

EZT residents will see taxes rise over 6 per cent in 2024

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

East Zorra-Tavistock council recently passed this year's budget and property owners will notice a 6.51 per-cent increase on their tax bills.

What that means in dollars and cents is, for a house with \$400,000 worth of assessment, the tax rate increase results in an additional \$134.79 on the year or approximately \$11.23 per month.

Oxford County's budget resulted in a tax increase of nearly 17 per cent when passed in December of last year. At that time, EZT Mayor Phil Schaefer said it wasn't easy for him to raise his hand in favour of it. This time around, he explained the township is providing good government for its ratepayers.

"I feel it is a responsible budget in that it provides funding to where it is needed most, and funds in reserves to make sure we have the resources in the future to replace assets as required. I can understand affordability is a concern, but so is adequately funding the prudent operation of the municipality. Not that it is a competition, but our increase is significantly lower than some others in the area, and we still maintain our position of having the second-lowest tax rate in the County of Oxford."

He added debating an increase to be less than 6.5 per cent would mean necessary funds could not be set aside

for the arena maintenance, and/or the EZT fire department would not be able to replace their SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) equipment.

The department with the largest increase is parks and recreation, seeing a hike of just over three per cent. The total levy increase is \$220,792, primarily comprised of a new reserve being created for parks and recreation equipment including the Zamboni and grass-cutting equipment with a contribution of \$110,000, and an increase to the transfer to the arena building reserve by \$25,000.

"The remaining \$85,792 is the result of the final year of reallocating expenses from public works to parks and recreation, including staff expenses and vehicles-and-equipment reallocations to reflect the actual usage by department," explained EZT CAO Karen DePrest.

The fire and protective services budget has the next largest hike of 2.13 per cent due to what the township said is necessary equipment purchases.

"The increase of \$154,124 is solely related to the full capital replacement of all the SCBAs across all three (Tavistock, Hickson and Innerkip) stations. The total cost of the project is \$459,000 and there is only \$315,000 available in the equipment reserve for funding, so the residual is being recovered through the tax rate."

One term often discussed around council tables is funding directed to reserves, which could otherwise be described

as money set aside for future expenses. The money can be utilized in part to reduce tax burdens on ratepayers.

DePrest said EZT's reserves are just where they need to be.

"We did offer adjustments to reserve drawdowns and/or contributions but, as the mayor mentioned, it is prudent to ensure that reserve levels are adequate to allow for a smoothing of the tax rate and address key, one-time capital expenses rather than having them be borne by the tax rate in any given year."

The Gazette asked DePrest what kind of shape the township's reserves are in currently.

"My council report for this week shows our financial indicator review provided by the province and you will see a metric that reflects our reserve levels in comparison to municipalities across the province. I would draw your attention to the indicator labeled total reserves and discretionary reserve funds as a percentage of municipal expenses. The township is rated low-risk regarding reserve balances at 157 per cent of its expenses versus the provincial average of 82.6 per cent. The township does a great job of maintaining reserve balances that would cover expenses, if needed."

She echoed Schaefer's comment that EZT continues to maintain the second-lowest municipal tax rate in Oxford County "while being able to maintain exceptional levels and quality of service for all our ratepayers."



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Come & Join the family

TAP's program director stepping down

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Linda Holst has announced her retirement from the Tavistock Assistance Program (TAP).

The well-known East Zorra-Tavistock woman first began her role as the charity's program director in July 2022 training under then-director Deb Wagler. The director works on TAP's front line with those in the community who need financial and other support.

Holst released an open letter informing the community of her decision.

"After months of discernment and mixed emotions, I announce my retirement as program director of TAP as of April 2, 2024," she wrote.

"I thank this community and the surrounding area from the bottom of my heart for being the people that you are and for caring for our community members. I am also grateful for wonderful volunteers and a hardworking board of directors who work diligently to provide guidance and support. Your assistance is so appreciated and recognized - thank you.

When I reflect upon what TAP means to me and this community, I am not sure where to begin. This beautiful program is truly a Godsend to many neighbours in need. Being the program director for TAP has allowed me to meet some pretty amazing people and develop some pretty amazing relationships.

I thank God that he gave a group of local men the vision to initiate this program and I thank God for all who support it, from individuals, organizations, businesses, churches, restaurants, hockey teams, fire departments, insurance companies, memorials, bursaries, donors and sponsors. Thank you for loving on your community! We are so blessed to have your support!

It is my pleasure to report that Angie Brenner will be the new program director as of April 3. Angie has been a member of the TAP board for several years and shares a wealth of knowledge of the TAP program and this position. I trust that this community will support and care for Angie as you have done for me.

Respectfully and lovingly submitted by Linda Holst."

Holst said she doesn't have one moment that stands out



Linda Holst is stepping down from her role with the Tavistock Assistance Program. Photo courtesy of Tavistock Little Preschool

during her tenure but said memories of both clients and those helping the group will stick with her.

"My favourite memories during my time with TAP would be the people that I met and the relationships that were formed, whether that be with donors, colleagues, or our neighbours in need. That was the best part for me," she said.

She added TAP has seen an increase in need in the past couple of years, something they have been able to successfully manage.

"Thanks to generous community support and many answered prayers, we are able to meet the needs."

TAP has named a new director to succeed Holst. Angie Brenner, a longtime board member of the organization, will soon take over the helm.



Restoring small-town journalism, one community at a time!

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

Publisher
Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Editor
Galen Simmons • galen@granthaven.com

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries
Erin Parsons • thewtgazette@gmail.com

Business Development
Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Billing Administrator
Cindy Boakes • boakescindy1576@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant
Wendy Lamond • wendylamond74@gmail.com

Contributors
Lee Griffi, Nancy Silcox, Gary West, Paul Knowles, Mercedes Kay Gold

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2
info@stmarysindpendent.com | 519.284.0041 | granthaven.com



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COMMUNITY —

Show Us Your Wilmot



Show Us Your Wilmot Facebook group member Steph Lemont recently shot this rather reflective photo on Tye Road, just outside Haysville, after a morning rainfall. Photo courtesy of Show Us Your Wilmot

Partnership with Stratford Festival results in new Fabled exhibit at Castle Kilbride

By Galen Simmons

A partnership between the Stratford Festival Archives and Castle Kilbride has resulted in an exhibit exploring the childhood books of Laura Louise Livingston at the National Historic Site and museum in Baden.

Dubbed Fabled, the exhibit pairs classic books like Alice Through the Looking Glass, Peter Pan, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and Romeo and Juliet that were read by Livingston as a child with costumes from the festival archives' collection from past Stratford Festival productions.

"Laura Louise was actually born inside Castle Kilbride on May 24, 1918, and she lived pretty much her whole life here," said Castle Kilbride curator Sherri Gropp. "There were a few years where she went off to school and university, and when she was first married, she also lived a little bit in Kitchener. Then she moved back home in the 1940s with her children and spouse, and she stayed here until 1988 when they sold off the castle and all of the contents inside. Unfortunately, she passed away a few months later in 1988.

"When we opened as a museum five years later, we started gathering those materials and we have amassed a beautiful collection of her childhood books. We always thought it would be really great to do an exhibit on them."

As Livingston was an ardent supporter of the Stratford Festival, having seen productions in the festival's inaugural season and attended each season after until she died, partnering with the Stratford Festival Archives to display Livingston's books throughout the 1877 Victorian home alongside costumes from past productions was a collaboration that made total sense.

"The Stratford Festival Archives has an impressive collection and we are grateful to showcase their outstanding costumes at the castle," Gropp said. "It has been like a fairytale to co-curate with Stephanie Vaillant and the archival team. We feel like we are continuing a partnership



Costumes and props like these from the Stratford Festival's 2016 production of The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe, as well as numerous other past festival productions, are on display now alongside the childhood books of Laura Louise Livingston at Castle Kilbride in Baden. Photo by Donna Kell

that started back in 1953 when Laura Louise attended the inaugural year of the Stratford Festival."


According to Vaillant, the festival's interim archives manager, the costumes on display span from 1984 to 2022 and are accompanied by costume sketches, photographs, props and theatrical designs to help visitors fully immerse themselves in the stories. Highlights include the dress worn by Sarah Polley as Alice (Alice Through the Looking Glass, 1994), the White Witch's dress worn by Yanna McIntosh (The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe, 2016) and Peter Pan's costume worn by Michael Therriault (Peter Pan, 2010).

In addition to securing the costumes from the Stratford Festival Archives, Vaillant and Gropp also got permission from each of the costume designers to have them on display at the castle.

"While many of these stories are reflective of the time periods in which they were written, theatre allows for a much broader and more creative exploration of content," Vaillant said. "These new interpretations can create bridges between the stories of the past and the world of the present – a concept well represented by housing the display at historic Castle Kilbride. It is our hope that visitors will be as delighted by the creativity of the Stratford Festival's artists as we are with the castle, which is a work of art in and of itself.

"From armour and ball gowns to pirates and fairies, there's something tucked away in every room of the castle just waiting to be discovered."

Fabled runs now until Dec. 29 at Castle Kilbride. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.eventbrite.ca/e/march-break-fabled-family-tours-at-castle-kilbride-tickets-837859990787.

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The Tavistock Assistance Program is a Canadian Registered Charity

COMMUNITY —

Fryfogel Tavern and Arboretum hosts annual meeting

By Gary West

The annual meeting of the Stratford-Perth Heritage Foundation was held last week in Shakespeare to review the activities of the historic Fryfogel Tavern and Arboretum, two kilometres east of Shakespeare.

Board chair Jim McKenzie said the year was a success financially due to the ongoing support of resident donors and organizations in the area.

It was reported that painting of the exterior of the tavern had been completed last year, and steps into the building have now been refurbished.

Committee member Jim Hazelwood hopes the first floor will have work completed which includes replacing wood trim and painting of the hallway entrance.

Discussions took place surrounding recruitment of new board members and recruitment of active volunteers for gardens and grounds maintenance.

The board is hoping to hire two summer students under the federal government's summer works program again this year, and have doors open again for tourists who come to visit the arboretum and tour the tavern.

Board vice-chair Denise Keelan said there will again be a weeklong summer camp from July 8- 12, and 11 youth have already been registered.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the heritage foundation and plans are underway for an end-of-season open house at the end of August.



Pictured is the recently elected Stratford-Perth Heritage Foundation board of directors. In the back row from left are Richard Smelski, chair Jim McKenzie, Barry Nowack and Jim Hazelwood. In the front row from left are Emily Coyne, Rachel Bedic and Denise Keelan. Photo by Gary West

Anyone interested in volunteering with or donating to the foundation can email fryfogeltavern@gmail.com.



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Shop Local: Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette dates back to 1895

By Stewart Grant

The relationship between a newspaper and its community requires a two-way street, as each must “shop local” for mutual benefit.

It was through my purchase of the Tavistock Gazette in 2020 I learned of the dire situation of the nearby New Hamburg Independent and how it had lost that two-way relationship with New Hamburg and Wilmot Township in general. That’s why, with the help of two New Hamburg residents, Lisa Hagen and Nigel Gordijk, we were able to launch the Wilmot Post in October 2020.

Instrumental in the growth of the Wilmot Post was Wellesley-based salesperson Sharon Leis, whose warm personality and expert sales advice helped populate our newspaper with ads from local businesses and organizations, many of whom continue to advertise to this day within the pages of combined Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette (the Post and the Gazette merged in late 2021).

As the legendary newspaper publisher Bill Gladding moved into retirement from the Gazette in 2021, we were pleased to have Tavistock resident Lee Griffi step up to cover happenings in East Zorra-Tavistock. Lee is a passionate citizen and an accomplished journalist who digs into local issues that matter to the community.

Shakespeare’s Gary West has been such a blessing for our newspaper. My parents, June and Murray, had known Gary through their mutual involvement in the farming industry and suggested that I reach out to Gary a few years ago about possibly writing an article. Well, that one article turned into a retirement passion for Gary, and his features on local people that appear in our newspaper each week are an absolute treasure.



Stewart Grant, present owner of the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette, holds one of the oldest-preserved copies of the Tavistock Gazette from Thursday, June 3, 1897. Photo by Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

Galen Simmons, based in nearby Stratford, has written some excellent pieces in his first three months as regional editor of the Gazette. This busy time has included overseeing production of our biggest issues of the years: February’s Heritage Edition and March’s Farm Edition. I know that Galen looks forward to meeting more residents of Wilmot Township and Tavistock in the weeks to come.

As I discuss this “Shop Local” concept in this article, I’d certainly like us to invest deeper within our community by hiring additional local freelance writers. Mercedes Kay Gold is a great example of a local person who has made our newspaper better in the past year through her features on area businesses and personalities. We have a number of talented writers who might only write one or two articles each year, but their contributions are valued. Everyone knows

different people and has different stories to tell.

This is the philosophy we’ve tried to follow throughout our organization. People still want local news, and if you can provide that to people, then the newspaper becomes an attractive place for businesses to advertise, which in turn makes the operation viable, just as the Gazette has been since 1895.

In short, it’s all about having great content and about “shopping local” to get it. Therefore, if you ever have story leads for us to consider, or if you yourself would like to submit an article or two to us, we’d certainly love to hear from you. Our editor, Galen Simmons, can be reached at galen@granthaven.com or feel free to call Wendy or Cindy at 519-655-2341 or leave a submission in our drop-box in Tavistock within D&D Homestyle Café.

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COMMUNITY —

OBITUARY

Ernst Frederick (Ernie) Ritz

1925 - 2024



Passed away at Nithview Home, New Hamburg on March 13, 2024, just a few weeks shy of his 99th birthday. He was well-known for his remarkable memory of decades of New Hamburg and area history, his dedication to local public service, his love of learning, and his warm and gregarious personality.

He was born at New Hamburg April 5, 1925, son of the late Otto Ritz and Elena Betzner. He was married for over 65 years to his beloved wife and best friend, the former Betty Murray, who predeceased him in 2012.

He served in the RCAF from 1943-45, training first as a pilot and then as navigator, with the war ending just as he completed his training. The Ritz family had been in the printing business since 1855, and after the war, he learned the printing trade in Toronto and Kitchener before returning to New Hamburg to join the family business in 1947, and became editor and publisher of the New Hamburg Independent. Following the sale of the newspaper in 1967, he continued with Ritz Printing with his sons until his retirement in 1990.

He was devoted to his community, and was active in local public service for many decades. He was first elected to local municipal council in 1949 at the age of 24, beginning a long connection and serving on public boards and commissions, including several hydro commissions, the Grand River Conservation Authority, and in the promotion and building of the New Hamburg Arena and Community Centre. He was a member of the New Hamburg Board of Trade for over 70 years. He was the last Mayor of New Hamburg and the first Mayor of Wilmot Township when Regional Government was begun in 1973, chairing several major committees during the formation of the new form of government. In 1979 he was appointed by the Province to serve on the Waterloo Regional Police Service Board for four terms and was Chair of that body in 1986. He was a founding and charter member of the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, provided leadership in the planning and construction of the present Legion Branch Building, and was honoured with a Life Membership in 2008; he was the last surviving member of the original founding group of 34 local Legion members.

He has long been recognized as an expert in local history, and he played leadership roles in the Waterloo Historical Society and in the establishment of a local Heritage Conservation District. As a member of the Ontario Genealogy Society, he was frequently sought as a resource person by many who sought local facts pertaining to their family histories. Ironically, his interest in history began after failing a high school history test, when his principal told him that if he found history boring that he should "try writing it as he would like to read it, make it come alive" – this ultimately culminated in his publication of a volume of local history, "New Hamburg As It Really Was", in 2003. He has been recognized for his contributions by a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ontario Heritage Society, a Waterloo Regional Heritage Award, was inducted into the Waterloo County Hall of Fame in 1997, and honoured with a Queen's Jubilee Medal in 2012.

Ernie was an avid reader and had thirst for knowledge throughout his life. He was articulate, and well-informed across a wide range of topics, and people were often surprised to learn that he had left formal schooling at the age of 16. He particularly was passionate about astronomy and was most knowledgeable about matters pertaining to the skies and universe, and loved meteorology. He was an avid computer and internet user in his later years, and continued to write a weekly local newspaper column until he was 97 – indeed, he may have been Canada's oldest weekly columnist.

He is lovingly remembered by his children Bill and John, along with their wives Kathryn and Betty. He was the proud grandfather of Stacey (Scott), Marcia (Chris, predeceased), Joe (Jen), and Jake (Kate), Betty's sons Brock (Sharon) and Travis (Laura), and great-grandfather to Liam, Braylon, and Emily. He is fondly remembered by sisters-in-law Betty Murray and Gywin Murray, cousin Shirley Unrau, many beloved nieces and nephews in the Ritz-Murray clans, along with Gladys Kropf, Dianne Ritz, Marie Voisin, many cherished friends and collaborators, and the caring staff at Nithview.

According to his wishes, cremation has taken place. Visitation took place at the Jutzi Funeral Home on Saturday, March 16 from 1 to 4pm. A memorial service will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church, New Hamburg on what would have been his 99th birthday, Friday, April 5 at 1pm followed by a reception at the New Hamburg Legion. In his memory, donations may be made to the Trinity Endowment Fund, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, or Wilmot Family Resource Centre.

Personal condolences and donation information available at www.markjutzifuneralhomes.ca

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Monday March 25 at 7pm: Monday of Holy Week

Tuesday March 26 at 7pm: Tuesday of Holy Week

Wednesday March 27 at 7pm: Wednesday of Holy Week

Thursday March 28 at 7pm: Maundy Thursday Service of Holy Communion

Friday March 29 at 10am: Good Friday at Zion United Church

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

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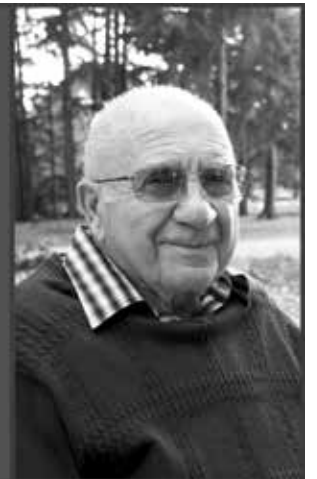
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COMMUNITY —

The Wilmot-Tavistock
Gazette Weekly Quiz

1. Dinosaurs lived in what time period?
2. What is the largest species of deer?
3. What town do the Flintstones live in?
4. What has a gravitational pull so strong even light cannot escape it?
5. How many sides does the home plate have in baseball?
6. What do you call a group of lions?
7. Who released the 1987 song "Never Gonna Give You Up"?
8. What is the most common letter in Scrabble?
9. Who won the Oscar for best actress in 2024?
10. Which country is nicknamed the land of a thousand lakes?

Answers found on page 22

BIRTHDAYS AND
ANNIVERSARIES

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

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

March 23: Happy birthday to Caleb Faulhafer (13), Ethan Faulhafer (13), Riley Oesch (21) and Jenine Stock.

March 24: Happy birthday to Josh Kimpel and Diane Berger

March 25: Happy birthday to Caleb Mohr (14), Ronan Lamarche (19) and Caleb Whetstone (21).

March 26: Happy birthday to Reese Weicker (14) and Bob Gladding Jr.

March 27: Happy birthday to Broden Cressman (10).

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The Old Gazettes

By Jake Grant

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

March 19-26, 2014, Edition (10 years ago)

Although Izac Blum is not admittedly a Toronto Maple Leafs fan, his weekend with the NHL players and Alumni was a dream come true. The 11-year-old Tavistock lad won a dream weekend in Toronto with NHL alumni when he sold the winning ticket for the NHLA Hockey Dream Draw.

Members of the Tavistock Girl Guides and Pathfinders had a chance to learn curling on the dual sheets at the Tavistock Curling Club Monday 3rd with the help of some dedicated volunteers.

Upper Thames Conservation Authority workers planted some cattails in Lake Victoria Stratford as a part of their erosion control program this past week.

March 17-24, 2004, Edition (20 years ago)

The Ontario Track and Field Association's Indoor Provincial Championships were held at York University in Toronto on February 21st and 22nd. Twelve-year-old Branden Wilhelm, who competes for the Woodstock Legion Athletic Club came up a big winner in the 13 & under category. Braden earned gold medals in Triple Jump, Long Jump, and High Jump.

On March 5, 2004, at 7:18 a.m. the Oxford Community Police attended a residence on the 13th Line in East Zorra Tavistock in regards to an ATV from the residence. Sometime on the night of the 4th suspects made off with a 2004 Honda Rincon 4-Wheeler ATV.

Tavistock skaters came away with a circle of medals from the Western Ontario Section Winter Invitational Competition held in Sarnia on the weekend, the last competition of the season. Emma Bender earned a first-place medal in Pre-Preliminary Elements and a first in Pre-Preliminary B Free skate. Other skaters include Alex Drinkwalter, Stephanie Lupton, Michelle Mattell, Katie Yantzi, and Andrea Green who all had respective medals in their categories.

March 21-28, 1984, Edition (40 years ago)

Christine Stein, 10, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Stein is presently in the Sick Children's Hospital, Toronto after being hit by a car near the foot of Bay Street in Toronto. She sustained a broken arm, concussion and neck injuries. Christine is reported to be progressing well.

Winning for the third consecutive year the Embro Men's team dominated the Tavistock and Embro District Men's Hockey League final series with Fields taking the championship in four straight games.

A large tree was cut down on Monday afternoon at the corner of William and Woodstock Street. Another one is marked for the cutting in the parking lot at Grace United Church.

It would seem that the balance of Tavistock's youth already know what a synthesizer does and how it works. Sixteen young people and three adults were present for Geoff Johnson's Electronic Music Machine performance in the basement of the Library Hall in Tavistock on Thursday.

March 18-25, 1964, Edition (60 years ago)

Sitting atop of the goal posts at the Toronto hockey rink, Bobby Hull of the NHL Chicago Black Hawks, chuckles while his surprised friend, Scott Young is unexpectedly mobbed for his autograph by young fans. Hull is subject of a Camera Canada documentary called The World of Bobby Hull to be seen Sunday, March 22, on the CBC-TV network.

Last Monday morning The Gazette had a minor break-down of a part of the linotype machine, and through the splendid co-operation of the Stratford Beacon-Herald, a replacement was made available until such time as the new part could be received from the supply house in Toronto.

The East Zorra Township School Area Board has purchased a new bus for the Hickson area, confirmation of the purchase being received at the March meeting.

Maple Syrup on the city markets at \$8.75 to \$9 a gallon! The sap hasn't been running too fast in recent days.

William Glanfield was the winner of a carton of cigarettes Friday night in the annual alley bowling festival, sponsored by a cigarette company, and held at Les and Hap's lanes.

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COMMUNITY —

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: *Meeting a local legend*



By Galen Simmons

Sometimes a person can come into your life for just the briefest of moments and leave an impression that will remain for the rest of your days.

That's how I feel after meeting Ernie Ritz.

He was the last mayor of New Hamburg and the first mayor of Wilmot Township. He was a Royal Canadian Air Force veteran who served in the Second World War and a charter member of the New Hamburg Royal Canadian Legion. He was a passionate preserver of local history, and he was recognized for his contributions with a Lifetime Achieve-

ment Award from the Ontario Heritage Society, a Waterloo Regional Heritage Award, an induction into the Waterloo County Hall of Fame and a Queen's Jubilee Medal.

I didn't know any of that when I met Ernie for the first and last time at Nithview Home in New Hamburg earlier this year. All I knew was he had, at one time, owned and operated the New Hamburg Independent newspaper, and I wanted to talk with him about running the paper for a feature in the Gazette's 2024 Heritage Edition.

I didn't know what to expect when I arrived at Nithview to chat with the 98-year-old. I've interviewed people around Ernie's age before and some of them have, understandably, lacked the coherence, cognizance or memory necessary for the kind of story I was hoping to write.

I was in luck, though, as Ernie had none of those issues. He was quick, his memory was sharp and boy did he have plenty to talk about.

Still a reporter at heart, Ernie

had our appointment on his books for more than a week before we met, and he was ready and waiting with a smile on his face when I walked through the nursing home's doors. Ernie also had the wherewithal to book a multi-use room so we'd have the space and privacy to talk for as long as we wanted.

For more than an hour I had the absolute pleasure of listening as Ernie recounted his career, first as a printer and then as a newsman, with only a few brief interruptions as I asked clarifying questions. Ernie told me very early on in our conversation I'd need to keep my intrusions to a minimum so he could keep his train of thought – a request I was happy to abide.

I wish I could include the full transcription of our conversation in this column. Everything he told me would be worth reading and preserving on the pages of this newspaper.

What I can share, however, is the impact Ernie's stories from the news business had on me only one month into my new job as

editor of the Gazette. As a journalist with a decade of experience – which admittedly seems to pale by comparison with Ernie's time in news – I found I could relate with every story about reporting in a small community he told.

He reignited my passion for telling important, local stories that help build the community up while holding those in power accountable. As a journalist working in his home community, Ernie also shared valuable lessons about balancing personal interests with the responsibility of providing fair, balanced and unbiased reporting even – or should I say especially – when stories involved friends, neighbours and family.

Though I have always been taught to avoid becoming a part of any story I write, after speaking with Ernie, I'm more convinced than ever there is way to be an active, contributing member of your community while fulfilling your duties as a journalist in that same community.

Community connections aren't

a weakness; they're a strength, providing the context reporters need to fully understand the local issues we write about.

After Ernie and I parted ways that day, we corresponded a few more times by email. Ernie and I had plans to work on an article about the upcoming total solar eclipse together and he submitted a letter to the editor thanking a local elementary student for making a Valentine's Day card for him as part of a Valentines for Veterans project.

It seems fitting, after a long and storied career in news, that letter of gratitude was the last piece Ernie had published in his local paper.

Ernie died on March 13 just shy of his 99th birthday on April 5. For some reason, his death shocked me as I think it shocked many in the community. Having met Ernie just once, his quick wit, attention to detail and crystal-clear memory gave me the impression he'd be around forever.

I wish I had the chance to know you better, Ernie. Rest in peace.

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COMMUNITY —

Wellesley council awards \$2.6-million contract for Phase 2 of Queen's Bush Road reconstruction

By Galen Simmons

The Township of Wellesley has awarded a nearly \$2.6-million contract for the second phase of the township's ongoing Queen's Bush Road reconstruction to Musselman Excavating Ltd.

At the March 12 council meeting, councillors voted to approve the staff recommendation to select the low bidder for the reconstruction of Queen's Bush Road from Catherine Street to Greenwood Hill Road, as well as work that was originally scheduled for a third phase of the project in 2025 that has now been bumped up to this year.

"We completed Phase 1 of the Queen's Bush Road reconstruction last summer," said township public works director Chris Cook. "By all accounts it was a great success coming in on schedule and on budget. The recommendation before you is to award the contract for Phase 2 and Phase 3. ... Phase 3 was originally supposed to happen in 2025. We added those activities as a provisional item to this tender because it would be nice to wrap everything up by the end of this summer, if we could,

and not have to worry about topcoat asphalt and landscaping and everything else next year.

"... As it turned out, the tender bid came in slightly lower than our estimates and the number in front of you includes all those Phase 3 items."

Completed by Kieswetter Excavating Inc., last year's first phase included the installation of a storm-drain outlet to Firella Creek along the Molesworth Street right-of-way, the full reconstruction of Molesworth Street from Maple Leaf Street to Queen's Bush Road, and the full reconstruction of Queen's Bush Road from Molesworth Street to Catherine Street. The reconstruction included the replacement of all storm-water infrastructure, curbs and sidewalks, and the base-course asphalt.

This year's second phase will include the installation of new storm-water infrastructure as well as the installation of curbs and new sidewalks, and new base-course asphalt on Queen's Bush Road from Catherine Street to Greenwood Hill Road. The third-phase work to be completed

this year will include laying topcoat asphalt over the full reconstructed roadway, as well as a 50-millimetre mill of the asphalt on Queen's Bush Road between Molesworth Street and Nafziger Road, and new topcoat asphalt in that area.

"We will be notifying the (affected) residents," Cook said. "... We're looking to start, probably, the third week of May give or take; starting to tear up the asphalt and remove trees similar to last year. We're hoping to get the notification out ... at least a month in advance just so people have time to make plans if they need to make parking arrangements for campers. ... We're going to try to give them as much notice as possible, but it will come by way of a handout. We're not going to have another public meeting about it because most of the Phase 2 affected residents were at the Phase 1 meeting."

Cook said the residents who live along the portion of road being reconstructed this year will continue to have access to and from their driveways for the duration of the project – which is expected to wrap up prior to the beginning of school in September – and, if driveway access will

be restricted at any time, they will be given at least 24 hours notice by the contractor.

Cook said school buses, staff and parents and caregivers will continue to have access to Wellesley Public School at the end of this school year after reconstruction work begins.

The Queen's Bush Road reconstruction project has been on the township's capital forecast for many years and is necessary partly because of the deteriorating and poor condition of the road surface, but also because the storm-water infrastructure has deteriorated and filled in significantly with sediment and was therefore not able to accommodate the flow necessary to provide adequate drainage.

Last year's first phase of the project was fully funded through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) and the Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF). The work this year will be partially funded to the tune of nearly \$2 million through the OCIF and CCBF combined, leaving nearly \$337,000 to come from the township's infrastructure-reserve fund after the HST rebate.

Wellesley council establishes community safety zone along Maplewood Road

By Galen Simmons

Resident concerns around speeding on Maplewood Road led Wellesley council to establish a community safety zone (CSZ) along a portion of the narrow residential street, from 415 metres south of Hessen Strasse to 650 metres north of Weimar Line, at a recent council meeting.

At the March 12 Wellesley council meeting, Caressa Madison – a Paradise Lake resident who has lived on Maplewood Road with her husband for 30 years – detailed the ongoing pedestrian- and cyclist-safety concerns for residents along that road and in the immediate area.

"Since the south end of Maplewood Road was paved a number of years ago, it has become quite the thoroughfare," Madison said. "And because we have no sidewalks, bike lanes or even shoulders for most of the road. It can be quite dangerous when a car is speeding past while out walking, biking or playing. Many times, we have had to do a ditch dive to avoid a speeding car or a vehicle not moving over to pass safely.

"... I would say the speeding is worse during the warmer months, in the evenings, particularly Thursday and Friday nights, and also on the weekends, however there are a few residents that speed, as well as business or delivery vehicles, during the day. There are children playing or riding bikes on the road, many dog walkers out two to three times daily, (and) joggers and walkers as well. We even have one resident who is over 90 years old,

and she is out walking twice a day, with her walker, every day – even in the winter months – so it's hard for vehicles to pass her."

As a result of the high speeds of some vehicles along Maplewood Road – which a three-day traffic study conducted by the township last summer showed, in some cases, reached 40 or 50 km/hr above the posted 40 and 50 km/hr speed limits – Madison said there have been a number of single-vehicle collisions in recent memory.

One of those collisions, Madison said, involved a driver travelling too fast to make a curve in the road and hitting a brick retaining wall in a residential driveway, and another resulted in a vehicle driving into a tree right beside a school-bus stop.

"Fortunately, there were no injuries, however there will come a time when someone is seriously injured or worse, potentially killed, if no traffic-calming measures are implemented."

Equipped with the signatures of 28 residents along Maplewood Road and its side streets, Madison and her neighbours previously requested several traffic-calming measures to be implemented by the township along Maplewood Road including establishing a CSZ, having Waterloo Regional Police include the road in its Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP), and installing additional speed-limit signs and speed bumps along the road.

"Staff feel this added measure coupled

with some additional speed signs to remind motorists of the posted limit will help alleviate some of the speeding concerns raised by the residents," said township director of public works Chris Cook about establishing a CSZ on Maplewood Road. "I feel it is important to add that staff conducted a very comprehensive speed analysis of the area in the summer of 2023, the results of which gave no indication that speeding was a concern. Therefore, it was staff's recommendation at the time to do nothing.

"However, that recommendation was strictly based on the data collected that did not factor in the unique nature of the area. The narrow road allowances, tight curves, poor sightlines, the fact that several properties span both sides of the road to provide lake access and the recreation nature of the area make this area very unique and the only one like it in the township."

While Cook did not recommend measures like reducing speed limits or installing speed bumps, he said he has reached out to Waterloo Regional Police about enforcement of the new CSZ. Though he told councillors Maplewood Road does not qualify to be included as part of STEP, he will ask the police service to make an exception and, if they decide not to, he will speak with the sergeant in charge of speed enforcement in the township about increasing enforcement in the immediate area.

In response to a question from Wellesley Mayor Joe Nowak about how the township will monitor whether the traffic-calming

measures are effective in reducing speeding and improving safety for residents, Cook said the township will conduct another speed analysis over the same three days this summer and will report back to council with the results.

CSZs are an effective way of informing drivers when they are in locations where public safety is of high priority. A CSZ designation doubles speeding fines in the area, which acts as a further deterrent from speeding.

Cook said school buses, staff and parents and caregivers will continue to have access to Wellesley Public School at the end of this school year after reconstruction work begins.

The Queen's Bush Road reconstruction project has been on the township's capital forecast for many years and is necessary partly because of the deteriorating and poor condition of the road surface, but also because the storm-water infrastructure has deteriorated and filled in significantly with sediment and was therefore not able to accommodate the flow necessary to provide adequate drainage.

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SPORTS —

Tavistock to defend senior hockey supremacy

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

It may not be in the same league, but the Tavistock Royals have earned the opportunity to defend their provincial senior hockey title.

The Royals downed the Ripley Wolves 5-2 in front of over 600 fans to take the Ontario Elite Hockey League semi-final series in six games as they will now battle the Minto 81s in a best-of-seven series. Tavistock is the defending champion, but last year's title came as a member of the Western Ontario Athletic Association before the Ontario Hockey Association took over the league's operation.

Erik Robichaud scored the game-winner twelve and a half minutes into the third on a pass from Drew Gerth. Tristan Hohl and Jeremy Munro added insurance markers. The teams were deadlocked at two after two periods in Sunday's finale. Erik Robichaud tied the game at one in the first while Mike Noyes gave Tavistock a short-lived 2-1 lead early in the second period.

"Sunday's game was typical of the whole series; a very hard-fought battle between two closely matched teams. I thought we persevered by sticking with our initial game plan and taking advantage of any and all opportunities

that we were given. The whole team bought in and every single guy left it all on the ice. We as a staff are extremely proud of our group and the effort they put into this series," said head coach Brad Stere. He added the team's blueliners stepped up their offensive game. "It was great to see them rewarded with some offense, particularly the Noyes brothers. Big Mike with the tying goal, Greg with the winner, and captain Hohl with the insurance marker. A testament to our depth."

He added the series with Minto will be much of the same as the series with Ripley.

"They are a very talented, offensive team. We are going to have to continue with our defensive style of game and get the best out of all our guys, especially our back end. We will need a tight, disciplined game as Minto is a team that can change the flow of a game in a hurry. I am confident in our group to be ready for this challenge and to give everything they have to repeat as champions."

The Wolves forced game six following a come-from-behind, double-overtime win at home Saturday night. The Royals led 5-4 on Gerth's 11th of the playoffs from Sean Kienapple and Mike Noyes six and a half minutes into the third. Ripley tied it up with just over eight minutes remaining setting the stage for Garrett Meur's overtime winner, also his 11th.

Minto earned its way into the final by defeating the Creemore Coyotes 7-1 Saturday night to take that series

in five games. The two teams split their season series with the 81s winning the first matchup 9-4 and the Royals the second by a 5-3 score.

Game one is set for Tavistock on Saturday night at 7:30 p.m. with game two in Palmerston on Sunday at 6:30 p.m.



Tavistock captain Tristan Hohl puts the eight buck in the team's playoff board following a series win over Ripley. Photo courtesy of the Tavistock Royals

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SPORTS —

PJHL hands out regular season hardware

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Provincial Junior Hockey League has announced the full list of award winners for the 2023-2024 season.

The league hands out eight awards to each division after each regular season and they are decided by a voting committee made up of the conference managers and team coaching staff, other than leading-scorer and goals-against-average awards, which are awarded on statistics only.

The Doherty Division award winners are as follows:

Most Valuable Player

Owen Fischer, New Hamburg Firebirds – 31 goals, 24 assists

Leading Scorer

Davin Gray, Woodstock Navy Vets – 16 goals, 47 assists

Top Goalie

Carter Spence, Norwich Merchants – 21 games played, 2.55 goals against average, .926 save percentage

Top Defenseman

Tyler Reid, New Hamburg Firebirds – 16 goals, 27 assists

Coaching Staff of the Year

New Hamburg Firebirds – 37 wins, seven losses, two OT losses

Rookie of the Year

Brendan George, New Hamburg Firebirds – eight goals, 14 assists

Most Sportsmanlike Player

Travis Lamb, Norwich Merchants – 13 penalty minutes

Top Goals Against Team

Graeme Noye and Tony Theodoropoulos, New Hamburg Firebirds – 106 goals against



Owen Fischer was recently named the PJHL's regular season Most Valuable Player in the Doherty Division. Contributed photo



Firebirds lead Shamrocks in PJHL semi-final series

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

New Hamburg was cruising with a 2-0 lead over Hespeler in their Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) semi-final series, but the Firebirds ran into a brick wall in a 4-2 loss on Sunday.

After all, it was St. Patrick's Day and a little luck of the Irish couldn't hurt.

Despite outshooting the Shamrocks by a huge margin, the Firebirds dropped a 4-2 decision but still lead their Doherty Division series two games to one. Hespeler goalie David Hanley kicked out 54 of the 56 shots he faced including 25 of 27 in the third period where New Hamburg's Matt Domm and Tyler Reid cut into a 4-0 Shamrocks lead. The Firebirds went zero for six with the man advantage. The victory was the first for Hespeler over New Hamburg since they joined the division two seasons ago.

Firebirds general manager and head coach Shane Gerber said it was one of those nights.

"(Hanley) played really well. There's nothing you can do. We will just regroup on Thursday (for game four) and go back at it. Those things happen."

He added he was still pleased overall with the team's play in game three but at the same time, Wednesday's practice will focus on defence.

"We'll talk about tightening things up a bit and some of that probably comes from when you're not scoring and you think you should be, you gamble a little more than maybe you should. We'll talk about keeping with our game plan and continue to throw pucks at him and at some point, they will go in."

New Hamburg easily won game two by a score of 5-1, going three for seven on the powerplay. They trailed 1-0 after 20 minutes, but a pair of goals by Aidan Reid gave the Firebirds a 2-1 lead after two periods. Owen Fischer, Tyler Reid and Owen Sulthorp scored in the third.

Game one resulted in a 5-2 Firebirds victory. Owen Bruder led the way with a goal and 2 assists while Fischer, Jake Thompson and Keegan Metcalfe had two points apiece. Riley Benko and Antonio Pasqualino each scored single markers.

The team has had 15 players hit the score-sheet in the series, something Gerber said has been the team's trademark the entire season.

"It doesn't seem to matter who is in or out (of the lineup). It's been a different guy on any given night contributing. Everyone else finds different ways to contribute, not necessarily on the sheet. It makes a coach's job a little easier."

New Hamburg decided to accept a first-round bye meaning they had a two-week layoff from any game action. Gerber said he didn't know what to expect.

"We came out of it pretty well. I was pleased with game one and game two was better."

He added the team is very healthy with just one regular, d-man, Andrew Miele, out of the lineup with an injury.

"He's a couple of weeks yet. He was injured in the last regular season game."

Over 500 fans packed into the Wilmot Recreation Centre for Friday's game two, something not unnoticed by Gerber.

"It's incredible the way the community supports us. It's loud in our building and it makes it fun for the guys to play. They enjoy it."


Gerber agreed the noise can be intimidating which likely played a part in the first two games of the series, both played in New Hamburg.

"We hope it continues and we know we have a game five at home on Friday."


Merchants trail Navy Vets

Norwich faces an uphill battle in the other Doherty semi-final as they trail Woodstock three games to none. The Navy Vets won by scores of 4-2, 2-1 and 4-1.


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COMMUNITY —

Perth County Holstein Club visits young, local dairy producers

By Gary West

There have been many stories in news outlets around the country focused on aging farmers in Canada who maintain a safe food supply.

Statistics Canada's last Census of Agriculture seemed to indicate that the age of 57 was the median age of Canadian farmers, up from the age of 49 in 2001.

On a recent Saturday, the Perth County Holstein Club led a tour of six local dairy

farms for interested farm families to visit and observe how these milk producers are managing in today's market.

They all farm in Perth County's North Easthope Township between Stratford, New Hamburg and Wellesley.

Based on what those who participated in the tour, the future of local dairy production is still bright as young dairy producers continue to work hard on their farms.



Andrew and Sherri Bell of Avonslope Holsteins Inc. on Perth Line 37 east of Stratford are pictured with daughter Gracie and sons Brayden and Codie. (Missing is youngest son Griffin). The family milks in a robotic, free-stall barn built in 2014, and their registered herd of 60 milking cows are fed a mix of corn silage, haylage, high-moisture corn, dry alfalfa hay and supplements. They also raise a large flock of broiler chickens on their second farm north of Shakespeare. Photos by Gary West



Shylane Holstein farmers John and Sheryl McCallum, and Kurtis Moesker with children Rys and Grady. They milk 120 cows in a double-10 milking parlour and free-stall barn. They also have incorporated a large veal-calf operation into their 450-acre dairy farm.



Wilhelmshaven Holsteins: Pictured are David and Jessie Wilhelm, and their three, young children, Landon, Paisley, and Jaxson. They milk 45 registered Holstein cows on the southern edge of the village of Amulree. The herd is a certified organic dairy farm of 300 acres and produce milk for Harmony Organic Dairy Products. They also finish hogs and raise some beef cattle. The Wilhelm family with their dairy cows were also featured in the Dairy Farmers of Ontario television advertisements last year. David continues to be a volunteer firefighter at the nearby Shakespeare fire station.



Chris and Tiffany Cook, who farm with their young children, Ryerson and Elliott, father Irvin and brother Dennis milk 160 registered Holsteins in a new free-stall, milking-parlour barn, built in 2007. They farm 575 acres growing alfalfa for haylage and corn for silage.



The Jantzi family of Rosevale Knoll Farm on Perth Road 103 southwest of Wellesley. Pictured from left are Arnold Jantzi and sons Jamin and Daniel, who built a new robotic-milking barn in 2022, and milk 50 registered Holsteins. The family farms on 220 acres on the eastern edge of Perth East in North Easthope Township. (Missing from photo is wife Rosemary and daughters Sara and Eunice, who all work on the farm). In another barn on the farm, they also have sheep, laying hens, pigs and turkeys.



Bill and Alicia Killing of Impact Farms milk a show herd of 52 cows comprising both Holstein and Jersey breeds. They began farming on their own in July 2020 and milk with an up-to-date pipeline milking system on Perth Road 110 northeast of Stratford.

COMMUNITY —

New Dundee Optimist Club news

By Don Poth, New Dundee Optimist Club

On Wednesday, Feb. 27 we celebrated our youth in the community for the many wonderful things they do to help others and enrich New Dundee. Congratulations to everyone who was honored.

It is indeed a pleasure to nominate Kyle Thomson as the New Dundee Optimist Club's Adult Hero for 2024.

Kyle was born and raised in New Dundee and is a volunteer firefighter. At 16, Kyle started to help fellow firefighters with the outdoor skating rink. Since then, for the past 25 years, he has been the initiator, the manager and the chief worker developing our skating rink in town.

Over the years, he has done an absolutely great job preparing the rink. In a good winter for two to three months, five days a week, he works two hours a night shovelling and flooding. He has fellow firefighters and neighbours that assist, but Kyle is a perfectionist and wants it done right.

The rink is enjoyed and, on many winter days, you can drive by and the rink is filled with children and adults thoroughly enjoying it. He makes arrangements with the Township of Wilmot to erect the boards, levels the snow on the cement pad, utilizes the fire truck to flood the rink and many times has cleaned the snow off himself before he floods it. He has many people that offer to help, but many nights he is there alone quite often on the coldest night of the year. What a great job he does!



Pictured are Kyle Thomson (Adult Volunteer Hero Award winner), Evan Debacker and Reese Rempel-Collins (New Dundee beautification committee), Sadie Black and Taylor Murphy (Wilmot Aces), Dylan Debacker (St. James Lutheran Church), Colin Berg and Nadine Dore (New Dundee Public School), Lila Rowland and Shiry Madison (Sir Adam Beck Public School), and John Demarco and Wesley Martin-Root (Waterloo-Oxford DSS). Contributed photo

In 2018, Kyle started and coached blastball for the younger children and it is now a part of the Wilmot Thunder softball program. Kyle is a natural coach for kids at such a young age in baseball. He has the patience and ability to simplify directions for them and is happy to put the time in to prepare before practices. The children all enjoyed their baseball life thanks to Kyle.

Kyle was a part of the fundraising committee for the Doug Fischer Memorial Ball Park as well as the creative playgrounds, and helped to build them.

Kyle assists the fire department in any community projects.

This past New Years Eve, Kyle and his wife Sarah arranged a party for over a dozen

friends and their children to celebrate the New Year.

Kyle is a valued member of the New Dundee Dodgers. His pitching and batting skills are appreciated very much.

It is interesting to note that Kyle's parents, Bob and Joy Thomson, were the Optimist Heroes in 2020.

Kyle, you deserve a lot of credit for what you have done to help our young people in our community. Keep up the good work!



Kyle Thomson was recently presented with the New Dundee Optimist Club's 2024 Adult Volunteer Hero Award. Contributed photo

Fall fair ambassador and Wellesley-North Easthope Agriculture Society directors visit local sugar bush

By Gary West

Sand Hills Maple Products welcomed the public and those who happen to have a craving for this year's freshly boiled maple syrup on Saturday for a tour of the sugar bush.

Visitors included directors from the Wellesley-North Easthope Agriculture Society, along with this year's fall fair ambassador, Katelyn Bartlett.

There were many local families from the Wellesley area taking in the tour of the sugar bush and seeing firsthand how sap is boiled over a fire to make maple syrup and all that can be made from it.

Since maple syrup is the first crop of the year to be harvested by local farmers, the agriculture society members, Wendy Richardson and Joanne Stewart, felt Bartlett would enjoy meeting visitors and the Wagler family hosts, while sitting among the maple trees and enjoying a pancake and sausage breakfast with warm syrup right out of the syrup pan.

Bartlett learned that Sand Hills Maple Products has been producing quality maple syrup and maple products since 2003.

The Wagler family is the fourth generation of maple syrup producers and they



Christine Wagler serves up warm pancakes and fresh maple syrup to her family and fall fair ambassador Katelyn Bartlett, along with directors from the Wellesley-North Easthope Agriculture Society. Photo by Gary West

stressed that every batch of syrup is tested and graded before being bottled and sold.

They tap 3,000 trees in two area bushes and they also sell in stores like Anna Mae's of Millbank, Cloverleaf Farms in New Hamburg, Lens Mill stores across

Ontario, and at the Niagara Falls farmers' market every Saturday.

Each tree tapped for sap can produce one and a half to two litres of syrup most years.

This year, the family has a food-trailer

outlet at their 1270 Manser Rd. location near Wellesley, where visitors can enjoy a freshly made pancake breakfast and lunch.

Bartlett has been very busy as fair ambassador, attending the Wellesley Apple Butter and Cheese Festival, an antique car show and Christmas parades, and she recently represented District 7 at the Ontario Association of Agriculture Societies (OAS) convention in Richmond Hill.

In an interview she said she really enjoys getting out and meeting area farmers and residents while promoting local agriculture for the Wellesley-North Easthope Agriculture Society. She also enjoys meeting other ambassadors from other agriculture societies in the province.

The Wagler family, along with other maple syrup producers in the area, would invite all family and friends for Maple Weekend, the first weekend of April. They said visitors will be able to see how they can continue to make maple syrup year after year, and take a tour of the bush and of course taste a few samples.

More information is available at www.sandhillsmple.com.

OPINION —

EXPERT ADVICE: *Fermenting Fun*



By Mercedes Kay Gold

Nutrition is key to glowing and ample energy to thrive day-in-and-out. Whole foods are first and foremost, but the ancient art of pickling for preservation is powerful. Fermentation is nothing new, but has made a much deserved comeback. Sauerkraut, dill pickles and kimchi, a Korean staple, are delicious dinnertime delights. Fermenting should be your next DIY. It's simple, cost effective and has heaps of health benefits.

Fermentation is a daily dose of inexpensive, food-based probiotics thanks to

Mother Nature. Great digestive health is key to overall wellness and, since a happy gut positively impacts brain health as well, this nutritionist chose to ferment a few favourite vegetables. My rainbow of love consists of iron-rich beets, vitamin-A-stocked carrots, quercetin-rich red onions, and vitamin-C-rich daikon radishes.

Fermenting foods creates lactic acid, dreamy for the digestive system. Lactic acid helps stimulate digestive juices thanks to active enzymes. Complex carbohydrates found in vegetables break down, convert to organic acids and lead to delightful digestion. Lactic acid also helps regulate the PH level in the body. Raw, fermented foods are live-food sources, and beneficial bacteria bolsters our microbiome. Happy gut, happy life! Fermented foods retain valuable vitamins, and vitamin C even increases during the process.

Let's ferment!

Shopping is a snap and inexpensive to get started. Glass weights referred to as pebbles, vented lids specifically for fermentation, clean glass jars, and produce complete the list. Fresh, organic vegetables and salt are used in both techniques – dry salting or brining. This holistic nutrition-

ist is bringing boatloads of body-boosting benefits to you with brining. This option is all about the chunky love, and these veggies are my new go-to as side dish, snack or salad topper.

Vegetables provide the carbohydrates and bacteria, and salt is the magic. Salt draws the water from the produce and creates a brine once it has moved into cells. Skip standard table salt. Iodized salt or table salt kills the good bacteria. Three types of salt top my chart. Celtic sea salt provides 82 trace minerals, Himalayan pink salt contains 84 and Redmond pink salt has 60. Vegetables are submerged into a salty brine, and a glass weight keeps the veggies below the brine to prevent molding. The lid is locked on and bubbling will soon take place. The fermenting bacteria consumes sugar and, in turn, excretes lactic acid while producing carbon dioxide.

Pick one pound or three cups of your fa-



Carrots, red onions and daikon radishes are perfect candidates for fermentation. Photos by Mercedes Kay Gold

vorite plant power, keeping all your produce picks close to the same size. Pack tightly in a one-quart mason jar. Mix together two cups of chlorine-free water and two teaspoons of salt. Use two teaspoons per cup if dill pickle passionate. Pour the brine over the veggies and place a weight to secure. Fermenting veggies become swollen and the weight helps prevent spoilage. Seal the jar and let it breathe. I do encourage the use of a specialty lid with a one-way valve, helping release gases before setting the jar aside. Store the jar in a cooler space, ideally with a temperature between 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit. Don't forget your fermented friends. In two weeks, swap the lid for a tight-fitting, matching mason lid and store in the refrigerator.

Nourishing the body inside and out is about fresh whole food all year long. With the cost of eating produce skyrocketing and no end in sight, fermenting is one way to get value from seasonal produce. Spending a day prepping jars helps bring your home-garden goodness to the table all year. Green beans, carrots, beets, onions, radishes and cucumbers are just a few of the piles of produce perfect for planting this summer. Plan a garden of fermenting favorites and preserve the harvest or load up at local markets. Happy fermenting my friends!



Fermenting foods creates lactic acid. Lactic acid helps stimulate digestive juices thanks to active enzymes. Complex carbohydrates found in vegetables break down, convert to organic acids and lead to delightful digestion. Lactic acid also helps regulate the PH level in the body.

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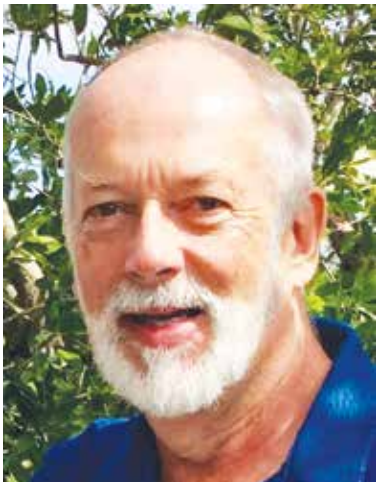
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TRAVEL —

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Exploring a real, fictional, community – and that's not a contradiction



By Paul Knowles

JoAnne and Dennis Rogers had spent the previous day taking a lengthy mini-coach tour, visiting sites that have inspired the work of their favourite mystery writer. After a long day on the tour, Jo Anne was nothing but enthusiastic.

"It was incredible," she told me. "One of our best experiences ever."

The couple, who live in Massachusetts, had come to Quebec's Eastern Townships for the precise purpose of exploring the world of Louise Penny, the Canadian writer whose 18 and counting Inspector Gamache novels have earned fans all over the world. Those fans include former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who liked the novels so much she conscripted Penny as her co-writer when she decided to write a fictional thriller called *State of Terror*.

Fans of Penny's books know their protagonist lives in a fictional Quebec village named Three Pines. The village and its



Brome Lake Books, where Louise Penny may be found doing a reading, is the model for one of the key locations in her Inspector Gamache books.

eclectic cast of characters figure large in the Penny novels.

I met the Rogers because, like us, they were staying at the Hillhouse Bed and Breakfast in Lac-Brome. The town of Lac-Brome actually includes seven villages, one of which is Knowlton, where Penny lives, which has provided much of the thinly fictionalized setting for her novels.

It was no coincidence we were at Hillhouse B&B. Owners Louise Cadieux and Gilles Trudel are also the operators of the Three Pines Tours which the Rogers were praising so effusively.

The day-long tours, which have been vetted and approved by Penny, take visitors to many of the sites which appear – usually under assumed names – in the novels. Even if you are not a fan of Inspector Gamache, visiting these places on your own can still make for fascinating experiences.

Take, for example, the tour of the Abbaye Saint-Benoit-du-lac on the shores of Lake Memphremagog. I wrote about this abbey, still home to cheese-making monks, in a previous feature. But what I didn't say was this monastery was the model for Penny's fictional monastery, Saint-Gilbert-Entre-les-Loups, site of mayhem and murder in *The Beautiful Mystery*. I asked our guide at the monastery if they were bothered by this link with evil. He laughed and pointed out that Louise Penny has been a faithful, financial contributor to Abbaye Saint-Benoit-du-lac and also brings her friends there – most recently Hillary and Bill Clinton. So, they quite like her, even if she



The Pettes Memorial Library in Knowlton, a beneficiary of Louise Penny's generosity.

did leave them with fictional corpses.

In fact, it seems everyone in the mythical Three Pines area likes her – and why not? Louise Penny has almost singlehandedly raised tourism to a more-than-healthy level in these towns and villages.

People like to dine where Gamache and his beloved wife, Reine-Marie, have enjoyed romantic get-aways. In that spirit, we had lunch on the patio of the highly rated Manoir Hovey, overlooking Lake Massawippi. The meal – scallops, a seafood wrap, corn soup, Caesar salad and a chocolate brownie – was exceptional, by the way.

We also wandered around Sutton, another point of inspiration for Penny, and enjoyed dinner at the Sutton Brouerie.

Penny's influence on tourism is very evident in the growth of the Three Pines Tours. Gilles and Louise told me while their team conducted 325 tours in 2022, in 2023 they hit at least 950. The day-long, guided, mini-coach tour costs \$335.

Visitors on the tour will stop at many Penny sites including Brome Lake Books, a shop owned by friends of Penny that has a dedicated Louise Penny corner where the author herself may sometimes be found doing a reading or answering questions from fans.

Tour participants will also get some personal information from their guides. Louise Cadieux confided in me that Inspector Gamache is based on Penny's late husband. As to other characters in the books, there is speculation in the town about some of the characters,



The Sutton Brouerie, in the town of Sutton, is another source of inspiration for author Louise Penny's fiction.



Hillhouse B&B owners Louise Cadieux and Gilles Trudel also own and operate the Three Pines Tours, a day following in the footsteps of Gamache. All photos by Paul Knowles

including the elderly, rude and belligerent poet, Ruth Zardo. Cadieux laughed and suggested Ruth may be a mélange of local personalities. No names were mentioned.

I asked Cadieux if Knowlton really has three pines. She grimaced. "They're dead." There was an effort to plant three pine trees, but they did not survive. So today, they exist only in Penny's fiction.

Louise Penny's international fame has certainly made an economic impact on Knowlton and its equally appealing East-

ern Township neighbours. Most of the visitors, say Gilles and Louise, come from the United States. I think Canadian fans of Penny's work are missing a real opportunity, here.

But Penny's impact goes a lot farther than bringing tourists on a bus or diners to a restaurant. I wandered into the Pettes Memorial Library in Knowlton and chatted with librarian Ingrid Bird. She told me about a current plan to expand the library and pointed to a list of donors to the project. The number-one major donor was Louise Penny, who has donated \$600,000 to the library expansion.

The Three Pines books have brought a lot of pleasure to thousands of readers including yours truly, but they have done much more than that, bringing employment and economic prosperity to a delightful part of Canada known as the Eastern Townships.

For visitors to Penny's Three Pines country, it's a win-win.

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.

COMMUNITY —

Oxford County builders group makes its return

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The Oxford County Builders Association (OCBA) ceased to exist four years ago but has resurfaced thanks to some former members.

The group folded back in November 2019 just before the pandemic. Board member Derek Jukema is one of the professionals behind its resurrection.

“It was losing its steam and we just couldn’t run it properly with the resources we had. On the flip side, we have done interviews and we have a potential executive officer who would operate in a part-time role.”

Jukema said they are trying to get the word out now, setting the stage for a launch on March 27.

“In attendance will be the presidents of the Canadian and Ontario Home Builders Associations to speak about the national

and provincial levels.”

He added at a local level the group will be meeting and consulting with municipalities in the county.

“We will be lobbying, offering training, education and networking. Discounts are extended to members for services such as group insurance.”

The association’s interim board president Cedric Tomico said there has already been considerable interest across the county.

“A very good response with well over 60 organizations showing interest in re-igniting the OCBA. Technically we have not been signing people up yet, but I have had many confirm they will become members. I would say that number looks like it’s at 20 or more already.”

Affordable housing is one of, if not the biggest socio-economic issues of our time, something Jukema hopes they will be able

to help with.

“Provincial laws have changed quite a bit recently in terms of intensification and other areas. The association is there to help builders be a uniform group and meet with municipal governments to get through the issues of the day.”

Tomico added he is confident the organization will be able to make it more efficient to build homes in Oxford.

“We believe that with a collaborative approach of all our members, we can advocate to municipal and regional planning and building departments to streamline processes concerning building. This will essentially reduce time, costs and stress with respect to how our approvals currently go, which will not only benefit us as the OCBA but all those individuals who plan to ever build a home in the future.”

Jukema explained there has been a fair

bit of interest from potential members so far but, ultimately, he is waiting to see how the launch goes and is hoping for interest outside of the Friendly City.

“In the past, it was mainly just Woodstock members. We have reached out to Ingersoll, Tillsonburg and builders from other areas as well as trades and other businesses from all corners of the county.”

The launch will be at Ingersoll’s Elmhurst Inn with an event starting at 6:30 p.m. More information is available on the organization’s website at oxfordcountyba.ca/. Other than builders and tradespeople, anyone who supports the construction sector from suppliers to legal, insurance providers, auto and equipment dealers.

“Pretty much anyone that supports the construction industry in any way or form,” added Tomico.

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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
Smith, Victor Joseph	03/19/1894	New Dundee
Strauch, Arthur Bernard	11-02/1895	New Hamburg
Studer, Arthur Jacob	03/13/1894	New Hamburg
Thomas, Arthur Wellington	08/27/1894	Washington
Thomas, Lorane	06/16/1895	Washington
Tye, Howard Warner	10/30/1883	Haysville
House, Nelson George	02/24/1894	Berlin
Lantz, Andrew	05/26/1896	Philipsburg
Lautenschlager, Thomas Henry	04/23/1897	New Hamburg
Lautenschlager, Stanley	04/13/1896	Petersburg
Luckhardt, Lorne Lincoln	08/29/1896	North Easthope
Ludwig, Harvey Albert	10/04/1897	Berlin
Marth, John George	06/01/1891	Petersburg
Marth, Herbert William	12/24/1896	New Hamburg
Werner, Chester Kastner	10/26/1892	Sebringville
Miehm, Hugh Patrick	11/29/1891	New Hamburg
Miehm, Walter Raymond	06/05/1899	Waterloo
Mohr, Clayton Allan	09/30/1896	Philipsburg
Puddicombe, John Balkwill	06/28/1891	New Hamburg
Randall, John Ernest	07/14/1899	Baden
Ritz, William John	03/06/1897	New Hamburg
Reid, Roy Jacob	10/23/1897	New Hamburg
Robertson, Jean Morton	05/03/1886	Wellesley Twp
Russell, William Russell	10/16/1893	Baden
Ruthig, William Alfred	09/05/1895	New Hamburg
Rush, George Milton	12/30/1896	Wilmot Township
Schultz, Herman	07/19/1889	New Hamburg
Schultz, Oscar Frank	08/16/1887	Stratford
Seftel, William	10/04/1895	St. Agatha
Schulyer, Andrew Allan	06/20/1896	New Hamburg

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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Turning 1 this March, Macy Mae is a lively farm dog who enjoys being outside with her family whenever she can. Her favourite thing is belly rubs and tennis balls. She likes to sleep on the back of the couch with her face by the window as if she's a cat.

Nominate your Pet of the Week by emailing: thewtgazette@gmail.com



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COMMUNITY —

Wilmot passes double-digit tax increase as poor financial situation highlighted

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

It wasn't unanimous, but the township's council has approved a 10.8 per-cent tax hike.

The increase will tack on about \$123 per year to the average home's property taxes on each \$424,800 of assessed value. Two councillors voted against the budget, Harvir Sidhu and Kris Wilkinson. Both said more could have been done to ease the burden on the taxpayer.

In his address to council, interim chief financial officer Dan Elliot said the township is facing somewhat of a financial crisis in that it has the lowest capital reserves per capita in the province, something that puts a great deal of pressure on its ability to repair and replace aging infrastructure. Funding in the 2024 budget for repairs and capital replacement sits at \$5 million, but Elliot said the actual price tag is closer to \$11 million.

"Only those projects that are most important or most urgent are being completed, with this short list exceeding our available cash on hand. That requires us to issue

debt to finance and pay for fixing broken roads and things like that," added Elliot.

He explained the only other approach is to raise taxes. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has asked about the township's reserves.

Coun. Lillianne Dunstall raised her concerns about the lack of reserves and said, though rare, the province potentially could intervene. Elliot said the province is well aware of Wilmot's financial situation.

"Fortunately, it's very rare they have to intervene. We have seen it in the past with smaller municipalities – well in the past in Ontario. They are simply doing their diligence to make sure everybody is staying healthy and safe and following the rules."

Elliot added the budget shows a significant effort to address the financial shortcomings.

"It can't all be done in one year, but we are working on it. We have a program. This is a five- or six-year issue that is going to have to be addressed to get us into the safer zones."

Sidhu said residents continue to tell him

that times are tight, becoming harder day by day, and a double-digit tax hike won't sit well with them.

"I understand we are in a unique situation that has been 20 years in the making. I also understand we need to dig out of a financial situation where our reserves are lower than our surrounding municipalities. There needs to be a balance of raising taxes as well as looking at options, like service levels, to help offset the financial burden on our residents."

He added more could have been done to mitigate a large tax increase.

"I still believe we could have found more efficiencies and looked at further options instead of continuously raising taxes."

In his remarks before the vote was taken, Wilkinson commended the efforts of Elliot and other staff members and hoped in the future council will be able to receive more detailed reporting regarding township finances. He also admitted the township's finances are not in great shape.

"These problems have been compounded by years of poor policy and decision

making, and it's not just on the last council. The problems have been accumulating for years. That was under past councils as well as a long-tenured administration that has led us to this point."

He added passing on a tax hike of this magnitude will make it more difficult for regular citizens.

"I feel there are better times for a tax increase of this size, and I do feel for those on fixed incomes."

There was some tension at the meeting when Wilkinson essentially apologized to residents of Ward 2, where he was elected.

"I have to go back to my ward where roads are in disrepair. Roads need speed control. Culverts and other infrastructure need attention, and I regret I am going to have to tell them it's another year they are going to have to wait."

Ward 1 coun. Stewart Cressman appeared to take exception with the remarks.

"I would remind councillor Wilkinson you're elected to serve the entire township, not just your ward. That's a basic governance principle."

Humane Society nears capacity, urgently needing fosters and adopters

By Emily Stewart

The Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford Perth's (HSKWSP) shelters are almost at full capacity and the organization is putting out an urgent call for residents to either foster or adopt.

The humane society sent out a press release recently noting there are 125 animals in between the two shelters and another 68 on the waitlist.

"We have so many animals in our care that if there's someone looking to add a new member to their family, they are bound to find their perfect match here at our centre," said Nasreen, the local humane society's communications and marketing manager. "If you adopt or even consider fostering, it opens up space at our shelter for another pet to be helped. And of course, we cannot provide the love and care we provide to animals who need it the most without the support of our community members."

HSKWSP is reliant on donations and does not receive government funding. Fostering is a volunteer opportunity for residents who cannot otherwise adopt a pet to help an animal

in need. The pet's stress and anxiety levels decrease in a foster home, and their happiness increases while waiting for their forever home.

"It's an extremely rewarding experience," Nasreen said. "It's incredibly rewarding to see the positive impact you can have on an animal's life, from their initial arrival to the day they find their forever home. Fostering also allows you to learn more about animal behavior, health care and compassion, which can be valuable skills that extend beyond the realm of animal welfare."

To make more room in the shelter spaces, the humane society will be reducing adoption fees for a few dogs that have been waiting for their forever family for quite some time. One of the dogs, Hazel, has been looking for nearly two years. Jack has been at the shelter for two months.

Along with fostering and adopting, supporters of the HSKWSP can either make a monetary donation to the organization or donate items such as pet food, collars, leashes and other supplies to the Pet Pantry program. More information, including animals available for adoption, can be found on kwsphumane.ca.



Jack and Hazel are two of the animals looking for their forever homes. They are with the Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford Perth, which is nearing shelter capacity and urgently asking for fosters and adopters. Photo courtesy of Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford Perth

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COMMUNITY —

Louis and Duclos pitch dental care plan in New Hamburg

By Lee Griffi, Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Kitchener-Conestoga MP Tim Louis welcomed federal Minister of Public Services and Procurement Jean-Yves Duclos to New Hamburg Wednesday morning to tell seniors about the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP).

The event took place at Morningside Retirement Community where Louis and Duclos spoke with more than 60 senior residents in attendance about the dental plan, which opened for applications from seniors aged 70 and up in March. Participants can validate their eligibility by phone.

One million seniors across the country have already been approved for the

Canadian Dental Care Plan. By 2025, the plan will be rolled out to nine million Canadians who are estimated to currently not have coverage.

Once Canadian residents are approved for the plan by Service Canada, Sun Life then enrolls eligible applicants in the CDCP and sends them a welcome package, including information on the CDCP, coverage details, their member card and the start date of their coverage.

People who qualify for the CDCP can start seeing a dentist or other dental care provider as early as May, based on their coverage date. An individual's coverage start date, the date at which they can begin to access services, will vary based on when the application is received and when enrolment is completed.



Jean-Yves Duclos, Canadian Minister of Public Services and Procurement (left), and Tim Louis, Kitchener-Conestoga MP, spoke to seniors in New Hamburg recently to pitch the Canadian Dental Care Plan. Contributed photo

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR - MARCH/APRIL 2024

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*

TUESDAY, APR. 2

Ostomy Support Group Meeting
7:00 p.m.
'Humour and Feeling Good' with Dr. Ken Shonk
Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome.
93 Morgan St., Stratford

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*

WEDNESDAY, APR. 10

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Join us for lunch and fellowship.
Cost: \$14.00. Must register by April 5 by calling 519-664-1900 or Toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
*Wellesley Recreation Complex,
1401 Queen's Bush Rd. Wellesley*

SATURDAY, APR. 20

Tavistock Historical Society Annual Meeting
1:30 pm
Presentation: Growing Up In Tavistock In the 1960's
*Grace United Church
116 Woodstock St S, Tavistock*

WEDNESDAY, APR. 24

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Join us for lunch and fellowship.
Cost: \$14.00. Must register by April 19 by calling 519-664-1900 or toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
*Linwood Community Centre,
5279 Ament Line, Linwood*

THURSDAY, APR. 25

Community Care Concepts Lunch and Fellowship
12 p.m.
Join us for lunch and fellowship.
Cost: \$14.00. Must register by April 19 by calling 519-664-1900 or toll Free: 1-855-664-1900.
*Wilmot Rec Complex,
1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden*

COMMUNITY —

Get your Easter Sauerkraut from the Tavistock Men's Club

By Gary West

With Easter fast approaching, the Tavistock Men's Club still have their famous homemade Sauerkraut for sale.

The price is more reasonable than it's ever been – \$5 for a two-and-a-half-pound bag.

With only one Saturday left before Easter, pick up the nutritious treat at their Woodstock Street North location between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. or place orders by phone by calling 519-655-3573 and leaving a message.



Sauerkraut customer Ken Smith (far right) is seen picking up his order at the Men's clubhouse on Saturday. Also pictured from left are Tavistock Men's Club members John Schultz, Jim Pitcher and Keith Wiffen. Photo by Gary West

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Weekly Quiz Answers

1. The Mesozoic Era
2. Moose
3. Bedrock
4. A Black Hole
5. Five
6. A pride
7. Rick Astley
8. E
9. Emma Stone (Poor Things)
10. Finland

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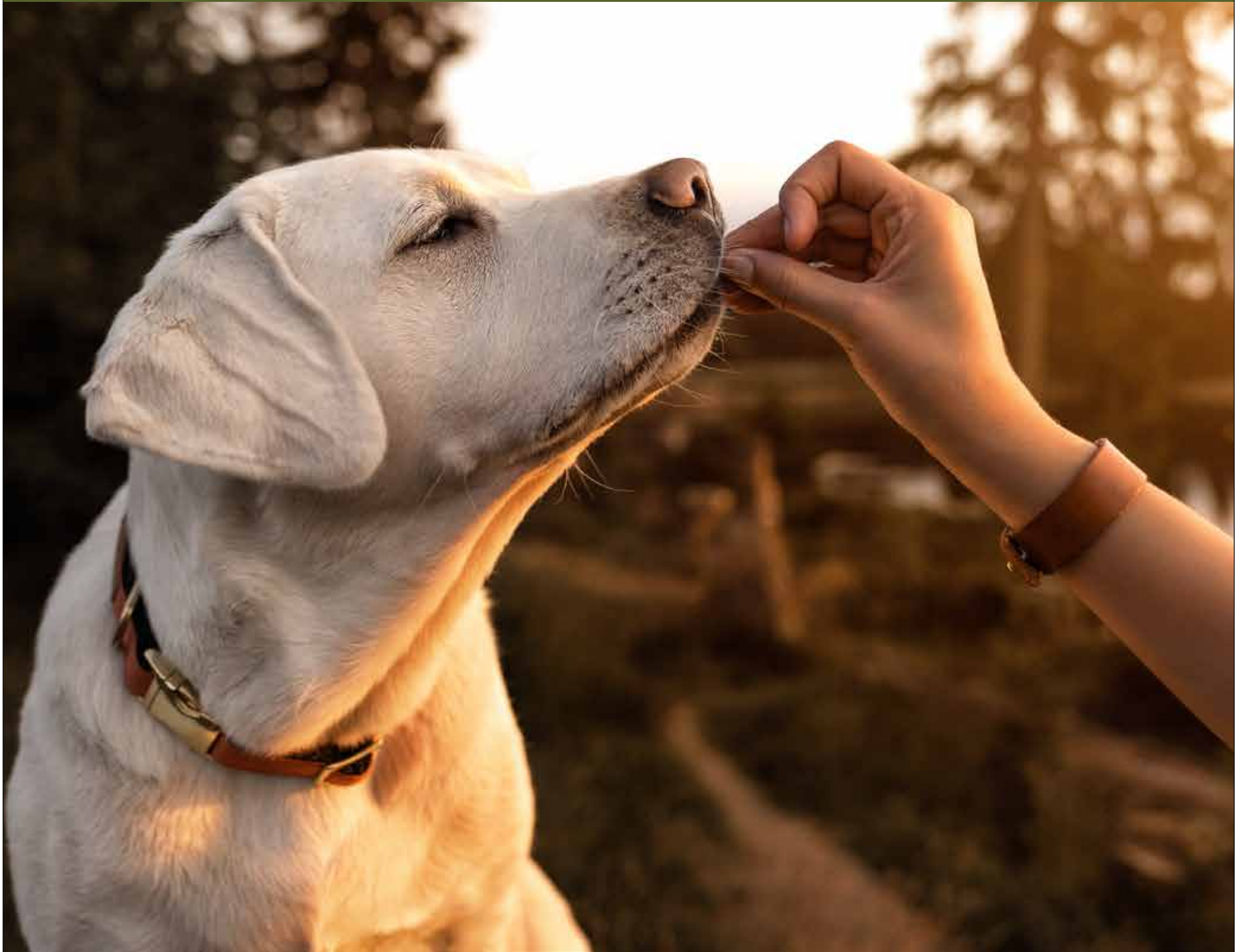
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