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Flurries



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Scattered  
Flurries



Sunday:  
Mainly  
Sunny



Monday:  
Mix of Sun  
and Clouds

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# Holly Jolly Christmas

The Beeton Santa Claus parade, hosted by the Beeton Agricultural Society, made its way down Main Street in Beeton on Saturday, Dec. 14, to the delight of hundreds of people who lined the streets to take part in the fun. The parade featured, floats, music, dancers and lots of great costumes. Of course, the Jolly Old Elf himself, Santa Claus made an appearance to an enthusiastic response from the crowd. See more photos on Page 8. BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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# Grant funding to provide job training for marginalized groups

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

After nearly 45 years of raising funds for gCamphill Communities Ontario, near Angus, was the focal point of a celebration for a \$280,000 multi-year UWSM Community Collaborative grant.

A team from United Way Simcoe Muskoka met at Camphill on Thursday, Dec. 5, to recognize the grant.

Through a partnership between Camphill, Habitat for Humanity Huronia, Community Builders, Lakehead University, and Social Innovation at Georgian College, the project directly addresses the need for skilled training and supportive affordable housing by providing pre-employment construction training for underrepresented groups who

will then put their training into action building affordable supportive housing.

“We are thrilled to be working with such an incredible group of partners to create opportunities for increased housing and income stability in our community,” said Brian Shelley, chief executive and philanthropy officer of United Way Simcoe Muskoka. “This collaborative partnership is a clear example of what happens when organizations come together to address complex issues.”

This project will provide over 20,000 hours of paid trades training and employment development for marginalized groups who face barriers to employment, including adults with developmental disabilities. Additionally, trainees will work on-site in a supportive and supervised environment to build 8 new affordable and supportive housing

units in rural Simcoe County.

Four of the units will be dedicated to local families in need of affordable housing and interested in home ownership. The remaining four units will be used to provide housing for persons with disabilities supported at Camphill.

“The impact of this Community Collaborative grant cannot be overstated,” said Kathrine Killam, community participation and innovation manager for Camphill. “This grant opens the door for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to receive accessible trades training, an opportunity that hadn’t been available to them before now. Best of all, some of the individuals who will participate in the paid trades training program can earn an income while building their own supportive housing.”



**GIVING GRANT** – Staff and committee members from United Way Simcoe Muskoka and Camphill Communities Ontario, gather at Camphill on Thursday, Dec. 5, to celebrate a \$280,000 multi-year UWSM Community Collaborative grant that will provide job training for underrepresented groups.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

# Kevin Lord Foundation donates from golf tournament to Matthews House Hospice

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

After another successful golf tournament held at Bear Creek Golf Course, the Kevin Lord Memorial Foundation continues to help local charitable causes by donating the proceeds of the annual tournament.

On Thursday, Dec. 12, the Foundation donated \$1,000 to Matthews House Hospice in Alliston.

“We raised the funds through our annual tournament,” explained Al Lord, chair of the Kevin Lord Memorial Foundation.

“This year we had 130 golfers. We’re usually sold out. Matthews House has been one of the major causes we support. We also have supported the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada, and Camp Fire Circle, a camp for

kids with cancer.”

The fundraiser was started in 2007 after Al’s son Kevin passed away.

“This is our 17th year doing the tournament,” Al said. “It’s still going.”

Al said that if he decides to give it up one day, he hopes someone else will be able to take the torch and continue running the tournament.

**DELIVERING DONATION** – Al Lord, chair of the Kevin Lord Memorial Foundation, delivered a donation of \$1,000 to Matthews House Hospice in Alliston on Thursday, Dec. 12. The fund came from the annual Kevin Lord Memorial Golf Tournament held at Bear Creek Golf Course in May. Representing the Hospice is its executive director Martina Whittick and foundation president Marv Chantler.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



Final Release

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# Local resident finishes final fundraising effort after 45 years

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

After nearly 45 years of raising funds for good causes, Tottenham resident, Eva Bradley, has finished her final event.

For almost a year, Ms. Bradley has been raising funds through her Toonies for Tecumseth initiative in support of Our Town Food Bank in Tottenham and S.H.I.F.T in Alliston.

She held a raffle and bake sale at the Tottenham Legion, attended the Beeton Honey Festival and the Tottenham Street Festival with homemade knitted and crocheted items, and had donation jars scattered around town.

On Monday, Dec. 10, she gave a cheque for \$2,000 to S.H.I.F.T. in Alliston, which provides emergency shelter services to homeless individuals.

Toonies for Tecumseth wrapped up at the Cedar Kitchen Restaurant in Tottenham when restaurant owners Sherri Bailey and Danielle Leslie donated the funds from coffee sales and held a bake sale.

Over the year, Ms. Bradley had help from several good friends for her fundraising

efforts.

Now it's time to take it easy and let someone else take up the torch.

"I'm now 83 years-old," Ms. Bradley said. "My body is tired, I have to think about myself. But it was worth it. If I've helped one or two people – it was worth it."

Mr. Bradley started fundraising in 1980 when she took part in the Terry Fox Run.

"This is my last fundraiser. I started back in 1980 with Terry Fox. I gave six or seven years to Terry Fox. I went from there to different things. I raised money for heart and stroke, I had garage sales, I knitted, I did needle work. For a while I decided to do something in support of animals. I did the Alliston hospital, raised money for breast cancer, and this our fifth time raising money for the food bank. My main goal was to give back to Canada. I came here as a 15 year old girl and a refugee. I want to give back to the people and country that helped. People were really good to me when I arrived here. Now, I think it's time to focus on myself."

Ms. Bradley raised over \$10,000 during the course of the year.

The funds will go a long way for Our Town Food Bank and S.H.I.F.T.



**FINAL FUNDRAISING** – Eve Bradley and Carolyn Hopps, representing Toonies for Tecumseth, present a cheque for \$2,000 to Candace Gordon, representing S.H.I.F.T. The funds were raised from the Toonies for Tecumseth initiative which has been running for nearly a year. This is Ms. Bradley's final charity fundraising effort. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

# County curbside battery recycling and waste management reaches new milestone

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The County of Simcoe, along with Call2Recycle Canada, the nation's leading battery collection and recycling organization, has announced a milestone in battery recycling and sustainable waste management.

The County collected over 50,000 kg – the equivalent weight of 30 cars – through its Battery Collection Week from Nov. 3 – 7. This was one of the most successful curbside battery collection events in Canada and the 27-year history of the Call2Recycle program.



Throughout the year, the County of Simcoe and Call2Recycle have worked together to recycle used batteries while educating the region's 350,000+ residents about the benefits of responsible battery recycling practices and making battery recycling more accessible through the County's five permanent Household Hazardous Waste Depots, where batteries can be dropped off any time of the year.

The publication of educational materials about battery recycling and the distribution of bags for residents to place their batteries in for at-the-curb pickup has contributed to the success of this recycling accomplishment.

The County of Simcoe and Call2Recycle Canada have combined efforts since 2020 to support the County's sustainability objectives, collecting over 225,000 kg of used batteries since the partnership began.

"The outstanding battery recycling efforts by the County's residents demonstrate our community's strong environmental consciousness," said Simcoe County Warden Basil Clarke. "On behalf of the County of Simcoe, I could not be more proud of the residents of Simcoe County. This illustrates our dedication to making communities even more responsible, to create a lasting and meaningful environmental impact."

Last year, the County was awarded the Leader in Sustainability Award from Call2Recycle for its battery recycling commitment.

"Simcoe County's exceptional achievement is a powerful environmental success story for Ontarians, as we continue engaging and encouraging other municipalities across the province to adopt similar curbside collection initiatives to help advance

Ontario's waste diversion goals," said Joe Zenobio, president of Call2Recycle Canada.

Call2Recycle operates in Ontario as the largest registered battery Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO), with almost 3,000 convenient Recycle your Batteries, Canada, drop-off points in the province easily accessible to over 98 per cent of Ontarians.

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# Editorial, Letters & Opinion

“The window to the world can be covered by a newspaper.”

~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

## Christmas wishes

It is the Christmas season – the season of peace on earth, goodwill toward men and women.

It is the season of giving and receiving. Some people prefer receiving instead of giving. I’ve known some people who thought they deserved gifts, and expensive ones, and could not care less about giving to others.

I try to avoid that kind of person. I’ve known others, whose greatest pleasure is seeing the smile on someone’s face when they present them with a holiday gift.

I never expect much in the way of gifts during the holidays. For me, the big deal of getting a gift is the fact that someone was thinking about me.

Last Christmas, someone I know gave me a Tim Horton’s gift card – I was thrilled.

I wasn’t thrilled because I could get several cups of my favourite beverage, I was happy that she actually thought of me, and took the effort to get me something she knew I would like.

To me, that is the spirit of the season.

For many people, the gift that brings back the most memories, or may be cherished more than others, will not be the

most expensive or elaborate gift. It may be something simple or understated, but touches your heart.

When I was around eight years old, I was with my mother in a local Playtime Store. I can’t remember why we were there, but I’m pretty sure she was surreptitiously buying Christmas presents while I wandered the aisles, star-struck by the rows and rows of toys.

When we went up to the counter to pay, I noticed a bin full of rubber action-type figures. I picked up a little rubber man.

He looked like he was hanging by his elbows in some medieval prison. He was wearing torn green pants held up by a rope. His feet were bare, his eyes bulged from their sockets, and his tongue was hanging out of his mouth.

I thought this was hilarious. I laughed and laughed, and poked my mom and showed it to her.

She took a cursory glance, nodded, said nothing, and went back to paying her bill.

I laughed some more and put the little rubber man back in the bin.

A week later, it was Christmas morning. I emptied out my Christmas stocking to see what Santa had brought during the

night.

A few things fell out onto the carpet, including the little rubber medieval prisoner.

I guess my mom really did notice how much I liked this ridiculous little trinket probably made in some Japanese factory that sold for .29 cents.

I took that little rubber man and hung him from the light fixture in my bedroom, where he stayed for the next 14 years.

When I moved away, I took him with me. In every place I have ever lived, that little rubber man has had a place of honour in some way or another.

Currently, he is hanging from the light fixture in my home office. Most of the time I forget he is even there.

Once in a blue moon, I look up and see those bulging eyes looking down at me – and I still laugh.

Why does such a small, inexpensive gift still mean something to me after all those years?

I think it just reminds me of a happy time in my life. A time when dinner was made for me every night, and I had a place to sleep. A time when there were no bills to pay, no taxes to pay, no car problems to fix, and my biggest problem

was deciding what I was going to do on a Saturday afternoon.

One day I asked my dad, “why is there a Mother’s Day, and a Father’s Day, but no kid’s day?”

He replied, “every day is kid’s day. One day you’ll understand.”

He was right. So this Christmas, when everyone is opening their presents, take a moment and think about the best gift you really could have, and would it even cost anything?

The best gift I could have is to see that my family and friends are happy, successful, and healthy. Nothing else really matters.

Although, I must admit having a red Ford Mustang 5 L convertible, would make me pretty happy. However, that’s something I’m going to have to earn myself.

Enjoy your holidays, visit your friends and family, and renew old acquaintances. Revel in this time and don’t waste a moment.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all, a good night.

**BRIAN LOCKHART**  
FROM THE SECOND ROW



## Christmas lists and tall orders

If you happen to celebrate Christmas, you’ll understand that everybody has their own individual stressors that can sometimes cast a shadow over what is often plugged as “the most wonderful time of the year.” Thanks for that, by the way, Andy Williams and Staples.

For some, it might be getting everything just right before family arrives for the big, celebratory dinner. For others, it might be a time of trepidation as a family gathers for the first time since the loss of a regular fixture at the table. Still, others, a number that is growing at a pace that is nothing short of alarming, are simply concerned about their ability to have something on that table, regardless of who is or who is not there.

When I consider my own stressors at this time of year, particularly in how they figure into the big picture, they are mercifully small potatoes. I’m fortunate enough to have a roof over my head, something warm in my stomach every night, and presently – although so many things seem precarious these days – have the wherewithal to get or make gifts, or otherwise provide, for my loved

ones.

I’m conscious that I’m one of the lucky ones, even though I find my own seasonal frustration with trying to figure out a schedule of when and where I need to be during the season of gathering, hopefully deriving a schedule that works for everyone, causes minimal disruption, and, sometimes more importantly, minimal offence.

Every time Christmas rolls around, I make a pledge that my own personal gift to myself will be to make the holidays as stress-free as possible. I haven’t quite been able to achieve that for various factors – everything from weather to motivation – but there’s no harm in dreaming, is there?

I guess you can call it, to borrow a phrase from a flash-in-the-pan holiday song, a “grown up Christmas list.”

The older I get, the less material my grown-up Christmas list is. Depending on the circumstances of the year, it can include the practical (my childhood self couldn’t have imagined how excited my adult self would be to receive a good pair of well-made cozy socks) or the

ephemeral, such as gifting an “experience” that can be just as groovy, if not more so, than a tchotchke that collects dust.

Otherwise, sometimes in a level of dismay with the state of the world, it can be a grown-up Christmas list for the wider world, whether at the community, national, or international levels.

Given the year that was, and the year that continues to be for a little while yet, that is the direction I have found myself leaning this year.

So, herewith, a truncated list for the year ahead:

### APPRECIATING LESSONS LEARNED

As our neighbours to the south appear to be heading backwards in many respects – see: the possible revocation of the time-tested, highly effective polio vaccine after more than 70 years of successfully beating the disease back – it’s time to take notice and take stock so our country does not move further in an anti-science, anti-democratic direction.

The incoming administration will be an international game-changer in many

respects, and countries like ours need to keep up, but, alas, we have been down this road before.

Premier Ford caused a stir last week by suggesting one way of combatting debilitating tariffs threatened by the incoming administration is to withhold energy exports to the United States, particularly in Michigan, Minnesota and New York.

“We’re sending a message to the US,” he said. “You come and attack Ontario, you attack the livelihoods of Ontario and Canadians, we’re going to use every tool in our toolbox to defend Ontarians and Canadians across the border.”

But the Premiers of Quebec and Alberta were among those pushing back on the idea, with Alberta’s Smith suggesting diplomacy is the way to go.

From my perspective, however, it seems Premier Ford was the only one taking notes on negotiation from the incoming administration’s first go-round.

Continued on Page 19

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# Syria: Another miracle, please

**GWYNNE DYER**  
OUR WORLD TODAY



They're still celebrating the miraculous fall of the Assad regime in Damascus, and the killing has stopped in Syria except for parts of the north, east and south. So what are the odds that the man whose fighters brought down the regime, Ahmed al-Sharaa, can bring peace, prosperity and even democracy to Syria?

Sharaa, until recently known as Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, is an Islamist who started out in al-Qaeda. He is therefore still listed as a terrorist, which he is not, or at least not any more – but as an Islamist he would normally reject 'modern' forms of Islam that permit abominations like democracy and equal rights for women.

That would not endear him even to Sunni Muslims (70 per cent of Syria's population). Sharaa is Sunni himself, but most of them would see his Islamist doctrines as extreme. And he really frightens the 30 per cent of Syrians who

belong to various religious minorities: Alawites, Ismailis, mainstream Shia Muslims, Christians, and Druze.

To make matters worse one of the Muslim minorities, the Alawites, has effectively run the country for the past 53 years under the Assad family, father and son. The other minorities tacitly backed Alawite rule because they feared Sunni domination – and over those years hundreds of thousands of innocent people, mostly Sunnis, were tortured and murdered.

Now an explicitly Islamist Sunni force called Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) has overthrown the Assad regime. Sharaa promises that the rights of all minorities will be respected and the new Syria will be democratic, but he would say that at this stage, wouldn't he?

One might also mention the country's ethnic diversity (Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Druze), the fact that Syria has just been through a 13-year civil war that has left half the population refugees either at home or abroad, and the presence of foreign troops (Turkish, Russian, Israeli and American) on its soil, all with blood on their hands.

Finished yet? No. The new HTS-appointed government in Damascus is dead broke, with no immediate source of income except its Turkish backers. All the minorities are heavily armed, and HTS forces currently control no more than a quarter of the country's territory.

Israel has just destroyed the Syrian air force in more than 300 air strikes and seized land across the Syrian border, just in case it doesn't like the policies of the new government when they finally become clear. The Russians, Assad's biggest backers, may leave, but the Turks are carving out Syrian territory along the

border for a buffer zone.

So what is Syria's biggest problem? None of the above. It is the fear that HTS will try to turn Syria into a radical religious dictatorship like Afghanistan.

That would terrify not only the Americans, the Russians, and the various Shia countries and minorities of the Middle East, but also all the non-extremist Sunni states in the region. Syria would be isolated and stigmatized as a terrorist state, its people would start fleeing again, and the killing would doubtless also re-start before long.

The best insurance against this disaster would be a secular democracy where religious beliefs are a strictly private matter, but it's unlikely that HTS will permit that. So what's the least bad available option? Perhaps some version of the old Ottoman millet system, where every religious group ran its own affairs but Sunni Turks made the big decisions.

In the Syrian case, it would be Sunni Arabs making the big decisions, while the other religious groups (and also an ethnic group, in the case of the Kurds) would have broad autonomy in matters closer to home.

If this sounds a bit like the old Lebanon, which broke down in a 15-year civil war and never really recovered, well, yes, it is. But that Lebanese state might still be functioning today if it had not been destroyed by the Palestinians and the Israelis. It wasn't a full democracy, but there was at least the rule of law and freedom of speech.

Even this kind of compromise will be hard for Ahmed al-Sharaa and HTS to accept, however, because fundamentalists of any variety have a big problem with secular states. If they truly believe in their version of God, then they should do what he wants – and what he wants, in the Islamist and most other fundamentalist versions of God, is not a secular state.

Not to do God's will, when it is in your power to do it, is definitely a sin. As the Vatican used to put it in the bad old days, "Error has no rights."

Even if Sharaa can talk himself into accepting a democratic and secular state, it's an open question whether the men around him can. (They are all men, of course.) What Syria needs is another miracle.



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Puzzle No. 24C310 • Solution in Classifieds

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### CLUES ACROSS

- Miller beer variety
- Member of people inhabiting Bering Sea islands
- Stomach
- Investment vehicle
- Fictional soccer coach Ted
- Irregular in botanical parlance
- Cease standing
- "American Horror Story" actress
- Grow milk teeth
- Plant parts
- Snow house
- Most contemptuous
- Note to repay
- Old English
- Wings
- Financial institutions
- Parks and Lopez are two
- Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
- Relative biological

### CLUES DOWN

- Dormant Peruvian volcano
- Norwegian composer
- Indicates location
- Pubs
- Unable to walk easily
- Electronic warfare-support measures
- World leader
- Midsection
- Jewish calendar month
- Urological condition
- A small quantity of anything
- Mountain Time
- Affirmative
- Word element meaning ear
- Carried away
- Short-billed rails
- Newborn child
- Sword

### CLUES DOWN

- Witness
- Groups of people
- Prickly, scrambling shrubs
- Become less intense
- Polishes
- Indicates position
- Songs sung to one's beloved
- The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
- Insects
- Israeli politician
- Pre-digital
- Roaming
- Ambience
- Brew
- Late
- Make ecstatically happy
- Semitic alphabet letter
- Blend
- Dash
- Self
- Exclamation of satisfaction
- Hill or rocky peak

*No one has more self-confidence than the person who does a crossword puzzle with a pen.*

# Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to change organizational structure

BY SAM ODROWSKI

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) recently announced changes to its organizational structure and human resource allocation for next year in response to critical program pressures, increasingly constrained human resources due to funding pressures, and upcoming revisions to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS).

The SMDHU's Board of Health and senior management have been preparing for the impending changes by approving a new organizational structure that will take

effect on Jan. 1, 2025.

"These changes are necessary to strengthen our capacity in infectious disease and immunization programming, while managing within increasingly limited financial and human resources. As a result, personnel from various departments are being reassigned and additional adjustments are being made over the coming months to align with expected revisions to the OPHS that defines and guides our work, and to make optimal use of our resources," said Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU).

"Although our organizational changes will formally take place on Jan. 1, 2025 the transition of staff, and the planning and implementation of program changes will continue throughout 2025. During this period of adjustment, the health unit will continue its work with partners, clients and the communities to fulfill our mission."

The health unit's stated mission is "With our communities, we prevent disease and injury, and promote and protect health for all in Simcoe Muskoka."

On behalf of the health unit's leadership and Board of Health, Dr. Gardner said he



recognizes that this is a substantial change and wishes to commend SMDHU staff for their dedication and professionalism during this challenging situation.

"I know that together, step-by-step we will come through this change successfully," said Dr. Gardner.

# Simcoe County creates resource sheet for homeless individuals across the region

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The County of Simcoe has created a new resource sheet supporting unhoused individuals across the region.

This sheet includes details on various programs that are available throughout winter 2024-25 and will be regularly updated on the County's website as support continues to open for the region's most vulnerable individuals.

The resource sheet outlines investments in unhoused individuals across the region made through the County's 10-point homelessness prevention strategy, which provides significant investments and resources to help unhoused individuals across the region. It includes recent announcements, such as expansions to the County's Supportive Rapid Re-Housing Program, expanded domiciliary care agreements

housing more vulnerable, seniors, warming centres, and more information on what is available.

The 10-point homelessness prevention strategy makes affordable housing even more attainable by increasing supply, creating 'deep rent subsidies,' increasing eviction prevention services and improving available shelter. The strategy commits the County to finding new opportunities, enhancing community shelter services, and improving safety throughout the community.

Those in need of shelter or warmth can always call 2-1-1 to connect with a nearby shelter.

The County's 10-point homelessness prevention strategy provides a strong, data-driven plan to help vulnerable residents.

The strategy includes a considerable added investment toward the goal of preventing and ending chronic homelessness.

**COUNTY OF SIMCOE**

## HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 10-POINT PLAN

- 01 MAKE AFFORDABLE HOUSING MORE ATTAINABLE TO END HOMELESSNESS**  
Providing deep Rent Subsidies for individuals and families (\$600-\$800) distributed through Housing First and Outreach teams
- 02 CREATING NEW SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAMS**  
Increase creative Supportive Housing Programs by converting existing community housing into supportive housing programs
- 03 CREATING PEACE OF MIND WHEN USING SERVICES**  
Offering Storage Unit Solutions for people who are homeless to store belongings safely while accessing services
- 04 IMPROVING SAFETY AND WELL-BEING FOR THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE**  
Enhancing and mobilizing mobile Outreach Services to improve safety and well-being for all
- 05 INCREASING HOUSING AVAILABILITY IN CURRENT PROGRAMS**  
Increasing housing availability through increased Affordable Housing stock and Supportive Housing units, and lifting the funding freeze on the Domiciliary Care Program
- 06 CREATING EASIER WAYS TO HELP ACCESS SERVICES**  
Implementing a Centralized Intake System that is available after hours for services
- 07 ENHANCING OUR COMMUNITY SHELTERS SERVICES AND STANDARDS**  
Increasing funding to the Shelter System and supporting the Temporary Shelter at Rose Street over the winter months
- 08 INCREASING EVICTION PREVENTION SERVICES AND ACCESS TO HOUSING FOR FAMILIES**  
Improving access to housing through Housing Retention Funding by doubling the grant limits for families
- 09 IMPROVING SHELTER ON THE HOUSING CONTINUUM**  
Addressing repairs/maintenance needs through the Retrofits & Upgrades Program (up to \$50K per grant)
- 10 FINDING NEW OPPORTUNITIES**  
Continued attention to Potential Capital/Operating Opportunities to increase housing

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# Blood donor clinics coming to New Tecumseth amidst increase in demand

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The demand for blood and plasma is rising, but there are not enough donors to keep up with the increasing demand.

On average across the country, there are around 230 new donors each day. To meet the growing need for blood and plasma, that number needs to double.

Canadian Blood Services is calling people across the country to be one of the 450 new

donors needed every day this winter.

More patients need blood products than over the past decade due to an increase in surgeries and treatments that require blood products. This is due to the fact that the population is aging and growing.

One in two Canadians are eligible to give blood, yet only one in 76 actually does.

There are many ways to help, and each action means saving lives in different ways.

You can become a blood, platelet, or plasma donor. Blood products have a limited

shelf life, which is why the need is constant. One donation could save three lives.

Join the stem cell registry – you could be a match for the nearly 1,000 people in Canada who are waiting for a stem cell transplant.

Register your intent to donate organs and tissues to help more than 4,000 people in Canada who are waiting for an organ transplant.

There are two blood donor clinics coming to New Tecumseth in January.

There will be a clinic at Alliston Memo-

rial Arena, 49 Nelson Street W., Alliston, on Thursday, Jan. 23, from 1:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

There will be a clinic at the Tottenham Community Centre in Tottenham, 139 Queen Street North, on Saturday, Jan. 18, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

To book your spot, visit [blood.ca](http://blood.ca), or call 1-888-2DONATE.

It is important that once you make your appointment, you keep it, and show up on your donation day.

# NVCA looking for volunteers for the Conservation Areas Engagement Working Group

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is inviting community members with a passion for nature to join its new Conservation Areas Engagement Working Group.

This is an exciting opportunity for those who want to roll up their sleeves, share creative ideas, and help shape the future of the region's most beloved natural spaces.

The NVCA's 11 Conservation Areas offer many opportunities for visitors to connect with nature. Visitors can enjoy self-guided activities such as hiking, snowshoeing, canoeing and fishing. Special events and education programs offer a more interactive way to explore nature.

"This isn't your typical committee," said Elise Barr-Klouman, community engagement facilitator at NVCA. "We are looking for volunteers who are passionate about protecting nature, connecting with others, and creating lasting change to join us. The group will play

a key role in supporting NVCA's fundraising efforts and increasing public awareness about the importance of natural spaces."

The new working group will focus on increasing the profile of the Conservation Areas, starting with Fort Willow Conservation Area and Tiffin Centre for Conservation, and potentially extending to other locations like Edenvale, Minesing Wetlands, Nottawasaga Bluffs, and Petun Conservation Areas.

With a special focus on shaping future events at Fort Willow Conservation Area, members will explore innovative programming ideas, work with heritage and community partners, pursue sponsorship opportunities, and support funding initiatives to expand the event's reach and impact.

Members will meet quarterly or more often during key planning periods. This volunteer opportunity offers plenty of flexibility for members to lead individual projects or assist at events.

If you are interested in joining the Conser-



**NEW GROUP** – The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is looking for volunteers to join its new Conservation Areas Engagement Working Group. The group will have an impact on shaping future events at places like Fort Willow Conservation Area.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

interview. applications are open until Jan. 3, 2025. For more information or to apply, visit [nvca.on.ca](http://nvca.on.ca) or email [lands@nvca.on.ca](mailto:lands@nvca.on.ca). Selected candidates may be invited for an



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**The Times** New Tecumseth

**SANTA COMES TO TOWN** – Downtown Beeton was filled with Christmas spirit for the community's Santa Claus Parade on Saturday, Dec. 14. Presented by the Beeton Agricultural Society, the parade featured floats, bands, dancers, and an assortment of parade participants who drummed up holiday cheer. The parade started at Jackson Plaza and made its way down Main Street to the Beeton Arena. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**



# The Times <sup>New Tecumseth</sup> Season's Greetings **GUIDE**



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# Season's Greetings 2024

# Indulge in food and family FUN this holiday season

Families have their own unique holiday traditions, and such customs help to make this time of year so special.

Baking together as a family is a popular holiday tradition that rewards everyone with some tasty treats after a fun-filled day in the kitchen. Incorporating a holiday theme into baked goods can add to the fun factor, particularly for children. Families looking to mix fun and food this holiday season can try their hands at this recipe for "Chocolate Reindeer Cupcakes" courtesy of Lines+Angles.



## Chocolate Reindeer Cupcakes

Makes 12 servings ★ Preparation time: 40 minutes ★ Cooking time: 25 minutes ★ Total time: 1 hour, 5 minutes ★ Difficulty: Medium

### Ingredients:

#### FOR CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES:

- 2/3 cup butter, softened
- 3/4 cup superfine sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups self-rising flour
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder

#### FOR CHOCOLATE FROSTING:

- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 3 1/3 cups confectioners' sugar
- 7/8 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 - 6 tbsp milk

#### FOR DECORATIONS:

- 12 sets candy eyes
- 12 red gumdrops
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

### Directions:

#### FOR CHOCOLATE CUPCAKES:

1. Preheat the oven to 375 F. Line muffin tin wells with 12 paper cupcake liners.
2. In a large mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Gradually add flour and cocoa powder, mixing until all ingredients are incorporated.
3. Spoon the batter into the paper liners. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until tops are springy to the touch. Cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pan and allow to cool completely before decorating.

#### FOR CHOCOLATE FROSTING:

1. In a large bowl, cream butter until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar, cocoa and vanilla. Add milk one tablespoon at a time until frosting reaches the desired consistency. Frost each cupcake using an off-set spatula.

small plain round tip. Pipe antlers with chocolate on parchment or waxed paper; place in the refrigerator or freezer and allow to set.

3. Once the chocolate has set, carefully remove antlers from paper and insert in cupcake. Serve.

#### TO DECORATE:

1. Arrange candied eyes and gumdrop nose on frosted cupcake.
2. Melt semisweet chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Cool slightly, and transfer to a pastry bag fitted with



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# Season's Greetings 2024

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GUM DROP  
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CHOCOLATE

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# Season's Greetings 2024



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Season's Greetings 2024

# Craft an edible HOLIDAY classic from the comforts of home



## Ginger Bread House

**Ingredients:**

**FOR THE HOUSE:**

- 3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra as needed
- 3 tbsp cornstarch
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup molasses, warmed
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

**FOR THE FROSTING:**

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar, plus extra as needed
- 1 1/2 tbsp meringue powder
- 1 - 2 tbsp warm water

**TO DECORATE:**

Assorted colourful candies, sugared chocolate candies, round peppermint candies, candy canes, etc.

**Directions:**

1. For the gingerbread: Combine the flour, cornstarch, spices, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Stir well and set aside.
2. Beat the softened butter with the molasses and vanilla in a separate mixing bowl until pale and creamy, about 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Beat in the flour mixture in 4 additions, mixing well between additions until you have a rough dough; add more flour as needed to form a stiff dough.
4. Turn out and knead briefly. Shape into a round, wrap in parchment paper, and chill for 2 hours.
5. After chilling, preheat the oven to 325 F. Grease and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Remove the dough from the refrigerator. Roll out to about 0.333" thickness on a lightly floured surface.
7. Cut out two rectangles approximately 4.5" x 4" for the roof. Cut out 2 pointed rectangles

- approximately 5" at their tallest points and 3.5" wide at the base; these will be the front and back of the house as per the image. Make sure that one side has a round window cut out.
8. Using some of the remaining dough, cut out the 2 rectangles to be the sides of the house, approximately 3" x 4" in diameter. Use the remaining dough to cut out 4 even rectangles, approximately 2" x 1.5", to shape the chimney.
9. Arrange the pieces across the baking sheets. Bake for about 25 minutes until browned and dry to the touch. Remove to cooling racks to cool.
10. For the frosting: Combine the confectioners' sugar, meringue powder and 2 tablespoons warm water in a large mixing bowl.
11. Beat with an electric mixer until the frosting is thick and glossy, about 4 to 5 minutes; beat in more confectioners' sugar if too thin and more water if too thick.
12. Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a thin, round nozzle. Chill for 15 minutes.

13. To decorate: Using the frosting as 'glue,' assemble the chimney using the 4 even rectangles of gingerbread. Let dry and set.
14. Start to assemble the rest of the house by glueing the pieces together as per the image, attaching the front and back of the house to the sides before attaching the roof in place. Let set dry and set at each building interval.
15. Once the sections are dry, pipe more frosting onto the edges of the roof and down their sides, shaped as icicles.
16. When the chimney is set, attach it to the top, cutting the pieces to fit if necessary, and decorating the outside with frosting.
17. To decorate: Attach the assorted candies to the house, decorating the roof with a tiled pattern using the frosting.
18. Let the house dry and set until ready to serve.

– Courtesy of Lines+Angles.

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**May the Light, Love, Joy, and Hope of the Holiday Season bring Peace to you and your world. As we enter into 2024, as always I will be here to help in whatever your needs may be.**

**Blessings, Ken Pratt**

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## Season's Greetings 2024

# Christmas cookies embody the JOY of holiday cooking



The holiday season simply wouldn't be the same without food. The joyful spirit of the season lends itself to sharing a bite if not a full meal with family and friends. Perhaps that explains why so many people embrace the joy of baking each holiday season. Some bake to honour and continue family traditions, while others spend hours crafting cookies to put a smile on the face of loved ones each holiday season.

Whatever it is that inspires individuals to break out the measuring cups, flour and whisk, cookie fans undoubtedly appreciate that spark of confectionary creativity. This holiday season, those with an urge to bake some cookies can try this recipe for "Christmas Linz Shortbread Cookies with Red Jam" from Lines+Angles.

## Christmas Linz Shortbread Cookies With Red Jam

Makes approximately 24 cookies

Preparation time: 30 minutes ★ Resting time: 1 hour, 30 minutes ★ Baking time: 15 minutes ★ Difficulty: Easy

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup almond flour
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 1/2 cup raspberry jam
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, almond flour, salt, and cinnamon together. In a separate bowl, beat the butter and sugar until fluffy. Add in the egg yolks, vanilla extract and lemon zest and continue to beat until well incorporated.
2. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and continue to beat until just combined to form a dough. Divide the dough in half; pat each half into a disc, wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour.
3. Remove the dough from the refrigerator, and let it soften for about 5 minutes, until soft enough to roll. On a lightly floured surface, roll one disc of dough out to about 1/4" thickness. Using a 3" cookie cutter, cut out cookies. Cut out a top for each cookie using a smaller cookie cutter to cut out the centre. Transfer the cookies to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Gather the scrap dough, roll, and repeat.
4. Place the first batch of cut cookies in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to chill. Preheat the oven to 350 F and repeat the process with the second batch of dough.
5. Bake the chilled cookies for about 12 minutes or until just starting to turn golden around the edges. Let the cookies cool for a few minutes until transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.
6. Once cooled, spread the bottom half of each cookie with some raspberry preserves, leaving a thin border around each cookie. Dust the tops of each cookie with powdered sugar and place on its corresponding bottom half. Use a spoon or piping bag to fill the cut-out centre with a little more of the preserves.



## Hot Chocolate

### Ingredients:

- 2 cup milk
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 1/2 cup dark chocolate
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

### Directions:

1. Add milk, cocoa powder, cinnamon stick and sugar to a pot on medium low heat. Remove from heat once the chocolate has melted. Whisk in vanilla extract.
2. Whisk until mixture comes to a boil. Add dark chocolate and continuously whisk so that it does not stick to the bottom of the pot.
3. Serve with marshmallows, whipped cream and/or chocolate sauce.



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## Season's Greetings 2024

# Add a new offering to your Christmas cookie lineup



The holiday season doubles as cookie season. Indeed, there's no shortage of baking opportunities in December. Various cookies make the rounds, and if you are tasked with bringing cookies to a function, you might be interested in something a little different.

"Santa's Whiskers" likely get their name from the coconut on these cookies, which resemble Santa's beard. Maraschino cherries add some jolly red to the cookies as well, making them perfect for Christmas. Try this recipe from "Butter, Flour, Sugar, Joy" (Sourcebooks) by Danielle Kartes.

### Directions:

1. In a stand mixer, with a hand mixer, or by hand, cream the sugar and butter until light and fluffy.

Add the cherries, vanilla, almond extract, and salt. Mix thoroughly. Fold into the flour and mix until it forms a crumbly but moist dough.

2. Lay a 16-inch sheet of parchment paper onto the counter. Sprinkle 1 cup of the coconut on the centre in a loose rectangle, making sure it does not reach the edge of the parchment. Place the cookie dough on top, flattening a bit with your fingers, and sprinkle the remaining coconut over the top of the dough.

3. Form the dough into a 12- to 14-inch log, about 3 inches thick. Evenly press the coconut around the log and roll to make the log an even cylinder. Roll the parchment up with the dough inside and twist the ends. Chill for at least 2 hours or overnight.

4. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Slice cookies in 1/4- to 1/2-inch rounds, place on the prepared baking sheet, about 2 inches apart, and bake 12 to 15 minutes. Allow to cool before serving. Store in an airtight container.

## Santa's Whiskers

Makes approximately 20 to 24 cookies

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups confectioner's sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 112-ounce jar pitted maraschino cherries, strained and stemmed
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp almond extract
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sweetened shredded coconut



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Season's Greetings 2024

# 10 New Year's Eve PARTY POINTERS



Many people consider New Year's Day the unofficial end of the holiday season. That often means that New Year's Eve is an opportunity to socialize, gather and party one final time before returning to the routines of daily life.

The first known instance of New Year's celebrations can be traced to around 2,000 B.C. in the region of Mesopotamia. Celebrants were gathering in March, rather than January, as this was the time of the vernal equinox, when the darkness of winter subsided and agricultural life could begin anew.

As individuals count down the days until New Year's Eve festivities, these planning tips can make the celebrations occasions to remember.

**1. Consider a theme**

Everyone who is anyone is having or attending a NYE party. Let your event stand out from the throngs of others with a theme. Guests can come dressed as dynamic duos (like Mario and Luigi) or the party can evoke a bygone era, such as the roaring 1920s. Let guests know what they can do to play the part.

**2. Start late**

You do not want guests wiped out by the time midnight arrives. Therefore, start the party at around 9 or 10 p.m. and anticipate it lasting into the wee hours of the morning.

**3. Tailor drinks to the season**

Utilize seasonal ingredients when crafting drinks, or serve drinks that are expected this time of year, such as a boozy eggnog or cranberry Moscow mules.

**4. Provide various activities**

Plan fun activities during the party. Offer card games or board games to give guests something to do. Karaoke or group activities like trivia also can spread out the fun.

**5. Beverages should be accessible**

Unless you are hiring a bartender who will be on call to pour drinks, having drinks ready to go is a smart

idea. In addition to cans/bottles of beer or malt beverages, have ready-to-go mixed drinks available by selecting a signature drink and preparing a bulk batch.

**6. Curate a winning playlist**

Ask guests to submit a list of their favourite tunes so you can create a collection of songs that will ebb and flow with the evening's events. Be sure to include some sing-a-long favourites like "Don't Stop Believin'" or "Tiny Dancer."

**7. Offer self-serve foods**

Much like having drinks ready to go, make foods accessible as well. Finger foods and bite-sized morsels will not require guests to carry plates, reducing the chances for spillage. Sliders, miniature quiches and dessert shooters should suffice.

**8. Tie decorations into the theme**

Classic New Year's Eve decorations include balloons, streamers and confetti. Think about a very festive balloon arch or backdrop that also can serve as a place to pose for photo opportunities.

**9. Offer takeaway gifts for designated drivers**

Encourage guests to stay sober and volunteer for designated driving duties by offering prizes. Ideas include gift cards to coffee shops or restaurants.

**10. Be ready for midnight**

Have a large television at the ready to show the midnight countdown and start pouring champagne roughly 20 minutes before midnight to ensure all glasses are full when the clock strikes 12.

New Year's Eve celebrations get an extra boost from a well-planned party.

## Blood-Orange Champagne Cocktail

- 2 1/4 cups freshly squeezed or frozen blood-orange juice
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— Courtesy of Martha Stewart

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# SPORTS

NEW TECUMSETH TIMES

## Hornets continue to dominate Junior Hockey with three more wins

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Alliston Hornets continue to dominate the North Carruthers Division of the Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) after winning three more games this weekend.

The Hornets are undefeated after 24 games this season.

On Thursday, Dec. 12, the Hornets travelled to Stayner to take on the third-place Siskins.

It was a 2-1 Alliston game at the end of the first period.

Jax Bellwood scored the only goal of the second frame to make it a 3-1 game.

Bellwood and Ben Smith scored Alliston goals in the third period to give the Hornets a 5-1 win to start the week.

They were back at it the next night when they returned to the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre to host the Muskoka Bears.

The Bears are new to the League and arrived in Alliston as a team that has only won three games this season.

The Hornets set the tone of the game in the first period scoring seven unanswered goals to pretty much end the game before the teams returned for the second period.

Muskoka scored the only goal of the second period to avoid a shut-out.

Returning for the third period, Duncan Grube and Ben Smith each netted one Alliston goal to end the night with a 9-1 Alliston win.

The third game of the week had the Hornets in Midland to take on the Flyers.

The Midland team got the jump on the action in this game scoring three unanswered



**WINNING STREAK** – The Alliston Hornets host the Muskoka Bears at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Dec. 13. The Hornets won this game 9-1, and continue to remain in first place in the North Carruthers Division of the Provincial Junior Hockey League.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

goals to lead the game.

It was the second period that saw the Hornets come alive after being surprised by the effort in the first period. The Hornets scored six unanswered goals in the second period, leading 6-3 with one period remaining.

Midland scored early in the third period, but the Hornets responded with two more to end the night with an 8-4 win.

After the weekend, the Hornets are in first place with 48 points – seven ahead of the second-place Orillia Terriers.

The Stayner Siskins are in third place with 36 points.

The Hornets will return to home ice at the NTRC on Friday, Dec. 20, when they will host the Stayner Siskins.

Game time is 7:30 p.m.

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# At-home sudden death of family member – what to do when it happens

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The sudden at-home death of an immediate family member can be a very traumatic experience – especially for those who have not experienced a death before.

Most people will be unprepared and may not know which authorities should be notified of such an event.

When a death is expected due to a long illness, there are support systems that will guide you through the purpose.

There are many misconceptions when it comes to death in Ontario and any real laws that pertain to how the deceased should be disposed of.

Many Canadians will be surprised to learn there are few, if any real laws, regarding the disposal of human remains.

Government documents only say “the remains must be disposed of in a dignified and appropriate manner.”

However, there are laws pertaining to reporting deaths. You can be charged for not reporting a death or not properly caring for a deceased person.

In Ontario, if a person dies unexpectedly or suddenly, you should call emergency services. If a death is expected, you should call the doctor who was caring for the deceased person.

If there is uncertainty about why the person has died, the local coroner’s office

must be notified.

Most families choose to use the service of a funeral home. There is no legal requirement that you must use any services from a funeral service provider.

You can go through the entire process on your own. However, for most people, using a service provider is the best option as they know about body preparation, arrange services, complete needed documents, and can make arrangements through cemeteries.

Funeral homes can handle the details to make sure everything is done properly while providing the family the time to grieve their loss.

Currently, there are three main processes for disposing of a body in Ontario – burial,

cremation, and alkaline hydrolysis.

A funeral director usually oversees the process of registering a death, but a family member can also register the death without using a funeral service provider. You must register a death before a burial permit can be issued.

If the death occurred outside of Ontario, but the burial and arrangements will take place in the province, you need a burial, transit, or removal permit from the jurisdiction where the death occurred.

A sudden death is something we can never truly be prepared for, however having some knowledge of what to do when it happens, can at least relieve some of the stress of a traumatic time.

Continued from Page 4

## Brock’s Banter: Christmas lists and tall orders

### MEDIA LITERACY

Teaching media literacy is a frequent flyer in my grown-up Christmas list and it remains so this year, perhaps more importantly than ever in the face of the rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence in its myriad forms.

In the context of media literacy, I’ve always believed it’s important for students who are growing up in a digital realm to learn how to properly navigate it, use it to its best advantage, and be safe and savvy while doing so in a rapidly changing environment.

From protecting themselves online at times when parents are unable or unavailable to provide assistance, to being able to recognize the truth in a sea

of misinformation or, worse, unadulterated fake news, all generations would benefit from this emphasis and, in my view, it’s becoming just as important as Civics and the Provincial curriculum’s recent shift towards practical math.

In a time when so many are leaning on apps and platforms like ChatGPT to make their lives easier, it’s become more pervasive and harder to separate the proverbial wheat from the chaff. Without the means and skills to recognize it as it comes at us, where does that leave us as a society?

### A RENAISSANCE OF COMPASSION AND EMPATHY

At this time of year, it is often a welcome

shift to be able to cover the scores of individuals and groups across our communities who are stepping up to have a real positive impact on our residents, whether it is a food or clothing drive to help families make ends meet at this often-trying time of the year, or simply shovelling snow for a neighbour in need.

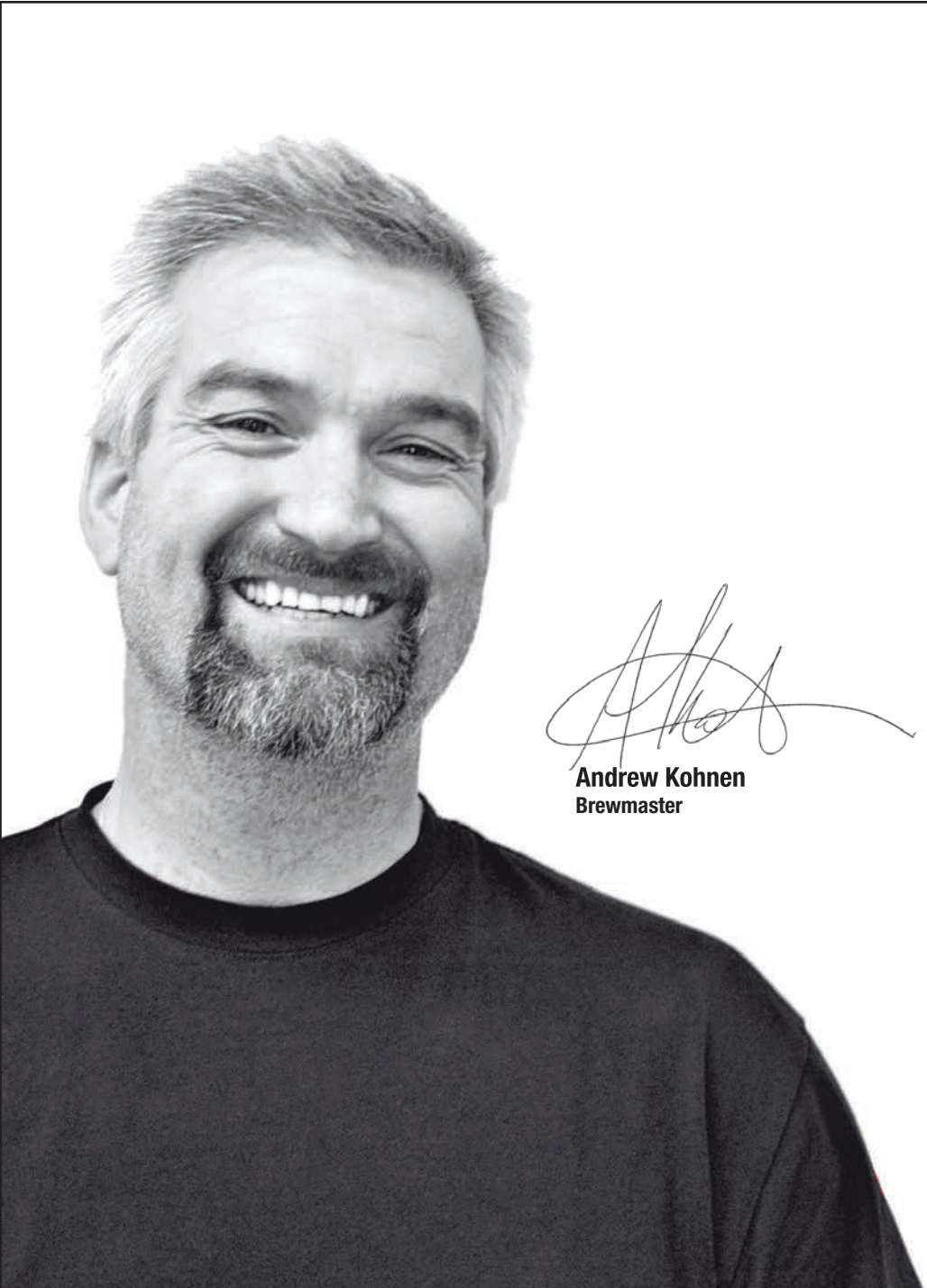
Yet, in some other instances seen over the course of the year, we see examples of self-centredness or, worse, selfishness in the interest of looking out for Number One to the expense of the whole. This can be seen materially, philosophically, and politically.

While there is nothing wrong with looking out for Number One, all too often these days, spreading the wealth a little

bit – again, materially, philosophically or politically – can be seen as “woke” (whatever this actually means) or a state of weakness.


Compassion and empathy (and, indeed, grace) unlike the flu, are not seasonal conditions and should be exercised all year round, from lending a hand or simply recognizing that everyone is fighting their own individual battle – and what we might classify as “needs” versus “wants” in our own circumstances, generations, and life experiences might not be the same for our friends, neighbours, coworkers, and wider community members.

As far as Christmas lists go, I don’t think it’s too tall of an order.



*Andrew Kohlen*  
**Andrew Kohlen**  
Brewmaster

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## Three arrested after Nottawasaga OPP execute search warrant

Three people were arrested and charged after members of the Nottawasaga Community Street Crime Unit, Emergency Response Team, and Crime Reduction Unit from the Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) executed a search warrant on Knight Street in Alliston.

In the fall of 2024, Nottawasaga CSCU began an investigation regarding a male trafficking drugs in downtown Alliston.

Officers observed activity consistent with drug trafficking and obtained a CDSA search warrant.

On Dec. 10, 2024, officers observed 'accused 2' conducting a drug transaction in Tottenham, and with the assistance of ERT officers, arrested the male while he was parked on the side of the road in Tottenham.

Nottawasaga CSCU officers then attended the residence and executed a CDSA search warrant shortly before 1 p.m.

A search of the residence along with three vehicles was completed where police seized the following items: Approximately two ounces of cocaine, four imitation handguns, one

imitation rifle, one prohibited knife, 12 knives, five swords/axes/cleavers, two cell phones, scales, brass knuckles, body armour carrier, two stolen sets of headphones, and 2027 Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck with a value of \$30,000 seized as offence related property.

Investigators have arrested and charged the following individuals contrary to the Criminal Code of Canada and the Controlled Drug and Substances Act.

Eric Hogg, 36, of Adjala-Tosorontio, has been charged with Trafficking in a Schedule I substance – Cocaine; Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of Trafficking – Cocaine; Possession of imitation weapon for Dangerous Purpose – four counts; and Possession of a prohibited device.

Trevor Wilson, 38, of Alliston has been charged with Trafficking in Schedule I substance – Cocaine; Possession of a Schedule I Substance for the Purpose of Trafficking - Cocaine; Carrying a concealed weapon; Possession of Weapon for Dangerous Purpose; Possession of Imitation Weapon for Dangerous Purpose – four counts; Possession of a prohib-



**SEIZED ITEMS** – The Ontario Provincial Police arrested three local area residents after an investigation and execution of a search warrant on Tuesday, Dec. 11. Police seized a quantity of illegal drugs and weapons as well as one vehicle during the search. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

ited device; Breach of Recognizance; and Possession of Property Obtained by Crime Under \$5,000 in Canada – two counts.

Kelsey Kirk, 35, of Alliston, has been charged with Trafficking in Schedule I Substance – Cocaine; Possession of a Schedule I Substance for the Purpose of Trafficking – Cocaine; Possession of imitation Weapon for Dangerous Purpose – four counts; Possession of a prohibited device; and Possession of

Property Obtained by Crime Under \$5,000 in Canada – two counts.

Accused 1 and 2 were held for a bail hearing and appeared before the Ontario Court of Justice on Dec. 12.

Accused 3, was released on an Undertaking and is to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice on Jan. 9, 2025.

The listed charges have not been tested in court.

## Police seeking public's help identifying suspects of armed home invasion, robbery

Officers from the Nottawasaga Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are investigating a home invasion and robbery in Everette.

On Dec. 8, shortly before 7:30 p.m., officers were dispatched to a residence on Burbank Circle in the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio for a home invasion in progress. Suspects fled the scene prior to police arrival.

The preliminary investigation revealed that four unknown suspects believed to be three males, and one female attended the address.

Two males approached the driveway and shot off a shotgun at the front of the residence, then proceeded to enter the residence stealing an 85 Inch Samsung TV. The four individuals then fled in a blue four door sedan.

Descriptions pertaining to the driver are very limited at this time. The driver is described as male, skinny build wearing glasses and a hat.

The two male suspects that entered the driveway are described as:

6'0 to 6'3" wearing an all-black sweater and pants, with a ski mask and gloves, holding a

silver barreled shotgun with black grips.

Six feet tall wearing all black clothing, a ski mask, a black sweater that had a bandana with a black and white pattern to it. This male had an all-black handgun, that was described to resemble a Glock.

Police have no description for the female suspect and are encouraging residents to review their camera footage or dash cam for any suspicious activity that may be helpful in this investigation between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., on Sunday Dec. 8.

The investigation is ongoing by the Nottawasaga OPP Major Crime Unit.

If you have any information in relation to this incident, please contact the Nottawasaga Major Crime Unit at 1-888-310-1122 Reference (E241621871).

You can also provide information anonymously by contacting Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or online at [www.crimestoppersdm.com](http://www.crimestoppersdm.com).

When you contact Crime Stoppers you stay anonymous, and you never have to testify.

## Bradford West Gwillimbury resident charged in recent child exploitation investigation

A Bradford West Gwillimbury resident has been charged following a prolonged investigation into online child sexual exploitation.

A search warrant was executed at a residence in Bradford on Wednesday, Dec. 4, and a quantity of electronic devices were seized following an investigation conducted by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Child Sexual Exploitation Unit with the assistance of OPP Digital Forensics and Nottawasaga OPP.

As a result of the investigation, Zi Jian Ken Liu, 19, of Bradford, was arrested and charged with two counts of possession of child pornography, contrary to section 163.1(4) of the Criminal Code.

"Protecting children from sexual exploitation is paramount," said Detective Staff Sergeant Chris Barkey, OPP CSEU. "It's critical that members of law enforcement

and the communities they serve work together to educate our children about safe internet practices, while actively working to identify individuals who seek to cause harm. Through collective efforts, we can foster an online environment where children are safe to explore, learn, and grow. Our most fundamental responsibility as a society is to protect our children from predators who exploit their vulnerability. Many child sexual abuse victims are so young that they cannot tell their story. Each time an image or video of their abuse is shared, it causes further harm and re-victimization to the child."

Parents are reminded to take a proactive approach to help protect their children from online sexual exploitation by speaking with their children regarding internet safety.

Parents can find resources to assist them at [cybertip.ca](http://cybertip.ca) or [protectchildren.ca](http://protectchildren.ca)



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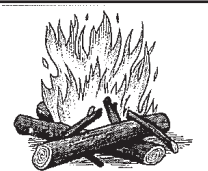
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Lots begin closing at 5pm on Dec 13th.

**Features:** an overflow of sporting goods, hunting and fishing accessories, edged weapons, ammunition, reloading gear, vintage publications and more. Note: There will not be any firearms in this auction.

Still looking for more? The next Straight Shooter Sale returns on February 18-22 with an outstanding Enfield Collection that will be up for auction!



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708 OBITUARIES

**JOHN LEE GOURLEY**  
1962-2024



It is with great sadness that I, Mary DePlancke, announce the passing of my spouse John Gourley of 16 years.

John passed away peacefully at Matthews House December 1st at the age of 62.

He will be lovingly remembered by his siblings Joan, Jim, Jerry, Joe (Cara) and Julie (Joe).

Predeceased by parents Jim and Phyllis.

John was born in Toronto and moved to Adjala when he was 9. He attended Adjala Public School and graduated from Banting Memorial.

He went on to achieve his journeyman carpenter licence at Georgian College. He loved hockey. He played many years in Beeton where his father was coach. He went on to play four years for the Alliston Hornets as a forward and captain. He had faith, he was a Leaf fan until the end!

He worked 40 years as a carpenter, working on numerous homes in New Tecumseth. He also worked at the Alliston Creamery and Baxter Labs. He retired in November 2023.

The family wishes to send special thanks to everyone at Matthews House for their care and compassion.

Also, special thanks go to Rob Winter and Terry Sullivan for their support and true friendship during John's final journey.

John's kind heart touched many lives.

A celebration of life will be held in the spring 2025. (Details to follow)

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602 ARTICLES FOR SALE

**Helen Lucas original for sale - "The Holy Spirit"**



For sale is a unique original painting by renowned floral artist, the late Helen Lucas. "Holy Spirit," is an original acrylic on wood frame piece that captures spirituality in a simple way, through a dove. Created in 2017. The small set of originals was meant to be printed as art cards for a church fundraiser. Only 5-6 of these doves exist (in different poses) so they are truly rare. This is the only one of its kind. Measures 19.5" by 23.5." Lucas originals are quite valuable and sought after. This is unlike anything else in her collection. "... the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Asking \$500. Email [mpavilons@rogers.com](mailto:mpavilons@rogers.com) for more.

**Original Arathoon canvas for sale**



For sale is "Pine on the Ridge" (Small Study) by Canadian artist David Arathoon. It was created in the 1990s and sold at a Caledon-based charity auction. Frame measures 20" by 17.25" and canvas is 11.5" by 8.5". Valued at \$450. David Arathoon has achieved national success with numerous solo and group exhibitions in many private and public galleries, such as the Hummingbird Center for the Performing Arts, Toronto. Arathoon has been instrumental in successful fundraising efforts with his original art and limited edition prints. His prints have raised over \$100,000 for various charities. Asking \$300 obo. Email [mpavilons@rogers.com](mailto:mpavilons@rogers.com)

612 AUCTIONS/FLEA MARKETS



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Come preview this catalog on Dec 27th from 10am-4pm, or call for appointment on another day, at our Home Office Base 438280 4th Line, Melancthon L9V 1S9.

**Features:** CCCS Graded \$1-\$50 CDN Banknotes & Silver Dollars; RCM 2019 The Elements \$3 Silver Coins Set; 1937 Bank of Canada \$50 Banknote; 2016 CDN 90th Birthday 1oz Silver Coin; 1923 CDN 25 cent shinplasters; RCM 1976 Montreal Olympiad \$10 Silver Coin; CDN \$5 Misprint Banknote; 2011 RCM 'Gifts From Santa' 50 Cent Coin; RCM Collectible \$20 Fine Silver Coins including 2003 Rocky Mountains; 1944 Germany & France Allied Scripts; 1986 CDN \$2 Sequential Uncirculated Banknotes; RCM Collectible Coloured Coins; CDN & U.S. Silver Dollars; International Coin Sets & Bank Notes and so much more!

Lots begin closing online at 5pm on Dec 27th. **PLACE YOUR BIDS ONLINE NOW.**

Interested in absentee bids? Give us a call if you have any questions. Join in on the fun and let us treat you like family too.



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**save \$4**

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**Cabbage Rolls** **save \$7**

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**INCREDIBLE PRICE**

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**Dry Garlic Pork** 50-70 PIECES 600 g **save \$4 each**

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**Mini Quiche** 16 PIECES 340 g **sale**

**Mussels in White Wine Sauce** 454 g **LIMITED TIME ONLY**

**Breaded Calamari Rings** 340 g **save \$3**

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