



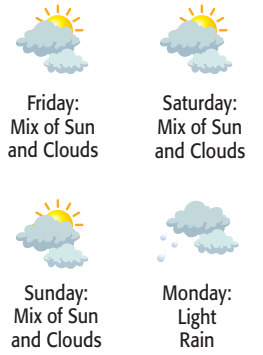
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Santa Claus Comes to Town

Kris Kringle was spotted in downtown Alliston during the Night Lit Santa Claus Parade on Saturday, Nov. 15. The parade travelled down Victoria Street to Young Street, featuring floats and displays from various community groups. Thousands of people lined the parade route and enjoyed some early Christmas cheer. See more photos on Page 8.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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Mayor responds to Automated Speed Enforcement cameras ban

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Local drivers who know where the Automated Speed Enforcement cameras are in New Tecumseth are likely checking their speed when entering those areas.

While cameras have slowed the speed of most cars in community safety zones, the province has decided they aren't a fair way to issue speeding tickets.

The province has passed Bill 56 – Building a More Competitive Economy Act, 2025, which includes significant changes to the Highway Traffic Act, affecting the use of Automated Speed Enforcement cameras.

As of Nov. 14, municipalities are no longer authorized to operate Automated Speed Enforcement cameras in school zones or community safety zones, where they were

previously permitted to do so.

New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross issued a statement on Friday, Nov. 14, in response to the legislation.

“While the ASE program is concluding, our priority remains the safety within our school zones and neighbourhoods,” Mayor Norcross stated. “We look forward to collaborating with the province on new traffic-calming initiatives that will continue to create a safe environment for all.”

New Tecumseth Deputy Mayor Stephanie MacLellan tabled a motion to council in October, asking Council to request Premier Ford reconsider the then-proposed dissolution of the Automated Speed Camera program.

She cited public safety concerns and the fact that 74 per cent of Ontario drivers backed the use of cameras in high-risk areas.



PROVINCE ENDS PROGRAM – The province has legislated the ban of Automated Speed Enforcement cameras as of Nov. 14, 2025. New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross issued a brief statement regarding safety on local streets and roads **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

New data shows high levels of household food insecurity in Simcoe County

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is reporting an alarming rate of household food insecurity in the region, resulting in a significant impact on health and on the cost to the health care system.

The rising cost of living and higher grocery prices have many residents feeling a financial pinch.

The results of the 2025 Nutritious Feed Basket survey highlight the growing number of households in Simcoe Muskoka that are unable to afford the basic nutritious food needed to meet current Canadian nutrition recommendations.

The SMDHU conducts the Nutritious Food Basket survey annually to monitor the cost of having a healthy diet.

This survey includes 61 staple food items such as milk, eggs, and bread. According to the 2025 findings, a family of four with two adults and two children ages 8 and 14 would need to spend \$1,282.89 per month to afford these essentials, while a single-person household would have to spend \$445.92.

“When household income is too low, people cannot cover their basic expenses,” said Vanessa Hurley, Public Health Nutritionist and Registered Dietitian at SMDHU. “While food insecurity is impacting peo-

ple with lower incomes, those who have unstable or insecure work, people who rent, single parents with kids, those receiving social assistance, and the number of middle-income households reporting that they are also feeling the squeeze, doubled in 2024 in comparison to 2022 and 2023. And having a job does not guarantee food security. In our province, more than half of households that have income from employment are food insecure.”

When food costs are considered along with rent and total household income, many individuals and families in Simcoe Muskoka are unable to meet basic needs.

A family of four receiving Ontario Works benefits would need to spend 97 per cent of their income just on food and rent alone. A parent raising two children receiving “Ontario Works benefits would need to spend 93 percent of their income on food and rent.

Household food insecurity is an urgent public health issue. For people experiencing food insecurity, it can mean buying less or lower-quality food and worrying about running out of food, skipping meals, or, in the most severe cases, going without food for days.

This can lead to serious physical and mental health consequences, with those affected facing a higher risk of chronic illnesses such

as diabetes, hypertension, and depression.

“Household food insecurity is not an access to food issue, it is an income issue,” Hurley added. “Vital food charity and emergency food programs do not address household food insecurity. The growing household food insecurity crisis requires action by all levels of government to put in place sustainable, income-based solutions that put more money in people’s pockets for food and other basic needs.”

According to recent data from Public Health Ontario, household food insecurity in Simcoe Muskoka is worsening, with 26 per cent, or approximately 60,000 households, experiencing some level of household food insecurity from 2023 to 2024.



These numbers are in line with what is being seen at the provincial and national levels.

These results are significantly higher than the previous four years.

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Editorial, Letters & Opinion

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

~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

Let them eat cake

“Let them eat cake.”

That is the notorious phrase attributed to French Queen Marie Antoinette as her response to being told the population is starving.

It's a little misleading as the phrase gets lost in translation. She wasn't suggesting they bake a chocolate cake and have dessert – the reference was to brioche, another type of bread.

However, a history search reveals there's no real evidence that the queen ever said those words, or even understood the plight of the peasants at the time.

It wasn't even attributed to her until decades after her death.

More than likely, the phrase was blamed on her as a late excuse for explaining why an innocent person lost her head in the guillotine during the height of the French Revolution.

However, the phrase emphasizes the obvious need for people to have food.

“An army marches on its stomach,” is a phrase supposedly coined by Napoleon Bonaparte, the emperor who conquered much of the world, and apparently couldn't get along with anyone.

Once again, it is not certain that he ever uttered that phrase. In fact, it has

also been attributed to a few other historical figures.

But the phrase does have a meaning. A well-fed army stays healthy and maintains morale.

Try feeding your army fish heads and beans for a year straight and see how willing they are to take up a fight.

There is an old story from the Second World War. A group of German soldiers had captured some American supplies.

When the Germans took a look at what they had captured, they were stunned to see the amount and quality of food that was heading for the American troops.

The Germans realized they were going to lose the war, based just on what they had found. They figured that the Allies were better equipped in all ways, and morale would be boosted by decent food that would make the Allies a superior fighting force.

Apparently, the German Army was more of a ‘bread and water’ type of army when it came to feeding its troops, and as a soldier, you were expected to like it and never complain.

Years ago, I had a job working on the Welland Canal, delivering food supplies to both Great Lakes freighters and some foreign ocean-going ships.

Quite often, we would arrive close to lunch or dinner time. Almost always, if it was close to mealtime, after signing for the delivery, the cook would invite us to stay for something to eat.

The food served on the ships was always good, and that includes both the domestic carriers and the foreign ships.

It was much better and had more variety than you would get if you were at home and decided to throw a sandwich together for lunch.

The shipping companies knew very well that if you have a crew of 29 on a ship, and they may be away for weeks or months at a time, you want to keep them happy so the ship operates properly and morale remains high.

Good food makes people happy and healthy.

Health units in Ontario are reporting a dramatic increase in the number of households that are experiencing food insecurity. They simply can't afford the food it takes to feed a household properly.

While we quite often think of low-income people struggling the most at the grocery store, the problem is now affecting the middle class.

Forget about inviting a group of friends over for a summer barbecue with steaks, baked potatoes, and corn

on the cob. Who can afford to buy a bunch of T-bones to throw on the grill?

More likely at a summer barbecue, you will hear the question, “How do you want your chicken hot dog cooked?”

No one in this country should have to struggle to put food on the table.

Food prices have been rising while grocery store chains are reporting record profits.

The rise in food prices was supposedly based on inflation. However, an educated consumer didn't have to do much research to discover that many products that suddenly saw price increases were based solely on producers and suppliers seeing other producers raise their prices and following suit, strictly out of greed, not out of necessity.

Political leaders seem to be doing nothing to get this under control, so every citizen of this country can afford to feed their families.

While the fat cats dine at the fancy parliamentary café, I expect to hear one of them say, “Rising food prices? Let them eat hamburger.”

Except hamburger, which was once considered a cheap meat, has also gone through the roof price-wise.

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Get a hobby, already!

Did you ever hear the phrase, “Get a hobby!” directed at you when you were young?

Heck, have you ever had the phrase, “Get a hobby!” directed at you at any age?

In my experience, whether I've been on the receiving end of it, or simply within earshot of someone else getting summarily dismissed, it almost invariably comes with a side of derision.

The joke's on them, however, because it's a pretty damn sound piece of advice – particularly if you truly don't have one already. But who, when you get down to it, is truly hobby-free?

I grew up in an environment where hobbies abounded. But it was also, in some instances, an environment that had very strict definitions of what constituted a hobby.

Judging by what he left behind, my maternal grandfather had a passion for coin collecting. Being a numismatist might not have been how he defined himself, and it may have been a more passive hobby when you really got down to it, but it was there.

He and his wife also shared a passion for golf, one which, along with bridge, stuck with her until the final few chapters of her life.

On the other side of the family tree, my paternal grandmother had a passion for pottery-making, curling and speed skating and, perhaps incongruously due to her diminutive size, muscle cars!

Go figure. Her husband took somewhat more traditional rides on his hobby horse – photography, stamp collecting, and model railroading. Photography was something he

passed down to my father, along with, to a lesser degree, model railroading. Philately was also one that was passed down, reaching my father and, intermittently, me as well, but I feel I may have been a familial outlier.

My hobbies were, and, in some cases, more passive – inclined more towards books, history, and classic film and television, and deep-dive research into many topics that fall under those umbrellas.

“Get a hobby!” I heard more than once.

Again, joke's on them – hobbies are in the eye of the beholder and, as far as I was (and am) concerned, my proverbial cup runneth over.

I've had a few hobbies come and go over the years, but the three listed above are at my core and aren't likely to go anywhere soon – and I'm fine

with that.

The point is, they're there and, whatever your hobbies might be, we're all reaping the benefits.

This past spring, UCLA Health looked at the impact hobbies have on our minds, bodies, and souls. I was heartened that they too defined “hobby” as “any activity you do for pleasure during your leisure time” whether they “spark your imagination or creativity, get you moving or help you relax.”

“The more hobbies you have, the greater the health benefit can be,” they found. “Researchers have identified more than 600 ways that leisure activities might affect human health.”

Continued on Page 19

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Winter warmth: Meeting community needs during the cold months

As the days grow shorter and temperatures begin to fall, many of us start to prepare for the comfort of winter. We pull out heavier coats, stock up on coffee and soup, and look forward to cozy evenings indoors. But for many families in our community, the arrival of cold weather brings something very different: anxiety, pressure, and the difficult reality of having to make impossible choices.

Winter in Ontario can be especially hard for those already living on tight budgets. Heating costs rise, hydro bills increase, and grocery prices remain high. Families who were managing to get by in the warmer months suddenly find themselves having to choose between keeping their home warm and keeping food on the table. For parents, that might mean skipping meals so their children can eat. For seniors, it can mean sitting in a cold home to make sure the bills are paid on time.

At the Alliston Food Bank, we see the impact of this seasonal hardship every year. The number of people reaching out for help always increases in the winter. For some, it is their first time needing support. They arrive embarrassed or hesitant, often saying, "I never thought I'd need to come here." Our team of volunteers greets every person with kindness and reassurance, because we understand that life can change quickly and that asking for help is never easy.

Preparing for the season

Our volunteers and community partners begin preparing for the winter months in advance. Through the fall, we sort and organize thousands of pounds of food collected from community food drives, schools, service clubs, and local businesses. Every can, bag, and box helps us

stock the shelves with nutritious and comforting items that can stretch through the colder months.

During the winter, hearty foods become especially important. Soups, stews, pasta, canned vegetables, proteins, and breakfast foods are among our most needed items. These are the foods that fill stomachs, warm homes, and bring families together around the table. When available, we also include small comfort items like hot chocolate, oatmeal, and baking supplies. These little touches can lift spirits and help make the season feel a bit brighter for families who are struggling.

The weight of winter

Beyond food, winter brings an emotional weight that is harder to measure. For many people we serve, the season is not about holidays or celebrations but about

endurance. Cold weather limits outdoor work and increases isolation for seniors and people without transportation. Parents face extra stress as they try to provide both meals and warm clothing for growing children.

We hear stories every week that remind us how significant these challenges are. A mother who was laid off before Christmas is now trying to make her grocery money stretch until spring. A senior who comes in quietly, grateful for the extra cans of soup that will last through the stormy week ahead. A father who never imagined he would stand in line for food but now smiles when he can bring home fresh produce for his kids.

These moments remind us why the Alliston Food Bank exists — to provide more than food. We provide reassurance, understanding, and dignity. We want every per-

son who walks through our doors to know they are seen, respected, and cared for.

The power of community

The colder months also bring out the warmth of our community in beautiful ways. Businesses organize holiday drives, schools collect snack donations, and neighbours drop off bags of groceries at our bins. Every contribution, no matter how small, helps keep our shelves stocked and our hearts full.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who gives, whether it is time, food, or financial support. Volunteers work tirelessly through snow and ice to unload deliveries and prepare hampers. Donors think of others even when their own budgets are stretched. It is this spirit of generosity that keeps our doors open and our community strong.

How you can help

If you are looking for ways to make a difference this winter, consider donating some of our most needed items or organizing a small food drive with your workplace, school, or neighbourhood. Each item collected helps provide warmth and nourishment to someone in need. You can also make a monetary donation, which allows us to purchase fresh items such as milk, eggs, and produce.

To learn more about donating, volunteering, or hosting a food drive, please visit www.allistonfoodbank.com or email us at info@allistonfoodbank.com.

This winter, as we wrap ourselves in blankets and share meals with loved ones, let us remember that kindness is the greatest warmth of all. Together, we can ensure that everyone in our community feels cared for, supported, and fed.



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Remembrance Day – Alliston



HONOURING THE FALLEN – Remembrance Day services hosted by Alliston Legion Branch 171 were held at the cenotaph in Alliston on Nov. 11. An early morning snowfall did not deter those who came out to pay their respects and honour the fallen. There was good attendance from local residents, Legion members, the military, and the police.
BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTOS



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Arts & Local Events



DATES STILL AVAILABLE FOR THE HOLIDAYS



CHRISTMAS SPIRIT: The sun went down and the night began to shine from thousands of Christmas lights during the Night Lit Santa Claus Parade in Alliston on Saturday, Nov. 15. The parade travelled down Victoria Street to Young Street and entertained thousands of people who lined the parade route. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTOS**

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BRIAN SAUNDERSON
MPP, Simcoe-Grey



How to make informed choices about alcohol during the holidays: SMDHU

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the holiday season approaches, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is encouraging residents to keep their health in mind by making informed choices about alcohol use.

Choices not only support personal well-being but can also have a positive impact on others, especially young people.

Social gatherings during the holiday often

include alcohol and can result in drinking more than intended.

The latest research from the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction shows that when it comes to alcohol, less is better.

Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health explains that the more a person drinks, the greater their risk of both short and long-term harms.

These harms include several types of cancer, such as breast and colorectal, heart

disease, liver damage, alcohol dependence, and injuries from violence or motor vehicle collisions.

"Reducing your alcohol use during the holidays is a meaningful way to care for yourself and those around you," said Mia Brown, manager of Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Program.

"When you choose to drink less, you not only lower your risk for serious health conditions but also experience other benefits such as improved sleep, more energy, and a clearer mind. These positive changes can help you feel more present and connected with the people you care about."

Changing how you approach alcohol can also have a positive effect on young people in your life, said Brown.

"For adults who drink, modelling responsible drinking or choosing not to drink at all can make a real difference. Young people are influenced by the adults around them, and positive examples can help delay their alcohol use and support a healthier relationship

with alcohol later in life," he noted.

Tips on how to model responsible drinking

- Set clear personal limits and stick to them.
- Measure alcohol when mixing drinks to prevent overpouring.
- Avoid getting drunk, especially in front of children and youth.
- Demonstrate how to politely decline offers of alcohol in front of young people.
- Celebrate without alcohol to show that fun doesn't depend on drinking alcohol.
- Practice healthy stress relief, like walking, listening to music, or spending time with friends.

If you are hosting a celebration that includes alcohol, consider ways to support safer consumption.

Offer a variety of appealing non-alcoholic choices, serve food, include fun activities or entertainment that do not centre around drinking, and make sure everyone has a safe way to get home.

Town of New Tecumseth seeks input on future of recreation and libraries

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of New Tecumseth and the New Tecumseth Public Library have announced a collaborative initiative to develop a future-based Recreation, Culture, and Library Action Plan (RCLAP) alongside an Indoor Pool Feasibility Study.

The two projects will help guide long-term decision-making for indoor recreation, aquatics, culture, and library facilities across New Tecumseth for the next several decades.

"Recreation, library, and culture facilities are vital spaces for the community to play, learn, and connect," said New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross. "As New Tecumseth's population grows, we want to hear from the community about how they use our facilities, services, and

programs — and what options should be considered for the future."

The Town said it is committed to engaging its residents in meaningful ways to better understand what facilities are needed and which programs and services matter most to them.

Over the coming months, residents will have several opportunities to provide input through surveys and open houses.

The Beeton Community Centre is not included in the scope of the RCLAP. However, the Town is planning to work on this project in the near future.

A separate consultation process will be held to ensure residents have a dedicated opportunity to share their input and help shape the future of the Beeton Community Centre.

For more information, visit the Town's website at newtecumseth.ca/ActionPlan.

Queen Street resurfacing in Tottenham delayed

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Tottenham residents will have to wait until the spring before they can enjoy a smoother ride down Queen Street.

As part of the Town's Road Improvement Program, Queen Street between Nolan Road and 177 Queen Street South was planned for resurfacing this year.

The timeline for the resurfacing has now changed.

Work on the main street is now expected to begin in spring 2026, starting with milling, followed by resurfacing.

No reason for the delay was issued by the Town.

A detailed notice will be shared before work begins.

The notice will be hand-delivered to nearby properties and posted on the Town's website.

Updates during construction will be shared the same way.

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Angus man and two friends to split \$1 million after winning LOTTO 6/49 draw

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

An Angus man and his two friends from Barrie will all find their retirement years a little easier after winning big in the LOTTO 6/49 Gold Ball Draw on July 16.

Clarence Kennedy from Angus, Kenneth Maw and Kurt Lawler, both from Barrie,

are all retirees who used to work together and still enjoyed playing LOTTO 6/49 and LOTTO MAX as a group.

It was Kennedy's turn to purchase their tickets, and he happened to have another ticket with him that had to be checked, according to an OLG press release from Nov. 7.

The ticket was a \$1 million winner.

"When I saw the screen said 'BIG WINNER,' it was like a dream," Maw said while at the OLG Prize Centre in Toronto to pick up the group's windfall.

"He called me to share the news, and it took a while to believe it," Maw said.

Lawler added, "I said, 'Are you kidding me?'"

The group members all had similar reactions to their big win – they were all shaking in disbelief.

With his share of the winnings, Kennedy plans to invest, treat himself to a new Mustang, and help out his grandchildren.

Maw plans to go to Ireland to relax and help out his grandchildren.

Lawler said he plans to help out his children and grandchildren.

The winning ticket was purchased at Petro-Canada on Queensway East in Mississauga.



BIG WIN – Three men are sharing a \$1 million prize after winning the LOTTO 6/49 Gold Ball Draw on July 16, according to a press release issued on Nov. 7. Clarence Kennedy from Angus, Kenneth Maw, and Kurt Lawler from Barrie are retirees who used to work together and still play the lottery as a group.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



FILE PHOTO

Influenza outbreak closes inpatient unit at Stevenson Memorial Hospital

The medical and surgical inpatient unit at Stevenson Memorial Hospital is now closed to visitors.

In collaboration with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, an influenza outbreak has been declared in Stevenson Memorial Hospital's medical/surgical unit.

All close contacts have been notified. Enhanced cleaning has been implemented along with additional infection

prevention and control measures. This includes additional influenza testing.

The medical/surgical inpatient unit is closed to visitors at this time, unless a designated or essential care partner has been determined as required or a patient is palliative.

Wearing a medical mask is a requirement at all times in the unit.

Masks are provided by the hospital.

Santa's Cozy Cabin brings holiday magic to town

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Families are invited to step into a world of warmth, wonder, and old-fashioned holiday charm in Santa's Cozy Cabin at the Museum on the Boyne.

This magical event promises a full day of festive fun for all ages.

The event features a visit with Santa Claus, complete with a printed photo to take home.

There will be a holiday-themed scavenger hunt weaving through the museum's exhibits, as well as craft stations where kids and adults can create seasonal keepsakes.

Story time with Miss Evie the Elf will bring a tale that's sure to become a family favourite.

Santa's Cozy Cabin, set against the muse-



um's cozy, historic backdrop, offers a perfect opportunity to make timeless holiday memories and soak in the sparkle of the season.

Please dress for the weather, as parts of the event will take place outdoors.

Admission is \$15 per child. Accompanying adults are free.

You can reserve your photo time slot on the Town of New Tecumseth's website.

Santa's Cozy Cabin will take place on Saturday, Nov. 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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DOCTORS HIT THE CATWALK: Physicians from Southlake Health hit the runway on Oct. 30 at Whiskey, Wine & MR Menswear, showcasing fashions from a clothing store owned by Mike Rathke. This year's event raised a whopping \$140,000 for cancer care. Pictured here, from left to right, are Drs. Christopher Overgaard, Chris Coutinho, Matthew Laskin, Jennifer Ritter of the Southlake Foundation, Rathke, Southlake President & CEO Paul Woods, Drs. Danyal Saeed, Philip Buckler, Peter Anglin, Lukasz Boba, and emcee Steve Hinder of the Southlake Philanthropy Cabinet. **GLENN RODGER PHOTO**

Southlake doctors strut their stuff for cancer care at Whiskey, Wine & MR Menswear event

BY BROCK WEIR

Giving back was fashion-forward evening as Aurora and Newmarket came together for the semi-annual Whiskey, Wine & MR Menswear fashion show, benefiting local cancer care at Southlake Health.

Hosted by cancer survivor and local business leader Mike Rathke, owner of the Industrial Parkway South-based MR Menswear, the Oct. 30 event saw eight Southlake physicians hit the catwalk in MR Menswear fashions, raising a whopping \$140,000 for the Southlake Regional Cancer Centre in the process.

"A heartfelt thank you to everyone here tonight supporting this incredible event," said Rathke, following a moving video featuring his mother, wife, and two daughters, recalling his cancer journey and the importance of having top-quality cancer care close to home. "I'm so proud of how far this show has come since we first began in 2016, the impact of all of us here together – our guests, our sponsors, and our models."

Emceeding this year's fashion show once again was Steve Hinder, who described Rathke as "stronger than any athlete or bodybuilder out there – he's my hero."

"Mike talked a bit about the community that we're in and I just have to add one more thing: the Southlake Family is different," said Hinder, Co-Chair of Southlake's Philanthropy Cabinet. "The doctors are giving up their time tonight, together with our Physicians' Council.... It's because they know it takes all of us to provide the best care possible to our patients and our loved ones, and that we're truly in this together."

"We all need one another to be successful in this hospital. It's a very unique relationship, I believe, at Southlake, and one we're all extremely grateful for."

This was echoed by Jennifer Ritter, President of the Southlake Health Foundation, who said the auditorium at Newmarket's NewRoads Performing Arts Centre was "filled with joy and generosity."

"Sincere gratitude to Mike Rathke for just pouring his heart and his soul into

everything that he does," said Ritter. "Mike is a true community champion, a pillar in our community, and an inspiration to so many of us. Mike, thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts – we're so grateful. It makes such an impact for so many other people who came to Southlake for treatment at our Cancer Centre, which is among the top three cancer centres in Ontario, something we should all be proud of."

"Mike, this event tonight makes such a great impact."

While there were plenty of smiles and laughter to go around as the physicians took their turn on the runway, perhaps the most fun job of the evening went to Dr. Paul Woods, President & CEO of Southlake Health who had the honour of presenting tongue-in-cheek awards to the models, including Southlake's Next Top Model, which went to Dr. Philip Butler.

"The best part of my job is being able to go into work every day and to work alongside these eight guys," said Woods of the physician-models, "and there are hundreds of colleagues in our staff each and every day. It's truly a remarkable place to work. Thank you for putting it out there tonight, but thank you even more for what you do each and every day for the people we serve."

The evening's winners:

- Atrial Fabulation Award: Dr. Christopher Overgaard
- Bedside Manner Runway Glamour Award: Dr. Danyal Saeed
- Paging Dr. Runway Award: Dr. Philip Buckler
- Born to Slay Award: Dr. Matthew Laskin
- Code Blue Steel Award: Dr. Chris Coutinho
- No Complications Award: Dr. John Randle
- Smooth Operator Award: Dr. Lukasz Boba
- Veteran of Vogue Award: Dr. Peter Anglin
- Southlake's Next Top Model: Dr. Philip Buckler

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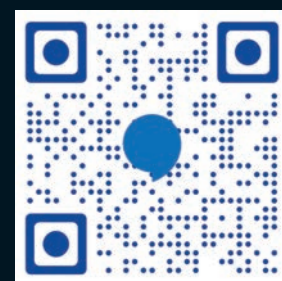
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SPORTS

NEW TECUMSETH TIMES

Tottenham resident wins international competition at Royal Horse Show

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A local equestrian captured a prestigious title at the Royal Horse Show.

Canadian Olympian Erynn Ballard of Tottenham opened international show jumping competition at the Royal in winning fashion by riding Let's Fly to victory in the \$45,000 International Strength & Speed Welcome Nov. 12.

The first competition of the CSI5*-W division – which denotes the highest level of show jumping sport also offering a FEI World Cup™ qualifying grand prix – saw riders competing over a one-round “power and speed” track set by course designer Olaf Petersen, Jr. of Germany. Riders navigated eight fences and, if they left all of them in place, immediately advanced to the speed portion of the course.

Living up to his name, Let's Fly navigated the course with unmatched footspeed while carrying Ballard to a winning time of 26.85 seconds.

“What a horse to be able to go in and win in his first pass at The Royal,” smiled Ballard as she described the nine-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding (Fly x Phin Phin) owned by Roaring Fork Farms.

Let's Fly was developed by Ballard and Ilan Ferder and is destined to be the mount of owner Djuna Lauder, who has five-star aspirations of her own but is currently focused on her studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

For Ballard, 45, Toronto's Royal Horse

Show is her home show. She first competed at The Royal on a small pony in 1988.

“It took me nine years to get my first Royal win, but I've had some pretty cool Royal moments,” said Ballard, who added another memory to her list this week following a five-year absence from The Royal. “This was a nice homecoming; it fit in nicely in our schedule this year and the World Cup Final is on our radar, so it was a nice one to come home for.”

“I have the right horses right now,” said Ballard of her World Cup bid. “They are an exceptional group to have at the high level, but the biggest draw this year is that the final is North American based. Anytime that there is a championship where you think that you can be competitive, it should be on your radar.”

The opening-day win was extra special for Ballard and her entire family.

The Royal Horse Show marks the last competition appearance for Looking Back Farm, which is owned and operated by Erynn's parents, Sandi and Dave Ballard, as they are retiring after a storied career of developing horses and riders from their home base in Tottenham.

Erynn's late grandfather, Jump Canada Hall of Famer Bob Ballard, was also a regular competitor at the Royal Horse Show, and frequently represented Canada in the Nation's Cup team competition.

“It's great to win for them and to also add more Royal memories,” Erynn reminisced. “We've had great ones, all the way from small ponies to now five stars!”



INCREDIBLE PERFORMANCE – Canadian Olympian Erynn Ballard won the \$45,000 CSI5*-W Strength & Speed Welcome Aboard Let's Fly international competition during the opening day of the Royal Horse Show in Toronto.
BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

Alliston Hornets take two losses over the weekend, but remain in first place

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It was not a good weekend on the road for the Alliston Hornets.

The hometown squad took two losses over two days, not long after ending a 13-game win streak on Nov. 6.

On Friday, Nov. 7, the Hornets travelled to Penetang to take on the fourth-place Kings.

For the first time this season, the Hornets were shut out and failed to score a single goal.

The Kings notched two goals in the first period, five minutes apart. There was no scoring in the second frame.

Penetang scored the only goal in the third period and left the ice with a 3-0 win.

The following night, the Hornets again went north to Orillia to face the third-place Terriers on Saturday, Nov. 15.

The Hornets were first on the scoreboard when Jonathan Beausart hit the back of the Terriers' net at 4:28 into the first period.

Orillia responded with two goals to take a 2-1 lead.

Alliston's Ben Smith tied the game with a goal early in the second period.

The Terriers hit back with two second-period goals.

There was no scoring in the final period, and the Terriers took a 4-2 win.

After the weekend, the Hornets maintain first place in the North Carruthers Division of the Provincial Junior Hockey League with a 14-3 record and 28 points.

They are four points ahead of the second-place Stayner Siskins, who have a 12-5 record.

The Orillia Terriers are in third place with an 11-3 record and 22 points.

They are followed by the Penetang Kings, who have a 9-5-2 record, including one shootout loss.

In the rest of the standings, in order, are the Midland Flyers, Muskoka Bears, Huntsville Otters, and the Innisfil Spartans.

The Hornets will be back on home ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Nov. 21, when they will host the Orillia Terriers.

Game time is 7:30 p.m.

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Stevenson Memorial Hospital provides guidelines on staying healthy during flu season

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Stevenson Memorial Hospital is providing local residents with information on how to reduce their chances of getting sick during flu season.

Now that the fall is here and temperatures are cooling, people are spending more time indoors and in closer contact with others. This seasonal shift increases the risk of spreading respiratory viruses, including influenza, COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and the common cold.

“Each year, respiratory illnesses like influenza, RSV, and COVID-19 place a significant strain on our community,” explained Sarah Morris, interim chief nursing executive at Stevenson Memorial Hospital. “By staying up to date on vaccines, washing our hands often, masking when appropriate, and staying home when sick, we can each play a part in keeping ourselves and our loved ones healthy. These simple steps help reduce the spread of infection and protect those at higher risk of severe illness.”

Several vaccines are available that may help reduce the risk of getting sick this winter.

Covid-19

In Ontario, updated COVID-19 vaccines became available in October for individuals aged 6 months or older at no cost. High-risk populations such as older adults, immunocompromised individuals,

and residents of congregate settings may receive an additional dose in the spring.

The flu and COVID-19 vaccines are safe to receive together to maximize protection, according to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

Influenza (Flu)

The annual flu vaccine is formulated each year to match anticipated viral strains. In Ontario and Simcoe Muskoka, the flu shot is typically available starting in October.

Getting the flu vaccine remains one of the best ways to reduce your risk of serious illness, hospitalization, and complications.

RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)

In Canada, three RSV vaccines are now authorized for adults: RSVPreF3 (Arexvy), RSVpreF (Abrysvo), and mRNA 1345 (mRESVIA10).

The age indication has been expanded. RSVPreF3 was authorized for adults aged 50 and older as of November 2024.

NACI recommends RSV immunization programs, especially for adults 75 years of age or older and for those 60 years of age and older living in long-term care or chronic care settings.

In Ontario, publicly funded RSV vaccines are offered to certain eligible populations.

You can get vaccinated at a Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit office, a local pharmacy that offers the vaccines, or with your family healthcare provider.



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Ontario Provincial Police encourages the public to be mindful of school buses

The Central Region Headquarters of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is reminding all motorists of the critical importance of stopping for school buses when their overhead red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended.

Under the Highway Traffic Act, drivers must stop at least 20 metres away from a school bus that is stopped with its red lights flashing and stop arm activated.

Failing to do so is not only illegal but puts children's lives at risk.

This applies to drivers approaching from both directions unless the roadway is divided by a median.

Penalties for failing to stop for a school bus include:

- First offence: Fine of \$400 to \$2,000, six demerit points, and a significant increase in insurance premiums.
- Subsequent offences: Fine of \$1,000 to \$4,000, six demerit points, and possible jail time up to six months.
- Vehicle owners can also be charged if their vehicle is involved, even if they were not driving at the time.

Safety tips for drivers:

- Stop when school bus lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended. It's the law.
- Stay alert in school zones and residential areas where children may be walking or biking.

- Watch for children crossing roads and walking to school, especially during peak times (7-9 a.m. and 3-5 p.m.).

- Put your phone away. Don't drive distracted! Distractions can cost lives.

"The OPP urges the public to report any incidents of vehicles failing to stop for school buses by calling 9-1-1 and providing the vehicle description, license plate number, location, and time of the incident," reads a press release from Central Region OPP.

If reporting after-the-fact, members of the public can also contact the non-emergency line at 1-888-310-1122 or submit information anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or online at ontariocrimestoppers.ca.

For more information on school bus safety, visit Ontario.ca/schoolbus



Impaired driving charges laid against Bradford man following single vehicle collision in Essa

Members of the Nottawasaga Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have charged one individual with impaired driving following a single motor vehicle collision in Essa.

On Nov. 16, shortly after 9 a.m., Nottawasaga OPP responded to a single in the ditch on the 5th Sideroad between 9th and 10th Line in Essa.

Officers located the vehicle and met with the driver who did not sustain any injuries.

During the interaction, grounds were

formed that the driver's ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol leading to the driver's arrest.

As a result of the investigation, Kyle Zdrilich, 36, of Bradford was charged with:

- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs

The accused is scheduled to attend the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford on Dec. 18, to answer to the charges.

"The OPP remains committed to ensuring Ontario roads are safe from impaired drivers," reads a press release from Nottawasaga OPP. "If you suspect that someone is driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, it is important to call 9-1-1 to report it."

You can also provide information anonymously by contacting Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). When you contact Crime Stoppers, you stay anonymous, and you never have to testify.



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Suspicious death under investigation in Adjala-Tosorontio

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers are investigating a death in Adjala-Tosorontio.

On Saturday, Nov. 15th, at approximately

5:22 p.m., officers were called to a residence on Sparrow Way where one person was located deceased.

Preliminary information suggests this is an isolated incident, with no signs of a broader threat to the community.

Police continue to investigate and are

actively monitoring the situation.

Residents of Adjala-Tosorontio Township can expect to see an increased police presence as officers continue the investigation.

Nottawasaga OPP says further information will be released as it becomes available.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation should immediately contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

Those who would like to submit information anonymously can contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or ontariocrimestoppers.ca.

Motor vehicle collision investigation leads to multiple drug related charges

On Nov. 10, at approximately 12:27 p.m., South Simcoe Police responded to a single-vehicle collision on Tornado Drive in Bradford West Gwillimbury. A black BMW was travelling southbound on Tornado Drive from Canal Road and rolled into a ditch.

Upon arrival on scene, officers located the driver who reported no injuries. Through investigation, Police detected a strong odour of cannabis coming from the

vehicle and located various packages of suspected cannabis in the vehicle. Subsequently, the driver was arrested for various drug-related offences, including possession of suspected cocaine, suspected fentanyl and suspected oxycodone.

As a result of the investigation, a 23-year-old male from Etobicoke was arrested and charged with the following offences:

- Possession Schedule I – Cocaine

CDSA 4(1)

- Possession Schedule I – Oxycodone CDSA 4(1)

- Possession Schedule I – Other Drugs (Fentanyl) CDSA 4(1)

- Possession Schedule I – Other Drugs (Meth) CDSA 4(1)

- Possession for the Purpose Schedule I – Cocaine CDSA 5(2)

- Possession for the Purpose Schedule I – Oxycodone CDSA 5(2)

- Possession for the Purpose Schedule I – Other Drugs (Fentanyl) CDSA 5(2)

- Possession for the Purpose Schedule I – Other Drugs (Meth) CDSA 5(2)

- Possession of Property Obtained by Crime Over \$5,000 CC 354(1)(a)

- Drive Vehicle or boat with cannabis readily available CCA 12(1)

- Careless Driving HTA 130(1)

The accused was taken into custody and held pending a bail hearing.

Two break and enters reported in Essa, police seek public's assistance identifying suspects

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers are investigating two break and enters that occurred at local businesses in the early morning hours of Saturday, Nov. 15.

The first incident took place shortly before 3:30 a.m. at a business located at 239 Barrie Street in Essa. Suspects forced entry through the front door and stole a quantity of cannabis products valued at \$100.

The second break and enter occurred shortly after 4 a.m. at a business located at 173 Mill Street in Angus. Suspects again

forced entry through the front entrance and stole various cannabis products valued at \$10,000.

“Investigators believe the same suspects are responsible for both incidents. Surveillance footage shows a red Honda Civic (later model) with its front licence plate removed and rear windows tinted,” reads a press release from Nottawasaga OPP.

“The vehicle was occupied by three suspects, all described as tall, medium build, wearing masks and dark clothing. One sus-

pect was wearing bright blue track pants, and the suspects used a yellow crowbar to gain entry.”

Anyone with information regarding these incidents is asked to contact the Nottawasaga OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or submit an anonymous tip through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or online at www.crimestoppersdm.com.

Nottawasaga OPP asks the public to please reference Case Numbers: E251544439 and E251544411 when providing information.



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708 OBITUARIES

DOVE HAYWARD, PEGGY



It is with deep love and sadness that we announce the passing of Peggy Jean Hayward (Dove), (née Campbell), who gracefully danced through 91 beautiful years of life before passing away in the early hours of November 9, 2025.

Born on October 24, 1934, in Toronto, Peggy's dedication to dance inspired generations with her talent, warmth, and choreography, having once owned two dance studios in Rexdale and Clarkson, and then another in Elmvale. Lovingly known to those in the dance community as "Miss Peggy", her admiration for dance lived on through her daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughter, who continued in her dance shoes. Her legacy carried on as Cyndy and Lindsay brought that same love and talent to those whose hearts are forever changed through dance, opening their own studio(s), all stemming from what Peggy began. In addition to her dance, Peggy was also a welcoming face at the office of Dr. John McKenzie in Elmvale, where she worked as a receptionist for over 10 years.

Peggy is predeceased by her late husband, the Honourable Clifford Dove, Justice of the Peace (d. 1993), and then found love again with her late husband, Roy Hayward (d. 2017). She was loved by her four children, Cyndy (Chris Daniels), Steve Dove (Deanna), Kerry Dove, and Wayne Dove (Linda), and her seven grandchildren, Matthew, Lindsay (Ryan), Ashley (Chris), Nick, Jason, Simon, and Nathanael (predeceased, d. 2021). She loved and proudly adored being a Great Nana to her beautiful great-grandchildren, Corbin, Liam, Amelia, Owen, and Charlie.

A private celebration of life will be held at a separate time. The family would like to thank Matthews House in Alliston for their kindness, compassion, and grace, providing such a beautiful space to be with our mother and grandmother in her last days.

Dance is the language of the soul – a way to express what words cannot. It inspires joy, connection, and the beauty of living fully in each moment. Thank you, Grandma, for giving us that. We will always remember you.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to www.lynnstonefuneralhome.com

KAUPPINEN, Olli Kalevi

Passed away peacefully on November 14th, 2025 at Matthews House Hospice in Alliston with family by his side. Olli Kauppinen at the age of 74 years, beloved husband of Susan Kauppinen (née: Vella). Loving father of Michael Kauppinen, Lisa Cockerill (Brad Basarab), Christine Symons, and Pamela Cockerill (Peter Boncardo). Caring grandfather to Brock, Evan and Curtis. Predeceased by his parents Vilho and Elma Kauppinen. Olli will be missed by his brother Mike Kauppinen (Cheryl), extended family and friends. A private Celebration of Olli's Life will be held at a later date. For those who wish, donations in memory of Olli to Matthews House Hospice or the Salvation Army would be appreciated. Online condolences or memories may be left for the family at www.RodAbramsFuneralHome.com

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Continued from Page 4

Brock's Banter Get a hobby, already!

UCLA Health continued, "However, health responses vary by person, hobby, and whether the activity is completed individually or in a group. Some benefits are immediate, and others may be seen over time. More research is needed to understand the full power of hobbies, but most experts agree that most hobbies can be good for your health."

The health benefits? Mental well-being, improved cognitive function, and even a reduction in one's risk of chronic disease.

"Some hobbies seem to offer greater benefits for mental health than others," the report continued. "A 2023 poll conducted by the American Psychiatric Association found that 71 per cent of the participants reporting 'very good' or 'excellent' mental health engage in creative activities more frequently than those reporting 'good', 'fair', or 'poor' mental health. If that creative hobby involves art, research suggests that doing it for two or more hours weekly yields the most benefit for well-being."

"Researchers suggest that taking up a hobby in your leisure time can support the biological processes of

your endocrine, immune, and central nervous systems. When your body's systems are functioning well, it may lower your risk for health issues such as heart disease, stroke, dementia, and some types of cancer. Having hobbies – especially those that reduce stress or get one moving – may also affect your cardiometabolic health, which involves your heart, blood, and blood vessels. In particular, making art helps reduce cortisol (stress hormone), which is linked to lower blood pressure levels and heart rate."

Get a hobby, indeed. The report also found that hobbies that are mentally stimulating or involve physical activity are associated with a decreased risk of dementia in the 65+ population, a statistic that struck a particular chord with me on Sunday evening when I attending a screening of GTA filmmaker Sean Cisterna's new documentary Silver Screammers.

The doc charts Cisterna as he recruited area seniors, many of whom hail from York Region, including The Auroran's own Diane Buchanan, to get out of their comfort zones and

take on behind-the-scenes production roles as Cisterna simultaneously filmed his short horror film, The Rug, starring Canadian entertainment icon Jayne Eastwood, a senior herself.

I had the pleasure of taking in one of The Rug's production days at Hillary House National Historic Site last year and it was amazing to see so many seniors not only learn filmmaking skills, a path many of them probably couldn't even imagine a couple of years ago. Not only did they execute their behind-the-scenes tasks capably but with an interest and passion that has clearly stuck with them since the production wrapped in 2024.

Will these newly-minted filmmakers, whose ages span from their mid-70s to just shy of 98, be the next senior directing sensation like 95-year-old Clint Eastwood or a critical acting darling like 96-year-old June Squibb, who, after decades in the business, scored her first leading film role just last year in Thelma, is currently starring in Scarlett Johansson's directorial debut, and now preparing to take over Broadway?

Maybe, maybe not, but it was clear at Sunday night's post-film Question-

and-Answer session that their minds are open to the idea – and, probably, just about any idea Cisterna might send their way.

And that, in the end, is the most important thing: keeping your mind open to the possibilities.

My contribution to the film, a brief on-camera interview with Cisterna, did not awaken any further desire in me to appear larger than life on the silver screen – my apologies to the filmmaker – but Sunday's screening satisfied my love of consuming film, and I left the theatre both engaged and energized.

Another win on the hobby front. The passion the seniors had for their newfound hobbies, not to mention the pride in their newfound skills, was nothing short of inspiring and now I feel compelled to add to my aforementioned list of hobbies.

Time to try something new – maybe it's time to try out snowshoeing, a hobby I intended to take up during the first winter of COVID before life got in the way.

Thankfully those days are behind us, but the snow certainly isn't – let's see what we can make of it!

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