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The Times • New Tecumseth

- Alliston
- Beeton
- Tottenham



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Sunday: Mainly Cloudy



Monday: A Few Flurries

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SMILING SUCCESS

Tim Hortons held another Smile Cookie event from Nov. 17-23 across the nation, selling cookies to raise funds for charitable causes. The Alliston Tim Hortons on Young Street and Dunham Drive donated the proceeds of their sales to the Alliston Food Bank on Monday, Dec. 15. From left, Rajat Gupta from the Dunham Drive location, Vicki Hector from the Tim Hortons Foundation, Young Street Store Owner John Lewandowski, Alliston Food Bank Board Chair Janet Humphrey, Alliston Food Bank Operations Manager Savanaha O'Reilly and New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross gather at the Young Street Tim Hortons for a cheque presentation in the amount of \$21,044.12.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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New Tecumseth Town Council receives report on water audit/loss control

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

New Tecumseth council received a report from its public works department on the 2025 Water Audit and Water-Loss Control Program during a Dec. 15 regular meeting.

The report detailed the findings of the Non-Revenue Water Audit Study and Water Loss Control Program, including planned future initiatives.

In 2024, Tatham Engineering completed a water audit study, which highlighted three recommendations to address water loss.

In 2025, Tatham started work on Phase 2 of the project.

A leak detection task was completed, finding 8 leaks across the town.

Customer meter inspection testing is ongoing. Step testing is on hold.

The Non-Revenue Water Audit Study identified potential savings of 656,821 m³/year, or \$2,459,794 per year, based on the initial non-revenue water loss calculations.

Continuing the Water Loss Control Program and addressing additional leaks and meter issues proactively will continue to provide savings for the Town of New Tecumseth and reduce overall water loss.

In December 2023, council adopted a motion to allocate \$60,000 to undertake a

Non-Revenue Water Audit Study.

A key component of any effective water conservation plan is understanding water loss within the system.

Water loss refers to water that does not travel from the source of supply to the end user.

This includes physical losses such as leaks and theft, and commercial losses such as unpaid bills, unbilled water, or incorrect billing due to poor metering or inaccurate customer records.

Non-revenue water significantly impacts the financial viability of water agencies through lost revenue, wasted water resources, and increased operational costs. A water audit is the process of identifying where these losses occur, quantifying them, and developing policies and programs to prevent them.

Over the past five years, the town's calculated water loss has ranged from 13 to 18 per cent, with the most recent figure in 2023 at 18 per cent – equivalent to 790,800 m³ of unaccounted-for water.

It is important to note that some water uses in New Tecumseth are not billed, such as splash pads, town facilities, and operational activities.

Over the three towns, it was determined:

- Alliston: Seasonal losses ranged from 8

to 21 per cent, with peak losses occurring in summer months.

- Beeton: Non-revenue water was significantly high (34 to 47 per cent), which is common in smaller systems.

- Tottenham: Losses were relatively low, with about 50 per cent of non-revenue water attributed to auto-flushers and unmetered uses.

An acoustic leak detection survey was completed covering 1,216 municipal hydrants and 160km of watermains throughout New Tecumseth. A total of four leaks were identified in Alliston, one in Beeton, and three in Tottenham.

The town has fixed seven of the eight leaks since they were identified.

A total of 430 industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) properties within the town, as well as municipal facilities, were identified for review under this program. To date, 130 ICI properties have been reviewed, with 25 deficiencies identified. These deficiencies include bypass valves that were not locked or sealed, loose seals, and missing valves,



which may indicate unauthorized use of water meter bypasses.

The town is currently developing a plan to address the identified meter deficiencies and is working to close this gap.

In addition to the current 2025 capital Water Loss Control programs, Council has approved additional funding for the Water Loss Control Programs through the 2026 capital funding program for future initiatives, which include ICI meter replacements, permanent leak detection in the distribution system, leak detection on the Collingwood Transmission Main, district metering, and stricter development site controls.

Nottawasaga OPP makes arrests in connection to suspicious fires in Colgan subdivision

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Several arrests have been made in an investigation that began in the fall of 2024 after multiple unoccupied homes in a new subdivision in Colgan were set on fire.

Police allege fires were deliberately set in homes that were not completely finished. In at least one case, video footage was released of darkly clothed persons wearing masks, arriving in a car at the targeted residence, and leaving after setting a fire.

Members of the Nottawasaga Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police executed six search warrants in Mississauga, Brampton, Toronto, and Tottenham at approximately 6 a.m. on Dec. 16.

The operation was part of an ongoing investigation led by members of the Not-

tawasaga Detachment Major Crime Unit with assistance from the Caledon Detachment Major Crime Unit, Central Region's Regional Support Team, the Highway Safety Division's Toronto and 407 Detachments, as well as the OPP Emergency Response Team.

As a result of the investigation, six individuals were arrested.

Those individuals are:

- Wisam Fareed Anton Dibo, 32, of Etobicoke
 - Rafid Baqdr, 28, of Toronto
 - Yokhanna Butrus, 27, of Etobicoke
 - Allen Yousif, 28, of Mississauga
 - Napleon Uoail, 27, of Etobicoke
 - Liyon Nazar Sitrak, 21, of Etobicoke
- The individuals have all been charged under the Criminal Code of Canada with:
- Conspiracy to Commit an Indictable

Offence, S. 465(1)(c)

- Arson, S. 434

The accused are scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford on Jan. 22, 2026.

There is no threat to public safety at this

time, and the investigation remains ongoing.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Nottawasaga OPP at 1-888-310-1122, or anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or online at crimestoppersdm.com.

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Editorial, Letters & Opinion

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

~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

Memories

There used to be a magical place called Crystal Beach Amusement Park.

It was located in the small town of Crystal Beach near Fort Erie.

The park had opened in 1890 and, for the next 100 years, was a thriving, fun summer place.

Where I grew up, it was the place to visit every summer.

At one time, a ferry travelled across Lake Erie, bringing visitors from Buffalo, New York.

What made this place so special was that it was old school. There was a dance hall from the 1940s, where old-time big bands used to play.

There was an arcade called The Penny Arcade, which had all these old games from the 40s, although in later years they brought in some more modern video games.

There was the fun house, which, for some reason, was the last thing you visited before leaving.

It was an unwritten rule that you had to ride the smaller yellow roller coaster first, then try the big grey one called The Comet, which provided a great view of the lake and the entire park on the way up to the top of the first drop.

The fun included the HeyDey, Cater-

pillar, the Ferris Wheel, and a few other rides that would make your head spin.

There was also a roller skating rink in town, and I spent many nights there trying to roller skate like I had a lot of skill.

The parking lot at the Amusement Park was filled with as many New York license plates as those from Ontario.

As teenagers, we could always tell which girls were American. It's hard to explain, but they just had a different vibe.

One summer night, I took my girlfriend to the park for a night of fun.

We were in line, waiting to get on one of the rides.

I turned around, and standing behind me was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen in my entire life. She was wearing a sweater and had her dark blonde hair pulled back in a ponytail. She had beautiful, sparkling blue eyes.

This girl was a year, maybe two years older than me at the time – that makes a difference when you're a teenager. She was an American girl, no doubt, probably from one of those towns near Buffalo - Cheektowaga, Lackawanna, or Orchard Park.

She was with two attractive friends, but somehow it seemed a special light

shone down on this girl.

I turned around a few times to take a look at her. She took no notice of me at all and was always looking up at the ride or off in the distance.

I was hoping to at least get a smile out of her.

I realized she probably was used to getting a lot of attention. I was just one more admirer, and she just didn't care and deliberately avoided my gaze.

A minute later, it was our turn to get on the ride, and I never saw her again.

A memory is a funny thing. Some things, events, or people, you will forget, and never think about again.

I saw this girl for only a few moments, yet decades later, I still clearly remember her face, those beautiful eyes, and her radiant smile.

It is now Christmas, the time when making memories is important.

My earliest Christmas memory is being placed on Santa's knee, probably in some department store, when I was four or five years old, and having this big man with a big white beard asking me what I wanted for Christmas.

I replied, very quietly, "A G.I. Joe doll." Sure enough, on Christmas morning, G.I. Joe was wrapped up and waiting for

me under the tree.

Maybe you will have the best Christmas memory this year.

It could be because those special relatives you haven't seen for so long finally had a chance to visit.

Many couples get engaged at Christmas, and that would be a moment they will never forget.

Maybe someone will do something special for you this season that will create a lifelong, lasting memory that makes you smile every time you think about it.

Maybe you will do something nice for someone else, and the memory of making someone happy will stay with you always.

I'm going to take a cue here from Mr. Rogers, and a speech he made at a TV awards ceremony several years ago.

Take ten seconds during this Christmas season to think about someone special who has made a difference in your life, and give thanks for having known them.

May you have the best holiday season ever.

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

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Communities of care

Tradition, ritual, and custom – for many of us, they are an important part of holiday season, but, are these traditions, rituals, and customs three factors on which the spirit of your season depends, or do you ever find they bog you down?

At a recent holiday gathering, talk turned to what we had planned for our time off – if, of course, we were lucky enough to have some.

While a few of the players in this conversation had plans to get away somewhere warm, to decompress, or simply disconnect, others had much more active plans – and, truth be told, some of them were less than thrilled about it.

One of them was on turkey duty, rolling their eyes at what they insisted would be a “dry” meal – I resisted the temptation to offer they still had some time to get a few cooking tutorials under their belts before the big day to avoid that – arguing that ham or roast beef would be preferred.

Family tradition, however, dictated otherwise.

Another rattled off all the stops they had to hit before the end of Boxing Day, including at least three or four family dinners because, with a sigh, “that’s always how it’s been.”

Personally, I’m always grateful there are more than a few places we have to hit each year, but “have” isn’t the right word. Each stop brings me together with people I love, the familial warmth that is at its peak at this time of year, and, in all honesty, it’s an interesting challenge to figure out all the logistics ahead of time. Although I feel I might be in the minority on that last one.

Traditions have always been an important part of our family’s holiday, even down to the little things – including what to watch on the big day.

One particular 1962 episode of The Lucy Show is always in the rotation. In this installment, Lucy Carmichael (Lucille Ball) and Vivian Bagley (Vivian Vance) are two single moms sharing a house with their children and, for the first time, they’re spending the holiday together as a non-traditional blended

family.

It’s all fun and games until Lucy and Viv realize their own respective traditions, ones they hold pretty dear, are almost completely incompatible. Viv’s family opened their presents on Christmas Eve with everyone taking turns, while Lucy’s family saved theirs for Christmas Day, the littlest child in the family getting the distribution honours. Lucy’s family always tucked into a turkey for the big meal, while Viv’s always had Christmas Goose – and let’s not even get into what each woman preferred to stuff their birds with. We’d be here until New Year’s.

It never fails to raise smiles as it underscores how many people can get about their traditions, but also how it usually pays off to have a bit of flexibility about them.

Another tradition that is an important part of our Christmas routine is holding off on getting the celebration truly underway until after the King’s Christmas Message.

It’s always provided an oasis of calm

amid the chaos, but, more than that, I always find there’s always at least one kernel of wisdom to keep in mind as we prepare to welcome a New Year. In short, it often helps set the tone of what lies ahead – or, at least how to tackle it.

The King’s 2025 Christmas Message, of course, was still under wraps as we went to press this week, but the Monarch recently offered some particularly poignant – and potent – words of wisdom a few weeks ago in a special broadcast for Stand Up to Cancer.

The message was very personal, but evidently it struck a chord with many because, in the immediate days following the video’s release, cancer organizations in the United Kingdom, in particular, saw a significant uptick in the number of calls they had received from individuals looking to get tested.

Continued on Page 19

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Rubio's strategy – the tail wags the dog?

US President Donald Trump has ordered “a total and complete” blockade of all ‘sanctioned’ oil tankers entering and leaving Venezuela ports, which is technically an act of war. How seriously should we take this?

Trump has certainly threatened war with Venezuela in the past. Former US National Security advisor John Bolton reports that Trump said during his first presidential term (2017-2020) that invading Venezuela would be “cool” because it is “really part of the United States.”

Andrew McCabe, former Deputy Director of the FBI, says that Trump told him in 2019 that Venezuela was “the country we should be going to war with. They have all that oil and they’re right on our back door.”

Gustavo Petro, the current president of Colombia, says that his predecessor Iván Duque was approached by Trump in 2020 with a plan to invade Venezuela via Colombia. (No need for an amphibious landing operation. Just disembark the US troops in Santa Marta and march them across the border.) Trump’s advisors talked him out of that one.

He was still at it two years ago, when he said at a press conference in North Carolina: “When I left [the presidency in 2020] Venezuela was about to collapse. We would have taken over it, we would have kept all that oil.”

It sounds pretty damning, until you recall that Trump is a blowhard who almost never acts on his threats. (‘TACO’ – ‘Trump Always Chickens Out’) Or just count the numbers and realise that there are not enough American troops in the Caribbean region at the moment to make a full-scale invasion of Venezuela a viable military option.

And if you are still in doubt, remember that Trump is politically allergic to wars. His promise to his own MAGA base was ‘no more forever wars’ in exotic places. He is famous for echoing the views of the last person who spoke to him, but it would take some truly masterful manipulation to persuade him to go against his own gut instincts.

On the other hand, blockade alone is unlikely to bring down the Maduro regime. Losing the oil income will hurt the regime, but Venezuela has already seen its oil production collapse (now less than one million barrels/day) for purely domestic reasons. They did it to themselves through incompetence and corruption, and they are already sort of used to being poor.

Moreover, the Venezuelan regime is not so foolish that it will give the warhawks in the US administration a pretext for invasion by trying to break the blockade by force. The frustration will build up on both sides, but it is unlikely to explode into major violence unless some senior figure in the Trump administration goes rogue....

“In my opinion, the three regimes that exist in Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Cuba are enemies of humanity,” said US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Costa Rica early this year. He was making a special point of saying it there because

Nicaragua is Costa Rica's next-door neighbour, but he actually says it almost everywhere he goes. That is the bee in his bonnet.

Marco Rubio is a second-generation Cuban-American whose parents immigrated to Miami in the mid-1950, several years before Fidel Castro's Communist regime took power, but like many other Cuban-Americans his politics have been defined by that event. Reversing it has been his life's goal.

For a very long time there seemed no clear path to that goal, although all three of those regimes are unpopular and all three countries are impoverished. (John Bolton calls them the ‘Troika of Tyranny’). But Rubio had lots of access to Donald Trump as a senator for Florida, and he was sharp enough to see that Trump might be his instrument to end those regimes.

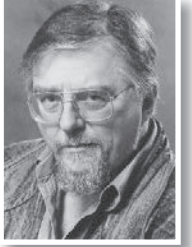
His plan of campaign (if that's what it was) ended triumphantly with his elevation to Secretary of State last January, in charge of America's foreign policy. That clearly is a large part of the reason why the focus of US foreign policy has shifted to the Western Hemisphere this year.

Is it also the reason why there has been a strong and particular focus on Venezuela, a country that rarely features at the top of anybody's priority list? Possibly so, because there is a pseudo-strategic analysis which holds that the road to Havana and the overthrow of Cuba's Communist regime runs through Venezuela.

It is complete nonsense, of course. If the Cuban revolution managed to survive even when the Soviet Union collapsed, it is unlikely to fall just because Venezuela suffers violent regime change. If and when it goes under, it will fall of its own weight.

But Rubio's fantasy could lead the United States into a forever war in Venezuela if Trump doesn't keep him on a short leash.

GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY



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CLUES ACROSS

- Paddles
- Sunscreen rating
- Very fast airplane
- Immune responses
- “Partner” to feather
- New England river
- Longest river in New Guinea
- Midway between east and southeast
- Israeli politician
- Back bones
- Consumed
- One you can rely on
- Dressed up gaudily
- Representatives
- Dog breed
- Pitching statistic
- Manpower
- S. Korean entertainer
- Outsourcing firm
- Viceroy of Egypt under Turkish rule

- One who removes antlers from a flower
- Potluck dish
- Discount
- Airborne (abbr.)
- Cavalry sword
- Basics
- Hollywood director Howard
- Afflicted in mind or body
- Horsley and Majors are two
- Midway between northeast and east
- Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- Malaysian isthmus
- Fall back
- Cheek
- S. Korean entertainer
- Former CIA
- Baseball's best pitchers
- ___ Nui, Easter

- Journalist Tarbell
- College hoops tournament
- Monetary unit of Macao
- Of she
- Spoke ill of
- Elements
- Kilocalorie (abbr.)
- Shades
- Poem of fourteen lines
- Pole used in Scottish sport
- Hollyhocks genus
- Street name for marijuana
- Polio vaccine developer
- Swiss river
- Prejudice
- Actor Idris
- Confederate soldiers
- Criticize

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

COMMUNITY VOICE

Monthly Message: My Sister's Place applauds community support through 2025

As the year comes to a close, we would like to take the time to give our heartfelt gratitude to all of those who have supported us in various ways throughout the year. Without community support, we wouldn't be able to keep the shelter doors open or provide our services and outreach programs.

Each year, we need to raise 20 per cent of our budget (more than \$300,000) over what we are provided by government funding. This money is fundraised through grants and donations.

We apply for corporate, municipal, foundation, and community grants. We also run several fundraisers of our own, including Trees for Shelter, Hats, Heels and High Tea, and our online auction.

Thank you to those who bought trees, attended our events, bought raffle tickets, and

participated in our auction in the past. Thank you to our event sponsors and to everyone who donates prizes to these fundraisers. Sponsorships and prize donations have a significant impact on the funds we raise at our events.

Each year we run our Sponsor a Family campaign, and every year the community steps up, and every family is sponsored, making the holidays happier for families who need it. Thank you.

We also rely on the generosity of the communities we serve and other donors to help us fill the funding gap.

Thank you to those who make cash donations, donate gift cards, donate most-needed items, or purchase items from our Amazon



Wish List.

Thank you to those who run third-party fundraisers, community events, and donation drives for taking the time to organize them and for choosing to donate the funds raised to My Sister's Place. These events make an enormous difference in the funds raised for the year.

Thank you to our major annual donors: Canadian Women's Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Legacy Supply Chain, Home Depot, Giant Tiger, Shoppers Foundation, Honda Foundation, Homeless Hub, Canada Helps, and The County of South Simcoe.

Thank you to groups and organizations that

invite us to speak. Community awareness is an important part of our mission, and having the opportunity to inform people about who we are and what we do is a great way for us to meet community members, answer questions, and dispel myths and misconceptions about violence and abuse.

At My Sister's Place, our staff work hard every day to provide the best facilities, services, programs, and care that we can to the women and children who come through our doors or utilize our services. The money raised throughout the year helps us to continue to do so. The funds you donate or raise help us continue our work in the future and directly affect someone's life.

You are making a difference.

Thank you for caring, thank you for your support.

Town of New Tecumseth marks major milestone of progress on the construction of Fire Station 4

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of New Tecumseth is celebrating a significant milestone in the construction of Fire Station 4 in Alliston.

On Dec. 12, Mayor Richard Norcross and Council gathered on site to commemorate this achievement by signing a piece of structural steel — a symbolic gesture of council's commitment to public safety, community growth, and future readiness.

"This milestone is more than steel and concrete," said Mayor Richard Norcross, "it represents our collective commitment to keeping New Tecumseth safe, prepared, and resilient as our community continues to grow."

With the structural steel framework now

complete, construction will advance to exterior and interior work, bringing the new facility closer to serving residents.

"Fire Station 4 will enhance our ability to respond quickly and effectively, ensuring the safety of residents as our community expands," said Fire Chief Dan Heydon. "This project reflects our dedication to providing modern, efficient fire services for years to come."

DID YOU KNOW?

As the Town of New Tecumseth continues to experience growth, the demand for timely and effective emergency services has increased. The municipality currently operates three fire stations serving the communities of Alliston, Beeton, and Tottenham.

Prior to selecting the location for the new fire station, the Town undertook a comprehensive Site Suitability Review. This review assessed servicing requirements, traffic impacts, and overall site functionality. The findings confirmed that the selected site—adjacent to the existing sports fields and Public Works yard—meets operational needs while also offering financial and logistical efficiencies. This approach ensures the facility will serve

the community in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Fire Station 4 will contribute to reduced emergency response times, improved service coverage in high-growth areas, and the continued delivery of reliable fire prevention and emergency response services. The construction of this facility represents a strategic investment in public safety to support the Town's continued growth and future needs.



FUTURE SERVICES – The Town of New Tecumseth recently celebrated a milestone in the construction of a new fire station. The fire station will help to bring more modern services to the community. **TOWN OF NEW TECUMSETH IMAGE**

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New Tecumseth hopes to capitalize on economic activity from FIFA World Cup

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

New Tecumseth council received a report from New Tecumseth Ward 4 Councillor Alan Masters was brought forward during the council meeting on Monday, Dec. 15, to suggest the town capitalize on the huge financial windfall that will arrive when six FIFA World Cup matches are played at Toronto Stadium in 2026.

This will be the first time Canada plays its men's World Cup match on home soil.

The matches are scheduled to be played in Toronto from June 12 to July 2, 2026.

Estimates say the World Cup could generate up to \$940 million for the GTA, including \$520 million in GDP growth, \$340 million in labour income, \$25 million in government revenue, and over 6,600 jobs.

The motion states that the Town of New Tecumseth can capitalize on this tourism opportunity by leveraging BIA networks, local attractions, businesses, and resort locations.

The motion requests that town staff explore opportunities to collaborate with local busi-

nesses, BIA's, and tourism boards to leverage the economic potential and attract tourism to the town.

During the council meeting, it was noted that the town took advantage of the 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto and benefited from the event.

Councillor Masters noted that the Nottawasaga Resort has created a professional-level soccer pitch and is reaching out to World Cup teams, inviting them to practice, relax, and take advantage of the resort's training facilities.

The motion was received by council.



Dead geese at Tottenham Conservation Area spark concerns from the community

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Residents of Tottenham noticed several geese that appeared to be dead on the ice at the Tottenham Conservation Area, while the rest of the flock floated in the water.

The geese raised concerns that the flock might be diseased or that some had died sud-

denly for another reason.

It is not common to see a number of animals suddenly die together in this way. Concerned residents notified officials of the strange sight.

As a result, there is now an investigation underway to determine what caused the deaths.

The Town of New Tecumseth issued a statement reporting that the proper authorities had been notified of the issue.

"Thank you to those who reported a presence of deceased geese at the Tottenham Conservation Area. The Town of New Tecumseth is working with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) and Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) on appropriate next steps," reads the town's statement. "A sample collected from the Tottenham Pond has been delivered to CWHC for analysis, with

results pending. We will continue to work with the NVCA and CWHC and provide updates on our official channels. Further guidance and reporting options can be found at cwhc-rcsf.ca."

The agencies can determine the cause of death and take appropriate action if needed, if there is a suspected disease outbreak, or if the geese were killed in another manner.

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit reports rising number of flu cases throughout the region

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Several arrests have been made in an investInfluenza season has arrived early this year, and the number of people sick with the flu is quickly increasing in Ontario and Simcoe Muskoka.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit strongly recommends that people who have not yet received their flu shot get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect themselves from severe illness this winter.

With the early start of flu season, the Health Unit is seeing a steep increase in the number of cases being reported.

The number of cases reported for the season to date is more than four times the number of cases reported for the same period in the last two flu seasons.

It is expected that those numbers will continue to increase for the next few weeks as people gather to spend time with friends and family during the holiday season.

Getting the flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from influenza and makes it less

severe if you get sick.

This means your risk of needing medical care or being hospitalized for flu-related problems is significantly reduced.

People two years of age and older can receive their flu vaccine at participating local pharmacies and some health care providers.

Children aged six months to two years may receive the flu vaccine from a doctor, nurse, or health unit clinic by appointment.

In addition to influenza, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) continue to spread. The same protective steps you use to

avoid getting influenza will also help to prevent illness from these viruses. The COVID-19 vaccine is available free of charge to individuals aged six months and older at participating local pharmacies and some health care providers.

The health unit encourages people to check the Weekly Respiratory Virus Update on its website, consider their personal circumstances that may increase risk, and take appropriate precautions to protect themselves and others from transmission and severe illness.

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The Times ^{New Tecumseth} 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

Attention Readers!

For the final edition of the New Tec Times in 2025, we're taking you through all of the highs and lows of last year. Our 2025 Year in Review will share some of the most significant stories impacting our readers from January to December. Now, without any further ado, here's a look at the year that was!

JANUARY

- **New Stevenson Memorial Hospital facility to include MRI Suite:** Stevenson Memorial Hospital (SMH) has announced that an MRI suite will be part of its redevelopment project. Housed in the Diagnostic Imaging Department, the new MRI suite will allow patients to receive the care they need closer to home, eliminating the need to travel outside their catchment area for advanced diagnostic imaging services.
- **Alliston Hornets start the new year with 27th consecutive win:** The Alliston Hornets started the new year with their 27th win of the season when they hosted the Innisfil Spartans on the ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Jan. 3. Cole Turcotte and David Harvey scored the opening Alliston goals in the first period.

- **Suspension possible for elementary students without proper vaccination records:** The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is urging parents of children in Grades 4, 5 and 6 to provide up-to-date immunization records or submit a medical exemption form or affidavit to the Health Unit before Feb. 4, 2025, to avoid suspension from school.

- **County council approves motion cutting number of councillors in half:** A motion was approved to support the process of reducing the size of Simcoe County council from 32 members to 17, inclusive of a full-time appointed Warden.

- **Local dairy processing businesses benefit from modernization initiative:** The federal and provincial governments are supporting 70 dairy processing businesses across Ontario through the Dairy Processing Modernization Initiative.

FEBRUARY

- **County receiving funding for emergency shelters:** The Province of Ontario has begun providing municipalities with up to \$75.5 million in funding to help them wind down encampments in public spaces by creating additional emergency shelter spaces and affordable housing units.

- **Local long-term care homes to host 'Bring a Friend to Volunteer Days':** The County of Simcoe invites those interested in making a difference in the lives of older adults to check out one of the "Bring a Friend to Volunteer Days," taking place at local long-term care homes.

- **Stevenson Memorial Hospital launches new monthly Paediatric Clinic:** Stevenson Memorial Hospital has announced the opening of a new Paediatric Clinic, expected to launch on Feb. 25.

- **Candidates respond to issues prior to provincial election:** There are five candidates running in the upcoming provincial election for Simcoe Grey, scheduled for Feb. 27. The New Tecumseth Times offered each candidate the opportunity to address constituents on several important issues.



STEPPING FORWARD – Local dignitaries and members of the Royal Canadian Legion branches in Alliston, Tottenham, and Beeton gathered to officially open a new crosswalk dedicated to veterans on Albert St. Just outside of the Town of New Tecumseth administration building on Monday, Sept. 22.

tunity to address constituents on several important issues.

- **Alliston Hornets sweep Muskoka Bears 4-0 in quarter-final playoff round:** The Alliston Hornets eliminated the Muskoka Bears in their best-of-seven quarter-final North Carruthers division playoff series.

MARCH

- **Measles cases nearly doubled in Ontario over two weeks:** A recent measles outbreak in Ontario has resulted in 18 unimmunized children being hospitalized.

- **Blue wave sweeps across Ontario, Saunderson re-elected in Simcoe-Grey:** A wave of blue swept across Ontario on Thursday, Feb. 27, during the provincial election, as Premier Doug Ford and his Progressive Conservatives won their third straight majority government.

- **Local chapter of national group advocates for responsible municipal spending:** The local chapter of Kiclei Canada is trying to raise awareness of what they say is outside influence and spending that affects decisions made at the municipal level.

- **Region faces flooding from rising temperatures, melting snow and ice:** Rainfall accumulations of 15 to 20 mm combined with the existing snowpack are expected to cause significant melting, resulting in increased runoff.

- **New Tecumseth placed into new riding for federal election:** The riding of Simcoe-Grey has had its boundaries changed and will now include Mulmur Township and Grey Highlands. Some residents of Adjala-Tosorontio will find themselves voting in the Dufferin Caledon Riding. The Town of New Tecumseth will now join Bradford West Gwillimbury in the new riding of New Tecumseth-Bradford.



ROWING TOGETHER – Abilities in Motion hosted its fourth annual Regatta at Earl Rowe Provincial Park on Friday, Aug. 15, and Saturday, Aug. 16. The big canoe is always a favourite for visitors. The 26-foot canoe allows several people to go out on the water together.

Merry Christmas!

Wishing you and your loved ones a warm and joyful holiday season.

BRIAN SAUNDERSON

MPP - Simcoe-Grey

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Your generosity allowed the Alliston Lions to provide the communities our club serves with by bringing a little Christmas Cheer to approximately 191 families and 353 children this Christmas Season.

We sincerely appreciate that you took time from your busy schedules in continuing our legacy of assisting those less fortunate.

On behalf of the Alliston Lions Club, Thank You, Thank You Very Much for Your Kind and Wonderful Support.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year.

*Alliston Lions Club Members
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APRIL

- **New Tecumseth Council considers changing Procurement Policy to 'Buy Canadian':** As a response to the US government's tariffs and proposed tariffs on Canadian goods, New Tecumseth Town Council is considering a by-law to amend the Town Procurement Policy to implement a more flexible Buy Canadian' and Buy Ontario' policy.
- **Alliston high school's robotics team gains attention of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz:** Students

attended the Hanover Messe (German for fair) in Germany, which ran March 31 to April 4, to run a demonstration of a robot goalie they built that stops pucks using a high-tech design and a camera that can read the trajectory of a puck.

- **County temporarily extends drop-off facilities, adds locations following ice storm:** To help residents during spring clean-up, the County of Simcoe is opening several waste drop-off facilities on extra days for brush only.

- **Province proposes expansion of**

Strong Mayor Powers across nearly 170 municipalities: In a statement, the province said the special powers are designed to "help deliver on provincial priorities, such as building more homes, transit and other infrastructure across Ontario."

- **Honda Canada remains confident despite possible U.S. tariffs:** Honda Canada will continue to operate at full capacity and the Alliston automaker is confident it will be able to get through any challenges it may have with potential U.S. tariffs.

Theatre's production of Pippin. This classic musical first hit the stage on Broadway in 1972.

- **Pilot project aimed at reducing speed limits launches in some neighbourhoods:** If you have a bit of a lead foot, it may be time to rethink your driving habits when you are cruising the streets of Alliston. A new speed limit pilot project has been launched to reduce speeds in residential areas.

JUNE

- **Town acquires downtown Tottenham property to increase parking:** The Town of New Tecumseth has purchased six properties in the downtown core of Tottenham with plans to turn the area into a parking lot.

- **SCDSB approves budget of \$769 million for 2025-26 school year:** The Simcoe County District School Board has approved a balanced budget of \$768 million for the 2025-26 school year in compliance with the Ministry of Education's mandate.

- **Prison isn't all that bad for the Delval Divas in Blackhorse Theatre production:** They may be behind bars doing long prison sentences, but life in a country club-style institution isn't so bad for a group of women in the Blackhorse Village Players' production of Delval Divas.

- **Humane Society breaks ground on long-awaited expansion:** The Alliston & District Humane Society has broken ground to start construction of its long-awaited Second Chances Shelter expansion.

- **New supervisor appointed to oversee operations at Stevenson Memorial Hospital:** The Ministry of Health has appointed a new supervisor for Stevenson Memorial Hospital (SMH) to oversee the hospital's operations and strengthen its governance and accountability.

- **Liberal Party of Canada projected to form minority government, New Tecumseth-Gwillimbury provides Conservative MP with resounding mandate:** Conservative incumbent, Scot Davidson, has retained his seat in federal parliament after winning the riding of New Tecumseth-Gwillimbury with 59 per cent of the popular vote in the federal election on April 28.

MAY

- **New Tecumseth mayor shares how he'll use 'strong mayor powers':** The Province of Ontario expanded strong mayor powers to an additional 169 municipalities, including New Tecumseth, on May 1.

- **Request for Proposal announced for redevelopment of Stevenson Memorial Hospital:** This is part of the hospital's journey to expand and revitalize the hospital. The new 147,100-square-foot facility will provide a modernized hospital for New Tecumseth and the surrounding communities and will accommodate a growing population.

- **The South Simcoe Theatre's production of 'Pippin' – a rollicking fun time:** A young man searches for fulfillment and a purpose in life in the South Simcoe



RIDING THE RAILS – Brothers Dario and Fabian cruise along the new pump track at Riverdale Park in Alliston during an event marking its opening on Thursday, July 10. The new track features hills and curves that provide a fun ride for bicycles, skateboards, scooters, and rollerblades.

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JULY

• **Council discusses long-term financial plan:** This is a tool to map the Town's vision, not a budget or a commitment. The intent is to ensure operational goals align with the Town's financial goals.

• **Campaign to redevelop Hospital relaunches with a new goal of raising \$80 million:** The Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation has relaunched and rebranded its fundraising campaign in support of hospital redevelopment, increasing its goal from \$43 million to \$80 million.

• **Concerts in the Park continues to run as weekly event thanks to sponsors:** The weekly Concerts in the Park series that takes place every Sunday at Keogh Park in Tottenham is possible thanks to two organizers and a group of local sponsors who support the event.

• **Two New Tecumseth residents face murder-related charges:** Two years after an Alliston man went missing, charges are being laid in connection to his disappearance. Two New Tecumseth residents have been arrested and face charges related to murder.

AUGUST

• **Annual Alliston Potato Festival returns to downtown this weekend:**

FULL STEAM AHEAD –

The annual Georgian Bay Steam Show is celebrating the 60th anniversary of its popular exhibition of steam era farm implements and machinery at its Cookstown location.



majority process undertaken by the 16 municipalities in the County.

• **New Tecumseth to expand urban forest with \$1.5 million in federal support:** The Town of New Tecumseth is ready to enhance its natural landscape thanks to new funding from the Government of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund.

• **Local hospital foundation announces the success of \$1 million Matching Gift campaign:** The Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation has announced the remarkable success of the Building Your Stevenson for Tomorrow, Together campaign's \$1 million matching gift initiative, launched in partnership with Brian and Kathy Gibson.

• **TUFF Therapeutic Riding Foundation uses horses to help at-risk youth:** The equines at TUFF Therapeutic Riding Foundation at Jewel View Farm near Loretto are a large and powerful breed of horses. They are also gentle and appreciate human contact.

SEPTEMBER

• **Town of New Tecumseth to hold public input session next year's budget:** Every year, the Town of New Tecumseth builds a Business Plan and Budget. This is the roadmap for delivering the services and programs residents count on every day.

• **At-home kit from public health gives more options for STI testing:** The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit has announced a new ongoing effort to reduce the stigma surrounding HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

It is an annual tradition in Alliston where thousands of people turn out to watch the parade through the downtown core on Friday night, followed by three days of fun, music, events, and community spirit.

• **St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School set to expand:** St. Thomas Aquinas (STA) Secondary School in Tottenham has received provincial approval to issue a tender for a new addition.

• **Downtown demolition to reshape the look of Tottenham:** The northwest corner of Queen Street and Mill Street in Tottenham will look a lot different by the end of the summer.

• **Municipalities split evenly on changes to Simcoe County Council representatives:** Simcoe County Council has released the results of the triple

FUN TIMES –
It was a big party in Alliston Aug. 7-9, as the annual Potato Festival took over the streets and the fairgrounds. Victoria Street was closed with vendors, buskers entertained, and bands performed on the street.



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SPORTS

NEW TECUMSETH TIMES

Win and a loss over the weekend for the Alliston Hornets

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Alliston Hornets gave up a loss to the seventh place Huntsville Otters on home ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation in a game that saw the Hornets chasing the Otters for the entire game.

It was a 1-1 game at the end of the first period after Huntsville got the opener, and Alliston's Tristen Pitt tied it up midway in the period.

The Otters were leading 3-1 after scoring two goals early in the second period.

Alliston's David Harvey scored early in the period, but Huntsville responded with another goal to make it a 4-2 game.

Will Millington hit the back of the Huntsville net followed by a second Alliston goal from Noah Cochrane that made it a 4-4 game with one period left to go.

The Hornets saw the game slip away when Huntsville scored twice to lead 6-4 with just over seven minutes left on the clock.

Ben Smith got the final goal of the night at 17:3 into the third period.

The Otters got a final goal with just over a minute left on the clock for the 7-5 win.

The following night, Saturday, Dec. 20, the Hornets travelled to Innisfil to take on the Spartans.

After a scoreless first period, Alliston's Duncan Grube got the first goal of the night early in the second period.

The Hornets pulled away in the third period scoring two goals for the 3-0 win.

Alliston goalie Riley Arts got the shutout



BACK IN FIRST – The Alliston Hornets host the Huntsville Otters on the ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Dec. 19. The Hornets took a 7-5 loss in this game. They rebounded the following night with a 3-0 over the Innisfil Spartans. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

for the night.

Alliston goals came from Will Millington and an empty netter from Mark Coish with 22 seconds remaining in the game.

The Hornets remain in first place in

the North Carruthers division with a 21-7 record and 42 point.

The Stayner Siskins are close behind in second place with 39 points.

They are followed by the Penetang Kings,

Orillia Terriers, and the Midland Flyers.

The Hornets will be back on home ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Monday, Dec. 29, when they will host the Midland Flyers. Game time is 7:00 p.m.

Alliston Food Bank benefits from Kempfenfelt Cup hockey tournament

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The annual Kempfenfelt Cup hockey tournament brought school spirit and the spirit of giving back to the Sadlon Arena in Barrie on Dec. 16 and 17.

Simcoe County District School Board schools from southwest Simcoe County battled on the ice to see who would bring home bragging rights this season, while also raising money for a variety of local charities.

Nottawasaga Pines Secondary School brought home the title with shoot-out victories in both the boys' and girls' divisions in the Kempfenfelt Cup South competition.

Eastview Secondary School won both the boys' and girls' divisions in the Kempfenfelt Cup Central competition.

The big winners are the charities supported by these events.

More than \$21,500 was raised.

The Alliston Food Bank and Bradford Helping Hand Food Bank received \$2,550.

Barrie and District Christmas Cheer received \$19,000.

The SCDSB would like to thank the organizers of each tournament – Colin Bowins,

vice-principal at Eastview SS, and Hayden Adams, teacher at Bradford District HS –

as well as all of the staff and students who supported and participated in these events.



SPORTS FUNDRAISER – for some on-ice fun. The tournament was held at the Sadlon Arena in Barrie on Dec. 16-17. The tournament raises funds for several local charities. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

OCTOBER

• **New Tecumseth council receives staff report on investment strategy:** Council has received a report from the Town treasury department to present the first annual performance update on the Town's investment portfolio.

• **Support in reshaping rivers in the Nottawasaga watershed:** The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority has announced that it has received support from Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund for its 'Reshaping Rivers for Resiliency' project.

• **New Tecumseth Deputy Mayor Stephanie MacLellan tables motion in support of speed cameras:** In light of Ontario Premier Doug Ford's comments about dissolving Automated Speed Enforcement programs in Ontario, New Tecumseth Deputy Mayor Stephanie MacLellan tabled a motion during a Council meeting on Monday, Oct. 6, asking that Council formally request that the Premier reconsider the proposed dissolution of ASE programs.

• **JAK Fund supports families in need with 200 Thanksgiving dinners:** The JAK Fund helped local families celebrate Thanksgiving by providing a full dinner they could enjoy on the holiday.

• **Simcoe County delivers final funds for hospice investments:** County of Simcoe Councillors presented a cheque for \$437,987 to representatives of the Simcoe County Hospice Alliance on Oct. 15.

• **Banting senior girls win SCAA flag football championship:** The Banting Memorial High School Marauders senior girls' football team are champions after winning the Simcoe County Athletic Association championship final game over the Orillia Secondary School Nighthawks on their home field at Banting on Thursday, Oct. 30.



FUN TIMES –

Hundreds of local residents turned out to celebrate Canada Day at Riverdale Park in Alliston on Tuesday, July 1. The event was hosted by New Tecumseth-Gwillimbury MP Scot Davidson and the Alliston Lions Club. Visitors enjoyed free hamburgers, live music, and a day to celebrate the nation's birthday and heritage.



CHAMPIONS –

The Banting Memorial High School Marauders senior girls' flag football team captured the Simcoe County Athletic Association championship with a 14-7 win over the Orillia Secondary School Nighthawks on the field at Banting on Thursday, Oct. 30.

• **Adjala-Tosorontio man charged with second-degree murder of 41-year-old woman:** Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police officers have made an arrest in connection with an ongoing suspicious death investigation and continue to appeal to the public for information.

hospitals and 66 community health-based facilities across Ontario.

NOVEMBER

• **Council approves land exchange for new Banting Memorial High School site:** New Tecumseth Town Council has approved a land exchange agreement with the Simcoe County District School Board that will pave the way for the long-awaited construction of a new Banting Memorial High School.

• **Local organizations share concerns about NTRC name change:** Local users and organizations arriving at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre in Alliston were recently surprised to see a new sign at the facility naming it the Alliston Community Centre.

• **New data shows high levels of household food insecurity in Simcoe County:** 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.

DECEMBER

• **Stevenson Memorial Hospital receives provincial funding for infrastructure:** An Integrity Commissioner Report regarding Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston will receive funding from the province for Community Infrastructure Renewal. It is part of a broader \$257 million investment to support critical infrastructure upgrades and repairs at 126

• **New Tecumseth's deputy mayor motions for transparency on town credit cards:** New Tecumseth deputy mayor Stephanie MacLellan made a motion at the New Tecumseth town council meeting on Monday, Dec. 1, calling for the mayor and chief administrative officer to provide a monthly report detailing all purchases made using their town-issued credit cards, known as P-cards. The motion did not pass.

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South Simcoe Police Service introduces latest addition to its canine unit

The South Simcoe Police Service (SSPS) recently welcomed Police Dog Nash to the SSPS family.

Nash is one of the police service's newest recruits, a Belgian Malinois-German Shepherd mix born in Hungary. After months of intense training alongside his handler, Police Constable Shawn Gwilliam, Nash is ready to begin his career supporting front-line policing. Nash's training included tracking, building, area searches, article searches, criminal apprehension, and obedience.

SSPS thanked the Barrie Police Service Canine Unit for delivering an "exceptional training program." The police service noted that the knowledge and commitment shown reflect the "highest standard of excellence."

Nash will begin his career working alongside Police Constable Gwilliam while learn-

ing the ropes under the guidance of our experienced Police Dog Nitro, who will continue to remain operational.

Over time, Nitro will pass the torch to Nash, ensuring a smooth transition and continued excellence in front-line policing. Together, they will form a dynamic partnership that strengthens our Canine Unit and enhances the SSPS's capability to serve the community.

"Police dogs are an important part of keeping our community safe, from tracking and search duties to supporting operational response," reads a press release from SSPS, dated Dec. 19. "We are incredibly proud to have both Nash and Nitro as part of our team and the SSPS family. We look forward to seeing Nash put his training into action and grow into his new role alongside Nitro and the Canine Unit."



NEW RECRUIT – Police Dog Nash is the newest recruit at the South Simcoe Police Service. He is a Belgian Malinois-German Shepherd mix born in Hungary. His handler, Police Constable Shawn Gwilliam, has provided months of intense training. Nash was trained for tracking, building, area searches, article searches, criminal apprehension and obedience.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Impaired driving charges laid in New Tecumseth after three hospitalized from collision

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police have charged one individual with impaired driving following a single-vehicle collision in New Tecumseth.

At approximately 2 a.m., on Dec. 14, police responded to a single-vehicle collision on the 14th Line of New Tecumseth.

Upon arrival, officers located a vehicle that had left the road and overturned in a steep ditch.

Three occupants were assisted from the wreckage by emergency services. Two passengers sustained significant injuries and were transported to the hospital for treatment. They were later discharged.

During the investigation, officers determined that the driver's ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol. The driver was arrested and transported to a local hospital as a precaution and later discharged with minor injuries. As a result, the driver, a resident of New Tecumseth, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired – blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)

- The accused is scheduled to appear at the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford on Jan. 15, 2026.

- The accused's driver's license has been suspended for 90 days, and their vehicle has been impounded for seven days.
- The listed charges have not been proven.

Nottawasaga OPP raise nearly \$4,000 through 4th Annual Detachment Christmas Auction

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is pleased to announce the success of its 4th Annual Detachment Christmas Auction. This internal fundraising initiative was held to support deserving families within its policing area during the holiday season.

This year's auction raised \$3,850, with

100 per cent of the funds raised spent on Christmas gifts for local families in need. This important initiative helps ensure that more children and families in our communities experience a joyful and memorable holiday.

"The success of this year's auction was made possible by the incredible generosity

of local businesses, organizations, and individuals who donated a wide variety of items for our officers to bid on," reads a press release from Nottawasaga OPP.

"Their kindness directly impacts families within the Town of New Tecumseth, Township of Essa, and Township of Adjala-Tosorontio."



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Feaver, Howard Riley
March 21, 1945 - December 15, 2025
Peacefully on December 15, 2025, surrounded by family at home. Howard Feaver of Schomberg, beloved husband of the late Shirley Feaver (nee Weir). Loving father of Scott (Tracy), Kim (Joshua), Leanne (Brian) and Lisa (Scott). Caring grandfather of Joeli, Erin, Dalton, Braden, Brooke and Jack. Doting Great grandfather of Aileana. Howard will be sadly missed by his nieces, nephews, family and friends. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date in honour of Howard's Life. Cremation has taken place. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Rod Abrams Funeral Home
www.RodAbramsFuneralHome.com

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Continued from Page 4

Brock's Banter: Communities of care

As someone whose family was touched by cancer this year, it was hard not to feel encouraged by such a profound reaction, and I share his words below in case you missed them:

"I know from my own experience that a cancer diagnosis can feel overwhelming. Yet I also know that early detection is the key that can transform treatment journeys, giving invaluable time to medical teams – and, to their patients, the precious gift of hope. These are gifts we can all help deliver. Throughout my own cancer journey, I have been profoundly moved by what I can only call the 'community of care' that surrounds every cancer patient – the specialists, the nurses, researchers and volunteers who work tirelessly to save and improve lives.

"But I have also learned something that troubles me deeply – at least nine million people in our country are not up to date with the cancer screenings available to them. That is at least nine million opportunities for early diagnosis being missed. The statistics speak with stark clarity. To take just one example: When bowel cancer is caught at the earliest stage, around nine in ten people survive for at least five years. When diagnosed late, that falls to just one in ten. Early diagnosis quite simply saves lives.

"Now, I have heard this message repeatedly during my visits to cancer centres across the country. I know, too, what a difference it has made in my own case, enabling me to continue leading a full and active life, even while undergoing treatment. Indeed, today I am able to share with you the good news that thanks to early diagnosis, effective intervention and adherence to 'doctors' orders', my own schedule of cancer treatment can be reduced in the New Year. This milestone is both a personal blessing and a testimony to the remarkable advances that have been made in cancer care in recent years; testimony that I hope may give encouragement to the fifty per cent of us who will be diagnosed with the illness at some point in our lives.

"Yet too often, I am told, people avoid screening because they imagine it may be frightening, embarrassing or uncomfortable. If and when they do finally take up their invitation, they are glad they took part. A few moments of minor inconvenience are a small price to pay for the reassurance that comes for most people when they are either told either they don't need further tests, or, for some, are given the chance to enable early detection, with the life-saving intervention that can follow.

"As I have observed before, the darkest moments of illness can be illuminated by

the greatest compassion. But compassion must be paired with action. This December, as we gather to reflect on the year past, I pray that we can each pledge, as part of our resolutions for the year ahead, to play our part in helping to catch cancer

early. Your life - or the life of someone you love - may depend upon it."

I wish all of you, and especially those in our respective "communities of care," a very warm and wonderful holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year!



FEEDING THE COMMUNITY: The Alliston Lions Club wrapped up its annual 2025 Food and Toy Hamper campaign and made deliveries to deserving families in the region on Saturday, Dec. 20, and Sunday, Dec. 21. The Lions brightened the Christmas season for 192 families and over 250 children. Alliston Lions, family members, and friends who helped with the campaign gathered at the Lions Club in Alliston after the deliveries were completed. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

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