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Lighting up the night and making waves

It was a big party at the Twelfth Night Celebration bonfire held at Riverdale Park in Alliston on Saturday, Jan. 3. Hosted by the Alliston Rotary Club with help from the New Tecumseth Fire Department, local residents donated their Christmas trees to create a huge fire in the park. The party kicked off with music, hot dogs, and hot chocolate. Dan the Music Man gets a lot of kids involved at the bonfire pre-show.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority reports year of progress

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is reporting that it has had a successful year of significant progress in service delivery, watershed protection, and partnership-building.

Throughout 2025, NVCA advanced ecological restoration projects, modernized permitting processes, strengthened relationships with industry and community partners, and supported municipalities across the Nottawasaga Watershed.

“This year has been one of transformation,” said Councillor Jonathan Scott, chair of the NVCA Board of Directors. “We set out to become faster, clearer and more transparent while staying true to our core mission to

protect our natural environment. Thanks to dedicated staff and strong support from our member municipalities, NVCA is delivering better service and stronger environmental outcomes.”

NVCA’s shift to digital permitting continued with the rollout of e-permitting, updated guidelines and new triage and pre-screening processes. These changes reduced backlogs, improved turnaround times and supported a strong rise in customer satisfaction across planning, permitting and public-facing programs.

NVCA’s 2026 Business Plan and Budget reflected careful financial management, with most expense categories held flat or reduced, the operating budget reduced by \$9,000, and the overall levy increase remaining under three per cent.



AERIAL PHOTO of development that is outside of the NVCA’s regulated areas.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



CHILDREN are pictured attending NVCA’s environmental education programs.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The budget prioritized fair wages, responsible asset management and NVCA’s core role in protecting communities from flooding and erosion.

This year saw major investments in habitat restoration and community engagement, including river and stream restoration projects in Adjala-Tosorontio, Clearview, New Tecumseth, Oro-Medonte and Springwater. Planting nearly 10,000 native trees and shrubs through community volunteer events. A successful Spring Tonic Maple Syrup Festival, supporting both Rotary community projects and conservation area maintenance.

These efforts improved local habitat, protected water quality and strengthened community connections to the watershed.

In addition to monitoring the health of our rivers, streams, groundwater, wetlands, and forests, NVCA reduced redundancies by providing cost-effective monitoring for municipalities and by gathering local data and watershed-wide insights into human impacts.

Watershed residents of all ages spent time in nature by exploring NVCA’s conserva-

tion areas. Students experienced hands-on learning through Indigenous Programming, school visits and field trips.

Camp Tiffin expanded and welcomed more children than ever before. These experiences connect residents with nature and inspire them to be future stewards of their local watershed.

NVCA continued to lead provincial discussions on addressing rising chloride pollution, encouraging limited-liability protections for certified winter maintenance contractors and consistent best-practice standards. NVCA also called on the Province to strengthen recycling and waste-diversion rules to prevent illegal dumping and protect water systems.

“This has been a year of meaningful progress and strong partnerships,” said Jennifer Vincent, NVCA Chief Administrative Officer. “As we move into 2026, NVCA will remain focused on modern, responsive service while restoring and protecting the watershed that thousands of residents, farmers, businesses and visitors rely on every day.”

Scott didn’t receive an organ transplant, but an organ transplant saved his life

Because thanks to an organ donor, his wife Katie received a lifesaving transplant.

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Applications open for New Tecumseth's 2026 Community Grant program

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The 2026 New Tecumseth Community Grant Program is now open for applications. All grant applications are contingent on the allocation of funding as part of the town's budget process.

The total amount of funding available for grants will be determined annually through the budget process.

The Town's Community Grant program is

awarded under one of three categories:

- **Community Fee Waiver Grant** –

Funds provided to offset town-established user fees to rent space, equipment, or provide supplies. This may include, but is not limited to, space rental, signs, and equipment.

- **Community and Events Grant** –

To provide funding to assist organizations that provide services or events to the community, which are beneficial and not currently provided by the town. This category will support a variety of community

celebrations, festivals, and special events. Funds provided in this category will include requests for initial start-up funding, as well as for equipment, materials, and supplies purchased.

- **Community Arts, Culture and Tourism Grant** –

Supports local not-for-profit organizations promoting activities and initiatives that enhance the cultural and artistic landscape of the community through education and participation. This category can fund the opera-

tion of significant cultural facilities that provide core services to the community.

The grant application period opened on Jan. 2, 2026.

The deadline for grant applications is the last day of February, at 4:30 p.m.

The Community Grant Program Committee will review and process applications in March and April.

Applications for the Community Grant Program are available on the town's website: newtecumseth.ca

Local paramedics raise nearly \$43,000 through annual Food & Toy Drive

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The County of Simcoe Paramedic Services has wrapped up its 23rd annual Food and Toy Drive.

Thanks to the generosity of residents, businesses, and community partners, this year's campaign gathered 8,803 toys, over 8,680 pounds of food, and \$42,915.52 in monetary donations to brighten the holidays for local families.

"This drive truly embodies the spirit of Christmas in Simcoe County," said Simcoe County Warden Basil Clarke. "During these challenging economic times, our residents once again rallied around our request to 'Give a little, help a lot', opened their hearts and gave generously. Filling ambulances with food, toys, and donations ensures that families across our region can celebrate with joy. Thank you to our incredible residents and volunteers for continuing to showcase the holiday spirit year after year."

With this year's totals included, the CSPS Food and Toy Drive has, over 23 years, collected 139,634 toys, 97,650 pounds of food, and approximately \$333,757 in monetary and gift card donations to support families across Simcoe County.

"Our paramedics are honoured to lead this tradition each year, and we are especially grateful for the efforts of our Paramedic Services team, their families, and friends who dedicate countless hours to this cause," said County of Simcoe Paramedic Services Director and Chief Sarah Mills.

"Their commitment, combined with the kindness of our community, helps to ensure



ANNUAL DONATION – Throughout the month, County of Simcoe Paramedic Services delivered donations to locations across the region, keeping support within local communities. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

that meals will be on tables and gifts under trees, making the season brighter for thousands of families."

For 23 years, this Food and Toy Drive has been a cherished tradition, uniting residents in support of those in need.

All donations were distributed to local children and families in need by charitable organizations working in partnership with County of Simcoe Paramedic Services.

Some of the charities supported by the County of Simcoe Paramedic Services Food and Toy Drive include the Salvation Army, WOW Living Bradford, Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions, Barrie Christmas Cheer, Kinette Club of Wasaga Beach, Georgian Bay Food Network, Christmas in a Box, and

Innisfil Christmas for Kids.

Several local food banks, including those in Alliston, Angus, Bradford, Clearview,

Coldwater, Elmvale, Tottenham, Orillia, and Wasaga Beach, benefited from the food and toy drive.

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Editorial, Letters & Opinion

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

~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

The customer is always right

Now that the new year is here, maybe you have taken advantage of Boxing Day sales, or as the retail world has now reinvented it – Boxing WEEK sales.

Yes, this unusually named day has now become an entire week when stores entice you to come in and spend even more money after you have already maxed out your credit cards on Christmas purchases.

I don't mind it - I got a couple of nice deals this Boxing Week.

So, Merry Boxing Week to everyone, and Happy.. something.

Some customers will shop in a calm, dignified manner. Others follow the old saying, 'The customer is always right,' and make a lot of demands of shopkeepers and store employees.

Except the phrase, 'The customer is always right,' was never a thing.

When you think about it, why would it be correct? Just because you're a customer doesn't mean you can decide to be rude to store staff or make unreasonable demands.

The original saying was 'The customer is always right, in matters of taste,' which gives it an entirely different meaning.

The original saying, coined by a retailer, means, do not argue about a

customer's preferences. It was never meant to tell employees to give in to unrealistic customer demands.

There are many old sayings that have changed over time, and with that, their meanings and intended wisdom.

'Money is the root of all evil,' is an often quoted phrase from the bible. It seems to imply that rich people are inherently bad and somehow achieved their money through nefarious means.

Why would a person who has done well in business or in life be automatically considered 'evil' in some way?

The original passage in the bible states, 'The LOVE of money is the root of all evil.' That single word dramatically changes the entire meaning.

The phrase doesn't mean that money itself is bad; it is the excessive desire for it that leads to various forms of wrongdoing.

'Curiosity killed the cat,' is an old saying that implies sticking your nose into somewhere where it doesn't belong will get you into trouble.

However, the original phrase is actually, 'Curiosity killed the cat, but satisfaction brought it back.'

Those additional words entirely change the meaning. The phrase implies that curiosity may lead to set-

backs, but the rewards of discovery make it worthwhile.

You have probably heard, or used the phrase, 'Blood is thicker than water.'

The modern meaning is that your family always comes before everyone else. However, there are a lot of families that do not get along for different reasons.

If you have a brother who is the black sheep of the family, and just got out of prison after his third conviction of being some kind of sexual pervert, do you place him higher on your list than a life-long friend who has supported you your entire life?

The original phrase is 'The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb.'

This implies the exact opposite of the modern phrase. It actually means that bonds made by choice are stronger than family ties.

Remember that the next time someone tells you that you are obligated to help that creepy relative who hasn't worked for 20 years, does illicit drugs, and is looking for a place to crash for the week, and they suggest your house has a nice guest bedroom.

"A jack of all trades, but master of none," is an old saying that seems to

ridicule someone who tries to accomplish varying tasks, but has limited skills.

The original saying is, 'Jack of all trades, master of none, though oftentimes better than master of one.'

That little addendum changes the entire meaning.

The phrase now means that having multiple skills, even if not perfectly mastered, is more valuable than excelling in just one area.

Remember that the next time you criticize someone for trying their best but not achieving perfection every time.

'Birds of a feather flock together' is a phrase that implies that people who have the same interests gravitate toward each other.

However, the original phrase has the added line, 'until the cat comes.'

This is a warning about fair-weather friends who are there for you until trouble arrives. That's when your not-so-loyal friends have scattered and left you on your own.

Things take on a different meaning when you see the whole picture.

"The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese!"

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Full speed ahead in 2026

The New Year didn't waste any time getting into full swing.

Many of us had to shake off a bit of snow – well, more than a bit, depending on where you are – to get back into the office on Monday morning and, again, depending on your level of post-holiday Zen, could have been a bit more of a challenge than you would like on your first day back to the office or school.

After a few days off, it's nice to slip back into the routine rather than get thrust back into it, but we don't necessarily write the rules.

After what was, for many, a fraught 2025 on so many fronts – economically, politically, spiritually – I know there was a lot of hope in the air that some of this would ease over the next twelve months and we would be able to collectively look ahead to brighter horizons.

Those hopes were dashed relatively early on when the world was thrown into significant uncertainty following events in Venezuela, as conflict still rages in

Ukraine, despite multiple perspectives on how peace can be achieved, as many parts of the Middle East remain nothing short of a tinderbox, and, here at home, the affordability crisis continues with little abatement.

With so many issues facing our world at the dawn of a new year, it was somewhat disconcerting by comparison to have what was possibly our quietest start to the New Year in recent memory.

Typically, I like to start the year off on the right foot by spending the evening, or the first few hours of the fresh calendar, doing something new. It doesn't have to be big – it could be something as grand as a trip within Canada or abroad, or as quiet as raising a drink with friends and family.

This year, however, the only new things that were enjoyed were two movies we had never seen before on New Year's Eve, and the creation of a new cocktail, given the eclectic mix of bottles we received over the season of giving.

It had been a pretty intense and busy period leading up to the holiday, so we didn't feel any guilt spending it a bit quietly and while it was quiet indeed, it was time well spent.

There is something to be said about finding peace amid the quiet every once in a while.

As a budding journalist, one of my most formative experiences was time spent working overseas. Access to the internet in this location was, at the time, a bit spotty, and calls home exorbitantly expensive, so before setting off one of the factors that made me feel a bit uneasy was being disconnected for extended periods of time.

Was it a fear of not being in touch?

A matter of potentially missing an important event with the power to change the world until hours after the fact?

A bit of both?

Maybe.

Looking back, despite being a man who depends on news, matters of pub-

lic interest, and all the wonderful things that fall under the umbrella of "human interest," it seems so silly to feel that way. Yes, the world is more connected now than ever before, so those fears of the early 2000s are now basically moot, but having that time away from a cord, device, or, in short, a screen, was a veritable luxury in hindsight.

As I wrote in my last column before the holidays, one oasis of calm we traditionally find as a family is the King's Christmas Message, as it often serves as a great way to set the tone for the year ahead.

I couldn't help but smile this Christmas Morning, however, when the King's words touched upon just that – finding that calm, that peace, wherever you can.

Continued on Page 19

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Somaliland: Mixed motives

GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY



Last week Israel was the first country in the world to establish diplomatic relations with Somaliland. Not Somalia, a wreck of a country on the East African coast that has been mired in civil war for the past thirty-five years, but Somaliland, a different country just north of there that has been peaceful, relatively prosperous and even democratic for all those years.

This is causing a diplomatic outcry because many countries suspect that the deal has a secret clause. They think Somaliland's president, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, may have promised to let Israel offload Gaza's two million Palestinians onto his country in return for recognising Somaliland as an independent state.

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's motivation is clear. He still wants to expel the Palestinians from the Gaza Strip if possible, although his own cabinet will not let him defy President Trump's order to accept a ceasefire. But he knows how volatile Trump

is: just one big Hamas strike could turn him around and let Netanyahu restart the war.

Netanyahu is slow-walking the talks on moving to the second phase of the ceasefire (ten weeks and counting), while the Israeli forces keep trying to provoke Hamas into doing something stupid (401 Palestinians killed and 1,108 injured since the ceasefire). But even if Israel got a green light from Trump to expel the Palestinians, where would it send them?

Every Arab state has said it will not be an accomplice in the ethnic cleansing of the Gaza Strip, but Somaliland would do as a destination. It's Muslim, it has room (6 million people in an area bigger than Bangladesh), it's not too far from home (just across the Red Sea from Yemen), and above all it's willing. But why would it let in up to two million Palestinians?

They would be excellent immigrants in smaller numbers (one of the best-educated populations in the Arab world), but normally no country would voluntarily bring in foreign immigrants who speak an entirely different language and are up to one-third of the entire existing population. However, Somaliland does not live in normal circumstances.

It's a classic case of 'Marry in haste, repent at leisure.' The British colony of Somaliland and the Italian colony of Somalia both got their independence in 1960, and the people of the smaller bit (Somaliland) voted to join the bigger bit in a unified 'Somalia'.

They forgot that all politics in Somalia is clan politics, and that the Isaaq, the main clan family in the northern, formerly British-ruled area, had no allies or influence in the formerly Italian-ruled south. The Isaaq came last in government and civil service jobs, in education and health-care, in their share of the national budget.

Within a year the northerners had realised their mistake and

voted heavily against the new constitution. It made no difference – and when they protested, they were met with repression.

By the '80s the whole north was occupied territory and the repression had tipped over into genocide. It only ended when the dictator Mohammed Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991 and the former British colony reclaimed its independence and its name: Somaliland.

The rest of the once-united country then dissolved into almost perpetual civil war (which still continues), but Somaliland kicked free of the wreckage and has seen no further violence. It's a perfectly normal country in many ways – an army, a currency, a school system and healthcare, regular elections – but no other country recognises its government.

It is a victim of the basic rule of post-1945 international law: borders may not be changed by force. That's unfair to many parts of the world that are trapped in unhappy unions, or have managed to secede but don't get international recognition. However, if the rule puts an end to wars of conquest then it's a price most of the world thinks is worth paying.

The problem is that the rule is no longer being observed. Russia's attempted conquest of Ukraine is the most flagrant example, but the impending US attack on Venezuela would be an equally unjustifiable breach of the law. If those things are okay, then surely Somaliland can legally secede from Somalia without getting the latter's permission.

Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates will probably recognise Somaliland fairly promptly, because they have some interests in common with it. However, I suspect that Somaliland's president is stringing Netanyahu along: he already has the recognition, and in the end he probably won't help Israel ship the Palestinians out.



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CLUES ACROSS

1. Former CIA
4. Language
7. Constrictor snake
8. Demand
10. Rich man
12. Short-tailed marten
13. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
14. Superconducting super collider
16. International group of countries within the Americas
17. Sacred state for Muslims
19. Shock therapy
20. Engrave
21. Localities
25. Paddle
26. Periodical
27. Dishonestly gained

CLUES DOWN

1. Acquire
2. Console
3. Hunting expedition
4. Pie ___ mode
5. Simple shoes for peasants
6. Eurasian shrub
8. Reciprocal of a sine
9. Work together in harmony
11. Grenade
14. File extension
15. Minute pores in a plant
18. Medal of Honor
19. Make a mistake
20. Advance slowly, as if by inches
22. Sandwich meat
23. An awkward stupid person
24. Strong tree
27. Commoner
- 28.
- Electroencephalograph
29. ___ Mahal
31. Congressman
32. Disorderly crowd
33. 007's creator
- Fleming
34. Atomic #55
35. Part of a door
36. Short-tail martens
37. Baltimore ballplayer
38. Cuddle
39. Gang in "The Outsiders"
40. Of Croatia
44. Body cavity
47. Get free of

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

COMMUNITY VOICE

Monthly Message: Nature is the gateway to hope for a sustainable and equitable future

Recently, I listened to an environmental podcast featuring an interview with Dr. Howard Frumkin, a world renowned scientist. He is an epidemiologist, a specialist in environmental and occupational medicine, and a professor at the University of Washington. He directed the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health and is a co author of Planetary Health: Protecting Nature to Protect Ourselves.

Dr. Frumkin explained that we are living in both the best and worst of times. Our quality of life, measured in health, longevity, and material well-being, has never been higher. Yet this progress comes at a steep cost to planetary health and equity, pushing us toward tipping points that threaten our future. The challenge is to sustain equitable human progress without compromising our environment.

Root of the problem

Our dependence on nature is undeniable, yet many societies act as if we are separate from it. Why?

- **Disconnection:** Urban living distances people from natural ecosystems.

- **Short term thinking:** Economic systems reward immediate gain over long term sustainability

- **Illusion of control:** Technology fosters the false belief we've "tamed" nature, and that breeds complacency

- **Cultural narratives:** For centuries, some cultures have framed nature as something to conquer, not coexist with. That story shapes how we build, consume, and govern.

- **Lifestyle choices:** Collective consumption, especially in recent decades, has intensified the crisis.

What is the solution

We must restore our connection to nature, raise awareness, and become more mindful of our dependency on it. Motivating people to make lifestyle choices that reverse the current trend is essential. Dr. Frumkin reminds us that "dependence" isn't just physical, it's spiritual, cultural, and emotional, too.

Nature nourishes our bodies and our imaginations. Both science and indigenous wisdom confirm that people who connect with



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nature are happier, healthier, live longer, and have a greater appreciation for life. That sense of awe we feel when comparing our smallness to the grandeur of nature centers us, fosters "pro social" attitudes, and makes us more

likely to adopt sustainable lifestyle choices.

Meaningful actions

Actions can be taken on the community, regional and personal level.

Community and regional level

- Advocate for municipal leaders to provide more opportunities to connect with nature.

- Emphasize that green infrastructure is a living utility, equally important as water, energy, internet, and stormwater systems.

- Rationalize investment in trees and parks by highlighting the return on investment in health, equity, and resilience.

- Support regional policies that protect urban forests, wetlands, and biodiversity corridors.

Personal level

- Make time to connect with nature.

- Share what you know with others. As Canadian climate scientist Catherine Hayhoe says, spreading the word builds compassion, and compassion ignites action.

- Practice Stewardship, be a caretaker, not just a consumer, use less, use longer, use again,

- Use spending power to support corporations committed to sustainability.

A Vision Forward

Imagine a world where humans see themselves as part of nature, not apart from it. As David Suzuki reminds us, we must live with nature, not off it. Reconnecting with the natural world is not only essential for survival but also a gateway to hope, equity, and a sustainable future.

This week's Community Voice submission is from John Wilson, director of Greys for Green in New Tecumseth. He believes that a greater understanding and appreciation of nature is what's needed to inspire everyone to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. Contact Greys for Green at contactus@greysfor-green.org or follow on social media.

New Tecumseth receives \$48,000 Fire Protection Grant from Province, fostering safety on the job

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of New Tecumseth has received a \$48,000 Fire Protection Grant from the Province of Ontario.

Simcoe-Grey MPP Brian Saunderson, Fire Chief Dan Heydon, and New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross gathered at Fire

Station 1 in Alliston on Sunday, Dec. 28, to celebrate this important investment in community safety.

"This grant is an investment in safety and readiness," said Mayor Richard Norcross. "It's about giving our team the tools they need to meet the challenges of a growing community. We appreciate the province's support and the town's dedication to fire-

fighter safety."

The grant will enable critical initiatives aimed at strengthening firefighter safety.

Specifically, the grant will be used to purchase 120 certified wildland firefighting coveralls, designed for high mobility and protection in high-temperature environments.

"Every emergency demands preparation

and the right tools," said Fire Chief Dan Heydon. "These coveralls will provide the protection and flexibility our firefighters need to respond safely and effectively."

Fire protection in New Tecumseth is provided by three stations located in Alliston, Beeton, and Tottenham, with a second Alliston station scheduled for completion in late 2026.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Response to 'Musk's Starship' column (Dec. 18)

Dear Editor,

I strongly objected to the negativity expressed by Mr. Gwynne Dyer in his recent article, "Musk's Starship: If it sounds too good to be true..." The title alone raises an eyebrow – obviously the intent.

As a retired engineer who grew up in the '60s, the race to the moon captivated me. The technical challenges of space flight still fascinate me.

Putting Elon Musk's politics aside, it's hard to feel anything but enormous respect for what he has accomplished since his company SpaceX began in the early 2000s. Working with a small team, he built his first rocket from scratch and first principles. Named Falcon 1, it reached orbit on its fourth try. From this success, SpaceX developed the Falcon 9 and later, with the addition of deployable landing legs and an innovative steering system, successfully landed the booster on a remotely positioned barge in the middle of the ocean. Albeit only after more than a few fiery failures – which Musk referred to as RUDs or Rapid Unscheduled Disassemblies!

However, the successful landing milestone, which many respected rocket engineers and NASA personnel insisted could not be done, has now been accomplished by SpaceX over 500 times, with some boosters in the fleet logging more than 30 trips to space and back. And until the launch of Blue Origin's New Glenn rocket earlier this year (kudos to Jeff Bezos and his team!), no other rocket launch company has accomplished this feat, although China is developing a Falcon 9 copycat, so they may be next.

Musk's goal in the near term is full and rapid

reusability. This is the basis of his claim of being able to reduce the cost of tonnage to orbit by at least two orders of magnitude. All other launchers 'expend' every last piece of hardware during the process of placing a satellite in orbit. The booster, the second stage, any side-mounted boosters, the fairings – everything is dumped into the ocean, never to be seen again.

Each launch costs the customer over \$100 million. Musk wants to reduce that to only the cost of the fuel, say, about \$1 million. To do that, he is developing Starship. And it's not easy. But his approach is unique. Build, test, fly, and repeat, each time improving on the previous version, always pushing the envelope. This process, by its nature, invariably leads to explosions, or RUDs, but each time he gets closer.

Mr. Dyer's article uses phrases like 'someone got the calculations wrong' and 'ignorantly overstated' and 'grossly underestimated', implying that SpaceX engineers are less than competent. I suggest that an alternative opinion can be gained by watching a YouTube rerun of the Integrated Flight Test 5, or ITF 5. In this, the returning Super Heavy Booster guided itself to spot exactly from where it launched minutes before and was gracefully caught between two giant arms, called "chopsticks." And just in case anyone thought this was a fluke, SpaceX did it again on a subsequent flight.

I don't recall the origin of this expression, but it certainly applies here:

'Would the guy who keeps saying it can't be done get out of the way of the guy who's doing it...!'

Klaus Fritzsche
Alliston



NEW YEAR ARRIVAL – Stevenson Memorial Hospital is celebrating the first baby born at the hospital this year. Lakelin Kehoe-Iggulden arrived on Friday, Jan. 2, at 8:12 a.m., weighing 7 lbs. 11 oz. This is the first child for proud parents Ashley Kehoe and Peter Iggulden.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



FIRST BIRTH – Southlake Health is proud to introduce Turner, the first baby born at the hospital in 2026. Turner made his entrance shortly after midnight at 12:48 a.m., weighing six pounds and 14 ounces. Southlake welcomed seven new babies on January 1, 2026.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Arts & Local Events

Aurora set for musical revival as Winter Blues Festival returns to community

BY BROCK WEIR

Local music lovers know that few things warm the cold winter nights better than hot jazz and good company.

For the last five years, winters around here have been a little bit chilly without the blues to go around, but February is shaping up to be a scorcher as the Aurora Winter Blues Festival rises from the ashes of a COVID pause with a hand from the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Music Aurora, long-time proponents of the Aurora Winter Blues Festival, have formally passed the torch to the Aurora Cultural Centre to put the Festival back on the map – and the results are four days of entertainment spanning six shows and four live blues workshops between February 26 and March 1.

“I think of all the hard work that was put in by [former Aurora residents] Jamie and Helen Macdonald to build this up, it’s nice to see it coming back,” says Music Aurora’s Greg Smith.

Adds Music Aurora’s Stewart MacLaren: “The love of music and then the fun of putting the event on was the main thing that drove it.”

The Aurora Winter Blues Festival grew significantly since the Macdonalds founded it as a live music party in their own home. It was soon too big for one home to handle and branched out to various venues in the community for both key concerts and pop-ups, including Theatre Aurora and St. Andrew’s College.

Pop-ups associated with Aurora Winter Blues Festival also took place within the Aurora Cultural Centre’s historic Church

Street School, and now that the school is at the heart of Aurora Town Square, the new edition of the Festival will be something of a homecoming.

Opening the lineup on Thursday, February 26 will be Jack De Keyzer, who will take over the Aurora Town Square Performance Hall at 7.30 p.m. The music continues the following evening, also at 7.30 p.m., with Suzie Vinnick, featuring special guests Kevin Breit, Tony D., and Jay Blues.

Glenn Marais’ Jook is up next on Saturday, February 28, at 1 p.m., followed by Dominique Fils-Aime that evening at 7.30 p.m., and on Sunday, March 1 with Harrison Kennedy and Dave Mowat at 2 p.m., concluding with Little Magic Sam Band at 7.30 p.m.

“When Greg and Stewart gave me the green light, we began putting things in place for the four days that are running, replicating as much as we could [of the original Aurora Winter Blues Festival] under this roof – and it’s a brand-new roof,” says Derek Andrews, Performing Arts Producer for the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Andrews is no stranger to Blues. A long-time producer at Toronto’s Harbourfront Centre, he was also tapped to emcee a few Aurora Winter Blues Festival shows over the years, having first taken in the Festival first when it was still a house party.

“I think Blues music is accessible – people have heard the Blues whether you know it or not,” says Andrews. “When you hear Etta James on the soundtrack of a movie, it’s not necessarily telling you it’s Etta James, but there she is, leaving her imprint. Blues is the bedrock of rock, jazz, and country, and it’s

highly influential to a lot of other styles of music.”

The program, he adds, is all-Canadian with most of the performers hailing from Ontario. “I think the lineup is excellent,” says Smith. “Having some local artists as well as people from across Ontario, it’s a really strong lineup and it’s going to be a very busy four days here at the Centre. It’s great to see that the Aurora Winter Blues Festival will be revived. York Region has a really strong Blues patronage and a lot of people from all

over the GTA have come to the Aurora Winter Blues Festival in the past, so I think we’re going to look forward to many of those same people, if not more, coming again.”

Adds MacLaren: “Treat it as a night out and maybe discover something new, rediscover something from the past, and enjoy the programming because there’s a lot of effort and some great talent.”

For more information on the 2026 Aurora Winter Blues Festival, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/awbf2026.

Education workshops will continue legacy of Aurora Winter Blues Festival

BY BROCK WEIR

When Music Aurora decided to take the Aurora Winter Blues Festival to the next level, they did so with the community in mind, supporting up-and-coming artists and furthering their opportunities.

This legacy will continue on as the Aurora Cultural Centre takes over the Aurora Winter Blues Festival next month with a series of workshops beginning on Friday, February 27, with Early Instruments of Blues at 5 p.m.

“Glenn Marais is joined by Manny DeGrandis (Toronto Blues Society) cigar box, dobro, diddleybow, broom, stomp board, and harmonica are all featured in [Marais’] ‘Jook’ project and explained in this session,” says the Cultural Centre.

The second workshop will take place the following morning, Saturday, February 28, at 11 a.m. with String Bending.

“Rewinding from their main concert, this guitar workshop features ten-time Maple Blues Award winner Suzie Vinnick, Ottawa’s Tony D (Monkey Junk) with upstart rising star Jay Blues.”

Strings remain in the spotlight on Saturday, February 28, with Banjo Man Blues.

“Discover the history of Black settlement in York Region with a public interview by Aurora Museum’s Michelle John-

son and award-winning Underground Railroad historian and musician David Braithwaite.”

The series concludes Sunday, March 1 at 4 p.m. with Blues Harp.

“Cabbagetown Steve’ Grant, harmonica master from Little Magic Sam’s band, joins Alderville First Nations bluesman Dave Mowat in a session guided by local Aurora singer and emcee Steve Falk.”


All sessions are located in Brevik Hall, within the Aurora Town Square complex.

“The whole thing was about reviving and keeping the music alive,” says Music Aurora’s Greg Smith, noting that since the Blues Festival was put on hiatus due to the global pandemic, the organization still worked to support community events, including providing honorariums to performers, particularly young musicians, giving them an opportunity to hone their skills and build their confidence.

Derek Andrews, Performing Arts Producer for the Aurora Cultural Centre who has programmed the workshops, says that the Centre is interested in building upon the success of this year’s festival to once again further educational and development work going forward into future seasons.

For more information, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca/awbf2026.

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Ontario mandates additional carbon monoxide detectors in residential homes

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Changes to the Ontario Fire Code came into effect on Jan. 1, requiring additional carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in homes with fuel-burning appliances, fireplaces, or attached garages.

Updates are being made across the province to improve household safety and prevent carbon monoxide-related incidents.

The new regulations require:

- A carbon monoxide alarm adjacent to every sleeping area in the home.
- A carbon monoxide alarm on every storey that does not contain a sleeping area.

These requirements apply to all residential occupancies, including existing homes.

Even if your home already has a CO alarm, you may need to add more to comply with the updated Fire Code.

What you can do now:

- **Check your alarms** – make sure you

currently have CO Alarms installed in the required areas.

- **Plan ahead** – Purchase and install any additional alarms before the Jan. 1, 2026, deadline or notify the property owner to do so.

- **Maintain your alarms** – test alarms regularly and replace them when they expire (approximately every five to 10 years).

- **Inspect appliances annually** – have all fuel-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician and ensure vents and exhausts are clear of snow, debris, and obstructions.

Placing combination smoke/CO alarms on each level of your home can be used to meet this requirement.

A CO alarm will alert you when dangerous levels of CO are inside your home. A working alarm will ring loudly, giving you and your family the early warning you need to get out.

CO alarms can warn you about sudden failures of fuel-burning appliances and are a good first line of defence against CO exposure.

If you or anyone in your home has symptoms of CO poisoning, or if your CO alarm sounds, make sure everyone leaves the home immediately and call 9-1-1.

There are different types of alarms with different features, so choosing the right one can be confusing. While alarms might look different and/or have different features, they are all tested to the same standard.

Unlike smoke, CO mixes freely with the air, so your CO alarm doesn't have to go on the ceiling or up high. It does need to be near where you sleep, so it is loud enough to wake you up and get you into action. If your home has a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage, install a carbon monoxide alarm adjacent to each sleeping area.

Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully and follow them exactly.

Exposure to CO can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, burning eyes, confusion, drowsiness and even loss of consciousness.

In very severe cases, CO poisoning can cause brain damage and death.



Charges laid in connection to arsons in Adjala-Tosorontio following GTA search warrants

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers executed six search warrants in Mississauga, Brampton, Toronto and Tottenham resulting in the arrest of six individuals.

The investigation began in the fall of 2024 after multiple unoccupied homes in new subdivisions in Adjala-Tosorontio were set on fire.

On Dec. 16, 2025, at approximately 6 a.m., officers executed several search warrants at residences across the region. The operation was part of an ongoing investigation led by members of the Nottawasaga

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 OPP Emergency Response Team (ERT).

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

- Wisam Fareed Anton DIBO, 32 years old, of Etobicoke
- Rafid BAQDR, 28 years old, of Toronto
- Yokhanna BUTRUS, 27 years old, of Etobicoke
- Allen YOUSIF, 28 years old, of Missis-

sauga

- Napleon UOAIL, 27 years old, of Etobicoke
- Liyon Nazar SITRAK, 21 years old, of Etobicoke

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

None of the listed charged have been proven in court.

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 <https://www.crimestoppersdm.com>.

Crime Stoppers does not subscribe to call display, and you will remain anonymous. Being anonymous, you will not testify in court.



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Avian influenza confirmed at Tottenham Conservation Area

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of New Tecumseth has been advised by the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) that Avian Influenza has been confirmed in a dead Canadian goose found at the pond at the Tottenham Conservation Area.

Local residents noticed several dead geese on the pond ice amid a larger flock in the water and reported it to authorities.

The Town is working closely with CWHC to monitor the affected area.

Residents are strongly advised to avoid ponds and waterfowl habitats at this time.

While the risk of transmission to the general public is low, the Public Health Agency

of Canada recommends the following precautions:

- Do not handle sick or dead wild birds or other wildlife
- Keep pets away from sick or dead wildlife and ensure dogs are leashed
- Keep cats indoors
- Do not feed or interact with waterfowl
- Do not feed pets raw meat from game

birds or poultry

- Restrict pet birds to indoors if they are normally kept outside.
- Remove bird feeders

If you encounter sick or dead wildlife, do not touch them. Report sightings and obtain more information by contacting the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative at 1-866-673-4781 or visiting cwhc-rcsf.ca.

Overflow waste and Christmas tree collection running through January

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

There are several options for overflow waste and Christmas tree collection through January so residents can clear out the clutter after the holiday season.

For extra garbage and recycling, here's how you can dispose of it:

- If your recycling cart is full, simply place the overflow in clear bags or blue boxes – no tags required.
- Remember to flatten and bundle any extra cardboard you may have.

If your recycling cart is full, simply place the overflow in clear bags or blue boxes – no tags required.

If your garbage cart is full, attach a garbage tag to each extra garbage bag (limit of five).

For bag tag locations, visit simcoe.ca/waste.

Keep all additional bags and materials at least two feet from your cart for easy pickup.

The County is no longer responsible for recycling collection as of Jan. 1, 2026, due to the provincially mandated recycling change. For any issues regarding recycling collection after January 1, please contact Emterra at 1-888-597-1541 or customer-care@emterra.ca.

Residents can also visit one of the County's Waste Drop Off locations if they wish to dispose of their garbage and recycling, subject

to fees.

Please note, in 2026, there will be new tipping fees at County waste drop-off locations.

Christmas tree collection

Bi-weekly Christmas tree collection will take place throughout January, which gives residents two opportunities to easily dispose of their trees.

To ensure your tree is picked up, place it curbside by 7:00 a.m. on the Monday of your garbage collection week.

Please note that collection may not occur on your regular garbage day, which is why it is important to place it out Monday morning.

Be sure to remove all decorations, lights and plastic before setting your tree out. Place the tree in a cleared area at the end of your driveway. Do not place it in a snowbank.

Ensure that the tree is free from snow and ice.



FESTIVE FLAMES – It was the annual Twelfth Night celebration at Riverdale Park in Alliston on Saturday, Jan. 3, with a huge bonfire lighting the night. The event was sponsored by the Alliston Rotary Club, with help from the New Tecumseth Fire Department to ensure things went smoothly. Local residents donated their Christmas trees to the fire, and hundreds turned out to watch them all go up in flames.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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BRIAN SAUNDERSON
MPP, Simcoe-Grey

Outdoor patio for mental health inpatients opening in spring 2026

Southlake Health is creating an elevated outdoor patio space for patients receiving inpatient mental health care at the Davis Drive site, offering a safe and healing outdoor environment specially-designed to support adult patient's well-being.

Located on the third floor of Southlake's West Building, the new 2,900-square-foot seasonal patio will include a variety of seating areas for reflection and connection, as well as planters filled with seasonal plants and flowers to bring natural elements to the space. The space offers a primarily southern exposure, providing natural light and open views through glass partitions that maintain safety precautions.

"Access to outdoor space is an important

part of a healing experience," said Mahdi Memarpour MD, Chief of Psychiatry and Nathan Robinson, Director for Capital Development at Southlake. "This new patio will give our patients the opportunity to step outside in a safe and therapeutic setting, supporting their recovery and overall mental wellness."

Construction coordination is already underway, with on-site work beginning this month thanks to the communities' generosity. Donors to Southlake Health Foundation's Better.Begins.Today. Mental Health Campaign thoughtfully invested over \$7.5-million to support a variety of expansions and upgrades to transform Southlake's Mental Health Program, including the addition of

this patio space.

"We are deeply grateful to our donors and community for helping make this vision a reality," said Jennifer Ritter, President and CEO, Southlake Health Foundation. "Their generosity ensures that patients in our Mental Health Program have access to the same kind of healing spaces that benefit so many others across the hospital."

The new space reflects Southlake's ongoing commitment to advancing mental health care and creating supportive environments that optimize patient and visitor experiences, including:

An expanded Emergency Department that opened in January 2025, creating an additional 2,400 square feet of space to meet the

communities' growing needs.

A new artificial intelligence (AI) enabled MRI introduced in May 2025 to transform diagnostic imaging capacity.

A new Starbucks, Tim Hortons, retail and patient food services opened over the past two years as part of a complete culinary transformation project, and much more.

This work is reflective of Southlake's evolving capital redevelopment plan, which will maintain acute care capacity at the Davis Drive site. While contractual approvals are ongoing to secure land on which to build a second acute care hospital; refurbishments to the Davis Drive site will continue as Southlake works to transform into a Distributed Health Network over the next 10 years.

Conservation Authority reminds residents stormwater ponds are not for skating

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is reminding residents not to use neighbourhood stormwater ponds for recreation activities.

While your local stormwater pond may look like a great place to have a game of pick-up hockey or a leisurely skate, don't be fooled. These ponds have a specific job, and that's to continuously collect stormwater runoff from neighbourhoods.

Because of this function, they are designed to have water flowing in and out of them all year long (from rainfall and snowmelt), making them an unsafe place to play.

No matter how deep into the winter or how thick the ice may appear, temperature changes can cause major variations in ice thickness. Air pockets are also easily formed under the surface and contaminants like salt weaken the ice. All these factors combined, create dangerous and unpredictable conditions that put your safety at risk.

Despite these hazards, you can still enjoy the outdoors this time of the year. At con-

servation areas and municipal parks, official trails have been created with your safety in mind. Use these trails and still get some fresh air safely.

Be safe by following these tips:
Stay on the official trails at Ontario's conservation areas.

Keep family members and pets away from riverbanks and edges of all water bodies.

Do not attempt to drive or walk on iced-covered water bodies. Always obey any posted safety signs.

Avoid all recreational activities in or around water, especially near ice jams or ice-covered water bodies, unless at an officially designated municipal facility.

Never use stormwater ponds for ice skating or any other activity.

Rescuing another person or a pet from ice is dangerous. If you see anyone that has fallen through the ice, call 9-1-1 for help immediately.

Explore nature in winter, close to home at: www.LSRCA.on.ca/enjoytheoutdoors



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NEW TECUMSETH TIMES



Hornets stay in first place after winning a pair of weekend games

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Alliston Hornets continue to remain in first place in the North Carruthers Division of the PJHL with a 23-8 record and 46 points after winning both of their weekend games.

They are five points ahead of the second-place Stayner Siskins.

Weekend games started on Friday, Jan. 2, when the Hornets hosted the Muskoka Bears at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre.

Alliston's Will Millington notched the only goal of the first period.

At the end of the second period, the Hornets were leading 4-1.

Hornets' second-period goals came from Nick Lamont, Will Hopcraft, and Gunner Kirk.

Muskoka scored early in the third period.

The Hornets responded with three goals to finish the game and leave the ice with a 7-2 win.

Third-period Hornets goals came from Noah Prokopec, Nick Lamont, and Cameron Lamont.

The Hornets were back on the ice the following day for an afternoon home game

against the Orillia Terriers.

Alliston opened the scoring with two first-period goals from Will Hopcraft and Tristen Pitt.

Two more goals in the second period from Nick Lamont and Will Millington gave the Hornets a 4-0 lead.

Orillia scored a single late in the period.

Lamont got his second of the game with 36 seconds remaining in the third period.

Returning for the final frame, Orillia scored at 13:33 into the period.

Lamont got the final goal of the night, and a hat-trick for him, at 15:28 into the third

period.

The Hornets left the ice with a 6-2 win.

Orillia is currently in third place in the North Carruthers Division standings, followed by the Penetang Kings, the Midland Flyers, and the Muskoka Bears. The Huntsville Otters are in seventh place, and the Innisfil Spartans are in the basement, having won only seven games after 26 times on the ice.

The Hornets will return to home ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Jan. 9, when they will host the Innisfil Spartans.

Game time is 7:30 p.m.



DOUBLE WIN – The Alliston Hornets take on the Muskoka Bears at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Jan. 2. The Hornets left the ice with a 7-2 win. They played again the following day, Saturday, Jan. 3, and delivered a 6-2 win over the Orillia Terriers. The Hornets remain in first place in the North Carruthers Division of the PJHL.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

Province invests \$3.9 million to restore 4,500 kilometres of snowmobile trails

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Alliston Hornets continue to remain in firWhile snowmobilers are among the few groups hoping for a lot of snow this winter, they still need proper trails to safely take part in their activity.

The Province of Ontario is providing the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs with an additional \$3.9 million this season, bringing the total to \$4.9 million for 2025-26.

This targeted funding will enable the full

reopening of 4,500 kilometres of trails while the province works with the OFSC on a long-term trail strategy.

"We heard the concerns from riders and the OFSC, and we took action," said Ric Bresee, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Transportation. "This investment will keep Ontario's snowmobile trail system safe, reliable, and ready for the season, giving riders and communities the certainty they need to plan with confidence."

Snowmobiling continues to be one of the province's most popular winter activities.

With over 30,000 kilometres of trails, Ontario has a world-class snowmobile network that attracts visitors from around the world. Reopening these trails is essential to supporting local businesses, protecting tourism revenue, and ensuring riders can safely access Ontario's trail system.

"For residents of Simcoe-Grey, snowmobile trails are more than recreation. They are an important part of our winter economy and a source of local pride," said Brian Saunderson, Simcoe-Grey MPP. "This funding means trails across our region can open fully, supporting

small businesses, seasonal jobs, and the many families who rely on a strong winter tourism season."

Ontario's snowmobile network contributes up to \$6 billion of economic activity annually. Since 2020-21, the Ministry of Transportation has provided \$4.5 million in funding to the OFSC through an existing Transfer Payment Agreement.

The OFSC manages the province's snowmobile trail permit system and coordinates trail operations across hundreds of local volunteer clubs that maintain the trail network.

Unstoppable renewable energy revolution powers on

BY DAVID SUZUKI
OPINION

There's good news and bad news on the climate front. Unfortunately, the bad news is horrific, as accelerating extreme weather-related events and other unfolding climate catastrophes show. But there are signs of hope. We just have to stop dragging our feet.

"We are already facing danger," a scientists' statement from the November COP30 climate summit in Belém, Brazil, warned, adding, "COP30 has a choice — to protect people and life or the fossil fuel industry."

Too many governments, including Canada's, appear to be leaning toward the latter.

"We need to start, now, to reduce CO2 emissions from fossil-fuels, by at least 5 per cent per year," the scientists wrote. "This must happen in order to have a chance to avoid unmanageable and extremely costly climate impacts affecting all people in the world."

Studies show that "Rising heat is killing roughly one person per minute, and air pollution from the burning of fossil fuels claims an estimated 2.5 million lives every year," DW news reports. It was also "costing as much as \$304 billion in global economic losses last year."

We've already passed one climate "tipping point," with warming oceans causing irreversible mass coral reef die-offs, and we're nearing others, including Amazon rainforest devastation and collapse of crucial ocean currents.

Coral reefs support one-quarter of all marine life, and the Amazon rainforest has more animal and plant species than any other terrestrial ecosystem. It also regulates global climate and weather and holds one-quarter

of the planet's available freshwater. Ocean currents also regulate global climate and weather.

Even though emissions continue to rise as the world refuses to halt fossil fuel development and forest and wetland destruction, investments in and growth of renewable energy technology are exceeding expectations, now outpacing fossil fuel investments.

DW reports that, "In 2024, the world experienced its largest-ever increase in renewable energy generation, which now provides 40% of global electricity. In the first half of this year solar and wind exceeded all demand growth for electricity, surpassing coal for the first time." Solar capacity is doubling every three years. Wind power has tripled since 2015. The International Energy Agency reports that global renewable energy investments exceeded US\$2 trillion last year, double the amounts committed to coal, oil and gas.

To increase energy security in the face of a growing global energy crisis and reduce their reliance on increasingly expensive, inefficient fossil fuels, countries that import oil, gas and coal are rapidly advancing electrification and renewables.

Analysis from COP30 also shows that "Sticking to three key climate promises — on renewables, energy efficiency and methane — would avoid nearly 1 C of global heating and give the world hope of avoiding climate breakdown," the Guardian reports.

But the world continues to burn dirty, polluting coal, gas and oil at deadly rates and has increased subsidies to the fossil fuel industry — the most profitable enterprise in history.

Canada has failed to live up to its promise to phase out fossil fuel subsidies. The federal and provincial governments are supporting expanded development of methane gas



exploitation and liquefaction, and are proposing pipelines to ship more dirty bitumen from the Alberta oilsands to British Columbia ports for export, where it will be burned in other countries and not counted in our emissions reporting.

Canada's expansion of liquefied "natural" gas production is not only economically suspect, it also makes methane-reduction pledges more difficult to meet, as LNG is almost entirely methane, and leaks and emissions occur at every step of the process, from fracked extraction and transport to liquefaction and burning.

Although 160 countries, including Canada, have signed a Global Methane Pledge, promising to cut methane emissions by 30 per cent from 2020 levels by 2030, emissions continue to rise and countries, including Canada, continue to under-report them.

By every measure, shifting from fossil fuels to electrification, renewables and energy efficiency and conservation is far more beneficial to most people than following the same fossil-fuelled road. The only ones who benefit from continuing to exploit polluting, climate-altering fossil fuels are greedy industry profiteers and short-sighted politicians who would trade human health, economic resilience and survivability for a handful of short-term jobs and limited economic boosts.

Regardless of what roadblocks fossil-fuelled governments throw in the way, the renewable energy revolution is unstoppable.

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with David Suzuki Foundation Senior Writer and Editor Ian Hanington. Learn more at david Suzuki.org.

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Drug trafficking investigation leads to arrests and seizure in Innisfil

The South Simcoe Police Service's Street Crime Unit have arrested a male and a female in connection with an ongoing drug trafficking investigation.

On December 23, 2025, the Street Crime Unit, with assistance from the Emergency Response Unit, Canine Unit, and Community Response Unit, executed a search warrant in the Town of Innisfil as part of a drug investigation. Officers seized quantities of cocaine and crack cocaine with an estimated street value of approximately \$20,000, along with Canadian currency and drug trafficking paraphernalia.

As a result, a 61-year-old male from Toronto

was arrested and charged with the following offences:

- Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of trafficking (Cocaine) (two counts)
- Possession for the purpose of trafficking (Cocaine) (two counts)
- Possession of a controlled substance (Cocaine) (two counts)
- Possession of property obtained by crime under \$5,000 (one count)
- Operation while prohibited under the Criminal Code (three counts)
- Dangerous operation of a conveyance (one

count)

As well, a 54-year-old female from Innisfil was arrested and charged with the following offences:

- Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of trafficking (Cocaine) (two counts)
- Possession of a controlled substance (Cocaine) (two counts)
- Possession of property obtained by crime under \$5,000 (one count)
- Fail to comply with prohibition order (one count)

Both accused have been held for a bail hear-

ing.

This remains an ongoing investigation and police are asking anyone with information to contact Detective Constable Patrick McFall at patrick.mcfall@southsimcoepolice.ca.

Anyone wishing to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS).

You can submit information online at www.crimestopperssdm.com. Crime Stoppers does not subscribe to call display, and you will remain anonymous. Being anonymous, you will not testify in court and your information may lead to a cash reward of up to \$2,000.

South Simcoe Police investigating robbery involving two young male suspects

South Simcoe Police responded to a report of a robbery involving two male youths that occurred outside of a business on Jans Blvd. in Innisfil on Dec. 17, 2025, at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Police were advised that the victims were walking along a roadway when they were approached by two male suspects and directed to go behind a nearby business. One of the victims was pushed up against a wall and had his jacket taken by one of the suspects, while the second victim managed to get away to seek assistance and contact

police.

The suspects then fled the scene and were observed leaving the area in a vehicle. No physical injuries were reported. The two victims were subsequently released into the care of their parents.

The investigation is ongoing and police are actively canvassing the area for video surveillance in an effort to identify the suspects and the vehicle involved.

- Suspect 1 is described as male, approximately 16 years old, black, between 5'10" – 6'1", thin build, medium length hair with

dreads, wearing a blue surgical mask, grey sweatpants, black jacket.

- Suspect 2 is described as male, approximately 16-17 years old, black, 6'4", medium build, medium length hair with dreads, grey pants and grey sweater with a hood – hood was up and suspect was not wearing a mask but covering his face during the incident.

Police are asking anyone with information, or who may have surveillance footage in the area of the retail plazas on Jans Blvd and Innisfil Beach Road from Dec. 17, between 1:15 and 1:40 p.m., to contact South Simcoe

Police Criminal Investigations at 905-775-3311 ext. 1461 or email investigations@southsimcoepolice.ca.

Anyone wishing to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS).

You can submit information online at www.crimestopperssdm.com. Crime Stoppers does not subscribe to call display, and you will remain anonymous. Being anonymous, you will not testify in court and your information may lead to a cash reward of up to \$2,000.

Impaired driving arrest following traffic complaint

Members of the Nottawasaga Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have charged one individual with impaired driving following a traffic complaint for a suspected impaired driver.

On Dec. 31, 2025, shortly before 12 a.m., officers of the Nottawasaga OPP responded to a traffic complaint regarding a SUV unable to maintain it's lane and veering into oncoming traffic on Highway 89, east of Alliston. Officers located the vehicle and initiated a

traffic stop.

As a result of the investigation, officers arrested the driver for impaired driving.

The driver, William Robertson, a 29-year-old, of New Tecumseth, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - blood drug concentration (80 plus)
- Driving while under suspension

The accused party was released on a Form 10 Undertaking and is scheduled to attend

the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford at a later date to answer to the charges.

The OPP remains committed to keeping Ontario roads safe from impaired drivers. If you suspect that someone is driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, call 9-1-1 immediately 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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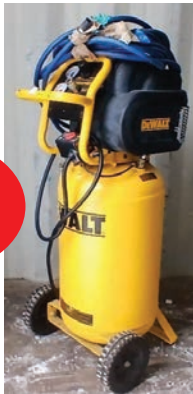
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708 OBITUARIES

Norma Jean Boose

Peacefully, at Southlake Regional Health Centre, Newmarket, on Monday, December 22, 2025, Norma Jean Boose, at the age of 67 years, beloved wife and best friend of Gary for over 42 years. Loving daughter of the late Thelma (née McCutcheon) and Ross Taylor. Norma has been a lifetime resident of King Township. Honouring Norma's wishes, cremation has taken place and there will not be a funeral service. A private family celebration of Norma's life will happen at a later date. If desired, memorial donations may be made to the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre at Southlake Health (www.southlake.ca) or a charity of your choice. Condolences for the family may be offered at www.EganFuneralHome.com

708 OBITUARIES

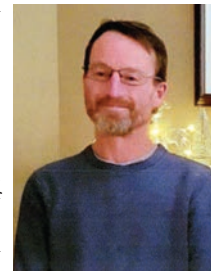
Rayson: Jean

June 8, 1931- December 28, 2025
Jean Rayson, 94, passed away peacefully on December 28, 2025, in her Tottenham home. Born in Buchlyvie, Scotland, she was a registered nurse at Simcoe Manor and a cherished member of the Tottenham community for 52 years. She is lovingly remembered by her children Steven (Emily) and Elizabeth (Robert Fraser); her grandchild Marnie; her brother George (Geraldine); and many family members and friends. She is predeceased by Derek Rayson, and by her siblings Elizabeth, William, and James. Visitation was held at Rod Abrams Funeral Home, Tottenham, on Monday, January 5, 2026, from 10 a.m. until the memorial service at 11 a.m. Reception followed in the funeral home's Cliffside Hall. Donations in Jean's memory may be made to Matthews House Hospice.



TREVOR WILLIAM LYNCH JUNE 29, 1971 - DEC. 23, 2025

Trevor left us suddenly of natural causes at age 54, leaving behind his wife Joanna and his adored children Thomas & Jocelyn, brother Patrick and parents Bill & Marilyn, a crowd of cousins, aunts & uncles of a large extended family and his cat Mica.



Trevor was a kind, sensitive hardworking individual who loved rebuilding antique cars in later years. He grew up in Bradford, where like most boys joined cubs, scouts, hockey. His boyhood idol was Evel Knievel which led to falling off bikes, trees etc. usually ending in injuries.

He liked taking things apart and putting them back together which led him to his career as a mechanic. His passion was NASCAR and No. 3 Dale Earnhardt. Trevor will be sadly missed by his mom & dad, children, his cat along with friends and co-workers.

The family will host a Celebration of Life on Saturday March 7th, from 1:00pm to 3:00pm at The Thomas Funeral Home 244 Victoria St. E. Alliston. Speeches to begin at 2:00pm.

You can take a rest now.



709 IN MEMORIAM



In Loving Memory of our dear husband, father and grandfather,
Bill Bible

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Continued from Page 4

Brock's Banter: Full speed ahead in 2026

"Pilgrimage is a word less used today, but it has particular significance for our modern world, especially at Christmas," said the King. "It's about journeying forward into the future while also journeying back to remember the past and learn from its lessons. We did this during the summer, as we celebrated the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day. The end of the Second World War is now remembered by fewer and fewer of us as the years pass, but the courage and sacrifice of our servicemen and women, and the way communities came together in the face of such great challenge carry a timeless message for us all. These are values which have shaped our country and the Commonwealth. As we hear of division, both at home and abroad, they

are values of which we must never lose sight.

"As our world seems to spin ever faster, our journey may pause to quieten our minds, in T.S. Eliot's words, at the point of the turning world, and allow ourselves to renew. In this, with the great diversity of our communities, we can find the strength to ensure that right triumphs over wrong. It seems to me that we need to cherish the values of compassion and reconciliation, the way our Lord lived and died.

"These stories of the triumph of courage over adversity give me hope, from our venerable military veterans to selfless humanitarian workers in this century's most dangerous conflict zones, to the ways in which individuals and com-

munities display spontaneous bravery, instinctively placing themselves in harm's way to defend others. As I meet people of different faiths, I find it enormously encouraging to hear how much we have in common, a shared longing for peace and a deep respect for all life.

"If we can find time in our journey through life to think on these virtues, we can all make the future more hopeful.... That prayer for peace and reconciliation, for doing to others as we would have them do to us, which rang out over the fields near Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago, still reverberates from there and around the world today. It's a prayer for our times, and our communities too, as we journey through our lives."

A pause does more than just quiet our

minds. It can help each of us restore the mental bandwidth that we have to take on all the challenges that lie ahead with renewed vigour, determination, and perhaps even a clearer view of what ultimately lies at the finish line.

It affords us inner peace where external peace might be harder and harder to come by these days. Perhaps if we all take the time to find it, we can collectively harness it for the greater good.

We certainly need it this week and, if it's needed that much in the just the first full week of the year, we're going to need more and more time for these restorative pauses.

In the meantime, welcome 2026, and all the challenges – and joys – that you have in store for us!

Credit Valley Conservation's Ignite the Night opens this weekend through end of February

BY RILEY MURPHY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

This Saturday, January 10, marks the opening of Credit Valley Conservation's "Ignite the Night", a two-kilometre illuminated forest trail at Terra Cotta Conservation Area.

Visitors can enjoy various activities, such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and skating, or a hot beverage and a snack.

CVC park staff shared that Ignite the Night, now in its third year, was created to give park visitors an opportunity to experience the park

in different ways.

"The event gives the community a chance to come out to the park at night and see the lights along the trails, while taking in the nighttime sounds and getting outside for some winter fun," staff shared. "We've created a self-guided experience along a two-kilometre brightly lit winter trail where visitors can follow our interpretive signage to help connect with nature and learn about trees in a new way."

CVC's Conservation Parks team begins preparations for Ignite the Night in mid-October, testing lights and organizing equipment

before starting their setup in November.

Staff shared that some installations need to be set up before the ground freezes, and the final strands of lights are hung in the first week of January.

Park staff noted Ignite the Night is a weekly event series that supports CVC's goal of providing visitors with quality, nature-focused experiences and ample recreational activities, fostering a deeper connection with nature.

"Terra Cotta Conservation Area has great family-friendly trails and opportunities to participate in winter activities like cross-country

skiing, snowshoeing and skating. Visitors can enjoy the beauty of the forest under a night sky, try winter activities, and enjoy a hot beverage or s'mores by the campfire at Ignite the Night."

They have ski, snowshoe, kick sled and ice rink rentals available, as conditions allow, and visitors can also bring their own.

This year, the event will take place on Saturdays from January 10 to February 28 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Regular park admission applies, and Credit Valley Parks passholders get in free.

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