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SWEET SMILES

Annual Smile Cookie Campaign launches

Tim Hortons is getting ready for its 2026 spring Smile Cookie Campaign, with proceeds this year going to the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation and the Matthews House Hospice Foundation (MHHF). The campaign kicked off at the Alliston Dunham Drive location on Friday, April 17, with a large group in attendance. From left: Crystal Terranova (SMHF events and fundraising coordinator), Kara Harris (SMHF community and corporate giving officer), lyla Kala, Mandy McCurdy (MHHF executive director), Dave Cropper (Tim Hortons restaurant manager), Rayna Kala, Jason Holliday (special assistant to MPP Brian Sanderson), Sylvia Biffis (Because of YOU Campaign chair), Stephanie MacLellan (deputy mayor of New Tecumseth), Fayaaz Kala (SMHF board chair), Melody Craggs (SMHF director of development), Const. C. Hietanen (Nottawasaga OPP), Amit Seth (Tim Hortons franchise owner), Senaa Zora (Tim Hortons restaurant manager), P. Kumar (Tim Hortons assistant manager) and Rajat Gupta (Tim Hortons Area manager).

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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New Tecumseth council receives 2025 report on tax arrears

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Town of New Tecumseth received a report at the April 13 council meeting detailing the status of property tax arrears as of Dec. 31, 2025, along with current collection efforts and the number of properties eligible for tax sale registration.

As of Jan. 1, 2025, there were 255 properties with two-plus years of tax arrears. As of Dec. 31, 2025, 56 properties remained with over two years of arrears.

Of the 56 remaining properties, 26 had been formally registered in the tax sale process, while the remaining 30 had either entered payment arrangements with the town or had been issued a final notice prior to tax sale registration.

The total arrears as of Dec. 31, 2025, amounted to \$6,548,584, inclusive of penalties and interest, tax sale charges, and water/waste-water arrear transfers.

The Town of New Tecumseth collects property taxes for multiple entities, including its own operations, the County of Simcoe and local school boards.

The tax collection is based on assessment values provided by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC).

These property taxes are critical for funding essential services, including education, infrastructure, and municipal operations. Outstanding property tax receivables continue to be monitored and acted upon in a timely manner.

Given that property taxes form a priority lien on the property, the town's tax receivables

are secure with minimal risk of uncollectable taxes. MPAC assessments ensure property taxes are distributed based on each property's current market value, providing a consistent and equitable approach to funding local services and education.

Taxes are billed twice a year through interim and final billing, with each consisting of two installments.

Unpaid utility arrears are transferred to the tax accounts after three months of non-payment. This process is completed monthly by staff in settlement areas, including Beeton, Tottenham, and Alliston.

The town is obligated to remit levies billed to the County of Simcoe and school boards, irrespective of whether it has received payment from taxpayers.

To encourage prompt payment, the town imposes a penalty and interest rate of 1.25 per cent on the first day of each month for principal balances not paid by the designated due date. The town aims to enhance cash flow by reducing the amount of outstanding property taxes.

As of Dec. 31, 2025, there were 56 properties in a position of tax sale.

Of these properties, 26 had already been registered for tax sale, while the remaining 30 properties were either actively engaged in arrears payment arrangements with the town, which are expected to bring the accounts fully up to date within 24 months through pre-authorized payment agreements, or were in the process of receiving final notice prior to registration.

Simcoe County council raises concerns over province's plan to appoint warden

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Simcoe County council will see the number of regional councillors reduced from 32 to 17 after the next municipal election.

Reducing the number of councillors was seen, for the most part, as a favourable move by the current county council. However, the introduction of the Better Regional Gov-

ernment Act will also allow the province to appoint the county warden, rather than the warden being elected by the current council.

This has raised concerns from members of county council that a provincially appointed warden, especially someone from outside of the region, will not have the experience required to fulfil the position.

The new legislation will allow the province to appoint a warden from anywhere in the

province.

County councillors are pushing back against the proposed overhaul of regional governance. They say the legislation overrides the local decision-making process.

The Better Regional Governance Act, 2026, would significantly reshape how upper-tier municipalities across Ontario are run.

The changes were up for discussion at the Simcoe County Council meeting on Tuesday, April 14.

"I do believe that members of council who represent residents should always be elected, but I think we are too far away from that now," said New Tecumseth Deputy Mayor Stephanie MacLellan at Tuesday's meeting. "To me, this reeks of provincial political control. Strong mayors' powers have resulted in very few new houses, but it sure has got a lot of CAO's fired with big payouts from the taxpayer. Democracy is dying, and this is what it looks like. I don't think the province has any business appointing our head of council."

Essa Mayor Sandie Macdonald is not the only one on council with concerns about the legislation.

Macdonald said she researched the legislation.

"They want a centralized oversight for provincial appointments to ensure alignment with provincial policies, priorities and standards across the counties," Macdonald said.

"I believe we have that already. They (provincial government) also said consistency and uniformly appointed Wardens can promote consistent service, by-laws, implementation and procedures between the counties – which we already do."

Macdonald also said the provincial appointments may be appointed from anywhere in the province and may lack experience, having not "lived and worked, and been a part of the County of Simcoe."

Innisfil mayor Lynn Dollin requested council send a letter to the province outlining their concerns.

"I think we should be advocating for democracy," Dollin said. "When the province announces something they are going to do, we either say, great, go ahead, or really dumb idea, or sometimes we say, really dumb idea, but if you insist on doing it anyway, make sure you do A, B and C. I think that's where we should go with this. I think we should go with, we don't like the idea of an appointed chair, but if you insist on going down this road, make sure it's someone who knows Simcoe County, has lived in Simcoe County, make sure it's someone with governance experience."

Dollin put forth a motion requesting that county council send a letter to the province detailing council's concerns.

The motion was passed.

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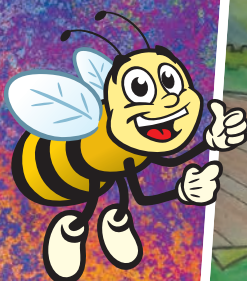
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The Times New Tecumseth



Alliston & District Humane Society celebrates opening of new addition

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Alliston & District Humane Society is celebrating the opening of a new addition that doubles the facility's space and provides the needed room to accommodate the many animals that come to the shelter each year.

The shelter grew from 1,500 to 3,200 square feet with the new addition.

Shelter staff, dignitaries, and donors gathered to cut the ribbon to officially open the

new building on Saturday, April 18.

With a growing population in the region, the shelter has seen an increase in the number of animals abandoned or surrendered at the Humane Society location.

It has been operating at capacity for several years and needs more space to accommodate more animals, as well as room for support services.

The new addition was made possible by a private donation from an estate.

"We are having a private function this

morning for our donors. These are people who have purchased naming opportunities to support the shelter and a lot of people who support us over the year," explained Sherri Wilson, volunteer and vice-president of the Alliston & District Humane Society, during the April 18 gathering.

"We are having a ribbon cutting ceremony because the new expansion is dedicated to Brian Lorimer. He was a long-time volunteer here, and he passed away. His cousin Susan Robins left a legacy donation to build the expansion in his name."

Robins, who herself was terminally ill, inquired about the services the shelter offers.

After being satisfied that the Alliston & District Humane Society was a 'no kill' shelter that does valuable work, she left a sizable donation to build the new addition.

"This new wing is for cats," Wilson explained. "We have moved all the cats out of the old building and now we have been able to expand our dog and small animals program. We were at full capacity all the time. We just didn't have the room to take new animals in. In just the past three weeks, we have had six dogs that were just dumped in the area."

The new addition will benefit both the animals and the shelter volunteers who donate their time to care for them.



RIBBON CUTTING – The Allison & District Humane Society held a ribbon-cutting to officially open a new addition to the local animal shelter. The new addition doubles the facility's size. Jane Lorimer, whose late husband Brian was a long-time shelter volunteer and has the new addition being named in his honour, and Jennifer Lorimer cut the ribbon to open the new building.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



RECOGNIZING EXPANSION – The Alliston & District Humane Society held a ribbon-cutting to officially open a new addition to the local animal shelter. Simcoe-Grey MPP Brian Saunderson, left, and Simcoe-Grey MP Terry Dowdall, present certifications of recognition to Alliston & District Humane Society President Jane Clarke during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



PROGRESS CONTINUES – Construction on New Tecumseth Fire Station #4 is progressing and is on budget and on schedule. The new fire station, located on the 14th Line near the Briar Hill subdivision, will meet the need for expanded fire and rescue services as the town grows. The facility is expected to open in the fall of 2026 with the completion of the building and the arrival of the new fire trucks and apparatus.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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Editorial, Letters & Opinion

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

~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

Rumours

There was a time when the year 2000 was considered a futuristic date. For some reason, that number represented a time when science and technology would be so advanced that life would be very much different.

After all, the Space Family Robinson blasted off in the Jupiter II in 1997, and at the time, that date was considered well into the future.

Pretty much none of what was expected to happen ever happened. We don't have flying cars like the Jetsons, and no cities are encased in a giant glass dome.

Televisions have become much larger, thinner, and have better resolution, so that's a bonus.

Except for digital technology, life as we know it is just about the same as it was.

However, as the year 2000 approached, media reports started telling the public that there was a looming threat that computer scientists and engineers had missed when designing and building all this new digital technology.

Someone theorized that since computers were designed to recognize two numbers as a year, computers were going to have an issue when the calendar moved into the new millennium.

The theory was that computers would recognize '98' as '1998', however, they would not understand or recognize 00 as

a year, and possibly interpret those digits as 1900.

The looming situation became known as Y2K, and there was general concern worldwide that anything with a computer chip or digital clock would simply shut down when the clock clicked over to 00.

Hey, doesn't your car have computer chips? What about your TV, your digital alarm clock, and some of your kitchen appliances?

Will you wake up on January 1, 2000, to find your computer has had a catastrophic failure and has lost all of your valuable data? Maybe our car won't start because the computer chips failed?

Companies with a reliance on computer technology, especially banks, began scrambling for a fix.

A lot of people were very worried.

Then – nothing. Somehow, the computers all knew that the number that comes after 1999 is 2000.

Crisis averted. Everyone's car started in the morning, and automatic coffee makers started brewing java at 7 a.m.

When the COVID pandemic became well-known in 2020, no one really knew what to expect at first.

The government, rather quickly, announced that many businesses must close. Many others were severely restricted in how they could operate.

It was quickly becoming a crisis situation – especially for people like restaurant owners or business owners whose functions included human contact.

Thankfully, thanks to the wisdom and apparent reliance on alcohol by those at Queen's Park, liquor stores remained open, and shelves were fully stocked.

For some reason, the pandemic resulted in a rumour that there was going to be a massive toilet paper shortage.

For those with common sense, they thought, why would a pandemic cause a toilet paper shortage?

It didn't matter. Some people believed the rumour and started buying as much as they could.

I recall standing in the checkout line at the grocery store, next to a woman who had two full shopping carts of toilet paper.

She looked angry and refused to make eye contact with anyone, because she knew her selfishness meant someone else could not buy the product, as she had cleaned out the shelves.

There never was a toilet paper shortage. Everyone got what they needed.

During the 1970s, several credible media sources said scientists were predicting that the earth was heading for a new ice age, and had the date to prove it.

That was a little worrying for people who prefer beach weather.

The ice age didn't happen.

A couple of decades later, it was predicted, again using scientific data, that due to global warming, coastal cities like New York would be going underwater by 2005.

Some people actually moved further inland to avoid the coming catastrophic floods.

Yet people have recently been posting duplicate photos of cities and ocean-side landmarks taken over 100 years apart, showing that sea levels in 1900 were exactly the same as they are now.

One religious denomination, over the years, has predicted several times the end of the world as we know it.

These predictions resulted in cult member selling their possession, failing to obtain insurance policies, and not pursuing post-secondary education. After all, why would you need a degree if you're going to be in heaven by midnight next Tuesday?

The predictions, of course, all failed.

There will always be rumours, and rumours of rumours.

Sometimes you just have to let the chips fall where they may, and get on with life without worrying about what may or may not happen.

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



A story still being written

I don't know what it says about me that one of the most exciting days of my life took place when I was just 11 years old, but it's a fact I can't deny.

As a youngster with a budding interest in the monarchy, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh's 1997 trip to Toronto was a chance not to be missed.

After my mom agreed to take me into Toronto to see them at St. James' Cathedral as they attended Sunday services, I devised a game plan. Wanting to stand out from the crowd, I donned a near-neon tie-dyed Tasmanian Devil t-shirt and picked out flowers of a relatively unusual colour – a pinky peach somewhat incongruously labelled as “Oceana” – in the hopes of leaving an impression. Okay, that sartorial choice, which I still have nearly 30 years later, is one I might regret just a little bit, but you can't argue with results!

The excitement in the air was palpable when the couple arrived at the church around 11 a.m. The Queen was the first to emerge from the car, with

Prince Philip following just a few steps behind. After greeting members of the clergy, they made their way towards the entrance of the cathedral, smiling at the hundreds who were waiting to catch a glimpse.

Unaware of the proper protocols, I reached out as far as I could over the crowd barrier to give the bouquet to our Head of State. She glanced over in my direction and made what I felt was eye contact before turning back to the path and entering the church.

My chance had passed. It was the first time I felt truly deflated.

But the feeling was only temporary.

Moments later, a member of Her Majesty's entourage came back out of the church, made a bee-line for me and said in hushed tones that the Queen had asked him to come out to assure me she had seen me and promised she would come my way after the service, after meeting members of the choir.

I guess the deflation showed on my face, but any such feelings evaporated

instantly and was replaced with a nearly unbearable excitement.

The Queen emerged once again about an hour later to the toll of bells. The entourage member was standing beside the monarch as he gestured with his arm for she and Prince Philip to walk through the line of choristers and then conduct a walkabout.

Without saying a word, I could see The Queen frown ever so slightly and firmly shake her head. The walkabout was to begin immediately and she walked directly over to my side of the barricades.

The excitement was too much by the time she got to me and I have no recollection of any exchange we might have had – but the feeling was unforgettable, and I think it's a testament to her character that she made the time to make one little kid in the crowd feel just a little bit special that day.

Over the subsequent years, I was fortunate enough to meet The Queen on three more occasions, each time

unique and special, but that very first time stands above the others. And, as they did in September 2022 when the second so-called Elizabethan Age came to an end with her death at the age of 96, they did so again at the start of this week when her memory was celebrated across the Commonwealth in a variety of ways to mark the 100th anniversary of her birth.

Much was said about Queen Elizabeth II during her lifetime, and much more has been said in the years immediately following her passing and the seamless succession of King Charles III.

As I wrote in this space the week of the succession, Elizabeth II never struck me as a public servant who was in it for herself or her own personal glory.

Continued on Page 15

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Death rattle of a superpower?

GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY



"We're offering a very fair and reasonable DEAL, and I hope they take it because, if they don't, the United States is going to knock out every single Power Plant, and every single Bridge, in Iran." Familiarly genocidal threats from Donald Trump, with the trademark mobster-style "NO MORE MR NICE GUY" at the end. Amazing how fast you get used to it.

There may be another ceasefire by the time you read this, or 92 million Iranians may be learning to live with no electricity, little food and no water. (In other rants he threatens Iran's desalination plants and its bridges, crucial for getting food to the cities.) In either case, the regime's leaders, all survivors of his assassination attempts, remain unyielding.

Trump regularly has "good conversations" with the civilian and Islamic Revolutionary Guard leaders, many of them entirely imaginary. But just beneath the surface he's as frantic as a trapped rat, unable to understand why the Iranians won't give in although "they have no

cards". (Wrong: they have weapons, patience, faith and, above all, favourable geography.)

He can't admit even to himself that Israel's Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu tricked him into this doomed enterprise, because that would be to admit he has been fooled. John Kennedy took the blame for the Bay of Pigs disaster and walked away. Trump cannot do either of those things, so he keeps reinforcing failure.

If this were just a personal and political disaster for Donald Trump and his associates, few people outside the United States would see it as a tragedy, and neither would about half of the American population. However, if it also involves a permanent decline in US power in the world, most Americans and many people elsewhere would see it as an unwelcome change.

The key word here is 'permanent'. In fact, that collapse has already occurred, as witness the almost unanimous refusal of America's erstwhile allies to get involved in Trump and Netanyahu's 'war of choice' against Iran, but it is so recent that a recovery still seems possible. Maybe it is, and maybe not.

Economic strength was always the key factor in any system of states, with military power mainly determined by a country's industrial production. By that traditional measure the United States has long been in relative decline (it produced more than half the manufactured goods in the world in 1945, but only 16% now.)

However, the United States has remained the foremost power because it spends a lot on a very high-tech military (eight times China's spending) and it continues to lead in science, in finance and in intellectual property. Those more or less intangible assets are more easily lost, however, and they are what is currently at risk because of Trump's presidency.

In the past five centuries there have been three transfers of dominance in the European state system,

which expanded over that period to include the whole world: from Spain to France in about 1620 (the Thirty Years' War); from France to Britain in about 1800 (the Napoleonic Wars), and from Britain to the United States around 1940 (peacefully).

On the current assumption that China is the next obvious candidate, a hopefully gradual and non-violent transfer should occur in the next half-century, which would give both China and the rest of the world time to get used to the idea. But what if the United States falls out early?

Trump has already seriously damaged America's reputation as a potential ally or partner, and he's not finished yet. Several American experts are already talking about the possibility of a civil war, and Trump himself came close to endorsing a coup attempt in January 2021. Countries that are fighting civil wars automatically lose the crown.

At the same time, China's claim to be the inevitable successor to the role of First Among Equals is rapidly being undermined by the demographic collapse that is already getting under way in the country. It will halve the population by the end of the century, and the economic damage will probably be as grave as the demographic effects.

The dark horse in the race is India, whose population will still be around 1.5 billion in 2070 when China's has already fallen below one billion, heading down towards 730 million by 2100. But that would only give India the prize if it manages to duplicate China's feat of 30 years of high-speed economic growth (10 per cent-plus annually), which is far from assured.

Let's face it. We cannot see even dimly that far into the future, and besides we should hope and work for a time when that kind of pecking order among the great powers is no longer major consideration in international affairs.



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CLUES ACROSS

- Egyptian bull-god
- Romanian monetary unit
- Will Ferrell holiday film
- "It Ain't Half Hot Mum" actor
- Error-related negativity
- Volcanic crater
- Boston Herald columnist Margery
- True market value
- Italian term for exchange rate
- Informal loan clubs
- Men's fashion accessory
- Children's craft supply
- Extra benefits
- In an early way
- A judge has one
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Tractor unit

CLUES DOWN

- Defunct supercomputer developer
- Promotional materials
- A forgetful state
- One who beheads
- Photographers
- Small, rich sponge cake
- Clergy's vestment
- Expressed pleasure
- Abba __, Israeli politician
- Zero
- Ancient Greek word for "earless"
- Nigerian governmental area
- Mild expression of surprise
- Places to hang things
- Keyboard key
- Make a mistake
- One-time president of Republic of Korea

CLUES DOWN

- Bridge building degree
- Expression of sorrow or pity
- Large, stocky lizard
- Romanian river
- Communication
- Stoats
- Showcases
- Bird of prey
- King of Thebes
- Cleaving tool
- Large African antelope
- Three are particularly notable
- Meet one's needs
- C. European river
- Dictator
- Indicates how much out of 100 (abbr.)
- The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
- Consume food
- Woman (French)
- Scrape a surface

CLUES DOWN

- Green vegetable
- Pacific Standard Time
- Capital of Brazilian city
- Paddle
- Cause to become insane
- Drier and flakier
- Mimic
- ESPN personality
- Kimes
- One who moves slowly
- Secret political clique
- Behind the stern of a ship
- Supernatural force
- Sanctuary
- Swiss river
- Grayish white
- Engrave by coating
- North Carolina university
- Midway between south and southeast

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

COMMUNITY VOICE

Monthly Message: Plant a tree, shelter a life with annual campaign through My Sister's Place

Every year at My Sister's Place, we run our annual Trees for Shelter campaign. For this fundraising campaign, we sell potted trees. The program began as a volunteer-run campaign under the skilled and knowledgeable supervision of retired forester Doug Skeates, selling Spruce seedlings. It has since branched out and grown over the years into a smoothly running operation providing a variety of native species of trees and bushes for both rural and suburban planting. The program is now run by former board member and farmer Dave Johnson, who keeps and cares for the trees on his farm in Egbert.

Each year, we gather our volunteers and have a planting day at the farm to pot our seedlings to grow for the next year's sales, keeping the cycle of growth going. For the past several years, we have potted several varieties of seedlings, preparing them for sale. Dave then waters and cares for the trees throughout the spring, summer and fall

months. Trees can be purchased through Dave now at the farm for \$25 each by calling 705 458 9076.

Last year, for the first time in the program's history, we added a second sales location to make buying a tree easier and more convenient. Murphy's Farm Market and Bakery had trees available for purchase beginning in May and running through October. This year, Murphy's will again have trees available for purchase starting on May 8th. Murphy's Farm Market is located at 5141 County Road 10, Alliston. For store hours or directions, log onto www.murphysfarmmarket.com.

We are excited to announce that this year, we will have a third location for buying our trees! Sheldon Creek Dairy will also carry



My Sister's Place

Trees for Shelter trees for the spring, summer and fall months, beginning on May 8th. Sheldon Creek Dairy is located at 4300 Concession Road 5, Loretto. For store hours and directions, log onto www.sheldon-creekdairy.ca.

The species of trees available this year through Dave, Murphy's Farm Market, and Sheldon Creek Dairy will be White Spruce, White Cedar, Red Maple and Cranberry bushes and will be sold for \$25 each. Cash only.

We are so grateful to both Murphy's Farm Market and Sheldon Creek Dairy for their support with the fundraiser and for making it more convenient for people to buy our Trees for Shelter trees.

The Trees for Shelter fundraising cam-

campaign is an important part of our annual fundraising agenda. The funds raised from the program go to supporting the costs of the shelter, 2nd stage housing, our in-shelter services and outreach programs.

We also feel good that running the Trees for Shelter program is benefiting the environment. When you buy a Trees for Shelter tree, you are not only helping support women and children in your community living with the consequences of violence and abuse, but you are also making a difference by helping contribute to a healthier plant.

For more information on the Trees for Shelter program, email fundraiser@mysistersplace.ca or call Dave at 705 458 9076. This season, starting May 8, if you stop by Murphy's Farm Market or Sheldon Creek Dairy to buy some farm market items, consider buying a tree and supporting My Sister's Place, an important service in our community.

Tim Hortons launches 2026 Smile Cookie Campaign in support of Stevenson Memorial Hospital and Matthew's House

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Everyone loves a chocolate chip cookie.

Tim Hortons will once again be hosting its spring Smile Cookie Campaign, with proceeds going to local charities chosen by location owners.

This year, Tim Hortons in Alliston at Dunham Drive, Young Street, and Highway 50 at Highway 89 locations will be supporting the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation and Matthews House Hospice Foundation in Alliston.

The campaign's spring goal is to sell 25,000 cookies. The smile cookies are a very popular treat and only cost \$2 each.

"This is the second year they have done it as a partnership with the Hospital Foundation and Matthews House Hospice," explained Kara Harris, community and corporate giving officer with the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation.

"They make the cookies, and we have volunteers that decorate them. Every cookie bought in this community serves the community through healthcare and hospice care. The Stevenson Memorial Hospital has

their 'Because of You' campaign, which is an \$80 million campaign to provide equipment, upgrades to new technology, and, of course, to help support the build of the new facility due to open in 2028."

Tim Hortons holds two Smile Cookie campaigns every year – one in the fall, and one in the spring.

"We've been doing the Smile Cookie campaign for the best part of 20 years," explained Dave Cropper, general manager of the Young St. Tim Hortons location. "The campaign is run twice each year. The one in the spring is all local. In the fall, its sup-

ports Tim Hortons Foundation camps and a local charity. In Alliston we split it between charities in the spring, and this time it is for the hospital and Matthews House. They are important local charities. The goal we are trying to hit this year, is 25,000 cookies between the three locations."

While Tim Hortons employees make the cookies, the happy smile decoration is done by volunteers who go into the store and learn how to apply the signature iced happy face.

The spring Smile Cookie Campaign runs from Monday, April 27, to Sunday, May 3.

Answer the call.

Volunteer with Ontario Corps.

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Ontario

County honouring 911 heroes at Tri-Service Public Safety Awards ceremony

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Simcoe County Tri-Service Public Safety Awards ceremony is marking its 15th year of recognizing and celebrating the dedication of the region's public safety communicators.

The ceremony took place at the County of Simcoe Administration Centre on Thursday, Apr. 16.

This annual event honours the call-takers, dispatchers, supervisors and support staff whose actions and expertise make an immeasurable impact every day.

This year, the ceremony recognized two young 911 callers whose actions saved lives and helped emergency services obtain the critical information when it was needed.

Public safety communicators are often the calm voice during someone's most difficult moment, ensuring critical information is relayed quickly and accurately to emergency personnel.

"Public safety communicators are the heroes who are on the other end of the line when a person calls 9-1-1, ensuring that help is within reach," said Simcoe County Warden Basil Clarke. "As we celebrate the 15th year of this ceremony, we are proud to recognize their exceptional efforts and grateful for the work they do each day to keep our communities safe."

Three awards were given to communicators, and two youth awards were presented.

Communicator of the Year for Public Safety Communications Award

Denise Horn, a communicator with the Orillia Fire Department, is the recipient of this award.

Denise consistently demonstrates strong decision-making skills in complex situations and when determining required next steps, often thinking ahead and asking the right questions.

She is calm and clear on the phone or radio, no matter what the severity of the incident is, or how many incidents she is handling.

Support Staff for Public Safety Award

This award went to Melissa Soule, a valuable member of the emergency services team from Midland Fire Services.

Melissa demonstrates sustained excellence over time, not just during isolated events. She maintains professionalism under pressure, particularly during high-stress or time-sensitive situations and is trusted by both leadership and staff to manage confidential and critical information appropriately.

Her exceptional attention to detail, accountability, and dedication reflect the core values and professionalism expected of emergency services support staff.

Simcoe County Public Safety Communications Team Award

This award was presented to Barrie Fire communicators Tracey Hyder, Ashlee Heb-

ner, Benoit Osborne, Kirsten Heard, and Amanda Balch for their actions during a severe winter storm, which created dangerous travel conditions across Simcoe County.

The storm left more than 200 motorists stranded on roadways in Springwater.

During the height of this incident, the Communications Centre experienced a CAD system outage, requiring the team to immediately transition to a fully manual, paper-based operation.

The team coordinated responses for stranded motorists, supported fire operations on severely congested roadways, and maintained situational awareness without automated tools.

This response highlighted the team's ability to collaborate, innovate, and maintain service continuity during system failures, ensuring public safety even when conditions were at their worst.

2026 Youth Awards

Youth awards were nominated by Wasaga Beach Fire and Georgian CACC.

Charlotte Bieniek

On the afternoon of July 4, 2025, eight-year-old Charlotte Bieniek demonstrated extraordinary courage and composure during a life-threatening emergency on the Nottawasaga River.

While paddleboarding with her mother, Charlotte noticed her mother stop paddling and was struggling to respond.

Recognizing the danger, Charlotte tied her board to her mother's, stabilized her, and paddled against the current for approximately 500 meters to reach the boat slip.

Charlotte pulled the board up as far as she could, climbed the bank, and called for help. When her mother lost consciousness, Charlotte returned to the water, placed her in the recovery position, secured the boat, and ran to alert her grandparents.

She retrieved critical medical information, including transplant history and medications.

Charlotte's calm, logical actions saved her mother's life.

Hannah

Hannah called 911 and identified herself as a young teenager.

She reported that a vehicle had pulled into her driveway and the driver knocked on her door, asking her to call an ambulance. The person at the door said their mother was having a heart attack.

Despite her young age and chaotic circumstances, Hannah remained calm, answered all questions clearly, and followed instructions while on the phone with 911.

Hannah demonstrated exceptional composure, accurately following instructions and assisting with life-saving measures until EMS arrived.

Her bravery, maturity, and ability to follow and relay critical instructions were instrumental in the care provided before EMS arrived.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Passionate about an issue you've read about within the pages of the New Tecumseth Times? Want to share your opinion? Email us a letter to the editor to: newtectimeseditorial@gmail.com. Be sure to include your name and town.

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 <p>3.89 ea save 4.10</p>	 <p>9.99 /lb 22.02/kg</p>	 <p>9.49 ea 454g</p>	 <p>19.99 ea 6"</p>	 <p>1.99 ea save .50</p>
 <p>2.99 /100g</p>	 <p>30% OFF reg. 2.49/100g</p>	 <p>3.49 ea 650g</p>	 <p>14.99 ea save 4.00</p>	 <p>1.99 ea save 1.50</p>



Arts & Local Events

C.R.I.C. Draw & Dance ready for return to Tottenham Community Centre

The countdown is on as Tottenham prepares for one of its most anticipated events of the year — the Tottenham C.R.I.C. Draw & Dance returning to the Tottenham Community and Fitness Centre on Saturday, May 2. This beloved community tradition promises an unforgettable evening of entertainment, excitement and giving back.

For more than four decades, Tottenham C.R.I.C. (Community Recreation Improvement Committee) has been investing in our community — and the impact is undeniable. Since 1979, close to \$1 million has been reinvested into local recreation and cultural initiatives, supporting projects and organizations that enrich the lives of residents across Tottenham.

From Coventry Park lighting and the C.R.I.C. Idea Lab at the Pam Kirkpatrick Branch Library, to local sports teams, Music in the Park, Next Step Literacy, Our Town Food Bank, TNT Disc Golf Course, Tottenham Community Week, and the Tottenham Legion — the reach of C.R.I.C.'s support can be seen throughout the community.

Declared a Municipally Significant Event by the Town of New Tecumseth, the Draw & Dance is C.R.I.C.'s signature fundraiser. The evening features an exciting elimination draw with close to \$50,000 in prizes, building anticipation all night until the grand-prize winner drives away with a brand-new Honda Civic LX.

But the excitement doesn't stop there.



Scan the QR code to buy tickets

Guests will enjoy a full night of live entertainment with popular band Your New Neighbors, plus a DJ to keep the dance floor packed. With a buffet available all night, a photobooth, and a vibrant atmosphere filled with friends and neighbours, it all comes together for an unforgettable night out.

Get Your Tickets — and Be Part of the Impact

Tickets are \$75 and admit two guests, offering incredible value for an evening of dinner, live entertainment, prizes, and community spirit. Attendees must be 19 years of age or older.

C.R.I.C. is also calling on community members to get involved behind the scenes. Volunteers are needed to help make the event a success, particularly those with up-to-date Smart Serve certification for bar



ROCKIN' TOTENHAM — Your New Neighbors will be back at the Tottenham Community and Fitness Centre on May 2 to rock the annual C.R.I.C. Draw & Dance. The band plays covers of popular music through the decades. Fund raised through the event support local charities and community-based initiatives.

FILE PHOTO

service. Students are welcome and can earn valuable community volunteer hours while being part of this signature event.

Tickets and event information is available at www.tottenhamcric.ca.

Whether you come for the prizes, the

music, the food, or the cause, one thing is certain — the Tottenham C.R.I.C. Draw & Dance is more than just a night out. It's a celebration of generosity, connection, and community pride.

Don't miss your chance to be part of it.

Explore in-demand careers at upcoming Simcoe County Skilled Trades Fair

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

If you have considered a job in the trades, there is an opportunity to learn about rewarding career opportunities at the Simcoe County Skilled Trades Fair, taking

place today (April 23), at Georgian College's Midland Campus.

The community-focused event is free and open to the public.

The Skilled Trades Fair highlights career opportunities across construction, manufacturing, transportation, electrical, and

industrial sectors.

This interactive event is designed for job seekers, career changers, parents, and anyone curious about skilled trades pathways.

Attendees will have the opportunity to connect directly with employers, training organizations, and industry professionals working in high-demand trades.

There will be the opportunity to sit in on live discussions exploring pathways into the skilled trades, including a live podcast hosted by SM Skillforce featuring inter-

views with industry experts on apprenticeship and certification in Ontario. There will be a discussion with employers about what they look for when hiring and candid conversations with skilled trades professionals who will share their career experiences and insights.

The Simcoe County Skilled Trades Fair will take place at the Georgian College Midland Campus, located at 649 Prospect Blvd., Midland, on April 23 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Heritage Fair returning to Simcoe County Museum

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

What happens when curiosity meets Canadian history? You get the Simcoe County Heritage Fair at the Simcoe County Museum.

The fair is a place where stories of Canada's past will be shared by students from across Simcoe County.

From fascinating historical figures to unique cultural stories, these projects showcase months of creativity, research, and passion.

The public is invited to wander through

the projects and explore Canadian heritage through fresh eyes.

With nearly 700 students participating at the school level last year, this regional fair represents the best of local stories.

The Simcoe County Heritage Fair will take place on Wednesday, April 29, at the Simcoe County Museum (1151 ON-26, Minesing), from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Admission is \$8 for adults (21-64), \$6 for seniors (65+), \$6 for youth (12-20), \$4 for children (4-11) and free for preschoolers and museum members.



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK 2026 **IGNITE VOLUNTEERISM**

Volunteer Bénévoles Canada

APRIL 19-25

National Volunteer Week

Local volunteers – The heart of the community

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE
REPORTER

Many organizations that exist to help others in the community rely on volunteers to ensure their valuable work is completed.

Volunteers are the heart of the community, donating their time and skills to make life better for others.

Whether teaching others a skill, running a program, driving a bus, or using their talents to help work on a project, their contributions are a huge part of keeping these programs and organizations running.

“Our volunteers really are the foundation of our organization,” said Brenda Pufek, CONTACT Community Services manager of community engagement and development, about the importance of volunteers to CONTACT. “We couldn’t do what we do, without

our volunteers. They do everything from run the Clothesline store to help facilitate seniors’ programs and helping people in need.”

Marcia Breedon has been volunteering at CONTACT for six years, after originally being on staff. She retired after being injured and returned to help out through volunteering at CONTACT’s clothing store, The Clothesline.

“The reason we volunteer is to give back to the community,” Marcia explained. “Everything that comes into the store – all the money goes to help people find jobs, and housing, and we help the homeless.”

Maria does a lot of the merchandising at the store and goes through the clothes to make sure they are okay to be sold.

“I’m retired so I’ve got a lot of time. I feel good doing it, and I’ve made a lot of friends,” Marcia said of why she likes volunteering.

Christine Wodchis has been volunteering at CONTACT for a year and a half and said she does it so she can give back to the community.

“I love giving back to the community,” Christine said. “I facilitate the seniors program. I like to get all these seniors out to try new things they haven’t tried before. It gets them out and socializing. I helped with the birdhouse program and the pickleball program. We did the aquafit, and it’s great to see them get out, and it’s all free for them. Through volunteering I get a sense of fulfillment. It makes me feel good.”

Many local volunteers have been giving their time for many years, with some seeing decades of volunteering behind them.

They all agree that it gives them a sense of purpose, a sense of fulfillment and an opportunity to give back to the community they live in.



VOLUNTEERS – As part of national Volunteer Week, volunteers across the country are being celebrated for their selfless contributions to their communities. CONTACT Community Services Manager of Community Engagement & Development, Brenda Pufek, is joined by volunteers Marcia Breedon and Christine Wodchis at a volunteer appreciation dinner held at the Alliston Lions Club hall on Monday, Apr.20. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

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www.ntpl.ca

to learn more.

Local man planning long-distance cycling-running journey in support of autism

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A local man is planning a long-distance run/bike trip from Windsor to Ottawa to raise funds and awareness for autism.

Adam McEachern, an Alliston resident, York Region Police officer, and father of two neurodiverse children, will be leaving Windsor on April 30, with plans to arrive in Ottawa on May 17.

The funds raised will support Kerry's Place Autism Services in Toronto.

Local singer/songwriter Grant Boyer is providing support by allowing one of his songs to be part of the run and promotional videos.

During the run, McEachern will stop at the Adjala-Tosorontio Municipal Office on May 5, before heading into Alliston. This will provide him with one night during the run when he can lay his head on his own bed.

There will be a special fundraising dinner – Carboost 2026 – a spaghetti dinner which is being organized by the Kiwanis

Club of South Simcoe with the support of many community groups, organizations, and businesses, that will take place on May 5.

The bike run will be a 989-kilometre journey, during which Adam will run 20 to 25 kilometres and cycle 35 to 55 kilometres each day. The trip will end near the Terry Fox statue in Ottawa.

Since 2020, Adam has completed three 24-hour events and one 12-hour endurance event, raising approximately \$100,000 for Kerry's Place Autism Services, Autism Ontario, and Special Olympics Ontario.

Kerry's Place Autism Services supports around 8,000 neurodiverse individuals across Ontario, with locations in Orangeville, Guelph, Barrie, Newmarket, and Brampton.

LONG DISTANCE – A local man is planning a long-distance run and bike trip from Windsor to Ottawa to raise awareness and support for autism. Alliston resident Adam McEachern will be making the journey starting on April 30, with the trip expected to take around 18 days.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



County of Simcoe approves 54 Partnership Fund applications for tourism and culture initiatives

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The County of Simcoe has approved 54 successful applications totalling \$400,370 through the 2026 Experience Simcoe County Partnership Fund.

The program will fund tourism-focused and culture-driven initiatives that focus on attracting visitors to the region.

A total of 60 applications requesting nearly

\$400,000 in financial support were submitted for the fund in 2026.

“These investments reflect our commitment to supporting the people, organizations, and communities that bring Simcoe County’s stories, culture, and experiences to life,” said Simcoe County Warden Basil Clarke. “This Partnership Fund helps ensure that residents and visitors alike can enjoy inclusive, engaging, and memorable activities across our region.”

The Experience Simcoe County Partnership

Fund supports and enhances tourism offerings in the County by investing in initiatives that increase awareness and appreciation of Simcoe County’s diverse tourism, cultural, and recreation offerings.

It also fosters partnerships and collaboration among tourism stakeholders, municipalities, and organizations to strengthen the regional tourism ecosystem, while supporting innovative, inclusive, and accessible programming

that improves the quality and appeal of visitor experiences.

It also aligns funded projects with the Experience Simcoe County work plan and strategic priorities, including destination marketing, product development and workforce development.

The full list of 54 successful applicants can be found online at experience.simcoe.ca/resources/grant.

VENDOR APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

ORANGEVILLE CITIZEN

HOLLYFEST

A holiday artisan shopping experience

We’re decking the halls once again and inviting unique, passionate vendors to join us in making HollyFest even more magical in its second year. After an incredible inaugural event, we’re excited to welcome new businesses and continue growing Orangeville Citizen’s signature holiday shopping experience.

If you’re ready to showcase your products, connect with an engaged community, join a festive tradition in the making, we’d love to have you at HollyFest and share in the magic!

Saturday, November 21, 2026 - 9am to 4pm; and
Sunday, November 22, 2026 - 10am to 3pm

Indoors at the Orangeville Fairgrounds,
247090 Side Rd 5, Mono

orangevillehollyfest.ca

To apply to be a vendor at the show, scan the QR code, visit our website or email shows@ipcmedia.ca for a vendor application form. Apply before June 1, 2026 and be eligible for early acceptance on June 26.



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Magic is 7 years old and head of the greeting committee. He loves to get his pets and runs to meet the volunteers. Magic is very playful and will spend hours with a wand toy. This handsome stud has a best buddy Rufus, who although isn't as outgoing, also loves his pets (yes you can adopt both!).

Magic is neutered, microchipped, dewormed, flea treated and vaccinated.

Adoption price: \$275

Check our facebook page to see the other kitties looking for their forever home. Donations always needed to help care for the cats as we are not funded at all, and rely on donations and fundraisers. If you would like to volunteer as well we are always appreciative.

Magic

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How seniors can build their social networks in retirement

Social isolation and loneliness can have a notably adverse effect on a person's overall health.

According to the World Health Organization, roughly 12 percent of older individuals experience loneliness, which can have a negative impact on their physical and mental health, quality of life, and even their life expectancy.

Seniors have much to gain when they take successful steps to avoid social isolation. Seniors who are concerned about the prospect of social isolation or loneliness or those already experiencing such feelings can try these strategies to build their social networks in retirement.

• **RECONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS**

It's easy for adults to lose touch with old friends. By the time many adults reach middle age, professional and personal obligations can leave little time for a thriving social life. Successful professionals may be preoccupied with work projects, and while parents may be juggling their own hectic schedules with their children's obligations. Come retirement, much of those responsibilities have ended, making this a perfect time to reconnect with old friends who also might have extra

free time on their hands. Reach out through social media, text message or even a phone call, and let the situation unfold organically from there.

• **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COMMUNITY OFFERINGS**

Many communities sponsor events for seniors, like bus trips to local museums or stadiums, in an effort to encourage seniors to get out of the house. Retirees can take advantage of these opportunities, which tend to attract like-minded individuals with the same interests. A bus trip to a theater production will attract fellow arts lovers, and shared interests are a solid foundation for friendship.

• **START A LOCAL CLUB OR GROUP**

Starting a local club based on a particular activity is another great way for seniors to build a social

network in retirement. Take to social media and express your interest in starting a local book club or walking group. Like community-sponsored bus trips, clubs and groups tend to attract like-minded individuals, providing a built-in pathway to friendship.

• **RECONNECT WITH YOUR FAITH**

Houses of worship also offer a great way to meet locals and build relationships based on a shared identity. Faith-based communities provide a sense of belonging that can help retirees overcome social isolation and loneliness.

• **OPEN YOURSELF TO NEW EXPERIENCES**

Trying something new is another great way to make new friends. Many local agencies like parks departments or community recreation offices of-

fer seniors in-person workshops covering a wide range of activities. These offerings are a great way to discover a new pastime and meet new people along the way.



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Celebrating SENIORS

How seniors can find a suitable volunteering opportunity

Volunteering is a rewarding experience that engages people from all walks of life. While young adults and adults in middle age may find it hard to squeeze volunteering into their schedules, retirees are free of many of the professional and personal obligations that prevent younger adults from volunteering.

Retirees can reap some unique benefits from volunteering. Volunteering can provide retirees new opportunities to socialize, which can help them avoid feelings of social isolation and loneliness that many seniors confront after retiring. Volunteering also can provide an opportunity for seniors to utilize their professional expertise to the benefit of others.

With so much to gain from volunteering, retirees can start looking for opportunities in their communities. Many such opportunities exist, and the following tips

can help retirees find the most suitable one for them.

IDENTIFY YOUR MOTIVATION TO VOLUNTEER

Identifying why you want to volunteer can be a great first step. Many retirees who had long and distinguished careers in the professional arena aspire to give back by employing their expertise in new ways. For example, retired attorneys may want to volunteer with a nonprofit organization that provides free legal advice to those who cannot afford to hire their own legal representatives. Once retirees have identified why they want to volunteer, they can then look for opportunities that align with that motivation.

CONSIDER ANY POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS YOU HAVE

Some volunteering opportunities are physically demanding, which makes them difficult for retirees.

Seniors may not be able to handle a volunteering opportunity that requires heavy lifting or one that asks volunteers to spend hours on their feet. Be honest about any physical limitations, and discuss any uncertainty you might have with your health care provider before committing to a volunteering gig.

DECIDE HOW MUCH TIME YOU CAN VOLUNTEER

Volunteering is often characterized as a rewarding experience that offers homebound seniors a chance to get up and go. But some retirees already have active social lives, so it's imperative that prospective volunteers identify how much time they have to volunteer. Many organizations allow volunteers to determine how much time they spend volunteering, but others may ask more of volunteers in regard to a time commitment. For example, volunteering to organize community events may require a sig-



nificant time commitment that some retirees do not necessarily want to make.

There are many great reasons to volunteer. Retirees considering volunteering can give the prospect ample consideration before they begin searching for the right opportunity to give back.

MAKING FRIENDS IN YOUR GOLDEN YEARS

AGING AND CHANGE GO HAND IN HAND. Physical changes associated with aging, such as graying hair or reduced muscle mass, may garner the most attention. But personal relationships also can change as people age.

It is important to have a solid group of friends. Psychology Today reports that a strong social network reduces the risk of early death by around 45 percent. Recent data even indicates that loneliness is as great a health risk as smoking half a pack of cigarettes per day. Starting fresh and making friends at 50 or older might seem challenging. Although making new friends

after 50 may take more effort than it did when you were younger, it is certainly not impossible. Here are some tips for making friends after 50.

• JOIN A NETWORKING GROUP

Networking isn't just for advancing your career. Networking groups that focus on friendships can help individuals meet one another. Perhaps there is a neighborhood group in which people from a particular housing development or several streets in town get together? Shared interests can include the place where you live.

• ORGANIZE A GET-TOGETHER

Sometimes making friends involves effort

on your part. You might need to step out of your comfort zone and initiate first contact with others. Maybe there is a person at a store you run into frequently, or someone whose path you cross regularly that can be asked out to a get-together?

• GET INVOLVED WITH ACTIVITIES

A church group or a volunteer activity can be a great place to meet new people. In fact, volunteers often get involved for the express purpose of getting to know others and to be integral members of the community.

• CONSIDER OTHER GENERATIONS

Friends need not be the same age and from



the same generation. Keep an open mind that friends can come in all ages and from all walks of life.

Making friends after 50 requires some effort, but a sizable social network can benefit individual well-being into one's golden years.

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Celebrating SENIORS

5 health problems an eye exam can catch

(NC) They say that the eyes are the window to the soul.

But they're also your window to the world around you, which is why it's important to have your eyes tested regularly. Beyond issues with your vision, an eye exam can also help detect other health issues that you should investigate further. Particularly if your eye exam includes an optical coherence tomography (OCT) scan, then it may help detect some eye conditions at earlier stages.

Here are five health issues that may be seen during an eye exam.

BRAIN TUMOURS

Some types of tumours can increase pressure on the brain, which in turn can impact your eyes. An op-

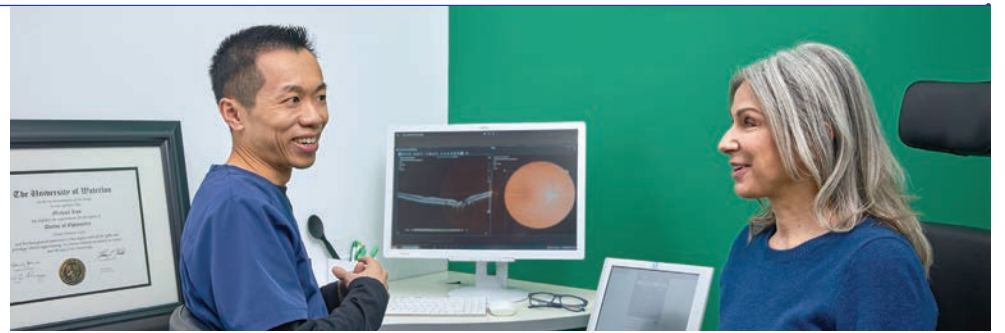
tometrists can see if you have swollen optic nerves, which can be caused by a brain tumour.

SKIN CANCER

Your optometrist will examine your eyes for indications of skin cancer on the eyelids, around the eyes or within the eye as part of the exam.

DIABETES

Your optometrist might be able to detect diabetes even before you've been diagnosed with it, by spotting a yellow fluid or bleeding in your retina. An OCT scan can also help optometrists detect early or subtle diabetic changes. Early detection of diabetes can help avoid long-term vision loss or other serious complications.



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

An eye exam provides a non-invasive way for optometrists to view the actions of blood vessels and nerves. Changes in the retina such as bleeding or changes to blood vessels at the back of the eye can indicate high blood pressure, which is one of the risk factors for developing glaucoma.

HEART DISEASE

An OCT scan can also help your optometrist look for signs of eye strokes which could indicate heart disease. Eye strokes happen when cells have died be-

cause they were deprived of blood or oxygen, or a vein is blocked causing blood to pool up in the eye.

Optometrists who operate the independent clinics at Specsavers include OCT scans as a standard part of all their eye exams at no additional cost to the patient.

Learn more about the benefits of regular eye exams at specsavers.ca.

www.newscanada.com

What seniors can do to safeguard their mental health

Mental health has increasingly been noted as a key ingredient to an individual health regimen.

THE STIGMA once assigned to mental health issues has largely dissipated, and many people now recognize that mental health should be just as big a priority as physical health. Recognition of the importance of mental health is a step in the right direction, and seniors also can consider these strategies to safeguard their mental health.

• **RECOGNIZE YOUR VULNERABILITY**

Mental health is shaped by numerous variables, including earlier life experiences and some notable stressors related to aging, such as a decline in functional ability that

can cause psychological distress. Seniors also are more likely than others to experience adverse events like the loss of a loved one or even a loss of purpose, which can affect anyone upon retirement. Recognition of this vulnerability may be enough to compel seniors to seek advice and assistance on how to safeguard their mental health from age-related stressors.

• **TAKE TIME OUT IF YOU'RE A CAREGIVER**

The Alzheimer's Association reports that studies have found that 70 percent of caregivers report feeling stress related to co-

ordination of care, while two in three caregivers have difficulty finding resources and support for their needs. Seniors who have taken on caregiving duties for a loved one must protect their own mental health by taking time out to care for themselves as well. Work with family members to share responsibilities when caring for a loved one. If family members cannot pitch in, then work with local government agencies to alleviate some of the stress of caregiving.

• **MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO SOCIALIZE**

Social connection can significantly improve

mental health and provide a sense of life satisfaction while improving quality of life. Seniors are urged to prioritize socialization. Many community-based groups, including government offices, run programs designed specifically to facilitate socialization among older residents. Take advantage of such programs whenever possible. Seniors living alone also may want to consider relocating to communities exclusive to people age 55 and over, as such developments typically offer an array of socialization opportunities to residents.

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A different kind of multigenerational escape: *Ocean yacht cruising*

(NC) For many families, finding meaningful time together can be a challenge. Work, distance and the pace of everyday life often pull family members in different directions. One way an increasing number of families are choosing to reconnect is luxury yacht cruising.

It's a travel experience that blends exploration, ease and togetherness, which can give every generation space to enjoy the journey in their own way. Here are four reasons why more families are trying it:

1. Experiences that suit every pace. Modern yacht cruising is all about choice. Some family members might want to dive into local culture on a guided tour or food tasting, while others prefer a slower day—snorkelling in clear waters, lounging on deck or unwinding in the spa. With onboard amenities like pools, gyms and libraries, everyone can find their own rhythm, whether that's active adventure or quiet downtime.

2. Travel made simple. Unlike traditional cruise ships that can carry thousands, boutique yachts like those from Emerald Cruises & Tours host just over 100 guests. This smaller scale means a less crowded and more relaxed atmosphere, perfect for

families who want both togetherness and personal space.

3. Adventures that bring everyone together. By day, everyone can choose their own adventure, such as a coastal hike, a market visit or simply soaking up sunshine at sea. Come evening, the family can gather again to share the stories of what they experienced, over dinner or cocktails on deck. It's travel that keeps everyone engaged without ever feeling rushed or confined.

4. New destinations, no repacking. One benefit, especially for older travellers, is that passengers unpack once, and the ship does the rest. Passengers experience a variety of sights, from famous destinations to hidden harbours, without the stress of repacking and moving accommodations each time.

At its heart, luxury yacht cruising isn't just about where you go, it's about the time spent together along the way. It offers families a chance to slow down, share experiences across generations and create memories that last long after the voyage ends.

Learn more about creating a multigenerational escape at emeraldcrucises.ca/yacht.
www.newscanada.com

Hearing Well, Living Fully: Supporting Seniors in Alliston

There is something special about the way seniors shape a community. In Alliston, their stories are part of everyday life. They are the neighbours who built local businesses, raised families, volunteered their time, and continue to show up with quiet strength and resilience.



As we celebrate seniors, it is important to recognize that staying connected plays a big role in maintaining independence and quality of life. Conversations with family, laughter with friends, and simply hearing the sounds of daily life all contribute to a sense of belonging. When hearing becomes more challenging, many people begin to withdraw without even realizing it.

Hearing care is not about perfection. It is about making everyday moments easier and more enjoyable. Small steps, like a hearing check, can help people stay engaged in the conversations and activities they value most. This is especially important as hearing changes are a natural part of aging.

At Hear Right Canada, the focus is on providing clear, supportive guidance in a comfortable setting. Every individual has different needs, and care should always reflect that. The goal is to help people feel confident, informed, and supported at every stage.

If you or someone you care about has noticed changes in hearing, consider booking a hearing test. It is a simple step that can make a meaningful difference.

Come visit our caring Hear Right Canada team at 106 Victoria Street West, Unit 300 or call (705) 250 8884.

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Continued from Page 4

Brock's Banter: A story still being written

Many of her closest friends and acquaintances underscored the point that she much rather would have spent her life quietly on a farm with her beloved horses and dogs, far away from the pomp and circumstance that defined her life. But fate had other plans.

She had a destiny to fulfil, and that destiny was a role she felt duty-bound to take anything but lightly. She was conscious of her role as monarch, yes, and took the role extremely seriously, but there was also the fact that she was, above and beyond being Queen, a custodian of the Crown and a representation of something much larger than herself: a public servant like no other.

The subsequent three-and-a-half years since her death have left plenty of time for reflection, and in that time, a fuller picture of the woman continues to emerge as

more people within her circle feel more respectful in sharing their perspective.

Historian Anna Keay has been tasked by the King in penning his mother's official biography, it was announced last week. As is the case with official biographies of any public leader, the author will have access to a trove of private papers, diaries, and more to get further beneath the surface than any writer has before. Especially interesting to me is that the chosen author is a person who can view one of the most remarkable female leaders of our time through anything but a male lens. A generation or two removed from the monarch's more prominent female biographers, she will undoubtedly have very different questions than her predecessors had in searching for answers and a differ-

ent view on which key moments of her life are in need of greater evaluation.

"I said to a Private Secretary, 'I've spent some time with the Queen. She seems not quite the conservative do-as-you've-done-it-before restrained person she always appears to be in public. She seems quite radical at times,'" said another biographer, Gyles Brandreth, a personal friend of the Queen and Duke, who also served as a Conservative MP in the 1990s. "He said, 'That's deliberate.' I said, 'What do you mean that's deliberate?' 'She feels she ought to be conservative with a small C because her philosophy is that she should only go at the pace of the slowest person in the kingdom so that nobody in the kingdom should ever feel left behind.'"

Evidently it was a winning formula, but what other factors were part of that equa-

tion?

Perhaps it's a question on the mind of another woman wearing a crown.

"It must have been so difficult being surrounded by much older men," said Queen Camilla in a BBC documentary that aired Sunday night, watching newsreel footage of her young mother-in-law returning from Kenya as monarch aged just 25. "There weren't women prime ministers or women presidents. She was the only one, so I think she carved her own role."

Queen Elizabeth II's role as a female trailblazer is not one often explored, perhaps because the trail she blazed was the only one that was laid out before her, and perhaps because she did not view herself in those terms, but what an exciting facet to explore and help add to a remarkable chapter in a remarkable woman's story.

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit cautions well owners during flood season

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

With recent warnings of flooding in the region, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is reminding citizens to take precautions to keep food and drinking water safe.

This is especially important for residents who get their drinking water from a well.

Private wells are at a higher risk of contamination during floods, and any well can become unsafe. A prolonged power outage can cause your well pump and any treatment devices to stop working.

If flood water reaches or covers your well head, you should assume the water is not safe

to drink.

Follow all drinking water advisories and use only safe water sources until your well has been properly tested and confirmed safe.

If you experience a power outage, flush the lines by running water for five minutes, and check the treatment devices once power is restored to ensure everything is running properly.

You should then test your water. Private well owners can test their water free of charge. Sample bottles can be picked up and dropped off at many health offices.

Drink commercially bottled water until the safety of your drinking water is confirmed through testing.

If bottled water is unavailable, boil water for at least one minute before using it for drinking, cooking, or cleaning.

Use only safe drinking water for making drinks or infant formula, cooking, washing fruits and vegetables, brushing teeth and washing hands, and washing dishes.

Municipal drinking water is safe, treated, and continuously monitored, even during power outages or flooding. You will be notified immediately if there is a concern about water quality.

When it comes to food safety, floodwater can carry silt, sewage, oil, and chemicals, making food and water unsafe.

Any food that comes into contact with con-

taminated flood water should be thrown out. Even packages that look dry may be unsafe if they come in contact with contaminated water.

A power outage can also cause refrigerated and frozen foods to spoil. All food should be checked carefully before using it.

Perishable foods such as meat, poultry, dairy, fish, and eggs must be thrown out if stored above 4°C for more than two hours.

A full chest freezer will keep food frozen for up to 48 hours without power. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen for approximately 24 hours.

If you are in doubt about a food item, err on the side of caution and throw it out.

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SPORTS

NEW TECUMSETH TIMES



North Dufferin Baseball League getting ready for 2026 season

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The boys of summer are getting into training mode as they prepare for the upcoming 2026 baseball season.

The North Dufferin Baseball League (NBDL) senior season will get underway on Saturday, May 2, with the first game of the year between the Midland Mariners and the New Lowell Knights in Midland.

In the Junior Division, the Caledon Nationals will meet the Creemore Padres for the start of that division's regular season on Monday, May 4, in Creemore.

The Senior Division defending champions are the New Lowell Knights.

Returning for this season in the Junior Division, the Creemore Padres will be looking for their third straight championship year.

The NBDL has a full lineup of teams this season, with the regular season running through July 26 before heading into the playoffs.

This year's senior team line-up includes 12 teams – all returning teams from last season.

The line-up includes the Creemore Padres, Midland Mariners, New Lowell Knights, Bolton Brewers, Lisle Astros, Orillia Majors, Mansfield Cubs, Barrie Angels, Ivy Rangers, Clarksburg Blues, Owen Sound Baysox, and the Caledon Cardinals.

The junior team lineup includes the Barrie Baycats, Orillia Royals, Creemore Padres, and Innisfil Cardinals.

There are three new teams in the junior loop this season. These teams include the Caledon Nationals, Aurora King Jays, and the Owen Sound Baysox.

The North Dufferin Baseball League is one of the longest-running sports leagues in the country.

Beginning in 1930, the League will soon be celebrating its 100th season.



SEASON STARTER – The North Dufferin Baseball League is getting ready for the 2026 season. The Senior Division has a full lineup of 12 teams. The Junior Division has seven teams, including two new entries for this year. **FILE PHOTO**

The only interruption in play was during World War II, and 2020, when the COVID pandemic put a temporary stop to all sports across the country.

The first league championship took place in 1930 between Shelburne and a team from Horning's Mills. However, the results of that game have been lost to history.

It's going to be an exciting season, and teams are now getting out on the diamonds to shake off the winter rest and get into playing mode for this summer.

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One vehicle stopped by police twice in one day, license plates seized

South Simcoe Police officers conducted a traffic stop on April 15 after observing a vehicle operating with an expired 10-day permit that was several months overdue.

Around 6:50 a.m., officers saw the vehicle was travelling from County Road 88 onto Highway 400 southbound and stopped it north of Canal Road in Bradford West Gwillimbury.

Through the investigation, officers identified that the male driver held a G1 licence and was in contravention of G1 driving conditions by not being accompanied by a qualified driver and driving on a 400 series highway.

“The vehicle was also found to be uninsured,

and the driver was unable to produce a valid permit. The vehicle was guided off the highway for safety during the morning commute,” reads a press release from the South Simcoe Police Service (SSPS).

A couple of hours later, at approximately 9:40 a.m., officers observed the same vehicle at 10 Sideroad and County Road 89 in Innisfil. A female was driving the vehicle, with the accused from the earlier incident seated in the front passenger seat. The vehicle remained uninsured and continued to display the expired permit. Police seized the licence plates and had the vehicle towed from the roadway.

As a result, a 36-year-old male, and 40-year-old female both from Barrie were charged with multiple offences, including:

- Drive motor vehicle – no currently validated permit
- G1 licence holder – unaccompanied by qualified driver
- G1 licence holder – driving on a prohibited highway
- Operate motor vehicle without insurance
- Fail to surrender permit for motor vehicle
- Fail to notify of a change of address (owner)
- Owner permit operation – no insurance
- Owner operate motor vehicle – no cur-

rently validated permit

- Permit operation of motor vehicle no insurance

“South Simcoe Police remind all motorists that driving without insurance is a serious offence,” said SSPS. “Vehicle insurance is mandatory under Ontario law and serves as critical protection not only for the driver but also for passengers, pedestrians, and all other road users.”

SSPS added, “This incident serves as a reminder of the importance of complying with driver’s licence, vehicle validation, and insurance requirements.

Six year old boy pronounced dead, two hospitalized following pickup truck collision in Mulmur

Provincial police say a boy is dead and a toddler is fighting for their life in hospital after a motor vehicle collision in southern Ontario.

Officers were called to the intersection of County Road 17 and County Road 19 in the Township of Mulmur, northwest of Toronto, earlier Sunday.

They say in a news release that a vehicle carrying six people got into a crash with a pickup truck.

A six-year-old boy was taken to a local hos-

pital where he was pronounced dead, while a 30-year-old man and a two-year-old child were airlifted to a Toronto area trauma centre with life-threatening injuries.

Commercial motor vehicle driver faces 11 charges after being stopped for speeding 40km over limit

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers continue to conduct enforcement initiatives targeting commercial motor vehicle compliance at all hours of the day.

Officers conducted a traffic stop on Airport Road in Mono after observing a commercial motor vehicle travelling at 121 km/h in a posted 80 km/h zone. During the stop, officers conducted a commercial motor vehicle inspection.

As a result of the investigation, a total of 11

Provincial Offence Notices were issued.

Charges included:

- Speeding 1-49 km/h over the posted limit
- Exceeding 13 hours of driving time in a day
- Fail to accurately complete daily inspection report
- Drive commercial motor vehicle with air brake - no endorsement

“The Ontario Provincial Police remind all commercial motor vehicle operators that

compliance with traffic laws and regulations is essential to ensure the safety of all road users,” said Dufferin OPP. “Due to their size and weight, commercial motor vehicles require greater stopping distances and have larger blind spots. Drivers are reminded to ensure they are properly licensed, adhere to hours-of-service regulations, and complete accurate daily inspections to help prevent collisions.”

Dufferin OPP said the public needs to drive

safely around commercial vehicles by maintaining a safe following distance, avoiding blind spots, and allowing extra space for turning and stopping.

While the majority of drivers operate safely and responsibly, enforcement will continue to focus on those who choose not to comply.

Anyone with information regarding unsafe driving is asked to contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or report anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

OPP investigate two fires deemed suspicious in Caledon area, seeks public help in identifying suspects

Caledon Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers are investigating two suspicious fires within Caledon that occurred within one day of each other.

On April 14, at approximately 1:40 a.m., Caledon OPP responded to a report of two vehicles on fire at a private business in the area of Highway 50 and George Bolton Parkway, in Caledon. Police responded alongside members of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services. The fire was extinguished and no injuries were reported.

On April 15, at approximately 2:45 a.m.,

Caledon OPP responded to a report of a vehicle fire at a private residence in the area of Old Church Road and Henry Wilson Drive, in Caledon. Police responded alongside members of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services. The fire was extinguished and no injuries were reported.

During the April 15 incident, two masked suspects were observed setting fire to a vehicle and leaving the area in a white Honda sports utility vehicle.

At this time, the fires have been deemed suspicious and are being investigated as instances of arson.

These investigations are ongoing. Anyone who may have information regarding these incidents is asked to contact Caledon OPP at 1-888-310-1122. You can also provide information anonymously by contacting Peel Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or online at www.peelcrimestoppers.ca. When you contact Crime Stoppers you stay anonymous, and you never have to testify.

SUSPECT VEHICLE – Caledon police are looking to identify the pictured vehicle.

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INCREDIBLE PRICE
14⁹⁹

SAVE \$7

Pork Pot Roast
907 g



BACK TO OUR LOWEST PRICE OF THE YEAR[‡]

*Lowest price of the year matches the lowest price of 2026 to date.

INCREDIBLE PRICE
10⁹⁹

SAVE \$7

Fall Off the Bone® Back Ribs

1 FULL RACK OF RIBS 510 g - 680 g CHOOSE FROM 4 VARIETIES.



Honey Garlic

INCREDIBLE PRICE
24⁹⁹

SAVE \$10

Chicken Strips
27-33 PIECES 1.36 kg



Stuffed, Breaded Chicken 142 g
Choose from:
• Broccoli and Cheese • Kiev
• Parmesan • Swiss

SAVE \$1
3⁹⁹ each

Bistro Chicken®
114 g
Choose from:
• Ricotta & Spinach • Swiss



SAVE \$2
27⁹⁹

Cheesecake Variety Pack
12 SLICES 1 kg



Wonton
Soups
255 g - 400 mL
Other varieties available,
• Loaded Potato
• Broccoli Cheddar
• Tomato and Grilled Cheese



SAVE \$2
4⁹⁹ each

Mini Cream Puffs
250 g



Mini Eclairs
12 PIECES 200 g

Also available,
Caramel Cream Puffs 240 g \$4.99 **SAVE \$2**

Deep Dish Chicken Pie 907 g
Also available,
Deep Dish Beef and Vegetable Pie
907 g \$12.99 **SAVE \$5**

SAVE \$5 each



Italian Style Beef Meatballs
89-95 PIECES 907 g



12⁹⁹ each

SAVE \$4
Haddock Tenders
8-12 PIECES 454 g
Sauce included



SAVE \$7
Supreme Homestyle Meat Loaf 600 g



BETTER WITH BACON

17⁹⁹ SAVE \$2
Bacon Wrapped Chicken
4 PIECES x 142 g/5 oz



24⁹⁹ SAVE \$2
Mini Bacon Wrapped Chicken Fillets
14 PIECES 238 g



LIMITED TIME ONLY
Maplewood Smoked Bacon Wrapped Salmon
2 PIECES 284 g



SAVE \$2
17⁹⁹ each
Bacon Wrapped Scallop Medallions
9-13 PIECES 300 g



SAVE \$2
12⁹⁹
Bacon Wrapped Jalapeño Shooters®
12 PIECES 255 g



31⁹⁹ SALE
Bacon Wrapped Beef Top Sirloin Steaks
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Pub Party Pack
32 PIECES 576 g



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38-46 PIECES 632 g



SALE
16⁹⁹ each

Puff Pastry Quartet
32 PIECES 576 g



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