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Friday:
Scattered
Flurries



Saturday:
Mix of Sun
and Clouds



Sunday:
Mix of Sun
and Clouds



Monday:
Cloudy with
Sunny Breaks

CHECK OUT OUR TOP FLYER SPECIALS ON PAGE 7!



Vince's
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Grocer Gives Back

Vince's Market last week presented the Alzheimer Societies of York Region, Simcoe County, and Durham Region with a cheque of \$34,835, the results of their 2025 Community Product Initiative. Through the Community Product Initiative each year, a portion of the proceeds from the sales of selected products go directly to the year's selected charities. The 2026 beneficiary has been announced as Easter Seals Ontario. Joining Giancarlo and Maria to celebrate the selection of Easter Seals as the 2026 partner was Easter Seals' Andrea Peterson.

GLENN RODGER PHOTO

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Adjala-Tosoronto will receive over \$29 million for water infrastructure

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Township of Adjala-Tosoronto will receive up to \$29,980,769 in provincial funding to rehabilitate its water infrastructure.

The announcement was made by Simcoe-Grey MPP Brian Saunderson at the Adjala-Tosoronto municipal offices on Monday, Jan. 26.

The funding comes from the province's Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program's Health and Safety Water Stream.

"This investment will support important upgrades in Everett while helping ensure Adjala-Tosoronto has the servicing capacity needed to move forward with new housing."

Brian Saunderson, Simcoe-Grey MPP

"Planning for growth means investing in the systems that make it possible," MPP Saunderson said. "This investment will support important upgrades in Everett while helping ensure Adjala-Tosoronto has the servicing capacity needed to move forward with new housing. It is about making sure families today, and in the years ahead, can count on



SUPPORTIVE FUNDING – Simcoe-Grey MPP meets with Scott Anderson, mayor of Adjala-Tosoronto, and local dignitaries at the Adjala-Tosoronto municipal offices on Monday, Jan. 26, to announce over \$29 million in funding for water infrastructure in the township.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

safe, dependable infrastructure in their community.

The funding will be used in Adjala-Tosoronto to support upgrades to the Everett wastewater system and new housing servicing.

"I'm delighted to see continued provincial investment which is helping Adjala-Tosoronto

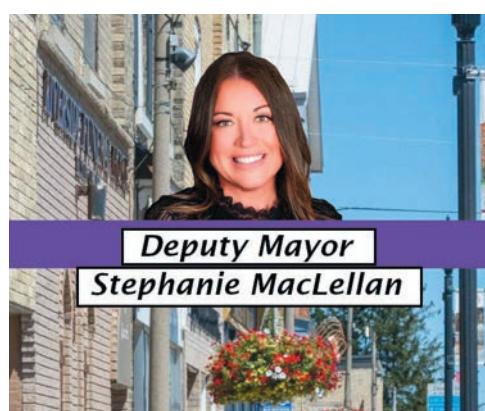
modernize the infrastructure that protects our residents," said Adjala-Tosoronto Mayor Scott W. Anderson. "Working with strong partners and guided by prudent long range planning, we are aligning growth with servicing capacity so our community remains safe, sustainable, and well served."

This funding is part of a historic investment of \$4 billion in the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program, included in Ontario's \$220 billion capital plan, the most ambitious in the province's history, to build transit, highways, hospitals, schools and water infrastructure that enables new housing.

"As we continue to navigate economic uncertainty and unwarranted U.S. tariffs, our government is protecting Ontario by investing

in critical infrastructure that drives growth, creates jobs and strengthens communities," said Todd McCarthy, Acting Minister of Infrastructure. "Through our historic \$4 billion Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program, we are giving municipalities and First Nations the tools they need to get shovels in the ground and build stronger communities. Our investments will deliver more homes, modernize aging water systems and lay the foundation for long-term prosperity across Ontario."

In August 2025, Ontario increased the MHIP to \$4 billion to speed up construction of homes and core infrastructure, such as roads and water systems. Since its launch in 2024, the MHIP has enabled about 800,000 additional new homes.



Save The Date!
2026 Town Hall
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Alliston Legion
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Communication is the key to good, effective government and too often we find it hard to meet and share ideas and listen to each other. I want to hear directly from you about your concerns, your ideas and discuss how we can make this town even better!

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Ontario runs low on salt: Province wide shortage affects winter road maintenance

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A province-wide salt shortage is forcing cities and towns to adjust road maintenance and ration salt used to de-ice streets and sidewalks.

An early start to winter this year, followed by almost constant precipitation, means most municipalities have already used up a sizable portion of their salt stockpile.

Demand for road salt is so high that one of the world's largest underground salt mines in Goderich can't keep up with demand. The Goderich mine runs below Lake Huron.

The mine has been operating around the clock, but still can't keep up with the demand.

Many municipalities are now using a salt-and-sand mixture to keep roads safe.

The Town of New Tecumseth's Transportation Operations team has now shifted to a salt-and-sand mixture on local streets and roads.

While extreme cold makes salt less effective, the main reason for the switch is to make sure the limited salt supply is responsibly managed.

When the supply issues are resolved, the Town will return to standard winter maintenance.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Beeton Tottenham Business Improvement Association will hold our annual general meeting to review 2025 and present our 2026 budget. The meeting will be held on

Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 6:30 pm.
at the Tottenham Community Fitness Centre
139 Queen St. N., Tottenham. RSVP to attend.

For information please contact Susan Iacoucci
905.936.3424 or email info@btbia.ca



Contract awarded to build Stevenson Memorial Hospital expansion

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Ontario government has awarded the construction contract for Phase One of Stevenson Memorial Hospital's redevelopment project to Canadian construction company Pomerleau Inc.

This step marks a significant milestone in the project. Once complete, it will help the province achieve its goal of connecting more families in New Tecumseth and surrounding communities to convenient, high-quality care close to home.

The project is part of the government's plan to protect Ontario's health-care system by investing nearly \$60 billion in more than 50 major hospital projects across the province over the next 10 years.

"Our government is making historic investments to protect Ontario's healthcare system and connect more people to the care they need, where and when they need it," said Syl-

via Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "By investing in the redevelopment of Stevenson Memorial Hospital, we are making it faster and easier for more people and their families to access world-class hospital care in their community, for generations to come."

The \$174 million investment will support the redevelopment of Stevenson Memorial Hospital, including new and expanded acute care areas, the construction of a new, three-storey building that will more than double the hospital's size to approximately 147,100 square feet, and an increase in inpatient bed capacity by 20 per cent.

The complete redevelopment is expected to be done by late 2028.

Once Phase One of the hospital's redevelopment is complete, the expanded hospital will provide nine new inpatient beds at the hospital, increasing the total number of beds from 38 to 47.

A new emergency department, triple the size of the current one, will be completed.



REDEVELOPMENT RENDERING – A detailed rendering shows what the expansion to Stevenson Memorial Hospital will look like upon completion.

STEVENSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PHOTO

There will be expanded diagnostic and surgical services, as well as a brand-new birthing suite.

Infrastructure Ontario and Stevenson

Memorial Hospital selected Pomerleau Inc. following extensive evaluations through an open, fair and competitive procurement process that began in August 2024.

Construction on New Tecumseth fire station progressing on schedule and on budget

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

New Tecumseth Town Council received a report on the progress of construction on its new Fire Station #4, in southern Alliston, during a regular meeting on Jan. 26, 2026.

Construction of the new facility began in May 2025, with substantial completion anticipated by the end of 2026.

The report states that as of Jan. 7, the proj-

ect remains on schedule and all major milestones have been achieved.

From a financial perspective, based on the December 2025 billing, construction is approximately 54 per cent complete.

When completed, Fire Station #4 will be a modern, one-story facility with approximately 12,600 square feet of space. The station's site is located at 6365 14 Line, Alliston. It will be Alliston's second fire station, providing greater coverage of the town.

The new fire station will include three drive-through apparatus bays, firefighter dormitories, training and meeting rooms, administrative offices, a kitchen and dining area, and dedicated spaces for equipment maintenance and decontamination.

The facility's layout and features are designed to support efficient operations, enhance firefighter safety, and ensure quick emergency response times.

The station's design also considers future growth and sustainability.

To date, during construction, all major milestones have been achieved, including rough grading, site servicing (sanitary sew-

ers, pumping station, storm sewers), the watermain and fire service main, and municipal connections.

Work over the coming weeks will focus on completing the caulking around the pre-cast panels and continuing with roof work. Inside, crews will advance framing, while plumbing, sprinkler, HVAC, and electrical work progress through the interior.

The project has an approved total budget of \$13,368,330, including contingency, and a construction budget of \$10,123,516.

So far, the contingency funds have not been needed, as construction is progressing well.



SUPPORTIVE FUNDING – New Tecumseth's new Fire Station #4 is currently being built on the 14th Line. A report delivered to New Tecumseth council on Jan. 26 reports construction is on time and on budget.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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Editorial, Letters & Opinion

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

~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

The affordable housing myth

There is a subdivision near where I live that is filled with modest homes.

It has a 1960s feel, and that's pretty much the decade this development was built.

The homes are all bungalows, mostly with wood and aluminum siding or wood paneling. They are small, but on a fairly decent-sized lot.

This area was obviously designed to be a neighbourhood for people who didn't want to spend a lot of money on a big fancy house.

At the time, I'm sure there were many young couples who took advantage of this area, purchased their first home, and decided to raise a family there.

I'm pretty sure this neighbourhood would be considered to be a place with 'affordable housing,' in the sense that someone who bought there wouldn't end up being house poor and unable to have a meal in a restaurant once a month because their mortgage payments sucked the life out of their weekly pay cheque.

I heard yet another radio commercial this morning from the federal government, telling us how 'we', that is, the gov-

ernment, are building 'affordable housing' to meet the need for more homes in this country.

Yet, you have never seen a house or subdivision built by either the federal or provincial government. You have never seen a sign welcoming you to the new 'Happy Acres Neighbourhood' that was designed and built by the federal or provincial government.

Governments do not build homes. They only facilitate the process.

The ads use the phrase 'affordable housing,' which has been a buzzword in both the government and building industry for the last few years.

Except no one has identified exactly what 'affordable housing' is supposed to mean.

Are they building homes that are affordable for a family with an income of \$250,000, or affordable for a family with an income of \$50,000?

Some people can afford a \$5 million dollar home. These days, most people struggle to afford an average-priced, entry-level home.

There are many people who are buried beneath a mortgage and barely man-

age to hold on each month.

The term 'affordable housing' suggests that these houses are priced so that anyone can afford to buy one.

However, that's not the case – not by a long shot.

Housing prices are determined by what someone is willing to pay. The prices are not based on a developer's good intentions of providing homes for the less fortunate.

All you have to do is drive through any new development to see what's going on. They are building cookie-cutter homes and slapping on a price tag that is no better than when the affordable housing chant began.

You will still buy a house and assume the huge mortgage that goes along with it.

Try asking a developer or a government official where the affordable \$200,000 houses are being built, because that's all you can afford, considering you will be paying for it for at least 25 years.

The other trick is 'intensification.' In this case, they cram as many homes into the smallest area possible.

For some reason, the government

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



thinks that cramming 10,000 people into a one-square-mile area is a good thing, in a country that spans 9.9 million square kilometres.

Again, for some reason, the promise of affordability is toyed with, suggesting that lower-income people don't deserve a front lawn and should be happy to live in a house connected to their neighbour's home on both sides.

But again, all you have to do is look at the asking price of these new builds to see that the affordability factor is a myth.

Housing prices for 'affordable housing' does not mean that homes are being built and sold for a small profit. It means they are being built and sold for a huge profit.

Developers aren't in the building business because they are nice guys. They are in the business to make a profit.

The government has to explore other options to ensure everyone has a place to live.

Building new homes means nothing if the average person can't afford to live there.

School shakeups and trusty trustees

Suggesting that we should spare a thought for our politicians might be an increasingly unpopular opinion in this day and age, but hear me out on this one – if only for a moment.

We quite rightly laud our neighbours when they have the courage of their convictions to put themselves forward for an elected office to help foster the difference they want to see in the world, at any level of government.

Unless there is a significant shake-up in Ottawa, we're due to next hit the polls in the municipal election of October 26. Incumbents and newbies have already begun to make their intentions known, and they deserve our respect for wanting to serve, whether it's a desire that's been long-burning inside them, or whether they've become civically engaged more recently with a Ward-specific issue that's captured their attention.

Stepping up – particularly for the first time – is never an easy decision to make. Above and beyond whether your platform will resonate with voters, you have to consider a number of other factors.

Campaigning is not only a time-consuming activity in the most mundane of

elections, the political climate in which we're currently living is far from an attractive prospect.

If a candidate goes into a race with good intentions and a well-tuned pair of listening ears, it's always a worthwhile exercise no matter how the polls turn out on election day.

If the numbers don't go your way, at least you've learned something about the issues that are important to the community and the power one individual has to make a difference. If the tides turn in your favour, you've found yourself in a reasonably long-term commitment – and that is where those listening ears are particularly valuable.

When you take your seat, you already have a good foundation of what your mandate from voters is and what they expect of you.

A successful candidate is voted in to represent the voices of their constituents. This is the paramount responsibility of the office, regardless of which level of government is.

Continuous engagement is also very important, not only to keep your finger on the pulse of the community, but on a

pulse that can evolve rather quickly. At the same time, a successful candidate has secured their spot because they've won the confidence of the electorate to make decisions on their behalf – and there comes a point where continuous consultation has to give way to making an actual decision.

Candidates who make the final municipal ballot this fall will, I'm sure, have a clear grasp of that concept, but it's lining up to be another crap shoot when it comes to the election of our school trustees and the arguably less-than-welcoming political area parents and other stakeholders might be considering jumping into.

Last week, the Peel District School Board and the York Catholic School Board found themselves once again in the crosshairs of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry made the decision to put the PDSB under Provincial Supervision, halting their plan to lay-off 60 classroom teachers, a move the Ministry says will "cause significant learning disruption for nearly 1,400 students" in the middle of the year.

BROCK WEIR
BROCK'S BANTER



The YCDSB, on the other hand, has been warned the Ministry will put them under Provincial Supervision as well if they don't respond to "pressing governance and financial concerns" within 14 days of last Wednesday's announcement.

"I'm taking immediate action to put an end to mismanagement and disruption at two school boards that are directly and negatively impacting both students and teachers," said Education Minister Paul Calandra in a January 28 statement. "The action I am taking at the PDSB will put an immediate halt to a disruptive mid-year upheaval in staffing that would have created uncertainty for parents, students and teachers alike. I am also putting the YCDSB on notice that the infighting, disruption and serious financial concerns that have undermined student success for years need to end immediately, with every penny of public funding directed to support students in the classroom."

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Iran – Pretending to have nukes?

The Iranian regime is brutal, fanatical and corrupt. It has just committed the mass murder of its own citizens in the city streets and in their own homes. But the story we are told about Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons is very misleading.

Let's begin with the two Presidents George Bushes. Just 12 years after George Senior defeated Iraq in 1991 and forced dictator Saddam Hussein to destroy all his 'weapons of mass destruction' (just poison gas, really), George W. Bush Jr. invaded Iraq again in 2003. That time round it was completely the wrong country, but he did it anyway.

The main reason Bush Junior believed that Saddam was lying and really had nuclear weapons was that the Iraqi dictator obstructed the work of the UN inspectors. He caused enough delay to rouse everybody's suspicions about Iraqi nuclear weapons. Why did he do that?

Probably because he lived in a very dangerous neighbourhood: Israel, Egypt, Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia were all his enemies. He wanted them to fear that he really did have weapons of mass destruction in order to deter them from attacking Iraq. It might even prevent the United States from having another go.

It was a dangerous game, bound to raise suspicions about Iraqi nukes everywhere, and in the end it did kill Saddam. After the 2003 invasion American experts spent a year searching Iraq for evidence of Saddam's alleged 'weapons of mass destruction' and found nothing, but they hanged him anyway.

Why bring all this up 20 years later? Because a similar kind of logic may apply to Iran's 'nuclear weapons' program.'

Iran was not part of the Arab-Israeli confrontation under the Shah's regime, and the nuclear power program he launched (with US approval) in the early 1970s did not seek to create nuclear weapons. Israel's nuclear weapons, acquired in the 1960s, did not worry the Shah either.

The 1979 revolution in Iran brought to power an extreme Islamist regime that saw a nuclear-armed Israel as a potential threat. However, the new Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, declared the development and use of weapons of mass destruction forbidden (haram) on moral and religious grounds – and he meant it.

This was not to Iran's advantage. In the 1980s Iraq

invaded Iran with American backing in order to destroy the new and destabilizing regime of the ayatollahs. Saddam Hussein's troops were flooding the battlefields with poison gas, while the Iranian defenders were banned from replying in kind.

The episode shows how seriously Iran's Islamic rulers take their own religious decrees. Abstaining from chemical 'weapons of mass destruction' probably caused the deaths of tens of thousands of Iranian soldiers. We too should take the ayatollah's decrees seriously, because that would open the way to an alternative explanation of Iranian behaviour.

There is no evidence that Iran even considered nuclear weapons until Pakistan and India tested their first nuclear weapons in 1998. There was then clearly some dalliance in Tehran with the notion of getting a 'threshold' nuclear capacity (just short of weapons-grade), but that was halted after an opposition group revealed it in 2003.

In 2015 Iran signed an agreement backed by all the great powers that restricted it to 3.67% enrichment of uranium, useful for civil reactors but far below the level needed for nuclear weapons. The sanctions that had been imposed on Iran were removed and all went well – until Donald Trump tore up the agreement in 2018,

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probably at the instigation of Israel.

Israelis are as obsessed by the threat from Iran, small though it is in practice, as the ayatollahs are obsessed with Israel. They don't even share a border, and Israel has hundreds of nuclear weapons versus Iran's none. They couldn't even have an interesting war, yet they can't leave each other alone.

Trump was able to force the other signatories to reimpose sanctions on Iran (which had meticulously observed the agreed limits), and the Iranian economy crashed. After two years the Iranians began inching up the degree of enrichment, carefully announcing each increase, in an attempt to put pressure on the countries that had let the agreement die.

Continued on Page 19

GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY



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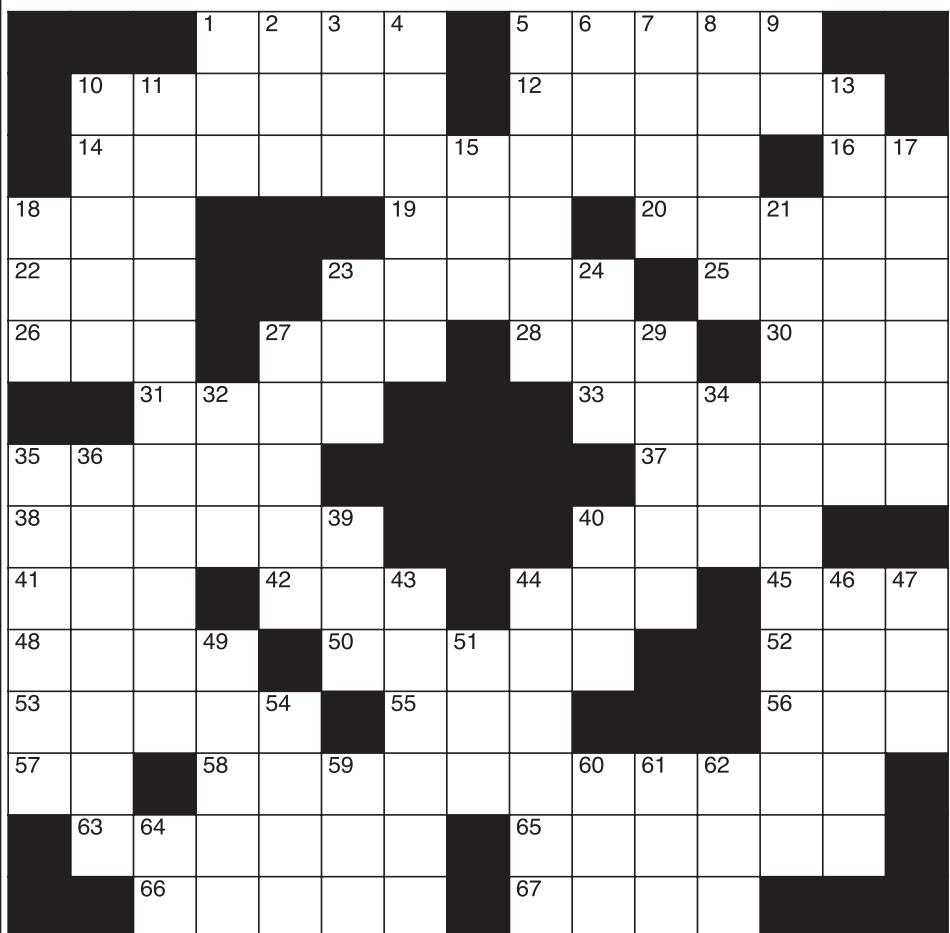
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1. Native American group of N. California	38. Type of fuel	4. Where rockers go	34. AI tool
5. Geological times (Brit. sp.)	40. Actor Damon	to work	35. Pass or go by
10. Tool to remove	41. What thespians do	5. Subsides	36. Indicates a purchase
12. Rods	42. One's mother	6. Consume	39. A digital tape
14. One who renews	44. Disallow	7. Greek mythological figures	recording of sound
16. They precede C	45. Swiss river	8. California mountain	40. More (Spanish)
18. Chatter incessantly	48. A banana has one	10. Disfigured	43. Disfigured
19. __ King Cole, musician	50. Philippines lake and volcano are two	9. Tin	44. White (Spanish)
20. Insect parts	52. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)	10. Muse of lyric and love poetry	46. Church building
22. One from Utah	53. Agave	11. Animates anew	47. Georgia rockers
26. The world of the dead	55. Journalist Tarbell	13. Humorous	49. Type of surgery
27. Singer Redding	56. One-time tech giant	criticisms	51. Much __ about nothing
28. NBA legend Nelson	57. Indicates upon	15. Cool!	54. Make by braiding
29. Indicates wrongly	58. Intestinal bacteria	17. Worst	59. Local area network
30. Unhappy	63. Loose sheaths	18. Wet dirt	60. Unit of work or energy
31. Anger	65. Around the spinal cord	21. Designed to be useful	61. Member of indigenous people of Thailand
32. Dark brown	66. It goes with nook	23. Hebrew unit of liquid capacity	62. Liquefied natural gas
33. Some are in kitchens	67. A fashion	24. High schoolers' test	64. Distance to top
35. Made a mistake	or see	27. Computer device	
37. Damp	31. Witch	29. Indian territory __ and Diu	
	32. Utilize	33. A place to sleep	
	34. Writing utensil		

CLUES DOWN

1. Witch	38. Type of fuel
2. Utilize	40. Actor Damon
3. Writing utensil	41. What thespians do

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

COMMUNITY VOICE

Monthly Message: The health economics business case for green space

From reducing air and water pollution and moderating surface temperatures to providing opportunities for physical activity and relaxation, green spaces provide many physical and mental health benefits. But can we measure these health benefits in terms of monetary savings in order to convince decision-makers that protecting and enhancing green spaces is an environmentally and economically responsible decision for our community?

The answer is yes.

The Conceptual Framework to Understand the Business Case for EcoHealth in Ontario is being used by conservationists, public health professionals, and others to communicate the monetary value of the health benefits associated with greenspace investment, including reduced illness and death, decreased use of health services, and increased productivity.

Case Study: Increasing Tree Canopy, Brampton, Ontario, estimates the annual net benefits of increasing tree canopy by 50 per cent to be \$2.5 million, with health system savings achieved through reduced exposure to extreme heat days, improved air quality and increased physical activity.

Case Study: Downtown Urban Park, Peterborough, Ontario, demonstrated that a new urban park could result in health system savings of \$4.2 million annually, with a return on investment from park development costs in 1.5 years.

Effectively communicating these health system savings to local decision-makers can help inform municipal budgets for investments in green spaces, helping communities



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grow in a more healthy, resilient and economically sustainable manner.

Similar tools are helping prioritize projects to protect and enhance the natural environment for climate resiliency. These tools incorporate a wide range of greenspace, community health, and health equity benefits, including flood control, air quality improvements, surface temperature regulation, and reduced social vulnerability. Including these metrics when making decisions about nature-based climate solutions is an important step toward building more climate-resilient and equitable communities.

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority applied its Nature-Based Climate Solutions Siting Tool to the Humber River watershed to identify priority locations based on ecological value and population need. Priority areas included areas with little natural cover and populations characterized by high levels of deprivation, higher rates of chronic health conditions, and low access to green spaces.

The increased threat to the urban forest from climate change and development pressures, and municipalities' limited budgets to maintain existing trees and plant new trees, prompted Peel Region to develop a Tree Planting Prioritization Tool that considers

environmental, social and economic sustainability metrics. These include: mitigation of urban heat island effects and air pollution, support for physical health and emotional well-being, and enhancement of social equity and economic value. The tool generates maps of where tree planting would have the greatest benefits. These include areas with a higher proportion of groups at increased risk of experiencing heat-related illness – older adults, people with chronic illnesses, socially disadvantaged individuals and newcomers.

While research linking natural environments to positive health outcomes and health

equity helps increase awareness and support for protection and enhancement of green space, providing the health economic business case for investments in green space using tools outlined above, may have greater potential to influence local decision-making on green space policies, programs and projects that truly account for health.

Helen Doyle, B. Sc., CPHI(C), is a member of Greys for Green in New Tecumseth. She is passionate about spreading the word about the interconnections between human health and the environment, and mobilizing action for planetary health.



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New Tecumseth Rotary Club to host Volunteer Fair this weekend

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Volunteers play an important part in the community by giving their time to help with local activities, events, and to help fellow residents.

If you have ever thought about getting involved, you can learn about various opportunities at the Volunteer Fair hosted by the New Tecumseth Rotary Club.

Local charities and community groups do incredible work helping families, supporting people in need, and building a stronger, more connected town, but they can't do it alone.

The Volunteer Fair is a chance to meet the people behind the scenes and learn about all the volunteer organizations in New Tecumseth.

You will be able to speak with representatives from various organizations and learn about volunteer opportunities that are the per-

fect fit for you, based on your time, interests, and skills.

Whether you have limited time or a lot of time on your hands, there is a place for you as a local volunteer.

Up to 25 local organizations will be at the event to answer questions and share what they do and how they contribute to the community.

If you have a special skill or ability that you can use to help others, you will be able to find out which organization could best use your talents to help others.

Many people enjoy passing on their knowledge to help others achieve their goals.

The Volunteer Fair will take place on Saturday, Feb. 7, at the Alliston Memorial Arena in the upstairs hall, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

It costs nothing to attend, and you will meet plenty of people and see how you can volunteer to help enrich the lives of others in the town.



Correction

A story printed on Page 7 of the Jan. 29 edition of the New Tecumseth Times, with the headline "Volunteers needed for upcoming blood donor clinics in Alliston, Tottenham," provided the incorrect telephone contact number. If you are interested in volunteering at an upcoming blood donor clinic, please call 905-717-5399 or 905-729-3583.

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Arts & Local Events

AgKnowledge Forum coming to Gibson Centre, providing information on agriculture opportunities across the region

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

There will be plenty of information and knowledge shared at the AgKnowledge Forum, hosted by Nottawasaga Futures, later this month.

This annual event brings together local farmers, businesses related to agriculture, and others with an interest in farming.

The event is especially helpful for younger people or those new to farming who want to learn more about how to succeed in agriculture.

The morning portion of the event will feature a forum with guest speakers who share their industry experience.

In the afternoon, there will be a vendor market featuring local producers with a variety of products for visitors to buy and sample. This is a popular feature, as visitors love the opportunity to sample new or unusual products.

New this year, there will also be a second

vendors' market with other products by local people.

"We've been hosting the forum every year for many years," explained Robin Brown, community, events, and partnerships manager with Nottawasaga Futures. "The market, we introduced last year, and it was so well received that it is something we are hoping to host every year."

She added, "The Forum will take place in the Rotary Room at the Gibson Centre and the market will be held in the Honda Hall. The Forum will provide an educational morning. This will be good for the young farmer and new farmer. We'll be going over food safety with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit."

Other topics at the forum will include "Grants" with the Halton Region Federation of Agriculture, a "Farmer's Journey" with The Mushroomery at White Pine Meadows, and "Cultivating Local," with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

There will be a chance hear directly from local farmers as they share their experiences, learn strategies for a successful farm start-up, and connect with the local agriculture community.

The market will feature a variety of different products.

"For example, we have an organic garlic farm coming, and they are sampling fresh garlic as well as some amazing black garlic," Robin said. "We have a new young entrepreneur bringing cinnamon rolls. Only one person with each product will be there. Last year, many of our vendors sold out."

The event is an opportunity for everyone with an interest in agriculture to learn more and connect with others in the industry. Whether you are a new farmer or a seasoned veteran, there will be something for you to see or learn at the unique event.

Several community organizations will be on site in a special not-for-profit section of the event to connect with local residents.



The AgKnowledge Forum will take place at the Gibson Centre, 63 Tupper St. W., in Alliston on Friday, Feb. 27.

The Forum will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., followed by the Vendors Market from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

You must register to attend the AgKnowledge Forum.

Register by calling Robin Brown at 705-502-0311, or by email at Robin@nottawasaga.com.

Family Day fun planned at the Tottenham Community and Fitness Centre

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The annual Family Day holiday in Ontario is coming up on Monday, Feb. 16.

This is a special day for the entire family to

enjoy some mid-winter fun, whether it is outdoors, enjoying some time on the slopes, hiking through snow-covered trails, or staying inside and joining in some special activities.

In New Tecumseth, special activities will take place at the Tottenham Community and

Fitness Centre.

This is a fun event for the entire family and all ages.

The fun will get underway at 11 a.m.

Free face painting with Bling will give you a new look for the day.

Both ice pads will be open, and you can enjoy skating in the arena or on the outdoor rink.

In the parking lot, New Tecumseth Fire Rescue will bring one of its fire trucks. You can learn about fire safety and explore one of the trucks you usually see on the street with flashing lights, heading out to help someone in an emergency.

The Recreation Team at the Community

Centre will have interactive games and activities for family fun, as well as a craft station where kids can make something to take home.

You can get a beautiful henna tattoo with a design offered by a skilled artist.

If you enjoy music, there will be a Cajun drumming circle. You can watch or listen, or join in on the fun and try drumming yourself.

There will be several mascots on site who will walk around, greet the kids and pose for photographs.

This is a fun event for the entire family.

The free Family Day event will take place at the Tottenham Community and Fitness Centre on Monday, Feb. 6, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority announces chair and vice chair

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Jonathan Scott, Councillor for Bradford West Gwillimbury, and Gail Little, Deputy Mayor of Amaranth, were acclaimed to lead the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority Board of Directors as Chair and Vice Chair, during the NVCA's Jan. 26 meeting.

"I'm grateful to my colleagues for unanimously renewing their confidence in Vice-Chair Little and me," said Chair Scott. "Over the past year, the board and our staff focused on protecting nature across the watershed while improving the efficiency and timeliness of our planning and permitting work. Together, we strengthened flood and erosion hazard management, advanced stream and wetland restoration, expanded tree planting and stewardship, and continued to modernize how NVCA delivers its core services."

Scott added, "Just as importantly, we've supported agricultural communities by promoting practical, science-based approaches that protect soil, water and farmland while

recognizing the essential role farmers play as stewards of the landscape," adding, "We delivered a lean budget and modernized our operations to support the province's goals of sustainable housing and economic development. In 2026, we will continue that work to protect natural systems, support resilient communities, and ensure decisions are grounded in good governance and sound science."

Throughout 2025, NVCA worked with volunteers, funders and partners to restore rivers and streams, plant forests, and provide environmental education throughout the Nottawasaga Watershed. Residents and visitors alike explored nature and gathered at community events hosted at NVCA's conservation areas.

To further support municipalities, landowners and development partners, NVCA reduced backlogs, improved customer satisfaction and completed permit reviews in an average of 17 days.

"As we continue to address the varying needs across our watershed, I appreciate the ongoing, excellent support and commitment of our staff and board members," said Vice

Chair Gail Little. "Their dedication to NVCA is essential to build on what we have already accomplished. I would encourage our urban and rural communities to share their diverse perspectives to assist in the development of

our objectives as we continue the work of protecting our water and natural environment."

The NVCA Board of Directors elects its Chair and Vice Chair annually at its January meeting.



RETURNING LEADERSHIP – Jonathan Scott and Gail Little were acclaimed as the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. They were acclaimed during the NVCA's Jan. 26 meeting.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Looking to showcase your business in the Shelburne community?

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Mansfield to get new elementary school

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The community of Mansfield will be getting a new elementary school with space for 328 students.

Funding comes from the province's plan to invest \$23 billion over the next 10 years to build, renew, and improve schools in fast-growing communities.

The Mansfield school will be funded to the tune of \$16.4 million.

"By building and expanding schools across the province, we're making sure students can learn in modern, high-quality environments that support strong achievement," said Paul Calandra, Ontario's Minister of Education. "These investments will help students gain

the skills and confidence they need to succeed and prepare for rewarding careers."

The new school will be located at 9th Street and County Road 18 in Mansfield.

"The funding for a new Mansfield Elementary School in Mansfield is great news for our community," said Sylvia Jones, MPP for Dufferin-Caledon. "Through this investment, we're creating opportunities for students to thrive today and well into the future."

Over the past two years, the government has committed \$1.3 billion annually in new school buildings, additions, and renovations across the province. This is the highest level of school capital funding in Ontario's history.

A timeline for completing the new school has not yet been announced.

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SPORTS

NEW TECUMSEH TIMES

First-period blitz gives Alliston Hornets a win over Huntsville Otters

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A huge first period set the tone for Friday's game between the Alliston Hornets and the Huntsville Otters at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Jan. 30.

The Hornets hit the back of the Otters' net at 4:23 into the period to open the scoring on a goal from Ben Smith.

Two more goals, two minutes apart from Gunner Kirk and Hunter Martell, gave the Hornets a 3-0 lead at the halfway mark in the first period.

Jacob English got the fourth goal of the night at 14:37 into the frame.

The final Hornets goal for the first period came on an unassisted effort by Mark Coish.

Huntsville scored its only goal of the night late in the period.

The second period saw two more Hornets goals from Nick Lamont and Duncan Grube to give the Alliston squad a 7-1 lead with one period remaining.

The final frame saw Noah Cochrane score to cap off the night, and the Hornets left the ice with an 8-1 win.

Alliston dropped to second place in the North Carruthers Division of the Provincial Junior Hockey League after Stayner picked up some points on a

couple of weekend wins. The Hornets have 54 points and are now one point behind the Siskins.



BIG BLOWOUT – The Alliston Hornets host the Huntsville Otters at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Jan. 30. The Hornets scored five goals in the first period to take command of the game. The final was an 8-1 win for the Alliston team. The Hornets have dropped to second place behind the Stayner Siskins after the Stayner team picked up points on a couple of wins over the weekend.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

The Siskins have a 28-9 record, including one overtime loss, and will be looking for a few wins as the regular season comes to a close.

In third place, the Orillia Terriers are having a good season with a 23-10 record, including one overtime loss and one shootout loss, good for 48 points.

The Penetang Kings are in fourth place and can't be counted out. With 46 points, the Kings have a respectable 21-13 record, including three overtime losses and one shoot-out loss.

The Midland Flyers are 19 points behind and in fifth place. They are followed by the Muskoka Bears, Innisfil Spartans, and the

Huntsville Otters.

As of Feb. 5, the Hornets have five games left on the regular season schedule.

The Hornets will be back on home ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Feb. 6, to host the Innisfil Spartans.

Game time is 7:30 p.m.

Third period costs the Tottenham Railers in home game against Meaford Knights

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It all came down to the third period when the Tottenham Railers hosted the Meaford Knights at the Tottenham Community Centre arena on Saturday, Jan. 31.

At the end of the first period, the teams had played to a 2-2 tie.

The Railers opened the scoring on a goal from Tristan Lavoie. Meaford matched the goal two and a half minutes later.

Tottenham scored at 14:02 into the first period when Artiom Bialiayev scored on a powerplay.

It was again a tie game when the Knights scored with 1:12 left on the clock in the first period.

Railers forward Matvei Novik scored at 3:24 in the second period. It was a short-lived lead when Meaford scored just two minutes later to make it a 3-3 game with one period remaining.

The Railers ran into trouble in the third

period when Meaford scored three goals before the Railers could respond.

Railers forward Felix-Antoine Huard scored the final goal of the game at 12:09 into the third period.

The Railers had to settle for a 6-4 loss. Tottenham is in fourth place in the North

Division of the Greater Metro Hockey League with a 19-20 loss, including one overtime loss.

The Railers will be back on home ice at the Tottenham Community Centre on Saturday, Feb. 7, when they will host the Bradford Rattlers.

Game time is 7:45 p.m.



EDGED OUT – The Tottenham Railers host the Meaford Knights at the Tottenham Community Centre arena on Saturday, Jan. 31. The game was tied up to the third period with teams matching goals. The Knights got the edge in the final period and took the 6-4 win.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



TOURNEY PLAY – The New Tecumseth USS Ice Cats go up against the Orangeville Tigers during the Winter Classic Tournament in Orangeville on Friday, Jan. 30. The house league tournament brings teams from all over the province. The Ice Cats delivered a 9-0 shutout in this game.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

Nottawasaga Conservation shares highlights from January board meeting

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority has released the highlights of its recent board meeting held on Jan. 26.

NVCA Board of Directors election

Jonathan Scott, Councillor for the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury and Gail Little, Deputy Mayor of the Township of Amaranth, were acclaimed to lead the 2026 NVCA Board of Directors as Chair and Vice Chair.

Permit approvals under the Conservation Authorities Act

NVCA reports permit application processing timelines against the timeline set by Conservation Ontario's Best Practices timeline, which recommends that conservation authorities follow set timelines.

Between Jan. 1, 2025, and Dec. 31, 2025, NVCA issued 435 permits and consistently

met those timelines.

On average, both minor and major permits were issued within 17 days.

Major permits were issued within 90 days, 98 per cent of the time.

Minor permits were issued within 30 days, 92 per cent of the time, and within 90 days, 100 per cent of the time.

NVCA staff notified applicants of the status of their application within 21 days, 90 per cent of the time.

Staff track a permit's 'run time' for when an application is with NVCA and when it is with the applicant. This tracking excludes periods when applications are returned to the applicant to address comments and ensures transparent, accurate timeline reporting.

2026 Permit and planning fee schedule

NVCA's Board of Directors approved NVCA's Permit and Planning fees to increase by 3 per cent.

This fee is intended to partially reflect the

cost-of-living allowances while being consistent with other Conservation Authorities.

Upcoming events include Families in Nature, March Break at Camp Tiffin, Tiffin Nature School, and the Spring Tonic Maple Syrup Festival.

Upcoming events



Ontario Provincial Police reminds residents not to shovel snow onto roadways

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

There has been a lot of debate this winter when people complain about neighbours shovelling their snow onto the road.

The people doing this seem to think they can throw their snow wherever they want; however, the OPP is reminding residents that shovelling, plowing, or blowing snow onto the road is dangerous and illegal.

The Ontario Highway Traffic Act, Section 181, states that no person shall deposit snow or ice on a roadway without written permission from the Ministry or the road authority responsible for maintaining that road.

Individuals who throw snow on the road may be charged under Section 213(1) of the Highway Traffic Act, which provides for a fine ranging from \$60 to \$1,000.

Depositing snow onto the roadway creates hazards for motorists and pedestrians.

Snow piles can obstruct sightlines, create icy patches, interfere with snowplow operations, and increase the risk of collisions.

These hazards compromise road safety and place additional strain on winter maintenance crews who must return to re-clear affected areas. Residents are encouraged to use designated areas on their own property and follow local municipal guidelines for proper snow removal.



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HOMES

Police warn the public about increase in 'bank investigator' fraud

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Police are warning members of the public about a recent increase in 'bank investigator' fraud incidents occurring in the region.

Fraudsters are contacting individuals by telephone and falsely identifying themselves as fraud investigators from their financial institution. In many cases, the caller ID is spoofed, causing the bank's legitimate phone number to appear on the victim's display.

This tactic is intended to make the call appear credible.

Police investigators have learned that these callers often possess personal information

about the person they are targeting, which further enhances their appearance of legitimacy.

The fraudsters typically claim that fraudulent transactions have been detected on the victim's account and will attempt to obtain additional financial or personal information.

In several cases, the suspects have arranged for a so-called 'courier' to visit the victim's residence to pick up the victim's bank card, claiming it is needed for an investigation.

The victims later discover that their card and account have been compromised.

Important safety reminders:

- Financial institutions do not send couriers to collect bank cards, PINS, or personal financial documents.

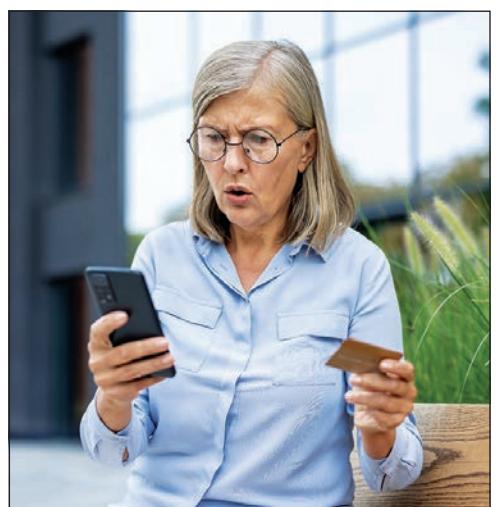
- Never provide personal or banking information over the phone, especially if you did not initiate the call.

- If you suspect a call is fraudulent or are unsure of its legitimacy, hang up immediately.

- Contact your bank using a verified phone number found on the back of your card or by visiting your branch in person.

- Do not use any phone number provided by the caller.

Anyone who believes they may be a victim of fraud, or who has provided personal information to a suspicious caller, is encouraged to contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 and report the incident to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501.



Hospital hopes to raise over \$500,000 in this year's Run for Southlake fundraiser

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Last year was a record-breaker for the Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake, with community members lacing up to raise more than \$460,000 for local health care.

Now that the countdown is on for this year's run on April 26, organizers are hoping to raise more than \$500,000 through the event – but they can't do it without your help.

Community leaders gathered at Nature's Emporium's flagship Newmarket location on Monday afternoon to formally launch the countdown to the 2026 Run for Southlake.

Jennifer Ritter, President and CEO of the Southlake Health Foundation, said last year's event saw more than 1,650 participants "running, walking, dancing" on Davis Drive to support the local hospital and she hopes these records will be broken in the spring.

"We know that this year is going to be a record-breaking year," said Ritter. "Without the support of our community running, walking, and raising critical dollars to support leading-edge patient care, we wouldn't be able to look after all the members of our community."

"Last year, we raised \$460,000... the highest we have raised. The bar is set. We want to blow past half-a-million dollars this year. We're on the path [to] turning this into a million-dollar investment in the health of our communities and I know the community can do that. I have the utmost confidence that we will build towards that goal and get there together – because I know how we all value the health and wellbeing of one another."

These values were underscored by Steve Hollingsworth of Nature's Emporium, the grocery store that has been the title sponsor of the Run for nearly 15 years.

Hollingsworth said he had the chance to

"Without the support of our community running, walking, and raising critical dollars to support leading-edge patient care, we wouldn't be able to look after all the members of our community."

Jennifer Ritter, President and CEO of the Southlake Health Foundation

participate in the Run last year with his daughter and said the value it continues to bring the community is clear.

"Southlake Health is where our loved ones go to get the care they need," he said. "It's a very special place and it's obviously something that we want to continue to support

and ensure that everybody has access to the life-saving care they need.... As community members, we have the opportunity with this event to show up for one another in a time, quite frankly... when technology, which is intended to bring us all together, seems to continue to push us apart. There's not that many events like this that give us this opportunity to show up for each other, so we're very excited to continue to support an event that does that."

"We're grateful to be part of something that brings so many people together. We know we're going on 14 years now as a partnership and we look forward to continuing to grow that, to continuing to help provide leading-edge care that's close to home in our communities for years to come."

For more on the 2026 Nature's Emporium Run for Southlake, including how to register or pledge your support to a team or individual, visit runforsouthlake.ca.

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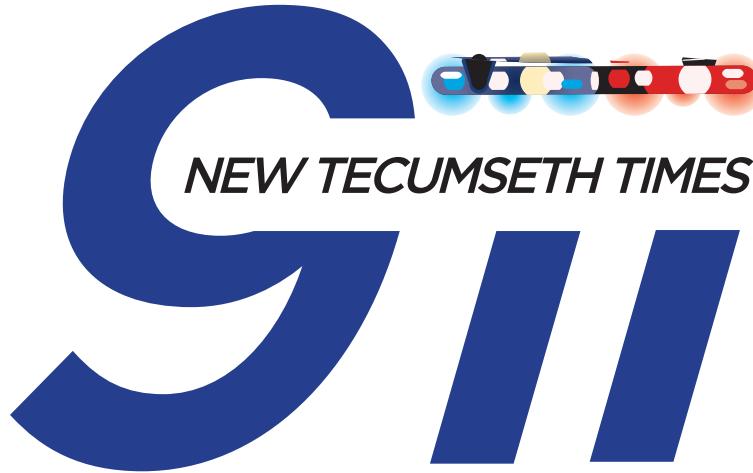
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Two vehicle collision results in impaired driving charges for Essa man

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged one individual with impaired driving following a two-vehicle collision.

On Friday, January 30, 2026, shortly after 3:30 am, officers of the Nottawasaga OPP

while out on patrol, drove upon a two-vehicle collision. While investigating the collision officers detected signs of impairment from one of the drivers.

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

The driver, Gavin Kelly, 34, of Essa Township, has been charged with:

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

The accused party was released on a Form 10 Undertaking with a future court date at the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford to answer to the charges.

The listed charges have not been proven in court.

Impaired driving charges laid after Barrie man drives through backyard in Essa

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers charged one person with impaired driving following a complaint from the public about a possible impaired driver.

On Jan. 31, shortly before 6 p.m., officers responded to a report of a possible impaired driver who had driven into a residential yard

on County Road 90 in Essa. Officers located the involved vehicle and the driver, and an impaired driving investigation was subsequently conducted.

As a result, the driver, Andre Pepin, a 68-year-old resident of Barrie, was arrested and charged with:

- Operation While Impaired - Alcohol and Drugs
- Operation While Impaired - Blood Alcohol Concentration (80 plus)

The accused was released on a Form 10 Undertaking and is scheduled to appear at the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford on

March 12, 2026. Their driver's licence was suspended for 90 days, and the vehicle was impounded for seven days.

“If you drink or consume drugs, don't drive,” says Nottawasaga OPP.

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

South Simcoe Police charges three youths in connection to arson incident last November

The South Simcoe Police Service have identified and arrested three suspects connected to an arson incident that took place last November.

A structure fire occurred on Hofland Street near Killarney Beach Road in Lefroy on Nov. 22, 2025.

An explosion was heard near the Morgan Russell Memorial Arena and Community Centre, that was traced to the skate park where investigators recovered a 25-litre fuel can and fireworks. Parts of the skate park sustained damage, while the Hofland Street fire caused significant destruction to

the former fire hall.

The investigation was led by the South Simcoe Police Service Crimes Against Persons Unit. Surveillance footage from the area captured three male suspects carrying a 25-litre gas can at the time of the incident.

Through investigation, police identified the suspects and arrested three youths, aged 15 and 16. All three have been charged with Break and Enter, Arson, and Mischief Under \$5,000.

The charges have not been proven in court.

South Simcoe Police Service says it will not participate in federal firearm compensation program

The South Simcoe Police Service will not be participating in the Federal Assault-Style” firearm compensation program.

The South Simcoe Police Service released the following statement on Jan. 29:

“After careful consideration and review of the information currently available, the South Simcoe Police Service, with the support of the Bradford West Gwillimbury/Innisfil Police Services Board, will opt out of the Federal Assault Style Federal Compensation Program (ASFCP) at this time.

The statement continued, “While the service will not be directly involved in the collection process, it will continue to work cooperatively with policing partners and all levels of government on matters related to public safety and lawful firearms regula-

tion. In addition, the service will continue to prioritize operational resources toward core public safety and policing functions, including emergency response, criminal investigations, crime prevention, and victim support services. These priorities remain central to ensuring community safety and effective law enforcement within the communities of Innisfil and Bradford West Gwillimbury.”

“The federal government's national declaration period for the ASFCP began on Jan. 19, 2026. The program is intended to support the removal of certain firearms from circulation through a federally administered compensation process. The program is being administered at the federal level, and participation by local police services is not mandatory,” the statement added.



The Public Safety Canada portal is open for individuals who wish to declare their firearms for possible compensation under the ASFCP.

For more information regarding the federal Assault-Style Firearm Compensation

(buy-back) Program, members of the public are invited to visit the Assault-Style Firearms Compensation Program webpage at canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/firearms-buyback.html

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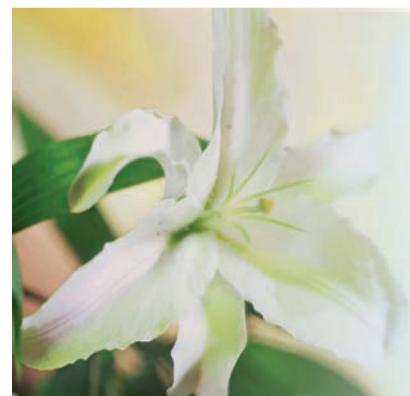
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708 OBITUARIES

NOAKES, Stephen "Steve" Allen

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Stephen "Steve" Noakes, who passed away on January 25, 2026, at the age of 69, surrounded by those who loved him. Steve was the devoted and loving husband of Zana for 12 years. He was a cherished father to Jeremy and Michelle (Jeff) Small, and a deeply adored stepfather to Edita, Senka, and Maja. He will be lovingly remembered by his eleven grandchildren, who brought him great joy and pride. He is survived by his sister, Sherry Noakes, and will be dearly missed by his extended family members and many friends. Stephen proudly ran H.R. Noakes Plumbing & Heating for over 25 years and was a familiar, trusted face in the community. He was a lifelong sports enthusiast and respected hockey coach with the Schomberg Minor Hockey Association. Stephen will be remembered for his kindness, strength, and the profound impact he had on the lives of his family and friends. He was known for his strong character, unwavering loyalty, and the genuine care he showed to everyone fortunate enough to know him. Donations can be made via cheque to Schomberg Minor Hockey Association or e-transfer to our Treasurer, Lori Van Noort at [lori.vannoort@kingminorhockey.com](mailto:vannoort@kingminorhockey.com). A password will be required for the e-transfer. In keeping with Stephen's wishes, cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date, with details to be shared by the family. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to Lampman Funeral Home. www.lampmanfuneralhome.com



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Continued from Page 4

Brock's Banter: School shakeups and trusty trustees

The decision earned a quick and sharp rebuke from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, with president David Mastin stating the Ministry's "take-over" of the Boards undermines their democratically-elected membership.

"There is growing concern that these takeovers are part of a broader plan to seize control of school board finances and real estate across the Province," said Mastin. "This treats public education as a profit-making enterprise rather than a vital public service meant to serve every child. Parents and communities must join us and act now to prevent lasting damage to our high-quality public education system."

"Elected trustees are a critical link between communities and publicly-funded schools. They provide local accountability, represent and elevate diverse perspectives, and make decisions that reflect

the needs of the students and families they serve. Replacing them with supervisors, government insiders with little to no education sector experience, strips communities of their democratic voice and hands control over to a government that has repeatedly shown disregard for public education. Government-appointed supervisors answer only to the Premier and the Education Minister, not to parents, not to students, not to communities."

While I agree with EFTO that the above-mentioned scenario is troubling, it can't be said there is no room for improvement when it comes to how boards like the YCDSB and PDSB operate.

In my more than 15 years covering school boards, I have to say one of the most disheartening experiences I've had in that context was the YCDSB's debate over whether or not to fly the Progress

Pride flag at Board facilities during Pride Month.

There were distinct splits in the discourse amongst both trustees and parents, with a far more unified voice in favour of flying the flag among the student body.

While parents and trustees argued amongst themselves, sometimes in language that would not have been accepted in the classroom, the students themselves passionately and articulately made the case, going high when an alarming number of those in the crowd opted to go low.

And this was not just delegates to the meeting; these were views expressed with equal passion and clarity by Student Trustees appointed to be, as their title suggests, the voice of students at the Board table.

Sadly, their efforts were nixed by Trustees, some of whom, by their own admis-

sion, leaned on their own personal views to justify their vote rather than on the voices of the parents and students they were elected to represent.

The Ministry of Education has mused on whether or not school boards are even necessary in today's society. That is not a question I have – they are integral for parents and students to have a voice in their own education.

Whether or not that voice is being listened to is a question I believe should be equally integral in upcoming reviews, here in our communities or in any jurisdiction within Ontario.

You know what might not be a bad start? Giving weight – and maybe even a voting stake – to students who have been selected to be the voices of their peers.

They're not window dressing; they're there for a reason.

Continued from Page 5

Our World Today: Iran – Pretending to have nukes?

Five years later a lot of uranium has reached 60 per cent enrichment, the last step before weapons-grade enrichment, and still the same fools are in charge on both sides.

Three Plausible Conclusions:

1: Ayatollah Khamenei has followed the same stupid strategy as Saddam Hussein, and is approaching the same ugly consequences.

2: The 'nuclear threat' from Iran's enriched uranium may have been deliberately encouraged by Iran in the past to create leverage that evades (but does not violate) a fatwa that bans the manufac-

ture or use of weapons of mass destruction. (It's okay to pretend.)

3: Lots of people will be killed for no good reason.

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