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Beeton Blaze Demo

New Tecumseth Fire hosted an open house at Station No. 2 in Beeton on Wednesday, Oct. 8. The public had a chance to see the equipment the fire department uses to keep the town safe and meet some of the firefighters. Six-year-old Mitchell tries his hand at extinguishing a fire with some help from New Tecumseth firefighter Nick Wilcox.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

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Beeton Foodland recognized as Age-Friendly Champion

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The County of Simcoe has announced the recipients of the 2025 Age-Friendly Recognition Awards, honouring individuals and businesses who have made outstanding contributions to creating inclusive, accessible, and supportive environments for older adults across the region.

Foodland in Beeton was honoured as an exceptional age-friendly business.

The awards follow a public nomination process held throughout the summer of 2025, during which residents were invited to spotlight those who exemplify age-friendly values in their work, volunteerism, and community leadership.

Nominations were received from across Simcoe County reflecting the deep commitment to enhancing the quality of life for seniors in diverse and meaningful ways.

“These awards shine a light on the incredible efforts happening across Simcoe County to support our aging population,” said Simcoe County Warden Basil Clarke. “From grassroots volunteers to forward-thinking businesses, our communities are working together to ensure that older adults can thrive, stay connected, and feel valued.”

The Age-Friendly Awards were presented on Tuesday, Oct. 7, at the County of



AGE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS RECOGNIZED— The County of Simcoe presented this year’s Age-Friendly Recognition Awards to businesses and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to creating a positive environment for older adults across the region. The awards were presented at the County of Simcoe Administration Centre on Tuesday, Oct. 7. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

Simcoe Administration Centre.

“These awards highlight the power of community-driven change,” said Jane Sinclair, general manager of Health and Emergency Services.

“The recipients are not just meeting the needs of older adults, they’re reimagining what it means to age with dignity, purpose, and connection. Their leadership is helping build communities where age is embraced as a strength and we are proud to recognize their contributions.”

The following recipients were honoured for their contributions:

Business Recognition Awards

- Foodland Beeton, New Tecumseth
- Back to Barbering, Orillia
- Beach Builders Home Hardware Building Centre, Wasaga Beach
- Centre de Santé Communautaire CHIGAMIK Community Health Centre, Midland
- Habitat for Humanity Huronia & Restores, Barrie/New Tecumseth/Essa/Collingwood
- Hear Right Canada, Orillia
- The Hive Restaurant & Pub, Wasaga Beach
- MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie

- North Simcoe Arts, Midland
- Orillia Thrift Store, Orillia
- Quest Art School + Gallery, Midland
- Royalty Care, Barrie/Orillia
- Swiss Chalet, Wasaga Beach

Individual Recognition Awards

- Beth Dubeau, Penetanguishene
- Linda Myles, Oro-Medonte
- Monica Menecola, Clearview
- Neill Latter, Orillia
- Rick Groves, Barrie
- Tayla Nesbitt, Orillia
- Saveria Caruso, Barrie

Tottenham resident wins \$1 million in recent Lotto 6/49 Gold Ball draw

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Playing the lottery has paid off for a Tot-

tenham resident who won the big prize in the LOTTO 6/49 Gold Ball draw on Sept. 6, 2025.

Angela Pompei won a prize worth \$1 mil-

lion.

Angela, who works in retail, has been a loyal lottery player for over 20 years. She enjoys playing LOTTO 6/49, LOTTO MAX, and ONTARIO 49, as well as a variety of instant tickets.

One day after work, Angela stopped by her usual store to pick up a LOTTO 6/49 ticket. Early on Sunday morning shed checked her ticket and discovered she had won big.

“At first, I thought I won \$1,000,” she recalled with a chuckle. “I realized it was \$1 million and had to wake up my daughter to tell her.”

With her winnings, Angela is looking forward to preparing for the future and is thinking of retiring.

When asked to describe what it’s like to win the lottery, Angela smiled and said, “I fely like a million bucks!”

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BIG WIN – Tottenham resident Angela Pompei is \$1 million richer after winning the top prize in the LOTTO 6/49 Gold Ball draw on Sept. 6, 2025. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

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JAK Fund supports families in need with 200 Thanksgiving dinners

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It is a time for a traditionally large dinner with friends and family.

However, not everyone has the means to have a large meal during this special time of year.

The JAK Fund helped local families celebrate Thanksgiving by providing a full dinner they could enjoy on the holiday.

The JAK Fund is named for Justin Alexander Keogh, a young man who lost his life at age 18 in an automobile accident along with two other local teens.

Funds were raised during the JAK Fund's wildly popular annual Washer Toss Tournament held at the Tottenham Community Centre.

Funds raised at the tournament are given to several local charitable organizations, with the Our Town Food Bank in Tottenham being one of the main beneficiaries.

Volunteers at the Food Bank were joined by members of the JAK Fund to pack 200 Thanksgiving dinners for local families.

The Washer Toss started out as a fairly small event held in the gym at the Community Centre; however, it was so popular that organizers doubled the number of entries the next year.

Eventually, the event had to move to the arena because so many people wanted to be a part of the tournament. The tournament is a fun night and has become a tradition in Tottenham.

"The Town is very supportive of our efforts," said Paul Keogh, who was Justin's uncle. "These meals are part of what the Washer Toss funds go to. We started doing this five years ago and the first year we prepared 40 meals. This year we are preparing 200 meals for local families."

The need for assistance from the Food Bank has grown considerably over the past few years as more and more people are struggling with food insecurity.

The JAK Fund was able to help through its donation, so many local families could enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.



FOR THOSE IN NEED – The JAK Fund provided 200 Thanksgiving dinners for local families as a result of their efforts, with the annual Washer Toss Tournament held at the Tottenham Community Centre. JAK Fund members Margaret Anne Smith and Paul Keogh are joined by Our Town Food Bank volunteers Susan Iacoucci and Kim O'Leary. They are surrounded by 200 meals they put together for the holiday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

County clarifies homelessness programs and encampment response

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Essa Township and the County of Simcoe have issued a joint statement to provide clarity regarding the County's Temporary Family Shelter Program – also referred to as the Motel Voucher Program.

The statement also addresses recent public concerns regarding encampments in the City of Barrie.

The Family Shelter Program is a long-standing emergency shelter service designed to provide safe, short-term emergency accommodations for families experiencing homelessness. It is not a direct response mechanism for encampments.

The Family Shelter Program prioritizes families with young children and offers dedicated support services to help families find permanent housing solutions.

While the program is overwhelmingly family-focused (96 per cent), single adults may be considered in exceptional circumstances, particularly when medical, safety, or health-based accessibility needs cannot be met through other shelter options.

Expanding capacity to support families facing homelessness or currently experienc-

ing homelessness is a key component of the County's 10-Point Homelessness Prevention Strategy that was launched in 2023.

The Family Shelter Program is regionally administered, meaning placements are not restricted by a person's current location.

This ensures equitable access across Simcoe County, including communities such as Alliston, Barrie, Collingwood, Orillia, Midland, and Essa Township.

Motel partnerships, including longstanding arrangements, are the primary way the Family Shelter Program is delivered throughout Simcoe County. The Family Shelter Program predates the current encampment enforcement actions being carried out by local municipalities.

Motels across Simcoe County are used to support families requiring temporary shelter and are not designated as direct relocation sites from encampments.

The County of Simcoe takes community context and safety into account when making placements into any of its shelter system programs.

Family Shelter Program motels near schools are used for families with school-aged children. Individuals with more complex health needs are not placed in areas that

could pose risks to program participants or the broader community.

Essa Township currently has motels that have been longstanding regional partners in the Family Shelter Program and continue to provide safe places only for vulnerable families with children to stay as they find permanent housing.

The County of Simcoe confirms that there are no plans to relocate individuals from the Barrie encampments into Essa Township motels delivering the Family Shelter Program.

Essa Township and the County of Simcoe remain committed to working together to support vulnerable residents while addressing community concerns.

The County will continue to provide updates as further information becomes available.

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Editorial, Letters & Opinion

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

~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

'To the moon, Alice!'

"Godspeed, oh Glenn."

That was the historic sendoff astronaut Scott Carpenter gave to oh Glenn moments before Glenn's Redstone Rocket lifted off on his historic flight into orbit to become the first American to circle the planet in outer space.

It was a new era when rockets try, at least with human cargo, was in its infancy, and as many test rockets blew up on the launch pad as managed to get off the ground.

The men who were chosen to be astronauts really did have the 'right stuff.'

They were chosen for the space program for several reasons.

They were test pilots and former combat pilots, so they had the mental strength to remain composed and think rationally under extreme stress. They were smart, with all of them having engineering and related, or advanced degrees.

They were physically tested and ready to endure the rigours of a launch.

They had grit – they took on the challenge of getting into a space capsule smaller than your car and taking a ride on top of what is basically a controlled explosion, until they were doing 17,000 miles per hour – escape velocity for going into a successful orbit.

The astronauts had nerves of steel,

but they were still human.

Astronaut Carpenter, years later, described a space flight by saying, "You're looking out at a totally black sky, seeing an altimeter reading of 90,000 feet and realize you are going straight up. And the thought crossed my mind: What am I doing?"

One thing that is often overlooked about early space flight was that the original seven astronauts were all of average size or slightly smaller – and for good reason.

The flight had to carry the least amount of weight possible, and the capsules were so small that a man who was 5'11" or taller would not fit inside the craft.

The concept of manned flight was so new that NASA sent up a monkey in a space capsule for a test.

This test flight did create some ridicule when some people said, 'If a monkey can do it,' it must be easy.

However, the reason NASA scientists sent a monkey into space was because, as it had never been tried before, they had no idea what would happen to a man placed on top of a rocket and subjected to a high G-force. It wouldn't make much sense to launch a man in a space capsule if crushing G-forces killed your astronaut.

The crowning achievement of space

flight was, of course, the moon landings.

When you look back at the technology available to land a man on the moon in 1969, it is an absolute miracle they achieved what they did, in a program that was only five years in the making.

Years later, astronaut Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the moon, said that at launch for the moon mission, he figured they had a 50/50 chance of being successful.

There was no backup plan and no escape route. Even a minor failure could have resulted in a crash on the lunar surface or left the astronauts stranded with no way to get back to their mother ship.

The cost of sending people into space is huge, and there is the question of why we need people in space these days.

The US has made massive cuts to its NASA program because it is just too expensive to operate.

I saw a video on the new manned space capsule NASA is currently working on. It seats four astronauts and returns to earth by parachute with a water landing.

That's the same way astronauts returned from a mission five decades ago. It seems space travel technology really has not advanced that much.

Every time a space capsule returns,

you have to send out a large naval vessel to retrieve it. You also have to deploy several other ships over hundreds of miles in case the return burn to slow the craft is late or early, which could mean a landing hundreds of miles off course.

Space technology is largely communications and similar satellites, which have become a regular part of daily life on the planet.

What is the purpose of the International Space Station other than making videos of "This is how we brush our teeth in space?"

NASA has a plan to return to the moon – but why? There's nothing there.

There is talk of going to Mars – but why? There's nothing there either, and realistically, a successful return trip to the planet is never going to happen.

I know Star Trek fans like to dream about zipping around the galaxy at warp speed, but the truth is, that's not going to happen either.

Maybe it's time to clean up the massive amount of space debris that is orbiting the planet and use the funds allocated to studying how bees behave in near-zero gravity for a more practical earth-bound purpose.

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Thanks and gratitude

I've always felt Thanksgiving to be a particularly special time of year.

Sure, Christmas and Easter are often seen as the big headlines as far as widely-observed holidays and observances go, but they get enough time in the limelight to share a little bit of it.

One thing going in its favour: the meal. There are few meals more satisfying in my book than a Thanksgiving turkey with all the trimmings. When done right, it's a perfect mix of savoury with a few lashings of sweet and, if you're like me and an ardent member of the Pumpkin Pie populous, a fair bit of spice, too.

It's a time of year when the weather is a bit more predictable and any plans you might have are less likely to hinge on the vagaries of the weather we've come to, well, weather in the mid-winter and early spring, and not having to worry about a snow drift getting in the way of making merry certainly is a stress buster!

It's also a comparatively easy-breezy

holiday. While there might be some debate about meal prep, it's not a season when you find yourself in a retail battle zone getting that last-minute gift for a last-minute addition to your list. Given the pace of life today, that's not an insignificant thing!

While I'm often one to try hard – some might say too hard – to accentuate the positive in situations where there might seem to be precious few positives to be had, I found myself coming up short in the Silver Linings department in the lead-up to this year's holiday.

It had been a difficult summer for our family and while things have calmed down somewhat, at least temporarily, there is still plenty of uncertainty on the horizon. That uncertainty was coupled with a feeling of a bit of burnout creeping in, despite my best efforts to achieve that elusive work-life balance so many of us busy people are striving to find these days, and, as the days went on, I

was admittedly feeling a bit down in the dumps.

That, however, turned around significantly on Thursday night as I attended the 10th annual Dancing with the Easter Seals Stars Aurora-Newmarket.

Always a fun and rewarding event on my calendar – except for last year when, at the last minute, I decided nobody would appreciate sharing in my bronchitis – it was a particular pleasure to be there not only to celebrate how far the event has come but the sheer ability it has to bring community together; after all, \$1 million raised for Easter Seals in the decade since it was first established is nothing to sneeze at.

For me, it was also a pleasure to be able to celebrate in the achievements of the owners of Aurora's Artistica Ballroom Dance Studios, a once-fledgling business that has gone from strength to strength as they've built their profile in the community alongside their capacity

for giving.

The wonderful evening, which culminated in one of the most beautiful dances I've seen on the floor of the event, certainly put the wind back in my sails and, with the internal battery recharged, I was able to truly appreciate and be thankful for all that I have, all the people in my life, and, yes, the privilege I have of being able to look forward to that aforementioned meal every year.

With a little bit of downtime this weekend, I also took the opportunity to reflect on another milestone.

This week marks the 25th anniversary of our sister paper, The Auroran, an independent newspaper founded by long-time newsman, community builder, and councillor Ron Wallace.

Continued on Page 23

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The Coming Crash

GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY



“The thing that comforts me,” said Jeff Boudier at Hugging Face, the leading open platform for AI builders, “is that the internet was built on the ashes of the over-investment into the telecom infrastructure of yesterday” during the dot.com boom of the late 1990s. The coming AI crash “is going to enable lots of great new products and experiences including ones we’re not thinking about today.”

Boudier’s optimism is charming, but note that he assumes this will all happen some years after the current AI-driven boom in global and especially American markets has crashed and burned, taking some of the ‘magnificent seven’ tech companies (Meta, Tesla, Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft and Nvidia) down with it.

Meanwhile ordinary folk will have to live through the post-Crash years one day at a time, and they may find it quite difficult.

Boudier’s promise, credible or not, is that the half-trillion dollars now being hurled at AI infrastructure – data centres, graphics processing units, land purchases, construction – will at least leave behind hardware that will serve the next AI boom in the 2030s.

Far too much money is being spent on long-odds bets that some new AI tech will appear that justifies the current ridiculously high level of investment, but only one of the magnificent seven can demonstrate that its product will ever make a profit. Nvidia is already making a very large profit – but its product is chips, which it sells mostly to the other six.

The seven together represent about a third of the stock on Standard & Poor’s Index, which tracks the stock performance of 500 leading American companies. When the Bubble bursts and at least some of them go down, therefore, they will probably take the whole market down with them at least in the US, and probably everywhere.

The Bubble (the word no longer requires explanation) is now expanding at a completely unsustainable rate. As Praetorian Capital Management CEO Harris Kupperman wrote in August, “Today I watch in awe (stupefaction, really) as companies continue to throw endless resources at AI.”

“I really thought that the CEOs of today, educated with the lessons of the prior cycle [the crash in 2000 that ended the dot.com boom], would never repeat

the mistake of overbuilding at massive scale without revenue. Yet, here we are again.”

Nobody in Silicon Valley is making rational calculations of Return on Investment any more. What drives the spending spree now is the conviction that really useful and profitable AI will magically emerge if you just scale up the computing power enough, and that the last companies standing will inherit the earth. Delusions of grandeur, in other words.

A run-of-the-mill stock market crash was getting overdue anyway – it’s been seventeen years since the last one (not counting Covid) – but the folly of the present boom may well make the crash deeper and the recovery slower than normal. The biggest players in the system are spending vast amounts of borrowed money on a technology they don’t even fully understand.

There is definitely a hint of impending doom in the air. Stock market crashes are a feature of the system and normally just a major inconvenience, not a catastrophe (except for those who jumped too late). What further darkens the outlook is the already disordered environment in which the next one will be happening.

There are more and bigger wars than we have seen for decades, accompanied by a near-collapse of the international rule of law.

Donald Trump’s headlong assault on the established rules of international trade has made every agreement open to doubt.

The first plausible attempt is underway to end the US dollar’s monopoly as the global reserve currency and promote the Chinese yuan as a viable alternative, with the support of the BRICS group (China, India, Russia, Brazil, and six others).

We live in very unstable times.



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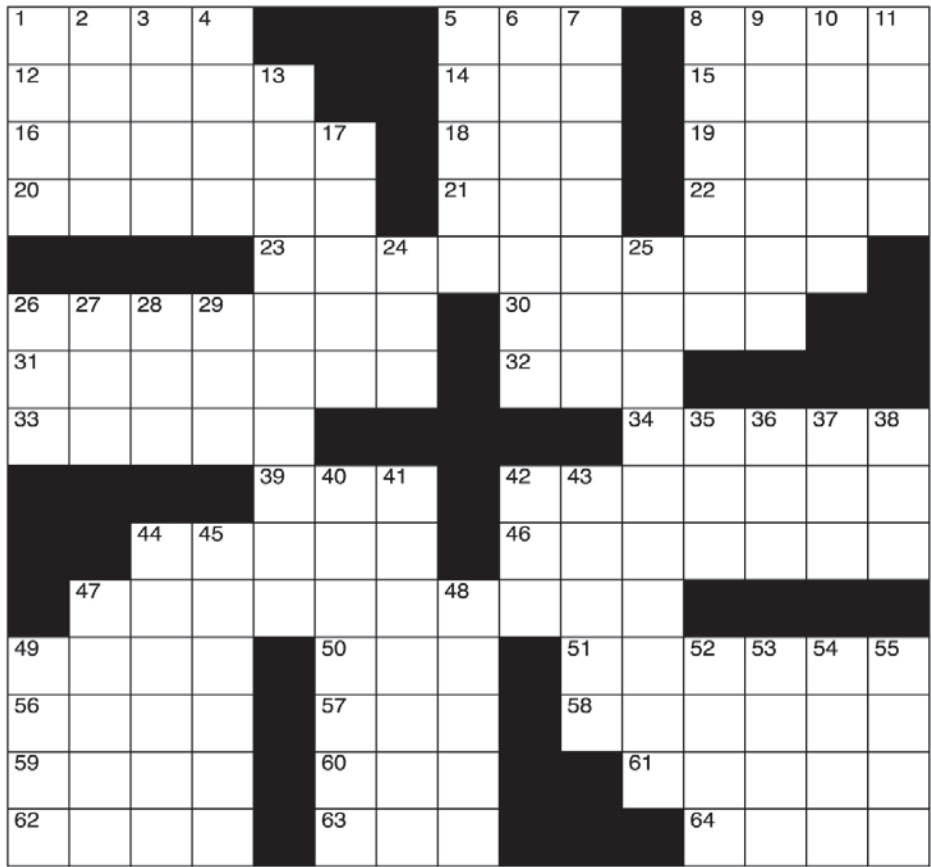
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Remark
- 5. Upper body part
- 8. Expression of dismissiveness
- 12. Alternate name
- 14. Popular beverage
- 15. Swiss river
- 16. Step-shaped recess
- 18. Rocker Stewart
- 19. Bright shade of color
- 20. Popular “street”
- 21. Wrath
- 22. Heat units
- 23. Nocturnal omnivorous mammals
- 26. Fall back into
- 30. Remove from the record
- 31. Sound a splash
- 32. Popular Dodge pickup model

- 33. Jamaican river
- 34. Notable event in Texas history
- 39. Cool!
- 42. Subset of Judaism
- 44. Newly entered cadet
- 46. Duct in urinary system
- 47. Exterminator
- 49. Snatch quickly
- 50. Have already done
- 51. Less healthy
- 56. Therefore
- 57. What couples say on the altar
- 58. Mysteriously
- 59. Look angry or sullen
- 60. Bird’s beak
- 61. Taco ingredient
- 62. Square measures
- 63. Google certification (abbr.)

- 64. Singer Hansard
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Pubs
- 2. Wings
- 3. Popular BBQ dish
- 4. Small sponge cake
- 5. Open-roofed entrance halls
- 6. Organize anew
- 7. Type of wine
- 8. Forums
- 9. North Atlantic islands (alt. sp.)
- 10. Pond dwellers
- 11. Large integers
- 13. Signaled
- 17. Brief
- 24. Type of student
- 25. Tibetan monasteries
- 26. Revolutions per minute
- 27. NY Giants great
- 28. Local area network

- 29. Residue from burning
- 35. Illuminated
- 36. Vasopressin
- 37. Notable space station
- 38. Wood sorrel
- 40. Adhering to laws
- 41. Chose
- 42. Hovel
- 43. Stood up
- 44. European city
- 45. Works ceaselessly
- 47. Mistake
- 48. Sun-dried brick
- 49. Sicilian city
- 52. A steep rugged rock or cliff
- 53. Murder
- 54. Other
- 55. “Deadpool” actor
- Reynolds

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

COMMUNITY VOICE

Monthly Message: Alliston Food Bank busts myths about food expiration

Every week, Canadians throw away thousands of tonnes of food that is still perfectly safe to eat. Research by Second Harvest, Canada’s largest food rescue organization, shows that nearly 60 percent of food produced in this country is wasted — and almost half of that is completely avoidable. One of the biggest culprits is confusion over “best before” and “expiry” dates.

According to Second Harvest, best-before dates are about quality, not safety. They indicate when a product is at its peak taste, texture, or freshness. Food that has passed its best before date may be a little less crunchy, creamy, or colourful, but that doesn’t make it unsafe. Yogurt can still be good a week later, dry pasta can last for years, and canned beans can remain safe far beyond their printed date if stored properly.

By contrast, very few items in Canada actually “expire.” Only five categories are required by law to carry an expiry date: infant formula, meal replacements, formulated liquid diets, nutritional supplements, and medications. Once those dates pass, the safety or nutrient value can no longer be guaranteed. Everything else — from cereal to frozen vegetables — can often be eaten well past its best before date if it looks, smells, and tastes as it should.

Despite this, Second Harvest reports that 23 percent of avoidable food waste is caused



by misunderstanding date labels, representing billions of dollars in lost food each year. It’s heartbreaking to know how much food ends up in the garbage when it could be nourishing families instead.

Here in Alliston, the issue is felt daily at the Alliston Food Bank. The number of households needing support continues to climb, with more than 1,100 people and 400 households served just last month. Every donation helps, yet myths around food expiration sometimes discourage well-meaning donors.

Many people are unsure if they can donate items that are close to or just past their best before date. As long as the food is still in good condition, those items are welcome. Misunderstanding date labels can mean fewer donations — even at a time when shelves are stretched thin and demand is at an all-time high.

The Alliston Food Bank relies on both community donations and rescued food from local grocery partners to provide nutritious

support to families. Volunteers carefully check and sort all items to ensure they are safe for distribution. Community education about best before and expiry dates helps ensure that good food doesn’t go to waste and instead reaches the neighbours who need it most.

It’s also an important message to share with clients: if a product on our shelves is past its best-before date, it’s not a sign of disrespect — it’s a sign of resourcefulness and care. These items are still safe, nutritious, and valuable in reducing food waste while feeding our community.

Reducing food waste isn’t just good for the environment; it directly benefits local families by increasing the supply of food available for distribution. Second Harvest and food banks across Canada encourage people to rely on their senses: look for signs of mould, rust, or bulging cans; smell for off odours; and if everything appears normal, taste a small sample to confirm it’s still good. These simple steps can save households money, reduce environmental impact, and ensure that safe, nutritious food is

shared instead of wasted.

For Canadians, the message is clear: don’t let the date on the package trick you. With a better understanding of what best before really means, we can all play a part in cutting down on unnecessary waste. The next time you find yourself holding a box of crackers or a can of soup that’s past its date, pause before you toss it. Chances are, it’s still perfectly safe — and it might make the difference between an empty or full plate for a neighbour here in Alliston.

For more information on the difference between “best before” and “expiry” dates, visit the Canadian Food Inspection Agency’s website by searching “CFIA best before vs expiry dates” and clicking on Understanding the Date Labels on Your Food.



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Final Release



New Tecumseth resident has vision improved thanks to new treatment

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

When New Tecumseth resident Patrick Sacco noticed his vision was slowly deteriorating, he assumed that much of the problem was just due to getting older.

At 78, Patrick is an active person but when his vision started failing, it presented many challenges in daily life.

He had to give up driving and had difficulty seeing in low level light. He carried a pen light with him so he could illuminate small, dimly lit objects like that lock on his mailbox at the post office.

Patrick was diagnosed with dry age-related macular degeneration. This is a condition where tissue in the back of the eye develops a type of wrinkle.

It has been described as the same thing that would happen if the film in your film camera started to wrinkle, and the image would not be displayed correctly.

Dry AMD is the leading cause of vision loss in older adults, affecting nearly 2.5 million Canadians and more than 200 million worldwide. While cataracts are a more common vision problem, they can be corrected with surgery. There is no cure for Dry AMD, only methods of slowing the process.

Having vision loss has a dramatic impact on your life and Patrick was getting worried about the future. “I first noticed it around three years ago,” Patrick explained. “It just started getting worse and worse. I was having the most difficulty at night, It got to the point that even if it was a cloudy day, the low light caused a problem. You start worrying about your vulnerability. I was losing my independence.”

When his eye doctor, Optometrist Dr. Hari Amarnath, lead Optometrist at FYidoctors

called him and suggested he try a new procedure, Patrick was excited to learn there may be hope in correcting his vision.

The new procedure is called MacuMira, and is Canada’s first and only clinically proven treatment for Dry AMD.

MacuMira delivers low-level microcurrent through the eye-lids to stimulate retinal activity. The approach is grounded in decades of medical use and has been adapted for the specific needs of dry AMD.

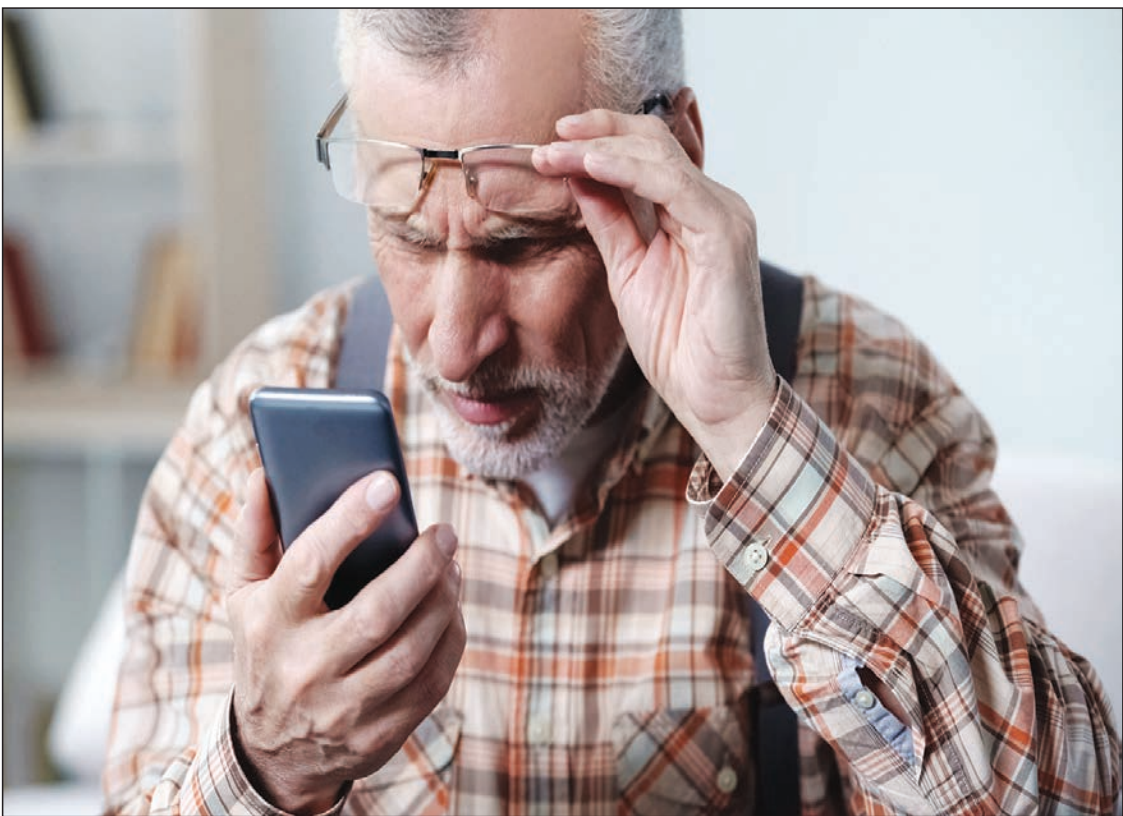
“I took four treatments over a ten-day period,” Patrick explained. “A couple of weeks later, I went to the post office and thought they had put new lights in there because it seemed so bright. To my surprise, I could see the lock on the mailbox.”

This was when Patrick realized the treatments had worked and his vision had improved. He still visits the optometrist office every few month for treatment.

The treatment has changed his life and he is again able to drive during the day and do other tasks he previously found difficult.

Dr. Amarnath was introduced to the new MacuMira procedure and since it could do no harm, he decided to ask five of his patients if they wanted to give it a try.

“Dry age-related macular degeneration tends to happen when you age,” Dr. Amarnath explained. “It is the leading cause of permanent vision loss. Cataracts are more common but they can be corrected with sur-



REINVIGORATING VISION – Nearly 2.5 million Canadians suffer from Dry Age-Related Macular Degeneration. The condition slowly affects a person’s vision. A New Tecumseth resident tried a new procedure and is experiencing good results with improved vision.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

gery. Generally speaking, Dry AMD can’t be stopped, but it can be slowed down. There is no cure. MacuMira came in as a way to slow it down, but through studies, they realized people were actually getting better. It seemed to be one of those things that are too good to be true.”

All five of his test patients have received positive results from the treatment, with some doing better than others.

One patient, who couldn’t see one side of his face, always came to the Doctor’s office with only one half of his face fully shaved.

Dr. Amarnath knew the treatment was working when the patient came into the office with a full and clean shave.

Macular Degeneration is a blanket term for several conditions and MacuMira treatment won’t work for everyone. There is a condition called Wet Macular Degeneration, and this treatment won’t help with that.

However, if you are experiencing vision loss due to Dry Macular Degeneration, you can call Dr. Amarnath at FYidoctors in Alliston for an appointment and see MacuMira can help you.

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Arts & Local Events

Last Blast event brings vintage construction equipment to life

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Simcoe County Museum, in collaboration with the Historical Construction Equipment Association of Canada, is going to present another exciting edition of the Last Blast.

This is a one-of-a-kind celebration of vintage steam-powered machinery.

During this event, you step back in time and experience the raw power and engineering marvels of historic construction equipment in action.

From antique tractors and classic trucks to steam rollers, shovels, and road-building equipment, this event offers an impressive array of equipment from a bygone era.

The event features live demonstrations and static displays.

While at the museum, you can explore the picturesque museum grounds, have something to eat at the concession stand, or bring your own lunch to enjoy in the covered picnic area.

The Last Blast event will take place on Saturday, Oct. 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Simcoe County Museum at 1151 ON-26 in Minesing.

Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors 65-plus, \$8 for youth ages 12 to 20, \$5 for children, and free for preschoolers and museum members.



BLAST FROM THE PAST: The Simcoe County Museum is hosting Last Blast, which celebrates vintage steam-powered machinery on Oct. 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will feature antique tractors, classic trucks, steam rollers and road-building equipment. **FILE PHOTO**

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DON'T BE LEFT IN THE COLD! To apply to be a vendor at the show, scan the QR code, go to orangevillehollyfest.ca or email shows@lpcmedia.ca for a vendor application form.



Home interior trends on the rise

Trends that seem ubiquitous one day can seemingly vanish before the sun rises again just 24 hours later.

THAT'S ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE DIGITAL AGE, when overnight celebrities and viral videos can be on the tips of everyone's tongue before being forgotten entirely when the next online sensation emerges in an increasingly rapid news cycle.

Home trends typically benefit from a longer shelf life than viral videos and other fads that originate on the internet, and that's something renovation-minded homeowners should consider when improving their homes. Homeowners preparing to do just that can consider these notable trends,

which the online renovation experts at Houzz suggest will be particularly popular in the year ahead.

Rounded furnishings

Houzz noted that gentle curves and rounded edges embody the organic modern styles that many current homeowners love. Rounded dining tables and similarly circular coffee tables may merit consideration among homeowners who want to embrace popular trends.

Arches

Houzz cites arches among the more popular modern trends, and the experts at Better Homes & Gardens note this unique, eye-catching style has been gaining popularity for several years. Better Homes & Gardens suggests that part of the appeal of arched doorways could be their deviation from a more traditional door shape. That uniqueness draws the attention of residents and visitors alike, and Houzz notes that arched windows, cabinets

and even millwork details are part of the pivot toward arches.

Stove alcoves

If it's a touch of history homeowners want, kitchen range alcoves might be just the project for them. Range alcoves call an earlier time to mind when wood burning stoves were commonplace. The report from Houzz notes range alcoves immediately draw attention, which undoubtedly adds to their appeal.

Wood for warmth

Homeowners who hear "wood and warmth" might think fireplaces, but Houzz reports that wood elements are being incorporated into interior designs as a means to giving homes a more cozy vibe. Ceiling beams, trim, wall paneling, and cabinetry are utilizing wood to add warmth to a home.

Trends come and go, but home trends typically

have more staying power than styles that emerge in other arenas. Homeowners who want to upgrade their home interiors can consider the latest trends and choose those that align with their own personal tastes.



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ROOFING & EAVESTROUGHS: Fall Maintenance musts

As autumn leaves begin to fall, it's a good reminder to turn your attention upward — to your roof and eavestroughs. These key components protect your home from water damage, especially during the wet and freezing months ahead.

Start with your roof. Look for missing, curling, or cracked shingles, as well as worn flashing around chimneys and vents. Damage left unchecked can lead to costly leaks during winter thaws. If you're unsure, a quick fall inspection by a roofing professional can spot small issues before they become big problems.

Next, **clean your eavestroughs** (gutters). Leaves, pine needles, and debris can clog the system, causing water to overflow near your foundation or back up under your shingles. After clearing debris, flush gutters and downspouts with water to check for leaks or poor drainage.

Inspect for sagging or separation from the fascia, and ensure downspouts extend several feet away from your home's foundation.

Don't forget to **trim overhanging branches**, which can drop leaves onto your roof or cause damage in high winds. Fewer leaves on the roof means less frequent gutter cleaning.

Finally, if you've experienced past issues with ice dams or water pooling, this is the time to address them — not in the middle of a snowstorm.

Taking a few hours this fall to inspect and maintain your roofing and eavestrough system can prevent headaches — and big repair bills — later on.



If home is where the heart is, then the kitchen is where that heart spends most of its time. Kitchens are where family and friends tend to congregate during holiday celebrations, and many a homework assignment has been completed at a kitchen island while parents prepare dinner.

Upgrading kitchen storage is a popular renovation project, and it's also one that has practical appeal. Adding more storage in the kitchen gives the room a more organized feel, which can make preparing meals more enjoyable and create space when hosting and guests inevitably congregate around an island. With those benefits in mind, would-be organizers can consider these strategies to create more storage space in the kitchen.

Take stock of the spice rack

Creating more storage space does not necessarily have to involve tools like screwdrivers, hammers and nails. Spice racks can easily become overcrowded as amateur cooks expand their culinary repertoire. A crowded spice rack inevitably spills out onto the surrounding countertop. Take stock of the spice rack and discard any spices or seasonings you haven't used in a while. This can create a more organized look and free up extra counter space.

Make a digital cookbook

If your go-to recipes are filling a binder or two, those binders are almost certainly taking up precious

storage space. Scan printed recipes and convert your physical recipe collection into a digital cookbook you store on a tablet.

Install roll-out shelving in the pantry

Roll-out shelving puts the entire pantry to use. Without such shelving, items are destined to be relegated to that nether region known as the back of the pantry. Some items never emerge from this area, as cooks forget they're there and then purchase duplicates, which inevitably contributes to storage issues. Roll-out shelving ensures all items in the pantry can be found and greatly reduces the likelihood that cooks will have lots of duplicate items taking up precious kitchen space.

Remove single-use gadgets from the kitchen

Much like spices and seasonings vital to the preparation of specialty meals have a tendency to be used just once, kitchen gadgets that lack versatility have a way of gathering dust and taking up storage space. Whether it's a popcorn maker, a seldom-used but space-needy wok or another gadget that's used infrequently, if at all, store single-use gadgets in the garage or another area of the house where they won't get in the way or contribute to a less-than-organized look in the room.

A handful of simple strategies can help anyone create more storage space in the kitchen.

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THE FIREPLACE STOP: Delivering home comfort with heart since 1987

Based in Schomberg, The Fireplace Stop is your trusted, one-stop destination for premium home comfort solutions. Family-owned and operated since its founding by Andy Leonard in 1987, the company has proudly served the community from its location at Highway 9 and 27 since 1990.

At The Fireplace Stop, great people are the foundation of the business. “As you progress and get bigger and better, it’s because of your supporting team, whether it’s your installers, salespeople, drivers, or people in the office... it’s a bumper to bumper, front door to back door effort in our business,” said Leonard. “Everyone has their part in the process.” Together with its sister company, ABL Air Heating & Air Conditioning, The Fireplace Stop has earned a reputation for tackling challenging projects with professionalism and precision. From all types of fireplaces and premium barbecues to full-scale HVAC systems, their experienced team has you covered.

“If it contributes to your home’s comfort, we’re involved,” Leonard adds.

The Fireplace Stop proudly serves a wide area across Ontario, including Toronto and cottage country, with some installations completed at properties accessible only by snowmobile or boat—highlighting their commitment to getting the job done, no matter the challenge.

Service That Sets Them Apart

Customer satisfaction is the top priority at The Fireplace Stop. Each project benefits from personalized service and a team passionate about excellence in sales, service, and installation. The business proudly carries a curated selection of premium brands, including Napoleon, Marquis, Fireplace Xtrordinair, Da Vinci, Kozy Heat, Tempest Torch, Enviro, Regency, Valcourt, RSE, Lopi, Delta Heat, Pacific

Energy, Twin Eagle, Spartherm, and STÜV America—ensuring long-lasting quality and comfort. As industry technology continues to evolve, so does The Fireplace Stop’s commitment to offering efficient, innovative, and affordable solutions that enhance your living space.

A Team Like Family

The team at The Fireplace Stop operates like a close-knit family, many of whom have been with the company for decades.

Head installers Scott Leonard and Eric Newton lead an elite installation team, with Eric’s brother, Daniel Newton, adding further expertise. Corey Hillier oversees service operations, while Richard “Tricky Ricky” McAnsh is renowned for handling the most complex jobs with ease. Mateusz Welna manages shipping and receiving while also supporting the install team, and Lucas Dowdle contributes to installs alongside talented co-op students Alexander Lord, Bobby Worth, and Aaron Hwang—each showing great promise in their careers.

Custom cabinetry is expertly handled by Glen Rue-

da, adding a distinctive finishing touch to many projects.

Sales are led by Andrew Leonard, working alongside seasoned professionals Ron Rice, Cristina Ventresca, and Andy Leonard himself. Kelsey Leonard heads administration, supported by Kevin Snell, Renee Noble, and Jennifer Russell. Jody Koerssen oversees the accounting department.

These dedicated professionals are the heart and soul of The Fireplace Stop. Their teamwork, experience, and passion for excellence are what truly set the company apart.

To book an appointment or request a quote, email info@fireplacestop.com or call 905-939-8758. Experience the difference a great team makes.



Andrew Leonard, Ron Rice, Cristina Ventresca and Andy Leonard make up The Fireplace Stop's dedicated sales team. (Contributed photo)



The Fireplace Stop's administration team of Kelsey Leonard, Kevin Snell, Renee Noble, Jody Koerssen and Jennifer Russell keeps the business running smoothly and clients happy. (Contributed photo)



The Fireplace Stop's courteous and highly skilled installation team—including Alexander Lord, Bobby Worth, Daniel Newton, Aaron Hwang, Eric Newton, Scott Leonard, Lucas Dowdle, Richard McAnsh, Corey Hillier, and Mateusz Welna—is dedicated to completing your project with precision, professionalism, and complete customer satisfaction. (Zachary Roman photo)



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Are fall's dropping temperatures making you crave the crackling sounds of a warm wood fire? Before you load up your logs and light the first match of the season, be sure that your wood fireplace or stove is in good working order.

"When considering a wood fireplace or stove for your home, make sure to hire an installer who specializes in wood units and always have your chimney swept annually to help prevent house fires," says Robert Cook, owner of The Heating Source in Mansfield, Ontario.

When installing a new wood-burning fireplace or stove or assessing an existing unit, The Heating Source's certified Wood Energy Technology Transfer Inc. (WETT) Inspectors ensure safe distances from combustible materials, proper venting and unit integrity to provide homeowners with peace of mind and a WETT report for insurance purposes.

The Heating Source also offers a discounted chimney sweep membership program. Each chimney sweep includes a full interior unit cleaning with a professional grade vacuum, full chimney system cleaning, ash removal, any needed paint touch-ups, recommendations for required repairs and proof of the sweep for household records.

"Proper installation and annual maintenance are key to help prevent the build up of draft-blocking soot that can make wood-burning units less efficient and can lead to dangerous chimney fires," Cook explains.



The Heating Source is your local destination for all your wood fireplace and stove needs – from installations to maintenance and service.

Visit their website at www.theheatingsource.ca or call 705-250-0498 to book your chimney sweep or free in-home consultation.



Fireplaces have been featured in homes for centuries. Although their function may have shifted through the years from a necessity that provides light and heat to a device that is more a design focal point, fireplaces are still popular among homeowners.

The Spruce says there are four main types of fireplaces: wood-burning, gas, electric, and ethanol. The type of fireplace homeowners choose will affect the initial installation cost, the long-term cost of operation and even the utility of the feature. Better Homes & Gardens says direct-vent gas fireplaces are among the easiest to install. They can be on any exterior wall and will vent directly out the back of the fireplace units. Another advantage of this type of gas fireplace is that it can start with the flip of a switch rather than a match. There also are B-vent gas appliances and ventless units that combust the interior air.

Most people imagine a wood-burning fireplace when they conjure images of a roaring fire. Wood fireplaces offer the crackling sounds of a fire and the smell of burning wood. Wood fireplaces can be expensive and require more extensive installation, particularly because a homeowner needs a space above the fireplace to install a chimney through the roof. In a two-story home, that reality may limit where a fireplace can be installed. A wood fireplace requires a brick

or stone firebox to be installed as well. Wood-burning fireplaces also can be dangerous if they are not installed correctly or properly maintained.

Electric fireplaces are easy to install and operate. The Spruce says most electric fireplaces are mounted on the wall and plugged into a standard outlet. Some also are portable and thus can be moved from room to room depending on need. A notable drawback of an electric fireplace for some is that such fixtures do not have a real flame, which some believe adversely affects their aesthetic appeal. Also, electric fireplaces will not be helpful during a power outage and do not produce the same amount of heat as other fireplaces.

Ethanol fireplaces are a relatively new invention that are lightweight and can be moved as needed. Smaller versions can be placed on a tabletop, while others can be built into a wall as permanent fixtures. Again, these produce less heat than other fireplace options, but the fuel required to use them can be more expensive than gas, wood or electricity.

Fireplace installation is best left to a professional. If gas lines need to be routed, fireboxes and chimneys must be built, or proper venting has to be installed, such complex work should be left to those with experience to ensure efficiency and safety.

The basics of basement conversion projects

The real estate market has been highly competitive in recent years, and home prices have remained high as a result. That reality has prompted some current homeowners who feel they have outgrown their homes to look for ways to increase the usable space in their existing properties. Basement conversions are one way to add more space. Homeowners mulling a basement conversion project can learn the basics of the project as they try to determine if such renovations are right for them.

- **BASEMENT CONVERSION PROJECTS CAN BE COSTLY.** Though the final cost of a conversion project can vary widely depending on the condition and accessibility of the existing space, estimates range from around \$45,000 to as much as \$150,000. The home renovation experts at Angi.com note that the average price for excavation is \$37,000. Of course, homeowners who are simply hoping to repurpose an existing basement likely won't need to pay for excavation. Accessibility is another notable variable that can affect the final cost. If the current space is a crawl space, potentially costly structural changes may be necessary to ensure contractors and eventually residents can access the area. Basements that are already easily accessible won't require such expenditures.

- **VENTILATION IS A MUST.** Finished basements must be adequately ventilated so moisture can be controlled. Without sufficient ventilation, the damp conditions common in many basements can foster the growth of mold. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America notes that inhaled mold spores can trigger allergic reactions in some people, potentially leading to runny nose, postnasal drip, red and watery eyes, and itchy eyes, nose, ears, and mouth, among other symptoms. Waterproofing systems and adequate ventilation can prevent mold growth in a basement, and these should be integral components of the design.

- **PERMITS ARE PART OF THE PROCESS.** Basement conversions are considered major projects, and thus typically require homeowners and contractors to secure permits before any work is done. Permits may be necessary at various stages

of the project. Homeowners who ignore laws regarding permits will have trouble selling their homes down the road, as it can be difficult if not impossible to secure a certificate of occupancy if renovations were made without securing the proper permits. In addition, securing necessary permits for each phase of the project can ensure final approval of the project. If permits are not secured along the way, local officials may insist work be redone to adhere to local laws, which can make the project even more costly.

- **BASEMENT CONVERSIONS TAKE TIME.** The time a project takes will depend on the condition of the space at the start of the project and various details unique to each conversion. However, various contractors indicate projects take about two to three months once they begin. That timeline does not include the pre-project process of finding a contractor, soliciting design plans or preparing the rest of the home for such a significant and lengthy undertaking. Basement conversion projects can add significant square footage to a home. Recognition of what such projects entail can help homeowners decide if this is the best way for them to increase livable space in their homes.



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Renew your space for fall and winter

As the crisp autumn air sets in and your home begins its seasonal transition, **Brisco Furniture & Appliance** is your one-stop shop to refresh and fortify every corner of your space. Serving Alliston and beyond since 1983 as a family-owned business, Brisco brings decades of local commitment and expertise to each customer's home project.

When tackling your fall to do list, think of Brisco as your home decor, furniture, appliance, and mattress hub. Whether you're looking to cozy up your living room with a new sofa, refresh your dining area, or outfit your home office with stylish storage solu-

tions, they offer a full range of furniture collections—from living rooms and dining rooms to complete bedroom sets. But the service doesn't stop there.

As the weather cools and you shift gears back inside, appliances become central to comfort and convenience. Brisco's appliance selection covers essentials like refrigerators, ranges, dishwashers, washers, dryers, microwaves, and more. Check out the new Frigidaire range that cooks a thin crust pizza in 2 minutes, making pizza night a breeze. Swap out older units, streamline your household workflows, and count on quality brands such as Whirlpool, Maytag, and KitchenAid.

Sleep is another key area for renewal heading into fall and winter. Brisco's dedicated mat-

tress division—Brisco Mattress World—offers options across sizes and comfort levels (firm, plush, memory foam, hybrid, etc.) so you can find your ideal bed for restful nights. And don't forget the finishing touches: home accents, décor items, lighting, mirrors, and more are available to help you bring cohesion and style to the space you're settling into for the coming months.

Whether you're gearing up for cozy evenings, hosting family dinners, or simply seeking a more functional living environment, Brisco Furniture & Appliance is equipped to handle every layer of your home refresh. Visit their showroom in Alliston or browse their full catalog online to make this fall your season of transformation.



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Signs it's time to replace gutters

A GUTTER REPLACEMENT might not inspire the same level of excitement as a room addition or an overhaul of an outdoor living space, but new gutters can help to prevent roof damage and make properties safer by ensuring rain water is directed away from walkways. Homeowners who suspect it might be time for a gutter replacement can look for these signs of fading gutters.

Cracks or splits

Cracks or splits at the seams of the gutters where two pieces connect is a tell-tale sign they need to be replaced. Cracks or splits are can slowly lead to separation of gutter pieces, which will lead to leaks. But not all cracks or splits are found at the seams. In fact, some homes feature seamless gutters, which also can crack or split. Regardless of where they're found, cracks or splits are a warning signs of fading gutters.

Rust

Rust is rarely a good sign whether you're looking at a vehicle or even garden tools. Rust also is a bad sign in relation to gutters. Gutters are painted, and not only for aesthetic purposes. Paint on gutter also serves to protect them from water. When paint begins to flake, gutters will begin to rust and may even produce noticeable rust flakes on the ground below. Rust on gutters and rust flakes beneath them are indicative of gutters that need to be replaced.

Gutter pulling away from the home

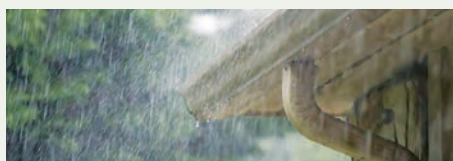
Gutters that appear to be pulling away from the home is a sign that they need to be replaced. Gutters are fastened to a home during installation, which ensures they can withstand rain and water. Over time, those fasteners can wear down, ultimately leading to gutters that appear to be pulling away from the home. Though gutters can be refastened, eventually they will need to be replaced.

Pooling water

Pooling water in a gutter may just be a sign that gutters need to be cleaned. However, pooling water on the ground directly beneath gutters indicates they're not effectively directing water away from the home.

Water damage inside

A home's interior might not be the first place homeowners look when inspecting for damaged gutters, but a flooded basement or crawl space could indicate a gutter problem. Gutters and downspouts are designed to direct water away from a home when functioning properly. When that isn't happening, water can pool beneath the foundation, leading to pooling water and other water damage in basements and crawl spaces.



Why it pays to create a mudroom in a home

HOMEOWNERS Considerations for room additions or space modifications generally involve rooms that will add value or function to a home. Mudrooms certainly fit that description, as they can add aesthetic appeal in more ways than one.

As the name implies, mudrooms are entire rooms or areas near entryways of homes where muddy shoes and other items can be stored. By having a set space for messy shoes and coats, homeowners do not need to worry about dirt and other debris being tracked throughout the home. Mudrooms also can provide a welcoming space for guests.

Homeowners who have adequate space to add an entirely new room may have no difficulty putting in a mudroom. A mudroom addition is a job best left to a professional. Ideally, this new mudroom can be adjacent to an entry by the garage, or a side or back door. The footprint of the mudroom needn't be too large, either. All it requires is a small amount of space to place a bench, coat hooks and shoe storage.

a simple porch conversion to \$30,000 when a new foundation is needed and the build-out is extensive.

Budget-conscious homeowners can create a mudroom in an existing foyer or another entryway. Adequate storage is essential for any mudroom, and should include coat racks, hooks, a bench to facilitate removing shoes safely, shoe storage, and additional considerations, like shopping bag storage or umbrella holders. Creating a door from the outside into an existing laundry room can enable homeowners to use the space as both a mudroom and laundry area with minimal changes necessary.

There are some extra considerations for mudrooms that homeowners should think about. The flooring, walls and furniture/storage used in the mudroom should be durable and easily cleaned. As wet and dirty shoes and clothing will be in the space, it's essential to make clean-up a breeze. Look for nonslip flooring so entering the mudroom safely is not an issue.

According to This Old House, homeowners also can convert a porch, create a mudroom by expanding into an adjacent room or closet, or even repurpose space in an attached garage. U.S. News and World Report indicates that a well planned and executed mudroom has the potential to increase a home's value. Depending on the scope of the work, the average cost of a mudroom project ranges from \$2,500 for

Although a mudroom is a utilitarian space, creature comforts can be added to integrate the space with the rest of the home. Cover a storage bench with indoor-outdoor fabric that coordinates to the colors used in a home. Add some decorative drawer pulls and cabinet hardware to elevate the space. Washable throw rugs also can add some design appeal to the room.





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keeps your home comfortable

Allen HVAC Solutions is a family owned and operated HVAC company led by Garfield Allen and his children Maddison and Keegan. Their mission is to deliver a thorough, consistent, and trustworthy service experience to homeowners and businesses.

They offer a full suite of heating, cooling, and ventilation services, from regular maintenance to emergency repairs and full installations. They emphasize individualized service: rather than promoting one-size-fits-all solutions, Allen HVAC works with customers to assess their specific heating and cooling needs and present tailored options.

A key focus of their offering is indoor air quality (IAQ). They note that HVAC systems in homes move over a million cubic feet of air daily, making them prime places to address air purity. They provide products such as:

- Whole house humidifiers to help with respiratory comfort, dry skin, allergies, and snoring
- An IAQ 1000 Polarized Media Air Cleaner capable of removing particles as small as 0.3 microns, helping allergy and COPD sufferers and improving system efficiency
- An IAQ 3000 dual wavelength ultraviolet purification system (using UVC and UVV) to control viruses, bacteria, mold, chemicals, odors, and off gassing, which comes with a lifetime warranty.

Allen HVAC services both residential and commercial clients. They combine high quality parts and equipment with a commitment to workmanship, backing their installations and repairs with warranties.

In short, Allen HVAC positions itself not just as a repair or installation company, but a partner in home comfort and air quality. By taking time to understand each customer's needs, offering advanced IAQ solutions, and guaranteeing their work, they aim to build long-term trust in the communities they serve.



GET READY FOR A FURNACE CHECKUP

Turning on the heat may be the furthest thing from homeowners' minds come the end of summer or early fall.

After all, there are plenty more days of comfortable temperatures to expect over the weeks to come. However, failing to inspect a furnace prior to when it is needed could lay a foundation for cold evenings.

MANY HVAC EXPERTS recommend that homeowners get their furnaces tuned up before the first cold spell arrives. When the heat is needed for the first time, it will be guaranteed to work if it's been examined and any underlying issues have been addressed.

HVAC technicians are busy at the start of summer and winter. If a furnace is not working correctly, it could take some time before a professional can make a service call. Having the furnace and related equipment checked prior to when it's time to turn on the furnace means homeowners will not be left in the lurch or potentially spending premium prices for repairs.

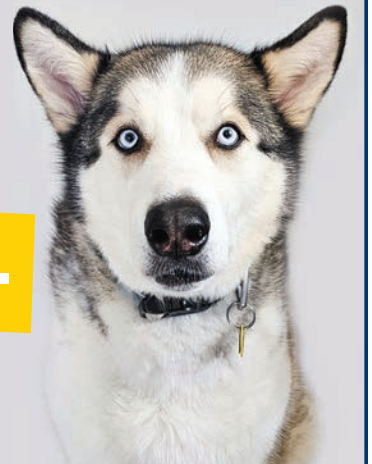
It is important to get a furnace checkup for a variety of reasons. Doing so can make the HVAC system run more efficiently, which could result in savings over the winter. Regular maintenance also can help the furnace last longer, delaying the need for a costly replacement. No one wants the furnace to break down in the middle of a frigid night. Annual checkups can help reduce the risk of that happening. In addition, many furnace manufacturers offer warranties on their systems that require annual maintenance from a professional. Failure to have the system inspected could void the warranty.

Even if homeowners are floating in the pool and cranking up the air conditioning, they should give consideration to having their furnaces inspected and serviced soon to prepare for the colder months ahead.



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fall HOME & GARDEN

How to find the right contractor for your next home renovation

Home renovations are significant undertakings. Though some projects require more sizable investments of time and money than others, all merit homeowners' attention and inspire some excitement when pondering the finished product.

A finished product tends to offer more appeal when the project is overseen and undertaken by a professional contractor. Small projects may be in the wheelhouse of skilled do-it-yourselfers, but most homeowners are best served leaving home renovations to the professionals. Finding the right contractor for a given job is of the utmost importance, and the following are some tips to help homeowners do just that.

• **SEEK WORD-OF-MOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS.** Word-of-mouth advertising has long been recognized as an invaluable tool to attract customers, and for good reason. A 2025 report on the state of the roofing industry provided by Roofing Contractor, the official publication for the International Roofing Expo®, found that 79 percent of homeowners identify word-of-mouth as the top way to find a roofing professional. Word-of-mouth is so valued because homeowners can ask friends or neighbors about their experiences with a given professional in a pressure-free setting. Word-of-mouth also can help homeowners cut down on the pool of potential contractor candidates, which is no small benefit in markets flooded with renovation professionals.

• **SECURE MULTIPLE WRITTEN ESTIMATES.** It can be time-consuming to speak to multiple contractors and secure written estimates from each one, but such legwork is well worth the effort if the end result is finding the right contractor. Secure multiple estimates even if the first one provided to you is below budget. Multiple estimates allow homeowners to compare what's included, and not included, in each one. Some contractors offering low estimates may not include materials costs or additional factors that will increase the price. Others may seem more expensive initially but may prove more affordable than

competitors if their estimates include all of the costs associated with the project. Only a direct comparison of multiple estimates, which should include details specific to the project and an itemized list of what will be provided and performed by the contractor, can give homeowners an idea of what they're paying for.

• **STAY LOCAL WHEN POSSIBLE.** Hiring local contractors is beneficial for a number of reasons. Hiring locals keeps money in the community and thus supports the local economy. And working with local contractors can make it easier for homeowners to keep lines of communication open. Many projects also require a little post-completion upkeep or even some tweaks, which is more easily accomplished when working with contractors based nearby. And finally, local contractors will be familiar with building codes and other details specific to a given town. That familiarity can ensure a project is done in adherence to codes and not stalled by permit- or inspection-related delays.

• **CONFIRM THEIR INSURANCE.** Travelers Insurance urges homeowners to confirm a contractor is properly insured and bonded prior to signing a contract. Contractors should be willing to provide a certificate of insurance (COI) that indicates their provider, policy number and coverage limits. Travelers also notes homeowners can contact insurers directly to verify coverage and ensure the policy is current. Never hire a contractor who is uninsured or unwilling to provide proof of insurance.

Hiring a contractor to perform a home renovation may be a leap of faith, but homeowners can take steps to ensure they find the right professional for the job.



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BARRELLING THROUGH – A St. Thomas Aquinas Stinger player sprints through the defence during a senior girls' flag football game against the St. Josephs Jaguars from Barrie on Monday, Oct. 6. The Stingers were fast on the field and played a good game, but they had to settle for a 28-0 loss in this match. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

Alliston Hornets cap off weekend with eight game winning streak

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Alliston Hornets remain undefeated after winning two weekend games and maintain first place in the North Carruthers Division of the PJHL.

On Friday, Oct. 10, the Hornets travelled to Midland to take on the Flyers.

At the end of the first period the Alliston squad was trailing 3-2 after Midland scored a tie-breaker late in the period.

First period Alliston goals came from Duncan Grube and Payton Palbiski.

It was a 4-2 game when the Flyers scored first in the second period, but that's all they could do for the night.

Alliston forward Tristen scored two goals in just under five minutes to make it a 4-4 game going into the final period.

Nick Lamont scored at 4:39 into the third period to give the Hornets the lead.

That was followed by Grube's second goal of the night to give the Hornets a 6-4 win.

The following night, Saturday, Oct. 11, the Hornets again went north to take on the Orillia Terriers.

It was a 1-1 tie at the end of the first period. Alliston's only goal came from Noah Cochrane midway in the period.

The game was again tied in the second period when Jax Bellwood scored at 1:19 into the frame, and Orillia matched the goal just 41 seconds later.

Alliston's Nick Lamont got the tie breaker at 9:14 into the period then followed up with a second goal late in the period to give the Hornets a 4-2 lead with one period remaining.

Hornets' forward Duncan Grube got the only Alliston goal in the third period.

Midland scored late, but the Hornets held on for the 5-3 win.

That made it eight wins in a row for the Hornets who are still undefeated for the season and are in first place.

The Penetang Kings are in second place in the division with a 5-3 record, followed by the Orillia Terriers and the Stayner Siskins.

The Hornets will finish off their scheduled six road games in a row this week when they will play three games over three days.

They return to home ice at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Oct 24., to face the Innisfil Spartans. Game time is 7:30 p.m.



TOP TEAM TAKES THE WIN – The St. Thomas Aquinas (STA) Catholic Secondary School Stingers junior girls' basketball team hosts the squad from Patrick Fogerty Catholic Secondary School from Orillia in the gym at STA on Tuesday, Oct. 7. Stingers point guard Charlotte Vienneau takes the ball into the Patrick Fogerty zone during the first quarter of the game. The Stingers won the game 35-17 and are now in first place in the CSASC standings. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

Ontario Volunteer Service awards recognize outstanding contributions

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Ontario government has recognized 56 outstanding Simcoe-Grey residents with the Volunteer Service Award.

This honour is given in acknowledgement of exceptional contributions from individuals providing dedicated service to a single organization.

Recipients, including several from New Tecumseth and the surrounding area, were recently celebrated at local ceremonies and received a personalized certificate and lapel pin as a token of appreciation for their years of service.

“Looking after our neighbours and community has never been more important,” said Simcoe-Grey MPP Brian Saunderson. “I am grateful to see so many volunteers selflessly stepping up and embodying the best of Ontario’s spirit. On behalf of the residents of Simcoe-Grey, thank you to this year’s award recipients for helping make our communities strong, vibrant, and welcoming.”

Across the province, Ontario’s Volunteer Service Award recipients support a wide

variety of causes, from hospitals, senior centres, and food security programs to arts, culture, and youth initiatives. Their commitment, whether as volunteers, board members, or fundraisers, enriches the lives of countless people and showcases the very best of our communities.

“The Ontario Volunteer Service Awards are all about celebrating the incredible people who give their time to make our communities stronger,” said Graham McGregor, Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. “Volunteers are the heart of Ontario, and we’re truly grateful for everything they do to support and uplift those around them.”

2025 Ontario Volunteer Service Award recipients from New Tecumseth and region include:

Youth Volunteer Service Award

Immanuel Deo Sewah – Town of New Tecumseth

Nicholas Morrow, Town of New Tecumseth

5 Years of Service Award

Carla Beckett – Tec-We-Gwill Women’s Institute

Nancy Chapple Smokler – County of Simcoe, Simcoe Manor Long Term Care

Pamela Close – County of Simcoe, Simcoe Manor Long Term Care

Pat James – County of Simcoe, Simcoe Manor Long Term Care

Teresa Main – County of Simcoe, Simcoe Manor Long Term Care

Fran McDonell – Catholic Women’s League, St. Paul the Apostle Church

Millie Quigley – Alliston & District Humane Society

Anne Sledz – County of Simcoe, Simcoe Manor Long Term Care

10 Years of Service

Beverly Beesley – Friends of the Utopia Mill and Park

Maggie Curran – Friends of the Utopia Mill and Park

Ralph D’Alonzo – Friends of the Utopia Mill and Park

Michael Lubiana – County of Simcoe, Simcoe Manor Long Term Care

Linda Patenaude – Alliston & District Humane Society

Maureen Powling – Friends of the Utopia Mill and Park

Anne Sharpe – Friends of the Utopia Mill and Park

15 Years of Service

Mary Lafazanos – Catholic Women’s League, ST. Paul the Apostle Church

20 Years of Service

Floy Catt – Friends of the Utopia Mill and Park

Pat Skelly – Alliston & District Humane Society

Edith Steinmayr – Alliston & District Humane Society

25 Years of Service

Marie Heffernan – Catholic Women’s League, St. Paul the Apostle Church

30 Years of Service

Patricia Marshall, - CONTACT Community Services

35 Years of Service

Sandra Luksys – Alliston & District Humane Society

45 Years of Service

Sylvia Plant – Tec-We-Gwill Women’s Institute

55 Years of Service

Suzanne Hayes – Catholic Women’s League, ST. Paul the Apostle Church

Town of New Tecumseth budget proposes new website, better roads and enhanced parks

BY BRIAN LOCKHART
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

New Tecumseth Mayor Richard Norcross and Town Council met on Thursday, Oct. 8, for the first Budget Working Session and Public Input Session for 2026.

The proposed draft budget focuses on maintaining essential services, planning for future growth, and managing costs responsibly.

A proposed tax change is 2.33 per cent plus a one er cent capital levy, which is around \$142 per year for the average household and remains in-line with inflation.

Council says residents can expect improvements that matter most. This includes resurfacing key roads, investing in parks and playgrounds, and technology upgrades that will modernize the Town website and improve customer service.

“This budget is about planning ahead – protecting the services residents depend on, improving efficiency, and preparing for the future,” Mayor Norcross said.

The budget manages rising costs for materials and services while achieving savings through grants, shared services and collaborations, and operational efficiencies.

Despite working toward full cost recovery, New Tecumseth’s water and wastewater

rates remain below average, reflecting the Town’s commitment to cost-effective service delivery.

Mayor Norcross added, “These initiatives reflect our commitment to sustainability, service excellence, and community well-being.”

The second budget meeting will take place on Oct. 22, where Council will review amendments and deliberate on the proposed budget.

Buy Canadian should fund Canadian jobs and news, not U.S. Big Tech

A Message from Canada’s news publishers

To the Government of Canada,

We applaud the Government of Canada’s ambition to build Canada strong, and commitment in the forthcoming Budget to Buy Canadian.

Last year, the federal government including agencies and Crown corporations spent over \$100 million on advertising. Most of it went to U.S. Big Tech.¹

Why are we funding American tech monopolies that extract tens of billions a year out of Canada -- largely untaxed -- at the expense of local journalism and culture, and whose platforms have become vectors for division and disinformation?

Let’s reinvest our ad dollars in Canada. In Budget 2025, the Government of Canada should follow Ontario’s lead and set aside a minimum of 25% of its advertising budgets for Canadian news media.

At no additional cost to taxpayers, the government can support local jobs while getting its message out in a brand safe environment. Far fewer Canadians trust ads on Facebook and Instagram than those published by Canadian news media.²

Buying Canadian advertising in Canadian news media is both the right and smart thing to do.

Respectfully,
Canada’s news publishers



SOURCES
¹ Annual Report on Government of Canada Advertising Activities 2023-2024, combined with proprietary industry data.
² Totum Research Canada, January 2025. Canadians 18+, n=2418.; Pollara for the Dais. 2025 Survey of Online Harms, Canadians 16+, n=2502.

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Essa man charged with impaired driving after putting vehicle into ditch

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have charged one individual with impaired driving following a motor vehicle collision in New Tecumseth.

On Oct. 11, shortly after 11:30 p.m., Nottawasaga OPP responded to a vehicle in the ditch on Adjala Tecumseth Townline just south of the 13th Line, in New Tecumseth.

Officers located the vehicle and met with the driver. During the interaction, grounds were formed that the driver's ability to operate a motor vehicle was impaired by alcohol, leading to the driver's arrest.

As a result of the investigation, Jesus Zola, 31, of Essa Township, was charged with:

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

The accused individual is scheduled to attend the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford on Nov. 6, 2025, to answer to the charges.

The charges have not been proven in court.

If you suspect that someone is driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, the OPP asks that you call 9-1-1 to report it.

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

South Simcoe Police warn of spoofed phone numbers appearing legitimate to commit fraud

Fraud-related incidents are occurring within the region, and the South Simcoe Police Service is reminding the public to be alert and remain vigilant of potential scams.

The South Simcoe Police received a report from a member of the public who believed they had been contacted by their banking institution and warned that their bank cards had been compromised.

The member of the public was told their bank cards would be retrieved at their home

by an employee of the bank, and to place them in an envelope to be collected.

Through investigation, South Simcoe Police determined that the person had been contacted using a spoofed phone number by someone posing as an employee of their banking institution.

A second suspect attended the person's home to collect the alleged compromised cards, while the first suspect remained on the phone and asked the person to provide and update their passcodes.

Fraudsters are disguising their phone numbers to appear as legitimate businesses or financial institutions and may use professional language to gain your trust.

It's important to note, banks will never send employees to your home or workplace to discuss account issues or possible fraud.

To protect yourself:

- Never share personal or banking details over the phone unless you initiated the call using a verified number.
- Hang up and contact the company directly if you're unsure of a caller's legitimacy.
- Do not open the door to unexpected visitors claiming to represent a business.

South Simcoe Police are urging residents to remain alert to ongoing phone spoofing scams in our communities.

Anyone who has been targeted or received suspicious calls is asked to report the incident to the police.

South Simcoe Police Service respond to suspicious fire at vacant condo building, search for suspect

The Innisfil Fire Department notified the South Simcoe Police of a suspicious fire last Thursday, Oct. 9, at approximately 11:30 p.m.

Officers responded to a vacant condominium building in Innisfil and found evidence of an intentionally set fire outside the building.

A short distance away, they also discovered

signs of a second attempted fire.

The area was secured, and the Criminal Investigation Bureau took over the investigation.

No one was injured as the building was vacant, and the damage from the fires was minimal.

Police determined that a male suspect, wearing dark coloured clothing and a mask covering a portion of their face, approached the property and set both fires before fleeing the area on foot.

Police are asking anyone with information about this incident to contact the South Sim-

coe Police Service's Criminal Investigation Bureau at 905-775-3311 or investigations@southsimcoepolice.ca.

Additionally, anyone with information who wishes to remain anonymous can contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

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612 AUCTIONS/FLEA MARKETS

REMINDER

LIVE AUCTION SALE

Equipment Consignment Saturday October 18, 9:30am

554447 Mono-Amaranth TLine, Mono, ON — Go west through Orangeville on Hwy 9 to County Rd 16 (Veterans Way at Greenwood Cemetery), turn north 5 miles to farm on East side. OR From Shelburne go east on Hwy 89 for 2 miles to Mono-Amaranth Townline, turn south & go 5 miles to farm on East side.

Backhoe, Skid Steer, Tractors: JD 2555 loader tractor, 4WD; GVC 214 backhoe; Volvo MC80B skid steer; Agco 5670 4x4 loader tractor; JD 3520 loader tractor; White 1370 loader tractor; 3910 Ford tractor; (2)Case Agri-King tractors - older; Zetor 8145 loader tractor; Int cub Cadet lawn tractor; MF 165 tractor. **Trailers, Vehicles, Motorcycle:** Wilson 26' livestock trailer; 12' bumper hitch enclosed trailer; 1100cc Yamaha V-Star Classic motorcycle; 2009 Jeep Cherokee North Edition; 2015 Mitsubishi Lancer CS; 2006 Ford F-150 pickup; Mitsubishi FUSO truck, Saltdog box, V-plow. **Mach/Equip:** 24ft mesh floor hay wagon; 6' Lely Turf Shaper; 12' cultivator; 7' snowblower; bale spear; Gehl 175 manure spreader; manure bucket; Gehl 250 manure spreader; Demco 800 gal plastic nurse tank on Horst mount; JD 415A, 2 furrow plow; JD 78 grader blade; HLA 72" manure forks; Gehl 250 manure spreader; Bruns 300bu hopper wagon; Marwood Buzzsaw - only used 2yrs; Sovena 5ft 3pth rototiller; Bushog 3pth wood splitter; Kverneland 4 furrow plow; NH 326 haybine; Case 8450 round baler; Heston 555 round baler; Heston 1120 haybine; 18' disc; Lucknow snowblower; grain wagon; wagon undercarriage; JD 14ft disc; Case IH 575 manure spreader; NH round baler, twine; 8ft Western snow plow; (3) Blizzard snow plows; MF 124 sq baler; plus, plus, plus!! **Sheep Equip:** Lamb penning; Heatwave milk machine for 4; weigh scale; lamb creep feeders; Shearmaster clippers; waterers; & many more pieces. **Gates & Barn equip:** (7)mesh gates-var lengths; (2)milk house heaters; (2)42in barn fans; fencer; aerator fan, & lots more! **Chicken & Rabbit Equip:** Feeders, waterers, 80in rabbit nesting boxes, rabbit cages, chicken feeders & waterers (3)wood chicken crates; Pullet Plus roll away nest box; & more items. **Veneered Plywood:** all plywood is veneered on both sides, 4x8 sheets; (115)sheets black, 1/2 inch; (296)sheets white speckled, 1/2 inch; (160)sheets greyish white wood grain, 1/2 inch; (12)sheets greyish white, 5/8 inch; (86)sheets pure white, 5/8 inch; (59)sheets pure white, 1/2 inch; (99)sheets brown wood grain, 1/2 inch; (35)sheets resin counter top for furniture/tables, 5x6, 1/2 inch, by Paper Stone, colour: gun steel. **Farm Rel/ Shop/Misc:** Red tool case on wheels; (3)lawn seeders; air hose line; motors; shop light; leaf blowers; Kawartha Kutter snowmobile tow sled; Karrite - car roof storage; Delta checker-plate truck tool box; sm metal Coca-Cola cooler; sm pig feeder; (2)hammer drills; (3)Nelson automatic waterers; chainsaw sharpener; (2) sea cans (8'x8'x20' & 8'x8'x40')-purchasers to remove; 220V motor; Champion 5625, 4500W generator; tensile wire; Stihl MS271 chainsaw; 2550psi press washer; (2)chicken crates; (3)farm gates; tractor roll-over bar; hammer mill motor; (2)crosscut saws(A); calf bowls; grain funnel; wheelbarrow style air comp with Honda motor; elec chain hoist; set of 360gal truck saddle tanks & mounts; tire balancer; (75+)sheets of aspenite-mostly 7/16"-new; 200+ 8ft 2x4's - new; (14) bush cord white ash, stacked 2 yrs; 5-knuckle metal bender; (2)charge point elec car commercial units; Win-Sweep commercial leaf blower; PIAB dynamometer; (5)Multilin; qty cedar logs; welders; commercial electrical cable handling; log skidder tracks; sm garden rototiller; (30+) 2'x3'x6' XL cement blocks; 50 lbs fencing nails; Lots to see here!

Household & Antiques - selling promptly at 9:30am - please be on time)

****Watch the website as items being added regularly****

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Featuring: "Timber Wolves" by Martin Glen Loates - Framed Watercolour & Ink; "A Jaeger and Snow Bunting at Play" by Paulosie Sivuak - Stencil; "Still Life With Cosmos" by Frances Anne Johnston - Framed Oil Canvas; "Wolverine" by Magnus Keeash - Stonecut; alongside an assortment of media including etchings; stencils; oil on canvas; watercolour and more by artists such as Nell Blaine; Thomasie Alikatuktuk; plus Stone carvings from artists such as Davidialuk Alasua Amittu; Panee Kumaqjuk and Lucassie Oqaituk; Artisan Dolls; Hand Woven Baskets; Beaded & Tanned Leather Accessories; Sterling Silver and Gold-Plated Earrings and Rings; Pocket Watches; selection of Swarovski Crystal Animal Figurines incl. Trinket Box; Natural Gemstones ft. Moonstone; Emeralds; Opals and so much more.



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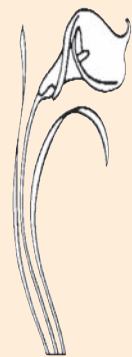
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Continued from Page 4

Brock's Banter: Thanks and gratitude

Begun on a shoestring and initially reliant on volunteers, it had its work cut out for it going toe-to-toe with some larger competitors, but quickly found its foothold in the community.

The Auroran had just celebrated its ninth anniversary when Ron brought me on as the paper's main reporter following the death of stalwart contributor Dick Illingworth, and, in many ways, I was coming into a very different world than the one I find myself in now.

I like to think the paper was founded with a "small town mentality" in the best sense of the phrase; at its core was the idea that if it mattered to the community, it mattered to us. And, as the paper grew alongside the community it covered, I like to think that hyper-local perspective still holds true.

Following Ron's retirement in 2011, I was honoured to be chosen to take over as editor and, while we have grown and tweaked

our format a little bit, I hope we've been able to maintain our focus on the community while also being conscious of how events in the wider world can impact so many here at home.

Going through back copies of the paper ahead of this anniversary year raised many smiles over memories made, while there were moments of reflection looking at content from creators in our earliest days who are no longer with us – Ron Wallace, photographer David Falconer, columnist Jan Freedman, and so many more whose words and moments captured illuminated our community.

It was a pleasure leafing through and revisiting hot-button stories of the day, from political intrigues, to celebrating the achievements of up-and-coming leaders and remembering the achievements of those who came before us who are now part of our historical tapestry;

student successes that lead to tremendous steps forward in business, service, and elsewhere; innovations that have taken the world by storm; local sports heroes who have gone out to conquer the world; opening celebrations of local landmarks and institutions that are too numerous to count and, truth be told, the closure or demise of far too many landmarks and institutions that gave generations of this community joy.

We weathered a global pandemic but, amid all the loss and fear that was ubiquitous in that period of time, we saw so, so many examples of the community pulling together to help keep each other safe, make ends meet, or simply to raise a smile or two to brighten the darkness – stories which always felt especially rewarding to me.

Twenty-five years is a long time in any industry and it was heartening to see that as

much as things change, there are still so many constants to hold onto – and one key to that constancy is being able to keep a finger on the pulse of the communities we serve: shining a light on truth in a sea of misinformation, training that same light on community builders and people making significant differences, no matter how small they might seem on the surface, documenting the community's joys, and joining in on moments of difficulty and sorrow – and, sadly, there has been no shortage of the latter in recent years.

It's what The Auroran has done for a quarter century, and what community newspapers had done for generations before that new kid on the block stepped into the fray back in 2000, and it's what we all commit to continuing into the future.

And, to have the opportunity to be a part of that, I'm truly grateful.

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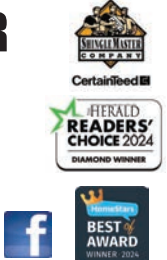


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save \$5

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