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## Street party

The Tottenham Railers celebrated their home opener with a kids' street party in the parking lot at the Tottenham Community Centre on Saturday, Sept. 20, prior to their game against the Toronto Flyers. Along with games and bouncy castles, the New Tecumseth Fire Department brought a fire truck and gifts for the kids. The Railers won the game 10-3 over Toronto and now have a 3-1 record.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



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# Paramedic Services launches enhanced Driver Training Program

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

County of Simcoe Paramedic Services has unveiled its Paramedic Driving Enhancement Program.

This is a new initiative aimed at strengthening the driving skills of paramedics.

The advanced training program is designed to elevate driver proficiency and ultimately enhance road safety across the region.

“Our paramedic vehicles travel an average of 3.8 million kilometers per year, often in heightened situations when seconds matter,” said Warden Basil Clarke. “This innovative initiative sets a new standard for operational excellence and safety, not just for our staff, but for the communities we serve.”

Developed in partnership with the Canada Safety Council and Hamilton Paramedic Services, PDEP delivers targeted instruction tailored to the unique driving conditions faced by paramedics.

The program includes five hours of classroom education and two hours of supervised, in-vehicle training, followed by a graduated driving matrix

that ensures new recruits are assessed and signed off before transporting patients independently.

“We’re very excited to partner with the Canada Safety Council and Hamilton Paramedic Services to offer this first-of-its-kind program to our staff,” added Sarah Mills, director and chief of County of Simcoe Paramedic Services. “This program isn’t just about training drivers; it’s about expanding our culture of safety to ensure our team has the training they need to provide the highest level of care to our communities.”

There are several key features of the program. They include instruction by CSPS Platoon Supervisors certified through the Canada Safety Council and Infrastructure Health and Safety Association; access to closed training zones at Canadian Forces Base Borden for realistic, hands-on learning, and proactive training for high-risk staff; and future expansion to all operational personnel.

The program also features advocacy for province-wide adoption through collaboration with the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs.

CSPS is also working with the Safety Council of Canada to develop a standardized driver safety curriculum for paramedic colleges across Ontario.



**NEW STANDARD** – County of Simcoe Paramedic Services has unveiled its Paramedic Driving Enhancement Program to improve the driving skills of paramedics around the region.  
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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# Camphill awarded Capital Grant to improve Community Hub

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

MPP for Simcoe-Grey Brian Saunderson attended Camphill Communities Ontario in Angus on Thursday, Sept. 11, to announce \$146,500 in provincial funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's (OTF) Capital Grant Stream.

"The Camphill community provides vital support, education, and care for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities," said MPP Saunderson. "This significant OTF grant has been put to excellent use, as the Camphill team was able to renovate and restore their exceptional rural community hub, ensuring it can continue to serve the community for decades to come."

Camphill Communities Ontario is an accredited not-for-profit organization that supports adults with developmental disabilities in Simcoe County. Camphill's mission is to enrich society by creating meaningful opportunities to live, learn, and work together, building a community where people of diverse abilities enjoy quality of life and personal growth in a rich social and cultural environment.

Camphill will use the \$146,500 grant over 12 months to renovate and repair Novalis Hall, its rural community hub. This space is vital for delivering programs and services to adults with developmental disabilities. It also functions as an inclusive gathering place for arts, culture, education, and social connec-

tion within the broader community.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for making these much-needed improvements to Novalis Hall possible," said Larry Palmer, executive director at Camphill Communities Ontario. "With the exterior refreshed, the interior restored, and critical infrastructure like the septic system and washrooms upgraded, we've been able to breathe new life into a space that holds deep meaning for our community. Novalis Hall is more than just a building — it's a place where people come together to share, celebrate, and connect. This project ensures it will continue to serve as a welcoming and vibrant hub for Camphill and the wider community for many years to come."

OTF's Capital grant stream helps organizations improve their infrastructure so they can continue delivering programs and services that Ontarians need to thrive. Whether it's purchasing equipment, building a new space, or completing renovations, retrofits, or repairs, these grants support projects that are



**UPGRADES INCOMING—** Camphill in Angus will receive \$146,500 in provincial funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Capital Grant Stream to help renovate Novalis Hall. Simcoe-Grey MPP Brian Saunderson visited Camphill on Thursday, Sept. 11, to announce the funding. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

making a difference in Simcoe-Grey. These capital grants are part of the more than \$28 million supporting 300 local programs and services that help deliver critical community programming across the province.

# County of Simcoe seeking public input about household emergency readiness

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The County of Simcoe is asking residents to take part in a new survey aimed at strengthening community resilience.

The County's Emergency Management department wants to know, "When disaster strikes, how ready are you?"

From wildfires and floods to power outages and tornadoes, emergencies can happen at any time. This survey invites households across Simcoe County to share their preparedness plans.

This will help the County better understand local readiness and tailor support where it's

needed most.

The County's emergency management program encompasses both emergency planning and the administration of 9-1-1 services with the aim of fostering disaster-resilient communities ready to meet the challenges of emergencies that arise in municipalities in the region.

The program is built upon the five pillars of community emergency management – prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery – to meet legislated requirements under Ontario's Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

The survey is now live at [simcoe.ca/BePrepared](http://simcoe.ca/BePrepared) and open to all residents.

Responses to the survey will guide the county's future emergency initiatives and ensure rapid, informed action when it matters most. The survey will remain open until Oct. 31.

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# Editorial, Letters & Opinion

*“The window to the world can be covered by a newspaper.”*  
~ Stanislaw Jerzy Lec

## Bananas and other oddities

I like to have a variety of fruit in my diet. Apples are good. So are pears, plums, apricots, kiwi, pineapple – especially good. I was at the local market the other day. Peaches, which are always good, were advertised as being Ontario-grown. \$4.99 per pound. A few feet away in the banana department, bananas were listed as a ‘product of Guatemala’. 89 cents per pound. You can get almost six times the amount of bananas for the same price as the same weight of peaches. Ontario peaches are grown in the Niagara Fruit Belt – about two hours away by truck. The peaches are loaded on a truck and shipped to the Ontario Food Terminal and distributed. Bananas are grown in the tropics, almost 3,500 kilometres away, probably put on a ship to cross the Gulf of Mexico (yes, Mexico, not America), loaded on trucks, and driven halfway across the continent to get here. And they are sold dirt cheap. A fact check indicates that cheap farm labour, as well as the fact that bananas don’t have a growing season and grow all year round, results in the low price to

consumers. There are a few other facts that I just don’t believe. One being that grocers price bananas low, to draw people over so they will then buy other, more expensive nearby fruit. I don’t think many people who want to buy bananas will see a watermelon and have an impulse to buy one. Guatemala may be a long way away, but consider distances here at home. St. John’s, Newfoundland, is closer to Europe than it is to the other side of the country. As the crow flies, St. John’s is 3,991 kilometres from Paris. In the opposite direction, St. John’s is 5,005 kilometres from Vancouver. That sure puts a new perspective on the phrase ‘road trip.’ When it comes to road trips, Europeans are astounded when they tour North America and learn how big it really is. In Europe, you can drive through four countries in a day. This past summer, I was planning a long road trip. I take road trips all the time, but they are usually only day trips. I have always wanted to see the north shore of Lake Superior. I may have seen

it when I was a kid and my family drove to Winnipeg to visit relatives, but I have no memory of it. I decided on a road trip to Thunder Bay. The farthest north I have driven is Sudbury. That’s a great road trip if you like trees and granite. Even though I’m pretty good at geography, I was stunned to find out that a drive to Thunder Bay would take almost 16 hours. For some reason, I had it in my head that it would take about eight hours. Even after all that driving, you still have almost a quarter of the province to get through to get to Manitoba. I decided that four days of just driving, on a five-day vacation, just wouldn’t be worth it – at this time. I may try it again next summer. A friend of mine had family visiting from Italy a few years ago. The visitors didn’t want to be a bother to their hosts, so they said they would make their own way around to see different things. One evening, my friend asked the relative what they had planned for the following day. The relative casually said they were going to drive to Algonquin park for the

afternoon as they heard it was a good place to visit. My friend got out a map and showed them the route. The visitors were astonished to see that driving to Algonquin Park from Toronto was the same as driving around halfway up the boot of Italy. They did finally see Algonquin, but only after they took a couple of days to plan the trip. Another friend of mine had visitors from Europe. They expressed an interest in seeing the Rocky Mountains, as they had seen photos of the majestic peaks around Banff, Alberta. My friend explained the situation and how far away they were, and offered to show them some nice hilly terrain in Ontario. To put this in perspective, Ontario, with a land mass (excluding water) of 892,411 square kilometres, is larger than France, which covers an area of 632,705 square kilometres. As for bananas, I wouldn’t mind paying double the current price if it meant some farm worker in Guatemala would get a raise in pay.



**BRIAN LOCKHART**  
FROM THE SECOND ROW

## High octane words

As a writer, I’ve always been conscious of the power of words. It’s a lesson that’s hard to avoid. You learn it fairly early on as a kid when you find yourself on the giving or receiving end of a good old “Sticks and stones...” lecture when certain words struck a certain chord on the playground or in the classroom. If you’re from a certain generation, perhaps your precocious word choice got you a mouthful of Ivory Soap if what you said proved particularly crass or controversial. There are more avenues than ever before to learn this valuable lesson. Yet, looking back, to hear my mother tell it, my first lesson in this regard started off in a particularly innocent and potentially unavoidable way. Family lore records a rather ordinary visit to a convenience store when I was about three years old. Apparently, there were a bunch of much older kids hanging out in front of the shop, shooting the breeze, having a good time, and apparently using what the Brits sometimes like to call “fruity language.” We went in, got what we set out to get,

and went home. End of story. But not quite. A short time later, my mom asked me to do something that has been lost to the midst of time. Evidently, however, it was something I didn’t want to do because, despite my age, my response was “F\_\_\_\_\_ off!” I guess there’s something to the adage of “little pitchers have big ears” because, when the initial surprise wore off and she had the wherewithal to ask where I had picked up such a word, my simple response was, “At Becker’s!” I guess the store was serving up more than dairy that day and I wanted to milk it before it was too late! Her reaction was a curious mix of surprise and slight annoyance and, in hindsight, more than a couple of snickers she tried to hide. That melange underscored from that early point that words can indeed make an impact, depending on how you use them. I’m not going to lie and say that the lesson was so powerful I never swore again – nobody who knows me would be able to keep a straight face if they read any words

of mine suggesting it – but, in addition to the power words hold, it also instilled a curiosity in how simple combinations of letters can be so divisive. There is one word, an adjective that has sadly been directed over the years at certain individuals or groups thereof, that was rightly, in my view, consigned to the historical dustbin as an inappropriate relic of a bygone era. Yet, in certain groups, it has sadly made an alarming and astonishing comeback. I like to push back on it whenever it flies out of the lips of someone with whom I’m conversing. When I do so, I can sometimes see the speaker’s back straighten just slightly as they really lean in and try to justify it, with varying degrees of anger at being called out or pleasure at knowing that what they said got under someone’s skin. A common refrain in this situation is, “I can say what I want!” as if that was the proverbial hill they wanted to die on. Yet, when I reply that I too can say what I want, and that was it, it’s often met with astonishment and confusion that speech and the freedom thereof can be a two-way

street. Who knew! I’m writing this on Tuesday morning with just hours to go before comedian Jimmy Kimmel is due to return to the airwaves on his eponymous late-night show after what has been, I think we can all agree, a week that has prompted many to take a deeper dive into what freedom of speech and expression means in this highly-polarized day and age. “Last Wednesday, we made the decision to suspend production on the show to avoid further inflaming a tense situation at an emotional moment for our country,” said The Walt Disney Company on Monday, explaining its decision to reinstate Jimmy Kimmel Live! “It’s a decision we made because some of the comments were ill-timed and thus insensitive. We have spent the last days having thoughtful conversations with Jimmy and, after those conversations, we reached the decision to return the show on Tuesday.”



**BROCK WEIR**  
BROCK’S BANTER

Continued on Page 19

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# Too late for a Palestinian State?

GWYNNE DYER  
OUR WORLD TODAY



Ten more countries are recognizing Palestine as a sovereign state in the course of this week. That merely brings the total up from 147 to 157, but it's a big deal nevertheless because for the first time it includes quite a few big, rich Western countries (France, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia). But it is not unified and it still controls no territory.

The cascade of recognitions at the United Nations General Assembly's annual session in New York is pure gesture politics. What drives it is belated sympathy for the Palestinians as they face a disaster even worse than the naqba (catastrophe) that drove most Palestinians out of what is now legally the State of Israel in 1948.

The new naqba got underway last week, with the big Israeli offensive to drive all the surviving Palestinians in the Gaza Strip down to a tiny southwest corner, far too small to accommodate the Strip's surviving two million people even in the most miserable conditions. There they will be offered free trips into exile with enough money to start anew nowhere near their homeland.

The governments of the countries that are now offering token recognition to a purely virtual Palestinian state know very well what Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu intends.

They suspect that he will then exploit violent reactions by the three million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank to expel them as well and complete the conquest of all of Palestine.

They know all this, but they dare not try to stop it so long as Donald Trump maintains his unstinting, unquestioning support for the present Israeli government. The Palestinian state is probably about to become even more virtual, in the sense that hardly any Palestinians will still live there.

It all feels inevitable now, but once it wasn't. There was a time when the 'two-state solution' was quite possible. All that it required was a real Palestinian state – and it was Arabs, not Israelis, who sabotaged that possibility.

Palestine fell into British hands when the victors carved up the Middle East after the First World War. During the war Britain had promised to create a 'Jewish homeland' in Palestine to attract financial support from wealthy Zionists. Afterwards, it found itself caught between the anxieties of the resident Arab majority and the ambitions of would-be Zionist immigrants.

By 1948 the British empire was crumbling, Palestine's Jewish population had soared, and they were demanding independence. In fact, Jewish terrorists (Irgun and the Stern Gang) were killing British soldiers. The war-weary British dumped the problem in the lap of the United Nations, which decided Palestine must be partitioned into two states.

The history is complicated, but the salient fact is that sovereign states were offered to both the Jews and the Arabs in 1948.

It was a more or less equal division – about 50-50 – and the Israelis (as they would now be called) accepted at once. Why not? Their population

had grown more than tenfold in thirty years, they were now one-third of the total population, and they got half of the good land.

The Palestinians, for equally obvious reasons, rejected it. They assumed they would win in a war, although they had no army and hardly any arms themselves. The armies of much bigger Arab countries around them – Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq – would do the fighting and 'drive the Jews into the sea'. Stories about driving out the Crusaders got some play too.

The Arab armies lost, of course. All those countries were just emerging from British or French colonial rule, their kings had been chosen in London or Paris, and the main job of their armies was holding the local peasantry down. They were easily defeated by the Israelis, who ended up holding five-sixths of the country.

The other one-sixth was what we now call the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which gave shelter to most of the Palestinian refugees driven out by the Israelis. No Palestinian government had been formed, so the decisions stayed in the hands of Jordan (the West Bank) and Egypt (Gaza). And this was when the Great Mistake was made.

Neither Egypt nor Jordan showed any interest in using that remaining land as the base for the Palestinian state that had already been authorized by the UN. Yes, it would have been severely truncated, but it would be celebrating its 77th anniversary this year. Instead, Jordan simply annexed the West Bank, and Egypt did nothing useful in Gaza.

Both those areas were conquered by Israel in the 1967 war, so Palestine might now have a government-in-exile if that war had also happened on the alternate timeline. But nothing could be as bad as the fate Palestinians face now. No actual state has been erased from the map by violence since 1945, but virtual doesn't count for much.



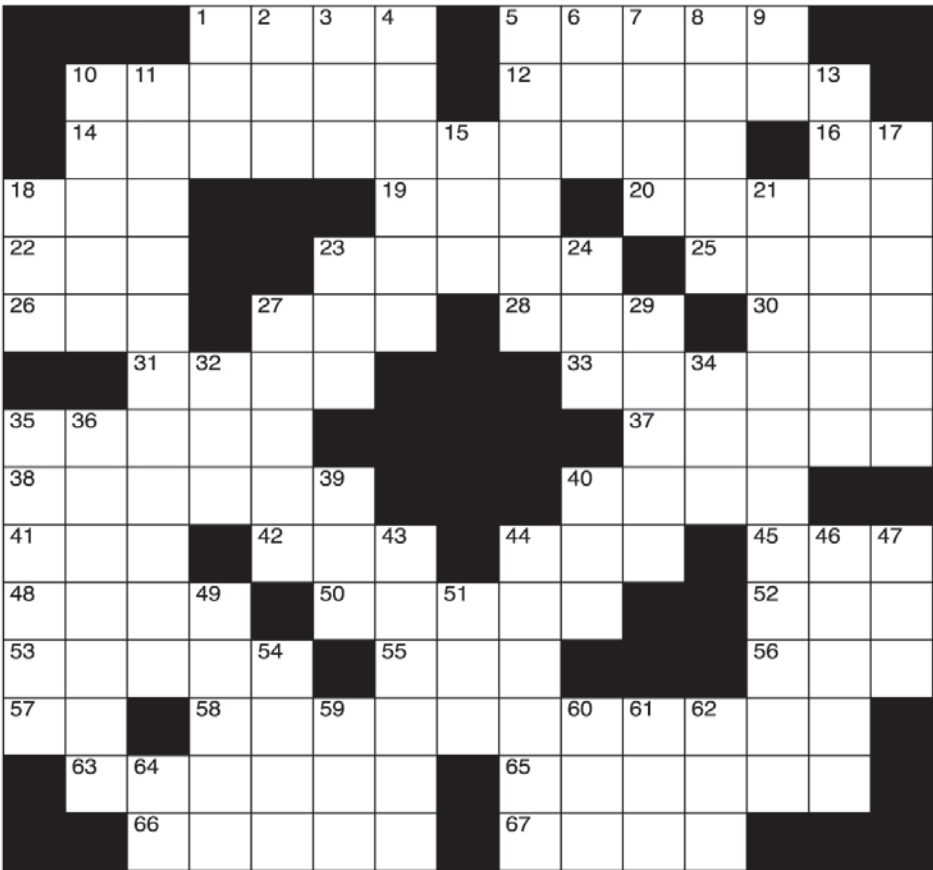
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## CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. 25A110 • Solution in Classifieds



- CLUES ACROSS**

  - 1. Native American people of CA
  - 5. Long periods of time (Brit.)
  - 10. Classroom tool
  - 12. Rods
  - 14. One who renews
  - 16. They start the alphabet
  - 18. Periodical (slang)
  - 19. Smooth singer Cole
  - 20. Dorsal sclerites in insects
  - 22. One from Utah
  - 23. The world of the dead
  - 25. Singer Redding
  - 26. Mafia head
  - 27. Wrongly
  - 28. Unhappy
  - 30. Anger
  - 31. Dark olive black
  - 33. Places to sit and eat
- CLUES DOWN**

  - 35. Made a mistake
  - 37. Damp
  - 38. Banned fuel type
  - 40. Actor Damon
  - 41. What thespians do
  - 42. A polite address for a woman
  - 44. Disallow
  - 45. Swiss river
  - 48. A banana has one
  - 50. Afrikaans
  - 52. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
  - 53. Agave
  - 55. Journalist Tarbell
  - 56. One-time tech leader
  - 57. Incidentally (abbr.)
  - 58. Intestinal bacterium
  - 63. Loose sheats around the spinal cord
  - 65. Accompanies nook
  - 66. Vogue
  - 67. Highly excited
- 29. City in India
  - 32. A place to rest
  - 34. Chat responder
  - 35. A way to move on
  - 36. What consumers are given
  - 39. Digital audiotape
  - 40. More (Spanish)
  - 43. Disfigured
  - 44. White (Spanish)
  - 46. Church building
  - 47. Georgia rockers
  - 49. Surgeon's tool
  - 51. "Much \_\_\_ about nothing"
  - 54. Make by braiding
  - 59. Local area network
  - 60. Unit of work
  - 61. Indigenous person of Thailand
  - 62. Liquefied natural gas
  - 64. Distance to top

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



# COMMUNITY VOICE

## Monthly Message: My Sister's Place's grassroots fight against domestic violence

My Sister's Place has been serving South Simcoe County since 1987, but it was a long road and a lot of hard work to get the shelter into existence. Here is a little bit about our history, or as we like to call it, "her story."

The very beginnings of the idea of a women's domestic violence shelter, which would one day become My Sister's Place, started when a small group of concerned community members came together in 1977 to discuss issues that they felt were of growing concern in Alliston and the surrounding areas.

One of the key issues they identified was how to address the needs of women

showing up at local churches, the hospital, and other agencies suffering from physical and emotional abuse. From these meetings, a steering group was created. This group worked to gather statistical information from Statistics Canada, the provincial government, local police detachments, and health agencies.

All of the information gathered proved that abuse was widespread in the area and appeared to be growing worse. At this point, the steering group approached municipal governments for support to open a women's shelter. They were seeking financial support, which was critical to move forward with the planning of the shelter,

but also needed approval, and had to deal with the hurdle that this widespread problem was acknowledged.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCSS) who's mandate is "helping to improve outcomes for children, youth, families and individuals who need support, and advancing the interests of women across Ontario," was very supportive of opening a women's shelter during this time. With their help, the first iteration of My Sister's Place and Contact Community Services was established, called The Contact Information Agency.

This agency was community-based, run by a volunteer board and an executive director. It initially provided women a "listening ear," contact numbers, and referrals to other agencies in the community that could assist them, but we still did not have a safe place for women to go, where they could stay.

The community members involved kept pushing ahead, advocating for the importance of a shelter and working to gather support in the areas that were needed to make the shelter happen. Finally, 10 years after the group first got together, the agency called "People In Transition Alliston (Inc)" was incorporated, and a house was bought on Albert Street in Alliston. In May of 1987, My Sister's Place opened its doors.

Since then, we have evolved significantly in order to meet the demands of the communities we serve. More programs and services, along with professional staff, were added to meet the needs of the women and their children, as well as the expansion of our services to all of South Simcoe County.

In 2011, our Second Stage housing units were built, providing another level of short-term affordable housing for the women we serve, and in 2014, we were able to purchase the house on the property next to the shelter and renovate it into our Third Stage housing units, thus providing two more affordable housing options.

Our organization continues to grow with outreach programs, legacy advocacy and support, as well as transitional and affordable housing support. We will continue to work hard, always providing the best services, programming, and safe housing for the women and children of South Simcoe County.

For more information log onto [www.mysistersplace.ca](http://www.mysistersplace.ca)



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**LEGION WEEK CEREMONY** – Members of the Royal Canadian Legion, Beeton, Tottenham, and Alliston branches, parade through the square near the Veterans Walkway at the New Tecumseth Administration Centre on Monday, Sept. 22. The parade was part of an official flag-raising ceremony to recognize National Legion Week, which is taking place across the country.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

## Elderly couple defends against attempted vehicle theft at local medical centre

On Sept. 22, at approximately 11 a.m., members of the Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers responded to a report of a disturbance at the Mill Pond Medical Centre, located at 106 Victoria Street West, New Tecumseth.

Upon arrival, officers located an elderly couple engaged in a physical altercation with a female individual. The parties were separated, and further investigation revealed that the accused had attempted to steal the couple's idling vehicle while one of them was still seated in the passenger seat. This led to a confrontation between the vehicle owners and the accused.

As a result of the investigation, Harlee Skinner-Jackson, 30, of no fixed address, was

arrested and charged with the following offences:

- Assault (two counts)
- Mischief under \$5,000
- Theft of motor vehicle

The accused was taken into custody at the Nottawasaga OPP Detachment and was held pending a bail hearing at the Ontario Court of Justice at

a later time.

"The OPP would like to remind all vehicle owners never to leave their vehicles unlocked or idling unattended, even for a short period of time. Opportunistic thefts can occur in seconds and pose serious risks to public safety. Always turn off your vehicle, remove the keys, and lock the doors - even if you're just stepping away briefly," said Nottawasaga OPP in a press release.



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### PUBLIC NOTICE TOWN OF NEW TECUMSETH

Pursuant to Section 295 (1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, copies of the 2024 Audited Consolidated Financial Statements for the Town of New Tecumseth are now available to any taxpayer or resident of the municipality. The statements can be viewed on the Town's website at [www.newtecumseth.ca](http://www.newtecumseth.ca). For further information, please contact Alison Gallant, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer (705) 415-3058 or Raj Naraine, Manager, Financial Services/Deputy Treasurer at (705) 415-1925.

In accordance with the *Development Charges Act, 1997*, the 2024 Statement of Development Charge Reserve Funds and Project List is now available for public viewing on the Town's website at [www.newtecumseth.ca](http://www.newtecumseth.ca). For further information, please contact the Finance department at (705) 435-3900 or by email at [dc@newtecumseth.ca](mailto:dc@newtecumseth.ca).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT [WWW.NEWTECUMSETH.CA](http://WWW.NEWTECUMSETH.CA)



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# Arts & Local Events

## Local Terry Fox Run marks 37 years and raises \$2,250

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

They ran, walked, and cycled the route along the old railway trail in Tottenham to take part in the annual Terry Fox Run.

It was a small group, but the important thing is that they turned out to participate.

Eleven local participants took part in the Run on Sunday, Sept. 14, starting at the trail on Mill Street across from the Steam Train.

Collectively, they raised \$2,250 in support of cancer research.

“The Tottenham Terry Fox Run has been held for 37 years now, and I took over the organization to keep Terry’s Marathon of Hope alive in our town,” said run organizer Phil Short.

“It would be great to see more people participate, so if anyone has any ideas on how to make the event bigger for next year or would like to assist in organizing it, please reach out to me.”

Short can be contacted by email at phil.short@yahoo.com.

A statement from the national Terry Fox Run organization underscored the impact of community efforts across Canada: “We are projecting that the community runs will raise \$11.5 million for cancer research. There is no doubt that this group of relentless volunteers will finish it for Terry and us all.”

With nearly four decades behind it, the Tottenham run continues to honour Terry Fox’s legacy in a down-to-earth, family-friendly way.

Residents who walked, ran, or cycled this year helped keep that legacy moving forward.

If you have ideas, energy, or simply want to lace up next time, Short is asking local residents to consider joining the organizing team or plan to participate next year.

Every step taken in Tottenham adds up to real support for cancer research and brings the town one step closer to helping Terry ‘finish it.’



**SUCCESSFUL STEPS** – The 2025 Terry Fox Run took place in cities and towns across the country on Sunday, Sept. 14. In Tottenham, a dedicated group walked, ran, and cycled along the railway trail. Organizer Phil Short completed the walk with three generations of his family. **BRIAN LOCKHART 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](https://orangevillehollyfest.ca) or email [shows@lpcmedia.ca](mailto:shows@lpcmedia.ca) for a vendor application form.





# TD Tree Days returns to the Nottawasaga Watershed this fall

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is working with TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (TD FEF) to deliver four TD Tree Days events in September and October.

The events will be held in Mono, Angus, Wasaga Beach, and Creemore.

The NVCA invites families, individuals, groups, and other volunteers to join forces to restore natural areas, improve wildlife habitat, and enhance water quality through the planting of native trees and shrubs.

These events also provide a meaningful opportunity for participants to connect with their local environment and learn more about the role trees play in keeping rivers, streams, and wetlands healthy.

“Tree planting is one of the most impactful ways to support a healthy watershed,” said Sarah Campbell, Aquatic Biologist at NVCA, and coordinator of this year’s events. “TD Tree Days brings people together to make a lasting difference for our communities, wild-

life, and water.”

Native trees and shrubs planted at these events will help filter runoff before it enters waterways, provide shade to keep stream temperatures cool for fish, and create important habitat for local birds and other wildlife.

Beyond their ecological role, the plantings also help naturalize landscapes for future generations to enjoy.

Since launching in 2010, TD Tree Days has engaged thousands of volunteers to plant more than 550,000 trees across Canada and abroad. This fall, TD volunteers and community members across the Nottawasaga watershed will plant nearly 1,000 trees as part of the program.

“TD Tree Days are a wonderful example of how communities and organizations can come together for nature,” added Campbell. “The trees planted this fall will support the Nottawasaga Watershed for decades to come.”

Tree planting events are planned for Sept. 20, Sept. 27, and two on Oct. 18.

Volunteers interested in tree planting and other environmental projects can visit [www.nvca.on.ca](http://www.nvca.on.ca) to learn more.



**NEW GROWTH** – The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority will be hosting tree planting days this fall. A previous NVCA tree planting event in Creemore had a good turnout of volunteers.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



## Read Local

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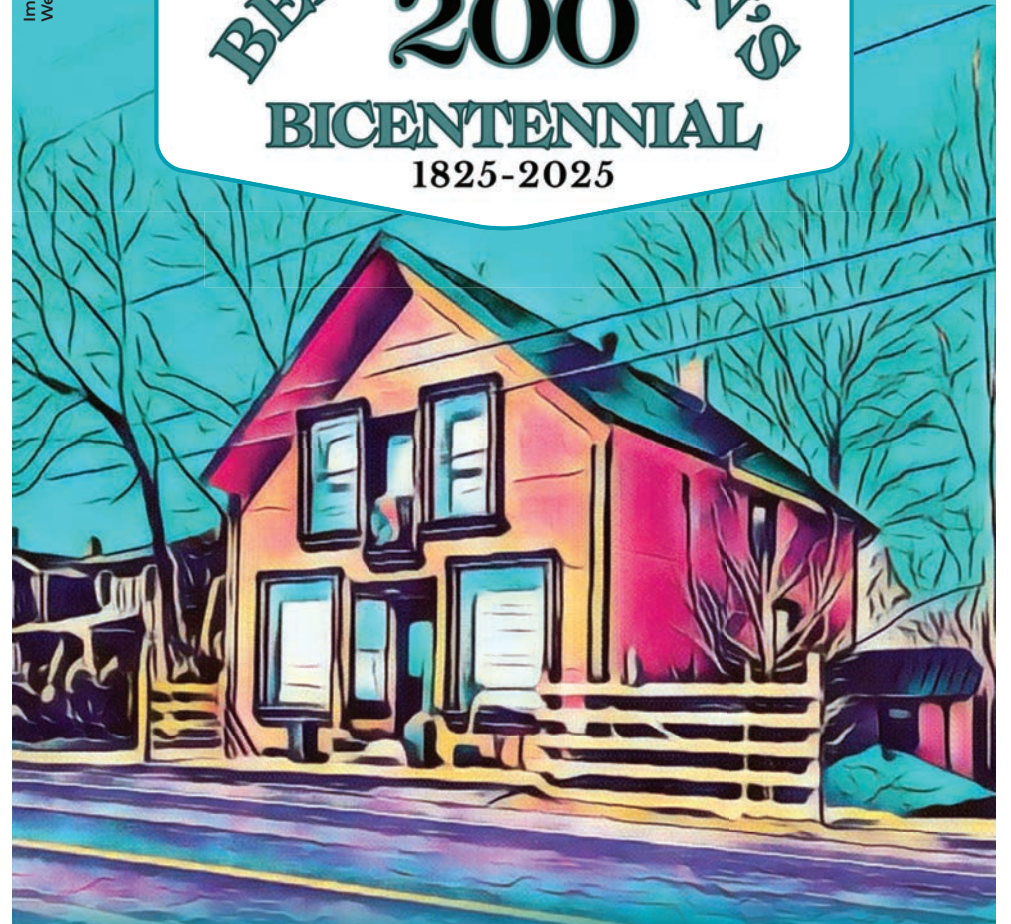
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# CONTACT Community Services announces new co-chairs at AGM

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

CONTACT Community Services has announced the election of Jonathan Scott and Katherine Pressnail as co-chairs of its Board of Directors.

The duo was elected during the not-for-profit organization’s Annual General Meeting on Sept. 18.

They will succeed Jennifer Lloyd, who has completed her term as chair after years of dedicated service on the board.

During her tenure, Lloyd oversaw the hiring of a new executive director, led CONTACT’s expansion into Collinwood, and provided extensive guidance to strengthen the organization and its social enterprises.

“Jennifer has done so much behind the scenes for our organization, our clients and the communities we are dedicated to serve,” said Tina de los Santos, executive director.

Jonathan Scott is an experienced business consultant with clients on three continents, bringing significant governance and public service experience to the role.

He serves on the board of VIA Rail Canada,

is chair of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, and is a municipal councillor in Bradford West Gwillimbury.

He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Trinity College, earned degrees in law from Cardiff University and the University of Toronto, and an MBA from Queen’s University.

Katherine Pressnail, a senior manager at KPMG Canada, combines deep professional expertise in finance and auditing with a strong record of community service.

A Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA), she holds a Master of Science in Accounting with Cognitive Analytics from Simon Fraser University and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Wilfrid Laurier University.

She has also served CONTACT as treasurer and vice-chair, guiding the organization with competence and sound judgment.

Outgoing chair Jennifer Lloyd said, “Jonathan is someone organizations consistently turn to for leadership and strategic governance. He is respected for his integrity and ability to deliver on complex projects with confidence. Katherine has already shown out-



**NEW ROLES** – CONTACT Community Services has announced that Jonathan Scott and Katherine Pressnail have been elected as co-chairs of its Board of Directors following their annual general meeting which took place Sept. 18.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

standing dedication and competence as treasurer and vice-chair, and I have no doubt she will continue to provide wise leadership. Her

financial acumen is a great. Together, they are exceptionally well positioned to guide CONTACT into its next chapter.”

## Grade 11 and 12 students in Simcoe face suspension if not immunized

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is enforcing suspension orders for students in Grades 11 and 12 who have incomplete vaccination records.

In accordance with the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA), suspensions began on Tuesday, Sept. 23.

Under the ISPA, health units are required to maintain vaccine records for every student attending school and enforce suspensions for

incomplete vaccine information.

As of Sept. 15, there were more than 2,700 outstanding records.

To support students and families, the Health Unit is offering drop-in clinics at the following office locations: Barrie, Midland, Orillia, Cookstown, Collingwood, Huntsville, and Gravenhurst.

A vaccination clinic is available on Friday, Sept. 26, from 9 a.m. to noon, and 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Students may also receive their immunization through their healthcare provider, but

must report this information to the Health Unit. Reporting immunizations can easily be done online at [smdhu.org/ImmsOnline](https://smdhu.org/ImmsOnline) or by calling the Health Unit at 705-721-7520, ext. 8827, weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Having up-to-date immunizations helps to ensure that students have the best protection against serious vaccine preventable diseases. Proper vaccination also reduces the risk of outbreaks in schools, and allows the Health Unit to act quickly to prevent and control outbreaks.



## For more than 160 years, Indigenous children were forced into Indian Residential Schools.

September 30 is National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a day to learn about the 150,000 childhoods lost to Canada’s Indian Residential School system.

[ontario.ca/LearnTheLegacy](https://ontario.ca/LearnTheLegacy)  
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**FUNDRAISING ON THE FAIRWAY** – Golfers finish the 18th hole at Woodington Lake Golf & Country Club near Tottenham during the annual Brighter Tomorrows Classic Charity Golf Tournament on Friday, Sept. 19. The event raises funds for the Special Olympics and Community Safety Partners. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTOS**

## Brighter Tomorrows Classic tournament near Tottenham raises funds for charitable causes

**BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER**

It was a record turnout for the annual Brighter Tomorrows Classic Charity Golf Tournament held at Woodington Lake Golf & Country Club near Tottenham on Friday, Sept. 19.

The annual tournament raises funds in support of the Special Olympics and Community Safety Partners.

As the tournament has grown, there was

a need to move to a golf course that could accommodate the number of golfers who were teeing off.

Fortunately, the weather was perfect for a round of golf at this picturesque country club. Golfers had a great time on the course, having fun and enjoying camaraderie while knowing they were taking part in an event that raises money in support of good causes.

“This is the third year of the Brighter Tomorrows Classic,” explained organizer

Provincial Constable Jeff McClean, who is stationed with Dufferin OPP in Primrose. “Previous to that, we had another tournament name. We’ve grown every year. The first year in Shelburne, we had 75 golfers. Today, we have 191 golfers. It’s a shotgun start. There are two foursomes per hole on the Legends course, and 11 per hole on the Legacy course.”

The tournament supports two worthy causes in the region.

“The tournament is in support of Spe-

cial Olympics and Community Safety Partners,” Constable McClean explained. “Community Safety Partners is focused on traffic safety as well as children’s safety. Special Olympics supports athletes who are participating locally and provincially, as well as nationally and internationally.”

The tournament featured special challenges on the fairways, such as closest drive and closest to the pin, as well as an opportunity to win a big prize for a hole-in-one.

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# SPORTS

NEW TECUMSETH TIMES

## Hornets take early lead in North Carruthers Division standings

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Alliston Hornets have moved into first place in the North Carruthers Division of the Ontario Junior Hockey League after winning their first three games of the 2025/26 season.

There is a new head coach on the Hornets' bench this season. Dan Schaly took over the position earlier this year.

Alliston is the only team that hasn't taken a loss so far this year.

The Hornets opened the season with a 5-0 loss to the Muskoka Bears on Sept. 12.

They followed up with a 5-1 win over the Stayer Siskins on Sept. 13.

For the third game of the season, the Hornets hosted the Penetang Kings at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Sept. 19.

The Hornets got the opener just 2:48 into the first period when Noah Larmon beat the Penetang goalie.

It was a 2-0 game when Will Millington scored at 6:07 into the second frame.

Penetang got on the scoreboard midway through the period.

It was a tie game when the Kings scored at 7:59 into the final period.

The Hornets finished off the night with a tie breaker from Jacob English with an insurance goal from Tristen Pitt to give the Hornets a 4-2 win.

This is a redemption year for the Hornets. Last season, the team finished the regular season in first place, winning 40 out of 42 games.

In the final division championship series in 2025, they lost to the Orillia Terries in



**EARLY LEAD** – The Alliston Hornets host the Penetang Kings at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Sept. 19. The Alliston team left the ice with a 4-2 win and has moved into first place in the Carruthers Division of the PJHL. **BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO**

a series that went five games and left fans stunned and wondering what happened to the team that had such a stellar season.

The Hornets will play a road game against the Huntsville Otters on Friday, Sept. 28. They will return to home ice at the New

Tecumseth Recreation Centre on Friday, Oct. 3, to host the Muskoka Bears. Game time is 7:30 p.m.

## North Dufferin Baseball League senior championship will be decided in the final game

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The North Dufferin Baseball League senior division championship series will go to a deciding Game 7 after the New Lowell Knights and Owen Sound Baysox traded wins over the weekend.

Going into the weekend, the series was tied with both teams claiming two wins in the best-of-seven series.

The Baysox won the first two games of the series on Sept. 6 and 7.

It was all tied up the following weekend when the Knights won both games to make it a 2-2 series.

Back on the diamond in Owen Sound on Sept. 20, for Game 5, the Knights jumped out to a three-run lead in the first inning.

The Baysox moved ahead in the third, scoring four runs off an Adam Shaver grand slam.

The Baysox added two more in the fourth inning and one run each in the sixth and seventh innings to seal an 8-3 win.

Shave also added a single for Owen Sound

with Robert Doyle contributing a home run and a double. Ryan Bartley, Greg Slater, Steve Barrett, Bryan Post, and Kevin Zettler each chipped in with singles.

In Game 6 on Sunday, Sept. 21, the Knights took control early in the game on some sloppy plays from the Baysox.

New Lowell scored two runs in the first and four more in the second inning.

A triple from Kurt Roy drove in two of those runs.

Owen Sound's lone run came on a right-field home run from Adam Shaver – his second home run of the weekend.

Strong pitching from both sides kept the remainder of the game scoreless over five innings.

The final was a 6-1 win for New Lowell.

With the series tied at three games each, the entire season will come down to one final game to determine who will raise this year's Strother Cup to claim the 2025 NDBL championship.

The final game will be played in New Lowell on Saturday, Sept. 27.

The first pitch is scheduled for 1 p.m.



**TIED AT TWO** – Kurt Roy of the New Lowell Knights slides into third base for a two-run triple before the ball reaches Adam Shaver of the Owen Sound Baysox during Game 6 of the North Dufferin Baseball League Championship Series on Sept. 21. The championship series is tied with both teams winning two games. The final game of the series to determine this year's Strother Cup champions will be held in New Lowell on Sept. 27. **DAVID ANDERSON PHOTO**



# Low-cost rabies clinics available for pet owners in Simcoe Muskoka

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Veterinarians in Simcoe County are offering several low-cost rabies vaccination clinics to help pet owners protect their dogs and cats, aged three months and older, from rabies.

Spread through bites or scratches from infected animals, rabies poses a risk to both pets and humans.

These clinics provide an affordable way for pet owners to ensure their animals are vaccinated and safe.

Low-cost rabies clinics are offered annually by local veterinarians who give their time to participate in the program and operate the clinics.

The first clinic was held in Midland on Saturday, Sept. 20.

A clinic was held in Tottenham on Sunday, Sept. 21, with another clinic was held Sunday, Sept. 21.

Other clinics will be held in Barrie, Bracebridge, Orillia, Oro-Medonte, Penetanguishene, and Severn.

In 2024, the first domestically acquired human case of rabies was reported in Ontario

in over 50 years. Although this case occurred outside of Simcoe Muskoka and human cases are very rare, it is important to remember that rabies is present among bats and wild animals such as raccoons, fox, and skunks, who live in and around communities.

They can pass the disease to pets and people.

The best way to protect yourself and your family against rabies is to have your pets vaccinated. It is also the law to get your pets vaccinated.

In addition to vaccinating your pet, you can help prevent the spread of rabies by not allowing cats or dogs to roam free and keep them indoors at night.

One and three-year vaccines are being offered at the clinics, depending on the animal's vaccination status. Pet owners should speak with their veterinarian to determine when their pet is due for its next rabies vaccination.

It helps to bring the previous vaccination certificate to a clinic to determine which vaccine is best.

If you are unable to attend the limited low-cost clinics, contact your local vet to arrange to get your pet vaccinated.



Anyone who has been bitten or scratched by a domestic or wild animal or been in direct contact with a bat should seek immediate medical attention and report the incident to public health. In 2024, the health unit's public health inspectors investigated 1,804 potential rabies exposure incidents, of which 1,551 involved cats or dogs.

Approximately half of these investigations involved unvaccinated pets.

The next Tottenham clinic will take place on Sunday, Oct. 4, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Pyne Hills Veterinary Hospital, 99 Queen Street South.

One and three-year vaccines are available. The cost is \$30.



**SECOND WIN** – A Banting Memorial High School Marauders' player sprints through the middle field during a game against the Nottawasaga Pines Timberwolves on the field at Banting on Thursday, Sept. 18. The Marauders won this game 12-6 and now have a 2-0 record for the season.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO



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# Dodge Ram stolen from residential property in New Tecumseth

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers are currently investigating the theft of a pickup truck from a residential property in New Tecumseth.

On Sept. 20, at approximately 8 a.m., police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle from a home on Cherry Lane. Preliminary

investigation suggests the vehicle was taken during the early morning hours, between 12 a.m. and 3:45 a.m. No surveillance footage has been recovered at this time.

The stolen vehicle is described as a grey 2023 Dodge Ram LTD pickup truck, bearing Ontario licence plate BY54900. No

additional identifying features have been reported.

The investigation remains ongoing, and police are urging anyone who may have witnessed suspicious activity in the area or who may possess relevant video surveillance footage to come forward.

If you have any information that could assist investigators, please contact the Nottawasaga OPP Detachment at 1-888-310-1122, quoting Report #E251281158. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or online at [ontariocrimestoppers.ca](http://ontariocrimestoppers.ca).

# Failure to stop for stop sign in Essa results in drug trafficking charges

Nottawasaga Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged one driver with impaired driving and one passenger with drug related offences after failing to stop for a stop sign.

On Sept. 14, shortly after 11 p.m., members of the Nottawasaga OPP were conducting general patrols when they observed a vehicle fail to stop at a stop sign on Scotch Pine Road and Brentwood Road in Essa.

Officers conducted a traffic stop, and 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.

Upon further investigation, officers located and seized 88.3 grams of suspected crystal methamphetamine and 7.6 grams of cocaine on the passenger and as a result, both the driver and passenger were subsequently placed under arrest for trafficking.

As a result of the investigation, Sohrab Mohammadian, 36, of Milton, was charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs
- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Possession of proceeds of property

obtained by crime under \$5000 - in Canada

- Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of Trafficking - Methamphetamine

Jeanette Belanger, 42, of Barrie, was charged with:

- Possession of an identity document
- Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of Trafficking - Methamphetamine
- Identity Theft - obtain or possess another person's identity information

The accused parties are scheduled to attend the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford on Oct. 9, to answer to the charges.

The charges have not been proven in court.



# Simcoe County to hold simulated hazmat emergency exercise in New Tecumseth today

The County of Simcoe and Town of New Tecumseth are advising the community of Alliston that there will be a staged emergency exercise today (Sept. 25), at the CPKC Spence Pre-Tripping Facility, located just west of the 11th Line and Tottenham Road intersection near Alliston.

This exercise will help emergency personnel learn, practice, and test the coordination of emergency services on scene in the context of a chemical leak originating from a rail car.

During this time, the community may see non-toxic coloured smoke in the area,

and additional emergency vehicles and personnel in hazmat suits present through this planned training event.

The Town's Emergency Operations Centre will be activated for this simulation, and the response will include the County's Emergency Management personnel, County of Simcoe Paramedic Services, New Tecumseth Fire Rescue, Barrie Fire HazMat Team, OPP, and staff from CPKC Railway.

The public is asked to refrain from engaging with personnel while they participate in this training exercise.



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## Tottenham man charged in connection with human trafficking investigation

BY BRIAN LOCKHART  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Stewart Street off-leash dog park in BA Tottenham man has been charged with several offences following an investigation into human trafficking.

The man was charged by the York Regional Police Counter Exploitation Unit.

On Aug. 29, 2025, the victim, who is under 18 years old, notified investigators that between Apr. 1 and Aug. 1, 2025, the suspect had lured her into providing sexual services.

Police allege that the suspect sexually assaulted the victim, took photos of her for a sexual purpose, and attempted to have clients attend her location to obtain sexual services.

The suspect was taken into custody on

Sept. 9, 2025, and was found to be in possession of a quantity of a controlled substance.

Investigators executed a search warrant at a residence in Tottenham, and an additional quantity of controlled substances was seized.

As a result of the investigation, Diaa Al-Shimmery, 35, was charged with the following:

- Sexual assault
- Sexual Interference
- Invitation to Sexual Touching
- Procure a Person Under 18
- Making Child Pornography
- Luring a Child (four counts)
- Possession for the Purpose of Trafficking – Schedule 1 Substance

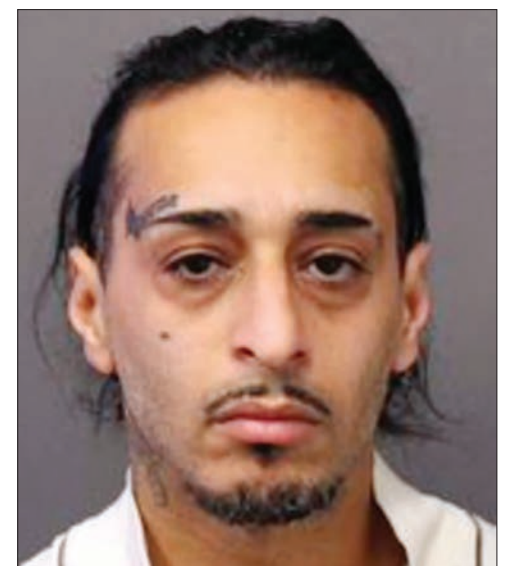
A sexual assault includes any non-consensual contact of a sexual nature. York Regional

Police would like to encourage anyone who feels they may have been a victim of a sexual assault to come forward and report the incident to police. There is no statute of limitations for sexual offences, and offenders can be prosecuted well after the date of the offence.

Investigators are releasing a photo of the suspect as they believe there are additional victims, and police are encouraging them to come forward.

**CHARGES LAID** – Police have released a photo of a Tottenham man charged with multiple sex offences as they believe there may be more victims. Diaa Al-Shimmery, 35, has been charged. Police are encouraging any victims to come forward.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



## Large-scale police operation at property near Schomberg poses no threat to public safety

A large-scale police operation on the 2nd Line near Schomberg had local residents wondering what was going on.

The operation was led by the RCMP with the assistance of local police agencies. A search warrant was served, and the property was entered.

There have been reports of individuals wearing hazmat suits working at the back of the property in buildings behind a main dwelling.

So far, police have not released any details about what is happening; however, the RCMP has released a statement regarding the ongoing investigation.

ing the ongoing investigation.

“The RCMP Central Region Serious and Organized Crime Unit has worked diligently at a site in Schomberg to collect and preserve evidence after the execution of a search warrant on September 7, 2025. As our members continue to conduct our inves-

tigation we acknowledge the concerns of residents in the area. As stated previously, there is no concern to public safety and the investigation is continuing. We hope to host a press conference in London, Ont., to release the details of the operation, likely in mid-October.”

## Nottawasaga OPP encourages additional victims to come forward following sexual assault investigation

The Nottawasaga Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police Major Crime Unit has charged an individual in relation to two sexual assault investigations, including one case that was reported as ‘historical.’

Police began an investigation on Mon-

day, Sept. 1, following a report of a sexual assault that occurred in Beeton in the Town of New Tecumseth.

On Friday, Sept. 4, 2025, a second investigation was initiated in relation to a reported historical sexual assault dating back to 2020.

As a result of these investigations, a 50-year-old Beeton man has been charged with:

- Sexual Assault – Two counts
- Sexual Interference – Two counts
- Luring a Person Under 14 years of Age

by Means of Telecommunication – Two counts

The accused was arrested and subsequently released. He is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in early October.

## Driver from Angus charged with impaired driving following two vehicle collision in Essa, no injuries reported

Nottawasaga Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged one individual with impaired driving following a motor vehicle collision involving two vehicles in Essa.

On Sept. 18, shortly before 8 p.m., members of the Nottawasaga OPP responded to a motor vehicle collision in the area of Gold Park Gate, where the driver had struck another vehicle.

No injuries were reported.

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, Aime-Lyn Vanayan, 47, of Angus, was charged with:

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

The accused is scheduled to attend the Ontario Court of Justice in Bradford on Oct. 9, to answer to the charges.

“The OPP remains committed to ensuring Ontario roads are safe from impaired drivers,” said Nottawasaga OPP in a press release. “If you suspect that someone is driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs, it is important

to call 9-1-1 to report it.”

Information can also be provided anonymously by contacting Crime Stoppers at

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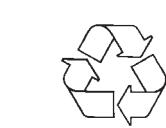


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## 708 OBITUARIES



## Brooke Hindle (née Carpenter)

It is with profound sadness that our family announces the passing of Brooke Hindle (née Carpenter) of King City, on September 14, 2025 after a short but courageous battle with ovarian cancer.

Brooke was born on June 25, 1945 in Victoria, British Columbia to Lucille and Gordon Carpenter.

Brooke was a devoted and loving wife to Art Hindle and very proud and dedicated mother to Tara Neal (Randell), Todd Phillips (Catherine), Brandon Phillips (Andrea). She was a cherished grandmother to Fraser, Mackenzie Greco (David), Blake, Colton, Ocean and Onyx, and newly great grandmother to Maverick.

She will be deeply missed by her siblings: Greg Carpenter (Rose), Randal Carpenter (Jim), Shawn Hayes (Jay), Brenley Cone (Mac) and Morgan Carpenter (Ann) and her many nieces and nephews.

Brooke was an avid horsewoman who loved show jumping, fox hunting and polo but most of all, Brooke loved her family.

A church service was held on Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. at All Saints Anglican Church, 12935 Keele Street, King City, followed by burial at Kettleby Cemetery, 631 Kettleby Road, King. Contributions in Brooke's memory may be made to Polo for Life, [poloforlife.org](http://poloforlife.org) or Ovarian Cancer Canada, [ovariancancercanada.org](http://ovariancancercanada.org).



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Continued from Page 4

## Brock's Banter: High octane words

It will be interesting to see what the results of these “thoughtful conversations” might be this evening, and, indeed, whether his monologue will throw water or gasoline on last week’s embers. Will he apologize for his words, double down on sharing his perspective, or walk a delicate tightrope down the middle?

Whichever way you slice it, he’s in an unenviable position.

And whether you agree or disagree with his comments, the debate that has taken place since his suspension has, I believe, been a valuable one.

Regardless of where you might fall on the political spectrum, there seems to have been a collective wake-up call on just how precious freedom of speech

and expression is and has always been – but also how fragile it is, how it can be snatched away, how it can be undermined by the usual suspects, and, as evidenced last week, some surprising ones as well.

It has also caused many people to consider the words Kimmel used, evaluated them against the facts, and come to, one can only hope, an informed view point.

One can also only hope that some have also embraced the idea that while freedom of speech and expression is of the utmost importance, it needn’t be a free-for-all and the words that you use can have the power to hurt and cause harm.

My mother, as a woman who

embraces “fruity language” herself and really had no real ground to stand on feigning offence when I dropped my first “F-bomb” (without even knowing what an F-bomb was, mind you) brushed it off pretty easily – but I can only imagine it’s a bit more of a challenge when one is on the receiving end of an outmoded, ridiculous, and inflammatory term that has been taken out of that historical dustbin and given a spit-polish out of, at best, ignorance, or, at worst, malice.

Freedom of speech and expression, as mentioned above, cuts both ways. No one person or group has the monopoly on it, but without being conscious of the words we use, and how we use them, it can be more fragile than we’d ever like to think.

### THANK YOU

I’d just like to end this week’s column by thanking all those who took the time to reach out last week with birthday wishes. It was heartening to hear from so many of you and it made turning forty all the sweeter. Thanks also to the anonymous individual who sent in a very generously-loaded coffee gift card. While it’s getting harder and harder to find genuine milk from Becker’s to brighten up the coffee a little bit, rest assured it will be well-used, whoever you are, and, as autumn has now officially arrived, I’m thinking something in the pumpkin spice family might hit the spot. Wait, that too is a divisive choice. But, if you disapprove of my beverage choice, I hope you defend my right to drink it!

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