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JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**HEALTHCARE RALLY:** Nurses and healthcare workers from the North York Family Health Team (NYFHT) demonstrate outside the constituency office of Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, who also serves as Ontario's Health Minister, on Dec. 3. The protest is aimed at raising awareness about what protesters call "financial mismanagement" within the NYFHT Board of Directors, as they redirected funds from the government meant for retention and recruitment of staff to balancing a budget deficit. They are calling on Sylvia Jones, as Minister of Health, to intervene to ensure the funding goes to staff retention and recruitment. See a full story on Page A4.

## Family Transition Place holds candlelight vigil

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Family Transition Place (FTP) held an outdoor ceremony to recognize the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on Thursday, Dec. 4. The gathering recognized that gender based violence remains an ongoing crisis across Canada and beyond.

A moment of silence was held shortly after the start of the ceremony, a vigil for women killed for simply being women. Candles were lit for the memorial.

Lynette Pole-Langdon, a board member for FTP, thanked those in attendance for their moment of silence.

"Thank you, everyone, for recognizing that moment of silence, but lighting the candles reminds us that today isn't just about remembrance, it's a call to action," she said. "Over the past few years, we've seen some important shifts. Municipalities, including our own, have declared gender based violence an epidemic."

"I think we all here tonight agree that women, children, and families deserve far more than the management of violence. There really is so much work still to be done. We see it every day. The sad reality is our services remain chronically underfund-



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**DELIVERING REMARKS:** Lynette Pole-Langdon, executive director of Family Transition Place, led the ceremony, highlighting the need for more advocacy and resources to further fight gender-based violence. She said that only through consistent advocacy and community support can meaningful change be achieved.

ed," Pole-Langdon added.

Despite the funding gap, Pole-Langdon thanked the shelter's supporters, whose time and money have helped keep it running, despite a lack of funding.

The evening ceremony then shifted, with shelter supervisor Tiffany McMillan coming

forward to recognize and honour the victims of the École Polytechnique massacre in 1989. She said that since that massacre, violence against women has remained a deeply rooted problem in society.

Continued on Page A6

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# Orangeville looks at road map to more efficient transportation

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A large component of devising a transportation master plan for Orangeville is anticipating what future needs will likely be.

Kevin Jones, a consultant at Paradigm Transportation Solutions Ltd., recently appeared before council to provide an update on the town's transportation master plan.

The group is near the end of the four-step process toward a sound plan, he said during the Orangeville council meeting on Dec. 8. The public and various stakeholder groups have given feedback, and the plan is at the final formulation stage.

"A lot of similar comments we got," Jones said. "But also a real theme around investing in transit for the benefit of the community."

They're looking at six per cent of travel within town being by transit. And that's about triple of what's done today, he said. To do that, bus coverage areas will be expanded and hours of operation extended to allow more trips for more people.

Paradigm is planning for growth, Jones said.

Orangeville is projected to grow to a population of 38,500 residents and will be the centre of about 22,000 jobs by 2051. Much of that growth will be in the north-west area of town.

The plan is about preparing for that growth and looking ahead to what the possible infrastructure needs will be to best accommodate that influx of people and industry.

That will require such road improvements as widening Hansen Boulevard and County Road 109, which is already in Dufferin County's transportation master plan.

County Road 109 would need an extension to Highway 9.

Blind Line should be extended to Centennial Road, and College Avenue should reach Clara Street.

Paradigm has also suggested five locations for the municipality to include roundabouts.

"The town should start to look at roundabouts as a way to manage some of the conflicts in intersections," he said. "They perform much safer and more efficient than signal lights in intersections."

He said Orangeville can live up to a transportation master plan if it makes the necessary investments over time.

Jones also suggested the town's 2017 downtown parking study should be revisited and updated. That may include future all-day parking and increased options for



FILE PHOTO

downtown employee parking.

Another facet of future transportation infrastructure will be more electric vehicle charging stations.

"Electric vehicles are coming," he said. "There'll probably be some ups and downs in terms of their adoption, but over time they will be coming. So you should be investing in that infrastructure as well."

# Healthcare workers hold protest outside Sylvia Jones' office on Broadway

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The picket, designed to be informational and raise awareness of ongoing disputes with the North York Family Health Team (NYFHT), ran from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 3.

The workers are represented by the Ontario Nurses Association, which currently represents more than 68,000 registered nurses and health-care professionals, as well as 18,000 nursing student affiliates, who provide care in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and public health.

Rita Ha, the bargaining unit president for the workers picketing, said that while they are also picketing for fair wages, they are also striking over what they describe as questionable management by the NYFHT board.

"We are fighting for fair wages, but also accountability from our board of directors and Ontario Health," she said. "The government provided recruitment, retention pay for primary care workers, which was supposed to go towards increased wages and some level increase in compensation. But the North York Family Health Team has decided to use that money, that funding, to pay off a budget deficit. We haven't seen a single cent of it."

The workers from NYFHT, which include nurses, pharmacists, social workers and more, support some 95,000-plus patients at all stages of life with comprehensive medical care, from mental and physical health to chronic disease management.

They are asking Sylvia Jones, MPP for Dufferin-Caledon and Ontario's Minister of Health, to use her powers to ensure that the funding is used responsibly and for the right purposes for which it was provided.

Ha said that their requests have been denied.

"The question has been asked of her in the house and she doesn't want to get involved, saying that it's a labour dispute," she said. "She doesn't want to oversee it, they don't want to get involved, but this is taxpayer money that was supposed to be used for recruitment and retention."

The ONA and the workers at the NYFHT argue that Minister Jones has a responsibility to get involved and hold the board of directors to account, with Ha claiming that redirecting this money was a loophole that was exploited and should be closed.

She directly called on Jones to act.

"We want her to use her power, use her oversight," Ha said. "She has to be accountable for how taxpayer money is used, how this money is being used. Help us end this strike. We need her to tell Ontario Health, tell our board to end this strike, to do what she needs to do."

The newspaper reached out to Health Minister Jones' office for comments, but the office would not comment on the situation beyond insisting that this remains an issue between the union and the employer.

As far as Ontario is concerned, the ONA and NYFHT need to work out their disagreements at the table and come to a decision that everyone is happy with.



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**ON STRIKE:** A group of nurses and healthcare workers from the North York Family Health Team (NYFHT) gathered in front of Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones' constituency office in downtown Orangeville on Dec. 3.

"The Ministry of Health is not involved in bargaining efforts with the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) and the North York Family Health Team," said Ema Popovic, spokesperson for the Minister of Health. "We encourage both parties to stay at the table and work toward a fair and sustainable agreement that supports patients and staff."

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# Some Orangeville residents say tree bylaw is a good start

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

It may be that Orangeville’s proposed by-law to protect and bolster the municipal tree canopy needs some tweaking so as not to handcuff property owners.

That’s despite survey results indicating much support for a proposed tree preservation bylaw.

According to a public survey, 81 per cent of respondents agree a private tree bylaw should ensure controlled tree removal, 78 per cent believe the town should do more to protect and maintain trees, and 74 per cent say the bylaw should help avoid unnecessary tree removals.

Seventy-two per cent support protecting the town’s tree canopy, and 66 per cent think the number of trees is decreasing in Orangeville.

Mark Middleton has two massive trees on his Zina Street property. He said they could be as old as 70 years, and he wanted to know how a resident would discern whether or not a tree is dying.

“One side of it has already fallen over, so we had to cut that off,” Middleton said. “It is dying off.”

He has planted some trees to take over the space, he said.

Katherine Rog, the town’s senior climate and sustainability specialist, said an arborist would be required to determine the health of a tree.

Wade Speirs has lived in Orangeville for about 15 years, and he lauded the town’s efforts to preserve the tree canopy.

“I feel that we’re failing the whole program if we don’t have a dedicated arborist on staff,” he said.

The program’s success depends on having a certified arborist with tree risk assessment qualifications, Speirs said.

Barbara Whyton said she is a tree-lover

who enjoys a cottage in Muskoka surrounded by nature. But she said the tree preservation goes too far, trampling on the rights of ownership.

Orangeville residents who pay taxes on a property and want to build a back deck shouldn’t be influenced by a tree in the way.

“That should be our right to be able to do what we want, within reason, on our property that we pay taxes to the town for,” Whyton said. “If we want to better our property and make it look nice and enjoy it, we should be able to do so.”

Simply put, people should be free to do what they want in their backyard to better enjoy their home and property.

A resident since 1978, she has a beautiful crimson maple in her backyard.

“Which I love,” she said of the tree. “But it is getting closer to the house.”

It has been trimmed in the past, and its roots are beginning to show above the ground. She said there may come a time when that tree has to come down. It may create a situation in which a healthy tree could soon cause damage to the house, a neighbour’s property or fence.

She said there have to be alternatives for bolstering the town’s tree canopy.

“People coming in, tourists or whatever, they’re not going to see what’s going on in people’s backyards,” Whyton said. “They’re going to see what’s going on in the streets.”

That said, planting trees on thoroughfare boulevards is better than telling property owners what to do, she said.

“We are running out of space on the boulevards,” Rog said. “And we are running out of public space to plant additional trees.”

She said the bylaw’s enforcement would be complaint-based. Unless a neighbour is upset by somebody removing their own tree, the issue wouldn’t be brought to the town’s attention. Even if that happens, the town will weigh the circumstances.

## Council says tree preservation measures need work

Written By SAM ODROWSKI  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A former town councillor is dismayed by how she feels the current municipal government has reacted to rules regarding the municipal tree canopy.

More directly, Sylvia Bradley expresses concern that years of work and much money may have been all for naught in inking a municipal tree preservation bylaw.

A draft Tree Preservation Bylaw was presented at a public meeting Nov. 24. It aims to support the town’s goal toward a 40 per cent tree canopy cover by 2040.

Bradley, a former town councillor, made a motion in June 2012 in favour of similar legislation. She was then chairperson of the town’s sustainability action team.

Bradley said that after much time, resources, public involvement, and as much as \$100,000 in costs, the motion failed.

“Our urban forest was not going to be protected,” she said in a letter to council for the Dec. 8 council meeting.

So another avenue was taken, this time to write a policy as opposed to a bylaw.

The 2020 Municipal Tree Canopy Policy was approved by council in February 2020, and it included a goal to achieve 40 per cent urban tree canopy cover by 2040.

In May 2023, council directed staff to report back with a framework for developing a tree preservation bylaw that included community input. Council received the 2023 Urban Tree Canopy Assessment report prepared by PlanIT Geo Inc. in August of that year.

The Tree Preservation Bylaw Framework was presented to council this year for review.

The draft bylaw was presented during a public meeting Nov. 24 to allow for public consultation and feedback.

“It was evident that council, in all likelihood, will not be supporting this second attempt at protecting our urban forest,” Bradley said. “All council members spoke against the bylaw and I watched with great sympathy for the staff member who authored the bylaw and saw their energy drained as councillors provided their opinions.”

Bradley, in her letter, asked why council had approved a plan to protect the urban forest with, she said, no intention of approving a bylaw. She wanted to know how much taxpayer money was spent to get a plan she said appears will not be approved.

“The community and environmental benefits of protecting our urban forest are well documented and I’m sure we all agree to the value of our urban forest,” she said.

Katherine Rog, the town’s senior climate and sustainability specialist, spoke Nov. 24 about the significance of the tree canopy. Healthy trees improve air quality, provide shade, and manage stormwater.

A tree preservation bylaw would enable the municipality to regulate tree removal. It would require residents to have a permit to cut down or injure a healthy tree with a diameter of at least 30 centimetres.

It will require compensation or replacement when trees are removed.

“The intent of this bylaw is for environmental protection, not financial gain, and certainly not to punish residents,” Rog said.

Enforcement will be complaint-based.

Councillor Debbie Sherwood said she be-



lieves the proposed bylaw falls a little short in her estimation in that the bylaw misses historic tree preservation.

“I think it’s very imperative that we be protecting trees of cultural or historical significance,” she said and added that there are municipalities with historical tree preservation legislation.

Rog said heritage trees are typically of a certain trunk diameter. And that would be captured by Orangeville’s proposed bylaw.

Coun. Andy Macintosh said he agrees with the importance of tree preservation. But, on the other hand, he is in favour of the autonomy of property owners.

The minimum threshold for protected trees in the proposed rules is those with a trunk diameter of 30 centimetres. He suggested he isn’t very handy with a tape measure.

If he removes a tree on his property, he believes is 25 centimetres, but somebody says it meets the 30-centimetre minimum, what is his penalty?

Tim Kocialek, the town’s infrastructure services general manager, reminded Macintosh that the bylaw would be driven by complaints.

Coun. Joe Andrews and Coun. Rick Stevens both shared Macintosh’s predicament.

Andrews said it’s imperative that the town meet tree canopy requirements. Given that the setup would be complaint-based, he said not everybody who may complain is a qualified arborist.

“I think it’s a great start, but I there’s maybe more work that needs to be put into the bylaw,” Stevens said.

Coun. Tess Prendergast is chairperson of Sustainable Orangeville and “somebody who spends an inordinate amount of time thinking about trees.” But she’s a resident, too.

She believes the bylaw should be directed at strict penalties for developers that have a great impact on tree loss.

“Residents are already our biggest partners in growing the canopy,” Prendergast said. “Any bylaw that we put in place should empower them and not discourage them.”

Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor said there should be penalties for any arborist hired by a property owner to remove a healthy tree.

“That would really make a difference,” Taylor said.

Mayor Lisa Post said the current draft of the bylaw is too restrictive for responsible homeowners. The demands for permits and arborist evaluations are too much red tape for residents and pose unnecessary expense to residents when affordability is a challenge.

“The tree’s already cut down by the time somebody complains,” Prendergast said.

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# Family Transition Place holds candlelight vigil for victims of gender based violence

Continued from FRONT

“Thank you, everyone, for recognizing the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women and pausing while we remember the 14 young women who lost their lives at École Polytechnique,” she said. “We also recognize the many women, girls and gender diverse peoples whose lives continue to be shaped or lost because of gender-based violence in Canada.”

She continued by reminding those in attendance that while the statistics can paint a grim picture, it’s important to remember that every number is a person, a woman, a child, families that have to sacrifice so much just to be at peace. But with real action and support, the cycle can be broken,

“One in three women in Canada will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Every six days, on average, a woman is killed by her intimate partner. These are more than statistics for our shelter. These are people coming to us for support. Gender-based violence is preventable, and it takes all of us. It requires sustained investments, and it requires the courage to speak openly about a problem that thrives

in silence.”

Pole-Langdon continued by calling out all the supporters of the shelter, whose support and advocacy have been instrumental in their mission.

“We feel so blessed that we have our wonderful volunteers and our wonderful community that supports us,” Pole-Langdon said. “We appreciate all our donors that stand beside and support us, and all of you that came out here in the freezing cold.”

She continued by making a call to action to the community.

“Each of us here has a role to play, whether you’re a door, a volunteer, a neighbor, a parent, a service provider, anyone that believes we should all have a safer future,” she said. “Your voice, your advocacy, your willingness to stay engaged matters. We need coordinated, sustained, and structural change. We need to refuse anything less than safety, dignity and justice for every woman, every child, and every survivor.”

Family Transition Place concluded its Dec. 4 ceremony with a heartfelt message - no matter how reality might seem, there is always hope and a light at the end of the tunnel. Gender-based violence is not an invincible reality. It can be challenged,



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**LIGHTING THE CANDLES:** Family Transition Place staff and guests in attendance lit small candles together in a show of unity and remembrance, both as a tribute and a promise to continue to fight for a safer future.

changed, and prevented.

FTP provides critical services to women and their children who have experienced abuse and unhealthy relationships. These services include shelter services for those

who need to leave home, counseling services, and outreach campaigns to educate and inform.

For more information, go to FTP’s website at <https://familytransitionplace.ca/>

# East Garafraxa lavender farm recognized at 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Awards

Written By SAM ODROWSKI  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The founder and owner of a 250-acre lavender and sunflower farm in East Garafraxa was recently recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

Julie Thurgood-Burnett of Hereward Farms was presented with an Honourary Mention in the Women in Excellence in Agriculture category at OMAFRA’s 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Awards in November.

“I’m truly honoured to be recognized among so many inspiring leaders in agriculture,” said Thurgood-Burnett. “This award is a reflection of our team’s dedication and our mission to create something meaningful — not just for our customers, but for our land, our community, and for Canadian agriculture as a whole.”

Thurgood-Burnett was recognized for her leadership in sustainable farming, having converted her family’s plot of land into a successful farm-to-business operation.

Hereward Farms began in 2020 with very humble beginnings. Thurgood-Burnett planted just 40 lavender plants as a side project – what she called “a passion planted in the soil.”

From there, it has rapidly expanded into a large agricultural operation.

“I never imagined it would bloom into more than 6,000 lavender plants and 400,000 sunflowers, or that it would change our lives the way it has,” she told the Citizen.

“Watching this farm grow has been nothing short of magical. Every season reminds me that when you nurture something with love, hard work, and a bit of lavender-scented optimism, incredible things can grow.”

Hereward Farm’s focus is on crafting premium skincare and home products, which are 100 per cent Canadian-made and eco-friendly. These products are made from crops grown on the farm.

“Guided by the farm’s philosophy, ‘from our soil to your soul,’ Hereward Farms demonstrates how agriculture and mindful entrepreneurship can grow hand in hand. From seed to shelf, every step of production happens with intention — celebrating nature, nurturing community, and setting a new standard for what sustainable beauty and home care can look like in Canada,” reads a press release recognizing Hereward Farms as a recipient of OMAFRA’s 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Award.

OMAFRA congratulated Thurgood-Bur-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**SUCCESS STORY:** Julie Thurgood-Burnett, owner and founder of Hereward Farms in East Garafraxa, received an Honourary Mention in the Women in Excellence in Agriculture category at OMAFRA’s 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Awards in November.

nett, along with all the 2025 award recipients, for their efforts in supporting the future of agriculture in the province.

OMAFRA’s 2025 Excellence in Agriculture Awards took place at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto on Nov. 8.



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\$182

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LICENSING EXTRA

\$42,912

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C.O.B \$28,527.66

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FOR 48 MONTHS FOR 3.9% - 16,000KM/YR  
BASED ON \$54,320 SELLING PRICE - \$0 DOWN

2026 GMC TERRAIN AT4 AWD



6 TO CHOOSE FROM

LEASE FROM **\$147**<sup>+HST/LIC</sup>  
**/WK**  
FOR 48 MONTHS FOR 3.9% - 16,000KM/YR  
BASED ON \$49,010 SELLING PRICE - \$0 DOWN

2025 GMC CANYON ELEVATION 4X4



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BASED ON \$54,775 SELLING PRICE - \$0 DOWN

2026 GMC SIERRA 1500 ELEVATION 4X4 2025 GMC SIERRA 2500HD PRO REG 4X4



14 TO CHOOSE FROM

LEASE FROM **\$196**<sup>+HST/LIC</sup>  
**/WK**  
FOR 48 MONTHS FOR 3.99% - 16,000KM/YR  
BASED ON \$85,585 SELLING PRICE - \$2600 DOWN



25668

FINANCE FROM **\$251**<sup>+HST/LIC</sup>  
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# Arts & Entertainment



## LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Orangeville artist turns logs and stones into heavy, high-value art

Written By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

There is a painting on the wall that weighs 32 pounds. It is an interesting work of a tree and leaves, the ground and a beautiful background behind. Yet, the trees are actually trees, with leaves made of stone, and the ground is small stones; the background is painted, but sometimes Lecky uses glass for water and sky.

Reg Lecky spoke to the Citizen from his 150-year-old home, specifically his bedroom, where many logs and bags of stones are stored.

“It’s a labour of love,” he said. “I’ve been doing it for a little while but I’m sitting in my bedroom looking at a pile of logs.”

He has lived in Orangeville for 30 years and has owned this home for 10. It stands in a tight corner of the town where the busy road is noisy, and the house is now too small for the art he is doing.

“I’m looking for a country place,” he remarked, “more spacious.”

Art has always been Lecky’s passion: as a tattoo artist, making stained glass, rock painting, and many other forms, always creative.

A few personal details were interesting: he commented that his son is in the military and that his daughter has graduated from Guelph University as an environmental scientist, working at the Island Lake Conservation Area.

He and his girlfriend go out to collect rocks, logs, and wood, especially birch. He cuts and treats everything and varnishes the collection as needed.

“I treat the stone and shells,” he said. “they can be dirty, so I wash them. With wood especially I do my thing. It is a rare theme to create these pieces.”

What is not needed immediately is stored and organized. Meanwhile, Lecky makes his canvas and boards.

“It started in 2009, on a camping trip,” the history began. He had been working on a painting, and there were plenty of logs on

their campsite. So, he started attaching pieces of logs to the painting.

He reckoned he had the skills to seal the wood but admitted it was a learning curve to make it right. “I had a picture in my head and materials in front and thought about how they would fit together.”

He started by painting the elements, while noting that some of them don’t need painting. Working on it, there were a lot of “tricky parts,” and when it was done, he had to make his own frame.

“The paintings are heavy,” Lecky agrees, “but they do sell.”

In his work life, Lecky is a millwright. He worked for Chrysler in Brampton for 30 years, but was quick to emphasize he was not tied to Brampton, saying, “Orangeville’s got everything, trails, nice restaurants; it’s a beautiful town.”

While Lecky was still working for Chrysler, it took a long time to do one piece, but he wanted to do this art and having retired from Chrysler, he was happy to say, “Now I can.”

“There are a lot of tricky parts, “ he confirmed.

In September, Reg Lecky joined Headwaters Arts, hoping to participate in the show Headwaters hosted in September. He was not, but could join the Artful Giving show and sale, currently open at the Headwaters Gallery in the Alton Mill Arts Centre. He signed up for the show in January, titled “Dreamscape.”

Originally, he felt some concern about whether the stones in his paintings would stick, but as it turns out, they have “stood the test of time.”

To add the flow and beauty of sky and water, Lecky uses shell and glass to wondrous effect.

Born in Ireland, Lecky loves to travel back to the green Isle, driving up the coast, visiting the small towns to enjoy the humour and hospitality of his original countrymen.

His unusual paintings have sold well de-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**SHOWCASING ART:** Reg Lecky holds his painting, titled *After the Rains*, combining wood, logs, and stone, with a painted background.

spite their weight, and this pleases him for the validation it gives. They can be priced at \$4,000 or more, as is the one at the Headwaters Arts Gallery.


For sure, he says, it is much better to see them in person, since a photograph cannot express how the texture of wood and stone, glass and shell bring power to the scenes

they portray. However, he has several photos on his website.

They can also be seen at Dragonfly on Broadway. Owner, Joan Hope, has been a wonderful supporter of Lecky’s work.

“They are a lot of time and effort,” Lecky said. “If I don’t sell them, I keep them.”

Lecky’s website is [www.earthart.ca](http://www.earthart.ca)




**Larry Soper**  
Sales Consultant

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Lucas brings a fresh and energetic approach to the Orangeville Chrysler sales floor. With a passion for helping people and a commitment to great service, he takes the time to understand each customer's needs. Lucas is focused on making the vehicle-buying process easy, comfortable, and enjoyable.




**Andrew Maiorana**  
Sales Consultant

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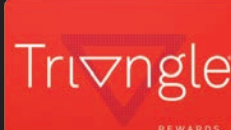
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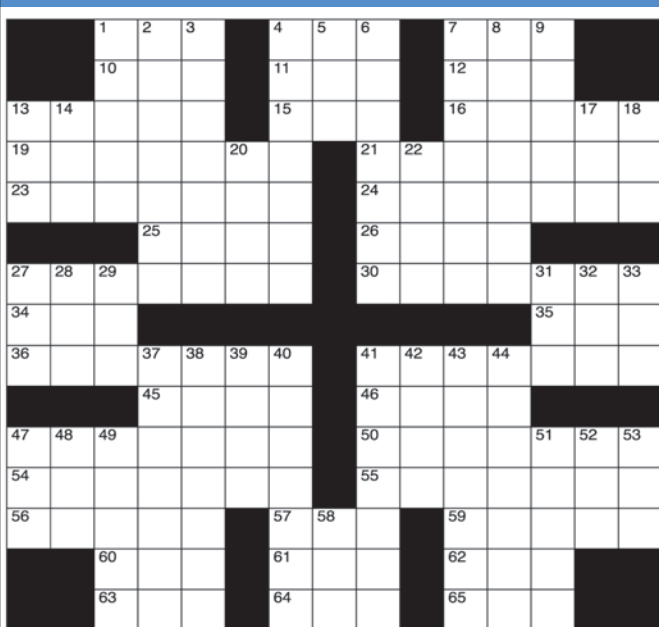
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### The Citizen CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. 25C310 • Solution on page: CLASSIFIEDS SECTION



**CLUES ACROSS**

1. American automotive titan

4. Tire term

7. Two-year-old sheep

10. Indigenous people of Thailand

11. Anti-Soviet Cold War group

12. Actress de Armas

13. Not moving

15. Cool!

16. Plants of the arum family

19. Connected with touch

21. Pen stain

23. Monetary units

24. School kids' art project

25. Early Bell Canada executive

26. Sword

27. Hates

30. Fixed in one place

34. Pie \_ \_ \_ mode

35. Moved swiftly on foot

36. Carrier on vehicle

41. A path to get through

45. "Rule, Britannia" composer

46. Spiritual leader

47. Flowing

50. Respectful compliments

54. Cure

55. Soft, lightweight fabric

56. Building material

57. Japanese delicacy

59. A way to cause to be swollen

60. One and only

61. You might get one in summer

62. Wreath

63. Thus far

64. They \_

65. Employee reference

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Policemen (French)

2. Toy dog

3. Intestinal condition

4. Muscular weaknesses

5. Helps little firms

6. Alphabetical lists

7. Takes down

8. Facilitates

9. Ethnic people of Ethiopia

13. Engine additive

14. Explorers group

17. Written account

18. Consumed

20. Opposite of first

22. No (slang)

27. Government lawyers

28. NY Giants great

29. Small amount

31. A way to save for your future

32. Fall behind

33. Midway between northeast and east

37. Head pain

38. Wildly popular sport

39. "Princess Diaries" actress Hathaway

40. Boat race

41. About fish

42. Nursemaid

43. Able to be marketed

44. Not as large

47. Parts per billion (abbr.)

48. Paddle


49. Oneness

51. Bitter chemical

52. Not around

53. Very fast airplane

58. Main tributary of the Rhine



**Double Word Puzzle**

Unscramble the individual words to reveal letters for the phrase.

GPAES   


CVROE   

KAMR   


AIED   

       B


4   2   1   6                      1                      3   3   5




**Can you guess what the bigger picture is?**




Answer: Little Free Library



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**SYNOPSIS**

a brief summary of something

Answer: Read a book



# Maggiolly's new owners find warm welcome in Orangeville's arts community

Written By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

Carl and Emilie Jagt, the new owners of Maggiolly's Arts and Supplies, are very happy they have come to Orangeville, and they are still thrilled they took the leap of faith to purchase the shop. People of the town are their new neighbours, and the extent to which those neighbours are supportive by shopping and enjoying their classes gives them reasons for optimism in the future and the energy to help that along.

In a recent interview with the Citizen, they responded to the health check of the business, as it were, by saying, the shop is "going great," and they are "absolutely loving it."

Of the classes they have held in the back of the shop, Carl commented, "We're having fun meeting new people and seeing the remarkable work people are doing."

The time since they officially took over the premises on Aug. 26 this year has been spent partly on refitting the shop and attending to superficial things like the displays. Their three windows are all about the season, with Elf on the Shelf, artwork, colouring on Santa's shelf and Gnomes of Cedar. All good fun.

Emilie mentioned she was on her hands and knees, deep cleaning the shop floor, and was very happy with how that came out: "People are commenting," she said.

Plans for the new year are blooming. They are reaching out to artists known to them in the broader region, beginning with Orillia and Elora. Absolutely, was the promise that there will continue to be art classes, but also more – book binding, sculpting, "everything is on the table," said Carl.

They made the point that Amelia Perri, from whom they purchased the shop, was on her own to run it, but now, "there's two

of us, fully invested – that's more muscle."

Perri owned and ran the shop for 29 years.

Customers are invited to suggest classes, and, indeed, life drawing was requested. Life drawing classes are going ahead in the new year; they are already arranged.

"It's fine to paint a still life of a vase, but to draw and paint the human body is another art form," said Carl.

As if to confirm the welcome Maggiolly's extends, when Firelight and Frost festivities were cancelled due to inclement weather, the door was open to shelter people from the storm.

Between them, they told us that they "played Christmas Story for them to watch and the kids painted, while the parents had a place to sit and get warm."

They wanted to get their message out: "We are in this for the long run."

The shop will be closed for a week in January to allow the couple to clear out the basement and set up a spare paint room for "Jam Face painting and split cake."

Face and body paint have been a big part of Emilie's artistic life, and she is bringing that to Maggiolly's as well. Part of the plan to clean up the basement is to bring the fun and novelty of face and body painting.

"It is an illusion," Emilie began, explaining the charm. "Whether a kid at a fair, they truly believe. When that kid has the paint on, he believes he's that character until the paint comes off. Full body paint is all about the illusion and the fun behind it."

Emilie took classes for face and body painting in person. She is very proactive about the need to practice, "it's all about practicing. Every time I paint, I learn something and do better."

Luckily, kids love being painted; there has always been enthusiasm for it.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**HELPING THE ARTS THRIVE:** Carl and Emilie Jagt are proud and happy to stand in front of their holiday window display. The couple bought Maggiolly's in August this year and are excited to be part of Orangeville's art scene

The couple turned their faces to the future and expressed their ambition to run the shop for another thirty years.

Maggiolly's is largely a walk-in. While they are also engaged in growing an online business too, with shipping on a national level, they have changed the shipping policies. They have had a good online response to shipping canvases and brushes; they are looking to supply paint, pens, and really every need for artists.

From Carl, "Let people understand cre-

ativity is not the claim to just anyone, but for everyone. We want to democratize art. Come see our class list; even for classes you think are too hard – just throw someone in.

"Art is fundamental."

Later in the year, there will be an intro to acrylics, with a chance to learn everything about them.

"All the classes will teach different levels," said Carl.

Maggiolly is located at 158 Broadway.

# Shelburne's Food For You is hosting a free Christmas dinner for the community

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Mark your calendars, because a warm Christmas meal is cooking up in Shelburne.

Food For You, a weekly hot meal program operating in Shelburne, is hosting its seasonal Christmas dinner on Dec. 17 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., and everyone in town is invited. No money, food, or plates are required; everything will be prepared by the team behind the program.

Sandra Gallagher, one of Food For You's creators, said guests can expect a full-course meal waiting for them when they arrive.

"This is a seasonal dinner, and it's actually going to be our last dinner meal for the year," she said. "We're going to be having turkey, dressings, potatoes, and vegetables, you know, a good, hearty meal."

Of course, there will be some light desserts served as well. The exact treats haven't been decided yet, so for now, Gallagher said it will be a surprise. Whatever is decided, there will be a focus on making the desserts as healthy as possible to stay aligned with Food For You's mission of serving warm, healthy meals to those in need.

She continued by saying that everyone is welcome, regardless of age or situation. While they currently see a lot of users that

come in solo, such as seniors, they are always welcoming families as well, and have provisions for potentially picky eaters among kids.

"We try to have multiple types of soups and foods stored in case we need options. We know that kids might not like all of them," Gallagher said. "But I definitely think a full turkey dinner with veggies, potatoes and such should have something for everyone to enjoy."

This dinner is also special because it's another collaboration between Food For You and a local business, which has been a focus of the program.

On Dec. 10, Trillium Ford in Shelburne hosted a mac and cheese dinner. These

sponsored meals give Food For You even more resources to deliver more food with greater variety.

"This dinner is sponsored by Metz Homes LTD, and we'd very much like to thank them for their sponsorship," Gallagher said.

The dinner will be hosted at Shelburne's Trinity United Church, 200 Owen Sound St, in the lower level.

Beyond this dinner, Food For You will continue its warm meals program in the new year and is still accepting food and cash donations.

For more information on Food For You, go to <https://shelburnerotaryclub.com/blog/soup-for-you/>.

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# Children’s Christmas Market in Melancthon helps kids with holiday shopping

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Helping Hands Project is running a Christmas market from Dec. 12 to Dec. 14 at Tripp Fields in Melancthon.

Sometimes, Christmas shopping isn’t very affordable. That’s even more apparent if you’re a kid looking to get something thoughtful for your parents, siblings, or someone else who’s close.

But that’s where the Helping Hands Project aims to step in. They have gathered a large assortment of donated items to be sold for affordable prices, so that kids can have a chance to purchase something nice for Christmas.

Brenda Serbin, one of many volunteers with Helping Hands, said the goal was to give kids some independence.

“The general philosophy behind the market was to provide the kids with an opportunity to go out shopping without breaking the family budget,” she said. “It’s also an independence thing, giving them the freedom of purchasing and gifting something to someone they care about, to know that feeling of giving.”

This market sells items priced from \$1 to \$5, no matter what they are. This allows kids on a tight budget to purchase several items for as little as \$10. The money isn’t the focus, but the heartfelt gift the kids will give is.

“Everything is priced from \$1 to \$5, so that kids can come to the market with \$20 and maybe get something for the whole family with cash left over,” Serbin said. “As a mom or grandma, if your child’s gone and picked out an item that didn’t break your budget, you’re quite happy. It could be a plastic ring, and you’d still say ‘wow’ because it’s a genuine gift they picked for you from their heart.”

All of the money raised by the market will stay in the community and be donated to other charitable causes, such as local food banks.

Of course, for that extra special touch, the market also has a gift wrapping station, so when the kids have picked out what they’d like to get, they can have their choices wrapped up for them.

The Helping Hands Project is also preparing some shopping certificates for kids. Cash donations, such as a very generous

\$500 donation from a local resident, will be broken down into small, \$10 packages to be given to kids who might have a little bit more cash for their Christmas shopping.

For parents on a tight budget during the holiday season, a special area has also been set aside. Concealed from the rest of the market, adults can come in and shop for items they might want as gifts, in comfort and privacy.

Serbin said that there will be a variety of items to choose from.

“We have things like brand new roasters, jewelry, toys, and stuff,” she said. “There’s a lot to pick from. I have a banquet hall on my property, a 3,000 square foot building, and it’s absolutely packed with stuff we collected this year from donations.”

The Helping Hands Project is a relatively new but very busy and spirited organization. There is no hierarchy in the group; they maintain a collaborative atmosphere where everyone can propose new ideas freely, and it’s been that way since the group was founded.

“Everything is done by voting here, including our name. They just thought of some names, and the Helping Hands Proj-

ect was the one we went with,” Serbin said. “We all own our own successes and failures. At the end of the day, we are just a bunch of people that love doing initiatives like this.”

The project is also looking to partner with local businesses.

“We would really love to have more businesses donate, as we haven’t had too many step up yet,” Serbin said. “Even if it was \$20 per business, we could give out a bunch of \$10 shopping certificates to kids. It would make a huge difference.”

While they might be new, the Helping Hands Project is full of passion and energy, and has committed itself to bringing more positivity to a world that needs it. They hope that anyone interested will visit their market and consider supporting them in the future.

The market will be open from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Dec. 12, and open at 11 a.m. on both Dec. 13 and 14. It will be set up at Tripp Fields, 723190 Sideroad 250, Melancthon.

For more information about the Helping Hands Project and the market, contact Brenda Serbin at 519-943-3582.

# Ontario Provincial Police call on the public to be cautious near frozen bodies of water

Snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and skiing are all great ways to get exercise throughout the winter season.

But when enjoying recreational activities in the snow, it’s important to remember that frozen bodies of water can pose a threat.

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is urging the public to exercise extreme caution when near bodies of water, and to remember, “no ice is safe ice,” even if it appears frozen.

“Early-season ice is often dangerously thin and unpredictable. While some people enjoy snowmobiling or motorized recreational vehicles on frozen lakes and waterways, current ice conditions greatly increase the risk of breaking through the ice and experiencing cold-water immersion, which can become life-threatening within minutes,” reads a statement from Central Region OPP. “Taking unnecessary risks not only endangers individuals but also puts emergency responders in harm’s way during rescue efforts.”

The OPP warns that snowmobilers and anyone on a motorized recreational vehicle must remain on designated trails and avoid unfamiliar areas, particularly at night. The police also ask that weather and trail conditions be checked before leaving on a trip.

Wearing appropriate clothing is important to prevent hypothermia and fully charging a cellphone can assist in an emergency situa-

tion. As well, downloading the what3words app can assist first responders in pinpointing someone who needs help.

Other tips include not going out alone and telling someone about a planned destination and expected time of return.

As with any motorized vehicle, drinking alcohol or consuming drugs is illegal while driving. Alcohol and drugs impair judgment and reduce the body’s ability to stay warm in cold conditions.

Carrying first aid, a survival kit, and safety equipment, such as ice picks and throw ropes, can make the difference in an emergency.

“Response time from emergency personnel may be prolonged due to the weather conditions, and these tools can assist you while you wait for help to arrive,” reads the OPP’s statement.

Inspecting a snowmobile or other motorized vehicle is important to do regularly to ensure it is in good mechanical condition.

“If someone falls through the ice, call 911 immediately. Safe rescue efforts require appropriate equipment and training. You cannot help anyone if your safety is also at risk,” reads the OPP’s statement.

“Make safety your priority this winter season. Take necessary steps to ensure you return home safely to your loved ones after a day enjoying the winter weather.”



STOCK PHOTO

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JADE TRAVERSO

SALES ASSOCIATE

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If you need anything at all, or would like to schedule a visit — even just to stop by for a coffee — please feel free to reach out anytime. I'd love to hear from you.

Thank you so much for your patience and continued support. I'm really looking forward to seeing you soon.

Warmest regards, Jade

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RYAN SKILLEN

SALES ASSOCIATE

Orangeville Chrysler is pleased to welcome Ryan Skillen as the newest member of its sales team. Born and raised in Orangeville, Ryan brings a strong understanding of the local community and its automotive needs. His long-standing passion for the automotive industry—particularly the Stellantis brand—drives his commitment to offering customers knowledgeable guidance and exceptional service.

Beyond his professional background, Ryan leads an active and well-balanced lifestyle. An avid golfer, he can often be found on the course perfecting his game.

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RILEY MURPHY PHOTOS  
**CHRISTMAS CHEER:** Mayfield Secondary School's Jazz Studies Chorus performs at Bethell Hospice's annual Celebrate Light and Love Tree Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 4.

# Supermoon shines on Bethell Hospice's Celebrate Light and Love Tree Lighting

Written By RILEY MURPHY  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Bethell Hospice was lit up this past Thursday not just with the annual tree lighting ceremony or this year's Winter Supermoon, but with the light of those in remembrance. The Bethell Hospice Foundation recently held its annual Celebrate Light and Love Tree Lighting Ceremony. Despite the less-than-ideal minus-ten conditions, the community showed up in full force. "The polar vortex brought some problems, but it also brought a beautiful full moon and a clear night," shared Bethell Hospice Foundation Board co-chair Adrian Horwood. The celebration was illuminated by the last Supermoon of 2025. First gathering in the Caledon Public Library's Inglewood Branch, attendees of the event were welcomed in with the voices of Mayfield Secondary School's Jazz Studies Chorus singing Christmas classics such as Carol of the Bells. After their performance, the choir led the way to Bethell Hospice, as each person was given a candle to light their path. Upon arrival, attendees were invited to either hold onto their candles or place them at the base of the soon-to-be-lit tree. Stan Cameron, Caledon's Peel District School Board Trustee, welcomed everyone to the Hospice. Cameron has been a volunteer with Bethell Hospice for 13 years and read the names of those in remembrance that night. Lighting this year's tree was Clarissa Martin, a member of the Bethell Hospice Care Team. Martin is a personal support worker who recently won the Dr. Joan Lesmond Bursa-

ry Award, which reflects a commitment to lifelong learning, mentorship, and community-based quality of care. After Martin had the honour of lighting this year's tree, Bethell Hospice's Medical Director, Dr. Michael Gagnon, read aloud "We Speak Your Name", a poem that has been rooted in Bethell Hospice's Light and Love Celebration since volunteer Jake McArthur originally wrote the piece in 2010. "We speak your name. Not for the last, but for this day. And feel connected when we hear our voices say your name," closed Gagnon, as Cameron began to read more than 380 names. When Cameron read each name aloud, the name was repeated back to him by the crowd. Horwood explains that this day is extremely important to him. "I have been coming here for six years now since my late wife passed, and I find the tree lighting and the remembrance of our loved ones to be special," he says. "I don't have the words for it." "Each one of us has been given a gift of light in memory or in honor of someone special, and we are really all honored and privileged to be able to remember so many loved ones and to do it together in community," says Horwood. Light and Love is also a key fundraising event for Bethell Hospice in their journey to raise \$1.8 million each year to keep their services entirely free and continue offering them to residents and families. Bethell Hospice raised \$150,000 through this year's fundraiser. Afterwards, attendees were invited to lay their candles at the base of the tree and join together once again for refreshments at the Inglewood library branch.



**COMMUNITY SPIRIT:** A crowd gathers for Bethell Hospice's annual Celebrate Light and Love Tree Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 4.

# Two-vehicle collision in Amaranth results in impaired driving charges

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged a Shelburne resident with impaired operation-related offences following a motor vehicle collision (MVC). On Nov. 29, just before 10:30 p.m., Dufferin OPP officers responded to a two-vehicle collision in the area of County Road 11 and 5 Sideroad in Amaranth. Upon arrival, officers spoke with the drivers, who were being assessed by paramedics, and subsequently initiated an impaired driving investigation. Pratheeb Uthayakumar, 36, from Shel-

burne, has been charged with:

- Failure or refusal to comply with demand
- Dangerous operation
- Pass on right - not in safety

The accused individual is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville. Their driver's licence was suspended for 90 days, and their vehicle was impounded for seven days. The listed charges have not been proven in court.

Ikenna Mgebeze, a 40, from Dundalk, has been charged with operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus). The accused individual is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville. Their driver's licence was suspended for 90 days, and their vehicle was impounded for 7 days. The listed charge has not been proven in court.

# Traffic complaint in Melancthon leads to the arrest of a Dundalk resident



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# Orangeville’s treasurer discusses capital program ahead of budget

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The capital budget aims to balance Orangeville’s infrastructure needs with taxpayers’ affordability.

Cheryl Braan, the town’s treasurer, provided details about the 2026 municipal capital budget during a special meeting Dec. 9. The consolidated spending plan with details about capital and operating expenditures and the year’s OPP service bill was expected to be discussed Dec. 10.

The proposed 2026-2035 capital program provides \$64.4 million in investments in critical infrastructure in 2026 and \$320.7 million across the 10-year planning horizon.

About \$44 million of the 2026 capital budget includes projects carried over from this year. They include vehicle replacements, road renewal, stormwater rehabilitation, transit bus replacements, trail and park development, construction of the town’s new fire station, and water supply and storage upgrades.

“This aligns with our theme of finishing what we started and continuing to invest in what matters,” Braan said.

The budget includes \$20 million in new requests for road reconstruction, municip-

pal vehicles, water and wastewater infrastructure renewal, and various facility upgrades.

The proposed capital program contemplates total debt issuance of \$47.7 million across the 10-year planning horizon, of which \$14.9 million is identified in 2026.

Property taxes will pay for the lion’s share of the capital program next year to the tune of \$34 million. That’s 53 per cent of the tab.

Water and wastewater rates, along with debt and reserve funds, will cover another 16 per cent of the \$10 million needed. Development charges are expected to cover another 16 per cent of the program for 2026.

Grants, subsidies, and third-party recoveries will cover the final 15 per cent, for just under \$10 million.

“In order to be financially stable in the long run, we really do need to pay attention to our debt levels,” Braan said. “As it currently stands, the 10-year capital program contemplates debt issuances of almost \$50 million in the next five years.”

Orangeville is at about six per cent of its province-mandated annual debt repayment limit. That’s projected to climb to more than nine per cent of that limit in the next five years. However, that would still

be below the town’s self-imposed ceiling of 12 per cent of the repayment limit, which is part of its long-term borrowing policy.

All of which is well below the province’s limit of 25 per cent of revenue excluding development charges that could be used for debt servicing.

Development charge reserve funds are projected to be in a deficit over the next 10 years. Braan referenced a resident’s question during the Dec. 8 meeting about possible courses of action should development charges fall off.

Orangeville resident Mark Middleton asked whether the town has a plan to address the lack of such revenue over the next three to five years.

The municipality would continue to have capital projects that would need to be carried out, though some may be deferred, he said.

He suggested those projects could deplete reserve funds in the absence of development charges.

Middleton wondered if relying on reserves might result in a future tax rate increase to replenish those funds.

Tim Kocialek, the town’s infrastructure services general manager, said Dec. 8 that there are no plans to decrease development charges. The nature of revenue from

such sources is that of an ebb and flow stream.

“You’ll have peaks and valleys in the development charges, but we don’t have any anticipation at this time that it will be topped up with tax dollars,” Kocialek said.

On Dec. 9, Braan said staff would first review planned projects to see which could be paused until there are sufficient collections to cover the costs. Another option would be to take on more growth-related debt.

Or, she said, the town could borrow from its tax and user rate reserves and then repay those reserves.

“At the end of the day, we would need to strike a balance between ensuring only infrastructure projects that are critical for growth to proceed ... are prioritized ahead of projects that don’t necessarily inhibit development from proceeding,” she said.

Critical projects would be ensuring the integrity of water and wastewater infrastructure. The lower priority work would be widening roads, she said. Road congestion can be tolerated until development charges are received.

“More broadly speaking, the trend seems to indicate higher levels of investment over the next four years which is drawing down on reserve balances overall,” Braan said.

# Ontario issues RFP for Highway 410 extension connecting directly to future 413

Written By RILEY MURPHY  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Ontario government held a press conference in Caledon Village Tuesday morning to announce the issuing of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to design an extension of Highway 410 that will directly connect to the future Highway 413.

Prabmeet Sarkaria, Ontario’s Minister of Transportation, was joined by Sylvia Jones, MPP for Dufferin—Caledon, Mayor Annette Groves, Amarjot Sandhu, MPP for Brampton West, Graham McGregor, MPP for Brampton North, Hardeep Grewal, MPP for Brampton East, and more.

The extension will be 9.1 kilometres from Highway 410 at Countryside Drive north to Highway 413, and from Highway 413 west to Highway 10.

This extension will be a direct link between the two highways, and Sarkaria shared that this extension will save drivers up to 30 minutes per trip.

The construction of the highways, they said, will support more than 6,000 jobs per year, and contribute more than a billion dollars to the Ontario economy.

“To protect our strong economy, we need a strong transportation network,” says Sarkaria. “At a time when President Trump is taking direct aim at our economy, our government is doubling down on our plan to protect workers and jobs.”

Sarkaria noted that gridlock is currently costing the economy \$56 billion per year.

He added that MPPs in surrounding areas such as Brampton, Peel Region, York, and more know firsthand “how important it is for this highway in our rapidly growing communities.”

“Shovels are in the ground and we’re getting it done. It’s part of our \$30 billion plan to build and repair highways across the province to attract investment, keep drivers and goods moving, and to protect Ontario,” said Sarkaria.

Mayor Groves said “the Highway 413 corridor will be a big help for our villages by supporting the extension of Highway 410 and easing traffic congestion on Highway 10, Caledon Village, and Valleywood.”

Groves noted it will also spur the extension of Highway 427 and reduce the number of heavy trucks travelling on Highway 50.

“If any of you travel Highway 50 you’ll know exactly what I’m talking about,” she added. “This transportation project will provide much needed capacity and better connections throughout Caledon. It will support the growth we’re planning, while helping to keep the unique character and vibrant spirit of our community intact.”

She added Town Staff will make every effort to support and work in partnership with the Province to ensure the successful delivery of Highway 413 and mitigate any impacts to Caledon.

“Our government continues to push forward with the construction of the critical infrastructure that families, workers, and businesses across our community rely on,” said MPP Jones. “This progress reflects our government’s bold action to deliver the transportation network Ontario needs now, and for generations to come.”

When it comes to mitigating trucking issues with the extension, Sarkaria said they have already significantly increased enforcement along both the Highway 10 and Highway 50 corridors, including targeted blitzes on both roads.

As of last month, they have carried out

94,000 inspections, a 45 per cent increase from the year before.

“You will see whether on Highway 10 or on Highway 50 we have significantly more enforcement on our roads,” said Sarkaria.

In regard to the extension, the 410, where it winds around Valleywood, will now directly take drivers to the east of that area, said the Minister, and “avoid a lot of traffic going into some of the areas where there is high residential density.”

“What this will do is effectively create another way for people that are traveling along Highway 10 to get to the 413 and connect to different parts of Caledon in a safer way, and help alleviate that pressure.”

Sarkaria noted the 427 extension is also a part of their plan for Highway 413, and that it will help to “significantly help alleviate truck traffic on that element as well,” as it pertains to Highway 50.

“This project is so vital not only for businesses but also from the perspective of continuing to build and keep up with the new population growth that is happening in these regions of Peel, York and Halton.”

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# A father’s dedicated practice routine helps son with autism find his voice

Written By **RILEY MURPHY**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Caledon resident Sahil Prashar, 25, cannot read or write, but he can sing over 100 songs in several languages.

When Sahil was very young, he was diagnosed with autism, and he wasn’t able to communicate with his family. As he was growing up, his father, Anoop Prashar, always played music, whether they were in the car, at home, or out and about.

“One day I had an MP3 player and I was just fooling around with it. I was listening to something and I put it on my son’s ear, and for the first time, he said one line of it,” says Anoop.

“That was kind of a eureka moment.”

From there, Sahil began behaving better in school and communicating once they began incorporating music into his life, he says.

Then, when Sahil was seven, the school he attended had him sing the national anthem with the school band.

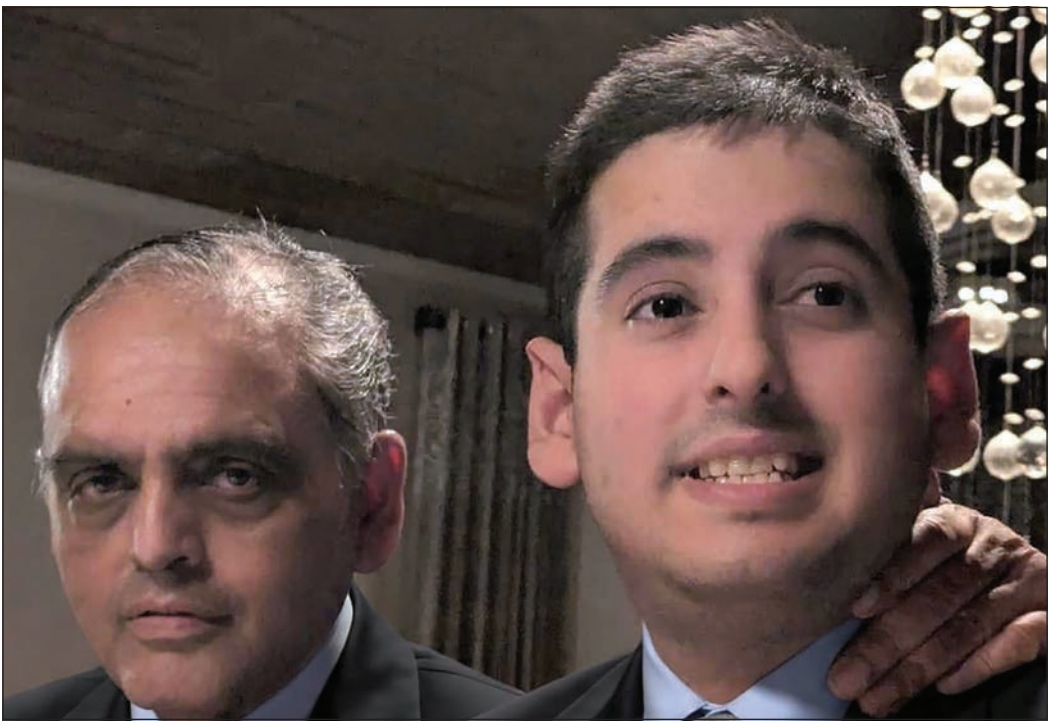
Anoop, who has a background in sports and martial arts, shares that he was very familiar with the fundamentals of practicing and working out, and decided to apply that to Sahil and his newfound love for singing.

From that day, he decided he wanted Sahil to begin practicing seriously.

He moved him, his wife, and Sahil to a bigger house in Caledon Village, where Sahil would have more space. Once they moved, he set up a sound system with a stage and bought a karaoke system with a \$2 microphone.

Anoop explains that Sahil would sit and sing the same song 20 times without getting tired.

“I knew he could memorize songs, but I



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**HELPING HIM FIND HIS VOICE:** Anoop (left) has been teaching his son Sahil (right), who has autism, how to sing.

didn’t know at the time he had a powerful photographic memory.”

He explains that Sahil was memorizing the repetitions and patterns in each song and utilizing them the next time he sang it.

Anoop used to write down every song Sahil sang, but now he says it’s gone into the hundreds; “it’s too much, we threw the books away. Now, we just wing it every day.”

“This whole thing started 15 years ago, his routine, this is his therapy because he doesn’t go to college,” Anoop continues. “He doesn’t have one friend in the world, he was left alone. I’m his friend.”

A few years ago, Anoop quit his job to take care of Sahil full-time. His wife works with the local school board with children with disabilities.

Now, eight hours a day, Anoop practices with Sahil, whether it’s vocal training, singing, or their daily concerts, just the two of them.

Anoop shares that Sahil covers 40 different artists in languages ranging from English, Punjabi, Hindi, and even a song in Japanese.

“He is fascinated by Elvis and sings several cover songs,” he adds.

“Music is something he has to have for the rest of his life,” he says. “The music gives him structure.”

For years, Anoop shared that he has struggled to find an avenue for Sahil’s music.

“An audience is impossible to find. I sent his music worldwide for 10 years, with zero interest.”

Anoop has been posting videos of Sahil’s singing on Facebook for over 15 years now.

What began as a way for him to keep the videos without using too much storage has turned into his hope to inspire others.

“My hope was to motivate somebody else in the same shoes,” he explains. “I belong to these Facebook groups and autism groups, and if you can very early pick out that there’s some hidden talent in there, you can refine it.”

“If they have an interest, then you can bring that out. It could be anything. It could be singing or math. You have to engage people who have been diagnosed with autism, and if you ignore it, you don’t even recognize it’s there. A lot of times that spark is ignored, but a lot of talent does exist,” he explains. “I picked it up right away, and we just started to work on it very quickly as soon as we discovered it.”

When Season 14 of America’s Got Talent premiered, the world met Kodi Lee, a 22-year-old man who had been diagnosed with autism and was legally blind.

For Anoop, seeing Lee win America’s Got Talent gave him hope for his own son.

“I did a little bit of research,” says Anoop. “Kodi Lee’s family, where they live and the music school that he goes to, they interact with him, and there were bars where Kodi could perform and they allowed him, they gave him opportunities and they appreciated him.”

# Give the gift of adoption: Orangeville animals in need of loving homes for the holidays

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Ontario SPCA and Humane Society’s Home for the Holidays adoption campaign is underway.

The province-wide initiative aims to help 500 animals find loving homes in time for the holidays.

After just one week of the campaign, over 300 animals have been adopted.

In Orangeville, a few animals are looking for a place to call home.

Molly, a four-year-old German Shepherd, has been with the Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre since August.

“She’s loving, energetic, and so deserv-

ing of a forever home after months of being overlooked,” said Shannon Bury, community outreach coordinator for the local animal centre. “She would thrive in an environment without children or other animals, and with a family who has experience with large breed dogs.”

Nickie, a one-year-old cat, also arrived in August and is in need of a loving home.

“She’s cuddly, curious, and would make a wonderful companion. She would thrive in an environment with a family who can provide her with care and patience as she grows out of her shell,” said Bury.

A bonded pair of 10-year-old senior cats – Isaac and Masey – are hoping to spend their golden years together in a cozy home. The

two cats are described as gentle and affectionate.

“These animals represent just a few of the many in our care who are hoping to be

Home for the Holidays. Their stories highlight the importance of adoption and the impact community support can have during this time of year.

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# Caledon approves framework for stand-alone red light camera program

Written By **RILEY MURPHY**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Caledon council has approved town staff’s recommendation to establish the framework for a stand-alone Red Light Camera (RLC) program for the municipality.

In May, staff were directed to prepare a report on red light cameras within the Town of Caledon’s jurisdiction, and this Tuesday it was presented to Council.

The report states that there are 71 signalized intersections within the Town of Caledon that are operated and maintained by the Region of Peel.

Of these, 13 fall under the jurisdiction of the Town of Caledon. Staff were asked to investigate whether RLCs are needed at the 13 intersections the Town itself controls.

At this time, staff reported that RLCs shall not be installed at any of the 13 intersections.

The objective of the RLC program in Ontario is to reduce red light running and severe right-angle collisions, also known as T-bone collisions, at high-risk intersections across the province.

The report shared that there were 27 right-angle collisions out of 81 motor vehicle collisions during a 5-year period spanning 2020 to 2025 at these 13 intersections.

Staff stated that the collisions were “widely distributed” across the 13 intersections, with the highest recorded count at one intersection: seven collisions.

Five intersections reported no right-angle collisions during this time period.

“The findings indicate that the incidence right-angle collision frequencies across these intersections is comparatively low, with no significant collision patterns in any specific direction that would warrant the immediate need for the installation of a red-light camera. Therefore, no RLCs are recommended at this time,” stated the report.

Staff prepared the report based on information currently available in the Town’s database. They had requested additional collision data from the OPP, which could include incidents not yet recorded in the Town’s database, but it was not available in time for the report.

Staff recommended that at this time, RLCs not be installed, and instead, recommended that staff continue to analyze and monitor collision data and trends at the 13 locations and “begin to establish a mechanism under which the Town of Caledon can install red light cameras in the future should they become warranted.”

In order to establish a standalone RLC program for the Town of Caledon, several steps will need to be taken to authorize the Town to install cameras and ensure compliance.

In terms of financial implications, staff report the initial capital cost is estimated to range between \$100,000 \$130,000 per camera, and covers all one-time expenses required to install

and activate the system, which can vary depending on the complexity.

The annual operating cost per camera is estimated to range between \$50,000 and \$90,000.

Currently in Ontario, the penalty for running a red light detected by an automated camera is \$325; of this, \$260 is directed back to the municipality, while \$65 is collected by the Province as a victim surcharge and administration fees.

“The municipal share of these fines should be applied toward offsetting RLC and AMPS program expenses, helping to reduce the financial burden on taxpayers,” reported staff.

Amanda Corbett from the Caledon Community Road Safety Advocacy (CCRSA) Group, speaking on the staff report, said, “We’re a little disappointed to see that the recommendation is to not proceed with them [RLCs], but fully understanding that there is a list of criteria to meet.”

Corbett said in light of the recent removal of Automated Speed Cameras, and Caledon OPPs recent report regarding a decrease in patrol hours, as well as a decrease in policing of highway traffic act offenses than previous years, “putting that all together, this is making the situation we’re in worse, not better.”

“I think we need to really figure out what we’re going to do as a Town. Given all of those factors, to try and make something better as opposed to things getting worse,” says Corbett.

Members of the Council also expressed their concerns.

Councillor Dave Sheen noted that many of the intersections fall within his Ward, some of which did not exist for very long during the study period, and some of which are in areas that were ASEs zones, which may have played a part in these areas being “safer” over the years.

“I always find this confusing that the number of incidents is not high enough, so more people have to get hurt to make it reasonable to get in red light cameras,” said Councillor Lynn Kiernan.

During the meeting, Dan Terzievski, Director, Transportation, said there are several reasons to consider bringing an RLC program in-house.

He shares that with development, Caledon is likely to receive more intersections that will fall under their jurisdiction, as well that “with transition, the other 71 intersections that are currently under the jurisdic-



STOCK PHOTO

tion of Region of Peel would then potentially transfer to us, and then we would be then responsible for about 90 intersections, and I think some of the intersections that currently may not prioritize or rank as high on a region-wide basis may rank differently from a town of Caledon perspective,” says Terzievski.

“The intent of this is to get that framework in place, get all the agreements in place, so that when all that happens, we can basically bring it in-house and make our own decisions.”

Councillor Christina Early noted that regarding aggregate hauling, she shares they have seen accidents resulting in death when it comes to red light runners, “I think we’ve got to push pretty hard to get those red light cameras in place. It is a clear safety issue.”

Councillor Doug Maskell raised the question of whether the seven reported right-angle collisions that occurred at a single intersection were close to the threshold to require an RLC, to which Terzievski answered

that he suspects it’s not.

In regard to the Miovision cameras that the Town of Caledon and the Region of Peel are implementing at various intersections for traffic data collection and management, Councillor Mario Russo asked whether these cameras will be able to be used to continue to analyze and surveillance the intersections.

Terzievski responded they can be, as the Region is currently looking at whether they can establish a feature that can also evaluate near misses as well, which can be used in future as a tool to monitor these intersections.

In the end, the motion was moved that staff be directed to continue reviewing collision and traffic data on an annual basis at intersections under the Town’s jurisdiction to monitor and identify any future need for red light cameras at these locations, as well as establish the framework for a stand-alone Red Light Camera (RLC) program for the Town of Caledon.

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**ALL STAR SKATE TEAM:** The Dufferin-Peel Skating Club held its annual Holiday Show and Skating Party at the Teen Ranch Ice Corral on Sunday, Nov. 30. The show featured STARSkate and competitive figure skaters. There was also a special visit from Santa, Mrs. Claus, and Rudolph.

# Westside Secondary School Thunder volleyball team wins Dufferin Cup

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

The Dufferin Cup has become an annual tradition in which local high school teams compete for bragging rights outside regular district play.

Local high school teams are split between District 4 and District 10 competition, depending on the size of the school.

Several volleyball teams were on the court at the Athlete Institute for this year's competition on Friday, Dec. 5.

High school teams from Orangeville District Secondary School, Centre Dufferin District High School, and Westside Secondary School competed.

The evening started with showcase games as elementary schools from the region showcased their skills.

When the high school teams took the court

for their games, they delivered plenty of exciting action, as all teams were highly skilled and showed a lot of talent.

"The Dufferin Cup is a fantastic way to bring our three high schools together, and to extend our volleyball season," Said Jessica Shortt, Westside Secondary Senior boys' volleyball team coach. "Big thanks to Matt Barlow at CDDHS for organizing this event, and to the Athlete Institute for hosting."

The Westside Thunder senior girls won their match against ODSS.

ODSS took the first set, winning 25-17. Westside made a big comeback in the second set after being down 11-16. They won the set 25-22.

The Thunder won the match 25-11 in the third set.

The Westside Thunder senior boys won their match in two sets over ODSS.

In the first set, the Thunder won 25-10. They

followed up with a 25-15 win in the second set for the win.

Westside Thunder girls' volleyball teams started off well in this year's District 4 competition.

After the first tournament, the Westside senior girls moved into first place in the District standings by winning all three matches at the Dec. 3 competition at Emmanuel Christian High School in Fergus.

The Thunder won seven of nine sets played on the first day of competition.

The Thunder junior girls are in second place after their first day of competition, also held at ECHS on Dec. 3.

Westside junior girls won two of three matches for the day. They managed to come out on top in six of the nine sets played for the day.

The next girls' volleyball tournament was held on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at Wellington Heights Secondary School.

Results were not available at press time.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

**CUP WINNER:** The Westside Secondary School Thunder senior girls volleyball team takes on the squad from Orangeville District Secondary School during Dufferin Cup competition held at the Athlete Institute on Friday, Dec. 5. The Westside girls team won their match 3-2 to claim the Dufferin Cup.

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BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

**JUMP SPIKE:** The Orangeville District Secondary School Scarlett Bears senior girls' volleyball competes at the Dufferin Cup held at the Athlete Institute on Friday, Dec. 5. The Bears played an excellent game but lost 2-1 in the match to the Westside Secondary School Thunder.

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# OPINION

## Don't tread on me – Bill C-9

The early astronauts were one tough and brave bunch of guys.

Those guys have a reputation as being fearless, but they were still human.

I read a quote recently from one of the early astronauts, where he explained his true feelings during a launch, years after the event.

“The altimeter said 90,000 feet. I was going straight up and accelerating, and I thought to myself, ‘What am I doing?’”

At that point in his flight, he had no control of the situation at all. He couldn't turn around, he couldn't call it off, and he couldn't decide to leap from the craft and hope his parachute worked.

He was committed to the experience, and there was no way out.

That must have been a feeling of being out of control.

I believe this is how many Canadians feel about the federal government.

The men and women in Ottawa seem to have no desire to represent their constituents, the job they were elected to do.

Instead, they form an agenda and carry it out with no regard to the will of the people, even when the people tell them this isn't what we want.

This new nonsense called Bill C-9 is just

another example of the government trying to shove through yet more legislation to control the population.

That bill is now becoming a convoluted mess as the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois, who were teaming up to pass this bill, can't come to an agreement.

Bill C-9 calls for the prosecution and possible imprisonment of anyone who uses symbols or speech that someone else finds offensive. This includes certain organizations' symbols, like a swastika.

However, the plan is for it to go even further by claiming certain religious scriptures should be included as hate speech.

The Criminal Code currently prescribes jail terms of up to two years for 'wilful promotion of hatred'; however, there is an exemption if that statement is in a 'good faith' opinion based on a belief in a religious text.

Legislators are trying to remove religious protections from this Bill, meaning the pastor in your church could be arrested for quoting the bible.

Marc Miller, the newly appointed minister of Canadian Identity and Culture, opened this mess by stating parts of the bible should be censored.

We don't need more and more and more

laws, especially laws designed to govern behaviour.

Years ago, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's 1967 Omnibus Bill in the House of Commons made several reforms to the Criminal Code of Canada. One of those reforms was to decriminalize 'homosexual acts' performed in private.

Trudeau famously said, 'There's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation.'

He was quite right on that. There is no reason for a democratically elected government to peek into people's bedrooms to determine if they are living a certain way.

On a side note, Trudeau never actually said that quote – it was penned by a newspaper reporter – and Trudeau actually thanked him later for it.

But here we are, years later, where the state wants to dictate what we can say, do, or fly on a private flag pole, or face jail time.

I don't care if my neighbour wants to fly a Nazi flag in front of his house if it's on his private property.

I wouldn't like it, that's for sure, and I certainly wouldn't salute it when I drove by.

Most likely, that guy wouldn't be very popular in the neighbourhood and would be asked by the people next door to remove it. More

likely, a neighbour might do it for him late at night by tearing it down or using a hacksaw to cut down the flagpole.

If that happened, he shouldn't be surprised.

But don't forget, our grandfathers and great-grandfathers fought for the right for that guy to fly whatever flag he chooses.

There are protests being planned in January to voice opposition to this bill. These groups are normal citizens who are fed up with the constant attack on the people by their own government.

If this bill passes, I guess someone could take it to the tenth degree and find a way into the parliamentary cafeteria, or whatever it's called on Parliament Hill, and clandestinely listen to the conversations among the MPs.

The first person that makes an off-colour joke, or criticizes another group, and yes, they are human, it happens, just yell 'hate speech!' and point.

That would make a great front-page story and a fiasco for the unfortunate government official who made the mistake of telling a joke or story that didn't fit the extreme narrative of Bill C-9.

**BRIAN LOCKHART**  
FROM THE SECOND ROW



## Venezuela: Performative murder

“If you're on a boat full of cocaine or fentanyl or whatever, headed to the United States, you're an immediate threat to the United States,” said US Secretary of State Marco Rubio last week. So it's perfectly reasonable for the US armed forces to kill everybody on that boat (including a 'double tap' on any survivors in the water).

That's a good place to start unraveling what the Trump administration is really up to, because it is literally impossible for a motorboat off the coast of Venezuela to be heading to the United States. All 22 boats destroyed and all 87 people killed by US missiles were going somewhere, or more likely many different places, but the United States was not one of them.

The shortest distance between the Maracaibo region of Venezuela and the Florida Keys, the nearest bit of the United States, is about 1,000 nautical miles (1,160 statute miles). Most of the boats are twin outboards of various designs, so their maximum fuel capacity cannot be much more than 200 gallons.

Assuming that the boats have 125 hp motors and are doing 20 knots (seems about right, from the drone footage), they will run out of fuel after something between 120 and 200 nautical miles. So they will

need to stop between five and eight times to refuel. That's a major nuisance because it would mean many detours and many different customs to clear.

Alternatively, they could just fill lots of jerry cans and carry at least a thousand gallons of extra fuel on the boat. Unfortunately, a thousand gallons of fuel weighs about three tonnes, which is a lot more than those boats are built to carry.

This is basically a stupid idea, and definitely not the way that drugs reach the United States.

Everybody who grew up in countries where they teach basic geography knows that, and so do many Americans. But even if Donald Trump does plan to escalate to air strikes on Venezuela (as he says he will) or an actual invasion of the country (not yet confirmed), why would he start by killing random people in small boats?

It is performative murder, and the intended audience is not just Venezuelans. We are all back in the 19th century, when the Western Hemisphere was the exclusive domain of the United States. As former US Secretary of State Richard Olney said in 1895, citing the Monroe Doctrine: “The United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law.”

Since the other people who share 'the Americas' with the USA, from Canadians to Chileans and Argentines, have grown unfamiliar with this perspective, they have to be reminded of it. Indeed, they have to be re-taught it, and how better than by giving the uppity Venezuelans a good thrashing? Not only instructive, but enjoyable as well.

Trumpworld is going to be a world in which the great powers do what they want, limited only by the strength of other great powers, while the lesser countries do what they are told. If you prefer that in a more diplomatic format, it's all there in this week's 'US National Security Strategy', 33 pages setting out how the Trump administration sees the world.

The Western Hemisphere section offers us a 'Trump Corollary' to the old Monroe Doctrine: “After years of neglect, the United States will assert and enforce the Monroe Doctrine to restore American preeminence, and to protect our homeland and our access to key geographies throughout the region. [‘Key geographies’? Hmm. Like mines and stuff, maybe?]

“We will deny non-Hemispheric competitors the ability to...own or control strategically vital resources in our Hemi-

sphere. This ‘Trump Corollary’ to the Monroe Doctrine is a common-sense and potent restoration of American power and priorities, consistent with American security interests.”

There's no need to read between the lines. It's right there on the page: ‘We'll do what we want, and you'll do what we want too.’ But for slow learners the US armed forces will be staging a series of demonstrations in and around Venezuela in coming days. Stay tuned.

If this analysis is right, then we may have an answer to the question ‘Why bother?’ that normally bedevils debates about a US invasion of Venezuela. After all, nobody really needs its oil, and nobody in the Trump administration gives a toss about bringing justice, democracy or ‘freedom’ to Venezuelans.

But if Trump or whoever is doing the thinking for him needs a horrible example of what happens to any country that defies the United States, Venezuela will do fine. In that context, some performative murders as an opening act for the main event makes perfectly good sense.

**GWYNNE DYER**  
OUR WORLD TODAY



## Keeping a historical village alive

It is so very heartening to see a Christmas concert being staged in Hockley Village at the Hockley Historic Community Centre and Church. I have quite a history with the village, the Hockley United Church, as it was, and the Community Centre.

It was October 1990 when my daughter Patricia and I, coming back to Canada from living many years in London, England, moved into our new (1850s) home on the Mono-Adjala Townline. The house is situated right at the juncture of the Townline and the 15th Sideroad, a scant kilometre from the village. Its centre attraction was the Driveshed, a crumbling 1800s general store owned and run by a series of folk, but there was always a source of fresh and packaged food, dry goods and – of course butter tarts. There was never an owner who failed to have butter tarts on the shelves.

We had transported my darling horse, Patrick, and our dog, Zen, to Canada (I had owned Patrick for some time before I gave birth to my daughter, whom I had, forever ago, decided to call Patricia after my late mother). The people in England at the stables where Patrick was boarded laughed somewhat incredulously that I named my baby after my horse...

I had already found suitable accommodation for him in stables on the nearby 7th Concession, and we right away met companions for riding out in the beautiful Hockley Valley.

On those sweet summer days, we habitually rode down to the village to sit outside the Driveshed where we tied the horses and ate butter tarts that could not have tasted better anywhere else.

Our neighbours up and down the 15th Sideroad and the Townline were a varied collection of generations of families living right in Hockley Valley, some dating back to original settlers, some more recently come and we did our best to introduce ourselves to the nearest of them over the first few weeks of our arrival. Indeed, as a single mother of a young child on our own (that is, without a man), we were quite a novelty to this rural community.

Immediately next door to us was an older couple. We had bought our house from a lady who had lived in it for the whole of her 85 years. Naturally, our neighbours, who had resided next door to her for many decades, were very interested to know who we were.

They gave us good advice about country life.

In such a perfect place, inevitably perhaps, a number of us suggested a Strawberry Festival in support of the church and the centre.

The totally adequate kitchen in the community centre housed the pancake breakfast – those ladies knew all about feeding lots of people. They dug into the cooking, serving and cleaning up with cheer and effi-

ciency that was wonderful.

Of course, there was a bake sale: all those perfect pies, scones, cookies, chocolate things, and fruit perfectly embellishing pastry treats.

Someone had brought a collection of antiques and memorabilia to buy.

There was a band of drums, sax and horns. We pitched a tent for them, and the whole day was all that it should have been. The Strawberry Festival stood for years, and it was brought back this year to a great welcome.

In due course, and for better or worse, I married Colin and Patricia, and I moved into his log house (1835), which was basically around the corner. We were married in the Hockley United Church and contributed to the running of it. Colin built a baptismal font from wood, and I think it is still there. We accepted our first communion at its altar.

In 2002, the church put out a follow-up cookbook to one that the ladies' association put together in 1973. The congregation, neighbouring people, their grandmothers and local restaurants contributed to the recipes of the new book, which a committee of church members compiled.

In the front of the cookbook is an introduction, a poem, an acknowledgement, and a fulsome history of the village and church by local resident, historian, artist, and architect Jacques Brooksbank.

Hockley Village took its name from the Hockley Hotel, owned by Thomas Hockley, whose name was finally officially adopted when the post office was established on August 1, 1863, Brooksbank wrote.

The church also has an interesting history. Brooksbank wrote that it was originally built as a Methodist Church in 1869 and stood on the (now) Airport Road. In the winter of 1887, the building was “sawn into four pieces” and moved by horses and sleds to its present position in Hockley Village, where a new foundation was ready.

The book is charmingly illustrated by Brooksbank of Hockley's buildings and homes.

For some years, Patricia played the organ for the services in the Hockey Church until the DuBois family became part of the congregation and Mark DuBois took over the music with Patricia, bringing it to a delightfully high level.

There is a frenzy to demolish the old and revered, to replace them with new cookie-cutter houses and mediocrely designed buildings that are in fashion now.

It is so wonderful to witness the wisdom of people still caring, still understanding the value of these ancient places, for all of us.

And I thank them here.

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# COMMUNITY VOICES

## Monthly Message: Helping kids hold their boundaries over the holidays

The holiday season is often filled with warmth, connection, and joyful traditions shared with loved ones. But for many families, this time of year can also bring stress, particularly when gatherings involve relatives who may not fully understand or respect personal boundaries. As parents, one of the greatest gifts we can offer our children is the assurance that they are safe, supported, and heard, even in situations that feel overwhelming.

Teaching children about boundaries is more than a seasonal concern; it is an essential life skill. In a world that often praises politeness and going along with the crowd, boundaries remind children that their comfort matters. When a child learns to say, “My feelings matter, and so do I,” they are building a foundation of self-respect that will carry them into adolescence and beyond. Boundaries also help children form healthy relationships and protect them from interactions that feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

As families prepare for holiday visits, dinners, and celebrations, a bit of preparation can go a long way in helping children feel confident and supported. Start with open



conversations. Explain what boundaries are in simple, age-appropriate language and encourage children to share what makes them feel comfortable or uncomfortable. This helps normalize boundary-setting as a healthy part of interacting with others.

Setting expectations ahead of time can also reduce stress for both children and parents. Talk about what kinds of interactions they may encounter, such as relatives who expect hugs or kisses or ask personal questions. Let your child know they are allowed to decline affection politely and that you are there to step in if needed, or you can offer to support boundary-setting in advance of family gatherings. These conversations help children understand that their

autonomy is respected.

Parents can also teach by example. When adults model respectful communication, whether by declining intrusive questions or calmly asserting personal space, children see that boundaries are not about conflict, but about self-respect. Creating a designated quiet space at gatherings can give children a place to regroup if things become overwhelming, and preparing a few simple phrases they can use (“I’m not comfortable with that,” or “I need a break”) gives them practical tools to draw on in the moment.

It’s equally important to offer support when children show discomfort, whether verbal or otherwise. Sometimes a child will communicate their boundaries through

actions like pulling away or looking distressed. These moments are opportunities for parents to advocate on their behalf, making their limits clear in a gentle, respectful way.

After the festivities, take a few minutes to check in. Ask your child how they felt, what went well, and whether anything made them uneasy. These conversations not only validate their experiences but also strengthen their confidence in communicating openly with you.

Teaching children to understand and honor their boundaries is a gradual process. With each conversation and each supportive moment, we equip them with skills that will serve them well long after the holidays are over. And for families who may need additional guidance in navigating tricky social situations or helping children assert themselves with confidence, WonderTree clinicians are here and ready to support you!

If you want more help learning how to support your children in asserting their own boundaries and navigating difficult situations, reach out to us today!

Happy Holidays from the WonderTree team!



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: The recognition of gender-based violence

While I have spoken out about this very serious and also very private but dangerous issue of Gender Based Violence (GBV) or, as it is now known to police and other services such as our governments, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), I would like to bring attention to a 60 campaign. From Nov. 25 to Dec. 10, Raising Our Voices Against Normalized Violence Against Women is organized by WomenACT (Women Abuse Council of Toronto).

Domestic Violence or Intimate Partner Violence is, like everything else in life, if you have never experienced it yourself, you really do not understand the impact it has upon its victims, which can also include men, transgender, and gender diverse people. However, it is primarily women who are subjected to this form of abuse.

My experience with IPV in the past years has led me to advocate for a greater awareness of this issue. On my quilt website, I have included a number of pages on Violence Against Women in which I have tried to place a visual ‘face’ to this very painful issue for victims. My website is Romancing the Eye... quilts (https://www.sandysmallproudfoot.com).

Both our governments and our police have adopted a policy of concern for victims of abuse, yet dealing directly with the victims is another matter entirely. When I was forced to report IPV to the local Dufferin OPP, a young constable came to my place of residence and took my statement down on a cell phone.

It was never reported to me by the OPP or this young constable that he had lost my statement, nor was I asked to replace it. Thus, the Crown Attorney dismissed the charges, claiming to have ‘insufficient evidence’ and thereby dismissed the case of assault and abuse, allowing the offender to lie and claim that the abuse never happened.

Filing a complaint with the Ontario OIPRD under the Police Services Act only resulted in an apology from the constable, yet when I asked why I had not been notified of the loss of my statement, nor was I asked to replace it, this was not acknowledged by the OIPRD when I asked for a written response. I was informed by the OIPRD that it had been verbally acknowledged, which it had not. How does an ordinary citizen have a chance at the truth when the police lie about their actions?

For victims of IPV, it is essential to put

safety first. Do not stay in a threatening or dangerous situation. Call your local women’s shelter for support and protection. You may also ask the police to help you obtain a non-criminal protection order against your offender, as I recently did, since the offender in my case has been violating his restraining order.

After a number of repeated requests and filing a complaint with the C-Line detachment

of the Dufferin OPP, I have yet to have a response from that department of our local police force. This unfortunately does not leave a feeling of support or protection by the police, which has been not only my experience but that of many other victims of Intimate Partner Violence.

Sandra Small Proudfoot.  
Mono

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# Dufferin OPP issues warning regarding speed camera text scam

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is warning residents about a text message scam circulating in the area that falsely claims recipients have incurred a speed camera fine.

In an incident reported to the Dufferin OPP, a victim received a text message stating that a speed camera fine had been is-

sued, along with a link appearing to direct the individual to a secure Service Ontario payment page. Believing the message to be legitimate, the victim paid what appeared to be a \$12 fine.

By submitting the payment, the victim unknowingly provided scammers with access to their credit card information. Fraudsters

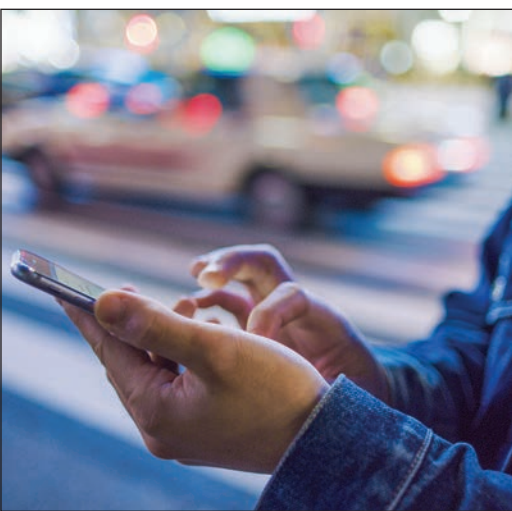
then attempted to withdraw \$750 from the card. Fortunately, the suspicious transaction was detected by the credit card company, the card was cancelled, and no further losses occurred.

The victim later received a second, similar text message. A screenshot of this message has been shared with the police to help raise public awareness.

The OPP would like to remind residents of the following important facts:

- The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) does not send notifications of fines by text message.
- The MTO does not collect or use personal phone numbers for enforcement or fine notifications.
- Legitimate provincial offence notices, including speed camera fines, are delivered by mail only.
- Do not click on links in unsolicited text messages-even if they appear to be from official agencies or government services.
- If you receive a suspicious message, delete it immediately and do not provide any personal or financial information.

Anyone who believes they may have been



a victim of fraud is encouraged to contact police and report the incident to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or [antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca](mailto:antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca).

If you wish to report a similar incident or have information related to this scam, please contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122, or Crime Stoppers to remain anonymous at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or through [www.crimestoppersdm.com](http://www.crimestoppersdm.com).

## Melancthon resident faces impaired driving charges after failing to stop at stop sign

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged a Melancthon resident with impaired operation-related offences after failing to stop at a stop sign.

On Dec. 6, just after 1 a.m., Dufferin OPP officers were conducting traffic enforcement in the area of 2nd Line SW and 250 Sid-



eroad in the Township of Melancthon when they observed a vehicle fail to stop at the stop sign. Officers conducted a traffic stop and subsequently initiated an impaired driving investigation.

Arie Greydanus, 60, from Melancthon, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs
- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Operate a motor vehicle without insurance
- Fail to surrender insurance card
- Disobey stop sign - fail to stop

The accused individual is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville. Their driver's licence was suspended for 90 days, and their vehicle was impounded for 7 days.

None of the listed charges has been proven in court.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

**IN THE ENDZONE:** The Westside Secondary School Thunder boys' senior basketball team take on the Centre Dufferin District High School Royals at their gym on Monday, Dec. 1. The Thunder played a solid, well-executed game during their first time on the court this season, but had to settle for a 57-41 loss. Westside's Josh Kirkland takes the ball into the Royals' zone during the second quarter of the game.



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**Tractors/Skid Steer:** Case IH MXU 110 4x4 tractor, Quicke Q41 loader, cab, 2 remotes, 4600hrs.; MF 265 tractor & Allied 590 loader, multi power; JD 5575 skid steer, material bucket, 3479hrs.; JD X320 lawnmower, 54" deck, hydrostatic, 597hrs, annual maint. **Mach/Equip:** JD 8350 seed drill, 18 run, grass seed, 1 disc, fert; Gehl TDC 1475 round baler, 4x5's, inoc; NH Hayliner 315 sq baler & thrower; (3)18ft wood wagons; Kuhn GA4100 rotary rake, pull-type, tandem; Lucknow 6ft snowblower, hyd chute; post hole auger; Case IH 8330 haybine, 9ft; gravity box; Ford 8ft disc; IH 12ft cultivator, & harrows; (3) thrower wagons (2- 20ft, all steel tops, 1- 20ft steel with wood floor); 20ft wood & steel round bale wagon; for skidsteer- 2 prong hay fork, manure forks; Leon 375 manure spreader; Agro-Trend 3pth sprayer. **Horse Equip & Rel:** 4-seater horse sleigh, team hitch; (2) single horse shafts; (2) Fore carts (single, double); blankets; stocks-for shoeing; (2)horse bale feeders; whipple trees; (1) set work harness; (1)set Todd Style show harness; harness rack; qty heavy horse harness pieces, lines, etc; asst horse supplies; (2)steel stall dividers; (2)single horse sleighs; (4)stall corner feeders; (2)hay/ grain feeders; (3)round bale feeders-tombstone style; semen tank; microscope; Black Horse Ale picture & trays; 4-wheel buggy-like new; 2-wheel pleasure driving cart; draft foal/horse halters; asst white show halters; leg wraps; asst show equip; and much more! **Shop/Farm Rel/Straw & Hay:** Onan 60W generator, alternator; 4'x8' 1-axle utility trailer; bale moisture tester; twine; tool chest; anvil- lg; battery charger; asst lumber; 1 tonne winch; oat/corn roller; asst of tools; (9)bales 3x3x6 wheat straw; some sm squares hay(if not used); stationary sander/grinder; radial arm saw; table saw. **HH & Antiques(A):** (A)flat back hutch & buffet cupboard; (V)Kenmore sewing machine; leather couch-dk brown, nice; recliner chair-brown fabric; pine dining room table & (6)chairs; pine buffet & hutch; (A) hutch; (6)wood chairs; dry sink;lots to see!

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In addition to vintage toys, this sale features a wide variety of Tin; Porcelain & Framed Paper Advertising from brands such as Red Indian; Texaco; Ford; Buffalo Motor Oil; Evinrude Outboard Motors; Gold Star Stamps and more; Pepsi-Cola "Delicious Refreshing" Battery OP Wall Mount Clock; Stained Glass Coca-Cola Table Lamp; Orange Crush SST Push Plate; Gas Station Collectibles incl. Shell Oil 60L Barrel Can; Gasoline Fuel Pump Globe; Service Caps w/ Texaco Patches; Hubcaps; Motor Oil Cans; and so much more.



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HARRIET TSURUYO  
YAMASAKI-COYLE



Harriet Tsuruyo Yamasaki-Coyle, 92, passed away in Amaranth, Ontario. Born in Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii, Harriet touched countless hearts with her brilliant smile, gentle and kind nature, and a full-throated laugh that could lift the roof off its rafters.

In her youth, Harriet had a successful professional music career, with her best-known performance as Linda Low in Flower Drum Song in London, England. Over her lifetime she shared her musical learning with innumerable students, amateur singers, and community theater lovers. Harriet also gave her time as a piano player at her church and at Avalon Care Center in Orangeville, where the Drop-in Program staff welcomed her with great care and kindness.

She is survived by her children Mary, Chris, Anne, and Michael, her grandchildren Kate, Susie, David, Charlotte, Tyson, Carys, and great-grandchildren Charlie and Paul.

Harriet spent her final moments in the warmth of family at her daughter's home in Amaranth, Ontario. The family is especially grateful to the Ontario Health at Home palliative team and to nurses Kevin, Madison, and Osaro for the excellent care she received in her final days.

In lieu of flowers, the family invites donations to the Orangeville Food Bank in memory of Harriet.

Condolences may be offered to the family at www.dodsandmcnair.com

LOIS HAND

Lois Jeannette Hand passed away peacefully on Dec. 4, 2025 at Headwaters Healthcare Centre, surrounded by her family.



Beloved wife of Earl. Devoted mother of Angela (Antonio) and Jen (Chris). Proud grandmother of Cooper, Freddii, Jack, Aeryn, and Chase. Lois will be lovingly remembered by her family and friends.

As per her wishes, a cremation has taken place and a Celebration of Life will follow at a later date. Details to follow. Online condolences may be placed at [www.jackandthompsonfuneralhome.com](http://www.jackandthompsonfuneralhome.com)

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