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PETER RICHARDSON PHOTO

HORSING AROUND: A child enjoys riding a pony at the 4th Annual Cardinal Woods End of Summer Party at Mono College Park on Sunday, Sept. 7. The community event featured a petting zoo, live bands, face painting, performances, a vendor market, food trucks and multiple bouncy castles. The event is meant to bring the community together for a celebration, capping off the end of summer. See more photos on Page A13.

Local brain injury group recognized for community advocacy

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES

Headwaters Acquired Brain Injury Group, also known as HABI, has been nominated by the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) for its outstanding efforts in community support, advocacy, and education. As part of the recognition, HABI's own flag design was chosen to represent the association across the province.

HABI founder Kindrey Rowland, who works as a speech-language pathologist and clinic director at the Orangeville Speech & Language Clinic, said it was an incredible moment for the group. The flag's production was made possible by a donation in honour of a group member who died last year.

"The flag was made possible by a donation in memory of Keaton Cook and Keaton's family," said Rowland. "Keaton passed away in 2024 and so this donation has been made in the memory of Keaton, and it went to produce the flags. It really was an incredible moment for us, especially to have the flag representing all of Ontario."

Rowland said that OBIA is hoping the flag will fly even further.

"The Ontario Brain Injury Association is also hoping that the flag will catch on beyond Ontario," she said. "Because they [are] connected with brain injury associations across Canada, they hope the flag will also then go nationwide."

HABI's nomination from OBIA is for an Award of Excellence in Brain Injury Rehabilitation. The areas examined when selecting the award's recipient are strong advocacy, positive outcomes for clients, years of service, credentials, number of public votes, and supporting testimonials.

It's a big moment for HABI, which had humble beginnings here in town.

Forming unofficially in the 1990s, HABI held meetings in the basement of members' homes, and continued that way for many years until 2009, when it formally joined the Ontario Brain Injury Association as one of its 22 chapters across the province.

The group now has close to 100 members, with a stable turnout of 25 at each of its monthly meetings.

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month. The sessions, which last about two hours, follow a circular format that allows members to share experienc-

es, learn from guest speakers, and connect with other group members. The group also organizes potlucks, barbecues, and other community activities to foster stronger bonds among participants and the wider township.

The group's mission is divided into three main goals: Educating the public, creating social connections for members, and promoting awareness of brain injury prevention. HABI welcomes survivors of all types of acquired brain injuries, including those caused by trauma, stroke, opioid use, and intimate partner violence, along with caregivers, family members, friends, and advocates.

Members represent a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, from young adults just beginning their recovery to older residents who have lived with brain injuries for years. This diversity allows people to learn from one another, share coping strategies, and provide encouragement across generations.

Rowland said that no matter the severity, all are welcome.

Continued on Page A5

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Headwaters Health Care Centre welcomes children for playful Teddy Bear Clinic

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A visit to the hospital can be scary, especially if you've never been.

Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) gave local children and their families a first-hand look into the health care system, as they hosted their annual Teddy Bear Clinic on Saturday (Sept. 6).

"The hospital is an important place when you need to come to it, and the last thing we want is for a child to feel uncomfortable or scared when they're in this environment," said Juliann McArthur, manager of patient experience and lead of the Teddy Bear Clinic. "There's lot of bells going off, it's busy, it can feel chaotic at times, and we really just want them to know that this is a safe place for them and that we're going to be there for them in a comforting way to provide the care they need."

Started in 1998, the purpose of the Teddy Bear Clinic is to help reduce childhood anxiety surrounding hospitals and medical care by inviting children to bring their stuffed toys to the hospital for a fun, pretend health-care experience.

The Teddy Bear Clinic starts with the child and their stuffy going through the registration process, where they receive a health card and wristband for their stuffed toy and for themselves. From there, they head into triage, where the vitals of the stuffy are

taken and the reason behind their visit is given. The teddy bear and child then head to the waiting area to be seen in one of the clinic's six treatment rooms. Meeting with a Headwaters physician or nurse, they learned about the treatment needed for their stuffed animal, the treatment plan, and received a prescription. The trip to the Headwaters Teddy Bear Clinic concluded with stops at Teddy Nutrition, Teddy Pharmacy, and Teddy Hygiene, a new addition to the clinic that teaches children about handwashing techniques and germs.

Mono resident Jessica Willow attended the Headwaters Teddy Bear Clinic with her seven-year-old son, Mason, and his stuffy – Firebreath.

Speaking with the Free Press, Mason said Firebreath was treated for a fever and an upset stomach because he wasn't eating properly.

"[The Teddy Bear Clinic] is a really good community event where you can come with friends and relatives and get used to the services that are available in the area," said Willow.

Kristy Caulfield, a personal support worker (PSW) with Headwaters, brought her six-year-old daughter, Kennedy, to the Teddy Bear Clinic. Kennedy, who has epilepsy, has had a number of experiences with visiting the local hospital.

"A lot of kids have experiences going to emerge, and it can be a scary one; it's the un-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

TEDDY BEAR CARE: Headwaters Health Care Centre welcomed children and their stuffed animals to the hospital for a Teddy Bear Clinic on Saturday, Sept. 6. Healthcare professionals provided pretend care for the animals, helping the kids feel more comfortable if they ever need to use the hospital in the future.

known," said Caulfield. "For us, it's helped greatly with anxiety, coming to the hospital and seeing it's not all bad. It's a great experience to expose them to the health care system."

After each child's stuffed toy received medical care, families had the opportunity to meet with some of Dufferin County's emergency service members.

McArthur said that roughly 30 physicians and nurses from Headwaters Hospital volunteered their time to help run the Teddy Bear Clinic, and around 60 volunteers assisted throughout the whole clinic.





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Orangeville man creates web app that rewards users for charitable donations

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

Do good. Save money.
That's the motto of a new online platform that rewards people for donating to Canadian charities.

Carsen Chubak, who moved to Orangeville from Saskatchewan in 2019, officially launched the website-based app Donacelet on Sept. 9, which can be visited online at pwa.donacelet.app.

Through Canada Helps, Donacelet allows its users to choose from approximately 86,000 Canadian charities, and they are rewarded with exclusive deals after making a one-time or monthly donation of \$10 or more.

Currently, there are 78 charities that are in proximity to Orangeville that app users can support to access deals and coupons. A one-time donation provides access to deals for seven days, while monthly contributions keep deals active permanently.

"I hope this provides charities with more consistent income," said Chubak. "That's a big thing for charities – a lot of people don't realize big donations are great, but oftentimes it's sporadic for them. They don't know when that support is coming in, but if they get consistent support [with monthly donations], they can actually manage what they're doing a lot better."

Donacelet is working on signing up business in Dufferin County for local deals, but in the meantime, the web-app offers coupons from online brands like Expedia, Hotels.com, Vrbo, Black Circles, Ticket Network, ButcherBox.ca, and StubHub.

Cost savings, on average, are 10-20 per cent, depending on the deal being accessed, which can add up when buying hotel accommodations, flights, or new tires. Certain companies selling software offer deals ranging from 50-80 per cent off.

Chubak noted that the savings offered through Donacelet are significant enough that most people should be able to offset the cost of their donations through the deals they access.

The idea behind the company is to encourage and reward donations to not-for-profits, while also helping businesses reach new customers.

Chubak, the CEO of Donacelet, is a retired professional hockey player. He competed in NCAA Division 1 Hockey for Niagara University in the U.S., and was a Top 10 Hobey Baker Award finalist. Chubak played as a goaltender throughout his career and later signed with the American Hockey League (AHL) to play for the Adirondack Phantoms, which is the top affiliate of the Philadelphia Flyers. He played professionally in Europe

for a few years as well.
Chubak wound down his hockey career in 2016, and after officially retiring in 2019, he began directing his spare time and energy towards developing Donacelet.
The concept is new, and he said he felt it was something he would use if someone else created it, so he began developing it himself, with the help of tech professionals.
Chubak has spent significant money, time, and resources on developing Donacelet, but he's hopeful all that hard effort will soon pay off as people hear about and sign up on the web-app.
The idea for the donation platform dates back to when Chubak was a kid, playing minor hockey. As a fundraiser, he and his teammates would sell coupon booklets for local businesses. Doncelet is a similar idea, but digitized. Instead of donating \$20 for a book of local coupons, Donacelet users can donate \$10 or more to access a vast catalogue of deals.
Since retiring from playing hockey, Chubak has worked for a few different sports analytics' companies. Currently, he's very active in minor hockey as a goalie coach.
Aside from his passion for hockey, Chubak is dedicated to spreading the word about Donacelet and making it a success.
He told the Citizen he plans to build out Donacelet over time. First, by finding users and businesses in Dufferin County and surrounding regions, before branching out further to cover the entire province, country, and eventually, other parts of the world.
"We want to test everything in Orangeville, or Southern Ontario, make sure we have all the bugs worked out and then expand after that," said Chubak.
Getting brands onboard for Donacelet has been relatively easy, as Chubak has a background in affiliate marketing and finds that most of the brands he met with were happy to get involved.
"Oftentimes they'll give out discount codes for pretty much nothing, so since this is helping charities, it's kind of easy to get them on board," he said.
However, app development has been one of Donacelet's biggest challenges to date. Without any external funding to back it, Chubak used his own savings to get the app functional and user-friendly.
It's taken about two years and hundreds of meetings with web-app developers, but he's happy to finally launch the app for the general public.
Chubak said his six-month-old son Cooper keeps him motivated to create more support for charitable organizations through Donacelet.
"I just want make the world a better place for him, too, and do something that he can



SAM ODROWSKI PHOTO

DONACELET TEAM: Donacelet CEO Carsen Chubak (left), his wife Heather Chubak (right) and son Cooper, share some smiles from downtown Orangeville. The Chubak family has lived in Orangeville since 2019, and during that time, developed Donacelet, a web app that rewards users with exclusive coupons and deals for donating to Canadian charities.

be proud of outside of hockey," he said.
Now, Chubak's focus is on ramping up the number of app users and businesses on Donacelet to make it a success.
"It's kind of a catch-22, because we have to have businesses to get users, and we have to have users to get businesses," he said. "We're trying to do that at the same time right now."
The web-app's name, Donacelet, comes from the platform's donation bracelets that are launching later this month.
The bracelets have an NFC chip that can be scanned by a smartphone at a business to bring up a donation authentication page, showing eligibility for rewards on Donacelet.
"You show them [businesses] you're actively donating, and then they actually apply the deal at checkout," Chubak explained.
Businesses can run one online and one in-store deal at any given time, as a reward for users of Donacelet, and the deals can be switched out at any time.
Donacelet charges a flat fee of \$1 for every donation and the transaction associated with credit card processing.
It's important to note that Donacelet is a web app and cannot be purchased through the App Store or Google Play Store. While Donacelet functions as an app, it is only accessible through the website: pwa.donacelet.app.
Chubak said Donacelet's a good outlet for companies to offer deals and attract customers, while fulfilling their corporate social responsibility (CSR), which is the idea of not operating solely for profit but in a way that benefits society as a whole.
"I find that it's a much deeper emotional connection when it's your personal donation to your personal charity, and then the business gives you the deal," said Chubak. "[App users] can see what companies are willing to support people who support charitable causes."
Any businesses looking to partner with Donacelet can email partnerships@donacelet.org and express their interest. There is a monthly fee associated with being listed as a brand on Donacelet, but businesses that sign up with the code "Orangeville330" get three months free and 30 per cent off forever, as long as they remain signed up.
To sign up as a user on Donacelet, visit pwa.donacelet.app and select "customer."
Donacelet can be found on social media at @donacelet.

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Mono maintains campaign to hasten cell, net improvements

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Mono Centre is like the Bermuda Triangle of electronic reception in the Town of Mono.

So sayeth Mono Mayor John Creelman as part of his reply to a question by resident Olga Constantopoulos, who asked about progress toward reliable internet and cell-phone service in Mono Centre.

“We are severely under serviced in this area and have been waiting for years to see improvement,” she said.

Mayor John Creelman said when council met Sept. 9 that improving cellphone service and high-speed internet in Mono has not gone as initially promised by Rogers Communications.

“It’s just terrible,” he said. “Anyone who has driven through Mono Centre knows to say to the person they are talking to, get ready to be dropped because nine times out of 10 it’s going to happen.”

He’s in touch with Rogers “frequently” to encourage them to quicken the pace of their rollout, he said.

In fact, he most recently sent emails to Rogers officials on behalf of some residents to ask the utility company when service will be provided to people who have the cable to their doorstep.

“At one point there was going to be 200-plus connections made and I have not heard that has actually occurred yet,” he said.

The need to improve a lacklustre cell-phone service has also been impressed upon providers, he said.

Creelman said work to improve service is not being done by the municipality. But town staff have worked tirelessly to accommodate the service provider to complete the work.

“And we’re not letting up on it,” he said.

Granted, millions of dollars have been provided by the federal government for the project, but that’s limited to work on fibre optic high-speed internet service, said Councillor Melinda Davie.

She asked if there are resources that can be made available with respect to cell phone service.

“Nothing that we can do,” Creelman said. “But there is lots that the providers can do.”

Providers could create more space and capacity on service towers to accommodate more high-speed wireless users, he said.

“We also have a water tower in the south end that no longer has high speed wireless capacity,” he said. “And that’s open to any provider who wants to approach us and negotiate an arrangement.”

“That’s great for the south,” Davie said.

She suggested the town erect its own tower on municipal property that could be used by a service provider.

“Have we ever looked at that?” she said.

Creelman said the town delivering its own service hasn’t been discussed in some years.

“That was a proposition at one point and, for practical reasons, it was not pursued,” he said. “We could initiate some discussions with Bell and Rogers to see what’s possible.”

“I think we as a town, John, should be doing just what you suggested,” Coun. Ralph Manktelow said. “Getting in touch with Rogers and Bell to indicate that the municipality has concerns because its residents are complaining that they don’t have good coverage.”

“The old joke was you had to go out and stand on the right patio stone to get a cell signal,” Creelman said. “And hold the phone aloft.”

“It’s almost true,” Deputy Mayor Fred Nix said.

Headwaters Acquired Brain Injury Group recognized for local advocacy and support

Continued from FRONT

“We are welcoming any level of severity,” she said. “So there’s people there with concussions, some with moderate and severe brain injury. Sometimes people might think ‘maybe this group’s not for me,’ but we want everyone to know the range of severity is well represented,”

“You’ll also find friends, family members, caregivers, with us as well. It’s not just for the person who has the brain injury themselves, because brain injury never affects an individual. It’s a ripple that spreads outward from the centre, and it affects loved ones, family and friends,” Rowland added.

Moving forward, HABI hopes to expand its public education efforts, strengthen partnerships with healthcare providers, and continue building community awareness around both prevention and long-term support for those living with brain injuries. The group sees its nomination and the unveiling of the new flag as a springboard for greater recognition and impact.

HABI is encouraging the community to



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

FEATURING THE FLAG: HABI members stand in front of a new flag, designed by Jonathan Hall, which will now fly across Ontario.

support their nomination in the coming weeks. Voting is open until the end of the month on Sept. 30, and supporters can vote at aoe.pialaw.ca.

Further information for HABI is available on their website, www.headwaters-abi.ca, and the group can be contacted by phone at 519-942-6934. They can also be reached via email at Kindrey@orangevillespeech.com or normanphilips74@gmail.com.

Dufferin residents invited to plant 200 native trees at Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Dufferin County residents have the chance to help plant native vegetation in a well-known local part of the Bruce Trail system.

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation is working with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) to host TD Tree Days. The planting event is scheduled for Sept. 20 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

“This is a really great opportunity to come out and help increase and enhance your local green space while meeting your neighbours, colleagues, and friends. It’s also a really great way to just spend time out in nature,” said Carolyn Scotchmer, executive director of TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

TD Tree Days is a volunteer program created by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, a charity affiliated with the financial institution that has been supporting urban greening programs for 35 years.

Each year, the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation works with local not-for-profits, municipalities, conservation authorities, and Indigenous communities to bring a variety of planting events to life in green spaces.

The goal of TD Tree Days is to bring employees, friends, families, and members of the community together to plant new vegetation in local green spaces within the TD North American footprint.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of TD Tree Days, and the foundation has set an ambitious goal of planting a total of 30,000 trees and shrubs across Canada.

“TD really recognizes that our local green spaces are of critical importance to our communities. These are spaces that support mental and physical health in communities



as well as spaces that provide a place for communities to come together, interact and connect with the people around them,” said Scotchmer.

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation previously worked with the NVCA in 2018 to plant a total of 300 native trees and shrubs at Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve, with more than 40 volunteers participating.

This year, the foundation is planning to plant a total of 200 native trees and shrubs at Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve, located near Mono and Shelburne.

Ahead of the event, volunteers are recommended to dress in appropriate clothing such as layers for flexible weather conditions, sturdy footwear, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent, and gardening gloves.

Students looking to use the event towards their volunteer hours are required to bring their official volunteer form for the TD site leader to complete and sign.

“The event goes rain and shine,” said Scotchmer. “With the work of our supporting organization as well as the TD site leader, it’s really a fantastic day.”

For more information about TD Tree Days or to register for the upcoming event at Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve, visit: <https://www.tdtreedays.com/en-ca/mono-splitrock-narrows-nature-reserve>.

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Talk with farmers, learn about agriculture at upcoming Dufferin Farm Tour

Written By **PAULA BROWN**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Dufferin County residents and tourists have the opportunity to learn about and see first-hand the day-to-day operations of select local farms.

The Dufferin Farm Tour is set to return for its 26th annual event on Sept. 27 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

“We are very proud to keep this wonderful community event happening for 26 years,” said Marci Lipman, a Dufferin Farm Tour committee member. “Every year people get more and more interested in understanding where their food comes from. Having this experience up close and personal with the farmers is really a tribute to our local agriculture.”

The Dufferin Farm Tour was established in 1998 by a group of dedicated farmers who

wanted to bridge the gap between rural and urban communities by bringing them together on working farms to hear firsthand the challenges of providing safe, nutritious food and the importance of local agriculture.

According to the Dufferin Federation of Agriculture (DFA), agriculture is one of the most significant economic contributors in Dufferin County, with over 700 farms in the community. The top five farm commodities in Dufferin County include cattle, dairy, potatoes, soybeans, and corn.

With over 700 farms in the community, the connection between how food goes from farm to table can be lost. The goal of the Dufferin Farm Tour is to close the gap between the two by fostering dialogue and providing a look at modern farming practices.

“When people understand how their food is grown and raised, they are more likely

to support local farmers and contribute to the local economy,” said the Dufferin Farm Tour.

Each year, for one day in the fall, a different group of farmers in Dufferin County opens their doors to the public to showcase their farm, allowing families to talk with the farmers, experience the animals up close, ask questions, and watch demonstrations.

During the 26th annual Dufferin Farm Tour, visitors will have the chance to experience a homestead in Mono with beef cattle and chickens grazing on pastures, see robotic milking at a high-tech 35,000 square foot Holstein dairy barn, horse around at a school of horsemanship, go for a side of veggies at a market garden and hydroponic greenhouse operation, and jump early into the winter festive spirit with a wagon ride through a Christmas Tree Farm.

The Dufferin Farm Tour is a self-guided

tour that begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. on Sept. 27. Families can follow the provided route on their own time while trying food and refreshments, along with added attractions along the way.

“Bring the whole family, from your littlest kids to grandparents, because the whole family is going to enjoy this tour,” said Lipman.

Donations to local food banks are being collected and can be made at the time of registration or at farms during the tour day.

Last year, the Dufferin Farm Tour raised over \$3,000 for local food banks and, in its history, has raised well over \$13,000, as well as thousands of pounds of food to support residents facing food insecurity.

Those interested in touring the farms can register by visiting the Dufferin Farm Tour website at dufferinfarmtour.com. Spaces may be limited.

Local animal centre seeking foster volunteers for vulnerable animals

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

Foster volunteers are urgently needed at the Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre.

With children returning to school and the house a little quieter, the local animal centre is seeking people who can provide loving care to animals that need extra support before they’re ready for adoption.

“Fostering not only gives an animal in need a loving home, it also brings joy, companionship, and purpose to the foster family,” says Julie Woods, manager of the Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre.

“It’s a meaningful way to fill an empty house – and heart – while making a life-changing difference.”

Foster care is provided to animals that are too young, sick, injured, under-socialized, or stressed to thrive in an animal centre environment.

Foster care volunteers provide a temporary home for dogs and cats that need a little extra help learning new behaviours. They also care for animals with medical needs, such as those taking medication or recovering from surgery.

Volunteers support pregnant dogs and help care for their puppies after birth as well, with bottle feeding and round-the-clock care.

To foster an animal, volunteers must have no other cats or dogs in their home already.

To apply to become a foster volunteer and change an animal’s life, visit ontariospca.ca/foster

“As a registered charity that does not receive annual government funding, the Ontario SPCA depends on the generosity of volunteers and donors,” reads a press release from the Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre. “If you’re not in a position to foster, please consider making a donation to help provide care and shelter to animals in need.”

Donations can be provided online at ontariospca.ca/donate.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ANIMALS IN NEED: The Ontario SPCA Orangeville & District Animal Centre is in need of volunteer fosters to help animals who are too young, sick, injured, under-socialized, or stressed to thrive in an animal centre environment.

Mono council keeps status quo on bylaw case reporting after hearing from resident

Written By **JAMES MATTHEWS**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.

And that holds true with how Mono’s bylaw enforcement staff manages reports about complaints by residents.

Mono resident Jake Thomas suggested when council met Sept. 9 that the town implement a number system for bylaw complaints, with names and addresses redacted, so all bylaw complaints and tickets can be viewed on the municipality’s website.

Under that suggested system, the complainant could get a case number so they would be able to check the issue’s status on the town’s website.

Fred Simpson, the town’s clerk, said by-

law complaints are subject to privacy regulations.

“I’m not sure what the service to the public is by publishing each bylaw complaint individually on the website,” Simpson said. “Now, we bring an aggregate report to council periodically that says we had this many noise complaints and this many of each individual complaints.”

Simpson recommended that council continue with the current means of reporting enforcement activities.

“I don’t see how it serves the public to list each one individually,” Simpson said.

Councillor Melinda Davie asked if discussions about the proposed new noise bylaw might have inspired the question of changing how infractions or complaints are tracked.

“So you can see whether there’s been one or two complaints already so I should add mine or no there’s already been 10 complaints so what’s mine going to add?” she said.

“I think by the time they are posted on the website, bylaw enforcement would already be moving on a complaint that needed action,” Simpson said.

The town’s online complaint service system already attributes a number to each complaint. There is confirmation that the complaint has been received, and a service request number is provided.

“I think we need to think more about this,” Coun. Ralph Manktelow said. “I think the suggestion has some merit.”

The public always benefits from the trans-

parency of governing bodies. In terms of disadvantages, frivolous complaints are made public.

Mayor John Creelman said the heart of the question pertains to the level of feedback to residents who make a bylaw complaint.

“It’s one thing to have a pro forma response with a number,” Creelman said. “It’s another thing to have made a complaint and a year or two later wonder how it was disposed of.”

“If a resident who files a complaint doesn’t get a follow-up, which they should and the vast majority of times they do... if that person reaches back out to bylaw enforcement staff, they get that update,” Simpson said.

Sometimes weeks or months may be needed to determine a course of action to resolve a complaint, Simpson said.



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LICENSING EXTRA

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\$176

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\$72

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LICENSING EXTRA

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\$169

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\$188

WEEKLY + HST
84 MONTHS WEEKLY
LICENSING EXTRA

\$49,912

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C.O.B \$18,445

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STK# U121998 • 121,271 KM • 5.7L HEMI V8, 8-SPEED AUTO, 3.21 AXLE, 5.7FT BOX, UCONNECT 5 NAVIGATION, HEATED CLOTH BUCKETS, HEATED STEERING WHEEL, 20 INCH CHROME ALLOY WHEELS, REMOTE START, DUAL ZONE CLIMATE, TOW PACKAGE, REAR CAMERA, CHROME BUMPERS, FRONT/REAR PARK ASSIST, BIG HORN LEVEL 2 GROUP!

\$162

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LICENSING EXTRA

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Arts & Entertainment



LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Theatre Orangeville is bringing back Norm Foster for three days of staged readings

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES

Theatre Orangeville is set to launch its 2025-26 season with a rare theatrical experience: *The Norm Effect*, a three-day series of performances featuring Norm Foster himself, featuring staged readings of his own plays, alongside an accomplished cast of performers.

Audiences will get the unique opportunity to watch Foster's best works in a different way, delivered by the man who wrote them. While the playwright has largely stepped away from performing on stage, *The Norm Effect* offers a special chance to see him breathe life into his own characters.

Theatre Orangeville Artistic Director Jennifer Stewart said that it will be an honour to have Foster – the most produced playwright in Canada – back in Orangeville, where many of his plays first debuted.

"I've been a long time admirer ever since theater school," she said. "To hear him read these plays and just to share the plays with the audience in Orangeville, it's super exciting. It's going to be a great weekend. I think both new audiences and fans of Norm will love it."

Three plays will be performed by Foster: *On a First Name Basis* on Sept. 17, starring Foster and Sheila McCarthy; *The Writer* on Sept. 19, starring Foster and Jamie Williams; and *Jonas & Barry in the Home*, starring Foster alongside longtime friend and fellow actor David Nairn and Mairi Babb on Sept. 21.

On a First Name Basis follows an older man and his long-serving housekeeper as an ordinary evening turns unexpectedly intimate. After 26 years of working side by side yet knowing little of one another, the two finally share a drink and open up. What begins as a casual conversation deepens into genuine understanding, culminating in a surprising twist.

The Writer is a father-son drama unfolding over seven years, with each scene marking a new chapter in their evolving relationship. After a painful family split, a father starts

over in his own apartment, and his son visits annually to talk through the aftermath. Their conversations circle around the mother, the sister, and the life they've lost, but at the heart lies an unspoken family secret the father refuses to reveal.

Jonas & Barry in the Home is a comedy about friendship, aging, and finding purpose in life's next chapter. Inspired by Norm Foster's own stay at Orangeville's Chartwell retirement residence, the play imagines two best friends – Jonas and Barry – navigating the transition into retirement living. As they settle into their new home, they grapple with questions of identity, self-worth, and what it means to step away from the workforce.

Unlike full productions, these presentations will be staged readings – actors at music stands, scripts in hand, drawing audiences into the words themselves. Organizers say the format creates an intimate, immediate connection between performer and audience, allowing the humour, heart, and humanity of Foster's writing to shine.

Stewart said that the goal was to find a way to perform these plays with Foster taking a leading role.

"The idea behind the stage reading was that, how do we get Norm Foster on stage again? Because he's 77 now," she said. "He's not acting anymore, but he has this wonderful body of work, and some of these plays have never been performed on the stage. I was thinking about how we can do this play without, you know, actually doing the play and putting that pressure on them?"

Stewart added that when the idea was pitched to Foster, he was immediately on board – something of a relief to the theatre, which had placed its big bet, the opening of the season, on making this collaboration happen.

"Norm really loved it and was fully on board," she said. "I think he was excited not only to be involved in the theater again, but also to have a reason to get back on stage in a safe way for him. He loves Orangeville and he's looking forward to seeing everyone



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SEASON OPENER: Norm Foster (left) stands next to David Nairn, as they reprise their roles in *Jonas & Barry in the Home*, with *The Norm Effect*, a series of staged readings featuring Canada's most beloved playwright and friends of the Theatre Orangeville stage. The play will be at the Opera House from Sept. 17 to 21.


again. So we were thrilled that he said yes, because you know, if he had said no, this wouldn't be happening."

With three performances scheduled, *The Norm Effect* promises to be an unforgettable kickoff to Theatre Orangeville's new season.

For audiences, it's not just a chance to see beloved plays - it's an opportunity to ex-


perience the wit and heart of Norm Foster through the playwright's own voice, right here on the Orangeville stage.

Tickets are available through the Theatre Orangeville box office at 519-938-7584 and online –theatreorangeville.ca – with subscription packages on sale now for multiple performances.




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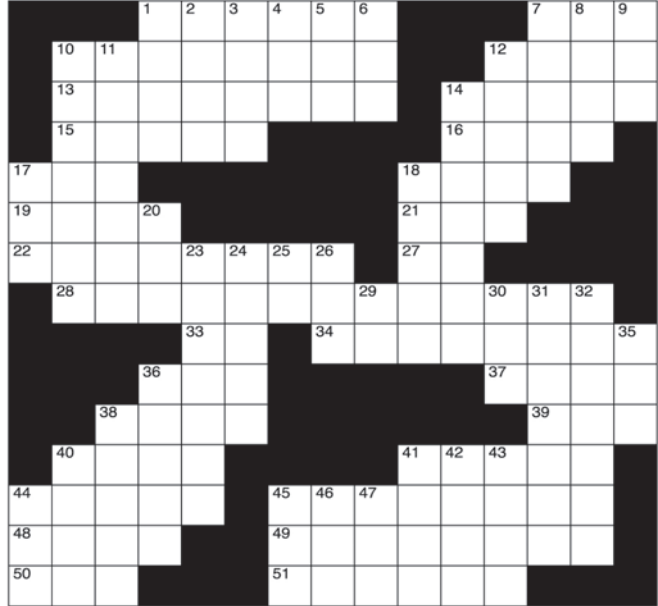
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The Citizen CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. 259310 • Solution on page: CLASSIFIEDS SECTION



CLUES ACROSS

- Carved into
- ___ Rogers, cowboy
- Unruly locale
- Edible mushroom
- Influential noblemen
- Rattling breaths
- David ___ George, Brit. P.M.
- Musician Clapton
- Small Eurasian deer
- Invests in little enterprises
- Perimeter
- Chicago ballplayer
- Animal body part
- It's everywhere these days
- Fictional ad exec
- Mr. T character
- Midway between east and southeast
- Animal dwelling
- An object that as survived from the past
- Oil cartel
- Affirmative
- Foul smell
- Brisk tempo
- S. American indigenous person
- Restored
- Official
- Skin lesions
- Electroencephalograph
- Middle Eastern country
- Extremely angry
- Title used before a woman's name
- British thermal unit
- By the way (abbr.)
- Anger
- Nullifies
- Ones who acquire
- Time zone
- Arabic name
- Protein in mucus
- Ballpoint pen
- Mimics
- Humans have a lot of it
- Expressions of good wishes
- Cool!
- One point east of due south
- City of Angels football team (abbr.)
- A way to save for retirement

CLUES DOWN

- Root of taro plant
- Those ones
- Appliances have one
- A way to sing
- Baracus
- Against the current
- Subway rodent
- Armor plate
- Hair on the head
- Strong insect
- Swollen lymph node
- A way to lessen
- Walter White poison
- Sleeveless garment
- Long accompanied song
- Without features
- Yankee great Mattingly
- Removes from record

ANSWERS:

Across: 1. LA 2. Panicle 3. Snob 4. Air 5. Kneel 6. Email 7. School 8. Down 9. Leaves

Down: 1. Chloophyll 2. Remain in an inactive state, typically during winter

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



How they say that in...

English: Cool
Spanish: Fresco
Italian: Fresco
French: Frais
German: Kalt




ACROSS

- California city (abbr.)
- Sudden fear
- Dull pain
- Rest on knees
- One who feels superior to others
- We breathe it
- Place for learning


DOWN

- They grow on trees
- Game played with a baby
- Not as hot
- Digital message



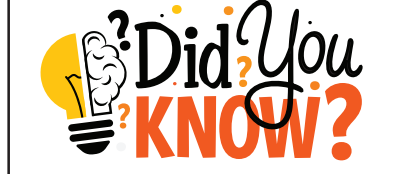
Leaves change color in the fall due to the breakdown of this substance.

ANSWER: Chlorophyll




HIBERNATE

remain in an inactive state, typically during winter



Raking leaves by hand is a great form of exercise that enables people to enjoy the fresh air and does not contribute to noise pollution caused by leaf blowers.



ANSWERS:

1. Leaves 2. Peekaboo 3. Cooler 4. Email 5. Kneel 6. Air 7. Snob 8. Air 9. School 10. Down 11. Leaves

Orangeville Jazz Society Big Band to perform at Opera House

Written By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

On Nov. 7, the Orangeville Jazz Society Big Band will be presenting a Frank Sinatra tribute show at the Orangeville Opera House, containing many well-known songs from Sinatra's catalogue.

"It all started with the Orangeville District Secondary School (ODSS) jazz band, which I ran for 20 years," said Ryan Grist in an interview with the Citizen this week. "There was an increasing interest of adults in the community; at one point there were as many adults as kids."

He went on to tell the story, "One day, one of the adults gave Al Luiker \$20 and told him, 'I just want to donate to the cause.' Al Luiker had been playing with the band for 10, 11 years."

That gesture was the true beginning of the Orangeville Jazz Society Big Band.

Pianist Nichola Mustapha put them in contact with John Amato, vocalist and "crooner" who sings the music of Frank Sinatra with truth and clarity.

Building on the tremendous success of the Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival in June, when they played to a full house at the Opera House, they wanted to return to the venue for another performance with this tribute show.

"I couldn't believe how well Amato sings," Grist commented. "Sinatra, Nat King Cole, tunes they sang with the Count Basie Bands."

Grist wanted to extoll the beauty and im-

portance of real instruments making music, "not as a computer," as he said. "So real."

He is confident that jazz can never go away; it can't because it's so compelling, so human.

According to Grist, there are two things on his mind that we have to experience live: a gospel choir with so many voices and the power in their singing, and a big jazz band.

"We're social beings – we have to experience together in spite of whatever differences we might have," he said.

It was really Frank Sinatra's music that got Grist into jazz. His father had recordings of Frank and great arrangements of some of the greatest soloists.

"My grandpa he played bass," Grist recalled. "He kept had a bass in the basement, but I had never seen him play it. One day at a party, my uncle kind of caught him. He brought the bass upstairs and handed it to my grandpa and said 'go on, play it.'"

The grandfather just started playing, and it was magic. "I couldn't take my eyes off him — I have a photo that sees me with my jaw hitting the ground."

Grist's uncle, who lived in Ottawa, was also a jazz musician. He had played on Parliament Hill and once played for the Queen. When Grist went out to visit, his uncle sat down at his grand piano to play. He had a radio program and was friends with Guido Basie.

We have to tell the stories, and we love the



NICK ROSE PHOTO

TRIBUTE CONCERT: On Nov. 7, The Orangeville Jazz Society Big Band is presenting a Frank Sinatra tribute with many of the songs from Sinatra's catalogue at the Orangeville Opera House, featuring singer John Amato. Pictured here is the 18-member band and John Amato on the David Nairn Stage, playing to a full house at the Blues and Jazz festival in June, this year.

stories.

"That's what we want to do at the show," said Grist. "They told such great stories. Amato is the vocalist. He can sing all the music in all the keys. Nicholas Mustapha will be on piano."

For one show only, the Orangeville Jazz Society Big Band and its "18-piece powerhouse Big Band" urges us to save the date, Nov. 7.

Tickets will be available soon for only \$25 to make sure the show is accessible. Tickets will be available at the Orangeville Opera House Box Office; this is a big undertaking.

Said Grist about the very reasonable ticket price, "We're building forward and we want people to hear the music and for those who have supported us."

Gallery Gemma Annual Gemstones Event coming to Alton Mill Arts Centre

Written By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

Twenty years ago, Anne-Marie Warburton, founder and owner of Gallery Gemma, first went to the Tucson Gem Show, the largest gem show in the world, in Tucson, Arizona.

At the time, she was establishing her fledgling jewellery business here in Caledon, and she attended a lecture during the Tucson event on showing and selling gemstones in an educational and interesting gathering.

Recounting this story during a recent interview with the Citizen, she said, "I thought I could do that but I didn't have a store nor customers. The next year I did have a store and when I went again to Tucson, I asked the same lecturer 'how do I get a cutter to come to Canada' and she said 'I was born there and I can come.'"

Warburton opened Gallery Gemma in 2006 as a profound act of faith in the Alton Mill, while the other side of the building was still under construction.

It seems Warburton's faith has been justifi-

fied: her business has grown as a result of her focus, innovative approach, and exceptional customer service.

Among these is her annual gemstone event, one that concerns itself with precious stones and is on this Saturday (Sept. 13) and Sunday (Sept. 14) at 1402 Queen Street West in Alton.

The meeting with the Canadian lecturer in Tucson led Warburton to an introduction to Lisa Elser is an award-winning cutter. The Smithsonian Institute displays one of her cut gems.

Elser buys many of the rough stones she cuts from mines in the Arusha region of Tanzania in East Africa. In return, she and her late husband, Tom, worked, and she continues to work and donate to the people in Africa with whom she associates on many platforms: supporting schools for young single mothers, who were recently banished from going to school; paying for borehole wells for safe water and sanitation, just to mention a couple.

"Lisa's late husband was a mathematician," Warburton added to Elser's background, "He designed some of the cuttings, winning awards for his designs and she won awards for the cutting."

The other thing about Warburton's gemstone show, as she went on to explain, is that people get to see coloured gemstones they are not familiar with. The usual focus is on sapphires, rubies, and emeralds, whereas Elser is bringing all sorts of variations of gemstones, "reasonably priced to the sky is the limit."

It is meant as a fun way to learn more and see what attracts you.

The format is simple. Light drinks and catered refreshments by Gourmandissimo are served to attendees seated around a table but it is said humorously that the "main course is the gemstones."

Throughout the couple of hours the event runs on Saturday and Sunday, hundreds of gems are passed around while Elser explains where they come from, the thoughts behind the cutting, and the elements of what makes them precious to own.

Over the 12 years that Elser has been present at these events, Warburton commented, "Over the time we really love her – she is just a pleasure – talking to clients – a harmony is there that I want for my clients. It is so interesting, and sometimes on your first visit, you feel this mind-blowing fun and interest that you weren't expecting. Each time, some have never been, and this year, some are coming for the eighth time. Once you want to be involved in your own jewellery, there's always new cuts – things that go together that you never have thought would."

One of the best parts of the gemstone event is that it is free to attend, but reservations are required. It is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon on a Saturday or Sunday – see that which you never see and afterwards, people can take their purchases to their own jeweller.

Continued on Page A14



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Orangeville Girl Guides to celebrate 75th Anniversary Tea event

A local group is celebrating a significant anniversary later this month. The Orangeville Girl Guides are holding a 75th Anniversary Tea at the Tweedsmuir Presbyterian Church on Sept. 20, from 2 to 4 p.m.

The local Girl Guides troupe, aged nine to 11, meets once a week from September to May and participates in community outings, cookie fundraisers, camping, and sleepovers. The way the program works – kids aged five and six are enrolled in the Sparks, seven- and eight-year-olds are Embers, nine to 11 are Guides, 12 to 14 are pathfinders, and rangers are 15 to 17.

The Orangeville Girl Guides have 23 members at the moment, and they'll be serving tea and cookies at the upcoming 75th anniversary event. A celebratory 75th anniversary cake will be cut as well to mark the milestone. The Tweedsmuir Presbyterian Church is located at 6 John St., Orangeville.



PETER RICHARDSON PHOTOS

FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN: With the warm weather coming to an end, the 4th Annual Cardinal Woods End of Summer Party was held at Mono College Park on Sunday, Sept. 7. The event featured a wide variety of activities for families to enjoy, such as pony rides, a petting zoo, a display from the Orangeville Fire Department, karate demonstrations, and live music. A raffle was held in support of Caledon Dufferin Victim Services.

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Orangeville mayor speaks out against vandalism at local parks

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

The Town of Orangeville is reporting an increase in theft and vandalism at local parks. Stolen items include metal bleacher seats and copper wiring from electrical panels at Orangeville’s Springbrook Park, Kay Cee Gardens, and Rotary Park.

The Town of Orangeville says these thefts not only damage local parks but also increase costs for the community and can result in the closure of parks and sports fields.

Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post took to social media to share her concerns.

“I am beyond frustrated to share that over the last few days, we’ve had significant theft and vandalism in our parks,” she wrote on Sept. 5. “This isn’t just ‘a little damage.’ These senseless acts come with a big cost to our entire community. Taxpayer dollars that should be going toward improving our parks now have to go to repairs and replacements. And while we haven’t had to close any parks or fields yet, these thefts put that at risk – and

they directly affect the enjoyment of our parks for families, kids, and local baseball leagues.”

Anyone who sees something suspicious is asked to report it to the police. The Town of Orangeville asks that the public remain vigilant when using these spaces.

“Our parks belong to everyone. They are meant to be safe, welcoming places where we can gather, play, and enjoy our community. When they’re targeted like this, it impacts us all,” Mayor Post shared. “The police are in-

vestigating, and I ask every resident to keep your eyes open. If you see suspicious activity, please report it. And if you or someone you know is struggling financially, please reach out to the County of Dufferin for support options before ever resorting to theft – there are resources available.”

Anyone with information can contact the Dufferin OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or online at opp.ca/reporting. Anonymous tips can be provided to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or ontariocrimestoppers.ca.

Province increases base funding for Dufferin County paramedics

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

The Ontario government is increasing its base funding for land ambulances in Dufferin County.

The province announced nearly \$5.5 million on Tuesday, Sept. 9, representing a 11 per cent increase in the amount of money the County of Dufferin receives annually.

“This increase in base funding helps ensure municipalities address increased costs so they can continue to deliver high-quality emergency care. This investment is part of the almost \$1 billion in land ambulance funding Ontario is providing municipalities across the province this year, representing an average increase of 8.7 per cent from 2024,” reads a news release from Dufferin–Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones’ office.

“In addition, to further reduce delays paramedics encounter when dropping patients off at a hospital, Ontario is investing \$327,040 in the County of Dufferin through the Dedicated Offload Nurses Program to hire more nurses and other eligible health professionals dedicated to offloading ambulance patients in hospital emergency depart-

ments.”

Through the program, paramedics are able to get back out into the community faster to respond to their next emergency call.

Offload times have been reduced by approximately 65 per cent, since peaking in October 2022.

“Our government is making record investments to protect Ontario’s health-care system and connect people to the care they need, when they need it,” said Jones, who’s also Deputy Premier and Ontario’s Minister of Health. “Through these additional investments, we are providing paramedics and emergency departments with the tools they need to connect more people across the province to high-quality emergency care, faster and closer to home.”

To ensure patients in need receive critical care sooner, the Ontario government is also continuing to implement the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS).

“The system helps to better prioritize and triage emergency medical calls and dispatch paramedics sooner,” reads the release from Jones’ office.

The provincial government has expand-

ed the use of MPDS to Mississauga, Kenora, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Renfrew, Georgian, Kingston, Lindsay, Ottawa and Timmins. It is accelerating progress to implement the system at the 10 remaining Central Ambulance Communication Centres across Ontario over a year ahead of schedule.

“With the increased funding for Dufferin County Paramedic Service, the Government of Ontario is investing in the dedicated paramedics who work tirelessly, often under challenging circumstances, to provide the highest level of care to residents,” said Gary Staples, Chief Paramedic for the County of Dufferin.

“In addition, the Dedicated Offload Nurse funding will help ensure that paramedics remain available to respond to commu-

nity needs in a timely manner, rather than being tied up in hospitals. This investment strengthens our local healthcare system, improves response times, and enhances the quality of care for all who call Dufferin County home.”



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FUNDING BOOST: The Ontario government increased the base funding for land ambulances in Dufferin County by 11 per cent. In total, the county will receive nearly \$5.5 million from the province.

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Gemstones Event coming to Alton Mill Arts Centre

Continued from Page A11

What is exceptional is how much men enjoy the experience. They feel dragged by their partners to come, and then, they enjoy it tremendously.

“Now more than ever, men are wearing jewellery,” said Warburton. “I’m fascinated on how many men are interested in wearing jewellery, pearls, gemstones, all kinds of things. We’ve been doing this for probably 17 years.”

There is also an annual cultural pearls event on the menu at another date; once a year, gemstones and pearls keep it special, and people look forward to it.

Spontaneously, Gallery Gemma holds a Trunk Show with various individual artists. A tradition from back in the ages, when a traveller would come with his trunk to sell in any town he came to.

In this case, they can bring in a wide selec-

tion, and people enjoy that. Gallery Gemma gives them a case space in the store. This is not particularly routine but comes about “just as suits ours and the artist’s time,” Warburton remarked, “I’m thinking who is selling well and offer a time and place to the artist.”

The reason one would want to come to this weekend’s gemstone event is that they are interested in custom jewellery and want to have the opportunity to purchase an incredible selection of gorgeous gemstones directly from the source. Most of the gemstones purchased will later be used on custom-made jewellery.

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Camp Molly ignites passion for fire service careers among local youth

Written By RILEY MURPHY

“Mom, I think I’m going to be a firefighter,” said Sarah Messiha to her parents after her first day at Camp Molly in Vaughn in 2019.

The now 20-year-old is a volunteer for the first-ever Camp Molly in Caledon.

Camp Molly is a free, four-day camp for young women and non-binary youth aged 15-18, providing a hands-on firefighting experience.

The camp aims to showcase a career in the fire service as a viable and rewarding option while empowering female and non-binary youth.

Although the camp is very hands-on and “boots on the ground,” it imparts a wide array of information, ranging from firefighting to medical, communications, education, and more.

This year’s camp, held at Caledon’s Fire Station 309, featured 23 campers and 31 volunteers.

One of those volunteers was Messiha.

She first joined Camp Molly because her parents “thought it’d be a great opportunity to gain confidence and see what a girl can do,” explained Messiha.

They signed her up in hopes that Messiha would gain courage and responsibility, but with the intention of “explore, but don’t actually,” laughed Messiha.

But, after her first day, she couldn’t wait to

attend again.

After waiting a whole year, Messiha attended Camp Molly in Vaughan yet again and then began volunteering for the camp.

She also completed her pre-service training at the Fire and Emergency Services Training Institute (FESTI).

The current law and policing student at Guelph-Humber says she’s “counting the days down until I can get on a truck.”

“I think one of the biggest things was realizing as a girl, I can do anything that I put my heart to,” says Messiha. “I’m just as capable as anyone else.”

During the Caledon camp, campers gained hands-on experience in all aspects of fire services, including auto extrication, fire suppression, medical response, fire investigations, and more.

In one demonstration, campers were invited to learn how to properly use an AED machine, as well as CPR.

In the demonstration nearby, suited-up campers were able to try their hand at opening and closing fire hydrants.

The campers were divided into platoons, where they could participate and learn together as a group.

Camper Bianca Indovino, a resident of Bolton, learned about Camp Molly in a somewhat unconventional way.

Firefighters were responding to a false alarm at Indovino’s residence when she be-

gan speaking with a female firefighter on the scene, who told her about Camp Molly.

“You see a lot of male firefighters and not enough females, so once you see a female firefighter, it’s something you want to become, you get inspiration from female firefighters,” she said.

Indovino shared she often meets stereotypes about what girls can do compared to boys in her school.

“But then I turn to them, and I say, ‘Girls can do anything boys can do’,” she says.

Indovino says after learning about different opportunities in fire at Camp Molly, she decided not only to pursue a career in firefighting, but also to specialize in firefighter communications.

Some campers attended Camp Molly because they had strong role models in their own lives.

16-year-old camper and Caledon resident Emma Deagua wanted to attend Camp Molly as her mom works in the fire department.

She shared she wanted to join to experience what it was like and what it involves.

Deagua says she sees herself following in her mom’s footsteps one day, and that Camp Molly is “helping with the experience.”

Emma Heath has not one, but two of her role models with her that day; she was joined by her parents, Julie McNeely and James Heath.

McNeely currently works as a suppression

firefighter in Toronto, and Heath is a training captain in Caledon.

Emma Heath says that she likes the idea of being a firefighter and “helping people every day.”

Her parents shared it’s nice to hear her interested in the field because, as their daughter, she hears both sides of the work.

“They’ve all been raised in it so they see the not nice aspect of it as well and the fact that she’s still interested in attending is really nice,” said McNeely.

Emma had attended her first activity of the day, where she got to see the side of public education and fire prevention.

“That was really fun because we got to talk about all this stuff like code enforcement, making sure everyone has smoke detectors in the right places and actually has smoke detectors in their homes and all that kind of stuff. Just enforcing the rules of being safe and knowing your escape plan,” she says.

Role models outside of parental figures were also present that day. The Lunch and Learn, catered by Firehouse Subs, featured OPP Staff Sgt. Kathe Kiamos.

Kiamos shared with the campers that in her career, she often had to prove herself.

“Put the time in. Do the work,” said Kiamos. “You’ll get a lot of no’s, push through the no’s.”

Campers enjoyed their final days at Camp Molly with a dance battle, a combat challenge, and a graduation ceremony.

Dufferin OPP lay charges throughout the region related to impaired driving, theft

Close to 200 charges issued to motorists in Dufferin County over Labour Day weekend

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) laid nearly 200 charges while patrolling the region’s roadways over Labour Day weekend.

Between Aug. 29 and Sept. 1, Dufferin OPP officers laid 198 total traffic related charges, with speeding making up the majority of charges, with 105 citations issued.

Officers laid 22 charges related to the use of seatbelts, four charges for stunt driving/racing, four for impaired diving, one for distracted driving and 62 “other” charges, according to Dufferin OPP.

“[We] would like to thank the majority of motorists who obey laws and assist in keeping our roads safe,” reads a press release from Dufferin OPP.

Dufferin man charged in relation to theft from local business

As a result of a police investigation, Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged a male with theft.

On Aug. 29, members of the Dufferin OPP were called to a business on Centennial Road in Orangeville. The business owner reported

a male pulling up with a trailer and stealing items from his establishment before driving away. Police located the vehicle a short time later.

Kevin Innis, 42, from Orangeville, has been charged with:

- Theft Over \$5,000
- Possession of Property Obtained by Crime Over \$5,000

The accused individual is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville, to answer to the charges.

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation of any other criminal activity is asked to contact Dufferin OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or Crime Stoppers to remain anonymous at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

You can also submit your information online at ontariocrimestoppers.ca.

On Sept. 4, just before 8 p.m., officers responded to reports of a vehicle striking multiple parked cars on Century Drive in Orangeville.

Officers quickly responded and after engaging with the driver, entered into an impaired driving investigation. As a result, the male driver was arrested and transported to the Orangeville OPP Detachment.

Dennis Weaver, 34, from Orangeville, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drug
- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Careless Driving

The accused is scheduled to appear at the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville to answer to the charges. His driver’s licence was suspended and his vehicle was impounded.

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

where) program.

On Sept. 1, just before 1 a.m., Dufferin OPP officers were conducting a R.I.D.E. spot check in the area of Broadway in the Town of Orangeville. A vehicle entered the checkpoint but failed to stop and continued driving through.

Officers conducted a traffic stop moments later. Following a brief interaction with the driver, officers observed signs of impairment and initiated an impaired driving investigation.

Christopher Johnson, 64, from Ajax, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs
- Fail to surrender insurance card
- Driver failed to surrender licence
- Fail to surrender permit for motor vehicle
- Driving motor vehicle with open container of liquor

The accused individual is scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville. His driver’s licence was suspended, and vehicle was impounded.

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

Several parked cars struck by individual facing impaired driving charges

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged a male with impaired operation related offences after striking several parked vehicles.

RIDE check results in several impaired driving related charges

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged an Ajax resident with impaired driving-related offences following a R.I.D.E. (Reduce Impaired Driving Every-



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SLIDE INTO SAFETY: Orangeville Men’s Competitive Slo-Pitch league is now in playoffs as teams battle it out to see who will advance. A player slides safely into second base during a game between the Kegmen and the Machine at Rotary Park in Orangeville on Thursday, Sept. 4.



FRIENDLY COMPETITION: Local ball diamonds are staying busy as Orangville Men’s Competitive Slo-pitch is in the playoffs. A player makes it safely to first base during a game between OLAR Mechanical and the Kegmen on the diamond at Rotary Park in Orangeville on Thursday, Sept. 4.

Local athlete makes semi-finals in Youth Athlete of the Year competition

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

An Orangeville athlete is in the running to win the Colossal Youth Athlete of the Year competition in partnership with Sports Illustrated, and she has already made it through the first five rounds to become a semi-finalist.

Thirteen-year-old Elise Horton has been a competitive cheerleader for eight years, and she also plays volleyball and flag football.

A well-rounded athlete, Elise has travelled as far as Florida and Texas with her cheer team to compete in high-level competitions.

“I like being fit and challenging myself with my teammates,” Elise said of why she likes athletics. “I love the emotions of both winning and disappointment – both encourage me to work and train harder. Before I got into cheer, I did dance and acro, and I feel that cheer is a mix of that.”

Her cheer team is the Warriors, and they train out of Alpha Cheer and Tumbling in Aurora. Elise trains about 10 hours each week.

Elise’s mom, Melanie, said they received an email asking if Elise wanted to apply for the competition.


“We got into it because we thought it was fun,” Melanie said. “As we got into it, we wondered how many rounds of competition are there?”

Elise did well in the competition and made



TALENTED ATHLETE: Local athlete Elise Horton, 13, is a semi-finalist in the Youth Athlete of the Year competition. A well-rounded athlete, Elise is a member of a highly competitive cheer team. She also plays volleyball and flag football.

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If she wins, Elise said she would like to use some of the prize money to remodel her room.

High school sports soon return to Orangeville

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

There is a full lineup of high school sports getting underway as athletes begin training for the fall sports season.

The District 10 schedule has been published. District 10 includes Orangeville District Secondary School.

The District 4 schedule, which includes Westside Secondary School, has not yet been released; however, Westside will participate in some sports that have varsity teams entered in competition.

The ODSS Bears will have both a junior and senior team entering the girls’ basketball competition this year. The Bears always have competitive girls’ basketball teams, so it will be fun to see how they do this season.

The girls’ basketball season gets underway on Sept. 16.

Both ODSS and Westside have teams entered in the varsity girls’ field hockey this season. The season starts on Sept. 15, with each team playing eight games before going into the playoffs.

Golf will be an interesting sport to watch this year. The District 10 championship will be held at Guelph Lakes Golf Club on Sept. 24.

The senior boys’ soccer schedule starts on Sept. 16. The ODSS Bears team will have their home opener on the field at ODSS on Sept. 18.

The ODSS Junior boys’ soccer team will also play their home opener on Sept. 18.


ODSS has junior and senior boys’ volleyball teams entered in competition this year.

Both teams will play their first home matches at ODSS on Sept. 18.

Cross-country running is a great sport to watch as hundreds of students compete in this outdoor event.

The District 4/10 cross country championships will be held close to home at the Island Lake Conservation Area.

The event is hosted by ODSS this year and will take place on Wednesday, Oct 15.




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OPINION

Self defence

A recent incident in Lindsay, Ont., has caused some controversy when a victim of a crime was charged with some very serious offences after an intruder broke into his apartment around 3:20 a.m.

The victim, who was alone in the middle of the night, did the obvious thing and defended himself against an intruder in his home.

However, in the aftermath, the police charged the apartment dweller, the victim, with aggravated assault and assault with a weapon.

The intruder was no Boy Scout. Also from Lindsay, the man has been charged with possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose, break and enter, theft, mischief under \$5,000, and failing to comply with probation. Police said he was also wanted on unrelated offences.

The intruder was not the kind of guy you want in your home at any time – and certainly not as a stranger in the middle of the night.

As a result of his criminal activity, the intruder ended up in the hospital with life-threatening injuries.

As he spends time in his hospital bed, severely injured, hopefully, he can reflect on his decision to break into someone's home in the middle of the night.

The incident has many people, including

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, questioning why the victim in this case was charged with a crime.

In Canada, a person can defend themselves with 'reasonable force' against an attack or home invasion.

This isn't Florida with its 'stand your ground' law, where you can open fire on a trespasser simply for being on your property.

'Reasonable force' is a common sense way of saying you can defend yourself, but it's not your place to seek revenge for an incident.

If you are attacked on the street and a person raises their fist to you, reasonable force would be to defend yourself and hope you are a better boxer than the other guy.

In the case of an intruder in your home, the stakes are much higher.

I'm sure in this mentioned case, the apartment dweller was scared to death to find a stranger in his home in the middle of the night. Having a strange, shadowy figure in your bedroom would no doubt cause you to believe they intend to do harm to you or your family.

So what would constitute 'reasonable force' in a case like this?

A baseball bat to the side of the intruder's head would likely be considered reasonable. It would be better to swing a bat than wait and find out the intruder is armed and intends to

harm your family.

However, if you give him a good beating and drive him out of the house, your part in the incident is over. It is then that you call the police and let them take it from there.

Using unreasonable force, would be if you chased the intruder down the street and beat him into a coma several hundred metres from your house.

Several years ago, a friend of mine and her family were getting ready for bed around 11 p.m. She heard her husband call out, 'Call 9-1-1, there's an intruder in the house.'

Her husband had discovered a young man, around early 20s, in his daughter's unoccupied bedroom, wearing only boxer shorts, his clothes lying on the floor.

The man had a minor scuffle with the intruder as the stranger tried to leave the premises.

The stranger seemed more confused than threatening. After a few moments, the husband let the guy walk out through the front door.

It was the middle of winter and -20 degrees. The police found him standing on a street corner in his underwear and freezing.

It turns out the guy had gone out drinking with friends. He knew he was too drunk to drive, so he called for a taxi.

He gave the taxi driver his home address. However, the location where he was picked up was between two towns.

The taxi driver dropped him off at the right address, but in the wrong town.

It just happened that my friend and her husband both thought the other person had locked the home entrance from the garage that night.

The intruder simply walked into the house because, in his drunken state, he thought he was home.

What would have happened if my friend's husband were a gun-toting feller with a 'shoot first and ask questions later' philosophy?

Part of the problem in cases like what happened in Lindsay is the reluctance of police to provide information to the public. Ontario police are notoriously tight-lipped when it comes to keeping the public informed, always stating that providing information will 'compromise the case.'

Although most people probably sympathize with the victim in this case, knowing the full story might provide insight as to why the police thought it was necessary to charge a person, even though they were the apparent victim of a crime.

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Gaza – not so much a genocide; more a real estate opportunity

A motley band of greedy fantasists got together at the White House a week ago (Aug. 27) and came up with a cunning plan to bring peace to the Middle East while lining their own pockets at the same time. It was 'leaked' within days, as it was clearly meant to be, and since then the sound of outraged clucking has been loud in the land.

It is "a Trumpian get-rich-quick scheme reliant on war crimes, AI and tourism," wrote the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

"It's a textbook case of international crimes on an unimaginable scale: forcible population transfer, demographic engineering and collective punishment," said Duncan Grant, head of Swiss-based human rights group Trial International.

"It's insane," said H.A. Hellyer of the Royal United Services Institute.

They are right, so far as they go – but they only know the half of it. The other half is that this is an insane crime that could actually happen.

As you would expect at a meeting chaired by Donald Trump, half the participants were real estate developers by trade – himself, his ignorant 'Special Envoy for the Middle East' Steve Witkoff, and his son-in-law Jared Kushner. Marco Rubio was there as National Security Adviser,

and former British prime minister Tony Blair to raise the tone a bit.

He can't raise it all that much, because he is a war criminal himself. (He has admitted that he would have invaded Iraq even if he had known that there were no 'weapons of mass destruction' there.) But he and his Tony Blair Institute (TBI) have spent the past nine years scrounging money from various Middle Eastern potentates and investors, so he has contacts.

The meeting was intended to flesh out the plan for 'cleansing' Gaza of its 2 million current residents that Trump first mooted early this year and replacing them with an unspecified but wealthy 'international' population who would turn it into 'the Riviera of the Middle East'. You know, like Saint-Tropez, Antibes and the Cinque Terre, only flatter and farther east.

The Palestinians who are living and dying in Gaza now would be 'relocated' to some other country while 40 million tonnes of rubble, unexploded ordnance and decomposed bodies are cleared away and a shiny new city is built on the ruins. Property owners will be given digital tokens that they can spend to resettle elsewhere or maybe even buy property in Gaza again.

The United States will govern Gaza as

a 'trusteeship' for at least 10 years, with no information on what happens after that. The immense cost of clearing up the devastation and building a new 'Land of Oz' would be borne by private investors, who could expect a fourfold return on their capital in a decade. And everyone will live happily ever after.

There are different levels of self-deception operating among the various political and financial groups that may be inveigled into supporting this bizarre and illegal project. Most naive are those who believe this is a sincerely meant and viable plan. This may include Donald Trump, who is probably blinded by the ever-receding vision of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Then there are those who pride themselves on their cynicism and have worked out that it is just 'a cover story for ethnic cleansing', as the Washington Post put it. It gives Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin 'Bibi' Netanyahu something to say while his troops drive the Palestinians into exile, and he can just 'change his mind' later about letting them return.

And then there are the true cynics, most of them Arabs, who know all of the above and still think that the Riviera of the Middle East may come to pass. They base this view on their conviction that the govern-

ing Arab elites have given up on the Palestinians and would accept Israeli annexation not only of the Gaza Strip but also of the West Bank.

Here's what Ragheda Dergham wrote on Aug. 31: "Trump and Kushner have calculated that Arab states, particularly in the Gulf, will not jeopardize their prized bilateral relationships with the Trump administration. Eventually, they believe, these countries will accept the new status quo in Gaza and, later, the West Bank, however bitterly..."

"Neither Arab states nor the Islamic Republic of Iran, nor Turkey or the broader Islamic world, will do more than protest – albeit in varying forms – against US support for Israeli plans to remove Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank through either forced or 'voluntary' displacement, in service of the biblical project to remake these territories into a singular Jewish state."

I'm afraid she may be right, in which case Israel may have 'King Bibi' forever. Of course, Ragheda Dergham lives in Lebanon. In most other countries of the Arab world, she'd be in jail.

GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY



The loss of our first pet

The very first pet our family ever had was a young, jet-black stray tomcat who appeared out of nowhere one day at our country house when my little brother and I were very young.

And being very young, we were soft-hearted little kids who loved small animals, especially if the animals were friendly. This cat was very friendly right from the start, letting us pat him right from the moment we first saw him.

We had no idea where he came from or who he belonged to. The only people nearby with a black cat were our immediate neighbours, a few hundred yards down the road on the other side of the highway. But their cat was older, fat, happy, and never wandered very far from home.

Falling in love with this newcomer immediately, my little brother and I quickly asked our parents if we could keep him.

After some deliberation, they agreed – on the condition that if someone came to claim the cat, we would have to give him up. We accepted the condition and hoped that day would never come.

With that settled, the next task was choosing a name. As a little kid, I thought our neighbors' cat had the coolest name ever for a black cat, and I insisted on giv-

ing our new cat the same one. My parents tried to talk me out of "copycatting", so to speak, but I was adamant. So from that day on, there were two black cats in our rural neighborhood that had the same name.

Since our new cat showed up in the summer after school let out, we decided to keep him outside temporarily, until we could figure out how clean he was. Once that was determined, we could then decide whether we would allow him inside the house or not.

Not long after getting that cat, we had to drive into town to do our weekly shopping. We left him outside, piled into the car, and headed off. A couple of hours later, with our errands done, we began our drive back home.

As we slowed to turn into our driveway, we saw a heartbreaking sight.

In the gravel on the shoulder of the road, right across from our driveway, lay a small, still mass of jet-black fur.

Our parents saw it immediately and knew what it was. They tried to shield us from seeing it, but from our spot in the back seat, we saw it. And in that instant, my brother and I had a terrible sinking feeling.

After pulling into the driveway, Dad qui-

etly asked Mom to take us kids into the house. Mom did, and Dad walked back to the highway to investigate the situation.

Our worst fears were soon confirmed.

When Dad came in through the doorway, the grim look on his face told us everything. The little pile of black fur by the side of the road was, indeed, the body of our cat. He'd been hit by a car and killed.

And then the tears began. My younger brother and I cried and cried over the sudden loss. We hadn't had that cat for very long, but it doesn't take long for little kids to take an animal into their hearts.

Through my tears, I remember the look of shared pain on my parents' faces, as if they would have given anything in the world to spare their children the heartbreak of this moment. It was the universal look of sadness that any good and decent parent gets on their face when faced with the unavoidable heartbreak occasionally experienced by their child.

Any loving parent would do anything in the world to shield their child from the pain of loss, but sometimes that pain is unavoidable. It is just a part of life.

And what can you say to the child who has just had their heart broken?

Dad returned to the road, gently gath-

ered up the cat's body, and quietly buried him in the woods behind our house.

One of the saddest days in a family's life is when a child experiences the loss of a beloved pet. That day came quickly and suddenly for our young family, and there was nothing we could do to stop it.

But kids are resilient, and eventually, we healed. Not long after that sad day, another stray cat found its way onto our property. And once again, we opened our home to another wayward soul—and, once more, our hearts.

The pain you feel at the end of a pet's life makes it almost not worth having a pet in the first place.

Almost.

We had three cats and a dog over the span of our family life, one right after the other. Each was an integral part of our family, and their companionship and devotion made our own lives that much richer for having had them.

But as anyone who has ever experienced the loss of a beloved pet intimately knows, the heartbreak of loss is the price of love.

KEITH SCHELL
REMEMBERING WHEN



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COMMUNITY VOICES

Monthly Message: Restful nights, ready mornings – supporting sleep as school starts

As summer winds down, many families face a familiar challenge: getting kids back into a healthy sleep routine for school. Late nights, irregular schedules, and extra screen time can make the first weeks of September tough. For kids and teens with disabilities and learning differences, the transition can be even more challenging. Sleep is essential for focus, learning, and overall well-being. Yet, many children, especially those who are autistic, have ADHD, experience anxiety or depression, or are gifted, struggle to get the rest they need. Understanding why sleep can be so tricky is the first step in helping your child reset. Autistic youth may find sleep difficult because of sensitivities to light, noise, or textures, or because their internal body clocks do not align with typical schedules. Children with ADHD often describe feeling “wired” at bedtime. This can be linked to delayed melatonin production as well as racing thoughts that make it hard to wind down. For teens who experience anxiety or depression, nights often bring rumination, physical tension, or disrupted



sleep cycles that keep them awake. Gifted children and teens may have overactive minds that make it hard to quiet down at night, while others genuinely need less sleep than their peers. No two children's sleep needs are exactly alike, which is why flexibility and patience are so important. Experts recommend starting to adjust sleep habits about two weeks before school begins, but it is never too late to make small, helpful changes. One of the most effective steps is creating a consistent bedtime and wake-up time and sticking to it, even on weekends. Predictability helps regulate the body's clock. Another helpful tool is building a

calming bedtime routine. Reading, journaling, listening to music, or dimming the lights an hour before bed can all help signal to the body that it is time to sleep. Reducing screen time before bed is also essential, since the blue light from phones and tablets can interfere with the body's natural production of melatonin. If avoiding screens is not possible, blue light filters or glasses can help lessen the impact. The sleep environment itself can make a big difference. Blackout curtains, white noise machines, or weighted blankets can reduce sensory distractions and create a more restful setting. Allowing children to choose comfortable bedding and pajamas can also support better rest, especially if

they are sensitive to certain textures. Relaxation strategies such as breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or calming scents like lavender can help ease nighttime tension. Some children also benefit from “rest time,” where the focus is not on forcing sleep but simply on lying quietly until their bodies naturally relax. Parents can help by modelling good sleep habits themselves, showing that rest is a priority for the whole family. If sleep challenges continue despite consistent routines, it may be helpful to consult a doctor. Sleep studies, therapy, or other professional supports can sometimes be necessary to address underlying issues. The most important takeaway is that every child's sleep needs are unique. For neurodivergent youth in particular, the goal is not a perfect sleep schedule but rather an environment and routine that helps them feel rested, calm, and ready to take on the school day. Here's to earlier bedtimes, brighter mornings, and a successful start to the school year. Happy back-to-school!

Don't dilute democracy in education

TESS PRENDERGAST
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY



The provincial government is now openly musing about eliminating elected school board trustees. Education Minister Paul Calandra has suggested that Ontario's governance model is “outdated” and that the role of trustees may no longer be necessary. Under this same government, we've also seen the rise of “strong mayor powers,” giving mayors the ability, in some cases, to pass by-laws with only a third of council's support if they match provincial priorities. Those changes diluted the role of councillors and shifted decision-making away from the community. When you add it all up, this feels less like reform and more like Queen's Park pulling power away from our communities.

School board trustees are often the only direct and local democratic voice parents have in public education. Trustees are elected, accountable, and rooted in their communities. They answer to parents, students, and taxpayers, not to Queen's Park. If they disappear, so too does a critical avenue for parents to raise concerns and influence how schools are run. Yes, there have been examples of poor decision-making and expense scandals at school boards. But the solution to those problems isn't to eliminate the role altogether. If municipal councils experience problems, we don't eliminate councillors. Instead, we improve accountability, strengthen transparency, and educate citizens on how to engage with the sys-

tem. The same principle should apply to education. Anyone who's been to a board meeting knows democracy can get messy, and that's okay. Debates about school names, policies, or curriculum are not distractions; they are signs of an engaged public. Eliminating trustees under the banner of “efficiency” may speed up decisions, but it does so by shutting out the very people those decisions affect. Streamlining without local input doesn't make governance better. It just makes it less democratic. If the government truly wants to strengthen education, it should focus on underfunding, classroom resources, and student well-being. It should also invest in

civic education, helping Ontarians better understand the role of trustees, encouraging higher voter turnout in trustee elections, and building stronger pathways for parent engagement. That's the kind of system I want to see as both a teacher and a councillor, one that's accountable and democratic. Public education is a cornerstone of our democracy. Diluting community voices by eliminating elected trustees may serve short-term political goals, but it will weaken our long-term civic health. Instead of taking power away from the people, the province should be working to bring them in.

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Bethell Hospice volunteer recognized for her passion and dedication

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

Bethell Hospice and Bethell Hospice Foundation marked their 15th anniversary at a joint stakeholder meeting in August, celebrating dedication, compassion, and community.

At the event, the Debbie Davis Outstanding Achievement Award was presented.

The award honours an individual who exemplifies Bethell Hospice's values through extraordinary service and commitment.

It was named after Debbie Davis, in recognition of the passion and dedication she has witnessed and shared at Bethell Hospice.

This year, the award went to Lisa Pecarski, a Bethell Hospice volunteer who has dedicated her time to the kitchen, reception, and as a resident support volunteer.

Bethell Hospice said her "warmth, kindness, and generosity have touched the lives of countless residents, families, and fellow team members."

"Lisa embodies everything this award stands for," said Margaret Paan, Executive Director, Bethell Hospice. "Her remarkable kindness, commitment, and compassion

make her an extraordinary role model for our staff, volunteers, and community."

Pecarski joined as a Bethell volunteer in 2022, following a 43-year career in childcare.

She shared that she was "fascinated with that caring and compassionate approach Bethell has" after attending a volunteer information session.

Pecarski says that one thing that was immediately evident when she joined the team was that they treat full-time staff and volunteers collaboratively as one big team.

Her favourite position at Bethell is in the kitchen, and she shared that it's an "honour" to prepare food for Bethell residents.

Pecarski says often those coming to Bethell are coming from hospitals, "to see someone get excited about food again, it's not a joyful experience in the sense that it's fun, but when you see you make a difference in someone's days."

"Food is love," says Pecarski. "If their loved one will eat something it makes such a difference to them," she said about residents' friends and family.

"I'm just privileged to be there and to make meals," she says.

In our own homes, she said, the kitchen is the heart of the house, and the same holds

true for the Bethell kitchen, which serves as a compassionate, warm, and loving place for residents and their families.

Pecarski shared that over the years she has seen the kitchen act as a place where people can not only share their worries and sadness, but also their beautiful stories.

She said often many families come back and thank them.

"It's really quite beautiful that they don't walk away from Bethell, now we're all part of one family."

"Cooking and listening and caring are the things I do the best," says Pecarski.

She says she's "just someone who puts on a hairnet and an apron and goes in and makes omelets and oatmeal," but Bethell Hospice shared that Pecarski always goes above and beyond to support others.

One of her favourite parts is mentoring new volunteers.

Pecarski often leaves her name and number with new volunteers, saying they can reach her anytime, even if it's just to ask where the vanilla is.

"Anyone who comes into the hospice, I want them to feel welcome whether they're a family member, a new staff member, a

resident, especially new volunteers," says Pecarski. "Volunteers are the most valuable assets; staff are hired, staff are paid, but volunteers, this is not your job. You have to sign up for a couple shifts a month; if we can get people to come more than that and really commit and work with other people, it just makes for a much richer and more enjoyable interaction for everybody when everybody is working together."

Sometimes, Pecarski will even sit in the kitchen with new volunteers to let them know there's someone there supporting them.

She shared that Bethell truly is her happy place, and even when she comes home exhausted, she feels enriched and joyful.

Pecarski often volunteers her time to spend Christmas at Bethell, as she says she knows the struggle it can be to get people to sign up to volunteer around the holidays.

"When you can go in and spend Christmas Eve with a family, that's such a gift," says Pecarski.

"I don't know if I'm that deserving of Debbie Davis but I care enough to make sure everyone has a positive experience," she says.

Continued on Page B5

Young musician from Mono performs successful concert at Windrush Estate Winery

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

A teenager from Mono is making waves in the local music scene, following his recent concert at Windrush Estate Winery.

On Aug. 10, Taras Petryk, 17, who graduated from Orangeville District Secondary School (ODSS) with a 99 per cent average, intuitively creates strikingly original, soulful music.

"Truly, this was a 'goosebump concert'; a star is born. His piano works spoke of life itself with its many nuances. Then he picked up the guitar," said Windrush co-owner, Marilyn Field.

Petryk said, "I've played several piano concerts, but this was the first time I wrote lyrics, composed for guitar, performed guitar, and sang."

In response, Field said "I knew it would be brilliant, but I was shocked how brilliant it was – lyrically and musically so sophisticated, yet so natural, so mature. How can someone's first song be a masterpiece?"

Field helps empower vulnerable kids through Windrush's national charity youth-LEADarts. After meeting Petryk and hearing him play, Field took a personal interest in helping foster his talent.

Two years ago, inspired by his mother Michelle Grierson's novel "Becoming Leidah," he composed six pieces for piano on the theme of water. On Mother's Day, 2023, he premiered these at Chateau Windrush as a surprise gift for Grierson.

That summer, he recorded these and five more at Windrush as his first album. The album can be streamed from platforms like Spotify and YouTube or downloaded from Bandcamp.

"Marilyn is a bottle of joy," says Petryk, who performed a song he had composed on her piano for her as part of this concert, entitled "M."

"She's just out there, inspiring everyone around her. She's so gracious and generous and grandiose. I feel like that piece captured that. My piece has huge cadences and a grandiose theme that repeats over and over, swirling and getting more intense and more out there, and it just feels very Marilyn."

Petryk also credits the nature of his surrounding environment as having helped grow his talent.

"In 2023, I started composing," he said. "The first time I ever composed a piece I walked out into the forest; I felt like I needed to be among the trees. I sat with this one tree that just felt very right. I returned to the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

YOUNG PRODIGY: Taras Petryk, 17, from Mono, recently performed at a concert at Windrush Estate Winery, for an appreciative crowd.

house [with] this two-minute song that just came out of me into the piano! Often, I end up walking out in nature and kind of receiving."

In July, Petryk headlined at the Collingwood Music Festival as a Rising Star. This month, he will join opera singers in Toronto at a charity event for orphans of war.

He recently moves to Montreal to pursue a Bachelor of Music at Concordia University.

"Concordia's Composition stream just felt right to me. Other universities' music programs focus on theory and performance; I want to use those foundations to create. This program is very experimental," said Petryk, who added that he was also drawn to its music history curriculum that includes more

eclectic influences like David Bowie and Indian music.

"It's a broader horizon," Petryk noted. "'Experimental' gives me the go-ahead to explore what I want without any genre restrictions. I want to be as expressive as I can and push things into new territory."

Literally new territory will be living and composing in Montreal.

"Every phase of my life seems to have a different feel and a different vibe. The pieces I'm composing now definitely have a different maturity to them. And Montreal will take me to another level," said Petryk. "I'm not used to being in a community of musicians – collaborating and living with musicians. We'll see what that brings, but I'm very excited."

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Volunteer from Bethell Hospice recognized for her relentless passion and dedication

Continued from Page B4

She said it was a huge surprise and honour to receive the award, especially as it's named in Davis' honour.

"This woman has been with Bethell through everything, and I look at her and I think that is really an outstanding achievement," says Pecarski.

"Everyone should be honored for something they love to do, so this is my turn and I greatly appreciate it and I'm just delighted. I throw my heart into things that I feel passionate about so this is a big one for me."

She encourages everyone to volunteer at Bethell, especially those early in their adult life, as Pecarski wishes she had joined sooner.

"I would love to have been here 15 years ago when it opened."



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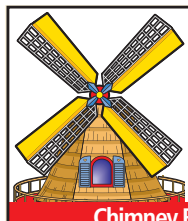
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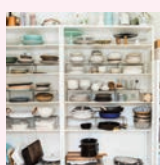
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Inspired by his uncle, Bruce Parker's love and interest in military history was instilled in him from a young age. What began with hunting shops for the latest airplane models later turned into scavenging "junk stores" for parts of the real things. His collection reflects his devotion to remembering Canada's contributions through warring times and to the honorable men and women who served. It is through his collection that we may remember them and him.

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COMMUNITY YARD SALE - Saturday, September 27th. Settler's Creek will be hosting its' Annual Fall Sale from 8 am - 12 noon.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

MEMORIAL SERVICE for Rosemary Kilbourn formerly of Caledon on Saturday, September 20th at 2pm. Centre Fellowship Church, 375 Hansen Blvd., Orangeville. Obituary in Globe and Mail on July 26th, 2025.

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OBITUARIES

PATRICIA LILLIAN PUCHNIAK

JANUARY 23, 1937 - AUGUST 21, 2025

With deep love and sorrow, the family of Patricia Lillian Puchniak (née Juskow) — known to all simply as Pat — announce her peaceful passing on Thursday, August 21, 2025, surrounded by her family. She was 88 years old.

Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on January 23, 1937, Pat was the daughter of the late Kaye and Pete Juskow. She lived a life marked by faith, music, adventure, and devotion to her family. She was the beloved wife of the late Edward Michael Puchniak with whom she shared a beautiful marriage rooted in love and partnership.

A gifted pianist, vocalist, and music teacher, Pat dedicated her life to sharing her love of music. Pat was an active member of the Winnipeg Sweet Adelines Chorus, and she could often be found at the piano, while inspiring generations of students through her teaching, her choirs, and her performances. In her later years she continued to enrich the lives of others with her involvement in Meals on Wheels, The Canadian Cancer Society, The Probuc Club of Bolton and the Caledon Seniors Club and by playing regularly where she lived at Sorrento Retirement Residence in Bolton.

Pat was known for her spirited nature and zest for life. She cherished books, movies, and music, but she also embraced adventure — whether riding rollercoasters, skydiving (at the age of 84!), or dancing down the aisle as "flower granny" at her granddaughters' weddings. Deeply devoted to her family, she was the loving mother of Christine Thompson of Bolton, Ontario, Glenn (Nancy) Puchniak of Trenton, Ontario, and Tom (Cathy) Puchniak of Trenton, Ontario. Cherished Gramma of Katie, Jesse, Emma (Hannah), Holly (Matt), Erica (Joshua), Joseph, Stepgrandsons Tim (Nikki), and Christopher (Jess). Great-grandmother of Faline, Sully, Thatcher, and step great-grandchildren Kameron, Carter and Bennett. Pat will also be dearly missed by her sisters Susan Sanders (Brian) and Maryanne Haiko (Gary) both of Winnipeg, Manitoba. She was predeceased by her sister Kathie Link and brother-in-law Glen Link.

Visitation will be held at Egan Funeral Home, 203 Queen Street South, Bolton on Wednesday, September 24 from 6-8pm. Memorial Mass will be held in Holy Family Parish, 60 Allan Drive, Bolton, on Thursday, September 25 at 11am. Reception and light lunch will be held at Egan Funeral Home immediately after the service. If any guests desire, you're welcome to incorporate in any way to your dress code black, white and red - Pat's favourite colour palette.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Mom, Gramma - We love you, we miss you, and we know we will see you again. Condolences for the family may be offered at www.EganFuneralHome.com

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORY OF:

My Loving Son Danny, Loving Brother, Loving Uncle

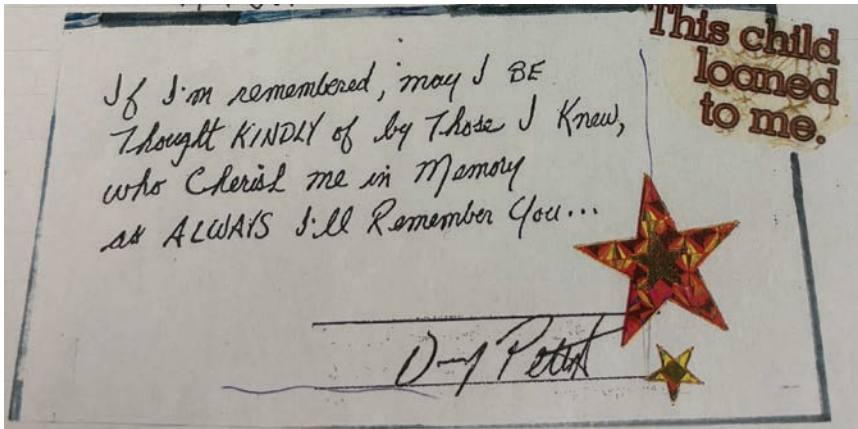
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