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JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**TERRIFIC TEACHERS:** Teachers, support staff and local officials came together on March 7 to mark International Women's Day with the Upper Grand Occasional Teachers Local for a brunch event held in Orangeville. Several teachers were highlighted and awarded for their outstanding contributions to the educational sector, reinforcing the critical role that occasional teachers play in community support and learning development. From left to right: UGOT Past President Marina Howlett, President Nkese Charles-Campbell, award recipient Simrin Chahal and Nitya Patel, who MC'd the event. See a full story on Page A6.

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**Family Transition Place celebrates International Women's Day**

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

Hundreds of community members gathered at Hockley Valley Resort on March 5 for Family Transition Place's annual International Women's Day Celebration Breakfast. The event combined celebration with fundraising to support services for women and families across Dufferin County and Caledon.

The morning event brought together community leaders, sponsors and residents for a program focused on recognizing the achievements of women while supporting programs aimed at preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Several local dignitaries attended the event, including Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post and members of municipal councils from across the region.

Lynette Pole-Langdon, executive director of Family Transition Place, welcomed guests to the event, highlighting the important role advocacy plays in daily life.

"On behalf of Family Transition Place, thank you for taking the time in your busy schedules," she said. "I know that your days fill up fast, and there are a million places for you to be, and there's lots of work for you to do. The fact that you've carved out time in your day, in your schedules, to be here,



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**CELEBRATING CULTURE:** Sharon Rigby of the Brave Canoe (right) and her daughter open the International Women's Day brunch, held by Family Transition Place, with the beat of a drum. They shared their voices, energy, and song with an audience of roughly 300 people. The Brave Canoe is a not-for-profit organization based out of Dufferin County, dedicated to revitalizing Indigenous culture.

to support us and to celebrate with each other, we really, really appreciate that," she said.

"We are really fortunate to live in a community that has incredible people that are so generous, and so that's where I think it's

important when we have businesses and individuals that show up to support events like this, that we give back and make sure we support their businesses."

Continued on Page A2

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# FTP marks International Women's Day with community breakfast

Continued from FRONT

Guests were treated to a gourmet buffet breakfast and a signature mocktail, while also participating in a silent auction and centrepiece auction. A series of games and prizes added to the atmosphere, with funds raised throughout the morning going toward Family Transition Place's programs and services.

During the program, members of Family Transition Place's youth education team spoke about their work in local schools and the role it plays in preventing violence before it begins.

Travis Greenley, a youth educator with Family Transition Place, explained the focus of the education program and the goals of the young girls they work with.

"We are trying to talk to young people in schools today about healthy relationships to hopefully stop them from coming to the front door tomorrow," he said. "Through our programs, we want them to be strong, resilient and adaptable in the face of adversity. Can they make the world better for themselves and people in relationships?"

The program, which has been operating for more than 25 years, delivers classroom sessions for students from Grade five through Grade eight focused on building healthy relationships, empathy and confidence.

The presentations also highlighted research showing that girls can begin to doubt their intelligence at a young age, underscoring the importance of early education around self-esteem and identity.

Through a series of lessons, activities, and discussions, the program encourages students to challenge stereotypes, understand consent, develop emotional awareness, and



**WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT:** Lynette Pole-Langdon, executive director of Family Transition Place (FTP), welcomed guests to the International Women's Day Brunch at Hockley Valley Resort on March 5. She spoke about the important role advocacy and thanked attendees for taking the time to celebrate with FTP. International Women's Day was recognized globally on Sunday March 8.

learn how to recognize both healthy and unhealthy behaviours in relationships.

Running programs like this one isn't cheap, but Greenley said it requires ongoing support to keep operating.

"This program has been going on for over 25 years," he said. "It is an unfunded program. Events like this, sponsors, donors, Family Transition Place's commitment has allowed us to continue to go up the river and make this impact, hopefully maybe break



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTOS

**SUPPORTING WOMEN:** Staff and supporters of Family Transition Place gathered at the Hockley Valley Resort on March 5 for their annual International Women's Day brunch event. With gourmet food, entertainment, and education, the brunch event was more than just a celebration of achievements; it was a commitment to supporting women, breaking down barriers, and fighting for a fairer, more equitable future.

some of the cycle of violence that we've seen."

Ultimately, it is just one part of Family Transition Place's programming. They provide a range of services for women and children escaping violence or unhealthy relationships. These include emergency shelter, counselling, safety planning, outreach services and youth education programs delivered in schools throughout the region.

The organization serves communities

across Dufferin County and Caledon and relies on donations, sponsorships and volunteer support to maintain its programs and continue providing assistance to those seeking safety and support.

The brunch event was a powerful moment for supporters and staff to come together and celebrate what they have achieved so far, and a commitment to continue pushing forward to effect even more change for the future.

# Amaranth declares emergency due to flooding of municipal building

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

The Township of Amaranth declared an emergency on the evening of March 8, due to rising flood concerns.

At 6:19 p.m., Amaranth issued a Declaration of an Emergency, signed by Mayor Chris Gerrits, notifying the community that flooding had occurred at the Township Municipal Office.

"The township has taken this step, most importantly, to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and residents," reads the declaration. "During this emergency, council and staff are working to ensure that the municipality operates effectively and continues to provide essential services."

Township staff can be reached by telephone at 519-941-1007 or by email at info@amaranth.ca.

"Staff will endeavour to respond to phone messages and emails during regular working hours, but an immediate response may not be possible," reads the declaration. "Please consider using the drop box at the office for correspondence as it will be checked on a regular basis."

The Township of Amaranth website will post updates and notices regarding the emergency.

The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), which covers the southern and central parts of Amaranth, issued a flood statement on March 10. The GRCA noted

that warm weather and rain from March 5 to 9 have melted the snowpack, leading to ice jams and flooding.

"While the risk of ice jams is believed to be past, river flows remain extremely high," reads the GRCA's statement.


As of press time, Environment Canada issued a Special Weather Statement covering all of southern Ontario, including the Grand River watershed, with rainfall amounts of 20 to 40 mm beginning March 10 and continuing into March 11. This is likely to have raised river levels, and additional rainfall will further increase river flows.

"High flows and unstable ice conditions will increase the safety risk around rivers

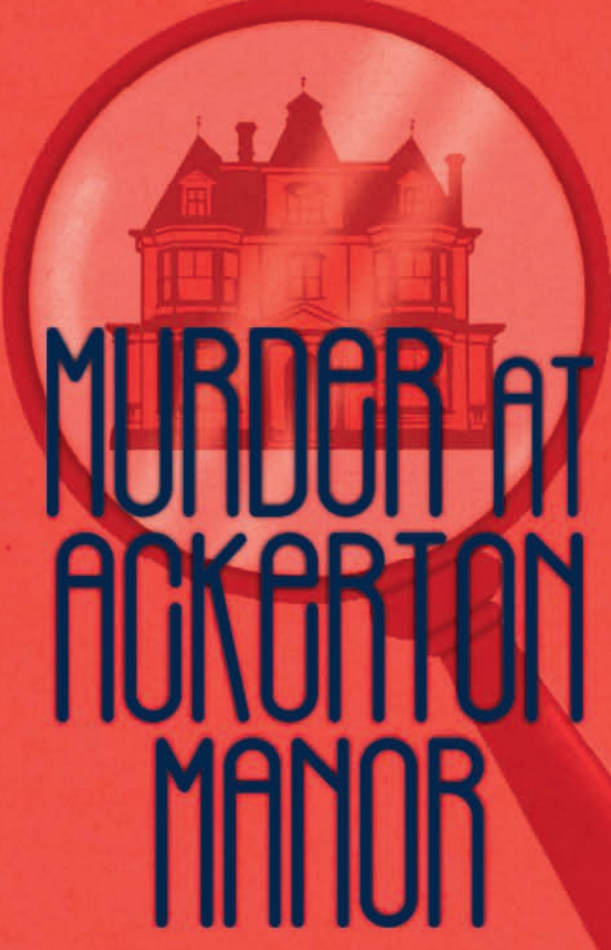
and streams throughout the watershed," reads the GRCA's statement. "The public is encouraged to exercise extreme caution around local waterways. Parents are reminded to keep their children and pets away from watercourses. The public is reminded to stay off ice-covered waterbodies, due to unsafe conditions."

In addition to Amaranth, Grand Valley has been heavily impacted by flooding.

"River flows have exceeded flood thresholds in Grand Valley and will continue to affect this area. The flood risk remains high due to the forecast rainfall. Municipal flood coordinators in Grand Valley have been advised to monitor conditions and take necessary actions," reads the GRCA's statement.



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# Resident questions council on accessibility in Orangeville

Written By **JAMES MATTHEWS**

Orangeville resident Vivian Petho feels her family got a sour taste of how the municipality complies with accessibility standards.

As part of a question to Orangeville council during its March 9 meeting, Petho said her family was recently told by municipal officials that compliance is a shared responsibility and is something town staff consider as part of their work.

As per information in an email she obtained through a provincial freedom of information request, she said a manager at town hall wrote in 2023 that “there is absolutely a need for someone in the organization to lead accessibility.”

So an accessibility and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) coordinator position was budgeted in that year’s municipal operating and capital spending plan.

At some point, funding for the position was cut.

Petho said during the March 9 meeting that she spoke with the province’s information and privacy commissioner regarding the municipality’s keeping of Orangeville Tran-

sit drivers’ accessibility training records.

The agency that provided her family’s service dog reached out to the town regarding standards required for service dogs on public transit.

“And First Student drivers had to be re-trained on transit accessibility after three incidents involving our family,” she said.

Those three alleged accessibility infractions, as confirmed by the information and privacy commissioner, she said, weren’t documented.

She asked if council stands by the 2023 decision to suspend hiring an accessibility and DEI coordinator.

David Smith, the town’s CAO, said Orangeville Transit and the municipality have been audited regarding accessibility compliance.

“We will be sharing that with members of council when that report comes forward,” he said. “It will indicate our path forward. We were proactive to do that and we will continue to be like that.”

Tim Kocialek, the town’s infrastructure services general manager, said the report Smith referenced with additional information will be tabled at the next council meet-

ing later this month.

“We’ll be able to speak more on the items at that time,” Kocialek said.

Tamara Limebeer, another Orangeville resident, said the province set the goal to be fully accessible by January 2025. And that goal is nowhere near accomplished, she said.

“I would be lying if I said it didn’t hurt to watch friends try new restaurants or music venues that I cannot access,” Limebeer said. “Reading those social media posts sometimes feels like sitting outside a window, watching friends and family inside having a great time.”

When a business commits to accessibility, it conveys a welcoming message, she said. When accessibility is treated as an afterthought, the message becomes one of mere tolerance.

Limebeer asked about possible municipal grants available to help business owners undertake accessibility-related renovations. She suggested the town waive some building fees for businesses that have been voluntarily upgraded by owners.

If such grant programs or fee breaks exist, she asked why they’re not better promoted?

Smith said he can’t knowledgeably answer Limebeer’s questions off the top of his head.

“We have people that come and ask questions and staff have no heads-up, no knowledge,” Smith said. “We have email addresses. We have the ability for people to call and give us a heads up.”

If residents would like good answers to their queries, Smith suggested they send their questions to town staff in advance of the council meeting.

“Otherwise, it puts all of us in an awkward situation of being asked anything at all about municipal services from 50 years ago to 50 years in the future,” he said.

He said town staff aren’t prepared to answer Limebeer’s questions during Question Period, but staff will get to her with answers.

Mayor Lisa Post said the town has a community improvement plan that includes accessibility components for existing businesses looking to do upgrades. That information, along with how to apply, is shared with the Orangeville Business Improvement Area (BIA) and its members. It is also promoted on social media and by municipal economic development staff.

# Orangeville man documents experience riding town’s transit

Written By **JAMES MATTHEWS**

One Orangeville man’s first experience on local transit was an eye-opener he hopes will lead to some improvements.

Matthew Smith described his experience and some of his observations to town council when it met on March 9.

Smith said he put himself in the shoes of people who depend on Orangeville Transit to travel throughout the town. He rode both bus system routes on Family Day, Feb. 16.

The trip took him about two-and-a-half hours, he said.

On that day, the transit automatic vehicle locator (AVL) wasn’t working. That locator shows riders how close a bus is to their bus stop.

“So I didn’t know what time the bus would actually arrive at the stop,” Smith said. “Luckily, the bus was on schedule that day.”

Smith said he’s looked into it, and the transit system’s AVL is working fine now.

There’s a bus stop across from the Lord Dufferin Centre, a seniors’ residence. The stop there wouldn’t have been easily accessible to most senior citizens due to the lack of a ramp to the portion of the stop cleared of snow.

“I just feel this particular stop isn’t meet-



FILE PHOTO

ing the needs of the Lord Dufferin residents,” Smith said. “And I believe that’s why this particular stop was actually placed there, to service the building.”

He said some bus stop shelters lacked route maps and schedules for potential riders. A Centennial Road bus shelter lacked a garbage can and, as a result, “had quite a bit of garbage in it.”

The presence of a garbage can doesn’t guarantee that people will use it, he said. But it will at least give people an opportunity to litter less.

One of the more glaring omissions Smith noticed during his ride was that the bus stops weren’t announced. The province’s human rights tribunal ruled the Toronto Transit

Commission in July 2007 violated the rights of people with disabilities by not calling out the stops. The issue of stops not being announced particularly affects blind passengers, who may be unsure of how far along the route they are.

In Orangeville, Smith figures that functioning AVLs resolve that issue. However, the school buses that are often used when transit buses are off the road are not equipped with AVL.

Those school buses also pose a traffic risk at some intersections because the accessibility lift is located at the back of the bus. As accessible boarding will be from the bus stop’s sidewalk, the bus would have to pull into the intersection and disrupt traffic flow to accommodate a rider using the lift.

“I believe that would be a safety issue,” he said.

Based on some of Smith’s social media feedback, it seems people feel the 45-minute bus routes are too long for users. Some people opt to walk to where they need to go.

But one visually impaired resident who contacted Smith said walking isn’t an option. But riding the bus on those long routes often takes a whole day to get anything done.

“The new transit system prevents me from being independent,” the respondent wrote.

Smith suggested Orangeville Transit consider adding a third route when its new 40-foot vehicle is on the road.

Mayor Lisa Post said municipal staff are aware of issues with the routes. Staff have been gathering rider feedback, she said. A report based on that consultation into options is expected soon.

David Smith, the town’s CAO, said reliability of routes has been the top issue heard about the bus service. That’s been resolved, he said.

“Every bus was on time and that was the No. 1 complaint we heard,” he said.

Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor appreciated Matthew Smith’s efforts. The very fact that Matthew Smith saw what he did tells Taylor that people are using transit.

Taylor said he was a voice against transit eight years ago. And council eventually voted to adopt a free bus service.

The fact that ridership has increased proves how wrong he was, Taylor said.

“There is a propensity between the people who need the service and those who don’t,” Taylor said. “We need those people to be out in the community using the service.”

Taylor said he was afraid the town was “shoving money at something and not getting a benefit for it.”

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# From Green Team to Stage Crew: Volunteers needed for Blues and Jazz Festival

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

Orangeville's favourite festival is returning in early June, and volunteers are needed to make it a success.

The 22nd Annual Orangeville Blue and Jazz Festival (OBJF) will be held along Broadway and in Alexandra Park from June 5 to 7. Anyone looking to get involved is encouraged to express their interest to organizers.

"Volunteers are the backbone of the festival," said Norm Trudeau, OBJF volunteer coordinator.

"On average, I try to recruit 230 people across 14 different teams, which is no small task... We need everything from event staff, our food and beverage team, operations people and fundraising, to merchandise, and admissions."

He added, "Anybody who wants to volunteer between the ages of 14 and 95 can come and volunteer - I'll have positions for them."

There are two key dates for interested individuals to watch out for - April 21 and May 27. Volunteer orientation and training meetings will take place on both dates at the Orangeville Seniors Centre (26 Bythia St.), each starting at 7 p.m.

Roughly 50 per cent of OBJF's volunteers return each year and are put in key positions to run the festival, while the other half is made up of new recruits.

"They really are some of the greatest people I've ever met," Trudeau said of the volunteers. "They're just wonderful. We're like a big family."

### Perks of volunteering

While volunteers generously give their time to the OBJF and make it possible, the festival gives back to them and provides them with great value as well.

"It really is a fantastic experience for any demographic," Trudeau said. "I've personally been a volunteer with the festival for 20 of its 22 years, and every year the experience has just been amazing."

He continued, "The real big advantage of

being a volunteer is you get to be up close and personal to the music - and the music is what the festival is all about."

Larry Kurtz, OBJF festival director and founder, praised the volunteer experience, noting that people have made lifelong friends by getting involved.

"A lot of people have made lifelong friends by volunteering, so it's a good social aspect. You get to meet people in the community who are like minded and want to give back," he said.

Kurtz added that to reward volunteers, he puts together a celebratory appreciation party a few weeks after the festival. The event features live music, refreshments, and an opportunity to reconnect with fellow volunteers.

### Available volunteer positions

There are several different types of volunteer positions to be filled. OBJF organizers are seeking a leader for the festival's Green Team, which handles garbage, compost, and recycling.

The Merchandise Team and Fundraising Team also have positions open.

Experienced bar staff or people with a Smart Serve Certificate are needed on the Food and Beverage Team.

"We are expanding our Broadway Beer Garden this year, which is awesome, but we'll need more people for that," Trudeau said.

Individuals with sound, stage or emcee experience who can volunteer are of great value to the festival, helping to run its three stages.

Kurtz highlighted the volunteer Roust About Team, affectionately called the RATS, who assist with setup and teardown.

He also noted the Artist Hospitality Team, which looks after musicians as they get to the festival, setting them up with passes and meal vouchers.

### How to sign up

Anyone interested in volunteering, or looking for more information, can visit [orangevillebluesandjazz.ca/volunteer](http://orangevillebluesandjazz.ca/volunteer) to sign up or contact Trudeau by phone at 647-281-1575 or by



FILE PHOTO

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** The Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival is seeking volunteers for this year's event, which runs from June 5 to 7. Two volunteer orientation and training dates have been set, April 21 and May 27. Both events will get underway at 7 p.m. and occur at the Orangeville Senior's Centre.

email at [Norm@orangevillebluesandjazz.ca](mailto:Norm@orangevillebluesandjazz.ca).

"I would be more than happy to walk through the process of applying to become a volunteer," Trudeau said. "It really is a fantastic experience. I can't say enough about how rewarding it is to get involved with this festival."

While anyone interested in volunteering is encouraged to express their interest in advance, volunteers will be accepted until the end of the festival; there is no cut-off date.

"If a person wants to become a volunteer, all they have to do go to our main Volunteer Centre at the gazebo in Alexandra Park, and we'll put you to work," Trudeau enthused.

High school students looking to complete their volunteer service hours while enjoying a

fun local event are encouraged to get involved.

"It's a great experience for them. They get to work with experienced people, and see the festival from the operational aspect, not just being a patron," Trudeau noted.

Anyone who'd like to meet the team in person and learn more about the festival can visit them at two upcoming home and garden shows.

OBJF organizers will have a booth at the 26th Annual Orangeville Lions Home and Garden Show, which runs from March 27 to 29 at the OAS Event Centre on the Orangeville Fairgrounds (247090 5 Sideroad, Mono). The team will also be at the Erin Home and Garden Show from April 24 to 26 at the Erin Agricultural Society (184 Main St., Erin), seeking volunteers.

## Two Mono residents charged with impaired driving during same day in separate incidents

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged two Mono residents with impaired operation-related offences following two separate incidents.

On Feb. 25, at approximately 4:46 p.m., Dufferin OPP officers were dispatched to the area of 150 First Street after receiving reports of a female slumped over the steering wheel of a vehicle in a parking lot. Police attended the scene alongside other emergency services and located the driver.

After speaking with the individual, officers initiated an impaired driving investigation.

Marie Macdonald, 37, from Mono, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs
- Use plate not authorized for vehicle
- Use plate not in accordance with regulations
- Fail to surrender permit for motor vehicle
- Possess unmarked cigarettes

On Feb. 25, at approximately 10:20 p.m., Dufferin OPP officers were conducting general patrol in the area of County Road 124 when they located a vehicle in a ditch that had sustained significant damage. After speaking with the driver, officers initiated an impaired driving investigation.

Kristopher Erdei, 46, from Mono, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs

- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Drive vehicle or boat with cannabis readily available

The accused individuals are scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville at a later date. Their driver's licence was suspended, and both vehicles were impounded.

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

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# Orangeville officials discuss March Break childcare issues

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

It's the same in Orangeville as it is anywhere else, in that many households in this difficult economic time rely on two incomes to make ends meet.

Having the children out of school during March Break can complicate a delicate work-life balance.

Orangeville resident Mark Middleton asked council during its March 9 meeting about childcare capacity at the Alder Street Arena during local schools' March Break next week.

He wanted to know how many spaces were offered to residents, how many families applied for those spaces, how many were put on a wait list, and how many were ultimately turned away.

"Clear numbers help us understand whether this is an occasional pressure or a constant shortfall," Middleton said.

Some parents will have to scramble to secure childcare, and some may have to take unpaid leave from their jobs to accommodate their young students' school breaks.

Middleton asked whether the town has assessed the possible impact of limited capacity at the Alder Street Arena on working families.

"Is there a needs assessment in place, and is the childcare planning aligned with our

population growth?" he asked.

Middleton wanted to know if there's a plan in place if demand for childcare exceeds what can be offered. Expansion by way of partnerships with local service providers may be necessary, he said.

Orangeville has a large number of people who commute to jobs outside the town. The workday typically begins early for those people, and that complicates matters if the childcare program starts at 8 a.m. or 9 a.m.

Heather Savage, the town's community services general manager, said another angle that needs to be considered is the availability of potential staff members.

"Because there is a ratio that you have to uphold," she said. "A one to 10 ratio. So, provided we can hire more staff and if we have the space, then I'm sure the planning team is considering those things."

David Smith, the town's CAO, said staff availability is an issue for a one-week venture that is the March Break childcare program.

"It's very difficult to staff," Smith said. "It's very difficult to staff reliably."

When parents register their children up to four weeks in advance, having to alter the program due to a lack of staff is a concern, he said.

"Our recreation staff work really hard to maximize space," he said. "Their goal is to get more kids in those programs."

# Find inspiration while supporting the community at the 26th annual Orangeville Home and Garden Show

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

As the weather warms and seasons change, many homeowners begin looking for creative ways to improve their home or backyard.

And there's no better opportunity to generate ideas than at the Orangeville Lions 26th Annual Home and Garden Show, featuring 165 vendors. Many of the booths will feature businesses specializing in renovations, home building, roofing, landscaping, and home improvement of all kinds.

The three-day event returns to the Orangeville Fairgrounds (247090 5 Sideroad, Mono) over the weekend of March 27 to 29. The show runs from 5 to 9 p.m. on March 27, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on March 28, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on March 29.

The funds raised through the home and garden show enable the Orangeville Lions Club to take on community projects, donate to local charities, and support meaningful initiatives.

Yasmine Slater from the Orangeville Lions said attendees not only support the Lions Club but also the local business community.

She added that the event is a great opportunity to connect with other community members, old friends, and new businesses.

"It's just a great way to connect with your neighbours and people you might not see all the time," Slater noted. "Spring is upon us, everybody's getting ready to go outside, so what better way to get home renovation ideas flowing?"

It's important to note that the entrance to the building that houses the home and garden show has moved this year. Attendees can enter through the front entrance on the north side of the building, rather than the side entrance used in the past.

Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 people are expected to attend the event over the three days it runs.

GSC Orangeville Take Home Meals and Catering will be running the food court this year.

As in past years, the home and garden show will feature a space dedicated to not-for-profit organizations, where attendees can learn



FILE PHOTO

**READY FOR RETURN:** The Orangeville Lions Annual Home and Garden Show is returning to the Orangeville Fairgrounds from March 27 to 29.

more about what's in the community and how to get involved.

Volunteers are needed to ensure the show runs smoothly. Anyone looking to get involved or learn more about the Orangeville Lions Club can email [info@orangevillelions.org](mailto:info@orangevillelions.org).

"If any local high school students want to help out a local service club and connect with some really great minded people in the community, we're always looking for volunteers," said Slater, who noted that contributing counts towards students' mandatory volunteer hours.

Several local businesses sponsor the show, helping to make it a successful fundraiser.

The Title (main) sponsor this year is Royal LePage RCR Realty; Diamond sponsors are Headwaters Fitness & Racquet Club, Country 105, Expedia Cruises Orangeville and Orangeville Nissan; Gold sponsors are Chartwell Retirement Residences and Hickory Hickory Decks; and Silver sponsors are Larry's Small Engine and TreadXperts - Tire Expert Service Network.

To learn more about the Orangeville Lions' 26th Annual Home and Garden Show, read next week's edition of the Orangeville Citizen, where we will feature a special section highlighting the event.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**COLOURING CONTEST WINNER:** Isolde Vahey is the Orangeville Citizen's Family Day Colouring Contest Winner. She shows off her winning prize, containing art supplies, intended to help her continue on her artistic journey. From all of us at the Citizen - congratulations!

# UGOT brunch honours occasional teachers for International Women's Day

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

The Upper Grand Occasional Teachers' (UGOT) Local marked International Women's Day on Saturday, March 7, with a community brunch recognizing the vital but often unseen contributions of occasional teachers.

Held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Trattoria Semplice in Orangeville, the event brought together educators, union leaders, community partners and local officials under the theme 'Together We Rise.' Food prepared by the staff at Trattoria Semplice was served for brunch, complete with dessert.

Four occasional teachers who identify as women or non-binary were selected by their colleagues for exemplifying leadership, advocacy, creativity and service in Upper Grand schools.

The program opened with MC Nitya Patel inviting attendees to reflect on International Women's Day as both a celebration of women's achievements and a reminder that equity is ongoing work.

"International Women's Day is celebrated around the world as a call to recognize the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, and also as a reminder that equity is ongoing work," she said. "Today we gather not only to reflect on progress, but to celebrate the women in this room, the educators, leaders, artists and community builders whose daily work shapes futures."

UGOT President Nkese Charles-Campbell described the brunch as more than a social gathering, calling it a statement that visibility, community and partnership matter in public education. She reminded

attendees of the important role occasional teachers serve.

"Occasional teachers step into classrooms with little notice, adapt with skill and compassion, and hold space for students with a professionalism that deserves to be celebrated," she said. "This morning, we have the privilege of recognizing three occasional teachers whose dedication often unfolds quietly, but never without impact."

Three occasional teachers were formally recognized from the stage.

Simrin Chahal of Centennial Hylands Elementary School in Shelburne was honoured as a School Community Champion for her ability to build strong relationships, support colleagues and boost morale through thoughtful initiatives.

Giasmine Samaniego of Glenbrook Elementary School in Shelburne received the Heart of Education Award for creating inclusive, joyful learning spaces and offering consistent, individualized support to students.

Mulmur resident Jessie Steinberg, founder of LEAP Adventures, received the Guiding Light Leadership Award for leadership that extends beyond the classroom through programs such as drumming workshops that build confidence, voice and community.

In alignment with this year's International Women's Day theme, "Give to Gain," proceeds beyond event costs will support three women-led or women-serving organizations in Dufferin County: Family Transition Place, The Shoebox Project - Help Secure Her Tomorrow Campaign, and Streams Community Hub.

Campbell said that this event was a reaffirmation of the power of mutual support and what is possible with compassion, understanding and advocacy.



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**SUPPORTING TEACHERS:** From left, Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post, Nancy Claridge and Faye Corbett share a laugh during an International Women's Day event for the Upper Grand Occasional Teachers Local.

"This event reflects our belief that when we take care of our teachers, our teachers can take care of our students, and when we invest in women, our entire community rises."

For UGOT, its partners, and guests, the brunch signalled an ongoing commitment to make the work of occasional teachers visible, to invest in women and non-binary leaders, and to ensure that, in the spirit of "Together We Rise," the gains made in classrooms ripple outward through the entire community.

## Dufferin County snowmobile trails closed for the season

The snowmobile trails in Dufferin County are officially closed for the 2025-2026 season.

"We want to thank the Dufferin Drift Busters, Orangeville Snowmobile Club, and Hillsburgh Snow Roamers for their hard work in maintaining the trails and providing an

excellent experience for riders this winter," reads a statement from Dufferin OPP.

"Please respect the landowners and stay off the trails until they reopen next season. Additionally, the rail line trail is also closed and will reopen for ATV use on May 1, 2026, weather permitting."

## Fire at Sugar Shack in Mono deemed non-suspicious

On March 9, at approximately 4:30 p.m., Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), along with local fire departments and other emergency crews, responded to a reported structure fire on 30 Sideroad in Mono.

Upon investigation, the fire was determined to be non-suspicious.

Anyone who may have witnessed the incident and wishes to speak with victim services is encouraged to contact Caledon/Dufferin Victim Services at 905-951-3838.

# adopt a cat

Diana is our absolute stunning 8 year old long-haired princess. She was brought to FCR to socialize and in the past two years we have seen her come out of her shell. She is a peaceful girl who would prefer a quiet home. She gets along well with other cats and can co-habit with dogs without issue. She truly wants a home where she can receive pets and lounge in a warm bed.

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Check our facebook page to see the other kitties looking for their forever home. Donations always needed to help care for the cats as we are not funded at all, and rely on donations and fundraisers. If you would like to volunteer as well we are always appreciative.

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# DUFFERIN (SHELburne)

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TOWNSHIP OF  
**East Garafraxa**

**NOTICE OF RESCHEDULED STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING**  
**Township of East Garafraxa - Official Plan Review**

Further to the Notice of Open House and Public Meeting dated November 6, 2025, please be advised that the Statutory Public Meeting originally scheduled for Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. was postponed due to inclement weather. The Open House was held on December 17, 2025, and proceeded as scheduled.

This notice is being given in accordance with Sections 17 and 26 of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13*, as amended. Notice is hereby given that the rescheduled Special Council Meeting/Statutory Public Meeting will be held as follows:

**STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING DETAILS**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 22, 2026

**Time:** 4:30 p.m.

**Format:** Hybrid (in-person and remote participation available)

**In-Person Location:**

Township Administration Office  
065371 Dufferin County Road 3, Unit 2  
East Garafraxa, ON L9W 7J8

**Remote Participation:**

Registration is required for those wishing to attend remotely. The Zoom registration link will be posted on the Township website calendar under the applicable meeting date (<https://calendar.eastgarafraxa.ca/council>).

*Electronic participation is provided as a convenience and is dependent on third-party platforms, internet connectivity, and user equipment. While the Township will make reasonable efforts to ensure the technology functions properly, uninterrupted access cannot be guaranteed. If technical issues arise, the meeting may proceed provided quorum is maintained. The Township is not responsible for a participant's inability to connect due to technical difficulties outside the Township's control.*

**PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

The purpose of the Statutory Public Meeting is to consider the proposed Draft Official Plan for the Township of East Garafraxa, which is intended to replace the current Official Plan.

An Official Plan is a legal document required under the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13*, that sets out the municipality's long-term land use strategy for growth and development.

The proposed Draft Official Plan is intended to:

- Conform with the County of Dufferin Official Plan and applicable provincial plans;
- Be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024;
- Address matters of provincial interest; and
- Reflect community needs and the long-term vision for the Township of East Garafraxa.

Council will consider all written and oral submissions before making a decision regarding adoption of the proposed Official Plan.

**PARTICIPATION AND SUBMISSIONS**

Any person or public body may attend the Special Council Meeting/Statutory Public Meeting and make written or oral submissions in support of or in opposition to the proposed Official Plan.

**1. Written Submissions**

Written submissions should be addressed to the Township Clerk using the contact details provided at the bottom of this notice.

Written comments will be accepted no later than **Wednesday, April 15, 2026**.

If you wish to be notified of the adoption or refusal of the proposed Official Plan, you must make a written request to the Township Clerk prior to adoption.

**2. Oral Submissions**

Oral submissions may be provided to Council at the Public Meeting, either in-person or remotely.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Additional information regarding the proposed Draft Official Plan, including Draft Official Plan Version 2 (V2 - January 2026), is available:

- In-person at the Township Administration Office during regular office hours (065371 Dufferin County Road 3, Unit 2, East Garafraxa, ON L9W 7J8); and/or
- On the Township website: (Official Plan and Official Plan Review Page - <https://www.eastgarafraxa.ca/business-and-development/official-plan-and-official-plan-review/>)

Materials related to the Introductory Official Plan Workshop (Special Council Meeting) held on September 17, 2025, and the Open House held on December 17, 2025, are also available on the Township website at the link provided above.

**DOCUMENT UPDATES**

Following the Introductory Official Plan Workshop (Special Council Meeting) and Open House, and comments received to date, updates were made to Draft Version 1 (V1) of the Official Plan. These updates are reflected in Draft Version 2 (V2 - January 2026), which has been posted on the Township Official Plan and Official Plan Review project webpage (link provided above). Highlighted changes include:

- Incorporated feedback received during the September and December 2025 meetings, and written comments received to date, including revising the minimum agricultural lot area size recommendation from 40 ha to the current 20 ha with respect to agricultural severance policies;
- Updated data layers in Schedules (maps) to best reflect the most up-to-date Natural Heritage information and restructured the contents of the schedules to best match the proposed standardization from the Province; and
- Restructured the document to align with the Provincial proposed standardization of Official Plans. This is the most significant visual change from Draft V1. Draft V2 Table of Contents has been reorganized to reflect the proposed standardization structure from the Province.

**PROJECT NEXT AND FINAL STEPS**

Following this Statutory Public Meeting, final changes may be made to the Draft Official Plan (V2) to incorporate written and/or oral comments.

At a later date, a final draft version will be presented to Township of East Garafraxa Council for review and decision (adoption). Once adopted by Township Council, the final Official Plan will be submitted to the County of Dufferin for approval pursuant to Section 17(2) of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13*.

**PLANNING ACT REQUIREMENTS**

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Township of East Garafraxa to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Township before the proposed Official Plan is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Council of the Township of East Garafraxa before the proposed Official Plan is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Township of East Garafraxa on the proposed Official Plan, you must make a written request to the Township Clerk at the address provided below.

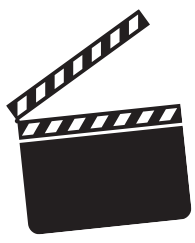
For more information about this matter, including information about appeal rights, contact the Township Clerk using the contact details provided below.

Should the proposed Official Plan be adopted by the Council of the Township of East Garafraxa, it will be submitted to the County of Dufferin for approval pursuant to Section 17(2) of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13*.

**Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of March 2026**

**Jessica Kennedy, Dipl.M.A., Clerk**

TOWNSHIP OF EAST GARAFRAXA  
065371 Dufferin County Road 3, Unit 2 | East Garafraxa | ON | L9W 7J8  
Tel: 226-259-9400 ext. 206 | Toll Free: 877-868-5967 | Fax: 1-226-212-9812  
[clerks@eastgarafraxa.ca](mailto:clerks@eastgarafraxa.ca) | [www.eastgarafraxa.ca](http://www.eastgarafraxa.ca)



# Arts & Entertainment

## LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS



### St. Patrick's concert featuring Celtic music coming to Westminster United Church

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

The band Chroí, Gaelic for "Heart," will be entertaining us as only the Irish can at Westminster United Church in Orangeville on Saturday, March 21.

Beginning at 7 p.m., this concert is part of a four-date tour celebrating St. Patrick's Day and the joy of Irish and Celtic music and stories.

Chris Dawes, the band's founder, joined the Citizen for an interview late last week. Dawes has been part of the local music scene as the accompanist for the Achill Choral Society since the 1990s and, for a short time, their conductor.

As a musician of organ, piano, keyboard at least, Dawes works on many platforms as a conductor and keyboard collaborator. Living in Georgetown with his family, Dawes is a prominent figure in many Southern Ontario musical communities. He has been conducting programs with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music and as a director of Canada's Summer Institute of Church Music since 2004. He is especially well known for his work with choirs.

Busy as that sounds, Dawes very much admires and enjoys Celtic music, laying claim to the heritage through his Irish-born Fitzpatrick grandmother. Perhaps that was in part why he founded the band Chroí in 2013; they performed until 2019, when, like everyone else, Covid shut them down. In fact, there were plans in 2020 for them to bring their music to Westminster United Church. Fast forward to March 21, 2026.

Coming back even now, as they would have done then and joining Dawes are Jenna Gallagher on the violin, originally a Suzuki violin player, learning by ear. She went on to study at Wilfrid Laurier University under Jeremy Bell of the Penderecki String Quartet for a Bachelor of Music in Performance. Bell has since moved to Eastern Ontario with her family.

And Doug MacNaughton, beginning his singing career with the Edmonton Opera, has sung across Canada and the U.S.

Now, "against his better judgment," living in New York, MacNaughton has come up to join Chroí for their tour, to play and sing in the concerts with the band.

"Doug's spouse is the tech director for the Met Opera," Dawes explained.

He added, "As a MacNaughton, he's Scottish and some of that colours the show too."

Paul Ormandy, based in Orangeville, plays the Bodhrán as the Band's percussionist and is their heartbeat for this, their "adventurous trail."

"It's a great thing that Jenna and Doug are back for this concert," said Dawes. "It was Nancy [Dettbarn, Minister of Music, pianist, and organist for Westminster United Church] who suggested they come to Orangeville."

He continued, "This concert is a little different from the standard Irish gig — they tend to be played in bars and pubs. We started in churches singing and telling stories, where we can tell the tales that come with the songs in the quieter venue."

One such song and story is about the "peg and awl," traditional tools of the shoemakers, how, when shoes were first made by machines, the shoemakers suffered. There are stories about the people immigrating from Ireland to America, who were abused in the New World. It was a time of pride, demanding justice and protest.

"We don't fit in a pub scene," he remarked, "more in churches, small festivals, the God-erich [Celtic Roots] Festival."

For the Chroí concert program, all four performers sing and play their instruments, but there are yet more treats in store for the audiences.

"They have gone all out," he declared.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMING TO TOWN: The band "Chroí," which is Gaelic for "Heart" is bringing Celtic and Irish music and stories to Westminster United Church on March 21, starting at 7 p.m. Come for the "exuberance" of a slightly different concert. Band members, from left, are Jenna Gallagher, Christopher Dawes,

The treats someone is preparing for the audience were named: Guinness Brownies, Earl Grey Shortbread and Bailey's Truffles at a reception after the show, available as a fundraiser for the church's much-needed new roof.

Dawes mentioned that he did not travel with the Achill on their journeys to Europe, but he did join them to go to Ireland, specifically to the Achill village and area of Ireland, after which the choir is named. It made a profound impression on him. The hospitali-

ty and humour of the people he encountered could only meet with deep affection for them.

Be sure to come to Chroí, as Dawes said, "People like the feeling of Irish music, and they don't necessarily want a beer. This is a different feeling."

"We just love sharing Celtic music with other people."

Tickets are available at BookLore on First Street and at Westminster United Church during office hours.

**David Gauthier**  
Service Consultant

David brings a calm, customer-first mindset to every service appointment. As a MacMaster Certified Service Consultant, he works hard to ensure every visit is smooth and stress-free. Whether you're dropping in for maintenance or need help navigating a repair, David is ready with clear communication, helpful insight, and a friendly attitude.

**Maurice McDonald**  
Service Consultant

Maurice is the kind of advisor who makes service feel easy. He's known for his warm, approachable style and his ability to keep customers informed every step of the way. With strong product knowledge and a passion for helping people, Maurice takes the guesswork out of vehicle service at Orangeville Chrysler.

**Jazz Matharu**  
Service Consultant

Jazz combines technical knowledge with an easygoing, professional style that customers appreciate. Bilingual in English and Punjabi, he makes sure every guest feels heard and understood. Whether it's a routine visit or a more involved repair, Jazz helps keep the process efficient, transparent, and tailored to your needs.

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# PUMPS

IN STORE AND ONLINE

### The Citizen CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. 263210 • Solution on page: CLASSIFIEDS SECTION

**CLUES ACROSS**

- Blockchain-based entity
- A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- Painted with glue
- Legendary crooner
- Structure made with strips of wood
- Tropical fruits
- Commercial
- Comedienne Gasteyer
- The Ocean State
- Ancient Scot
- Basics
- Stated propositions
- Scottish island group
- Expression of annoyance
- Large tree
- Engine additive
- Conspiracy
- Drunkard
- Someone who is morally reprehensible
- Ancient Syrian city
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- Midway between east and southeast
- Sweet potato
- European river
- The Golden State
- Windy City ballplayer
- New Testament
- Possess spiritually
- A treeless grassy plain
- Popular historical novel
- In a law-abiding way
- A place to sleep
- Criticize

**CLUES DOWN**

- Impression in a surface
- Computer language
- Relating to the ear
- Occupant
- Member of Great Plains people
- Social media firm
- Digital audiotape
- Midway between east and southeast
- Chronic, progressive disease
- Chinese lute
- Not wet
- Moves wings up and down
- Communication devices
- Swiss river
- Female sibling
- Receive
- Relating to a type
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Steep bank
- Taxi driver
- Moves into without difficulty
- Bicycle manufacturer
- Traditional rhythmic pattern
- Fugitives are on it
- Bitter-tasting organic substance
- Die
- Matched
- Literary genre \_\_\_-fi
- Cannot
- Pounded
- British rock group
- Debt relief order
- 2006 NL Cy Young winner
- Green vegetable
- Tough outer skin of fruit
- \_\_\_ Spumante (Italian wine)
- Ailments
- Famed singer Charles
- Camper

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

**How they say that in...**

**English:** Ireland  
**Spanish:** Irlanda  
**Italian:** Irlanda  
**French:** Irlande  
**German:** Irland

### MUSIC FACT:

This instrument features prominently in traditional Irish music.

Answer: Fiddle and bow

St. Patrick supposedly used the clover/shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity to native Irish in an effort to convert them to Christianity.

**NEW WORD**

**CELTIC**

people from the nations of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall, and the Isle of Man

### Double Word Puzzle

Unscramble the individual words to reveal letters for the phrase.

DISNAL   

GERNE   

COANE   

ORBKO   

        H

Answers: Island, Green, Ocean, Brook : Erin Go Bragh

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# STAN DOUGLAS

## TALES OF EMPIRE

Global legacies of colonialism through the lens of one of Canada's most celebrated artists.

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Stan Douglas (b. 1960), *Masonic Lodge, Barkerville* (detail), 2006, laserchrome print, 127 x 145 cm, courtesy of the artist, Victoria Miro, and David Zwirner © Stan Douglas

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# McMichael

# Revitalized Grand Valley Community Centre reopens as modern hub

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

The Grand Valley and District Community Centre has officially reopened following a major multi-year expansion and rehabilitation project, marking a significant milestone for the Town of Grand Valley and its surrounding municipalities.

Meghan Townsend, CAO for the Town of Grand Valley, welcomed guests and officials to the reopening ceremony.

"I'm very happy that all of you are here to celebrate this grand opening of the newly expanded and rehabilitated Grand Valley and District Community Centre," she said. "In 2019, members of the Grand Valley and District Community Centre board met with Town of Grand Valley staff to review a new opportunity to apply for funding to rehabilitate the community centre."

After the town applied to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's Community, Culture and Recreation stream, they secured substantial federal and provincial support.

Throughout the overhaul process, the original ice surface, cooling system, change rooms and washrooms were upgraded.

Grand Valley Mayor Steve Solomon reflected on the enormous workload required to complete this project and congratulated not just town staff but also provincial and federal partners who helped see it through.

"I will thank Sylvia [Jones] and the Government of Ontario-Government of Canada, as they both came in with almost a million dollars each for this project, which is a real contribution to the cultural vibrancy of this town," he said. "The Government of Ontario-Government of Canada, decided that we were worthy of keeping an arena here, because it could have easily been gone. But now we do have a new place where the community can come and gather. Thank you all again for your work."

Phase one of the project, launched in 2021, focused on the core arena infrastructure. The concrete ice pad was replaced, the arena layout was redesigned with new boards, glass and player benches, and the piping system beneath the ice was upgraded.

Early accessibility improvements were also introduced to improve safety and ease of use for participants and spectators.

Phase two finalized the broader expansion of the facility. Six new change rooms, accessible washrooms and referee rooms were added, along with roof repairs, exterior wall insulation and resurfacing. The construction, which began in 2025, has now reached substantial completion, transforming the building into a modern, inclusive hub for sport and recreation.

The renewed arena is designed to better serve all age groups and reflects the growing demand for girls' and women's hockey by providing improved dressing room capacity and layout.

Local leaders emphasized that the project demonstrates the impact of collaboration among federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as the dedication of the community centre board, contractors and arena staff.

Local MPP and Ontario's Health Minister Sylvia Jones was also in attendance to congratulate the completion of the project, and said that local health is directly impacted by



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES AWAIT:** Local community leaders and provincial representatives celebrate the reopening of the Grand Valley Community Centre after its overhaul. The work would not have been possible without the cooperation of all three levels of government providing funding. The building has new ice rinks, changerooms, bathrooms, and more,

the availability of facilities such as this one.

"I am very pleased that we were able to have three levels of government come together, and, of course, the community center board to have this project come to completion," she said. "In healthcare, I often get asked, what about the prevention piece? Well, this is the prevention piece. You know, we are making sure that we have facilities in our community for our young people, for our seniors, for our adults, to be able to continue

to stay and be healthy and do that in our own communities."

"So congratulations. I think it is a real indication of when governments of different levels work together, great things can happen."

With the grand opening complete, the facility is expected to host year-round activities, from winter skating and hockey to potential summer programs such as lacrosse, strengthening Grand Valley's role as a regional community gathering place.

## Applications officially open for County of Dufferin's 2026 Experimental Acres Program

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

The County of Dufferin is encouraging farmers to apply to the 2025 Experimental Acres Program by March 27.

"Experimental Acres provides Dufferin farmers with educational and financial support to de-risk new practices that improve yield, soil health, carbon sequestration and overall sustainability," reads a county press release. "The program is intended to champion farmer-led discovery, with small-scale experimentation that can link to larger funding opportunities."

There are three Experimental Acres funding streams.

The Living Roots and Green Cover Stream focuses on maintaining soil cover, as this helps reduce soil erosion from wind

and precipitation. This could include cropping, intercropping and introducing new crops into the rotation.

The Innovation Stream provides funding to projects that benefit soil health and don't fit into other categories. Tarping to reduce tillage intensity, planting a tallgrass prairie, and winter crop rotation are all eligible projects for the Innovation Stream.

The third funding category is the Integrating Animals on the Farm Stream, which includes financing to support rotational grazing, silvopasture, and bale grazing. Animals bring many benefits to soil health and carbon storage.

"Experimental Acres brings farmers and partners together in a shared learning journey to advance sustainable agriculture. The program supports practices that

strengthen climate resilience while improving soil health, protecting water resources, and increasing biodiversity," Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy at Dufferin County.

During the past three growing seasons, Experimental Acres has supported a variety of producer-led projects. These projects include suppressing plant competition with ducks, implementing espalier methods, creating natural pesticides, companion planting, cover crops, and green manure.

"Dufferin County continues to invest in a strong, innovative agriculture sector. Through the Experimental Acres Program, farmers gain early-stage support to test new ideas, build momentum, and position themselves for future funding while scaling up regenerative approaches on their

farms. The Experimental Acres Program is grounded in respect for farmer expertise. We know that every farm is different, and real progress comes from solutions designed by producers that reflect practical, on-the-ground realities," said Dufferin Warden Lisa Post.

To view past projects, visit [dufferincounty.ca/county-services/climate-and-energy/experimental-acres](http://dufferincounty.ca/county-services/climate-and-energy/experimental-acres)

"Successful applicants can expect to receive prompt reimbursement of costs to de-risk their trial, and for soil testing and result analysis, research support from staff, and information about related events and programs," the county explained.

To apply for the program, which accepts submissions until March 27, visit [tinyurl.com/ExperimentalAcres](http://tinyurl.com/ExperimentalAcres)

## Dufferin OPP and Credit Valley Conservation warn the public of flood potential as temperatures rise

The Dufferin OPP and Credit Valley Conservation are reminding residents to prepare for warmer weather as local waterways begin to wake up after a long winter.

Rising temperatures combined with melting snow and seasonal rainfall can quickly

lead to increased water levels and localized flooding throughout the county.

Dufferin OPP and CVC shared the following reminders in a statement on March 3 and March 4, respectively.

- Stay away from riverbanks: Riverbanks

can become unstable and slippery during the spring thaw. Fast-moving water may carry dangerous floating debris, including ice chunks, construction materials, tree limbs and other objects. Residents are urged to keep a safe distance from all waterways and ensure children and pets are supervised at all times.

- Avoid entering the river: The river may become deeper in areas because of ice jams scouring the riverbed.

- Avoid recreational activities in or around water: This is especially important near ice covered watercourses and waterbodies.

- Exercise caution in an emergency: Rescuing another person or a pet from icy water is dangerous. If you see anyone that has fallen through the ice call 911 for help immediately.

- Check Your Equipment: Now is an excellent time to ensure your generator is in proper working order. Test sump pumps to confirm they are functioning correctly and consider having extra sandbags on hand should water levels rise. Being proactive can help reduce potential property damage.

- Generator Safety: If you are using a gas-powered generator or water pump, ensure the area is well-ventilated to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Never operate these devices indoors or in enclosed spaces.

es.

- Photo Safety Reminder: While high water levels may draw attention, getting too close to waterways or standing on bridges and riverbanks for photos can put your life at risk, as well as the safety of first responders. No photo is worth compromising your safety.

- Plan Accordingly: If you live in a flood-prone area, take proactive steps now to protect your property. Move objects such as chairs or benches away from the water's edge to avoid losing them during potential spring high water. Stay informed, monitor local weather alerts and follow the guidance of local officials.

The Dufferin OPP says by staying informed and taking preventative measures, residents can work together to keep their community safe during the spring thaw.

It's also important to note, when flooding is possible or about to occur, CVC issues flood messages to municipal emergency management officials, emergency medical services, school boards, police and the media. Municipal officials then take action to warn local residents and respond in emergency situations.

The CVC also issues flood warnings directly to watershed residents through the CVC website, Facebook account, X (Twitter) account, and through Alertable.

**Elected Members of Council:**

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# Orangeville aims to cultivate pollinator garden on Centre Street

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Orangeville's Centre Street will soon be abuzz with activity.

The municipality and Dufferin County have agreed to a partnership to establish a pollinator garden at 30 Centre Street. The bed size will be about 150 square feet, and town council agreed during its March 9 meeting to earmark \$6,000 for the work.

That location is recommended for the town's first such garden because it is a high-visibility location conducive to community engagement. It will also maximize ecological and operational benefits, according to a report to council.

The location is adjacent to the community garden, where increased pollinator presence can directly support garden productivity through pollination activities.

A report to town council highlights that the site is situated within a strong ecological environment, with full-sun exposure and proximity to a water source, Mill Creek. It will be part of a broader native plant corridor that will reinforce habitat value and connectivity.

The municipality will convert an existing

garden rather than add a new one.

It comes "at a time when parks resources are under increased demand due to the transition of additional gardens from the Horticulture Society, while also supporting community alignment with the Horticulture Society and other municipal partners," according to the report.

It was previously recommended that the pollinator garden be established along the Mill Creek Trail south of Montgomery Boulevard between Chapman Road and Gooseberry Street.

The proposed new location, 30 Centre Street, is county-controlled land. The town and Dufferin County already have an agreement governing the land's use through the community garden.

"Given that there are currently agreements in place establishing the use of some of the spaces and that this location is (of) high visibility, it was determined that the pollinator garden located in this area would be a natural fit," according to the report.

Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor broached a second part of the report that indicates municipal staff will assume maintenance of the pollina-

tor garden, as was done with the community garden.

"We don't do a great job at this overall," Taylor said. "They tend to get missed or it falls apart a little bit. My fear is that here's one more thing that the town has taken on."

The site used to be maintained by a group "of hardy volunteers," he said.

"My concern is will we do a good job at this?" Taylor said. "Do we have the staff set up?"

He said his concern wasn't meant to disparage town staff that will have a presence at the pollinator garden. He simply wants to ensure the best possible job is done on the project.

Tim Kocialek, the town's infrastructure services general manager, said a pollinator garden needs little maintenance.

Katherine Rog, the town's senior climate and sustainability specialist, said pollinator gardens are typically self-sustaining after about three years.

"That's the beauty of these gardens," Rog said.

The town inherited five of its 12 gardens from the horticulture society. Staff decided to simply repurpose one of those parcels as the



pollinator site.

"So we're not creating a new garden," Rog said. "We're updating one of the existing gardens that we will be inheriting."

The Centre Street location is pretty handy to the Orangeville Transit bus transfer station. Taylor asked if a pollinator garden in such proximity would create problems.

Rog said that would be doubtful, given that there are already pollinators at the site to serve the community garden there.

She said there are more pollinating insects than bees. But concerns about bees so close to transit riders can be addressed.

"In the future, if there is that issue, we will consider that and update the garden accordingly," Rog said.

## Annual World Day of Prayer unites congregations at Westminster United Church

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Annual World Day of Prayer unites congregations at Westminster United Church

A spirit of unity and reflection filled Westminster United Church as congregants gathered on March 6 to mark the annual World Day of Prayer, a global Christian observance that connects communities worldwide through shared worship and reflection.

The service, hosted this year at Westminster United Church and organized by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, is an international prayer movement observed in more than 150 countries.

Each year, women from different countries prepare the service, highlighting the social and spiritual issues affecting their communities. The 2026 service was written by Christian women in Nigeria and centred on the theme "Come, I Will Give You Rest," drawn from Matthew 11:28.

Dorothy Donnelly, this year's local coordinator for the event, said the annual gathering reflects both faith and global awareness.

The service encourages participants not only to pray, but also to learn about the experiences and challenges faced by women and children in other parts of the world, as they struggle with poverty, religious violence, political instability and more.

"I think it's good for your own growth to learn of the struggles of people," she said.

"We are so fortunate in our country, Canada. We have so many wonderful things, warm homes, food on our table, and roofs over our heads and everything. It's important to learn how other women, other families in the world are struggling, but how they survive because of their faith."

The program incorporated symbols and reflections on Nigerian culture and society, encouraging participants to consider issues such as poverty, economic hardship, environmental challenges, and the resilience of communities facing adversity.

Through prayer, readings and music, attendees were invited to reflect on how faith can inspire compassion and action.

World Day of Prayer has been observed for nearly a century and will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year. The event has long emphasized unity among Christian denominations, bringing together participants from multiple congregations to share leadership roles during the service.

At the Westminster gathering, readers and participants represented several churches from the region, including Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and United Church congregations.

Donnelly said the rotation of hosting duties among churches each year helps strengthen relationships between congregations while ensuring the event remains a shared community effort.

"It's an ecumenical service," she said. "Last



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**PRAYING WITH THE WORLD:** Congregants gathered at Westminster United Church for the annual World Day of Prayer service, with the 2026 theme focusing on Christian women in Nigeria, and their experiences with poverty, religious violence and political instability.

year, the Presbyterian Church held the service at their church. It gives everybody an opportunity to come together and be involved."

In that spirit, representatives from other churches read stories and scriptures throughout the service.

Ann Morrison of Tweedsmuir Presbyterian Church, Sharon Meredith of St. Timothy's Roman Catholic Church and Cindy Johnson of the Knox United Church all took turns reading scripture and the personal stories of Nigerian women featured in the service, sharing their journeys, struggles and faith.

While the service lasted about an hour, organizers said its message extends far beyond

a single gathering.

It was a powerful commitment to spirit, community and empathy — to always remember that not everyone in the world lives as comfortably, and to do what is possible to ease their burden.

By learning about other cultures and praying together, participants are reminded of the interconnected challenges faced by communities worldwide and the shared responsibility to support one another through faith and action.

For more information on World Day of Prayer, go to <https://wdpcanada.ca/world-day-of-prayer/>

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## Local axe thrower to compete in World Championships next month

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

A local competitive axe thrower will be heading to Tulsa, Oklahoma, from April 15 to 19 to compete in the Axe Throwing World Championships.

Steve Hunter competed at the 2024 World Amateur Axe Throwing Championships in Atlanta, Georgia, last year and has earned another bid to compete at the top level this year.

Hunter is ranked 69th in the World Amateur ranking and is in the top five of Canadian throwers.

Axe throwing as a competitive sport is relatively new. Over the past decade, clubs and tournaments have gained popularity across North America.

The sport is exactly as its name implies. Competitors throw an axe at a target and are scored on where the axe hits the target.

There is a full set of rules during competition that cover everything from a competitor's distance from the target, scoring, and the type of throwing axe that meets competition regulations.

"I have been competing for not quite four years," Hunter explained of his involvement in the sport.

"In those years I have travelled to Cleveland, Jackson, Michigan, Atlanta, Georgia, and now Tulsa. I honed my skills with the help of Benn MacDonald from Farshot Orangeville. I worked as an employee and coach for Benn. I own him a ton of gratitude for

all the help he has given me."

Hunter added, "Over the years, I have won multiple league championships from Orangeville, Brampton, and Cambridge. We won a team event in Lindsay, Ontario, with Jason Sharples from Orangeville and Peter Brown from Burlington. I have met a ton of great people and have made a lot of friends throughout my journey."

Axe throwing requires concentration, physical dexterity, and steady nerves to place the axe on target with consistency.

"I took up axe throwing to be more active and get out to do something fun," Hunter explained. "One thing led to another and I realized it came naturally after one season. I started right here in Orangeville, then started going to other leagues in Brampton, Cambridge, and Waterloo. Should I make the top eight in this upcoming event, I will be granted a spot in the Pro division on the same weekend."

He added, "I would like to thank all my sponsors who have made it possible for me to travel to this event, including Superior Construction and Pools (Timmins, Ont.); The Dufferin Group; McEwan Windows and Mirror; Coppertone Paving; Broadway Beat; K and G Engraving; Shawshank Designz in Orangeville; and Grey Wolf 3PL Logistics in Mississauga."

The Axe Throwing Championships in Tulsa are expecting more than 600 competitors in various disciplines, including hatchet, knife, duals, and big axe events.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**CHOPPING THROUGH THE COMPETITION:** Local axe thrower Steve Hunter will be competing at the Axe Throwing World Championships in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in April. Hunter got his start in the sport at Farshot in Orangeville and has risen through the ranks to become one of the top five axe throwers in Canada.

## Provincial Junior Hockey League moves to semi-final round of playoffs

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

The Provincial Junior Hockey League has eliminated half of the teams in the league after completing the quarter-final round of the 2026 divisional playoffs.

There were a few upsets among middle-of-the-pack teams with similar records through

the first round of playoffs.

In the North Carruthers Division, the fifth-place Midland Flyers knocked out the Penatung Kings in a series that took the full seven games to complete.

In the East Tod Division, the fifth-place Amherstview Jets won their series over the fourth-place Picton Pirates in seven games.

The South Doherty Division saw the fifth-place New Hamburg Firebirds eliminate the Norwich Merchants 4-1.

In the West Yeck Division, the fifth-place Mt. Brydges Bulldogs won over the fourth-place Petrolia Flyers in a series that went five games.

There are now 32 teams left in the league who have entered the semi-final round. The division winners will compete for the Provincial Schmalz Cup.

Locally, the North Carruthers Division had some predictable results in the quarter-final round.

There are now four teams battling it out in the semi-finals.

The Alliston Hornets are leading the Orillia Terries 2-0 after the opening weekend of games.

This is a big grudge match. Last season,

the Terries defeated the Hornets in the final series, pulling off an underdog win that stunned fans. Last year's championship series lasted five games.

In the other North Carruthers series, the first-place Stayner Siskins are up against the fifth-place Midland Flyers.

The Siskins are leading after winning Game 1 of the series.

Game 2 of that series was scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, in Midland.

Results were not available at press time.

All semi-final games in the league are scheduled to wrap up by Mar. 19.

The division championships will get underway the following week.

It has been an exciting season for Junior C hockey fans, with many good games, and the best games still to be played as teams turn up the energy as the playoffs continue.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

**BIG WIN:** Junior C hockey has moved into the semi-final round of the Provincial Junior Hockey League playoffs. The Alliston Hornets played the Orillia Terries in Game 1 of their best-of-seven series at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre in Alliston on Friday, March 6. The Hornets won this game 7-1.

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# OPINION

## The Olympics

I used to love watching the Olympics.

Other than Wide World of Sports, which used to air sometime around 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoons, it was the only time you could watch events like ski jumping, bobsledding, the luge, and downhill skiing.

As a kid, I was fascinated by the ski jumpers who rode down a perilous track to the end of the jump before flying through the air, and finishing like they were taking a walk in the park.

I'm sure the reality of it was that the jumpers are probably pretty nervous before every jump, because after all, there is an inherent risk of injury in that sport.

However, for a spectator, it was a great sport to watch – even if I've never seen it live.

The winter sports are different. It's not like there are minor bobsled leagues or a local luge track, and there aren't many places you can visit the local ski jump hill and sign up for lessons.

For the Summer Olympics, I pretty much liked watching all the sports.

I have always thought that the running events are the purest form of sport. You don't have a puck or ball to handle, you're not throwing anything, and you don't have

teammates.

During a running race, it's all on the competitor. All that training, all that coaching, and all those diets they follow to keep them healthy comes down to one person, on their own.

Either you run faster than the other person, or you don't.

The Olympics are all about finishing first. No one ever remembers who won the bronze medal.

Guys like Mark Spitz, the American swimmer who won an incredible seven gold medals at the Summer Olympics in Munich in 1972, returned home as a national hero.

Canada has hosted the Olympic Games three times - the 1976 Summer Games in Montreal, the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary, and the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver.

Hosting the Olympic Games is a huge challenge for the host city. You either have the venues, or you have to build them.

You need appropriate stadiums for track and field and team sports. You need Olympic-style pools, an equestrian park, and other outdoor venues for various sports.

For the winter games, obviously, you have to be in a region that has both mountains

and snow. If you don't have a bobsled run, you will have to build one.

You have to have a place for the Olympians to stay, so now you have to build a small city to accommodate several thousand people from a lot of different countries, and that's just for the competitors.

On top of that, you will have to accommodate thousands of officials and everyone involved in running the Olympic Games. And of course, visitors to the games will also need a place to stay.

It's a logistical nightmare, but they manage to pull it off.

It seems to be a prestigious thing to host the Olympic Games, but what does it all really mean?

A check of many former Olympic sites shows that many of them have simply been left to fall into ruin.

The Montreal Olympic Games were a notorious financial disaster. No cities ever seem to come out ahead after hosting the Olympic Games.

Maybe it's time to build permanent venues rather than allow the notoriously corrupt International Olympic Committee to play its political games and select a new city every four years.

**BRIAN LOCKHART**  
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Just build an Olympic venue with all the needed athletic stadiums, pools, and equestrian parks, and an Olympic village to host the athletes. If every country participating in the Olympic Games contributes to the venue's maintenance, it wouldn't cost very much to keep it alive.

The athletes go to the Olympics to compete. Why would they care which city the games are held in?

For the Winter Olympics, find a suitable mountainous area with abundant snow. Having a permanent Olympic site would greatly benefit the town or city where it is built through jobs and tourism.

Between Olympic Games, the venues could host other world-class sporting events.

A permanent venue would also eliminate all the political crap that goes into selecting a city and the cost of putting a bid together in the first place.

Every other sport on the planet has a permanent home. You don't see the Toronto Maple Leafs announcing they will be playing home games in Kingston this year.

If you build a permanent Olympic Games venue, they will come.

## Trump in a trap

Donald Trump is caught in the trap that he helped to build, and he is starting to flail against his fate. His 'war of choice', 'Operation Epic Fury', was supposed to end in "unconditional surrender" by Tehran in just a few weeks, but if Trump ever had a plan beyond 'use massive force' it isn't working.

Trump managed to 'decapitate' much of the Iranian regime in the first hour of the American-Israeli sneak attack. (For the second time in a year, the United States attacked while still in peace talks with Iran.) However, this massacre of the old leadership class only ensured that a younger, smarter generation of true believers would lead Iran's resistance struggle.

Knowing a bit about the cult of martyrdom in Shia Islam, I am even tempted to speculate that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei knew that the US might strike that meeting and held it anyway. At any rate, it gave regime supporters more martyrs (killed by infidels) to celebrate, including the new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's father, mother, wife and son.

Mojtaba was a hard-liner anyway, having fought as a 17-year-old volunteer in the Iran-Iraq War. (Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded Iran with US encouragement and support in

1980-88.) There is almost zero probability that Iran's new leadership will seek a peace deal with the US and Israel – and no good reason that it needs to.

The American staff officers who planned Operation Foolish Fantasy counted up all Iran's worn-out fighters and decrepit warships and creaking logistics and concluded that they couldn't hold their own in a fight with America and Israel for even two weeks. Nobody asked if that was the fight they had to win.

The Iranian planners, well aware that they couldn't win a stand-up fight with Israel's hi-tech weapons, considered where they did have leverage and decided that fossil fuels and Western economies were their enemies' vulnerable flank. Stop the flow of oil and gas, Western economies will tank, and they'll have to make a deal with the ayatollahs.

(I am assuming here that after the murder of several tens of thousands of civilian protesters in the streets of Iranian cities in January, nobody is going to try another uprising until the regime is clearly, irrevocably losing. It's a long way from that now.)

So: oil again. Fifty years after the first oil embargo brought the West to its knees,

you'd think that the powers-that-be might have switched to a less vulnerable energy source, but, you know – "the money's good and I just want to make my pile and then we can all switch to a safer, cleaner, closer source of energy..." Repeat for fifty years.

Can the United States and its allies break Iran's closure of the narrow Strait of Hormuz, which is currently stopping 20% of the world's oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) traffic from entering or leaving the Persian Gulf? Technically, yes. Indeed, France's President Emmanuel Macron has suggested a multinational naval operation to do exactly that.

But Operation Blind Rage may not be the best answer either. The price of oil has almost doubled and the world economy is sliding into a major recession. Fighting might sink ships in the narrow channel and block it that way. And in the middle of it all is Donald Trump, unable to stop what he started and beginning to realise that he has been had by Binyamin Netanyahu.

We will never know whether Netanyahu genuinely believes there is a nuclear problem with Iran, but we can be certain that the Israeli intelligence services (and the American ones and everybody else's too) have

assured him that Iran is at least five years away from deliverable nuclear weapons.

Netanyahu first warned that Iran would have nukes "in three to five years" in 1992. He has repeated the warning at frequent intervals, saying it was one, two, three or at most five years away. But it was just a useful fiction: nobody takes 34 years to make nuclear weapons if they are serious about it. Consider Pakistan. Consider North Korea. Consider Israel itself.

The lie was useful because it enabled Netanyahu to portray Iran as a threat not just to Israel (which it was) but also to rich and powerful Western countries. His goal has always been to draw those countries into a direct conflict with Iran, and with Trump he has finally succeeded.

To escape again, Trump would have to accept that he has been wrong, so probably not. The likeliest alternative, unfortunately, is for Trump to decide that the solution is yet more force. Perhaps including 'Boots on the Ground', because it will be hard to make the Strait of Hormuz safe without controlling the Iranian islands on the north side of the Strait.

**GWYNNE DYER**  
OUR WORLD TODAY



## The cat caught a bird!

Our late father loved and would do anything for his birds. He was kind to all the animals we ever had, but the wild birds that frequented the bird feeders outside our home in the winter were a particular favourite of his.

When our family moved into our newly built country house in the early 1970s, Dad set up bird feeders on poles outside the dining room picture window so we could watch the birds flit in, take their seeds, and flit out again. We spent many happy winter lunchtimes watching the birds feeding outside our big picture window as we ate.

After finishing lunch, Dad would usually take a little quiet time before resuming his outdoor chores to sit at the kitchen table and look out the window at his beloved birds. He took quiet joy in watching the constant and colourful avian activity — the different species of birds flying to the feeders, taking a seed, and flying away again.

We took great pleasure in feeding the birds, even spreading seeds on the ground to encourage those who were reluctant to use the feeders.

That, as it turned out, would prove to be a mistake.

One year in the early spring, Mom went outside for some task and noticed a little pile of feathers in the melting snow under

one of the bird feeders. She went over to investigate and discovered what remained of a dead bird.

To make matters worse, it was a chickadee—one of the friendliest of birds and one of the species we particularly enjoyed seeing around our property.

We could only surmise that while the family cat was outside, she had stalked the chickadee as it foraged for seeds on the ground, pounced, and killed it when the opportunity presented itself.

Mom, angered, came back into the house and said to me, "The cat killed a chickadee! Just wait 'til Dad finds out about this!"

She then found the cat in the house and scolded her sternly, much like she would scold one of her own children who had done something wrong, ending with the age-old threat that mothers have used throughout time to instill the fear of God into their kids: "YOU JUST WAIT 'TIL DAD GETS HOME!"

In our house, that was the ultimate threat. You knew you were in big trouble when Mom said that. When Mom brought Dad into it, she was bringing in the big guns, so to speak. While it rarely happened, when Dad did get involved, you knew you had committed a major no-no. And messing with Dad's birds was a major no-no in our

house.

The cat and I happened to be in the kitchen when Dad got home from work that day. When Mom told him what had happened, he was visibly upset. His face clouded with protective anger at the news of the death of one of his beloved birds.

Dad turned to the cat and scolded her very sternly.

And what did the cat do? Beloved by the entire family and secure in the knowledge that she was in a safe environment and wouldn't be harmed, she sensed the stern tone in Dad's voice and meowed right back at him with a tone of defiance I've never forgotten. It was as if she were saying, "I'm a cat, and that's what I do!" Then she sullenly walked away, and that was that.

While we were not happy, we knew we were faced with a bit of a dilemma: how do you discipline a cat just for being a cat? Even though they are warm and fuzzy and love to sleep in your lap, cats are natural-born predators.

Stalking and killing are simply what cats do, even though we didn't want her to in this particular case.

Had we caught her in the act, separated her from her prey, and scolded her, she might have understood why she was being disciplined, even though she was simply

acting on her natural instincts. But because the deed was already done, the cat probably wouldn't have understood or associated any discipline with her past actions.

What else could we do? We didn't think the cat would have understood why she was being disciplined if we did so after the fact.

In hindsight, we had no one to blame but ourselves. We really shouldn't have spread seeds on the ground under the feeder in the first place.

She was a good cat, but a cat can't help being what it is. Because she rarely went outside in the winter, we really didn't foresee an issue. We usually kept an eye on her when she was outside near the bird feeders, but we couldn't watch her all the time. Sometimes, her natural instincts simply took over.

Lesson learned. After that day, we made a point of never spreading seeds on the ground under the bird feeders again, removing as much temptation as possible for the cat. She never caught another bird again after that.

And from that day on, Dad's birds lived happily ever after.

**KEITH SCHELL**  
REMEMBERING WHEN



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# COMMUNITY VOICES

## Monthly Message: Awareness, acceptance, and everyday conversations that matter

It's almost April, which means Autism Acceptance and Awareness Month is on its way – a time to intentionally pause, and amplify conversations about neurodiversity.

While we believe neurodiversity should be honoured and celebrated every day, this month offers a special opportunity to listen more deeply, learn more openly, and lead with greater understanding. This month isn't just about facts or statistics. It's about people with incredible strengths, families with powerful stories, and everyday moments that deserve to be seen and celebrated.

It's a time when conversations about neurodiversity get a little louder, a little brighter, and, hopefully, a little more understanding, too.

So, let's get into it. Oh, how far we've come... from times when autism was barely talked about, misunderstood, or hidden in the shadows, to a time where we're learning to listen, celebrate differences, and create spaces where autistic voices are heard and valued. But let's not forget - awareness helped us get there - but acceptance is what moves us forward.

Let's talk about the difference between awareness and acceptance.

Awareness means knowing that autism exists. It's recognizing the signs, understanding autism, and acknowledging that not all brains think, feel, or experience the world in the same way, and that's okay.

Acceptance, though, is where the real beauty lives. It's about celebrating neurodiversity in all its richness. It's about listening, learning, and creating a world where neuro-



• CHILD, ADOLESCENT, & FAMILY PRACTICE •

divergent individuals don't just get by - they thrive.

It's about shifting the focus from "fixing" differences to supporting and embracing them. When we openly talk about autism, we help remove the stigma. We label it as something valid and valuable, rather than letting kids (or anyone!) grow up thinking there's something "wrong" with them. Instead, we help them understand that there's simply something unique and wonderfully different about how they see and experience the world. Because everyone deserves to feel seen, valued, and supported, just as they are.

### Double Empathy Problem - what is it?

When people have different ways of communicating, misunderstandings can happen. To avoid these, the burden is often placed on autistic people to change how they express themselves to match others' expectations.

The Double Empathy Problem is the idea that when autistic and non-autistic people have trouble understanding each other, it's not just the autistic person's responsibility. Communication goes both ways.

For example, an autistic teen might be perceived as "rude" for not using small talk

or for being blunt in conversation. But from their perspective, they are being clear, efficient, and honest. When non-autistic peers or adults expect that teen to "fix" their communication without also working to understand their intent or adjust their own expectations, the connection gets lost.

Autistic people may communicate differently, but that doesn't make it wrong. The real challenge is that both people may find it hard to understand each other's point of view.

Instead of expecting autistic people to do all the adapting, we should all work toward meeting in the middle. That's how real connection and mutual understanding grow.

### Starting conversations at home

Family conversations play a huge role in shaping how kids understand and think about differences. Whether your child is autistic or not, having open, respectful conversations about neurodiversity can make a big difference. It's so important to teach our kids about acceptance- especially at school, where they're surrounded by classmates with all kinds of wonderfully different brains!

Here are a few tips and ways to start these conversations at home:

- Read books together. One that we absolutely love here at WonderTree is Wonderfully Wired Brains by Louise Gooding. It is extremely engaging, affirming and filled with great visuals for kids.

- Use inclusive language when speaking with your child.

- Encourage curiosity and compassion. If your child has questions, don't worry about having all the answers; show openness about learning together!

### Navigating a new diagnosis

If you and your child are navigating a new diagnosis, you are not alone, and we are here for you. Whether it is assessing autism, helping your child, their siblings or family members understand the diagnosis, supporting areas of need, or navigating through school meetings, we're here to support. We've also created an Autistic Self-Identity group at WonderTree for children and teens with the hope of building confidence and resilience, and an Employment Skills program for teens and young adults to help them access and thrive in the workplace.

Check out our blogs on navigating and explaining an autism diagnosis to your child or teen.

Whether you're parenting a neurodivergent child or raising one to be an ally, you're helping create a world that's more inclusive and understanding for everyone. And we think that's pretty amazing!

Visit [wonderpractice.ca](http://wonderpractice.ca) or reach out to us today!



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Losing farmland every day

Dear Editor:

Given the rising cost of food and Ontario's commitment to increase our population, one would think that preserving farmland would be a priority for our Conservative Government.

Alas, in a province where less than five per cent of the land is prime farmland, the

most recent Census of Agriculture indicates that Ontario is losing over 300 acres of farmland per day! Roughly 450 farms every year!

Urban sprawl, aggregate extraction and infrastructure such as the Highway 413 development will make up much of that loss.

If the government were truly focused on Ontario's economy, saving farmland would

be among its top priorities.

A 2024 Ontario Federation of Agriculture report entitled "The Economic Impact of Farming in Ontario" indicates that farm sales contributed over \$18 billion to Ontario's economy and supported \$50 billion in the food manufacturing sector. More than the auto sector contributes.

Beyond economics, eating away at this truly sustainable industry is an assault on rural Ontario. The irony here is that politically, the Conservative rural base is supporting a government that is engineering its decline.

Rob Strang  
Orangeville

## Open letter to Sylvia Jones

Dear Sylvia,

What happened? Remember what you and I used to talk about when the Liberals were in Office?

1. Government advertising (five pages or more in today's Star (March 7), who benefits

besides Torstar?

How much are we spending?)

2. Size of government  
3. Provincial deficit  
4. Number of days the Legislature sits (Ontario Legislature has been off since late

2025 and won't return until later in March. How many days did it sit in 2025?)

5. Government interference (strong mayor powers and overruling local zoning by-laws)  
There are many more concerns Ontarians

have – let's hope there is a change back to Conservative values soon.

Regards,  
Don Sargent  
Dufferin-Caledon P.C. Association

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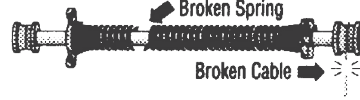
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: International Women's Day celebration

On March 5, International Women's Day was marked at Hockley Valley Resort, sponsored once again by the wonderful staff at Family Transition Place, our local women's shelter for abused women and their children.

As I walked into the enormous reception room, I was overwhelmed by the number of people who were in attendance, and I wondered how many among those gathered here were survivors of Intimate Partner Violence. For this is what Family Transition Place is all about: giving shelter to many women of all ages who have stepped away from abusive relationships.

I was amazed as well at the many women and some men who were there and whom I knew had never experienced Intimate Partner Violence, yet they financially support the work of our local women's shelter. It was a very moving experience, along with the indigenous women's musical performance.

As I continue to be an advocate for Intimate Partner Violence due to my own personal experience with this very tragic issue, I would like to honour this occasion and continue my work in trying to help others who have experienced Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence. To admit that you are living with someone who, in anger, hits you, who slanders you, who continually abuses you, is a very private and painful issue. And when the abuse endangers the vic-

tim, a call to 911 and the police changes their lives forever.

Through my textile designwork (as a later-in-life graduate of design from the Ontario College of Art (& Design U), I have created a series of wall quilts on what Intimate Partner Violence feels like, trying to put a visual face to this very serious issue in society today.

Through my work, I have spoken with a number of victims/survivors. I have heard repeatedly how victims' experiences with the police and, in particular, with family law, our present court system and judges have been very upsetting for them, feeling as though they were being abused all over again. Frankly, it is still a man's world in family court insofar as the "he said/she said" issue results in many abusers walking away from lawful responsibility towards the abuse they have inflicted upon another in a marriage or relationship.

One survivor I know of, Cait, had been left for dead lying on the floor of her home after being assaulted by her partner. She only survived as she was able to crawl to her computer and send a message to a friend to help rescue her. She has since been invited personally to speak about her experience with the Federal Government's Women's Committee in Ottawa, yet, when this meeting started, she was told by the moderator that she had only five minutes to speak. Five minutes to describe the horror

of what she had experienced. And all too soon, this government meeting turned into a political nightmare.

One MP accused the committee of not being given an equal opportunity to bring to the meeting someone of her own choice, and before long, the meeting dissolved into a politician's bloodbath. Cait finally turned her back on the committee, along with another speaker, and both walked out. In tears.

Domestic violence or Intimate Partner Violence, IPV, as it is now called, is not taken seriously enough by those in government and subsequently in the courts by judges. As much as our Ontario Premier Doug Ford has spoken out in support of this issue, his government still refuses to declare Intimate Partner Violence an epidemic. One might ask why?

The police are the first line of contact for a victim in their call to 911, and from my own personal experience, I know that a domestic violence call is not always well-handled by the police. The interaction with the police and victims of IPV could do with considerable improvement.

For example, I know of one recent incident with the police when a victim/survivor filed a complaint regarding the repeated violation of a restraining order by her former husband. She asked that the complaint be filed with the Intimate Partner Violence section of the OPP de-

partment, as this is what her complaint was in reference to, but instead, her complaint was given to a road cop, a constable who did not have any training in dealing with IPV and while he tried to deal with this violation of the restraining order which the police are required to do, he finally declared it was not of a "malicious" nature or intent and dismissed the complaint without informing the victim/survivor. What the police apparently did not take into account was the fact that the offender had a police record of mental health issues and arrests with the OPP in Dufferin County. This is what lay behind the woman's complaint. She is still fearful of her former husband's mental health issues.

Perhaps you might now understand why victims of abuse feel negated by the police and by the courts of law and judges. Hopefully, a dialogue between the police and victims and Family Transition Place may take place in the near future to build bridges towards improving the police responders' involvement in Intimate Partner Violence and its victims. IPV is a tragedy many women experience, and some men too, and it is time our governments stepped up and acknowledged that it is of epidemic proportions in our society today.

Sandra Small Proudfoot  
(AOCA'89)  
Mono

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JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**TERRIFIC TEACHERS:** Teachers, support staff and local officials came together on March 7 to mark International Women's Day with the Upper Grand Occasional Teachers Local for a brunch event held in Orangeville. Several teachers were highlighted and awarded for their outstanding contributions to the educational sector, reinforcing the critical role that occasional teachers play in community support and learning development. From left to right: UGOT Past President Marina Howlett, President Nkese Charles-Campbell, award recipient Simrin Chahal and Nitya Patel, who MC'd the event. See a full story on Page A6.

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**SATURDAY MARCH 14**  
**GAME THREE**  
**ALDER ARENA | 7:30PM PUCK DROP**



**Family Transition Place celebrates International Women's Day**

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

Hundreds of community members gathered at Hockley Valley Resort on March 5 for Family Transition Place's annual International Women's Day Celebration Breakfast. The event combined celebration with fundraising to support services for women and families across Dufferin County and Caledon.

The morning event brought together community leaders, sponsors and residents for a program focused on recognizing the achievements of women while supporting programs aimed at preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Several local dignitaries attended the event, including Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post and members of municipal councils from across the region.

Lynette Pole-Langdon, executive director of Family Transition Place, welcomed guests to the event, highlighting the important role advocacy plays in daily life.

"On behalf of Family Transition Place, thank you for taking the time in your busy schedules," she said. "I know that your days fill up fast, and there are a million places for you to be, and there's lots of work for you to do. The fact that you've carved out time in your day, in your schedules, to be here,



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**CELEBRATING CULTURE:** Sharon Rigby of the Brave Canoe (right) and her daughter open the International Women's Day brunch, held by Family Transition Place, with the beat of a drum. They shared their voices, energy, and song with an audience of roughly 300 people. The Brave Canoe is a not-for-profit organization based out of Dufferin County, dedicated to revitalizing Indigenous culture.

to support us and to celebrate with each other, we really, really appreciate that," she said.

"We are really fortunate to live in a community that has incredible people that are so generous, and so that's where I think it's

important when we have businesses and individuals that show up to support events like this, that we give back and make sure we support their businesses."

Continued on Page A2

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# FTP marks International Women's Day with community breakfast

Continued from FRONT

Guests were treated to a gourmet buffet breakfast and a signature mocktail, while also participating in a silent auction and centrepiece auction. A series of games and prizes added to the atmosphere, with funds raised throughout the morning going toward Family Transition Place's programs and services.

During the program, members of Family Transition Place's youth education team spoke about their work in local schools and the role it plays in preventing violence before it begins.

Travis Greenley, a youth educator with Family Transition Place, explained the focus of the education program and the goals of the young girls they work with.

"We are trying to talk to young people in schools today about healthy relationships to hopefully stop them from coming to the front door tomorrow," he said. "Through our programs, we want them to be strong, resilient and adaptable in the face of adversity. Can they make the world better for themselves and people in relationships?"

The program, which has been operating for more than 25 years, delivers classroom sessions for students from Grade five through Grade eight focused on building healthy relationships, empathy and confidence.

The presentations also highlighted research showing that girls can begin to doubt their intelligence at a young age, underscoring the importance of early education around self-esteem and identity.

Through a series of lessons, activities, and discussions, the program encourages students to challenge stereotypes, understand consent, develop emotional awareness, and



**WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT:** Lynette Pole-Langdon, executive director of Family Transition Place (FTP), welcomed guests to the International Women's Day Brunch at Hockley Valley Resort on March 5. She spoke about the important role advocacy and thanked attendees for taking the time to celebrate with FTP. International Women's Day was recognized globally on Sunday March 8.

learn how to recognize both healthy and unhealthy behaviours in relationships.

Running programs like this one isn't cheap, but Greenley said it requires ongoing support to keep operating.

"This program has been going on for over 25 years," he said. "It is an unfunded program. Events like this, sponsors, donors, Family Transition Place's commitment has allowed us to continue to go up the river and make this impact, hopefully maybe break



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTOS

**SUPPORTING WOMEN:** Staff and supporters of Family Transition Place gathered at the Hockley Valley Resort on March 5 for their annual International Women's Day brunch event. With gourmet food, entertainment, and education, the brunch event was more than just a celebration of achievements; it was a commitment to supporting women, breaking down barriers, and fighting for a fairer, more equitable future.

some of the cycle of violence that we've seen."

Ultimately, it is just one part of Family Transition Place's programming. They provide a range of services for women and children escaping violence or unhealthy relationships. These include emergency shelter, counselling, safety planning, outreach services and youth education programs delivered in schools throughout the region.

The organization serves communities

across Dufferin County and Caledon and relies on donations, sponsorships and volunteer support to maintain its programs and continue providing assistance to those seeking safety and support.

The brunch event was a powerful moment for supporters and staff to come together and celebrate what they have achieved so far, and a commitment to continue pushing forward to effect even more change for the future.

# Amaranth declares emergency due to flooding of municipal building

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

The Township of Amaranth declared an emergency on the evening of March 8, due to rising flood concerns.

At 6:19 p.m., Amaranth issued a Declaration of an Emergency, signed by Mayor Chris Gerrits, notifying the community that flooding had occurred at the Township Municipal Office.

"The township has taken this step, most importantly, to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and residents," reads the declaration. "During this emergency, council and staff are working to ensure that the municipality operates effectively and continues to provide essential services."

Township staff can be reached by telephone at 519-941-1007 or by email at info@amaranth.ca.

"Staff will endeavour to respond to phone messages and emails during regular working hours, but an immediate response may not be possible," reads the declaration. "Please consider using the drop box at the office for correspondence as it will be checked on a regular basis."

The Township of Amaranth website will post updates and notices regarding the emergency.

The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), which covers the southern and central parts of Amaranth, issued a flood statement on March 10. The GRCA noted

that warm weather and rain from March 5 to 9 have melted the snowpack, leading to ice jams and flooding.

"While the risk of ice jams is believed to be past, river flows remain extremely high," reads the GRCA's statement.


As of press time, Environment Canada issued a Special Weather Statement covering all of southern Ontario, including the Grand River watershed, with rainfall amounts of 20 to 40 mm beginning March 10 and continuing into March 11. This is likely to have raised river levels, and additional rainfall will further increase river flows.

"High flows and unstable ice conditions will increase the safety risk around rivers

and streams throughout the watershed," reads the GRCA's statement. "The public is encouraged to exercise extreme caution around local waterways. Parents are reminded to keep their children and pets away from watercourses. The public is reminded to stay off ice-covered waterbodies, due to unsafe conditions."

In addition to Amaranth, Grand Valley has been heavily impacted by flooding.

"River flows have exceeded flood thresholds in Grand Valley and will continue to affect this area. The flood risk remains high due to the forecast rainfall. Municipal flood coordinators in Grand Valley have been advised to monitor conditions and take necessary actions," reads the GRCA's statement.



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# Resident questions council on accessibility in Orangeville

Written By **JAMES MATTHEWS**

Orangeville resident Vivian Petho feels her family got a sour taste of how the municipality complies with accessibility standards.

As part of a question to Orangeville council during its March 9 meeting, Petho said her family was recently told by municipal officials that compliance is a shared responsibility and is something town staff consider as part of their work.

As per information in an email she obtained through a provincial freedom of information request, she said a manager at town hall wrote in 2023 that “there is absolutely a need for someone in the organization to lead accessibility.”

So an accessibility and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) coordinator position was budgeted in that year’s municipal operating and capital spending plan.

At some point, funding for the position was cut.

Petho said during the March 9 meeting that she spoke with the province’s information and privacy commissioner regarding the municipality’s keeping of Orangeville Tran-

sit drivers’ accessibility training records.

The agency that provided her family’s service dog reached out to the town regarding standards required for service dogs on public transit.

“And First Student drivers had to be re-trained on transit accessibility after three incidents involving our family,” she said.

Those three alleged accessibility infractions, as confirmed by the information and privacy commissioner, she said, weren’t documented.

She asked if council stands by the 2023 decision to suspend hiring an accessibility and DEI coordinator.

David Smith, the town’s CAO, said Orangeville Transit and the municipality have been audited regarding accessibility compliance.

“We will be sharing that with members of council when that report comes forward,” he said. “It will indicate our path forward. We were proactive to do that and we will continue to be like that.”

Tim Kocialek, the town’s infrastructure services general manager, said the report Smith referenced with additional information will be tabled at the next council meet-

ing later this month.

“We’ll be able to speak more on the items at that time,” Kocialek said.

Tamara Limebeer, another Orangeville resident, said the province set the goal to be fully accessible by January 2025. And that goal is nowhere near accomplished, she said.

“I would be lying if I said it didn’t hurt to watch friends try new restaurants or music venues that I cannot access,” Limebeer said. “Reading those social media posts sometimes feels like sitting outside a window, watching friends and family inside having a great time.”

When a business commits to accessibility, it conveys a welcoming message, she said. When accessibility is treated as an afterthought, the message becomes one of mere tolerance.

Limebeer asked about possible municipal grants available to help business owners undertake accessibility-related renovations. She suggested the town waive some building fees for businesses that have been voluntarily upgraded by owners.

If such grant programs or fee breaks exist, she asked why they’re not better promoted?

Smith said he can’t knowledgeably answer Limebeer’s questions off the top of his head.

“We have people that come and ask questions and staff have no heads-up, no knowledge,” Smith said. “We have email addresses. We have the ability for people to call and give us a heads up.”

If residents would like good answers to their queries, Smith suggested they send their questions to town staff in advance of the council meeting.

“Otherwise, it puts all of us in an awkward situation of being asked anything at all about municipal services from 50 years ago to 50 years in the future,” he said.

He said town staff aren’t prepared to answer Limebeer’s questions during Question Period, but staff will get to her with answers.

Mayor Lisa Post said the town has a community improvement plan that includes accessibility components for existing businesses looking to do upgrades. That information, along with how to apply, is shared with the Orangeville Business Improvement Area (BIA) and its members. It is also promoted on social media and by municipal economic development staff.

# Orangeville man documents experience riding town’s transit

Written By **JAMES MATTHEWS**

One Orangeville man’s first experience on local transit was an eye-opener he hopes will lead to some improvements.

Matthew Smith described his experience and some of his observations to town council when it met on March 9.

Smith said he put himself in the shoes of people who depend on Orangeville Transit to travel throughout the town. He rode both bus system routes on Family Day, Feb. 16.

The trip took him about two-and-a-half hours, he said.

On that day, the transit automatic vehicle locator (AVL) wasn’t working. That locator shows riders how close a bus is to their bus stop.

“So I didn’t know what time the bus would actually arrive at the stop,” Smith said. “Luckily, the bus was on schedule that day.”

Smith said he’s looked into it, and the transit system’s AVL is working fine now.

There’s a bus stop across from the Lord Dufferin Centre, a seniors’ residence. The stop there wouldn’t have been easily accessible to most senior citizens due to the lack of a ramp to the portion of the stop cleared of snow.

“I just feel this particular stop isn’t meet-



FILE PHOTO

ing the needs of the Lord Dufferin residents,” Smith said. “And I believe that’s why this particular stop was actually placed there, to service the building.”

He said some bus stop shelters lacked route maps and schedules for potential riders. A Centennial Road bus shelter lacked a garbage can and, as a result, “had quite a bit of garbage in it.”

The presence of a garbage can doesn’t guarantee that people will use it, he said. But it will at least give people an opportunity to litter less.

One of the more glaring omissions Smith noticed during his ride was that the bus stops weren’t announced. The province’s human rights tribunal ruled the Toronto Transit

Commission in July 2007 violated the rights of people with disabilities by not calling out the stops. The issue of stops not being announced particularly affects blind passengers, who may be unsure of how far along the route they are.

In Orangeville, Smith figures that functioning AVLs resolve that issue. However, the school buses that are often used when transit buses are off the road are not equipped with AVL.

Those school buses also pose a traffic risk at some intersections because the accessibility lift is located at the back of the bus. As accessible boarding will be from the bus stop’s sidewalk, the bus would have to pull into the intersection and disrupt traffic flow to accommodate a rider using the lift.

“I believe that would be a safety issue,” he said.

Based on some of Smith’s social media feedback, it seems people feel the 45-minute bus routes are too long for users. Some people opt to walk to where they need to go.

But one visually impaired resident who contacted Smith said walking isn’t an option. But riding the bus on those long routes often takes a whole day to get anything done.

“The new transit system prevents me from being independent,” the respondent wrote.

Smith suggested Orangeville Transit consider adding a third route when its new 40-foot vehicle is on the road.

Mayor Lisa Post said municipal staff are aware of issues with the routes. Staff have been gathering rider feedback, she said. A report based on that consultation into options is expected soon.

David Smith, the town’s CAO, said reliability of routes has been the top issue heard about the bus service. That’s been resolved, he said.

“Every bus was on time and that was the No. 1 complaint we heard,” he said.

Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor appreciated Matthew Smith’s efforts. The very fact that Matthew Smith saw what he did tells Taylor that people are using transit.

Taylor said he was a voice against transit eight years ago. And council eventually voted to adopt a free bus service.

The fact that ridership has increased proves how wrong he was, Taylor said.

“There is a propensity between the people who need the service and those who don’t,” Taylor said. “We need those people to be out in the community using the service.”

Taylor said he was afraid the town was “shoving money at something and not getting a benefit for it.”

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# From Green Team to Stage Crew: Volunteers needed for Blues and Jazz Festival

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

Orangeville's favourite festival is returning in early June, and volunteers are needed to make it a success.

The 22nd Annual Orangeville Blue and Jazz Festival (OBJF) will be held along Broadway and in Alexandra Park from June 5 to 7. Anyone looking to get involved is encouraged to express their interest to organizers.

"Volunteers are the backbone of the festival," said Norm Trudeau, OBJF volunteer coordinator.

"On average, I try to recruit 230 people across 14 different teams, which is no small task... We need everything from event staff, our food and beverage team, operations people and fundraising, to merchandise, and admissions."

He added, "Anybody who wants to volunteer between the ages of 14 and 95 can come and volunteer - I'll have positions for them."

There are two key dates for interested individuals to watch out for - April 21 and May 27. Volunteer orientation and training meetings will take place on both dates at the Orangeville Seniors Centre (26 Bythia St.), each starting at 7 p.m.

Roughly 50 per cent of OBJF's volunteers return each year and are put in key positions to run the festival, while the other half is made up of new recruits.

"They really are some of the greatest people I've ever met," Trudeau said of the volunteers. "They're just wonderful. We're like a big family."

### Perks of volunteering

While volunteers generously give their time to the OBJF and make it possible, the festival gives back to them and provides them with great value as well.

"It really is a fantastic experience for any demographic," Trudeau said. "I've personally been a volunteer with the festival for 20 of its 22 years, and every year the experience has just been amazing."

He continued, "The real big advantage of

being a volunteer is you get to be up close and personal to the music - and the music is what the festival is all about."

Larry Kurtz, OBJF festival director and founder, praised the volunteer experience, noting that people have made lifelong friends by getting involved.

"A lot of people have made lifelong friends by volunteering, so it's a good social aspect. You get to meet people in the community who are like minded and want to give back," he said.

Kurtz added that to reward volunteers, he puts together a celebratory appreciation party a few weeks after the festival. The event features live music, refreshments, and an opportunity to reconnect with fellow volunteers.

### Available volunteer positions

There are several different types of volunteer positions to be filled. OBJF organizers are seeking a leader for the festival's Green Team, which handles garbage, compost, and recycling.

The Merchandise Team and Fundraising Team also have positions open.

Experienced bar staff or people with a Smart Serve Certificate are needed on the Food and Beverage Team.

"We are expanding our Broadway Beer Garden this year, which is awesome, but we'll need more people for that," Trudeau said.

Individuals with sound, stage or emcee experience who can volunteer are of great value to the festival, helping to run its three stages.

Kurtz highlighted the volunteer Roust About Team, affectionately called the RATS, who assist with setup and teardown.

He also noted the Artist Hospitality Team, which looks after musicians as they get to the festival, setting them up with passes and meal vouchers.

### How to sign up

Anyone interested in volunteering, or looking for more information, can visit [orangevillebluesandjazz.ca/volunteer](http://orangevillebluesandjazz.ca/volunteer) to sign up or con-



FILE PHOTO

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:** The Orangeville Blues and Jazz Festival is seeking volunteers for this year's event, which runs from June 5 to 7. Two volunteer orientation and training dates have been set, April 21 and May 27. Both events will get underway at 7 p.m. and occur at the Orangeville Senior's Centre.

tact Trudeau by phone at 647-281-1575 or by email at [Norm@orangevillebluesandjazz.ca](mailto:Norm@orangevillebluesandjazz.ca).

"I would be more than happy to walk through the process of applying to become a volunteer," Trudeau said. "It really is a fantastic experience. I can't say enough about how rewarding it is to get involved with this festival."

While anyone interested in volunteering is encouraged to express their interest in advance, volunteers will be accepted until the end of the festival; there is no cut-off date.

"If a person wants to become a volunteer, all they have to do go to our main Volunteer Centre at the gazebo in Alexandra Park, and we'll put you to work," Trudeau enthused.

High school students looking to complete their volunteer service hours while enjoying a

fun local event are encouraged to get involved.

"It's a great experience for them. They get to work with experienced people, and see the festival from the operational aspect, not just being a patron," Trudeau noted.

Anyone who'd like to meet the team in person and learn more about the festival can visit them at two upcoming home and garden shows.

OBJF organizers will have a booth at the 26th Annual Orangeville Lions Home and Garden Show, which runs from March 27 to 29 at the OAS Event Centre on the Orangeville Fairgrounds (247090 5 Sideroad, Mono). The team will also be at the Erin Home and Garden Show from April 24 to 26 at the Erin Agricultural Society (184 Main St., Erin), seeking volunteers.

## Two Mono residents charged with impaired driving during same day in separate incidents

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers have charged two Mono residents with impaired operation-related offences following two separate incidents.

On Feb. 25, at approximately 4:46 p.m., Dufferin OPP officers were dispatched to the area of 150 First Street after receiving reports of a female slumped over the steering wheel of a vehicle in a parking lot. Police attended the scene alongside other emergency services and located the driver.

After speaking with the individual, officers initiated an impaired driving investigation.

Marie Macdonald, 37, from Mono, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs
- Use plate not authorized for vehicle
- Use plate not in accordance with regulations
- Fail to surrender permit for motor vehicle
- Possess unmarked cigarettes

On Feb. 25, at approximately 10:20 p.m., Dufferin OPP officers were conducting general patrol in the area of County Road 124 when they located a vehicle in a ditch that had sustained significant damage. After speaking with the driver, officers initiated an impaired driving investigation.

Kristopher Erdei, 46, from Mono, has been charged with:

- Operation while impaired - alcohol and drugs

- Operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)
- Drive vehicle or boat with cannabis readily available

The accused individuals are scheduled to appear before the Ontario Court of Justice in Orangeville at a later date. Their driver's licence was suspended, and both vehicles were impounded.

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

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# Orangeville officials discuss March Break childcare issues

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

It's the same in Orangeville as it is anywhere else, in that many households in this difficult economic time rely on two incomes to make ends meet.

Having the children out of school during March Break can complicate a delicate work-life balance.

Orangeville resident Mark Middleton asked council during its March 9 meeting about childcare capacity at the Alder Street Arena during local schools' March Break next week.

He wanted to know how many spaces were offered to residents, how many families applied for those spaces, how many were put on a wait list, and how many were ultimately turned away.

"Clear numbers help us understand whether this is an occasional pressure or a constant shortfall," Middleton said.

Some parents will have to scramble to secure childcare, and some may have to take unpaid leave from their jobs to accommodate their young students' school breaks.

Middleton asked whether the town has assessed the possible impact of limited capacity at the Alder Street Arena on working families.

"Is there a needs assessment in place, and is the childcare planning aligned with our

population growth?" he asked.

Middleton wanted to know if there's a plan in place if demand for childcare exceeds what can be offered. Expansion by way of partnerships with local service providers may be necessary, he said.

Orangeville has a large number of people who commute to jobs outside the town. The workday typically begins early for those people, and that complicates matters if the childcare program starts at 8 a.m. or 9 a.m.

Heather Savage, the town's community services general manager, said another angle that needs to be considered is the availability of potential staff members.

"Because there is a ratio that you have to uphold," she said. "A one to 10 ratio. So, provided we can hire more staff and if we have the space, then I'm sure the planning team is considering those things."

David Smith, the town's CAO, said staff availability is an issue for a one-week venture that is the March Break childcare program.

"It's very difficult to staff," Smith said. "It's very difficult to staff reliably."

When parents register their children up to four weeks in advance, having to alter the program due to a lack of staff is a concern, he said.

"Our recreation staff work really hard to maximize space," he said. "Their goal is to get more kids in those programs."

# Find inspiration while supporting the community at the 26th annual Orangeville Home and Garden Show

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

As the weather warms and seasons change, many homeowners begin looking for creative ways to improve their home or backyard.

And there's no better opportunity to generate ideas than at the Orangeville Lions 26th Annual Home and Garden Show, featuring 165 vendors. Many of the booths will feature businesses specializing in renovations, home building, roofing, landscaping, and home improvement of all kinds.

The three-day event returns to the Orangeville Fairgrounds (247090 5 Sideroad, Mono) over the weekend of March 27 to 29. The show runs from 5 to 9 p.m. on March 27, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on March 28, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on March 29.

The funds raised through the home and garden show enable the Orangeville Lions Club to take on community projects, donate to local charities, and support meaningful initiatives.

Yasmine Slater from the Orangeville Lions said attendees not only support the Lions Club but also the local business community.

She added that the event is a great opportunity to connect with other community members, old friends, and new businesses.

"It's just a great way to connect with your neighbours and people you might not see all the time," Slater noted. "Spring is upon us, everybody's getting ready to go outside, so what better way to get home renovation ideas flowing?"

It's important to note that the entrance to the building that houses the home and garden show has moved this year. Attendees can enter through the front entrance on the north side of the building, rather than the side entrance used in the past.

Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 people are expected to attend the event over the three days it runs.

GSC Orangeville Take Home Meals and Catering will be running the food court this year.

As in past years, the home and garden show will feature a space dedicated to not-for-profit organizations, where attendees can learn



FILE PHOTO

**READY FOR RETURN:** The Orangeville Lions Annual Home and Garden Show is returning to the Orangeville Fairgrounds from March 27 to 29.

more about what's in the community and how to get involved.

Volunteers are needed to ensure the show runs smoothly. Anyone looking to get involved or learn more about the Orangeville Lions Club can email [info@orangevillelions.org](mailto:info@orangevillelions.org).

"If any local high school students want to help out a local service club and connect with some really great minded people in the community, we're always looking for volunteers," said Slater, who noted that contributing counts towards students' mandatory volunteer hours.

Several local businesses sponsor the show, helping to make it a successful fundraiser.

The Title (main) sponsor this year is Royal LePage RCR Realty; Diamond sponsors are Headwaters Fitness & Racquet Club, Country 105, Expedia Cruises Orangeville and Orangeville Nissan; Gold sponsors are Chartwell Retirement Residences and Hickory Dickory Decks; and Silver sponsors are Larry's Small Engine and TreadXperts - Tire Expert Service Network.

To learn more about the Orangeville Lions' 26th Annual Home and Garden Show, read next week's edition of the Orangeville Citizen, where we will feature a special section highlighting the event.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**COLOURING CONTEST WINNER:** Isolde Vahey is the Orangeville Citizen's Family Day Colouring Contest Winner. She shows off her winning prize, containing art supplies, intended to help her continue on her artistic journey. From all of us at the Citizen - congratulations!

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# UGOT brunch honours occasional teachers for International Women's Day

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

The Upper Grand Occasional Teachers' (UGOT) Local marked International Women's Day on Saturday, March 7, with a community brunch recognizing the vital but often unseen contributions of occasional teachers.

Held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Trattoria Semplice in Orangeville, the event brought together educators, union leaders, community partners and local officials under the theme 'Together We Rise.' Food prepared by the staff at Trattoria Semplice was served for brunch, complete with dessert.

Four occasional teachers who identify as women or non-binary were selected by their colleagues for exemplifying leadership, advocacy, creativity and service in Upper Grand schools.

The program opened with MC Nitya Patel inviting attendees to reflect on International Women's Day as both a celebration of women's achievements and a reminder that equity is ongoing work.

"International Women's Day is celebrated around the world as a call to recognize the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, and also as a reminder that equity is ongoing work," she said. "Today we gather not only to reflect on progress, but to celebrate the women in this room, the educators, leaders, artists and community builders whose daily work shapes futures."

UGOT President Nkese Charles-Campbell described the brunch as more than a social gathering, calling it a statement that visibility, community and partnership matter in public education. She reminded

attendees of the important role occasional teachers serve.

"Occasional teachers step into classrooms with little notice, adapt with skill and compassion, and hold space for students with a professionalism that deserves to be celebrated," she said. "This morning, we have the privilege of recognizing three occasional teachers whose dedication often unfolds quietly, but never without impact."

Three occasional teachers were formally recognized from the stage.

Simrin Chahal of Centennial Hylands Elementary School in Shelburne was honoured as a School Community Champion for her ability to build strong relationships, support colleagues and boost morale through thoughtful initiatives.

Giasmine Samaniego of Glenbrook Elementary School in Shelburne received the Heart of Education Award for creating inclusive, joyful learning spaces and offering consistent, individualized support to students.

Mulmur resident Jessie Steinberg, founder of LEAP Adventures, received the Guiding Light Leadership Award for leadership that extends beyond the classroom through programs such as drumming workshops that build confidence, voice and community.

In alignment with this year's International Women's Day theme, "Give to Gain," proceeds beyond event costs will support three women-led or women-serving organizations in Dufferin County: Family Transition Place, The Shoebox Project - Help Secure Her Tomorrow Campaign, and Streams Community Hub.

Campbell said that this event was a reaffirmation of the power of mutual support and what is possible with compassion, understanding and advocacy.



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**SUPPORTING TEACHERS:** From left, Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post, Nancy Claridge and Faye Corbett share a laugh during an International Women's Day event for the Upper Grand Occasional Teachers Local.

"This event reflects our belief that when we take care of our teachers, our teachers can take care of our students, and when we invest in women, our entire community rises."

For UGOT, its partners, and guests, the brunch signalled an ongoing commitment to make the work of occasional teachers visible, to invest in women and non-binary leaders, and to ensure that, in the spirit of "Together We Rise," the gains made in classrooms ripple outward through the entire community.

## Dufferin County snowmobile trails closed for the season

The snowmobile trails in Dufferin County are officially closed for the 2025-2026 season.

"We want to thank the Dufferin Drift Busters, Orangeville Snowmobile Club, and Hillsburgh Snow Roamers for their hard work in maintaining the trails and providing an

excellent experience for riders this winter," reads a statement from Dufferin OPP.

"Please respect the landowners and stay off the trails until they reopen next season. Additionally, the rail line trail is also closed and will reopen for ATV use on May 1, 2026, weather permitting."

## Fire at Sugar Shack in Mono deemed non-suspicious

On March 9, at approximately 4:30 p.m., Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), along with local fire departments and other emergency crews, responded to a reported structure fire on 30 Sideroad in Mono.

Upon investigation, the fire was determined to be non-suspicious.

Anyone who may have witnessed the incident and wishes to speak with victim services is encouraged to contact Caledon/Dufferin Victim Services at 905-951-3838.

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# DUFFERIN (SHELBURNE)

## POLAR PLUNGE

Sunday, March 29, 2026

Location: Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex (Centre Ice)  
Registration : 2pm | Plunge : 4pm

Fundraising Incentives for ALL Plungers  
Prizes : Best Costume (Team, Individual, Special Olympian), Highest Fundraiser (Individual)

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TOWNSHIP OF  
**East Garafraxa**

**NOTICE OF RESCHEDULED STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING**  
**Township of East Garafraxa - Official Plan Review**

Further to the Notice of Open House and Public Meeting dated November 6, 2025, please be advised that the Statutory Public Meeting originally scheduled for Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. was postponed due to inclement weather. The Open House was held on December 17, 2025, and proceeded as scheduled.

This notice is being given in accordance with Sections 17 and 26 of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13*, as amended. Notice is hereby given that the rescheduled Special Council Meeting/Statutory Public Meeting will be held as follows:

**STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING DETAILS**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 22, 2026

**Time:** 4:30 p.m.

**Format:** Hybrid (in-person and remote participation available)

**In-Person Location:**

Township Administration Office  
065371 Dufferin County Road 3, Unit 2  
East Garafraxa, ON L9W 7J8

**Remote Participation:**

Registration is required for those wishing to attend remotely. The Zoom registration link will be posted on the Township website calendar under the applicable meeting date (<https://calendar.eastgarafraxa.ca/council>).

*Electronic participation is provided as a convenience and is dependent on third-party platforms, internet connectivity, and user equipment. While the Township will make reasonable efforts to ensure the technology functions properly, uninterrupted access cannot be guaranteed. If technical issues arise, the meeting may proceed provided quorum is maintained. The Township is not responsible for a participant's inability to connect due to technical difficulties outside the Township's control.*

**PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

The purpose of the Statutory Public Meeting is to consider the proposed Draft Official Plan for the Township of East Garafraxa, which is intended to replace the current Official Plan.

An Official Plan is a legal document required under the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13*, that sets out the municipality's long-term land use strategy for growth and development.

The proposed Draft Official Plan is intended to:

- Conform with the County of Dufferin Official Plan and applicable provincial plans;
- Be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024;
- Address matters of provincial interest; and
- Reflect community needs and the long-term vision for the Township of East Garafraxa.

Council will consider all written and oral submissions before making a decision regarding adoption of the proposed Official Plan.

**PARTICIPATION AND SUBMISSIONS**

Any person or public body may attend the Special Council Meeting/Statutory Public Meeting and make written or oral submissions in support of or in opposition to the proposed Official Plan.

**1. Written Submissions**

Written submissions should be addressed to the Township Clerk using the contact details provided at the bottom of this notice.

Written comments will be accepted no later than **Wednesday, April 15, 2026**.

If you wish to be notified of the adoption or refusal of the proposed Official Plan, you must make a written request to the Township Clerk prior to adoption.

**2. Oral Submissions**

Oral submissions may be provided to Council at the Public Meeting, either in-person or remotely.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Additional information regarding the proposed Draft Official Plan, including Draft Official Plan Version 2 (V2 - January 2026), is available:

- In-person at the Township Administration Office during regular office hours (065371 Dufferin County Road 3, Unit 2, East Garafraxa, ON L9W 7J8); and/or
- On the Township website: (Official Plan and Official Plan Review Page - <https://www.eastgarafraxa.ca/business-and-development/official-plan-and-official-plan-review/>)

Materials related to the Introductory Official Plan Workshop (Special Council Meeting) held on September 17, 2025, and the Open House held on December 17, 2025, are also available on the Township website at the link provided above.

**DOCUMENT UPDATES**

Following the Introductory Official Plan Workshop (Special Council Meeting) and Open House, and comments received to date, updates were made to Draft Version 1 (V1) of the Official Plan. These updates are reflected in Draft Version 2 (V2 - January 2026), which has been posted on the Township Official Plan and Official Plan Review project webpage (link provided above). Highlighted changes include:

- Incorporated feedback received during the September and December 2025 meetings, and written comments received to date, including revising the minimum agricultural lot area size recommendation from 40 ha to the current 20 ha with respect to agricultural severance policies;
- Updated data layers in Schedules (maps) to best reflect the most up-to-date Natural Heritage information and restructured the contents of the schedules to best match the proposed standardization from the Province; and
- Restructured the document to align with the Provincial proposed standardization of Official Plans. This is the most significant visual change from Draft V1. Draft V2 Table of Contents has been reorganized to reflect the proposed standardization structure from the Province.

**PROJECT NEXT AND FINAL STEPS**

Following this Statutory Public Meeting, final changes may be made to the Draft Official Plan (V2) to incorporate written and/or oral comments.

At a later date, a final draft version will be presented to Township of East Garafraxa Council for review and decision (adoption). Once adopted by Township Council, the final Official Plan will be submitted to the County of Dufferin for approval pursuant to Section 17(2) of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13*.

**PLANNING ACT REQUIREMENTS**

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Township of East Garafraxa to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Township before the proposed Official Plan is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Council of the Township of East Garafraxa before the proposed Official Plan is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Township of East Garafraxa on the proposed Official Plan, you must make a written request to the Township Clerk at the address provided below.

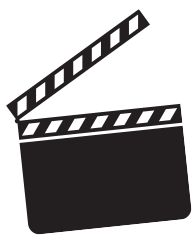
For more information about this matter, including information about appeal rights, contact the Township Clerk using the contact details provided below.

Should the proposed Official Plan be adopted by the Council of the Township of East Garafraxa, it will be submitted to the County of Dufferin for approval pursuant to Section 17(2) of the *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13*.

**Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of March 2026**

**Jessica Kennedy, Dipl.M.A., Clerk**

TOWNSHIP OF EAST GARAFRAXA  
065371 Dufferin County Road 3, Unit 2 | East Garafraxa | ON | L9W 7J8  
Tel: 226-259-9400 ext. 206 | Toll Free: 877-868-5967 | Fax: 1-226-212-9812  
[clerks@eastgarafraxa.ca](mailto:clerks@eastgarafraxa.ca) | [www.eastgarafraxa.ca](http://www.eastgarafraxa.ca)



# Arts & Entertainment

## LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS



### St. Patrick's concert featuring Celtic music coming to Westminster United Church

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

The band Chroí, Gaelic for "Heart," will be entertaining us as only the Irish can at Westminster United Church in Orangeville on Saturday, March 21.

Beginning at 7 p.m., this concert is part of a four-date tour celebrating St. Patrick's Day and the joy of Irish and Celtic music and stories.

Chris Dawes, the band's founder, joined the Citizen for an interview late last week. Dawes has been part of the local music scene as the accompanist for the Achill Choral Society since the 1990s and, for a short time, their conductor.

As a musician of organ, piano, keyboard at least, Dawes works on many platforms as a conductor and keyboard collaborator. Living in Georgetown with his family, Dawes is a prominent figure in many Southern Ontario musical communities. He has been conducting programs with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music and as a director of Canada's Summer Institute of Church Music since 2004. He is especially well known for his work with choirs.

Busy as that sounds, Dawes very much admires and enjoys Celtic music, laying claim to the heritage through his Irish-born Fitzpatrick grandmother. Perhaps that was in part why he founded the band Chroí in 2013; they performed until 2019, when, like everyone else, Covid shut them down. In fact, there were plans in 2020 for them to bring their music to Westminster United Church. Fast forward to March 21, 2026.

Coming back even now, as they would have done then and joining Dawes are Jenna Gallagher on the violin, originally a Suzuki violin player, learning by ear. She went on to study at Wilfrid Laurier University under Jeremy Bell of the Penderecki String Quartet for a Bachelor of Music in Performance. Bell has since moved to Eastern Ontario with her family.

And Doug MacNaughton, beginning his singing career with the Edmonton Opera, has sung across Canada and the U.S.

Now, "against his better judgment," living in New York, MacNaughton has come up to join Chroí for their tour, to play and sing in the concerts with the band.

"Doug's spouse is the tech director for the Met Opera," Dawes explained.

He added, "As a MacNaughton, he's Scottish and some of that colours the show too."

Paul Ormandy, based in Orangeville, plays the Bodhrán as the Band's percussionist and is their heartbeat for this, their "adventurous trail."

"It's a great thing that Jenna and Doug are back for this concert," said Dawes. "It was Nancy [Dettbarn, Minister of Music, pianist, and organist for Westminster United Church] who suggested they come to Orangeville."

He continued, "This concert is a little different from the standard Irish gig — they tend to be played in bars and pubs. We started in churches singing and telling stories, where we can tell the tales that come with the songs in the quieter venue."

One such song and story is about the "peg and awl," traditional tools of the shoemakers, how, when shoes were first made by machines, the shoemakers suffered. There are stories about the people immigrating from Ireland to America, who were abused in the New World. It was a time of pride, demanding justice and protest.

"We don't fit in a pub scene," he remarked, "more in churches, small festivals, the God-erich [Celtic Roots] Festival."

For the Chroí concert program, all four performers sing and play their instruments, but there are yet more treats in store for the audiences.

"They have gone all out," he declared.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMING TO TOWN: The band "Chroí," which is Gaelic for "Heart" is bringing Celtic and Irish music and stories to Westminster United Church on March 21, starting at 7 p.m. Come for the "exuberance" of a slightly different concert. Band members, from left, are Jenna Gallagher, Christopher Dawes,

The treats someone is preparing for the audience were named: Guinness Brownies, Earl Grey Shortbread and Bailey's Truffles at a reception after the show, available as a fundraiser for the church's much-needed new roof.

Dawes mentioned that he did not travel with the Achill on their journeys to Europe, but he did join them to go to Ireland, specifically to the Achill village and area of Ireland, after which the choir is named. It made a profound impression on him. The hospitali-

ty and humour of the people he encountered could only meet with deep affection for them.

Be sure to come to Chroí, as Dawes said, "People like the feeling of Irish music, and they don't necessarily want a beer. This is a different feeling."

"We just love sharing Celtic music with other people."

Tickets are available at BookLore on First Street and at Westminster United Church during office hours.

**David Gauthier**  
Service Consultant

David brings a calm, customer-first mindset to every service appointment. As a MacMaster Certified Service Consultant, he works hard to ensure every visit is smooth and stress-free. Whether you're dropping in for maintenance or need help navigating a repair, David is ready with clear communication, helpful insight, and a friendly attitude.

**Maurice McDonald**  
Service Consultant

Maurice is the kind of advisor who makes service feel easy. He's known for his warm, approachable style and his ability to keep customers informed every step of the way. With strong product knowledge and a passion for helping people, Maurice takes the guesswork out of vehicle service at Orangeville Chrysler.

**Jazz Matharu**  
Service Consultant

Jazz combines technical knowledge with an easygoing, professional style that customers appreciate. Bilingual in English and Punjabi, he makes sure every guest feels heard and understood. Whether it's a routine visit or a more involved repair, Jazz helps keep the process efficient, transparent, and tailored to your needs.

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## CANADA'S STORE

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# PUMPS

IN STORE AND ONLINE

## The Citizen CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. 263210 • Solution on page: CLASSIFIEDS SECTION

**CLUES ACROSS**

- Blockchain-based entity
- A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- Painted with glue
- Legendary crooner
- Structure made with strips of wood
- Tropical fruits
- Commercial
- Comedienne Gasteyer
- The Ocean State
- Ancient Scot
- Basics
- Stated propositions
- Scottish island group
- Expression of annoyance
- Large tree
- Engine additive
- Conspiracy
- Drunkard
- Someone who is morally reprehensible
- Ancient Syrian city
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- Midway between east and southeast
- Sweet potato
- European river
- The Golden State
- Windy City ballplayer
- New Testament
- Possess spiritually
- A treeless grassy plain
- Popular historical novel
- In a law-abiding way
- A place to sleep
- Criticize

**CLUES DOWN**

- Impression in a surface
- Computer language
- Relating to the ear
- Occupant
- Member of Great Plains people
- Social media firm
- Digital audiotape
- Midway between east and southeast
- Chronic, progressive disease
- Chinese lute
- Not wet
- Moves wings up and down
- Communication devices
- Swiss river
- Female sibling
- Receive
- Relating to a type
- General's assistant (abbr.)
- Steep bank
- Taxi driver
- Moves into without difficulty
- Bicycle manufacturer
- Traditional rhythmic pattern
- Fugitives are on it
- Bitter-tasting organic substance
- Die
- Matched
- Literary genre \_\_\_-fi
- Cannot
- Pounded
- British rock group
- Debt relief order
- 2006 NL Cy Young winner
- Green vegetable
- Tough outer skin of fruit
- \_\_\_ Spumante (Italian wine)
- Ailments
- Famed singer Charles
- Camper

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

**How they say that in...**

**English:** Ireland  
**Spanish:** Irlanda  
**Italian:** Irlanda  
**French:** Irlande  
**German:** Irland

## MUSIC FACT:

This instrument features prominently in traditional Irish music.

Answer: Fiddle and bow

St. Patrick supposedly used the clover/shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity to native Irish in an effort to convert them to Christianity.

**NEW WORD**

**CELTIC**

people from the nations of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall, and the Isle of Man

## Double Word Puzzle

Unscramble the individual words to reveal letters for the phrase.

DISNAL   

GERNE   

COANE   

ORBKO   

        H

Answers: Island, Green, Ocean, Brook : Erin Go Bragh

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# STAN DOUGLAS

## TALES OF EMPIRE

Global legacies of colonialism through the lens of one of Canada's most celebrated artists.

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Stan Douglas (b. 1960), *Masonic Lodge, Barkerville* (detail), 2006, laserchrome print, 127 x 145 cm, courtesy of the artist, Victoria Miro, and David Zwirner © Stan Douglas

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# McMichael

# Revitalized Grand Valley Community Centre reopens as modern hub

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

The Grand Valley and District Community Centre has officially reopened following a major multi-year expansion and rehabilitation project, marking a significant milestone for the Town of Grand Valley and its surrounding municipalities.

Meghan Townsend, CAO for the Town of Grand Valley, welcomed guests and officials to the reopening ceremony.

"I'm very happy that all of you are here to celebrate this grand opening of the newly expanded and rehabilitated Grand Valley and District Community Centre," she said. "In 2019, members of the Grand Valley and District Community Centre board met with Town of Grand Valley staff to review a new opportunity to apply for funding to rehabilitate the community centre."

After the town applied to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's Community, Culture and Recreation stream, they secured substantial federal and provincial support.

Throughout the overhaul process, the original ice surface, cooling system, change rooms and washrooms were upgraded.

Grand Valley Mayor Steve Solomon reflected on the enormous workload required to complete this project and congratulated not just town staff but also provincial and federal partners who helped see it through.

"I will thank Sylvia [Jones] and the Government of Ontario—Government of Canada, as they both came in with almost a million dollars each for this project, which is a real contribution to the cultural vibrancy of this town," he said. "The Government of Ontario—Government of Canada, decided that we were worthy of keeping an arena here, because it could have easily been gone. But now we do have a new place where the community can come and gather. Thank you all again for your work."

Phase one of the project, launched in 2021, focused on the core arena infrastructure. The concrete ice pad was replaced, the arena layout was redesigned with new boards, glass and player benches, and the piping system beneath the ice was upgraded.

Early accessibility improvements were also introduced to improve safety and ease of use for participants and spectators.

Phase two finalized the broader expansion of the facility. Six new change rooms, accessible washrooms and referee rooms were added, along with roof repairs, exterior wall insulation and resurfacing. The construction, which began in 2025, has now reached substantial completion, transforming the building into a modern, inclusive hub for sport and recreation.

The renewed arena is designed to better serve all age groups and reflects the growing demand for girls' and women's hockey by providing improved dressing room capacity and layout.

Local leaders emphasized that the project demonstrates the impact of collaboration among federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as the dedication of the community centre board, contractors and arena staff.

Local MPP and Ontario's Health Minister Sylvia Jones was also in attendance to congratulate the completion of the project, and said that local health is directly impacted by

and precipitation. This could include cropping, intercropping and introducing new crops into the rotation.

The Innovation Stream provides funding to projects that benefit soil health and don't fit into other categories. Tarping to reduce tillage intensity, planting a tallgrass prairie, and winter crop rotation are all eligible projects for the Innovation Stream.

The third funding category is the Integrating Animals on the Farm Stream, which includes financing to support rotational grazing, silvopasture, and bale grazing. Animals bring many benefits to soil health and carbon storage.

"Experimental Acres brings farmers and partners together in a shared learning journey to advance sustainable agriculture. The program supports practices that

strengthen climate resilience while improving soil health, protecting water resources, and increasing biodiversity," Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy at Dufferin County.

During the past three growing seasons, Experimental Acres has supported a variety of producer-led projects. These projects include suppressing plant competition with ducks, implementing espalier methods, creating natural pesticides, companion planting, cover crops, and green manure.

"Dufferin County continues to invest in a strong, innovative agriculture sector. Through the Experimental Acres Program, farmers gain early-stage support to test new ideas, build momentum, and position themselves for future funding while scaling up regenerative approaches on their

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES AWAIT:** Local community leaders and provincial representatives celebrate the reopening of the Grand Valley Community Centre after its overhaul. The work would not have been possible without the cooperation of all three levels of government providing funding. The building has new ice rinks, changerooms, bathrooms, and more,

the availability of facilities such as this one.

"I am very pleased that we were able to have three levels of government come together, and, of course, the community center board to have this project come to completion," she said. "In healthcare, I often get asked, what about the prevention piece? Well, this is the prevention piece. You know, we are making sure that we have facilities in our community for our young people, for our seniors, for our adults, to be able to continue

to stay and be healthy and do that in our own communities."

"So congratulations. I think it is a real indication of when governments of different levels work together, great things can happen."

With the grand opening complete, the facility is expected to host year-round activities, from winter skating and hockey to potential summer programs such as lacrosse, strengthening Grand Valley's role as a regional community gathering place.

## Applications officially open for County of Dufferin's 2026 Experimental Acres Program

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

The County of Dufferin is encouraging farmers to apply to the 2025 Experimental Acres Program by March 27.

"Experimental Acres provides Dufferin farmers with educational and financial support to de-risk new practices that improve yield, soil health, carbon sequestration and overall sustainability," reads a county press release. "The program is intended to champion farmer-led discovery, with small-scale experimentation that can link to larger funding opportunities."

There are three Experimental Acres funding streams.

The Living Roots and Green Cover Stream focuses on maintaining soil cover, as this helps reduce soil erosion from wind

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## Dufferin OPP and Credit Valley Conservation warn the public of flood potential as temperatures rise

The Dufferin OPP and Credit Valley Conservation are reminding residents to prepare for warmer weather as local waterways begin to wake up after a long winter.

Rising temperatures combined with melting snow and seasonal rainfall can quickly

lead to increased water levels and localized flooding throughout the county.

Dufferin OPP and CVC shared the following reminders in a statement on March 3 and March 4, respectively.

- Stay away from riverbanks: Riverbanks

can become unstable and slippery during the spring thaw. Fast-moving water may carry dangerous floating debris, including ice chunks, construction materials, tree limbs and other objects. Residents are urged to keep a safe distance from all waterways and ensure children and pets are supervised at all times.

• Avoid entering the river: The river may become deeper in areas because of ice jams scouring the riverbed.

• Avoid recreational activities in or around water: This is especially important near ice covered watercourses and waterbodies.

• Exercise caution in an emergency: Rescuing another person or a pet from icy water is dangerous. If you see anyone that has fallen through the ice call 911 for help immediately.

• Check Your Equipment: Now is an excellent time to ensure your generator is in proper working order. Test sump pumps to confirm they are functioning correctly and consider having extra sandbags on hand should water levels rise. Being proactive can help reduce potential property damage.

• Generator Safety: If you are using a gas-powered generator or water pump, ensure the area is well-ventilated to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Never operate these devices indoors or in enclosed spaces.

es.

• Photo Safety Reminder: While high water levels may draw attention, getting too close to waterways or standing on bridges and riverbanks for photos can put your life at risk, as well as the safety of first responders. No photo is worth compromising your safety.

• Plan Accordingly: If you live in a flood-prone area, take proactive steps now to protect your property. Move objects such as chairs or benches away from the water's edge to avoid losing them during potential spring high water. Stay informed, monitor local weather alerts and follow the guidance of local officials.

The Dufferin OPP says by staying informed and taking preventative measures, residents can work together to keep their community safe during the spring thaw.

It's also important to note, when flooding is possible or about to occur, CVC issues flood messages to municipal emergency management officials, emergency medical services, school boards, police and the media. Municipal officials then take action to warn local residents and respond in emergency situations.

The CVC also issues flood warnings directly to watershed residents through the CVC website, Facebook account, X (Twitter) account, and through Alertable.

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# Orangeville aims to cultivate pollinator garden on Centre Street

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Orangeville's Centre Street will soon be abuzz with activity.

The municipality and Dufferin County have agreed to a partnership to establish a pollinator garden at 30 Centre Street. The bed size will be about 150 square feet, and town council agreed during its March 9 meeting to earmark \$6,000 for the work.

That location is recommended for the town's first such garden because it is a high-visibility location conducive to community engagement. It will also maximize ecological and operational benefits, according to a report to council.

The location is adjacent to the community garden, where increased pollinator presence can directly support garden productivity through pollination activities.

A report to town council highlights that the site is situated within a strong ecological environment, with full-sun exposure and proximity to a water source, Mill Creek. It will be part of a broader native plant corridor that will reinforce habitat value and connectivity.

The municipality will convert an existing

garden rather than add a new one.

It comes "at a time when parks resources are under increased demand due to the transition of additional gardens from the Horticulture Society, while also supporting community alignment with the Horticulture Society and other municipal partners," according to the report.

It was previously recommended that the pollinator garden be established along the Mill Creek Trail south of Montgomery Boulevard between Chapman Road and Gooseberry Street.

The proposed new location, 30 Centre Street, is county-controlled land. The town and Dufferin County already have an agreement governing the land's use through the community garden.

"Given that there are currently agreements in place establishing the use of some of the spaces and that this location is (of) high visibility, it was determined that the pollinator garden located in this area would be a natural fit," according to the report.

Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor broached a second part of the report that indicates municipal staff will assume maintenance of the pollina-

tor garden, as was done with the community garden.

"We don't do a great job at this overall," Taylor said. "They tend to get missed or it falls apart a little bit. My fear is that here's one more thing that the town has taken on."

The site used to be maintained by a group "of hardy volunteers," he said.

"My concern is will we do a good job at this?" Taylor said. "Do we have the staff set up?"

He said his concern wasn't meant to disparage town staff that will have a presence at the pollinator garden. He simply wants to ensure the best possible job is done on the project.

Tim Kocialek, the town's infrastructure services general manager, said a pollinator garden needs little maintenance.

Katherine Rog, the town's senior climate and sustainability specialist, said pollinator gardens are typically self-sustaining after about three years.

"That's the beauty of these gardens," Rog said.

The town inherited five of its 12 gardens from the horticulture society. Staff decided to simply repurpose one of those parcels as the



pollinator site.

"So we're not creating a new garden," Rog said. "We're updating one of the existing gardens that we will be inheriting."

The Centre Street location is pretty handy to the Orangeville Transit bus transfer station. Taylor asked if a pollinator garden in such proximity would create problems.

Rog said that would be doubtful, given that there are already pollinators at the site to serve the community garden there.

She said there are more pollinating insects than bees. But concerns about bees so close to transit riders can be addressed.

"In the future, if there is that issue, we will consider that and update the garden accordingly," Rog said.

## Annual World Day of Prayer unites congregations at Westminster United Church

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Annual World Day of Prayer unites congregations at Westminster United Church

A spirit of unity and reflection filled Westminster United Church as congregants gathered on March 6 to mark the annual World Day of Prayer, a global Christian observance that connects communities worldwide through shared worship and reflection.

The service, hosted this year at Westminster United Church and organized by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, is an international prayer movement observed in more than 150 countries.

Each year, women from different countries prepare the service, highlighting the social and spiritual issues affecting their communities. The 2026 service was written by Christian women in Nigeria and centred on the theme "Come, I Will Give You Rest," drawn from Matthew 11:28.

Dorothy Donnelly, this year's local coordinator for the event, said the annual gathering reflects both faith and global awareness.

The service encourages participants not only to pray, but also to learn about the experiences and challenges faced by women and children in other parts of the world, as they struggle with poverty, religious violence, political instability and more.

"I think it's good for your own growth to learn of the struggles of people," she said.

"We are so fortunate in our country, Canada. We have so many wonderful things, warm homes, food on our table, and roofs over our heads and everything. It's important to learn how other women, other families in the world are struggling, but how they survive because of their faith."

The program incorporated symbols and reflections on Nigerian culture and society, encouraging participants to consider issues such as poverty, economic hardship, environmental challenges, and the resilience of communities facing adversity.

Through prayer, readings and music, attendees were invited to reflect on how faith can inspire compassion and action.

World Day of Prayer has been observed for nearly a century and will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year. The event has long emphasized unity among Christian denominations, bringing together participants from multiple congregations to share leadership roles during the service.

At the Westminster gathering, readers and participants represented several churches from the region, including Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and United Church congregations.

Donnelly said the rotation of hosting duties among churches each year helps strengthen relationships between congregations while ensuring the event remains a shared community effort.

"It's an ecumenical service," she said. "Last



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

**PRAYING WITH THE WORLD:** Congregants gathered at Westminster United Church for the annual World Day of Prayer service, with the 2026 theme focusing on Christian women in Nigeria, and their experiences with poverty, religious violence and political instability.

year, the Presbyterian Church held the service at their church. It gives everybody an opportunity to come together and be involved."

In that spirit, representatives from other churches read stories and scriptures throughout the service.

Ann Morrison of Tweedsmuir Presbyterian Church, Sharon Meredith of St. Timothy's Roman Catholic Church and Cindy Johnson of the Knox United Church all took turns reading scripture and the personal stories of Nigerian women featured in the service, sharing their journeys, struggles and faith.

While the service lasted about an hour, organizers said its message extends far beyond

a single gathering.

It was a powerful commitment to spirit, community and empathy — to always remember that not everyone in the world lives as comfortably, and to do what is possible to ease their burden.

By learning about other cultures and praying together, participants are reminded of the interconnected challenges faced by communities worldwide and the shared responsibility to support one another through faith and action.

For more information on World Day of Prayer, go to <https://wdpcanada.ca/world-day-of-prayer/>

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## Local axe thrower to compete in World Championships next month

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

A local competitive axe thrower will be heading to Tulsa, Oklahoma, from April 15 to 19 to compete in the Axe Throwing World Championships.

Steve Hunter competed at the 2024 World Amateur Axe Throwing Championships in Atlanta, Georgia, last year and has earned another bid to compete at the top level this year.

Hunter is ranked 69th in the World Amateur ranking and is in the top five of Canadian throwers.

Axe throwing as a competitive sport is relatively new. Over the past decade, clubs and tournaments have gained popularity across North America.

The sport is exactly as its name implies. Competitors throw an axe at a target and are scored on where the axe hits the target.

There is a full set of rules during competition that cover everything from a competitor's distance from the target, scoring, and the type of throwing axe that meets competition regulations.

"I have been competing for not quite four years," Hunter explained of his involvement in the sport.

"In those years I have travelled to Cleveland, Jackson, Michigan, Atlanta, Georgia, and now Tulsa. I honed my skills with the help of Benn MacDonald from Farshot Orangeville. I worked as an employee and coach for Benn. I own him a ton of gratitude for

all the help he has given me."

Hunter added, "Over the years, I have won multiple league championships from Orangeville, Brampton, and Cambridge. We won a team event in Lindsay, Ontario, with Jason Sharples from Orangeville and Peter Brown from Burlington. I have met a ton of great people and have made a lot of friends throughout my journey."

Axe throwing requires concentration, physical dexterity, and steady nerves to place the axe on target with consistency.

"I took up axe throwing to be more active and get out to do something fun," Hunter explained. "One thing led to another and I realized it came naturally after one season. I started right here in Orangeville, then started going to other leagues in Brampton, Cambridge, and Waterloo. Should I make the top eight in this upcoming event, I will be granted a spot in the Pro division on the same weekend."

He added, "I would like to thank all my sponsors who have made it possible for me to travel to this event, including Superior Construction and Pools (Timmins, Ont.); The Dufferin Group; McEwan Windows and Mirror; Coppertone Paving; Broadway Beat; K and G Engraving; Shawshank Designz in Orangeville; and Grey Wolf 3PL Logistics in Mississauga."

The Axe Throwing Championships in Tulsa are expecting more than 600 competitors in various disciplines, including hatchet, knife, duals, and big axe events.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**CHOPPING THROUGH THE COMPETITION:** Local axe thrower Steve Hunter will be competing at the Axe Throwing World Championships in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in April. Hunter got his start in the sport at Farshot in Orangeville and has risen through the ranks to become one of the top five axe throwers in Canada.

## Provincial Junior Hockey League moves to semi-final round of playoffs

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

The Provincial Junior Hockey League has eliminated half of the teams in the league after completing the quarter-final round of the 2026 divisional playoffs.

There were a few upsets among middle-of-the-pack teams with similar records through

the first round of playoffs.

In the North Carruthers Division, the fifth-place Midland Flyers knocked out the Penang Kings in a series that took the full seven games to complete.

In the East Tod Division, the fifth-place Amherstview Jets won their series over the fourth-place Picton Pirates in seven games.

The South Doherty Division saw the fifth-place New Hamburg Firebirds eliminate the Norwich Merchants 4-1.

In the West Yeck Division, the fifth-place Mt. Brydges Bulldogs won over the fourth-place Petrolia Flyers in a series that went five games.

There are now 32 teams left in the league who have entered the semi-final round. The division winners will compete for the Provincial Schmalz Cup.

Locally, the North Carruthers Division had some predictable results in the quarter-final round.

There are now four teams battling it out in the semi-finals.

The Alliston Hornets are leading the Orillia Terriers 2-0 after the opening weekend of games.

This is a big grudge match. Last season,

the Terriers defeated the Hornets in the final series, pulling off an underdog win that stunned fans. Last year's championship series lasted five games.

In the other North Carruthers series, the first-place Stayner Siskins are up against the fifth-place Midland Flyers.

The Siskins are leading after winning Game 1 of the series.

Game 2 of that series was scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, in Midland.

Results were not available at press time.

All semi-final games in the league are scheduled to wrap up by Mar. 19.

The division championships will get underway the following week.

It has been an exciting season for Junior C hockey fans, with many good games, and the best games still to be played as teams turn up the energy as the playoffs continue.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

**BIG WIN:** Junior C hockey has moved into the semi-final round of the Provincial Junior Hockey League playoffs. The Alliston Hornets played the Orillia Terriers in Game 1 of their best-of-seven series at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre in Alliston on Friday, March 6. The Hornets won this game 7-1.

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# OPINION

## The Olympics

I used to love watching the Olympics.

Other than Wide World of Sports, which used to air sometime around 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoons, it was the only time you could watch events like ski jumping, bobsledding, the luge, and downhill skiing.

As a kid, I was fascinated by the ski jumpers who rode down a perilous track to the end of the jump before flying through the air, and finishing like they were taking a walk in the park.

I'm sure the reality of it was that the jumpers are probably pretty nervous before every jump, because after all, there is an inherent risk of injury in that sport.

However, for a spectator, it was a great sport to watch – even if I've never seen it live.

The winter sports are different. It's not like there are minor bobsled leagues or a local luge track, and there aren't many places you can visit the local ski jump hill and sign up for lessons.

For the Summer Olympics, I pretty much liked watching all the sports.

I have always thought that the running events are the purest form of sport. You don't have a puck or ball to handle, you're not throwing anything, and you don't have

teammates.

During a running race, it's all on the competitor. All that training, all that coaching, and all those diets they follow to keep them healthy comes down to one person, on their own.

Either you run faster than the other person, or you don't.

The Olympics are all about finishing first. No one ever remembers who won the bronze medal.

Guys like Mark Spitz, the American swimmer who won an incredible seven gold medals at the Summer Olympics in Munich in 1972, returned home as a national hero.

Canada has hosted the Olympic Games three times - the 1976 Summer Games in Montreal, the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary, and the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver.

Hosting the Olympic Games is a huge challenge for the host city. You either have the venues, or you have to build them.

You need appropriate stadiums for track and field and team sports. You need Olympic-style pools, an equestrian park, and other outdoor venues for various sports.

For the winter games, obviously, you have to be in a region that has both mountains

and snow. If you don't have a bobsled run, you will have to build one.

You have to have a place for the Olympians to stay, so now you have to build a small city to accommodate several thousand people from a lot of different countries, and that's just for the competitors.

On top of that, you will have to accommodate thousands of officials and everyone involved in running the Olympic Games. And of course, visitors to the games will also need a place to stay.

It's a logistical nightmare, but they manage to pull it off.

It seems to be a prestigious thing to host the Olympic Games, but what does it all really mean?

A check of many former Olympic sites shows that many of them have simply been left to fall into ruin.

The Montreal Olympic Games were a notorious financial disaster. No cities ever seem to come out ahead after hosting the Olympic Games.

Maybe it's time to build permanent venues rather than allow the notoriously corrupt International Olympic Committee to play its political games and select a new city every four years.

**BRIAN LOCKHART**  
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Just build an Olympic venue with all the needed athletic stadiums, pools, and equestrian parks, and an Olympic village to host the athletes. If every country participating in the Olympic Games contributes to the venue's maintenance, it wouldn't cost very much to keep it alive.

The athletes go to the Olympics to compete. Why would they care which city the games are held in?

For the Winter Olympics, find a suitable mountainous area with abundant snow. Having a permanent Olympic site would greatly benefit the town or city where it is built through jobs and tourism.

Between Olympic Games, the venues could host other world-class sporting events.

A permanent venue would also eliminate all the political crap that goes into selecting a city and the cost of putting a bid together in the first place.

Every other sport on the planet has a permanent home. You don't see the Toronto Maple Leafs announcing they will be playing home games in Kingston this year.

If you build a permanent Olympic Games venue, they will come.

## Trump in a trap

Donald Trump is caught in the trap that he helped to build, and he is starting to flail against his fate. His 'war of choice', 'Operation Epic Fury', was supposed to end in "unconditional surrender" by Tehran in just a few weeks, but if Trump ever had a plan beyond 'use massive force' it isn't working.

Trump managed to 'decapitate' much of the Iranian regime in the first hour of the American-Israeli sneak attack. (For the second time in a year, the United States attacked while still in peace talks with Iran.) However, this massacre of the old leadership class only ensured that a younger, smarter generation of true believers would lead Iran's resistance struggle.

Knowing a bit about the cult of martyrdom in Shia Islam, I am even tempted to speculate that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei knew that the US might strike that meeting and held it anyway. At any rate, it gave regime supporters more martyrs (killed by infidels) to celebrate, including the new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's father, mother, wife and son.

Mojtaba was a hard-liner anyway, having fought as a 17-year-old volunteer in the Iran-Iraq War. (Saddam Hussein's Iraq invaded Iran with US encouragement and support in

1980-88.) There is almost zero probability that Iran's new leadership will seek a peace deal with the US and Israel – and no good reason that it needs to.

The American staff officers who planned Operation Foolish Fantasy counted up all Iran's worn-out fighters and decrepit warships and creaking logistics and concluded that they couldn't hold their own in a fight with America and Israel for even two weeks. Nobody asked if that was the fight they had to win.

The Iranian planners, well aware that they couldn't win a stand-up fight with Israel's hi-tech weapons, considered where they did have leverage and decided that fossil fuels and Western economies were their enemies' vulnerable flank. Stop the flow of oil and gas, Western economies will tank, and they'll have to make a deal with the ayatollahs.

(I am assuming here that after the murder of several tens of thousands of civilian protesters in the streets of Iranian cities in January, nobody is going to try another uprising until the regime is clearly, irrevocably losing. It's a long way from that now.)

So: oil again. Fifty years after the first oil embargo brought the West to its knees,

you'd think that the powers-that-be might have switched to a less vulnerable energy source, but, you know – "the money's good and I just want to make my pile and then we can all switch to a safer, cleaner, closer source of energy..." Repeat for fifty years.

Can the United States and its allies break Iran's closure of the narrow Strait of Hormuz, which is currently stopping 20% of the world's oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) traffic from entering or leaving the Persian Gulf? Technically, yes. Indeed, France's President Emmanuel Macron has suggested a multinational naval operation to do exactly that.

But Operation Blind Rage may not be the best answer either. The price of oil has almost doubled and the world economy is sliding into a major recession. Fighting might sink ships in the narrow channel and block it that way. And in the middle of it all is Donald Trump, unable to stop what he started and beginning to realise that he has been had by Binyamin Netanyahu.

We will never know whether Netanyahu genuinely believes there is a nuclear problem with Iran, but we can be certain that the Israeli intelligence services (and the American ones and everybody else's too) have

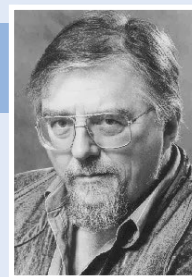
assured him that Iran is at least five years away from deliverable nuclear weapons.

Netanyahu first warned that Iran would have nukes "in three to five years" in 1992. He has repeated the warning at frequent intervals, saying it was one, two, three or at most five years away. But it was just a useful fiction: nobody takes 34 years to make nuclear weapons if they are serious about it. Consider Pakistan. Consider North Korea. Consider Israel itself.

The lie was useful because it enabled Netanyahu to portray Iran as a threat not just to Israel (which it was) but also to rich and powerful Western countries. His goal has always been to draw those countries into a direct conflict with Iran, and with Trump he has finally succeeded.

To escape again, Trump would have to accept that he has been wrong, so probably not. The likeliest alternative, unfortunately, is for Trump to decide that the solution is yet more force. Perhaps including 'Boots on the Ground', because it will be hard to make the Strait of Hormuz safe without controlling the Iranian islands on the north side of the Strait.

**GWYNNE DYER**  
OUR WORLD TODAY



## The cat caught a bird!

Our late father loved and would do anything for his birds. He was kind to all the animals we ever had, but the wild birds that frequented the bird feeders outside our home in the winter were a particular favourite of his.

When our family moved into our newly built country house in the early 1970s, Dad set up bird feeders on poles outside the dining room picture window so we could watch the birds flit in, take their seeds, and flit out again. We spent many happy winter lunchtimes watching the birds feeding outside our big picture window as we ate.

After finishing lunch, Dad would usually take a little quiet time before resuming his outdoor chores to sit at the kitchen table and look out the window at his beloved birds. He took quiet joy in watching the constant and colourful avian activity — the different species of birds flying to the feeders, taking a seed, and flying away again.

We took great pleasure in feeding the birds, even spreading seeds on the ground to encourage those who were reluctant to use the feeders.

That, as it turned out, would prove to be a mistake.

One year in the early spring, Mom went outside for some task and noticed a little pile of feathers in the melting snow under

one of the bird feeders. She went over to investigate and discovered what remained of a dead bird.

To make matters worse, it was a chickadee—one of the friendliest of birds and one of the species we particularly enjoyed seeing around our property.

We could only surmise that while the family cat was outside, she had stalked the chickadee as it foraged for seeds on the ground, pounced, and killed it when the opportunity presented itself.

Mom, angered, came back into the house and said to me, "The cat killed a chickadee! Just wait 'til Dad finds out about this!"

She then found the cat in the house and scolded her sternly, much like she would scold one of her own children who had done something wrong, ending with the age-old threat that mothers have used throughout time to instill the fear of God into their kids: "YOU JUST WAIT 'TIL DAD GETS HOME!"

In our house, that was the ultimate threat. You knew you were in big trouble when Mom said that. When Mom brought Dad into it, she was bringing in the big guns, so to speak. While it rarely happened, when Dad did get involved, you knew you had committed a major no-no. And messing with Dad's birds was a major no-no in our

house.

The cat and I happened to be in the kitchen when Dad got home from work that day. When Mom told him what had happened, he was visibly upset. His face clouded with protective anger at the news of the death of one of his beloved birds.

Dad turned to the cat and scolded her very sternly.

And what did the cat do? Beloved by the entire family and secure in the knowledge that she was in a safe environment and wouldn't be harmed, she sensed the stern tone in Dad's voice and meowed right back at him with a tone of defiance I've never forgotten. It was as if she were saying, "I'm a cat, and that's what I do!" Then she sullenly walked away, and that was that.

While we were not happy, we knew we were faced with a bit of a dilemma: how do you discipline a cat just for being a cat? Even though they are warm and fuzzy and love to sleep in your lap, cats are natural-born predators.

Stalking and killing are simply what cats do, even though we didn't want her to in this particular case.

Had we caught her in the act, separated her from her prey, and scolded her, she might have understood why she was being disciplined, even though she was simply

acting on her natural instincts. But because the deed was already done, the cat probably wouldn't have understood or associated any discipline with her past actions.

What else could we do? We didn't think the cat would have understood why she was being disciplined if we did so after the fact.

In hindsight, we had no one to blame but ourselves. We really shouldn't have spread seeds on the ground under the feeder in the first place.

She was a good cat, but a cat can't help being what it is. Because she rarely went outside in the winter, we really didn't foresee an issue. We usually kept an eye on her when she was outside near the bird feeders, but we couldn't watch her all the time. Sometimes, her natural instincts simply took over.

Lesson learned. After that day, we made a point of never spreading seeds on the ground under the bird feeders again, removing as much temptation as possible for the cat. She never caught another bird again after that.

And from that day on, Dad's birds lived happily ever after.

**KEITH SCHELL**  
REMEMBERING WHEN



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# COMMUNITY VOICES

## Monthly Message: Awareness, acceptance, and everyday conversations that matter

It's almost April, which means Autism Acceptance and Awareness Month is on its way – a time to intentionally pause, and amplify conversations about neurodiversity.

While we believe neurodiversity should be honoured and celebrated every day, this month offers a special opportunity to listen more deeply, learn more openly, and lead with greater understanding. This month isn't just about facts or statistics. It's about people with incredible strengths, families with powerful stories, and everyday moments that deserve to be seen and celebrated.

It's a time when conversations about neurodiversity get a little louder, a little brighter, and, hopefully, a little more understanding, too.

So, let's get into it. Oh, how far we've come... from times when autism was barely talked about, misunderstood, or hidden in the shadows, to a time where we're learning to listen, celebrate differences, and create spaces where autistic voices are heard and valued. But let's not forget - awareness helped us get there - but acceptance is what moves us forward.

Let's talk about the difference between awareness and acceptance.

Awareness means knowing that autism exists. It's recognizing the signs, understanding autism, and acknowledging that not all brains think, feel, or experience the world in the same way, and that's okay.

Acceptance, though, is where the real beauty lives. It's about celebrating neurodiversity in all its richness. It's about listening, learning, and creating a world where neuro-



• CHILD, ADOLESCENT, & FAMILY PRACTICE •

divergent individuals don't just get by - they thrive.

It's about shifting the focus from "fixing" differences to supporting and embracing them. When we openly talk about autism, we help remove the stigma. We label it as something valid and valuable, rather than letting kids (or anyone!) grow up thinking there's something "wrong" with them. Instead, we help them understand that there's simply something unique and wonderfully different about how they see and experience the world. Because everyone deserves to feel seen, valued, and supported, just as they are.

### Double Empathy Problem - what is it?

When people have different ways of communicating, misunderstandings can happen. To avoid these, the burden is often placed on autistic people to change how they express themselves to match others' expectations.

The Double Empathy Problem is the idea that when autistic and non-autistic people have trouble understanding each other, it's not just the autistic person's responsibility. Communication goes both ways.

For example, an autistic teen might be perceived as "rude" for not using small talk

or for being blunt in conversation. But from their perspective, they are being clear, efficient, and honest. When non-autistic peers or adults expect that teen to "fix" their communication without also working to understand their intent or adjust their own expectations, the connection gets lost.

Autistic people may communicate differently, but that doesn't make it wrong. The real challenge is that both people may find it hard to understand each other's point of view.

Instead of expecting autistic people to do all the adapting, we should all work toward meeting in the middle. That's how real connection and mutual understanding grow.

### Starting conversations at home

Family conversations play a huge role in shaping how kids understand and think about differences. Whether your child is autistic or not, having open, respectful conversations about neurodiversity can make a big difference. It's so important to teach our kids about acceptance- especially at school, where they're surrounded by classmates with all kinds of wonderfully different brains!

Here are a few tips and ways to start these conversations at home:

- Read books together. One that we absolutely love here at WonderTree is Wonderfully Wired Brains by Louise Gooding. It is extremely engaging, affirming and filled with great visuals for kids.

- Use inclusive language when speaking with your child.

- Encourage curiosity and compassion. If your child has questions, don't worry about having all the answers; show openness about learning together!

### Navigating a new diagnosis

If you and your child are navigating a new diagnosis, you are not alone, and we are here for you. Whether it is assessing autism, helping your child, their siblings or family members understand the diagnosis, supporting areas of need, or navigating through school meetings, we're here to support. We've also created an Autistic Self-Identity group at WonderTree for children and teens with the hope of building confidence and resilience, and an Employment Skills program for teens and young adults to help them access and thrive in the workplace.

Check out our blogs on navigating and explaining an autism diagnosis to your child or teen.

Whether you're parenting a neurodivergent child or raising one to be an ally, you're helping create a world that's more inclusive and understanding for everyone. And we think that's pretty amazing!

Visit [wonderpractice.ca](http://wonderpractice.ca) or reach out to us today!



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Losing farmland every day

Dear Editor:

Given the rising cost of food and Ontario's commitment to increase our population, one would think that preserving farmland would be a priority for our Conservative Government.

Alas, in a province where less than five per cent of the land is prime farmland, the

most recent Census of Agriculture indicates that Ontario is losing over 300 acres of farmland per day! Roughly 450 farms every year!

Urban sprawl, aggregate extraction and infrastructure such as the Highway 413 development will make up much of that loss.

If the government were truly focused on Ontario's economy, saving farmland would

be among its top priorities.

A 2024 Ontario Federation of Agriculture report entitled "The Economic Impact of Farming in Ontario" indicates that farm sales contributed over \$18 billion to Ontario's economy and supported \$50 billion in the food manufacturing sector. More than the auto sector contributes.

Beyond economics, eating away at this truly sustainable industry is an assault on rural Ontario. The irony here is that politically, the Conservative rural base is supporting a government that is engineering its decline.

Rob Strang  
Orangeville

## Open letter to Sylvia Jones

Dear Sylvia,

What happened? Remember what you and I used to talk about when the Liberals were in Office?

1. Government advertising (five pages or more in today's Star (March 7), who benefits

besides Torstar?

How much are we spending?)

2. Size of government  
3. Provincial deficit  
4. Number of days the Legislature sits (Ontario Legislature has been off since late

2025 and won't return until later in March. How many days did it sit in 2025?)

5. Government interference (strong mayor powers and overruling local zoning by-laws)  
There are many more concerns Ontarians

have – let's hope there is a change back to Conservative values soon.

Regards,  
Don Sargent  
Dufferin-Caledon P.C. Association

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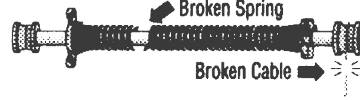
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: International Women's Day celebration

On March 5, International Women's Day was marked at Hockley Valley Resort, sponsored once again by the wonderful staff at Family Transition Place, our local women's shelter for abused women and their children.

As I walked into the enormous reception room, I was overwhelmed by the number of people who were in attendance, and I wondered how many among those gathered here were survivors of Intimate Partner Violence. For this is what Family Transition Place is all about: giving shelter to many women of all ages who have stepped away from abusive relationships.

I was amazed as well at the many women and some men who were there and whom I knew had never experienced Intimate Partner Violence, yet they financially support the work of our local women's shelter. It was a very moving experience, along with the indigenous women's musical performance.

As I continue to be an advocate for Intimate Partner Violence due to my own personal experience with this very tragic issue, I would like to honour this occasion and continue my work in trying to help others who have experienced Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence. To admit that you are living with someone who, in anger, hits you, who slanders you, who continually abuses you, is a very private and painful issue. And when the abuse endangers the vic-

tim, a call to 911 and the police changes their lives forever.

Through my textile designwork (as a later-in-life graduate of design from the Ontario College of Art (& Design U), I have created a series of wall quilts on what Intimate Partner Violence feels like, trying to put a visual face to this very serious issue in society today.

Through my work, I have spoken with a number of victims/survivors. I have heard repeatedly how victims' experiences with the police and, in particular, with family law, our present court system and judges have been very upsetting for them, feeling as though they were being abused all over again. Frankly, it is still a man's world in family court insofar as the "he said/she said" issue results in many abusers walking away from lawful responsibility towards the abuse they have inflicted upon another in a marriage or relationship.

One survivor I know of, Cait, had been left for dead lying on the floor of her home after being assaulted by her partner. She only survived as she was able to crawl to her computer and send a message to a friend to help rescue her. She has since been invited personally to speak about her experience with the Federal Government's Women's Committee in Ottawa, yet, when this meeting started, she was told by the moderator that she had only five minutes to speak. Five minutes to describe the horror

of what she had experienced. And all too soon, this government meeting turned into a political nightmare.

One MP accused the committee of not being given an equal opportunity to bring to the meeting someone of her own choice, and before long, the meeting dissolved into a politician's bloodbath. Cait finally turned her back on the committee, along with another speaker, and both walked out. In tears.

Domestic violence or Intimate Partner Violence, IPV, as it is now called, is not taken seriously enough by those in government and subsequently in the courts by judges. As much as our Ontario Premier Doug Ford has spoken out in support of this issue, his government still refuses to declare Intimate Partner Violence an epidemic. One might ask why?

The police are the first line of contact for a victim in their call to 911, and from my own personal experience, I know that a domestic violence call is not always well-handled by the police. The interaction with the police and victims of IPV could do with considerable improvement.

For example, I know of one recent incident with the police when a victim/survivor filed a complaint regarding the repeated violation of a restraining order by her former husband. She asked that the complaint be filed with the Intimate Partner Violence section of the OPP de-

partment, as this is what her complaint was in reference to, but instead, her complaint was given to a road cop, a constable who did not have any training in dealing with IPV and while he tried to deal with this violation of the restraining order which the police are required to do, he finally declared it was not of a "malicious" nature or intent and dismissed the complaint without informing the victim/survivor. What the police apparently did not take into account was the fact that the offender had a police record of mental health issues and arrests with the OPP in Dufferin County. This is what lay behind the woman's complaint. She is still fearful of her former husband's mental health issues.

Perhaps you might now understand why victims of abuse feel negated by the police and by the courts of law and judges. Hopefully, a dialogue between the police and victims and Family Transition Place may take place in the near future to build bridges towards improving the police responders' involvement in Intimate Partner Violence and its victims. IPV is a tragedy many women experience, and some men too, and it is time our governments stepped up and acknowledged that it is of epidemic proportions in our society today.

Sandra Small Proudfoot  
(AOCA'89)  
Mono

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# Never closed: The daily dedication behind Mono's beloved Black Birch Restaurant

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

A couple of decades ago, Mark Mogensen worked in a Toronto restaurant, and he did not like how the staff were treated, himself included. The daughter of the family-owned restaurant habitually closed earlier than the time posted if there were no customers, potentially losing evening income for the place.

One day, Mogensen decided to quit, and the question was – what next? The answer came as a restaurant property on the Hockley Road, just three kilometres from the centre of Orangeville, which he purchased in 2007.

In an interview this week with the Citizen, Mogensen related, “We had been working on it, with renovations and all the government requirements and I thought we have to have an opening date. So, we were ready. I decided to open officially on November 15, which is also my birthday. That was 18 years ago.”

He called his new business The Black Birch Restaurant.

Years of working in the restaurant business provided lessons on how to do better, and one such lesson taught him the good sense of being open seven days a week; actually, 364 days of the year. Mogensen reasoned that it was better to be open every day so as not to disappoint anyone making the trip.

“Seven days a week is straight forward. If we were closed on a Monday and someone came, all they would remember is that we were closed and it might be a while until they tried again,” was the wisdom.

Likewise, opening on Christmas Day invites people to have their Christmas lunch at the restaurant. As it happens, lunch is all that is required, for a second seating is rare.

“I don't mind going home early on that day,” he commented.

The 365th day, New Year's Day, is Mogensen's day off. Has he been asked to open



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**LOCAL EATERY:** Located at 307388 Hockley Road, the Black Birch Restaurant is open seven days a week.

on New Year's? Yes, and the answer was, “No.”

Following his own unpleasant experience as staff in other restaurants, Mogensen was determined to do better in that as well.

He said, “What stuck with me, if you have a regular staff, you all work well – you know how it all comes together.”

Indeed, part of the pleasure of dining at the Black Birch is the staff, most of whom have been with him since the opening and usually know what their regular customers like. A tribute to the chef's attitude toward his own staff.

What he has learned over the 18 years with this as his chosen profession is that there are good cooks, and then there are good chefs, and they can cook for 100, 200 people, and Mogensen qualifies there.

“There are restauranteurs who handle more of the business side,” he added. “That was an eye opener for me, dealing with the

Fire people and the Board of Health.”

There is the matter of purchasing his supplies, the very essence of the job, to find reliable sources of food for the menus. Times change as traditional farmers retire and new government rules affect agricultural businesses, which influences from which source a chef will make his purchases.

Likewise, catering to different schedules for when patrons like to eat, from the dinner-at – 8 p.m. crowd in the city to the earlier choice of dining closer to 5 p.m. in the country, has been a learning curve.

With a passion for some “changing up” his menu, including standard dishes, even as minimally as a different sauce, there is needed consistency and space for creativity.

“Some people go to a restaurant for their specific dishes,” he noted,

They come to the Black Birch for the duck, the lamb shank, the fish; others come to check the regular menu changes and the

specials, fresh from the Chef's new ideas.

Most importantly, Mogensen likes where he is and has no plans to change that. Aware as he is of the passing of time, he has taken to consider his health, abandoning the soft drinks he used to consume and watching his consumption generally.

Saturday evenings see musicians come to entertain, and there is a list of half a dozen showing up in turn to play for diners, enough to please without overwhelming. During lunch on any day, you can see us sitting by the windows where bird feeders bring another kind of entertainment, birds flying to dine as well.

Asked if he thinks about changes, Mogensen replied, “I feel if there were changes, would I be getting in more people?”

For ambience, a delicious and interesting menu for good prices and “expert staff that take care of people,” as the chef praises them, the Black Birch Restaurant is a joy.

## Seasonal road weight restrictions currently in effect to preserve local infrastructure

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) are reminding motorists and commercial vehicle operators that seasonal road weight restrictions are currently in effect throughout Dufferin County and many surrounding municipalities.

During the spring thaw, roadways become especially vulnerable as moisture saturates the ground beneath the pavement. This softens the road base and significantly reduces the road's ability to support heavy loads.

When overweight vehicles travel on restricted roads during this period, the dam-

age can include cracking, rutting, and the complete breakdown of the roadway surface. These damages can be costly to repair and may create unsafe driving conditions for all road users.

Seasonal load restrictions are put in place to help preserve municipal road infrastructure and reduce the long-term costs associated with road repairs. Motorists and commercial vehicle operators are reminded to observe all posted signage indicating reduced load limits, which are commonly reduced to five tonnes per axle unless oth-

erwise posted.

The Dufferin OPP would also like to remind members of the agricultural community that farm equipment being used for normal agricultural operations is generally permitted on restricted roads.

However, farm equipment or trailers being used for commercial hauling purposes, such as hauling excavators, gravel, or other materials not directly related to farming operations, could be subject to the same seasonal weight restrictions as any other commercial vehicle.

Drivers are encouraged to plan their routes in advance and ensure their vehicles comply with all posted restrictions. Failure to obey seasonal load limits may result in enforcement action, including fines and charges under the Highway Traffic Act.

Members of the Dufferin OPP remain committed to public safety through proactive and innovative policing in partnership with our communities. Officers appreciate the cooperation of motorists and commercial operators in helping protect local road infrastructure during the spring thaw.

If you have information about suspected unlawful activity, please contact the OPP at



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS:** Seasonal road weight restrictions went into effect across Dufferin County on May 5.

1-888-310-1122. In an emergency, call 9-1-1. Information can also be provided anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or online at [www.crimestoppersdm.com](http://www.crimestoppersdm.com).

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## OBITUARIES

### In Loving Memory of DR. JAMES ROBERT MACMILLAN

SEPTEMBER 25, 1936 – MARCH 3, 2026

Dr. James Robert MacMillan passed away peacefully on March 3, 2026, at Campbell House, Hospice Georgian Triangle, with his children by his side. He was surrounded by the love and support of family and dear friends in his final days. Jim was a dearly loved father, grandfather, and physician whose life was defined by devotion to family and friends, a lifelong connection to his Scottish roots, and a legacy of compassion and kindness that touched thousands of lives throughout his decades of medical practice in Dufferin County.

He will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by all who knew him.

A celebration of Jim's life will take place on Sunday, March 29, 2026 at 1 p.m. at the Bear Estate in Collingwood. Arrangements entrusted to Fawcett Funeral Home - Collingwood. [www.fawcettfuneralhomes.com](http://www.fawcettfuneralhomes.com)



### JAMES "JIM" BERRY

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Jim, who died peacefully at Dufferin Oaks in Shelburne on Friday, February 27, 2026, at the age of 90.

Jim was the loving father of Nancy Andrew (Jim Weedman), Lynn Watt (Ken), Sheila Craig, and Jay Berry. He was the proud grandfather of Colleen Andrew, Devon Andrew, Norm Craig (Aria Huang), Tyler Craig (Melissa Cameron), Josh Watt, Jordan Watt (Jolene), Cassandra Berry and Cody Berry (Brittany Reid); great-grandfather of Rachel Watt and was looking forward to the arrival of Cody and Brittany's child. Jim will be fondly remembered by his sister, Diane Stephens. Predeceased by our mother, Helen Berry.

Cremation has taken place and a celebration of life will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate memorial donations to the Dufferin Oaks Long Term Care Home.



### ELEANOR MUIR

Peacefully at Bethel Hospice on Monday, March 9th, 2026, at the age of 101, just two weeks short of her 102nd birthday. Beloved wife of the late Angus (1985). Loving mother of Catherine (Brian), Alex (Judy), the late Jim (2025), Ian (Nancy), and Earl (Carol). Cherished grandmother of 11 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. Eleanor will also be greatly missed by her many nieces, nephews, extended family, and friends.

Funeral Service will be held at Dods & McNair Funeral Home, Chapel & Reception Centre 21 First St Orangeville, Ontario on Saturday, March 14th, 2026 at 11:00 am. Visitation will begin at 10:00 am.

Memorial donations to Bethel Hospice would be appreciated by the family.

A tree will be planted in memory of Eleanor in the Dods & McNair Memorial Forest at the Island Lake Conservation Area, Orangeville.

Condolences may be offered to the family at [www.dodsandmcnair.com](http://www.dodsandmcnair.com)



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<p><b>2020 FORD ESCAPE TITANIUM</b></p> <p>Lane-departure, blind spot monitoring and back-up sensors! Heated leather seats, power liftgate &amp; back-up cam. 4 cylinder engine, auto. trans. &amp; AWD drivetrain.                  Ext: Blue, Int: Black. 228,500 KM</p> <p><b>\$10,995</b> + HST &amp; licensing</p>	<p><b>2018 RAM 1500 SXT 4x4</b></p> <p>5.7L Hemi, auto transmission &amp; 4x4 drivetrain. Aftermarket radio with bluetooth! Tow package with brake controller. Fold up rear seats.                  Ext: White, Int: Grey. 239,900 KM</p> <p><b>\$13,995</b> + HST &amp; licensing</p>	<p><b>2018 FORD F-150 LARIAT 4x4</b></p> <p>5.0L V8 engine! Auto. trans., 4x4 drivetrain. Leather seats, Bluetooth, nav &amp; center console. Aftermarket rims, antenna and loud exhaust- on purpose.                  Ext: Black, Int: Black. 207,500 KM</p> <p><b>\$23,995</b> + HST &amp; licensing</p>

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<p><b>ROOM FOR RENT</b></p> <p><b>ROOM for RENT</b> in Christian country home. \$800/month. Includes parking, WIFI/Internet, house privileges and more. 100 acres to wander. Call Roy @ 905-584-9772 for coffee/meet.</p>	<p><b>CONDO FOR SALE</b></p> <p><b>2 BDR CONDO for SALE</b> 8th Floor, South Facing, recently renovated. Call 519-216-2830.</p>	<p><b>VEHICLES WANTED</b></p> <p><b>SCRAP CAR DISPOSAL - CASH PAID</b> for Cars, Trucks, Vans - Big or Small. Call Joe at 647-294-2796.</p> <p><b>WE PAY CASH for Scrap Vehicles</b> - any size. We also buy construction and equipment. Open 7 days a week. Call 905-859-0817 (Peter).</p>	<p><b>ADVERTISING LOCALLY WORKS!</b></p>

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**TRACTORS, ETC.:** JD.7130 w/cab,PQ,4wd.,24 speed,4 cyl.engine,6760hrs.; JD.6430 Premium w/563 SL.ldr., 4wd.,w/cab,24 speed,PQ.,3 remotes, BKT 520-70R38 like new, 9110hrs.(engine rebuilt at 8400hrs.); CIH. MX 110 w/cab,4wd.,7392hrs.;CIH.Puma 115 w/stoll ldr., 4wd., 7700hrs.; JD.2950, 4wd.,OS.,apx.11,000hrs.;Agco 5680 w/640 quicke ldr., 4wd., 8000hrs.; JD.2120;Duetz 7807.2wd.;2023 Kubota SVL 97-2 Track ldr.,1150hrs. & extra tracks for snow; Giant 4548 Telehandler w/2800kg. Lift cap., 3030hrs.;2012 mod.JD.329D trac ldr., w/bucket, enclosed cab.,2350hrs. **MACHINERY, EQUIP.:** **Tillage-** 26ft. & 32ft. New Roller Prop packer's w/lights; Crowsfoot 13½ft., hydro. Lift packer; Bearcat 12ft. packer; JD. 450 seeddrill, 21run x7½DD.w/grass (plain grain);Melroe 20run seeddrill w/dry.liq.,fert.,& grass;JD.8250 seeddrill 18run,sing.w/fert., & grass;JD.8 row 7000 vacuum Vset end transport w/Dickey John monitor;N1.6 row complanter precision units;New 15ft. No-till drill w/grain,dry fert.,& grass; **Cultivators-** 26ft.DMI Tigermate w/3 bar coilline harrow w/rearhitch & lights; CIH. Tiger Mate II, 28½ ft. w/3bar harrows, new teeth (very good); 24ft.Case; IH.19ft.vibshank w/8"auger; Vaderstaad 12ft., TA., s-tine w/harrows.; IH.45 trail, 10ft.;**Haying:** Hay handler H128 Merger (New);JD.24T sm.sq. baler;NH.315 sm.sq.baler;JD.336 shredder baler;160ft.Forage King mow system w/4 drive units; **Feeding-**High cap.seed grain cleaner on trailer (220v); FarmK.graincleaner w/8"auger; Champion elect. Hammermill w/5hp.motor; V700 calf scale **Harvesting-MF.775** swather; Gehl 1060 Harvester w/7ft.pickup hd.; Elmer's 6"x21ft. fert.auger on wheels, hyd.drive, stainless; Wilmar 800 fert.spreader; **Wagons-** 2 Riverside 22ft.silage dumpers w/lights;Creekbank 30ft.meshfloor on 20t Horst gear, & lights; 2 Creekbank 30ft.meshfloors on 14t Horst gears w/lights & winches; New 30ft. on 14t Horst gear;2 meshtop 30ft.racks on Horst gears;24ft.woodenrack on Horst gear;2 Martin throwers; Kilbros 375 gravity w/rolltarp; Gehl & IH.110 forages;**Attaches-**New Baron Grapple w/Alo hookup; Alo HLA 8ft. reg. & Hi-volume buckets; 8ft.highvolume ALO bucket; Quicke Q51 ldr., complete (off JD.6420);JD.740 SL.ldr., subframes,grill-guard; **Other Machinery,etc.** - Tubeline #450 SA.spreader; Jamesway Ultra-Trac 5700 Liq.Spreader, US-gals.steering axles, hyd.brakes, 540 pto. 850x50x30.5tires;Lucknow 8ft.snowblower; CIH. 7500, 5 furrow vari-width plow; Kvernlid. BB.115, 5 furrow vari-width rollover plow w/coulters; Loadtrail 25ft. flatbed gooseneck trailer w/ramps,10,000lbs.axles;2014 Dumptrailer TA., 7ft.x14ft.;Big Jim logging winch; pair of 16.9x38 tires (80%);set of turf tires 16.9x24 & 13.6x16 (on JD rims);30ft.silo roof; other machinery & equip., not listed. **STEEL, MISC., ETC.:**Tractor-Trailer load of New Seconds steel tubing,etc.; qty. cedar posts; 6pc. of 3ft.x4ft.Solarpanels w/24v battery;1000 Blue sap pails w/lids;3pth.belt pulley;BSM 40ft. locking head rail;qty.of milking equip.(for double 8 parlor);qty.of tiestalls,dividers,waterbowls; New elect. Chicken Plucker (Kitchener);New Mac Oil-wood combo furnace; picnic tables & planters;8ft.x10ft. garden shed;some New Diamond bar gates 12ft.-16ft.;other gates;Autoseat buggy; used windows, doors; harness; bikes; tools; other misc. & wagon loads of small items.

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**Bistro Chicken** 114 g

Choose from:  
- Ricotta & Spinach - Swiss

Parmesan

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**14<sup>99</sup>**  
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**Stuffed, Breaded Chicken** 142 g

Choose from:  
- Broccoli and Cheese - Kiev - Parmesan - Swiss

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**14<sup>99</sup>**  
each

**Deep Dish  
Chicken Pie**  
907 g

**SALE**  
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170 g 3 Varieties  
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**MIX AND MATCH**

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225 g - 250 g 2 Varieties  
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**Mini Pepperoni Pizzas**  
16 PIZZAS 1.7 kg

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**Gluten-Free  
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**MEAL KITS** 840 g - 1.05 kg

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**KID-FRIENDLY**

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**FLAVOURS  
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**9<sup>99</sup>**

**Ginger  
Chicken Ramen** 417 g

LIMITED TIME ONLY

**SAVE \$2**

**NEW!**

**15<sup>99</sup>**

**Chocolate  
Dipped Cheezecake** 600 g

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**NEW!**

**9<sup>99</sup>**

**Pork  
Chashu Ramen** 417 g

LIMITED TIME ONLY

**SAVE \$2**

**9<sup>99</sup>**

**Chicken Quesadillas**  
4 PIECES 500 g

**SAVE \$3**

**9<sup>99</sup>**

**Mini Franks in Pastry**  
15 PIECES 270 g

**SAVE \$3**

**9<sup>99</sup>**

**Popcorn Chicken**  
680 g

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**9<sup>99</sup>**

**SALE**  
**TRY WITH  
Tartar  
Sauce  
375 mL  
**5<sup>99</sup>****

**NEW!**

**6<sup>99</sup>**  
each

**INCREDIBLE PRICE**

**6<sup>99</sup>**  
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**Chocolate**

**9<sup>99</sup>**

**Chocolate**

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