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JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

AUTISM AMBASSADORS: Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post (left) joins Brexton (second from left) and Brooklyn Higgins (centre), who are this year's Dufferin Autism Walk ambassadors. They're holding up framed copies of the 2026 Autism Awareness Day proclamation designating Autism Awareness Day in the Town of Orangeville on April 2. Also standing beside them is Councillor Joe Andrews (second from right) and Councillor Debbie Sherwood (right), inside council chambers at Orangeville Town Hall.

Autism Awareness Day flags raised across Dufferin County ahead of 10th annual fundraising walk

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

Several town hall buildings throughout Dufferin County recently held flag raisings to recognize Autism Awareness Day on April 2.

Among them was the Town of Orangeville. Mayor Lisa Post was joined by members of council, supporters, and advocates for a flag-raising and the reading of a proclamation declaring April 2 as Autism Awareness Day in Orangeville.

Despite the rain, which moved the event indoors to the city hall, dozens came out in a strong show of community support.

Mayor Post said it is an important goal for the town to remain an inclusive space that recognizes the autism community.

"The autism community is a very strong one in Orangeville and is continuing to grow," she said. "It's really important that any of the individuals in our community and their families who are living with ASD or supporting people with ASD know that the Town of Orangeville is an inclusive and safe space."

"We're constantly trying to improve our methods of doing things to make sure that it stays inclusive and accessible."

In addition to Orangeville, town halls

in Shelburne, Melancthon, Amaranth, and Caledon East also had Autism Awareness Day flag raisings on April 2. Local not-for-profit organization, Dufferin Child and Family Services, held one as well.

The Town of Orangeville's proclamation was closely tied to the locally run Autism Walk, hosted by the Dufferin Autism Committee.

The group is preparing to mark the 10-year anniversary of its annual autism walk, a community event that has become a cornerstone of local efforts to promote inclusion, awareness, and support for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families.

"The group has been doing the walk annually for years," Mayor Post said. "We've been recognizing it at town hall for years; it's such an important proclamation that we do every year."

Shelburne resident Karrie Daponte, who's the organizer behind the Autism Walk, said that the committee's primary goal is to provide critical support to individuals with ASD and their families.

"What we do is we support ASD individuals and their families through the whole process," she said. "Right from diagnosis to getting funding applications filled out. We promote a lot of events, too. We'll go

to birthdays, school meetings, you know, really spreading awareness and increasing awareness, education and acceptance."

Daponte said that they are grateful for the town's continued support year after year, especially with their recent decision to reorganize into a fully independent charity.

"While this will be our 10-year Anniversary, it's actually our second year on our own, because we're no longer connected to another charity," Daponte said. "That way the money fundraised here can stay locally in Dufferin County, which is really important for us."

As in previous years, Daponte said they have annual ambassadors who will lead the upcoming Autism Walk.

"Today we also announced the ambassadors of the 2026 Autism Walk," she said. "It's our first sibling duo, actually, Brooklyn and Brexton Higgins. They both live with autism, one is an adult, and one is a child."

The flag raising and proclamation were a strong signal of ongoing local support for the autism community in Orangeville and beyond, and with an upcoming Autism Walk on Sept. 27, there is hope for consistent turnout from last year's walk.

For more information on the walk, go to facebook.com/groups/778434011234056.

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Bethell Hospice kicks off fundraising for 16th Annual Hike for Hospice

Written By RILEY MURPHY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Bethell Hospice is gearing up for its annual Hike for Hospice, with an early-bird draw and prizes galore.

Bethell Hospice's annual Hike brings the community out to celebrate and support the hospice and all the work it does throughout the year.

The Hike is part of the foundation's year-round efforts to raise funds and ensure that the hospice care and community programs Bethell Hospice provides remain free to residents of Caledon and surrounding communities.

As they enter their 16th year of the Hike, they've already raised over \$80,000, with their overall goal of \$255,000.

The Hike will take place on Sunday, May 3, to coincide with the beginning of National Hospice and Palliative Care Week.

The event will take place at Lloyd Wilson Centennial Arena, 1551 McLaughlin Rd, in Inglewood, starting at 8 a.m.

There is no cost to register; however, Bethell Hospice asks that each participant pre-register for the event and encourages everyone to take part in the fundraising fun.

Kelly Stronach, Associate Director of Marketing and Communications with Bethell Hospice, says there are already 33 teams registered, and with this year's early-bird draw, she noticed many returning names, as well as many brand-new teams.

This year, Stronach adds that many new and exciting things are coming to the Hike, such as Stones with a Story, where hikers are invited to paint or decorate a stone



RILEY MURPHY PHOTO

TOP TEAM: Members of the Boardwalkers Team gathered for a photo at the launch event. The Boardwalkers Team is currently among the top fundraisers for the 16th Annual Hike for Hospice.

with their own saying or an inspirational quote, and then place it at the beginning of the Hike for others to see as they walk by.

On your return, you can collect your stone and take it home.

This year brings lots of fun for kids, with a new addition: face painting and other activities for all to enjoy.

Also, this year will be a marketplace, where people can browse items such as tea towels, aprons, jewelry, and more.

Returning is their Butterfly Wall, where attendees can personalize their own butterfly with a message or colour, either taking it with them or leaving it for Bethell Hospice's annual butterfly display for grief and bereavement.

Also returning this year are the beloved

pet kits for hikers to bring their dogs on the Hike.

Stronach laughs that there were probably over 70 dogs at last year's event.

Food-wise, hikers can expect a wide variety, including Tim Hortons, fresh fruit, veggie burgers, regular burgers from Harvey's, pancakes, and brand new this year: ice cream.

Stronach says that not only is the Hike a fun time, but it also provides space for people who have had a family member or loved one at the hospice to meet other families they may have known there.

"It's a day to remember loved ones and to hike in memory of them. I always look forward to hearing stories about family and friends who were residents and the care

they received at Bethell Hospice," says Stronach.

For this year's Hike, she reminds everyone to show up early to secure a parking space, register in advance to save time in the long run, and check out all the available activities.

This year's Hike is presented by Caledon Build.

The current top three fundraising teams at press time were Helpers with a Heart, Boardwalkers, and Walking on Sunshine, together raising over \$28,000 and climbing.

Registration can be done up to the day of the event, but it's better to be safe and register early!

To register your team, visit bhf.akaraisin.com/ui/hikeforbethellhospice2026.

Dufferin County seeks resident feedback on regional transit priorities

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

Residents across Bruce, Dufferin, Grey, and Wellington Counties are invited to share more feedback on the Joint Regional Transit Study and share their thoughts on early findings of the study. The short survey, available until April 14, will help explore how to better connect and move residents across all four counties.

Transit needs are growing across rural communities in the region. Population growth, aging demographics, and rising costs can create demand for more transportation options. The Regional Transit Study is assessing whether a unified transit network is feasible, with the goal of making travel easier for passengers, identifying efficiencies through collaboration, and ex-

panding transit service to areas with limited transportation options.

The first round of engagement revealed opportunities now being explored further:

- Transit corridors connecting settlements and key destinations across all four counties, with services running at least three to four times daily.
- Expanded on-demand service through SMART to communities not currently served, including residents who do not qualify for specialized transit.
- Integration with existing transit systems, including GO Transit, Owen Sound Transit, Guelph Transit, Colltrans, Simcoe LINX, Orangeville Transit, and Ride Well, to allow for seamless travel beyond the four counties.
- Private-sector partnerships with taxis

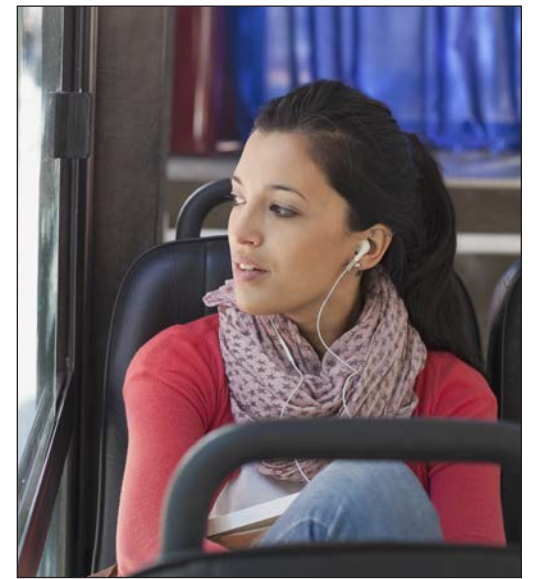
and ridesharing providers to help riders more easily connect to fixed-route transit.

The follow-up survey asks residents to confirm whether these priorities reflect their communities' needs. Results will inform the recommended plan, which will be presented to County Councils in May 2026.

The survey is available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Round2-CommunityEngagementuntilApril14>. For more information about the Regional Transit Study, visit grey.ca/regional-transit.

Paper copies of the survey are available at the Dufferin County administration building (55 Zina St, Orangeville) or Edelbrock Centre (30 Centre St, Orangeville).

The Regional Transit Study is receiving funding from the Province of Ontario and the federal Rural Transit Solutions Fund.



Help Shape the Future of Dufferin County!

Dufferin County is updating its Official Plan, and we want to hear from you.

An Official Plan is a long-term plan that guides how Dufferin County and its communities grow and change by helping to decide things like where housing, jobs, and infrastructure go, and how we protect farmland, address climate change, and build great communities.

Join us for a kickoff open house to learn about the project, share your ideas, and help identify what's working well, and where changes may be needed. This Official Plan update will focus on:

- Updating maps and policies that protect natural areas
- Looking at how much land is needed to support future growth in local communities
- Making general updates to keep the Plan current and in line with provincial rules

This open house is an early opportunity to:

- Learn how the County is planning for growth and change
- Share your thoughts on key issues and priorities
- Help shape the direction of the Official Plan update

Whether you live, work, or run a business in Dufferin, your input is important! Join us on:

April 23rd starting at 6 pm at the Dufferin County Administration Office Atrium, 55 Zina Street, Orangeville

Can't make it to the open house? There will be more opportunities to get involved as the project continues. For more information on the project and how you can participate, please visit the project webpage at: <https://joinindufferin.com/official-plan-amendment-five>

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Mono council keeps diligent eye on municipal water systems

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Mono residents can drink with confidence in the integrity of their municipal water systems.

Data is collected and compiled each year to ensure the Cardinal Woods and Island Lake Drinking Water Systems, which supply Mono households, meet provincial requirements.

Such reports serve as valuable reference materials, providing a wide range of operating, testing, maintenance, and compliance information and playing a key role in the municipality's regulatory compliance and public awareness.

Those annual reports provide a basic description of the water systems, a summary of any adverse water quality incidents

(AWQIs) that occurred during the reporting period, and a summary of the water quality testing results.

"The results of the required water quality testing continue to indicate that both of Mono's drinking water systems remain in good quality and consistently meet both the microbiological and chemical-related standards," according to a report to council.

Matt Doner, the town's public works director, said any non-compliance issues are promptly corrected.

Both water systems operate independently and are supplied by deep aquifer wells. Deputy Mayor Fred Nix said he was annoyed that there were four non-compliance issues cited in the report with a Coles Well and one with the Island Lake system.

"These are very small, minor non-compli-

ance issues like a piece of paper wasn't on the wall where it should've been," Nix said.

Though it isn't a health issue, sodium levels in the Cardinal Woods wells continue to climb, and that trend is concerning, he said.

Nix attributed the sodium increase to the road salt Dufferin County spreads on County Road 16 during the winter.

"I wish we could do something about it," he said.

Councillor Ralph Manktelow, a retired physician, raised the issue of increasing arsenic levels. Natural arsenic is found in groundwater, and he said town staff have been mindful of it.

Doner said the wells cited are particularly deep aquifer wells and, as such, unpredictable concerning arsenic.

"They fluctuate," Doner said of the arse-



nic levels. "They were up even higher years ago."

"I'm so pleased to see that we handle water in such a serious manner," Manktelow said.

"We don't downplay these types of things no matter how small they are," Doner said.

'For the Love of Butter Tarts' Festival to feature over 80 vendors at Alder Arena

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The sweet scent of butter tarts will once again fill the Alder Street Arena as the annual Orangeville Butter Tart Festival returns on April 25.

Back for another year in Orangeville, "For the Love of Butter Tarts" Festival will feature locally made desserts, hot sauces and more. Running from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The family-friendly event is shaping up to be bigger and better than last year, with organizers expecting strong community turnout and brisk business for local vendors.

Organizer Jackie Psutka said that this year's festival will feature dozens of vendors, anchored by a wide range of butter tart bakers offering everything from traditional fla-

vours to highly creative twists on the classic Canadian treat.

"We're going to have over 80 vendors with a mix of the butter tart vendors and other marketplace vendors with their spring decor, Mother's Day, Father's Day, those kinds of gift ideas, and more," she said. "We're gonna have some hot sauce vendors again this year, as they were pretty popular alongside the tarts."

Psutka continued by emphasizing that, despite the large number of vendors, guests can expect a wide variety of tarts, as vendors are looking to step up their game.

"It's no longer just raisin or pecan... people [at] these bakeries are getting really creative with what they put on them, and people love the variety," she said.

Psutka said the festival will keep last year's layout, making only minor adjustments to ac-

commodate the increase in vendors. The festival will again emphasize a local focus, with bakers and makers travelling from communities across the region, including Orangeville, Shelburne, Wasaga Beach, and the Greater Toronto Area.

The event is designed as a full afternoon outing for families and friends. In addition to shopping and snacking, visitors can enjoy live music from Elmira-based musician Jesse Webber, as well as children's games, balloon art, and craft-style table activities that encourage people to sit, relax, and socialize.

Admission is \$6, but Psutka said that a \$1 discount is offered to attendees who bring a non-perishable food donation for the Orangeville Food Bank. Last year's festival generated food donations for local families in need, and she hopes to build on that success



again this year.

With vendors expected to sell out as they did last year, residents are encouraged to arrive early for the best selection and to experience one of Orangeville's most popular community events.

"The For the Love of Butter Tarts Festival is one of the sweetest days of the year — bringing together amazing vendors, delicious treats, and our community," Psutka said. "We're so excited to see everyone there!"

Three people charged with impaired driving in Dufferin County over Easter long weekend

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) removed three impaired drivers from local roadways during the Easter long weekend.

On April 3, at approximately 11:07 p.m., Duf-

ferin OPP officers responded to a report of a possible impaired driver in the area of Highway 10 and County Road 10 in Mono.

A short time later, officers located the ve-

hicle of interest and conducted a traffic stop. Following their interaction with the driver, officers initiated an impaired driving investigation.

As a result of the investigation, Kobiraj Thangarajah, 38, from Dundalk, has been charged with operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus).

On April 4, at approximately 5:44 a.m., Dufferin OPP officers responded to a report of a single motor vehicle collision in the area of Highway 9, just east of Highway 10 in Mono.

Upon arrival, officers spoke with the vehicle's driver. Following their interaction, officers initiated an impaired driving investigation.

As a result of the investigation, Elizabeth Obeng, 39, from Hamilton, has been charged

with operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus) and operation while impaired - alcohol.

Later that day, at approximately 8:54 p.m., Dufferin OPP officers were conducting a RIDE (Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere) program on County Road 21 in Mulmur.

During the program, officers stopped a vehicle and spoke with the driver. Following their interaction, officers initiated an impaired driving investigation.

As a result of the investigation, Chayse McCallum, 27, from Shelburne, has been charged with operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus).

None of the listed charges has been proven in court.

Correction

A story that ran on Page A7 of the Orangeville Citizen (April 2 edition) with the headline "Demonstration held in downtown Orangeville opposing provincial decisions" had incorrect information. The story stated Shannon Lee was at the demonstration, with other protesters, because Doug Ford gave them the agency to organize. Lee was actually there to

protest several grievances against the Ford government. She and other protesters opposed the government's proposed changes to the Freedom of Information Act, decisions relating to healthcare, the environment, social services for people with autism, against the privatization of water systems, and against corruption. The Citizen regrets the error.

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STOCK PHOTO

SEAT BELT SAFETY: In Ontario, seat belts have saved over 9,000 lives since the province's first seat belt law was enacted 50 years ago. Dufferin OPP officers conducted an Easter long weekend seat belt campaign and placed 260 charges.

Lack of seat belts remains leading cause of preventable road deaths

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

The primary safety feature in any automobile – seat belts – has been mandatory for 50 years.

Ontario enacted its first seat belt law on Jan. 1, 1976, setting penalties for drivers and passengers who refused to buckle up.

It was one of the first jurisdictions in North America to pass a seat belt law, and since its enactment, the Government of Ontario estimates that over 9,000 lives have been saved in the province.

Despite the success of seat belt enforcement in the decades following the first seat belt law, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) reports that nearly one in four road fatalities involve someone not wearing a seat belt.

“Dealing with dozens of deaths linked to lack of seat belt use every year, the OPP recognizes that what makes these incidents even more tragic for the surviving families is learning that their loved one made the choice to not wear their seat belt before heading out on the road,” the OPP stated.

During the Easter long weekend, OPP officers conducted a province-wide seat belt campaign, with the goal of ensuring all drivers and passengers are buckling up. This includes ensuring all children are properly secured in an appropriate child car seat, booster seat, or seat belt for their weight, height, and age.

In total, 260 charges were laid during Dufferin OPP's Easter long weekend seat belt campaign, with 26 seat belt charges, 116 speeding charges, three distracted driving charges, five stunt driving charges, and five impaired driving charges. There was also 105 charges issues for other miscellaneous offences.

“Too many lives are lost to something entirely preventable. Buckling up takes seconds, but it can mean the difference between making it home or not. Seat belts save lives, it is that simple,” said Ontario Solicitor General Michael Kerzner.

“I want to thank the OPP for their continued leadership in education and enforcement, especially during [the recent] busy long weekend, helping keep families safe on roads and highways across Ontario.”

During a collision, the threat of serious injury or death rises steeply when a person is thrown into a rapidly opening frontal air bag without a seat belt strapping them in place.

The OPP laid 13,560 seat belt charges in 2025. Failure to wear a seat belt carries a fine of \$200 to \$1,000 and two demerit points, which remain on your driving record for 2 years.

“In 2025, the OPP responded to 41 road fatalities in which lack of seat belt use was either the cause or a contributing factor. At any time, you can become involved in a collision caused by another driver. The single most important thing you can do to protect yourself during a crash is to ensure you and all other vehicle occupants are properly buckled in,” said OPP Commissioner Thomas Carrique.

Within Ontario, people involved in collisions are 36 times more likely to die when not wearing a seat belt, according to the provincial Ministry of Transportation.

“Wearing a seat belt takes only a few seconds, but it can save your life and your family's,” said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Ontario Minister of Transportation.

“Help protect Ontario by buckling up and making sure every passenger is properly secured before every trip.”

Mono revisits ATV use on municipal roads

Written By **JAMES MATTHEWS**

Mono's mayor has raised the issue of off-road vehicle use on municipal roads.

Mono council previously decided to prohibit all-terrain vehicles and other similar conveyances from driving on municipal roads. But such a prohibition cannot practically be enforced by the town's bylaw enforcement officers as they are not allowed to stop moving vehicles.

The OPP enforces the Highway Traffic Act, which ensures the safe operation of motor vehicles, including ATVs. And some neighbouring rural municipalities permit ATVs on their roadways without major issues.

The legislation mandates that ATV riders wear helmets and that insurance be required.

Mayor John Creelman proposed that a bylaw be drafted and presented to council permitting ATV operation on Mono roads.

“In supporting this motion you're not making a final determination,” he said.

Creelman gave notice of the motion during a council meeting in March. He said he's spoken with a number of Dufferin County mayors about off-road vehicle use within municipalities, and they voiced no complaints.



“It doesn't approve them (off-road vehicles),” Creelman said. “It simply asks that a bylaw be drafted and presented to council permitting ATV operation on Mono roads.”

Creelman said he and former mayor, the late Laura Ryan, wondered whether there should be an allowance or “cutout” for farmers riding from one property to another.

“That never really got addressed,” he said. “We simply decided we weren't going to allow it.”

Councillor Elaine Capes questioned the necessity of such a bylaw when the town has so many more pressing priorities.

“Why now?” she asked.

“The weather is getting better and a number of people have asked me if I would sponsor such a motion,” Creelman said.

Capes asked town staff to give the ATV bylaw a low priority on the list of council's unfinished business.

Two people charged in drug, firearm seizure

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers laid drug and firearm related charges while conducting a traffic stop in Mono.

After receiving reports of a possible impaired driver, officers located a vehicle matching the reports description on Highway 10, at its intersection with Highway 89, just after 8 p.m. on April 1.

Officers conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle and say they saw the driver had access to open alcohol. A search of the vehicle followed, and as a result, officers seized cocaine, a ball bearing firearm, Canadian currency, and drug paraphernalia consistent with trafficking.

Tucker Cameron, 19, of Owen Sound, has been charged with:

- Adult Failure to comply with Probation Order
- Adult Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of Trafficking- Cocaine

- Adult Possession of Weapon for Dangerous Purpose
- Adult Possession of proceeds of property obtained by crime

Alex Macauley, 25, of Shallow Lake, has been charged with:

- Adult Possession of a Schedule I substance for the purpose of Trafficking- Cocaine
- Adult Possession of Weapon for Dangerous Purpose

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

None of the listed charges have been proven in court.

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

Information can also be submitted online at ontariocrimestoppers.ca.

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Older adults to share over 600 hours of wisdom in Dufferin schools

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

Headwaters Communities in Action, a local charitable community development organization, has been training, recruiting, and coordinating with senior volunteers over the last year, who will soon be active in classrooms across Dufferin County.

Nearly 40 older adults in the region have been trained to serve as mentors, storytellers and leaders at local schools through the GrandPals Program. HCIA received \$24,295 in funding from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program to prepare the senior volunteers through multi-session orientation cohorts in Mono, Orangeville, and Erin.

Experienced GrandPals David Proctor, Hazel Mason, and Glenda Reilly held the orientation sessions, which volunteers described as reflective, engaging, and rewarding.

"Even though I have done this program before, I found myself reflecting on stories and experiences I had not thought of before," said one returning participant of the GrandPals Program.

While the orientation phase supports seniors in revisiting formative experiences and preparing to share them confidently with students, it also builds peer connections among volunteers. This strengthens a sense of community even before classroom sessions begin.

Six classrooms in Dufferin will participate in the GrandPals Program. They include Erin Public School, Princess Elizabeth Public School, East Garafra Public School, and By Design Learning. Vetting, scheduling, and logistical preparation have been completed to ensure that structured classroom sessions can proceed this spring.

"This funding has allowed us to build strong foundations for intergenerational

engagement in our region. GrandPals highlights the leadership and generosity of older adults while giving students the opportunity to learn directly from lived experience. When generations remain connected and engaged with one another, communities grow stronger and more resilient," said HCIA Executive Director Jennifer Payne.

The GrandPals Program looks to strengthen intergenerational engagement and reinforce the vital role seniors play in community life.

"Collectively, the 39 trained GrandPals will have contributed more than 600 hours of volunteer service over the course of this program cycle. Students in Grades 5 to 8 will engage in weekly storytelling sessions centered on themes such as home, family, work, travel, and learning, culminating in a celebration showcasing student writing and artwork inspired by the life stories shared," reads a press release from HCIA.

HCIA has noted that the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors Program funding was "essential in building the foundation required for meaningful classroom engagement."

When the training funding period recently concluded, HCIA said all participating seniors were fully prepared and aligned with their respective schools, ensuring a smooth transition into the classroom phase.

In Dufferin County, adults aged 55 or older account for 30 per cent of the total population and actively contribute to civic life, community organizations, and family networks. With this in mind, HCIA noted the importance of creating intentional opportunities for generations to remain connected and engaged, which strengthens the social fabric of the entire community.

"The GrandPals program is grounded in an asset-based philosophy. Seniors are recognized as contributors whose lived experience



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TRAINING SESSION: Volunteers receive training for the GrandPals Program, which will be active in six schools throughout Dufferin County this year.

brings wisdom and perspective into classrooms. Students are active participants who listen deeply, ask thoughtful questions, and transform stories into written and artistic expressions," reads HCIA's press release.

"Through structured intergenerational dialogue, the program fosters empathy, curiosity, leadership, and a renewed sense of purpose. Each GrandPal commits approximately 16 to 20 hours of service, representing a significant investment of time and care in the next generation."

From previous classroom cycles, volunteers have reflected on the depth of connection that develops.

"I will truly miss my lovely little group," said one GrandPal Program participant, illustrating the bonds that often extend beyond the formal program timeline.

In the year ahead, HCIA is actively exploring opportunities to sustain and expand GrandPals programming in response to continued interest from both seniors and schools.

"[HCIA] remains committed to strengthening solidarity and mutual understanding between generations across the Headwaters region, to increase a sense of belonging and community engagement," reads HCIA's press release.

Orangeville modernizes municipal vote recount policy ahead of municipal election

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Orangeville has updated the ways in which an election vote recount can be triggered.

Voters will go to the polls Oct. 26 to choose who will occupy town council seats during the next term. Those votes can be cast by mail, internet, or telephone.

"Orangeville's 2026 election is planned as a hybrid model [with] paper ballots tabulated by equipment and internet voting, which necessitates clearer recount direction for both vote streams," according to a report to council.

While a municipality is not required to

have a policy on municipal election recounts, Orangeville's Municipal Election Recount Policy, adopted in March, keeps its recount approach current and operationally clear for the upcoming hybrid election.

"It provides greater transparency to council, candidates, and electors," according to the report.

The prior recount policy had been on the books since June 2010.

The updated policy for the coming municipal election includes a clear policy statement, scope and a full definition section to support consistent interpretation. It retains the established "close vote" threshold for continuity but embeds it within a broader

recount framework.

The newest version makes the three recount pathways and timelines included in the Municipal Election Act explicit and states specific timelines and triggers for and tied-vote recount (within 15 days), a council-ordered recount (resolution within 30 days; recount within 15 days of resolution), and a court-ordered recount (application within 30 days; recount within 15 days of court order).

It explicitly grants the town's clerk the authority to call a special meeting for recount matters to meet statutory timelines, and it adds clear expectations for transparency, communication, and recordkeeping while

maintaining the clerk's authority.

The town's established "close vote" approach refers to an outcome greater than 10 votes or 0.25 per cent of total votes cast for the office. The update modernizes the policy by adding an overarching statement and a clearer scope. It aligns recount pathways, including a tied vote, a council-ordered recount, and a court-ordered recount.

"The prior policy was primarily focused on bringing 'close vote' recount requests to council and did not include guidance related to hybrid elections, internet voting recount methodology, definitions beyond 'close vote,' or articulated administrative authorities," according to the report to council.

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New shawarma restaurant in Orangeville hosts grand opening

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Shawarma Alley hosted its grand opening celebration on April 2, inviting town council and residents to come out for free wraps.

Orangeville has a new shawarma spot in town, with a fantasy twist. Shawarma Alley, located at 75 First Street, hosted a grand opening to celebrate its successful launch in January. The restaurant isn't just a normal shawarma location; it has a theme. For magic lovers out there, Shawarma Alley is themed after the Harry Potter novel series by J.K. Rowling, featuring decorations and themed item names on the menu.

Aamir Mohammad Ashraf from Shawarma Alley said that since opening, they have been warmly received by the community. That welcoming attitude shaped their desire to open a franchise in town.

"The Orangeville community is great," he said. "The people are awesome. They're super nice, supportive, and they're honestly very, very welcoming compared to some other towns. Combine that with the need we saw for another shawarma spot in town – we thought it was a perfect spot to open a new shop."

Since opening in January, Ashraf said customer foot traffic has been steady, despite

the poor weather that winter brought.

"I think that even the very first day when we opened, the foot traffic was great," he said. "Honestly, traffic has been pretty consistent, and I think now that we've done the grand opening, a lot more people know about us. So we are seeing an increase in traffic since then, which has been amazing."

The grand opening was a hit, with a line stretching from the main door into the parking lot. The menu offers a great variety of items, from the more common shawarma wraps to more unique options.

"Our most popular item by far has to be the chicken shawarma wrap, and the other is the chicken on rice," Ashraf said. "Of course, we have variety for our beef lovers, our lamb lovers, and so on. We have our classic stuff, like the poutine, which you can make into a shawarma poutine."

"We have our signature pizza, the shawarma pizza, which is pizza with shawarma on it, with the garlic sauce, things like that. Essentially, what you would get is a chicken shawarma wrap exploded onto a pizza for a larger group."

With a variety of food options available, a comfortable interior, welcoming staff and a consistent customer base, Shawarma Alley is carving out a place in Orangeville's dining scene.



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

GRAND OPENING: With a line stretching beyond the front door, Shawarma Alley held a very successful grand opening celebration, drawing crowds and local officials to congratulate them on the launch. With traditional Shawarma options like wraps and unique menu items like themed Pizzas, Shawarma Alley has something for everyone.

Westside Esports Team opens doors for career development and social interaction

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

At lunchtime, Room 300 at Orangeville's Westside Secondary School is rarely quiet.

Students drift in before the bell, gather around screens and settle into matches, conversations and routines that have quickly become part of the school day.

This is the Westside Valorant Esports Team, a relatively new, three-year-running initiative at the high school that's changing the way students interact and express themselves through technology.

At the core of the esports team are the coaches, including Lachlan Mackintosh, the new media and animation teacher at Westside. A gamer himself, Mackintosh wanted to find a way to bring kids who didn't quite fit into other circles into a circle of their own that they can call home.

"There's a lot of kids that have nowhere to go at lunch," Mackintosh said. "Some of these kids might not have had that many friends, and now they're able to come in here and get a bunch of friends through the team, and meet like-minded kids. It's so important for them to have that environment."

Mackintosh said that originally, they started with some advertisements around school, asking if any students were interested in an esports team, and they got a response from a group of friends. Since then, the team has grown year after year.

"The team is really a group of friends that have been playing together for awhile," he said. "They play all day, all night, so that chemistry is already there. They just showed up, they played one or two games, and they were really good, so we kept them around."

"We started out with just a small setup and a few students, and it's grown from there as more kids got interested and wanted to be part of it."

The team doesn't just play for fun. Students will compete in a variety of titles through organized leagues, including those run by the Ontario Schools Esports Association, facing off against teams from across the province and even nationally. The team structure mirrors that of conventional athletics, featuring senior and junior squads, substitutes and game-specific rosters that have expanded well beyond the initial members.

Competition is tight, but Westside demonstrated its mettle this spring, taking home



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

GREATEST GAMERS: The Westside Valorant team took home the provincial championship this spring, beating out other districts and teams in a tough fight for first place. Beyond competition, the program also helps students develop teamwork, communication, and technical skills, while creating a space where they can build friendships and gain hands-on experience in areas such as media production and computer technology.

the provincial Valorant Esports Championship, a testament to the hard work, dedication and team spirit that continues to grow at Westside.

According to Mackintosh, students in the Westside esports program develop a wide range of skills that extend well beyond gaming and can benefit them after high school, such as teamwork, communication and social development. He noted that students learn how to work together in competitive environments while building confidence and forming friendships.

In addition to those interpersonal skills, the program provides hands-on technical experience, with students gaining knowledge of computer hardware by helping build gaming PCs, as well as media production skills such as livestreaming, video editing, scripting, and broadcast setup.

Mackintosh also emphasizes the development of professional skills, including on-camera presence, creativity and initiative, as students create content and take ownership of their work.

"All those PCs back there in that room were built by comp sci students from scratch," he said. "Then the film students get access to editing, live streaming, setting up, script writing — all those broadcast skills are right in there. It's not just playing video games — there's a lot of things that go along with it, especially the social part and the skills they're building."

"Being able to get students on that train of learning these skills so early will be such a rich development for them. Once they're out of school, they've got a bit of a head start," Mackintosh added.

Support from the school board has played an important role in the growth of the West-

side esports program, particularly in recognizing its impact beyond competition.

Mackintosh noted that the school board has backed the initiative because it provides students with a place to go and connect, especially for those who may not have been involved in other activities. He emphasized that the program creates a safe, inclusive space within the school, noting that much of the support stems from that community.

"We're in our third year now, so to see kids that were in grade nine to have a pile of friends now when they didn't have any friends back then, it makes me really happy to see that," he said. "That's what makes this community so special and important."

A major turning point for the program also came through support from the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program and community contributions, including roughly \$20,000 in funding from a prominent alumnus who helped equip the team with computers, chairs, and more.

Mackintosh said that investment allowed the team to move beyond a small setup and build a fully equipped space, giving students the tools they needed to compete and helping the program grow into what it is today.

With a provincial championship now under their belt, Westside's esports team is continuing to build momentum as the season moves forward. Upcoming competitions, including regular league play and spring tournaments, will give both veteran players and new recruits more opportunities to test their skills and represent the school.

For Mackintosh, the wins are meaningful, but it's the growth behind them that stands out — students gaining confidence, building friendships and finding success in a space they can call their own.

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Arts & Entertainment

LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS



The wildest wedding in Dufferin is coming to Theatre Orangeville

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Theatre Orangeville is transforming its space into the most unpredictable wedding of the season with *The Wedding Party*, a fast-paced, immersive comedy that invites audiences not just to watch a show, but to attend a reception that could go off the rails at any moment.

Director Jennifer Stewart said that at its core, the play follows the union of two families from opposite sides of the social and economic spectrum.

On one side is a family, fabulously wealthy and determined to stage a lavish event worthy of their status. On the other hand, a middle-class family is suddenly swept into a world of excess and expectations.

“You’re going to be thrown into this wedding and really see the class separation between these two families,” Stewart said. “The wealthy family wants to throw this expensive, lavish ceremony that the opposite family just isn’t into, and neither really are the bride and groom.”

She added, “You, as the audience, will be seeing the big debate play out, what is marriage for these families and the bride and groom. Is it a lavish wedding, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars... or is it just something intimate between two people, our bride and groom?”

Despite the wedding being about the bride and the groom, they will never actually appear on stage. Instead, the story unfolds entirely through the people orbiting them.

Parents clash over control and appearances, grandparents observe with a mix of wisdom and exasperation, and extended relatives bring their own baggage to a night meant to celebrate love. As the evening spirals, the play keeps circling a central question: is a wedding about the couple at its centre, or about everyone else’s needs, egos and anxieties?

Fueling this chaos is an ensemble of six actors, each responsible for bringing multiple characters to life – often in the blink of an eye. Every performer plays two or three distinct roles, sharply contrasted to heighten the comedy and emotional stakes.

Emma Grabinsky will play Tiger, Edward, Jack Jr. and Cleo. David Leyshon portrays Jack Sr., Tony, and Janice. Glynis Ranney will be Maddy and Pilot the dog. Tyrone Savage will be playing Edna, Murray, and Frank. Evelyn Wiebe steps into the roles of Katrina, Pippa, Tomas, and Sherry. Kristi Woods plays Margaret, Alice and Vlad.

Audiences will see the same faces reappear as stern parents, insecure best friends, awkward



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

WILD WEDDING: Directed by Jennifer Stewart, *The Wedding Party* is set to be messy, confusing and chaotic in all the best ways. From alcoholic seniors to chaotic teenagers, there will be something for everyone to enjoy in this dysfunctional family affair. The cast shares some smiles from backstage. The production runs from April 16 to May 3.

ward servers, rebellious teenagers and elderly relatives with more spark than anyone expects.

Grabinsky, for example, jumps between a teenage boy and an old grandfather. She thinks that such a huge jump between characters adds some extra charm that audiences will love.

“I spent a lot of time with my grandparents growing up,” she said. “And you know what? I think the thing that’s often overlooked is the fact that the spark of humor and the cheekiness and the cleverness is all there.”

“I think that the way I’m playing Gramps, with him being a rascal, combined with the invisibility that sometimes seniors experience, is very helpful for Gramps, because he’s just breaking into the alcohol when nobody’s looking and doing some outrageous stuff on stage,” added Grabinsky.

These rapid transformations are not just a theatrical trick – they are part of the fun, as the cast works to keep every character crystal-clear while the plot deliberately embraces confusion and overlap.

For some, it’s stepping into new roles they’ve never tried before. Savage described the experience

as both a new challenge and an exciting opportunity.

“I’m playing parts that I have never played before,” he said. “So I think that’s what’s really exciting, like the kinds of characters that I get to play (in) the show I’ve never done before. So as a challenge, as an actor, that’s really exciting for me. And as an introvert, I think it’s fun to be involved in a world where there’s so many extroverted characters; there’s so much chaos involved.”

“I just think about how awkward I would feel being a witness to this wedding, and how much fun it is to be a participant as an actor, like, that’s kind of my takeaway. The audience will love seeing us up there embracing the chaos,” said Savage.

Stewart said that speeches, side conversations, and emotional showdowns are also directed to the audience in their role as wedding guests, creating an atmosphere as close to attending an actual (and increasingly dysfunctional) wedding as you can get without bringing a gift.

“The audience is going to enter the theatre and experience a wedding,” she said. “The whole theatre is going to be decked out as if they were coming to a downtown Toronto wedding. The sound booth is the DJ... There [are] tables in the audience.”

“The cast will be coming through the house, through the guests, and when they make speeches, they’re talking to the wedding guests, so that the audience feels like they’re

a part of it. It’s as immersive as we can get in a theatre.”

Beneath the jokes, physical comedy and escalating mishaps, *The Wedding Party* is ultimately about love, family and what commitment really looks like once the flowers wilt and the bills arrive.

The creative team wants audiences to recognize themselves, their relatives and their own family dynamics in the characters onstage: the overcompensating parents, the quietly observant elders, the relatives who drink too much, and the people who are just trying to be seen and loved.

“Post pandemic, there was a lot of strife between families and family members... you’re going to see someone you know or recognize, or even yourself up there,” Stewart said. “Maybe then you’ll gain the ability to be able to laugh at that... maybe that cracks something open, where there’s forgiveness, not only of yourself, but maybe of a family member.”

Coming out of years of isolation and family strain, the production aims to offer both catharsis and connection – a chance to laugh at the messiness of relationships while feeling a little more forgiving of it, too. *The Wedding Party* is set to be chaotic, messy and hilarious, a show that you likely won’t want to miss.

The production will be performed at the Orangeville Opera House (87 Broadway) from April 16 to May 3.

Purchase tickets at theatreorangeville.ca/show/the-wedding-party.



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2026 Candidate information sessions

Considering running for council?

Get the information you need to make informed decisions about running for municipal office.

Virtual

Hosted by Dufferin County's lower-tier municipalities and facilitated by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
Registration: orangeville.ca/CandidateSession

In person

Hosted by Dufferin County's lower-tier municipalities and facilitated by Clerks on Call. Attend either date. Stay after the session to connect with the trainers and ask questions.

Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at 7 p.m.
Monora Park Pavilion,
500 Monora Park Pavilion Road, Mono, ON L9W 0E1

Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 10 a.m.
Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex,
200 Fiddle Park Lane, Shelburne, ON L0N 1S0

Notice of Nomination Period for Interested Candidates

Are you thinking of running for office in the next municipal election?

The nomination period for candidates begins on **May 1, 2026** and ends on Nomination Day, **August 21, 2026**. Nomination forms may be filed in person by the candidate or by their agent during normal office hours. On Nomination Day, nomination forms may only be filed between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

The 2026 Municipal and School Board Election will take place on **October 26, 2026**. The deadline to file the required Nomination Forms for the offices of Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor and School Board Trustee is **2:00 p.m.** on Nomination Day, August 21, 2026.

For more information, please contact your local municipality:

Township of Amaranth: amaranth.ca

Township of East Garafraxa: eastgarafraxa.ca

Town of Grand Valley: townofgrandvalley.ca



Township of Melancthon: melancthontownship.ca






Town of Mono: townofmono.com



Township of Mulumur: mulmur.ca

Town of Orangeville: Orangeville.ca/Election

Town of Shelburne: shelburne.ca

Minimum wage in Ontario rises to nearly \$18 per hour this fall

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

Minimum wage will increase from \$17.60 to \$17.95 per hour on Oct. 1.

The Ontario government announced the increase on April 1, which will result in a roughly 2 per cent pay increase for more than 700,000 minimum-wage workers.

The yearly increase is tied to the province's Consumer Price Index (CPI), currently at 1.9 per cent.

The provincial government says the \$0.35

per hour pay raise helps to ensure wages "continue to reflect economic conditions while protecting workers and providing businesses with greater stability."

According to the Ontario government, approximately 35 per cent of minimum-wage workers are employed in retail trade and 24 per cent in accommodation and food services.

"Ontario workers are the engine of this province," said David Piccini, Ontario's Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and

Skills Development. "By raising the minimum wage to one of the highest in Canada, our government is putting more money in the pockets of Ontario workers, supporting families through economic uncertainty and giving businesses the stability and predictability they need to plan and grow."

A minimum wage worker who works 40 hours per week will see an annual pay increase of roughly \$728.

In Ontario, minimum wage rises every Oct. 1 based on provincial CPI.



Ontario SPCA partners with Meals on Wheels for pilot pet food delivery program

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

A new partnership between the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) and the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society (Ontario SPCA) is supporting seniors and their pets by delivering pet food alongside Meals on Wheels.

The initiative is being run as a pilot project with Meals on Wheels Sudbury and Meals on Wheels Cornwall. The two organizations have already completed their first pet food deliveries to local seniors, marking the beginning of what is hoped to be a long-term program.

"This collaboration brings together community support providers and animal welfare services to address a practical challenge

faced by many older adults – accessing pet food due to limited mobility, fixed incomes, or transportation barriers," reads a press release from Ontario SPCA. "By leveraging existing Meals on Wheels routes, volunteers can now also deliver pet supplies donated by the Ontario SPCA during their regular visits."

OCSA CEO Lori Holloway noted the importance of ensuring seniors and their pets are cared for.

"Meals on Wheels programs do far more than deliver food, they are a vital connection point into the community," said Holloway. "This partnership reflects how organizations can work together to respond to real, everyday challenges seniors face. It's a practical example of how community-based care

supports the whole person, not just clinical needs."

Similar comments were echoed by Jennifer Bluhm, vice president of community outreach at the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society.

"Pets are family, and we know the positive impact they have on people's mental and emotional health," said Bluhm.

"This partnership helps remove barriers so seniors can continue to enjoy the companionship of their pets."

The pilot pet food delivery program is already making an impact, with providers seeing firsthand how small supports can improve quality of life for clients.

"Pets can play a powerful role in reducing the isolation many seniors experience," says

Tammi Lear, executive director of Meals on Wheels Sudbury.

"Meals on Wheels Sudbury is excited to partner with the Ontario SPCA and Humane Society to help keep our seniors healthy, connected, and able to remain in their homes with their pets."

Data shows that pets can reduce loneliness and support mental well-being among older adults. Small, practical supports like pet food delivery can play an important role in maintaining health, preventing more complex needs over time, and improving client outcomes.

OCSA and the Ontario SPCA say they will continue working together to explore opportunities to expand the program with additional community partners across Ontario.

Community comes together for 2026 Dufferin Polar Plunge in support of Special Olympics Ontario

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

There's nothing quite like a sudden dunking in some freezing cold water to give your senses a wake-up call.

The 2026 Dufferin Polar Plunge, presented by the Dufferin OPP, had participants 'freezing in' for a reason' as they took a quick swim in cold water at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex (CDRC) on Sunday, March 29, to raise funds in support of Special Olympics Ontario.

This year's event was moved indoors to the Recreation Centre to avoid weather-related issues. Both dates had to be cancelled last year after heavy snow on the first date made it too difficult for people to attend, and the second date was cancelled due to an ice storm.

The fun began when the audience participated in deciding which Special Olympics athlete had the best costume. That was followed by a contest for the best team costumes.

This year's event theme was Canadiana, and there were plenty of maple leaves on the costumes.

The plunge taking place at the CDRC's ice rink added to the event's Canadian theme.

"We set up the pool at centre ice. We are the only plunge [in Canada], if not worldwide, that's doing it indoors," explained Jeff McLean, Dufferin OPP Provincial Constable and event organizer.

"Last year, we planned the plunge for two different days – Family Day and March 27. Family Day was snowed out and we actually had to close the roads. The second day was cancelled because of the ice storm last year. Having it indoors is a way we can control the elements but still have the polar experience."

"We have 50 people signed up, and we are still taking registrations at the door. The water's cold, it came straight from the hydrant, so it's around 5 degrees Celsius. As of this morning, we had raised over \$12,000," said McLean during the event on Sunday.

A good-sized crowd, who chose to stay dry, cheered on participants as they jumped into the freezing water.

Everyone had fun, and it was a great way to raise funds for a good cause.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

FREEZIN' FOR A REASON: There were lots of Canadian spirit on display at the 2026 Dufferin Polar Plunge, held at the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex in Shelburne on Sunday, March 29. A participant jumps without fear into frigid waters within a pool at centre ice. The event is presented by the Dufferin OPP and raised over \$12,000 as of March 29.

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 Grand Valley

Shawn Grenke steps away from artistic director role with Achill Choral Society

Written By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

The Achill Choral Society (ACS) is currently on the hunt for a new conductor. After nearly nine years, Shawn Grenke is retiring from his position as artistic director and conductor. He has been offered to take on the role of conductor for the Peterborough Singers.

Grenke talked to the Citizen while driving to Brock University, where he teaches choral conducting, late last week.

"I'm moving on to the Peterborough Singers – their founding conductor is retiring. I saw their ad and decided to apply just to see what would happen, and they got back to me," he said.

The Peterborough Singers are a choir of 130 members, "singing with full orchestras and doing bigger works," Grenke added, expressing his enthusiasm for the challenges ahead.

He said it felt like a time for a change.

About ACS, he remarked, "I have grown the choir and now is a good time for someone else to come in and for me to grow as well. Achill is a very strong community."

Officially, Grenke steps down at the end of June and takes up his new position with Peterborough on July 1.

The city of Peterborough has its own very active arts community. Living in Hamilton means that Grenke's drive to Peterborough for rehearsals and concerts is about the same distance and time as it takes to attend the Orangeville-based ACS.

Before the changes in Grenke's and the

ACS's lives is their upcoming Return to Spring concert on April 26 at Westminster Church. The program is an interesting collection of music, and Grenke was happy to discuss it.

"It begins with Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass," he said. "Its nickname is Mass of Troubled Times and it is absolutely beautiful. The piece will be accompanied by piano and organ and features four soloists."

He went on to promise selections from The Pirates of Penzance by the beloved Gilbert and Sullivan, David Brunner's Earthsongs and selections from Rodgers and Hammerstein's The Sound of Music.

From his almost nine years with ACS, Grenke has learned how important a sense of community is; how it makes the music better, saying that originally he was with Achill for just one concert, filling in the need when the previous conductor stepped down in 2017. And then, he stayed on.

"We kept the choir together during Covid," he said. "And that meant the choir stayed together. There were other choirs that never came back and we had a turnover of thirty percent, with many new singers after Covid."

From childhood singing in a children's church choir in Belleville, Ontario, Grenke's life has been wrapped in choral music, and as his skills developed, he later toured with his choir to Germany and Holland, where his choir won prizes.

Within ACS, they are his friends, and the choir is like a second family.

"The decision to leave wasn't easy," was his



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NEW CHAPTER: The Achill Coral Society pictured here last December in Westminster United Church. Conductor Shawn Grenke is far left at the back. He is retiring from Achill and the choir is accepting applications for the role of artistic director and conductor until April 30.

comment. "Leaving is challenging."

It was his grandfather who reminded Grenke that health, money and time are staples, and with each window of opportunity, you can get all three. If you have the opportunity to travel, you should take it, the sage opined.

For Family Day, Grenke took a week and went to Mexico. "But the city was being burnt by the Cartel – they were only targeting the government people, not other people – it was haunting to see..."

After the Return to Spring concert, Grenke

has invited ACS to come to Toronto to join with the Eglinton-St. George Church choir in Toronto, which he also directs, in the performance of Haydn's Third Mass, on May 3. They will sing with a full orchestra. Even a bus "to and from" for the chorus has been organized.

As Grenke said, "It will be very exciting, with well over a hundred singers."

For tickets to the Return to Spring concert at Westminster United Church on April 26, go to www.achillchoralsociety.ca or in person at BookLore on First Street.

Caledon-based Elmer Iseler Singers prepare for upcoming 'The Earth Sings' concert

Written By **CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD**

Lydia Adams, conductor and artistic director of the Elmer Iseler Singers, is looking forward to their upcoming concert, *The Earth Sings*.

This concert will be staged at Eglinton St. George's United Church in Toronto on Sunday, April 12. The Caledon-based choir, now 47 years in the singing, performs in Toronto, across the country, and locally as well.

In an interview with the Citizen, Adams began by offering background on the choir's life.

"When we bring a singer in, we offer the entire season," she said. "This is normally a fixed choir of 20 to 21 members."

A season can be somewhat flexible, since the choir is frequently invited, as she put it, "to do other stuff."

The all-important funding to cover at least travel expenses and the workshops they do comes from the Canada Council of the Arts, plus donations from other sources and privately.

Wherever the Elmer Iseler Singers travel,

they include a workshop with local choirs. Adams related how profoundly interesting and beneficial these workshops are, as evidenced by the enthusiastic letters they receive from the communities they have visited.

For the upcoming *The Earth Sings* concert, Adams had plenty to tell. Always ready to bring stunning music without being intimidated by the inclusion of other languages, the music of this concert keeps the standards high.

"The program for Sunday, May 12 is fabulous," was her promise.

"We focus on the Earth, with an unspoken but clearly implied call for the Earth's preservation. The language of the music written around the beautiful poetry is inspiring," said Adams.

There are two songs of particular interest for their originality, both by R. Murray Schafer. Text for *The Epitaph for Moonlight* came in 1966, when he asked a class of grade seven pupils for suitable synonyms that would convey the sound of moonlight.

That became a free composition, in which the singers must improvise from given indica-

tions of pitch, intensity and duration. Accompanied by percussive instruments like glockenspiels, triangles, and cymbals, their vibrations can "produce luminous effects" that picture moonlight on the water. Here, there are no musical notes, as such. The score is written graphically.

Schafer's second is *Sun or A Day in the Life of the Sun*. refers to Pythagoras discovering the mathematical correspondence between the ratios of harmonics in a sounding string, while noting that the planets and stars also appeared to move with perfect regularity. He united this discovery with intuition and conjectured that the two types of motion were both expressions of a perfect universal law, binding music and mathematics.

"Pythagoras is reported to have been able to hear the celestial music," Schafer notes.

The text for Sun consists of words for "sun" collected from around the world, travelling west from the Far East to the Americas.

The piece takes the form of a day in the life of the sun, from Dawn's soft light to the great

energy of the noon heat, then cooling to end quietly in Twilight.

There are two World Premiers during the concert. It is always a thrill and a responsibility to be the first to perform a world premiere, setting a precedent to be followed or revised by other voices.

Following *The Earth Sings* Concert is Strawberries and Champagne, the EIS annual spring fundraiser. Set for May 31, it will be held at the beautiful Toronto Hunt, 1355 Kingston Road, Toronto.

The traditional event offers fine champagne, sweet and savoury delights and rounds of music from the EIS. A silent auction offers the opportunity to purchase something special and support the choir.

EIS is more than a choir, and the Order of Canada was presented to Lydia Adams in 2023, which she declared includes the Choir, speaks to the value of the beneficial influence the choir and their conductor have had on other choirs, emerging conductors, composers and choral singers over the many years.

David Gauthier
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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.

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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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The Citizen CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. 264210 • Solution on page: CLASSIFIEDS SECTION

CLUES ACROSS

1. Health care pros
4. A person inhabiting Benin
7. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
10. Split pulses
11. Frozen water
12. Small constellation
13. Perennial mountain rice
15. Pick up
16. Japanese historical period
19. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
21. Unattached
23. Fishing port in SE France
24. Products for dogs
25. One point south of southeast
26. Having the skill or resources to do something
27. Involve oneself deeply
30. Immobile
34. ___ pai dong: Hong Kong food stall
35. Move quickly on foot
36. Gathered
41. A way through
45. Another name for Thor
46. Sharp dueling sword
47. The supreme commander of a fleet
50. Seasoned sausages
54. Path
55. Christian hermit
56. Ancient region of Asia Minor
57. Where wrestlers go to work
59. Roman statesman
60. Explosive
61. Licensed for Wall Street
62. Where golfers start
63. Grow old
64. Autonomic nervous system
65. No seats available

CLUES DOWN

1. A legally binding command
2. General feeling of discomfort
3. Dribble
4. Soft touch
5. South American plant
6. Clouds of gas and dust in space
7. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Lines created by folding
9. Strong belief
13. Senior officer
14. Adult
17. Joint entrance examination in India
18. Passports and drivers' licenses are two
20. Those who go against an accepted authority
22. One point east of northeast
27. Journalist Tarbell
28. One's mother (British)
29. Nowhere to be found
31. A way to save for old age
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. The work of a sailor
38. Mark with striae
39. Energy, style and enthusiasm
40. Sticky situation
41. Monetary units of Spain
42. Three-banded armadillo
43. Chooses
44. More disreputable
47. Defensive nuclear weapon
48. "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
49. Livestock owners assn. in Spain
51. Duplicating machine (abbr.)
52. OJ trial judge
53. Politician
58. Airborne (abbr.)

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

Double Word Puzzle

Unscramble the individual words to reveal letters for the phrase.

LPREAY

ROECS

OIPTN

ATCKAT

H B

Z

Answers: Player, Score, Point, Attack, The pickleball craze

SPORTS FACT:

This is a low-impact paddle sport that mixes rules of tennis, paddle ball and more.

Answer: Pickleball

NEW WORD

BASELINE

the line marking each end of a court

Although pickleball seems like a recent phenomenon, it actually was created in 1965. The game initially was played using makeshift equipment.

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Pickleball and paddle

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Orangeville Otters have success at Ontario Age Group Championships

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

Strong performances, multiple club records, and a growing team presence highlighted the Orangeville Otters' showing at the Ontario Age Group Championships held at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre and the Markham Pan Am Centre on March 5 to 8.

The meet brought top swimmers together from across the province for a highly competitive, multi-day event.

The Otters sent 12 swimmers to compete at the event. In the 15 & Over session, Wesley Halls, 16, delivered a standout performance, placing top 10 in four of six events, including a 6th place finish in the 200m backstroke.

Wesley also set two new club records in the 200 IM (15-16 Open) along with several personal bests.

Kaitlin Malec, 17, finished top 10 in three events with two 4th-place finishes in the 50m and 100m Freestyle. Kaitlin posted five personal bests and set new club records in the 100m Freestyle 17-18 Open.

Maurizio Ruggieri, 17, competed in four events, achieving two personal bests and demonstrating consistent strength across his races.

In Para events, Austin Nellissen, 14, dom-

inated with three gold medals in the 400m Freestyle, 100m Backstroke, and 100m Breaststroke. He also won silver in the 200m IM and 4th place in the 100m Freestyle.

Alyssa Smyth, 16, captured gold in the 100m Freestyle before heading off to compete at the World Para Series in Italy.

At the Markham meet, the Otters' younger swimmers showed a lot of depth in competition.

Reegan Noronha, 13, made finals in three events and achieved personal bests in all swims.

Kaiden Norris, 13, reached finals twice, including an 11th-place finish in the 50m Fly. Qyona Egbert, 12, placed in the top 20 in five of six events.

Julia Noronha, 12, posted personal bests in all three of her events.

Jemma Harrison, 12, made a strong provincial debut with personal bests in all of her races.

Ava Yardley, 11, earned two top 10 finishes and gold in the 50m Backstroke with personal bests across all events.

The meet also marked a milestone, with the club's first-ever girls 12 & Under relay teams achieving top 20 finishes in both the 200m Freestyle and the Medley Relays.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

INCREDIBLE PERFORMANCE: The Orangeville Otters competed in two meets in March with great success. The swim team competed at the Ontario Age Group Championships held at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre and the Markham Pan Am Centre from March

Dufferin-Peel Skating Club wraps up the season with Ice Rodeo at Teen Ranch

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

The Dufferin-Peel Skating Club finished the winter season at the Teen Ranch Ice Corral with an Ice Rodeo on Sunday, March 30.

Ice Rodeo is an annual event where club figure skaters from Star 1 to Gold demonstrate their skills and celebrate the season's achievements.

This year, the club had many skaters competing in STAR 1-2 events outside of the club.

The STAR 1-2 team was: Soraya Ayres, Adelynn Bletsas, Megan Broom, Madelyn Long, Olivia Long, Elliott Piccolo, Anna Pink, Searsha Shepherd and Penelope Weber.

The STAR 3-4 Team competed in many re-

gional events, earning top assessments and medals.

The STAR 3-4 Team was: Claudia Bennett, Sydney Boston, Addison Daniel, Layla Fragapane, Sarah Hayden, Simer Kaler, Brianna Parker, Melissa Simpson and Kaitlyn Walker.

The Club's Provincial Team travelled to many events across Ontario from September to February, aiming to earn top scores to qualify for the Provincial Championship in Stratford from March 21 to 23.

The team included Kristina Nilsson, Hailley Parker, Ella Stamenkovic, Jillian Young and Jordan Young.

The Provincial Team earned many medals and personal best scores throughout the season.

Last year's STAR 7 Artistic Provincial Champion, Ella Stamenkovic, qualified for Provincial in three events again this season.

Ella competed at the Provincials in Hamilton on March 20 to 22, and is the Provincial STAR 9 Artistic silver medalist.

The club continues spring and summer training programs at the Teen Ranch Ice Corral.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SUCCESSFUL SEASON: The Dufferin-Peel Skating Club wrapped up the winter season with its annual Ice Rodeo at the Ice Corral at Teen Ranch on Sunday, March 30. The event gives the skaters a chance to show off their talent and skills learned through the season.



Provincial Junior Hockey League enters Schmalz Cup playoffs with eight teams remaining

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

The Provincial Junior Hockey League has completed the Division championships, and there are now eight teams remaining in Junior

C hockey who will battle it out for the Conference title in a bid to move on to the Junior C Schmalz Cup championship.

The Schmalz Cup is the top prize in the province for Junior C hockey.

The season got underway in September with 61 teams in the PJHL from small towns across Ontario.

In this region, the Stayner Siskins are the North Carruthers Division 2026 champions after defeating the Alliston Hornets in a final series that went six games.

The Siskins finished their season in first place, one point ahead of Alliston, after trailing behind the Hornets for much of it.

The championship series got underway in Stayner on March 19, with Game 1 ending in a 6-1 Hornets win.

Game 2 saw the series tied when Stayner left the ice with a 4-2 win on Alliston's home ice.

Game 3 was a disaster for the Hornets. After Alliston won the game 7-5, the Siskins protested.

A clerical error omitted one of the Alliston AP players on the roster. The League ruled that it was an illegal player, forfeited the Hornets, and awarded the win to Stayner.

Stayner won Game 4, 7-2, on March 27. The Hornets kept the series alive with a 4-3 overtime win in Game 5 on March 29.

The series ended on Alliston home ice on April 1, when the Siskins made a third-period comeback to tie the game and force overtime.

Stayner scored in overtime for the win and claimed the Division title.

The Siskins will now go on to face the Ferris Whalers for the North Conference championship.

The other Conference finals were not much of a surprise, as all the top teams advanced this year.

In the East Conference, the Frankford Huskies will be up against the Uxbridge Bruins.

The South Conference championship will



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

END OF SERIES: The Provincial Junior Hockey League has moved to the Conference championship playoffs after completing Division championships across the province. The Stayner Siskins take on the Alliston Hornets during Game 6 of their North Carruthers Division championship series at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre in Alliston on Wednesday, April 1. The Siskins won this game 7-6 in overtime to claim the division title.

see the Dundas Blues battle the Tavistock Braves.

The Lakeshore Canadiens will be facing the Mt. Brydges Bulldogs in the West Conference championship series.

The Conference championships are scheduled to be completed by April 16, if the series goes the full seven games.

The four teams remaining after the Conference championships will start the next series to see which two teams will play the final series for this year's provincial championship.

The Hanover Baron are the defending Schmalz Cup champions.

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OPINION

Culture clash

There is a rather famous video of a minor baseball game where parents in the stands are harassing the umpire.

The umpire turns and addresses them, telling them to knock it off and that their behaviour will not be tolerated.

One mother, with a big mouth, decides to shout out one more insult at the ref. This time it was of a personal nature and rather cruel.

"What's the matter?" she yelled. "Are you mad because all of the kids are taller than you?"

The umpire took off his mask, declared the game a forfeit, walked out to the parking lot and drove away. The viewers in the stands and both teams were stunned.

I don't blame the guy one bit. He didn't deserve to be harassed and insulted over a kid's game.

The parent looked like an idiot and caused her kid's team to forfeit the game.

Some sports, like hockey, are facing a shortage of officials because more and more referees are fed up with abuse from fans, players, and coaches.

Governing bodies of sports associations and leagues are doing what they can to educate people about proper behaviour at sporting events.

If you don't have officials, you won't have a sport to play.

They deserve to do their job without harassment or threats.

People in positions of authority are there for a reason. This isn't Nazi Germany, where people in positions of authority have free rein. They have obligations and rules to follow.

A police officer on duty deserves the public's respect. The uniform and badge represent the law, and the person wearing the badge is duty-bound to ensure the safety of the public and to uphold the law.

Everyone complains when they get a traffic ticket for doing a Hollywood stop at a stop sign, but when you're in trouble or witness a crime, the first call you make is 9-1-1.

Thanks to bodycams, there are plenty of videos floating around of traffic stops and those that usually go wrong. It's usually something like a person being stopped for speeding and found to be showing signs of impairment, or having an outstanding warrant.

It is shocking to see how many people address a police officer as 'bro' or 'dude.'

"Why y'all stoppin' me dude?" Or, "I'm not gettin' outta this car bro," and the popular 'don't you touch me' when a person is being arrested.

And these are phrases I've heard said to female police officers in bodycam footage.

A recent video from Quebec shows absolutely abhorrent behaviour by some goof who needs a serious lesson on how to behave in a civilized society.

The man was pulled over for illegally tinted windows. It was the second time, and he had already been warned.

In the video, he starts berating a young female officer.

He says, "If I want, I'll buy you and make you my slave."

He then proceeds to use foul language and call her a string of names that can't even be printed here.

His behaviour was disgusting. The police officer kept her cool and remained professional.

The guy has been described as a 'migrant worker.'

This reference to making her a slave didn't come from Quebec culture.

This guy learned that from his father, who learned it from his father, who learned it from his father, who learned it from his father. And this guy will teach that to his own son one day.

The question everyone asks is why is this guy even in our country?

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Men from a culture that regards women as second-class people or worse, and as property, certainly won't fit into our progressive society.

Which immigration person interviewed this guy and determined that even though he has an obvious hatred for women, he would be a good fit in Quebec society?

This country has evolved over several hundred years to become a modern and progressive society.

The last thing we need is influence from other areas that are stuck in the Middle Ages and can't or won't move forward, still maintaining the same culture from 1,000 years ago.

The reference to making a young woman his slave certainly says a lot about this guy and the way he was raised.

There are now groups springing up across the country who are opposed to seeing our culture being attacked and want to preserve our way of life.

I don't blame them at all.

If the federal government won't or can't protect our shores, then it is up to citizens to do it for them.

On not draining the swamp

'When you're up to your ass in alligators, it's hard to remember that your original goal was to drain the swamp.' (Not very old folk saying)

Eighty years ago we set out to drain the swamp, because we feared that otherwise we would all be pulled under. At least fifty million people were dead after the greatest war in history, around half the cities in the northern hemisphere had been smashed flat, and the first nuclear weapons had just been dropped on Japanese cities.

People were in shock. They hadn't known how destructive war could get, and now they realized that the next big war would be incomparably worse: nuclear war. So they decided that in future the goal must be not to win wars but to end war.

Don't think they were naive. They were having this conversation standing hip-deep in the wreckage of the last war. Many of them had fought in it, and almost all of them had lost people close to them. So between 1945 and 1948 they wrote new rules that made war illegal.

Early in my career as a journalist I interviewed quite a lot of these people, and what

struck me was the brutal realism most of them brought to the project. No airy-fairy stuff about 'brotherhood' and 'peace'; just hard-nosed calculations about how to contain or thwart the large number of countries that have designs their neighbours.

Their theory was that most wars have at least a large element of territorial dispute at their root. The wars tend to be about land that one side has lost in the past, or the other side believes should be theirs in the future, for reasons that do not seem to justify large-scale killing to people who are not involved in the confrontation.

Territory is what the great majority of wars have been about not just in historical times, but also in pre-historic times and even in the pre-human past. (See Netflix's 'Chimp Empire' for a brilliant documentary mini-series about a war between chimpanzee groups about territory.)

It's still mostly about land today. The Middle East wars of the past 75 years are all ultimately about the division of Palestine between Jews and Arabs in 1948. Putin's invasion of Ukraine is entirely about bringing at least the Slavic parts of the old Soviet Union back under Mos-

cow's control. India-Pakistan, North Korea-South Korea...There's an endless supply.

The solution chosen by these veterans of the worst war in history was simple: from now on, it will be against the law to change a border by force. Attacking another country will be a crime. Yes, this is very unfair to countries that have lost territory in the past and want it back, but that's the only way we can break the cycle.

Border changes by negotiation and compromise are permissible, but conquest is over. Past grievances have to stay in the past, or else we will end up fighting nuclear wars. We may not be able to stop every conquest, especially if the violator is a great power, but the rest of us will never acknowledge that what the aggressor has seized is really his.

It was not a perfect solution. It didn't even address the problem of guerilla wars and civil wars inside a single country, partly because that was too hard — there is usually no consensus on who is in the right — but also because they were unlikely to cause a nuclear world war. But it did the job.

No nuclear weapon has been used in war for 80 years. No great power has fought

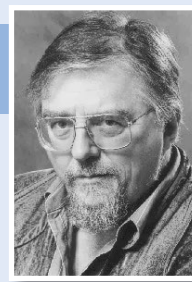
any other great power directly since 1953. (Proxies are sometimes employed.) We have been far more successful than anyone dared to hope in 1945. Even the number of deaths in war have fallen in every decade since then — until now.

The problem, I suspect, is generational turnover. The generation who wrote the new rules is long gone, but as recently as the 1990s I would regularly get lectured about the importance of the 'international rule of law' (code for the above rules) by diplomats at both the State Department in Washington and the Foreign Ministry in Moscow.

The general public was always hazy about the rules that gave us this long peace, but the people who ran the system continued to understand what the basic deal was for several more decades. However, I don't hear these arguments any more. The line has gone dead.

We set out to drain the swamp and we made some progress, but now the alligators are out in force and we have lost the plot.

GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY



A note on cutting zig-zags

For the past month, my Grade 12 Literacy Class has been working on creating their own vision boards. Their vision boards are made up from a collage of images, words, and affirmations that represent their goals and aspirations. I like the idea of vision boards because they can help a kid focus on what they want to achieve in life. It's an important time for this group to be doing that — they're a few months away from graduating, and some have zero idea as to what to do with the rest of their lives.

This is particularly concerning for this group of kids. You see, these are the kids who failed the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. If you don't pass the test, you don't graduate. Instead of writing the test a second time, they can take this class. If they don't pass, they don't graduate. Their literacy skills are weak, and many struggle with some of the more basic expectations of the curriculum.

I love working with them. What they may lack academically, they make up for with personality, authenticity, and creativity. No standardized test can measure that. They like learning, but most don't like school. They like being in my class (because they're in my class). When I read their work (grammatical errors and all), I'm always reminded of what a privilege it is to teach them.

That being said, I'm worried about them. I'm worried for so many of our young people (my own children, as well). I feel like we (adults) are handing them a world that's been forced through a wood chipper, and we're

asking them to build a rocket ship. They're a few months shy of graduating into a world that doesn't look anything like the world many of us graduated into — a world where Amazon recently cut 15,000 jobs for what it calls 'AI efficiencies' (Facebook has announced a cut of upwards of 25,000 people for the same reasons). These kids don't even show up to class with a pen and paper. How are they going to compete in an economy transformed by AI? And here I am having them cut words and images from magazines and newspapers?

While creating the assignment, I stumbled across this quote from the Bible: "And the Lord answered me: 'Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.'" If you can write it, you can run to it. If you can see it, you can be it. The idea of a vision board is that you hang it somewhere so that it's the first thing that you see when you wake up each morning. It gives you something to work for, to run towards. This is the goal of the unit.

There's a scene in The Godfather that rips apart me ol' heart every time I see it. It happens early in the film, when Michael is visiting his father, Don Corleone, who is recovering from a botched assassination attempt. When Michael arrives at the hospital, he's dismayed — there are no nurses or police officers keeping watch. When a nurse finally shows up, she tells Michael that the police ordered everyone to leave. Sensing another attempt on his father's life, Michael and the nurse

move him into another room. With his father safe, Michael hears footsteps approaching. It's Enzo, the baker, wanting to pay his respects. Michael tells Enzo to wait outside. When Michael joins him, he grabs the flowers from Enzo and tosses them away.

"Put your hand in your pocket like you have a gun!"

A car with four men pulls up, faces hidden beneath their fedoras. One of the men is brandishing a gun. Michael tries to reach for his own gun, but the car drives away. Michael tells Enzo that he did a good job.

The baker's nerves are rattled, his hands are shaking so hard that he can't light his cigarette — Michael has to do it for him.

I feel for Enzo. He was pushed onto the frontlines of a war not of his own making. It's the 'gangster ethos' — do anything to protect your own, even if it puts innocent people in harm's way. This is the story of our time.

I'm not sure how to describe this world to my students. I can't tell them what to see; I just need them to 'see' (like they don't already). I mean, how do I prepare them for these uncertainties and obstacles, and still provide space for their dreams? Can they look to our leaders? These leaders who take up so much of our spaces and places? Doug, Donald, and Carney? It's like an episode of Looney Tunes, and we've lost the remote to change the channel. This, in a world marked, and marred, by the six degrees of separation from Jeffrey Epstein?

How is it possible to be hopeful?

Scissors and glue? Really?

Here's another way: Robert Desnos was a Surrealist writer,

famous for his evocative imagination. Desnos and a group of fellow prisoners were being taken away from the concentration camp where they were being held. Everybody was aware that they were headed to the gas chambers. Once they got off the truck, no one could speak — even the guards. Eventually, the silence is interrupted by a sprightly man, who jumps into the line and grabs one of the prisoners. Desnos reaches for the man's hand, and on a whim, reads the man's palm. He tells the man that he has a very long life-line and that he's going to have three children. The man is jubilant; his excitement is infectious. Desnos eventually reads everybody's palm. The mood has changed. The guards are so disoriented by the sudden change that they're unable to go through with the executions. All the prisoners are put back onto the truck and taken back to the barracks. A stay of execution? Perhaps, a story of elocution?

What if we could reframe the collective dread that so many are feeling as 'a collective failure of imagination'? If we saw it this way, perhaps, we could imagine a new story, a new future. Cut up the script that is being forced upon us, and create something new, something we all could look forward to waking up to each and every day?

Do you have your scissors handy?

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COMMUNITY VOICES

Monthly Message: Rethinking support for autistic youth, discovering their own path

April is Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month, a time not only to increase understanding of autism, but to actively embrace and support autistic individuals in meaningful, individualized ways. For autistic youth, thriving in a world that was not designed with their needs in mind often requires more than a single service or strategy. It calls for wrap-around care: a collaborative, flexible approach that meets each child where they are.

At the heart of this approach is an essential truth: there is no one-size-fits-all therapy program for autistic children. Autism is not a singular experience. It is a spectrum, and each child has a unique profile of strengths, needs, communication styles, sensory preferences, and ways of engaging with the world. Because of this, supports must be thoughtfully tailored to the individual, not simply based on a diagnosis, but on the child themselves.

It's also important to emphasize that autism is not something that needs to be "fixed." Rather, supports exist to help autistic youth navigate their environments, build meaningful skills, and feel understood and empowered.

Wrap-around care often includes a combination of services, each addressing different aspects of a child's development:

Occupational Therapy (OT) focuses on helping children engage in everyday activities. For autistic youth, this might include support with sensory processing, motor skills, emotional regulation, and building independence in daily routines such as dressing, eating, and participating in school tasks. OTs often help children better understand their sensory needs and develop strategies to feel more regulated and comfortable in their environments.

Speech-Language Therapy is not only about verbal communication. It supports a wide range of communication skills, including nonverbal communication, social communication, and alternative forms such as AAC (augmentative and alternative communication). The goal is to help each child communicate in a way that works best for them, not to force a single "correct" way of speaking.

Psychotherapy can play a key role in supporting emotional well-being and building resilience. Many autistic youth experience



• CHILD, ADOLESCENT, & FAMILY PRACTICE •

anxiety, overwhelm, or difficulty identifying and expressing emotions. Therapy can help build emotional awareness, coping strategies, and self-advocacy skills. Importantly, this support is most effective when it is neuroaffirming, respecting the child's experiences rather than trying to change who they are, and supporting positive identity development.

Parent Coaching is another critical piece of wrap-around care. Raising an autistic child often comes with unique questions, challenges, and decisions. Parent coaching helps caregivers understand their child's needs, navigate systems such as schools or funding programs, and develop strategies that align with their child's profile. It also provides a space for parents to feel supported, validated, and empowered.

Support from other health, mental health, and allied health professionals can be of utility as well, such as pediatricians, dieticians, resource consultants, physiotherapists, massage therapists, nurse practitioners, and more. Not every autistic child will need all of these services, and that's okay. Some may benefit from one or two supports, while others may require a broader team. The key is flexibility and responsiveness. Support should always be built around the child's strengths and needs.

Accessing these services can sometimes be challenging. There are a variety of funding bodies and programs designed to support autistic youth and their families, helping make therapies more accessible in schools and communities. However, many community and OHIP-funded services come with long waitlists, which can delay access to care. This reality underscores the importance of early planning, advocacy, and, when possible, exploring multiple avenues

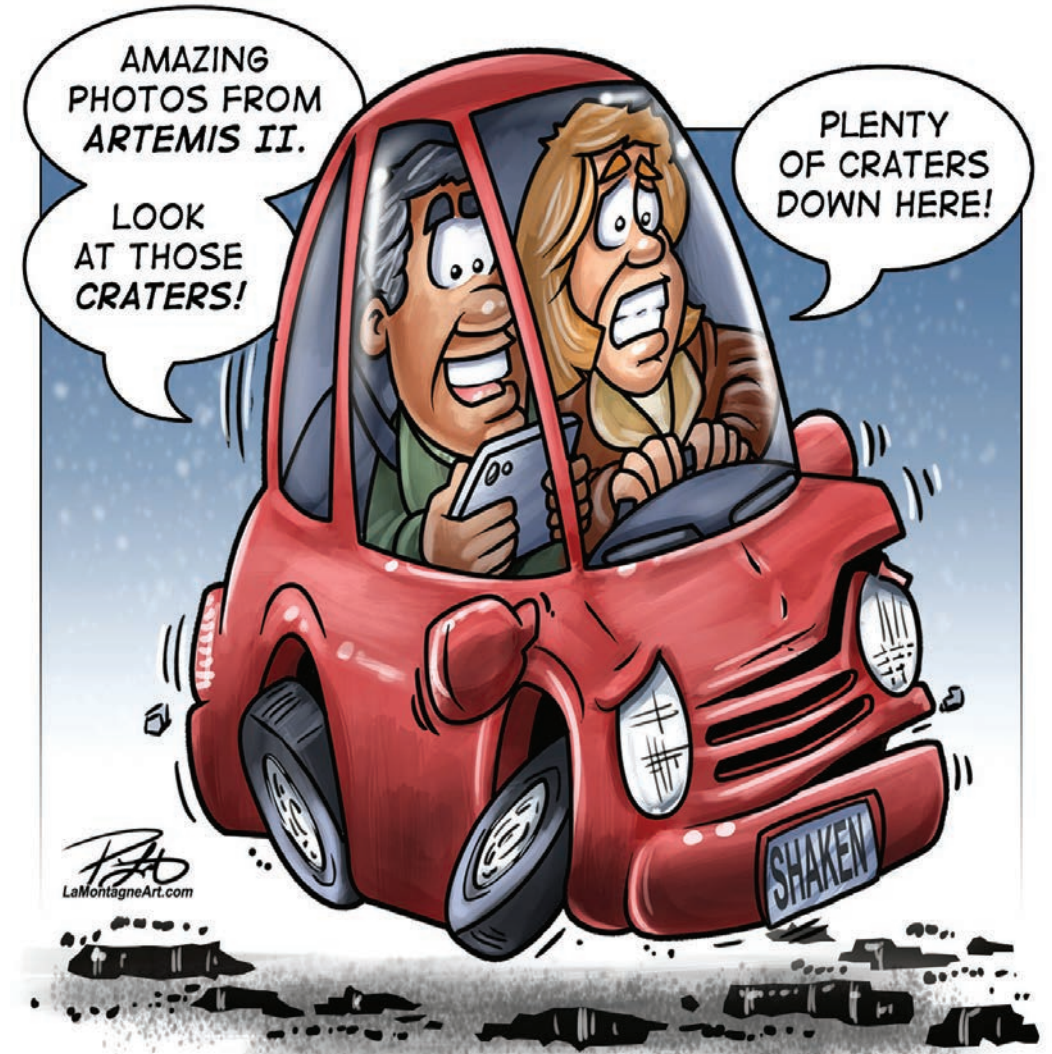
of support. Working with a child's school to access in-school speech-language and occupational therapy support is another avenue families can explore.

WonderTree has a blog that lists additional funding options for autistic youth (search

"Funding Options for Clinical Services & Programs: A Guide for Families").

Ultimately, wrap-around care is about creating a system of support that recognizes and respects each child's individuality. It is about shifting away from rigid models and toward compassionate, personalized care that helps autistic youth not just cope, but truly thrive.

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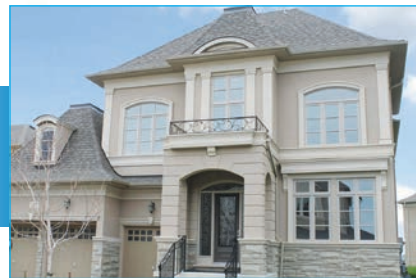
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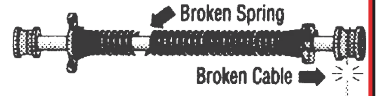
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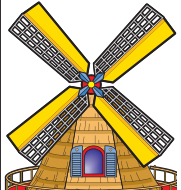
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New season of Inglewood Ball Hockey to benefit Bethell Hospice

Written By RILEY MURPHY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

As the Inglewood Ball Hockey League (IBHL) enters its 39th season, it's looking to support the community that has hosted its organization for decades.

This season, all profits from IBHL merchandise, and a partnership with TUFF Hockey, will go towards Bethell Hospice.

The IBHL began in 1987 as a pickup hockey league run by brothers Brian and Robert Dunn.

Ten years later, the IBHL organized into an official league.

Players across Caledon have come together in teams to play in the league for decades and have been having fun ever since.

Brian Dunn, owner and one of the league's Founders, explained that each year they like to give back to their community in numerous ways, whether it's been through donations to local hockey teams or donations to Bethell Hospice.

This year, he thought, "Let's see if we can do it a little bit bigger and better."

For the 39th season, all proceeds from IBHL merchandise, including caps, hoodies, track pants, etc., will go directly to Bethell Hospice as well as all money raised from player fines throughout the season.

Dunn also announced a partnership with TUFF Hockey, where players can get \$10 off every TUFF Hockey stick with code IBHL, and TUFF Hockey will donate \$10 per stick to Bethell Hospice, a donation the IBHL will then match.

"This isn't a project that I go out and make money at, this is just something I do for the

community," says Dunn.

Dunn grew up in Caledon and played minor hockey in Inglewood. He adds he's always trying to give back locally.

For Dunn, it's giving back to the community that has supported them all these years.

They also aim to collaborate with local sponsors and people from Caledon, in addition to their sponsors from across Canada who are looking to support the team.

The league will donate the total amount to Bethell Hospice at the end of its season, after its last game in August.

Blaze breaks out at a Peel Public Works Building in Caledon, no injuries reported

Written By RILEY MURPHY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A fire broke out at a Peel Public Works building located on King Street in Caledon on the night of April 5.

Kealy Dedman, Commissioner of Public Works, says that the fire broke out at 10:44 pm on the April 5, and Peel Region was informed around midnight.

By 9:10 am the next day the fire was extinguished, and the property was subsequently released back to Peel Region.

"The cause of the fire and the extent of

the damage is currently being investigated," says Dedman. "The building is used primarily for road maintenance and operations so these functions will be provided from Peel's works yard in Brampton in the short term."

Dedman says that Peel Region is collaborating with the Town of Caledon Fire department.

A Town of Caledon Official says that there have been no injuries reported and there is no ongoing risk to the public.

They ask that residents and media avoid the area to allow crews to continue their

work safely.

The official also says that the cause of the fire is under investigation and the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office has been notified.

The Ontario Fire Marshal's Office stated to the Citizen that the Office of the Fire Marshal did not investigate this occurrence.

Caledon OPP says that during the incident their involvement was to assist with traffic control as Caledon Fire and Emergency Services worked to extinguish the fire.

"At this time, we have not been engaged to assist with the investigation," says Caledon OPP.

OBITUARIES

EUGENE LAMMERDING

Eugene Lammerding, born November 8th 1953 sadly passed away March 27th 2026 at age of 72, surrounded by family, leaving behind a life shaped by hard work, quiet creativity, and care for those closest to him.



He will be deeply missed by his children, Cassandra Smith (Trevor), Alexander Lammerding (Katie), and Dayna Lammerding (Dave), and his five granddaughters, Parker, Hailey, Abbie, Elena and Riley. He is also remembered by the mother of his children Birgit Lammerding and close friend Beverley Frank.

He was brother to Anna Lammerding, Ewald Lammerding (Traci), Patricia Lammerding (Ken), Barb Wright, and son of the late Ewald and Emma Lammerding.

A lifelong farmer, contractor, and engineer at heart, Eugene had an intuitive understanding of how things worked and how to improve them. A creative and thoughtful problem-solver, he was always building, fixing, or imagining something new. He will be dearly missed.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations to Southlake Cancer Centre are appreciated.

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HELP WANTED

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- Electrical Assembler
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- Highway Cargo Tanker Repair
- Decal/ Wrap Specialist
- Licensed Mechanic 310T
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- General labour
- Welder – Fabricator
- Hydraulic Technician
- Assistant Shop Foreman
- Shipping & Receiving
- Plumbing Assembler
- Welder – Pipefitter




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 Applying method: In Person at
 275 Clarence Street, Brampton L6W 3R3

HELP WANTED



NOW HIRING

COME JOIN OUR HOME TEAM

Accounts Receivable Administrator

FULL-TIME (\$20.00-\$25.00 per hour)

JOB DESCRIPTION:
 The Accounts Receivable Administrator performs clerical and/or bookkeeping functions in the store. Responsibilities include maintaining records of receivables, preparing monthly statements, sending collections letters, tabulating sales records, etc. They may also work on special projects and additional duties as assigned by management. Administrative persons must perform all functions assigned to them with sufficient speed and accuracy to support store efficiency and a high level of customer service.

DUTIES / RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Balance cash on hand, floats and all daily records and prepare daily deposits.
- Process invoices and credits to charge customers and maintain accounts receivable records.
- Post and apply customer payments accurately
- Provide customers with accurate account information and balances in a timely manner.
- Prepare monthly statements and email/mail them to charge customers
- Monitor the aging of accounts and submit weekly status reports to the Dealer-Owner/Management
- Send collection letters by email and/or follow-up on delinquent accounts by telephone.
- Report accounts that should be denied credit to management, customer service associates and cashiers in accordance with company policy.
- Notify customers promptly when credit privileges are to be suspended/terminated.
- Follow legal, effective collection techniques, keeping delinquent accounts to a minimum.
- Answer incoming accounting related telephone calls.
- Maintain professional confidentiality of all store and customer records.
- Order office/store supplies in a timely manner.
- Work on additional duties and assignments as assigned by management.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum 3 years Accounting/Bookkeeping experience
- College diploma in business administration/accounting an asset.
- Ability to work co-operatively in a team environment.
- Ability to communicate effectively with management, co-workers, and the public at large in person, over the public address system, and by telephone.
- Proficient with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel and Outlook)

BENEFITS:

- Competitive Wage
- Offer Extended Health Care Benefits (incl Health/Dental/Vision, Life, LTD)
- RSP/DPSP Plan
- Excellent Employee Discount Program & Company Events
- Annual Reviews
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Interested applicants, please submit your resume to:
julie.gate@homehardware.ca
725 Steeles Street, SHELBURNE 519-925-3991
homehardware.ca/en/store/10071



NOW HIRING

COME JOIN OUR HOME TEAM

DZ Hitch Hiker Driver
 Seeking a responsible DZ driver to safely operate various vehicles and equipment for local and regional deliveries to jobsites.
 •Strong communication and problem-solving skills required
 •Customer service oriented
 •Commitment to road and jobsite safety
 •A valid DZ license is required

G Class Driver and Yard Worker
 Looking for a reliable and hardworking yard worker/driver to maintain/organize the yard.
 •Strong communication skills
 •Able to work effectively in a group or individually
 •Valid G class license required
 •Forklift experience an asset

Customer Service
 Looking for a customer service representative with knowledge of lumber and building supplies.
 •Reliable and hardworking
 •Customer service oriented
 •Strong verbal/written communication skills
 •Computer proficient
 •1 year customer service experience preferred

Customer Service – Summer Student
 Looking for a summer student interested in learning about lumber, building supplies, and customer service.
 •Dependable and hardworking
 •Eager to learn
 •Good communication skills
 •Computer proficient
 •Opportunity for employment growth

If you are interested in joining our team please submit your resume to
ross.fines@homehardware.ca
725 Steeles Street, SHELBURNE 519-925-3991
homehardware.ca/en/store/10071

NEED TO Hire?



Call Caledon at **905-857-6626**
 or Orangeville at **519-941-2230** to advertise.

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905 703 1107

When you buy from a **small business** you're not helping a C.E.O buy a 3rd holiday home, you are helping a little girl get **dance lessons**, a little boy get his **team jersey**, a mom or dad put **food on the table**, a family **pay a mortgage** or a student **pay for college**.

Thanks for shopping local! ♥



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

THE GIFT OF LIFE: Green ribbons are hanging throughout downtown Orangeville for Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Month, which is marked every April, as well as Green Shirt Day, celebrated on April 7. The green ribbons symbolize hope, generosity and the power of giving the gift of life through organ or tissue donation.

PLAYING TODAY'S BEST
AND YESTERDAY'S FAVOURITES

FM 101 ORANGEVILLE

FM 102 BOLTON FM 92 SOUTH SIMCOE FM 101 MILTON

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ORANGEVILLETODAY.CA

adopt a cat



Magic is 7 years old and head of the greeting committee. He loves to get his pets and runs to meet the volunteers. Magic is very playful and will spend hours with a wand toy. This handsome stud has a best buddy Rufus, who although isn't as outgoing, also loves his pets (yes you can adopt both!).

Magic is neutered, microchipped, dewormed, flea treated and vaccinated.

Adoption price: \$275

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.

Magic

FERAL CAT RESCUE INC.
519-278-0707

Don't go fishing for your news, community highlights, current events and more!

THE ORANGEVILLE CITIZEN HAS YOU COVERED ONLINE AND IN PRINT EVERY THURSDAY.



ORANGEVILLE CITIZEN
10 First St, Orangeville
519-941-2230 • citizen.on.ca

AUCTIONS

HOME OF THE 5% BUYERS PREMIUM
Kidd Family Auctions is calling all buyers and sellers!

APR 10TH - Antiques, Collectible and Quality Household Items
APR 17TH - Canvas, Carvings and Keepsakes
APR 24TH - The Springtime Tool & Equipment Sale
MAY 1ST - The Locked & Loaded - Handgun Auction
MAY 8TH - May 8th - Toys, Toys and more Toys.
MAY 15TH - Strike It Rich: The Coins & Currency Auction
MAY 26TH - 30TH - Straight Shooter Sale
JUN 12TH - Antiques and Collectibles Auction
JUN 26TH - available
JULY 10TH - Tools (?)
JULY 17TH - Coins (?)
AUG 7TH - Gas and Oil
AUG 18TH-22ND - Straight Shooter Sale



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HANDYMAN SERVICES - Providing an extra pair of helping hands in the Orangeville area. No job too big or too small. One man and a truck services along with residential seasonal lawn maintenance also available. All jobs welcome. \$25/hr. Call 519-447-7550.

HOME RENOVATIONS - kitchen/bathrooms: tiles/wood/vinyl floors: plumbing / painting / stain / drywall: outdoor repairs - fences, decks. Call Alex at 519-938-7727.

ROM MASONRY - Based in Nobleton. We do big or small jobs. Chimneys, window sills, walls etc. All work guaranteed. Free estimates, seniors discount. Call Spencer at 647-542-0559.

APARTMENT FOR RENT

1 BEDROOM CONDO at the Bromount Place, 8 Fead St, Orangeville. Available May 1st. Call 519-941-0375.

VEHICLES WANTED

SCRAP CAR DISPOSAL - CASH PAID for Cars, Trucks, Vans - Big or Small. Call Joe at 647-294-2796.

LARGE BACHELOR APARTMENT in Palgrave for rent. Walkout on stone patio overlooking pond. Parking, full kitchen and 3 piece bath. Clean and bright. Available immediately. \$1300/month. First and last upfront. If interested text 416-708-7758 and I can send pics.

ARTICLES WANTED

BUYING VINYL RECORDS - STEREO - 45's. Cash for antiques and collectibles-stamp-coins. Call James at 416-569-9976.

SERVICES

TREE PRUNING and REMOVAL as well as minor landscaping. Free estimates. 20+ years experience. Call Russ at 416-802-9180.

YARD MAINTENANCE - PROPERTY CLEAN UP & REPAIR. Anything from lawn care to pruning, small construction. Reliable equipment and extensive experience. Call Cliff 519-546-8833.

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COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL CLEANER. Reliable Cleaning Services in Caledon. Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly at good rates. Twelve years experience. Call Kim for an appointment 647-739-2481

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER!

IF YOU WANT to keep drinking, that's your business. **IF YOU WANT** to stop drinking, that's our business. Call Alcoholics Anonymous Hot Line, 1-866-715-0005. www.aanorthaltonerin.org.

DRUG PROBLEM? We've been there, we can help! Please refer to georgianheartlandna.org for a complete list of Narcotics Anonymous meetings. Call anytime 519-215-0761.

ARE YOU A WOMAN living with abuse? For safety, emergency shelter, and counseling call Family Transition Place, (519)941-HELP or 1-800-265-9178.

FOR INFORMATION regarding **HEART and STROKE**, call Dori Ebel (519)941-1865 or 1-800-360-1557.

IF YOU or a FAMILY MEMBER are struggling with gambling, Gamblers Anonymous is there to HELP. Call: (1855) 222-5542 or visit www.gatoronto.ca.

ALZHEIMER SUPPORT GROUPS meet monthly for spousal & family support. Call (519) 941-1221.

ORANGEVILLE OVER 65 - Singles Social Club. A place to meet and make new friends. We meet every Thursday at 5:30 pm. Many activities. For information call Betty 519-942-3090 or text Janet at 519-216-3249.

ADVERTISING LOCALLY WORKS!

When you buy from a **small business** you're not helping a C.E.O buy a 3rd holiday home, you are helping a little girl get **dance lessons**, a little boy get his **team jersey**, a mom or dad put **food on the table**, a family **pay a mortgage** or a student **pay for college**.

Thanks for shopping local! ♥



47 Broadway Ave. ORANGEVILLE 519-942-2573

M&M FOOD MARKET MAKE DINNER EFFORTLESS

BACK TO OUR LOWEST PRICE OF THE YEAR*
*Lowest price of the year is based on 2026 to date.

INCREDIBLE PRICE **SAVE \$7**
12.99
Fully Cooked Chicken Wings 680 g
 Choose from 8 varieties.

SAVE \$5
12.99
Fall Off the Bone® Back Ribs
 1 FULL RACK OF RIBS 510 g - 680 g
CHOOSE FROM 4 VARIETIES.

SAVE \$3
16.99
Chicken Strips 680 g
 Also available, Cheesy Nacho Chicken Strips 680 g \$16.99 **SAVE \$3**

SAVE \$1
3.99 each
Bistro Chicken 114 g
 Choose from: Ricotta & Spinach • Swiss

SAVE \$1
3.99 each
Stuffed, Breaded Chicken 142 g
 Choose from: Broccoli and Cheese • Kiev • Parmesan • Swiss

Chocolate Dipped Cheesecake 600 g
NEW!
17.99 each
Chocolate Lovers Variety Pack 850 g
SAVE \$2 each
Dessert Bar Variety Pack 675 g

BUY 1 GET 1 50% OFF
 Regular price \$14.99 each

MIX AND MATCH
SAVE \$7.50

Mozzarella Sticks 15-21 PIECES 454 g
Jalapeño Cheese Sticks 13-16 PIECES 454 g

SAVE \$4
Haddock Tenders 8-12 PIECES 454 g
SAVE \$5
Italian Style Beef Meatballs 89-95 PIECES 907 g

SAVE \$7
12.99 each
Chicken Nuggets 33-40 PIECES 907 g

SAVE \$7
Supreme Homestyle Meat Loaf 600 g

MULTI-SERVE MEALS 850 g - 907 g **CHOOSE FROM 15 VARIETIES.**

Butter Chicken **SALE**
13.99 each

Chicken Pad Thai **SALE**
13.99 each

Creamy Chicken Lasagna **NEW RECIPE!**

Cabbage Rolls

DON'T WAIT. GRILL. 17.99 each **SAVE \$2**

Sirloin Beef Burgers 6 BURGERS x 142 g/5 oz

Angus Beef Burgers 6 BURGERS x 142 g/5 oz

Cheddar & Bacon Stuffed Beef Burgers 4 BURGERS x 170 g/6 oz

Gourmet Chicken Burgers 6 BURGERS x 142 g/5 oz

Prime Rib Beef Burgers 6 BURGERS x 142 g/5 oz

SmashHouse Angus Beef Burgers 8 BURGERS x 113 g/4 oz

Also available, Gourmet Buns 8 BUNS 624 g \$6.99

Pot Pies 225 g - 250 g 2 Varieties
Creamy Chicken

Seniors Day Every Tuesday 10% Off Regular Priced Items!

Quiche 170 g 3 Varieties
Florentine

Pink Salmon in Sauce 142 g
 Herb and Garlic, Applewood and Maple, Dill

4.99 each

PREMIUM SINGLE SERVES 400 g

Mediterranean Style Chicken & Rice **SALE**
8.99 each

Chicken Dumplings and Noodles

Also available, Korean Style Beef Noodles • Chicken Burrito Bowl • Italian Style Sausage and Penne • Chicken Carbonara \$8.99 each **SALE**

SANDWICHES & SAUSAGES

Frankfurters 18 PIECES 1 kg **17.99** **SAVE \$2**

Montreal Smoked Meat 2 POUCHES x 200 g **17.99**

Pulled Pork 2 POUCHES x 340 g **17.99** **SAVE \$2**

Philly Beef Steak 4 PORTIONS 336 g **17.99** **SAVE \$2**

Boneless Rib Style Pork Cutlettes 6 PIECES 680 g **12.99** **SAVE \$2**

Sausages 8-9 PIECES 900 g 2 Varieties **17.99** **SAVE \$2**

Also available, Gourmet Sausage Buns 6 BUNS 480 g \$6.99 • Demi Baguette 200 g \$2.99

BETTER WITH BACON

Bacon Wrapped Chicken 4 PIECES x 142 g/5 oz **19.99**

Mini Bacon Wrapped Chicken Fillets 14 PIECES 238 g **24.99** **SAVE \$2**

Bacon Wrapped Jalapeño Shooters® 12 PIECES 255 g **12.99** **SAVE \$2**

Beef and Bacon Skewers 15 SKEWERS 360 g **24.99** **SAVE \$2**

Bacon Wrapped Scallop Medallions 9-13 PIECES 300 g **17.99** **SAVE \$2**

Bacon Wrapped Beef Top Sirloin Steaks 4 STEAKS x 142 g/5 oz **29.99** **SAVE \$3**

KID-FRIENDLY

Chicken Chunks 17-28 PIECES 680 g **19.99** **SAVE \$7**

Cheesy Pizza Rolls 8 PIECES 460 g **10.99**

Also available, Pepperoni Pizza Rolls 8 PIECES 460 g \$10.99 **SAVE \$2**

Mini Pepperoni Pizzas 16 PIZZAS 1.7 kg **19.99** **SAVE \$2 each**

Chicken Quesadillas 4 PIECES 500 g **9.99**

Gluten-Free Margherita Pizza 330 g **10.99** **NEW!**

Flatbreads 460 g - 515 g 4 Varieties **9.99** **SAVE \$3**

Bruschetta

SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH

Cake Pops 6 PIECES 216 g **7.99 each** **SAVE \$2**

Mini Filled Donuts 8 PIECES 184 g **6.99** **SAVE \$3**

Chocolate Chip Cookie Ice Cream Sandwiches 6 SANDWICHES 600 mL **9.99** **SAVE \$2**

SAMPLING EVENT
FRIDAY, APRIL 10 - SATURDAY, APRIL 11
11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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TASTING Look for this icon for items to be sampled.



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