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HERE COMES SANTA CLAUS: Local youth connected to the Shelburne Rotary Club braved the cold and snowy weather on Saturday (Dec. 7) as they took part in the annual Shelburne Santa Clause Parade. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Town invites public to attend holiday-themed art exhibit

Written By **PAULA BROWN**
 LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
 The Town of Shelburne is celebrating the start of the holiday season with a new exhibit in its town hall art gallery.
 The Town unveiled the holiday-themed exhibit, "Holiday Art Show & Sale," on Saturday (Dec. 7). The exhibit features the original works of six local artists, all of whom have displayed their work in the Town Hall Art Gallery for previous shows.
 The "Holiday Art Show & Sale" showcases the diverse talents of the six local artists, each drawing inspiration from nature, landscapes, and their inner worlds. The exhibit also features a variety of styles, including abstract, portrait, landscape and realism.
 The six featured artists included Brian Blakeman, Alexandra Scott, Jo Thomson, Helen Duplassie, Lynne Schumacher and Megan Mare.
 Brian Blakeman is a landscape artist, whose career in the arts spans roughly 30 years. His art depicts a variety of landscapes,

from the tranquillity of Muskoka to the frigid winter plains, to the rock formations and sweeping lakes of the Bruce Peninsula. Blakeman curated a show for the Town Hall Art Gallery called "Northern Perspectives" in 2023 and returned to the space in November with "Northern Perspectives II."
 "Specializing in multi-faceted scenes, I blend my passion for naturalistic art and conservation to capture the essence of nature," said Blakeman.
 Alexandra Scott, a student of Westside Secondary School in Orangeville, displayed a collection of 27 pieces at her Town Hall exhibit in September. Scott discovered her passion for painting during the pandemic and has created pieces using charcoal, watercolours and acrylics. In each of her pieces, Scott adds an abstract twist to make them uniquely hers.
 "I find myself constantly inspired by the experiences and emotions I encounter every day," said Scott.
 Mono-based artist Jo Thomson gave Shelburne residents the opportunity to glimpse

the "essence of plants" with her exhibit, titled "Plantopia", which was held in the art gallery in April. Thomson creates her pieces by first preserving foraged botanicals such as leaves, grass and dried flowers from her property. She then uses two traditional photographic print methods, cyanotypes, which are blue-based images created using the sun's UV rays, and photograms, black-and-white prints developed using a traditional darkroom. The methods create art described as "cameraless photographs" of botanicals.
 "Direct contact with organic objects captures their true scale and form, with photograms highlighting detail and cyanotypes offering a softer, translucent effect," explained Thomson.
 Helen Duplassie and Lynne Schumacher displayed their works of art at the Town Hall Art Gallery in August as part of an exhibit featuring 14 members of the Southern Ontario Visual Artists (SOVA).

Continued on Page 7


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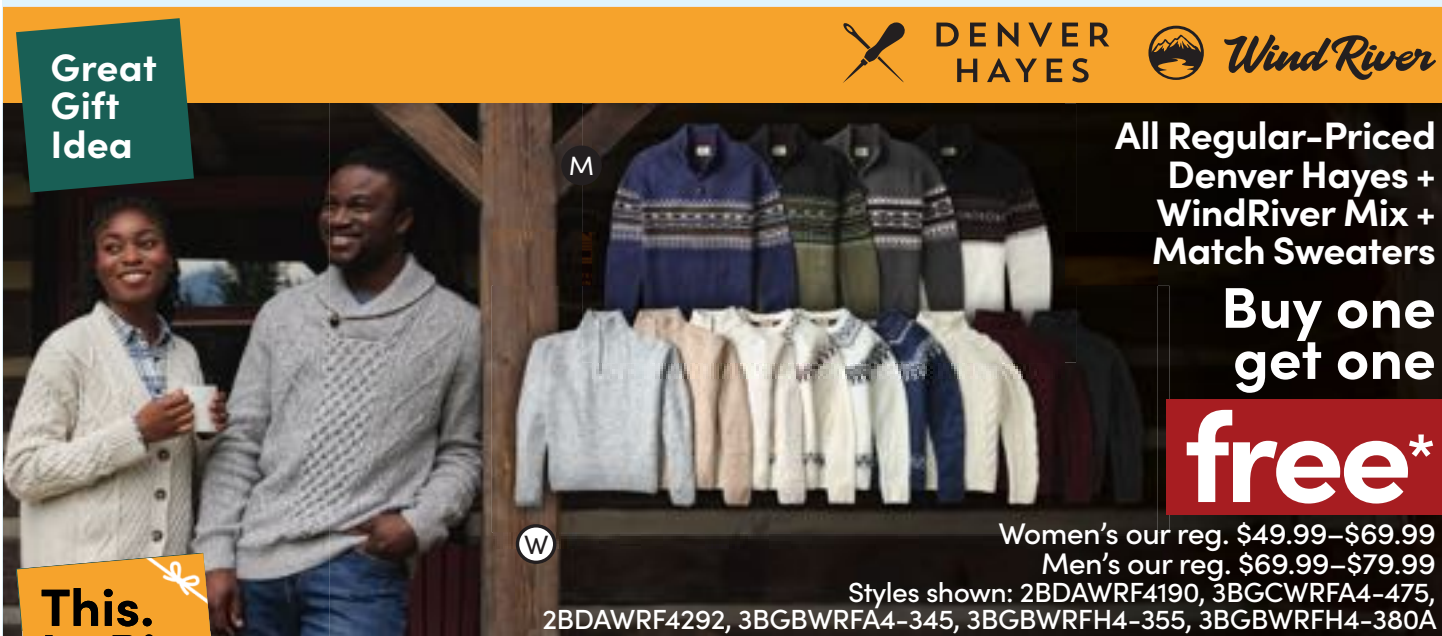
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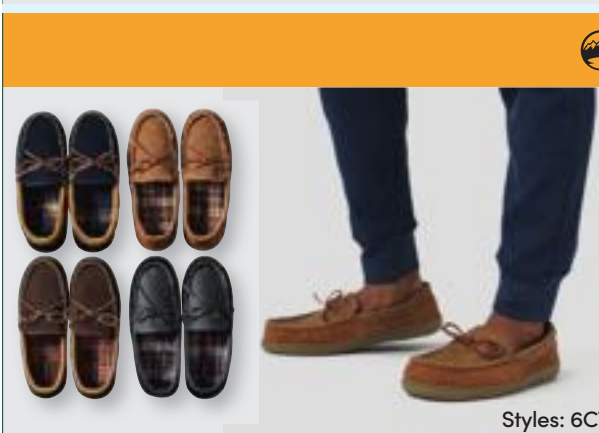
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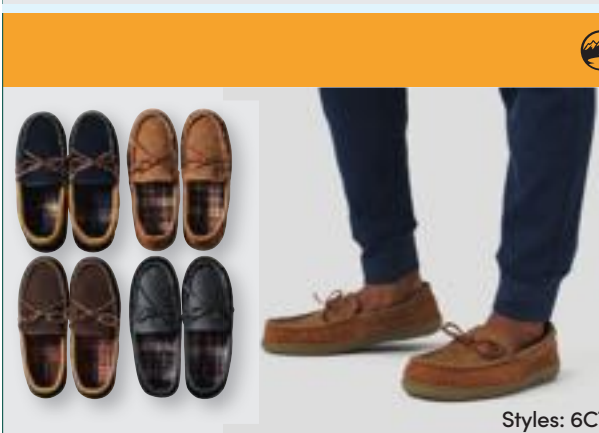
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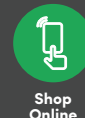
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MORE WAYS TO SHOP



Local Tim's Hortons owner receives Paul Harris Fellow Award

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Rotary Club of Shelburne has recognized the charitable contributions of a local business owner with a prestigious award.

The local Rotary Club presented John Lewandowski, owner of Shelburne's two Tim Horton locations, with the Paul Harris Fellow Award on Dec. 4. Lewandowski was selected for the recognition based on his support of Shelburne Rotary through the Tim Horton's Smile Cookie campaign.

"We proposed John, because of his donations to the Rotary through the Smile Cookie campaign over the last three years, that has made a huge impact on the community," said Bill Waite, president of the Shelburne Rotary Club. "The financial contributions he's made to us and trusted us to disperse has meant a lot to Rotary and the community."

The Paul Harris Fellow Award is the highest award given by Rotary International. It is presented to a person who has made outstanding contributions to their community and exemplifies the Rotary ideal of "service above self." Named after Rotary founder, Paul Harris, the award was established in 1957 to encourage and show appreciation for substantial contributions to a program

known then as, the Rotary Foundation Fellowships for Advanced Study.

Past community recipients of the Paul Harris Fellow Award include Greg and Heather Holmes, who hosted the annual musical event Pickin' in the Park and helped raise donations for Fiddle Park improvements and the Shelburne Food Bank. Ardiith Dunlop, volunteer coordinator for the Shelburne Food Bank, received the award in 2023 for her 30 years of volunteer service with the local food bank.

"I am honoured to have received the Shelburne Rotary Club's Paul Harris Fellow Award. Their motto of 'service above self' very much aligns with my personal beliefs and this recognition reinforces the importance of giving back to our community. Shelburne has changed a lot since Tim Hortons came to town and I am happy to be able to contribute to the well-being and growth of our local community," said Lewandowski.

Lewandowski's support of the Shelburne Rotary Club has helped aid a number of local organizations and causes including the Backpack Program, the Shelburne Food Bank, the Shelburne Hamper Program and enhancement to the local splash pad.

"Our two locations are rooted in Shelburne, and my wife Meagen and myself, strongly believe in giving back to the people



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ROTARY RECOGNITION: The Rotary Club of Shelburne presented local Tim Hortons owner, John Lewandowski with the Paul Harris Fellow award. The award is the most prestigious award given out by Rotary International and is given to an individual who has made major contributions to their community. Lewandowski was recognized for his support of the Rotary Club of Shelburne through the Tim Hortons Smile Cookie Campaign

who support us every day. Partnering with the Rotary Club and their programs and initiatives like our Smile Cookie Campaign allows us to make a positive impact and help those in need. These campaigns not only raise funds, but also bring our team members and the community together," Lewandowski added.

Streams Community Hub receives \$50,000 for Miles of Smiles Van campaign

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Streams Community Hub is one step closer to reaching its fundraising goal to purchase a passenger vehicle for its after-school programming after securing a \$50,000 grant.

The local youth-focused arts charity announced in a press release on Tuesday (Dec. 10) that they have received a \$50,000 grant from the Commonwell Mutual Insurance Group's Learning Engagement & Accelerator Fund (L.E.A.F).

The money from the grant will go towards Streams Community Hub's Miles of Smiles Van Campaign, which looks to raise funds to purchase a 15-seater van to transport students from school to the hub for after-school programming.

"This project is vital to removing barriers for families in our community to access our programming, without public transit children are often unable to access our site," said Juli-Anne James, co-founder and executive director of Streams Community Hub. "Our goal is to remove obstacles that prevent children and youth from accessing the resources they need to grow, learn and thrive."

Administered by The Commonwell Mutual Insurance Group, the L.E.A.F. program has invested \$400,000 in grants this year.

"We received over \$3.7 million in funding requests this year, highlighting its crucial role in supporting communities," said Tim Shauf, president of Commonwell, about the L.E.A.F. program. "Our L.E.A.F. grants are about caring beyond us, and beyond now."

Launched in the summer of 2017 by co-founders Juli-Anne and Andrew James, Streams Community Hub initially started as a seasonal art program for youth across Dufferin County to learn various disciplines, including visual arts, cooking, music, theatre performance and film.

After years of running on a seasonal basis and utilizing local school spaces, Streams announced in July of 2021 that they would be opening their first permanent location, a 3,600-square-foot facility. The new facility meant that Streams could expand its programming year-round.

In 2022, Streams Community Hub celebrated its 5th anniversary with the opening of its permanent facility at 305 Col. Phillips Drive in Shelburne.

As a registered charity, Streams Community Hub offers an accessible arts program for children and youth aged 14-17. Local youth learn about creativity and community while taking part in art-focused after-school classes, summer camps, and performing arts workshops.

Streams Community Hub has noted that getting to and from their after-school or camp programs can be challenging for families who don't have reliable transportation.

"The van is more than just a vehicle; it's an essential tool in our mission to remove the obstacles that prevent children and youth from accessing the resources they need to learn, grow, and thrive," said Streams Community Hub.

Streams Community Hub announced in November that they would be the recipients of this year's Tim Hortons Holiday Smile Cookie campaign, which ran from Nov. 18 to Nov. 24.

The funds raised through the Tim Hortons Holiday Smile Cookie campaign have been slated to help cover the remaining amount needed to purchase the 15-seat van for Streams.

To learn more about the programs available at Streams Community Hub, visit www.streamshub.org.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MILES FOR SMILES: Streams Community Hub announced on Tuesday (Dec. 10) that they received a grant for \$50,000 from Commonwell Mutual Insurance, called the Learning Engagement & Accelerator Fund (L.E.A.F). The grant will be used to purchase a 15-seater van for the youth arts charity, to help children attend after-school programming.



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OPINION

How smart are you?

I think people in general consider themselves to be intelligent.

It's very rare to hear someone say, "I am really dumb" and actually believe it.

Most people don't really like to admit they know nothing about a subject if brought up in conversation.

It depends on which circles you hang around which will provide conversations of interest over a game of cards.

I attended a New Year's Eve dinner a couple of years ago. I knew no one at this party other than the woman I went with. They were all in her social circle, and I was just a curiosity from out of town who arrived at the party.

I knew that everyone there had vastly different career backgrounds. One person was a retired doctor, and one was a retired firefighter. Other people came from all different backgrounds.

What I did notice, was the conversation never steered towards one person or their perceived importance in the community.

Never once, did the doctor mention her former occupation or bring up something to do with medicine. I was impressed by this group. It was like there was a general agreement they were all on an equal footing in life.

You may be a doctor, but you don't call the hospital to report your house is on fire.

I recently read a report on a woman who

apparently has the highest IQ of anyone on the planet. I'm not sure how you really test someone's IQ and assign a number.

A series of tests designed to test a person's IQ and assign a number was originally created over 100 years ago. There have been numerous other tests created over the years to offer a similar way of testing how smart people are.

But how can you assign a number to intelligence? Most of the tests created have been skewed in certain ways to satisfy the person creating the test.

Even a person creating an IQ test can't think of all the ways a person may be above average in things other than math.

Several years ago, a friend of mine had an eight-year-old son who was fascinated by the weather for some reason. He bought books, magazines, calendars – anything with a picture of a tornado, hurricane, or lightning storm would be his collection.

He studied the books every night to learn about weather patterns.

During a parent/teacher conference, my friend was told by the teacher, that her son can't concentrate, and does not seem to care about any subjects in school. The teacher said his knowledge of any subject was very limited.

My friend's response to her son's teacher,

was something like, "he can't concentrate? I see him get his books and maps and magazines out, and study them for hours. If we called him in here and questioned him, I guarantee he would know more about weather patterns in North America, than you do."

The teacher declined the challenge of facing off with an 8-year-old on the subject of weather.

Intelligence testing is done in schools in Ontario, in some ways. I recall taking a 'fill in the circle' test in elementary school while some very serious and angry people observed us from around the room.

I don't know how these tests are currently conducted, but I do know, the results of those tests would go on some record and every teacher after that would consider you to be an idiot if you didn't do well.

Assigning a number to intelligence just isn't practical.

It's also a great way to make a kid feel uncomfortable.

"You only got a 110? I got a 115. I'm a lot smarter than you."

And that comment is based on a number from a single test that doesn't run full range of things that could determine how smart a person really is.

I went to college with a girl who had to be the best. She would constantly remind us

that her father doesn't work, because he just sits around all day waiting for cheques to arrive from the tenants in apartment buildings he had inherited, implying the family was wealthy.

Except, she would slip up sometimes and we realized her father was some type of slum-lord.

This girl had previously graduated from Queens University – a prestigious school – and she brought it up at every opportunity.

One day, she said, "I have an IQ of 146."

I said, "Wow, I didn't know you went to school in the U.S."

She gave me a quizzical look, and said "I didn't."

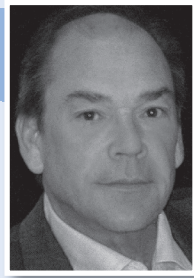
I explained that Ontario does not do, or assign numbers from standard IQ tests. She gave me the dumbest stare ever.

"Where did you get your IQ tested?" I asked her.

She started mumbling some ridiculous story before making up some excuse and exiting quickly.

Some of the most intelligent people you probably know, are the ones that quietly go through life, but never try to explain why they are so good at what they do.

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



Syria Gets Another Chance

Take a moment, first, to celebrate the fall of a regime of surpassing evil even by the demanding standards of the Middle East. Father and son, the Assad regime oppressed and abused the Syrian people for 53 years, and now it is gone in a week. Even the American-backed puppet regime in Afghanistan did not fall that fast.

The Russians, the Iranians and Hezbollah in Lebanon supported Bashar al-Assad through the last thirteen years of hot and cold civil war in Syria, but in the end they let him go. Hezbollah has been gutted by the Israelis, Moscow is too distracted by its war in Ukraine, and Iran is frightened of a joint attack by Israel and a Trump-led United States.

The big winners at this point, therefore, seem to be Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the one hand, and the rebranded jihadis who have now taken control of Damascus and most of Syria's

other big cities on the other. But it was Netanyahu's triumph over Hezbollah that indirectly helped the jihadis into power in Syria, and he may regret it.

The current name for the Islamist group that has just gained control of most of Syria's population is Hayat Tahrir-al Sham (HTS). That means 'Organisation for the Liberation of the Levant', a neutral name for what now claims to be a broad nationalist front – but HTS's roots lie in al-Qaeda and the murderous head-choppers of Islamic State.

'Once a jihadi, always a jihadi,' some would say, and HTS remains classed as a terrorist organisation by the United Nations, the United States, Turkey and Russia. US officials have even called HTS "a vehicle to advance [al-Qaeda's] position in the Syrian uprising."

However, it is possible that the leopard really has changed its spots. So far, in its

victory march across Syria, HTS has lived up to its promise not to impose shariah law on Syria's many and diverse sects. Even the Christian, Druze and Alawite minorities are being treated with respect – although for the Alawites, at least, that may not be convincing enough.

Alawites are no more than 10 per cent of Syria's population, and for most of the region's history they were an obscure agrarian minority. But the French recruited their colonial army in Syria largely from the Alawite community precisely because it was a marginal and powerless group – and when the French left, the Alawite soldiers took over the country.

For more than half a century the Alawites dominated Syria and benefitted greatly from the Assad clan's monopoly of power. They now fear that they will be held collectively responsible for the regime's crimes, and they will be strongly tempted to cut their own territory free from the ruins of the Syrian state.

They might actually achieve that if they move fast enough, particularly if they can get tacit Russian support for their separation from the rest. Their home territory includes almost all of Syria's Mediterranean coast and is home to Russia's air and naval bases in the region – and so far, HTS's march south has not impinged on the core Alawite territory.

Further fragmentation of Syria is possible if the Kurds in the east and the Druze in the south (near the Israeli border) try to go their own way, but the Turks, erstwhile sponsors of HTS, will strive to prevent that. Which way the United States will jump

(under new management) remains to be seen.

And the biggest change, which Western observers seem constrained from mentioning by some misplaced cultural sensitivity, is the collapse of Shia power and influence in the region. Iran is 95% Shia and Iraq at least 70% Shia, but Lebanon and Syria had also become

As for the question of the leopard's spots, it really is too soon to tell. Even if Abu Muhammad al-Jolani, the leader of HTS, is secretly the extremist that his early associations suggest, it would make good tactical sense for him to pretend to moderation until his relatively small group has established a secure position at the heart of Syrian politics.

That moment may never even come. The Syrian political stage is suddenly crowded with many other players with their own agendas, and the largely peaceful and non-violent nature of the Assad regime's collapse has created no conquering hero whose charisma overshadows all potential rivals.

We could imagine a different future for Syria in which the half of the population who have become internal or external refugees return safely to their homes, all but the worst of the criminals who served the Assad regime are pardoned and rehabilitated, and the country begins to rebuild a future worth having.

That may be a fantasy, but don't write the country off before it has a chance.

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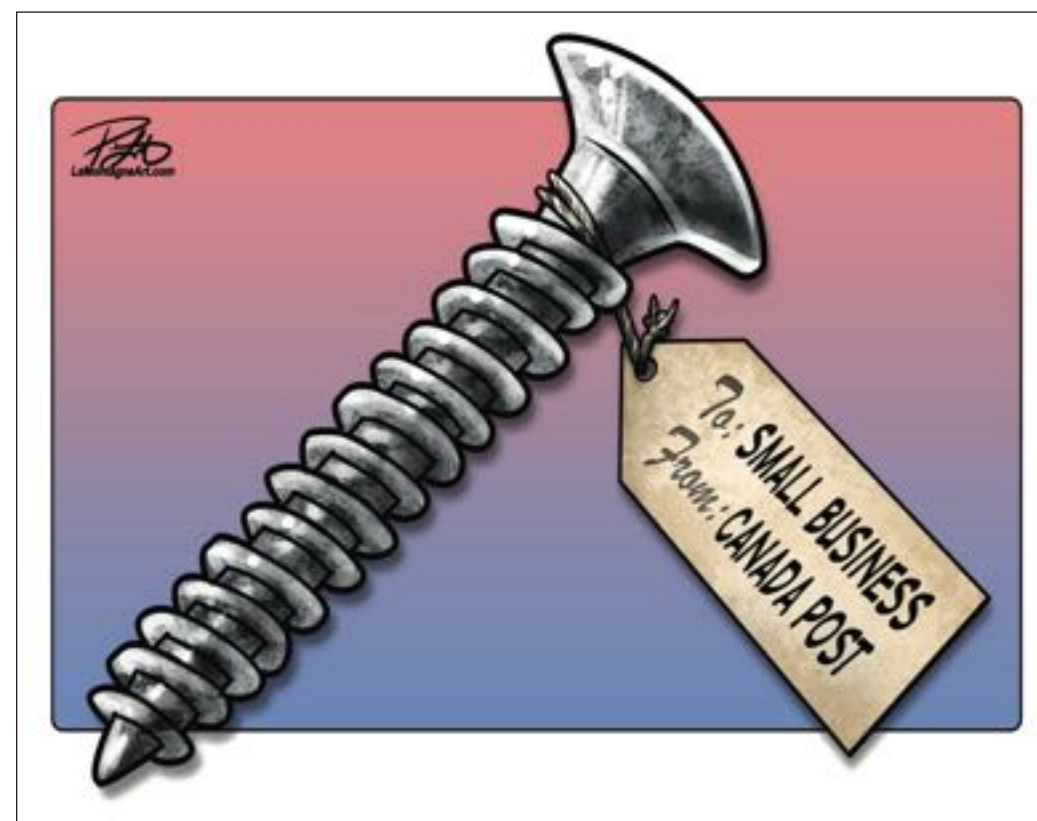
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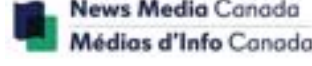
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Great Big Sea tribute band performing at Grace Tipling Hall Friday

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Shelburne residents will have the opportunity to hear songs from one of Canada's most well-known bands performed live at an upcoming concert.

Off the Rock, a tribute band for Canadian band Great Big Sea, will be hitting the stage at Grace Tipling Hall in Shelburne at 7:30 p.m. on Friday (Dec. 13).

"We've never been to Shelburne to perform a show before, so it's exciting to go a new town, especially one where we've heard there's a lot of people that like the East Coast Celtic kind of sound. We're excited about the show," said Anthony Clayton, guitarist and vocalist for Off the Rock.

A Christmas edition of their regular show, Off the Rock will be singing a number of holiday songs as well as incorporating some East Coast and Newfoundland traditions into their sets.

The show won't all be Christmas songs, with the band set to play some of the Great Big Sea's greatest hits including "Ordinary

Day," "Run Runaway," "The Night Pat Murphy Died," "When I'm Up" and "Sea of No Cares."

A big component of Off the Rock's shows is the band's interactions with the audience. During their shows, the band members utilize wireless instruments to allow them to head out into the audience. They also encourage audience members to sing along and dance to the songs they're playing.

"We always have to state that this is not an opera, you're not sitting there watching us. We want you up with us, singing and playing along," said Clayton. "Of 30-plus years of performing, I have never had so much fun. I think that's what people will see when they come to see us. We have so much fun on stage and off stage with the crowd."

Off the Rock consists of the musical talents of Anthony Clayton, Thom Speck, Sean Battams, Steve Peckford, David Skolnick and Aaron Spink.

The band was formed in 2021 after Clayton reached out to lead vocalists of different Celtic bands in Ontario with his idea of creating a tribute band for Great Big Sea. The



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A NOT SO ORDINARY DAY: The Shelburne Community will have the opportunity to hear the songs of Great Big Sea performed by tribute band, Off the Rock on Friday (Dec. 13) at 7:30 p.m. at Grace Tipling Hall.

band did their first show together in October of 2022.

Since then, the band has gone on to perform at venues across the province, completed two tours on the East Coast, is sched-

uling a tour in Alberta for 2026/2027 and is exploring shows in the United States.

Tickets for the Off the Rock Christmas Show are \$45 and can be purchased on the band's website, www.offtherockband.com.

Family Transition Place's candlelight vigil marks 35th anniversary of Montreal Massacre

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Family Transition Place (FTP) honoured the women and individuals who have lost their lives to gender-based violence as they marked the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and the 35th anniversary of the École Polytechnique Massacre.

Staff members, community leaders and local residents gathered at FTP in Orangeville (20 Bredin Parkway) on Friday (Dec. 6) for a candlelight vigil. At the base of each candle were the names of women and children from the 2024 femicide list, the women killed during the Montreal massacre, and local women who have died at the hands of gender-based violence.

"Every year, on this day we stand here and it's painful and emotional and it serves as a reminder that there is so much work, we still need to do to end gender-based violence," said Lynette Pole-Langdon, executive director of FTP. "We know that we can't do it alone. We need each and every one of you in this community to work along side us."

The École Polytechnique, also known as the Montreal Massacre, took place on Dec. 6, 1989, when a lone gunman separated the men from the women students inside the en-

gineering school before opening fire; killing 14 women and injuring others.

The 14 women killed in the gender-based attack were Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michele Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

"These women were daughters, sisters, friends and colleagues. Each of them had dreams, hopes and aspirations that were brutally cut short by an act of gender-based violence," said Pole-Langdon.

This year, the commemoration of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women holds even more significance for FTP as one of the names on the 2024 Femicide List comes from Dufferin County.

Dufferin OPP officers were called to a residence on Highway 10, at roughly 9 p.m. on Sept. 19 to investigate a suspicious death. As a result of the investigation, Dufferin OPP officers arrested and charged 49-year-old Daniel Domjanic in connection to the death of 76-year-old Jelana Domjanic. The case is currently before the Ontario Court of Justice.

"Her death is a tragic and stark reminder of the pervasive issue of gender-based vio-



PAULA BROWN PHOTO

STANDING IN SOLIDARITY: Community members stood vigil outside Family Transition Place while holding burning candles with the names of victims of gender-based violence, femicide, and the École Polytechnique Massacre on Friday (Dec. 6), as they marked the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

lence. It is not a big city issue. It can happen in any community, and sadly, it happens in ours, year after year," said

According to Family Transition Place, there have been 16 women and children in Dufferin County who have lost their lives as a result of femicide since 1997.

Danielle Churly, a member of Family Transition Place's Domestic Assault Review Team Survivor Panel, spoke during the candlelight vigil about her own experience with gender-based violence.

Continued on Page 14

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'I was held at gunpoint with my two very small children:' Orangeville man speaks out against delayed response from police during home invasion

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

From a young age, many of us are taught that when you're in danger or experiencing an emergency, the first step is to pick up the phone and call 911.

For Orangeville resident Theo Meadows, in his moment of crisis, he found his calls for help put on hold.

Shortly before 5 a.m. on Nov. 3, Meadows was lying awake in bed when a rustling sound at his front door prompted him to get up and head downstairs. It wasn't until he made it down the flight of stairs that he realized the sound he had heard was breaking glass.

"My brain couldn't figure out what was going on. I walked down stairs to see what was going on and I look at the front door and I see this guy breaking through the glass. He stuck the gun up at me through the window," recalled Meadows.

He said he ran back upstairs to the second floor of his home, first closing the doors to the bedrooms his five-year-old daughter and two-year-old son were sleeping in, and then grabbing his phone to call for help.

"I was able to let off one 911 call and it got put on hold. I tried to hang up, because my idea was, hang up and call right back and that'll go through," said Meadows. "By the time I hung up, all of them were inside my room."

Meadow described how in the next mo-

ments he was grabbed, pinned to his bed and held at gunpoint while the intruders demanded money and valuables.

It was at this moment that Meadows' five-year-old daughter opened her bedroom door and the gunman turned from him to point the gun at her.

"I was physically being confined to my bed while someone held a gun against my daughter and I was watching; me and her had our eyes locked on each other," said Meadows. "I've fought myself since then thinking how could I have let this happen."

Meadows said he told the armed group there was a safe in his closet and while the armed intruder went downstairs to retrieve the keys for the safe, he was able to make a second and third call to 911.

"I called 911 again and was put on hold again. I tried to call them back but I didn't have time because he was upstairs again," said Meadows.

From there, Meadows told the armed group that he didn't have any other valuables, which led them to flee the house. With the group gone, Meadows made a call to 911 for a fourth time and finally connected with an operator, but they couldn't hear him properly.

"At this point I'm thinking why am I even trying to call anyways, they're not going to do anything," said Meadows. "It was a very scary thing that happened."

No injuries were reported from the Nov. 3 incident, but the entire experience has left

Meadows questioning his safety.

"I was held a gunpoint with my two very small children, absolutely defenseless in my house and 911 wouldn't respond," said Meadows.

While the OPP said they can't comment on Meadows' case, as it's an ongoing police investigation, Dufferin OPP media officer Cst. Andrew Fines did note that home invasions with weapons are not a common occurrence in Dufferin County.

According to statistics from the Dufferin OPP detachment, in 2022 there were 86 reported incidents of breaking and entering incidents in Dufferin County, in 2023 there were 108 reported incidents and to date, in 2024 there have been 54 reported cases.

"It's an unfortunate situation that occurred," said Fines.

Speaking with the Free Press, Meadows said he wanted to share his story to make other residents aware of what happened and prompt changes in how 911 calls are responded to in Dufferin County, so it doesn't happen to other families.

The County of Dufferin is the 911 Authority for the eight municipalities within the region and has contracted a third-party dispatching system called Northern911 to serve as the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).

When a call is placed to 911 in Dufferin County, a call-taker will answer asking if the individual needs police, fire or ambulance. Based on the caller's answers they are transferred to the emergency dispatch they need. During this time, the PSAP call taker remains on the line to ensure the caller is connected to a dispatcher before disconnecting from the call.

In a 2023 General Government Services

budget package for the County of Dufferin, it was reported there were a total of 14,242 calls made to 911 in 2022 in Dufferin County. Recent reports indicate that in 2023 there were 15,766 calls to 911.

According to the County of Dufferin, 90 per cent of all 911 calls arriving at the PSAP are answered within 15 seconds and 95 per cent of the calls should be answered within 20 seconds. Northern911 has a reported average answering time of 5.9 seconds, which is less than one ring cycle.

The County of Dufferin has seven possible dispatch centres that callers can be connected to during an emergency, but calls for police are singularly routed to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Call Centre in Orillia.

"On the morning in question the County of Dufferin's PSAP, operated by Northern911, functioned as designed and each call was directed to the OPP dispatch centre without unnecessary delay," said Steve Murphy, manager of Preparedness and 911 for Dufferin County.

It's at the OPP dispatch centre where the issue took place.

Being left on hold by the OPP during his family's emergency has left Meadows with significant distrust in the ability of 911 call centres to respond without delay.

"I was put on hold multiple times by OPP and I had given up on calling," said Meadows. "I know if I call 911, they're not showing up and nothing could convince me otherwise."



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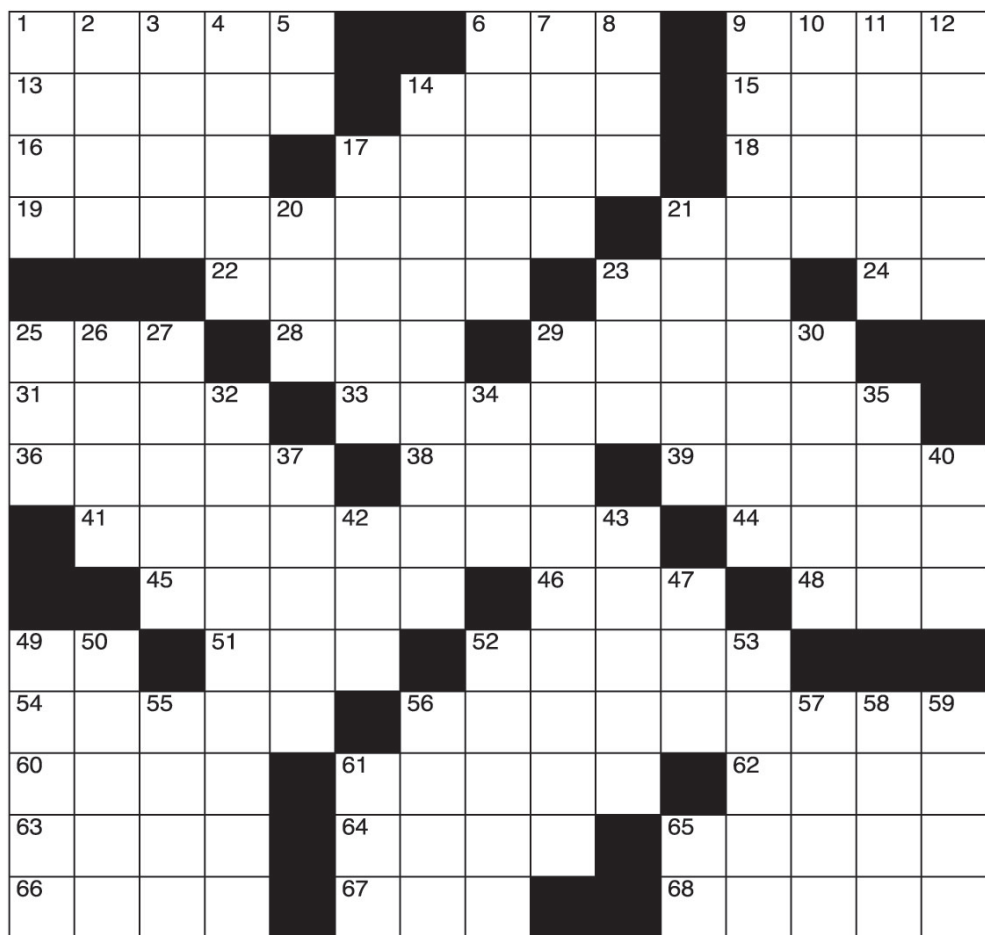
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1. Thou __ do it
6. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
9. Brainstem part
13. Town in New York state
14. Little (Spanish)
15. Continent
16. Retch
17. Short-billed rails
18. Small period of time (abbr.)
19. Confused
21. A team needs one
22. Woman in ancient times
23. Republican Party
24. Spanish be
25. "The Godfather" character Johnny
28. Not around
29. City in Zambia
31. A type of beginning
33. Numb
36. Gurus
38. Small, gray-headed crow
39. Vehicle type

CLUES DOWN

41. Disorders
44. One point east of southeast
45. Indian soldier
46. Tree type
48. Midway between south and southeast
49. It cools your home
51. Corn comes on it
52. Ship's deck
54. A way to bake
56. Improvised
60. Butterfly genus
61. Baseball fields have them
62. Designated space
63. Discharge
64. Two of something
65. Once more
66. Part of your face
67. Tax collector
68. Cassia tree

CLUES ACROSS

5. The Volunteer State
6. Non-hydraulic cement
7. Horse mackerel
8. Jackson and Diddley are two
9. Splendid displays
10. Mountain in NE Greece
11. A daughter or your brother or sister
12. German surname
14. Having more than one husband at a time
17. Romanian city
20. Energy
21. Makes less hot
23. Gas diffusion electrode
25. Former CIA
26. Set an example for others
27. Support of a particular person
29. One from the Big Apple
30. Mountain range
32. Violate the sanctity

CLUES DOWN

34. Supervises flying
35. Talks
37. Persian male given name
40. Born of
42. Forcibly take one's possessions
43. Discounts
47. Knockouts
49. Posh Colorado destination
50. Form of therapy
52. British rock band
53. Type of virus (abbr.)
55. The U. of Miami mascot is one
56. Volcanic crater
57. Middle Eastern nation
58. Sinn __, Irish organization
59. Ethiopian lake
61. Bits per inch (abbr.)
65. Equally

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

Headwaters Foundation receives \$67,000 from various Lions Clubs

Written By PAULA BROWN
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Headwaters Health Care Foundation (HHCF) purchased two new pieces of medical equipment for the local hospital after receiving a donation from the region's Lions Clubs.

The fundraising organization for Headwaters Health Care Centre announced in a press release on Tuesday (Dec. 10) that they had been gifted a donation of over \$67,000 from the Lions Clubs of Orangeville, Grand Valley, Shelburne as well as Lions Clubs International Foundation and the Lions Club of District A-9.

The money from the donation was used to purchase a Bookwalter Retractor Set and Prostatectomy Instrumentation.

"This grant will make a huge difference to the level of care provided at Headwaters Health Care Centre, expanding our services to include care for patients who need prostate surgery," said K.C. Carruthers, CEO of HHCF.

According to Headwaters Hospital, there have been 237 patients within Headwater's catchment area who have undergone radical prostatectomy procedures at other hospitals over the past five years.

Most commonly patients are sent to University Health Network in Toronto, followed by William Osler Health System in Brampton and St. Joseph's Health Care in Hamilton.

"The Bookwalter Retractor Set and Prostatectomy Instrumentation will allow surgeons at Headwaters to perform surgeries on individuals with prostate cancer," explained Dr. Shreyas Gandhi, Chief of Urology at Headwaters. "Prior to this gift, we were unable to offer this procedure to patients at our hospital, instead we would send them to hospitals outside of the region. Funding this equipment will improve care for patients by expediting cancer care and reducing systemic pressures through a reduced need to transfer patients to distant hospitals with long surgical wait times."

The local Lions Clubs have supported Headwaters Health Care Centre for over 20 years and have gifted more than \$400,000.

The purchase of the two pieces of medical equipment was supported in large part by funds donated by the Orangeville Lions' TV Bingo. The project was spearheaded by long-time Orangeville Lions member Dan Roach and Lions Past District Governor Wally Pugh in conjunction with Lions Clubs International Foundation.

"As an Orangeville Lion and member of our community, I am extremely proud of the relationship our club and Lions Clubs International Foundation have had in supporting Headwaters Health Care Foundation since its inception," said Roach. "I am also proud of our community for supporting the Orangeville Lions TV Bingo, which allowed us to contribute



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

HELPING HAND: Headwaters Health Care Foundation (HHCF) received a donation of more than \$67,000 from local Lions Clubs to help with the purchase of two new pieces of medical equipment.

\$20,000 towards this project. I truly believe Headwaters Health Care Centre touches all of us in the community at some point."

To learn more about the Lions Club or to

donate, visit www.lionsclubs.org. For more information about Headwaters Health Care Foundation or to donate, visit www.hhcfoundation.com.

Town of Shelburne invites public to attend holiday-themed art exhibit until Dec. 20

Continued from FRONT

Duplassie's work is mainly as a realist and landscape artist but also includes portraits and still life. Her work looks to convey how she sees the world, whether it's microscopic or huge and powerful and recreates the beauty, power or emotion. She utilizes mediums like oil paint, acrylic, watercolour and dye on silk.

"My artwork is a vibrant tapestry of vases, plants, and trees, celebrating the beauty in every piece," said Duplassie.

Schumacher studied commercial art at Central Technical School in Toronto but de-

cidated that painting landscapes was a better fit for her personality. Her artistic journey has seen her take part in art shows like Toronto City Hall Art in the Park, McMichael and The Artists Project. Her pieces have been on display at the Art Gallery of Ontario and various commercial galleries.

"From the woods of Haliburton to the rugged coasts of Nova Scotia, my realistic nature paintings capture the essence and mood of the landscapes I love," said Schumacher.

Megan Mare, program coordinator for Streams Community Hub, was among 11 artists featured in the art charity's takeover of the Town Hall Art Gallery in May.

The exhibit, which consisted of roughly 30 pieces, blended the artwork of local youth with those of practicing professional artists and displayed a range of art types including illustration, expressionism, abstract, and realism.

"As an arts facilitator and entrepreneur in Shelburne, I blend my passion for crochet, fiber arts, and self-expression into a journey of creative freedom and exploration," said Mare.

The "Holiday Show & Sale" exhibit opened for visitors on Dec. 7 and will remain on display until Dec. 20.

For those interested in viewing the holiday-themed exhibit, the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery is located at 203 Main Street East. The gallery hours are 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

More information about the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery, including upcoming exhibits for 2025, can be found at www.shelburne.ca.





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ALL WELCOME

SPORTS

High school girls start volleyball season with a tournament

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

District 4 high school girls' volleyball got underway on Wednesday, Dec. 4, with the first tournament of the season taking place at Emmanuel Christian High School in Fergus.

District 4 volleyball is played as a series of all-day tournaments throughout the season. Four teams are invited to each tournament and each team plays three matches throughout the day.

The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals have teams entered in both the junior and senior divisions this year.

Other District 4 entries include Wellington Heights Secondary School, Emmanuel Christian High School, Erin District High School, Norwell District Secondary School, and Westside Secondary School.

Junior

The Royals junior girls team played their first match of the day against Wellington Heights. The Royals played well but were squeezed 2-1 in the first match.

In the second match of the day, they were up against Emmanuel Christian High School. Again, the Royals put out a good effort but

had to settle for a 3-0 loss.

The Royals' final match had them facing Erin District High School, where they took a 2-1 loss.

Senior

The senior girl's Royals team started with a 10 a.m. match with Wellington Heights. It was a close game but the Royals had to settle for a 2-1 match loss.

At mid-day, the Royal were up against Emmanuel Christian in a match that was well played by both teams.

The Royals lost 3-0 in the match.

In the final match of the day, the Royals faced Erin District High School. The match ended with a 2-1 loss for the Royals.

The next tournament day was held Wednesday, Dec. 11, at Erin District High School. The results were not available before press time.

At each tournament, two teams have to sit it out to accommodate the schedule.

The Royals will be back on the court on Monday, Dec. 16, when they will host a tournament in the gym at Centre Dufferin.

The first matches will start at 10 a.m. with the last matches scheduled for 2:40 p.m.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

HANDS UP: The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals junior girls' volleyball team takes on the Emmanuel Christian High School Eagles in Fergus during the first tournament of the season on Dec. 4. The Royals had to settle for a 3-0 match loss in this game. Each team plays three matches on tournament days.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

BIG BUMP: The Centre Dufferin District High School Royals senior girls' volleyball team are up against the Emmanuel Christian High School Eagles in the Royals' second match of the day on Dec.4. The Royals played well but took a 3-0 loss.

Alliston Hornets continue to dominate the North Carruthers Division

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

Fans of Junior C hockey are watching the Alliston Hornets very closely this season.

The Hornets are the only undefeated team in the entire Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) line-up of 62 teams.

They have now won 21 games straight and are leading the division with 42 points. They are seven points ahead of the second-place Orillia Terriers and eight points ahead of the third-place Stayner Siskins.

The Hornets picked up four more points over the week. On Friday (Dec. 6) night, they hammered the Huntsville Otters 11-3. They followed up with a second win over the Penetang Kings the following day and left the ice with a 5-2 victory at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre in Alliston.

"We're a defensive team first, so we make sure we take care of our own end and that translates to offence in their end," said Al-

liston forward, Jaeden French after Friday's game against Huntsville. "Confidence level on the team has never been so high. We're feeling good. We're going to keep doing what we do. We treat every game like it's a playoff game every time we show up a the rink, and every practice too. We're a hard-working team and we're going to continue to do our thing."

The Penetang Kings are currently in fourth place in the Division with 24 points and an 11-14 record, including two overtime losses.

The Innisfil Spartans are in the number five spot with eight wins and 17 losses.

The Huntsville Otters have a lot of work to do after landing in sixth place with a 7-16 record including one overtime loss.

In the basement, the Midland Flyers have won only five games this season, two more than the Muskoka Bears, as they have managed to take only three wins over the season.

In other divisions in the PJHL across the province, the leading teams are Clarington Eagles, Frankford Huskies, Hanover Barons, Dundas Blues, New Hamburg Firebirds,

Essex 73s, and Exeter Hawks.

Some of the teams have returned solid squads from the past while a few others have emerged as stronger teams this year.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

GOING THE DISTANCE: The Alliston Hornets host the Huntsville Otters at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre in Alliston on Friday, Dec. 6. Junior C fans are watching the Hornets closely this season as the only undefeated team in the 62-team Provincial Junior Hockey League, with 21 wins under their belt. The Hornets won this game 11-3.

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TEAM:
CENTRE DUFFERIN
DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL
ROYALS SENIOR BOYS
VOLLEYBALL

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

AIDAN ROSS

"I started playing club volleyball in Grade ten. I just love the sport and playing with the people that are close to me," explained Centre Dufferin District High School senior volleyball team member Aidan Ross of why he likes the sport. "I love the way the game is played, the pace, the action, and I like connecting with that ball and hearing the crowd. I like the fact that everyone gets a touch – the whole teams has to be involved."

Aidan helped the senior Royals win the District 4 volleyball championship this year.

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United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin's NovemBurger contest raises over \$20,000

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

The United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin's first annual NovemBurger contest was a success.

Over 2,750 burgers were sold in support of the fundraiser, with \$2 from each being donated, and after counting sponsorships and donations, the contest raised \$20,000. The funds are being used by the local United Way to support food programs in the communities it serves.

Two restaurants in Dufferin County crushed the competition in the People's Choice category of the regional burger contest that saw 14 eateries across Guelph, Wellington and Dufferin. Out of the 14 competitors, only two resided in Dufferin and both did well in the contest.

Taphouse Craft Beer + Kitchen (34 Mill St., Orangeville) won first place with its Dirty Deedsy Burger and Déjà vu Diner (318 Broadway, Orangeville) won second place with its Grilled Cheese Cowboy Burger.

"As many of our neighbours, friends and family are struggling to put food on their tables, we are grateful to the community for their support," said Glenna Banda, executive director of the United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin. "But the fact is, we need every dollar to continue to help make a difference in our communities. If you have the capacity to give to the United Way campaign this year, or even give a little bit more, every donation will ensure no one in our community has to face challenges alone."

Taphouse owner Michael Beattie said his restaurant is known for its burgers, so it was nice to secure first place in the People's Choice category of the contest.

"During a dreary couple of months in the restaurant industry, NovemBurger certainly helped bring some fun and provide us with a wonderful way to honour our late friend, Herbert James, who passed away this summer of a heart complication," said Beattie. "Hopefully this drives business throughout the rest of the year as well," he told the Citizen.

Déjà vu Diner and Taphouse "beefed" on social media over who had the best burger through November.

When it began, Déjà vu posted a photo on its Instagram page with a staff member holding up a sign that read, "The beef in the streets is 100% real, just like our burgers. @Taphouse - bring it on!"

In response, Taphouse's Instagram page posted a picture with a staff member holding up a sign that reads, "Hey @DejaDiner, should've stuck to breakfast! #NovemburgerIsOurs."

Beattie said the good-spirited competition was a fun way of driving awareness.



"The little side competition with our friends at Déjà vu was a great opportunity to poke a bit of fun at each other and help drive business to both spots. Looks like they might be coming for us next year though," said Beattie.

The NovemBurger campaign had 14 restaurants in Guelph, Elora, Fergus and Orangeville each putting forward a unique burger creation to sell through November, with \$2 from each burger sold going to the United Way.

"I am so incredibly proud of both Taphouse and Déjà Vu, the two Orangeville restaurants who participated in NovemBurger both rising to the challenge delivering prize winning burgers! The fact that only two of the participating restaurants were Orangeville restaurants and they won 1st and 2nd place speaks volumes to the power of our community and the caliber of restaurants we have here," enthused Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post, who was a NovemBurger ambassador. "The friendly 'sign war' between Déjà Vu and Taphouse brought incredible attention to the NovemBurger challenge and to the great work that the United Way does in our community."

She added, "As an ambassador, I had a hard time scoring these two burgers because they were both incredibly delicious! Such a proud moment for Orangeville!"

The Top NovemBurger of the Year, voted on by the NovemBurger ambassadors, who spent a month visiting and tasting all of the burger creations, went to Bar Mason in Guelph for its Kicked Up Mason Burger.

Ambassadors ranked the burgers by presentation, taste, originality and overall execution.

The restaurant that sold the most NovemBurgers through the duration of the contest was Mijjidaa Café & Bistro in Guelph which sold 623 Wild North Boar Burgers.

The NovemBurger campaign was presented by Elinseky Scheutt Private Wealth of RBC.

The United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin plans to hold the contest again next year.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

GOOD ALLIES: CanHist welcomed historian Tim Cook at their latest Small Town Big Ideas event on Nov. 28 at the Monora Park Pavillion. The event focuses on Cook's latest publication "The Good Allies", which focuses on the turbulent relationship between Canada and the US during the Second World War. Pictured left to right: Can-Hist founder, Neil Orford, Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills, and guest speaker, Tim Cook.

Shelburne Public Library shares weekly news

Holiday Hours:

The Shelburne Public Library is closed Dec. 24 to 26, and Dec. 31 to Jan. 2, 2025. We are open Dec. 27 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and Dec. 28 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.). Regular hours resume Jan. 3, 2025.

Upcoming Events

Our Seniors Tech Tutoring appointments are available on Thursdays 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Fridays (1 p.m. to 4 p.m.) through the New Year. It's the perfect opportunity to ask your tech questions in a friendly, relaxed environment.

Call 519-925-2168 to book an appointment.

Recommended Read

Finlay Donovan is Killing it by Elle Cosimano: When struggling suspense novelist and single mom Finlay Donovan is mistaken for a contract killer, she inadvertently accepts the offer to dispose of a

problem husband in order to make ends meet. She discovers, unsurprisingly, that crime in real life is a lot harder than fiction.

Why Jade Recommends it: I know thriller and mystery fiction can be a bit tricky for some readers for a lot of reasons. Maybe the murder part is too graphic, or the psychological manipulation of some characters isn't an enjoyable part of the reading experience for you. Enter Finlay Donovan Is Killing It, a gentle murder mystery with a good dose of humour.

She needs her next book to be great. If only she could make herself work on it. Through a series of events for which you need to suspend your disbelief, Finlay bumbles her way through disposing of someone's husband. In the end, she has a great support system and finds her independence, which is the positive and joyful ending we sometimes need. There are four books in the series.



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'Sleeping Beauty... A Fairy's Tale' fills Opera House with laughter

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

This year, Theatre Orangeville's Pantomime, "Sleeping Beauty - A Fairy's Tale" is very funny right away. Gorgeous, song-filled and full of surprises, this show is on until Dec. 21. With no video recording for future enjoyment, get your tickets now for your first, second, or third... chance to have such a good time.

In brief, the three fairies, Sophia, Merriweather and Larry lead us through the story and provide occasional insights with the show's own musical interludes of everyone's favourite old and new songs – so cleverly, so irreverently re-written.

Traditionally, the birth of a baby girl to the king and queen of their own land sees an invitation to the local fairies to come and bless the child and Sophia, Merriweather and Larry are ready and willing.

Traditionally, the old story goes that the wicked fairy, in this case, Maleficent is not invited, out of fear of her wickedness. Duty calls the audience to boo every time she appears and the comic that she is, Debbie Collins as Maleficent, reminds us if ever we are slow to do so.

Almost true to tradition, Maleficent curses the child with a forever sleep by pricking her finger before midnight of her 18th birthday. How to conceal the child until she is safely past that dire time needs a solution.

So, Collins and David Nairn, co-playwrights of this second panto after last year's "Cinderella – if the Shoe Fits," turn Sleeping Beauty on its head and the audiences have a ball with the upset. One way or another, there must be a prince; there should be true love but none of it is predictable. The only way to know is to come and see the show.

The sole guide fair to be offered is to follow the quirky line of music the cast sing variously along with other references wo-

ven throughout the show, touching on songs re-written from the '50s and classical music from Gilbert and Sullivan – all the way up to contemporary pop music. This is really fun.

Andrew McGillivray is making his Theatre Orangeville debut in the role of Sophia (anyone thinking of those Golden Girls?), an outrageous Fairy Dame of generous wisdom and a strong sense of protecting the baby princess.

Christina Gordon, also here for the first time, plays the darling Merriweather, the middle Fairy, telling us stories as the story unfolds.

Ben Skipper has managed to spend his whole time here in Orangeville as he returns to Theatre Orangeville in the role of Larry the Fairy, narrator some of the time, who instructs the audience early on as to their own role in the show – a very vibrant part of all pantos: the respondents and, of course, the booing.

He is all this and Maleficent's Raven, named Diablo. A terrifying duo, to be sure.

The lovely Annika Tupper is the princess at risk of Maleficent's eventual curse but called Bella to keep her safe. All innocence at her approaching 18th birthday but who knows what traps and confusion will confront her?

Bringing the questions is William Lincoln as the local royalty, which he seems to nearly forget by his personal search for a mission. Something to do with art, he thinks.

In every way, music leads and rules this story and this is a cast of extremely talented singers. Often comical, the lyrics take liberties with the songs they mimic for high entertainment but whatever the song, the singing was simply wonderful and this writer felt one must be in any of the top popular theatres, anywhere to hear such fine voices.

Under the directorship of musical director and accompanist, Nicholas Mustapha, he



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FAIRYTALE ON STAGE: Theatre Orangeville's Pantomime, "Sleeping Beauty- A Fairy Tale" hits the stage from Nov. 28 until Dec. 21. Co-playwrights, Debbie Collins and David Nairn flip this traditional fairytale on it's head and leave audiences overjoyed at the upset. The show stars both debuting actors and well-known Theatre Orangeville faces.

provides every note they need and, in jest, suffers their jibes, as a loyal participant of Theatre Orangeville.

And David Nairn, not only as co-author but also directing this wonderful, hilarious couple of hours of entertainment – how does he do it? Sometimes, demurring, he claims to need only keep out of the way of the highly talented actors but he cannot shy away from the stupendous skill it has taken to match the potential chaos that could happen backstage to the coherent and delightful action on stage. His mastery is all in evidence in this show. We can be sure, his hand is everywhere in the clever writing (along with Debby Collins) and the truly successful production of this rollicking and busy fantasy.

The setting for all this is once again, by designer Beckie Morris' ingenuity and love of beauty within the set, and the timing of Chris Malkowski's lighting.

One pauses to describe the costumes, which, designed and constructed with equal genius by the brilliant Wendi Speck, they at once, sparkle and make us laugh; they are fabulous, whimsical and really do justice to such a great production.

This is only the second Panto at Theatre Orangeville but there are good reasons to hope Panto will continue to dazzle the holiday season's stage.

Be sure to buy tickets to this wonderful, spirited and excellent Panto show, a completely new take on a very old, well-loved story. In many ways, you may love this one better.

For more details and to buy tickets, go to www.theatreorangeville.ca You can call the joy-of-the-season folk at the box office at 519-942-3423 or pop into the box office at 87 Broadway, Orangeville. However you like, get them soon.



PETER RICHARDSON PHOTOS

NEW OFFICE: Dufferin-Caledon MP Kyle Seebach speaks with attendees of the grand opening of his new office location in Orangeville, located at 180 Broadway, on Dec. 5.

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OBITUARIES

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It is with broken hearts that we announce the passing of Herb. Loving husband and best friend to Joan Moffatt (nee Cotton) for 45 years. Especially remembered and loved by Joan's children, Darlene (Ron), Jeff (Debbie), and by Billy Avison (predeceased 2002) for his wisdom, strong work ethics and caring ways. Poppa Herbie was well loved and will be dearly missed by his grandchildren and great grandchildren. Loving brother of Evelyn Gibbons (nee Moffatt). Father of 3 sons.



Cremation has already taken place, and no service will be held as per his request.

Online condolences can be made at www.imfunerals.com

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Sandy Brown nominated as the Ontario Greens' candidate for Dufferin-Caledon

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES

During a nomination meeting in Orangeville, Ontario Green Party members voted for former Orangeville Mayor Sandy Brown as the local riding's candidate in the upcoming provincial election.

"I'm running because I believe in a government that leads with integrity and a strong work ethic, ensuring that every voice in our community is heard and valued," Brown said.

Green Party members gathered at the Mill Creek Pub and Restaurant in Orangeville for Brown's nomination meeting. The crowd was enthusiastic and welcoming of Brown's nomination, and without much delay, confirmed him by unanimous vote as Dufferin-Caledon's provincial representative.

As guests and members were seated, Mike Schreiner, leader of the Ontario Green Party, came forward to speak. He addressed the concerns of locals, such as the Caledon mega quarry, Highway 413 and housing. He promised the Green Party would remain the voice of the people, not corporate interests or political agendas. He also criticized Doug Ford's government for what he called irresponsible spending and catering to private interests.

"You want a government that's going to put health care ahead of highways, a government that is going to protect the Forks of the Credit from the Caledon mega quarry," he said. "You want a government that's actually going to

build homes that people can afford, taking care of our neighbours, not taking away their Charter rights, and actually addressing the climate emergency in a way that helps people save money."

Schreiner then introduced Brown, giving him his full support and endorsement, as the person he trusts to fight for these goals.

"I'm excited to have somebody who's a proven local leader and somebody who's going to be a strong voice for Dufferin-Caledon to be carrying the green banner in this election," Schreiner said. "There's so many important issues, from addressing the housing affordability crisis to shoring up our healthcare system to protecting the places we love here, especially from an unneeded, expensive highway like Highway 413."

Brown then took the stage. He said that he planned to follow Schreiner's example and lead the way in affordability, environmental responsibility and cooperation across party lines.

Brown shared that a meeting with Schreiner at a municipal conference marked the beginning of his alignment with the Green Party.

During his term as mayor of Orangeville, Brown said that he was already thinking Green with some of the policies that he worked on, so the choice became clear. He pointed to his accomplishments as mayor, which he said makes him the best choice for Dufferin-Caledon as a Green candidate.

As mayor of Orangeville, he introduced a

climate action policy requiring all municipal decisions to consider environmental impacts and oversaw initiatives like free transit and the start of converting the old railway into a bike and walking trail with Caledon's support.

"It's been through my term as mayor, and understanding that environment and climate change is real, and that we have to be concerned about that, and then looking at the Green Party policies, that made me start leaning towards this nomination," Brown said.

The Green Party of Ontario's platform focuses on healthcare, housing and a climate-based economic plan.

The Green Party prioritizes mental health, aiming to reduce stigma and support underserved groups. Brown emphasized that aiding low-income and homeless individuals with mental health issues would ease the strain on the healthcare system.

"If you think about it, the homelessness issue, over 50 per cent of homeless people have mental health or addiction issues. If we can help those people get back on the straight and narrow, maybe get them a job, get some housing over them, that's going to take the burden off of the social services issue, off of the healthcare system, off of the policing costs," Brown noted.

He also said that housing needs to have red tape torn down to incentivize builders and better planning to avoid congestion.

"Two weeks ago, at Hockley Resort, was an

Ontario Housing Summit, and it was depressing," he said. "In Toronto for example, it's beginning to be close to \$200,000 per unit for development charges. Twenty-five per cent to 30 per cent of the cost of a new house in Ontario is government fees and taxes, and here's the government talking about affordability when they're imposing a 30 per cent surcharge on every house that's being built."

"Does this make any sense to anybody? We need to remove red tape. We need to incentivize builders to build more."

He said that he plans to engage with the community, understand their needs, and work with them. Brown said that this is something the current members of parliament are lacking.

"Four years here in Orangeville as mayor, I never got a phone call once from Sylvia Jones," Brown said. "Now she's the MPP. She never called me once to say, let's have a coffee, or let's talk or what can I do for you? What are your struggles?"

"If I'm elected, we're going to engage people, we're going to talk to the municipal officials, we're going to have an active work ethic."

With the full backing of the Green Party and a track record of leadership, Brown enters the race as a figure determined to deliver for his community. With a possible provincial election on the horizon, he aims to engage voters with a vision of integrity, sustainability, and actionable change – one conversation at a time.

Family Transition Place's candlelight vigil marks 35th anniversary of Montreal Massacre

Continued from Page 5

In her speech, Churly touched on how she grew up in a home with domestic violence, mental health and addiction issues, parental incarceration and homelessness. She shared that at a young age, she entered a relationship that was physically, sexually, and mentally abusive. After leaving the relationship, she met her trafficker and was sexually exploited for several months while experiencing ongoing mental health and addiction problems.

"Shame and stigma were really hard for me to overcome, and it took a long time for me to accept and recognize everything I had been through, or even admit everything that happened to me over the years," said Churly. "I could have easily become one of the names on the femicide list and the only thing that separates me from this is I was lucky to survive my situation... I hold every single one of those names on the list close to my heart and continue with my life in pursuit of preventing this from happening to others."

During the ceremony, Family Transition Place also unveiled a new permanent sculpture, called Infinitude created by clay artist Ann Randerad. The sculpture looks to capture the generational, cultural and social history of violence against women.

"These eternal flames aim to deeply honour the memory of those lost in violence against women, but they [also] represent an ongoing commitment to creating safety and harmony for women in our communities," reads Randerad's artist statement about the piece.

Family Transition Place also used the ceremony to encourage local residents to take action to help end gender-based violence.

"We need to continue to advocate for policies that protect and uplift women, so we can build a society rooted in respect, equality, and safety for all of us," said Pole-Langdon.

A list of calls to action to help address gender-based violence can be found on the Family Transition Place website, www.familytransitionplace.ca.

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save \$2 Garlic Shrimp 340 g

12⁹⁹ each Lobster Puffs 12 PIECES 300 g

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Dessert Bar Variety Pack 675 g

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12⁹⁹ Cinnamon Bun Pull-apart Bread 625 g

12⁹⁹ Mini Eclairs 12 PIECES 200 g

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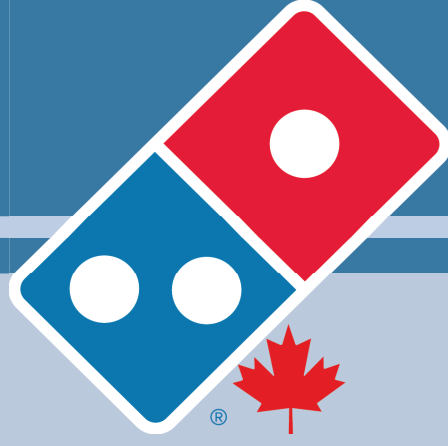
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