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JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

AUTISM AWARENESS: Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills, joined by Councillor Len Guchardi and Hearts Wide Open for Autism founder Deanna Avison, raised a flag at Town Hall, recognizing Autism Awareness Day as April 2. The flag raising reaffirmed local support for the autism community in Shelburne and the surrounding area. Read a full story on Page 2.

Brian Blakeman returns to Shelburne with Northern Perspectives III exhibition

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery is presenting a new exhibition this month as landscape artist Brian Blakeman returns with the third installment of his Northern Perspectives series.

The exhibition, running from April 6 to April 24, features a collection of paintings inspired by locations across the Bruce Peninsula and Northern Ontario.

Jessica Hanzel, recreation program development and special events coordinator for the Town of Shelburne, said that the town is eager to have Blakeman back due to consistent popular demand.

"We are happy to be welcoming Brian Blakeman back to the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery for his third exhibition," she said.

"His shows have been very popular in the community, and we often hear from visitors asking when his work will be returning."



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

ON DISPLAY: Brian Blakeman's art focuses on natural landscapes, depicting terrain, shorelines and forest environments that reflect and stylize Ontario's unique and varied geography. His paintings emphasize light, texture and seasonal variation. Seen here are four of his works of art: "Winter Trees," "Birch Stand," "Spring Flush," and "Tiny Marsh."

Continued on Page 7

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FEATURED ITEM

Autism Awareness Day flag raisings held across Dufferin County

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 Shelburne. Mayor Wade Mills was joined by Councillor Len Guchardi, Dufferin OPP officers and autism supporters for the raising of the "Hearts Wide Open for Autism" flag, and he read a proclamation declaring April 2 as Autism Awareness Day in Shelburne.

Town halls in Melancthon, Amaranth, Caledon East and Orangeville also had Autism Awareness Day flag raisings on April 2.

In Orangeville, Mayor Lisa 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."

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 corner-

stone 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."

Karrie Daponte, a Shelburne resident who's the organizer behind the annual 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.



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

SHOWING SUPPORT: Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills and Councillor Len Guchardi were joined by OPP representatives J. Vernell and T. Pencarinha, and Hearts Wide Open for Autism founder Deanna Avison, during a flag raising ceremony at town hall for Autism Awareness Day on April 2. The flag raising reaffirmed local support from the municipal government and emergency services for the autism community in Shelburne and the surrounding area.

"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 the Dufferin Autism Walk Facebook page at facebook.com/groups/778434011234056.

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

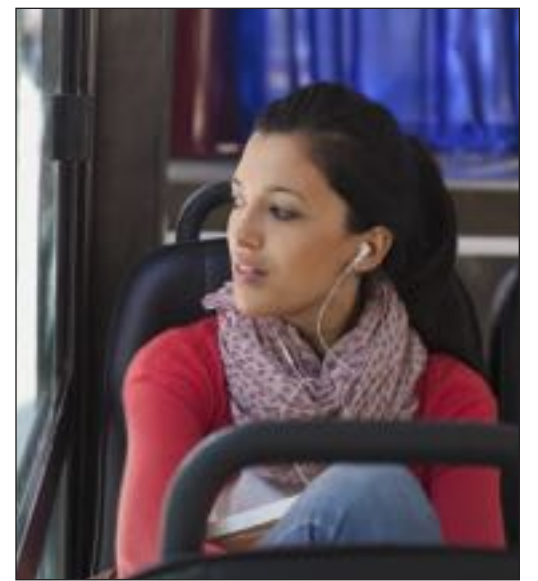
and ridesharing providers to help riders more easily connect to fixed-route transit.

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-CommunityEngagement> until April 14. 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.



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FOR INFORMATION
SCAN ME

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 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 experi-

ence, 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.



CONTRIBUTED 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 production runs from April 16 to May 3.



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>

Starting in April, recycling in Dufferin County will be even more convenient with a new recycling cart.



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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 per-

son 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.

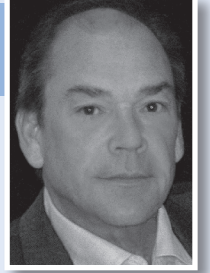
The guy has been described as a 'migrant worker.'

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. And this guy will teach that to his own son one day.

The question everyone asks is why is

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



this guy even in our country?

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 realised 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 Moscow'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 eighty 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.

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COMMUNITY VOICES

Monthly Message: When difference walks through the door

April is often marked as Autism Awareness Month. It is a time when many of us are invited to think more carefully about neurodiversity, accommodation, and inclusion. Those are important conversations. But this year, I have been contemplating something broader too. I have been thinking about difference itself. About the young people in our community who stand out in some way, whether because of a diagnosis, a disability, their appearance, their mannerisms, their interests, their energy, or simply because they do not fit neatly into whatever is considered typical.

And I have been thinking about what it costs to be visibly different in a small town.

Yesterday, I watched a young person do something brave.

She had been going from business to business in Shelburne, handing out her resume and asking for work. I know this because she had come into Streams earlier that day and done the same with us. Not long after she left, Andrew and I went out for lunch at a local restaurant. While we were there, she walked in, resume in hand, and approached someone at the counter. She said only that she had come to drop off her resume.

That was it. There was no long conversation. No awkward exchange. No disruption. Just a young person trying. Putting herself out there. Taking a step that is hard for many adults, never mind a youth.

When she turned to leave, the person she had handed her resume to called over to his colleagues, and with her resume in hand, they laughed. Not with her. At her.

STREAMS

COMMUNITY HUB

It was one of those moments that lands in your heart before your mind has even caught up. A moment that says far too much without saying anything at all. The laughter was not about her qualifications. It could not have been. No one had asked about her experience, her interests, her reliability, her skills, or even her availability. It was clear that whatever judgment had been made, it had been made instantly, and it had been made based on something visible. Something about her that marked her, in their eyes, as not fitting.

I left that restaurant with a heaviness I could not shake.

Not only because it was cruel, but because I knew that for many young people, this is not a rare experience. It is a pattern. A quiet one, often. The look. The snicker. The dismissal. The decision made before they ever get a real chance to show who they are.

As the Executive Director of a youth-serving organization, and as someone who cares deeply about the kind of community we are building here in Shelburne, I find that deeply disheartening.

Because this much, I know to be true.

The young people who are most often underestimated are very often carrying gifts we have not taken the time to notice. They may be bright, diligent, funny, loyal, creative, focused, observant, deeply caring, or wonderfully original. They may need support in some areas and shine in others. They may not package themselves in the way the world expects. But since when did sameness become the measure of worth?

At Streams, we have the privilege of seeing young people unfold. Sometimes that unfolding is loud and immediate. Sometimes it is slow and tender. Sometimes the child who barely makes eye contact in September is standing taller by November. Sometimes the youth who struggles socially finds their people through art, theatre, music, or simple belonging. Sometimes the child others write off turns out to be the one with the most vivid imagination in the room.

We have seen again and again that when young people are given safety, patience, and room to be themselves, they rise.

That is the kind of community I want for all our youth. Not one where difference is

merely tolerated, but one where it is understood as part of the beautiful range of human experience. Not one where kids have to brace themselves to be mocked, filtered out, or quietly excluded, but one where they are met with dignity. One where the first response is curiosity, not contempt. One where people make room.

Truthfully, if I had my way, we would hire all the youth. We would make room for every teenager trying to find their footing, every young person looking for a chance, every kid who needs someone to look past the surface and say, "Yes, there is a place for you here."

And maybe that is the invitation for all of us this month. To look again. To slow our assumptions. To ask what might be possible if we chose compassion over comfort, inclusion over instinct, and kindness over whatever urge makes people laugh at someone who is already doing something hard.

Difference is not the problem. The problem is the smallness with which we sometimes respond to it. Our young people deserve better than that.

At Streams, we are committed to being a place where difference is not castigated, but celebrated. A place where young people can come as they are and discover that who they are is not something to hide. It is something to build from.

That is the kind of community our young people need and deserve. I hope it is the kind of community we continue becoming.

This week's Community Voice submission was written by Juli-Anne James, executive director of Streams Creative Hub.

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.



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SPORTS

Shelburne Free Press

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brian.lockhart@hotmail.com

Shelburne Cricket Club enters 'chapter six' of competition

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

The Shelburne Cricket Club wrapped up the 2025 season by capturing the Shel-Bram Cup championship with a 2-1 series victory over the Brampton Strikers.

Held at night in Brampton, the series showcased the Shelburne Stars' competitive spirit as they secured their second title.

The championship win capped off a strong season for the Stars, who also played an evenly contested series against the Sudbury Cricket Club.

In October 2025, the Shelburne Cricket Club hosted the Dufferin County Cup. The Cup is a growing monetary tournament in the region.

The Orangeville Tigers won the 2025 Cup.

The Shelburne Cricket Club is entering its sixth year as a club, going under the banner of #ChapterSix.

A major boost comes from the Town's commitment to improved playing conditions, with weekly pitch rolling using a two-ton roller, expected to provide a smoother, more consistent surface that elevates the

standard of play.

The regular league season will run from May through September, and feature T20 and 25-over matches played with a hard leather ball.

This year, there is a stronger focus on competitive cricket, particularly with the Shelburne Stars taking on more teams from outside of the region.

Registration for the 2026 season is now open, with both player registration and team registration available for the main league.

Interested participants can sign up by visiting shelburecricketclub.com.

The Club will once again host the Dufferin County Cup in 2026 with more details to be announced," said Shelburne Cricket Club president Ahsen Siddiqui. "Along with the tournament, the Club will also feature the Stars Championship this season, adding another exciting competitive element to the season."

With a championship-winning squad, improved facilities, and a growing competitive schedule, Shelburne Cricket Club is set for an exciting new chapter.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CHAMPIONS: The Shelburne Cricket Club is now heading into its 6th season of playing cricket in Shelburne. The Orangeville Tigers are the winners of the 2025 Dufferin County Cup. Players are looking forward to competing for the 2026 Dufferin County Cup this season.

Eight teams enter Provincial Junior Hockey League's Schmalz Cup playoffs

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.



BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

HORNETS ELIMINATED: 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.

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 Fergus 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 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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i'm lovin' it

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

RYLEIGH HORNER

Playing hockey since she was just four-years-old, CDDHS right wing, Ryleigh Horner brings a lot of experience to her team.

"I like the competitiveness of it and always getting to meet new people and having fun with it," Ryleigh said of why she likes the sport. "It's fun to play at a high level."

Ryleigh scored four goals in one recent high school game.

Outside of school, Ryleigh plays hockey with the U18 AA Mississauga Hurricanes.

When the ice is out, Ryleigh likes to play ball hockey during the summer.

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New art exhibit currently on display at Shelburne Town Hall

Continued from FRONT

Blakeman's work focuses on natural landscapes, often depicting remote terrain, shorelines and forested environments that reflect the scale and character of Ontario's geography. His paintings emphasize light, texture and seasonal variation.

Despite not being located in Shelburne himself, Blakeman has established a presence within the local arts community through previous exhibitions at the gallery. His earlier installments of Northern Perspectives drew consistent attendance, contributing to sustained public interest in his work and prompting his return for a third showing.

Hanzel said that while the artwork is of more northern rural areas, it resembles the terrain around Shelburne.

The exhibition itself is part of the Town of Shelburne's broader efforts to provide accessible cultural programming within a municipal setting, making Northern Perspectives a suitable display in the town's mission.

"While Brian is based outside of Shelburne, his work reflects landscapes and natural environments that are familiar to many in our region," she said. "The exhibition contributes to the Town's ongoing efforts to bring diverse artistic perspectives to the community."



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTOS

NEW EXHIBIT: Artist Brian Blakeman currently has his work display at the Shelburne Town Hall Art Gallery for his latest exhibition, titled "Northern Perspectives," featuring paintings of rural and northern nature.

The continuation of the series reflects both the artist's ongoing exploration of northern subject matter and the gallery's role in supporting returning exhibitors as part of its broader efforts to provide accessible cultural programming within a municipal setting.

An opening reception is scheduled for April 12 from 1 to 3 p.m., allowing visitors to meet Blakeman and view the collection.

The exhibition will be open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free, and the gallery remains open to both residents and visitors

throughout the exhibition period.

"We encourage residents and visitors to stop by the gallery to see the artwork in person and to attend the opening reception on April 12," Hanzel said. "It offers a great opportunity to meet Brian and learn more about his work."

Traffic stop results in drug and firearm seizure, two people charged

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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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.”

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7⁹⁹ each
Cake Pops 6 PIECES 216 g
NEW! Chocolate

SAVE \$3
6⁹⁹
Mini Filled Donuts 8 PIECES 184 g

SAVE \$2
9⁹⁹
Chocolate Chip Cookie Ice Cream Sandwiches 6 SANDWICHES 600 mL

KID-FRIENDLY

SAVE \$7 **19⁹⁹ 10⁹⁹**
Chicken Chunks 17-28 PIECES 680 g
Cheesy Pizza Rolls 8 PIECES 460 g
 Also available, Pepperoni Pizza Rolls 8 PIECES 460 g \$10.99 **SAVE \$2**

19⁹⁹ 9⁹⁹
Mini Pepperoni Pizzas 16 PIZZAS 1.7 kg
Chicken Quesadillas 4 PIECES 500 g

SAVE \$2 each

NEW! 10⁹⁹ 9⁹⁹ SAVE \$3
Gluten-Free Margherita Pizza 330 g
Flatbreads 460 g - 515 g 4 Varieties
Bruschetta

SAMPLING EVENT
FRIDAY, APRIL 10 - SATURDAY, APRIL 11
11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Full schedule for sampling can be found on our website mmfoodmarket.com.

TASTING Look for this icon for items to be sampled.

To view the full flyer, scan the QR code or go to mmfoodmarket.com

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ALL PRICES IN EFFECT THURSDAY, APRIL 9 TO WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026 UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.
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CLASSIFIEDS

519.925.2832 • Fax: 519-925-5500 • email@shelburnefreepress.ca
 Email, or call us for pricing. Classified cut-off time is 12 pm Tuesday

HELP WANTED



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

NOTICE



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF

Melancthon

Township of Melancthon NOTICE OF OPEN HOUSE FOR A NEW OFFICIAL PLAN

Date and Time: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 – 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Location: Township of Melancthon Municipal Office, 157101 Highway 10

Please visit the Township's website for the official notice:

<https://melancthontownship.ca/planning/official-plan-and-zoning-by-law-conformity-exercise-update/>

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



Interested in absentee bids? Consigning in an upcoming sale?

Joining our Referral Rewards Program? Give us a call to get started.

Call, text or email anytime. Call: 519-288-2228 • Text ONLY: 519-938-1315

Lyn@KiddFamilyAuctions.com | www.KiddFamilyAuctions.com

438280 4th Line, Melancthon L9V 1S9 (North of Shelburne)

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 437-898-3875
 References Available

ARTICLES WANTED

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

HELP WANTED

LANDSCAPER NEEDED - Must have G license - all riding push mower. Weedeaters. Call 519-217-1281.

HOME RENOVATIONS

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

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES & REPAIRS

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.



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)
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Interested applicants, please submit your resume to:
julie.gate@homehardware.ca

725 Steeles Street, SHELburne 519-925-3991
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CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Please join us in celebrating the wonderful life of
LOIS JEANNETTE HAND (BARTON)
 Drop in on Sunday April 19, 2026 between 1-3pm at the Horning's Mills Community Hall.



PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER!

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 www.abidingplace.ca
 519-925-3651
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 Mel-Lloyd Centre, Entrance "F" Door,
 167 Centre St, Shelburne
 Pastor; Rev. Gord Horsley
Come and be Blessed

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 Pastor Gavin Sullivan
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 Office: 519 925 0905
 email: communications@shelburneprimrose.com
 www.shelburneprimrose.com
ALL WELCOME

BETHEL BIBLE CHAPEL
 419 Main Street East, Shelburne
 Sunday Services - 9:45am Lord's Supper
 10:45am Family Bible Hour, Sunday School
 Chapel 519-925-3910 or 519-278-0066
 www.bethelshelburne.com - All Welcome!!

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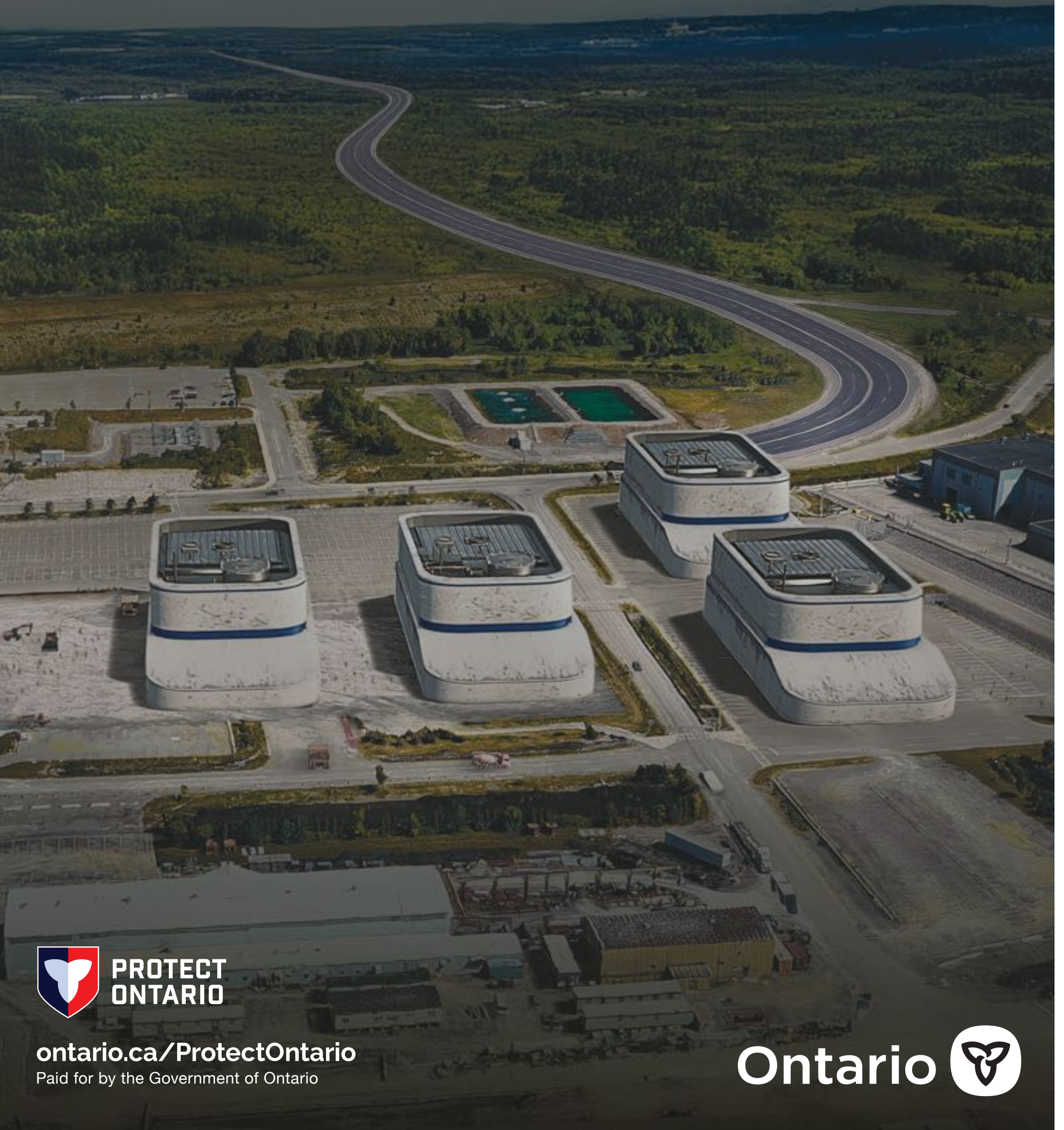
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BY THIS GUY!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Kohlen'.

Andrew Kohlen
Brewmaster



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