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## Spreading Love in Our Communities

By Kari Belcourt February 2, 2026

Foil balloons, flower arrangements, and neatly addressed cards fill our stores and homes as Valentine's Day approaches. Love is everywhere this time of year—but too often, so is pressure.

Valentine's Day has become closely tied to romance and retail. Advertisements tell us what love should look like, what it should cost, and how it should be displayed. For many, the result is less celebration and more expectation. It's fair to ask whether a day meant to honour connection has drifted into just

another obligation on an already crowded calendar.

But that narrow definition misses the point.

In a Grade 5 classroom, Valentine's Day is about including everyone. In a high school hallway, it's a hopeful candygram sent to someone admired from afar. It's a phone call to a parent, a grandparent, or a sibling—just to say thank you for loving me. It's a note slipped into a lunch bag, heart-shaped pancakes on a busy morning, or a small act of kindness that reminds someone they matter.

Love doesn't require a checkout line.

It can be found in a cup of coffee bought for a coworker, a smile shared with a stranger, or a moment of generosity that goes unnoticed by anyone but the person who needed it most. These are the quiet acts that truly strengthen our communities.

Valentine's Day does not belong to advertisers or price tags. It belongs to all of us. And if we choose to see it that way, it becomes something far more meaningful: a reminder that love is not measured by what we spend, but by what we give.



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

By Kari Belcourt Editor

As our transition to Publisher and Editor has begun, we would like to thank you for your support and kind words after our first publication was issued. This paper is about community. The events, businesses, politics and grassroot news within it. Most importantly it is about the people within these communities. The people that shape and inspire us. These people are your next-door neighbor, the teacher you grew up with or your child. There are good news and people for us to always share in our publication.

A community newspaper is only as strong as the people who shape it. Unlike large publications that report from a distance, a local paper is written from within — by neighbours, volunteers, business owners, parents, seniors, and students who live the stories they share.

Community input is not just helpful; it is essential. It's what keeps a newspaper honest, relevant, and reflective of real life. When residents submit letters, story ideas, photos, event notices, or opinions, they help ensure that the paper truly represents the community it serves. These contributions give voice to moments that might otherwise go unnoticed — a local achievement, a fundraiser, a concern at council, or a quiet act of kindness.

Local newspapers also serve as a meeting place for ideas. Letters to the editor and opinion pieces encourage respectful conversation and remind us that differing perspectives can exist within a shared commitment to the same community. This exchange of ideas strengthens civic engagement and helps residents feel connected, heard, and informed.

Community involvement also preserves local history. Long after social media posts disappear,

the pages of a newspaper remain — documenting milestones, challenges, celebrations, and change. When community members contribute, they help to record the story of their town for future generations.

Perhaps most importantly, community input fosters belonging. Seeing familiar names, faces, businesses, schools, and organizations in print reinforces the idea that this paper is not about the community — it is the community. It reminds readers that their lives matter, their voices matter, and their stories are worth telling.

A community newspaper thrives when residents take part in shaping it. Every submission, suggestion, and shared story strengthens the bond between the paper and the people it serves. Together, we ensure that local news remains local — grounded in connection, collaboration, and community pride.

We invite you to be part of that story.

Share your news, your opinions, your photos, and your ideas with us. Tell us what matters in your neighbourhood, what deserves recognition, or what conversations you feel are important to have. Together, we can ensure this newspaper continues to reflect the voices, values, and spirit of the community it serves.

DROPBOXES

If you are interested in obtaining a drop box for outside your business Email: info@springwaternews.ca or drop off at office. Contact information is on the bottom of this page. Priority will be based on area and readship interest. Full name, phone number and address must be supplied.

DELIVERY

If you normally receive our paper but did not last edition please contact as we are looking to rectify this issue. Email: info@springwaternews.ca or Contact information is on the bottom of this page.

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EVENT SUBMISSIONS

Events will be considered for publication based on area coverage and interest base. Events must be place as an advertisement to be confirmed in print.

Please submit your events at springwaternews.com Email: info@springwaternews.ca or drop off at office. Contact information is on the bottom of this page.

Full name, phone number and address must be supplied.

Celebrating Elmvale Businesses BIA AGM & Open House

Join us for an evening dedicated to celebrating Elmvale's vibrant business community! All local businesses are welcome.

February 19, 2026 - 5:30pm Thompson Fireplaces and Living Spaces - 58 Queen Street W



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Hope for Affordable Housing in Elmvale: Elmvale Community Church Pitches In



Pictured: Elmvale Community Church Members working on the project June 2025

What a joy it is to raise a family in this area. Small town connections. Small town values. School staff who know the families who attend. A high school steeped in tradition, but the good kind that brings a sense of innocent pride and good memories. The Fall Fair. The Maple Syrup Festival. Farmers' fields and nearby beaches. It's a good place to live! I hope that thought has crossed your mind a million times over the years.

We, the congregation of Elmvale Community Church, are so grateful to have Elmvale as our home. We want our love for our community to be noticeable in all that we do... our Sunday services,

Sharewear, The Hive after school program, the Winter coat giveaway, Soccer camp... and so many other initiatives, all happening as an expression of sincere love for you, our community.

Well, we are at it again. We have a new initiative brewing.

Elmvale Community Church is located at 12 Queen Street E. That little building is hopping through the week. Have you even driven past on a Sunday morning when the service is ending? Or on Wednesday nights when the youth group is hanging around, or Tuesdays after school when The Hive kids are playing on the huge snow mountain?

Centre Flos Womens Institute

February 19, 2026 marks 129 years since our organization was founded in 1897 — a milestone defined by courage, hope, and unwavering spirit. Imagine those pioneering women, stepping boldly into the unknown, fueled by a fiery desire to create change at a time when women's voices, especially in rural areas, were so often silenced. Think of their dreams—did they envision a future where their movement would grow beyond their small communities, igniting hearts across the province, sweeping across Canada, and reaching around the world?

Women's Institutes have championed for many changes that have made a huge difference in daily life.

- Pasteurization of milk
- Wrapping of bread
- Elimination of succession duties on estates passing to spouses

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- Signs at railway crossings
- Painted lines on highways
- Reflective safety clothing
- All staples be removed from food packaging
- Mandatory stopping for all school buses
- OHIP coverage for nursing homes
- Liquid cleaners labelled as poison
- Roll bars on tractors
- Safety arms on school buses
- Establishment of Brock University

Today, their national causes include a better understanding of womens' mental health, research & treatments for lyme disease, food sustainability, human trafficking and gender violence. Locally, donations help members of our community that need a lending hand, food banks, Hospital fund-raising and many more.

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It's a busy place to be. Across the street from ECC is 9 Queen St. E, another building owned by the church. It hosts the church offices in the rear, and Sharewear (the free clothing store), in the front. The upper level of 9 Queen has been an apartment for years.

About 5 years ago, our congregation started to dream... What if we were more intentional with the apartment? What if we could really help a family in need? What if we could coach them on the whole spectrum of life... parenting, relationships, mental health, spiritual health, budgeting, healthy eating, education, job etiquette? Maybe we could actually help a family move from the threat of homelessness, or being homeless, to a place of security? And once that is established, we could help them move on to an apartment in the open market, and we could take on another family to coach.

This concept is called Transitional Housing. It is an intentional program that will gradually help a family get back on their feet and begin to imagine a brighter future. As ECC learned more about the concept of Transitional Housing, we began to meet with others who were doing it and our dream began to take shape.

Since then, we've been on a journey to get the old place up to date. Research, fundraising, work teams, meetings, paperwork, grants applied for... Today, we are well underway! The apartment has been stripped down and built back up... new roof, new drywall, new windows, new flooring, new doors... but we still have a few major tasks ahead of us, namely the kitchen and the bathroom.

With these needs in mind, we met together with the lovely and humble Murry Truax, of the local Lions Club. Murry knows his way around fundraising... you might even say that he wrote the book on it! Or at least a book... Grass Roots Fundraising by Murry Truax. Murry encouraged us to share our story with you, our community; to let you know our passion. To show you how far we've come, but also the need that remains. The kitchen and bathroom projects will require another \$16,000.00 dollars.

Believe it or not, the project has been a joy, even the fundraising. We've had wonderful help from BMR, and donations from the Lions Club, the Lions and Lioness' Club, the amazing families of our soccer camp kids, and we even had an exciting "Multiply our funds like the loaves and the fishes" campaign at church, where some generous souls in our congregation offered to match our donations! Through that, we made over \$32,000.00 from our church family alone.

We are in the final pushes of our preparations, with the hopes of having a family move in, by the fall of 2026. What a gift for this family... not only to have the stability of a home and some healthy coaching in life, but to do it here, in our beloved Elmvale!

If you are excited to hear that this kind of project is happening right here in your community, maybe you would be excited to share from your resources to help us along! Please connect with us at office. eccchurch@gmail.com to give.

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NORTH SIMCOE SPRINGWATER NEWS INFO@SPRINGWATERNEWS.CA 705.790.1993 SPRINGWATERNEWS.CA 1058 FLOS ROAD 10 EAST. ELMVALE, ON L0L 1P0 FEB 12, 2026 THE NEXT PAPER WILL BE ON: FEB 26 PUBLISHER/OWNER: BRIAN BELCOURT EDITOR: KARI BELCOURT North Simcoe Springwater News is published every two weeks and delivered by Canada Post and available at newsstands throughout North Simcoe. The opinions expressed in articles contributed by interested parties and through the 'Letters to the Editor' do not necessarily reflect the opinion of this newspaper and/or the editor. The editor reserves the right to edit all submitted articles or letters for clarity and space or to avoid obscenity, libel or invasion of privacy. All contributions must have the writer's full name, address and telephone number for verification including Letters to the Editor. Copyrights are claimed on all original articles. Funded by the Government of Canada Canada News Media Canada Médias d'Info Canada Ad\*Reach.



## Georgian Bay General Hospital Awarded for Championing Organ and Tissue Donation

Midland, ON – Georgian Bay General Hospital (GBGH) was recently recognized by Trillium Gift of Life Network for its exceptional efforts to support organ and tissue donation as part of compassionate end-of-life care in 2024/25.

GBGH was presented with Hospital Achievement Award – Provincial Eligible Approach Rate awarded to hospital partners for demonstrating leading practices by facilitating a donation discussion with eligible patients/families of patients at end of life.

“We are deeply honoured to receive this provincial recognition from Trillium Gift of Life Network. It reflects the compassion, professionalism, and dedication of our team at GBGH, who ensure that every opportunity for organ and tissue donation is approached with care and respect. Supporting patients and families in honouring their end-of-life wishes is a profound responsibility, and we are committed to fostering a culture where donation is understood as a meaningful and life-saving gift.” stated Linda Gravel, Vice President, Clinical Services & Chief Nursing Executive at GBGH.

GBGH is one of 50 hospital partners across the province to be awarded a 2024/25 Trillium Gift of Life Network Hospital Achievement Award. This marks the largest number of hospitals ever honoured in the history of the awards.

“This year’s record level of recognition is a testament to the dedicated, patient-centred care provided by GBGH’s healthcare team as they honour and support the decisions of patients and their families to donate,” said Janet MacLean, Interim Vice-President, TGLN. “It also reflects the deep commitment of Ontario hospitals to fostering a culture where organ and tissue donation is a natural and meaningful part of end-of-life care.”

### ABOUT THE AWARDS

Each year, the Hospital Achievement Awards recognize hospital partners that meet or exceed Ontario’s targets in key areas of the donation process.

“Behind each award is a team of dedicated healthcare professionals who ensure that every opportunity for donation is thoughtfully considered, and that families are supported in honouring their loved one’s end-of-life wishes,”



**Members of GBGH's TGLN Committee – from left to right: Julianne Labelle, Director of Clinical Services; Nicole Lefave, Professional Practice Leader; Felicia Morden, Manager of the Emergency Department and ICU; and April Cross, Team Lead, ICU – accept the Trillium Gift of Life Network Hospital Achievement Award for Provincial Eligible Approach Rate.**

said Dr. Andrew Healey, Provincial Medical Director – Donation, TGLN. “Trust begins at the door of the hospital, where patients first receive active care. The compassion and commitment shown throughout a patient’s journey profoundly shape the possibility of donation. It’s the care at every stage that makes donation possible.”

### WHY DONATION MATTERS

Did you know? One organ donor can save up to eight lives, and a single tissue donor can improve the lives of up to 75 people. Yet right now there are 1,627 Ontarians on the transplant waitlist in need of an organ to save their life—while thousands more are waiting for tissue donations. Despite this

need, only 35 per cent of eligible Ontarians are currently registered as organ and tissue donors—that means more than 9 million Ontarians are still not registered. Anyone 16 years or older with a valid Ontario health card can register at beadonor.ca or in person at any ServiceOntario location during a visit to renew your health card or driver’s license.

Just as important as registering is talking to your family about your wishes. When a person has both registered their consent and discussed their decision with their families, their loved ones can confidently move forward in fulfilling those wishes without doubt or uncertainty of their wishes.

## Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival Supports Wendat Community Programs

Press Release – February 2, 2026

On January 30, 2026, the Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival generously donated \$2,000 to Wendat Community Programs to be used towards the annual operating costs of the Lorna Tomlinson Residence for Seniors. “We were very excited to learn that the Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival has a Community Support Grant Program and thrilled to be chosen as the recipient of \$2,000 to support the ongoing operating costs of the Lorna Tomlinson Residence for Seniors,” says Andrea Abbott-Kokosin, Executive Director of Wendat Community Programs.

The Lorna Tomlinson Residence for Seniors, located in Penetanguishene has been operating since February 2016. Currently, 21 low income, older adults with care needs live at the residence. Priority is given to those over the age of 75. Each resident has their own bedroom with a private bathroom designed for mobility and comfort. There are common spaces for socializing, watching TV or lounging. A structured day program provides social and recreational activities. Meals are provided in a central dining room.



**Pictured: Greg Davidson, President, Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival and Andrea Abbott-Kokosin, Executive Director of Wendat Community Programs.**

## Penetanguishene Lions Club Donates to Wendat Seniors' Residence

Press Release – January 30, 2026

On January 22, 2026, the Penetanguishene Lions Club generously donated \$1,500 to the Lorna Tomlinson Residence for Seniors operated by Wendat Community Programs. Since 2015, the Club has provided much needed financial support to the construction and ongoing operating costs of the residence. “We are very grateful to the Penetanguishene Lions Club for their generous support,” says Andrea Abbott-Kokosin, Executive Director of Wendat Community Programs. “There are many older adults in North Simcoe in need of affordable housing and the programs and supports we provide.”

The Lorna Tomlinson Residence for Seniors, located in Penetanguishene has been operating since February 2016. Currently, 21 low income, older adults with care needs live at the residence. Priority is given to those over the age of 75. Each resident has their own bedroom with a private bathroom designed for mobility and comfort. There are common spaces for socializing, watching TV or lounging. A structured day program provides social and recreational activities. Meals are provided in a central dining room.



**Pictured: Randy Hargrave of the Penetanguishene Lions Club and Andrea Abbott-Kokosin, Executive Director of Wendat Community Programs.**

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The Township of Tiny is proud to announce Nature Connect: Outdoor Adventures for Seniors, funded through a \$22,000 grant from the Government of Ontario.

**Tiny Ontario**



# Township survey finds 75% of voters OK with remote/telephone option

By Wayne Doyle, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter Barrie Today Feb 4, 2026

The vote on municipal voting in Springwater Township is in and the overwhelming majority of folks are concerned with two things — security and integrity of the process and accessibility for all eligible electors.

According to a report that will be presented to township council during tonight's meeting, 95 per cent of the 201 responses that were submitted in the online survey to gauge voter preferences for the upcoming municipal and school board elections considered security and integrity of the voting process "very important."

Those who thought accessibility for all eligible voters was "very important" was a close second, at 94 per cent of all respondents.

The cost to administer the vote and voter familiarity with the method of voting were the least important factors.

While 84 per cent of respondents were "very comfortable" voting in person using a paper ballot, only 66 per cent said they were "very likely" to vote by paper ballot.

Conversely, 69 per cent of respondents said they were "very comfortable" with remote electronic/telephone voting, yet 79 per cent said they were "very likely" to cast a ballot using remote electronic/telephone voting.

Vote by mail was the least popular option in both instances.

"The results indicate that paper ballots are the most familiar voting method, and that remote electronic/telephone voting received the highest level of preference and likelihood of voter participation," Springwater clerk Tracy Macdonald wrote in the report. "Survey respondents identified accessibility, security and integrity of the voting

process, reliability and technical stability, and privacy as the most important factors influencing voting method choice."

According to Macdonald's report, if Springwater residents were choosing the voting method for the 2026 elections, almost 75 per cent would want remote electronic/telephone voting, 45 per cent would want paper ballots and 35 per cent want in-person electronic voting. It's worth noting they were allowed to vote for more than one option.

Rolled out to residents between Dec. 23 and Jan. 30, the online survey and three in-person information sessions — held at Snow Valley Ski Resort, the Elmvale Arena and the township's administration centre — were in response to concerns Deputy Mayor George Cabral shared with council, first during a September council meeting and then again in December.

Cabral said he was concerned with the security, or lack thereof, of an electronic voting system that could be vulnerable to hacker attacks and lacks the ability to verify the person who's voting is actually the registered voter and is allowed to cast a ballot.

He referenced research on the subject done by an Orillia city councillor who had found a 2024 thesis called 'Cyber Risks in Ontario Online Elections,' by James D. Brunet of Western University.

Brunet's paper looked at a variety of electronic voting systems currently in use across Ontario municipalities that do not meet European standards for cybersecurity.

"There are potential risks at many stages of the online voting process," Brunet wrote. "Computer systems that count votes could be tampered with, voters could be intimidated into voting a particular way, voters could be impersonated, the secrecy of the vote of voters could be compromised, etc."

Despite the potential risks, Brunet noted, not

much research has been done into how these elections are conducted in Ontario, as well as how well municipalities in Ontario are doing in addressing these risks.

Cabral said the federal and provincial governments use paper ballots only and that should be a sign municipalities heed and follow.

Macdonald's report doesn't draw the same conclusion.

"Although federal and provincial governments have not yet utilized electronic voting, Section 42 (1) and (2) of the Municipal Elections Act allows municipalities to use alternative voting methods and vote-counting equipment," she wrote.

The township clerk referred to the Digital Governance Standards Institute (DGSi), which develops technology governance standards to establish trust in Canada's digital systems.

She wrote that once a standard is developed, it must be approved by the Standards Council of Canada, a federal crown corporation.

"DGSi has released the CAN/DGSi 111-1 standards for online voting in municipal elections, which several internet/telephone election service providers have confirmed they follow," Macdonald wrote. "Staff continue to recommend the use of in-person electronic and remote internet/telephone voting, utilizing multiple verification via personal identifier (birth date) to access their ballot, for the 2026 municipal and school board election."

"Staff will ensure the vendor complies with the security standards as set out by the DGSi," Macdonald added.

Council will debate the report and the recommendation during Wednesday's council meeting, starting at 6:30 p.m.

# Annexation agreement will deliver almost \$23M to Springwater

By: Wayne Doyle, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter Jan. 1, 2026 BarrieToday.com

Township CAO says Springwater and Barrie will also enter agreement to extend city water, wastewater services to land which will remain in the township

While annexation legislation passed at Queen's Park didn't specifically note the compensation Springwater would receive from Barrie, township officials are now certain they will receive almost \$23 million.

According to a report that will go before township council next week, prepared by chief administrative officer Stacey Forfar, Springwater will receive \$22.93 million.

The township will receive \$5.17 million when the agreement is executed — \$5 million for the boundary adjustment and \$170,000 for economic development.

On July 5, 2026, the township will receive \$3.416 million for the boundary adjustment, the report says.

On Jan. 5 of each year from 2027 to 2030, the township will receive \$3.586 million, which includes \$3.416 million for the boundary adjustment and \$170,000 for economic development.

Additionally, Springwater and Barrie will enter into an agreement to extend city water and wastewater services to land which will remain in the township.

Barrie will also create a seat for Springwater's mayor, or their designate, on the planned conservation trust for Little Lake. Barrie will establish a buffer between existing and proposed development in both the city and township, that may be used as a linear park/trail.

"In order to execute the compensation agreement and receive the above listed compensation from the City of Barrie, it is now appropriate to authorize the mayor and clerk to execute the 'Springwater-Barrie Restructuring Compensation Agreement' in a form substantially in accordance with the draft attached to this report and subject to final review and acceptance from the township solicitor," Forfar wrote in her report.

"The City of Barrie, in consultation with the township and the Ontario Provincial Land and Development Facilitator (has) prepared a compensation agreement, largely in conformity with its commitments made to the township during the facilitated process, as well as what was detailed at the township's public meeting held Oct. 8, 2025," she added.

On Wednesday night, Barrie city council signed off on a compensation package as part of its annexation more than 4,100 acres of land in Springwater and neighbouring Oro-Medonte Township. City council agreed to as much as \$38,085,000 following a closed-door meeting.

On Dec. 11, 2025, Barrie-Oro-Medonte-Springwater Boundary Adjustment Act, 2025, received royal assent and became legislation. Ontario Regulation 402/25 to the Act was subsequently filed on Dec. 30, 2025.

The regulation includes a revised and clarified schedule of land to be transferred to Barrie. The revised schedule excludes references to land located along the Bayfield Street corridor and west side of St. Vincent Street, which were identified as remaining in the township in the framework restructuring proposal.



Springwater Township deputy chief administrative officer Renee Ainsworth, left, and Stacey Forfar, the township's chief administrative officer, enjoy a light moment in this file photo.

According to Forfar's report, Springwater and Barrie have reached an agreement on cross-border servicing for land on Bayfield Street, at the city's northern boundary.

"The township has received several development proposals of interest on these lands; however, none have progressed to a formal application as these lands which are outside of a designated settlement area do not have access to existing or planned water and wastewater services," Forfar wrote.

"Through the facilitation process and for these projects of interest to proceed, the city and township have proposed that these lands become a 'cross-border servicing area' that would remain in the township but have access to city water and wastewater services," she added.

Under the current compensation agreement, Springwater and Barrie would agree to enter into a cross-border servicing agreement by July 1, 2026, as directed by the Ontario Provincial Land and Development Facilitator.

Further details of the arrangement, including detailed engineering, which fall out of scope of the compensation agreement, will need to be refined and developed into a separate agreement.

According to Forfar's report, failure to enter into such an agreement on either party by the deadline does not compromise any other compensation measure or provision of the compensation agreement.

Council will consider Forfar's report at the township's meeting on Feb. 4, starting at 6:30 p.m.

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# Message from MP Doug Shipley

As your federal Member of Parliament, I work to keep you informed on what the federal



government is up to in Ottawa. While I am always happy to answer your questions about policy, a significant part of my job is to help constituents navigate federal government programs and services.

My team and I are happy to greet in person visitors and answer phone calls and emails Monday to Friday in my local office. You can find us at 48 Alliance Boulevard, Suite 104, in Barrie. You can also reach us by telephone at 705-728-2596.

- We can assist with the following matters:
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  - OAS and the Guaranteed Income Supplement
  - Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada inquiries
  - Any other federal matters

How we can help is determined on a case-by-case basis, so the best thing to do is contact my office by telephone or email to discuss your specific

situation. Then we can let you know what steps we might be able to take to assist you.

When contacting my office, you will often reach one of my knowledgeable team members as I am juggling responsibilities both here in Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte and in Ottawa. If you would like to reach me directly to share your concerns around policy, legislation, or government service the fastest way to connect with me is by sending an email to Doug.Shipley@parl.gc.ca

With the various demands on my time every day I may not be able to respond immediately. I do review all emails and if I think that you will be best served by a direct conversation with a member of my team then I will ask them to follow up. Otherwise, you will receive a response from me.

We look forward to hearing from you.  
Sincerely,  
Doug Shipley  
Member of Parliament  
Barrie – Springwater – Oro-Medonte

## Community Update from Ward 1 Councillor Matt Garwood, Township of Springwater

Hello Springwater residents. I'm pleased to share updates on recent decisions and developments shaping our community. My goal with these columns is to inform, not to offer opinions, so you can stay connected with what's happening in Springwater.

Elmvale Business Improvement Area (BIA):  
The Elmvale BIA has requested that the Township consider dedicated funding to support a focused economic development plan. This investment would allow the township to advance strategic planning, business retention and attraction, tourism initiatives, marketing efforts, and pursuit of external funding opportunities.



Elmvale Arena – Dehumidification Project:  
Council has approved the dehumidification project at the Elmvale Arena. This upgrade will improve the building's functionality for residents while protecting it as a valuable public asset. Ensuring safe, healthy, and sustainable recreational spaces continues to be a key priority.

Voting Methods – 2026 Municipal Election:  
Following public consultation, Council voted to explore remote electronic voting options for the upcoming election. Staff have been directed to issue an expedited request for information to vendors who meet rigorous governance, security, and cost standards. A follow-up report will be brought back to Council.

Residential Recycling Service Concerns:  
Since January 1, 2026, residential recycling has been managed by Circular Materials and Emterra Environmental, following the County of Simcoe's service transition. Residents have raised concerns about missed collections and inconsistent service. Council has formally expressed dissatisfaction and called on the Province of Ontario to review oversight and accountability within the new producer responsibility system.

Thank you for staying engaged in our community's progress – Matt



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**Melissa Gauer** | ACCOUNTANT

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She looks forward to meeting our clients in the coming months.



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## Elmvale U13 B Enjoys a Strong Season of Development, Competition, and Cohesion



*Written by Adam Thompson*

The Elmvale U13 B team has enjoyed a positive and rewarding season highlighted by steady development, strong teamwork, and valuable competition both in league play and tournament action. From the opening weeks of the season through recent games, the team has continued to grow in confidence and cohesion while proudly representing Elmvale Minor Hockey.

The team is grateful for the generous sponsorship of the Elmvale Lions Club, whose continued support plays an important role in making the season possible. Their commitment to youth sports and the Elmvale community allows players to focus on skill development, teamwork, and enjoying the game in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Throughout regular season play, the team demonstrated consistent effort and a willingness to learn. Practices emphasized strong fundamentals, teamwork, and game awareness, which translated into competitive performances on the ice. As the season progressed, the team continued to build momentum, showing improvement in all areas of play while competing hard every game.

Tournament play was a key part of the team's development this season. Early in the year, the team traveled to compete in the Welland Little NHL Tournament, where they advanced to the semi-finals and were narrowly eliminated in a shootout — a hard-fought finish that highlighted the team's determination and resilience. In December, the Elmvale squad took part in the Bob Merkle Memorial Silver Stick Tournament in Midland, battling through to double overtime before being eliminated in the semi-finals, once

again demonstrating their ability to compete at a high level against strong opposition. Most recently, the team competed in the Highland Storm Tournament in Haliburton, making a strong run to the championship game achieving a silver medal. Reaching the championship round was a significant accomplishment and a reflection of the team's growth, teamwork, and competitive spirit throughout the season.

These tournament experiences offered more than just competition — they created lasting memories, strengthened team bonds, and helped the players grow both on and off the ice.

This incredible team includes the following roster: Sawyer Trace #2, Ray Duckett #3, Gibson Godin #5, Charlie Coughlin #7, Boston Laycock #8, L.J. Noble #9, Nash Rocky #10, Kohen Archer #11, Kohen Weiss #12, Lincoln Carlson-Thompson #14, Owen Maxwell #15, Max Champion #17, Easton Culbert #18, and Eli Daniels #31.

To the coaching staff for countless hours and dedication. Staff include Head Coach Brandon Godin, Assistant Coach Keenan Crowder, Trainer Logan Noble, Assistant Trainer Dave Rocky and Team Manager Sarah Daniels. A special thank you as well to Bradford Elliott and Candace Godin for their help and support throughout the season.

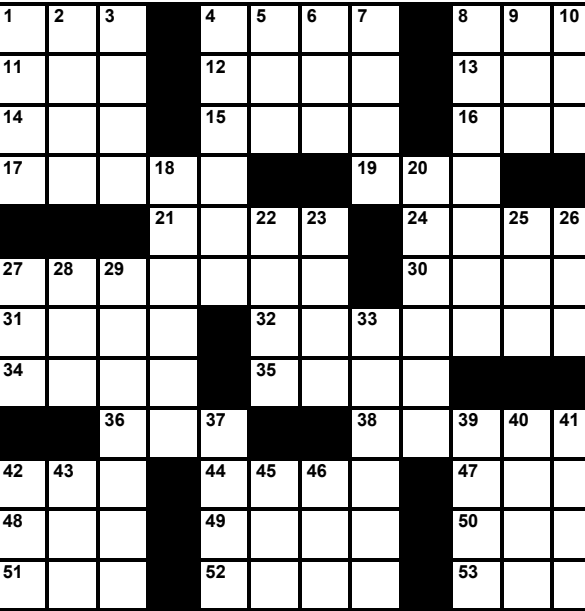
We hope to see you in the stands cheering us on, at our home games as we enter the playoffs, and at the Elmvale Minor Hockey hosted Maple Syrup Country Tournament March 13-15.



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Across		Down	
1	Halloween	1	Watched
prankster's aid		2	Landing
4	Alaska King	equipment	
8	Dance genre	3	Golden in San
11	Vote for	Francisco	
12	Stage part	4	Emergency
13	Life duration	5	"Maggie May"
14	Swallow	singer Stewart	
15	Like some	6	The lot
thoughts		7	Existed
16	Chow, for one	8	Frog's juvenile
17	Sari, for	phase	
example		9	"Long, Long
19	Tot's timeout	"	
21	Rewards for	10	Cribbage piece
waiting		18	Like some
24	Comfy spot	glances	
27	Vein	20	Court stat
30	Palm hit	22	Prop for
31	Testimony type	Sherlock	
32	Doctor's	23	Visitor's term
charge		25	Ardent devotee
34	Scotch	26	High-rise
35	Lookers	residence, for short	
36	Last word of a	27	Freckle, e.g.
film		28	Historical
38	Flower support	period	
42	Black gunk	29	Decorated
44	Funny one	walls	
47	Campaigned	33	Broke in
for political office		37	Ring result
48	A digit	39	Riyadh native
49	Ground plot	40	Tardy
50	Broke bread	41	Kind of pad
51	Occasional	42	"This ___ shall
52	Garden invader	pass"	
53	Worker in a	43	"What
cell		happened next?"	
		45	Skid cause
		46	Refinery metal



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# 2025-2026 U13 B2 Elmvale Coyotes

By Jenna Choi

The first season of the 2025–2026 year has now concluded for the U13 B2 Elmvale Coyotes, proudly sponsored by Duivenvoorden Haulage Ltd.

Although this team was formed at the end of September and is still relatively new, the players' hard work and dedication were clearly evident. During our first tournament at Muskoka Rock, the team delivered an impressive performance and proudly returned home with a silver medal.

Our forwards—Madden (#9), Ben (#2), Owen (#16), Oliver (#18), Declan (#14), Tyler (#5), Mason (#4), and Remington (#3)—continue to generate strong offensive pressure while developing their passing and shooting skills. Defensively, Eric (#15), Andrew (#8), Noah (#11), Jackson (#7), and Emery (#17) have been battling hard along the boards, applying consistent pressure in the defensive zone, and contributing offensively when opportunities arise. Anchoring the team in net, Jacob (#1) has been outstanding, providing reliable and confident goaltending throughout the season.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our coaches and team manager for their constant encouragement, leadership, and behind-the-scenes efforts to keep the team organized and supported.

As we head into the second half of the season, the



Coyotes are excited to showcase their continued growth, skill, and teamwork at upcoming tournaments in Gravenhurst in mid-January and Oshawa over the Family Day weekend. Our focus

remains on development, success, and—most importantly—having fun both on and off the ice. Please stay tuned for more exciting updates. Go Coyotes!

# The Elmvale Coyotes Steelers U13 LL2

By Jenn Morrow

The Elmvale Coyotes Steelers U13 LL2 team put together an impressive run at the Orr Lake Hockey Tournament, showcasing strong teamwork and determination throughout the weekend.

The Coyotes opened the tournament with a solid 3–1 victory over Centre Wellington, setting the tone with disciplined play and strong defense. They carried that momentum into their second game, dominating the TNT Tornados with a convincing 7–2 win. Elmvale continued to roll in round-robin action, shutting out the TCDMHA Rebels 4–0 in their third game.

Advancing to the semifinals, the Coyotes faced a tough opponent from Goderich in a tightly

contested matchup. After battling through regulation and overtime, Elmvale fell in a shootout, bringing their tournament run to a hard-fought end.

Despite the semifinal loss, the Coyotes can be proud of their performance, finishing the tournament with three strong wins and demonstrating growth, resilience, and competitive spirit on the ice.

Best of luck to the Steelers U13 LL2 team who will be heading off to their first away tournament of the season in Thorold, mid January!

The team would like to thank their sponsor Steelers Restaurant and Pub for their continued support!



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# Kings Still in the Hunt for 3rd Place after Winning Three of Four Games



Submitted by Jamie Robillard

The Penetang Kings played four games between January 16th and 24th winning three of the outings to remain in the chase for third place in the Provincial Junior Hockey League Carruthers Division.

The Kings dropped their January 16th game at home to the Orillia Terriers by a narrow 3-2 margin as Orillia scored the winning goal early in the third period.

In a tight checking affair, the Penetang scorers were Owen Fuller and Lucas Dubois who each also collected an assist. Matthew Laframboise added two assists for the Kings. Landon Simec turned aside 34 Orillia shots, while Penetang managed 28 shots on Orillia netminder Wilson Mackey. Fuller was selected as the Kings Canadoor Garage Door Kings player of game.

On Saturday January 17th the Kings travelled down the highway to face off against the Innisfil Spartans and came out on top with a 4-1 victory. Lucas Dubois with two goals paced the Kings offence while Gavin Pich and Wyndam Brownlee both scored single markers. Assists were earned by Fuller with two, Laframboise, Cole Rumbolt, Logan Tucker, Carson Thayer, Owen Clennett and Spencer Walker with one each.

Owen Moreau stopped all but one of the 17 Innisfil shots to get the victory in the Penetang goal. The



Gavin Pich



Owen Fuller



Owen Moreau



Spencer Walker

Kings fired 47 shots on the Spartans netminder Luke Rockburne. Pich was named the Kings Canadoor Garage Door player of the game.

Penetang finished off a busy weekend on Sunday January 18th with an afternoon affair in Midland against the Flyers. Once again Penetang played a strong game and came away with a 3-1 win. Scoring for Penetang were Carter Wilson, Logan Tucker and Camron Hutchinson. Josh Underwood managed to score the Flyers lone marker. Owen Moreau again had a strong game in the Penetang net and was named the Kings Canadoor Garage Door player of the game.

The Kings road game that was scheduled to be played in Alliston on Friday January 23rd was cancelled due to the inclement weather that has been plaguing the area over the last few days, it has been rescheduled for Sunday February 15th.

Penetang played host to the Innisfil Spartans on



Kings congratulate McDiarmid after win vs Innisfil Jan. 24



Lucas Dubois Face-off vs Innisfil Jan 17

Saturday January 24th and exploded for seven goals to come out on top by a 7-2 margin. The Kings offence was led by Spencer Walker who collected two goals and three assists in his best offensive performance of the season. Blake Weicker also had two goals with single tallies from Ty Hutton, Hutchinson and Fuller rounding out the Kings scoring parade. Assists were collected by Laframboise (3), Dubois (2), Fuller, Hutton, Wilson and Hutchinson. Walker was named the Kings Canadoor Garage Door player of the game.

Campbell McDiarmid made his debut for the Kings in goal and turned aside 34 of the 36 shots fired his way. Penetang had 40 shots on Ethan Lawrence in the nets for the Spartans.

Penetang now has eight regular season games remaining on the schedule starting Friday January 30th at home when the host the Stayner Siskins before travelling to Huntsville to face-off against the Otters on Saturday January 31st. On Wednesday February 4th the Kings are in Alliston to meet the Hornets and then on Friday February 6th they tangle with the Midland Flyers at the Bourgeois Community Center in Midland.



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Elmvale Harvesters  
Playoff Schedule

Home Games

Sat Feb 14 4:30pm Elmvale Harvesters vs Georgian Bay Applekings - Elmvale Arena  
Mon Feb 16 12:45pm Elmvale Harvesters vs Georgian Bay Applekings - Elmvale Arena  
Sun Feb 22 4:30 pm Elmvale Harvesters vs Georgian Bay Applekings - Elmvale Community Arena

Away Games

Sun Feb 15 3:00pm Elmvale Harvesters @ Georgian Bay Applekings - Beaver Valley Community Centre  
Sat Feb 21 5:30 pm Elmvale Harvesters @ Georgian Bay Applekings - Beaver Valley Community Centre

Waterside Retirement Lodge  
Friday Senior Curling Standings

	Wins	Losses	Ties	Points
Team Madore	5	0	0	43
Team Mooney	3	1	1	32.5
Team Townes	3	1	0	26.5
Team Marshall	2	1	1	25
Team Lambie	2	1	1	23.5
Team Allen	2	2	0	20.5
Team Belcourt	2	2	0	20
Team Johnstone	1	1	2	20
Team Scott	2	2	0	19.5
Team Pullen	2	2	0	19.5
Team McClung	1	3	0	13
Team Murphy	1	3	0	12
Team Smitham	0	3	1	11
Team Huth	0	4	0	4

6 points for a win, 0.5 Points per end,  
3 Points for a tie  
0.25 points for a blank end



SPORTS  
Harvesters Roll Into Playoffs  
With Momentum

By Adrianna McGinnis  
The Elmvale Harvesters wrapped up regular season play on January 31st at home against the Shelburne Muskies, closing out the schedule in dominant fashion with a 9–1 victory. The Will Marshall Insurance Brokers 3 Stars of the Game were 1st Star Jordan Fuller, 2nd Star Adam Redgate, and 3rd Star Jacob Kelly.  
The win secured the Harvesters third place in the North Division, setting up a first-round playoff matchup against the sixth-place Georgian Bay Applekings in a best-of-seven series.

Game 1 took place on February 6th, with the Harvesters braving snowy roads to Thornbury. Elmvale wasted no time asserting control, dominating the offensive zone and skating away with a convincing 6–3 win. The Will Marshall Insurance Brokers 3 Stars of the Game were 1st Star Jordan Fuller, 2nd Star Noah Featherstonhaugh-Gowe, and 3rd Star Jeremy Robertson.  
The series shifted back to Elmvale on February 7th for Game 2, where fans were treated to a fast-paced and hard-fought contest. The Harvesters

jumped out to an early lead, but the Applekings responded quickly and took control of the game. Elmvale showed resilience, turning up the pressure and battling back to tie the game in the third period. With just one minute remaining, Jordan Fuller buried the go-ahead goal, followed by an empty-net goal to seal a 7–5 Harvesters victory. The Will Marshall Insurance Brokers 3 Stars of the Game were 1st Star Ryan Young, 2nd Star Jordan Fuller, and 3rd Star Riley Pitt.  
With the two wins, the Harvesters now lead the series 2–0.

Game 3 is set for Valentine’s Day, February 14th, in Elmvale with a 4:30 p.m. puck drop. Game 4 will take place in Thornbury on February 15th at 3:00 p.m. If necessary, Game 5 will return to Elmvale on Family Day, Monday February 16th, with a 12:45 p.m. start.

Season ticket holders and sponsors are reminded that they receive a complimentary ticket to Game 3. Following Game 3, they will receive an early-access ticket code via email. Fans are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance to guarantee entry as the playoff excitement continues in Elmvale.



Tiny Fire Welcomes New Tanker Truck into Service

Date: February 6, 2026  
(Tiny, Ontario) On February 3, 2026, Township of Tiny Fire and Emergency Services welcomed a new fire tanker truck into service. This new tanker truck is now fully operational and will be stationed at Tiny Fire Station #2 in Wyveale.

The tanker truck was made in Ontario and is specifically designed to support firefighting operations in areas of the municipality not served by fire hydrants. Much of Tiny relies on tanker-based water delivery, making this apparatus a critical component of our emergency response.

The tanker carries 9,000 litres of water and is equipped with an onboard pump capable of flowing 5,000 litres per minute, allowing firefighters to supply water quickly and efficiently at fire scenes. This new unit replaces a tanker over 20 years of age which improves the reliability, safety, and operational capability of Tiny Fire’s vehicle fleet.

Funding for the tanker was provided through the Fire Department’s reserves, reflecting long-term planning and responsible stewardship of community resources.

“The addition of this tanker strengthens our ability to protect lives and property throughout the municipality,” said Director of Fire and Emergency



Services/Fire Chief Dave Flewelling. “It represents a major investment in safety for both our community and our firefighters”.

In addition to various fleet vehicles, Tiny Fire also maintains an accredited Superior Tanker Shuttle Service through Fire Underwriters Survey. This accreditation means that our Fire Department can provide quality fire protection services in areas not serviced by fire hydrants. This accreditation confirms the department’s ability to deliver sustained water supply operations in rural areas, providing residents with assurance that effective fire protection is

available even in locations without hydrants. This achievement can also provide insurance discounts to eligible property owners. To learn more about the accreditation, visit [www.tiny.ca/TankerAccreditation](http://www.tiny.ca/TankerAccreditation).  
“We’re thrilled to welcome a brand-new made in Ontario tanker truck to Tiny Fire’s fleet,” said Mayor David Evans. “This purchase replaces an aging fleet vehicle that was in service for over 20 years. This new tanker reflects our commitment to providing our firefighters with the proper equipment they need to protect our community. We honour those who run toward danger so the rest of us can be safe.”

Water Museum Festival waved ahead by Midland on Art Installation

By Derek Howard, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter Midland Today Feb 5, 2025

Midland is host to Canada’s sole museum of water, and a council decision could mean a summertime art installation comes to Little Lake Park later this year.

At Wednesday’s committee of the whole meeting, a request from the Canadian Museum of Water looked for council support to bring a temporary public art installation to the town’s central location from June through September.

The dynamic piece by Toronto-based artist Ben Johnston titled ‘It Comes In Waves’, if approved, would highlight the July ‘Celebrate Water!’ event by the museum with the organization requesting \$10,000 from town coffers.

The majority of the committee of the whole granted approval for the installation subject to future formal ratification of regular council, but required some clarifications at the recent meeting.

At the beginning of the evening, an open forum deputation from a resident preceded the accompanying Celebrate Water report with various claims which members of council and staff responded to with clarifications.

A claim that the museum had circumvented a failed 2025 grant attempt during budget was disproven by Coun. Jamie-Lee Ball who stated

it was unrelated to the current council initiative reserve request being discussed.

Refuting a claim that costs would exceed the \$10,000, Ball explained that the amount was strictly for the art installation; culture and community manager Karen Mealing further clarified that the Canadian Museum of Water – and not the town – would be responsible for installation along with potential maintenance, repairs or damages; municipal costs for the event would be clerical in nature. Additionally, a hard cap of \$10,000 was

placed on council initiative reserve contributions, which the town’s financial liability would not exceed.

Furthermore, any exploration into water permits would be taken upon by the Canadian Museum of Water in contact with proper authorities of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Transport Canada, and the Canadian Coast Guard as required; town staff would not be responsible for such assurances other than ensuring the museum met public art policy compliance.

Several council members spoke in favour of the request: Coun. Jaz Patel encouraged start-up projects through seed funding; Sheldon East highlighted Midland as a tourism destination, and the art placement in Little Lake near the upcoming splash pad; and Bill Meridis remarked upon the full support given by the Downtown BIA, Midland Cultural Centre, and other organizations.

Mayor Bill Gordon took the opportunity to change into a Canadian Museum of Water shirt as he announced full support for the request and art installation.

“They (the museum) are super excited about this; they have so many activities planned,” said Gordon. “This is something they’ve been working on for a year.

“When you look at the kind of seed funding that our municipality provides to startups, that’s right in line – they’re not asking for \$100,000; it’s \$10,000.” Gordon noted the credibility of museum executive director Dan Travers, and said that he believed in the proposed business plan presented by Travers.

“Nothing about this project, from what I’ve heard or seen, leads me to believe that this is a risky investment,” added Gordon, “and I think I can defend this to ratepayers who may want to challenge me later.”

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**Bearbells** By Leslie Noonan

February 4, 2026  
After a sunny and warm week in the Dominican Republic, it was a shock to the soul to feel the cold Canadian wind. I waited until the weather heated up to a balmy minus twelve degrees Centigrade before making plans to snowshoe. I donned layer after layer of synthetic clothing, hoping to stay somewhat warm in the crisp Arctic air. I was going out to a spot near Orillia that a friend frequently took her grandchildren to and that seemed to have an abundance of wildlife. The George Langman Sanctuary is found just across from Bass Lake Provincial Park and is managed by the Orillia Fish and Game Conservation Club. A short trail, but with the frigid temperatures a short trail seemed prudent.

The conservation area has a nice sized parking lot that is plowed. As I walked toward the building, I stopped to talk to Judy, an older woman here to enjoy an hour or so of nature, and a respite from her care giving role. Judy was friendly as well as being a wealth of information about this, her favorite local area to get outside. There is no fee, though donations are welcome. Judy also encouraged me to return in the summer, when the birds and other wildlife are more abundant, as well as to see the bee and wildflower area. Close by a rooster belted out his cock-a-doodle-doo, and Judy pointed out another red building where birds and bunnies were housed. No wonder my friend brought her grandchildren here! I said goodbye to Judy and started out on the trail, which is surprisingly groomed, negating the need to don my snowshoes. The sun made a rare appearance, though the rays did little to dispel the tingling on my cheeks and the end of my nose. It was so cold that I hesitated to touch my nose, sure that the tip would snap right off!

The trail follows the fence line, with Bass Lake Road on one side and an open field dotted with small evergreens on the other. I believe this “field” might also hide a significant wet land in warmer weather. Now bright red sumacs wear a mantle of white snow and tree branches appeared draped in cotton candy, and the slightest movement of those branches sent cold snow down the back of my coat. A single oak shivered in the wind, its brown leaves clinging tenaciously to the tiny twigs. The wind vanished once the trail entered a cedar forest, where it was calm and still, and still freezing cold. My fingers burned from taking off my mitts to take photos, and I am sure frostbite is a very real possibility today.

I continued through the cedar forest until the trees receded and I found myself next to the bee garden. I noticed a cute trio of ceramic mushrooms hiding under mounds of snow and decided to leave the groomed trail to take a picture. Well, the snow is deep, up to mid-thigh, and I promptly found my

self stuck. I had taken my first step off the trail with my right leg, which is my good leg, then my left. Ok fine, I am standing in that deep snow with both legs, no problem. Until I try to take the next step with my left and find myself unable to move. As that gimpy left leg can't bend, I can't take a step over the accumulation of snow and instead find my left leg rooted to the spot with the right leg a step ahead. Sigh. The options were limited and consisted of me just falling to the side and crawling back to the trail or using that right leg to break a trail back to the left so it could move. Falling sounded easier, but colder, so I started the slow process of packing down the snow so I could move. Instead of heading back on the groomed trail, I spent the next ten minutes to move a few feet, plowing ahead so I could get that picture of the mushrooms. Have I mentioned that I tend to be stubborn?

I was glad to return to the trail, as cold snow clumped in the top of my boots. I ducked under the overhang of one of the outbuildings and found the crowing rooster I had heard earlier. Other enclosures held turkeys and several brightly colored pheasants including a beautiful golden bird. Up on the rafters small grey and white doves let out soft coos. I spent some time talking to the fowl, though they all seemed timid as I was unable to coax one closer to me. Perhaps that was due to me wondering out loud if you can eat pheasant and what it tastes like. Probably not the appropriate conversation to be having with my new friends. I moved on, as nature was calling and I went in search of some facilities. I was in luck, as a porta-potty could just be seen under a snowbank. I had never really considered the logistics of a porta-potty in winter. Of course it can't be emptied. Instead, I was staring down a mountain of frozen poop, with stained white toilet paper like snow on a mountain top. Frozen glaciers of yellow-colored fluids clung to the sides of the mountain. Ugh. Some mountains were not meant to be conquered. With a certain sense of urgency, I jumped in my car in search of the closest restroom. I can appreciate why my friend loves this place, it is perfect for a short walk, children would love it and I look forward to coming back in warmer weather.



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**ANTEN MILLS**  
by Dennis Gannon

Do you have a paper calendar in your home? With the age of everything digital most homes no longer have one. In years past there were lots of free calendars offered but not so much now. The reason this is brought up is that if you were to look at a calendar for this month, February, you would see that it's a perfect display of numbers and days. The month began on a Sunday the 1st and will end on a Saturday the 28th. Four perfect weeks of Sundays to Saturdays. This phenomenon doesn't occur often as the days of the week move ahead each year and then there are leap years. It won't be until 2037 when this happens again.

After an absence during the fall, euchre returns again to the community centre on Thursday evenings. For the admission cost of a Tonnie, (\$2), you can join in for an evening of cards and socializing. Should you wish to bring a beverage or a snack with you feel free to do so. Euchre begins at 7PM and runs until 9.

Events and activities are an important part of our community and the Anten Mills Community Recreation Association is responsible for leading and undertaking activities. Obviously it cannot occur without the support and participation of members from the community. Annually a review of what occurred in the previous year and what should happen the current year takes place. Is there an interest in getting pickle ball happening or a need for some equipment? What about a once a week cornhole game under the pavilion. Kids pick up softball? Do we need to change up any of our annual events? Input from the community is imperative and the CRA is looking for your thoughts. On Wednesday, March 4 the CRA will have a meeting at the community centre beginning at 7:30PM to hear what you have to say. All are welcome to attend and provide your input. This is the opportunity for those new to the community to find out more about what is offered and for new ideas to be brought forward. Make a point of putting it in your calendar and attending.

Sunday, February 15 is National Flag of Canada Day. On February 15, 1965, at noon, the Red and White Maple Leaf flag we call our flag was raised for the first time on Parliament Hill. “Prime Minister Pearson's words on the occasion resound with hope

and determination: “May the land over which this new flag flies remain united in freedom and justice ... sensitive, tolerant and compassionate towards all.” While many flag poles are not accessible this year because of the snow banks, hopefully the flag you are flying is in good shape and if not can be changed out soon. Our flag is one recognized throughout the world and one we should all be proud of. In recognition of the day and those people who demonstrate exemplary dedication to their community through their actions, there is a special Flag Bearer award being presented by the government this year. Nominations must be received by February 15, 2026 and you can get more information by going to the Government of Canada website, <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-flag-canada-day.html>.

There are a number of events going on this weekend around our area. Minesing is holding their 54th annual MiniFest with lots of fun in the village. It's also Valentine's Day on Saturday. In Midhurst the United Church is hosting “chez Valentine” , a fine dining experience on February 13. You can get more details on their website or Facebook page. On Saturday night, the Springwater Vespra Lions Club invites everyone to their Great Evening in the Country, Moonlit Trails and Fireside Tails. Beginning at 6PM, it will be at the intersection of Old 2nd S and Pooles Rd. where they held the pumpkin event. There is a 2.5 kilometre trail lit by lanterns which you can walk, cross country ski or snowshoe on. Afterwards there is a bonfire with hot chocolate being served. Dogs on leashes are welcome. This sounds like an enjoyable evening and a great way to celebrate Valentine Day with the family. Check out more details on the Springwater Vespra Lions Club Facebook page.

Monday is Family Day and while there are no events planned for the community why not make it a family skate day at the community rink. The volunteers have done an amazing job this year and it won't be long before the sun and warm weather melt the ice for the season so take advantage of it while you can.

That's all for this week, enjoy the holiday and as always, THANKS for READING, BE WELL and STAY SAFE.






**March Break Registration is NOW OPEN!**  
Don't miss out on our amazing all ages March Break programs this year! We've got activities for family, children and teens! Check our website for details and registration. Space is limited so be sure to save your spot! Monday March 16: Community Scavenger Hunt, Magic Wand craft. Tuesday March 17: Make a Mug. Wednesday March 18: Tween/Teen Mystery Board. Thursday March 19: DIY Button Making. Friday March 20: Sword Demonstration, DIY Pet Bandanas.

**Journal Workshop**  
Be your own Valentine this February! At this workshop presented by the Barrie Community Health Centre will discuss what self-love is and teach you to create your very own self-love journal. Each participant will take home their journal and 20 writing prompts. All abilities are welcome! Friday February 13, 4:30pm-6:30pm at Midhurst Branch. Cost: Free. Registration required.

**Minesing Minifest**  
The 54th Annual Minesing Minifest is Friday February 13 and Saturday February 14 with the theme "Romantic Movies". Minesing Branch will be closed Friday but join us on Saturday February 14 from 9am - 2pm for a fun Swampy craft and a jellybean guessing game!

**Family Day Holiday Closure**  


**Makers**  
1st Thursday of the month, 6:30-7:45PM Adults  
Attention all crafters, creators, and DIY-ers! Drop in on the first Thursday evening of each month to work on your projects, troubleshoot or learn something new with other members of the community. This is a casual way to explore MPL's MakerPlace and discover new hobbies. Email [mnichol@midlandlibrary.com](mailto:mnichol@midlandlibrary.com) to find out more. No registration required.

**Adult Take & Make: Embroidery Sampler**  
Available from January 6 while supplies last  
Spend some cozy time learning a new skill during the cold winter months! This kit contains everything you need to get started with embroidery, including links to helpful stitch tutorials on our crafting database, CreativeBug. Reserve a kit in advance online or swing by the library to see if kits are still available. Limit 1 kit per library card.

**Intro to Digital Art**  
Adults  
Thursday, February 19, 6-7:30PM

**Dr Sean Corsini Orthodontist**  
No referral necessary  
  
705 527-5570  
550 Hugel Ave, Midland

Please note, all branches of Springwater Public Library will be closed on Monday February 16 to celebrate the Family Day Holiday. Thank you and enjoy your day!

**Drop-In Program**  
The library will be offering a fun drop-in craft at both its Elmvale and Midhurst Branches. This program will be available as long as supplies last. There is no registration required for this free program. Thursday February 19: Dancing Dragon.

**Senior Social Coffee and Crafting**  
Drop by the library for a fun time of crafting and socializing! One morning a month we will have a simple craft activity set up in the branch along with light refreshments. This is an excellent opportunity for seniors in the community to connect for a fun morning of creativity! This month, design and create your own sublimation Cricut coaster. Friday February 20, 11am-12noon at Midhurst Branch. Cost: Free. Registration required.

**Freedom to Read: Read-In at the Library**  
Celebrate Freedom to Read Week! Come read a banned or challenged book and promote Intellectual Freedom. All ages welcome! Thursday February 26, 10am-6:30pm at all branch locations (Minesing branch opens at 1pm). Cost: Free. No registration required for this drop-in program.  
If you're interested in learning the basics of digital art, this program is for you! Our volunteer, Steedan, will walk you through the basics of creating art on our iPads using the award-winning ProCreate app from Savage Interactive. Registration required.

**DIY Card Holders**  
Adults  
February 26, 5:30-7:30PM  
If you've ever been the victim of multiple Draw Four cards in a game, you know it's hard to hold onto all those cards! Learn how to sew felt card holders to make family game night a little easier in this introductory sewing program. Each participant will make two card holders and receive instructions to replicate the project on your own. Registration required.

**Teen Take & Make: Homemade Granola**  
Teens (12-18)  
Available from February 3 in The Vault  
Want to make an easy, delicious and customizable snack? Pick up a kit and learn how to make your own granola! Each kit contains all the ingredients for a base granola with suggestions for mix-ins to get creative. Get your kit in The Vault while supplies last. No registration required.  
Tween Tinker Tuesdays  
Ages 9-12  
Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30PM  
Join us on the second Tuesday of each month

  
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**Volunteer Income Tax Program**  
In person, phone appointments and drop off processing of taxes are available for those within the tax brackets of: \$35,000 for one person, \$45,000 for two people, up to \$50,000 for a family of four.  
If you are using the drop off method of tax processing (starts Monday February 23), please ensure your documents are in a sealed envelope labelled with your address, phone number and email address. This program operates in collaboration with the Canada Revenue Agency. In person 30 minute appointments are available in March and April at the Elmvale Branch, please call us to book your in person or phone appointment at (705) 322-1482.

- Thursday March 5, 10:30am-1pm
- Monday March 9, 2pm-5pm
- Saturday March 14, 10:30am-3:30pm
- Thursday March 26, 10:30am-1pm
- Saturday March 28, 10:30am-3:30pm
- Monday March 30, 2pm-5pm
- Thursday April 9, 10:30am-1pm
- Saturday April 11, 10:30am-3:30pm
- Monday April 13, 2pm-5pm
- Saturday April 18, 10:30am-3:30pm
- Thursday April 23, 10:30am-1pm
- Monday April 27, 2pm-5pm

as we alternate between our Make Stuff Move and Pathfinders kits. Tweens will build machines and devices that move, strengthening their understanding of Physics and Engineering, while building practical hands-on skills. Registration required.

**Family Movie Night**  
Tuesday, February 17, 5:30PM—Freakier Friday

**Make Your Own Travel Game**  
Ages 6-12  
Wednesday, February 4, 5-6PM  
Make your own Tic Tac Toe game to take on the go! Children will learn how the Cricut and laser cutter can be used together to make a fun, simple game. Registration required.

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## Jo Knows Nutrition

by Joanne Nijhuis



If you're looking for a recipe that checks every box - healthy, filling, affordable and delicious - this Black Bean & Chickpea dip may become your new favourite. In just a few minutes, everyday ingredients transform into a creamy, satisfying spread that's rich in fibre, protein and healthy fats. When food is this nutritious, easy to prepare and budget-friendly, it deserves a regular appearance in your home.

**Did You Know?**  
Regular bean consumption has been linked to improved gut and heart health and steady blood sugars. Black beans and chickpeas are a great source of plant-based protein and very good for your gut's microbiome - the healthy bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract. Full of fibre, beans promote a feeling of fullness and also keep you regular. With almost 15 grams of protein per cup of cooked chickpeas or black beans, they are a great way to add more plant-based protein to your meals and snacks. Protein has so many functions in the body and is important for muscle repair, optimal immune function and keeping you feeling full between meals. Whether tossed into salads, blended into dips or simmered in soups, these legumes provide a satisfying protein boost.

**INGREDIENTS (6-8 Servings)**  
1 cup (250 ml) black beans, cooked  
1 cup (250 ml) chickpeas, cooked  
¼ cup-½ cup (63-125 ml), fresh lemon juice  
3 Tablespoons (45 ml) tahini or natural peanut butter  
2-3 garlic cloves, minced or 1 teaspoon (5 ml) garlic powder  
¼ cup (63 ml) onion, diced  
1 ½ teaspoons (7.5 ml) ground cumin  
1 ½ teaspoons (7.5 ml) smoked paprika or chili powder  
½ -1 teaspoon (2.5-5 ml) salt, or to taste  
½ teaspoon (2.5 ml) black pepper  
½ - 1 teaspoon (2.5-5 ml) chilli flakes, optional  
½ cup (125 ml) fresh cilantro, chopped

## Annie's Journal

by Annie Warner Donnelly



Written by Annie Warner Donnelly  
Hello Everyone. Have you thought about what you would like to champion in 2026? The word "champion" has a few meanings. Let's use this one: "to defend something".  
In this Artificial Intelligence (AI) era, one thing we can do is search for the truth and defend it. Because peace in relationships has the capacity to change the world, let's begin with them.  
How often do we ignore the positive aspects of a person or an event and make the negative aspects the truth we tell? Ignoring the positive aspects means that we're only telling half the truth.  
How often do we deal with our lives in the same way? We may have had five good things happen to us during the day, but we give a single negative event power over us. Our need to see ourselves as doing

# LIFE STYLE

## BLACK BEAN & CHICKPEA HUMMUS PROTEIN PACKED AND SO DELICIOUS

[www.SpringwaterNews.ca](http://www.SpringwaterNews.ca) 17



2 Tablespoons (30 ml) olive oil  
2-4 Tablespoons (30-60 ml) cold water to dilute

**INSTRUCTIONS**  
1. Place the black beans, chick peas, lemon juice, tahini or peanut butter, garlic, onion, cumin, smoked paprika or chili powder, salt and pepper, and chili flakes (optional) in a food processor or blender.  
2. Process for 1-2 minutes until smooth.  
3. Add the cilantro and olive oil and blend again until mostly smooth.  
4. Adjust the texture by adding 1 Tablespoon (15 ml) of water at a time until the appropriate consistency is achieved.  
5. If desired, add more lemon juice or salt for brightness or cumin, smoked paprika or chili powder for warmth.  
6. Garnish with chopped cilantro, chili flakes, smoked paprika, diced onions or a drizzle of olive oil.

ENJOY!

everything well drives us to re-play what went wrong, what we could have said, what we could have done, perhaps even who we can blame.  
The truth is that sometimes we build our view of ourselves with bricks of negative thoughts, thoughts that when mortared into place build a wall that keeps us in a prison of low self-esteem. There is no peace in a life strategy that supresses half the truth.  
We were created to experience the joy of God's salvation, to centre our beliefs in the word of God that always guides us and lifts us into our identity as children of the living Lord. Applying God's word in all things removes the uncertainty of how to think and what to do next. Because God is love, the results of applying His word sustain peace in our lives.  
Have the voices we've been hearing presented both the positive and negative aspects of people or events so that we can discover the truth, or have they only been interested in telling us their opinion of how we should view the people and their events?  
In John 8:32, Jesus said, "... you will know the truth and the truth shall make you free."  
Let's become a champion at finding the truth and living it! Amen.



PER 1/3 cup (80 ml) SERVING: |Calories: 160 kcal | Carbohydrates: 17 g | Protein: 6 g | Fat: 9 g |Fibre: 5.5 g | Sodium: 230 mg |

Joanne Nijhuis MSc, RD is a consulting, media and culinary dietitian in Simcoe Grey Bruce on a mission to entertain and educate through her love of food. In addition to recipe development and writing for several publications, Joanne offers cooking demos/classes -for groups or individuals - in person and online. For more information, email Joanne at [jo.knows.nutrition@outlook.com](mailto:jo.knows.nutrition@outlook.com).

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**REGISTRATION**

**Cheezers Co-ed Soccer Registration**  
Registration for soccer for ages 3 - 15 yrs old is at the Springwater Library, Elmvale:  
**10:30 am - 1 pm**  
**February 28 (Open to Springwater Residents)**  
**Limited spaces available**  
**\$55 per player**  
**Starting Thursday May 7 at 6:30 pm**  
Call Doug Tinney 705-322-3239 for more information or email: elmvalessoccer@gmail.com. The soccer play time is at 6:30 pm

**info@springwaternews.ca**  
**705-790-1993****Please Note Payment Options:**

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February 26

March 12,26

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- January Multi Consignor Auction - Guelph (2026)
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Community Events Ongoing

SENIOR CLUBS

**Askennonia Seniors Centre**  
Rec. Centre, 527 Len Self Blvd, Midland  
P: (705) 526-7609

**Bay Shore Seniors' Club**  
2000 Tiny Beaches Road S., Woodland Beach  
Call 705-361-1331 or info@bayshoreseniors.ca

**Georgian Shores Seniors Club**  
The Place, 300 Balm Beach Road West, Tiny  
Call 705 526 5074 or gssseniors2016@rogers.com

**MONDAY**  
**Elmvale Seniors Drop In**  
Elmvale Community Church  
10 am - 12 noon  
Call Lynn for info, 705.322.3309

**Midland Jam**  
Free Admission, Show 7:00, Doors 6:30

**Bid Euchre**  
**Elmvale Community Hall 1 pm - 4 pm**  
Call Anne for details 705-322-1232

**Georgian Shores Seniors Club**  
Billiards/Pool, 9:00 – 11 am  
Seniors in Motion Fitness, 10:00 – 11:00 am  
Hustle and Muscle, 11:30 – 12:30 pm  
Bid Euchre, 1 – 3:30 pm

**Bay Shore Seniors Club**  
Bingo - Starts July 30th  
Adults Start at 7:30  
Bay Shore Seniors Club

**Askennonia Seniors Centre**  
Table Tennis, 9am-11am  
Yoga, 9am-10am  
Line Dancing Advanced, 9:15am-10:30  
Fun Fit Circuit, 9:15-10:15am  
Coffee Break, 10:00-12pm  
Chair Pilates, 10:30am-11:30am  
Intro to Line Dancing- Baby Steps, 10:30am-11am  
Walking Club, 11am-12pm  
Line Dancing Basic, 11am-12pm  
Hand and Foot Card Game, 1pm-3pm  
Writers Workshop, 1pm-3pm

**TUESDAY**  
  
Table Shuffleboard  
**Tuesdays at 1 pm** Cost \$2  
Elmvale Legion  
7 John Street Elmvale

**Palace Tavern Elmvale BINGO**  
**Every Tuesday night**  
Midland Rotary proceeds 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm  
Barrie Rotary proceeds 8 pm to 9:30 pm

EVENTS

13 Queen St W, Elmvale

**Penetanguishene Legion**  
**Lunch and/or Regular Euchre**  
luncheons 11:30am arrival. It fills up. Lunch served 12 pm.  
**Euchre**  
**Tuesdays, 1 pm - 4 pm**  
\$4, Drop-in, Legion #68, 2 Poyntz Street, Penetanguishene

**Georgian Shores Seniors Club**  
Billiards/Pool, 9:00 – 11 am  
Line Dancing, Prog. Beginners 9:30 – 11:00 am  
Line Dancing, Easy Intermediate, 11:30 – 1:00 pm

**Askennonia Seniors Centre**  
Pickleball, 9am-12pm (starting October 14)  
Cardio Drums Alive, 9am-10am  
Quilting, 9am-12pm  
Photography Club, 10am-12pm first Tuesday of every month  
Darts Club, 10am-12pm  
Zumba Toning, 10:30-11:30  
Badminton, 1pm-3pm  
Circle of Friends, 1:30pm-2:30pm

**Steelers Music Bingo**  
5:30-6:30 pm  
Steelers Restaurant, 23 Queen Street West, Elmvale

**WEDNESDAY**  
**Elmvale District Garden Enthusiasts**  
4th Wednesday from March to November  
7:00 pm Elmvale Legion, 7 John St.

**Bay Shore Seniors Club**  
**Pickleball** 12:45 pm  
Access Art - 1:00 - 4:00 pm

**Georgian Shores Seniors Club**  
Billiards/Pool, 9:00 – 11 am  
Chair/Floor Yoga, 9:30 – 10:30 am  
Zumba Gold, 11:30 – 12:30 pm  
Games Afternoon, 12:30 - 3:30 pm  
2nd Camera Club, 2:00 - 3:30 pm

**Askennonia Seniors Centre**  
Table Tennis, 9am-11am  
Pickleball, 9am-11:30am (starting October 15)  
Step Class, 9 am-10am  
Line Dancing Advanced, 9:15am-10:30am  
Chair Yoga, 9:15am-10:15am  
Men's Shed, 10am-12pm  
Cribbage, 10am-12pm  
Intro to Line Dancing- Baby Steps, 10:30am-11am  
Line Dancing Basic, 11am-12pm  
Walking Club, 11am-12pm  
Creative Crafting, 1pm-3pm  
Bid Euchre, 1pm-3pm  
Woodcarving, 1pm-3pm

**Midland Ganaraska Hiking Trail Club**  
Meets Wednesdays to hike, snowshoe, go camping or enjoy nature outings led by qualified hike leaders. Hikes meet at Food Basics Midland at 1 p.m For information contact Kris 705-435-8593.

**Ganaraka Hiking Club-Wasaga Beach**  
Weekly hikes Wednesday at 9:30 am from various locations, year

round. Both levels of hikes offered, intermediate and easy. Snowshoeing in winter. Please contact Lorraine at 416-606-5081 or lorvanvlymen@gmail.com for information.

**Georgian Shores Aquarium Club**  
**2nd Wed Sept-June**  
North Simcoe Sports and Recreation Centre in Multipurpose Room  
Monthly meetings  
Guest speakers, DIY aquarium related projects

**THURSDAY**  
**Jam Night Elmvale Palace**  
Thursdays at 9 am-1am  
13 Queen St. W, Elmvale

Euchre - 7 pm  
Elmvale Legion

**Askennonia Seniors Centre**  
Zumba, 9am-10am  
Pickleball, 9am-11:30am  
Corn Hole, 10am-11am  
Tai Chi, 10:15am-11am  
Chair Pilates, 10:30am-11:30am  
Writers Circle, 1pm-3pm  
Uke and Guitar Jam, 1pm-3pm  
Card Games, 1pm-3pm

**Probus Club of Simcoe North**  
Meetings monthly 2nd Thurs. 10 a.m  
For women & men in retirement or semi-retirement.  
Penetang Legion, 2 Poyntz St.  
Mary Grise 705-526-6349  
marygrise0@gmail.com

**Coffee Party**  
Last Thursday of the month 9:30 - 11a.m.  
Elmvale Presbyterian Church  
All Welcome, Cost: \$3

**Georgian Shores Seniors Club**  
Billiards/Pool, 9:00 – 11 am  
1st: Movie and Lunch, 12 noon - 3:30 pm  
2nd & 4th: Tiny Stitchers, 9:00 - 3:00 pm  
3rd: Book Club, 1:30-3:30 pm

**Let's Do Lunch \$5:**  
**Elmvale Presbyterian Church**  
2nd Thursday of the month. Eat in: 12-1pm. \$5  
For take-out & town delivery \$6 call 322-1411 between 9 & noon on the Monday previous.  
Pick-up Thursday 11:15 – 11:45 at East side of the church.

**Connecting Together - Fellowship with Others**  
Thursdays 2-3:30 pm call 705-526-6077  
St. Pauls United Church Atrium, 308 King St Midland

**Wasaga Beach Parkinson's Support Group**  
1st Thursday of each month 12:30-2:00 p.m.  
Dec. 4 Pot Luck at Wasaga Beach Community Presbyterian Church, 208 Mosley St. Jan meeting on Jan. 8  
Wasaga Beach Public Library meeting room  
All persons living with Parkinson's Disease and their care partners are welcome. For more info. contact

Dwight (705) 795-6952 or Phil at Bender.philip@gmail.com

**FRIDAY**  
**Palace Tavern Elmvale BINGO**  
**Karaoke 8:30 pm** Every Friday  
13 Queen St W, Elmvale

**Bay Shore Seniors' Club**  
Woodcarving 10:00 - 3:00 pm

**Georgian Shores Seniors Club**  
Billiards/Pool, 9:00 – 11 am  
Table Tennis, 9:30-11:30 am  
3rd Bingo & Lunch: 12 noon - 3:30 pm  
TGIF social, 4:00 – 6:00 pm

**Askennonia Seniors Centre**  
Knit'n Needles, 9am-12pm  
Cardio Drums Alive, 9am-10am  
Pickleball, 9am-11:30am  
Badminton, 9:30am-11:30am  
Tabata, 9am-10am  
Chair Zumba, 11:10am-12pm  
Card Making, 1pm-3pm  
Musicians Jam Circle, 1pm-3pm

**WEEKENDS**  
**Elmvale Legion**  
Saturday at 5 pm  
Meat Darts- \$ 10.00 for 3 games  
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**Midland Ganaraska Hiking Trail Club**  
Meets **Sat and Sun**, snowshoe, go camping or enjoy nature outings led by qualified hike leaders. Check the hike schedule on https://ganaraska-hiking-trail.org/?page\_id=13455.  
For information contact Kris 705-435-8593.

**Ganaraka Hiking Club-Wasaga Beach**  
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Thur. 12:45pm Duplicate Bridge,  
Fri. 12pm: Bid Euchre. Contact northsimcoebridge@gmail.com.

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Buttons sold before the event will cost \$3.00 and buttons sold at the event will cost \$5.00.

**Askennonia Winterfest**  
**Fri. Feb. 20 10am-3pm**  
Bourgeois Community Centre, Community Hall 527 Len Self Blvd, Midland  
Open house, free lunch and seniors got talent contest! \$35 2026 memberships for new members-one day only!

**Celebrate Family Day at the Simcoe County Museum**  
**Monday, February 16, 2026**  
**10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.**  
**Location** Simcoe County Museum, 1151 ON-26, Minesing, L9X 0Z7  
**Cost** Event Admission  
\$10 for adults (21-64)  
\$8 for seniors (65+)  
\$8 for youth (12-20)  
\$5 for children (4-11)  
Free for preschoolers and Museum Members

**Family Day - Monday, February 17, 2026 11 am to 3 pm**  
**Huronia Museum - 549 Little Lake Park Road, Midland ON**  
Join us for our annual Family Day board game event at the museum on Monday, February 16th, from 11 AM to 3 PM! (FREE ADMISSION)  
Bring your family and enjoy a fun-filled day playing classics like Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, and checkers, or feel free to bring your own games. We'll even provide hot chocolate on the house!  
Our museum volunteer, Jordanna, has organized a cupcake extravaganza, with all proceeds benefiting the Midland and District Animal Shelter.  
Additionally, Genesis: Battle of Champions players will be at the musuem that day and offering other games for sale. A portion of the sales—10%—will go to the Ontario SPCA that day.  
Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity! Pack up your friends and family to hang out with the coolest museum staff around for Family Day!

North Simcoe Springwater News

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Midland man's backyard sculptures warm hearts during ‘polar’ freeze

By Derek Howard, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter, Midland Today Jan 16, 2026

You know it’s a snow news day when Midland resident Pat Brodeur completes his backyard sculptures.

For four years since 2021, Brodeur has been entertaining friends and visitors to his backyard on Wawinet Street to show off creations of packed snow and ice, and this year’s entry included a functional igloo, a polar bear, a cub and an ice hole which will be used for a polar bear plunge.

“The main event is the polar bear; it’s probably bigger than the largest polar bear ever,” Brodeur tells MidlandToday.

The three-meter, snow-packed depiction of Canada’s winter predator had been accentuated with black spray paint in stencils for claws, eyes, ears and lips – just like the smaller and more life-sized cub, which Brodeur had begun sculpting at 7 a.m. one morning and completed a few hours later.

“In order to get the appearance on the ice and looking into the (three-foot-deep) ice hole, I had to raise the level of the yard,” says Brodeur, who points out he chose that sized hole due to its proper fitting for an insert.

“I’ve got a dunk tank, so I do cold-plunges, which I’ll do next week.”

And before or after the plunge, one imagines he’ll used the backyard sauna located nearby.

Brodeur began his process with the assistance of excess snowfall over the December holiday period. He drew snow from his front yard and driveway to bring to the back, while his neighbours throughout the street also contributed.

“I was shovelling for six neighbours, scooping it and bringing it over. I would say, ‘Can I borrow your snow?’ They would say, ‘Take as much as you need!’”

As for the igloo, Brodeur shared that its first iteration as a structure around the backyard fire pit resembled a castle, to which a young neighbour said: “Oh, look at the castle; you need a creature with this castle’. And so it just started.”

Brodeur had created the igloo blocks using recycling bins initially, but soon recognized that a handsaw on the packed snow of his front yard could be transported for a more accurate usage.

“When they make an igloo, they go onto the lake and cut blocks; so this is the true form of making an igloo, once I pack it down and it’s gone through the thaw.”

In previous years, Brodeur had sculpted the Kraken sea monster from Norse mythology, a mythical Yeti from the Himalayans and the aforementioned dragon and castle in his first exhibition.

While not traditionally a woodcarver, Brodeur says that he had taken some inspiration in the past with constructing wooden toys such as vehicles for friends and children based on designs they would provide.

Brodeur’s wife Mary tells MidlandToday that her husband’s creativity always came as a surprise.

“Every year he just gets better and better at it. He sometimes says, I’m not going to do it this year, it’s

a lot of work’, but then winter rolls around and the snow starts coming down, and I see the twinkle in his eye... and the next thing I know he’s in the backyard.”

Regional events involving snow and ice sculptures, such as the Winterama festival in Penetanguishene, are beyond Brodeur’s aspirations.

“That kind of scares me, to have a competition where you’re under the gun. I like when I can go at my own pace.”

Although the sculptures are in the backyard of the Brodeur’s property, he said that visitors would often come by and give a friendly drop-in to see what the new year had to offer.



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## OBITUARIES



**POTTS, John Carol**  
Our John, Dad, Papa, Great-Papa, finished his last gig on Wednesday, February 4, 2026.

John Potts was born in York, England in 1936 to William and Marion Potts. Shortly after, he became big brother and best friend to Richard. In 1960, John met the love of his life, Margaret, at a gig. John was instantly smitten and six months later asked Margaret to share her life with him. This began their international adventures of moving between England, Spain and Turkey and growing their family along the way. In 1968, John and Margaret boarded the Empress of Canada for a week-long sail to move to their new hometown of Elmvale. John began his Canadian teaching career at Huronia Centennial. During this time, he and Margaret worked as a team to complete his degree from Laurier University. John moved on to become vice principal at Bayview in Midland and later was promoted to principal of Regent and Parkview. John was an advocate for the rights of educators with the teaching union. From the mountain tops of Alberta to the shores of PEI, people would approach John to share how loved and respected they felt as a student under his care. John had a full life outside of the classroom.

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He continued his love for Dixieland Jazz as the band leader for the Fig Leaf Jazz Band and later Moonglow. At the age of 88, John decided to bring his musical career to a close. He passed on his instruments and cherished items to his grandchildren and donated a considerable amount of equipment to local schools. He was overjoyed to know that his love for music will live on through these people, including a recent recording at Massey Hall. Always a champion of others in his community, John taught his children the importance of welcoming new Canadians to our area. Through his many years of service at the Elmvale Food Bank, he taught the importance of respect, dignity and kindness for all.

John has created a legacy that will be carried on through his adored family. He is forever cherished by his wife Margaret, his children Sally (Geoff), Ivan (Shelley), Cal (Joanne), Wendy (John), Rachel and Leyla. He is loved by his grandchildren Bronwyn, Jennifer (Matthew), Christopher (Robin), Kera (Erik), Kaleigh (Devin), Kyle (Kiersten), Nicholas (Jaclyn), Thomas (Lucie), Jack, Gwyneth (Isaac), Meg (Mitch), Autumn (Zach). And his beard tickling great grandchildren Leigha, Lily, Ellie, Wes and Violet will carry on his legacy. John is looking forward to his grandson Liam welcoming him to the next life with the biggest hug. John would like to share his affection and respect for all of his students, teachers, staff, musicians, neighbours, relations and friends that he had the privilege to share his life with. Those who would like to share happy memories with the family can join us for a visitation at Lynn Stone Funeral home on Saturday, February 7, from 1 pm – 4 pm. Memorial donations can be made to the Elmvale Food Bank. You can honour John with acts of kindness in your everyday life.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to [www.lynnstonefuneralhome.com](http://www.lynnstonefuneralhome.com)

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**Walker, Irene (Nora)**  
On December 11, 2025, Irene (Nora) Walker passed away peacefully at Georgian Bay General Hospital, surrounded by her loving family. Irene is survived by her devoted husband, James Walker; her children, Brent (Trisha) and Ashley; Irene's siblings, Anna Teskey (Bruce), Gail Hubbard (Ruben), Jim Chatterton (Kathleen), and Steven Czeterwzuk; and her cherished grandchildren, Kennedy and Ethan Walker. She was predeceased by both her parents, her brother, John Chatterton and sister-in-law Gail Goggins (Shawn, Michael and David). Irene was known for her kindness, compassion, and unwavering desire to help those around her. She dedicated her career to nursing at Georgian Bay General Hospital, where she worked with care and devotion for many years before retiring in 2016. Through her work and her personal life, Irene touched countless lives and leaves behind a legacy of warmth and generosity. She has been cremated, and a celebration of Irene's wonderful life will be held in the spring of 2026. She will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by all who knew her.

Memorial condolences may be shared at [www.leclaircremationcentre.com](http://www.leclaircremationcentre.com)

### CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE Celebration of Life

We invite you to join us in honouring the beautiful life of:  
**Carol Wood Pilipenko**  
**Date:** February 28, 2026  
**Time:** 1pm-4pm  
**Location:** 7 John Street, Elmvale Ontario (Legion Upstairs)  
Please come and share your memories, stories and love as we celebrate the joy, kindness, and love as we celebrate the joy, kindness, and light that Carol brought into our lives.  
“Though they are gone from our sight, they will never be gone from our hearts”

## OBITUARIES



**Mary “Ann” Annabelle Thompson**  
Ann Thompson passed away peacefully, at Georgian Bay General Hospital on January 5, 2026 leaving behind a life remembered for its quiet joys and simple pleasures. She was predeceased by her parents, Peter Campbell and Florence Fowler, as well as her beloved husband, Albert Thompson. Ann will be lovingly remembered by her nieces and nephews, who held a special place in her heart. Ann had a deep appreciation for creativity and spent many happy hours enjoying all types of crafts. She was also an avid reader, finding comfort and companionship in books. In 1986, Ann and Albert made their home in Northern Ontario, a place she truly loved for its peace, beauty, and quiet way of life. She cherished her years there and the calm it brought her. Ann's gentle nature, creative spirit, and love for a quiet life will be fondly remembered by those who knew and loved her. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

**Linda Doreen Gonsalves**  
**Nec: Laurin**  
**April 17, 1954 – January 11, 2026**  
Passed away peacefully at Hospice-London ON. She leaves behind her twin daughters Rita and April Gonsalves, her only grandson Noah. Her fiancé Doug Myall and his daughter, Becky. Linda was a wonderful wife and mother. She love everything country especially Dolly Parton, and who could forget her favourite soda of all time – Pepsi. Linda also leaves behind her siblings – Omer, Clarence, Leonard, Doreen, Angelina, Romeo, Cleo and Donald. She joins her predeceased siblings Clarissa, Martha and Patsy, her parents Aleda Grozelle Laurin and Dosithe Laurin. Linda was an animal lover and will be missed by her cats Cricket and Duke, and her ferret Loki. Linda had a great sense of humour and truly loved and cherished her family. She loved spoiling her grandson Noah and was so proud of his accomplishments. She will be missed by all who love her. Linda was cremated and will be buried at St. Anns Cemetery in Penetanguishene with her beloved mother in the spring.

### OBITUARY INQUIRIES

Obituary notices can be placed in the paper at a custom cost of size. Please submit your notices to the Editor. Email: [info@springwaternews.ca](mailto:info@springwaternews.ca) or drop off at office. Contact information is on the bottom of this page.  
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# A Principled Approach to Council Compensation

By Ray Millar  
Ray Millar is a retired Fire Chief, past Councillor and Mayor in Ontario and has served a Chair of a citizen's advisory committee on council compensation.

In Ontario, council member pay is most often set using peer group comparator analysis: municipalities are grouped, averages calculated, and compensation adjusted to align with those of “similar” councils. The approach feels objective and reassuring. But familiarity does not guarantee legitimacy. When applied to elected office, labour-market tools can obscure more than they reveal.

Peer group comparison works reasonably well in competitive labour markets, where employers vie for workers with transferable skills and employees can move between jobs. Municipal councils operate very differently. Municipalities do not compete for council members, and council members cannot change employers without standing for election again. There is no standardized skill set that can be reliably priced across municipalities for pay-setting purposes. The only formal requirement to serve on council is democratic eligibility as a voter in the municipality.

This is not a judgment on the competence or capability of council members. Past, present, and future council members bring a wide range of experience, judgment, and leadership to their roles. Rather, it is a recognition of how elected office is defined in law and in principle. Council roles are grounded in democratic legitimacy and public trust, not credentialed entry. Tools designed to price labour-market skills are therefore a poor fit. Using them weakens the credibility of compensation decisions, regardless of the final number produced.

Council compensation should instead be grounded in first principles, not in the circular logic of what neighbouring municipalities pay themselves. In practice, peer group comparison often does less to assess value than to normalize imitation. Over time, this erodes public confidence by making compensation appear self-referential rather than principled.

If peer comparison is the wrong anchor, the question becomes: what standard should be used?

The purpose of council compensation is straightforward. It should remove financial barriers to participation, recognize the time, responsibility, and public accountability inherent in the role, and signal the value a community places on local governance. Any credible approach to setting pay should reflect three core principles.

First, a public service ethos. Council work is a civic trust, not a career ladder. Compensation should reflect responsibility and accountability rather than market positioning. Second, accessibility. Pay should enable people from across income levels and life circumstances to serve, without creating incentives for careerism

or narrowing the field to those who are already financially secure. Third, transparency and public trust. Decisions about council compensation should be informed by independent citizen committees and apply only to future councils, avoiding the conflicts of interest that arise when councils set their own remuneration.

These principles point toward a practical and transparent anchoring mechanism: the Living Wage.

The Ontario Living Wage Network calculates a living wage annually using regional Statistics Canada data. It represents the hourly income required to meet basic needs, including housing, food, transportation, childcare, healthcare, and modest participation in community life. Unlike the minimum wage, it reflects local economic realities. As such, it provides a defensible and transparent baseline for council compensation.

Anchoring council pay to the living wage does not imply that council members should be paid only a living wage. The responsibilities, decision-making authority, and public accountability borne by elected officials exceed those of typical living-wage employment. A task-based multiplier is therefore appropriate to adjust the baseline upward. Where council members receive reimbursements or benefits already included in living-wage calculations, these should be explicitly acknowledged to avoid double-counting.

The appropriate multiplier can be assessed by evaluating council responsibilities across several dimensions. These include the public impact of council decisions; the complexity of balancing competing interests and long-term consequences; the scrutiny and visibility that accompany elected office; the symbolic role council members play in embodying public trust; and the exclusive legal authority vested in council positions. Together, these factors provide a principled, task-based way to value council work without reference to individual personalities or neighbouring municipalities.

In addition to a task-based multiplier, a role-based multiplier should reflect the differing responsibilities associated with specific offices. Roles such as mayor, deputy mayor, and committee chair often involve heightened leadership demands, increased visibility, and variable time commitments. Recognizing these differences through transparent role-based adjustments ensures that compensation aligns with responsibility rather than status.

Council workloads also vary significantly

depending on council size, committee structures, and community expectations. Verified sources, such as surveys of current and former council members and independent reviews, can help establish typical time demands. A flexible compensation model can then separate a base salary from clearly defined per diem payments for council-directed duties beyond core responsibilities, with appropriate limits and transparency.

Not all council members are able, or willing, to take on the same workload. Life circumstances differ, and councils benefit from attracting people with diverse backgrounds and capacities. Per diem compensation allows additional work to be recognized fairly without discouraging participation or narrowing the field of who can serve.

Replacing peer group comparison with a framework anchored to the living wage would not eliminate debate over council compensation. Nor should it. What it would do is shift that debate onto clearer, more honest ground. It would replace circular benchmarking with a transparent standard rooted in local economic reality and civic values.

In doing so, it would help ensure that municipal councils remain accessible to a broad cross-section of the communities they govern—strengthening democratic participation and public confidence in local government.

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# Hey Dads!

By Jason Weening

Hey Dads! Have you been sledding with the kids yet this year? You know the activity I'm talking about. When the kids ride toboggans down the hill and you pull them back up? Sometime the sleds. Sometimes the sleds and the kids!

A couple years ago we moved out west to our “home, home on the range where the deer and the antelope play.” You read that right. The deer and the antelope play. The deer and the antelope do not sled. Because “the range” is pretty flat. It's so flat that it's actually called “The Great Plains”. An accurate name.

With all this talk about flatness and lack of hills we were surprised to get a text from some friends the other day asking us if we wanted to go sledding with them. I wondered where we could partake of such an activity. But they're locals who have lived in the prairies their whole lives so if anyone would know where the hidden hills were it was them. We accepted the invitation.

When we lived in Ontario we had sleds. So many sleds. Round plastic sleds, long wood toboggans, ancient black G.T. Snowracers from when I was a kid. There were hills around. We could literally see ski hills from our kitchen window. But when we decided to move to Saskatchewan the sleds were cut from the moving list. No room in the trailer for sleds. Lucky for me, there was tons of room in the trailer for other very important things like my tool box and ancient red drum set from when I was a kid.

We started to pack up for the sledding adventure. “Kids, where's all the sleds?” I asked, mostly to myself. Fortunately, we had a picked up a few at the thrift store last winter and they were now scattered around the yard. But, boy, they don't make sleds like they used to! Most of these were floppy, floppy, foam circles and rectangles in various states of disrepair because of a puppy who must have enjoyed the taste of foam. It crossed my mind to throw them in the dumpster rather than bring them to the alleged prairie hill. But they were all we had so we loaded 5 sleds and 12 people into the van and headed for the hill. The math on those numbers dictated that some sharing would be necessary.

To make the sled sharing easier we made a couple stops on the way. One stop at the cousins' house to borrow a couple snow sliders and one at Canadian Tire to buy an over-priced piece of foam with some plastic on the bottom. I hoped it would make it down the hill without being destroyed.

Finally, we arrived at the hill! Friends and family, young and old began to fly down the hill on all manner of pliable plastic pieces! Dads made some slides down the hill and many trips back up the hill with one, two, or three sleds and children in hand. I remembered our sledding adventure when I woke up this morning and could feel the various parts of my spine working to realign themselves. Dig those sleds out of the garage and hit the hills with your kids to make some memories, dad! Time flies. Make every moment count. Even the slippery-walking-uphill ones!

Jason Weening pulls his 10 kids and one patient wife on sleds (Not all at the same time). Get his book on Amazon, “Yes, Dear...I'm Watching Them”.

## Crossword answer

1	E	G	G		4	C	R	A	B		8	T	A	10					
11	Y	E	A		12	R	O	L	E		13	A	G	E					
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51	O	D	D		52	W	E	E	D		53	B	E	E					

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**Thurs., March 26 & Tues., April 28 - Niagara Fallsview Casino**  
**Includes:** a 4-hour stay at the Casino & \$35.00 in slot play (no meals)  
**Cost:** \$80.00

**Sat., March 28 - Blue Jays vs The Athletics - 3:07p.m. game**  
**Includes:** tickets in sections 133 & 134, motor coach transportation to the game & bus parking at the Rogers Centre. (No Meals) **Cost:** \$220.00

**Wed., April 8 - Blue Jays vs Los Angeles Dodgers - 3:07p.m. game**  
**Includes:** tickets in section 134, motor coach transportation to the game and bus parking at the Rogers Centre. (No Meals) **Cost:** \$255.00

**Wed., April 22 - The Music of Rod Stewart & Neil Diamond at The Gathering Place by the Grand, Brantford**  
**Includes:** buffet lunch by celebrity Chef D and afternoon entertainment.  
**Cost:** \$161.00

**Wed., May 20 - Funny Girl at Shaw Festival, Niagara-on-the-Lake**  
**Includes:** early buffet luncheon at “Queens Landing Restaurant”, 1:00p.m. performance, orchestra seating and free time on the Main Street following the show. **Cost:** \$245.00

**Tues., June 9 - Rhinestone Cowgirls - The Legendary Ladies of Country Music at Walters Music Venue**  
**Includes:** buffet lunch at “Quehl's Restaurant” in Tavistock, followed by the entertainment program at the Walters Music Venue near Bright, Ontario. **Cost:** \$192.00

**Wed., June 10 - “& Juliet” the Smash Hit Musical at the Royal Alex Theatre, Toronto - There's Life after Romeo**  
**Includes:** luncheon at the “HotHouse Restaurant” followed by excellent main floor seating for the 1:30p.m. performance. **Cost:** \$279.00

**2026 Overnight Tours**  
**Contact the office for complete itineraries**

**May 4 to 8 - Ladies Annual Quilting Week including Ottawa & Kingston**

**May 11 to 19 - Newfoundland - A Bucket List Itinerary of People, Places, Music & hopefully Icebergs**

**May 11 to 13 - Springtime in Ottawa - staying at the Hilton Lac Leamy Hotel & Casino in Gatineau, Quebec**

**June 3 to 19 - Western Canada featuring beautiful British Columbia & Alberta**  
**Join us as we fly to Victoria, motor coach through British Columbia & Alberta and return to Toronto by Via Rail.**

**July 5 to 18 and August 17 to 31 - 2 dates for - Our Premier Newfoundland & Labrador Tour including Battle Harbour, Labrador and tickets to “Come From Away” while in Gander. Let us take you “Off the Beaten Path”**

**September 9 to 20 - Experience Morocco: A tale of Arabian Nights**

**Departure Points include:** Barrie, Bradford, Orillia, Alliston, Stayner & Wasaga Beach upon request

**Call for a copy of our 2026 Tour Information or visit our website at [www.hamiltontoursltd.com](http://www.hamiltontoursltd.com)**

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# Chris Kontos...Olympian



By L. Waxy Gregoire...  
Penetang Sports Hall of Fame  
The Penetanguishene Sports Hall of Fame had one of its inductees contribute to the Olympic Men's Hockey team back in 1994. Lillehammer, Norway was the site of the Olympics with the team being composed of amateurs.

In 1994, Chris who was a seasoned pro had played in 230 NHL games, 20 more in the playoffs and was coming off his best season as a pro with the Tampa Bay Lightning. But a contract dispute followed, which allowed Chris to pursue the Olympics.

That opportunity was presented to Kontos from a fellow Penetanguishene resident, Paul Henry, who was effectively Team Canada's GM.

Canada defeated the Czechs in overtime to reach the gold medal game against Sweden. The Canadians had a late 3-2 lead but with less than two minutes left to play in regulation time. Magnus Svenson scored a power-play goal forcing the game into overtime. Overtime solved nothing which extended the game into a shootout, the first and only time that the gold medal had been decided this way.

After five shots, both teams had two goals. It didn't end until the seventh shot when Peter Forsberg scored the famed stamp goal. Both Chris and Paul Henry voice brims with pride at the experience, even though the disappointment still lingers from not winning gold...I guess silver will have to do.

One evening, a thief tried to steal an Olympic silver medal from the Penetanguishene Sports Hall of Fame, only to drop the precious memento on the way out. The crook broke into the display case containing the ceremonial uniform from the 1994 winter games. "They took off with the silver medal, then went around back and stole a camera, but accidentally dropped the medal." They did get away with the ribbon...Chris still has the medal.



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**FRI FEB 20, 2026**  
10 am - 3 pm

**OPEN HOUSE, FREE LUNCH & SENIORS GOT TALENT CONTEST!**

**Bourgeois Community Centre, Community Hall**

So get your act together and start practicing for the Talent Contest! It's a fun-filled afternoon with around 300 in the audience. Registration forms are available at Askennonia reception.

**705-526-7609**  
**www.askennonia.com**

**COME & ENJOY...**

- \$35 2026 Memberships for new members (one day only)
- Seniors Got Talent Contest at 12:30 (all 55+ invited to register to win cash prizes!). Admission is free!
- Painting, knitting, quilting, woodcarving show and sale
- Free Chili Lunch

**FREE ENTRY**  
All are welcome!

# Who Murdered Michael Kent?

It now has been 60 years since I first wrote this article about the murder of Michael Kent, and his death has still not been solved. Michael's body was discovered in the arena parking lot on a snowy Friday night 60 years ago as of February 11, 1966.

I will continue to republish this article every February until hopefully someone will finally come forward to police with information to punish the person(s) involved in this crime.

Mike Townes.

Everyone has events and dates that have taken place in their lifetime that they will never forget. If you are around my age, born in 1953, you remember Elvis and the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show, the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Neil Armstrong walking on the moon, and yes, even the Toronto Maple Leafs winning the Stanley Cup.

The above events were all seen on television and were many miles away, but closer to home, most people my age in our area will remember February 11, 1966. That is the date that Elmvale went from a sleepy, innocent small town to the place where six-year-old Michael Kent was murdered.

February 11th was a normal busy Friday night at the Elmvale Arena and Curling Club. The weather was a little snowy but the parking lot was full of cars as teams from Midland came to play hockey against Elmvale.

Michael came to the arena with his father and mother to watch his older brother play against Elmvale. At some point, he became separated from his parents. Investigators are not sure if Michael was taken from the arena or he had followed his father outside. The family's car had become stuck in the parking lot, so after getting the family inside, his father left the arena to try to get the car out of the snow bank.

After a quick look inside the arena, a search party moved outside in the hope of finding Michael. At about 8:40 pm, he was found outside lying near the hydro pole on the west side of the Curling Club. (The addition to the Curling Club was not there in 1966.)

Michael was rushed to the office of the late Doctor Douglas Patchell located where Superior Cleaning is now situated. At the time, the search party had thought Michael had been hit by a car, but after removing his snowsuit, Dr. Patchell soon realized that young boy had been stabbed several times. Doctor John McKenzie was called to rush down to the office to assist, but it was too late to save the six-year-old.

Almost instantly, the Ontario Provincial Police were everywhere in Elmvale, especially at the arena. Everyone leaving or coming had their cars searched for the murder weapon or clues that would help find the murderer. Eventually, the knife was found on the roof of the Curling Club. The knife had no fingerprints and could not be traced to any stores or owners in the area.

I can remember being at the Arena that night. I had refereed my youngest brother's hockey game from 6-7 pm and had stayed around the rink because I played at 8:00 pm. I played goal, so halfway through the game I was called to the bench for a goalie change. That is when I first heard about the murder of Michael Kent. I will never forget that night. Life in Elmvale changed that night.

Kids who walked to the arena or any other place in town were now driven or accompanied by an adult. Neighbours looked at each other differently as rumours ran rampant on who was being investigated for the murder.

All the kids and adults who were at the arena that night were interviewed by the O.P.P. We were mostly asked if we had seen anything unusual in the lobby or outside. I remember, after telling the officers that I had arrived at the arena 2 hours before my game, why I was there so early.

After sixty years, the murder case of Michael Kent is still an open investigation. Over that time span, numerous leads have been followed up, but these did not lead to any arrests. Officers involved in the investigation over the years have met to see if anything has been missed. A few years ago, an officer traveled to the east coast to interview the family just in case any new facts about the case had surfaced. I was told that any new investigation tools that were not around in the 60's also were not of any help in solving the murder of Michael Kent.



Photograph of the knife found on the roof of the Curling Club

Police still cannot reveal details of the case because the investigation is still open and the case is being looked at periodically when new information becomes available. I had a chance to talk to a police detective several years ago about my memories, the rumours and the weapon used but, again, since it is still an open case, they could not confirm or deny most of my questions.

It is good to know that the investigation of this case is still active, even after such a long time. It is a day I will never forget. Michael Kent will always be part of my life. Hopefully, if still alive, the person responsible will come forward, or anyone who has information leading to that person(s) will contact the authorities for further investigation. If you can help, please make the call to Crime Stoppers.

Today, we still do not know who murdered Michael Kent. I hope the person responsible for this crime is still not walking among us. If they are, they must have been living their life with a guilty conscience eating away at them for 60 years. The family of Michael Kent needs closure. Elmvale needs closure. I know I do.



**SNOWMOBILE SAFETY WEEK KICKS OFF IN HURONIA WEST (WASAGA BEACH, SPRINGWATER TOWNSHIP, CLEARVIEW TOWNSHIP, ON)-**

With Ontario Snowmobile Safety Week starting today, The Huronia West Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and their valued OFSC partner encourage snowmobile communities to make safe riding tips part of their conversations before every ride.

Officers continue to see preventable offences on local snowmobile trails, with 14 MSV-related charges laid so far in February. Since the start of 2026, officers have issued a total of 63 MSV charges and 50 warnings, many involving behaviours that put riders and the public at risk.

Common infractions include operating a snowmobile without proper permits or insurance,

speeding, and unsafe or impaired operation. Officers are reminding snowmobilers that these violations remain a leading cause of serious collisions and injuries each winter.

As trail conditions change rapidly with weather and rider volume, the Huronia West OPP is encouraging all snowmobilers to make safety the priority:

- Ride sober - alcohol or drugs have no place on the trails.
- Obey posted speed limits and adjust for weather and visibility.
- Ensure your snowmobile is properly registered, insured, and equipped.
- Wear approved helmets and appropriate cold weather gear.
- Check local trail conditions before heading out.
- Always check the ITG (OFSC

Interactive Trail Guide) for trail status information <https://ofsc.evtrails.com/#>

- Only access trails showing as Available (GREEN) or Limited Availability (YELLOW)
- Riding an Unavailable (RED) trail is trespassing and dangerous
- Stay on the marked trail, respect landowners and the OFSC Prescribed Snowmobile Trail remains the safest place to snowmobile.
- Ride within your abilities and comfort level

OPP snow patrols will continue throughout the winter, with a focus on reducing high risk behaviours and preventing serious incidents. The Huronia West OPP thanks responsible riders and local snowmobile clubs for their ongoing commitment to safe trail use.

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