Woolwich Lions collects $8K for Ukraine

LIONS HALL IN ELMIRA WAS filled with tables overflowing with bright purple and yellow pansies last week for the Woolwich Community Lions Club’s second annual “Pansies for Ukraine” fundraiser. “It was highly successful, they pretty much sold themselves,” said Valarie King, an organizer of the event. “People were very happy to hear that we were doing it again.”

Altogether, the group estimates they raised nearly $8,000 for the cause. The funds will go toward supplies and help for Ukrainian refugees and for Ukrainians still in the country, distributed by the Lions Club International Foundation.

“In this time of great need, Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) is awarding grants to make sure Lions are there to help provide immediate relief to those struggling to meet their most basic needs, and Lions around the world are uniting through kindness to help the people who desperately need it,” the organization says on its website.

“Grant funding will enable Lions to cover a broad spectrum of refugee needs, including immediate survival needs, transitional needs for mid- or long-term settlement, and support for services to help refugees integrate into their new community.”

People ordered their pansies ahead of time, and came to pick them up April 6 at Lions Hall. The group had more baskets of pansies on hand for people to buy the day-of, if they hadn’t ordered ahead. The pansies came in various sized baskets and hanging pots. Eight-inch pots sold for $12, ten-inch pots for $15. Hanging pots went for $19.

“We average $4 of every pot that we sell is actually going towards the fundraiser,” said King.

Pansies were sourced from Warren Greenhouses in Kitchener. “We appreciate the tremendous support from the community,” said Jeanette Bomhof, another organizer of the club’s event.

Nancy Booth, Vi Radcliffe, Jeanette Bomhof, Dorothy Campbell, Val King, Maryellen Townsend, Carol Jongerius and Christine Aberle of the Woolwich Community Lions Club pose with their pansies at their second annual “Pansies for Ukraine” fundraiser last week.  Leah Gerber.

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THE OBSERVER | Thursday, April 13, 2023
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Waterloo Region will receive $17.8 million next year from the province to help deal with the homelessness issue, an increase of $3.5 million over the 2022-23 allocation. This week’s announcement was part of the province’s pledge of an additional $202 million annually for the Homelessness Prevention Program and Indigenous Supporting Housing Program.

Hundreds of students from Elmira District Secondary School staged a walkout of classrooms last week as part of province-wide demonstrations against the Ford government’s proposed changes to education. The EDSS students voiced their opposition to the changes to classroom sizes, as well as cuts to student loan programs.

Funding for homeless

From the archives

Bill Atwood
Observer Staff

A LOCAL HOCKEY PLAYER IS being celebrated for his accomplishments off the ice. Owen Misener, 11, was selected as the winner of the ninth annual Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) essay contest for his essay answering the question “I love to play hockey because ....”

“I thought that it would be a really cool project to do, because I haven’t really done anything like that before. It was just to try something new,” Owen said.

Owen described the lengthy process writing about why he loves to play hockey.

“I worked on it for a while. I ran some ideas past my teacher. I would work on it after I got home from practice with new ideas and stuff. I would constantly be thinking about it, and then add to it,” he said.

His essay, which he also presented in video form, can be found on YouTube and the OMHA website (www.omha.net).

“Hockey makes me feel happy and confident in myself when I make a good pass or help my teammates score a goal. I feel proud of myself and my team. I’ve learned that we are better together than any one of us are on our own,” he stated in the video.

“It has helped me learn the importance of following through on a commitment by showing up for myself and my team. I will always follow through on my commitments because I know it not only affects me but my teammates as well,” he added.

At first Owen didn’t believe that he had won.

“My mom got the email while I was at school, when I got home from school, she came dancing up the stairs. And she told me, and at first I didn’t believe her. I was like, ‘No, you’re joking,’ because it had been a couple months.

Elmira player’s hockey essay wins OMHA competition

Ray Bolton, Mildred Reynolds and Jim Davies of the Maryhill and Ariss Lions Club are looking forward to the bottle drive on Saturday. They’re hoping to collect more than $300 worth of bottles and cans.

Elmira player’s hockey essay wins OMHA contest

Bottle drive in support of cancer centre

Leah Gerber
Observer Staff

THE MARYHILL AND ARISS LIONS Club is holding a bottle and can drive next weekend to raise funds for children’s cancer treatment. It’s the second year for the event.

This year, proceeds will go to Scotland’s Yard, a new initiative from the Grand River Hospital Foundation to raise funds for a children’s cancer centre in Waterloo Region. The organization is incrementally working toward raising $50 million over ten years.

The campaign begins with more manageable milestones, such as obtaining a PET CT machine, linear accelerator, nuclear medicine spectrometer and other specific pediatri- care equipment. Longer-term goals include a care lodge for families and endowment funds for family expenses while going through cancer treatment, and to support medications and treatments not regularly covered through provincial healthcare programs.

Last year, the Maryhill and Ariss Lions Club donated the bottle drive money to the children’s cancer unit at McMaster Hospital. This time

BOTTLE DRIVE

Bottle drive in support of cancer centre

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Leah Gerber
Wellesley seeking moderator for town hall meeting

Leah Gerber
Observer Staff

HAVING VOTED TO HOLD a town hall meeting later this month, Wellesley council is still working out the details.

The event, scheduled following public protest against the 2023 budget and a 14 per cent tax hike, is set for 7 p.m. on April 26 at the Linwood Community Centre.

Staff released a poster about the event last week, saying that people can submit their questions ahead of time through the online portal at www.wellesley.ca to ensure their questions are addressed.

The deadline to submit questions is 4:30 p.m. on Monday (April 17).

“Questions and/or comments are to be within the topic of the 2023 budget and tax increase as stated in the proposed resolution of council,” reads the poster released by the township.

The meeting will also be livestreamed on the town’s YouTube channel.

The final hurdle appears to be finding a moderator for the event.

Staff are looking for a moderator who is neither a resident or a staff member who has experience with this kind of meeting.

At last week’s council meeting, staff said they could only find potential moderators willing to do the work for quotes of $750 to $2,000. Calling the pricing too expensive, they’re looking for other solutions.

“We are continuing to explore options. A moderator would be experienced in public meetings with a demonstrated ability to control the decorum of the meeting,” said Grace Kosch, the township clerk.

“A powerful moderator communicates clearly and concisely, using straightforward language without being confrontational or biased. Their job is to ensure the speakers and audience members understand each other, creating a positive and productive atmosphere.”

BOTTLE DRIVE: Club’s ongoing effort to support the cause

Tom Mahood
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If you would like more information regarding this project, visit regionalwaterloo.ca/wellesleywater. To receive email updates as the project progresses, and register for virtual Public Consultation Center #1, subscribe to engagewr.ca/wellesleywater. To receive email updates as the project progresses, and register for virtual Public Consultation Center #1, subscribe to engagewr.ca/wellesleywater.

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BOTTLE DRIVE: Club’s ongoing effort to support the cause

Trees for Woolwich last weekend planted the first of a planned 22,000 trees to be planted along roadways in the township. Woolwich Mayor Sandy Shantz and Coun. Evan Burgess joined Mark Schwarz April 8 on Reid Woods Drive. The organization is looking to plant 3,000 trees by mid-May as part of its “Bring Back the Maples” campaign.
More space, diverse habit also factors for bee populations

Leah Gerber
Observer Staff

IF FALLING NUMBERS AND ONGOING concerns about pesticide use weren’t enough of a threat to bee populations, it now appears we may not be setting aside enough land for the pollinators.

A new University of Guelph study shows the province needs to conserve about 11.6 to 16.7 per cent of land cover, including a variety of habitats, to safeguard wild bee populations.

The provincial government outlined a strategy in 2016 called the Ontario Pollinator Health Action Plan that aimed to conserve a million acres of pollinator habitat. While the study’s authors acknowledge that a million acres seems plentiful, in fact, the amount of land needed to actually conserve pollinator populations is much larger.

“Investigating the amount of habitat needed to support biodiversity is crucial for developing impactful and critical policy around conservation at all levels of government,” said Alana Pindar, a lead researcher on the project.

The researchers found that the conserved land needs to include a diverse range of types of habitat, including wetlands, and that connectivity of conserved spaces is important. As well, the percentage of conserved land needs to apply at every scale.

“This is a percentage of the landscape at a bee scale. So, for example, you could say on a farm, or in a garden, or in a community space, or if you’re planning a city landscape, it would be great to have somewhere between 11.6 and 16.7 per cent of the landscape that was supportive of pollinators in that landscape,” said Nigel Raine, the other lead researcher on the project.

“What we’re saying is that if we can think about that at all scales, really. If we sort of took out a section that was 11.6 to 16.7 per cent of the whole of southern Ontario and just put that in one big block, that wouldn’t be particularly helpful to support pollinators.”

The pair of researchers aimed to calculate how much of each specific habitat type is needed to support a specific kind of pollinator community.

The concept of calculating the amount of habitat needed to be conserved and built up across a landscape in order to preserve pollinator populations is not new. In 2015, the UK government unveiled a new scheme to pay farmers to preserve and enhance habitat needed by pollinator populations on their properties, along with other needed stewardship activities. The amount of land included for conservation was calculated according to pollinator conservation needs.

To conduct the University of Guelph study, the team looked at over 6,000 surveys of bee populations in Ontario over 12 years. That included the findings of what kind of habitats were present for each survey through precision mapping data. They looked at five main types of bees, including solitary ground nesters, social ground nesters, cavity nesters, bumblebees and cleptoparasites and social parasites, and found the amount of specific habitat taxa type needed by each at local and landscape scales.

Raine says the planet is losing pollinators at a time when they’re needed even more since, as incomes are going up around the world, the demand for crops that rely on pollinators is increasing. These include the likes of fruits, vegetables and nut crops. As well, with more people on the planet, total demand for food increases, he said. So what happens if we lose pollinators?

“From time to time, [we hear] this sort of spirit that if we lose the bees, then we’ll all die within five years, which is not true,” said Raine. But he did outline what a future without pollinators would realistically look like.

“We’ll have a much more depauperate (less diversified) diet,” he said.

“We’ll still be able to grow a whole bunch of things that are wind pollinated or self-fertile, so lots of cereals and those things, but the fruits and vegetables, particularly, may be things that we will find very much harder to grow effectively except in some sort of controlled systems, maybe. That means that a lot of the micronutrients that we need – things like vitamins and other micronutrients – that will be much harder to find in our diets. It will really change our diets if we lose pollinators and lose the pollination services they provide for crops.”

Raine said there are more and more studies reporting pollination services provided by wild and managed pollinators are falling short of what pollination crops need to achieve their highest yield and quality.

For example, a three-year study of 24 conventional apple orchards in Kent, UK, published last year found pollination deficits (where maximum crop potential was not reached because of a lack of pollination) between three and 22 per cent, or approximately $3,350 to $25,460 of product lost per hectare.

“We are at a pivotal point and can’t assume policy makers have all the information,” said Pindar. “Connections, outreach, communication and education are very important!”

“This study really underlines how important the abundance and diversity of bees are, selfishly in terms of crop production, but also more generally,” said Raine. “They’re providing services to a whole swathe of wild plants that are important to maintaining our environment in the way we want it to be maintained. We need to find more space and we need to find more protection for sensitive habitats to support these and the pollination services they provide.”
Wilmot teacher faces more sexual assault charges

Waterloo Regional Police this week laid additional sexual assault charges against a 52-year-old Wilmot Township man, a teacher at a public school in Kitchener.

Kahlil Deep was this week charged with two counts of sexual assault and two counts of sexual interference.

The charges follow a joint investigation by police and Family and Children Services of the Waterloo Region.

On February 2, police received reports of youths being sexually assaulted by the male suspect. Deep was arrested on March 16 and charged with eight counts of sexual assault and sexual interference in relation to the incidents. On March 21, investigators received a report of historical sexual assaults, involving a teacher and a youth at a senior public school in the Forest Hills area of Kitchener.

In a release Tuesday, police say investigators believe there may be additional victims. Anyone with information is encouraged to call police at 519-570-9777. Anonymous information can be provided to Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or online at www.waterloocrimestoppers.com.

Woolwich to fete its volunteers at event

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THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK theme for 2023 is Volunteering Weaves us Together. This year’s theme reflects the importance of volunteering to the strength and vibrancy of our communities through the interconnected actions taken to support one another. There is no cost to attend, and attendees do not need to register ahead of time.

Leah Gerber

Observer Staff

THE TOWNSHIP OF WOOLWICH is hosting its annual volunteer appreciation night next week. Volunteers of all stripes are invited to attend the drive-in event on April 19 between 7 and 8:30 p.m.

The event includes live music from band Tea for Two and refreshments provided by Dyer Sweets and Never Enough Thyme. There will be a thank-you message from the mayor and council as well. "This is for all volunteers who are involved in various organizations, groups and committees within the Township of Woolwich," said Marie Malcolm, community programs and inclusion coordinator.

“National Volunteer Week is set aside each year to recognize and thank volunteers for the time and energy they contribute to causes that benefit our communities. The Township of Woolwich values the importance of acknowledging volunteers in-person annually by hosting a volunteer appreciation evening," she said.

Malcolm gave examples of the kind of volunteer efforts the event is aimed to highlight and appreciate, including recreation association members, recreation group and committee volunteers, service club members, affiliated sport organizations, community groups and community partners.

There is no cost to attend, and attendees do not need to register ahead of time.

Elmira firefighters responded to a call at a Union Street warehouse site April 6. Photo: Bill Atwood

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Volunteer Appreciation Week
Board of Directors, Committee Volunteers and Direct Support Volunteers, your impact resonates through the very fabric of this organization. Your contributions make a valuable difference in people’s lives.

Thank you!
Want to join our volunteer team, reach out at www.elmiradcl.com.

Thank you, volunteers, for everything you make possible in our communities.

National Volunteer Week
April 16-22, 2023

Thank-you
To all the dedicated Woolwich Volunteers for the amazing work you do in our community!

Want to join our volunteer team, reach out at www.elmiradcl.com.

The National Volunteer Week theme for 2023 is Volunteering Weaves Us Together. This reveals the importance of volunteering to the strength and vibrancy of our communities through the interconnected actions we take to support one another. These diverse forms of sharing our time, talent and energy strengthen the fabric of our community. What a wonderful statement to share this year as we celebrate our community volunteers in Wellesley Township.

On behalf of your Mayor, Council and Township Staff we would like to thank our many community volunteers who are your neighbours, individuals, families, workers, retirees, community members of all ages and backgrounds, who have dedicated time and skillsets to mentor our children, support those feeling isolated, beautify our green spaces, and fundraise for our charitable organizations.

Many organizations in the Township of Wellesley rely on volunteers to support, enhance and maintain their boards, events, programs, and community initiatives.

Therefore, I, Joe Nowak, on behalf of the Council of the Township of Wellesley, do hereby proclaim April 16-22, 2023, as National Volunteer Week, and urge my fellow citizens to recognize the crucial role played by volunteers in our community. Should you be interested in learning more about local volunteer opportunities please visit our Township website and search volunteer or reach out to one of the local service clubs in the area.
Reeling in public sector wages is key to good governance

Few Canadians will be shedding tears at the prospect of the Canada Revenue Agency shutting down due to a labour dispute. Fewer still, however, will have any sympathy for the workers threatening to go out on strike. CRA employees are looking for a 20.5 per cent pay increase over three years, plus an immediate nine per cent hike to bring their salaries in line with other government agencies. The 35,000 workers are in a position to strike as of tomorrow. While Canadians are very much familiar with inflationary pressures, particularly on food prices, they’ve not been receiving double-digit wage increases. They’ve certainly got no interest in paying higher taxes and doing with less so that public workers can have more.

The contract demands are so outrageous that they should be dismissed outright and immediately. This is the government we’re talking about, however, so we can expect any new deal not to favour citizens. This is surely a cautionary tale. A reminder of what happens when bureaucracies expand, and ever-increasing pay scales continue to grow, regardless of job type, skills, inflation, the tax burden or any other rationale measure that should be taken into consideration. Statistics indicate a growing gap between civil service wages and the average earning of private sector employees. The discrepancy is likely to increase, as average industry wages will remain stagnant or decline dramatically in some industries as layoffs take hold – look at what’s happening in the tech sector, for instance.

Yet, as we’ve seen in this area, government employees continued to receive multi-year deals that exceed most workers’ realities. With no bottom line – politicians seem to have few qualms about dipping deeper on their repeated trips to the well – governments simply pass the increases along to a public forced to pay taxes, a fair situation faced in the private sector. This is not simply a tirade against government workers. We want services, so we need people to provide them. Those people should be paid a decent living wage. The trick will be to decide what services we really need – hint, fewer than we’re spending money on right now – and what constitutes “decent.”

As the recent Ontario sunshine list tells us, there is a growing number of people – some 267,000, in fact – earning far more than the average worker. (About $59,000, according to Statistics Canada.)

The argument that the threshold for reporting salaries should be adjusted for inflation makes sense only to those who would seek to hide runaway growth in public sector compensation. The overstatement to say $100,000 is still a significant amount of money, far more than most Ontarians make. Saying someone has a six-figure salary has meant something for decades. Though inflation has eroded the buying power, it’s still enough to put the recipient in a category that excludes 95 per cent of the public.

When supported by public money begin making more than those paying the freight, friction is bound to follow – a boiling point may be reached as the gap widens and the public becomes more mindful of the inequalities, systemic and otherwise, that have been creeping back into the economy at a quickened pace.

The demands of CRA workers put a spotlight on the public sector’s detachment from the reality faced by most Canadian workers, a situation that hasn’t been helped by Ottawa’s profliation. A situation that hasn’t been helped by Ottawa’s profliation. A situation that hasn’t been helped by Ottawa’s profliation. A situation that hasn’t been helped by Ottawa’s profliation.

Connect: observerxtra.com/staff

Verbatim

Ontarians know that this government has been choosing to squander what remains of Ontario’s quality farmland and rare southern forests and wetlands to enrich well-connected land speculators.”

Phil Puthan of Environmental Defence argues the Ford government needs to focus on existing neighbourhoods in his plan to build 1.5 million homes.

The Good Friday Agreement at 25

US President Joe Biden was visiting Ireland this week to celebrate an anniversary that almost didn’t happen. It’s the 25th anniversary of the ‘Good Friday Agreement’ of 1998, that ended 30 years of killing in Northern Ireland, but it almost unravelled this year.

The ‘Troubles’ saw more than 3,000 people killed in assassinations, ambushes and bombings by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) waged a guerilla and terrorist war against the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland and the British army, seeking to unite the province with the Catholic-majority Republic of Ireland to the south.

Eventually the two sides fought each other to a standstill, and a 1994 ceasefire was followed four years later by the Good Friday Agreement, an intricate structure of balanced concessions, compulsory power-sharing, and of course, amnesties for many people who had done terrible things.

The Agreement was guaranteed by the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, and the European Union to which both countries then belonged. And for the next quarter-century Northern Ireland, with just under two million people, about half-Protestant, half-Catholic, enjoyed both peace and a flourishing economy.

The secret of its success was the ultra-open border it created between the British-ruled province and the Irish Republic.

Border controls were being dismantled between many EU members, but even the sign-posts disappeared along the 500-km. frontier between Northern Ireland and the Republic. The only evidence that you had crossed from one country to another was that the speed signs changed from miles per hour to kilometres per hour.

Catholic ‘nationalists’ dreaming of a united Ireland could live their lives as if it were true, and even claim Irish passports. Protestant ‘loyalists’ could still fly the Union Jack and pretend that nothing important had changed.

The British army was withdrawn from Northern Ireland, a new non-sectarian police force was created, and most people lived more or less happily ever after. Unfortunately, this agreeable compromise depended critically on the invisibility of the ‘virtual’ border, so when Brexit came along in 2016 the whole deal was undermined.

With nationalism resurgent everywhere and the British empire gone, an outbreak of Nationalism was quite likely, and the obvious target for it was the European Union. An ambitious journalist named Boris Johnson put himself at the head of the Brexit (“British exit” from the EU) cause, hoping it would make him prime minister – and, lo, in 2019, it did.

Johnson neither knew nor cared anything about Irish politics and diplomacy, but some kind of real border with the Republic of Ireland had to reappear if the UK left the EU. He denied this fact as long as he could, but in 2019 he signed a “withdrawal agreement” that put the UK-EU border in the Irish Sea, between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.

This infuriated the Northern Irish ‘loyalists,’ who believed they were becoming second-class British citizens. It hugely encouraged the more militant ‘nationalists’ among the Catholic population, who imagined that it was the last step before the inevitable unification of Ireland.

And just coincidentally, the 2021 census revealed that Catholics have finally become a narrow majority of Northern Ireland’s population. So the
O P I N I O N

Rapidly growing price tag should be enough to end region’s LRT scheming

You would think that hearing the extension of the little-used LRT into Cambridge is now expected to cost $4.5 billion would see regional council put an end to what was a bad idea even at a third of the cost, which had been the previous estimate. You would be wrong. Instead, the region will keep planning for the project. For “planning,” substitute hoping the provincial and federal governments will pony up the bulk of the cash needed.

That possibility doesn’t make light rail transit any less of a bad idea, but it does give the appearance that local taxpayers wouldn’t be blicked for the mortgage payments for something they don’t use. Only the appearance, though, because instead of paying billions to the regional government, local taxpayers will be paying billions in provincial and federal taxes to finance transit in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax, Edmonton, Vancouver ... and everywhere in between. It’s something of a zero-sum game as money gets moved around.

And, as with the first stage of the LRT, the provincial and federal dollars pledged early on would rise in proportion to the actual price tag years later when inflation, cost overruns and missteps come home to roost, leaving local citizens even farther down the financial stakehole.

Of course, given that Cambridge residents have spent years paying into an LRT scheme that benefitted them not one iota, the region must at least drag out the charade last taxpayers there demand a refund. They’ve forked out millions in advance of a promised extension, despite what is forecast to be inconsequential ridership even three decades from now – some 10,000-15,000 per day (even that low number is bound to be optimistic given the region’s track record on such matters).

There are good reasons for mass transit, mostly having to do with providing transportation to those without cars. Grand River Transit’s own numbers bear that out: the majority of riders are students. Despite promises made when the LRT was first pitched – eventually abandoned – few of the riders are commuters leaving their cars at home. Youths, students and seniors, yes, but not commuters. The lack of commuters undermines two standard arguments in favour of transit: reducing traffic on the roads and helping the environment. Studies have shown neither is the case.

When a transit system serves primarily those who do not have cars – low-income residents, students and seniors – it does nothing to reduce the number of cars on the road. Traffic and the resultant congestion remain the same. In actuality, the buses and trains slow down vehicular traffic.

As for the environmental argument, that only applies when the transit system is working or near capacity. But full buses – or trains – are more the exception than the rule. Near-empty runs at all peak times mean the system as a whole routes using more energy and causing more pollution than would be the case if those using transit made the trip by car. Not to mention the increased idling caused by buses and trains.

None of this is to say that we don’t need public transit in the region. But the less-than-convincing numbers are what have LRT proponents here and elsewhere trot out the development arguments: the train will help reshape the cities by encouraging people to live and work along a transit corridor. That is to say, ridership numbers will never justify the expense, but there could be some intensification of some areas of the cities ... if people decide that’s how they want to live, reversing decades of development trends. The if-you-build-it-they-will-come supposition also extends to ridership, who advocates speak of light rail transit: people don’t like to ride the bus, but they will flock to the train. Again, that flies in the face of the experience in other cities, where building LRTs simply transferred riders from the buses to the train, at greater expense.

Moreover, in some cases that created longer travel times, as riders were forced to take a bus to a central train corridor, wait for a train, travel along a fixed route, then transfer to another bus to complete their journey.

That model, of course, simply eats up more time. And time is of the essence when discussing public transit.

That experience has played out here in the first stage of the LRT project. The argument about increasing public transit: if it isn’t some combination of faster, cheaper and more convenient, it just doesn’t make sense when you’ve got the option of taking a car.

The mall-to-mall train makes absolutely no sense today, tomorrow or in your lifetime. Unlike the train to downtown Toronto, for instance, it is a solution to problems that doesn’t exist here.

Apart from the cost of wages, economic planners rarely acknowledge the value of individual time, but that has absolutely no impact on the reality that people themselves do put value on their time. One of the first things people do when they acquire some affliction is buy back their time. They hire out boring or unpleasant tasks like food preparation, housekeeping, child care and repairs.

The degree to which the value of time to individuals leads to unproductive results, as we’ve witnessed here.

Making transit palatable to people would involve a major shift: once someone decides to buy a car, the economic balance shifts sharply in favour of driving. The only way to shift the economic balance in favour of mass transit is to create a system where it becomes feasible for large numbers of people to give up owning a car.

For that, it must be faster, cheaper and more convenient. That includes safer and more comfortable, a difficulty here where it means standing or walking in the rain or snow. The recent spate of police-involved incidents on the transit system – a growing safety issue also seen in other cities – is not a selling feature in our increasingly isolated world.

Having rolled craps with the first stage, regional councillors should firmly refuse to gamble another $4.5 billion on a losing bet.
Letter to the Editor:

■ Project delays lead to rising prices

To the Editor,

In the news this past weekend was a story describing the tripling of the cost of the Cambridge LRT extension in only three years. A combination of inflation and demand has increased the cost by billions of dollars. This is a well-documented story that has repeated itself time and time again over the past couple of years with both municipal and private projects.

With the deferment of the Peel Street bridge project, Woolwich council has guaranteed that the project, already inflated by $1 million from its inception, will only escalate further in price, putting a totally unnecessary extra burden on Woolwich taxpayers.

In Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph Residential, the old adage penny wise and pound foolish certainly applies to our current council.

— Roman Novak, Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph Residential

Dyer: Working to stave off the collapse of the agreement

FROM B ancient conflict began to reawaken from its two-de-

centuries’ slumber. Johnson, having lied about the meaning of the treaty with the EU for two years, then threatened to tear it up, but his own Conservative Party dumped him last July over his incessant lying on this and other policy areas. After the brief but deranged prime ministership of Liz Truss, the relatively calmer and competent Rishi Sunak took over in London in October.

Sunak negotiated a deal with the EU in February that eases the movement of goods between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, but leaves the border in the Irish Sea. Maybe that will lull the monster back to sleep — and maybe not.

There is still no democratically elected government in Northern Ireland, because the blocus ‘loyalist’ party is boycaging the Assembly until the border in the Irish Sea is removed. But put it back on land, and the ‘nationalists’ will revolt. The ‘hard men’ on both sides are gaining influence, and the next government in the Republic of Ireland, for the first time ever, is likely to be led by Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA.

Many good people are striving to head off a collapse of the agreement, and they will probably succeed. But it’s hardly sustainable that the Irish, of Irish Catholic descent, started his Irish visit in Belfast, in Northern Ireland — and that Ireland is not planning to attend the coronation of King Charles III in London next month.

Bill Atwood
Observer Staff

WATERLOO REGION HUBBARD: SICK is seen in the number of COVID-19 cases since the start of the year, but that’s likely due to fewer people getting tested or reporting the illness, suggests one expert.

“I think there’s going to be a decrease in people testing and reporting COVID-19 infections. We’re not going to see probably lower than what we’ve actually in the community,” said Stephanie DeWitte-Orr, a virologist at Wilfrid Laurier University.

In Waterloo Region, there was relatively active access as of this week, some 49 new cases over the previous seven days. There was a seven-day moving average of 1.4 cases per 100,000 people last week, which dropped to the 0.6 cases reported at the start of the year.

Since that date, the number of positive cases has fluctuated from 35 to a peak of 88 on February 2 to five last week. However, the regional health unit noted that over the previous 90 days have also decreased from 53 on January 1 to 32 on April 4.

There has also been a steady decline in cases across Ontario. On January 7, there were 7,396 cases. The most recent regional reports put the number at 2,779.

The number of people getting tested for the virus has also fallen dramatically.

At the start of the year, the region administered 330,665 tests per 100,000 residents. Province-wide, that number was 420.

Three months later, the region administered 15 test per 100,000 residents, while the Ontario rate was 22.8.

The decline in tests is a consequence of the novel coronavirus decreasing in severity and it not being as big of a concern among residents, DeWitte-Orr posited.

“The virus is becoming endemic. It’s less severe for healthy people. It presents itself with symptoms very similar to other respiratory viruses, so people are maybe selecting not to test because there’s really no reason to test unless it gets really serious,” she said.

DeWitte-Orr cautions, however, that COVID-19 is not over and will never be over. Instead, she expects it will follow a similar pattern to other respiratory illnesses and fluctuating seasonally during the winter months.

“As we move into winter months and holiday season, we will see transmission of different respiratory viruses, including coronaviruses,” she said.

As cases and testing have decreased, so too has the rate of vaccination. The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered has decreased from 489 doses on January 7 to just 114 doses on April 1, the last date it was reported.

While the number of region residents that have received three-dose primary series is high at more than 324,000 people, “there’s dramatically decreases with each booster — a total of just 1,946 residents have received a third booster shot.

According to the region, 63 per cent of residents are recommended to receive an additional dose, while just 19 per cent of the population have received their three-dose series.

Public Health Ontario needs to do a better job of communicating the need to get vaccinated, says DeWitte-Orr.

“They haven’t created a model for everyone to follow. People are still trying to figure out ‘when should I get another vaccine? Should I get another one? And maybe not. I think we need public health to give clear guidelines on what the next step should be as this virus becomes something we deal with all the time and in nearly sort of a seasonal fashion, she said.

To DeWitte-Orr, being up to date means receiving a new vaccine in November at the start of the beginning of each respiratory virus season. She added that it is unrealistic to expect vaccination for respiratory illnesses to protect someone for more than one season.

“If you follow flu vaccines, one of the reasons we need to get vaccinated every year is because flu vaccines don’t mount immunity for life. It’s the same thing with coronavirus. There’s something about respiratory viruses...they don’t seem to mount lasting immunity.

I think there’s a lot of skepticism. ‘I get vacci-
nated for measles, mumps and rubella and I’m fine for years. What’s wrong with this vaccine? There’s nothing wrong with the vaccine. It’s just that these viruses, the vaccines don’t produce protection for any respiratory virus for longer than a year or two.”
Thrashers claim sledge hockey title

Bill Atwood  Observer Staff

THE WOOLWICH THRASHERS SLEDGE HOCKEY team finished a strong first season back to competition after the pandemic with a victory over the Elgin Imperials at the Ontario Sledge Hockey Association Champions weekend earlier this month.

"We obviously didn’t know what to expect at the start of the season with changes in our lineup. We’d lost a few players during the pandemic in terms of families who didn’t return or some players moved to other cities. We didn’t really know how we would do, and we ended up being a pretty competitive team," said trainer and assistant coach Rob Hoag.

The team competes in the open division, meaning it is open to people in a wide range of ages and skill sets. Despite the range, there is still a competitive nature to it, Hoag said.

"We very much ensure that everybody had fair and equitable time on the ice and got to participate fully and our opponents were very much of the same mindset.

"It was a very good experience for everybody, for the families, for the bench staff and especially for the players," he said.

In the team’s return to the ice, it played 21 games and picked up two silver medals in tournaments along the way. Both of the gold-medal game losses were against the Imperials, making the 4-2 win in the final April 2 that much more enjoyable.

"We sort of figured that, coming into this, we’re going to end up playing them in the finals again. And hopefully we could finally have their number, which ended up happening. The team was pretty pumped that we finally were able to beat them in a big game," said head coach Troy Stuebing.

This was the Thrasher’s first league championship, he noted.

"So they’re definitely excited, especially being a team that beat us two other times in a gold-medal game this year. So it’s super exciting. Everyone had big smiles and lots of pictures with the trophy," he said.

"After not playing for three years, it was great to see smiles on everyone’s faces again."

"We had a competitive but fun season and we are very proud of the performance of all our players," added Hoag.

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The Woolwich Thrashers Open Team won their league championship at the Ontario Sledge Hockey Association Championships in Brampton on April 2.
Young players explore ideas to make hockey more inclusive

Woolwich Minor Hockey awards prizes for submissions to its “Hockey for All” contest that looks to promote participation

Bill Atwood
Observer Staff

IN AN EFFORT TO BE more inclusive and to encourage kids to think more about what that means, Woolwich Minor Hockey held a challenge inviting teams of the association to make submissions discussing the nature of the phrase “Hockey for All.”

Three team’s submitted responses, with the U13 BB and U12AA submitting videos of their players explaining what hockey to them, while the U11 LL #2 team chose to write a fictional story featuring a diverse range of characters all gathering at a magical rink to play a game of pick-up hockey.

For Laura Rintoul, a parent of two boys on the U12 team, it’s an important conversation to have, even with kids.

“Even though they might be difficult conversations to have, if we don’t talk about it, then we’re basically saying it doesn’t exist. And these issues do exist for a lot of people,” Rintoul said.

The kids were eager to share what inclusion means to them, providing more responses than expected, Rintoul added.

“I think that we could have had a much longer conversation with them.

A lot of their ideas were very thoughtful. For sure, it could be a difficult topic to discuss with 11- and 12-year-olds, but we felt that in order to make a difference and lead by example, we should be talking about being part of a solution and not being part of the problem,” she said.

The team’s video also had the kids give suggestions on what they can do to be more inclusive. Responses included inviting others to their games, recognizing that people in hockey can come from different back-grounds and volunteering with programs such as the Woolwich Thrashers sledge hockey team or the Sun Rays.

For the U11 team’s submission, each player created a different character to include in the story. Characters included a girl who was born blind, several para-hockey players, a boy going through cancer treatment, and Maksym, a recent immigrant from Ukraine.

“They went into pretty good depth of what they wanted to portray their story to be,” said coach Lisa Backman.

While Backman said there is a fair bit of visible inclusion in Woolwich’s hockey community, the team needed to add their voice to the conversation.

“They wanted to make sure that their voices were heard and they want to make sure that hockey is positive for everybody and no one’s excluded regardless of what’s happening,” she said.

Having these conversations now can lead to even deeper discussions in the future, Backman added.

“We do that now, we open up the conversation, we open up their minds, and it’s just going to get better from there,” she said.

For its winning submission, the U13 team received $250 for a team party and $100 for the choice of equipment.

The U12 and U11 teams each received $100 towards a community initiative that promotes inclusivity and diversity in hockey.

“Diversity in Hockey has a long way to go to be considered as our community initiative that promotes inclusivity and diversity in hockey,” Backman wrote in an email.

The kids were eager to think about what hockey for all means to them and then advocate and promote that theme through a video, story, poster etc. Diversity in hockey starts with our youth and we will continue to do that,” WMHA president Nadia Elmasry Weiss said in an email.

Woolwich Minor Hockey Association held a hockey for all contest to which the U12AA (above) and U13 BB teams submitted videos of players describing what inclusivity means to them.
Dashboard radio is a matter of trust

The next time you plunk down $60,000 or so for a new pickup truck, ask the dealer: why can’t I get a $50 AM radio in it?

That’s a great question. Despite objections from the agricultural community, it looks like AM radios in some car and truck models, from Ford in particular, are on their way out. Electric motors are said to interfere with AM radio signals, causing poor reception. Eight manufacturers say they plan to eliminate it in some of their vehicles, and suggest that people who want it can stream it.

However, there are some real questions about customers surrounding all this.

First, it’s hard to understand why engineers aren’t trying to figure out a workaround. Electric vehicle sales are growing but they still comprise a small segment of sales. There’s a lot of time to find a way to have electric motors and AM radio signals co-exist in a vehicle.

Second, it appears manufacturers forgot to ask the farm community – one of its most loyal markets – what it thinks about no more AM radio. Maybe they were afraid of the answer.

Because if they asked, here’s what they could have heard.

On the farm, radio counts. In the US, three-quarters of all farmers listen to the radio five days a week. It’s their number one mobile medium.

According to the National Association of Farm Broadcasters, most farmers have a whopping 14 radios on their farm. Manufacturers must be aware of these statistics. As well, farmers and many others trust radio for weather and other public safety information. In a well-travelled quote, Nathan Simington, a commissioner with the Federal Communications Commission, called AM radio “an indispensable source of information for more than three million farmers in the US.”

More importantly, he said, farm broadcasters, especially those on AM, are a trusted source of information. “Forget about oil and gas,” he said. “These days, trust is the most important commodity out there.”

Trust, along with tradition and image, is certainly what manufacturers lean on to sell pickups. How can you trust a company that dumsp one of your important management tools?

Hooiser Radio out of Indiana reports that last December, Senator Ed Markey, a member of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, wrote a letter to the National Association of Broadcasters.

As the Senate Hearing states, “we have heard that a lot of the food and accommodation, the typical touristy groups, were having some struggles. Last summer, they were for sure. We also heard about issues with day camps and inability to find people to supervise children for the summer. We also heard that sometimes really great jobs like working for the government, like the municipal government, went unfilled.”

Area businesses having trouble finding youth to fill summer jobs

Workforce Planning Board keeping an eye on lower participation rates in the employment market after last summer’s decision by young people not to seek work

Many young people took a pass on summer jobs in 2022, with this year’s job market up in the air.

Home sales down

Sales through the MLS system of the Waterloo Region Association of Realtors set another low last month, with the 611 homes sold in March representing 38.4% drop over March 2022. The average sale price for all residential properties was $779,017, down 18.6 from a year ago. Detached homes sold for an average of $101,152, down 17.4% from last year, but up 2.9% from February.

Economic turbulence

When asked about the impact of the current economic conditions in Canada on their personal finances, 50% say they believe that the worst is yet to come, while 35% feel that we are currently experiencing the worst part of the economic cycle, according to the latest MNP Consumer Debt Index conducted quarterly by Ipsos. There’s little optimism, with only 15% stating that the worst is behind us.
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT: Too soon even now to predict what young workers will decide

The result of the analysis was something of a surprise to Hofbauer, who had thought the trend would be something employers had only perceived, but there was an actual drop in youth engagement. While the reason for this drop is unknown, Hofbauer has some theories. “I think in 2022, a lot of parents saw what their children had been through, and kind of discouraged work just for a summer,” she speculated. “I’m going to call them kids, but especially in that 15 to 19 year old group, just to let them be kids. Because the 15 to 19 year olds would have been 13 to 17 (before the pandemic), and I think their parents didn’t really encourage them the way they had in the past to seek employment. Maybe it was better for their mental health and their social life to take a summer off. That’s my theory at this point.”

If employers are having a hard time attracting youth to their jobs, Hofbauer suggests they take a look and reevaluate their job, including giving youth some time off, even a minimal amount, in the summer. “Think about some ways you might have to fit for me, but also have to fit for them.” Other suggestions include giving youth some time off, even a minimal amount, in the summer. “Look at what you’re offering. If you can connect with any younger people, ask them what they’re looking for in a job and then try and figure out how to market that job to attract the people that you’re looking for.”

Charlene Hofbauer is the executive director of Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin.

Hofbauer suggests youth may have had unrealistic expectations. Her advice for young people seeking a job is to keep expectations realistic and to connect with some of the youth job connection programs that the province runs. “I’m optimistic that Hofbauer is keeping her eye on is youth aged 20 to 24 who aren’t working. While 80 per cent of this group is working or looking for work, 20 per cent are not. ‘They seem to be kind of maxing out at 80 per cent of them participating. Participating means they’re working or looking for work. So I’m wondering what that other 20 per cent is doing. Is that something we will have to watch moving forward as they become 25 to 29 year olds? It feels a little bit like they’re stalling, and so I’m concerned they may struggle in the years ahead,’ she said.

And the outlook for this summer? Well, Hofbauer just doesn’t know at this point. “I’m optimistic that youth will come back, and I’m hoping that the participation rates will rise. As we get information, we will share it as quickly as we can to economic development and other business support agencies across Waterloo Region.”

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at different crossroads in life. It’s about wisdom and
knowing more and being able to look back on your
life and every time I read that, I feel a little bit wellled up, but the
thought of that, because we do worry about ‘Oh, I’m getting older.’ I hate
it and this just sort of changes that around. There are lots of little
moments like that, that just sort of pick you up,”
she said of the play.
The set is key to the inti-
macy of the play, Garner
noted. “Conceptually it’s all
about a semicircle, feeling
like a hug.” Beyond this
Garner is a big believer of
telling the story that the
playwright has created.
Garner is a big believer of
telling the story that the
playwright has created.

The Elmira Theatre
COMPANY is capping off
its 2022-2023 season with
a play that is humorous in
tone and serious in its
content as the characters
are facing the fear of
dying.

The show to rehearse because
of some of the subject matter
is really quite moving. So
you have to take care of
your actors and make sure
that they’re supported as
they work on the difficult
parts of the play,” she
explained.

There is something
for each theatregoer no
matter their stage in life,
Garner said. “[It’s about] What is
the legacy of our life? and
‘What are we doing to
to continue to live and
be vibrant?’ – all of that
different sort of stuff. I think it
really hits you differently
depending on what your
life is and what you need to
take from it, which I think
is kind of one of the
beauties of the play,” she
said.

The Elmira Theatre
Company production of
Tuesdays with Morrie runs from April 28 to May
13 with shows on Thurs-
days at 2 p.m. and Sundays at 8 p.m.
and then bring that to life
as best we can with all of
its nuances. I think it’s
fairly straightforward.”

Austin is joined by
Michael Klein, who plays
Albom. Garner said she is
thrilled about the cast.

“We had quite a few
people try out because the
characters are kind of
dramatic. I’m just delighted
with this cast, and they’re
working really hard. They
hit it off, and it’s a difficult
show to rehearse because
of some of the subject matter
is really quite moving. So
you have to take care of
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The Elmira Theatre
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Tuesdays with Morrie runs from April 28 to May
13 with shows on Thurs-
days-Saturdays at 8 p.m.
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  - For all your electrical requirements
  - Randy Weber
  - 519-699-1462

- **Woolwich Rentals & Sales**
  - Visit us online to see our entire rental lineup.
  - 519-669-0624

- **Woolwich Rentals**
  - Find us on www.woolwichrentals.ca
  - 100 Union St, Elmira, Ontario

- **General Services**
  - 519-669-4400

- **Woolwich Rentals**
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- **John Schaefer**
  - 519-503-6033

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COMMUNITY MEETING ON PROPOSED NOISE BY-LAW

You are invited to join Township By-law Enforcement staff for a community meeting regarding proposed updates to the Noise By-law. Township staff will be available to answer questions and hear feedback from the community.

The focus of the meeting is on updates to the enforcement process and proposed changes to the Noise By-law requested by Council. In 2022 Officers began using a decibel reader to determine volume during the enforcement process. Proposed updates to the Noise By-law include:

- Prohibiting music above 45 dB if measured inside another property
- Prohibiting music above 55 dB if measured outside on another property
- Prohibiting music from 9:00 pm to 9:00 am on Sunday – Thursdays, or after 11:00 pm on Friday and Saturdays
- Allowing construction noise for residential renovations at a reasonable volume on Sundays from 9:00 am – 7:00 pm (does not apply to contractors)
- Increased fees for noise exemptions and fine (ticket) amounts

The meeting will be held in person on Thursday, April 27 at 5:00 pm at:

The St. Jacobs Schoolhouse Theatre
11 Albert St W, St. Jacobs ON

Registration is not required. Please share this invitation with anyone else who may want to participate.

For questions, please contact:

Jeff Smith
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
519-669-6010
1-877-969-0094 ext. 6010
jsmith@woolwich.ca

NOTICE OF OFFICIAL PLAN FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

NPG Planning Solutions Inc. (NPG) has been retained to undertake a comprehensive review and work with The Township of Woolwich to create its new Official Plan. The Townships new Official Plan will shape the community and its growth to the year 2051.

The Township in collaboration with NPG will host a number of engagement opportunities to gather input from the community. The engagement will kick off with a Community Visioning phase over the month of April with a number of stakeholder meetings, focus group sessions and an online survey planned. The goal of the Community Visioning phase will be to increase awareness about the Official Plan review and to generate feedback and ideas from the community to establish a vision, goals and objectives that will guide the new Official Plan.

The upcoming focus groups session will be an in-person, two-hour session starting with a presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. Some of the questions you can expect to hear are – Is there anything the new Official Plan can do better than it does now? Or Does the current vision, goals and objectives of the current Offi cial Plan resonate with you? Why or Why not?

Focus group sessions are being held:

Date:
Thursday April 20th, 2023

Location:
The Township of Woolwich - 24 Church St W, Elmira

Times:
1. 10:00am – 12:00pm, and
2. 7:00pm to 9:00pm

All residents are welcome! NO REGISTRATION IS NECESSARY!
**Birthday**

**Paul Wintemeyer is turning 80!**

Friends and family are invited to celebrate with Paul on Saturday, April 22nd between 1-4 for an Open House at the Elmira Legion (11 First St. East). Finger foods, refreshments and cash bar available.

Best wishes only please.

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**Celebration of Life**

**Maurer, W. James “Jim”**

A celebration of life for Jim will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 22, 2023 at the Floradale Mennonite Church, 22 Florasine Road, RR 1. Elmira followed by a reception in the fellowship hall of the church. Burial took place on Wednesday, November 9, 2022 in the adjoining cemetery.

www.dreisingerfuneralhome.com

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**Obituary**

**Remick-Pond, Pamela L.**

Passed away on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at her residence in St. Jacobs, four days after her 66th birthday. Beloved wife of Darby for 39 years. Devoted mother of Josh and Sara, Justin and Ashley; and proud grandma of Julia, Callie; and Emma. Sister of Dan Remick. Predeceased by her parents Bud and Joanne (Allan) Remick. Pam worked at Grand River Hospital as a clerical worker for many years. Visitation will take place on Monday, April 17, 2023 from 5-8 p.m. at the Dreisinger Funeral Home, 62 Arthur St. S., Elmira. Donations to Canadian Cancer Society in Pam’s memory.

www.dreisingerfuneralhome.com

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**Death Notice**

**MARTIN, IRA - Wally**

Wally Panagapka died on April 3, 2023, in his 85th year.

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**PUZZLE SOLUTIONS**

**LAUGHTER**

EASY

```
9 7 1 8 3 4 6 2 5
2 3 8 1 5 6 7 9 4
5 6 7 3 2 9 4 8 1
1 9 3 5 4 8 2 6 7
8 2 4 7 6 1 3 5 9
7 8 2 6 1 5 9 4 3
4 1 6 9 8 3 5 7 2
3 5 9 4 7 2 8 1 6
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HARD

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4 2 7 6 8 1 3 9 5
5 9 1 2 4 3 8 7 6
3 8 6 9 7 5 2 1 4
6 1 2 3 5 7 4 8 9
8 3 4 1 9 6 5 2 7
7 5 9 4 2 8 6 3 1
9 4 8 7 6 2 1 5 3
1 6 5 8 3 9 7 4 2
2 7 3 5 1 4 9 6 8
```
Elmira’s support for African water project

Lanxess continues to back Enviro-Stewards’s biofilter program, which has extended to Ugandan refugee camps.

**Leah Gerber**
Observer Staff

LANEXX CANADA
STAFF ARE PARTNER-ING with Elmira-based Enviro-Stewards to bring clean water to Uganda.

This year, Lanxess is donating 24,000 to the cause.

Originally, the initiative began when Bruce Taylor, founder and president of Enviro-Stewards, helped build an orphanage in South Sudan in 2004. While there, he learned that people travelled long distances to gather clean water from the nearest available well. Then, it turned out that the well was contaminated anyway. In places where there is no access to clean water, people often get sick and spend much of their income on hospital bills. Being able to filter the water helps people stay healthy, saves them money that they can use for other things like sending kids to school, and also means people don’t need to boil their water using firewood, which reduces their carbon footprint.

Taylor had brought over the instructions and materials needed to build a bio-sand filter for the orphanage. That’s an old piece of technology, the concept for which is one of the first ways developed to filter water. He had an open-source patent from the Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology.

Eventually he returned to help train people to build and sell their own bio-sand filters. Since then, the organization has grown, with local people running their own bio-sand filter businesses. Enviro-Stewards works to help train and guide these entrepreneurs to run their own businesses and employ-ees to build and sell the filters. Taylor and the Enviro-Stewards company use donated funds to help people purchase the filters and help with the start-up costs of expanding the program.

The organization was set to expand further in Sudan, when the civil war broke out. Both the entre-preneurs and the intended recipients of the filters were displaced to Ugandan refugee camps, where they opted to continue with the program.

Taylor notes there’s a difference between a tradi-tional foreign aid and his group’s approach.

“In a normal approach, we would just get them some tents and pots and pans and stuff for the refu-gee camps. But instead, we rented a conference hall and they taught 40 Ugandans how to sell the filters – they sold 27 filters in the first month. So the first month from a refugee camp, they were more than breaking even and making water filters,” he said.

The money donated to Enviro-Stewards will be used to buy the bio-sand filters. The filters are distributed to the people in need and then the business portion of the program is expanded.

Representatives of Lanxess made the short trek to the Enviro-Stewards office in Elmira to mark the chemical producer’s latest contri-bution to the bio-sand filter program in Africa.

In 2023, the program will include up to 500 e-bikes for the Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology, making water filters,” he said.

The money donated to Enviro-Stewards will be used to buy the bio-sand filters. The filters are distributed to the people in need and then the business portion of the program is expanded.

**The importance of a birth plan**

**DEAR MAYO CLINIC:** I’m expecting my first baby and feeling a range of emotions, from anticipation to apprehension, for labor and delivery. A friend suggested that I create a birth plan to identify my wishes for labor and after the birth of the baby is born. Why is it important to have a birth plan and discuss it with my health care team before I go into labor?

**ANSWER:** Congratulations! Adding a new member to the family is an exciting time. You’ve likely been planning — stocking up on diapers, newborn clothes and blankets, as well as considering what you’ll name your little one.

Before your baby is born, you should create a plan leading up to the delivery and immediately following the birth. This is known as a birth plan, and it’s an important piece of two-way communication between you and your health care team. It’s a way for you to commu-nicate your preferences to your health care team during your labor and after the birth of your baby. Each birth is a unique experience.

Creating a birth plan empowers you to become informed of all your options during labor. At the same time, it’s a tool to let the team caring for you know about your preferences.

Here are answers to some common questions about birth plans:

- **Why is a birth plan necessary?**
  - A birth plan is a way for you to communicate your wishes to your health care team during your labor and after the birth of your baby. Each birth is a unique experience.
  - Creating a birth plan empowers you to become informed of all your options during labor. At the same time, it’s a tool to let the team caring for you know about your preferences.

- **Do you need to write your own birth plan?**
  - You don’t have to create your birth plan from scratch. Many hospitals have a standard form or booklet that you can complete at your conve-nience.
  - It’s recommended that you review your birth plan with your primary health care professional during your pregnancy. For exam-ple, if your pregnancy is high-risk, your health care team may recommend certain things on your birth plan. It’s a good idea to have this conversation before you arrive at the hospital for the delivery.

- **What needs to be included in the birth plan?**
  - Although you may have in your mind how you want your baby’s birth to be, your choices may not be shared effectively with your health care team if you don’t have a birth plan.

**We May Not Offer The Cheapest Tire Prices or Tire Installations.**

By including an alignment and visual vehicle inspection with every tire change over. We believe that we are offering you greater value long term. It is unfortunate when tires are installed and wear prematurely because the vehicle’s alignment is out. When having your tires installed it is also so important to make sure there are no unsafe suspension and steering parts.

At every appointment we monitor this and will always make you aware of any concerns we see.

Contact us today for a tire quote or with any questions you have! We are always happy to chat. 519-669-1082 info@leroyautocare.net.

**LEROY’S AUTO CARE**

20 Oriole Parkway E., Elmira.
Tel: (519) 669-1082 www.leryouautocare.net
Soup season isn’t over just yet!

While we await warmer days this spring, there’s often a chill in the air. The kind of crisp temps that leave you craving for something comforting, while ginger and curry powder added spicy heat to keep it lively. Curried Chicken Soup with Coconut and Kale

Curried Chicken Soup with Coconut and Kale

- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 2 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 1 tsp curry powder
- ½ tsp table salt
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper, plus extra for seasoning
- 8 ounces kale, stemmed and chopped
- 1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed and cut into ½-inch chunks
- 2 cups water
- 1 (14-ounce) can coconut milk
- 1 tbsp lime juice, plus lime wedges for serving
- 2 cups chicken, water, and coconut milk and bring to boil, scraping up any browned bits.
- 2. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until chicken is cooked through and kale is tender, about 15 minutes. Off heat, stir in lime juice and season with salt and extra cayenne to taste. Serve, passing lime wedges separately.

**Note:** Garnish this soup with sliced scallions. If desired, you can serve this soup with brown rice for a heartier meal.

For 25 years, confident cooks in the know have relied on America’s Test Kitchen rigorously tested recipes developed by professional test cooks and vetted by 60,000 at-home recipe testers. See more online at www.americastestkitchen.com

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**THURSDAY, APRIL 13**
- Woodside Evergreen for Seniors, 10-30 a.m., at Woodside Church, Elmira. “Happy Heart Equals Good Medicine” by Pastor Troy Tobey of Bright’s Grove. A program of humour, music, inspiration and spiritual encouragement. Suggested donation $10 includes a hot lunch. Registration required by April 8 at www.woodsidechurch.ca/evergreen or call 519-669-1296.
- Senior’s Community Dining. Community Care Concepts invites you to join us at Breslau Community Centre at noon for lunch, fellowship and entertainment. Cost: $12. Must pre-register by noon March 31 by calling 519-664-1900.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 14**
- The Larry Mercery Trio with special guest Leo Stock in concert at 7 p.m. at Gale Presbyterian Church, Elmira. Tickets $25. Purchase tickets in advance from the church office 519-669-2852 or office@galepresbyterianchurch.ca. Proceeds to Barnsawall Place.
- Friday Food at the Elmira Legion. Branch opens at 4 p.m., tickets on sale at 4:30 p.m., serving at 5:45 p.m. Menu: hot roast beef sandwich, mashed potatoes, veg and dessert, $10/plate. Join us in the lounge. All welcome.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 15**
- Talk to an Owner - net zero home walkabout. Extérieur home tour with an owner of a Net Zero Home. Tours at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. in Elmira. Learn about: electric car charging, rooftop photovoltaics, solar hot water, air source heat pumps, vine for summer cooling, trees for shade and protection, driveway construction. Registration required at: woolwich.ca/register questions: 519-514-7027.

**MONDAY, APRIL 17**
- Woolwich Gardeners April Speaker, DJ Hanna “Butterfly Rangers and Pollinator Gardens.” Join us 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at St. James Luther Church, Elmira (Wyatt St. entrance). Free-will donation for non-members. Open to the public! “Lug a Mug” for refreshments and treats.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 18**
- Tuesday Take-Out Lunch at Gale Presbyterian. Drive-Thru pick-up 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Menu ($12/person): pork roast, mashed potatoes with gravy, vegetable, salad, bread, cake. RSVP by April 14 (noon) to office@galepresbyterian.com or 519-669-2852.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 21**
- Friday Food at the Elmira Legion. Branch opens at 4 p.m., tickets on sale at 4:30 p.m., serving at 5:45 p.m. Menu: chicken drumsticks, potato, veg, roll and dessert, $10/plate. Join us in the lounge.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26**
- Senior’s Community Dining. Community Care Concepts invites you to join us at Linwood Community Centre at noon for lunch, fellowship and entertainment. Cost: $12. Must pre-register by noon March 31 by calling 519-664-1900.

**SATURDAY, MAY 6**
- Schnitzel Dinner at the Elmira Legion, 5:30 p.m. Menu: schnitzel, mashed potato, vegetable, salad, roll & dessert, $15 per person. Tickets purchased in advance at the Legion. Take out also available.

**Note:** The Community Events Calendar is reserved for non-profit local events that are offered free to the public. Placement is not guaranteed. Registrations, corporate events, open houses and similar events do not qualify for free advertising. See complete policy online. All submissions are to be made online at observerxtra.com/event-listing/.
Word of the Week
INFANTILIZE
To infantilize someone is to treat them as though they are an infant — to treat them as helpless, immature, or as one who lacks adult agency.

Find-A-Word
THEME: CLOTHES

ACROSS
1. Hurl, as a javelin
2. Hungarian mathematician Paul
3. Pope of 1605
4. “Nothing,” in legal phrases
5. Band worn in mourning
6. Former chairman and chief executive officer of Disney
7. Hokkaido native
8. Author
9. Patagonian
10. Active

DOWN
1. Violent reaction
2. Extended Roaming Indicator
3. Paw
4. Certain cloud formations
5. As a sprain
6. Certain cloud formations
7. Ancillary
8. Certain cloud formations
9. Asian nation
10. Ancient Irish king

Sudoku
EASY

HARD

#WEARETITANS

SATURDAY APRIL 15
TIP-OFF AT 7PM
THE AUD // 400 EAST AVE., KITCHENER

THE AUD // 400 EAST AVE., KITCHENER

THE OBSERVER | Thursday, April 13, 2023 | 22

The puzzles in Playtime are all exclusive to The Observer and handcrafted specifically for you. Find solutions on page: 19

If your company would like to sponsor this page, please contact The Observer at 519-669-5790 ext.104 Or email donna@woolwichobserver.com
A taste of summer while the sun shines

Although it made its way to Latin America, Gazpacho is actually of Spanish origin, with ideas stolen from Italy. The original recipe was more based on olive oil and garlic thickened with bread (a good use of old or stale bread). Eventually it evolved into having a tomato base (a good use of old or stale bread).

One of the few things that comes into season in April is the mango (well in Mexico at least).

**Mango Gazpacho**

- 2 cups diced mango
- 2 cups orange juice
- Juice of 1-2 limes
- 2 Tbsp olive oil

1. Puree mangos together with juices and oil.

2. Combine with diced veggies, serve.

So we’re going to “use the premise of the Gazpacho while using a mango base!”

When we just say “Gazpacho,” people will assume we mean with a tomato base, as they also would if we said “salsa.” By simply clarifying it by adding the word “Mango” in front, it allows creative license to change up the recipe anyway we choose while using a mango.

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ENVIRO-STEWARDS: Lanxess has donated more than $100K to project led by their neighbours in Elmira

Lanxess has donated just over $100,000 to the Safe Water Social Ventures project.

Macklin said the work of Enviro-Stewards to meet the UN Sustainability Goals reflects many of the core values at Lanxess. “Not only does the program aim to provide clean drinking water, it also helps to educate the recipients on the biofilter systems and how they operate, so that they can then take that knowledge and further help those within their community to attain access to clean water.”

Taylor says people should be aware of “the benefits of development and walking with people rather than just relief-based approaches which don’t respect dignity.”

Next, Taylor is working toward certifying the organization so that it can be accepted as carbon credit for other organizations. Basically, since the use of this technology reduces the carbon emitted by individuals by eliminating the need to boil the water, once certified, other companies can purchase carbon offset credits by investing into the Safe Water Social Ventures project.

Individuals can also help. This week, Taylor expects to release a call for the organization’s second film festival about inspirational development. It will screen at the Apollo Cinema in Kitchener in November. Proceeds will go toward the work of Safe Water Social Ventures.

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MAYO CLINIC: A tailored plan is key before and after birth

Some questions you may answer in your birth plan include:

- Who do you want present in the delivery room?
- Do you want medications for pain management? If so, what type of medications do you want?
- Do you want a natural birth and use alternate measures for comfort?
- Do you want to move freely during labor?
- Do you want to use hydrotherapy?
- Do you want your baby continuously monitored?

These are just a few items that can be included in your birth plan.

A birth plan does not end with the delivery of your new baby. The care team will want to know how you want your baby to be cared for in the hospital. For example, explain who will cut the umbilical cord, change the baby’s first diaper and give the baby his or her first bath.

In addition, the birth plan can indicate how you wish to feed your baby. Identifying breast milk or formula as a nutritional preference is an important item for your birth plan. Religious or cultural preferences should be included in your plan, as well.

Your birth plan should be tailored to meet your personal wishes. Keep in mind, your health care team may need to depart from the plan to ensure the safest possible delivery.

The goal during delivery is to have a healthy mom and a healthy baby. Your birth plan can help communicate your preferences to the care team during one of the most exciting times of your life.
More sunshine as list grows again in the past year

Steve Kannon
Observer Staff

WOOLWICH AND WELLSLEY TOWNSHIPS CONTRIBUTED 19 members to a list of people on the public dime who earned more than $100,000 in 2022.
Across Ontario, the list—which includes doctors, nurses, teachers, police and firefighters in addition to civil servants—some 267,000 workers, up 9.4 per cent, from 244,000 in 2021. The provincial government attributes about 80 per cent of the additions to the salaries of nurses and teachers.
The provincially mandated salary information known as the sunshine list, at the end of March.
Topping the list again in 2022 was the CEO of Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Kenneth Hartwick, who was paid $1.7 million. Two other executives at the organization, Dominique Miene and Michael Martelli received nearly $1.7 million and nearly $1 million, respectively.
The top-10 list was rounded out by Kevin Smith, the president and CEO of University Health Network ($932,085); Phil Verster, the CEO of Metrolinx ($869,458); Ronald Cohn, CEO of The Hospital For Sick Children ($833,689); Matt Anderson, CEO of Ontario Health ($832,603); Mark Fuller, CEO of the Ontario Public Service Pension Board ($829,123); Timothy Rutledge, CEO of Unity Health Toronto ($801,185) and Christopher Ginther of OPG ($789,801).
In Woolwich, chief administrative officer David Brenneman was the highest paid of township employees, taking in $163,625.81. Director of finance treasurer Richard Petherick received $130,894.85. The same was true of director of development services Deanne Friess and director of infrastructure services Jared Puppe.

Ball hockey tournament aims to boost accessibility

Bill Atwood
Observer Staff

A LOCAL CHURCH IS HOSTING a road hockey challenge in an effort to make getting out on the ice a little more accessible for kids in Wellesley.
The tournament hosted by Crosshill Mennonite Church invites both girls and boys teams of up to five (including a goalie) for the novice to bantam age group. Co-ed teams are welcome and separate boys and girls divisions will be formed if enough teams are registered.
“We want to see as many kids play [ice] hockey as we can, [even if] their parents can’t afford it. We are trying to get more girls to play, that’s the whole intent,” said tournament organizer Marty Schwende.
The tournament has raised between $2,000 and $3,000 every year to help assist players that cannot afford to either pay tryout fees or for equipment, Schwende said.
Back for its sixth year, the tournament has also seen several local NHL players make an appearance in support, including Bryan Little from Cambridge and Stanley Cup champion Tanner Pearson from Kimberley.
“The guys that we had out really love giving back to the community, and they love helping the kids. That’s what it’s all about,” Schwende said.
The celebrity appearance has also included a question-and-answer period.
“They sign autographs and stuff like that for the kids and the kids are over the moon. Some of them played a little road hockey with some of the kids and all in between some of the games and stuff like that—they get right into it.”