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EMBRACING CHANGE

VOL. 8 ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2025



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of the Month**
Schweitzer's
Bath & Kitchen

**ON THE COVER:
FROM PICTURE FRAMES TO PUZZLE
PIECES: RICK & MARY'S CROSS
CANADA JIGSAW OF A LIFE**

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LISTING: PAGE 27**

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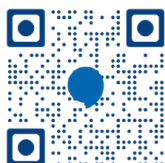
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On The Cover

From Picture Frames to Puzzle
Pieces: Rick & Mary Schmidt's
Cross-Canada Jigsaw of a Life.

See the full cover story on page 12

Cover Story & Photo By: Scott
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

If you close your eyes and imagine your ideal Christmas, what comes to mind? Perhaps it's a tree shimmering with lights, the comforting aroma of cookies in the oven, and a fire quietly crackling as children or grandchildren unwrap thoughtfully chosen gifts. Or maybe your perfect holiday is a home filled with family and friends—shared meals, warm laughter, a little eggnog, and the simple joy of being together.

No matter what your Christmas dreams look like, the season often arrives with high expectations. The pressure to create perfect moments can leave even the most organized among us feeling stretched thin. Families juggle busy schedules, long distances, and unpredictable winter roads, making it difficult to gather the way we hope. This is especially true for many seniors, who may face added barriers that keep them apart from loved ones.

I was fortunate to grow up in a cozy home with cherished Christmas traditions—many of which continue today. Even in challenging years, I always felt a strong sense of love and connection during the holidays. My father taught me early on the importance of opening your home and heart to those who may not have family nearby. No one should have to face loneliness at Christmastime. If you are blessed with a joyful holiday season, consider reaching out to someone who might be alone, and invite them to share in the warmth and spirit of the day.

A wonderful way to connect with others is at the Community Care Concepts' Annual Christmas Breakfast, taking place Saturday, December 13, from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the New Hamburg Legion. It's a meaningful opportunity to gather, enjoy good food, and make sure everyone feels included during this special time of year. See page 17 for more details on the event.

Thank you for spending part of your day with this issue of Embracing Change. Wishing you the comfort of old traditions, the excitement of new ones, and a holiday season filled with hope, joy, and love.

Warmest wishes,

Tara



Trail's End Hotel

Courtesy of the Grace Schmidt Room, Kitchener Public Library

This is a photo of the Trail's End Hotel, Conestogo. It was built in 1841 and later owned by Martin Schweitzer. It was named Schweitzer's Hotel and then eventually Trail's End Hotel because it was the end of the stage coach run. It was famous for it's food as it was prepared by Augusta Thiem who was the cook for Kaiser Wilhelm in Germany during hunting season. As a young boy William Lyon Mackenzie King visited the establishment with his father when bartering for ponies. It was a Waterloo County Landmark that was destroyed by fire in 1968. The Crowsfoot Restaurant now stands at that location.



Undated photograph donated in 1984



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Built to Last: A Legacy of Care and Craftsmanship

As the holiday season approaches, we find ourselves reflecting on what it means to feel truly at home. It's the comfort of familiar walls, the laughter that echoes down hallways, and the steady warmth of people who care. For fifty years, Schweitzer's has had the privilege of helping families preserve that feeling. What began as a small plumbing company in 1975 has grown into a trusted local name in home renovation, design, and accessibility, still guided by the same family values of integrity, craftsmanship, and care.

Reaching this milestone has given our team a deep sense of gratitude. We've watched homes evolve through the decades: the same front doors greeting new generations, the same kitchens welcoming new memories. Many of our long-time clients now call us back to adapt those cherished spaces for new stages of life, widening doorways, installing walk-in showers with decorative grab bars, or improving lighting to make daily routines safer and easier. Each of these projects reminds us that good design doesn't just change how a home looks; it changes how a person feels in it.

For our team, aging in place means honouring both independence and comfort. We believe safety should never come at the expense of style. Through our in-house design team, we help clients create beautiful spaces that support mobility, dignity, and peace of mind. From discreet grab bars that blend with your décor to curbless showers that add both luxury and accessibility,

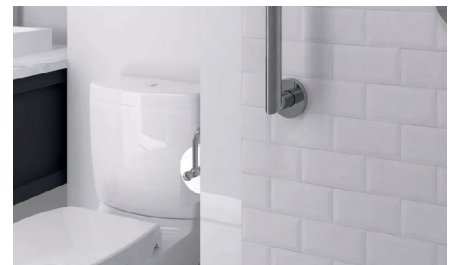
every detail is planned with care, so your home remains not just functional, but deeply personal.

What makes Schweitzer's special has never been only about fixtures and finishes; it's about people. The trust that families place in us, often across multiple generations, is the foundation of our success. We've had the honour of being invited into homes during milestones big and small, and that connection has shaped who we are as a company. Every call, every conversation, every renovation carries the same promise: to deliver quality that lasts and service you can count on.

This December, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the clients, colleagues, and community partners who have supported Schweitzer's through five decades of growth. Your loyalty and friendship have made it possible for us to continue doing what we love, helping people stay comfortable, independent, and proud of the homes they've loved.

As we celebrate our 50th year, we look forward to the next fifty with the same commitment to excellence that has defined us from the beginning. Because a truly great home, like a truly great relationship, is built to last.

From all of us at Schweitzer's Bath & Kitchen and Schweitzer's Plumbing Centre, may your holidays be filled with warmth, gratitude, and the comfort of friends, family, hearth, and home.



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PLUMBING AND RENOVATIONS



Short and sweet reflections on life's complications

www.annemilne.contentmentisforcows.com

Embracing Change is pleased to introduce readers to our newest contributor.

Anne Milne enjoyed a varied career as a social worker, a retailer, and an investment advisor. Through all those challenges, what she really wanted was to be more creative. In pursuit of that, she taught herself to draw, published a comic strip online, *Contentment is for Cows*, and started a blog at the same time. Since 2014, she's been writing weekly essays about creativity, friendship, grief, politics, and the messy side of life. Most recently, she edited her mother's 1930s coming-of-age diaries titled, *I Had a Swell Time*, (Available soon!), and is currently working on her first novel. She lives in Stratford, Ontario.

Together, Embracing Change and Anne chose the following blog post to introduce readers to her writing and learn a bit about her at the same time.

The Five Year Mark

When you reflect on the biggest life changing circumstances you've experienced, how long did it take before things felt normal again? Or, how long did it take to adjust?

July 6, 2025 was the five year anniversary of my husband's passing; October 1 marked the five year anniversary since I sold my house and moved to my current small city.

Decades ago in the midst of my social work career, I participated in specialized training from a therapist in Toronto. I remember her making sure we understood that for blended families it would take five years to consolidate "step" relations to the equivalency of biological relationships. (I have close relatives who will voice objections after reading this. Their blended family experience was relatively seamless. I might even get flack for using the word "relatively." But they were the exception.)

Major life changes converged for me; I retired to have more time to care for my husband. He passed, and "widow" became both a label and a description of me—whether I could relate to it or not. (I couldn't.) I sold my house and moved because I was burnt out from care-taking and the yard-work felt like another exhausting responsibility. At the time, I wasn't entirely certain these decisions were for the best, but choices had to be made.

I've always said I like my bandaids ripped off quickly. Give me the bad news, the punishment, the whatever, but let's get it done and over with. That philosophy might work when it is a physical bandaid, but emotions, such as grief, take time, space and processing.

I like to say, "Hindsight is a smug know-it-all," because, looking back over these last five years, I can see I was pushing myself to get through those difficult times just to get on with my life—the classic mistake of "trying too hard."

In the summer of 2023 my nephew died suddenly and way too soon. In an odd way, this tragedy helped me move on in a healthier fashion. Grieving his death, and grieving for my family, brought back unfinished business—if that possibly makes sense. I stopped rushing the process and took all the time I needed.

Moving on is part of the deal we make in exchange for the privilege of being on this planet. I'm living a very different life than if my husband were still alive and healthy. It has taken five years for my circumstances to feel "normal" but they finally do. This is who I am now and it's okay that it took time.

Keep your joy.

Anne Milne is an every Sunday blogger, unless it's a holiday weekend. Or summertime.

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Emily Giau, Audiologist

Emily has extensive experience working with older adults which has led her into the hearing care industry for the last 5 years. As an audiologist, Emily has mainly worked in private practice settings and has traveled to retirement, long-term care and personal residences to provide exceptional hearing health care.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Honours Health Studies/Aging Studies Option – Psychology Minor (University of Waterloo)

Master of Clinical Science in Audiology (University of Western Ontario)

Selina Mauro, H.I.S

Selina has 10 years of experience in the hearing industry as a Hearing Instrument Specialist and has also been certified in ear wax removal for 10 years as well. Selina also has experience working directly at a hearing aid manufacturer doing audiology support and training for all of Canada. Working as direct sales and training support for clinics traveling all over Ontario.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Biology/Psychology Trent University

H.I.S. Diploma Conestoga College

CONTACT US

If you or a loved one requires support with their hearing health or hearing devices or want to start their journey to better hearing, we are here to help.

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New Hamburg:

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3 Waterloo St. New Hamburg, ON N3A 1S3 (Inside the Affinity Health Clinic)



Woolwich Community Health Centre

Check out our website at wchc.on.ca for more upcoming workshops and follow us on social media for updates! You can register online on our website, via email (tabdulhadi@wchc.on.ca) or give us a call at 519-664-3794 ext. 222.

Free Workshops

We host many FREE workshops year-round on topics of self-care, health education, and special guests from the community. Contact us for more information!

New workshops for January – June 2026 will be posted to our website by early December.

Older Adult Fitness Classes

We have a variety of fitness classes geared towards older adults. Classes are available in person at our St. Jacobs location, or online via Zoom – and range in difficulty from introductory classes like Better Bones to Strength Training and Yoga. Classes range from \$5 - \$8 / class. Please visit our website to see the class schedule and register for the January – June 2026 season.

Immunization

Do you or someone you know need to catch up on their immunizations? We've got you covered! Whether it's routine, flu, or COVID vaccines. Please call Paula at 519-664-3794.

Newsletter

Are you registered to receive our bi-annual newsletter with updates about our health centre and upcoming programs? If not, you can pick up a copy of our newsletter in January, or visit our website to view a digital copy.



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What to Leave Alongside Your Will?

For many years, this column has included details about topics that go inside your Will. Today's advice is about things that don't appear in the Will itself. Consider the things that your Will's executor will need to know or to find, in order to carry out your wishes.

Most Wills dispose of 'everything' to a person, or a group of people (like children or grandchildren), or some charities. Rarely does a Will specifically list what is included in 'everything'. But, once you die, your executor might not know where to look in order to find your assets.

Consider making a separate list to help guide your executor. Some items to include on that list could be:

1. What institutions do you bank or invest with?
2. Who do you owe money to, and who owes money to you?
3. Do you have any life insurance policies or pensions that should be collected?
4. Where to look for a safety deposit box?
5. Do you use trusted professionals who would have more information that could help your executor locate assets, such as accountants, investment advisors, and lawyers?
6. Do you expect to be the beneficiary under someone else's will?
7. Do you have any assets in a different province or country?
8. Do you own assets which are valuable to collectors, but their value may not be immediately clear without some expert help?
9. Where should your executor look to find passwords or log-in credentials?

If your Will has been prepared by a lawyer, check to see if your lawyer will allow you to store this additional information with the Will in a safe place. Many offer that service. You can also keep these lists in a safe place with your copy of the document, or share it directly with your executor.

You don't want your beneficiaries to miss out on something of value. Take care to update this side list as frequently as you need, when circumstances change.

Duncan Henderson is an Associate Lawyer working at GGFI Law LLP, with offices in New Hamburg (519-662-2000), as well as Kitchener and Waterdown (519-579-4300). This is an occasional column where lawyers offer tips about frequently asked questions. This Advice is offered for information purposes only, and may not cover all circumstances, please consult any qualified lawyer for advice specific to your needs.



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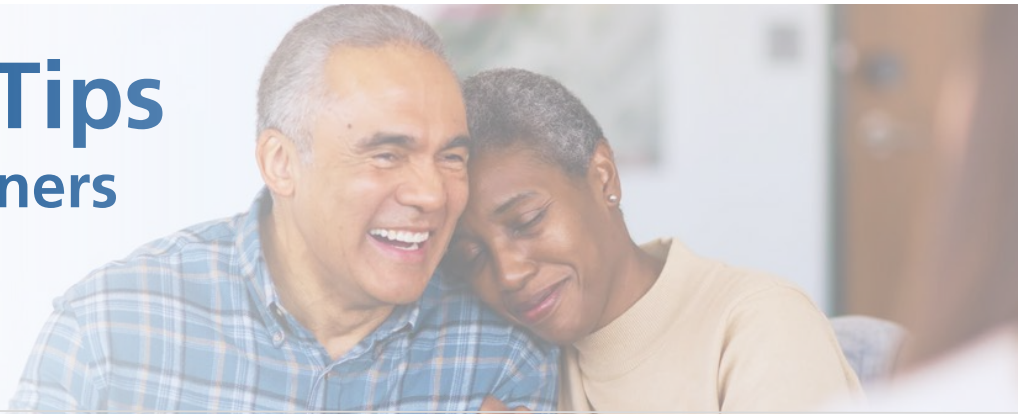
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Holiday Tips for Care Partners

Alzheimer
Society

WATERLOO WELLINGTON



The holidays can be a joyful time - but for care partners supporting someone living with dementia, they can also bring unique challenges. With thoughtful planning and some flexibility, you can create meaningful moments while reducing stress for everyone involved.

1. Plan Ahead and Communicate

Talk with family and friends before the holidays. Let them know about any changes in the person living with dementia and encourage them to avoid discussing these changes in front of the person. Preparing loved ones can help reduce awkward moments and ensure everyone is on the same page.

2. Adapt Celebrations to Meet Changing Needs

- Choose a time of day that works best for the person with dementia - earlier may be better than later.
- Keep visits short. Two shorter visits may be more enjoyable than one long gathering.
- If there's a routine that works well, stick to it as much as possible.
- Be flexible - it's okay to cut activities short if the person becomes tired or overwhelmed.
- Provide a quiet space at gatherings for breaks, and offer to sit with the person to help them feel at ease.

3. Rethink Traditions

It's natural to want to keep holiday traditions alive, but it's also okay to simplify or let go of some. Ask for help with cooking, shopping, or decorating. Don't try to do everything. Assign tasks to family members and adjust expectations. Focus on what really matters - connection and comfort.

4. If the Person Lives in Long-Term Care (LTC)

Taking someone out of a LTC home may not always be the best choice. For many, leaving familiar surroundings can increase confusion and anxiety. Instead, consider celebrating in the LTC home or trying a short "trial visit" beforehand to see how they respond. Sometimes staying in a safe, known environment is the most respectful and kindest option.

5. Make Visits Meaningful

When visiting someone with dementia, especially in a care home, focus on simple, engaging activities:

- Bring old holiday photos and share stories.
- Have a tea party with home baking and a festive touch.
- Wrap small gifts or write holiday cards together - you can address the cards and have your loved one apply the stamps.
- Read holiday cards aloud and talk about the senders.

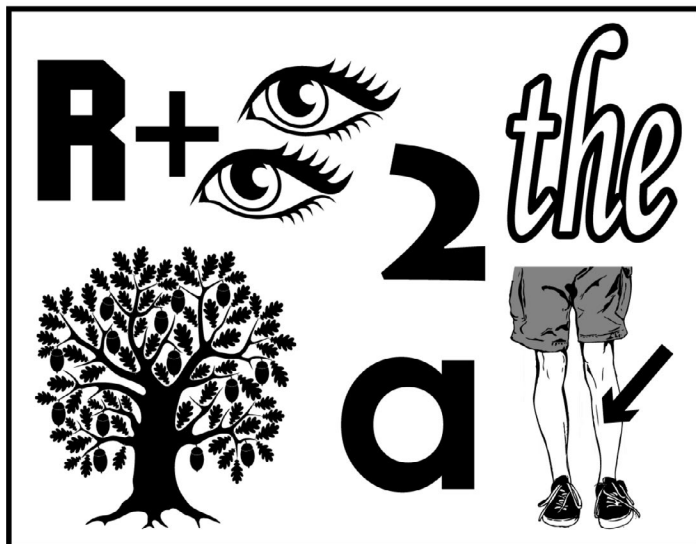
6. Take Care of Yourself

Caregiving is meaningful, but also exhausting. You deserve rest. Accept offers of help, and don't hesitate to ask your support network - friends, neighbours, family - to share the load. Adjust your priorities, spread out errands, and above all, give yourself grace.

Remember: Dementia may change a person's abilities, but not their importance in your family or their need to be included. Reach out to us at (519) 742-1422 or alzheimerww.ca for more information or support. You are not alone.

Concentration Puzzle

Use the visual clues in the puzzle to figure out what it says.



December Puzzles

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



Spot The Difference Game

Can you spot the 8 differences?



Solutions on page 30

COVER STORY



From Picture Frames to Puzzle Pieces: Rick & Mary's Cross-Canada Jigsaw of a Life

WRITTEN BY: SCOTT DUNSTALL

If you've ever stood on a windy cliff in Newfoundland and thought, "*You could point a camera anywhere and nail it,*" you already know the secret sauce behind Rick and Mary Schmidt's second act. They weren't just the founders of a startup...they followed a hunch, a horizon, and decades of gift-trade experience. When the pandemic swept in, living rooms rediscovered puzzles, and their hobby became a small but active Canadian enterprise: photographs turned into jigsaw puzzles, calendars, magnets, and postcards—one puzzle at a time.

Rick is the guy who sees evening light and goes quiet. He'll wait for shadows and sunset to stretch over Sauble Beach or the sun to rise and hit the mountains with a brilliant yellow and reflect on Moraine Lake, then set up the shot—sometimes with a drone, sometimes balancing on a log. Great images rarely happen at noon with a coffee in one hand. Mary, meanwhile, is the chief test pilot. She loves puzzles. Every photo gets judged by the same question: *Would someone actually enjoy assembling this... or fling 200 pieces of blue sky into the recycling?* If it's a wall of sameness, it doesn't make the cut.

They didn't stumble into this. For over 25 years, the couple worked the gift-show circuit—Toronto, Edmonton, Ottawa Halifax—first with picture

framing, then a whole line of "Gifts from the Heart." Those shows built a contact list, a sense of what moves in shops, and the courage to knock on doors in towns where the Chamber of Commerce still matters.

Mary's parents lived in Providence Bay on Manitoulin Island for over 30 years. Consequently Rick and Mary amassed over 50 years of family trips and vacations to a place where ferries replace roads. That history gave birth to a very successful puzzle of the island known as the Manitoulin Collage. The first run of 200 sold out in 7 days after contacting stores on the Island. The second run of 200 sold out in 8 days and they are now on their 4th run of 200 and have added 2 more designs of Manitoulin Island - Explore Manitoulin Map and Bridal Veil Falls. Yes people buy one for themselves and one for a gift.

As mentioned, Covid was the catalyst. Friends kept saying, "Make puzzles from Rick's photos." The first order? Four images, 250 copies each—the minimum thousand, shipped from China because North American runs demanded five thousand per image. Was it nerve-wracking? Absolutely. It's one thing to source locally and have a full view into the manufacturing process. It's another to place that order with a country on the other side of the world that you know very little about.

They've since learned what sells. Niagara Falls sells anywhere; horses—Rick's soft spot from childhood—don't. Local collages fly in places like Manitoulin, where every landmark means something personal. And if a gas station in Waterton, AB declines a puzzle featuring its own storefront, a nearby shop will happily stock it and sell out. It's all been a learning and growing journey they have gone through. For people that are supposed to be in "retirement" I think it's fantastic.

Quality is a quiet obsession. Mary is a puzzler, so the substantive feel of a thick and heavy piece defines the quality of a good puzzle. . Flimsy pieces that sag are a non-starter. Their puzzles are sturdy. Their puzzles even come with letters on the back to define the section of the puzzle where the piece is to be located—so beginners (like me) or grandkids can "cheat" ... and the way Rick does it according to Mary. And box design is deliberate too—bright covers that pop on a shelf, plus a back panel with a tidy story and credits. The difference between a box that gets picked up and one that gets passed by is the difference between "*order another case*" and "*why did we ever print this?*"

Production stays flexible. Puzzles are mass-made offshore at sane minimums. Calendars get printed in London, Ontario. Magnets come from near Montreal. Postcards? Local, fast, and easy to reorder when tourist towns clean them out in August. On the side, a few custom runs for places like Banff and Peggy's Cove—small batches with the shop's story on the box. It's the same Canadian ingenuity you see at farmers' markets: scale where you must, keep it local when you can, and never pretend you're bigger than you are.

Family floats in and out of the frame. A granddaughter with a good eye. Teens who take photos when sports aren't calling. Adult children in Alberta and Kingston, cheering from afar. Mentoring happens in little conversations: a high-school business class here, a shared photo walk there. Pride is the throughline. Mary lights up when she talks about the Manitoulin map puzzle—they layered in the island with micro-landmarks (digitally) only locals would recognize. It's a love letter disguised as a pastime.

They've also navigated the fine print. Early on, a competitor of sorts, Springbok Puzzles, licensed two of Rick's images for U.S. puzzles—a helpful payday that seeded their first run. The company wanted exclusivity on the images and Rick and Mary said yes to the first deal for 3 years. 3 years later Springbok wasn't happy that they declined the second offer. Months later Springbok came back friendlier, still buying the one image but not the exclusivity they initially requested. Rick and Mary discovered that they could do business but on their terms.

None of this is as breezy as a lighthouse at sunset. Forty-pound cartons don't lift themselves and neither one of them is still in high school so age related symptoms do play a role. It's at those times they fall back on help from their friends, unpacking skids of puzzles that have arrived. Much appreciated help from good friends! And what really drove home the reality of what they were doing was the conversion of their garage into a mini warehouse/distribution center. Fascinating.

What I love most about Rick and Mary's story is how ordinary decisions—when to order, what to order, what to photograph and where to photograph it, have added up to an extraordinary lesson for anyone semi-retired and still curious. Reinvention isn't a cliff dive. It's a series of small, stubborn choices that turn a camera roll into inventory and a trunk full of boxes into Tuesday's bank deposit. It's learning HDR in Photoshop after supper. It's knowing when to switch from blue canoe to red. It's driving to Penetanguishene with eight sample boxes and coming home with none.

And it's profoundly communal. These puzzles are not abstract art. They're home. Mountain lakes or rural businesses. A Waterloo Park bridge and a Manitoulin ferry. When a scene you love becomes a thousand tiny pieces on your dining table, you don't just pass the time—you reconnect with a place, a memory, a version of Canada you can hold in your hands.... and heart.

So if you're sitting on a lifetime of "little nothings"—a hobby, a knack, a phone full of photos—maybe it isn't nothing. Maybe it's the start of something local, useful, and quietly beautiful.



TIPS FOR GETTING THROUGH THE WINTER

While many of us will appreciate the beauty of the first snowfall, the long, cold days of winter can be difficult. Community Care Concepts, a non-profit that supports older adults to live independently, offers the following tips to help you get through the upcoming winter months:

Get your flu, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) and COVID-19 shot – Unless you have a history of an adverse reaction, getting a flu, RSV and COVID-19 shot not only protects you but also protects the health of those around you. Getting these shots is one of the most preventative measures that you can take to staying healthy this winter. Contact your health care provider or local pharmacy for more information.

Eat well – Eating nutritious meals is a key component of helping individuals to remain healthy. Many struggle with cooking for themselves or getting out to get groceries in the poor weather. Consider having Meals on Wheels' hot meals delivered at noon on weekdays or their nutritious frozen meals delivered to your door for evenings, weekends or during poor weather.

Stay physically active – Research shows that participating in three 45 minutes sessions of exercise each week minimizes the risk of falls, the leading cause of health decline. Consider participating in the many free gentle exercise classes offered throughout the community each week by Community Care Concepts. No registration or long-term commitment is required. Exercises are customized to the needs of older adults and can be done sitting or standing. There are also many great recreation programs offered through our local community or recreation centres. For those who enjoy walking, a walk on a nice winter day or on one of the indoor tracks at our local recreation centres is a great source of physical activity.

Stay mentally active – Keeping your mind active is equally as important as remaining physically active. Enjoy a good book. Complete a crossword puzzle. Enjoy a game with a friend. Alternatively, join many of the free social and recreational activities, including cards, games, crafts, coffee hours, discussion groups and activities available through seniors active living programs offered at the Wellesley Township Recreation Complex, Wilmot Recreation Complex and Hawkesville, Linwood and St. Clements Community Centres.

Leave the driving to us – Getting to where you need to go in the winter months can be difficult for many. Community Care Concepts has vans as well as volunteers to drive people to medical and other important appointments both within and beyond our community.

Avoid over-exerting yourself – Cold weather combined with over exerting yourself through physical activities such as shovelling can create health difficulties. Contact Community Care Concepts to get help with snow removal, homemaking and other maintenance needs.

Stay connected – Maintaining contact with others can be one of the best ways to maintain your health. Community Care Concepts offers a variety of opportunities to connect with others including its community dining programs and a variety of social and recreational activities.

Contact us – Help is only a call away. Connect with our Senior Support Workers for free, practical in-home support or help with getting through the flu season, groceries, getting to activities, accessing the services you need, information and any need that impacts your ability to live independently.

For more information or to access services, contact Community Care Concepts at 519-664-1900, 519-662-9526 or 1-855-664-1900.

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of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot

We're Online!

Missed an issue?

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Check us out at: embracingchange.ca



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Community Care Concepts' Annual Christmas Breakfast

Saturday, December 13th
8:00 am to 11:00 am

New Hamburg Legion
65 Boullee St., New Hamburg

\$12.00 adults
\$6.00 children *10 and under*
\$25.00 family maximum

Tickets available at the door, or in advance:

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Prevent Diabetes Today

Type 2 Diabetes is a condition where your body cannot use or make enough insulin. Over 1 in 3 Canadians live with diabetes or prediabetes – and many don't even know it.

Common Symptoms

- ✓ Unusual thirst and/or frequent urination
- ✓ Weight gain or loss
- ✓ Extreme fatigue or lack of energy
- ✓ Blurred vision
- ✓ Frequent or recurring infections
- ✓ Cuts and bruises that are slow to heal
- ✓ Tingling or numbness in hands or feet

Prevention Tips

- ✓ Eat a variety of healthy foods
- ✓ Stay active – 150 minutes per week
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Limit alcohol and do not smoke
- ✓ Get 7-8 hours of restful sleep

Risk Factors

- ✓ Prediabetes
- ✓ Advanced age
- ✓ High cholesterol
- ✓ Physical inactivity
- ✓ High blood pressure
- ✓ Being overweight or obese
- ✓ A history of gestational diabetes
- ✓ A family history of type 2 diabetes

Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water
your drink
of choiceChoose
whole grain
foods

Global Resources:

Diabetes Canada – www.diabetes.ca
 Government of Canada – <https://bit.ly/diabetesgov>

Healthy Living Resources:

24 Hour Movement Guideline – csepguidelines.ca
 Canada Food Guide – food-guide.canada.ca/en/

Local Resources:

Self-Management Program – bit.ly/waterloowellington: 866 337-3318
 Take Charge Workshop (WaterlooWellington) – <http://bit.ly/45HHZgE>

Take charge of your health before diabetes does!

**Talk to your healthcare professional
about how to prevent Diabetes.**



A Judgement Call... the Best of Us.

Will Rogers, once stated that, *"I never[yet] met a man I didn't like."* Most people have taken that out of context. If they look at his full statement he adds, *"... if I had a chance to meet him."*

This happened to me with the passing of singer/guitarist Glen Campbell. I read many of the tributes and interviews and got up to date with the history of the man – like you would in an interview.

Initially, I found his Rhinestone Cowboy music video – he's riding a star-spangled rodeo horse and decked out in a glittering cowboy getup – to be incongruous, as set against the reality of what I knew as serious world-wide issues. It seemed that everything they said about showbiz was true: you have to get through the superficial tinsel in order to find the real tinsel.

And, because of that perceived lack of credibility, I wrongly misjudged the man and his great talent and achievements. As imperfect human beings, we're the first to ask for forgiveness and understanding; but, are we the first to extend it?

Of course, music insiders knew him as a virtuoso guitarist – who Alice Cooper said was one of the five best in the music business. Despite not being able to read music, Campbell was in great demand as a session musician – from Sinatra to the Beach Boys – and could hold his own with anyone.

Then, there was his pitch-perfect, warm tonal voice that made him a household name with such hits as Galveston, Wichita Lineman, By the Time I Get to Phoenix, Gentle on My Mind, and of course Rhinestone Cowboy – over 45 million in sales, six Grammy awards, his own national TV show, plus acted in a movie opposite John Wayne.

'Music in Me' writer Fred Parry is a lover of people and a collector of stories, music, wisdom, and grandchildren. Find him at www.fredparry.ca

Yet, his demons were many: his cross addiction to cocaine and alcohol – with three failed marriages – hard times like he sang about in Rhinestone Cowboy.

"There's been a load of compromisin' / On the road to my horizon /

But I'm gonna be where the lights are shining on me"

His salvation? With the faithful help and love of his fourth wife, Kim, he beat the booze, beat the drugs, became Christian and was there – and along with his five grown children – announcing he had Alzheimer's and was doing a final 'Goodbye' tour. It was a sellout as fans welcomed the chance to honour this crossover legend.

The family's ultimate aim was to bring awareness and support for Alzheimer's victims and their caregivers: careliving.org

But, before Alzheimer's reached its final stage, he co-wrote 'I'm Not Gonna Miss You.'

"I'm still here, but yet I'm gone / I don't play guitar or sing my song..."

I'm never gonna know what you go through / All the things I say or do"

As psychiatrist Victor Frankl observed in his book 'A Man's Search for Meaning', men like Campbell were "worthy of their suffering." Can anyone ask more?

Perhaps, just a breath away, Glen Campbell's riding tall in the saddle... again.

That's the way I figure it. – by Fred Parry



Dear Readers: December 2025

Grief and illness can make the holidays and days of significance feel overwhelming. It's so important to give yourself permission to recognize the challenges—physical, emotional, or spiritual. Reaching out to a spiritual advisor, counsellor, local hospice or end of life doula for support can help get you through these difficult times. You don't have to navigate this time alone.

Holidays don't have to look the same every year. Rituals can help a great deal and it's important to consider ones that bring comfort without adding stress, such as candle lighting, sharing a favourite song, telling a short story or spending time in nature.

Rest can be as important as celebration, and you can help yourself by prioritizing one or two activities that matter most and let go of the rest. If you have always been "the one" who organized celebrations – lean on others to take over these tasks. Let your family and friends know what you can and cannot do and share your hopes for how you would like to spend the holidays. Sometimes that conversation can relieve pressure and create more meaningful connections.

Even if you can't be physically present, technology allows for connection. A video call, shared playlist or sending photos can keep you included. Small gestures often mean more than grand events. Illness can sharpen the desire to share what matters. Consider writing a short note, recording a story, or gifting a keepsake. These legacy gestures can be healing for both you and your loved ones.

It's important to remember that moments of joy can coexist with hardship. Experiencing joy does not mean you aren't thinking of and honouring your loved one.

Recommended Book: It's Ok That You're Not Ok ...
Megan Devine

Recommended Podcast: Heather Stang / Mindfulness and Grief

<https://heatherstang.com/coping-with-grief-during-the-holidays-podcast/#>

How about a **movie menu**. It's important to choose a movie that matches your emotional energy. Sometimes a lighthearted laugh is best, other times a gentle story of connection and resilience feels right. If these films aren't available to you on a streaming service check YouTube or visit your local library for books with similar themes.

- **The Holiday (2006)** – Two women swap homes at Christmas, discovering healing, new friendships, and unexpected love. Warm, funny, and heart-soothing.
- **It's a Wonderful Life (1946)** – A timeless reminder of how one life touches many others. Nostalgic and deeply affirming in moments of struggle.
- **Up (2009, Pixar)** – A gentle animated film about love, loss, and adventure. It acknowledges grief but leans into hope and new beginnings.

Some Essential Tips for Coping with Grief:

- Put out a memory box in a special place where you and others can write down memories you treasure. Pick a time to read them together.
- If you want to talk with someone who won't judge or gossip, try seeking the support of a counselor or a grief group.
- Volunteer in your loved one's memory.

Remember: the holidays don't need to be perfect. What matters most is creating space for connection, comfort and meaning – however that looks for you this year.

Next month: Strength in Support: Caring for Caregivers

Sue Phillips, www.suephillips.ca,
sphillips5519@gmail.com



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Merry Christmas



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Q&A with Lora

Standing strong against falls and fractures

Lora Giangregorio is a RIA research scientist and Professor at the University of Waterloo.



What are the most common causes of falls in older adults?

Falls can happen for many reasons – problems with vision, health conditions or medications that make one dizzy or unstable, tripping over clutter or rugs, missteps on stairs, not being able to react and take a step or grab something to steady yourself, among others.

What practical steps can individuals take to minimize the risk of falls?

If a person is falling often, an occupational therapist can visit and suggest changes to make your home safer.

Everyone, not just older adults, should remove trip hazards and make sure stairs and rooms are well-lit to prevent tripping.

When doing tasks on step ladders, wear appropriate footwear and don't lean in ways that increase fall risk.

Stay hydrated and eat at regular intervals to avoid dizziness or problems with judgement.

Discuss your medications with a pharmacist to see if there are any that increase your risk of falls.

Chat with a health-care provider about your individual fall risk factors and how to address them.

The best way to prevent falls is to do balance and functional exercises at least two or three times a week.

Can you recommend simple exercises or activities that older adults can incorporate into their daily routines to improve balance and reduce the risk of falls?

I can't recommend specific exercises that are suitable for everyone because everyone's balance and abilities are unique, and the key is to find exercises that are not too hard or too easy. If the exercises feel too easy, they probably aren't doing enough to help you improve your balance.. If they are too hard, you could increase your risk of falls. When picking balance exercises, go for something that requires you to concentrate hard to keep your

balance, but doesn't make you feel like you're about to fall over or out of control.

How can people prevent getting osteoporosis?

Some people will develop osteoporosis or experience fractures even if they eat well and exercise. However, you can reduce your fracture risk by addressing factors within your control, such as doing regular balance exercises, strength training and impact exercise, getting enough calories and protein to maintain muscle and bone, consuming the recommended daily amount of calcium and vitamin D, minimizing alcohol consumption, avoiding smoking, and addressing other risk factors in consultation with a health-care provider.

What are the signs and symptoms of osteoporosis?

There are no symptoms of osteoporosis. To identify osteoporosis, a health-care provider will order a bone mineral density test if a person has risk factors. Even then, they will consider your age, your bone mineral density, and other risk factors together to determine your risk of fracture in the future. Sometimes, people can have lower than average bone mineral density, but their fracture risk is not very high. Therefore, it is important to discuss bone mineral density results with a health-care provider.

For people living with osteoporosis, what exercises are safe for them?

There is no safe versus unsafe exercise for all people with osteoporosis. We want to encourage exercise rather than use language that promotes fear and physical activity avoidance. Each individual has a different ability and fracture risk. Most people can do any exercises that they wish if they start at a level appropriate for their ability and fracture risk, and progress the intensity of exercise slowly over time. For people at high risk of fracture, it is ideal to consult with an exercise professional with specific training on exercise for osteoporosis to help them. It may be a good idea to take precautions to reduce fall risk during physical activity or protect your spine by avoiding activities that increase the loads on the spine far beyond your typical activity. For example, avoiding lifting heavy furniture, or twisting or bending forward or to the side rapidly, repetitively, all the way, or when holding something heavy.

It's Cold Out There, But Our Community is Warmer Than Ever!

As the holiday season approaches and the snow starts to fall, Woolwich Community Services (WCS) has something that will truly warm your heart. The Coldest Night of the Year is back on Saturday, February 28, 2026, and we want YOU to be part of it!

CNOY is a national, family-friendly fundraising walk that raises awareness and essential funds for charities serving people experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness. Right here in Elmira, WCS will once again host this inspiring event and it's the perfect way to give back and spread some true community cheer.

This year's CNOY theme, "Across the Country, Close to Home," reminds us that while communities

everywhere will be walking together on February 28, the impact of each step begins right here in our own

backyard. Together, we're part of something bigger; a national movement rooted in local care and compassion.

Walkers Make the Magic Happen

While we're so thankful for our generous sponsors, it's the walkers and teams who bring this event to life. Without their energy, fundraising, and dedication, we wouldn't be able to support the growing number of families who rely on our services.

Last year, over 250 walkers bundled up and hit the streets in support of WCS. This year, we're aiming even higher with more teams, more walkers, and more community impact. Whether you walk the 2 km or 5 km route, each step helps us reach our \$88,000 goal to support vital programs and services for those in need.

Sponsors Keep Us Walking Strong

Our sponsors are the backbone of CNOY. Their generosity makes this event possible. From hot meals at the finish line to the event-day experience, we couldn't do it without sponsorship. Their support ensures that every dollar raised can go directly toward helping those who need it most.

We're deeply thankful for the businesses, organizations, and individuals who continue to stand with us year after year. Their commitment reminds us that Elmira truly cares for its neighbours. If your business or group would like to join this amazing circle of support, we'd love to have you on board!

Holiday Giving, With Heart

As you're making your holiday lists and planning festive gatherings, why not have a conversation with your friends and family about giving back in a different way this year?

Instead of exchanging gifts, consider raising funds together for CNOY. You could even invite loved ones to join your walk team! What better way to start the new year than with purpose and community spirit! It's a powerful way to turn seasonal giving into long-lasting change. The money raised goes right back into local programs like the Woolwich Food Bank, Christmas Goodwill, Family Violence Prevention, and support for housing, financial needs, and more.

Volunteers Are the Real MVPs

Behind every successful walk are the incredible volunteers who make the event feel like home. From check-in to cheering, setting up rest stops to serving a warm meal at the finish line, these heroes keep everything running smoothly!

Get Involved

There's a role for everyone in CNOY:

- Start or join a team
- Walk on-site or off-site
- Raise money as a family or business
- Donate, pledge, or sponsor
- Volunteer your time or services

Event Day Details

- Date: Saturday, February 28, 2026
- Location: Woodside Church, Elmira
- Check-In: 4pm
- Walk Begins: 5pm
- Post-Walk Meal & Social: Back at Woodside Church. It's a heartwarming way to end a winter's evening!

To sign up, donate, or learn more, visit:
cnoy.org/location/Elmira

This winter, walk with us. Bring your family. Make memories. Make a difference.

And remember... it's cold out there.





Popular New Hamburg Reflexologist Mentors New Travelling Reflexologist

WRITTEN BY: ELAINE BIRCH

Reflexology is a non-invasive therapeutic treatment applied to the feet and hands using finger and thumb techniques thus relieving stress and tension and improving circulation.

“I saw the gift in her—she has it,” explains Christina Flood, owner/operator of Soles Journey Reflexology on Arnold Street.

Christina is referring to her mentee—Jody Vleeming of Nithburg.

“I kept encouraging her to take the course. Now I get treatments from Jody every month!” Christina says with excitement. “She works similar to how I do.”

The Grounded Soulstice, Jody’s business name, officially began on October 1st of this year.

“I am honoured for Christina taking me under her wing,” shares Jody.

Reflexology treatments essential for many people in our area

In the aftermath of COVID, Christina’s client roster filled. Today, she is already fully booked for all of 2026, but she has a cancellation list that you can be added too.

Many of her clients come for treatments once a month, some travelling as far as Owen Sound and Niagara Falls on a monthly basis.

“During COVID, when we had to shut down, my clients realized how much their treatments were really helping them, they realized how much they need it,” explains Christina.

Human connection, particularly human touch is vital for our well-being, which Christina witnessed while volunteering at Hospice.

Has car, will come to you

Fortunately, with Jody now certified and insured, more local people who find it challenging to leave home can receive treatments in their place of residence.

“I bring everything with me when I do in home (or at their workplace) appointments including a reclining chair to use but if they have their own comfy recliner, I can work with that as well,” says Jody.

Currently Jody is doing mainly travelling reflexology but also has other options for clients if they wish to come to her for treatment.

Jody has various days and times available for appointments to help make it more convenient for new clients.

Many benefits of reflexology

Christina often hears clients say that they were not aware of all the benefits of reflexology. Many clients state their regret and wish they had started reflexology treatments sooner.

Reflexology can help improve:

- Stress Level
- Immune system
- Sleep issues
- Sinus issues
- Back pain
- Digestion
- Arthritis pain
- Lymphatic System & Circulation

Reflexology is so much more than a foot rub. It encourages our bodies to go into a rest and repair state.

“90% of my clients fall asleep during a treatment—it brings people into their homeostasis,” says Christina.

More than a job, a passion

Christina’s passion for reflexology came from her

desire to help her beloved Uncle Rudy while he was in his final days. While massaging his feet and legs, he looked at Christina and said, "you have a gift—you need to use it."

This past September, Christina has now used her "gift" for over 10 years. It's only natural that she is supporting another "gifted" reflexologist that she trusts to help care for the many seniors that live in our community.

"I love making a difference," says Jody. "I love seeing joy in people's faces—that I am able to bring people some much needed relaxation/homeostasis time, plus all the other benefits that foot reflexology can provide them."

Jody has always had jobs where she is either helping people or teaching—this experience—along with her volunteerism in our community (New Hamburg Thrift Store, Optimist Club, Wilmot Softball) will help Jody to provide exceptional treatments.

Contacting Jody

Inquiries can be made by calling or texting:
519-616-4055

Or by email: Thegroundedsoulstice@outlook.com



Traveling Reflexologist
Jody Vleeming RRP, RRCO
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- ~ Bring the Body into Balance
- ~ Promote Healing
- ~ Boost Circulation & Lymphatic System
- ~ Improve Sleep & Digestion
- ~ Reduce Stress & Improve Mood
- ~ and Much more...

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519-662-6720

Sobeys New Hamburg
100 Mill St, New Hamburg
519-662-1374

RESTAURANTS

MeMe's Cafe
Delivery & Curbside Pickup
102 Peel St., NH | 519-662-2828

Pizza Arca
98 Peel St, NH | 519-662-2583

Schmidtsville Restaurant & Gift Shop
3685 Nafziger Rd, Wellesley
519-656-2430

SENIOR CARE FACILITIES

Tri-County Mennonite Homes (TCMH)
200 Boullee Street, New Hamburg
519-662-2718 | www.tcmhomes.com
info@tcmhomes.com

Trinity Village
2727 Kingsway Dr., Kitchener
Adult Day Program, Independent and Assisted
Living, Long Term Care
519-893-6320 | www.trinityvillage.com

COMMUNITY BUSINESS DIRECTORY

SOCIAL SERVICES

Woolwich Community Services
Information Centre, Individual Support, Food
Supports and more
519-669-5139

TRANSIT

Kiwanis Transit
Serving Wilmot, Wellesley & Woolwich
(519) 669-4533 or 1-800-461-1355

TRAVEL

Stonetown Travel Ltd.
210 Mill St. New Hamburg
226-333-9939
www.stonetowntravel.com



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- Tile
- Vinyl
- Hardwood
- Custom Window Blinds
- Kitchen Cabinets
- Bathroom Vanities



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1011 Industrial Cres. Unit #2 • 519-699-5411

If you would like to be added to our growing list of valued local businesses, please contact us at embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com so our readers can be reminded of your services and support local.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

**Emergency
(Fire/Medical/Police)**
911

**Waterloo Regional Police
Non Emergency**
519-570-9777

Crime Stoppers
1-800-222-8477

Ontario Poison Centre
1-800-268-9017

**Ontario Problem
Gambling Helpline**
1-888-230-3505

TeleHealth
1-866-797-0000
TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Waterloo Wellington LHIN
519-310-2222

Community Care Concepts
519-664-1900

**Retirement Homes
Regulatory Authority**
1-855-275-7472

Elder Abuse Response Team
519-579-4607

Interfaith Community Counselling
519-662-3092

Hospice of Waterloo Region
519-743-4114

**Alzheimer Society of
Waterloo Wellington**
519-742-1422

Senior Safety Line
1-866-299-1011

Township of Wilmot
519-634-8444

Township of Wellesley
519-699-4611

Township of Woolwich
519-699-1647

**Region of Waterloo Public
Health**
519-575-4400
**Ontario Caregiver
Organization Helpline**
1-833-416-2273

This space is generously donated by:

TOWN SQUARE PHARMACY

PHARMASAVE 100 Mill St. Unit K, New Hamburg
P: 519-662-9995 F: 519-662-9984

WHERE TO GET YOUR FREE COPY

Copies will be available around the first Wednesday of every month at the following locations:

WILMOT TOWNSHIP:

- MeMe's Café New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- Sobeys New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- HearingLife formerly Hemmerich Hearing
- Dolman Eyecare
- Morningside Retirement Community
- Stonecroft New Hamburg
- Nithview Community
- Foxboro Green
- Community Care Concepts
- Town Square Pharmacy
- Cooks Pharmacy
- New Hamburg Thrift Centre
- New Hamburg Legion
- New Hamburg Office Pro
- No Frills New Hamburg
- Baden Village Pharmacy
- Rudy Held Performance Centre
- Soles Journey New Hamburg



- Heart & Home Creations NH
- McDonalds (outside magazine stand)

WELLESLEY TOWNSHIP:

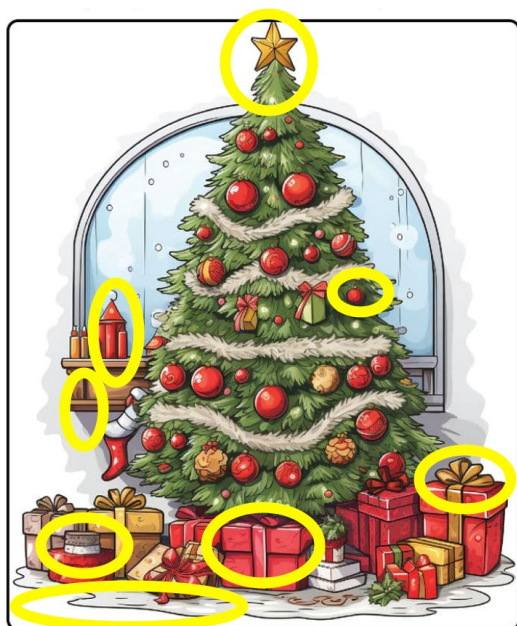
- Schmidtsville Restaurant (outside magazine stand)
- Wellesley Township Community Health Centre

- Linwood Nurse Practitioner Office
- Pond View Retirement Village
- Cooks Pharmacy Wellesley
- Pym's Village Market
- In Season Home & Garden St Clements
- Len's Mill Store – Hawkesville
- Food Town IFT St Clements (Outside Magazine Stand)

WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP:

- Community Care Concepts
- Martin's Guardian Pharmacy (outside magazine stand)
- Kiwanis Transit
- Woolwich Health Care Centre
- MCC Thrift & Gift Elmira
- Living Waters Books & Toys Elmira
- Bonnie Lou's Cafe
- Hillcrest Home Baking
- Dollarama Elmira (outside magazine stand)
- Harvest Moon St. Jacob's

Solutions



Concentration Puzzle: Rise to the occasion

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



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MLS# 40782013 X12500976
Price: \$99,999 2 bed, 1 bath



#31-165 Green Valley Dr. Kitchener

MLS# 40767961 X12397521
Price: \$467,500 3 bed, 2 bath



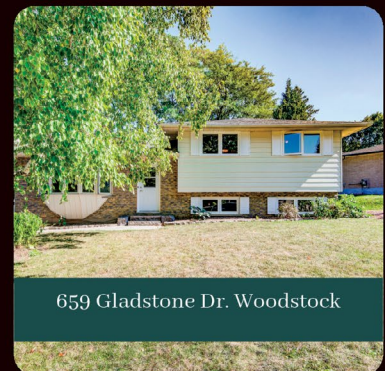
37 Decew St. W. Tavistock

MLS# 40764820 X12372033
Price: \$571,500 3 bed, 2 bath



#61-580 Beaver Creek Rd. Waterloo

MLS# 40739636 X12217186
Price: \$117,900 2 bed, 1 bath



659 Gladstone Dr. Woodstock

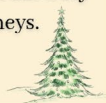
MLS# 40768667 X12400280
Price: \$619,900 3 bed, 2 bath

Wishing all my clients, family, friends, and colleagues a SAFE, JOYFUL, and MEMORABLE HOLIDAY SEASON. May you enjoy time with loved ones and find moments for REST, REFLECTION and REJUVENATION.

As I celebrate 20 years in real estate, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to my clients for your loyalty, trust, and continued support. I am truly grateful for the meaningful relationships built over the years and for the privilege of helping you navigate your real estate journeys.



Warmest holiday wishes, Alison



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