

## THIS WEEK

- 3 • *Charity*
- 4 • *Editorials*
- 13 • *Agriculture*
- 20 • *History*

# The Citizen

Huron County's most trusted independent news source



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### And... done!

Sunday was a day for celebrations all around. Of course, in Canada, we marked the unofficial start of the summer with the beautiful weather of the Victoria Day long weekend, but in Clinton there was another reason to be excited. The Clinton Raceway officially marked

the beginning of another season with a full slate of harness racing on Sunday. The season opener doubled as a fundraiser for Central Huron Secondary School and, as a result, students were on hand for all manner of fun activities, including face painting. *(John Stephenson photo)*

## Munro Festival set for Blyth, Wingham

The Alice Munro Festival of the Short Story is inspired by Alice Munro, one of the greatest storytellers of our time.

Born and raised in Wingham, Munro spent most of her life as a Huron County resident. She is the only Canadian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, which she won in 2013.

The Alice Munro Festival of the Short Story strives to nurture emerging local writers, showcase Canadian authors, and celebrate the joy of reading, writing, and telling our stories. This annual festival takes place in locations throughout Huron County and features workshops, author readings, presentations, performances, and a short story contest.

The Alice Munro Festival of the Short Story is now in its 21st year. In 2023, it will host a three-day

literary festival from June 2-4, offering workshops and onstage presentations as well as the annual short story competition, delivered by the Huron County Library, for emerging writers in both adult and youth categories. Programming for kids will be provided in partnership with the Foundation for Education and the Avon Maitland District School Board.

This year's lineup includes a selection of author readings, panels and masterclasses by the following authors:

- **Alissa York:** Internationally-acclaimed author, shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize presents her new work, *Far Cry*.

- **Anuja Varghese:** A Pushcart-nominated QWOC writer presenting her collection of short stories, *Chrysalis*.

- **Bianca Marais:** She will

present her bestselling novel, *The Witches of Moonshyne Manor*.

- **Carley Fortune:** *New York Times* and *Globe and Mail* bestselling author and award-winning journalist presents her newest novel, *Meet Me at the Lake*.

- **Corinna Chong:** The CBC Short Story Prize winner presents her newest collection of short stories, *The Whole Animal*.

- **Emily Urquhart:** A journalist with a doctorate in folklore with award-winning work presents her collection of essays, *Ordinary Wonder Tales*.

- **Farah Heron:** Critically acclaimed writer of romantic comedies presents her latest, *Jana Goes Wild*.

- **January Rogers:** a Mohawk/Tuscarora poet, artist and current writer-in-residence at the University of Western Ontario

presents readings from her latest poetry collection, *Ego of a Nation* on opening night.

- **Jennifer Robson:** an internationally-bestselling author of seven bestselling novels presents *Coronation Year*.

- **Samra Habib (they/them):** is a writer, photographer, and activist. They will present an author talk and reading opening night based on their bestselling memoir, *We Have Always Been Here*. Samra works with LGBTQ organizations internationally, raising awareness of issues that impact queer Muslims around the world.

- **S.K. Ali:** is an award-winning and *New York Times* bestselling author who will present their newest novel, *Love from Mecca to Medina*.

The Alice Munro Festival for  
Continued on page 7

## Proposed planning changes concern Caldwell

By Shawn Loughlin  
*The Citizen*

Dr. Wayne Caldwell, arguably the province's foremost expert in rural planning policy, is concerned that Premier Doug Ford's proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement could negatively impact communities like Huron County for generations, if not forever.

Alarm bells have been sounding for weeks now. Here, first, it was the Huron County Planning and Development Department, which, after consulting with Caldwell, spoke to Huron County Council and its lower-tier municipal councils about the proposal. While there are many changes being proposed in a new Provincial Policy Statement that could be released as early as this fall, one in particular has caught the eye of those in communities with a large inventory of farms. The change would allow for up to three residential lots to be created on every farm parcel, allowing, at its worst-case scenario, rural blocks to become de facto urban settlements, taking thousands of acres of farmland out of production and restricting agriculture drastically.

Earlier this week, every farm and commodity group in the province co-signed a joint statement asking the provincial government to reconsider the proposed change, citing many of the same concerns, desperate to preserve the ability of those in Ontario to farm.

Immediately upon hearing about the proposed changes, Caldwell, who has dedicated his life to meaningful and thoughtful rural planning in the province, sprang into action, doing what he could to spread the word and mobilize those who might be affected before it was too late.

The commenting period for the changes ends on June 5, so municipal councils, farm groups and rural planners have been working diligently to ensure their voices are heard and to implore the provincial government to reverse course on changes that could affect Ontario for generations to come.

In a presentation he has given to numerous county councils, Caldwell worked to put the change into perspective, demonstrating exactly what it

Continued on page 3



# Weerman to cycle cross-country for hospitals



## Easterly

Jurjen Weerman of the Lucknow area is embarking on a months-long, cross-country cycling journey from British Columbia to Newfoundland to raise money for two local hospital foundations. He begins on the west coast this weekend. *(Courtesy photo)*

**By Shawn Loughlin**  
*The Citizen*

By the time you read this, Jurjen Weerman from the Lucknow area

will be on his way to the west coast of Canada, days away from beginning his cross-country cycling trek to raise money for two area hospitals.

Weerman, who is a technical advisor with the Euro-Parts team locally, decided to take on the challenge a few months ago. As someone who was born in the

Netherlands, he says he was born on a bike and wearing football (soccer) boots and cycling was always one of his passions, which he kept up when he moved to Canada in 2001.

A few years later, there was a cross-country cycling fundraiser, but he didn't have the money to take part and make it happen. It was something that stayed with him, however, and he had always hoped to consider something like it again when the time was right.

Weerman said that when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, he was motivated to dust off his bike once again as the world was taken over by lockdowns and a lack of travel. It was then that he started to think about perhaps riding across the country again.

He'll be part of a team of three people who will be making the trip from British Columbia to Newfoundland, with a few dips into the United States along the way, in an effort to avoid busy highways as much as possible.

He says they will be staying with friends along the way, or in hotels or bed and breakfasts, even rough camping on the side of the road or in fields at times. He said the schedule is a bit loose to allow time to visit friends along the way, see some sights and build in a buffer to account for the unforeseen.

As for the cause, Weerman said that, after suffering a pair of heart attacks in 2012 - and with the deaths of both his mother and sister at young ages - he wanted to reach out to hospitals and see if his desire

to ride across the country could benefit them in some way. So, he was in contact with the Wingham and District Hospital Foundation, as well as the Children's Health Foundation based in London.

The journey is about 8,700 kilometres long and Weerman says that, if he can raise a dollar per kilometre, he would be a happy man, though anything over and above that would be fantastic.

Weerman's journey will begin in Jordan River, British Columbia this weekend and end in St. John's Newfoundland sometime this August. Again, the team members are giving themselves some time to be flexible while out on the road.

While the day's mileage will vary greatly along the way, depending on how hilly the route is, among other things, the goal is to travel between 100 and 125 kilometres per day, six days a week, Weerman said in an interview with *The Citizen*.

In Wingham, any funds donated to Weerman will be used to upgrade the chemical analyzer for the hospital's lab.

Donation pages have been set up for him on both hospital foundations' websites and he will be tracking his progress on YouTube by searching "jurjencyclingadventures" or on Strava, which will track his cycling progress. He plans to update these channels frequently to take supporters along for the ride as he makes his way from one coast of the country to another.

To get in touch with Weerman, e-mail him at [jurjen.c.a@gmail.com](mailto:jurjen.c.a@gmail.com).

# Caldwell says farmland is tip of the iceberg

Continued from page 1  
could mean for the province.

He estimated that, with over 48,000 farms in Ontario (according to Statistics Canada in 2022) and approximately 3.5 parcels per farm, 510,000 acres of farmland could be taken out of production based on an average lot size of one acre, which he admits is likely a low estimate.

"The overall impact is much, much larger, with virtually all prime agricultural land exposed to many residents and related [minimum distance separation (MDS)] impacts," he said in his presentation. "Not only will this policy lead to the loss of farmland, it will impact farms in many ways (ranging from impacts on land values, to trespass, to road safety, to concerns over manure application, etc.)."

This, he said, is in addition to the 319 acres of Ontario farmland being lost every day, according to the Ontario Farmland Trust.

In an interview with *The Citizen*, Caldwell said he was shocked when he first heard what was being proposed by the provincial government. "Oh my goodness," he said in response to his first thoughts upon hearing the proposal.

As someone who has dedicated his life to rural planning, he said it felt like "a kick in the stomach" to what has been "so much work by so many people over so many years" to preserve farmland and the right to farm in rural portions of the province. He said he hoped he's wrong, but, at the moment, it feels like an "attack on farming" by the provincial government.

Furthermore, he said, the protection of farmland has been a non-partisan issue for generations. Governments of all stripes have

upheld work done in the 1970s to protect farmland, which is all based on a pilot study from Huron County that led to much of today's rural planning policies and the foundation of protecting farmland. And, while there have been ill-fated proposals or minor erosions of rules here or there, he said he's never seen something this final proposed in his time working in the field.

According to his estimations, Caldwell thinks Huron County could be the biggest loser if this proposal is passed. In tracking 12 of the most agricultural regions in the province, Huron ranked first in his projection of potential new

residential lots created on agricultural lands with 24,900. Middlesex County was second with 21,000, followed by Essex County at 18,700, Oxford County at 17,000 and down the list it goes.

And while farmland preservation is the headline, Caldwell says there are a number of secondary implications that it's unlikely anyone has considered, like how the changes would affect aggregate extraction, water availability and safety, natural heritage, small towns and villages that will miss out on development, school boards, servicing and more. He said, for example, on a rural road with a

rapidly-increasing base of homes, there could be a push to lower speed limits in rural areas.

In addition to the effect the changes would have on minimum distance separation, it could also lead to an increase in conflict between those in residential-style homes and their farming neighbours.

There are many assumptions being made about how bad the changes could be for the area, but, in reality, Caldwell says it's hard to

know just how bad it can get.

Furthermore, he said there are ways to increase housing stock in places like Huron County without digging into farmland.

Years ago, Caldwell said he drove through Ohio near Columbus, where similar changes had been made and he saw, firsthand, the fragmenting of the rural landscape, and it hadn't served that area well and now he doesn't want to see the same thing happen to his home of Huron County.

## He loves us too well to promise that!

(J.C. Ryle)

"Man is born to *trouble* as surely as sparks fly upward." Job 5:7

"Here on earth you will have many *trials* and *sorrows*." John 16:33

If we are true Christians, we must not expect everything smooth in our journey to Heaven. We must count it no strange thing, if we have to endure sicknesses, losses, bereavements, and disappointments, just like other men. Free pardon and full forgiveness, *grace* along the way, and *glory* at the end—all this our Saviour has promised to give. But He has never promised that we shall have no affliction. **He loves us too well to promise that!**

By affliction He teaches us many precious lessons which without it we would never learn.

By affliction He...


shows us our emptiness and weakness,  
draws us to the throne of grace,  
purifies our affections,  
weans us from the world,  
and makes us long for Heaven.

In the resurrection morning, we shall all say, "*It is good for me that I was afflicted.*" We shall thank God for every *storm*.

"You do not understand now what I am doing—but you will understand later on!" John 13:7

A Grace Gem

Submitted by: Immanuel United Reformed Church,  
Listowel, ON 519-492-1359




## Blyth Annual Used Book Sale

**Trinity Anglican Church**  
166 Dinsley St., Blyth  
**June 2 & 3**

**Friday, June 2 ~ 4 pm to 8 pm (no early bird sales)**  
**Saturday, June 3 ~ 9 am to 6 pm**

**Book Intake**  
**May 31 & June 1**  
**from 9 am to 5 pm**  
Donate your clean, gently used  
books and help us  
preserve the past.

*We regret that we cannot  
accept text books,  
encyclopedias, magazines  
or anything stained, dirty  
or torn. Please help us  
save the expense of  
dumping them!*



**Fill a Box  
with Books  
for \$10**

**Join us for our famous  
box sale  
on used books  
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For info contact [deb@northhuron.on.ca](mailto:deb@northhuron.on.ca)