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New fitness equipment

The township will spend \$15,000 to replace indoor bikes and an elliptical machine in the fitness centre at the Woolwich Memorial Centre. Council last week approved the expenditure, drawing on equipment reserve to fund the updates.

Young golfers return

The Maple Leaf Junior Golf Tour opened a new season last weekend with the MJT VOVEX Golf Series Spring Invitational, held at the private Galt Country Club in Cambridge. Among the young golfers those taking part were Conestogo's AJ Shaw-McMahon, who shot a 74 and 82 to finish 16th in the junior boys division.

A little sportsmanship, please

Admit that on the face of it, turkey hunting seems ridiculous.

We get up long before first light, put on expensive clothes designed to make us look like shrubbery, drive to a desolate location, and walk in the pitch black until we find the perfect spot to set up a rubber turkey or two. Then we sit on the damp ground and find a place to hide before commencing to do our best vocal imitation of a hen turkey that is in desperate need of some loving.

If all goes well, this will lead to a conversation with a male turkey. If all goes wrong, it leads to an unhealthy emotional attachment that can last for several seasons.

Either way, we have no idea what we are saying to the birds. Yet, on occasion, our avian babbling will be sufficient to lure in a male bird to gun range. But, before we can shoot that bird, we must confirm that its beard is visible. Oh, we can also shoot hens, provided they have a visible beard too, which though rare, is not unheard of.



STEVE GALEA
Not-So-Great Outdoorsman

This leads me to believe a) that our turkey hunting regulations were written by men who really resented the fact that they could not grow a beard and b) we need to invest more taxpayer dollars into mental health and wellness.

Having said all that, I truly enjoy turkey hunting. But there are times when I think the birds forget about the expectation to be sporting.

A prime example occurred yesterday when we were leaving the field after a partially successful turkey hunt. I call it partially successful because we got to watch two hens and other wildlife, but primarily because we did not get soaked.

I could have lived with that hunt and, in fact, been quite satisfied. After all, in turkey hunting, you can't win them all.

But then, on the way home, I saw a big gobbler
→ GALEA 12



Prospective Sugar Kings got a chance to show their stuff at last weekend's camp, held at the WMC.

Bill Atwood

Kings hold prospects camp, now head into summer break

Steve Kannon
Observer Staff

THE BANQUET WAS HELD, THE awards given out and the exit interviews conducted, but the coaches and front-office staff of the Elmira Sugar Kings had one more thing to do before wrapping up the season and enjoying

the summer: the prospects camp.

That box was checked last weekend, as the team welcomed some 60 young players to the WMC to get a look at those hoping to earn a roster spot next season.

"It was good. Lots of good young talent out there – it just seemed to

get better and better," said head coach Corey Prang of the hopefuls who took to the ice over the weekend, noting there was a good contingent of U16 and U18 players, most born in 2007 or 2008.

"We had a good handle on who was coming into camp. We had a lot of guys that were out with us last

year as a team, but there was a bunch of guys that it was kind of our first look. Well, for me anyway – our scouts did a lot of good, hard work all year and scoured the U18 and U16 levels, so they had a good handle on it, but it was nice for me to see it firsthand."
→ KINGS 12

Woolwich U15 hockey team caps season with Triple Crown win

Julian Gavaghan
Observer Staff

THE WOOLWICH WILDCATS U15A TEAM has won the Triple Crown of three major titles for the first time in its history – and the proud coach credits the players' character for their success.

The boys "battled their butts off" to win the prestigious International SilverStick, Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) and Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) championships in a single season, said former Elmira Sugar Kings forward Jeremy Goodwin.



An International SilverStick win was one of the U15 Wildcats' many accomplishments this year. Submitted

Their most recent 3-0 victory over Woodstock Jr. Navy Vets in the OHF final in Orillia – with goals from Evan Hall, Jordan Martin and Austin Dietrich – capped their Triple Crown success.

Despite the convincing scoreline, Goodwin said getting their hands on the

trophy was not easy, especially as captain Mason Gear and assistant Reese Martin had both broken their wrists.

Additionally, defenceman Jaxon McGuire had cut his foot and also couldn't play against the same tough opponent the
→ TRIPLE CROWN 12

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GALEA: Getting the bird, either way

→ FROM 11

standing on a rock within arm's reach of the road, shaking off the rain as I drove by – and it occurred to me that he was not exactly being a good sport by flaunting his victory in my face. And, further down the road, I saw two more big birds in other fields doing the same. I hesitate to call this a trend, but it's sure starting to look that way.

In any case, I called the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to voice a complaint, but they would have none of it. Apparently, while we hunters are bound by all sorts of regulations and sporting traditions, the turkeys are not.

TRIPLE CROWN: Coach credits close-knit group for all the success

→ FROM 11

Wildcats had also faced in the final of the 62nd International SilverStick tournament in Port Huron, Michigan three months earlier.

"I think it speaks volumes about the character in our dressing room for them being able to rally and do it for the guys that couldn't play in the finals," said Goodwin.

But that didn't stop the whole team being there to help lift what many regard as the most prestigious trophy in Ontario minor hockey because it mostly involves league winners like the Wildcats.

Among the players also present were Rhys Taylor, Carson Kellough, Matt Kochut, Alex Lloyd, Max Krasovec, Cruz Balog, Colton Brito, Will Krubally and Levi Adams.

However, they didn't just win the Triple Crown this season, they won every other tournament they entered and so also scooped the Woolwich Fall Memorial Tournament, the Collingwood Regional SilverStick and Tri-County

They didn't exactly say that, but it seemed to be the gist of their response. And by response, I mean they put me on hold for 45 minutes.

I think I can speak for many turkey hunters when I say this is just not right. Having said that, I will also acknowledge that many turkey hunters I discussed this with insisted it was me who was not right.

That may be so. But I wouldn't have minded if those gobblers were standing by the side of the road giving a respectful salute or nod, as decent competitors do.

But this was not the case. Between you and me, the gesture seemed more like the bird.

KINGS: With prospects camp over, some summer downtime is now in order

→ FROM 11

The season just having finished, it's much too early to know just how many roster spots will be up for grabs when preparations get underway in August for 2024-25. The Kings had just three players age out of junior hockey – all late-season additions for the playoff-push – but there's no knowing for sure who'll be back.

Most years, there are players, existing and prospective, who'll be vying for spaces on other teams, perhaps in the OHL or in leagues elsewhere.

Even after the main camp gets going in mid- or late-August, there are still some question marks as teams everywhere wait for

the dust to settle, Prang notes.

"That's how it is. Not just here – that's hockey."

Still, the players at the prospect camp got a taste of what the future may hold, as well as advice for preparing for whatever's in store next season.

"We've given them feedback on what we'd like and what we think they need to work on. A lot of these guys will be going to major junior camps, obviously trying to get a place there," said Prang, noting the players were advised how to train over the summer.

"They gotta put in the work. The offseason is probably the most important time for the guys to get themselves prepared

for the upcoming season. The guys have to put in the work, hit the ground running when the season starts in order to have success," he added. "Gone are the days when you could just hang up the skates and grab a baseball bat, or play lacrosse or soccer, then pick it back up in August. It's all year now."

For management, however, there will be some downtime between last weekend's camp and the late-summer resumption of on-ice activity.

"That was kind of the closer to the season," he said of the prospects camp. "We'll take a couple of months off for everybody to recharge the

batteries.

After that, work will begin in earnest to improve on a season that saw the Kings finish with a record of 32-16-0-2, their 66 points the same as second-place Stratford (31-15-4) and fourth-place Waterloo (29-13-4-4). The Junior B squad had led the Midwestern Conference for much year, but a late-season surge by some of their rivals saw the Kings start the playoffs as the third seed.

The Kings defeated the Cambridge Redhawks in five games in the opening round of the playoffs before falling to the Stratford Warriors in a five-game second-round series that ended March 29.

it up and started rallying around his name and he was around all weekend in the dressing room.

"He was still being a vocal leader, he was still there to pick us up when we had our down moments throughout the weekend. He's a guy that is all heart."

With Gear being off the ice, "the boys had to go out there and lead by example without him," added the coach.

Having two very strong goaltenders he could frequently rotate in Cohen Patterson and Mason Maurice was also a tremendous asset.

Yet, despite the contribution of individuals, Goodwin wanted to stress what really gave this particular group of Wildcats an edge was truly being a team.

"For the most part, these kids have been playing hockey together since they were very young and I honestly think that the biggest thing is that they've been best friends their whole life and they were able to finally put it all together," he explained.

Wildcats organizers have ordered Triple Crown rings for the team and are planning a special ceremony to celebrate the boys' achievement, although a date has not been set yet.



The Woolwich Wildcats U15A team after winning the OHF championships, the third trophy of their triple crown success, on April 21 in Orillia. Top row: Brayden Crawford (forward coach), Tyler McBay (defence coach), Rhys Taylor, Jordan Martin, Carson Kellough, Matt Kochut, Alex Lloyd, Max Krasovec, Reese Martin (assistant captain), Cruz Balog, Mason Gear (captain), Jeremy Goodwin (head coach) and Kordic Weigel (goal coach). Middle row: Austin Dietrich, Evan Hall, Jaxon McGuire, Colton Brito, Emmett Colwill (assistant captain), Will Krubally and Levi Adams. Bottom row: Cohen Patterson and Mason Maurice. **Submitted**

Championship titles.

The last time the Wildcats came close to matching a Triple Crown was during the 1989/90 season when the 1976-born age group won OMHA and OHF championships, said Brad Shantz, the organization's vice-president of coaching.

This same legendary group also won the OMHA three years in a row, with players including former NHL forward Jamie Wright.

Goodwin, who swapped his stick for a clipboard after his Sugar Kings career ended in 2020, said his boys' willingness "to dig in and do it for each other"

was their biggest strength.

But they were also aided throughout the season by plenty of skill – notably their speed and ability to keep the puck – plus a philosophy that the "best offence is a good defence", added the 24-year-old coach.

In particular, before his injury, defenceman Martin's pace on the ice time and again provided cover when the team got in trouble.

"If we had a turnover, he was always the first guy back," explained the coach.

"There are only a handful of people who can keep up to him when he's at his top speed."

He also contributed on the scoreboard, too.

Another "super strong skater" is top-scoring forward Emmett Colwill, who won the MVP award at the OHF tournament, which ran between April 19 to 21.

In addition to being a "voice in the dressing room" and leading by example, Goodwin praised the boy's "hockey IQ" as a unique strength.

"He sees the ice at a different level than a lot of players throughout the league.

"He knows how to find the back of the net. And when he doesn't score, or if he doesn't help the team

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And they're off ...

Grand River Raceway kicks off another season of harness racing on June 5. This year they will be celebrating the first races on a new 5/8-mile track. The raceway will host 48 standardbred race nights this season, including 18 OSS (Ontario Sire Stakes) events, from June through September. Racing takes place every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday night.

Titans fall in playoffs

The KW Titans' season came to an end Saturday in game four of the playoff series against the London Lightning. The Titans took the first game of the series, but then dropped the next three, culminating in the 117-112 loss. The team had finished in first place in what was the inaugural regular season of the Basketball Super League.

Road hockey tournament part of Summer Jam at EDSS

Julian Gavaghan
Observer Staff

EDSS STUDENTS ARE ORGANIZING A road hockey tournament on school grounds that anyone from Elmira and surrounding areas is welcome to take part in. The five-a-side contest is part of a Summer Jam community festival they are hosting on June 7, which will also include food trucks, a host of other games and an outdoor movie screening. The road hockey event costs \$60 per team to enter and EDSS students will be on hand to serve as goal-tenders if needed, meaning each group will need a minimum of four players to compete. There will be two competitions, a harder, "competitive" contest and an easier, "non-competitive" one so that all abilities are

welcome, said Grade 12 student Mya Marton, who is still in the process of signing up teams. Prizes will be awarded to the winning side from each competition, which will take place between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. in a school parking lot. A basket of hockey equipment will be given to the victor in the more difficult division and free skate sharpening's on offer to individuals in the other one. She is hopeful that some teachers might be among the competitors. With informal games of street hockey becoming less common across Canada – even being banned once in Toronto – EDSS students thought it would be nice to give lovers of the game a chance to take part in this classic Canadian pastime.
→ ROAD HOCKEY 24



Students from 12 high schools came to Elmira to swim, cycle and run, including 15-year-old Victor Waite, from EDSS, pictured centre and right.
Julian Gavaghan

Student athletes hit the streets of Elmira during this week's Tinman Triathlon

Julian Gavaghan
Observer Staff

THE STREETS OF ELMIRA WERE filled with more than 150 high school competitors in the Tinman Triathlon on Tuesday as the three-part race returned for the first time

since the pandemic. The swimming, running and cycling event, which gets its name from a winner's trophy made from tin cans, took place after a five-year absence. Among the nine categories of races, which included single and team

events, EDSS students won one, came second in another and third in two. Swimmer Charlotte Heinrichs, cyclist Lexie De Jeu and runner Isabelle Cote came first in the junior girls' relay in a combined time of one hour, 13 minutes and 58

seconds. EDSS came second in the open mixed relay event, with team members Maddy Clemmer, Jon Freeman and Levi Adams finishing in 1:07:54. Elmira students came third in the senior girls' → TINMAN 12

Little fish: where skill really counts

When it comes to fishing, I think we have pretty well exhausted the wonder and joy of catching a big fish. All you need to do is peruse social media for a while to see that everyone is doing it. As a result, it is no longer the special achievement it once was. This leaves an angler to wonder where the next great fishing frontier lies. To answer that question, I would like to direct you to my social media account and those of the fellows I fish with. If you do that, you will soon realize that you are looking at a group of



angling pioneers, proudly going where no angler has willingly gone before – which is perfecting the art of catching tiny fish. Not to brag, but if you looked at some of my social media posts, you might ask yourself why is he standing there on a boat, smiling, and holding a tiny fishing lure towards the camera? Look closely, however, and you will soon realize that I am not holding a tiny lure

at all. In fact, it is a fish. I understand that the initial reaction of the non-angler or normal angler is to laugh. But the truth is it takes skill and keen eyes to target fish that small. First of all, I think we can all concede that to get a fly or lure near a tiny fish's mouth takes much greater casting accuracy. A muskie with an eight-inch-wide maw is child's play comparatively. Next, you really need to pay attention to feel the bite. Not to brag, but a couple of my best fish were

so small that they couldn't even pull down a tiny bobber. Lastly, there is the hook set. If you are not careful with a small fish and use a bass angler hookset, you will pull them out of the water and throw them off the hook 100 or so yards behind you. We call this cast and release. The point is you really need to practice to become a truly proficient angler of micro-sized fish. To be honest, when you are as good at it as me, it can be a little embarrassing.

Take, for example, the other day at the town dock. I didn't mean to show-boat but, by the time I was finished, I had caught six sunfish and one crappie that were so small that I could have fit them in a live well made from a coffee cup. They were so diminutive that none of the other anglers even noticed I landed them in my aquarium net. Aside from bragging rights, there are all sorts of advantages of catching these small fish, not the least of which is taxidermy costs. Also, unless your

spouse is eagle-eyed, he or she will likely never notice when you hang a really good specimen in the den. The point being, this is a new angling frontier that no one has tackled before. This is going to be great for the industry too. Just think of all the new ultra-light rods and tiny lures they will be able to market. And the camera industry is going to make a bundle selling macro lenses. If this catches on, someone will probably open a small fish hall of fame. I suspect it will be the size of a garden shed...





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BSL names commissioner

The Basketball Super League (BSL) this week announced the appointment of Devin Kinsella as its new commissioner. Hailing from Sudbury, Kinsella is tasked with driving the league's growth in its second year. He comes to the role with 25 years of business expertise.

Paralympic flag bearers

Wheelchair basketball athlete Patrick Anderson from Fergus and Para swimmer Katarina Roxon (Kippens, Nfld.), two Paralympic champions with accomplished careers, will carry the flag for Canada at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games opening ceremony, the Canadian Paralympic Committee announced Tuesday.

West Montrose's Hannah Maric wins silver at fastpitch nationals

Andrea Eymann

Observer Staff

WEST MONTROSE'S HANNAH MARIC came home from Quebec earlier this month with a silver medal from the U15 Girls Fastpitch Canadian Championship.

The Waterloo Ghosts U15 Gold softball team took part in the tournament August 14-18 at diamonds in Île-Perrot and Chateauguy, Que.

It was something of a case of déjà vu for the family, as Hannah's older sister Emma last year claimed a silver medal at the same championship tournament as a member of the UTM Bandits.

"It was really exciting, like it was a good accomplishment for our team, and especially since it was about half of our girls, we were the minors of the team," said 14-year-old Hannah of the experience.

"It was our first time at nationals, so it was a good experience, and it was really exciting."

The squad played a

total of nine matches, losing only the final game against the Abbotsford Outlaws. It was a squeaker, ending 1-0, another one-run difference to follow



Waterloo's

6-5 victory over the BC team just a day earlier.

"I'm extremely proud of her and her teammates," said Karen Maric, Hannah's mom. "They worked really hard all season long. They really grew as a group and as a team, and I think a silver medal at the national level would be a huge accomplishment."



Hannah Maric, 14, won silver at the national fastpitch championship earlier this month with the Waterloo Ghosts U15 Gold softball team.

Andrea Eymann

For Hannah, working with her team means "not thinking you can do it all by yourself because, especially in the sport, you need a team."

She added: "You can't just do it by yourself; it can't just be one person who does everything. So, really, just working together."

What she enjoys about playing softball is the

people. "It's all the teamwork, they're just really helpful, really understanding, and they're caring."

Hannah mainly plays outfield, principally on the left side. "Last year, I played outfield and first a lot, and this year, it kind of more became the outfield," she explained.

"[Playing outfield], it gives you a better chance to dive. It gives you a

better chance to make good plays."

She started playing tee ball around seven or eight years old – "It's been a sport that she's become very passionate about; she works very hard at it and is very motivated to improve," said Karen.

When it comes to preparing herself before each game, she likes to listen to a variety of music

on the car ride to the tournament.

"During warm-up, I'll think about what I am going to do in the game and how I can help my team out," she said.

If she makes a mistake in a previous match, she thinks about how she can fix that.

Karen added: "She spends a lot of time watching others and doing her research and things like that to better herself at the game."

That includes practicing with her sister Emma. The two can now compare notes.

"It's really nice because we can both talk about our experiences at nationals."

"Normally, we'll play catch or we'll hit off the tee, and it's nice because since she's older, she has more experience – she gives me pointers on how to do stuff," said Hannah.

She plans to continue playing softball until the end of high school at St. David Catholic Secondary School, but is unsure if she wanted to continue it in university or college.

The ideal situation to display some manners, please and thank-you

On Saturday morning, I took a fellow from work out in my boat.

The idea was to fish together, and get to know each other, outside of a working environment. This, I hoped, would allow that person to better know who he was dealing with,



STEVE GALEA

Not-So-Great
Outdoorsman

and cause him to lower his expectations accordingly.

As much as it grieves me to say, however, the man lacked basic angling

manners.

We were not out on the water for more than two minutes when he caught the biggest fish of the day.

Needless to say, as host, this put me in an extremely awkward position.

You see, I have always

made it a point that when a guest catches the biggest fish of the day, I try not to top it. Give them all the glory, I say.

As you might imagine, this is a difficult thing for a man of my angling abilities to do. Not to brag, but I happen to be one of those people who is a big fish magnet – which is why I think it is unfair to fish for steelhead. Fish practically shoulder each other out of the way to get to whatever fly I offer.

I'll admit, it required some effort to hold the giants of that lake off for even a few minutes. It took, I daresay, real angling know-how to elude the dozens of record-class fish that were so desperate to meet me. Not to brag, but I make it look easy.

Ask anyone who has ever fished with me.

Nevertheless, since my "fishing buddy" caught that big fish so early, I had

my work cut out for me. So, I focused on a strategy built around me only targeting the puniest fish in the lake for the next five hours.

Of course, my "fishing buddy" was unaware that this was an intentional effort, which is perhaps why he said hurtful and insensitive things about my angling ability and the fish I caught. The first part didn't bother me. I get insensitive comments about my angling ability all the time. But I did feel sorry for those tiny fish, many of whom I've formed personal relationships with after several meetings.

By about the third hour of not catching a bigger fish than my "fishing buddy," I was concerned that I was about to slip up and catch a real lunker. Which should explain why I wrapped myself in fly line for the next 15 minutes or so. And why, imme-

diately after extricating myself, I then cast my fly high up in a branch which overhung prime water and swore like a sailor.

I am nothing, if not a gentleman.

My "fishing buddy," on the other hand, bereft of any semblance of angling etiquette, continued in earnest to attempt to catch an even bigger fish. Thankfully, he failed. Otherwise, I would have had to try even harder not to top him.

In the end, I guess it worked out as planned. I did not catch a fish even half the size of the big one my "fishing buddy" caught. Yet, not once did he express appreciation for my efforts not to outdo him. Like I said, no basic angling manners.

Despite all this, I believe the trip was a resounding success. Which is to say, I'm fairly certain, his expectations are now seriously lowered.

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