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Home sales, prices fall

In June, a total of 674 homes were sold vial the MLS system of the Cornerstone Association of Realtors, a decrease of 13.7% compared to the same period last year. The average sale price for all residential properties in Waterloo Region was \$790,945, down 5.8% from June 2023 and 3.3% from May. The average price of a detached home was \$900,307, down 10.3% from a year earlier.

From the archives

Elmira's Henk and Bettina Schuurmans' national milk tour ended in tragedy on Monday morning, when their John Deere 6430 was rear-ended by a semi-truck on Saskatchewan's Highway #16 West. Bettina, 55, was killed in the accident. Henk was transported to hospital with critical injuries.

From the July 12, 2018 edition of The Observer

Butter tart festival returns to Elmira for a second year

Andrea Eymann

Observer Staff

WHETHER IT'S THE LOVE OF baking butter tarts or simply eating them, fans of the Canadian treat are now counting down to July 27.

That's when the For the Love of ButterTarts Festival will take place at the Woolwich Memorial Centre in Elmira.

"I'm a huge butter tart lover" said event organizer Jackie Psutka. "I love how ooey gooey they are."

A few years ago she attended a butter tart festival in Midland, which prompted her desire to create a similar event closer to home.

She organized a butter tart festival in Kitchener in 2019, but the pandemic that hit the following year prevented that from continuing.

After the pandemic, she moved the festival to Elmira, as she knew there were "many great bakers in the area."

The 2023 iteration was a "huge success."

Psutka said her favourite part of the experience is

"seeing the community coming together... just to enjoy their time together."

While she does most of the organizing, including bringing the vendors onboard, she says her husband and sister also help run the festival. Her son, Jackson Murdock, 15, sells water at the event.

"He is like a little entrepreneur" Psutka said.

Last year, Frannie's Restaurant and Bakery, located in Breslau, won the competition; winning a trophy and bragging rights.

Psutka said the bakers take the competition "very seriously."

Given the tasty treats involved, it's no surprise that Psutka has little problem finding volunteers to judge the competition. In fact, she's already been approached by those interested in doing so next year.

Just now, she's holding a competition on Facebook to be a guest judge. Those interested can make their case for why they think they would make a good judge.

→ BUTTERTARTS 6



Scott Buchan of the Chicken Farmers of Ontario (left) was joined July 4 by Kitchener South – Hespeler MP Valerie Bradford and Waterloo MP Bardish Chagger (second from right) for the CFO's presentation to the Food Bank of Waterloo Region, represented by Nicole Marinelli, food procurement manager, and director of operations Brad Gutscher.

Steve Kannon

Chicken farmers provide food bank with fresh source of protein

Steve Kannon

Observer Staff

PERHAPS NOT A CHICKEN IN every pot, but certainly enough for 14,000 meals for those in need. The Chicken Farmers of Ontario (CFO) will provide 1,600 kilograms of product this year to the Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

Across the province, CFO members will donate enough locally-grown chicken to provide more than a million meals. About 165 of the organization's 1,300 members can be found in Waterloo Region and Perth County, the area represented by board director Scott Buchan, who farms near Wellesley village.

"Chicken farmers are active members of their communities, and we will continue to step up to tackle hunger in our own communities with the chicken we grow to ensure that all Ontarians have access to safe, high-quality protein like chicken," he said at a July 4 presentation at the food bank's Kitchener headquarters.

Earlier that day, he was at the Cambridge Food Bank to announce the CFO Cares: Farmers to Food Banks program would be providing that organization with 440kgs of chicken, enough for 4,000 meals. The program also directly supports the food banks in Woolwich and Wilmot townships.

→ CHICKEN 4

Scouting groups feel pinch of decreasing volunteer numbers

Julian Gavaghan

Observer Staff

KNOWN TO MEMBERS AS WISE Owl, Kris McGee has volunteered with the Guides as a leader for 36 years and has been involved with the movement far longer.

"I always say to people

that, aside from my mother, Girl Guides is the most impactful thing that has ever happened to me," she said.

"My screensaver on my phone is a picture of me becoming a Brownie when I was 6 years old. It's just a reminder that every day the doors are

wide open."

Yet, while she has relished almost every day of leading since the age of 18, her St. Jacobs unit is increasingly struggling to recruit enough fellow volunteers.

As a result, the organization has a growing waitlist of local girls wanting

to join.

It is a situation that has become increasingly common across Canada.

Surging demand for outdoor youth activities since the pandemic and fewer adults willing to help out has created a pinch point across both the Guiding and related

Scouting movements.

Philippe Bertrand, the 1st Elmira Group commissioner, said the difficulty meant that some of his volunteers were doing "double duty," helping out in multiple sections, which includes Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Ventures, noting

they had only just been able to avoid waitlists for members.

"That's risky, because the volunteer could burn out because they're doing too much," he said.

He noted that the pandemic had exacerbated the shortage.

→ SCOUTS 10

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