

# points of view

## The best kind of skunk

**M**Y FRIEND TOM is one of those two per centers you sometimes read about. You know, the ones who frequently get into awkward situations with skunks.

Just about three times a year, he tells me that he has had another encounter with a skunk. And from what I have gathered from his wife and kids, the skunk only has the advantage during the first encounter. After that, both Tom and the skunk pretty much smell the same.

Oddly enough, Tom wears his skunk encounters as a badge of honour – and not just as a cologne.

So when we were chatting on the phone this morning, I should not have been so surprised when he said, “Hey, there’s a skunk walking beside my car!”

I replied with the standard advice, “Drive faster.”

But it turned out he wasn’t driving at all. Instead, he was parked at a waste transfer station and the skunk was, apparently, a very curious resident there.

Before continuing, I should mention that Tom doesn’t just

park at waste transfer stations for the ambiance. No, he usually is at places like this to scare off gulls with a bird of prey. Tom is a life-long falconer and somehow has convinced people to pay him to do what he loves – which, given his track record is, presumably, to have run-ins with skunks.

Every now and then, however, things get a little more complicated.

Take for example, this morning’s skunk.

It was, according to Tom, a little different as skunks go. Its front leg was broken; I’d like to think in



steve  
galea

Loon Tales

a skiing accident. This is only important to the story because the skunk was not exactly a fast mover.

And maybe that’s why it took so much interest in Tom’s truck.

For an entire five minutes while we were on the phone, the skunk simply circled around the vehicle smelling the tires as it went. Meanwhile Tom’s hawk was going nuts hoping to get a crack at the skunk – for the record, something I was very much in support of.

Unfortunately, Tom could not be swayed.

Listening to the encounter play out over the phone was high drama and better than any podcast I have recently heard.

Beneath his truck was basically a ticking biological time bomb, otherwise known as a three legged skunk.

Presumably, because of its predicament, it had a hairpin trigger too.

“What are you going to do?” I asked.

“I’ll just sit here quietly hoping it will move on without spraying my vehicle,” he said.

It turned out that’s exactly what happened, despite the fact that I told Tom I was really bored from social isolation and double-dared him to hit the horn.

He did not. But the encounter reminded me of my favourite type of skunk – the one that is far away. Frankly, there is no better species of skunk than this.

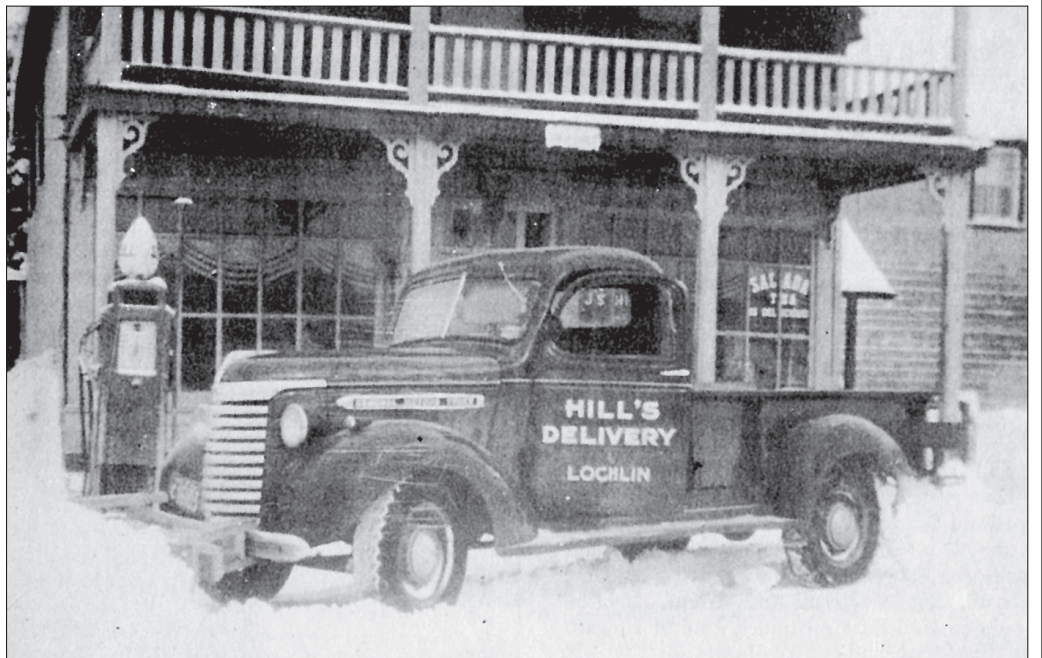
That’s because, for those who do not know, there are three stages to human-skunk interactions.

The first stage is the encounter. This is when both the skunk and the human first lay eyes on each other. No harm is done. No pungent odours are released.

The second stage is what we enthusiasts call an incident. This is when pungent odours are deployed into the air – in the vast majority of cases solely from the skunk.

The third stage is what is known as the separation phase. It describes how the victim and their spouse sleep over the next week or two.

This morning, Tom won the encounter. As for the skunk, it never had a leg to stand on.



## pic of the past

**D**uring the 1930s and ‘40s the Lochlin general store was owned and operated by Harold Hill. The truck driven by Archie Brown was used to deliver groceries to customers in the surrounding area, and also served as a snow plow.

## letters to the editor

# LTC fixes long time coming

To the Editor,

I thought your editorial “Investing in LTC workers” was entirely thoughtful and right on point.

Before I retired I was a national representative for 27 years for the Canadian Auto Workers and then Unifor. Most of my job was negotiating contracts and some of my responsibility was negotiating contracts for employees working in nursing homes, retirement homes and hospitals. I have been retired for 14 years now but nothing has changed.

The government and other bodies are claiming that they didn’t know that long-term care workplaces were broken. This is not true! When I retired we still could not break through the cycle of part-time workers working three jobs to make a living because the employers would not pay a living wage and benefits. Furthermore, privately owned nursing homes have been understaffed for years. I dealt with situations such as one staff person on at night for 72 residents!

The cycle of poverty and shame is not new and we tried to change this knowing that the people we were representing were completely dedicated to the people they were looking after. I have watched for the past weeks so many politicians saying they didn’t know what was happening in long-term care and PSWs that provide in-home services. Politicians and employers have had the opportunity to change this and no one would step up to the plate.

One has to wonder if this would be the same if the majority of the staff were men. I can only hope that now that the whole world knows the way these workers are treated something will be done to make sure the workers are properly compensated and allowed to work safely with proper protective equipment.

No group of workers is more dedicated to their patients than those on the front line of this pandemic and they deserve better.

Marilynne Lesperance  
Minden

# Homage to hairdressers

To the Editor,

In these uncertain times, with daily reports most dire and upsetting, it is important to try and maintain a sense of balance. The accompanying “song” was my attempt to add a bit of levity to a condition which affects everyone. Sung to the tune of “Do your ears hang low?” – an old camp song. Lyrics by Cheryl Cohoon.

*A Homage to Barbers and Hairdressers*

Does your hair hang low,  
Is it flying to and fro?  
Can you style it in a bun?  
Can you tie it in a bow?  
Can you toss it over your shoulder?  
Does white hair make you look older?  
Does your hair...hang...low?  
Are your nose-hairs getting longer?  
Are your eyebrows getting stronger?  
Is it sprouting from your ears  
And impacting how you hear?  
Are the whiskers on your face

Being braided into lace?  
Is your hair...too...long?  
Has your styling gone askew,  
And you’re wondering what to do?  
Dare you try your own “self-trim”?  
Results are likely to be grim!  
Are you longing to be “tinted,”  
Pampered, gelled, blown-dry and coiffed?  
Has your style...gone...“off”?  
When you look into the mirror  
Are you startled with a fright?  
Confronted with this image, think,  
“My God! I look a sight!”  
Take some comfort now, in knowing  
In this boat you’re not alone,  
And be grateful for this admonition,  
“Just...stay...home!”

With thanks to all our front line workers, who keep us healthy – body, mind and spirit.

Cheryl Cohoon  
Haliburton





# LOCAL EATS

Support local. Our local eateries are still ready to feed you and your families.



Name	Town	Phone	Website	Take Out	Deliver	Special Hours	Online Order
Elmira Tandoori Grill	Elmira	519-210-3333	elmiratandoorigrill.com	■		Call Ahead	
Never Enough Thyme	Elmira	519-669-0374	neverenoughthyme.ca	■	To Porch	Call Ahead	
Dyer Sweets	Elmira	519-841-9932	dyersweets.com		■	9am-5pm	■
Kitchen Kuttings Cafe	Elmira	519-578-6400	kitchenkuttings.com eweber@kitchenkutting.com	■	■		email order
Central Tavern	Elmria	519-669-9028	thecentraltavern.business.site	■		Call Ahead	
Tien Lee Restaurant	Elmira	519-669-2820	tienlee.com	■		Reg. Hours	
Chef Duff at RiverSong	Hawkesville	519-500-1715	chefduff.ca	■		Call Ahead	
The 86	Wallenstein	519-901-2105	the86.ca	■		Reg. Hours	■
Elmira Donuts & Deli	Elmira	519-669-5353		■		6am-4pm	
Little Gyros Greek Grill	Breslau	519-648-4976	www.littlegyrosgreek.ca	■	■	Call Ahead	■
Pita Pit	Elmira	519-669-3333	www.pitapit.ca	■		Reg. Hours	■
Harvey's I Swiss Chalet	Elmira	519-669-4640	www.swisschalet.ca	■		Reg. Hours	■
Twice The Deal Pizza	Elmira	519-669-4777	twicethedealpizza.com/	■	■	Reg. Hours	■
Palm Pizza	Elmira	519-669-5200		■	■	Reg. Hours	
The Grill on the Green	Elmira	519-669-1652	thegrillrestaurant@gmail.com	■		Reg. Hours	■
Bonnie Lou's Cafe	Floradale	519-669-2142		■		Call Ahead	

Are you a restaurant in Woolwich or Wellesley Township? Are you open during COVID-19 restrictions? Not on this list? Want to be on the list? Visit [ads.observerextra.com/local-eats](https://ads.observerextra.com/local-eats) and fill out the form. Free-of-charge



# SHOP LOCAL

Support local. Our small businesses need your support now, more than ever.



Name	Town	Phone	Website	Deliver	Special Hours	Online Order
Foot Foundation	Elmira	519-669-3030	footfoundation.ca		Call Ahead	
BH Business Consulting	Elmira	519-500-9449		Pickup	Call Ahead	
Farmer's Plus	Elmira	519-669-5475	farmersplus.ca	■	9am-5pm	■
Brian's Photo	Elmira	519-210-0608	briansfotosource.ca	Curbside	Reg. Hours	■
Home Hardware	Elmria	519-669-5537	homehardware.ca	■	Reduced	■
Creature Comfort Pet Empor.	St. Jacobs	519-664-3366	creaturecomfort.ca	■	Reg. Hours	
Green Valley Health & Herbs	Elmira	519-669-1480	greenvalleyhealth.ca	■	Call Ahead	
Ear and Hearing Clinic	Elmira	519-669-4425	earandhearingclinic.com		Call Ahead	■
Magnolia's of St. Jacobs	St. Jacobs	519-648-3464	Insta & FB @magnoliasofstjacobs	Curbside	Call Ahead	■
Quilter's Nine Patch	Elmira		quiltersninepatch@gmail.com	Curbside	Email order	
Pet Valu	Elmira	519-669-1350	petvalu.com/location/2334	Curbside	Reg. Hours	
The Crack Specialists	St. Jacobs	519-746-6611	thecrackspecialists.com		Call Ahead	
Funk Music Lessons	Elmira		funkmusic.ca	Online music lessons, piano, guitar & more		
Elmira Home Comfort	Elmira	519-669-4600	elmirahomecomfort.com	■	Call Ahead	
Bauman Printing	Elmira	519-669-2540	jimbelt@rogers.com	■	Reg. Hours	
Village Pet Food Shoppe	Elmira	519-6694374	villagepetfoodshoppe.ca	■	Call Ahead	
Sandelli Massage Therapy	Elmira	519-669-3494	kristasandellimassagetherapy.com	Discounted gift certs by email		
St. Clements Heart & Home	St. Clements	519-699-5411	LetUsFloorYou.ca		Call Ahead	
Woolwich Total Health Pharmacy	Elmira	519-669-8282	thpharmacy.com	■	Reg. Hours	
Reality Bytes	Elmira	519-669-5551	realitybytescomputers.com	■	Reg. Hours	
Schelters	Elmira	519-669-2201	schelters.ca	■	Reg. Hours	■

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# Slingshots play a vital role in our development

Most people do not give slingshots much credit for anything these days, but frankly, they are the only reason most little boys know the letter Y.

Despite this, adults tend to disregard the slingshot as the educational tool it was meant to be. But, believe me, they are exactly that. A slingshot teaches kids and adults so many things. The most important of these is keeping your thumb out of the way.

Keeping your thumb out of the way is one of those critical life skills that is truly underappreciated until you learn how to use a hammer. Then, you're happy you have it.

So, I'll repeat this for those who have lived a sheltered life and have never shot a slingshot – when you shoot one, keep your thumb out of the way. To be clear, I'm referring to the thumb on your shooting hand. It needs to be tucked out of the line of fire when you draw the band and pouch back, and also when you release them. If you don't, several things will immediately happen. And none of them are particularly good.

First, you will regret you ever owned a slingshot. Then, you will reveal your position to anyone within five kilometres. It will also quickly occur to you that you are never again going to be truly proficient at hitchhiking again. And, after the event, you will also never experience the joy that comes from giving someone two thumbs up. Plus, you will be horrible at texting. Worst of all, photos of you crying and sucking your thumb will probably go viral.

As in everything, there is also a positive side to all this too. For instance, there is no better way to create a new and exciting string of curse words – which has become something of a lost art since naval conscription ended. Also, after hitting



your thumb just once, you will never take them for granted again.

The best thing, however, is that the outdoorsman possessing this tidbit of knowledge about slingshots can use it to great advantage and in life-threatening situations.

Here's a fine example. Let's say a bear visits your campsite in the middle of the night and you have a slingshot. What can you do with a mere slingshot against a marauding bear, you ask?

Well, if you keep your wits about you, plenty.

First, you pick up your slingshot and you load it with a ball bearing. Then you draw back. And here's the important part. Just before you release, stick your thumb up in the line of fire.

Immediately after that, the bear will run off because they hate startling, loud noises and don't like to be cursed at in new and creative ways either. Also, you will simultaneously alert a rescue party since anyone within five kilometres of your campsite will come over to tell you to shut up.

On the off chance the bear doesn't leave, however, being mauled suddenly won't feel so bad. So it's a win-win.

I write about slingshots more frequently than most because I truly believe this primitive hunting tool has shaped our evolution. It's just a theory but I happen to believe that, if not for the slingshot, we would have probably evolved with four or more opposable thumbs.

Turns out we just have two, which I think is better. Can I get a thumbs up?



# LOCAL SPORT

■ JUNIOR B HOCKEY

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Online: [ads.observerxtra.com/scores](https://ads.observerxtra.com/scores)

Deadline: **Tuesdays by 4pm**

## KSA DONATION

The Kitchener Rangers Community Fund last week presented a \$5,000 donation to the Kitchener Sports Association. The funds are to support KSA programs that benefit local organizations and minor athletes for the upcoming 2020-21 year.

## NEW PLAYGROUNDS

Two playgrounds in Woolwich – Heidelberg and Floradale – will be overhauled this year. Meeting this week, councillors awarded a \$128,000 contract to Open Space Solutions Inc. To remove the old equipment and replace it with new structures.

# Sugar Kings sign St. Clements' Jaxson Murray

*While there's still no timeline for play to resume, the team is busy making preparations for the season, whatever it looks like*

BY DAMON MACLEAN  
dmaclean@woolwichobserver.com

St. Clements native Jaxson Murray is set to join the Sugar Kings for the upcoming season, whenever it is Junior B hockey action resumes.

The 17-year-old forward is excited to join the team and hopes to bring his own edge to the Woolwich Memorial Centre. His signing was welcomed by head coach Rob Collins.

"Jaxson is committed to playing for us next season, so we're really excited about that," said Collins. "[Murray] has the right attitude [and] we think he's got a good work ethic."

The work ethic is prevalent with the amount of time Murray has spent working out during the pandemic. At the onset of the lockdown, Murray says he played a lot of video games and then simply grew tired of them and has been in a productive mood ever since.

Though he has yet to join the team, Murray already has a connection with Collins. The coach is a good friend of Murray's uncle, who was one of his big influences in the beginning to play.

"My dad and my uncle are really big hockey players, so they just inspired me [to play]." At the age of three, Murray began to skate and slowly progressed through his hockey career. Col-



Jaxson Murray has been busy training this summer, hopeful that a hockey season will emerge from the lockdown. [DAMON MACLEAN]

lins has known Murray's family for more than 25 years, so the chemistry should exist when the team hits the ice in the coming months. Murray was an affiliated player with the Kings last year during his time playing for the Waterloo Wolves triple-A club, where he posted 18 goals and 23 assists playing on the left wing. Ten of the goals came on the power play. He said he aims to bring the same level of play to the Kings. "I can bring great offense. Good offense and score on a 200-foot player." While looking forward to playing for the Kings when the season begins, he's also got an eye on a future hockey career. Murray was drafted by the Sarnia Sting in the 14th round (268th) in the 2019 OHL priority selection. Murray remains hopeful that a season will run despite concerns surrounding COVID-19 and the possible changes to the hockey world. "I'm sure there's going to be a season, but I'm just not sure when [that] might be."

## The natural evolution of the camper

The other day I ran into a fellow who was sitting on a park bench beside a recreational vehicle that was roughly the size of my first house. This was parked in a municipal parking lot in the centre of town and running on a generator and assorted power outlets.

When I passed by, he told me that he and his wife love to "camp."

A lot of people would have laughed at that statement, since the nearest "wilderness" was a manicured lawn 15 feet away. But I'm not one of those people. I am old enough to recognize a highly evolved camper when I see one.

The camping process, as most campers know,

is not so much about the destination as the journey. That's because a camping destination is loosely defined as a place where raccoons and mosquitoes gather and where it rains from the moment you arrive to the moment you leave. The journey, on the other hand, is defined as a happy event on the way there and a happier event on the way back.

The fact that the journey either way is such a happy event is why people buy RVs.

But I am getting ahead of myself.

The average camper starts with far more youth and romanticism as well as a body that doesn't ache in damp weather.

That's why they begin with the simple thought: "Why have a tent when you can sleep under the stars?"

It's actually very cute.

But, after their first outing, they discover the answer – mosquitoes and rain.

Like all evolutionary processes, those who do not adapt, do not survive to the next phase in evolution, which is the pup tent.

Pup tent campers quickly learn the cardinal rule of tent camping, that being, if you want to find a sharp rock, place your sleeping bag on the ground and get in it.

This is such an unfailing rule that if I were ever



starting a company that sells sharp rocks, I would hire a bunch of campers to find them.

This realization eventually leads them to buying expensive inflatable sleeping bag pads, whose sole purpose is to make sharp, jutting rocks feel duller.

The evolution continues from there.

Somewhere along the way, the pup tent camper discovers that "roughing

it" would be much better if they had a "few" items. These include, portable camp stove, headlamps, better sleeping bags, a nicer waterproof and windproof tent, a water filtration system, a portable shower, a solar powered cooler, titanium mess kits and cutlery, camp chairs, camp table, radio, generator, big screen TV, their own personal satellite and several manservants.

Of course, these amenities are not inexpensive, so campers purchase them slowly over time as their view of camping evolves. Eventually, they reach the tent trailer and camper trailer stage.

Then something quite miraculous happens. It

is a metamorphosis of sorts, much like that of a caterpillar turning into a monarch butterfly. The only difference being, they don't have to consume milkweed. By the time these campers have reached middle-age or older, they understand two things: first, they have a lot on camping gear and, second, camping would be so much better if they could only sleep in a bed that is close to a kitchen and a big screen TV.

So, they have a garage sale and sell all their camping gear and use that money to buy a recreational vehicle.

And then they become the happiest campers that I know.