



Kiwanis Club of Brantford Newsletter 31-July-2025

1 message

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A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER from and about THE KIWANIS CLUB OF BRANTFORD

Meeting at the Best Western Brantford Hotel & Conference Centre:
Every Thursday at 12:00 noon

Current Membership – 42



E.C. & C. District

Governor

Pamela Rodney White
KC of Constant Spring

Governor Elect

Cynthina Blackman
KC of Pride of Barbados

Immediate Past Governor

John Chave
KC of Barrie

Secretary/Treasurer

Jim Steele

PROGRAM FOR JULY 31, 2025

We welcome Chief Jason Saunders to talk about the Brantford Police Service..

HEAD TABLE

President Nancy Thompson, Chief Jason Saunders, Introducer Pallo Sahota, Thanker Bob Saunders and others as invited by the House Committee.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, August 7 – Induction of New Members
Thursday, August 14 – Angelo Ciardella (tent)
Thursday, August 21 – TBD

KC of Brantford

Division Lt. Governor

Angel Vieth

KC of Kitchener-Waterloo

Club Officers

President

Nancy Thompson

Past President

Alfred Hauk

President-Elect

Maureen Henry

Treasurer

Jim Steele

Secretary

Dave Lewis

Club Directors

2 Year Term

Ross Pope

Karen Adams

Joanne Murray

1 Year Term

Randy MacKenzie

Leo Vos

Bob Wade

Thursday, August 28 – Peter Brown, Senior VP, Tax, Fidelity Investments on Tax and Retirement Planning

UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

August 9th @3:00PM: Family picnic @ Adelaide Hunter-Hoodless Homestead National Historic Site, Blue Lake Road.

September 13th: 2:00 PM Port Dover play and dinner ("Here on the flight path" Norm Foster")

KIWANIS CONVENTIONS

Eastern Canada & Caribbean District Convention – Toronto Ontario, April 30 – May 2, 2026

Kiwanis International Convention – Manila, Philippines, from June 25-27 2026

BIRTHDAYS

None

ANNIVERSARIES OF DATE JOINED

None

EDUCATIONAL SPOT

Club bylaws prevent the club from being used for any political purpose or, as a club, from actively participating in the political candidacy of any person. But this does not mean that the club cannot take an interest in public affairs. Article XIV, Section 1, of the Standard Form for Club Bylaws states, "This club shall seek, by fair discussions at its meetings and in other ways, to keep its members informed on all questions of public importance and any proposed legislation affecting the community, state, province, or nation in which this club is located." Equal time is normally given to opposing political candidates or supporters on each side of controversial issues.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Remember that the greatest reward you get for your efforts is not what you get for them, but what you become by them. Anon...

To view the highlights of last week's meeting, please click page down.

Last Week's Meeting Highlights



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Highlights of the Thursday, 24 July, 2025 Weekly Meeting

President Nancy, welcomed all members and Guest Speaker - Stephanie Sharp of Glenridge Hazelnuts - Farms



President Nancy asked Crystal Godwaldt to come to the podium for the presentation of her belated winnings from the 50/50 draw from a few weeks ago.



Graham Schram was called upon to present the 50/50 Draw with Jim Steele and Guest Speaker - Stephanie Sharp holding potential winning tickets. Unfortunately, neither were able to find the "Joker".

Bob Saunders introduced our Guest Speaker Stephanie Sharp, with a brief Bio and who was welcomed by very interested members.

Stephanie Sharp, thanked us for asking her to speak about the Glenridge Hazelnuts Orchard of St George. using a slide presentation outlining the Orchards development and growth which started in 2016.

Stephanie indicated that her parents, Bill and Martha Sharp started this venture when, Ferrero Rocher moved to Brantford and worked with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), to bring a successful hazelnut industry to Ontario.



Stephanie's parents, Bill and Martha bought the McCrae family farm that was originally settle in the 1800's. The farm's terrain was very hilly and rocky but her parents envisaged it as a good area for a hazelnut orchard. The Sharp family's entry into hazelnut production was encouraged by seeking a niche crop for a rocky piece of property featuring particularly sharp knolls.



Their interest was piqued and developed over years of research at OHA symposiums, along with the fact equipment used in their cash-cropping operation as well as farming experience in general could be sourced for hazelnuts.

In 2016, a fledgling industry featuring many test and hobby plots and some farms with 10 or 20 acres of trees, the Sharp family operation stands alone with a 70-acre orchard backed up by a full range of harvesting, drying and processing equipment.

Bill, Martha and their three children: Adam, his wife Chelsie and children Owen and Rorie; Stephanie, and James all work together on this family Farm.

We began planting hazelnuts seriously in 2018, gradually moving forward to their current acreage. Of the 70, roughly half are approaching maturity in terms of production, said Stephanie, with the remainder a combination of whips through trees approaching production age.



The orchard is split roughly between 35 acres of what James Sharp calls 'Oregon varieties', Jefferson, Yamhill, Gamma and Gene which were propagated there, and 'Rutgers University varieties', more eastern-based trees developed through a breeding program there, including Sommerset and Raritan.

Hazelnut orchards tend to have a combination of nut-production trees and pollinators - such as 'The Beast' from Rutgers, so named for how much pollen it produces. Nut size, shape and flavour are also considerations for picking varieties, as is Eastern Filbert Blight (EFB) resistance.

Compared to annuals like corn and soybeans, there is 'quite a wait' between planting trees and producing nuts. Stephanie says there was little apparent difference in the trees through their first two years, with a few clusters of nuts forming by year four. In year five, the family went out together and hand-harvested a few hundred pounds, getting to the point the year after where a mechanical harvester was required for around 8,500 pounds off 25-30 acres.

The transition from getting trees in the ground and moving them forward to age of production was 'exciting', but also required a corresponding addition in harvesting and production equipment.

Their harvester was sourced from Italy, essentially a series of rotating rubber paddles which sweep nuts into a row where they are vacuumed into a hopper. There are many different models and approaches says Stephanie, but they all seem to feature some form of vacuum. Initially, the Sharp family figured their nuts would be sold in the shell.

"We're finding that is not the case," noting Ontario and Quebec buyers want them cracked. As a result, cleaned Glenridge nuts are then dried in-shell, before being sorted for size, a crucial stage, given they must be as uniform as possible for the cracker to work effectively and efficiently. If there is too great a disparity in shell size, you'll end up with the hazelnut equivalent of 'mashed potatoes', rather than the desired full, intact nuts.

The cracker removes 98 per cent of the shells, meaning that last year, summer students employed in a variety of duties on the farms, also assisted in hand-sorting 22,000 pounds of cracked nuts. It is a vital step in ensuring Glenridge Hazelnuts are a premium product, however tedious and time-consuming.

As a result, the farm has invested in an optical sorter which will employ AI technology and infrared lights to remove any final bits of debris along with any sub-standard product.

Hazelnuts were always considered some form of 'value add' crop. Stephanie Sharp is in charge of Glenridge Hazelnuts product development, branding and marketing.

Glenridge Hazelnuts began with plain roasted nuts, adding cinnamon-sugar, espresso and maple-flavoured options, along with high-quality milk or dark Belgian chocolate-covered nuts. "It's pretty fair to say hazelnuts and chocolate go together really well," she said.

Stephanie now has all-natural hazelnut butter ready for sale by Christmas, an option she prefers to peanut, almond or cashew butters.

"I may be biased, but hazelnut butter is by far my favourite."

There are a lot of moving parts to that vision, however no form of farming is without challenge. "But in a good way," Stephanie emphasized. "It's good to have a challenge."

Her succinct summary could be applied to Ontario's hazelnut industry, a work full of promise, but also arguably in progress, requiring contributions from all players.

"We're here to share, to move the industry forward," she concluded. "We're still so small we do need each other and will need each other for the long haul."

OPTICAL SORTER

- Post cracking – the hazelnuts are sorted again to remove shells and impurities
- Previously, we were sorting all hazelnuts by hand, this would take almost a full year
- This year we were awarded a grant and purchased this optical sorter, using AI technology
- We were able to sort all hazelnuts in one week, and remove human error



VALUE ADDED/MARKETS

- Now that we have reached a point where we produce enough hazelnuts to sell, we have established a kitchen at the farm
- We've purchased a small batch roaster and candying machine
- You can find us in local farmgate markets
- Hazelnuts are high in protein, fiber, Omega-3s, and packed with vitamins and minerals, plus they are delicious!



Stephanie asked for questions from the members and was formally thanked for an interesting and informative presentation by Jim Steele.

Jim Steele past the Podium back to President Nancy

President Nancy asked If there was anything else for the good of Kiwanis, seeing none, she adjourned the meeting with the ringing of the Bell.