White City & Emerald Park DECEMBER EDITION, 2024



From shrimp Jesus to fake self-portraits, AI-generated images have become the latest form of social media spam

If you've spent time on Facebook over the past six months, you may have noticed photorealistic images that are too good to be true: children holding paintings that look like the work of professional artists, or majestic log cabin interiors that are the stuff of Airbnb dreams.

Others, such as renderings of Jesus made out of crustaceans, are just bizarre.

Like the AI image of the pope in a puffer jacket that went viral in May 2023, these AI-generated images are increasingly prevalent – and popular – on social media platforms. Even as many of them border on the surreal, they're often used to bait engagement from ordinary users.

Our team of researchers from the Stanford

Internet Observatory and Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology over investigated 100 Facebook pages that posted high volumes of Al-generated content. We published the results in March 2024 as a preprint paper, meaning the findings have not yet gone through peer review.

We explored patterns

of images, unearthed evidence of coordination between some of the pages, and tried to discern the likely goals of the posters. Page operators seemed to be posting pictures of Al-generated babies, kitchens or birthday cakes for a range of reasons. There were content

I here were content creators innocuously looking to grow their - Continued on page 2

From shrimp Jesus to fake self-portraits, AI-generated images have become the latest form of social media spam

followings with synthetic content; scammers using pages stolen from small businesses to advertise products that don't seem to exist; and spammers sharing Al-generated images of animals while referring users to websites filled with advertisements, which allow the owners to collect ad revenue without high-quality creating content.

Our findings suggest that these Al-generated images draw in users – and Facebook's recommendation algorithm may be organically promoting these posts.

Generative AI meets scams and spam Internet spammers and - Continued from page 1

scammers are nothing new. For more than two decades, they've used unsolicited bulk email to promote pyramid schemes. They've targeted senior citizens while posing as Medicare representatives or computer technicians.

On social media, profiteers have used clickbait articles to drive users to ad-laden websites. Recall the 2016 U.S. presidential election, when Macedonian teenagers shared sensational political memes on Facebook and collected advertising revenue after users visited the URLs they posted. The teens didn't care who won the election. They just wanted to make a buck.

In the early 2010s, spammers captured people's attention with ads promising that anyone could lose belly fat or learn a new language with "one weird trick."

Al-generated content has become another "weird trick."

It's visually appealing and cheap to produce, allowing scammers and spammers to generate high volumes of engaging posts. Some of the pages we observed uploaded dozens of unique images per day. In doing so, they followed Meta's own advice for page creators. Frequent posting, the company suggests, helps creators get the kind of algorithmic pickup that leads their content to appear in the "Feed," formerly known as the "News Feed."

Much of the content is still, in a sense, clickbait: Shrimp Jesus makes people pause to gawk and inspires shares purely because it is so bizarre.

Many users react by liking the post or leaving a comment. This signals to the algorithmic curators that perhaps the content should be pushed into the feeds of even more people. Some of the more established spammers we observed, likely recognizing this. improved their engagement by pivoting from posting URLs to - Continued on page 4

EMERALD RIDGE

ERES Community

Next ERESCC mtg: January 14 @ 6:30pm via Zoom

All parents are encouraged to attend as your input and ideas are welcomed and valued!

Important Dates:

- December 11- ERES Winter Band Concert 7:00pm (At ERES gym)
- December 18 K-4 Winter
 Celebration (1pm & 6:30pm)
- December 23 Christmas Break Begins
- January 7 Classes Resume

Holiday Raffle!

Support ERES Community Council's initiatives by purchasing holiday raffle tickets! Individual prizes valued up to \$400! Tickets will be available throughout December. Check the Emerald Ridge Elementary School website and Facebook page for ticket information. Draw December 18 @ the Winter Celebration Don't Miss Out!

New Members!

The ERES SCC always welcomes new members! If you're interested in helping out your school, feel free to pop into our of our meetings or send us

ERESCommunityCouncil@gmail.com





posting Al-generated images. They would then comment on the post of the Al-generated images with the URLs of the ad-laden content farms they wanted users to click.

But more ordinary creators capitalized on the engagement of Al-generated images, too, without obviously violating platform policies.

Rate 'my' work!

When we looked up the posts' captions on CrowdTangle – a social media monitoring platform owned by Meta and set to sunset in August – we found that they were "copypasta" captions, which means that they were repeated across posts.

Some of the copypasta captions baited interaction by directly asking users to, for instance, rate a "painting" by a first-time artist – even when the image was generated by AI – or to wish an elderly person a happy birthday. Facebook users often replied to AI-generated images with comments of encouragement and congratulations

Algorithms push Al-generated content

Our investigation noticeably altered our own Facebook feeds: Within days of visiting the pages – and without commenting on, liking or following any of the material – Facebook's algorithm recommended reams of other Al-generated content.

Interestingly, the fact that we had viewed clusters of, for example, Al-generated miniature cow pages didn't lead to a short-term increase in recommendations for pages focused on actual miniature cows, normalsized cows or other farm animals. Rather, the algorithm recommended pages on a range of topics and themes, but with one thing in common: They Al-generated contained images.

In 2022, the technology website Verge detailed an internal Facebook memo about proposed changes to the company's algorithm.

The algorithm, according to the memo, would become a "discoveryengine," allowing users to come into contact with

From shrimp Jesus to fake self-portraits, AI-generated images have become the latest form of social media spam

- Continued from page 2

posts from individuals and pages they didn't explicitly seek out, akin to TikTok's "For You" page.

We analyzed Facebook's own "Widely Viewed Content Reports," which lists the most popular content, domains, links, pages and posts on the platform per guarter.

It showed that the proportion of content that users saw from pages and people they don't follow steadily increased between 2021 and 2023. Changes to the algorithm have allowed more room for Al-generated content to be organically recommended without prior engagement – perhaps explaining our experiences and those of other users.

'This post was brought to you by Al'

Since Meta currently does not flag Al-generated content by default, we sometimes observed users warning others about scams or spam Al content with infographics.

Meta, however, seems to be aware of potential issues if Al-generated content blends into the information environment without notice. The company has released several announcements about how it plans to deal with Al-generated content.

In May 2024, Facebook will begin applying a "Made with Al" label to content it can reliably detect as synthetic. But the devil is in the details. How accurate will the detection models be? What Al-generated content will slip through? What content will be inappropriately flagged? And what will the public make of such labels?

While our work focused on Facebook spam and scams, there are broader implications.

Reporters have written about Al-generated videos targeting kids on YouTube and influencers on TikTok who use generative Al to turn a profit.

Social media platforms will have to reckon with how to treat Al-generated content; it's certainly possible that user engagement will wane if online worlds become filled with artificially generated posts, images and videos.

Shrimp Jesus may be an obvious fake. But the challenge of assessing what's real is only heating up.

Renee DiResta

Research Manager of the Stanford Internet Observatory, Stanford University

Abhiram Reddy

Research Assistant at the Center for Security and Emerging Technology, Georgetown University

Josh A. Goldstein

Research Fellow at the Center for Security and Emerging Technology, Georgetown University

THE CONVERSATION

Try this tasty dessert for your holiday gathering

Whether you're hosting for the holidays or just looking for a sweet new treat to add to your repertoire, this delicious dessert will have your family and guests asking for more. Find more dessert and holiday recipes at presidentschoice.ca.

Sticky Dulce de Leche Apple Cakes

Prep time: 25 minutes Cook time: 30 to 35 minutes Makes: 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup (125 ml) PC Unsalted Country Churned Butter
 1 cup (250 ml) granulated sugar
 1/2 tsp (2 ml) salt
 1 egg, at room temperature
 1/2 tsp (2 ml) pure vanilla extract
 1 cup (250 ml) all-purpose flour
 3/4 tsp (4 ml) cinnamon
 1/4 tsp (1 ml) baking soda
 1/8 tsp (0.5 ml) cloves
 3 cups (750 ml) tart apples (such as Jonagold, Empire or Mutsu), peeled and finely diced
- 1 jar (450 g) PC Dulce de Leche Caramel Creme Spread 1/4 cup (50 ml) 35% whipping cream
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) brandy

Directions:

- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray eight 1/2 cup (125 ml) ramekins with cooking spray; place on rimmed baking sheet and set aside.
- 2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat butter, sugar, salt and vanilla extract on medium speed for 2 to 3 minutes or until light and fluffy. Beat in egg.
- 3. In another bowl, sift together flour, cinnamon, baking soda and cloves; add to butter mixture and beat on low speed just until combined. Remove bowl from mixer. Using a wooden spoon, stir apples into the batter. The mixture will be very chunky and will just barely hold together. Divide batter among ramekins, using about 1/3 cup (80 ml) per ramekin.
- 4. Bake in the middle of your oven for 30 to 35 minutes or until golden and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Let cool for 10 to 15 minutes, resting in the ramekins.
- 5. To make the brandied toffee sauce, combine dulce de leche, cream and brandy in a small saucepan. Heat over low heat just until warmed and a pourable consistency. Do not boil.
- 6. Invert cakes onto individual serving plates. Spoon 2 to 3 tbsp (30 to 45 ml) warm sauce over each cake. Let them sit a few minutes before serving warm.



Tip: If you have leftover whipping cream, whip it in a stand mixer with the whisk attachment until it forms stiff peaks. Serve cakes with unsweetened whipped cream and additional sauce, if desired.

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It is true that children should respect their elders and appreciate their parents. This is an area where parents may occasionally run into difficulty with their children, but the issue seems to become even more intense in the case of stepparents.

It is a touchy area, because most stepparents want to be liked and respected by their partner's children. However, the step-parenting relationship is different than being a biological parent. You cannot demand to be treated in a particular way, because that will only exacerbate an already difficult situation.

If the children instinctively like you, respect and appreciation are generally not issues. Usually when they are, it is because of underlying tension between the stepparent and the stepchildren. Sometimes an ex-partner is resentful of the new spouse, and the children show their loyalty by being cool to the new partner. Alternatively, the children may resent the newcomer, if they have had a period of time when they had Mom or Dad all to themselves.

Sometimes the stepparent tries too hard to be a parent, to be accepted, or to have some control over

Blending Families

- By Gwen Randall-Young

the stepchild. This will create resistance in the child, who already has a Mom and a Dad, and does not want a third one!

It is so important to try to view the situation from the child's perspective. Most children want their parents to be together, and unless a parent is deceased, they do not necessarily want their parent to find a new partner. When the new person is introduced to the children, it is usually as Mommy or Daddy's 'friend'. They seem to be able to handle the idea of a friend. I think if stepparents thought of themselves as friends of the stepchildren, and acted that way, that a mutually respectful parenting relationship might evolve.

It is also important that children be involved in dis-

cussions about the role the new adult is to play in their lives. If they are involved and have input in these discussions, they are more likely to co-operate. Blending a new family is an extremely delicate process, and so it is best to proceed slowly, gently, and with a willingness to be flexible.

If the struggles are not resolving, for the sake of the children it is wise to get professional help.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and award-winning psychologist. For permission to reprint this article, or to obtain books, audio recordings or to read other articles visit www.gwen.ca. Follow Gwen on Facebook for inspiration.

3 gifts that will keep giving long after the holidays are over

Searching for the perfect holiday gift for your friends, family and co-workers can be challenging and stressful. This year, instead of giving something that may get stored away and forgotten about, consider these three gift options that will grow in their own way for years to come.

Greenery to liven up any room

After the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, most of us still have months to go before we see spring flowers and green foliage. Help brighten up the indoors by gifting a plant. Live plants can help boost our mood while also purifying the air. You could consider a kit for growing herbs or vegetables at home or a low-maintenance, durable cactus which can bloom into beautiful colours.

Handcrafted goods that support artisans

Consider gifting unique, handcrafted items made by artisans from around the world. Not only do these gifts bring a personal and meaningful touch, but they also support local craftspeople and their communities. Whether it's a beautifully woven scarf, hand-carved wooden decor or a piece of jewelry, these items often come with a story. By giving a handcrafted item, you're helping to preserve traditional skills and support the livelihoods of artisans and their families.

Charitable donations that multiply

Donating to a cause that means something to the receiver is a thoughtful gift that creates а lasting impact. Many charitable organizations have partnerships with governments and corporations that match or multiply your individual contribution. Every month, for example, over 2.5 million people receive food assistance from World Vision Canada in partnership with the World Food Programme, which multiplies gifts seven times, helping a \$15 donation grow to \$105.

Learn more at worldvision.ca/feed. www.newscanada.com





WHITE CITY ~ EMERALD PARK COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Off the Beaten Track



This month's column comes with a fair warning: if you are easily bored, gentle reader, avert your gaze now. Better yet, walk your dog or update your Christmas (that's Christmas, not Holiday) gift list. Those who stick around will be treated, among other topics, to a treatise on the R.M. of Edenwold's standing committee structure. Can't say I didn't warn you. Here goes.

The R.M. has eight standing committees ranging from the Asset Management Committee to the Water & Sewer Committee and lots in between. Meetings are open to the public (he said, laughing uncontrollably). Minutes are kept but no motions, or resolutions, are passed. Committee "decisions" are passed along to the full Council in due course as advice only.

So much for facts. You come here for opinions, right? Although committees are described as Committees of Council, recently, a staff member sat at the council table as would an elected official. Staffers should be there as resource professionals. They shouldn't be there as committee members.

A councillor is officially a committee chair, yet at a meeting I attended recently, a staff member not only sat at the council table, just as an elected official would, but chaired the meeting as well. Strange.

Unanswered at this point is whether an issue that gets "deep-sixed" at Committee can still find it's way onto the full Council agenda.

Here's another procedural oddity, seemingly unique to the R.M. of Edenwold: council meetings do not start by approving or adopting an agenda. If they did (as they do, by the way, at White City council meetings), it would give councillors an opportunity to add something for discussion before the meeting gets going.

So imagine my surprise recently when a councillor (Posehn) made a motion to amend the agenda to allow a replacement delegation for a no-show delegation. This seemed, at first, to generate consternation among staff and Council, but in the end the motion was carried unanimously. In all my years covering R.M. council meetings, this was a first.

I found out the hard way that audio recording R.M. of Edenwold council meetings is verboten, according to their procedural by-law. Under the heading "Improper Conduct" that "disturbs" a meeting are listed such obvious sins as "sitting at the council table without Council permission, shouting or using offensive, vulgar or profane language, or disturbing Council through words, noises, gestures or actions, displaying flags or signs." No reasonable person could disagree that those actions would "disturb" a meeting.

- By John Panter

Not so obvious is this one: "making audio recordings." So bringing a tape recorder or phone to a Council meeting couldn't possibly disturb a meeting, but pressing the "record" button would, resulting in an expulsion order from the Reeve.

Someone (might have been Clarence Darrow) at the next council meeting brilliantly argued the case to amend the procedural bylaw to allow audio recording. The request is now working its way through the system. We live in hope.

And finally, no Provincial law allows municipal employees to throw members of the public (you know, the ones who pay the salaries) out of the municipal office on election night or dictate what can or cannot be posted on social media. And yet, the R.M. of Edenwold tried to do just that. Very strange.

Call me if you disagree. 569-2345 or emeraldcity158@gmail.com





The White Butte Museum is proud to present **"A Salute to the Ukraine".** January 27th to February 1st.

Join us for workshops on Pierogi making, the Ukrainian language and more, all ending in an fun evening of Ukrainian food and entertainment.

To learn more about the workshops and the Ukrainian Dinner, visit our website: www.whitebuttemuseum.com

Advertise your business card for one year - \$360! email: shannon@westernlitho.ca



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Wrapping Up a Successful Volleyball Season A huge congratulations to our two senior teams that competed at Provincials on Nov. 15/16. Your commitment to your teams was amazing. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make hosting the 5A Boys Provincials a big success.

"Annie" Is Ready to Hit the Stage

Griffin Drama is presenting "Annie" on Nov. 28 (7 pm), Nov. 29 (7 pm) & Nov. 30 (2 pm) in the Greenall Gym. Tickets are on sale online now.

https://ghsallshookup2021.ticketlea p.com/annie-greenall-high-schoolmusical-2024/





GreenALL Equity Club

Congratulations to all the students and staff who brought in donations for Bright Eye's Dog Rescue! We filled the dog houses and collected much needed supplies for this community organization that is staffed by volunteers. A special thank you to Kerri Thurman for bringing in adoptable puppies for our students to visit with and enjoy! If you would like to check out the puppies or want to help in anyway, contact a atata an



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UPCOMING DATES:

- Nov. 28,29,30
- Nov. 19-20 PTS Conferences
- Dec. 20-Staff vs. Students **Hockey Game**

2024 ILVER PROVINCIAL MEDALIS'



Tips on how to help save for your winter getaway

With snow and frosty the temperatures in weather forecast, many Canadians are dreaming about a warm-weather winter escape. However, the rising cost of living and higher interest rates make it challenging to budget for vacations. Here are some tips to help you plan and save for your next adventure:

Create a travel fund

Budgeting for a vacation can be difficult, but having a savings goal helps. Start by listing all your expenses and income to identify areas where you may be able to cut back and save. Try using a money management tool, such as TD's MySpend, that can help you keep track of your spending. For example, if your anticipated trip will cost \$4,000 and

you have a year to save, the amount that you should consider setting aside is about \$330 per month. Consider opening a dedicated savings account for your vacation and use a pre-authorized transfer service to automate your savings. Continue saving even after booking to help cover last-minute changes or spontaneous activities.

Search for deals and be flexible

Being flexible with your traveldatesanddestinations can help save you money. The Christmas holiday and school spring break periods are the priciest times to book. Research the more affordable periods of the season for your desired destination. If your top choice is too expensive, consider other destinations

that may better fit your budget. Think about allinclusive packages that cover food, drinks and lodging. If travelling with family or friends, try to determine which costs can be shared with them.

Leverage travel points

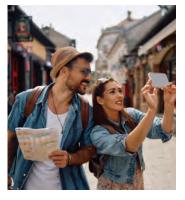
If you are a travel credit card holder, you could redeem your travel points you earned for flights, hotels and other travel-related expenses, which could help reduce your vacation costs. Remember to be cautious of vacation scams and only book through trustworthy sites.

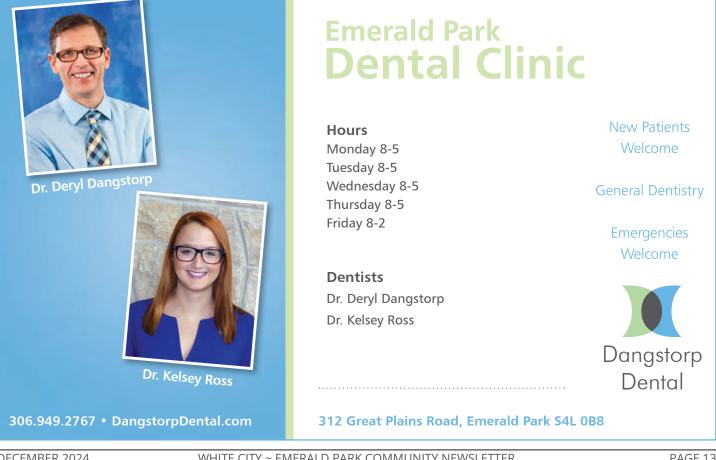
Factor in all costs

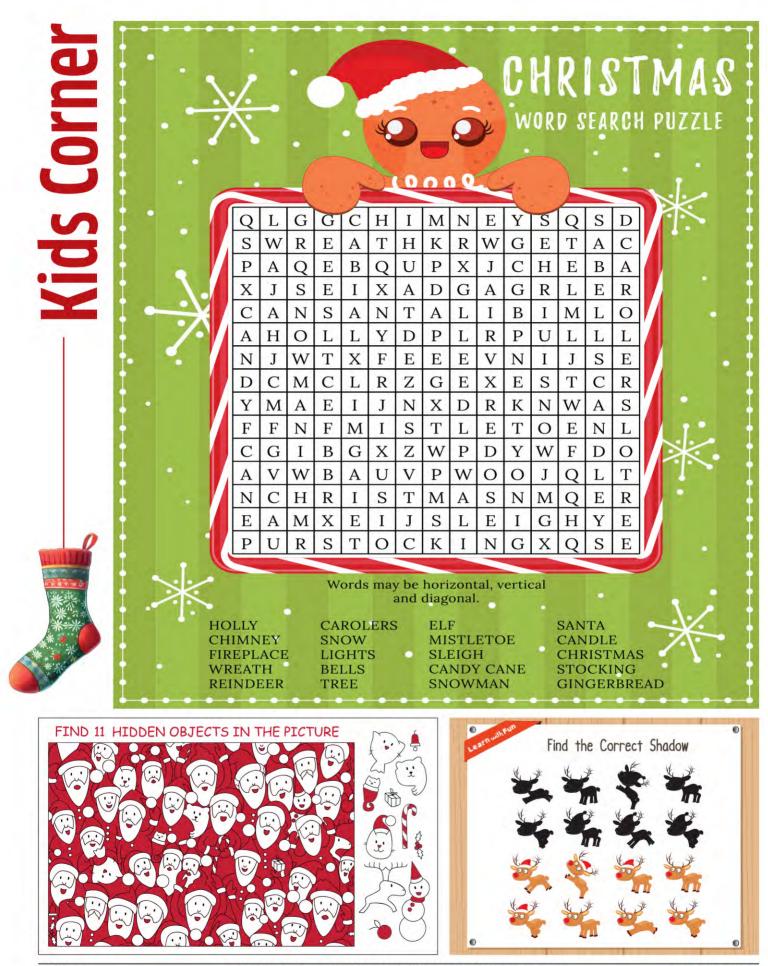
Consider all potential costs, including activities, souvenirs and other expenses like service tips, visas and pet sitters if you need. If you're planning

an all-inclusive vacation, account remember to for incidentals, such as excursions and souvenirs. Don't forget travel and medical insurance, and seriously consider including trip cancellation coverage. Planning a winter getaway can be costly and stressful but with careful budgeting and the right tools, your dream vacation can become a reality.

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Diversions 1 2

ACROSS

- 1. Duck's beak 5. Close to 9. Gloss 14. To the sheltered side 15. Killer whale 16. Bizarre
- 17. Binds
- 18. Nearest in this direction
- 20. Court sittings
- 22. Salt solutions
- 23. Secret agent
- 24. Timber
- 25. Withered stalk of grass
- 30. Not many
- 33. Worshipper
- 34. Buddhist temple
- 35. Aboriginal rite
- 36. Loses colour
- **37.** Item of headwear
- 38. Heights, Syrian area occupied by Israel
- 39. Melt
- 40. An age
- 41. An explosive
- 42. The sun
- 43. Aboriginal instruments
- 45. Wrinkle
- 46. Monetary unit of Japan47. Covered passage
- 50. Stumbles
- 55. Repeated
- 57. Potpourri
- 58. Arab spirit
- 59. Book of the Bible 60. Capital of Norway
- 61. Greek theatre
- 62. Arrived
- 63. Length measures
- DOWN
- 1. Flying mammals
- 2. Tennis star, Natase
- 3. Dregs
- 4. Minus
- 5. Markedly incompetent person (2-5) 6. One of The Furies (Greek
- Myth)
- 7. Performs
- 8. Cheer
- 9. Sadness
- 10. Sultry
- 11. English college
- 12. Gaelic
- **13.** Devices for fishing
- 19. Torpedo vessel (1-4)
- 21. Small islands
- 24. Envelop
- **25.** Floats through air
- 26. State in the NW United
- States
- 27. Knob-like

1	2	3	4		5	0	1	0		9	10	11		15
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17			1		18				19					
20			1	21			1		22					
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25	26	27	28				29					30	31	32
33		\uparrow	+				34	1			35		1	
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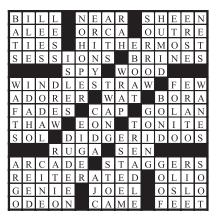
- 28. Sketched
- 29. Nasal tone
- 30. Book leaf
- 31. Muse of poetry

3

4

- 32. Diminishes
- 35. Surety
- 37. Musical ending
- 38. Leaving
- 40. Swiss mountain

- 53. Anger
- 56. Australian Jockey
- Club (Abbr)



- 41. Pedal
- 43. Short Irish tobacco
- pipe **44.** Revere
- 45. Proportion 47. Jason's ship
- 48. Marsh plant
- 49. Motion picture
- 50. Portico
- 51. Stupid person
- 52. Otherwise
- 54. Coal dust

DECEMBER 2024

The next issue of the Community Newsletter will be distributed the first week of January

All copy <u>MUST</u> be submitted on or before <u>December 20th</u>.

Everyone is welcome to put meeting dates, birthdays, anniversaries, etc. on the calender, free of charge.

Please email: shannon@westernlitho.ca

Special thanks to the advertisers for supporting the distribution of our newsletter. By using their services you support our community.



WC/EP RECREATION INFORMATION/REGISTRATION CONTACTS:

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