

STRATFORD TIMES

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 11

JANUARY 10, 2025

FREE



Jennifer Anderson
Team Leader - BROKER
519-301-2736



Jamie Gerber
Sales Associate - REALTOR®
519-276-7995



ANDERSON
REAL ESTATE GROUP



ROYAL LEPAGE Hiller Realty

165 Elm St. Stratford
Independently Owned and Operated Brokerage
AndersonRealEstateGroup.ca



COMMUNITY HEARING CARE

FREE HEARING TESTS

370 Ontario St., Stratford
519-271-HEAR (4327)

www.communityhearingcare.ca

Stratford's Diane Sims to be appointed as member of Order of Canada

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

In recognition of her tireless work as an accessibility advocate and as a journalist and author shedding light on important issues including her own challenges living with multiple sclerosis (MS) and ovarian cancer, and her medical assistance in dying (MAiD) journey, Stratford's Diane Sims will soon be appointed as a member of the Order of Canada.

Sims, who is living with end-stage MS and just released her unflinching autobiography, "Living Beyond the Shadow," learned she would be appointed as a member of the Order of Canada as part of the 2024 cohort of recipients back in October, but was told she had to keep the news quiet until it was officially announced by the governor general on Dec. 18, 2024.

"It was 9:30 a.m. one morning and I was in the middle of my morning routine which, as you know, is very rough. I was lying on the bed and the home phone rang long distance. It's always scams, but I answered it and I'm so glad I did," Sims laughed. "Immediately, this voice said ... 'I'm calling from the governor general's office for Diane Sims.' I had it on speaker and my support worker was hanging over me and grabbed her mouth, and I could see tears starting in her eyes. I said, 'I'm Diane Sims,' and she said 'You're to receive the Order of Canada.'"

While Sims knew a friend of hers, Val Critchley, had tried unsuccessfully to nominate her for the Order of Ontario nearly two years prior and another family friend, Jim Mitchell, had instead worked with

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



The SDSS Golden Bears celebrate their big win against St. Mike's during a buyout game Dec. 20 at the Stratford Rotary Complex. For the full story and more photos, turn to Page 21.

(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)

Stratford's iconic Shakespearean Gardens on the road towards heritage designation

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After 88 years, the iconic Shakespearean Gardens located beside the Perth County courthouse will be formally recognized for its historical significance to the Festival City.

At the Dec. 16 Stratford city council meeting, council issued an intent to designate the site and certain key features of the garden as a heritage site nearly a year after receiving a request to do so.

"It's one of my favourite things that we are looking at doing for Stratford," Coun. Larry McCabe said at the meeting, just prior to voting on the motion. "The Shakespearean Gardens has been an important place for people to gather for as long as I've lived here, and I'm happy to see that we're preserving it."

Over a year ago, the Friends of the Shakespearean Gardens made a formal request for heritage designation, which Heritage Stratford, an advisory committee that assists council on all matters related to heritage conservation, supported.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

MONDAY

50% OFF

ON PIZZA

AT REGULAR MENU PRICE

PROMO CODE STE50

EVERY TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY

BOGO

ON PIZZA

AT REGULAR MENU PRICE

PROMO CODE ST241

PIZZA

PAPA JOHN'S

1060 Ontario St.,
Stratford

226-779-4235

www.papajohns.ca

Stratford's iconic Shakespearean Gardens on the road towards heritage designation

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

As noted in the report and presented to council by city planner Alex Burnett, the garden has a long history that stretches back to before it was even a garden.

The garden was previously the site of the Dufton Woollen Mill, the chimney of which is the only mill feature that survived an early 20th century fire and still stands today. Thomas Orr, a community leader, had previously wanted to create a Shakespeare garden downtown and when the empty lands were put up for sale, he petitioned the council of the day to purchase the land.

The city acquired the land in 1925 and opened the garden in 1936. Due to the Great Depression that same decade, the project took longer than previously

thought.

The garden was officially opened by then Governor General of Canada Lord Tweedsmuir.

A Shakespeare garden, a garden that specifically cultivates some of the plants mentioned in the works of William Shakespeare, is common globally; however, in Canada there are only a few public gardens known. As such, the garden in Stratford, which has grown over 60 species of plants mentioned in the Bard's plays, attracts thousands of visitors each year.

The garden's relevance only compounded with the Stratford Festival's opening in 1953. Its influence is so entrenched that the chimney tower that still looms over the garden is featured on the city's official logo.

Cultural-heritage landscapes are defined in the provincial planning statement as an area that has cultural-heritage value or interest by a community. The area may include features such as buildings, structures, spaces, views, archaeological sites, or natural elements that are valued together for their interrelationship, meaning or association.

Specifically, council identified the chimney tower, the



The iconic chimney tower at the Shakespearean Gardens is one of the many features Stratford city council wishes to protect under heritage designation. At the Dec. 16 council meeting, an intent to designate was issued, one of many steps on the road to heritage preservation. (CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

original stone walls throughout the garden, the lychgate located on Huron Street, the knot garden, the herb garden, the rose garden, the perennial border garden, the walkway lamp lighting, the sundial and the bust of William Shakespeare as the key features to be preserved under heritage designation.

Issuing an intent to designate is the third step in a seven-step process. Once the by-law is passed, there are appeals, listing the property on the municipal register and finally including the property on the Ontario Heritage Trust register.

Once designated heritage, a plaque will be installed at the garden.

ROYAL LEPAGE Hiller Realty
100 Erie St. Stratford
Independently owned and Operated Brokerage

SHERRIE ROULSTON
Real Estate Broker
email: sherrieroulston@royallepage.ca
Direct: 519-272-3578

A Passion for People

Hyde Construction presents

30th ANNIVERSARY

Bring your own spoon!

SOUP'S ON

Saturday, January 11th 2025
11:00 A.M. — 2:00 P.M.
Stratford Rotary Complex

~ ADMISSION BY DONATION ~
DONATIONS TO SOUP'S ON WILL BE
MATCHED UP TO \$30,000 BY JAMES HUTTON IN
MEMORY OF ALBERT & MONA HUTTON
~ SOUPONS 5 for \$5 ~ CASH ONLY EVENT ~

Sample a variety of delicious soups, enjoy
live music, a silent auction and kids' activities

Presented by: All proceeds from this event remain in Perth and Huron to support:

Alzheimer Society
HURON PERTH
alzheimer.ca/huronperth | 519-271-1910

HYDE CONSTRUCTION STRATFORD

Cause of foam in Avon River remains elusive

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The City of Stratford will be using specialized equipment and a third-party contractor to get to the bottom of another foam incident in the Avon River.

On Dec. 31, the city announced it was aware of an issue with foam appearing in the river near the Stratford Country Club over the holidays and was investigating the occurrence, but as Sean Beech, manager of environmental services, told the Times in an emailed statement, the recent foaming was not an isolated incident.

"This is an ongoing issue which has been brought to our attention in the summer," Beech wrote. "In attempts to resolve this issue, we have completed several dye tests on businesses which would both use soaps and cleaners and produce

soap suds/foam. This included car-wash stations and laundromats within the stormwater catchment area.

"The results of these tests proved that they were not contributing to this situation, and they had proper servicing to the sanitary and storm systems."

Environmental services staff members also investigated the stormwater catchment area, opening manholes throughout the catchment area and looking for foam or any abnormal odours, but nothing was found.

Beech said next steps will be using CCTV equipment to investigate several stormwater pipes which empty into the creek that feeds into the river. A third-party contractor will use specialized equipment to conduct the investigation, which was scheduled to occur the week of Jan. 6.

Stratford's Diane Sims to be appointed as member of Order of Canada

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Critchley and Sims' former publisher at the Manitoulin Express newspaper, Rick McCutcheon, to nominate her for the Order of Canada shortly after that, she said she had never heard anything more about it and had dismissed it as something that wasn't going to happen, making the phone call in October a complete surprise.

As it turns out, staff from the governor general's office spent those two years meticulously vetting Sims – as they do with all Order of Canada nominees – to ensure she was worthy of honouring. According to Sims, every organization and individual mentioned in Sims' nomination letters – from those who worked with Sims in her MS, ovarian cancer and accessibility advocacy to those she worked alongside as a journalist and writer – was contacted during that time.

The day after the news broke that Sims would receive the Order of Canada, she hosted a celebration at her home in Stratford with family, friends and colleagues.

"I am both incredibly honoured and extremely humbled," Sims said of the honour. "... I'm surprised, delighted and extremely humbled. I look at the list of names of people who are honoured and I

am so humbled to be among those names. It's a phenomenal group.

"... I feel heard. I feel heard. I guess I feel somebody was listening."

Last month, Canadian Governor General Mary Simon announced 88 new appointments to the Order of Canada, including one companion, 24 officers and 63 members. Three appointments are promotions within the order.

The Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honours System. Thanks to nominators across the country, it has celebrated the outstanding achievements and wide-ranging contributions of over 8,000 people since its creation in 1967.

"Members of the Order of Canada are builders of hope for a better future," Simon said in a press release. "Each in their own way, they broaden the realm of possibilities and inspire others to continue pushing its boundaries. Thank you for your perseverance, fearless leadership and visionary spirit, and welcome to the Order of Canada."

Though a date for the official Order of Canada appointment ceremony has not yet been announced, Sims says she plans to travel to the ceremony in Ottawa to receive the honour in person.



Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma celebrates with 2024 Order of Canada Member Diane Sims at her home Dec. 19. (GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

HOT DEALS! SOURCE FLOORING

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

DRY BACK
VINYL PLANKS
100% WATERPROOF

FROM **99¢** /SQ FT
REG 2.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

100% WATERPROOF
CLICK VINYL PLANKS
PAD ATTACHED

FROM **\$1.59** PER SQ FT
REG 4.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

100% WATERPROOF
LAMINATE

FROM **\$1.99** PER SQ FT
REG 4.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

HIGH-GLOSS RED OAK
LAMINATE
PAD ATTACHED

FROM **\$2.99** PER SQ FT
REG 4.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

13" X 13"
PORCELAIN

FROM **79¢** /SQ FT
REG 3.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

12" X 24"
CARRARA

FROM **\$1.99** PER SQ FT
REG 3.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

SUBWAY TILES

FROM **\$1.99** PER SQ FT
REG 3.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

CLICK ENGINEERED
HARDWOOD
5" WIDE X 1/2" THICK

FROM **\$3.99** PER SQ FT
REG 12.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

2-TONE FRIEZE
CARPET

FROM **\$1.99** PER SQ FT
REG 3.99

IN STOCK **HOT DEAL**

3/7" COLONIAL
BASEBOARDS

FROM **99¢** /LIN FOOT

NEW PRICE

2' X 9'
ACOUSTIC WALL PANELS

STARTING FROM **\$1.39** PER PANEL

**FULLY STOCKED!
BIGGEST ON THE BLOCK!**

1362 VICTORIA ST N. KITCHENER
MON-FRI 9AM-8PM SAT 9-6 SUN 10-5 **CANADIAN OWNED & OPERATED**

Reality? **Reality check**

Canadian newspapers are powered by journalists, not AI. They check the facts so you can trust what you're reading.

nationalnewspaperweek.ca



Editorial

Predictions for 2025: A new PM, a Stanley Cup for Canada and a Super Bowl for Detroit

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

I've been doing predictions in the newspaper for a few years now, and after getting so many things wrong in 2024 I had to ask myself, "why do I do this?"

Life sometimes is like a set of dominoes, and if that first domino doesn't fall, the others won't either. Therefore, last year when I predicted that Donald Trump would face consequences and be ruled ineligible to run in the 2024 election, well you can imagine how badly some of my other predictions turned out from there.

I did get a few things right though, such as Biden dropping out before the election, a woman would run for President, and the Leafs would get bounced in the first round of the playoffs.

Like golf, it's those few successes that keep you coming back.

Mostly though, it's good to do predictions because life moves fast, and some-

times we forget about where we were at a point in time, and how we thought things would go. If we look back a year later, maybe we learn things and gain some perspective somehow. Speaking of Trump, I was pretty worked up about him in 2024. Hopefully I'll look back at the end of 2025 and reflect, "I guess it wasn't as bad as I thought." Only time will tell.

My 2025 Predictions:

1. I typed these predictions up the other day and my first prediction came true before we went to press, so I'm 1-for-1 if you believe me! I wrote a few days ago that Justin Trudeau would resign as Prime Minister this year.

2. I'll predict that the Liberal leadership vote results in Mark Carney becoming Canada's 24th Prime Minister. Carney won't hold the position for long though.

3. The Conservative Party will cruise to a majority win in the 2025 Federal Election, and Pierre Poilievre will take the reins as Prime Minister. His first policy

announcement upon taking office will be to cancel the Carbon Tax.

4. Echoing the results of the 1993 federal election where the incumbent party lost most of its seats, the Bloc Quebecois emerge to form the Official Opposition.

5. Shifting away from politics, here's one more 1993 parallel. For this first time in 32 years, a Canadian team will host the Stanley Cup! (I want to say it's the Leafs, but let's just say it'll be a Canadian team).

6. Alex Ovechkin will pass Wayne Gretzky to become the NHL's all-time regular season goal scoring leader.

7. The Detroit Lions will win the Super Bowl.

8. U.S. President Donald Trump will assist in ending the war between Russia and Ukraine, but the terms favour the Russian side.

9. Similarly, a ceasefire is negotiated in the Middle East.

10. The 25% tariff on Canadian goods entering the U.S. fails to materialize. Re-

lations between the U.S. and Canadian governments improve following the 2025 Canadian election.

11. Despite certain achievements, general uncertainty and chaos during the first year of the Trump administration is reflected in a down year for the stock market.

12. Just as the 1999 Columbine massacre produced a noted increase in school shootings in the U.S., the 2024 killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson will produce copycat crimes in 2025 by troubled individuals inspired by social or political causes.

13. Chinese-owned TikTok will avoid being shutdown in the United States, with Elon Musk assisting by purchasing a significant ownership share of the social media app.

14. The Trump-Musk bromance will have its up and downs, but the working relationship will continue to last throughout the year.

STRATFORD **TIMES**

Contribute to your local community newspaper!
Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

**GRANT
HAVEN
MEDIA**

Restoring small-town journalism, one community at a time!

STRATFORD **TIMES**

Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Regional Editor

Galen Simmons • galen@granthaven.com

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Connor Luczka • connor@granthaven.com

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Sarah Cairns • stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Billing Administrator

Cindy Boakes • boakescindy1576@gmail.com

Contributors

Spencer Seymour, Betty-Jo Belton, Julia Schneider, Gary West, Paul Knowles, Emily Stewart, Lisa Chester, Fred Gonder, Sheila Clarke, Irene Roth, Lee Griffi, Stuart Lender, Thomas R. Verna, Sydney Goodwin, Kristen Parker, Alex Hunt, Hannah Kavanagh, Julia Paul

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2
stratfordtimes@gmail.com | 519.655.2341 | granthaven.com



Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



Letter to the Editor

Microaggressions??!! Oh, fuddle duddle

The unaccountable power-tripping bureaucrats at all government levels are getting to be worse than the self-aggrandizing, incompetent, narcissists in governments around the world.

Speaking of which, Dear Donald:

I see your "Canada as the 51st state," and raise your bet to the following counter proposal.

We'll offer you the job of premier of the 11th province of Canada. The province of USA. Now mind you, you'll be very busy attempting to negotiate deals with 10 other premiers. But you're a dealmaker, right?

And you'll have to work out deals to bring your health care into line with Canada. And whoa, wait until you get a look at our gun laws! Busy, you will be. Negotiate you must do. Just think, no more northern border problems. Although there are these niggling interprovincial trade problems, I'm sure you can handle that, Mr. Deal Maker. Forget the Panama Canal.

Your bigly future is premier of the 11th province of Canada!

Happy holidays and a happy New Year!

*Sincerely,
Ed Montgomery, Stratford*

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US!

CALL 519-655-2341 OR

EMAIL STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM

STRATFORD **TIMES**

Guiding Principles

1. Everyone has a story
2. The news should be free for all to enjoy
3. Good news beats bad news
4. A Newspaper should be a community effort (contribute to your local paper!)
5. Newspapers document history
6. Newspapers strengthen communities
7. Advertisers, big or small, should profit from their ads (meaning sensible ad rates)
8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

Schooley Mitchell shares holiday spirit with food drive



Schooley Mitchell, a Stratford cost-reduction consulting company, donated 1,568 pounds of food to Stratford House of Blessing and Kitchener-Waterloo Food Bank on Dec. 20. With a grand total of 1,706 items donated, Schooley Mitchell staff showed their generosity and holiday spirit, collecting food for vulnerable families this winter. (JULIA PAUL PHOTO)



JANUARY & FEBRUARY EVENTS

Thursday, Jan. 23	Gourmet Poutine & Beer Fundraiser, 6:00 - 10:00 pm \$20 per person; \$10 for children 12 and under (pop or water) for tickets Call Dave 519-703-6544 or the Legion 519-271-4540
Saturday, Jan. 25	Winterfest Breakfast 8-11 am
Friday, Feb. 7	Wine Tasting with Sommelier Bob Latham from 7 - 9 pm Limited seating, so order your tickets early. Tickets are \$25. Call Dave 519-703-6544 or the Legion 519-271-4540
Sunday, Feb. 9	3 Course served "Sweetheart Dinner" \$30 per person, dinner is served at 5:00 includes a glass of either Pino Gregio or Cabernet Sauvignon. Reservations call Frank 519-271-9669 or Pearl 519-273-0457
Wednesday, Feb. 12	Ladies' Luncheon, \$16 per person; call Mary Helen 519-273-1389
Friday, Feb. 21	Friday Night Euchre, open at 6 pm, games start at 6:30, \$20 team of two, prize for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Registration required. Call Anne 519-301-0914, Dave 519-703-6544 or the Legion 519-271-4540
Friday, Feb. 28	Burger and Fries Night, 5:30 - 8:00, \$10 per person Takeout orders from 5:00 to 5:30 only. Please call Dave with your takeout order 519-703-6544

Tuesday Morning Buddy Check, 10:00 -12:00pm OPEN to all Veterans Widows and First Responders
Friday Afternoon Weekly Social 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Saturday Afternoon Meat Draw doors open at 2:00 pm, meat draw starts at 4:00pm

804-B Ontario St., Stratford N5A 3K1
stratfordlegion008@gmail.com

HearingLife



Keep the sounds you love.

Your hearing needs are unique. Choose the hearing care that isn't one-size-fits all.

Start Your Year With A 30-Day FREE Trial

Experience the benefits of state-of-the-art solutions tailored to fit your needs, preferences, and lifestyle.

When you're ready, purchase with confidence as we provide a **90-day satisfaction guarantee.****

Aftercare services at no extra cost.

Features of the Latest Hearing Aids:

- Long lasting rechargeable battery.
- Improved sound clarity.
- Seamlessly connect to phone, TV & other devices.
- Discreet and comfortable wear.



Learn more from a hearing professional near you.

Get started with a **FREE** hearing test.*

Stratford
 295 Huron Street
1-888-479-7314

Stratford - Cambria Professional Building
 386 Cambria Street,
 Unit 103
1-888-479-7316

Listowel
 1195 Wallace Avenue N,
 Unit 300
1-888-660-2368

Exeter
 281 Main Street S,
 Unit 277
1-888-660-2786



Mention code: **NSP-TBYB-SBTM**

Book online **HearingLife.ca/Try**

*A comprehensive hearing assessment is provided to adults ages 19 and older at no cost. The results of this assessment will be communicated verbally to you. Depending on the province you're located in, an administrative fee may apply if a copy of an Audiological Report is requested. Some conditions apply, see clinic for details. Offer not valid in Quebec. **90-Day Risk-Free Trial begins at the date of purchase. If you are not completely satisfied, you can return it within 90 days for a full refund or exchange. Trial offers varies by province. Conditions Apply. Ask our hearing care professionals for more details.

Keep being you **Love your ears**



cedarview
retirement living

**TOUR &
LUNCH**
with us!

CALL TODAY
519.771.4973

Learn more about our
community, meet new
friends & find your new
home!

Your forever home awaits



CedarviewSeniorLife.com
511 Finkle Street Woodstock, Ontario N4V 0C4

Professionally Managed by  **brightwater**



ReImagine Senior Living

Optimist Club of Stratford to help tackle food insecurity in 2025

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The Optimist Club of Stratford is a dedicated group of volunteers seeking to assist in food insecurity as a priority this year.

The challenge will be how best to direct their assistance where so many in the community are finding it difficult to meet the high cost of living. The Optimist Club has been active in Stratford for 88 years as a friend of youth. It was chartered in 1937 and has contributed over \$3 million over 40 years to minor sports and community projects.

"We meet once a month at the Legion, usually the second Thursday of the month. We usually do a dinner meeting which is more informal. There might be something to talk about but it is more social. In the past, we did a lot of events but since COVID we haven't yet," said Dennis Laughton, current president of the Stratford club.

Aside from the pandemic, there has also been a dwindling membership common to all service clubs, which has affected the ability to run programs like they used to. However, without the programs, there is no awareness and, without awareness, the ability to attract new membership is greatly impeded.

Despite their small membership, in 2024 the Optimist Club of Stratford was very active in the community. They made their ninth-annual Christmas donations, distributing \$27,000 to charitable organizations supporting vulnerable youth and families including the Kiwanis-CJCS Christmas Basket Fund, Stratford House of Blessing, Salvation Army Christmas Appeal, Chamber of Commerce Toy Drive, Stratford Perth Shelter Link, Simple Dreams Ministries, Shakespeare Public School Breakfast Program and L'Arche Stratford.

"In 2023, we donated \$40,000 to the Stratford General Hospital Foundation for a mat/child isolate (incubator). I didn't realize that every single piece of equipment there is donated; there is no funding from the province for that," said Laughton.

For 2025, the club's focus is to help address food insecurity currently experienced in the community. Stratford food banks have all seen an increase in first-time users and the number of users, and the need for donations is increasing every day. Schools have a snack program funded by the province, but there is also the need for a breakfast program to give children the right start to the day.

"It's sad to imagine that in a city such as Stratford there are so many kids that are going to school without a breakfast. That rocked me, honestly," said Laughton.



Pictured left to right are Dennis Laughton, Randy Fortune, Dave Evans and Paul Barton on the occasion of one of many Christmas donations by the Optimist Club of Stratford. (BRIAN PEARSON PHOTO)

With today's climate, there are many organizations that need help, and it will be difficult to determine where donations will go. Where there is a need, the club will try to help.

"We almost need to (help) because of the kids. Recently, we donated to the House of Blessing Toy Room. They have a room filled with toys for people to come and choose gifts. Moving forward, we need to keep our ears to the ground, finding out who needs what and to let people know that we are out there," said Laughton.

There will be a return of the Bike Rodeo run by the Optimist Club in May, and Stratford Police Service Const. Darren Fischer will be in attendance. The club is also considering a Kids' Day with fun activities for youth. Funds are primarily raised by organized bus trips to Blue Jays games. Organizer Dean Listman is skilled in selecting and planning the trips so they are affordable and fun for all.

"It usually leaves from the YMCA; you don't have to worry about driving in downtown Toronto or paying \$40 to park. You can have a few drinks and let the driving be done for you. Dean is really good at getting good deals on tickets," said Laughton.

Service clubs such as the Optimist Club are an opportunity to give back to a community. Supporting youth is at the core of the club's values of optimism, respect, integrity and global community.

"I had it good growing up, and you don't realize it. You need to have these conversations. What gave me such a great youth? Someone gave back," Laughton said.

For more information about the Stratford Optimist Club and to find out about membership opportunities, visit stratfordoptimist.com.



Franklin & Donna Hinz

Do what makes you happy.
Look upon what gives you joy. Listen to what lifts your spirit. Speak to those who warm your heart.
Surround yourself with sights and sounds and people who make you smile during this 2024 Festive Season.

Franklin E. Hinz
196 Ontario Street
STRATFORD
273-1633

STRATFORD **TIMES**

Contribute to your local community newspaper! Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Stratford Winterfest

COME PLAY AT THE PARK

Saturday, January 25, 2025

Platinum Sponsor

(Upper Queens Park)
www.stratfordwinterfest.ca

School board presents plan to address lacklustre EQAO performance

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Avon Maitland District School Board (AMDSB)'s recently released EQAO results left something to be desired, however leadership says it has a plan to address the shortfall.

Each year, numerous standardized tests take place through the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) across Ontario in Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9. They measure students' reading, writing and mathematics levels.

The results for the 2023-2024 school year were released in October of last year, showing math scores in particular were trailing for AMDSB. Only 48 per cent of Grade 6 students in its schools met or exceeded the provincial standard. That number dropped to only 43 per cent for Grade 9 students.

That rate is lower than the provincial average. In English-language schools in the province, 61 per cent of Grade 6 students and 50 per cent of Grade 9 students met the standard.

"I think it's important to recognize that EQAO, the testing that occurs over the course of the year, does not happen in isolation," Graham Shantz, director of education with the board, said at the most recent Dec. 10 meeting where leadership presented its plan to address the low numbers. "These are standardized tests that happen across the entire province of Ontario but they are done at specific times, but they are really a reflection of the curriculum that is being taught on a daily basis in our classrooms."

To specifically address the math shortfall, seven schools have been identified as priority schools in the Math Action Plan based on EQAO results over a three-year period: Central Huron Secondary School, Howick Central School, Hullett Central Public School, Mornington Central Public School, North Perth Westfield Elementary School, Romeo Public School and Stephen Central Public School.

All these schools are provided with more supports, such as a math coach in all schools and digital math tools to support learning in school and at home.

Additionally, a number of professional development days for educators will be focused on math and strategies for teachers with low-performing students are available.

Shantz explained to the board that the low rates did not occur in a vacuum.

"If you go back 10, 15 years ago, a much greater focus or a great portion of dollars to support was on the literacy components," Shantz explained. "So, it has been more recent and, again, I'm talking in the last five years, that focus has increased more on mathematics. ... We've been focusing longer on literacy, and I literally mean over a decade to 15 years, whereas mathematics has always been important, but the funds and the focused attention hasn't been at the same level."

Additionally, to address the whole EQAO results, six priorities are listed in the plan: equity and inclusion (having culturally relevant pedagogy to meet each student's individual needs), mindsets for success (encourage a supportive mindset by fostering positivity), data analysis and professional learning

(data-focused supports), practice (expose students to EQAO type questions throughout the year), intervention support (identify students at risk and develop plans accordingly), and family engagement (encourage families to understand the assessment).

Nearing the end of the presentation, trustee Bruce Whitaker asked when or how the board, the schools and parents will know if these strategies are working.

Superintendent Riley Culhane said results can already be seen.

"We have evidence that the work that we're doing is making a difference, and we can see in the results from our targeted schools," Culhane said. "So, if we look at those seven targeted schools that have access to math coaches and additional release time and resources, we are seeing gains in all those schools."

To see the region's EQAO results as well as individual scores for each school, visit www.eqao.com/results/?orgType=B&mid=66010&yearnum=2024.

Victim of Bradshaw Drive shooting reflects on a Christmas that was harder than ever

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

For many Stratfordians, this holiday season was a mixed-bag. Whether it was the rising cost of living, the strain the whole world is facing, or other personal reasons, there were many hurdles to be faced this December.

For David Tokley in particular, this Christmas was harder than ever.

Tokley was one of the victims of the Bradshaw Drive shooting on Aug. 1, when resident Ricky Billeke shot numerous neighbours, killing one, before turning the gun on himself.

Tokley had taken his dog out that evening when he heard what he thought were firecrackers going off nearby. After a few loud bangs, he heard screaming and realized that it couldn't have been, running outside.

"I booked it out the door not knowing what was going on," Tokley said. "All I was hearing was kids were screaming."

While running, Tokley was shot in the head. He didn't feel it in full at the time, describing the sensation as just "something hitting" him, but he later woke up in hospital and felt the full impact then. Numerous surgeries followed – along with

an outpouring of well wishes from family, friends, co-workers and the wider Stratford community. Those well-wishes even evolved into a GoFundMe page, which raised just over a \$1,000 at the time.

Tokley said he was shocked with the response from the community, but time has passed since last summer and the money from the page didn't go far with all the expenses he acquired and his inability to work. In early January, he posted on the popular Facebook community group, Stratford Connect, about some of the struggles he is going through.

"It just felt so bad watching everyone open up presents, handing presents around," Tokley told the Times, saying he wasn't able to contribute as much as he normally would. "Christmas is one of my favourite times of the year, next to Halloween, and then not being able to do my normal stuff I do every year and all that. ... I like to go out sometimes, like out walking around just to see all the Christmas lights. I didn't even do that this year because of the weather."

Since the weather changed last month, the air pressure is so bad Tokley said there are days he can't get out of bed to walk his dog. If the pressure is temperate enough that he could go outside, without the other

half of his skull to stave off the cold, the brain freezes this winter have been devastating, limiting what he could do. That's on top of the mental challenges he has been faced with.

"I have good days and bad days," he said. "I suffer from depression ... and then there is the other thing, PTSD; ... it's something that a lot of people go through in situations that have happened to me."

Immediately following the shooting, Tokley was flooded with attention from the community and from the health-care system. However, as time progressed, he said it was a struggle to hear from people.

For instance, Tokley was assigned a therapist and was told to wait for their call. He waited and waited but was only in to see them in December for an evaluation, five months after his injury. His first real session is scheduled for March, eight months after being shot.

"For anyone else who goes through what I went through, as soon as you get discharged, start making phone calls because you don't know if you'll get the doctors phoning," Tokley advised.

Financially, it's been extremely difficult being on employment insurance (EI), Tokley said. He has to wait until his EI runs out to apply for disability, but even being

on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) wouldn't be enough to live in Stratford.

Tokley isn't staying in Stratford currently. He couldn't live in the same house due to the trauma of reliving the shooting each and every day, and is living with family in Cambridge currently. He wants to return to Stratford, return to work at the Tim Hortons on Huron Street, but it isn't feasible right now. Single bedroom apartments are just too expensive in the city and despite the desire to work, he just isn't ready yet.

For all the anxiety he has for the future, Tokley said he is looking forward to a nine-hour cranial surgery (which was scheduled for Jan. 10, after press time) that would see a synthetic skull be put in to bolster his weakened bone. After the surgery, Tokley said he's also looking forward to returning to work once he's able.

Additionally, the GoFundMe page that was started in August for him was re-energized since his January post. As of publication, \$4,035 has been raised for him and can be found at www.gofundme.com/help-david-ducky-tokley.

Aside from that, Tokley said there is one other thing he is looking forward to.

"Not having a repeat of last year," he laughed.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.STRATFORDTIMES.COM

Decision on 68-townhouse subdivision deferred by council

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After questions of affordability and potential green initiatives went unanswered, a decision on a proposed 68-townhouse subdivision has been deferred by Stratford city council.

At the Dec. 16 council meeting, representatives of Paradize Properties Development Ltd. and its consultants presented the proposal and requested its approval as well as a zone change to accommodate the plans.

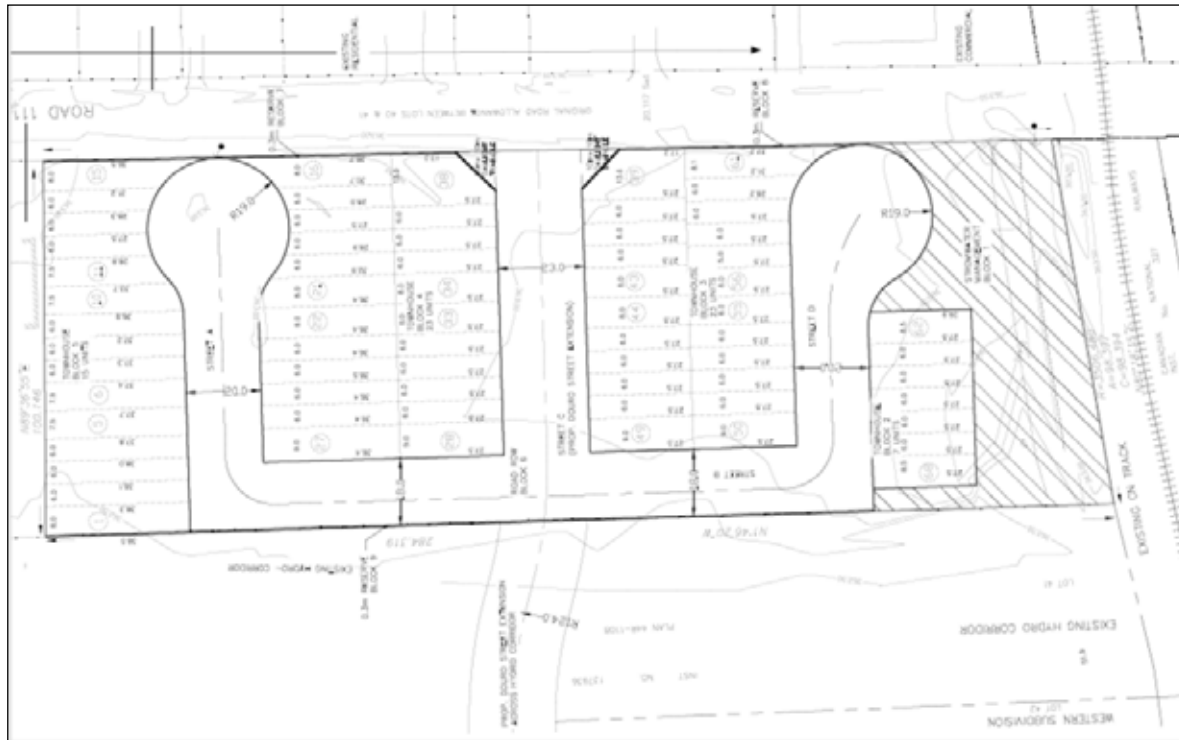
The subdivision would contain four new streets just off Perth Road 111, diverting into two cul de sacs. All units would be homogenous and a medium-density designation would be required.

No parkland was proposed in the plan, though Juliane von-Westerholt, a consulting planner, indicated there are parklands and green spaces already surrounding the property and the developers would give cash in lieu to the city, which was preferred by the parks department.

Jane Marie Mitchell, a concerned citizen, took issue with sprawling into farmland, the lack of parkland and was dubious about the commitment to affordable housing. She wished for a written commitment from the developers.

She also suggested a number of features related to climate initiatives: to build white roofs to keep residents cool in the summer or to have the homes built ready for solar if residents wish to install panels, for example.

Mike Sullivan expressed con-



The 68-townhouse subdivision plans presented to Stratford city council on Dec. 16. Council voted to defer any decision recommended at that time until more information on the possibility of affordable housing and green initiatives was available. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

cern as well, echoing some of the sentiments that Mitchell previously stated. Chief among his concerns was the lack of consideration to the city's previously declared climate emergency and dedication to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which are mainly generated in the city by buildings.

"Now it may be that it's just a response to a tremendous pressure to just build housing, and I know there is that, but the need to reduce or eliminate the use of fossil fuels should at least be considered when making these plans," Sullivan said. "There is nothing preventing the city from making demands of

these builders, these developers, that they build without natural-gas heating or hot water. The technology for heat pumps is now on par in terms of cost with gas furnaces and hot water. (It is) no longer more expensive to build a home with a heat pump than it is to build with a natural-gas furnace."

In response, the representatives said they are open to working with staff to make the development happen, though Adam Betteridge, director of building and planning with the city, later clarified that currently the municipality

has the ability to offer incentives but the power to require developers to build with "climate-sensitive building styles" rather than traditional natural gas is not available at the local level. That power remains with the province.

Coun. Larry McCabe specifically asked if heat pumps could be considered for this development and Punya Sagar Marahatta, speaking on behalf of the applicant, reiterated that whatever council or staff recommends

could be considered.

Betteridge also clarified that the 25 per cent of affordable housing is due to a 2016 policy and does not necessarily reflect the current needs of the community. It is a target rather than a requirement.

"And it's meant across the city," Betteridge said. "And it doesn't mean that every individual development has to achieve that 25 per cent target. ... The commitment to what is going to be put forth by the developers on actual affordable, or at least attainable housing, is at the developer's discretion.

"There's a lot of questions on affordability and what this means in the context of this development," Betteridge went on to say. "If council desires more information with respect to affordable in the context of this development, I would recommend that council defer and seek (a) follow-up information report from staff and the developer."

That suggestion was moved by Coun. Jo-Dee Burbach and supported by nearly all of council. Coun. Geza Wordofa and Coun. Bonnie Henderson did not support the motion. Coun. Brad Beatty was absent.

A follow-up report will be presented to council on possible affordable housing in the context of this subdivision, as well as the scope to which council can get more environmental requirements, at a later date.

Smile Cookie campaign raises nearly \$25,000 for local mental-health supports



Megan Adair, co-owner of the Tim Hortons on Huron Street, and Lisa MacDonald, owner of the Tim Hortons locations on Ontario Street and Erie Street, teamed up to run a successful Smile Cookie campaign at the end of last year, donating \$24,998.90 to United Way Perth Huron towards mental-health services in Stratford. John Wolfe, the local United Way campaign co-chair, accepted the donation on the United Way's behalf. (JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

The past and future of Stratford's Grand Trunk Railway locomotive repair shops



Former museum general manager and current communications liaison on the Grand Trunk Renewal ad-hoc committee John Kastner led a seminar at the museum on Jan. 6 to provide residents with historical background and updates on the progress of the city's Grand Trunk Renewal project to build a community hub in the old Grand Trunk Railway locomotive repair shop in downtown Stratford and develop the surrounding 18-acre property. Many exciting updates were shared during the seminar, including an upcoming city council decision over whether to move the Stratford Public Library to the new Grand Trunk Community Hub once it's complete. (JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

Glow and Throw sweeps up high attendance

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Glow in the dark curling became a hit during Lights on Stratford.

The Stratford Country Club partnered with Destination Stratford to bring Glow and Throw to the Lights On Stratford Winter Festival of Lights event for 2024/2025. The country club's Glow and Throw sessions offer the opportunity to drop in and try out glow-in-the-dark curling.

Jessie Jacob, certified wedding planner and event and hospitality manager, said Destination Stratford proposed the idea to the club in the summer of 2024.

"Destination Stratford has been great," Ja-

cob said. "They're definitely wanting to try new things and throw out some new initiatives to get people involved in sport tourism as well as just getting locals and more people from outside of Stratford to Stratford during the winter months to help support our tourism in Stratford."

Each session holds a maximum of 32 participants. When Glow and Throw began on Dec. 13, 2024, the attendance was at half capacity. Now, most drop-in sessions have been full.

The Stratford Country Club was to host a bonspiel on Jan. 18, but the bonspiel did not have enough registration. Instead, the club will hold more drop-in sessions that day, and the afternoon slot is already full.

"I would 100 per cent say it's due to price, probably," Jacob said. "The drop-in sessions are only a dollar as they are all sponsored by local businesses, so it gives people a chance to try it for a fairly reasonable price, where the bonspiel was \$50 per person or \$200 a team, so a different price-point comparison."

She added the drop-in sessions are much shorter than a bonspiel would be.

"Bonspiels take up the majority of your day, where these drop-in sessions are two hours or an hour and a half," Jacob said.

Those of all ages are trying out Glow and Throw, and the Stratford Country Club received positive feedback.

"The majority of them are super happy and they always have lots of fun out there,"

said Charlene Louwagie, assistant event and hospitality coordinator. "We've had a couple of curlers this past weekend as young as ... a three-year-old on the ice, so it's just super nice to have the entire family out there doing something fun together."

Glow and Throw will hold sessions from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 7:30-9 p.m. on Jan. 18. All participants must bring clean, indoor shoes for Glow and Throw, and those under 16 require a helmet. Wearing neon and white clothing is encouraged for a fully illuminated experience.

More information can be found by visiting stratfordcountryclub.ca/glow-throw.

HAVE A COMING EVENT COMING UP?
 Let us know!
 Contact: stratfordtimes@gmail.com or call 519-655-2341

Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW

Dec. 15 Clayton Lewis, Embro	\$50.00
Dec. 16 Ross Marshall, St. Marys	\$50.00
Dec. 17 Mary Arnett, Ilderton	\$50.00
Dec. 18 Rod Shantz, Stratford	\$50.00
Dec. 19 Patricia Skinner, Stratford	\$50.00
Dec. 20 Carolyn Klomp, St. Pauls	\$50.00
Dec. 21 Donna Kittmer, Lakeside	\$200.00
Dec. 22 Sandra Hammond, St. Marys	\$50.00
Dec. 23 Edna Black, St. Marys	\$50.00
Dec. 24 Nancy French, Sebringville	\$50.00
Dec. 25 Lynn Ann Van Middel Koop, St. Marys	\$1,000.00
Dec. 26 Darryl Ehnes, Shakespeare	\$50.00
Dec. 27 Jolene Parr, St. Pauls	\$50.00
Dec. 28 Brad & Michele Polley, Ilderton	\$200.00
Dec. 29 Lula Koert, St. Pauls	\$50.00
Dec. 30, Russ Barker, St. Marys	\$50.00
Dec. 31 Barb Dawson, Dresden	\$50.00
Jan. 01 Phil Elliott, Woodstock	\$50.00
Jan. 02 Cleo Smith, Stratford	\$50.00
Jan. 03 Ann Marie Hunt, Stratford	\$50.00
Jan. 04 Joe Pickering, Stratford	\$200.00
Jan. 05 Lynne Darling, St. Marys	\$50.00
Jan. 06 Glen Shackleton, St. Marys	\$50.00
Jan. 07 Sue Bain, Stratford	\$50.00
Jan. 08 Jamie Turvey, Embro	\$50.00
Jan. 09 Daniel Dunsmore Jr., Tavistock	\$50.00
Jan. 10 Benny Langlois, Bowmanville	\$50.00
Jan. 11 Peggy Parks, Clinton	\$200.00

2025 CALENDARS ARE GOING QUICKLY

 **Franklin E. Hinz**
 196 Ontario Street, Stratford
 519-273-1633

Get ready for a sweet adventure with Wellspring Stratford's Just Show Up! program

JULIA PAUL

Times Correspondent

Wellspring Stratford is hosting their third exciting activity for the Just Show Up! program, and it's a sweet one!

Wellspring Stratford continues to make a positive impact by offering unique programs for children with a parent or guardian affected by a cancer diagnosis. As part of their Just Show Up! initiative, the organization is hosting its third activity: a treat-making session led by Chef Lucy Dillinger at the Local Community Food Centre (CFC). On Saturday, Jan. 25, children aged six to 14 are invited to join the fun and bake delicious treats from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at 612 Erie St.

The Just Show Up! program, led by Wellspring Stratford's social workers, is designed to help children build supportive friendships and reduce feelings of isolation. Through various activities, the program fosters fun and social engagement in a safe, welcoming environment. The treat-making session is the latest example of how the initiative encourages creativity and connection among participants.

All Just Show Up! programs and activities are free of charge, ensuring they are accessible to all children who wish to participate. By offering meaningful and inclusive opportunities, Wellspring Stratford remains dedicated to supporting families impacted by cancer, and creating a sense of community and care.



Just Show Up!

Saturday, January 25, 2025
 1:30pm-3:30pm
 The Local Community Food Centre, 612 Erie St. Stratford, ON

Just Show Up! program is for children 6 to 14 years old who have a parent, guardian or grandparent impacted by a cancer diagnosis. This program gives children the opportunity to form supportive friendships and reduce isolation through various activities and fun socialization. All Just Show Up! programs and activities are free to participate.

Please join us for our next event!

The Local Community Food Centre

Chef Lucy Dillinger will be guiding participants in making delicious treats!

Join us on Saturday, January 25th, 2025
 from 1:30pm-3:30pm

The Local CFC is located at 612 Erie Street in Stratford, Ontario

For more information or to register, please contact Lisa Stacey at lisa@wellspringstratford.ca or call Wellspring Stratford at 519.271.2232



Reality? Reaily check

Canadian newspapers are powered by journalists, not AI. They check the facts so you can trust what you're reading.

nationalnewspaperweek.ca



Stratford author remembered as more than just a writer

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Messages of condolences from Stratford-area residents continue to pour in following the death of author Andrew Pyper.

The Festival City native, who has called Toronto home for years, passed away last week of complications from cancer at the age of 56. His first novel, *Lost Girls*, started a career of award-winning thrillers which has continued to this day. He published a total of 14 novels, several of which are award-winners and best-sellers.

This writer, while not a close friend of Pyper, played many rounds of golf with him at the Stratford Country Club, where his family spent many hours. One of his oldest and dearest friends is Larry McCabe, a Stratford city councillor and owner of Pazzo and Bouffon restaurants.

The Times reached out to McCabe, who first met Pyper when the two played Rotary Hockey in Stratford. McCabe's Facebook post was how many Stratford residents heard the sad news.

"I just pulled up a picture of us playing on Morris Plumbing back in the day. He stands so tall and confidently; that was kind of my first reaction to Andrew. He was always very secure with what he was doing and did it all very well," McCabe said.

McCabe added anyone close to Pyper adored him because of his personality.

"He was so funny and smart, up for a game and mischief, and was so much more resilient than the rest of us. He was a talent and I knew he was going to go far. He really taught me to aspire. I would be a completely different person had I not met him."

He added Pyper was respectful and easy to be around, something McCabe said was a result of a solid family unit.

"Having seen that household and having spent a lot of time on Joffre Street in the basement getting up to no good, having conversations with Dr. Pyper and the rest of the family, they weren't sure what to do



Andrew Pyper (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO) was born in Stratford in 1968 and passed away last week of complications from cancer.

with me, but they were always respectful and graceful."

McCabe said he knew for about a year his old friend wasn't well, but added Pyper wasn't totally forthcoming with specific details.

"He kept things close to his chest. He was very much focused on his family. I was surprised at the end. I thought of him as indomitable and thought he would overcome. Unfortunately, that isn't the case here. He was in his prime as a writer and a person."

Pyper attended McGill University where he studied English literature and graduated with both an Honours BA and a Master's degree before chasing a law degree at the University of Toronto. He was called to the bar in 1996, but McCabe explained anyone who knew him well assumed he would never actually become a member of the bar and practice law.

"He was always going to be a writer. That was clear and that was his vision. Everybody was happy when he had his first publication of *Kiss Me* and expected he



Andrew Pyper, back row middle, and Larry McCabe, second from the right in the second row, began their decades-old friendship when playing Rotary Hockey in the 1980s. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

would do exactly what he did: write books.

"I think he became one of the most important writers of the last 20 years in Canadian literature. The quality of his work is incredible. He is a literary craftsman of some note, but the genre he chose is the thriller and that doesn't necessarily get the kind of respect it is due."

McCabe added books like *The Demonologist* provided readers with such fright at moments and Pyper was a master of writing thrillers.

The *Demonologist* was published in 2013 and was also translated and published in Greece, Holland, Bulgaria, China, Poland, Türkiye, Taiwan, Spain, Russia, Italy, Brazil, Japan, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and France. The novel's film rights are held by Oscar-winning director and producer Robert Zemeckis and his company ImageMovers, and Universal Pictures.

McCabe said a memorial is planned in Toronto and donations can be made in Pyper's memory to Tree Canada at justgiving.com/campaign/andrewpyper. A celebration of life is in the works for Stratford at a later date.

"I'm hoping we can find some way of memorializing Andrew in this community. He is such an important artist and grew up in this community. His memory will grow as the years pass by. He had such a brilliant mind for literature and there are two books yet to be published."

McCabe believes his friend was concerned about his family, working right up until the end of his life.

"He was a remarkably resilient and dedicated person and it's lovely to see the heartwarming stories about Andrew. He touched a lot of people."

Pyper's obituary can be found at cremationcare.ca/tribute/details/628/Andrew-Pyper/obituary.html#tribute-start.

Queer Book of the Month Club

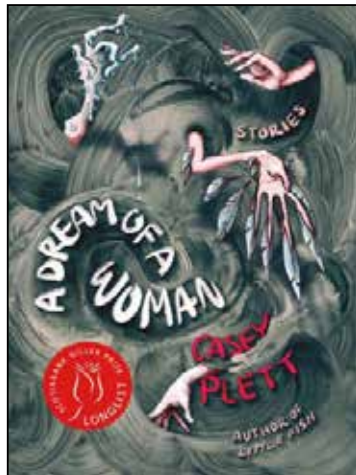
ALIDA LEMIEUX

Stratford Public Library

A Dream of a Woman, by Casey Plett
@SPL: FIC Plett

A Dream of a Woman is the second short story collection by award-winning trans Manitoban author Casey Plett. It's comprised of two novellas and six shorter stories all about trans women seeking love, happiness, and stability. Longlisted for the 2021 Giller Prize, this is a raw, melancholy, character-driven collection with glimmers of hope and joy.

In *Perfect Places*, Nicole slogs through the world of online dating in Windsor, hooking up with a nice man whose sexual fetish she can't get past. Nicole returns in *Rose City*, *City of Roses*, penning a pandemic letter to her deceased friend, Sue. In *Enough Trouble*, Gemma, hard up for cash and a place to stay after burning many bridges, takes refuge in her prairie hometown with Ava and Olive. There,



Gemma glimpses the kind of life she always dreamed of: "a life where she woke next to a good woman and they went peaceably about their days and the evening spread wide between them and friends, sweet and trusted friends" (p. 228).

Readers who usually prefer novels, including fans of Miriam Toews and Joshua Whitehead, will find something to sink their teeth into here. The novella *Obsolution* is broken up into five parts, allowing the reader to settle in with its characters throughout the book. We grow with 20-something David, playing Smash and partying with roommates in Portland to her rebirth in New York as a newly transitioned woman trying to make her way and reconcile old traumas. Recurring themes of sex, addiction, relationships, and "coming home" knit the stories together, delivering numerous gut punches along the way. Plett writes her versions of Portland, New York City, Windsor, and small-town Manitoba with gritty nostalgia, and you'll feel you've lived in all these places too.

Weekend Quiz

By Stewart Grant

- 1) How many combined years have Pierre Trudeau and Justin Trudeau been Prime Minister of Canada?
- 2) How do you spell the last name of the current Conservative Party of Canada leader?
- 3) What are the two zodiac signs for January?
- 4) How do you write 2025 in Roman Numerals?
- 5) What four countries comprise the United Kingdom?
- 6) Hydrogen is the most common element in the universe. What is the second most common element?
- 7) What is the Japanese word for "hello"?
- 8) What has been the most common baby girl name in Canada for three years in a row?
- 9) What has been the most common baby boy name in Canada for three years in a row?
- 10) True or false: the rate of left-handedness in Canada is higher than the world average of 10%.

This week's answers are found on pg. 34

Our Buildings Tell a Story: The Theatre Albert Part 1, the vaudeville years

PAUL WILKER AND GORD CONROY

Times Contributors

The Avon Theatre evolved from vaudeville through movies to musicals and plays.

In a Herald news article from 1900: "The property at the corner of George and Downie Streets recently occupied as a fruit shop has been torn down to make room for the Brandenberger opera building. This new building is being put up as rapidly as possible and is expected to be ready for the fall season."

Albert Brandenberger, a Stratford citizen and reputedly a theatre man of some considerable experience, had long wanted to establish a proper theatre in his hometown, an ambition ignited, as it were, by the fire in 1897 that destroyed the old town hall and with it the only performance hall in Stratford worthy of the name.

For years, Brandenberger had been bringing theatrical companies to Stratford and staging shows in the old city hall on the same site as present-day city hall. After the fire, Brandenberger was left with no place to have shows so he planned to build his own theatre. His original plan was to erect an opera house on the property belonging to his family between Erie and Wellington Streets. It would accommodate 800 people and there would be one gallery. Frontage was to be on Wellington with the stage entrance on Erie. However the plans changed and Brandenberger decided to acquire the building site at 99 Downie St. and purchased it for \$1,600 from Mary Patterson, grandmother of Tom Patterson, founder of Stratford's Shakespearean Festival.

The construction of the building began in 1900. Brandenberger named the



Theatre Albert 1901 - 1911 Stratford-Perth Archives

(STRATFORD-PERTH ARCHIVES PHOTO)

The former Theatre Albert, now the Avon Theatre, was once the largest and finest theatre in western Ontario.

building Theatre Albert after himself or after Queen Victoria's consort or both. The new theatre, although not completed, opened on Jan. 1, 1901 with *A Female Drummer*, the first stage show in the city's first legitimate theatre.

Theatre Albert was now the largest and finest theatre in western Ontario, becoming a centre of entertainment and a regular stop for touring productions. The famous Canadian troop, the Marks Brothers (not the American Marx Brothers) were regulars at the theatre. Others were The Westminster Abbey choir of

London, England; John Griffith, a noted Shakespearean actor in *Macbeth*, and Sir John Martin-Harvey, who was an English stage actor. Other greats of the day also performed at the theatre. They included Maude Adams, who achieved her greatest success as *Peter Pan*, and Elsie Janis, who was a headliner, comic and singer on Broadway and London in vaudeville.

The Herald carried this description: "The opera house has a colonial front with three front entrances, the middle entrance to the auditorium and the others



Maude Adams as Peter Pan

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Maude Adams, pictured here as Peter Pan, was one of the many greats that came through Theatre Albert's doors.

to the office and second balcony, respectively. There are entrances to two small stores, one on each corner. It is decorated with four terra-cotta pillars and a cornice of galvanized iron projecting over the sidewall. Immediately over the main entrance is a small balcony reached by way of the first balcony within. The building consists of a basement, first floor and two balconies, with the two stories being underneath the first balcony. About 1,500 people can view the productions on the stage which is 60 feet by 39 feet and fitted with the latest appliances. The dressing rooms are underneath the stage and then we have two boxes, one on either side of the auditorium. The building is heated with steam and ventilated in the most approved modern way with new electric lights."

By 1910, Brandenberger had enlarged and improved the building, giving most of his attention to the interiors. There was an orchestra pit of modest size, part of it taken up by a storm water culvert that conducted Romeo Creek diagonally under the building, as it does today. The auditorium decor, as it emerged from the 1910 refurbishing, was vaguely akin to Edwardian style, with bas-relief touches. Brandenberger commented that "My stage is one of the largest and finest in Canada" and said that the upholstered seats "were the best I can buy." The exterior façade was of little architectural merit. At this time there were stores on either side of the theatre that eventually became part of the theatre in 1967.

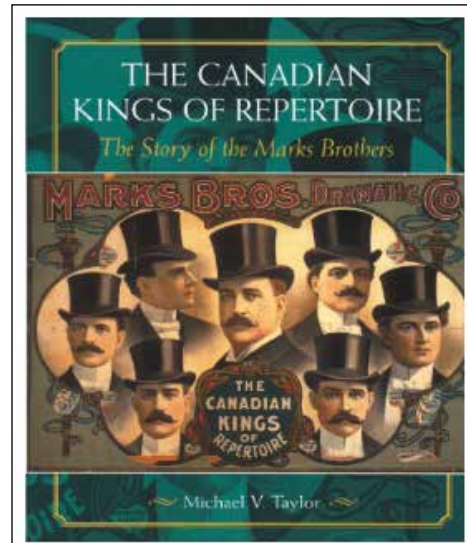
For more on the Theatre Albert, read Part 2: The Griffith and Majestic Theatres in a later edition of the Times.

Text provided by the Stratford-Perth Archives. For more on our buildings visit www.streetsofstratford.ca



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

A Female Drummer opened on Jan. 1, 1901 in the Theatre Albert. It was the first stage show in the city's first legitimate theatre.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Michael V. Taylor's *The Canadian Kings of Repertoire: The Story of the Marks Brothers* details the Canadian brothers – not to be confused with the American Marx Brothers – who were one of the great troupes to perform at Theatre Albert.

Stratford Fire Department receives nearly \$16,500 for cancer-prevention measures

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Fire Department is one of the recipients of the Ontario government's newly launched Fire Protection Grant.

The Province of Ontario announced in a Dec. 19 press release it will invest \$30 million over three years to provide 374 municipal fire stations with funding for cancer-prevention measures for firefighters. The Fire Protection Grant is the first-ever grant in Ontario recognizing cancer prevention for firefighters. The Stratford Fire Department received \$16,460 for the city's two stations.

"It's wonderful because it shows the province and municipalities are recognizing the increase of cancer in the firefighters," said Fire Chief Neil Anderson.

About 50-60 firefighters die from cancer annually in Canada with half of those firefighters in Ontario. Firefighters are exposed to carcinogenic substances such as PFAs, sulphides and alcohol substances. Building materials such as plastics are also becoming more carcinogenic.

"This stuff gets caught in our firefighting gear, our equipment, our tools and has to be cleaned properly," Anderson said.

The Stratford Fire Department's cancer-prevention measures include cleaning the gear, showering after exposure to fire and other harmful substances, having additional gloves and flash hoods, and keeping a second set of clean fire gear on the trucks for firefighters to change so they don't bring the chemicals into the truck.

Anderson said firefighter schools and colleges made cleaning gear a standard practice and he sees it with new recruits.

"Years ago, dirty bunker gear, firefighting gear used to be considered a badge of honour," he said. "Now, they would never think twice about wearing dirty bunker gear. They want to get the carcinogens out of their gear."

Anderson wants to use the grant funding towards a new extractor to have more convenient gear cleaning for his team.

"We can clean in-house without having to contract our cleaning out to an external organization. It also reduces your carcinogens," he said.

As fire gear expires every 10 years, the

Stratford Fire Department ensures each firefighter has new gear every five years. Last year, the fire department received more than \$47,000 from Firehouse Subs

Public Safety Foundation of Canada for 10 new sets of gear.

January is Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month.

STRATFORD **TIMES**

"I know the paper is free, but can I get a subscription anyways?"

Yes. We understand that some people might like the convenience of the Stratford Times arriving at their home (located near or far) through Canada Post, so we do have subscriptions available for this purpose.

The price for a subscription is \$51.43 + GST = \$54.00

To subscribe, please e-transfer granhavenmedia@gmail.com and include your full mailing address in the comments, or send a cheque with mailing address to Grant Haven Media, PO Box 2310, St. Marys, ON N4X 1A2.



We have a plan that's connecting Ontario

We're building new roads, highways and bridges to shorten your daily commute by up to an hour and keep our economy moving forward.

We're also leading the largest public transit expansion in North America to connect growing regions.

All so you can get around faster, safer, easier

See what we're building in your community at ontario.ca/builds

Paid for by the Government of Ontario

Ontario 

Little Leaf celebrates four fantastic years in Stratford

JULIA PAUL

Times Correspondent

Stratford's very own Little Leaf Cannabis Co. Inc. celebrated its fourth anniversary in December 2024.

"It's (lasted) a lot longer than what we thought it was going to be," joked Paul Thompson, co-owner of Little Leaf.

When Little Leaf opened in 2020, they started with 700 Stock Keeping Units (SKUs), an alphanumeric code assigned to each unique product in store, and an uphill battle. The newly rolled out regulations were stringent and, to this day, do not allow cannabis advertising. There was a large population of people who did not know what legal cannabis was going to look like and a plan for a maximum of four cannabis stores in Stratford.

Fast forward to today and there are now nine cannabis shops in Stratford, but business is booming.

"The main progression has been inventory," said Thompson. "When we opened the store, we had 700 SKUs in

total ... now we have over 5,000 SKUs. I believe that 5,000 number allows us to diversify, so that when you walk into our store, you get a selection of choice."

At Little Leaf, customers are like family and the education of legal cannabis is a main priority.

"I was a really late consumer to cannabis" said Leanne McPhie, the other co-owner of Little Leaf. "I used it a lot for wellness, and I just wanted to make sure that we had the ability to share the fascinating plant that it is with as many people as we could."

What makes Little Leaf unique is their passion for supporting local craft-cannabis producers.

"There's a craft designation in our industry ... meaning it was grown in a space smaller than 10,000 square feet. Everything is hand-trimmed, packaged and hung to dry. Those might not seem ... very impactful ... but speeding up that process can be detrimental to the quality of the product," Thompson said.

"A manufacturer, their whole goal is to



Paul Thompson and Leanne McPhie are gleefully delighted to celebrate their fourth-year anniversary at Little Leaf Cannabis Co. Inc.

(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

get as much product out there as much as possible; ... they are there for the product. The smaller, licensed producers are there for the consumer. They are there to take their time, hands-on approach, hand-trimming the flower ... using local techniques ... to get that product."

The future for Little Leaf is bright. With plans of expanding and adding more stores in Stratford, expect to see the town painted purple – Little Leaf's signature colour – with the success of this friendly, unique, local cannabis shop.

Unmatched Winter Savings – Your favorite rides under \$30K @ STRATFORD NISSAN

<p>2014 Mini Cooper S</p> <p>\$ 13,495 + HST & lic LOW KMS - 96,964 KM</p>	<p>2018 Nissan Micra</p> <p>\$ 13,495 OR \$130 B/W LOW KMS - 58,307 KM + HST & lic</p>	<p>2017 Nissan Rogue PLATINUM</p> <p>\$ 17,999 OR \$266 B/W LOW KMS - 122,000 KM + HST & lic</p>	<p>2020 Nissan Sentra SV</p> <p>\$ 19,495 OR \$161 B/W LOW KMS - 101,719KM + HST & lic</p>	<p>2018 Honda Civic</p> <p>\$ 20,495 OR \$235 B/W LOW KMS - 92,044 KM + HST & lic</p>
<p>2019 Volkswagen Jetta GLI</p> <p>\$ 23,999 OR \$228 B/W LOW KMS - 87,322 KM + HST & lic</p>		<p>2021 Toyota Corolla LE</p> <p>\$ 24,500 OR \$201 B/W LOW KMS - 90,370 KM + HST & lic</p>		<p>2017 Honda CR-V Touring</p> <p>\$ 26,495 OR \$388 B/W LOW KMS - 97,165 KM + HST & lic</p>
<p>2024 Nissan Kicks SR</p> <p>\$ 26,495 OR \$193 B/W LOW KMS - 12,785 KM + HST & lic</p>	<p>2021 Chrysler Grand Caravan</p> <p>\$ 28,495 OR \$233 B/W LOW KMS - 85,938 KM + HST & lic</p>	<p>2023 Volkswagen Tiguan</p> <p>\$ 28,999 OR \$211 B/W LOW KMS - 36,232 KM + HST & lic</p>	<p>2022 Mitsubishi Outlander</p> <p>\$ 28,999 OR \$211 B/W LOW KMS - 65,896 KM + HST & lic</p>	<p>2019 Chrysler Pacifica S</p> <p>\$ 29,999 OR \$284 B/W LOW KMS - 116,202 KM + HST & lic</p>

*While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, we are not responsible for any errors and omissions. Please see your dealer for current pricing. Plus tax and licensing. Bi-weekly payments are based on an interest rate of 7.99% O.A.C. Some terms and conditions may apply.

SERVICE CONTEST: SPIN THE WHEEL! **Find Your Perfect Match: Pre-Owned Cars for Every Taste and Budget!**

Service Your Vehicle, Spin the Wheel, and WIN Exciting Rewards! BAD CREDIT... NO PROBLEM! All Credit Approved with \$0 Down. T&C APPLY, O.A.C.

NISSAN Stratford NISSAN

2001 Ontario Street, Stratford ON. 519.273.3119

www.stratfordnissan.com

STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thu. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00 PARTS & SERVICE: Mon.-Sat. 8:00-5:00

Our Service Department is Now Open on Saturdays

Wildwood Labs releases first-ever hemp stick to be sold on recreational market

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

A local hemp producer and manufacturer of CBD topicals officially launched its flagship hemp-stick product on the recreational cannabis market during a special event at Little Leaf Cannabis Co. in Stratford last month.

In honour of this milestone product launch, Wildwood Labs of Lakeside in Oxford County, just a short drive from St. Marys, celebrated at the Stratford pot shop on Dec. 13, 2024. At the event, members of the media and those who visited the store that day were invited by Wildwood Labs representatives to learn more about hemp sticks and the company that makes them.

“A lot of people are under the impression that cannabis can get you high, and of course it can if you’re smoking it or certain edibles can have a psychoactive effect if they have THC in them,” said Shane Wiebe, managing director and co-owner of Wildwood Labs. “But our product is very rich in CBD and in CBC and in CBN and CBG and all these other cannabinoids that specifically target inflammation and pain, restless muscles, these kinds of thing.

“Our product is a full-spectrum hemp product – it’s not made from marijuana; it’s made from hemp. It’s a full-spectrum product, so we do not isolate the different cannabinoids after we’ve extracted this healthy crude oil from the hemp. The benefit is now instead of just having one cannabinoid in there – maybe it’s CBD, maybe it’s CBC or maybe a little bit of both – in this case, we’re actually using



Representatives from Wildwood Labs and staff from Little Leaf Cannabis Co. celebrated the launch of Wildwood Labs’ hemp stick on the recreational cannabis market in Canada Dec. 13 with a product-launch event at Little Leaf in Stratford.

(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

the crude oil as part of the product. You could almost use it before we put it into its format as a topical cream. ... Instead of having one or two cannabinoids, I always joke we have between nine and nine million in there because there’s only about 20 (cannabinoids) we can test for right now.”

While Wildwood Labs’ four varieties of hemp sticks – lemongrass and lavender, cool menthol, warming cinnamon ginger, and extra strength – have been available on the medical cannabis market for some time, the product launch last month marked the first time customers could purchase a hemp stick without first seeing a doctor and obtaining a prescription, something Wiebe said is a huge step

toward making the product more accessible to people who may benefit from it.

“We’ve really wanted to target people who are grandma’s and great grandma’s age because there’s so much that is not known about the cannabis market; they really do think of it as a recreational (drug) ... to get high, and that’s not at all what our ethos is about. For us, why it’s a big deal is because now we can just talk to people (about it),” Wiebe said.

“Let’s say we had a conversation about it with someone at Walmart. ... Now we can educate people around us and say, ‘No, this is not going to get you high, but it will help you get moving.’ We can say, ‘Hey, order it on the (Ontario Cannabis Store) online or order it here at Little Leaf.’”

Wildwood Labs is a homegrown business started by a group of local farmers and families who planted 60 acres of hemp in Lakeside in 2020. The company not only grows the hemp it uses in its products, it also extracts the hemp oil and processes it into the hemp sticks. For Leanne McPhie, CEO of Little Leaf Cannabis Co., being able to support a local business that is innovating in the cannabis industry is an important partnership for the Stratford pot shop.

“Like us, they are a family-run business, they’re local, they truly believe and are passionate about what they are doing, and the product they have put out is an all-natural product; it’s just incredible,” McPhie said. “I’ve been using it for a while now and it works so well. I find it more effective than anything else I’ve tried. Because they are local, family owned, we need to support each other.”

According to McPhie, about 30 per cent of Little Leaf’s customer base come into the store looking for wellness products.

“It’s always important for us to be looking for products that are going to be effective for our customers that are as natural as possible,” McPhie said. ... Wildwood Labs came to us about a year ago and said, ‘This is a product we are looking to put on the market,’ and I thought it would be great for our customers.”

Currently, only the warming cinnamon ginger hemp stick is available at Little Leaf and through the Ontario Cannabis Store, however Wiebe said Wildwood Labs is hopeful the other three varieties of hemp stick will be available on the recreational market soon.

WISHING OUR COMMUNITY A

Happy NEW YEAR

From your local
Stacked Pancake & Breakfast House
925 Ontario St., Stratford, ON

WHITE BALMER SHOES

44TH Anniversary SALE

2 DAYS ONLY

January 10 & 11 - 9:30am - 5:30pm

40% OFF

ALL REGULAR PRICED ITEMS STOREWIDE

GIFT WITH PURCHASE WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

Thank you for letting us serve you for the past 44 years.

Over 50 Great Brands - ALL ON Sale!

KEEN Clarks bueno VIONIC El Naturalista JOSEF SEIBEL ECCO saucony FLY LONDON

123 Ontario Street, STRATFORD 519-271-6661

Another successful Christmas Kettle campaign at Athens Greek Souvlaki sees \$4,838.10 raised for Salvation Army

JULIA PAUL

Times Correspondent

Stratford proved its generosity again by surpassing last year's donations to the Christmas Kettle in the Athens Greek Souvlaki restaurant.

Last year, Terry Voulkaridis, owner of Athens Greek Souvlaki, went to The Salvation Army Stratford-St. Marys to request a special Christmas Kettle be placed at his store, where he promised to match every dollar that was donated in the kettle. After all the donations were calculated, both Voulkaridis and The Salvation Army were astounded at the number, \$2,000!

This year, Voulkaridis had a goal to raise even more. People came from far and wide, even as far as Alberta, to donate to the Athens Greek Souvlaki Christmas Kettle. With everyone's generosity, the total donated to The Salvation Army this year by Athens Greek Souvlaki was \$4,838.10!

"Amazing citizens of Stratford and surrounding area," said Voulkaridis. "Your big heart and generosity are overwhelming. The Salvation Army and the people you helped are thanking you. The smiles you put on children's faces and their families is precious. May God bless you and give you health and prosperity. (Myself) and the wonderful employees of Athens Greek Souvlaki are thanking you from the bottom of their hearts."

The Salvation Army provides a wide



Stratfordians donated \$2,419.05 to the Christmas Kettle at Athens Greek Souvlaki. The restaurant matched the donation for a total of \$4,838.10 donated to The Salvation Army Stratford-St. Marys. Pictured from left to right are Athens Greek Souvlaki server Pam Vermist, community and family services manager with The Salvation Army Stratford-St. Marys Jennifer Morris, local Salvation Army executive director Rick Honcharksy, Athens Greek Souvlaki owner Terry Voulkaridis and server Maria Demetriou.

(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

range of community support programs. These include a food bank, a thrift store in St. Marys offering vouchers for those in need, and partnerships such as one with Feline Friends to assist with spaying and neutering cats. They also collaborate with the City of Stratford to offer a low-income tax clinic, distribute back-to-school backpacks filled with supplies, and sponsor a summer camp in the Simcoe region for 15 children

from Stratford and St. Marys each year.

"The need is still there, it's still growing. It's just the people which we're helping has changed slightly," said Jennifer Morris, community and family services manager with The Salvation Army Stratford-St. Marys. "It's not just the people you stereotypically see as needing a food bank, it's kind of grown into more middle class."

With a 26 per cent increase in the need for

The Salvation Army's support, the homelessness crisis has significantly worsened in the recent years. Factors such as renegotiated mortgages, high interest rates and elevated food prices have contributed to the problem.

"This is a wonderful partnership and friendship that we have here," said Rick Honcharksy, executive director of the local Salvation Army. "We hope that Terry's place continues its success and our friendship and partnership just grows. Thank you for your generosity and your big heart."

"We don't always have businesses that take the lead," said Morris. "Everyone's having a hard time, and having Terry reach out to us has been amazing. It's a very rare occurrence. Having a business take time out and making space for us for a whole season, six to eight weeks, you don't normally get that."

"I was happy to arrive in Toronto in 1969 with \$20 in my pocket and a light jacket my mother knitted me," said Voulkaridis. "The Salvation Army came ... and they gave me boots, long johns, a scarf, gloves. ... I was blessed to have The Salvation Army being there for me."

"The feeling you get when you give, the smile you get when you give, the hug when you give, it's about God's love. Giving is priceless."

The Salvation Army is still accepting donations and tax receipts are now available up to and including any donations made in February for the 2024 tax season.

LEASE A 2024 TELLURIDE EX FOR

\$146

WEEKLY FOR 60 MONTHS
@ 5.29% WITH 16,000KM
O.A.C + HST & LIC.

THE 2024 TELLURIDE

Room for 8 passengers.

1%

LOYALTY RATE
REDUCTION

IN STOCK FOR IMMEDIATE DELIVERY. \$0 DOWN, SIGN & DRIVE TODAY

SHOP
INVENTORY NOW

(519) 508-5755

863 Erie St., Stratford ON
www.stratfordkia.com

STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thu. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00 PARTS & SERVICE: Mon.-Fri. 8:00-6:00; Sat. 8:00-3:00 (By Appointment Only)
T&C APPLY



Transform Your Space with iCleanse Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning!

Expert Cleaning for Luxurious Fabrics & More
We specialize in cleaning premium fibers like wool, velvet, viscose, and more, ensuring your finest carpets, rugs, and upholstery look their absolute best.

OUR SERVICES
Carpet Cleaning – Perfect care for everyday and high-end fibers.
Upholstery Cleaning – Gentle and thorough for all fabric types.
Tile & Grout Cleaning – Restore the sparkle to your surfaces.
Office Cleaning – Keep your workplace fresh and inviting.
Move-In & Move-Out Cleaning – Leave a lasting impression or start fresh in your new space!

Visit www.icleansecuc.com
 Call: 519-200-0416
 Email: info@icleansecuc.com



Meaningful connections, and opportunities to grow your career are just around the corner.



DON'T MISS OUT! BE THE FIRST TO KNOW ABOUT OUR UPCOMING EVENTS DESIGNED FOR GROWTH, NETWORKING, AND FUN.

SCAN ME 

GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH US!
 Join the Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce



Network – Build and strengthen your business network. Gain an instant list of friends. We are stronger together.

Visibility – Stand out and get noticed as an active member. The chamber helps drive visibility to its members.


Credibility – Chamber status and recognition as a community builder. Consumers are more likely to do business with Chamber Members.

Voice – The Chamber creates opportunities for introductions to government, parliament and city officials.

Grow – We work together to bring more business & customers to the area. Let's all grow together.

Community – Create a strong community. Attract new talent & help develop the area for a higher quality of life.

SCAN ME! 




CONESTOGA
 Connect Life and Learning

ACADEMIC UPGRADING
Free Tuition




- Communications (English)
- Mathematics
- Biology & Chemistry
- Intro to Computers
- CAEC Prep

130 Youngs St.,
 Stratford, ON
 519-271-5700 ext.1

www.conestogac.on.ca/subsidized-training/academic-upgrading



Key Economic Metrics

<p>Policy interest rate</p> <p>3.25% ↓</p> <p>Dec 11, 2024 -0.50%</p> <p> BANK OF CANADA BANQUE DU CANADA</p>	<p>2024 Inflation rate</p> <p>2.0% ↓</p> <p>Decrease from 2023 -2.0%</p> <p> BANK OF CANADA BANQUE DU CANADA</p>	<p>Unemployment rate</p> <p>3.2% ↓</p> <p>Dec 6, 2024 -0.6%</p> <p> Statistics Canada Statistique Canada</p>
---	--	--



New Members Welcome

➤ **AWL Partners**

Learn more about our Members 



MEMBERSHIP WORKSHOP SERIES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES WORKSHOP



January 15 2025 2PM
 Online Webinar
 Register for admission

SCAN ME! 

THE EMPOWERING WOMEN WHO LEAD SERIES
 WOMEN LEADING BOLDLY: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Thought Leadership Panel



Keynote Speaker
Morgan Knieder Patterson
 Certified Applied Practice Psychologist, Practioner, RFP-ACC, Accredited Coach, and Resilience & Wellbeing Strategist

January 22 2025
 2 PM - 5 PM
 Grayson Mills

REGISTER NOW 

Collaboratively Produced By
 

WEDNESDAY JAN 22 2025

5 - 7 pm

533 Romeo St, Stratford, ON N5A 4V3

Register Here! 

JOIN US **BUSINESS AFTER 5**

Hosted by 

FREE FOR MEMBERS

MONTANA'S BBQ & BAR

ENJOY A **FREE SPINACH DIP** WITH PURCHASE OF AN ADULT ENTRÉE



925 Ontario Street, Stratford ON

*Free spinach dip with purchase of an adult entrée. Valid until March 30th 2025 at Montana's® located at 925 Ontario Street, Stratford ON.

Alzheimer's is what I have, but not who I am. I'm just "Ruthie".

Alzheimer Society

HURON PERTH

This testimony is written by Ruthie Brown. The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth thanks Ruthie for sharing her life experience. This is one person's experience with dementia. Each person affected by dementia has their own story.

It's an honour to be able to share my journey with you. Please keep an open mind as this is my story, but it might not be the same as someone else's walk with Alzheimer's.

Allow me to give you a brief background. I am 77 years old and was born and raised in St. Thomas. My husband, Alan, and I live in Exeter, and have been married for 56 years. I am a retired Registered Practical Nurse.

I was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in February 2023.

I've often been asked how I knew that something was different than the "normal" forgetfulness that sometimes happens as we age.

A few examples of the difference for me are as follows:

1. Not recognizing what red and blue stood for on the taps, therefore not knowing which one was hot and which one was cold.
2. Not being able to get my hearing aids in the correct ear because I didn't recognize the colours indicating which one was left and which one was right.
3. Getting in the car to drive and not remembering how to start it.
4. Proof reading something I had written and realizing that I had put wrong words in sentences therefore it made no sense at all. Also, when I was talking to someone, I sometimes said something that also didn't make any sense.
5. Finding things in strange places or not finding them at all.
6. Not remembering how to start the washing machine or sometimes running the washer or dryer without adding the clothes.
7. Turning wrong burners on the stove due to not recognizing the symbols.
8. Not remembering if I completed some of my routine hygiene practices therefore repeating them once or twice or maybe not doing it at all.

At this point I didn't get alarmed. I just thought I wasn't concentrating hard enough. Then something changed. I was driving home to Exeter from London, when I suddenly didn't know where I was or how I got there. I knew where I was supposed to be but didn't know how to get there. I pulled into a parking lot and waited until my mind cleared. I'm not sure how long it took, but eventually my mind cleared enough, and I drove home as if nothing happened.

A week or so later, I had a similar incident, but thankfully I wasn't driving this time. When we arrived at our friend's house, I was reluctant to get out of the car because I didn't recognize her house or its surroundings. When my husband convinced me to go in, I didn't recognize anything about the house. Again, after some time, my mind cleared, and I continued our visit as if nothing had happened. Periodically, I continue to have more of these types of events.

Once my husband found out that this wasn't the first incident, he insisted that we make an appointment

to see our family doctor. After a memory test and a CAT scan, the doctor diagnosed me. He also strongly advised me to give up driving.

At first, I was in a state of "shock". Even though I knew that something was "off", it wasn't the diagnosis that I was expecting. Once the shock passed, I went into a bit of a "pity party". I soon realized that "negative" or what I call "stinking thinking" was not a path that I wanted to stay on.

When I was first asked to share my testimony at a church function, fear and panic set in. "Why would they ask me to do that?", I thought. How could someone with dementia be able to remember well enough to speak in front of others. Then I heard a small voice say, "Why not you?" That speaking engagement led me to share my story.

I had heard of the Alzheimer Society but didn't know much about it. When I was first diagnosed a family member suggested that I get in touch with the society. I was reluctant at first because I didn't think I was ready for that yet. I presumed that you had to wait until you were much more advanced. Later, one evening I decided to Google info about the Society. There was a wealth of information available regarding programs and to my surprise, I found that the early stage is the best time to get involved. The next day, I made the phone call. It was the best decision that I could have made.

Because of the monthly phone calls that I receive, the "First Steps" program, "Minds in Motion", and the support group for caregivers, my husband and I are much better equipped to walk this journey.

Through my own experience this far with this disease, I have written a few suggestions that are helpful for me.

- No pop quizzes. Don't ask me if I know who you are. Just assume that I don't. Please introduce yourself when you are speaking to me. Some days I might know who you are and some days I might not. You won't offend me.
- If I can't finish a sentence, please don't try to finish it for me as it might not be what I'm trying to express, and it would be frustrating for me. Just move the conversation on. Keep conversations short and simple.
- I love having visitors. Just call and arrange a time that's suitable for both of us. Keep your visits to 30-60 minutes. Long visits leave me frustrated and mentally exhausted. Please keep your conversations positive. Lift me up. Encouraging words are much better than critical words.
- If I'm walking without my walker, I tend to slam my feet down. It's because my perception is diminishing, so I can't tell how close my foot is to the floor. I use my walker whenever possible now because my balance has been affected and it helps to prevent a fall. If you see me trying to walk without my walker, gently remind me as I've probably just forgotten it.
- If I don't respond to you right away, don't assume that I can't hear you and start shouting. It's likely at that moment, I might not know how to respond.
- Please have patience with me if I ask you something that you just told me.
- Please have patience with me if I ask you something that you just told me.
- Try not to talk "Baby Talk" to me. Remember that I'm not a child. I'm just someone living with dementia.
- Please don't ignore me because you don't know what to say. All I need is a friendly smile, a kind word, or maybe just a hug.
- Try not to approach me from behind, because my peripheral vision is not as good as it used to be. Stand in front of me so that I can see you clearly. Otherwise, you will likely frighten me, and I might react negatively.
- I do seem to wear my emotions on my sleeve. So, if I get teary, it doesn't mean that I am depressed. Crying does not define me. It's just an emotion. I may also have moments of frustration. Please don't take it personally.
- Lastly and most importantly, don't put all your focus on the person with this disease. Remember the caregiver. They need all the support they can get, but likely won't ask.

There is no point in denying that our lives have changed. I'd be lying if I said that everything is "rosy" and we have it all together, because we do not. Because of our faith, family, friends, and the Alzheimer Society, I am living well with dementia.

Alzheimer's is what I have, but not who I am. I'm just "Ruthie".

Individual support, support groups, education programs, the In-Home Recreation Program, Minds in Motion®, and other Social Recreation programs are all offered virtually, over the phone, and in person.

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth accepts and welcomes new clients and volunteers. If you are in need of support or have questions about programs and services, please call one of the offices.

Huron 519-482-1482 | Perth 519-271-1910



SUPPORT and EDUCATION

First Link Learning Series

The First Link Learning Series is comprised of courses that build upon one another to help you better understand dementia, coping strategies, planning, resources, and supports.

Taking Control of Our Lives

A self-management program for people living with dementia and their care partners.

One on One Support

Free, confidential support services to individuals, families, and friends affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Support groups are offered for both persons living with dementia and their care partners. Groups provide an opportunity to discuss topics related to dementia with others who truly understand. Groups are available in Clinton, Exeter, Goderich, Grand Bend, Listowel, Seaford, St. Marys, Stratford, Wingham, and online. New members always welcome. Registration is required.

PROGAMS

Memory and Aging Program™

Developed for those who are experiencing normal age-related changes in memory or who are interested in learning more about this topic.

Minds in Motion®

An 8 week community based social program incorporates physical activity and mental stimulation for people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their care partners.

Learning the Ropes for Living with MCI®


A program aimed at community dwelling older adults experiencing Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and their close family member/friend.

Alzheimer Society **Talk with the Doc!**
Dr. Alexandra Peel, Geriatrician

Planning Ahead for Medical Decisions **1:30 PM WEDNESDAY JANUARY 22** Zoom presentation 1:30 - 2:30 pm Questions & Answers 2:30 - 3:00 pm

Register at <https://bit.ly/Doc-Talk2025>

Forward any questions to christyb@alzhp.ca or 519-271-1910



January is Alzheimer's Awareness Month

During Alzheimer's Awareness Month, Alzheimer Societies across Canada unite to challenge dementia stigma and create a community where everyone feels more comfortable talking about dementia and sharing their own experience.

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth has a variety of education events coming up.

Talk with the Doc! Planning Ahead for Medical Decisions with Dr. Alexandra Peel will take place on ZOOM on Wednesday, January 22 from 1:30 – 3:00 pm.

Dr. Peel, a local geriatrician well-versed in dementia care, will identify and discuss how to prepare for the complex decisions that people and families living with dementia and frailty may face.

Talk with the Doc, also includes a lively Q&A session with Dr. Peel after the presentation. This is a FREE event. Self-register at <https://bit.ly/Doc-Talk2025>.

An exciting half-day Safety Sessions workshop will be taking place on Wednesday, January 29th at the Burnside Agri-plex 353 McCarthy Road, Stratford!

Alzheimer Society Huron Perth has partnered with the Stratford Lakeside Active Adults to present these in-person and interactive sessions in one place! Doors open at 8:30 am and the sessions start

at 9:00 am including topics on Frauds and Scams, Fire Safety, Driving and Aging, Brain Health, Community Paramedicine Program and a word from John Nater's office on Federal Matters! Pre-registration for this free workshop is available through Eventbrite: <https://SafetySessions.eventbrite.ca>.

Contact the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth for more about these and other upcoming programs.



EDUCATION HOUR

Join the Public Education Coordinators for one-hour virtual presentations on brain health, cognitive changes and dementia. Bring your questions!

<p>Wednesday, Jan. 8 10:00 AM Your Journey of Support Starts Here!</p> <p>Wednesday, Jan 15, 1:30 P.M. Wednesday, Jan 15, 7:00 P.M. Dementia Overview</p> <p>Monday, Jan 20, 7:00 P.M. Tuesday, Jan 21, 1:30 P.M. 10 Warning Signs</p> <p>Monday, Jan 27, 7:00 P.M. Tuesday, Jan 28, 1:30 P.M. Types of Dementia</p>	<p>Monday, Feb 3, 7:00 P.M. Tuesday, Feb 4, 1:30 P.M. Brain Changes: 8 A's</p> <p>Wednesday, Feb 5 10:00 A.M. Your Journey of Support Starts Here!</p> <p>Monday, Feb 10, 7:00 P.M. Tuesday, Feb 11, 1:30 P.M. Communication Tips</p> <p>Tuesday, Feb 18 1:30 P.M. What is M.C.I.?</p>
--	--

Self-Register: bit.ly/ASHPEducationHour
Questions: 519-482-1482 or 519-271-1910

Building Dementia Friendly Communities Across Huron and Perth Counties

A diagnosis of dementia changes everything. Or does it? A diagnosis means things are changing, but it also means there is still lots of good living to be done. Do you know where to find support and connection to continue to live well on this journey with dementia?

"Thank you so much for these resources, and our talks. I felt the weight lift from my shoulders and gained much clarity. Speaking with you was massively helpful, I can't thank you enough."
-Care partner after connecting with Counsellor

"The staff and people attending the program have been very helpful and wonderful to share things with. Have made it so much easier to understand and learn to live with it."
- Person with dementia who attended First Steps education program



The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth works every day to create dementia friendly communities.

"Thank you for your work! The Zoom (Minds in Motion sessions) motivate me to actually do the physical exercises. I admire your ability to create 'community' among the participants."
-Person with dementia who attended Minds in Motion® virtual sessions

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth offers dementia education to healthcare professionals, retail staff and community groups interested in becoming more dementia friendly.

Get involved with Alzheimer Society Huron Perth. The staff: counsellors, educators and social recreation staff would love to connect with you and become part of your community.

www.alzheimer.ca/huronperth

HURON
317 Huron Rd, Box 639 Clinton, ON N0M 1L0
519-482-1482

Alzheimer Society
HURON PERTH

PERTH
1020 Ontario St. Unit 5 Stratford, ON N5A 6Z3
519-271-1910

Knowledge Changes Everything

Memory & Aging Program™

What is her name? What did I come down here for? Where did I put...? The Virtual Memory and Aging Program, reviews age-related memory changes, how to optimize your brain health, and helpful memory strategies.

The Memory and Aging Program describes what memory is, how it changes with age, and when to be concerned. Brain healthy lifestyle choices and practical memory strategies are reviewed and practiced, improving your ability to remember those everyday things – including those pesky names and things you intend to do!

The Memory and Aging Program consists of four weekly ZOOM sessions, 9:30 – 11:30 am on Thursdays: January 23, 30, February 6, and 30.

There is a fee of \$25, which covers the cost of the program workbook and materials. Financial assistance is available.

Register online at <https://bit.ly/MAP-Winter25>



STRATFORD **TIMES** SPORTS

GET NOTICED!

Email stratfordtimes@gmail.com for details on how to get your ad here and support our local sports.

Warriors take three of four points to start 2025

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Hunter Steel Ltd. Warriors earned three of a possible four points as they opened 2025 with games against two of the west's best teams, the London Nationals and Listowel Cyclones.

According to head coach Dave Williams, the two games on Jan. 3 and 5 were a net-positive.

"It was a good weekend," Williams told the Times. "I thought we played two pretty solid hockey games coming out of the break, especially given we had eight days off and only practiced a couple of times. Obviously, we would have wanted a bit better luck in the overtime (against London) but, all in all, it was a good weekend to start off the new year."

The Warriors hosted the Nationals in their first game back

following the holiday layoff in what quickly proved to be a tightly contested battle between the Western Conference powerhouses. After two scoreless periods, the Nationals finally broke the deadlock on a goal by the newly acquired Ty Moffatt less than two minutes into the third frame. However, the Warriors stayed in the game and eventually tied things up at one apiece on a powerplay marker by Colin Slattery. The goal came after Slattery finished 2024 with just one goal in his last seven games.

With both teams scoring once in regulation, the game went into overtime and, despite a good three-on-three performance by the Warriors, David Brown potted the game-winner to secure the 2-1 win for London.

Goaltender Carter McDougall made 22 saves in the Warriors' crease.

Despite only getting a single point, coach Williams credited his group for their resiliency in the third and strong effort in overtime.

"Being down 1-0 early in the third meant we were really going to have to battle our way back. Very early on, it looked like it was going to be a low-scoring game, so to stay in and get that tying goal late in the third was really good to see. And then in overtime, we were really good. I thought we carried the play and had multiple opportunities to win the game but just couldn't find that goal.

"Sometimes, that kind of thing happens where one seems to have all the momentum only for the other team to go down and score," continued Williams. "But I was happy with how we played and it's good for our guys to remember that we can play and be competitive with other really good teams."

Stratford bounced back 48 hours later when they traveled to Listowel to face the defending Sutherland Cup Champion Listowel Cyclones and, thanks to an excellent two periods to start the game, the Warriors came out on the right side of a 2-1 final score.

"I really liked how we started," Williams said. "We came out strong to start the game. Our pace of play was really good. I thought we were doing a good job managing the puck. We maybe had a bit of advantage early in the game since we had played the night before while that was Listowel's first game since the break. They seemed to get rid of some of the rust in the third and put us on our heels a bit, but overall, I was happy with how we played, especially in

the first two periods."

Despite the Warriors' strong start, neither team found the back of the net in the opening 20 minutes. However, Stratford finally broke through in the second with Drew Hodge netting a powerplay goal six minutes and 59 seconds into the period. Just over four minutes later, Dax Vader snapped a five-game goal drought to put the Warriors up 2-0.

Both goals were assisted by the returning Jonas Schmidt, who was reacquired by the Warriors from the OJHL's Leamington Flyers. Williams was understandably excited about adding Schmidt, who recorded 23 goals and 47 points in 44 games in the 2022-2023 season, back into his lineup.

"It's always great to get a guy back who is a local guy, who has been here before and who knows what we're all about. Jonas was part of our group who went to the Sutherland Cup Final against Leamington, so he has some great experience knowing how challenging that run was. He's a guy who our younger players can lean on for his experience, and he was a really consistent scorer for us, so we're looking for him to provide some more offence for us."

Tate Brenner scored the lone Cyclones goal in the third period to cut the Warriors lead in half, but the Warriors held on for the one-goal victory.

The two games marked the beginning of a jam-packed 11-game schedule this month, seven of which are against opponents either in or close to a playoff spot.

"There are strong opponents every night," said Williams. "That's been a theme from day one with our group, even prior to really seeing how everyone looked. We all came into this season knowing that our team was quite a bit different from the year before, so we were driving home that message early on that we need to be as consistent as we can. Things have unfolded in such a manner that there is so much parity in the league, that there aren't any off nights. If you're not consistent with your play, you shouldn't expect to win most nights."

With over half the season completed, the bench boss explained the focal points the team will have for the remainder of the regular season.

"The big focus is just continuing to build on how we like to play as a group. I think we want to try to have more starts to games like we had against Listowel. If you get that good first period and ideally score that first goal, the game

unfolds in a different manner than if you start a little slower and are playing from behind.

"I think we've defended pretty well as a group so far this season so we need to keep our focus on generating as many good scoring opportunities as we can," Williams said. "Goals seem to be at a premium in the league right now so if we can keep getting better at doing the things that allow us to find the best scoring chances as possible, that's what we want to keep working on."



STRATFORD Hunter Steel WARRIORS

UPCOMING GAMES

Friday, January 10 - 7:30pm
vs Elmira - Allman Arena

Saturday, January 11 - 7:30pm
at Strathroy - West Middlesex M.C.

Friday, January 17 - 7:30pm
vs Kitchener-Waterloo - Allman Arena

Saturday, January 18 - 7:30pm
at St. Marys - Pyramid R.C.

Wednesday, January 22 - 7:30pm
vs St. Thomas - Allman Arena

Friday, January 24 - 7:30pm
at St. Thomas - Joe Thornton C.C.

Sponsored by

TINA GRASBY
BROKER
519-275-7663
Home & Company

GOJHL Western Conference Standings

(Regular season standings through January 7, 2025)

TEAM	W	L	T	OTL	PTS	GF	GA
St. Marys Lincolns	23	6	1	-	47	118	54
London Nationals	20	8	2	1	43	127	99
Stratford Warriors	20	9	3	-	43	105	72
Chatham Maroons	19	8	3	1	42	146	98
LaSalle Vipers	21	12	-	-	42	121	105
Elmira Sugar Kings	19	11	3	-	41	135	101
Listowel Cyclones	19	10	1	-	39	113	87
Strathroy Rockets	17	11	1	1	36	92	89
K-W Siskins	15	10	4	2	36	100	94
Sarnia Legionnaires	11	16	2	1	25	107	138
St. Thomas Stars	10	18	2	1	23	99	151
Komoka Kings	4	27	1	-	9	65	161

Stratford District Secondary School defeats hometown rivals 6-3 in annual school hockey finals

PAIGE CAMPBELL

Times Contributor

Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) hosted a buyout hockey game for the boys varsity team at the Stratford Rotary Complex on Dec. 20, for which students were able to buy out of class and watch the game.

For this game, the boys played St Michael Catholic Secondary School Warriors. The players, students, teachers and fans were all excited for this game, knowing the boys were playing their longstanding rivals. The Stratford Rotary Complex was filled with lots of school spirit from both schools, including special appearances from SDSS's Golden Bear and Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma.

Colten Brenzil opened up the scoring with a 1-0 lead. After the first goal, the Golden Bears knew what they had to do and they showed their skill by dominating the first two periods with five consecutive goals. As St. Mike's needed to bring the score closer, the game also got more aggressive, with some big hits and penalties from both teams.

The Warriors never gave up, but the score did not end up in their favour, ending at 6-3. This game was a great way for both schools to finish off their classes and hockey games in 2024. SDSS's goals were scored by Owen Chambers, Owen Blain, Casen DeGraaf, Rylan DeBoeck, Jordan Keene and Nathan Siebert, while St. Mike's other goals were scored by Evan Ballantyne and Nolan Miller.



Evan Ballantyne releases a hard shot on net during the game against Stratford District Secondary School.

(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)

WINTER SAVINGS WITH STRATFORD KIA'S PRE-OWNED DEALS

2015 Chevrolet Equinox 1LT



\$12,995 OR **\$48/wk** + HST & lic
Mileage - 104,889 KM

2019 Hyundai Accent



\$15,995 OR **\$59/wk** + HST & lic
Mileage - 110,773 KM

2023 Kia Forte EX



\$19,995 OR **\$74/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 96,425 KM

2022 Kia Rio LX+



\$20,495 OR **\$76/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 68,581 KM

2021 Hyundai Elantra



\$21,995 OR **\$81/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 66,728 KM

2020 Honda Civic LX



\$23,495 OR **\$87/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 81,270 KM

2023 Kia Soul EX



\$24,995 OR **\$93/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 30,628 KM

2023 Kia Sportage X-Line



\$28,995 OR **\$107/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 71,632 KM

2022 Honda Civic Touring



\$30,995 OR **\$115/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 65,644 KM

2022 Hyundai Santa Cruz



\$32,995 OR **\$122/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 61,382 KM

2023 Toyota Camry SE



\$34,495 OR **\$128/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 18,508 KM

2023 Toyota RAV4 LE



\$34,995 OR **\$130/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 69,631 KM

2022 Ford F-150 XLT



\$39,995 OR **\$148/wk** + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 86,344 KM

*While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, we are not responsible for any errors and omissions. Please see your dealer for current pricing. Plus tax and licensing. Some terms and conditions may apply.

GOOD CREDIT? BAD CREDIT? NO CREDIT? EVERYONE GETS APPROVED
\$0 DOWN, SIGN & DRIVE

T&C APPLY, O.A.C.



(519) 508-5755
863 Erie St., Stratford ON
www.stratfordkia.com

SHOP INVENTORY NOW



STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thu. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00 PARTS & SERVICE: Mon.-Fri. 8:00-6:00; Sat. 8:00-3:00 (By Appointment Only)

Fighting Irish continue winning as offence stays explosive

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Fighting Irish started 2025 the same way they ended 2024; scoring seven goals and securing another victory.

On Dec. 27, the Fighting Irish hosted their final game before the holiday break and after a three-goal first period had them ahead by two on the Tilbury Bluebirds, Stratford was put back on its heels when the Bluebirds scored twice in the first five minutes and 36 seconds of the third.

Stratford took a 3-0 lead in the first with goals from Mitch Casey, Cameron Stokes and Colin Martin. Finally, the Bluebirds stopped the bleeding with their only goal of the first at the period's 6:41 mark, but in the second, the Fighting Irish retook a commanding lead with two goals less than two and a half minutes apart from Zach Magwood and Connor Hall.

Tilbury got one goal back before the second intermission to head into the third trailing the Fighting Irish 5-2. However, the Bluebirds found a burst of life when they scored two goals almost exactly three minutes apart to cut the deficit to one. Matt Fuller stemmed the tide of the

comeback with the eventual game-winner a little over halfway through the third before each team scored once in the final 94 seconds, including Magwood's second of the night with just 22 seconds left on the clock.

Jonah Capriotti earned the win in between the pipes for Stratford with 30 saves.

The Fighting Irish returned to the ice for their first game of the new year on Jan. 4 against the Delhi Flames and picked up right where they left off, jumping out to a 3-0 lead in the first period thanks to tallies by Sean O'Brien, Calvin Thomson and Matt Henderson. Thomson's goal went down as the game-winner.

Nine minutes and five seconds after a shorthanded goal by Sullivan Sparkes in the second stanza put Stratford ahead 4-0, the only blemish on goaltender Zack Weir's night came in the form of a powerplay goal by Delhi to cut the lead back to three. Weir finished the game with 36 saves to back his team to victory.

Christian Polillo answered back for Stratford two minutes later to give the Fighting Irish a 5-1 lead going into the final period. In the third, Sparkes completed the hat-trick with a pair of goals to push Stratford to the 7-1 win.



Goaltender Zack Weir makes one of his 36 saves in the Stratford Fighting Irish's dominant 7-1 win over the Delhi Flames on Jan. 4.

(FRED GONDER PHOTO)

**Check
Ontario 511
and know
before you
go**

Before getting behind the wheel, check Ontario 511 for real time local updates on snowplows, driving conditions and road closures.



Get local road updates at ontario.ca/511

Paid for by the Government of Ontario

Ontario 

SSC skaters have strong showings at tournaments



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Top left: The Stratford Skating Club (SSC) had three skaters win medals in the 2024 Stratford December Classic competition held at the Stratford Rotary Complex on Dec. 12-15. Pictured from left to right are Amy Schroeder, Mason Clemmer, and Nicole Verhoef. Schroeder placed 10th in the Star-Six Women's Group One and sixth in Star-Seven Artistic Group Two. Clemmer finished fourth in Star-Five Men's O13, while Verhoef came in ninth in Star-Five Women's O13 and 15th in Star-Five Artistic Group Seven.

Top right: Prior to the Stratford December Classic, the SSC also had skaters attend their first event of the year at the Star-One-Four Preston competition on Dec. 7 at Hespeler Memorial Arena in Cambridge. Pictured from left are Reese Manzer, Tessa Bell, and Daniela Lingard. All three skaters were at the Star-Three level, with Manzer earning the bronze medal in Group 12, Bell capturing silver in Group Eight, and Lingard taking bronze in Group 11. This was the first tournament of the year for SSC skaters.

Left: The SSC's heavy slate of medal-winners at the Preston competition on Dec. 7 also included Laura Neeb, Adele McCutchen, and Izzy Pritchard, pictured in the front row from left. Neeb earned silver in Star-One Group Two, while McCutcheon won bronze in Star-One Group One and Pritchard claimed Star-Two Group Five bronze. In the middle row are Hailey Graul, Emmy Ford, Melanie Milton, and Katerina Schimide. Graul took bronze in Star-Two Group Six. Ford captured Star-One Group Two silver. Milton finished with silver in Star-Two Group One. Schimide won silver in Star-Three Group Three. In the back row are Madeleine Milton (Star-One Group Three silver), Clara Robertson (Star-Two Elements bronze), Gracie Sutherland (Star-Three Group 10 silver), Jaida Ford (Star-Three Group Nine bronze), Bella (Star-Two Group 11 silver), Olivia Clemmer (Star-Two Group 10 bronze), and Jane McCutchen (Star-Three Group Seven silver).

FARM FOR SALE BY TENDER PERTH EAST, SEBRINGVILLE

Property: Part Lot 75, Registrar's Compiled Plan 511; Part Lot 87, Registrar's Compiled Plan 511, Part 1, 44R3225; together with & subject to interest, if any, in R114509; Township of Perth East.

Municipal Address: Perth County Road 135, Township of Perth East, no Municipal 911 number is assigned. The property is located to the North beside 911 number 4049 Perth County Road 135.

Total of 74 workable acres (more or less), systemically tiled at 30' intervals. This property is vacant farmland with one road entrance located on the North edge of Sebringville.

Tenders will be accepted until 12:00 p.m. on February 12, 2025.

Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

For tender forms contact:
Monteith Ritsma Phillips Professional Corporation
 Barristers and Solicitors
 Attention: Andrew Phillips



6 Wellington Street, P. O. Box 846
 Stratford, ON N5A 6W3
 Phone: 519-271-6770 ext. 2226

154B Ontario Road, P. O. Box 608
 Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0
 Phone: 519-348-8112

Email: phillips@stratfordlawyers.com



NOT EVERYONE TRAPPED BY ALCOHOL IS AN ALCOHOLIC

Families and friends are suffering too

Al-Anon & Alateen could help



App available

1-800-706-9833
al-anon.alateen.on.ca



1-888-4AL-ANON • AL-ANON.ORG

North Easthope's Alexis Hinds making a name for herself in competitive women's basketball

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

In the summer of 2023, word was circulating around Perth County's North Easthope Township about a teenage farm girl who was lighting up the dragster racing circuit.

Fast forward to the summer of 2024 and that same teenager, Alexis Hinds, was burning up the stats sheet in basketball. Recently, she signed on with Lambton College's women's basketball program. According to her mother, Melissa Hinds, Alexis Hinds found the love of basketball by watching her younger sister, Avery Hinds, who has always been a star basketball player herself.

It all started with the Heavenly Hoops program offered by Stratford's Bethel Church 10 years ago.

It was the start of the Hinds family's journey to loving the sport of basketball. According to her mom, after watching younger sister, Avery Hinds play her first season, "Alexis was hooked and joined the following year."

"Her first coach, Katie Kneider, was amazing and always encouraging and helped to anchor the importance of team," Melissa Hinds said.

Alexis Hinds loved playing in this program that was made up of boys and girls of all different abilities.

Her mother said she soon blossomed and she realized that both girls really enjoyed the sport, so they signed them up for the Hoops for Fun program in Stratford as well.

The following season, they tried out for the Stratford Revolution's club teams and, under coaches Tracy James-Britton and Jennifer Yantzi, Alexis Hinds began to find her space as a point guard developing her ball-handling and ability to read the court at the age of 13.

St. Michael Catholic Secondary School's senior basketball coach, Steve Goforth, watched her play a game, and had her convinced to attend St. Mike's the following year and play for the senior team under his tutelage.

From Grade 10 until this year's final high-school basketball performance as a fifth year, Alexis Hinds has become a force on the court, according to her coach. The connection and relationship she has formed with him has contributed very much to her success.

He is her biggest fan and he knows how to coach her in a way that encourages her



In a photo from a day she will never forget, Alexis Hinds stands with her proud parents, Shawn and Melissa, after signing to play basketball next season for Lambton College's women's basketball program. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

to continue striving for improvement. Alexis Hinds has always been noticed on the court. She has earned captain status for her teams and, in tournaments, she is often rewarded with the MVP award.

College coaches have approached Alexis Hinds since Grade 10, but it was Lambton College and coach Janine Day that held her heart. Day made a point of staying in contact with Alexis Hinds throughout her basketball career, often coming to games at St. Mike's and reaching out about results or offering tips.

Once Alexis Hinds focussed on her career path in firefighting, the decision became easy. Lambton College offers one of

the best fire programs in Ontario and their women's basketball team is one of the top-ranked teams as well.

On Monday, Dec. 16, 2024, Alexis Hinds, accompanied by her family and Goforth, gathered in the Lambton Lions gym as she signed to play for the team next season. A dream come true and, according to her mother, they are beyond proud of Alexis Hinds as her lifelong dream has come true.

Mom says she truly eats, breathes, sleeps and loves basketball.

From racing dragsters to sinking basketballs, a North Easthope farm girl is making Perth County proud!



Stratford Branch 008

All veterans and First Responders are welcome at the branch Tuesday mornings 10:30 to noon for a social visit at the Buddy Check Coffee. William Rothernel is available at the Buddy Check Coffee if assistance is required.

The Stratford Branch 8 Veterans Service Officer William Rothernel, with the support of Veterans Affairs Canada continues to serve the needs of all Canadian Veterans in need of assistance or advice on all service-related situations.

Call our Branch office at 519-271-4540 to speak to Bill.

804-B Ontario St., Stratford N5A 3K1
stratfordlegion008@gmail.com

HELPING YOU LOOK AND FEEL YOUR BEST!

Schedule your next cleaning by January 24th and receive a FREE MINI ZOOM WHITENING SESSION.

WHITER SMILES DENTAL HYGIENE CLINIC



Jenny Brouwer, Helaina Greb, Katie Bossers, LeeAnne Wraith and Taylore Bushfield.

20 Cooper St., Stratford | 519-276-9063

Visit www.whitersmilesstratford.com to book online.

Perth County's Sarah Wood re-elected vice president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

Most farmers in Ontario have to consider themselves very lucky to have an organization that represents them and their farming neighbours.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is one such organization made up of 51 county and regional federations, 18 board directors and 38,000 farm family members from across Ontario.

Sarah Wood from the Mitchell area of Perth County is one of those dynamic directors who, along with keeping busy farming with her family raising broiler chickens, was also recently re-elected vice president of the OFA.

Her educational history includes attending Upper Thames Elementary School in Mitchell, then graduating from St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford, followed by graduation from the University of Guelph with a four-year degree, during which she competed in varsity swimming.

She swam competitively for years and, in her youth, also took part in many 4-H projects. She also graduated from the advanced agriculture leadership training program.

Wood had a very busy teenage life. She was crowned the Mitchell Fall Fair Ambassador for 2006-2007 and was crowned Queen of the Furrow for Perth County in 2011 and 2012.

The following year she became Ontario Queen of the Furrow for 2012-2013 and represented the Ontario Plowmen's Association.

With her interest in farming and agriculture, Wood joined the Perth County Feder-



Sarah Wood and husband Chris, along with their son Logan, are pictured with their new flock of baby chicks on their broiler chicken farm outside of Mitchell in Perth County. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

ation of Agriculture as a director in 2013 and then became a director at large for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture board in 2021.

Two years later, she was voted by her peers to be an executive member and took on the role of vice president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture board in November 2023. The OFA is based in Guelph.

For a young farmer who always strived to do her best for her family and farming

neighbours, her life took a dramatic turn as she was diagnosed with cancer in September 2022 at age 33.

It was the nurse, during a routine exam, who first found a suspicious lump in her breast. She then had a series of mammograms, blood tests and several biopsies before confirmation could be given.

Wood is a fourth-generation farmer who, along with her husband, Chris, and mother Deb, was not going to let cancer get in her way.

She's also mom to Logan, who was 4 years old when she was first diagnosed.

Wood said a cancer diagnosis can be a devastating setback for young, busy farmers, but with personal grit and support from family, friends and empathetic members of the agricultural community, they cannot only survive but thrive.

Wood has done just that and never tried to hide her cancer diagnosis. She never wore a hat, wig or scarf to hide her hair loss during treatment.

She always had a smile on her face and was so positive about everything she was involved in, especially farming.

Wood, when not busy on the farm, now travels the province and sees farm operators who are struggling, but she always encourages them that the wins can always outnumber the losses.

She said she knows Ontario farmers are part of a strong, vibrant agriculture future and will be there for years to help feed and educate the people of Ontario, who continue to know their food is safe and secure.



The Wood family is seen enjoying all aspects of farming in the cab of their tractor. Sarah Wood says she considers herself lucky to have family and friends helping her do what she loves in her farming community of Perth County.



In 2025

... there will be approximately 800,000 gallons of formaldehyde buried in the ground from loved ones who were embalmed and thousands of tons of wood, steel and concrete from caskets and vaults. We understand wishes were made long ago, before anyone thought about it. But let's try to make part of our legacies a caring one.

AQUAMATION & GREEN BURIAL

... are the most environmentally gentle, clean and friendly options in Canada.

Rutherford Cremation & Funeral Services
804 Ontario St., Stratford | 519-271-5062
rutherford@jarfh.com | www.jarfh.com

Spring Works Puppet Works! brings Lights On Stratford programming indoors

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

With winter in full swing, SpringWorks PuppetWorks! has again joined forces with Lights On Stratford.

This year, however, the programming is taking a bit of a different form and will be held from the warmth of the city hall auditorium and the Stratford Perth Museum.

"This year, we are doing warm and cozy, watching family friendly film collections curated by Heather Henson, the daughter of Jim Henson. One set is called KidScapes and it's very much directed to children, and the other is called Tales of the Earth and is (for) all ages," said Eileen Smith, artistic director for SpringWorks PuppetWorks!

Heather Henson is a filmmaker, philanthropist and environmentalist, and supports puppetry across the United States. The films featured are shorts ranging from one minute to eight; in total, about 45 minutes of programming. Naturally, the films being showcased are puppet based.

The Puppet Shorts: Mini-film Festival will be held in the city hall auditorium on Jan. 10 and 11 at 4 and 6 p.m. Explore the light installations at Market Square then come in from the cold and enjoy stop-motion puppetry. Tickets are a pay-what-you-choose model with a suggested donation of \$5 for children and \$10 for adults.

At the Stratford Perth Museum, a new



The installation of Grounds for Goodness at the Stratford Perth Museum explores puppetry through the use of objects for storytelling created by attendees in a living, evolving exhibit. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

exhibit, Grounds for Goodness by Ruth Howard, will run from Jan. 10-19.

"Ruth Howard is the founder of Jumblies, which is a community theatre-based, art-creating entity out of Toronto. She has toured all over Canada and

all over the world. This particular piece is called Grounds of Goodness. It started with an idea of a post-card-sized piece where you, the attendee, can tell a story of something good that happened to you. These cards are the place to write or draw

your stories, but she also has a whole bunch of little sculptures or puppets so that you can create or enact your story," Smith said.

There will be displays throughout the museum where attendees can interact and there will be intersections of memory and stories of goodness through the heritage of the museum, an object or item that inspires, or a story that already exists that relates to an object. It is like a little scavenger hunt for stories in the museum, culminating in a living exhibition of goodness expanding on previous installations.

"It is family friendly and the nature of making stories with objects is the essence of puppetry. There are 250 different story cards that she brings and you can look at the ones that are set up, or you can create your own story of goodness to add into the exhibit," said Smith.

Additionally, there will be an artist talk on Jan. 13, embroidery on Jan. 14 and on Sunday, Jan. 19 there will be a final presentation featuring percussionist Graham Hargrove and theatre and interdisciplinary artist Varrick Grimes. Both the artist talk and the final presentation are pay-what-you-choose tickets with the suggested donation of \$5 for children and \$10 for adults.

Tickets can be purchased at the website address springworksfestival.ca where there is also an opportunity to donate in support of bringing affordable and free, family friendly puppetry programming to Stratford.

Swing into the New Year with the Festival City Big Band

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Festival City Big Band's first concert of the new year encourages attendees to shake off the winter blues and dance the night away.

The 17-piece band, led by Laurence Gauci, will host the Swing into the New Year concert at Avondale United Church on Jan. 18. The concert features vocalists Cathy Whelan and Chris Adair, and promises an evening full of music with room for anyone to dance along.

Whelan said at first, the Festival City Big Band didn't realize the ensemble would be celebrating a monumental anniversary.

"We didn't realize as a music committee when our band was brought up as being the first show in the series this year," she said. "At the time, I didn't realize it was our 30th anniversary. It makes it really special as a kick-off for our 30th year to be having this concert in January."

"As Cathy said, none of us really thought about it until we did the math," Gauci said. "Again, we are quite excited to kick off the year with a dance, which is one of the things that we've always enjoyed doing."

Festival City Big Band began performing in the summer of 1995. As there are

fewer big band ensembles these days, the group hopes to introduce about a century of big-band music to younger generations. Gauci said the band's library has music from the 1920s all the way up to the past year.

"Certainly, when you say big band, a lot of people think about that music. I don't know if you want to call it the old music or the old style and we certainly do that, but there's contemporary music," Gauci said. "I mean, music is being written for these types of ensembles all the time."

People watching the Festival City Big Band include fans who try to see their concerts as much as possible, and new attendees who are in awe by the end of the performance. Whelan loves to sing with the band and is grateful there is one in a city like Stratford.

"They are a wonderful big band and to have it right in Stratford," Whelan said. "It's wonderful and people should come out and enjoy it, especially in January when it's so blah."

Tickets are \$20 each and \$25 at the door. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. with doors opening half an hour prior. To purchase tickets, either call 519-271-7946, scan the poster's QR code, or visit www.ticket-scene.ca/events/50079.

**SHOP
LOCAL.
SAVE
LOCAL** 🍁

**Support
the local
businesses
that support
your local
newspaper.**

News Media Canada
Médias d'Info Canada

**ADVERTISE
LOCAL**

Renowned Wellesley bronze sculptor with connection to Stratford Festival appointed to Order of Canada

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

With her extended family from across the province and in the U.S. once again gathered at her rural Wellesley home over the holiday season, renowned bronze sculptor Ruth Abernethy had a lot more to celebrate this year than Christmas and New Year's.

In October, Abernethy received a phone call out of the blue from the governor general of Canada's office. The staffer on the other end of the line told the sculptor, known across the country and beyond for her work memorializing in bronze important Canadians from the past and other historical figures from around the world, that she would be appointed as a member of the Order of Canada as part of the 2024 cohort.

"It's a real honour and, to be fair, it's lovely to share the news at last because we were notified in October, and we were sort of sworn to silence. I wasn't terribly good at that," Abernethy said. "But there weren't that many people to tell. I have a few repeat clients who waited on news and mostly it was just a mention to family, but lovely to share that news at last and indeed an honour.

"... To be honest, it sounds a bit grand, but that's not wrong. I tend to just take forward steps and I'm not one to really look back. I think the career is something



Wellesley bronze sculptor Ruth Abernethy, who got her start in bronze sculpting with a commission for the Stratford Festival, will be appointed as a member of the Order of Canada at a ceremony in Ottawa later this year.

you end up with, not something you hunt down."

For more than three decades, Abernethy has been commissioned to memorialize in bronze Canadians of note who have made an outsized impact well beyond their home communities. From Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister John A. Macdonald

to Oscar Peterson and Margaret Atwood, Abernethy's incredibly lifelike sculptures give visitors to and residents of villages, towns and cities from coast to coast a reason to pause and consider their lasting legacies, good and bad.

While working in the prop department for the Stratford Festival in the 1990s, Abernethy started her career as a bronze sculptor with the commission of "Raising the Tent," a sculpture that sits outside the Festival Theatre in Upper Queen's Park. Since then, she has carved and cast numerous sculptures of Canadians wearing the Order of Canada pin on their lapels.

Now, she can consider herself as worthy of being among their ranks.

"I'm working with people who are a humbling lot," Abernethy said. "They are overachievers in their own right ... and they are hoping I can portray Canadians whom they admire. The company I keep either theoretically as portrait subjects or collaborate with in the doing are a pretty humbling lot of overachievers. The people I'm sculpting and the people that I'm talking to; you meet them at a reception here or there and there's usually a couple of pins in the crowd.

"It's a bit of an adjustment to imagine that I'm on the same guest list now. In a curious way, it is a good fit in that I was lucky enough to have family and acquaintances across the country. ... When you go from one region of Canada to the other,

you always represent from that which you come. ... I have felt that over travels for a lifetime and if I'm at an international conference or I'm in Europe, people are kind of knocked sideways by the portfolio and I do kind of represent Canada. ... You carry that with you, and it really is an honour to have that recognized in any other way beyond my own musings."

Last month, Canadian Governor General Mary Simon announced 88 new appointments to the Order of Canada, including one companion, 24 officers and 63 members. Three appointments are promotions within the order.

The Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honours System. Thanks to nominators across the country, it has celebrated the outstanding achievements and wide-ranging contributions of over 8,000 people since its creation in 1967.

"Members of the Order of Canada are builders of hope for a better future," Simon said in a press release. "Each in their own way, they broaden the realm of possibilities and inspire others to continue pushing its boundaries. Thank you for your perseverance, fearless leadership and visionary spirit, and welcome to the Order of Canada."

Though a date for the official Order of Canada appointment ceremony has not yet been announced, Abernethy says she plans to travel to Ottawa to receive the honour in person.

Stratford Honda gives back following Drive Your Community campaign



Stratford Honda donated the proceeds from their Drive Your Community campaign to Stratford to House of Blessing at the end of December. Pictured are representatives from Stratford Honda and House of Blessing as the money and food donations collected during the campaign are handed over.

Heading to the U.K. this year? Read this first

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

There's an important new step to complete before packing your suitcase and heading overseas to the U.K.

As of this week, beginning Jan. 8 to be exact, Canadians are among those who will be required to apply for and get approval for the new Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) before entering the United Kingdom.

This new requirement applies not just to those who are visiting the U.K., but also to those who are connecting through a U.K. airport.

The intended benefits of the program are to strengthen border security and to use modern technology to expedite the arrival process of those entering the U.K. The cost of applying for the ETA is £10 per person, but the ETA is valid for a period of two years (or until your passport expires, whichever is sooner) and is good for unlimited trips to the U.K. during that time.

There are two ways to the apply for the new U.K. ETA, but it is strong-

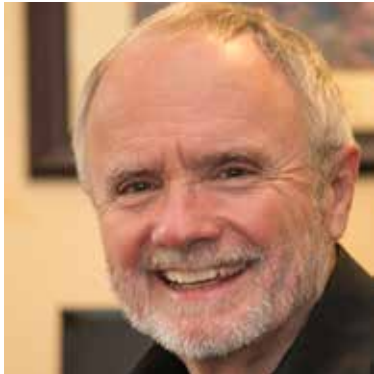
ly recommended to apply through the UK ETA app rather than through the government website. In fact, if you visit the government website at www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta, they will also push you towards the app, which is available through your app store on Google or Android.

Using the app is preferred because the camera function on your phone is helpful to take photos of your passport and of your face during the application process. The estimated time required to complete the application is 10 minutes, and most approval decisions are rendered within three business days but could be as fast as just a few minutes.

Whether you're heading to England, Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland, it is a great time to visit the United Kingdom. Just make sure that you avoid problems at the border by applying for the new Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) in advance of your travels.

Stewart Grant is owner of Stonetown Travel Ltd., with offices in St. Marys and New Hamburg.

Musings: The lights are on but ...



MARK HERTZBERGER

Times Freelance Columnist

I used to love traveling by rail. During my working life, whenever I had a meeting in Toronto, I would always choose the train option over the lunatic rodeo called the 401.

It's been a long time since I last took the train from Stratford. After Christmas I had a brief glimpse into the current state of Via Rail. My wife Yvonne and I drove her sister Janet to the station and waited with her until the train showed up to take her home. That it was going to show up late should not have been a surprise. This seems to be standard Via scheduling from all reports.

With a long wait ahead, we sat down on a bench which was



The Stratford train station, where Via Rail has its local stop.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

surely designed to discourage sitting. The wooden slats were positioned in a manner which dug them into the back of any unwary traveler. Coats were bundled and used as padding without much success.

After waiting for a while, we soon became bored so I drove back home to scavenge for snacks and reading material. When I returned, I discovered that the doors had been locked. Apparently they lock automat-

ically after the train leaves, except... the train hadn't even arrived yet. After Janet saw me and let me in, I assumed the role of Via Greeter, opening the door to admit other cold, frustrated, luggage-laden passengers. When I got tired of this, I used a shopping bag to prop open the door.

The station began to fill up with annoyed passengers and soon there was a disturbance from the far end. People had noticed a rather pungent odour which

they traced to a body sprawled on the floor – fortunately a live body and not a dead one. The police were called. I don't know the whole story here but I suspect it might be related to inadequate emergency housing for the Stratford homeless.

While we continued to wait for Janet's train, she told us about another Via experience she'd had while boarding. She asked for help in getting her heavy suitcase aboard, which the employee

dutifully did ... partially. The suitcase was put aside, leaving my 73 year old sister-in-law to hoist it onto an overhead luggage rack by herself.

The steam era is long gone. The golden age of travel is history, along with customer service it seems. We are now in the age of plastic and computer screens. The beautiful old Stratford station remains as a shell but its soulless interior is bereft of human interaction. The lights are on but no one is home.

A live security guard with people skills and a knowledge of train schedules would go a long way toward safety and peace of mind here. If customer service and caring doesn't ring a bell with the Via bureaucrats, perhaps the word "liability" will eventually blow their whistle.

Mark Hertzberger is a former social services supervisor, human resources manager, conflict mediator, and literacy practitioner. He has since freed his mind and now writes poetry and occasional opinionated columns. Mark has lived in Perth County for 27 years, the last 12 of which have been in Stratford where he resides with his wife, novelist Yvonne Hertzberger.

Addressing the loneliness epidemic



BRUCE WHITAKER

Times Freelance Columnist

Lynn, my very outgoing friend, met me at a café a few years ago while I was in Manhattan for work. After a few laughs reminiscing about our lives, she became a bit somber. She had not made one single friendship connection over the last twelve months. She was lonely in one of the biggest and most thriving cities in the world. How strange, I thought, yet it is not uncommon, I found.

Loneliness is that unsettling feeling when our need for so-

cial contact and relationships isn't met. Yet, loneliness isn't the same as being alone. You may be around others and still feel alone. You can have lots of social contact and support and still feel lonely. Especially if you don't feel understood or cared for by the people around you. Actor Robin Williams articulated it well, "I used to think that the worst thing in life was to end up alone. It's not. The worst thing in life is to end up with people who make you feel alone."

While loneliness is often seen as a problem for residents of developed countries, the rates of one in four people experiencing loneliness are similar in all regions of the world. Upwards of 20 per cent of adolescents experience loneliness. The World Health Organization (WHO) in 2023 declared loneliness to be a pressing global health threat, with the US Surgeon General saying that its mortality effects are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

The start of loneliness can be linked to major demographic,

economic and spiritual shifts during the industrial revolution and the mass migration to big cities, rising individualism and declining belief in a higher power during this time. Previously, we lived in small communities, tended to believe in a god, and invested in our own community as a source of common good.

The book *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection* suggests that humans are hard-wired to seek connection and that our modern way of living – in single households, as part of transient, fragmented communities – is at odds with where we have come from. Just as physical pain prompts us to avoid physical harm, the social pain caused by loneliness protects us from becoming dangerously isolated. Loneliness is meant to be a temporary discomfort, not a chronic one.

Louise Hawkey, a renowned loneliness researcher, points out that loneliness can lead to many negative emotions including depression, anxiety and anger.

"Gradually, our brains evolve to prioritize togetherness, and conversely, to generate an anxiety response when we fail to find it. A person desperately wants not to be lonely, but fear and anxiety have convinced them that their loneliness reflects undesirability. They are certain that they're not worth talking to, that no one likes them, that they're not a good person and that it's all their fault. The brain is being hijacked."

Some optimists point to the loneliness crisis today as a period of evolution, as a bridge during which we make peace with certain trade-offs. Our kids may grow up far from their grandparents – away from the towns where they were raised. Workplaces are networked through Zoom meetings and the occasional in-person happy hour. Friends are more often found on FaceTime than in real life. And, in the end, we will need to adjust and find one another once again.

Hopefully, these five tips will help should you feel lonely this

winter. People with loneliness are truly courageous survivors.

1. Give through volunteering. In a study of 10,000 volunteers in the UK, over two-thirds agreed that volunteering had helped them feel less isolated and more connected. Stratford has many worthy organizations, including Wellspring and the Stratford Connection Centre, actively looking for volunteers.

2. Knock on your neighbour's door. Invite them over for a coffee, a game of cards or to watch a favourite movie.

3. Pick up a paddle and get involved in the pickleball community at the Rotary Complex or Pinnacle Fieldhouse. Après coffee or beer is encouraged.

4. Find a group, perhaps through the Stratford Public Library (i.e. book club). If there isn't one to your liking, create a weekly discussion group.

5. Pick someone, anyone, and walk the Stratford Intermediate School track, hike a path at TJ Dolan Park or stroll one of Stratford's streets.

**SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US!
CALL 519-655-2341 OR EMAIL STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM**

Stepping into the new year positively



IRENE ROTH

Times Freelance Columnist

So many of us start the year off with resolutions. Some of them are unrealistic. Others are realistic but we lose our motivation in a few weeks. I have always wondered what causes that? What makes us so excited for a few weeks and then we abruptly stop?

I think there may be a few explanations for this. First, we all love new beginnings, new starts, the sparkle and hope of a new year. There's so much to look forward to and we're still glowing from the holiday season with

all the parties and gifts we purchased and received. Then there's the endless convivial and happy people around us, even in traffic.

Fast forward a few weeks, and we're back to our routines, our old mindsets set in. We are no longer as happy and motivated to make positive changes in our lives. Our credit card statements arrive and reality really hits. It's the end of the most wonderful time of the year. And our heart sinks and reality hits us hard.

Suddenly, it's difficult for us to even keep going. Thus, all our goals and resolutions get sidetracked or put onto a back burner. We start running and rushing. Our life/days at work or home are long. By the time all is said and done, we get completely sidelined and exhausted. All we can do is to try and keep going, sometimes to the detriment of our health and well-being. We become negative and unmotivated.

One may wonder "Where did all the positivity go?" I believe when our goals and resolutions are motivated from the outside

(by others or external reasons), they are short-lived because there is no internal commitment. In other words, you can't commit to your goals long term unless your mindset and values are in line with your goals.

It can be hard to start the year positively. Here are a few things you can try to lift your negative mindset.

1. Start the year with an attitude of progress, but not perfection. Don't aim to be perfect. Instead, try to make small, consistent changes. Slow but steady often wins the race.

2. Realize that progress isn't linear. There will be many fits and starts as well as ups and downs. We must accept these and carry on regardless – without the negative self-talk machine starting.

3. Challenge negative thoughts. Don't expect to always avoid negative thoughts. Instead, try to respond to the negative voices in your head with self-love.

4. Cultivate mindfulness. Live in the present moment and focus on the good things in your life.

The present is all there is. Be sure to breathe into each moment of the day.

5. Monitor and assess how you're spending your time. Are you wasting a lot of time – time that you can be using to achieve your goals? If so, change how to spend your time.

6. Even amid challenges, there's often something to be grateful for, such as a kind gesture, a beautiful sunset, or a moment of laughter. Start a gratitude journal, noting three positive moments daily. This practice can shift your perspective and help you find joy in the small things.

7. Pacing is crucial for all of us. Begin the year by setting boundaries and recognizing your energy limits. Use tools like the spoon theory to communicate your needs to others. Remember, saying no to something today might mean saying yes to something more meaningful tomorrow.

8. Practice self-compassion. Don't beat yourself up if you don't complete your goals as you planned. Instead, try to appreciate

why you are struggling and try to change your life to make space for yourself and your goals.

9. You're okay even if you don't complete your goals. This isn't a reason to feel like you can't accomplish anything. Instead, it can be a time to take stock and to realize that maybe you're too busy and need to step back from certain activities and responsibilities. There's no sin in that.

10. Make time to pat yourself on the back. It could be as simple as thanking yourself for being so diligent and responsible for all that you do in a day. Or perhaps you can give yourself a few genuine compliments. Why wait for someone else to praise you. Offer yourself some praise.

By taking these steps, you won't be struggling with a negative mindset as the year starts. Instead, try to keep your positive attitude into the new year by being kind to yourself and knowing that you are capable of doing anything you set your mind to. May this year be filled with inspiring moments and completed goals.

Web-crawling through the mountains (of stuff)



SHEILA CLARKE

Times Freelance Columnist

Here's a thought. We're drowning in stuff in all directions. It seemed like a good idea at the time! I really wanted that nifty carrier – PERFECT for organizing my other stuff. Well yeah, it's plastic – but so USEFUL! And such a pretty colour! Have you noticed you can even buy pastel pink plastic garbage cans now? Don't get me wrong, I know that consumerism is the creeping monster behind the garbage explosion – and the credit card explosion – but it's so hard to resist online store displays placed just where I'll bump into them, and sales, sales, sales!

Here are a few tips for making a difference for you, for your wallet, and for the planet.

In the kitchen:

Before you throw it out, use it up! There are amazing recipes for combinations you never thought of. I often find great recipes from other countries with my special se-



West 5, a solar-powered community in London created by Sifton Properties, will be one of the talking points at January's Climate Conversation, scheduled for Jan. 23 at 7 p.m. in Stratford City Hall's auditorium.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

cret source! In your search engine (Google, Bing, e.g.), put the ingredients you have (kale, potatoes, a can of chickpeas, e.g.) and the word "recipe." I came up with a curry, a stew and a soup – yummy and packed with all the nutrition you need.

Shop local and shop seasonal! Look for items that show Canada or even better Ontario on their labels! Keep our own farmers in business and don't pay big money for shipping out-of-season foods from far away. Make it organic if you can for added health benefits! Not sure what to do with some

foods? Check The Local Community Food Centre for creative cooking from scratch courses!

Be kind to the planet and shift as many meals to plant-based as you can. Legumes (beans) plus grain equals a full protein serving, the same as meat and eggs. A peanut butter sandwich with a salad covers all the bases (peanuts are legumes). So does that chickpea curry I found online!

Take a cloth bag, take vegetables from a bin, and add them together – WITHOUT the plastic bag in between! Only nine per cent of plastic is recycled. The rest is

ending up in microplastics in nature and in us. Current research indicates microplastics may contribute to endocrine disruption, birth disorders and some cancers (Dutchen, "Microplastics Everywhere," Harvard Medicine, 2023).

In the house:

Seriously, go thrifting. Join the rest of us! Why support continuous new resources at the expense of the environment when we already have more than we need and are filling up landfills with things that can't be recycled – like oil products, polyester, plastic, tin foil, and acrylic. For a start, buy less, but when you need something, go thrifting!

Thrifting wears a whole bunch of different hats. There are upscale vintage shops, consignment stores, re-make shops, the Re-Store, and the fun big thrift stores where you can score amazing finds! I have favourites in Stratford, New Hamburg, Goderich and Kitchener. Try it, you'll like it! (See you there!)

In your wallet:

Consumerism, buying lots and buying what you don't need, had its real beginning with television I've read (Higgs, *Collision Course: Endless Growth on a Finite Planet*, 2014). Suddenly we had a 24/7 window into lives that looked way better than ours. Advertising and marketing rose to the challenge with clever ads, pricing and product placement (like all those little goodies you find in the checkout

lane), and a thousand other ways to make you feel you just have to have that plastic organizer. The final word on stuff has to be that old, old line: want vs. need. That is such a toughie! I do try, if I don't always win. For your health, your wallet, and the planet, I urge you to take that little line with you every time you're tempted to pull out your charge card. Do I need it? Or do I just want it? We'd make amazing strides if we could make that part of our lives – easier said than done. How's your inner warrior?

UPDATES:

1. Carbon parts per million (ppm) in the atmosphere as of early January, 2025: 427.2 ppm. Safe level, 350 ppm passed in 1990.

2. Don't miss a window into the future! The January Climate Conversation (Thursday, Jan. 23, City Hall Auditorium, 7 p.m.) is about "Alternate Energy Options" through an astounding site in London called West 5 (West5.ca). It's a solar-powered community, with a variety of alternate energy options created by Sifton Properties. Derek Satnik, one of the designers, will be sharing with us. A truly exciting evening! Back to the Future!

Sheila Clarke is a Stratford advocate for the environment, of our community and of our planet. She is a member of CFUW Stratford, Stratford Climate Momentum, and the Perth County Sustainability Hub.

Perth-Waterloo Egg and Pullet Farmers pledge to continue school egg program

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

Egg and pullet farmers from the Perth County and the Region of Waterloo recently got together to celebrate a year of giving in the area.

These area farmers came up with the idea a decade ago to promote proper nutrition in schools by providing individually packed hardboiled and peeled eggs to students at no cost. There are now more than 150 schools taking part in this very successful program.

"Through the 2023-2024 school year, Perth-Waterloo Egg Farmers were able to supply 65,000 hard cooked eggs to the 150 schools," said Kayla Veldman, who farms with her family near St. Marys and helps to monitor the Egg donations. These Eggs were used in

school breakfast and snack programs, to help address food insecurity within the community. "The addition of Eggs to school nutrition programs provide children with access to a healthy source of protein to help fuel them through the school day."

Statistics show that as many as one in three children in Canada are at risk of going to school on an empty stomach. Through this program, every student is encouraged to take an egg, no matter their lifestyle or situation.

The Perth-Waterloo school egg program would not be possible without the support of their generous sponsors, which include local businesses, companies and farmers.

The funds raised and committed in 2024 will support the continuation of the program until at



Pictured is a group of egg and pullet farmers from Perth County and Waterloo Region at a recent gathering. In the front row, from left, are Erin Gerber, Amanda Cook, Bonnie DeWeerd, Sally Van Straaten, Brenda West, Pauline Neeb, Karen Wagler, Gary Wagler, Jess Graham, Laurie Graham, Gary West and Julie Wynette. In the back row from left are Josh Gerber, Mark Cook, Andy DeWeerd, Mike Van Straaten, Delmer Schultz, Mike Ready, Julie Ready, J.J. Deslippe, Rita Reynen, Brett Graham and Kyle Wynette.

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

least 2026. Local individuals and businesses can contribute by emailing perthwaterloeggfarmers@gmail.com.

COMING EVENTS Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

FRIDAY EUCHRE TOURNAMENT

January 10, February 21, March 21 & April 11; 6:30 p.m.

Stratford Legion, 804 Ontario St.

\$20 per team of two players. Each game consists of 2 deals per player. Register to game date. Anne: 519-301-0914, Dave: 519-703-6544, Legion: 519-271-4540 or online.

GARDEN STRATFORD GENERAL MEETING

Monday, January 13, 2025; 7:15 – 9:00 p.m.

Army Navy Hall, 151 Lorne Ave. E., Stratford

Featured Presentation: "Design Solutions for Small Spaces", Tom Temming, Landscape Designer, Touch of Dutch. Meeting Open to Everyone; Free Admission.

GOURMET POUTINE & BEER FUNDRAISER

Thursday, January 23, 2025; 6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Stratford Legion

Large size portion fresh cut fries paired with a pint or draft or Po. \$20/person, Kids 12 and under \$10. For tickets call legion office at 519-271-4540 or Dave Hartney at 519-703-6544 or order online.

GARDEN STRATFORD GENERAL MEETING

Monday February 3, 2025, 7:15 – 9:00 p.m.

Army Navy Hall, 151 Lorne Ave. E., Stratford

Featured Presentation: "Vanquish Invasives", Elizabeth Spedaliere, Tri-County Master Gardeners Meeting Open to Everyone; Free Admission.

KIWANIS FESTIVAL'S 2025 FEATURED MUSICAL

Friday, March 28, 2025; 7 p.m. (live & livestreamed)

Avondale Church, 194 Avondale Ave, Stratford

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" by Christopher Norton and Wendy Edwards Beardall-Norton

Early-bird registration to perform until Dec. 15 Singers accepted until Feb. 3. Great for families! All non-professional singers welcome, no audition required. Rehearsals begin in late January. Early-bird registration until Dec 15, including special family rate. Cast will receive script, music and rehearsal tracks to use during holidays. Visit kiwanisfestivalstratford.com/events

STRATFORD SCRABBLE CLUB

Anne Hathawy Residence 480 Downie St., Stratford

Meets every Wednesday evening for 3 games at the. Cost is \$1 per person to cover prizes. We resume in 2005 on January 8.

CROKINOLE CLUB

Every Tuesday 2-4 p.m.

Rec Centre, 2nd floor Ristma room Stratford

For more info call Oliver Davidson 519-508-5664

STRATFORD TIMES

Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.

Contact: stratfordtimes@gmail.com

PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

- The Community Calendar is for non-profit organizations to promote their free admission events at no charge. Event listings can include your event name, date, time and location as well as a phone number, email address or website.
- If your event is not free admission or you would like to include more details than stated above, you have the following options:
 - Coming Events Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$10 + hst
 - Coming Events Boxed Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$15 + hst
 - Display Ad - Sizes begin at a classified business card size for \$35 + hst

Community of Christ
226 Forman Avenue 519-271-4539

Proclaiming Jesus Christ
with communities of

LOVE, JOY, HOPE & PEACE

Worship with us
Sunday 10:00 a.m.

11:00 a.m. – Fellowship and
Coffee Hour

We are a Welcoming Community

Worship
With Us

Stratford Associate
Reformed
Presbyterian Church

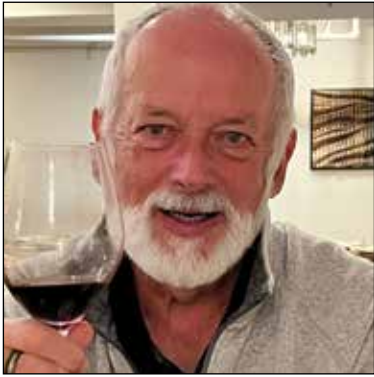
Quality Inn Festival
(1144 Ontario St., Stratford)

WORSHIP TIMES:
10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
stratfordarp.org



Invite readers to your worship services. Contact stratfordtimes@gmail.com

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The challenges of an historic town at the confluence of three rivers



PAUL KNOWLES
Times Contributor

There is a well-worn cliché about travelling in Europe: “I’ve seen enough castles and cathedrals!” Well, I am a pretty big fan of castles and cathedrals, but I do understand there can be too much of a good thing. And there is no lack of either castle or cathedral in the historic towns and cities of western Europe.

And yes, the German town of Passau does have a castle and, in fact, a cathedral, but don’t let that stop you from including it on your itinerary. There is so much more here, including a long and dramatic history of coexisting with the three rivers that meet, right here, and the frequent crises arising from that uneasy coexistence.

We were in Passau as part of our excellent Viking River Cruise, Romantic Danube. It’s probably true that the Danube can be very romantic at a time when it is flowing peacefully through Passau, but when we were there, the Danube and the other two rivers that meet here, the Inn and the Ilz, were in flood and the lowest parts of the town were already underwater.

But that, believe it or not, is one of the most interesting reasons to visit this historic town located just west of the Austrian border.

The story here is one of perseverance and community cooperation. Passau has existed for more than two millennia, founded because of the trade benefits of the three rivers that occasionally become its enemies. In medieval days, the num-

ber-one trade commodity was salt. Today, it’s tourists.

Like many of the towns located along the Danube, the community rises quickly from the riverbank into the hills round about. So, while the homes and businesses nearer the river are very vulnerable to high water, the upper levels of the community are impervious to flooding.

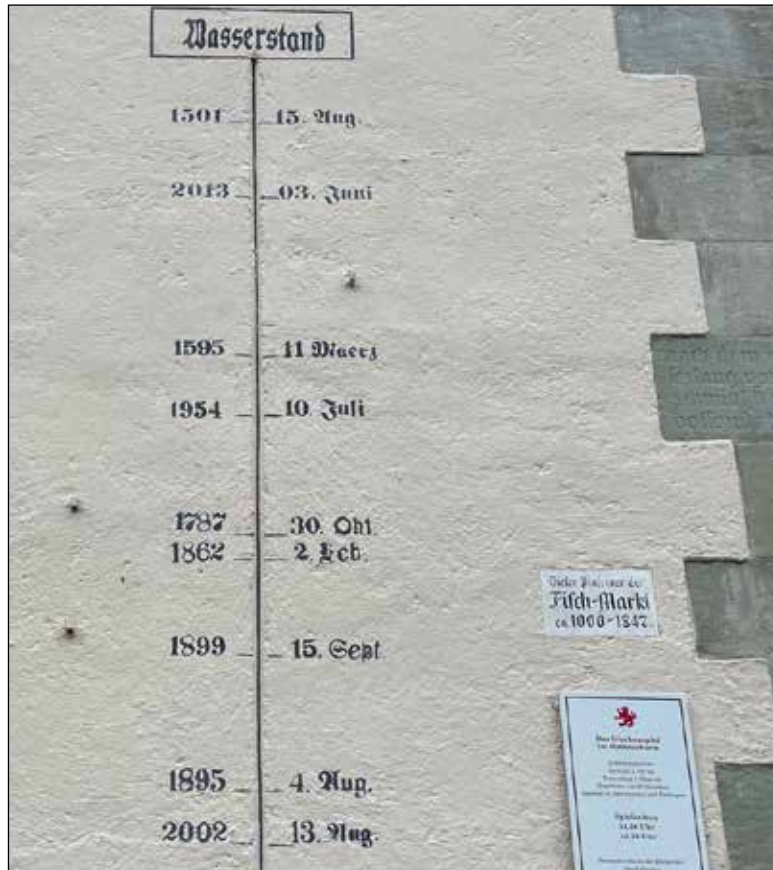
We saw dramatic examples of both realities when we toured Passau. Our guide admitted that, since the river had just started to rise, he could take us around the town – skirting some streets that were turning into streams – but that a day or two later, he personally would be temporarily confined to his three-floor apartment, as water would have risen a metre or two against his building. We saw many nearby homes and businesses barricaded with sandbags and metal flood barriers.

But then we ascended some rather steep but scenic cobbled streets to the square where St. Stephen’s Cathedral is located. And no, cathedral cynics, this is no ordinary church. St. Stephen’s is home to the largest pipe organ outside the United States, an instrument that includes 17,974 pipes, 233 stops and four carillons. I have heard it played and it is truly worth the trip. The temporary bad news is I didn’t hear it on this visit because the organ is being refurbished, a project that will extend into next year.

But the cathedral is magnificent in its own right and while you won’t hear the organ in 2025, you may be fortunate enough to hear the eight bells in the cathedral’s bell tower.

One of my favourite streets in lower Passau is the Artists’ Alley, where local artists have their shops and studios, and where they paint the cobblestones in bright colours and hang whimsical pieces of art above the street.

You can get a great view of Passau and its rivers from the Veste Oberhaus, the castle high atop the hillside on the opposite side of the Danube from the cathedral. Other



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Flood heights are marked on the walls of waterfront buildings in Passau, the German town at the confluence of three rivers.

popular photo stops include the Roman Tower, the Bishop’s Palace and the oldest church.

But be sure to spend time on the river front, contemplating the dual nature of Passau’s situation – ideal for trade in times gone by, for transportation during the days of the Roman Empire and for river-cruise stops today, but also, subject to the whims of nature and the temperament

It’s definitely appropriate the Danube was named for the great river goddess of the Celtic tribes. We learned that from Isis-Sybill Frisch, an expert on the Danube who gave an amazing lecture on-board the Viking Var. When you sail on the Danube, she told us, you are travelling on “the major river of mainland Europe,” a waterway that stretches 2,896 kilometres from the Black Forest and to the Black Sea, and passes through 10 European countries. We visited four of them on our cruise.

As we sailed on a Danube swelled by heavy rains upstream from Passau, Frisch observed, “Despite all human intervention, we cannot control the river.” The great river goddess will have the last say, and the historic high-water markings on the buildings of Passau offer dramatic documentation of her more violent moods.

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@golden.net.



The Artists’ Alley, with brightly painted cobblestones and art pieces suspended overhead.

FEBRUARY 8, 2025
STRATFORD KINSMEN





ROAST BEEF BUFFET AND DANCE
SILENT AUCTION ITEMS
DOORS OPEN AT 5 P.M.

LIVE MUSIC AND DANCE BY UPSIDE OF MAYBE
\$50.00 PER PERSON





ROTARY COMPLEX
353 MCCARTHY RD STRATFORD ONTARIO
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT BLACK ANGUS OR
CALL 519-272-6912 OR 519-274-5781

CLASSIFIEDS

Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

WANTED

I WILL PAY CASH FOR ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES – Coca Cola Pepsi any pop company, Brewery items Kuntz, Huether Labatts etc. Old radios and gramophones, Wristwatches and pocket watches, Old fruit jars Beaver Star Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs Red Indian Supertest etc. Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me - 519-570-6920.

WANTED

\$ Cash Paid \$ for your RECORDS and LPs. Jazz, Blues, Rock, Pop, Folk, Soundtracks, and more. Selectively buying CDs, Cassettes, Turntables, and Stereo Equipment. For more information: **DIAMOND DOGS MUSIC** 114 Ontario St. Stratford / 226-972-5750

WANTING TO BUY – All collectibles including sports cards, beanie babies, Funko pops and stamps. Highest prices paid. Free appraisals. Are you downsizing or need an estate clean out? We can help. Call or text Stan anytime 519-868-3814.

Fair value offered for your vinyl records, cassette tapes & hifi components. Please contact **Sound Fixation, 519-801-5421, 4 George St. W, Stratford.**

FOR SALE

TREES: Shade trees, Fruit trees, Apple, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Sweet and Sour Cherries, Apricot, Nectarines, Blueberry, Haskopp, Black Chokeberry, Grapes etc. Lots of Spruce, Pine, Cedars for windbreaks and privacy hedges, Sizes 1 to 6+.

Flowering shrubs and much more. Come check us out Mon-Sat 7:00am - 6:00pm
Martin's Nursery
42661 Orangehill Road
Wroxeter (1 concession north of Wroxeter on Belmore Line)

For sale, ash firewood 14–16 inch length. Seasoned minimum one year. Stored in shed to keep dry. Pick up \$115 per cord. Delivery available in Stratford area. Also, saw cut ash lumber and oak, elm, ash, and poplar live edge for your woodworking projects. Call Don at Krantz Machine and Welding 519-271-8839.

Editorial content in newspapers is trusted more than any other format.



More than half of Canadians say they trust news content from print/digital newspaper outlets - ahead of TV, Radio and Social Media outlets.

#Newspapers247



RUN YOUR CLASSIFIED AD HERE!

JUST \$10 + HST PER EDITION Contact: stratfordtimes@gmail.com or call 519-655-2341

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.STRATFORDTIMES.COM

NISSAN

2025 KICKS PLAY S

LEASE FROM \$299 MONTHLY WITH \$2,129 DOWN.

THAT'S LIKE PAYING **\$69** WEEKLY AT **4.99%** APR FOR 39 MONTHS O.A.C.

PLUS, QUALIFYING NISSAN OWNERS MAY RECEIVE UP TO **\$500** IN LOYALTY BONUS

WINTER READY EVENT

Stratford NISSAN

2001 Ontario Street, Stratford ON
519.273.3119
www.stratfordnissan.com

STRATFORD NISSAN

STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thurs. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00
PARTS AND SERVICE: Mon.-Sat. 8:00-5:00. FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, OUR SERVICE DEPT IS NOW OPEN ON SATURDAYS

Riddles

What do snowmen eat for breakfast?
Frosted flakes!

Why did the snowman go to therapy?
He had a serious meltdown.

What do you call an old snowman?
Water.

How does a snowman get around?
By riding an icicle!

What do you get if you cross a snowman with a dog?
Frostbite!

Why don't mountains ever get cold?
They wear snowcaps!

What did the big furry hat say to the warm scarf?
"You hang around, I'll go on ahead."

How does a penguin build its house?
Igloos it together.

Why did the boy keep his trumpet out in the snow?
Because he wanted to play cool jazz!

What's a snowman's favorite drink?
Ice tea!

Sudoku

			4	5				
1			6					4
				2	8	6	7	
3		6	1			4		
2	1	8						
				9	2			
						2		9
5			4	7				8

Solutions on page 34



Pet of the Month



HIBISCUS

Meet Hibiscus, a three-year-old sweetheart with a big heart and an even bigger love for cuddles! This affectionate girl adores head scratches, tasty meals, and being the center of attention. With her outgoing and playful personality, Hibiscus is sure to bring warmth and joy to any home. She's the perfect companion for someone looking for a loving and loyal feline friend who will happily snuggle up by your side. If you're ready for a lifetime of purrs and affection, Hibiscus is ready to be your perfect match. Apply today at kwsphumane.com to give her the forever home she deserves!



Word Search

EMBRACING THE NEW YEAR

Q	T	E	S	O	P	R	U	P	K	Z	H	Y	Z	N	R	P	X	P	C
V	U	N	D	W	Y	G	F	U	U	I	L	Y	V	P	C	Z	Z	Z	D
Z	P	J	B	X	T	A	T	N	E	F	O	T	H	C	H	L	Z	E	T
E	X	D	V	U	V	F	R	A	P	D	F	H	E	D	J	U	K	C	J
I	Q	D	H	N	D	L	A	E	Q	U	U	W	Y	C	J	I	V	Y	H
N	Q	C	J	V	P	G	B	E	G	K	J	T	J	I	N	S	U	D	F
O	A	Y	F	D	E	R	U	Y	O	Z	V	P	I	D	T	A	S	K	H
H	K	T	P	J	O	T	N	M	Q	Z	J	G	N	T	A	U	L	E	O
N	V	K	E	M	I	N	D	F	U	L	N	E	S	S	A	O	L	A	I
A	R	B	P	R	V	P	A	N	S	T	S	R	W	Z	H	R	N	R	B
Q	D	B	H	M	P	X	N	U	N	S	D	O	W	W	G	P	G	C	N
K	H	L	I	C	W	O	C	L	O	E	G	A	R	U	O	C	O	A	R
V	G	G	A	Y	A	H	E	U	E	K	H	G	C	T	B	N	Q	V	L
P	N	S	A	W	Y	E	G	J	R	Y	O	A	X	T	N	S	O	X	O
G	B	M	C	Y	J	Z	V	H	P	H	T	L	A	E	H	G	Q	U	D
R	E	S	I	L	I	E	N	C	E	M	Q	M	C	C	S	Z	Y	X	H
O	D	C	A	C	R	E	A	T	I	V	I	T	Y	U	Q	J	Z	N	A
W	A	J	S	P	C	J	V	I	J	Z	I	V	B	S	R	T	O	S	E
T	E	B	P	I	O	D	G	I	I	O	S	S	Q	O	M	A	P	I	Q
H	O	H	F	O	S	N	Y	H	N	K	Y	Y	C	T	Z	A	N	L	P

- Gratitude
- Growth
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Joy
- Balance
- Courage
- Abundance
- Mindfulness
- Health
- Creativity
- Connection
- Purpose

BUSINESS DIRECTORY Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

ACCOUNTING

Famme & Co.
Professional Corporation
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

125 Ontario St., Stratford
519-271-7581 | Fax 519-271-2737
office@fammeandco.on.ca

CONSTRUCTION

FRASER ASPHALT PAVING

"Serving Stratford & area since 1977"

www.fraserpaving.ca 

Driveways • Parking Lots • Excavating
Truck Rentals • Asphalt Patching
Call Scott or Denise for a free quote.

519-271-5690

EAVESTROUGH

EAVESTROUGH CLEANING

Fully Cleaned, Downspouts Unblocked,
Free Estimates, Quality Workmanship
Stratford
519-273-4713

FENCING / DECKS

ALL SHORES
Fencing & Decks

519-273-2003
info@allshoresfd.ca

FENCING / DECKS

bcamHandyman

Forty Years of Home Improvements



519-703-1936

HEARING

COMMUNITY HEARING CARE

Free Hearing Tests!



519-271-HEAR(4327)
www.communityhearingcare.ca

HOME APPLIANCES

PHELANS PLACE Appliances

APPLIANCES • PARTS

237 Huron Road,
Sebringville
519-393-6181
info@phelansplace.com

www.phelansplace.com

HUMANE SOCIETY

Stratford Perth
HUMANE SOCIETY

125 Griffith Rd, Stratford
519-273-6600
kwsphumane.ca

INVESTMENTS

Franklin E. Hinz

196 Ontario Street, Stratford
519-273-1633
www.franklinehinz.com

JUNK REMOVAL

DIAMOND DISPOSAL

BIN RENTAL OR FULL JUNK REMOVAL

519-284-2221
www.diamonddisposal.ca
info@diamonddisposal.ca

MARKETING

TOWN CRIER MARKETING

FREE CONSULTATION



MASONRY

JVK Jacob VanKooten
519-274-9288
jake@jvkmasonry.com

MASONRY

- Restoration Masonry
- Brick BBQ & Outdoor Living Needs
- Parging, Repointing & Rockfacing
- Chimney Removal, Repair & Rebuild

Member of the 

SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.

MORTGAGE

MORTGAGE ALLIANCE

LET ME FIND THE RIGHT MORTGAGE FOR YOU!

PAUL BARTON | 519-272-9559
pbarton@mortgagealliance.com
Mortgage Agent Level 2 Lic# 10530

Mortgage solutions to suit your needs.

Rona Marquez
Home Financing Advisor
226-921-4536
rona.marquez@scotiabank.com

Scotia

Registered trademark of The Bank of Nova Scotia

REAL ESTATE

LUCIE STEPHENS
SALES REPRESENTATIVE




519-703-0333

SOLD!

YOUR AD HERE

THIS COULD BE YOUR AD HERE!

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO!

REAL ESTATE

DAVE FAIR
REALTOR®

Make Real Estate a 'FAIR' GAME

www.davefair.ca
905.866.7577

ROYAL LEPAGE Hiller Realty

Home & Company
REAL ESTATE CORP. BROKER/REALTOR

Toni McLean Sales Representative

519-274-1120 Direct
245 Downie St, Stratford, N5A 1X5
tmclean@homeandcompany.ca

Home & Company
REAL ESTATE CORP. BROKER/REALTOR

Tina Grasby
BROKER

b. 519.508.HOME (4663) | m. 519-275-7663
tgrasby@homeandcompany.ca
homeandcompany.ca

Spencer Binkle
Sales Representative

Direct: **519-801-5620**

spencerbinkle@royallepage.ca

ROYAL LEPAGE Hiller Realty

TRAVEL

STONETOWN TRAVEL

150 Queen St. E., St. Marys
519-284-2332

210 Mill St., New Hamburg
226-333-9939

www.stonetowntravel.com
agent@stonetowntravel.com

WATCH/CLOCK REPAIR

Watch & Clock Repair
FREE ESTIMATES

Watch batteries, bands & crystals

All makes & models. New & Old.

House calls available
Antiques in Time
45 York Street | 519-272-0411
www.antiquesintime.ca

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 25
- Poillievre
- Capricorn (until Jan. 19) and Aquarius (Jan. 20 onward)
- MMXXV
- England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
- Helium
- Kon'nichiwa
- Olivia (2nd place is Amelia)
- Noah (2nd place is Liam)
- True. Nearly 13% of Canadians are believed to be left-handed

SUDOKU

9	6	7	4	5	1	3	8	2
1	8	2	6	7	3	9	4	5
4	5	3	9	2	8	6	7	1
3	9	6	1	8	5	4	2	7
2	1	8	7	6	4	5	9	3
7	4	5	3	9	2	8	1	6
8	7	4	5	1	6	2	3	9
6	2	1	8	3	9	7	5	4
5	3	9	2	4	7	1	6	8

ADVERTISE HERE FOR AS LOW AS \$15 PER ISSUE!

Contact: stratfordtimes@gmail.com
or call **519-655-2341**



GIVEAWAY TIME

WITH EVERY VEHICLE PURCHASE AND SERVICE, YOU'LL BE ENTERED FOR A CHANCE TO

WIN A 55" SMART TV

To be eligible for the draw, entries must be submitted by January 31, 2025.



SAVINGS UP TO \$100

Start the new year with savings! Come see us about our walk-in specials.

Free vehicle inspection | Save on Oil Changes



ROUTINE MAINTENANCE SERVICES & COMPLETE DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

DON'T BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD.

CALL NOW TO BOOK YOUR INSTALLATION FOR BEST AVAILABILITY!



PRE-OWNED VEHICLES YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

\$16,889
+ HST & Licensing



2015 Subaru Crosstrek 2.0i W/Sport Pkg
117,850 km

\$19,889
+ HST & Licensing



2017 Ram 1500 Laramie Crew Cab 3.0L Diesel
221,089 km

\$16,995
+ HST & Licensing



2017 Lincoln MKC Select AWD
117,425 km

\$27,900
+ HST & Licensing



BMW 750i xDrive
139,374 km

STOREWIDE **SAVINGS** EVENT

CLEARANCE SALE

UP TO 50% off

LIMITED QUANTITIES ALL ITEMS

ON ALL IN STOCK ITEMS



FREE LOCAL DELIVERY
(CONDITIONS APPLY)



NEW MAIN STORE CLEARANCE CENTRE



Home furniture



MAIN STORE:
519-273-9330
2954 Hwy 7&8 E



Follow us on:
www.stratfordhomefurniture.ca
www.homefurniture.ca

Main Store Hours:
Mon. to Thurs. 10 to 6
Fri. 10 to 8
Sat. 10 to 5
Sun. 12 to 4