

STRATFORD **TIMES**

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Alzheimer Society Huron Perth hosts first in-person Soup's On since 2020

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

One of Alzheimer Society Huron Perth's largest events is back in-person for the first time since the COVID-19 began.

Soup's On returns to the Stratford Rotary Complex on January 14 between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m for its 28th year.

"We're excited to be back in-person. Prior to our unification with Huron Society, it was Perth's largest fundraising event of the year," Teresa Weicker, fund development assistant and CSS dementia educator, said.

Alzheimer Society Huron Perth hopes to raise \$50,000 from the event.

There will be more than 25 vendors at Soup's On, along with a silent auction and children's area. Prizes will be awarded for the best creamy soup, hearty soup, and vegetarian soup in professional and amateur categories as well as the people's choice award. Guests will also be treated to live music from the Stratford District Secondary School Jazz Band, Stratford Police Pipes and Drums band, and members of Upside of Maybe.

The fundraiser also has house party for six packages available. For \$300, those hosting a Soup's On house party will receive three soups of their choice, cheese and crackers, bread and oils, and wine and sweets.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



LIGHTS ON STRATFORD

(FRED GONDER PHOTO)

Children along with their parents are enjoying "The Pool" designed by Jen Lewin behind City Hall. Lights On Stratford runs until January 27. Visit lightsonstratford.ca to explore the multiple locations in Stratford and enjoy the beautiful light set ups along with multiple store locations participating.

Puppetry, music and dance return with World in a Weekend...in Winter

LISA CHESTER

Stratford Times Correspondent

This weekend, Friday the 13th and Saturday the 14th will see the return of puppetry, music and dance with World in a Weekend...in Winter. Encouraged by the success of last summer's event, Springworks

Puppetworks and Stratford Summer Music have again teamed up to bring wonder, merriment and fun to Stratford.

"We were very pleased with how the summer went, we had so many people come out and seemed very happy with the experience. We had two sets of strolling artists so lots

and lots of people got to experience them in market square and wandering the streets. All our programming and spaces were well attended so we thought to do it again," shared Eileen Smith, artistic producer at Springworks.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



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Puppetry, music and dance return with World in a Weekend...in Winter

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

This season's family friendly interlude will see giant, illuminated, dancing puppets in market square from 5-10:00 pm both nights in conjunction with Stratford Lights On display currently also in the market.

Friday evening at 7:00 pm is Side-by-Side: Winter Bach at the Avondale, performed by members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra featuring principal cellist Joseph Johnson and emerging artists from the University of Toronto. The performance is under the direction of Mark Fewer who will explore how generations shine light on each other through the independent compositions of father and son duo of J.S. Bach and C.P.E. Bach.

"When you perform as students with professional musicians it tends to lift their game and vice versa as those young ones add inspiration and energy. Same with the dancers, we have two established professional dancers with three ballerinas that are studying, they've already done a ton of training" said Smith.

Interpreting the music is the choreography of Nicola Pantin performed by established dancers Tyler Gledhill and Ryan Lee, with mentees from Jorgen Dance. This is a ticketed event at \$10 per person.

"By making the price point affordable, those that may not have tried classical music and dance might decide to give it



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

a try," adds Kendra Fry, general manager Stratford Summer Music.

Saturday will see two exciting opportunities for enjoyment at Factory 163. From 10:00 am to noon there is a Dance Masterclass Workshop in modern dance accompanied by a live percussionist. This class is suited to those fifteen years old and up, of an intermediate level of skill, though formal training is not a requirement. The class, based loosely on the principles of

the Limon technique, will include full centre warmups, progressions including jumps and finishing with a combination at the end.

"It's a modern dance class, as opposed to contemporary, ballet, jazz or tap, and they are looking for intermediate level students who have some skill and can take direction and be interested in learning," said Smith.

The workshop will wrap up with a short

performance by three members of Jorgen Dance's mentorship program and finally, an informal Q & A. This is a ticketed event, at \$25 each and can accommodate thirty dancers. Those wishing to attend to observe may do so by donation.

Later that afternoon is the professional puppetry of the company "Ombres Folles" from Montreal. Suitable for children aged eight and up, "Quijote" is the story of the exploits of Don Quijote and his friendly squire Sancho Panza. They are characters from the epic Spanish novel first published in two parts, in 1605 and 1615. This presentation marks the world debut of the show in English.

"Don Quijote is a dreamer, a hero, and often beyond his depth. He has a side kick and they go on adventures and do battle and rescue maidens. It's about chivalry, and dreaming, and hope and courage and they are always doing funny things," said Smith.

Tickets for the show are \$30 for a pod of up to five people. All tickets can be purchased at the website www.worldinaweekend.ca

These opportunities to experience professional puppetry are few and far between in Canada, they are more European in practice. Stratford is well suited for festivals like World in a Weekend where music, art, and performance come together to intersect and inspire wonder and joy.

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City looking for resident feedback amid 2023 budget talks

The 2023 municipal budget talks are underway and the city wants to hear from residents.

The City of Stratford ran a public feedback survey until January 3rd. While the survey deadline has passed, the Engage Stratford website has the option for residents to send in questions to be presented at a future budget meeting.

Karmen Krueger, Stratford's treasurer and director of corporate services, said in an email sent to the Stratford Times on January 4 that feedback from the survey and a staff report will be presented to council at the first budget meeting on January 10. Stratford residents are welcome to attend all budget meetings, which are public, and either watch or listen to the budget meeting or act as a delegate to talk to council about anything specific.

"Residents can reach out to members of Council, department staff and/or myself with questions or considerations during the budget process or at any time," Krueger said.

An executive summary on the City of Stratford website sets the total 2023 operating budget at \$138.8 million and \$61.7 million in capital projects. The budget does not include Bill 23, but could be discussed at future meetings. Some highlights of the 2023 budget include improving the parking lot on Erie Street, implementing electric charging stations, and rehabilitating Dunn's Bridge.

The draft operating budget posted on the Engage Stratford website had several sections including the mayor's department/CAO, corporate services, and G134 Information Technology listed as ones that would be continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, in spite of several restrictions being eliminated.

"The comment reflects the uncertainty that previous restrictions caused and continue to cause," Krueger explained. "While the explicit provincial or federal restrictions may be lifted, there have been some resulting and ongoing supply chain issues and uncertainties around potential grant funding that may or may not be available, which can impact the completion of initiatives."

Krueger said Stratford residents should get involved with the budget process as much as possible to let council know what expenses should be prioritized.

"The City takes the responsibility of being a steward of taxpayer dollars very seriously, and the budget process is an opportunity for residents to learn more about how we do that, and where their property tax dollars go."

The next budget meetings take place on January 24, February 7, and February 21. More information can be found via engage-stratford.ca/2023-budget and stratford.ca/en/inside-city-hall/2023-budget.

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STRATFORD TIMES

Stratford's Community Newspaper

Established 2021

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(If interested in contributing to the Stratford Times, send us a note at stratfordtimes@gmail.com)



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**6,500 printed copies of the
Stratford Times.**

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Stratford Airport Study enters Community Engagement Phase

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Ben Crooks of HM Aero Aviation Consulting appeared at the Stratford City Council meeting on January 9th to provide a mid-project progress report for the Stratford Municipal Airport Study which began in October and is scheduled for completion this spring.

HM Aero, a team of five airport professionals based in Ottawa, was chosen by the City of Stratford to carry out a review of the Stratford Municipal Airport ("SMA"), specifically on whether the airport can be financially sustainable.

At present, Crooks referenced that the operations of SMA were a net cost to the City of \$185,000 during the 2022 year, and projected to be a net expense of \$167,000 in 2023.

"What we're trying to ask with the study is, 'is the City getting a good return on its investment and its operating costs based on the economic role that the airport serves, based on the social benefits realized by residents of Stratford and surrounding region, and spinoffs that come from its availability and operation. The following question is, 'are there opportunities to increase its operating revenues and control its costs to make it a financial self-sustaining asset,' Crooks said.

Crooks added that his firm has undergone similar reviews of airports of this small size in places such as Owen

Sound, Wiarton, Wingham and Cornwall. "By no means is this an uncommon question in the airport sector nowadays," he said.

The HM Aero team has been conducting an "Existing Conditions Review" which has included extensive stakeholder engagement interviews. In total 23 individuals representing 18 different stakeholder organizations have been interviewed, including government organizations (City of Stratford, Township of Perth East, Perth County), airport users (Stratford Air Services, Elms Aviation, Ornge, Ontario Provincial Police, Hydro One, Royal Canadian Air Force – 424 Squadron, Perth County Flying Club), and regional stakeholders (InvestStratford, Destination Stratford, Stratford Festival, Stratford General Hospital, Perth County Paramedic Service, 19 Stratford Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron, SW Ontario Transportation Task Force, Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Aeronautics)

The next phase of the study focuses on Community Engagement, and this will be launched on January 16th and available until February 10th with an online portal for project information through Engage Stratford.

Next month, HM Aero looks to complete its Financial Sustainability Analysis of SMA, including a 20-year pro forma. March is slotted for Future Strategy Identification, while Study Completion and Presentation to Council is projected for April/May with actionable and pragmatic recommendations.

Letter to the Editor

To the editor:

I would have a hard time explaining the article on city council's zoom meeting to children, poor people and recent immigrants. Council chambers were renovated at significant expense and now it seems some councillors aren't in shape to walk up the stairs, they need the elevator. Without it, in-person meetings in the council chamber are out of the question. Alternatives discussed look costly.

The problem really is that meetings of council are not accessible for certain citizens in person until that elevator

is repaired. But folks without computers aren't privy to the Zoom meetings either. Another suggestion, besides using the stairs, that wasn't mentioned, is the idea of meeting in city hall's auditorium. If council has even a little spirit of saving taxpayers' money they'll manage to climb that amount of stairs.

Sincerely,
Murray Scott
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
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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

Council considers parking options for Canadian Dairy XPO

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

With a ten-year history in the City of Stratford, the Canadian Dairy XPO has developed into the “Largest Dairy Stage in Canada” but with that comes some careful logistical considerations.

Founder Jordon Underhill represented the Canadian Dairy XPO in a delegation before Stratford City Council at their meeting on January 9, 2023, asking for approval of angle parking on McCarthy Road for the three-year period from 2023 to 2025 for the two-day annual event, which this year would be Wednesday, April 5 and Thursday, April 6.

Underhill explained that the activity on McCarthy Road would be primarily within the 7 to 9 a.m. on the two days of the show, with the intention being that vendors would fill these spaces early in the morning, thus leaving the Stratford Rotary Complex parking for the attendees.

The Canadian Dairy XPO hosts approximately 350 exhibitors from 32 different countries, making it a very significant event for the area. Underhill referenced a study completed five years ago which indicated that sales arising from the show generated \$19.1 million in GDP for Perth County, \$42.5 million in GDP for Ontario and \$75.1 million in CDP across Canada.

Per the CDX website, www.dairyxpo.ca, Stratford was chosen as the host city

of CDX “as it is a rural location in the heart of Dairy Country. If you were to draw a circle 100km around Stratford, you would find the highest concentration of commercial dairy farms in the country.”

Councillor Bonnie Henderson said in response to the delegation, “Congratulations on being able to open up again, and I know a lot of people enjoying going there... it’s excellent that you’ve chosen Stratford to showcase this.”

Following the delegation, Council discussed the request and ultimately voted in favour of the staff recommendation which was a one-year approval of the McCarthy Road angle parking followed by development of a plan to introduce offsite parking beginning in 2024.

Mark Hackett, Manager of Community Facilities, was on-hand to summarize his position for council, stating, “My recommendation for the development of offsite parking would be for the organizer, after the 2023 CDX, to come up with an alternative plan that they could use for an offsite parking location and then shuttle those patrons to the Rotary Complex from that parking site.”

Although McCarthy Road has been used in the past to service parking for the event, the growing residential neighbourhoods in the area have made safety concerns even more relevant, which was at the heart of the discussion.

Alzheimer Society Huron Perth hosts first in-person Soup’s On



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

SING FOR YOUR SOUP

There will be musical entertainment including the Police Pipes and Drums for the “Soup’s On” crowd that usually numbers in the hundreds.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Soup’s On is one of the several Alzheimer’s Awareness Month events run by Alzheimer Society Huron Perth, which include talks at the public libraries in St. Marys, Stratford, and Listowel. There is also the Capturing the moment photography exhibit at the North Perth Public Library until January 20th. The exhibit will then stay at the Stratford Public Library from January 20th until February 18th.

The Talk with the Doc event featuring geriatrician Dr. Alexandra Peel will run on Zoom on January 24th. The Huron County Museum in Goderich will have free movies, *The Cuban* and *The Artist’s Wife*, playing on Jan. 26th and Feb. 2nd.

Lights On Stratford, which runs until January 27, also features the Affinity display at Tom Patterson Island. Affinity is a structure, designed like a brain and the connections of a brain.

“When you touch one part, the node, you’ll see the shot go up into the neuron so it’s showing how the brain interacts with each other,” Weicker said.

Weicker said that getting more information on Alzheimer’s and dementia and engaging in physically and mentally stimulating activities also helps. Anyone can reach out to the organization for more information, self-referrals, and for caregiver support.

Caregivers of people with Alzheimer’s and dementia can reach out even if the person is in a different location than Perth County.

“Say, your loved one lives in a different county or a different province, we can support the caregivers that are supporting people living with dementia as well.”

Visit alzheimer.ca/perth/en for more information. More information about upcoming events can be found on the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth Facebook and Instagram pages.

Ontario Superior Court Rules in City's Favour on Appeal of Cooper Site Expropriation Decision

The City of Stratford has received a favourable ruling from the Ontario Superior Court of Justice Divisional Court related to the Cooper Site (Grand Trunk) Additional Expropriation compensation award.

In a unanimous decision dated November 25, 2022, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice Divisional Court dismissed an appeal by 1353837 Ontario Inc. of an earlier decision of the Ontario Land Tribunal upholding the City’s original offer of market value for the lands in 2009. The City was

also awarded costs of \$20,000 by the Court.

“We are pleased that this appeal is now at an end,” said City of Stratford Chief Administrative Officer Joan Thomson, “and we continue to move ahead with plans to develop this site.”

In keeping with the City’s usual practice, the decision was listed on the December 19, 2022 City Council agenda for the information of Council.

The ruling is available online at <https://bit.ly/3uTFHt1>

Community Mailbox Thefts

The Stratford Police Service would like to caution all businesses and individuals in our area of mailing cheques through your local community mailboxes.

The Stratford Police is currently investigating a series of cheques being stolen from community mailboxes. Once stolen, the cheques are being deposited into fraudulent accounts, with the money being forwarded to various parts of the globe.

As a result of these incidents, we would like to encourage everyone to find alter-

nate methods of payment, or sending money, other than sending cheques through your community mailboxes.

The Stratford Police continues to investigate these matters and are asking for anyone with information to contact us at 519-271-4141 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS. Please also be mindful of any suspicious activity around the community mailboxes in your neighbourhood and contact police immediately if any suspicious activity is observed.

Alzheimer Society
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11:00 A.M. — 2:00 P.M.

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Presented by

Other City Council Briefs

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Fines raised for overnight street parking

City Council hopes that increased fines for overnight street parking will help emphasize the message that roads need to be clear during the winter season to allow

snowplows to effectively do their jobs. Following a 2019 study by the Ontario Transit Commission Parking Committee that reported that Stratford had the lowest set fine for overnight parking of the 28 municipalities surveyed, this year the City will charge up to \$80 (or \$60 if paid within seven days) for parking on city streets overnight between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.

Harjinder Nijjar appointed Deputy Mayor

At the December 19, 2022 meeting of Stratford City Council, two councillors were nominated for the position of deputy mayor. The first motion, to nominate Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach, was defeated, with six members voting against. The second motion, for Nijjar, was carried as the result of seven of the 10 councillors voting in favour. Nijjar will serve as deputy mayor for an initial two-year term.

Winter Pride Days recognized

At the January 9 Council meeting, Feb-

ruary 9-12, 2023 was proclaimed as "Winter Pride Days" in the City of Stratford, and that the rainbow pride flag be flown at Stratford City Hall during that period.

Committee Appointments

During the January 9, 2023 meeting, Council considered appointments to the following advisory committees and local boards:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Active Transportation Advisory Committee
- Board of Park Management
- Communities in Bloom
- Committee of Adjustment
- Energy and Environment Committee
- Heritage Stratford
- Stratfords of the World (Ontario) Committee
- Stratford Police Services Board
- Stratford Public Library Board

Within certain appointments still to be considered, a complete listing of committee members will be listed at a later date.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY – APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND LOCAL BOARDS

The City of Stratford is looking for a diverse range of volunteers to lend their unique voices and perspectives to help guide the City's decision-making by joining various advisory committees and boards. Community members serving on an advisory committee provide advice and feedback to City Council in a variety of areas, including but not limited to the environment, accessibility, active transportation, heritage and safe communities. Boards have the autonomy to make decisions for the good of their organizations.

Why serve on an advisory committee or board? Volunteering makes a difference in our community and is a great way to give back. It's also an opportunity to help influence decision-making in your local government and be part of democracy in action. You will learn new skills, build your understanding of how municipal government works, and make connections with other passionate members of the Stratford community.

These opportunities are open to Stratford residents and eligible electors who are at least 18 years of age (with the exception of the Youth representatives who can be under 18 years of age). Additional qualifications may apply depending on the advisory committee or board you are interested in. Experienced and new members are encouraged to apply.

If you are interested in volunteering on one of the City's advisory committees or local boards listed below, please complete and return no later than Monday, January 30, 2023, an application to the attention of the City Clerk through the following:

Email: clerks@stratford.ca

In-person or mail to:

The Corporation of the City of Stratford,
Attention City Clerk,
Clerk's Office, Ground Floor, Stratford City Hall
P.O. Box 818,
Stratford, ON N5A 6W1

The application form is available through the City's website or by pick-up at the City Clerk's Office.

Available Opportunities:

Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA) - The Downtown Stratford BIA Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:15 p.m. The BIA deals with matters concerning promotion and beautification of the downtown core. To be eligible for appointment, you must be a downtown property owner or business operator. There are eight (8) positions available for 4-year terms concurrent with the term of Council. Provincial eligibility requirements for persons who may be appointed to the Downtown Stratford BIA are:

- a. persons who own property that is in either the commercial or industrial property class in the designated City Centre and who are shown on the last revised assessment roll;
- b. persons who operate businesses, either owning the business premises or holding them under a lease requiring the payment of property taxes;
- c. persons operating businesses in leased space under a gross lease entered into on or before June 11, 1998;
- d. nominees of persons who qualify under (a), (b) or (c).
- e. Incorporated members shall be represented only by a named person so designated in the corporation's official designation letter for that purpose filed with the City of Stratford.

Energy & Environment Advisory Committee - Meets on the first Thursday of the month at 4:00 p.m. This Committee provides advice to Council on matters relating to waste reduction initiatives, water and energy conservation and preservation of natural areas. There is one (1) youth representative position available for a one-year term ending November 30, 2023.

Heritage Stratford Advisory Committee - Meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Heritage Stratford deals with matters relating to the promotion of architectural designing and conserving of heritage architecture and heritage designations. There are two (2) citizen representative positions for 2-year terms available.



NEW STRATFORD COUNCIL PICTURED

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The 2022-26 Stratford City Council gathered in late 2022 for the official photograph which appears on the City's website. Pictured in the back row from left to right are Councillors Jo-Dee Burbach, Harjinder Nijjar, Cody Sebben, Bonnie Henderson, Geza Wordofa, and Brad Beatty. In the front row, from left to right are Councillors Mark Hunter and Taylor Briscoe, Mayor Martin Ritsma, and Councillors Lesley Biehn and Larry McCabe.

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STRATFORDTIMES St. Marys Independent

The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

Applications now open through United Way for new Government of Canada funding

Now more than ever, charities and non-profits are playing a key role in addressing persistent and complex social problems faced by all Canadians. The Community Services Recovery Fund is a \$400 million investment from the Government of Canada to support charities and non-profits as they build resilience by making investments in their people, organizations, and program innovation.

"We are now accepting Community Services Recovery Fund applications," said United Way Perth-Huron Director Governance & Community Impact Megan Partridge. "With this funding provided by the Government of Canada, we will support a broad and diverse range of charities and non-profits to adapt and modernize so they can better support recovery in their communities. We encourage organizations to visit communityservicesrecoveryfund.ca and learn more."

"The Government is supporting the long-term COVID-19 pandemic recovery in communities across Canada through this historic fund," said Minister of Families, Children and Social Development,

Karina Gould. "This transformational investment with the National Funders supports a more inclusive model of economic growth that creates opportunities at the community level. The Community Services Recovery Fund will strengthen the ability of community service organizations, including charities, non-profits and Indigenous governing bodies, to deliver services and resources where they will have the most impact."

United Way Perth-Huron (UWPH) is proud to be taking part in the Community Services Recovery Fund, a collaboration between United Way Centraide Canada, Canadian Red Cross, and Community Foundations of Canada to provide funding to Community Service Organizations, including non-profit organizations, Indigenous Governing Bodies and Registered Charities located across Canada. The Community Services Recovery Fund responds to what charities and non-profits need right now and supports organizations as they adapt to the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications will be accepted until February 21, 2023.

Tim Wolfe Appointed as Director of Community Services

The City of Stratford has appointed Tim Wolfe as its new Director of Community Services, effective January 9, 2023.

Mr. Wolfe brings many years of municipal experience and knowledge in management of recreation, forestry, horticulture, parks, special events, sportsfields and cemetery.

He was most recently employed with the City of Waterloo as Manager of Parks Operations, Forestry and Horticulture, and has also worked for the City of Kitchener, the Town of St. Marys and the City of Stratford.

He is a graduate of the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture, and has affiliations with the International Society of Arborists, the Ontario Parks Association and the Canadian Playground Institute.

As Director of Community Services, Mr. Wolfe will oversee the City of Strat-



Pictured above is Tim Wolfe, appearing at the City of Stratford Council meeting held on January 9, 2023.

ford's Parks, Recreation and Cemetery, and Transit divisions.

"We are looking forward to having Mr. Wolfe join the City's Corporate Leadership Team," said City of Stratford Chief Administrative Officer Joan Thomson. "His valuable insights, knowledge and collaborative approach will be instrumental in advancing the priorities of our Community Services Department."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

TO STRATFORD WITH LOVE

The contributed photo above shows the tables all laid out and ready for the To Stratford With Love event that was held on December 17, 2022 at the Stratford Rotary Complex. "We were pleasantly surprised by the attendance of approximately 700 people plus the volunteers," said organizers Richard and Ruth Kneider. "It was a magical evening, having so many people celebrating together. We enjoyed fellowship, live music, much laughter and the opportunity to share the love of Christ. There were so many favourable comments on the meal, meeting new people and of course finishing off the evening with a triumphant choreographed glow stick show to the Hallelujah Chorus with everyone participating... Always a sight to behold! We thank everyone that participated to make TSWL 2022 happen! We cannot do it without you!" The 2023 edition of To Stratford With Love will be the 35th year and it is scheduled for December 16, 2023.



(SARAH CAIRNS PHOTO)

STUFF THE RV

Camp Out RV was on a mission to make a donation in a large way. On December 17 Camp Out was outside the Stratford Irish game where admission was covered if a donation was given. On December 18 they were parked outside of Giant Tiger. Above is Bri Parks and her friend Tobi as they braved the snow and wind. They raised over 1,250 lbs of food plus lots of toys, toiletries, and gifts that were not weighed. "The event was super successful we're still so impressed by the community and the number of donations raised" Bri Parks said. The lucky winner of the Leafs was Douglas H.



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Tablet of Honour Award



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

TABLET OF HONOUR

John Patterson of the Kiwanis Club was presented the Tablet of Honour on December 19 in Stratford. The award was presented by Wilf Smyth.

The Kiwanis Club of Stratford recently paid tribute to John Patterson by naming him recipient of the Tablet of Honour Award.

Wilf Smyth presented the award to John during their December 19th meeting, and said the following:

“John over the years has served in many roles. Along with being a member on many committees in our club, he has served as President of our Club on two occasions, Secretary for many years, a member of the

Human and Spiritual Values Committee, Inter-Club Chairperson, Treasurer of the Stratford Garlic Festival... to name but just a few.

“John also served as Lieutenant Governor for Division 5, Black Walnut Division for the 2011/2012 Kiwanis year. His positive attitude and extensive knowledge of Kiwanis, coupled with his excellent oratory skills, contributed to a successful year in his role as Lieutenant Governor.

“Due to his dedicated service to Kiwanis, John has received both the Mel Osborne Fellowship Award as well as the Diamond Level One Fellow designation. In addition to his exemplary service as was just shared, John once again stepped forward and agreed to assume the chairperson of the organizing committee of the 2018 E.C. & C. District Convention which was held in Stratford. In his role, John again performed above the call of duty. His fastidious organizational skills resulted in an extremely well-organized and smooth-running convention. In fact, the convention in question was considered to be one of the most organized and well-run conventions to date.

“John's faithful dedication to the work of Kiwanis has justly earned him this Tablet of Honour Award. He now becomes the 48th member within the Canadian Kiwanis organization to be recognized with this award.”

Sebringville-area organic farmers newest honourees

Antony John and Tina Vandenheuvel, a Sebringville-area husband and wife who have dedicated their careers to organic farming, are the latest honourees of the Stratford Perth Museum Agriculture Wall of Fame.

John McIntosh, chair of the committee, pointed out that their influence has extended far beyond Perth County.

“The committee is pleased to announce our choice from this year's nominees,” said McIntosh. “This dynamic couple have become well-known - not just in our area but stretching out to the greater food community with their organic farm produce marketed through their Soiled Reputation business.

“Antony and Tina have proven that agriculture and food production and marketing comes in different shapes and sizes and we felt should be recognized for their accomplishments.”

Antony and Tina started their farming careers in 1983 at Heuvelholm Farms just north of Sebringville, working for Tina's father, Joe. In 1993 they bought an 80-acre farm from Tina's parents in Perth East.

At the time Antony was a landscaper and two of Stratford's finest restaurants were among his clients. It was at this point Antony recognized an opportunity to supply local restaurants with vegetables, most notably salad greens, and by 1993 the couple founded their farm operation, Soiled Reputation.

By 1999 Soiled Reputation had achieved certified organic status, and has maintained that standard every year since. Soiled Reputation expanded rapidly, growing into a year-round operation of 15,000 square feet of greenhouses and 28 certified organic acres, making it one of the largest certified organic market gardens in Canada.

Today, hundreds of varieties of unique and hard to find culinary vegetables are produced (over 20 varieties of tomatoes alone).

During the peak months of summer, the

farm produces almost 500 pounds of various salad mixes every week, all picked one leaf at a time, and thousands of pounds of gourmet vegetables.

Since its inception, the work force to plant, weed, and harvest all this food has been entirely local. Since 2012, over 130 jobs have been created by Soiled Reputation Farm, and many of the workers come back year after year. Today, the 16 acres of field crops and 15,000 square feet of greenhouses generate an annual income equivalent to a 500-acre cash crop operation.

“Tina and I are deeply honoured and humbled by our induction into the Stratford Perth Museum's Agricultural Wall of Fame,” said Antony. “To have our life's work held up for regard in a county famous for its agricultural output is one of the highlights of a career in organic farming together.”

Soiled Reputation has established itself as the industry standard for high-end, locally grown organic produce. Their vegetables grace the tables of some of the finest restaurants in Toronto, Niagara, Stratford, Kitchener-Waterloo, and London and chefs from all over the world visit the farm or seek out the food grown there.

That announcement was made at the Stratford Perth Museum's Innkeepers' Dinner in October. Historically, the Agriculture Wall of Fame announcements are made at the Stratford Rotary Club's Rural-Urban Dinner but that has not taken place since 2019. It is the intent that the 2023, 2022 and 2021 honourees be recognized at the 2023 Rural-Urban Dinner in April.

The Wall of Fame is open to current or former residents of Perth County who have made outstanding contributions to agriculture in Perth County. Nominations are solicited from the public and a committee determines the honourees.

For more information contact: John Kastner, General Manager, Stratford Perth Museum 519-393-5312 or johnkastner@stratfordperthmuseum.ca



Weekend Quiz

- 1) Approximately how many grapes does it take to produce one bottle of wine?
- 2) What is the name of the famous hat that originated in Ecuador?
- 3) Which large south-east Asian country turns its flag upside down in times of war?
- 4) What is the well-known Malay word for “man of the forest”?
- 5) Which famous fictional character had a brother named Mycroft?
- 6) Name the two countries in the world that have a square flag.
- 7) What are ‘beliebers’?
- 8) Issued in 1840, what were the names given to the first two postage stamps in the world?
- 9) Who was Canada's longest serving prime minister?
- 10) How many time zones are there in Canada?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

Councillor Briscoe: More actions needed in mental health conversations, breaking stigma

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

City Councillor Taylor Briscoe, an advocate for mental health, said that society has come a long way over the past several years in terms of talking about mental health and is speaking from her own experiences.

During the October 3rd Meet the Councillors Forum that took place before the Mayoral Debate for the 2022 Stratford Municipal Election, Briscoe said in her speech that she is a mental health advocate after losing her father to addiction and suicide. After the passing about seven years ago, the family had a difficult time processing the death. Briscoe said she took on guilt and blame and didn't have time to process it.

"I took it as if it was completely my responsibility or my fault and just thought the best way to move forward was to continue moving forward in goals and in life and if I achieve things and make him proud then that'll be fine," she said speaking to the Stratford Times Jan. 4.

Briscoe then went to law school, which was lots of pressure and a demanding environment with not a lot of support available for her.

"My experience in the school deteriorated my mental health really badly. I was already dealing with the grief and the anxiety and the depression and not knowing it," she said. "I couldn't name it at the time but that was what I was dealing with and then when I got there, being made to feel that it was a part of my story that I really needed to separate myself from. That I had to hide away from."

At the time, the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) had a character and fitness requirement for mental health. The NYSBA has since removed the re-

quirement, but at the time, Briscoe faced concerns over her family's mental health history because of her father's death.

"I needed to take steps while in law school to essentially prove that I wasn't going to have that same fate. It was really difficult. It made a hard time even more difficult and I didn't know what was happening at the time."

After law school and working through it, Briscoe realized that neither she nor her father received support in crisis and then she became an advocate, focusing on action-oriented discussions. She shares her story, addresses how to approach those who appear to be "high-functioning" during crisis and - with her family- talks about the supports needed for survivors of suicide loss. As someone who works for the Salvation Army, Briscoe recognizes the importance of ensuring the most vulnerable are accessing services.

There are more people openly talking about their mental health from the time Briscoe was in law school.

"We're more apt to share about 'I have anxiety or I went through depression' and that's without the fear of - we understand what that means now a lot more," Briscoe said.

There are also more discussions about how school curriculums and workplace culture can affect mental health. She add-



TAYLOR BRISCOE

ed that a lot of the time when there are talks about mental health, the discussions happen when the mental health crisis is over and not as often when the crisis is happening.

"We think of it as a chapter ending when your mental health is a continuous thing to monitor. You could have a good day or a bad day," she said. "There's going to be loss in life and changes in life consistently and so how

we move forward with that, I think that's the next evolution in that discussion that we need."

Briscoe said that while we've come a long way in discussions of mental health, more work needs to be done.

"We've come a long way in accepting that it's something to be prioritized. I think the next step is breaking the stigma down a bit further that being able to have candid conversations in crisis," she said. "And empowering everyone else is to have those conversations as the one that's being sought out, where you're not the one in crisis but someone can come to you comfortably and you actually feel empowered to have that conversation or at least direct them to where a good resource is."

Addressing the power of language on social media in terms of discussions about mental health is also important.

"There's a lot of Instagram therapy and quote therapy I think that happens, which can be very helpful, but it can also be di-

minishing to the point where a lot of times we say trauma and a lot of times we say toxicity or we say abuse," Briscoe said. "But we need a better spectrum of words to better address what is happening in that space."

The isolation that came with the COVID-19 Pandemic also played a huge part in the mental health effects. Briscoe said society went through collective grief through the Pandemic. Right now, society is in the anger stage.

"We can see it on social media, we see it in our politics. The world changed and we are just in this anger phase and we don't have a lot of outlets or resources to deal with that," she said. "We're turning on each other, which is difficult, and we're turning to online forums and you get a quick band aid solution because it can get you through that day."

For those who are struggling, whether it is their own personal crises or as a caregiver for someone going through one, Briscoe said to avoid personifying the situation or making assumptions and instead, vocalize how you are feeling.

"I would constantly talk to a ghost with my dad - 'Oh, he's not proud, he's not proud. I'm not doing enough,' but when I would vocalize that, you kind of hear the absurdity and you finally get the chance to address it," she said. "I think being brave and vocalizing 'this is what I'm feeling' and the second it's out there, you start to have the availability to vocalize it and start looking at it in a rational way and we don't keep it in this emotional tornado of our minds and adding more kind of what ifs and absurdities to it."

If you need support for your mental health, call Resilience Huron Perth Mental Health Services 519-273-1391. If you are in a life-threatening crisis, call 911.

Queer Book of the Month Club

The Foghorn Echoes, by Danny Ramadan
@SPL: FIC Ramad

With winter deepening, many of us are on the hunt for immersive, engrossing stories to keep us company through the cold, dark nights. If this sounds like you, I humbly suggest one of my favourite books of 2022: Danny Ramadan's *The Foghorn Echoes*.

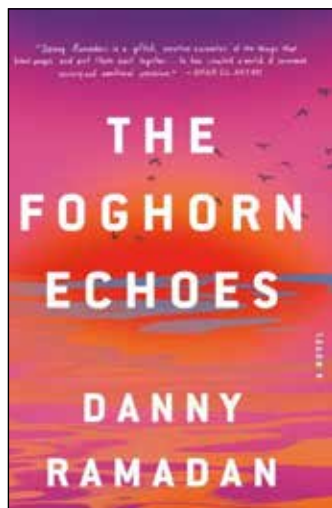
The book begins in Syria in 2003, with two teen best friends who find themselves falling in love. Their sweet romance is marred by a tragic accident, when Hussam's father catches him acting on his feelings for Wassim. In the ensuing struggle, Hussam's father falls from a roof to his death.

The rest of the book traces the fallout, as both boys struggle to carry their blame and their love. Sponsored by a controlling older man, Hussam finds himself in Vancouver, slowly spiraling downward

in the party scene, weighted by drugs, trauma, and his sponsor's emotional abuse. Wassim, meanwhile, lands on the streets of Damascus, cast out by his family when they discover his relationship with Hussam.

Frankly, this book has everything: star-crossed lovers, extravagant parties, a ghost story or two, incisive commentaries on war, racism and colonialism, and redemptive love, though nothing like the simplified fairytale version of romance novels. The writing in this book is searing, immediate and stunning. Readers should know going in that Ramadan holds nothing back on the page - not the sex, not the drugs, not the trauma - and thank goodness he doesn't. *The Foghorn Echoes* is too honest for anything less.

Shauna Costache
Public Service Supervisor
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Times Past: Stratford's City Hall and the Citizens

Who Saved It – PART 1

BETTY JO BELTON

Stratford-Perth Archives

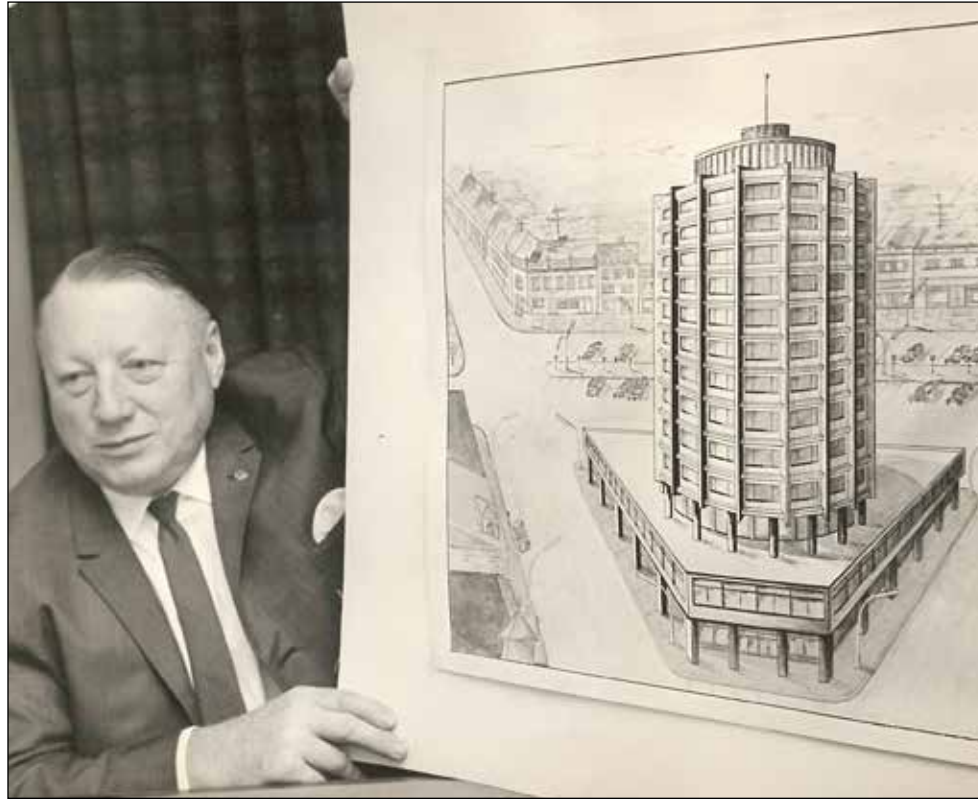
On Sunday, May 15, 1983 plaques installed to celebrate the building's history were unveiled at Stratford City Hall. One reads:

"Stratford's spacious civic square has been the site of the city's municipal buildings since 1857. Construction began on the present city hall after the destruction of the first town hall and market by fire... The resulting structure is a notable example of a late 19th century public building, monumental in scale and picturesque in aspect. Opened in 1900, it has long been a centre of Stratford's political, social and cultural life." This polite paragraph and the calm event on that late spring day in 1983 were the culmination of nearly two decades of sometimes heated debates about the fate of the city hall.

Stratford's Queen of the Square, now a national historic site, still regally presides over our downtown. This happy ending was brought to you in part by the Save the City Hall League – truly one of Margaret Mead's small group of thoughtful, committed citizens who changed our world in Stratford. The League – or Committee as it was originally called – started with Jo Ann Hayes, Mary Brothers, Evelyn Melodysta, Winnifred Kneitel, Dolores Whiteman and Madeline Ferguson. The story of how they, and those who joined them, saved City Hall is worth retelling from time to time to remind everyone that the happy ending was by no means inevitable.

Stratford's first City Hall was completely gutted by fire in the early hours of November 24, 1897. Construction of its replacement began in 1898, with the first Council meeting held there in early 1900. The new building cost just shy of \$35K to build in accordance with plans drafted by Toronto architect, George W. King. It is an unusual design of geometric shapes fitted to the triangular site. As someone later said, "The building fits neatly in Stratford but would not fit neatly in any other city." Inside, there was a public library, Police Court, two-storey auditorium along with the Council Chambers, and staff offices. Many happy community events took place at City Hall over the years – the Old Boys Reunion of 1906, the City's Centennial party in 1932 and the Perth Regiment's return after World War II to name a few.

But, by the early 1960s, this jewel in its unique setting was losing its lustre and looking a little chipped. Architects from Toronto, Bindhardt and Cheney were commissioned by City Council "to investigate the existing conditions of the City Hall and to propose a solution including estimated cost for the replanning and renovating of the existing building so that adequate accommodation for the operations of the City Hall would be obtained and the building's life expectancy extended for approximately 25 years." Their 1964 report more or less concluded that the basic structure of the building was safe but the mechanical equipment and installations were rapidly deteriorating. Another concern was that a fire in the main stairwell during office hours could have tragic results. The architects reported that the percentage of usable office space in re-



TIME TO SAY GOODBYE?

1968 proposal hotel drawing with Mayor Meier.

lation to gross area was extraordinarily low and questioned the need for an auditorium.

Three tenders to renovate the building – all in the neighbourhood of half a million dollars -- were received that fall. Discussion ensued. Some members of Council, including Mayor C.H. Meier, were not in favour of spending money on the existing City Hall. One councillor wanted citizens to vote on the decision in a plebiscite. Others wondered if there were any interested buyers and what they would pay and asked if there were any other suitable sites available to build a new City Hall. In November 1964, Council approved establishing a committee to look for a new site for City Hall, consider what type of building should be built and report back

"by the first of the year."

But on November 25, the Stratford Beacon Herald published an editorial entitled "The Story Has Two Sides" along with many letters to the editor. All of the letter writers were in favour of keeping the City Hall. The editor commented that they "disagreed with each other only in the degree of their indignation at any suggestion that Stratford's City Hall should be torn down... [and] if anyone had, before this date, submitted a letter-to-the-editor arguing for the destruction of City Hall, we would have been inclined to give it priority for publication, simply to preserve some balance in public discussion."

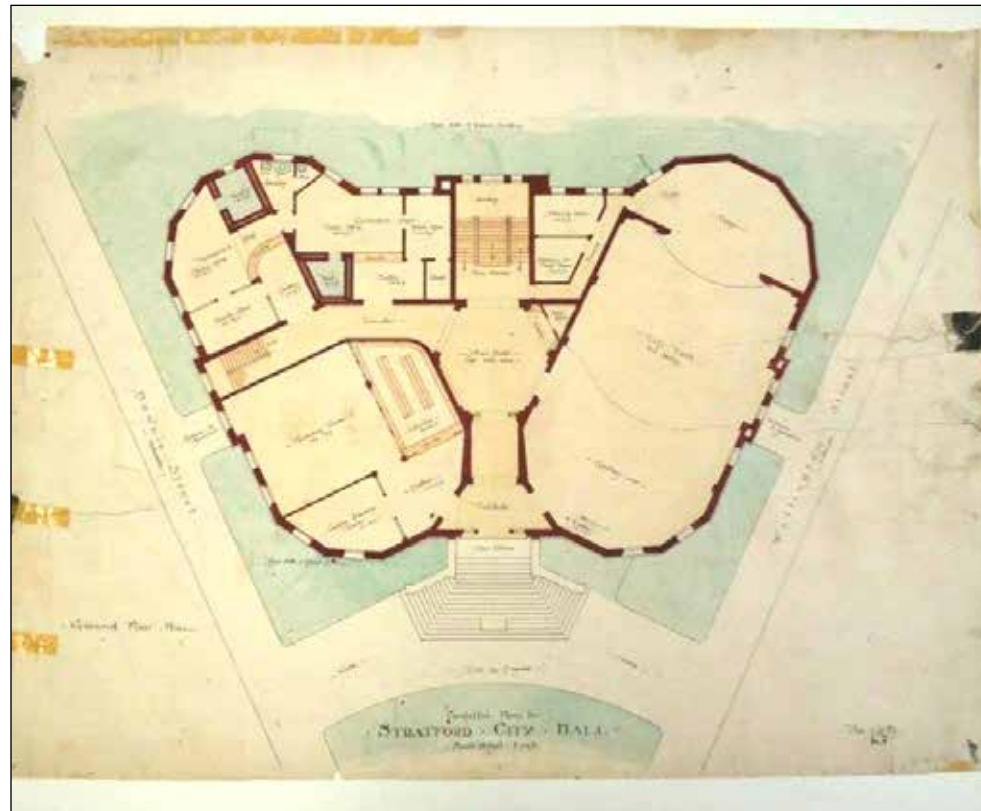
By 1967, Mayor Meier had a new plan for

the City Hall site. He envisioned a modern ten-storey hotel. Responses from Councillors and business owners were mixed. Some thought it was a bit grandiose and costly and wondered if the Mayor realized how much the existing hotels were struggling to keep going in the winter months? Meier told Council that the hotel would be up by the spring of 1969. In December, sketches for the proposed hotel were presented to Council, the planning board and the Chamber of Commerce. The plan was for a 2-part triangular structure with a ten-storey hotel section separated by a driveway from a 3-storey section south of it to house city offices and council chambers. The third storey would be a sun deck with a swimming pool and grassy area. The city would rent their space from the hotel developer.

In February 1968, it was reported that the developer was Thomas Evans, president of Ardevan Construction, operating as Bard Square Development for the purposes of the 3 million dollar project. Evans wanted to begin work by March. Councillors were asking for more information, with some still arguing for renovations to the existing City Hall, while others called for a referendum. The new Mayor, John V. Killer, felt he should remain neutral. In April 1968 a committee of Councillors and the Mayor formed to "advise the public that the city hall site is available for redevelopment... [and to] solicit the help of citizens of the city... [to sit on committee and seek information from interested citizens at] public meetings." They wanted the committee to be expanded to include citizens knowledgeable in building, architecture, surveying, finance and law.

That committee's 1969 report echoed concerns raised by the 1964 consultant. They described the building as "antiquated" with cracked exterior walls, and loose plaster and dampness inside. The plumbing would need to be completely torn out and replaced, along with the obsolete heating system. The auditorium was "used very infrequently" because "new school gymnasiums and assembly halls were more suitable and convenient for organizations. The office space was inadequate and they had concerns about fire safety due to open staircases of wood construction "which do not meet the Fire Marshall's standards." They said that the 1964 report made it apparent that even if the city spent \$500,000 on renovations and air conditioning, "it would be unrealistic to count on more than a further 25 years life for the building, and it was apparent that this would represent a very high annual cost for very inferior accommodation."

Meanwhile, having come together in the summer of 1969, the Save the City Hall Committee reported on their work in January 1970: "As you perhaps know, during one week in July 1969 a handful of women collected almost 2,000 signatures to a petition asking for a plebiscite to determine the future of City Hall. From our brief and necessarily incomplete sampling of public opinion we became aware of widespread opposition to the demolition of the City Hall and exploitation of the site by a commercial developer. Our study of the matter, going back over several years' reporting in local newspapers, revealed that there has



City Hall ground floor plan

Stratford's City Hall and the Citizens Who Saved It – PART 1

been persistent and undiminished opposition to losing the building which is the heart of Stratford. At the same time there had been until our Committee became involved, a pronounced proclivity on the part of previous administrations to disregard the expressed wishes of the electorate in this matter...This is, as we have stressed, Stratford's most important and valuable single piece of real estate...Its fate and its future are the deepest concern of the people of Stratford. New buildings have a place in any developing city. That place need not be at the very heart of the city, killing the heart of the city and deposing historic buildings. Old buildings have a place in modern cities, as the most far-sighted city planners are now urging. Stratford has a rare opportunity to become a leading example of concerned city planning. We pray that the opportunity will not be missed in the interests of permitting private sale of the site for commercial exploitation."

April 1970 saw Councillor David Bradshaw tasked with getting together another special City Hall committee consisting of four members of Council, citizens and at least one member of the Save the City Hall Committee. Within a few weeks the idea of another committee had been set aside. Instead, the original special committee for the 1969 report would be invited to reconsider its findings and submit any changes to the City Clerk by the end of May. The Save the City Hall Committee was asked to submit a brief on the same day. Advertisements in local papers invited members of the public to do so as well. Bradshaw wrote to Jo Ann Hayes on April 29: "I have reason to believe a number of people are going to submit briefs in favour of redeveloping the site, and I feel we should do our utmost to get at least 10 or 12 people on our side to come forth with a good sound argument to save this building...I would, in closing, like to congratulate you and your committee for the splendid job you have done so far and I know there is a lot of support in the town on our behalf. The idea now is to get moving and give these people a good stiff battle." By June 10, there were 81 briefs sent to Council – 4 were in favour

of tearing it down while 65 recommended saving and renovating it. Others were, presumably, less specific. The Save the City Hall Committee members, wrote "Historically, geographically and financially, the City Hall site is the most important single piece of real estate in this city. This is literally the city's heart. Why the building is in so bad a condition is what we need to have explained: why a building planned and built as the focal point of this city should have been grossly neglected even, as to everyday maintenance, let alone necessary renovations...It should be occupied and used – that is why it was built – rather than disavowed, emptied, scorned and neglected" and "City council should appoint a committee to spend as much time and expense in trying to find a use for the City Hall as other committees did in trying to tear it down and redevelop it." Council was still wrangling over what to do at the end of August 1970.

The December 2, 1970 Stratford Beacon Herald had a picture of City Hall "dressed for Christmas" and a brief article about another redevelopment proposal from David Owen. The article also reported that Mrs. Eric Ferguson of the Save the City Hall Committee wrote a letter to Weekend magazine saying "built in 1898, our city hall is the very heart of our city. Attractive and different, it towers over surrounding buildings and presents a delightful picture, especially when decked with Christmas lights. In summer, along with our Shakespeare, it's part of the atmosphere which attracts thousands of visitors... why must the powers that be try to bring everything down to dollars and cents? Our city hall is an irreplaceable gem." A few days later, the committee announced that that they were about to publish an ad with a picture of City Hall and a list of local election candidates in favour of saving it. They were "highly optimistic as this is now definitely the vital election issue." TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

This article is based on information and images from the collections at Stratford-Perth Archives. www.stratfordpertharchives.on.ca



Stratford Centennial Fair behind City Hall 1932

Rae Announces \$14 million for Perth-Wellington infrastructure needs

On December 13, Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington announced municipalities throughout Perth and Wellington Counties will receive a combined total of over \$14 million in 2023 for local infrastructure needs. This funding is part of the province's overall \$400 million investment through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF).

"Our government is helping our local municipalities address critical infrastructure needs, such as road, bridge, water and wastewater projects," said MPP Rae. "In 2021, our government committed to doubling the funding under OCIF for the next five years. These funds will help our local municipalities undertake critical infrastructure projects, while reducing the impact on their budgets."

"Ontario's small, rural, and northern communities are essential to the growth and prosperity of the province," said Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure. "Our government is continuing to provide stable funding to meet local infrastructure needs and provide support in response to pressures from inflation. By supporting key community infrastructure projects, we are helping to grow and build safer, more resilient communities for generations to come."

In December 2021, the Ontario government announced an additional \$1 billion

for critical infrastructure projects that support economic growth and job creation in small, rural and northern communities, bringing the government's total investment to nearly \$2 billion dollars over five years.

The OCIF supports local infrastructure projects for communities with populations under 100,000, along with all rural and northern communities. Municipalities may accumulate their funding for up to five years to address larger infrastructure projects.

Funding allocations are based on a formula that recognizes the different needs and economic conditions of communities.

Perth-Wellington 2023 OCIF levels are as follows:

Municipality	2023 Funding
Wellington County	\$3,195,548
Mapleton	\$991,573
Minto	\$1,143,388
North Perth	\$842,575
Perth County	\$827,069
Perth East	\$361,593
Perth South	\$370,408
St Marys	\$688,499
Stratford	\$2,709,199
Wellington North	\$1,944,252
West Perth	\$1,268,497
Total	\$14,342,601



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Perth County's Jean Aitcheson receives word that she is the latest recipient of the "Order of Canada"

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

One of the highest honours that a Canadian resident can receive is the Order of Canada. A Downie Township Nurse and community leader for decades in the area has recently received word of that honour.

Jean Aitcheson has never thought of herself as a local celebrity, but many people who have had the pleasure of meeting and knowing her would say otherwise.

She has devoted her entire life to coming to the aid of the less fortunate at home and abroad while also working as a Registered Nurse full time.

The always friendly and smiling personality sets Jean apart from most, but she would be the first to say the recognition she is now receiving is really "out of her realm".

The following will give readers a sense as to the reason for Aitcheson receiving this prestigious award.

Over the years, she has been part of humanitarian mission teams travelling the world and recognized the need for discarded medical supplies. For her it started in a little village of Cojax, in the mountains in Guatemala, in 1995 as she was part of a team to build a Christian school and hold a three-day medical clinic for the local people there. Due to overcrowded classrooms, the people had prayed for six years for a school



WELL DESERVED HONOUR

Perth County's Jean Aitcheson in her 2nd home, at the "Stratford Mission Depot" in St. Andrew's Presbyterian church in Stratford, proudly displaying the "Order of Canada" insignia that she will receive later this year in Ottawa.

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

mala many times, but also multiple trips to El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru, Guyana, Dominican Republic, Mexico and the Philippines (Jean has been on 37 mission trips so far!). The registered nurse also took her expertise in the medical field as part of one team to Malawi, Africa, to start building a secondary school for girls and work in the local rural hospital. She was also part of a Rotary plastic surgery team to Bangladesh to repair cleft lips and palates and release burn scars and contractures.

Each of those mission teams used medical supplies collected at the Stratford Mission Depot. The initial trips to El Salvador included building pre-fab homes that sparked the interest of Nick Wouters, a St. Marys area farmer, who founded the registered charity "Homes for Hope" and over the last 17 years his team has built 430 homes in 3 villages, plus school classrooms, toilets and sinks, along with support from the community.

Aitcheson also says Dr. Doug Thompson, a compassionate family physician and Rotarian in Stratford, was on trips as the practical physician on many medical teams, and then he and Mitchell's Janice Rauser founded "Commit", a part of the Stratford Rotary Club Foundation, to send containers and commit to doing medical and community work in Nicaragua.

She stresses that the Stratford Mission Depot, which houses the vast assortment of medical supplies and equipment used in various countries, is not a registered charity but she said they have been blessed with donated space to work: 10 years at Stratford Hospital, 10 years at the Oak Street Centre at the invitation of Dr. Doug McDougald, three years on Jarvis Street thanks to Jason Baier and Tom Melanson, one year at the old Heinbuck Funeral Home and now in a great organized space at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Stratford.

According to Aitcheson, they can always use the public's help in the Perth County area from those who might have air casts, canes, walkers, crutches, I-V equipment, wheelchairs, and any over the counter medication's, that she will make sure are properly disposed of through their ongoing work. To donate, call Jean at 519-276-1975 or e-mail jkhsn@quadro.net.

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater said he was delighted to see Jean Aitcheson appointed as a member of the Order of Canada. Nater called her personally to congratulate her and said that Jean truly embodies the motto of the order, "They Desire a Better Country" and congratulated Jean "for all you have done and all you will do".

for the village. Once completed, in gratitude, they named it the "Canada" school.

She said they were overwhelmed with people needing care in the small makeshift medical clinics, which reinforced the resolve of the team to take or send more teams and medical supplies down there in the future.

The mission team returned to Guate-

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FOOD DRIVE GOAL ACHIEVED

(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

Stratford Honda wrapped up their annual "Drive Our Community" food drive on December 16th, raising \$10,100 along with six full bins of food. Theresa McMurray of Stratford House of Blessing was thrilled to accept the cheque from Stratford Honda for the generous donation, presented by Kathleen Duiker (pictured left) and Janet Keen (right). "The community here is always amazing," said McMurray. "It's campaigns like this that bring even more awareness, and the need is so great this year." The Honda team extends their sincere thanks to all their customers, staff and friends who donated.

Annual Perth County Paramedic Recruitment Now Open



Starting January 9, 2023, Perth County's Paramedic Services Department will be accepting applications for new members to join the team!

"It's always an exciting time of year when we welcome new Paramedics onto the team," said Mike Adair, Chief of Perth County Paramedic Services. "We are a talented service with an incredible group of people."



















Perth County is currently recruiting 10 new members. Those interested in learning more about the recruitment process and working for Perth County can visit: www.perthcounty.ca/paramedics. From there, candidates can read more about being a Primary Care

Paramedic in Perth County as well as review the requirements to apply for a position.

"We offer a wide variety of opportunities for our staff to be involved in some exciting programs and development," said Tristan Barter, Assistant Deputy Chief, Performance and Development for Perth County. "We have paramedics working as part of our Community Paramedicine Program, our Field Training Paramedics, as well as opportunities for future leadership growth as an Acting Commander."

Recruitment will remain open until January 23, 2023. Interested candidates should visit www.perthcounty.ca/employment to apply.

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<p>2022 Ram 1500 Rebel</p>  <p>\$69,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 504 km</p> <p>4-Wheel Drive</p>	<p>2022 Ram 1500 Limited</p>  <p>\$83,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 3,275 km</p> <p>4-Wheel Drive</p>	<p>2021 Ram 1500 Big Horn</p>  <p>\$54,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 31,470 km</p> <p>4-Wheel Drive</p>	<p>2021 Ram 1500 Sport</p>  <p>\$57,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 58,318 km</p> <p>4-Wheel Drive</p>	<p>2022 GMC Canyon AT4</p>  <p>\$52,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 6,886 km</p> <p>4-Wheel Drive Leather</p>
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<p>2020 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Sport S</p>  <p>\$54,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 12,540 km</p> <p>4-Wheel Drive</p>	<p>2022 Chevrolet Blazer LT</p>  <p>\$47,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 10,167 km</p> <p>4-Wheel Drive</p>	<p>2019 Lincoln Nautilus Reserve</p>  <p>\$48,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 54,641 km</p> <p>All-Wheel Drive</p>	<p>2022 Lincoln Nautilus Reserve</p>  <p>\$64,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 7,372 km</p> <p>All-Wheel Drive</p>	<p>2020 Nissan Kicks SV</p>  <p>\$26,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 22,569 km</p> <p>Front-Wheel Drive</p>
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STRATFORD **TIMES** SPORTS

Templeman passionate about team-building and growth of women's hockey

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

For Lexi Templeman, being on the ice has been part of her whole life. Growing up in Staffa, Ont., about 30 minutes away from Stratford, she began skating at three-years-old.

"Growing up in Canada as a whole and Southwestern Ontario, I'd like to say that we were born with skates on," Templeman said.

Her hockey journey began at five-years-old. Templeman would watch her older sister and older brother play hockey at the rink and she wanted to play hockey. She attended St. Michael's Catholic Secondary School in Stratford and played ice hockey for four years there as well. The Elite Prospects website noted Templeman also played for the Bluewater Hawks (2012-2013), the Kitchener-Waterloo Jr. Rangers (2014-2017), the Robert Morris University Colonials

(2017-2021), and the Ohio State University Buckeyes (2021-2022).

According to the Premier Hockey Federation (PHF) website, Templeman brought the Buckeyes to the Frozen Four Final and led them to their first national title.

Out of everything hockey, she enjoys being part of a team and making friends the most.

"I really like skating on the ice. I like the aspects of the game, but I think the one thing that I like the most is that it is a team game and all the friendships that I've got to make and the places that it's taken me over the years," she said.

Now, the 23-year-old is a forward for the Toronto Six and competing in the PHF Women's Hockey League. So far, Templeman made two goals and five assists, along with 15 shots on goal in her first season of playing in the league, which began right af-



ter she finished her studies.

"It's been a really great experience being able to continue hockey after college," she said. "That's something that as a little girl I always dreamed of being a professional athlete. To be able

to have that reality is something that I've cherished and I really enjoy to do this season."

The PHF was founded in 2015 and is a women's professional hockey league. Other teams include The Montreal Force, the Buffalo Beauts, the Boston Pride, the Connecticut Whale, the Metropolitan Riveters, and the Minnesota Whitecaps. The league is part of the quickly growing women's hockey industry.

"It's really cool to have seen two years ago where this league was at, players getting paid very minimal, not too much structure, to where we're at today with a 750,000 American dollar cap, and next year the salary cap is going up to \$1.5 million US per team," she said. "Just being able to watch the league grow and the team grow and the women's sport of hockey as a whole grow is something that I'm really passionate about and I really enjoy

being a part of that."

Templeman, like all athletes, had to face challenges and restrictions due to COVID-19. She learned how to adapt and not take the sport for granted.

"COVID has actually made me enjoy each time I step on the ice a lot more. Just because you really realize that anything can happen and you don't know when the next time together with a team or a group might be," she said.

Outside of hockey, Templeman likes to spend time with her family and friends back in Staffa as much as possible and works in accounting through Connect CPA as her day job.

"I keep myself busy but it's a lot of fun and I couldn't ask for anything better."

The second half of the PHF 2022/2023 season will be a busy one leading up to the Isobel Cup playoffs beginning in March. Visit premierhockeyfederation.com/home for more information.

Stratford December Classic Competition Results

The Stratford Skating Club successfully hosted our annual Stratford December Classic competition, December 16-18, 2022.

In all, we had a record number of skaters attend the event. Over 800 skaters came to Stratford to compete this past weekend.

The Stratford Skating Club had 10 skaters compete in our Stratford December Classic Competition that was held at the Stratford Rotary Complex.



ICE ROYALTY

Amy Schroeder placed 11th in Star 5 O13 Women Group 2, Nicole Verhoef placed 6th in Star 5 O13 Women Non-Qualifying. Honor Gropp earned Silver in Star 3 Girls Group 10. This Team placed 1st in Star 5 Team Elements.



Above, Katerina Schmidt earned Silver in Star 1 Girls Group 3, Elena Arouzdid-Desormeaux earned Gold in Star 1 Girls Group 3, Hailey Gaul earned Silver in Star 1 Girls Group 4 and Gracie Sutherland earned Gold in Star 1 Girls Group 2. Below, Tessa Bell earned Silver in Star 2 Girls Group 1, Reese Manzer earned Bronze in Star 2 Girls Group 11, Danika Lingard earned Silver in Star 2 Girls Group 1. All 3 also competed in the Star 2 Team Elements event earning Bronze.



A 12 year old Kart racing champion with racing in his blood

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

There are a number of young people that are probably not sure what they would like to do in life. In meeting a 12 year old named Aristeides Theodoropoulos, from Stratford, you have to admire this young man for what he has accomplished in Kart racing so far in his young career. He also is an accomplished student, in grade 7 at Stratford Intermediate school.

Ari, as his friends and relatives know him, is a fierce competitor in only his 2nd full season in Canadian Kart racing and he will say he's super proud of his accomplishments in the season he has had in 2022 on the "PRIME" power racing team.

Ari was recently named the junior lite "Canadian Karting National Champion" but not before he won many other championships, in Hamilton, Innisville near Barrie and Mosport in Bowmanville.

During the racing season in Hamilton, Ari was named the junior lite "Ron Fellows" Karting Champion, the HRKC (Hamilton Regional Kart Club) Briggs Junior Lite season champion, and in the fall, he completed the motomaster Ron fellows carting series, winning the championship for his division, and came home with the CKN (Canadian Karting News) Headliner award.

He also completed the regional season at Hamilton regional karting club bringing home a first place finish in his last race of the season.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

MENTORING GRANDFATHER
2022 Kart racing champion, Stratford's Ari Theodoropoulos with his mentor and grandfather Jack Hyde who recently retired from racing.

The regional points are calculated using the best 13 races from a 16 race season and he ended up with 13-1st place finishes, meaning he had a perfect season.

In a recent interview he says "he is extra excited about the plans made for 2023".

The young racer says his 2023 season starts in January with the Florida RoK

winter tour. For those not familiar, RoK is a 2 stroke engine that reaches speeds up to 120 km/hr. He says he and his mom, Stephanie (who is also his mechanic), will be heading down for a three race series in the sunshine state. He will go one week each month in January, February and March. This will give him the experience he needs with his RoK card, so he can come back to the Canadian season with more experience and ready to win! He says at regional races he plans to run both his RoK and his Briggs Karts with a full season in RoK and a partial with his Briggs-4 stroke Kart (which reaches 90 Km/hr.) He said all his big races will be RoK only.

In talking to this young junior racer recently, you have to be impressed with not only his compassion and focus, but his love of racing. It could've come partially from his grandfather, Jack Hyde, who raced most of his young life in Grand Bend, as a farm boy from North Easthope Township in Perth County, and also ended up a champion!



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

SHOWING OFF THE HARDWARE

12 year old racer Ari Theodoropoulos is shown with his trophy collection from the 2022 Kart racing season, at his home in Stratford.

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Fighting Irish tied for second in WOSHL

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Fighting Irish are in the mix at the top of the tight Western Ontario Super Hockey League standings.

Heading into Friday's game between the Tillsonburg Thunder and Elora Rocks, the Thunder and Fighting Irish were tied for second place in the WOSHL. Since December 10th, the Fighting Irish have won four of their five games and they have scored at least five goals in each of those four wins. Stratford's 102 goals on the season is third in the league.

Their most explosive offensive output of the last month was Stratford's most recent game, a 10-4 drubbing of the Plattsville Lakers on January 8th. Through 40 minutes, Stratford held a two-goal lead going into the third after a seven-goal second. In the final frame, the Fighting Irish potted four unanswered goals to secure the 10-4 victory. Ray Robbins and Brody Smith each contributed two goals and an assist, while Mitchell Casey posted four helpers. Darren Smith earned the win in goal with a 32-save effort.

One day prior, the Fighting Irish were in Delhi battling the Flames, a contest



(FRED GONDER PHOTO)



DENIED

Irish goalie Zack Weir #60 blocks this shot attempt by Dylan Denomme #96 of the Bluebirds who is taken to the ice by Irish defender Matt Fuller #27 as Graham Brulotte #10 watches. The Fighting Irish lost to the Tilsonburg Thunder 5-0.

that Stratford won by a 7-3 final. Zack Weir made 33 saves in net for the Fighting Irish while the newly-acquired Devon

Rymarchuk led Stratford in points with a goal and two assists.

Rymarchuk, who played in the OHL with the Barrie Colts and Owen Sound Attack, was acquired by Stratford along with former Niagara Falls Canuck blueliner Frank Nemeth from the Plattsville Lakers in exchange for three roster cards. Nemeth picked up his first point as a member of the Fighting Irish with an assist on Brandon Speziale's goal just 35 seconds into the first period.

Stratford's one recent stumble came when they hosted the Tilbury Bluebirds, who blanked the Fighting Irish 5-0 on December 27th. Despite slightly outshooting the first-place Bluebirds, a four-goal second period lifted Tilbury to victory.

On December 17th, the Fighting Irish had their own goal-filled second period, scoring five in the middle stanza en route to a 9-1 win over the Alvinston Killer Bees. Robbins and Graham Brulotte both posted four points, with Brulotte netting a hat-trick. Defenseman Riley Coome also added a pair and Stratford outshot the visiting Killer Bees 53-16.

One week before the blowout win over Alvinston, Stratford knocked off the Erin

STRATFORD FIGHTING IRISH 2022-23 Player Statistics (as of January 10, 2023)

#	PLAYER	GP	G	A	PTS
10	Graham Brulotte	14	17	10	27
9	Ray Robbins	14	8	19	27
77	Cameron Stokes	14	5	15	20
19	Brody Smith	13	8	11	19
44	Cooper Leitch	14	9	8	17
21	Steven DeGroot	11	8	7	15
79	Brad Krysko	13	7	8	15
16	Sean O'Brien	14	3	11	14
14	Mitchell Casey	14	5	8	13
55	Riley Coome	15	3	9	12
24	Brenden Speziale	12	7	3	10
81	Dylan Buckholz	11	4	6	10
27	Matt Fuller	10	3	7	10
8	Warren Gorman	12	2	7	9
15	Zachery Tierney	11	0	8	8
7	Colin Martin	10	2	4	6
18	Mav Petrie	10	1	5	6
27	Sebastien Nogueira	5	1	5	6
13	Matt Granger	15	2	3	5
25	Daniel McCutcheon	9	3	1	4
17	Brock Trichilo	4	2	2	4
33	Dillon Hunter	4	1	2	3
	Devon Rymarchuk	1	1	2	3
23	Michael Finlay	9	0	2	2
21	Frank Nemeth	2	0	1	1

WOSHL STANDINGS

(as of January 10, 2023)

	GP	W	L	OTL	PTS
Tilbury Bluebirds	17	15	2	0	30
Tilsonburg Thunder	13	12	1	0	24
Stratford Fighting Irish	15	12	3	0	24
Elora Rocks	16	10	6	2	22
Strathroy Jets	17	9	8	0	18
Plattsville Lakers	17	5	12	0	10
Alvinston Killer Bees	17	4	13	1	9
Erin Blitz	15	3	12	1	7
Delhi Flames	17	2	15	1	5

#	PLAYER	GAA	SV%
1	Darren Smith	2.20	.921
60	Zach Weir	3.40	.893



Stratford Branch 8

ATTENTION: CANADIAN VETERANS AND EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL

Branch 8 continues to offer emergency assistance as well as the services of Veterans Affairs Canada to eligible Veterans, their spouses, widows and dependents through the Poppy Fund.

Branch 8 Stratford is now offering a support program called the Buddy Check Coffee Program. Meant for all Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans, as well as interested first responders, it is a no-cost social gathering to share coffee and snacks every Tuesday morning of the year from 10:30 am to noon, paid for by the Branch Poppy Fund, with a host able to direct guests to support resources, under the guidance of the RCL OSI Group.

Please contact Reg at the Legion 519-271-4540 for a consultation.

Wishing everyone a Happy New Year in 2023!

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

Warriors sit atop GOJHL as win streak hits 16 games

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

As the homestretch of the GOJHL season gets into full swing, the Stratford Warriors remain the hottest team in the league, riding an incredible 16-game unbeaten streak that has them first in the entire GOJHL.

According to the Warriors' Director of Hockey Operations Jason Clarke, the success has the group feeling really good yet still hungry for more.

"The atmosphere is excellent right now," Clarke told the Times. "The guys love coming to the rink. The mood is light but heads are down and everyone continues to work extremely hard day in and day out."

"Good team wins over Ayr, Elmira, and Listowel continue to help our group build confidence in each other. That confidence showed last Friday in a huge win for our group against a very strong Kitchener-Waterloo Siskins group who have beaten us twice this season."

Just under 1,000 people were at the William Allman Arena for the afore-



mentioned 16th consecutive win by the Warriors over the Siskins on January 6th. After the Siskins took a 1-0 lead into the first intermission, Patrick Cole brought the game back to even just 80 seconds into the second period with a powerplay marker. That was the first of six goals to be scored in the second, including three in the span of two minutes and 13 seconds. Hunter Nagge and Jonas Schmidt had Stratford's other two second-period goals. The Warriors finally pulled away with the game in the third, fending off the Siskins while scoring three times. Luke Fritz put up a powerplay goal to tie the game at 4-4 before Schmidt gave the Warriors a one-goal lead on his second of the contest. Nagge also picked up his second goal of the game by potting an empty netter. Owen Willmore won his fifth straight game since joining the Warriors on the back of a 30-save effort.

Clarke credited the team's goaltending duo and a returning defenceman for helping the team round into the form that has helped them win 16 in a row.

"The group really settled when we got Owen Robertson back, who is a fantastic guy in our room. He had missed the start of the season recovering from surgery this summer. We also had a team trip to Bowling Green which was a good team-building experience for us. Willmore and Burleigh have been very strong in the crease for us as well."

In December, Stratford had three games against the floundering Brantford Bandits, who sit in eighth place in the Midwestern Conference with just two wins on the season and are trying to snap a 24-game losing streak. In their three games against Brantford in December, the Warriors outscored the Bandits 31-6.

One of the Warriors' other important victories in December came on a visit to Listowel, which saw the Warriors explode for four goals in the second period en route to a 5-3 win. Zac McCann broke open the scoring on the powerplay in the second frame after a scoreless first. Just under two minutes later, Reid Oliver capitalized on another powerplay to put the Warriors ahead 2-0. Nagge made it 3-0 just over three minutes later before Listowel scored twice in eight seconds. Before the end of the period, Cole restored Stratford's two-goal lead with what went on to be the game-winner. The teams traded goals early in the third including a goal by Fritz at 3:41 of the final period.

The GOJHL Trade Deadline was on January 10th and the Warriors made a deal one day before the Deadline, sending forward Tanner Ryan to the London Nationals for forward Dylan Dundas. In 34 games this season with London, Dundas has six goals and 11 points and he was selected to participate in the 2022 Top Prospects Game. Clarke said Dundas "moves well, has some edge to his game, and has some skill."

STRATFORD WARRIORS 2022-23 Player Statistics (as of January 10, 2023)

#	PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
9	Zac McCann	F	34	22	45	67
17	Hunter Nagge	F	34	29	28	57
18	Camden Daigle	F	33	15	29	44
22	Jonas Schmidt	F	32	17	22	39
27	Sheldon Pryce	F	29	14	23	37
19	Reid Oliver	D	33	8	26	34
12	Keaton McLaughlin	F	34	14	19	33
11	Luke Fritz	F	33	15	14	29
16	Patrick Cole	F	23	15	11	26
14	Jordan Moulton	D	32	6	17	23
24	Cole Lewis	F	29	6	10	16
7	Braydon Stumpf	F	34	7	8	15
5	Nolan Adkins	D	23	3	9	12
25	Zach Hatch	D	33	3	9	12
6	Rhyse Brown	F	27	6	5	11
28	Tanner Ryan	F	20	5	5	10
23	Wyatt Adkins	D	26	0	9	9
5	Jackson McLwain	F	7	3	5	8
4	Bo Doxtator	D	28	2	5	7
20	Zachary Schooley	F	15	1	5	6
15	Haden Frayne	D	17	0	6	6
21	Owen Robertson	D	14	0	5	5

#	PLAYER	RECORD	GAA	SV%
30	Zach Burleigh	11-1-0-0	2.01	.914
1	Owen Willmore	5-0-0-0	3.13	.902

GOJHL STANDINGS Midwestern Conference (as of January 10, 2023)

	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS
Stratford Warriors	34	28	6	0	0	56
KW Siskins	34	26	7	0	1	53
Cambridge Redhawks	33	22	6	4	1	49
Ayr Centennials	34	19	13	1	1	40
Elmira Sugar Kings	34	19	14	1	0	39
Listowel Cyclones	32	15	15	2	0	32
Caledon Bombers	34	5	29	0	0	10
Brantford Bandits	35	2	31	2	0	6

Stratford Rotary League

U20 (2003-2006) Standings

	GP	W	L	T	PTS
International Graphics	14	13	1	0	26
Sun Life Financial	14	10	2	2	22
Steve Smith Construction	14	10	3	1	21
Stratford City Mazda	14	8	4	2	18
Next Generation Plumbing	14	7	5	2	16
K & K Racing	14	5	7	2	12
Festival City Rentals	14	5	9	0	10
Stratford Motor Products	14	3	8	3	9
Bentley's Restaurant	14	1	11	2	4
Progress Aluminum	14	1	13	0	2

U16 (2007-2008) Standings

	GP	W	L	T	PTS
A Touch of Dutch Landscaping	16	10	3	3	23
Red Cap Propane	16	9	3	4	22
Bell's Winery	16	10	5	1	21
Woodcock Brothers	15	6	7	2	14
Stratford Police Assoc.	15	4	9	2	10
Dunny's Source for Sports	16	1	13	2	4

U14 (2009-2010) Standings

	GP	W	L	T	PTS
Lloyd's Electric	5	4	0	1	9
Turner Plumbing	5	3	1	1	7
Teahen Construction	5	3	2	0	6
Stratford Orthodontics	5	1	1	3	5
All Equip Repair	5	2	3	0	4
Korner Shoppe	5	1	2	2	4
Professional Choice Reno.	5	1	3	1	3
Holman Plumbing	5	1	4	0	2

Send in your sports reports



Coaches and/or parents are invited to send in your sports reports and pictures to the Stratford Times to let Stratford and area know how your teams are doing throughout the new 2022-23 season (and to create some great scrapbook material to be reflected upon in future years).

Game reports should be kept to a maximum of 100 words. Please include a brief description of what happened during your games, including the names of those who scored and any special efforts made by your players.

Please have all reports and pictures in by the end of the month by emailing stratfordtimes@gmail.com.

Wheels Up: Stratford represents at Junior Roller Derby World Cup

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Two women with Stratford connections will play key roles as Team Canada heads to Valence, France from July 28-30 to play in the Junior Roller Derby World Cup.

Jennifer “Raspoutine” Zammit of Stratford is one of the organizers of this year’s World Cup, which will bring together junior athletes in the niche sport from countries such as Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand, France, Sweden, Denmark, and the United Kingdom.

Zammit is a key driver of the sport in this country, serving as both President of the Junior Roller Derby Association of Canada and Chef de Mission of Team Canada Junior Roller Derby.

Team Canada recently named 35 players to their two-team roster (one team within the female division and one team within the open division for all genders) that will compete in France. One of their star players is Stratford’s Makayla “Ma-Kill-Ya” Soper. She is a member of Kitchener’s Tri-City Junior Roller Derby, which had five of its members selected to the national team.

“Prior to the pandemic, Tri-City Juniors had a full-contact travel team that was going head-to-head with other teams that were mostly US-based,” said Zammit, Tri-City’s Head Coach. “Our coaches taught most of these kids to skate, and we are so excited for them to have this opportunity to travel to Europe to represent our national team.”

In the coming months, all national team members will participate in online team building and training plans, while continuing to train with their home leagues. They will also travel to in-person practices in Toronto, Calgary, and France prior to competing together.

“Roller derby may not be as well-known in conventional sports circles, but the people who play it are every bit as fierce and impressive as any other athlete,” says Team Canada head coach Caroline



MA-KILL-YA

Makayla Soper at a recent game in St. Catharines

(DARREN STEHR PHOTO)

“Meow” Reimer. “Our coaches were blown away by the skill and abilities we saw in these athletes from across Canada, and we can’t wait to bring this team to the world stage.”

Roller derby originated in the 1930s with banked tracks and many will remember that, for a time, it evolved into a form of theatrical sports entertainment. However, today’s modern roller derby is an athletic sport based on a new set of rules developed in Texas in the early 2000s, Zammit told the Times.

Contested on a flat surface circuit track, often on iceless hockey or curling pads or within gymnasiums, each team fields five players at a time, with one of those players

designated as a scoring player (the “jammer”, who wears a star on their helmet) while the other four players are “blockers”. As the players skate counter-clockwise on the track, the jammer tries to break through the other team’s defence and can earn points on the subsequent lap by passing the blockers again. Therefore, each team is playing offence and defence at the same time – trying to help their jammer move forward while simultaneously trying not to let the other team’s jammer advance.

While roller derby began as a sport for women, it has since evolved to be an inclusive sport for all genders. Key to its culture, roller derby players, coaches and



referees are known by

their “derby names” that often embrace the rough and playful nature of the sport.

“Ma-Kill-Ya” (Makayla Soper) is one of the jammers on Team Canada’s 2023 squad. The grade 11 student at St. Michael Catholic School has been around the sport for a long time, Zammit told the Times.

“Makayla has been around roller derby since she was six years old, but didn’t start skating with us until she was nine,” Zammit said in telling that Makayla was first exposed to the sport by watching both her older sister and cousin play at Tri-City.

“Our league welcomes youth ages 9 to 17, and once they pass a skills test, they are permitted

to play junior roller derby at low, medium and full-contact levels,” says Zammit. “We hope the excitement of having five of our own members play at such an elite level will inspire more youth to give the sport a try, and help us build back. After ten years here in southwestern Ontario, we want to keep the wheels in motion.”

For more information on how to get involved with Tri-City Junior Roller Derby, contact the team at tricityjuniors@gmail.com. The team’s practices are held at Queensmount Arena in Kitchener every Sunday from 8 to 10 a.m. The only equipment required is helmets, knee pads, elbow pads, wrist guards, mouthguards, traditional quad-style roller skates.

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Stratford Minor Hockey



U12 WARRIORS MOVE ON TO CONSTELLATION DIVISION (STEWART GRANT PHOTOS)

The U12 AA Stratford Warriors, coached by Jamie Morris, parlayed a strong 9-2-1 regular season record into a qualification for Constellation Division play which began in January. Having been off the ice for three weeks, the Warriors started slow again the London Jr. Knights White team on January 8th but fought with two third period goals in a 5-2 loss. Pictured left is Will Molenhuis with a close chance versus London. Above, Nikolas Aroutzidis Desormeaux tries to score with a wraparound attempt in the third period.



U13 WARRIORS ARE IN FULL FLIGHT

(STEWART GRANT PHOTOS)

The U13 AA Stratford Warriors, coached by Todd Schmidt, are 1-0-1 in Constellation play thus far this month after completing the regular season in first place with a dominant record of 11-1-0. The team hosted the Sarnia Jr. Sting on January 7 and skated to a 2-2 tie. Pictured above, Owen Martin (#19) celebrates as his late first period goal tied the game at 1-1. Pictured right, Ryder Duchesne is in full Superman flight as he drives towards the Sarnia net.



U11 STRATFORD ACES HAVING STRONG SEASON (STEWART GRANT PHOTOS)

The Orr Insurance U11 A Stratford Aces are off to a solid 16-8-3 start in the 2022-23 season. Pictured to the left in their January 8th game against the South Huron Sabres are four Aces hustling into the defensive zone, led by Paisley Stevens, and followed by Keatyn Bell, Avery Canal and Olivia Willemssen. Pictured above, Keatyn Bell clears the puck while goaltender Adella Feller looks on.

Pioneering rock and roller Gail Selkirk featured in City of Waterloo Museum exhibit

LISA CHESTER

Stratford Times Correspondent

The exhibit at the City of Waterloo Museum, named Rock This Town Music and Memories, features founding member of Major Hoople's Boarding House Gail Selkirk. After joining the band in 1967, she unwittingly became a rock and roll pioneer as the female addition to a male rock band at a time where there were few female musicians, let alone one that could sing and play piano.

Selkirk first started taking piano lessons at eight years old, and studiously progressed to royal conservatory grade 8, and grade two, three, and four theory and harmony. Though classically trained, her interests were in all forms of music. She first came across the band Major Hoople's Boarding House when they advertised for a piano playing vocalist and was hired on the spot. Fellow band member Peter Padalino called her the little girl with the big voice. She toured with them until 1972 where she left to pursue more personal ventures.

The times were exciting, the music scene was exploding in North America and in Kitchener to Kingston, the crowds were greedy for more. But there is the reality of making music.

"We just put our heads down and we just got to work. It was a job. Other people went to work. We got in the Hoople bus and we went to work," clarifies Selkirk. "The crowds were great, the audiences were fabulous people. We had a huge following of absolutely rabid fans."

After leaving Major Hoople's Boarding House, Selkirk pursued other bands and was able to etch out a full time career singing and playing piano. Since coming to Stratford, she directed the musical 'Jesus Christ Superstar' for community theatre twice, which she found challenging.



ROCK THIS TOWN

Gail in front of the Major Hoople's Boarding House exhibit in which she is featured

(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

"I did it twice, once in 1988 and in 1994. They were different productions with different people, different cast, and it was challenging because there is no script. It is an opera that goes from song to song. You

had to orchestrate the band, direct the band, and give them all the parts. It was pretty involved and I learned a lot," said Selkirk.

There are generations of children that will remember her as their piano teacher,

or as head of the concert choir. She's performed at the former Church restaurant and current Revival House, Stratford Blues and Rib Fest, and the Hall to name just a few venues. After nearly forty years in Stratford, she's been pretty much everywhere and known by many.

Musically, she finds inspiration across the gamut. "In opera, Maria Callas, in rock, probably Frank Zappa among other people, in jazz, Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald, in rap, Eminem." In her solo shows, she will cover Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody followed by an original classical piece. There is no pegging her down. Her experience and skill after fifty-five years in music is boundless.

It is her mission to stay relevant, and to keep her thinking relevant.

"I want to keep moving and keep improving, it is really important for me to always get better and also to not be stuck in a rut, and to keep trying new things, experiencing new things," she mused.

To challenge herself, Selkirk was always interested in dancing, so she started learning some hip hop moves to incorporate into her solo act. She does a little bit of rock, jazz, classical, blues and even rap. She goes through a broad range of changes to always keep people surprised.

These days, Selkirk is working on her solo concert act, which she adores. "I have all the control, creatively and musically, and if I fail, it's all on me and I have to go back to my piano and try again." Though, she never fails. The last show she played with her good friend Glen Dias was sold out, and we can hopefully look forward to more of her soon, on her own or in collaboration with others.

The City of Waterloo Museum exhibit is located at 550 King Street North, Waterloo, in the rear of the Conestoga mall and runs until June 2023. Admission is free.



QUEEN'S JUBILEE PIN PRESENTATION

Stratford Times reporter Gary West, right, and Murray Schlotzhauer, left, were presented with a Queen's Platinum Jubilee pin by Perth-Wellington Member of Parliament (MP) John Nater to thank them for their tireless volunteer service. "From the ag society to providing palliative care visits, they're always the first to help out," said Nater in a Facebook post. "After our visit, Gary was off to deliver hams and Murray was off to volunteer with the Salvation Army."

Rosemary Vail was also honoured with the Jubilee Pin. She's been with Girl Guides for 30+ years, a volunteer with her church and the Alley Thrift Store.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Aviva Goad dances to sold out crowds in National Ballet's The Nutcracker

LISA CHESTER

Stratford Times Correspondent

Thirteen year old Aviva Goad danced to sold-out crowds in the National Ballet's 'The Nutcracker' this holiday season. Goad has been attending the National Ballet School (NBS) in Toronto and is now in her second year. Her development is evident as last year she was cast in a minor role of the ballet, this year she was cast as Marie, a major role as one of the two siblings at the heart of the ballet.

"I was super excited. Last year when I saw the other Mariés I knew I really wanted to do that part," said Goad.

This performance of the Nutcracker, choreographed by NBS graduate James Kudelka, tells the story of Marie and Misha, a fractious brother and sister, and their friend Peter the stable boy.

"They are having a big party at their barn, but Marie doesn't get a toy from her Uncle Nikolai. Her Uncle realizes that she is sad so he gives her a Nutcracker. She does this whole dance about the Nutcracker. Now, she and her brother Misha fight a lot, Misha steals the Nutcracker and in the end no one get it. They both go to sleep and in their dreams the Nutcracker comes to life," explained Goad.

Rehearsals started in September and ran until December when the ballet began. First they were every other day, then as the



MAJOR ROLE

Outside the performing arts venue stands Aviva Goad stands proudly in front of the sign of her major role.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

production date was closer they increased in frequency to every day.

"The Mariés rehearsed every day, so we would have ballet class in the morning for two hours, then we did Nutcracker rehearsal for two hours. In the beginning of October we were doing another performance so it kind of intertwined rehearsals and was pretty busy," said Goad.

The role of Marie is a large part, Goad is on stage for the entire ballet with the exception of one scene, where the snowflakes dance. There are four dancers that play the role, and Goad performed the ballet seven times.

"I really like how there's a lot of little moments where you can do acting in between the dances. The audience may not realize this, and it's really fun to put

your own personality into the character. The characters have a lot of depths, even if it would seem they are just little characters, but they all have their own story," she said.

The most challenging part was memorizing the whole thing, she is on stage for about two hours and has to memorize not only two hours of choreography, but also the acting for different scenes. She found it fun and challenging to remain in character the whole time and reacting to what's happening on stage.

"Curtain call at the end, and seeing the audience's faces was really great."

Goad has been dancing since she was three years old, taking lessons at On Stage Dance Studio. Here she studied ballet, jazz and contemporary styles of dance. She has also made her acting debut in live theatre at the Stratford Festival. At the age of nine she played the prominent role of Betty Paris in 'The Crucible', a play by Arthur Miller about the Salem witch trials.

"I played the youngest daughter. I was there for the whole first act and played a girl who was really sick. In the story all my cousins were accused of being a witch because they saw us dancing in the forest and I got really scared so I tried to act crazy so I wouldn't be hurt. I used to do a lot of contortions so in the play I would do a lot of bending my back and crazy movements to

look like I was crazy," said Goad.

Acting is something that Goad really enjoys and would like to do more of. She was looking at another production but her schedule with the National Ballet School wouldn't allow it. She did manage to do a contemporary dance piece called Arise at Meridian Hall in Toronto as part of a dance festival.

Academics are still a priority at the National Ballet School. It is pretty much like any other school except one class is also the History of Ballet.

"We get to learn the history of how famous ballets came to be which is really helpful to ballet dancers to narrow the origins to be better performers," said Goad.

Her arts training is well rounded as she also loves to sing and takes singing lessons. While she hasn't been in any musicals yet, it is something that she'd like to try.

"I like to write songs and I play guitar. I am also learning to play piano. I think definitely when I'm older my career will be in the arts, and I'm hoping that I can do musicals when I am older, just be a performer," she shared.

It's hard to believe young Aviva Goad has downtime, but she says she has lots of hobbies. She loves to write songs and also likes to draw. The visual arts hold an interest. For the future, her goals are to audition for film and TV roles.

WEB CRAWLING: In the mud

SHEILA CLARKE

Times Freelance Columnist

Recommended attire for this week's column: gumboots (rubber boots).

In November we took a look at doughnut communities, ones where environmental limits are the outside, and people in need are in the middle. Using UN social and environmental guides, we can hit the balance point, the "sweet spot" of the doughnut (Kate Raworth)

Earlier we looked at how nature is a complicated web, where everything is connected, including us! We looked at the underground factory of organisms that keep the soil healthy. We looked above ground, to see how important (and how much needed) native plants are to our Insects and birds, and the terrific winter habitat our plants and leaves can be if they are left in our gardens and yards.

Got your boots? Better bring them along. We hear a lot about wetlands, let's take a look. What IS a wetland? First point, it's usually... wet, or at least moist. We see lots of puddles in the fields, and we see ponds and lakes, are those wetlands?

Technically no- Wetlands are wet lands :) which are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water in areas where the water table is close to or at the surface.

According to Ontario Nature, wetlands are "diverse and delicate ecosystems that are both ecologically and economically valuable." They are often formed over centuries, and for some, thousands of years. Over that very long time, they have built an AMAZING web of life! Look! The larger life you might expect: frogs, turtles, salamanders, red-winged blackbirds, butterflies, cattails, herons, Joe Pye Weed, and dragonflies- among many others!

Wetlands often form stepping stones! Many times you'll find one wetland, and then another one maybe half a kilometre away, or maybe a kilometre- and then another one, further along. These wetlands form a "complex" of wetlands. They might look like they're flying solo, but actually animals (and plants!) use them for travel from one wetland community to another. They form a chain of habitat for the life that lives within the complex.

It's what you DON'T see that is even

more amazing! Wetlands are home to millions of life forms, many of them microscopic- insects, so important as pollinators and food to birds, amphibians and reptiles. There are tiny organisms in and beneath the water and many plants that are vital as host homes for butterflies and moths. Many of the animals large and small who live in wetlands are endangered species, whose very existence is threatened by development and pollution of all kinds. Wetlands are also hugely important to migrating birds, who gratefully stop to rest and refuel after their long trips. It's a magical world, filled with life. To lose our wetlands would be a disaster for so many plants and animals.

About those gumboots- wetlands are also vital as part of flood control. When severe storms result in major flooding, wetlands act as sponges, absorbing the excess water that can threaten to overwhelm farms, homes and towns. In years past talk was around the idea of moving wetlands, or possibly substituting other wet areas for wetlands. One recommendation was for a wetland policy, but that never quite made it to the books. At present the

only people with specialized knowledge about important wetlands as part of habitat and flood control are Conservation Authorities. They know which wetlands are vital in flood control, and important for biodiversity.

The new word of the day is "off-setting", building over a wetland and creating a new one elsewhere. Wow, that's a tall order- How do you cram thousands of years into a month? Replacing a wetland really doesn't work. The habitat disappears, and so do frogs turtles, insects, plants and birds, among millions of other life forms in the wetland. More importantly perhaps economically, so does the floodwater sponge. Better keep those gumboots!

Sheila Clarke is a Stratford advocate for the environment, of our community and of our planet. She has a BSc Zoology from the University of Illinois, and a host of courses beyond, in disciplines that inform ecology, the science of how everything living fits together in nature. She is a member of CFUW Stratford, Stratford Climate Momentum, and the Perth County Sustainability Hub.

Let Me Introduce...

Samantha Guzzo - Actress - Up and Coming

APRIL TAYLOR

Times Contributor

Sometimes, I think about that big question... What is the meaning of life? It fascinates me how we all bring our service to the world, often unconsciously, whether it be a doctor, a mom, social worker, salesclerk, artist or a scientist. Together we create a story, with sub-plots and personal and collective anecdotes, within the big story of life. I need something and you share it with me, and you need something I have to offer, etc. It's a delicate balance as we weave in and out of each other's lives, serving and helping one another. Somehow, the universe knows what proportion is needed in each area and when we are born, it gives us our certain talent, to maintain the balance of life's dance.

In Samantha Guzzo's case, she was given the gift of singing and acting. In kindergarten, Sam led her class in a call and answer song "Take a walk to Christmas." To her parents' amazement when they sat in the audience watching the kids Christmas concert and saw their daughter in a light they hadn't even known existed, they turned to each other and said, "Our daughter can sing? Who Knew?" They didn't, but the universe did, the gift was within her all along.

Her parents put her in dance lessons;



from there, Sam realized she also loved to sing and it became her whole life. Wonderful to find your passion at such a young age. She started doing chorus parts at Drayton Entertainment, and also did a couple shows with the London Community Players at the Palace Theatre.

Sam's mother Joanne acts as her manager, applying to auditions. When Sam was eleven years old, her mom made an appli-

cation for Sam to audition for the Stratford Festival's big musical in 2019, BILLY ELLIOT. Yes! She got the part! Sam shares that this was the best day of her life thus far, but something tells me this kid is going to have bigger and better days.

"There were three auditions," said Samantha. "They first called us all into dance, then at the end they called out a bunch of numbers, followed by, 'we would like you to come back later today and sing for us. everybody else, thank you for coming.' My number was called, so I did as they asked and came back later that day for a singing audition. This time, it was me alone in the room with the creative crew. I, to this day, have never felt so nervous. I remember Donna Feore (the director) asking me who my favorite singers were and my mind went blank; I could not think of a single one. Nonetheless, I suppose it went well, because I got an email inviting me back to one last audition. This time we were back in a group; we danced, sang, and were asked to introduce ourselves in a 'Geordie' accent. If you watched Billy Elliot, you'd have heard this accent. It was difficult, none of us were familiar with it, so we kind of just laughed along the way. That audition was fun, it certainly felt more comfortable."

Can you imagine doing this at age 11? Not me, I was afraid of my own shadow at eleven.

When an eleven-year-old child gets a job as big as this, it affects the whole family. Sam's parents rented a house in Stratford for the season, commuting to and from London for their work, leaving their home in Delaware. Quite a sacrifice to make to give Sam this opportunity.

Samantha said, "Walking into that huge rehearsal hall on the first day was really overwhelming. There were hundreds of people; I do not know what I had been expecting, but it was not that. I remem-

ber coming home that night and saying, 'mom, this is like the real deal'. That was one of the best parts; being exposed to such a professional atmosphere at such a young age. I learned so much about the teamwork required to put on such a successful production. It isn't just actors. It is directors, choreographers, voice coaches, set designers, costume designers, the sound team, lighting team, child supervisors, stage managers, etc. Everyone needs each other. With this came friendship. It's impossible not to build special bonds with people when you spend ten months with them. The kids were all super close. There were fourteen of us. We had our fair share of drama and disagreements, but it was expected, we just spent so much time together."

I love how she says ... Everyone needs each other. It reminds me of one of my favorite quotes by a wise fella Konstantin Stanislavski... "There are no small parts... only small actors"

I asked Sam if there is a downside to doing this type of work at such a young age. There were times she felt sad and felt left out at school. "It was hard missing out on friends' birthday parties and just hanging out because I could never miss a rehearsal or performance," she replied. Sam also missed a lot of school and had to make it up after. It's a demanding schedule.

"In the end, though, I wouldn't trade the experience for the world. The rush you feel when you're standing backstage, waiting for your cue to go on; nothing can compare to that feeling. Billy is an insanely high energy show, but it's also super emotional. It's so cool to be a part of the journey the audience is being taken on. Even after a hundred or more shows, I never grew tired of the sound of an audience's laughter, or the feeling of the stage lights on my face. I still find myself singing Billy Elliot songs, while we have been closed for three years. I wish I could go back in time and tell little me to appreciate the experience just a little more," said Samantha.

More recently, Sam (at 14 years of age) was part of the 2022 production of Hamlet-911 at the Studio Theater. A completely different experience, this being a smaller show and a lighter time commitment. The show itself was also like nothing she had ever been exposed to. Quite dark and sad, while also artistic and informative.

What is in the future for this young woman?

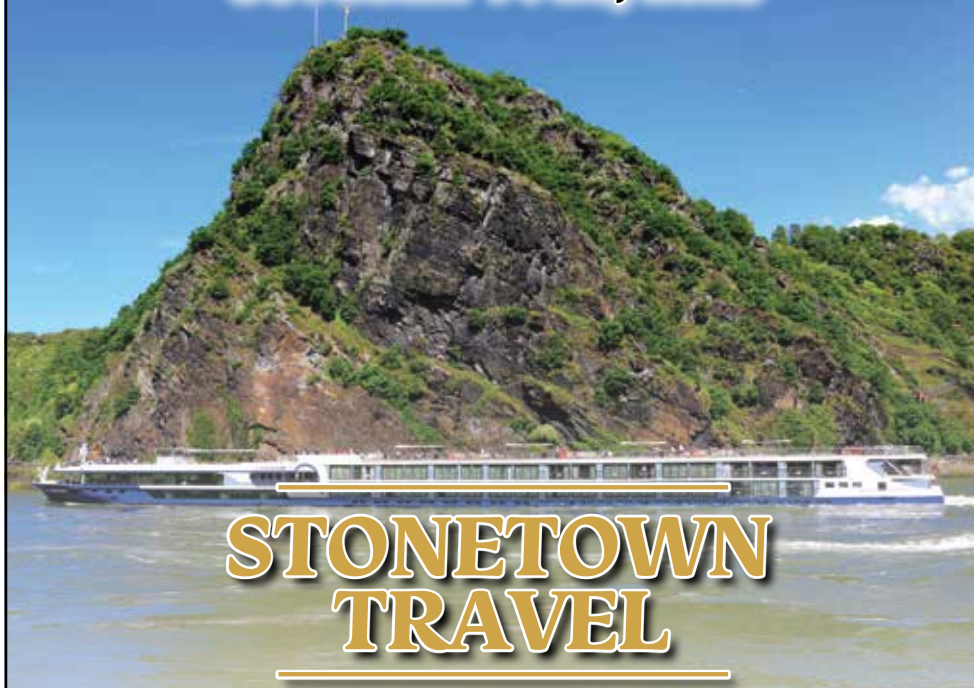
"I would love to do something like Billy again," she said. "Like I said before, nothing compares to that adrenaline. I hope to feel it again someday, maybe when high school is over and I have some more time. Until then, I continue to dance competitively at O'Neil Academy of Dance, and train in vocal every day at Catholic Central High school. My love for performing continues to grow as I do."

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Out With the Old and In with the New



IRENE ROTH

Times Freelance Columnist

I know it's a cliché that a new year offers us a chance to get rid of what's not working in our lives and expand what really is working and perhaps even take on a few habits that can help us prosper and become a better version of ourselves.

I just love the idea that I get a whole new chance to get it better and an unbroken expanse of 365 days to get there. There is something so inspiring and refreshing

about that.

Yet so many of us get bogged down, creating unrealistic resolutions that can never be maintained for any length of time. I believe the trick to creating a realistic new year's resolution is to look at what worked and didn't work in the past and create goals that have more of a tendency to work this time around.

For instance, if your resolution last year was to lose 50 pounds and you quit your diet around February, perhaps you should set a smaller, more doable goal that's more realistic. Also, perhaps instead of focusing solely on weight loss, perhaps try concentrating on creating more balance in your life through exercise and a positive mindset. That way, your weight will come off in a longer lasting way.

Many of us have had a hard year. There has been so much beckoning on our attention. Some of us may have had health problems in 2022. Or some of

our close relatives or friends may have become very ill. This seems to be a time of upheaval for people. Many of my friends and family members are struggling in ways that seemed incomprehensible at the beginning of the year.

How can we make the end of an old year and the beginning of a new one a fresh start for ourselves and those around us? Here are a few tips you may want to incorporate these into the brand-new year.

1. Take stock of last year. This is not to incriminate yourself for not completing your goals, as it is to provide you with some information on how to proceed in a more proactive and successful manner in 2023.

2. Reflect on which changes you would like to incorporate into your life in the new year so that you can become a better version of yourself.

3. Decide on whether the pace of your life is supporting you right now. Have you taken on

too much? Or can you add a few additional things to enrich your life? Perhaps you always wanted to take a course or start a new hobby. Why not try it this year?

4. If you've had health problems, perhaps it's time to step back from some of the usual activities to create a life that is more expansive and in line with your current goals.

5. Start a life journal. You may want to reflect on how you did this year, write down what new things you would like to try in the new year, set flexible goals, and write them down. This will help you stick to your goals.

6. You may want to take stock of how you are doing with your goals and your life regularly during the year. You can decide how often you check in. I usually try to do a reflective check-in once a week. It is where I reflect on what works and what doesn't and how I can tweak my goals or attitudes.

By taking these steps, you will

be living more mindfully and enjoy life more. But also, you will take steps to complete your goals or revise goals you set that aren't working. It is far better to keep tweaking your goals during the year than to set unrealistic goals and keep doing the same things repeatedly all year. Don't forget, the goals you set at the beginning of the year are not cast in stone. Instead, if you find you're not completing your goals as planned for a few weeks, it may be time to tweak them.

By taking the time to reflect on your goals, you will have a better year and be able to accomplish so much more. Then at the end of 2023, you will feel good about yourself and all your small and not so small goals.

*Happy New Year, Everyone!
May this year be your best year yet!*

Irene Roth

MUSINGS: Grammar Rage



MARK HERTZBERGER

Times Freelance Columnist

My first two years of public schooling took place in a two-room country schoolhouse with no indoor plumbing. (No, I'm not making this up!) The principal of that school, Sylvia Weber, was an excellent teacher but a real stickler for grammar. Using poor grammar didn't warrant the dreaded strap but often resulted in staying after school or missing

recesses until you got it right. While some would say the English language is evolving, I'm sure that Mrs. Weber would call it "devolving" if she was around today. As it is, she's probably "revolving" in her grave at 2000 RPM.

You really can't blame me, then, for shuddering every time I hear some of the phrases that are creeping into common usage. "Surely," you may say, "there are more important issues to get upset about!" Well, yes, that's true but I can't help myself. I think I must have PGSD (Post Grammatical Stress Disorder). My wife, Yvonne, says I'm becoming curmudgeonly in my old age and that may well be the case.

The dumbing down of grammar knows no limits. Here are just a few of the more annoying phrases I seem to hear everywhere – from journalists, news-

casters, weather forecasters, and, yes, even authors:

1. "I'm bored of this routine". Whatever happened to the phrase, "bored with"? Even "bored by" would work better. Think of it this way - you wouldn't say "I'm happy of this gift you gave me", would you?

2. "I'm excited for" the concert this weekend". I assume this means the person is excited about the upcoming concert. What it says though, is that they are excited on behalf of the concert. This is impossible. The concert is a thing, not a person, and cannot not get excited.

3. "They found evidence in connection to the investigation". "Connecting to" refers to a physical connection. Your television is connected to a wall outlet, for example. In connection with means "in relation to" and is what's really intended here...I hope!

4. "There is a few flurries out there". Plural versus singular: such an easy concept, one would think. We wouldn't say the leaves is on the tree...or maybe we would. Who knows these days? This really dates me but when Alfred Hitchcock's movie "The Birds" first came out, the radio commercials proclaimed: "The Birds is Coming!" Mad Magazine parodied this with "The Birds is coming and good grammar in advertising has went!" Of course, technically, "The Birds" is a film and therefore singular but I'm not sure many people today would even catch the irony.

5. One last gripe – and it's a big one. This is the one that causes me to yell, "no, no, no!" at the television screen and Yvonne to say, "Can't you just let it go?"

You can't say, "I was laying on the couch". You just can't. The first person use of laying always requires a direct object. So,

unless you are laying an egg, a brick or someone's corpse on the couch, the correct phrase is "I was lying on the couch". I suppose you could say, "I was laying myself down on the couch" but that's kind of redundant, isn't it?

Thank you for listening, however painful it was at you. I am happy of those whom would read all the way through this rant. As the snow lays on the ground, I hope the coming months is great for you. I am certainly excited for it...

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.

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Buzz Stop
Union Barber
Stratford Public Library
HH Delea
Balzacs Coffee
Queen's Inn
Arden Park Hotel
The Bruce Hotel
Stratford Motor Products
Stratford Legion
Festival Marketplace
Stratford Nissan

Stratford Subaru
Peavey Mart
Stratford Honda
Walmart
Shakespeare Variety
Shakespeare Brewery
Shakespeare Esso
Joe's Variety
Zehrs
Food Basics
Stratford Variety
Foodland

Pick Up Locations

Freeland's Diner
Stratford Hyundai
Stratford Chamber of Commerce
A.N.A.F.
McDonald's - Erie St
Expressway Ford
Strickland's Toyota
Stratford KIA
Fix Auto
Erie Street Esso
Stratford Medical Pharmacy
Erie Convenience

Stratford Mazda
Stratford Hospital
The Livery Yard
The Parlour Restaurant & Inn
Erie Convenience
United Way Perth Huron
AJ's Hair / Festival Square /
Features
Joe's Diner
The Urban Barber
Graham Energy - Hwy #7
Delmar Foods

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL: The Renewal Year



STUART LENDER

Times Contributor

Nature is perfect. Its persistence. Subtle and inspiring. Mighty and yet, an intimately hidden power. It renews. A flower emerges again and again even from the tiny crack in the concrete. We don't always feel its preparations. We don't always appreciate its dressings in season before we realize, the season is already upon us. When it comes, it comes in a glorious burst like

trumpets. Or it comes softly, like a bow arcing on a violin string; in tiny buds and infinitesimal sprouts along the crust of the earth. Becoming seen, as a note becomes heard.

Uninterrupted, the earth and the sky embrace to create this music for us. And it never ends.

Nature doesn't argue either. Nor does it condemn when it is wounded. It responds because it is fair. It maintains life - harmonious and symbiotic - a mutually beneficial relationship with everything in its midst. It doesn't force harmony with us or with anything else around it; instead revealing itself and in this way, giving - so long as it is given to. If it keeps giving without a return then it suffers; it's soul, emptied. As ours becomes when it is gone.

How are we, like it?

Natural and unique; imbued with life and imbued with death like us - it is there where we can look. We are part of it, organ-

ic and growing. And absolutely EVERYTHING in nature performs a valuable function. We know this. Plants don't need to be taught, told or search for what to do. They perform their valuable functions automatically. Purifying air. Releasing nutrients. The only thing WE do automatically like that, is knowing how to be born and how to die. The rest of our lives throughout history, had something to do with our choosing. But still, as everything in the natural world does, we too will decompose - the soil our common grave, the air our common spirit. We breathe it in while we walk on the bones of others.

Some of us can't recognize the patterns of our home that nature continuously and incessantly shows us. It is our own pattern. Birthing, thriving, decaying and dying. Constant; year after blessed year that is given us. And nature returns again from the stuff of its own decline. A rebirth from

the soil of its own decay.

Why shouldn't we?

What is our "soil" then? In what does our renewal sit? Not in the decay of the body. Could it be the firmament of the MIND? The stuff, the energy, the spirit that has given us the ability to exalt ourselves through the way in which we choose to think? That is what separates us from all other material things, is it not? Thinking? If we don't raise ourselves up through the soil of our own poor thoughts and into the light of fruitful and compassionate thinking; what are we but walking stems who choose to shade our own unique gifts and each other out, from the enlightenment that makes the soil of our minds, fertile?

And you might ask: "why must our thoughts be fruitful and compassionate?" Well, because we are not alone. As much as we feel, believe or think ourselves to be; we are not, nor can we ever be -

alone. Eventually when we reach a tipping point. we will all sink or we will all swim, because of the way we all interact. The earth is fertile or it is full of poison. Once the illusion of "my land," "your land," "my country," "your country" is recognized, the soil of the planet is seen; the soil from which we all thrive PHYSICALLY. Our mind is fertile or it is full of poison. Once the illusion of "I," "me," "mine" is recognized, the soil of the mind is seen; our common soil from which we all thrive EMOTIONALLY.

The renewal year is upon us. And once again, the same question sits in the old years chair before we get up out of it. "How will I choose to live this year?"

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL.

Stuart is the manager of Ruthersford Cremation & Funeral Services. It is his privilege to serve, dispel myths, and give information concerning his field of compassionate service.

PUSHING BOUNDARIES: Fake It Until You Make It



THOMAS VERNY

Times Contributor

Introduction

You may have seen the 1998 Hollywood movie on Dr. Patch Adams starring Robin Williams. Hunter Patch Adams while still in medical school, committed his life to bring fun and laughter to young hospitalized patients. Around the same time, professional clowns from the not-for-profit Big Apple Circus started to do hospital visits. Their message and techniques spread worldwide over the following years.

I assume the reader is familiar with the concept of psychosomatics. The science of how the mind affects the body. Many people forget that the reverse is also true. What goes on in the body affects the psyche, in other words - the mind. When we are happy, we smile or laugh. When we are sad, we sob, we cry. The interesting thing is that when we pretend to cry or laugh - actors do this all the time - the feelings associated with these bodily changes well up. In these difficult times, it behooves us to learn how to feel

optimistic and cheerful by way of conscious laughter.

How to Laugh

The easiest way to laugh is in a group led by a person familiar with laughing techniques. For example, see the work of Steve Wilson, a psychologist from Ohio, who brought the concept of Laughter Clubs to the US in the late 1990s. He is the has trained thousands of Certified Laughter Leaders in North America and beyond into a very thorough program that incorporate laughter exercises, non-competitive games, music, movement, creative arts, positive activity interventions and neuro-sciences (www.worldlaughter.com).

Another person whose work you can access on the web is Annette Goodheart, a psychologist from Santa Barbara. She was the first to create a theoretical framework for the use of voluntary simulated laughter. She devised a whole set of techniques on how to use laughter to release strong or repressed emotions. Her book "Laughter Therapy" is a good read (<http://lou.pm/lt>).

If joining a group either in your city or virtually does not appeal to you, you can learn to laugh on your own. You do not need to have a sense of humor, know jokes, or even be happy. Laugh for the same reason you exercise or diet. Because you know it is good for you.

Why it Works

Current scientific research at Loma Linda University's School of Allied Health and Medicine has shown that laughter helps

the brain regulate the stress hormones cortisol and epinephrine. The researchers also discovered a link between laughter and the production of anti-bodies and endorphins, the body's natural pain killers. Even the expectation that something funny is coming suffices to bring about positive effects, according to the lead immunologist, Lee Berk.

Scientists at the Maryland School of Medicine found that laughter causes the tissue that forms the inner lining of blood vessels, the endothelium, to expand in order to increase blood flow, while stress has the opposite effect, constricting blood vessels and reducing blood flow. "The idea to study positive emotions, such as laughter came about after studies had shown that mental stress caused blood vessels to constrict", says Dr. Michael Miller, Professor of Medicine and lead investigator.

In one study volunteers watched segments of a funny movie, "There's something about Mary" on one day and on the next watched the opening section of the rather stressful movie "Saving Private Ryan". Each volunteer served as his or her own control.

When study volunteers watched the stressful movie, their blood vessel lining constricted, reducing blood flow. This finding confirms previous studies, which suggested there was a link between mental stress and the narrowing of blood vessels. However, after watching the funny movie, the blood vessel lining expanded.

Overall, more than 300 measurements were taken. "The magnitude of change we saw in the endothelium after laughing was consistent and similar to the benefit we might see with aerobic exercise or statin use", said Miller.

The endothelium has a powerful effect on blood vessel tone and regulates blood flow, adjusts coagulation and blood thickening, and produces chemicals in response to injury and inflammation. It also plays an important role in the development of cardiovascular disease.

When we laugh, extra amounts of serotonin are naturally released in the gastrointestinal tract. Cardiac vagal tone is improved. The parasympathetic system - rest and digest - is dialed up, the sympathetic nervous system - fight or flight - is dialed down. As a result, the immune system is powered up and you heal faster and are prone to less sickness.

The pituitary gland and the hypothalamus release endorphins, dopamine and oxytocin, neuropeptides related to feelings of happiness and bonding. The pain threshold is significantly increased. You feel good connected with self and others.

Caveat

I should point out that sufficient randomized controlled clinical trials have not been conducted validating the therapeutic efficacy of laughter. Therefore, it is not surprising that in academic circles this approach is generally held in disdain as non-scientific

and off the wall that cannot replace antidepressant medications and if push comes to shove, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). In terms of consumers, the problem is that laughter is free, and we don't value what's free.

Key Takeaways

Eat your veggies, exercise, get vaccinated and have a good belly laugh every day.

Because the mind is not limited to the brain but dwells in the whole body, if the body feels good, the mind will feel good.

The question is not to ask which is better, but which is better for you and what you want to achieve.

None the less, some health professionals are beginning to implement laughter therapy in their clinical practice, both individually and in groups.

Dr. Thomas R Verny is a psychiatrist, podcaster and author of 47 scientific papers and eight books including the international best seller, The Secret Life of the Unborn Child, published in 27 countries and the recently released, The Embodied Mind. The Embodied Mind shows how intelligence and consciousness—traits traditionally attributed to the brain alone—permeate our entire being. Dr. Verny lives with his wife in Stratford.

In Pushing Boundaries, Dr. Verny will report on pioneering research and breakthrough discoveries in science and the arts as they impact our lives. He will try to address the question of readers everywhere, "Why should I care, of what value is this to me?"

Riddles

What's really easy to get into, and hard to get out of?
Trouble

Where would you take a sick boat?
To the dock

What gets wet while drying?
A towel

I'm tall when I'm young, and I'm short when I'm old. What am I?
A candle

What room do ghosts avoid?
The living room

I can be cracked or played; told or made. What am I?
A joke

What has a head and a tail but no body?
A coin

I sometimes run, but I cannot walk. What am I?
Your nose

What has four fingers and a thumb but isn't alive?
A glove

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 31



Pet of the Month

BUNNEARY
Hi there! My name is Bunneary. I'm a sweet and friendly, 3-year-old girl looking for a home to call my own! I love to go on self-guided tours of my foster mom's house. I love wicker baskets and fluffy floor mats. I am a good girl and I use my litter box even when I'm out of my pen. I am always happy to see my foster mum and like getting a few pets before asking where the food is. Shreddies & Cherrios are two of my favorite snacks. If you need a life-long friend to cuddle with, submit an adoption survey at <https://kwsphumane.ca/adopt/process>.



Word Search

WINTER

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

- Shovel
- Freezing
- Snowflake
- Slippery
- Skating
- Sledding
- Earmuffs
- Mittens
- Snowman
- Icicle Hot chocolate
- Blizzard
- Hibernate

Carson Farms and Auctions – a staple in the Perth County farming community

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

He could be recognized for his many accomplishments over the years but maybe none better than one of Canada's greatest livestock and farm auctioneers that would be hard to duplicate anywhere in Canada and beyond.

A business well-known to all farmers in the area, David Carson Farms and Auction Services is approaching 58 years in business, and Dave is the type of person that would help anyone in need.

Starting at age 19 with a small farm and a few dairy cows, David Carson also decided to become an auctioneer... and the rest is history.

Today, Carson is known far and wide for his auctioneering, deep booming voice, and his wry sense of humour that keeps customers smiling as they continue bidding. He is a successful auctioneer that has operated his business for over half a century selling dairy, beef, machinery, and horses, and also farm auctions to go along with all his other interests.

Carson has managed and auctioned many top dairy cattle, beef, horse and even goat dispersals to go along with managing a large number of acres to feed the many head of livestock that are on his numerous farms today.

Many livestock fairs and exhibitions in North America were always glad to see Carson Farms trailers pulling in with their show string of Clydesdale horses, in order to support the competition being held at various locations around Ontario and beyond.

The farm owned over 50 Clydesdales at one time, and they were a breeding estab-



SOLD!

Dave Carson, shown recently, auctioning from the back of his truck at one of his yearly machinery sales.

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

lishment that had shown draft horses for well over 50 years at most major shows across North America.

Carson has showed the winning six-horse hitch of Clydesdales at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto and bred the first female to be judged world champion Mare, which he named "Carson's Delight". He will say he has been privileged to supply several horses to Budweiser Clydesdales in St. Louis, Missouri as well as selling a complete six-horse hitch at the Great American Clydesdale show that went on to win the world championship in 2007. Some of the Toron-

to Police mounted unit have also purchased trained crossbred riding horses from Carson Farms.

More recently he had the supreme six-horse hitch at the 2015 World Clydesdale Show which was held in London, Ontario.

Wherever you travelled in North America in horse circles, if you say you come from Listowel, Ontario, they will ask if you know David Carson, because he has become so widely known around the country.

In the dairy business, they have their own milking dairy herd and raise a large number of breeding heifers for sale by private treaty or through their by-weekly dairy auctions in their state-of-the-art sales facility east of Listowel.

In 2005, Carson opened the doors to the public and hosted the International Plowing Match with close to 100,000 visitors from across the country.

He also contributes to the community in many ways including 4-H programs, supporting the Listowel Agricultural Society, volunteers and auctions at many charity events, and his family and staff have contributed to the Listowel Hospital fundraising campaign.

For many years Carson has provided, free of charge, the Mennonite Central Committee with their auction facility to raise money through their charity heifer auction to support countries in need.

In 2016, Dave Carson was inducted into the Stratford-Perth Museum "Wall of Fame" for his contributions to Agriculture in Perth County.

Over the years, the Perth County Holstein Club along with the Perth-Huron Jersey club and many other area cattle clubs, have been the recipients of some of the commission collected when Carson's auc-

tions hosts their annual fundraising sales.

Just recently, one of Perth County's top production dairy herds was dispersed for long-time South Easthope township breeder Robwynn Holsteins and the Bob and Tim Trachsel families.

The family had put their trust in Carson through their many years in the dairy industry of doing business together, and decided it made good sense to sell their herd of cows there.

David Carson does not appear to be slowing down but his motto that he always sticks by is that "their customers are the real heart of their business" and if past history has anything to do with it, their business will survive for many years to come in the future.



WALL OF FAME

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Dave Carson with his late mother Elaine, in 2016, as he was inducted onto the Perth County "Wall of Fame"

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Warriors

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Allman Arena, 15 Morenz Dr,
Stratford
Come out and support the Stratford
Fighting Irish

**ALZHEIMER SOCIETY
HURON PERTH SOUP'S ON
Saturday, January 14; 11 a.m. - 2
p.m.**
Stratford Rotary Complex
Back in person to sample Perth
Counties best soups! Don't forget
to bring your own spoon!

VOLUNTEER WELCOME

NIGHT
Wednesday, January 25; 5:30 - 7
p.m.
The Local Community Food
Centre, 612 Erie St, Stratford
Overview of the Volunteer
Program. Snacks and introductions
Plus an overview of the Local.

**GARDEN STRATFORD
MEETING**
Monday, February 6; 6:30 - 9
p.m.
Army Navy Hall, 151 Lorne Ave.
E., Stratford.
Speaker Presentation: Jim
Mabee, Ontario Horticultural
Association Judge, will speak
about "Houseplants to Consider",
highlighting some of the less
common options. The meeting
will begin with a Garden Chat
about "Favourite Seed Varieties".
Meeting open to Everyone; free
admission.

VALENTINE'S DAY GALA
Saturday, February 11; 5 p.m.
Stratford Rotary Complex, 353
McCarthy Rd., Stratford
Dinner, live music and silent
auction for Cystic Fibrosis. Tickets:
\$50. Tickets are available at Black
Angus Bakery & Catering or call
226-626-4971.

**DISABILITY JUSTICE
FORUM**
Thursday, February 23; 6 - 8
p.m.
The Local Community Food
Centre, 612 Erie St, Stratford
A public screening of Ballinran's
short film, McKenzie's Story,
followed by a moderated panel
discussion with representatives
from all three levels of
government. MP John Nater, MPP
Matthew Rae, and Stratford Mayor
Martin Ritsma have all committed
to attending this solutions-focused

discussion on advancing disability
justice.

CHARITY HOCKEY GAME
Saturday, March 18; 8 p.m.
William Allman Memorial
Arena, 15 Morenz Dr, Stratford
This exciting game will feature the
Stratford Professional Firefighters
Association facing off against a

full line-up of former NHL hockey
heroes. This fantastic community
event promises lots of skills and
lots of laughs, and is guaranteed to
be fun and memorable for all ages!
Tickets are \$30. Tickets available
at www.ProHockeyHeroes.com or
by calling the Event & Ticket Line
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QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) 600-800
- 2) Panama hat
- 3) The Philippines
- 4) Orangutan
- 5) Sherlock Holmes
- 6) Switzerland and The Vatican
- 7) Fans of Justin Bieber
- 8) Penny Black and Twopenny Blue
- 9) William Lyon Mackenzie King
- 10) 6

SUDOKU

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