

# STRATFORD **TIMES**

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## GO Train Service between London and Toronto to end in October

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

A pilot program featuring extended GO Train trips from London to Toronto, with stops in St. Marys and Stratford, is coming to an end in October. The announcement was made by Kitchener GoTransit, stating that Metrolinx's arrangement with CN and VIA Rail Canada to operate the service using existing infrastructure, including tracks and stations, will expire this fall, and no renewal is planned.

Erin Duffy, Community Engagement Advisor for Metrolinx, noted, "Metrolinx's arrangement to operate services between London and Toronto was established with CN and VIA Rail Canada to operate with existing infrastructure, including tracks and stations. The agreement with CN and VIA Rail ends this fall, and Metrolinx will no longer have access to the infrastructure."

Duffy added, "We remain committed to serving commuters and will look to redeploy those assets where appropriate to meet demand." Indicating that Metrolinx would explore alternative solutions to cater to the transportation needs of the affected areas.

The news of the service termination has sparked disappointment among residents and local representatives who have come to rely on the convenience and accessibility offered by the train service. In a video posted on Instagram by Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach, dozens of people can be seen boarding the GO Train in Stratford on a Tuesday morning, showcasing the popularity and usage of the service.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



**DOG DAYS OF SUMMER LAUNCHED IN MARKET SQUARE**  
Contest winners on the red carpet on June 22. See the story on page 5.

(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

## Repurposing peopleCare building

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The City of Stratford Council convened a public meeting at City Hall on June 26 to gather input from interested individuals regarding a Zone Change Application and an Official Plan Amendment Application 198 Mornington St.

The applications, filed under the Planning Act, relate to the property at 198 Mornington Street in Stratford.

The property spans approximately 2,487 square metres and features frontage along Mornington Street and Duke Street. Currently, the site is home

to a vacant institutional building that was previously utilized as a long-term care facility (peopleCare).

The applicant seeks to repurpose the building into a low-rise residential apartment building. Caroline Baker, Principal of Baker Planning Group, noted in a statement, "It is the intent that the 17 units would be residential rental units with 1 and 2-bedroom suites."

The proposed development does not involve any exterior renovations or additions to the site.

To facilitate this project, the Official Plan Amendment Application aims to increase the maximum residential density from 65 units per hectare to 75 units per hectare.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



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# Stratford Fire Chief attends his last council meeting



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

John Paradis shaking hands with the current mayor, Martin Ritsma, at the end of the July 10th City Council meeting.

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

Stratford Fire Chief John Paradis announced at the July 10th City Council meeting that he would be moving onto a new position in London.

"It's not a retirement; it's a see you later," Paradis said as he addressed the council at the end of the evening.

Paradis has led the Stratford Fire Department since March 2015. In addition to his role, he was an important

member of the city's population team and was also said to be instrumental in managing and declaring emergencies, including the most recent pandemic.

"It has been wonderful eight and a half years serving the community of Stratford, leading Stratford fire departments and providing oversight," Paradis said in his address to the council, "Thank you, members, of the council, this council and the previous two councils, all of your staff and your employees as well as the City of Stratford."

Paradis will be moving onto a new position as the City of London Deputy City Manager.

# GO Train Service between London and Toronto to end in October



(JO-DEE BURBACH PHOTO)

Patrons waiting to use the Go Train service at the Stratford station on a Tuesday afternoon.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington, expressed his disappointment in a statement to the Stratford Times, emphasizing the impact on constituents. "It is disappointing that this GO Train service will not continue. I encourage all constituents who are concerned about the GO Train pilot program ending to email me, which I am happy to share with the Minister of Transportation. I continue to advocate for local rural transportation funding, whether that is the PC Connect Bus or other methods of transportation."

Mayor Martin Ritsma also recognized the need for collaboration between all levels of government to address the issue. "The resolution of this issue will require all levels of government to work together," Mayor Ritsma stated. He further highlighted the direct impact of the cancellation on local residents, university and college students, and the tourism sector. Mayor Ritsma also expressed concerns about the environmental impact resulting from increased car passenger travel due to the discontinuation of the GO Train service.

Residents who wish to voice their concerns or provide feedback are encouraged to contact Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington, who is actively engaged in addressing the matter.

The cancellation of the London to Toronto GO Train service will undoubtedly prompt discussions and efforts to find alternative transportation solutions to serve both St. Marys and Stratford efficiently.

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# Repurposing peopleCare building

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The Zone Change Application requests a rezoning of the property from the existing Residential Second Density Zone to the Residential Fifth Density Zone. The proposed zoning provisions include adjustments to the building's front yard depth, exterior side yard depth, and side yard depth.

The specific provisions would also recognize the existing parking spaces regulated under a Site Plan Agreement between the property owner and the City of Stratford.

A Planning Consultant spoke on behalf of the City of Stratford and presented the public's support and concerns regarding the proposed changes to 198 Mornington Street. The consultant emphasized the intention to revitalize the property with affordable housing units in mind.

Various community members expressed their thoughts on the proposed development. Celia and Michael McConville emphasized the need for mixed-density housing options in Stratford, stating, "Stratford needs more mixed-density housing options."

Jennifer Birmingham, Owner of The Bruce Hotel, highlighted the lack of reasonable market rentals in Stratford and

noted, "My business has lost employees due to a lack of reasonable market rentals in the city. My concern is that they could be turned into short-term rentals and urges that they remain long-term rental units."

Elizabeth Curr raised concerns about the absence of a traffic study for the proposal, specifically citing the potential challenges at the intersection of Mornington, Duke, and Waterloo Street. She urged the council to consider the implications of increased traffic in the area.

If approved, the 17 new dwelling units may be subject to development charges and could contribute to additional tax revenue for the City of Stratford. Moreover, the development plan aims to address the parking needs by increasing the number of parking spots to 1.25 spaces per unit, resulting in a total requirement of 22 spaces. Currently, the property provides 10 parking spaces.

The City of Stratford Council will consider all public comments and concerns before deciding on the Zone Change and Official Plan Amendment Applications. The council's commitment to engaging with the community and fostering a sustainable and inclusive living environment reflects its dedication to the well-being and prosperity of Stratford's residents.



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

198 Mornington Street building awaiting approval to turn the vacant building into an affordable housing apartment building.

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# STRATFORD TIMES

Stratford's Community Newspaper  
Established 2021

The Stratford Times is published twice per month (the second Friday and fourth Friday) and is free to all citizens either in print format or online at stratfordtimes.com. The newspaper is published by Grant Haven Media, a local business who also publishes the St. Marys Independent, Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette and Woodstock Ingersoll Echo.

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# It's not all doom and gloom in newspaper industry

## Stratford Times going to publish twice per month

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

The news business has been in the news a great deal within the past month. The number of developments to impact the industry recently has been staggering.

Most of the news has not been good and have stemmed from the increasing financial difficulties facing Canadian news companies:

- On June 14, Bell Media cut 1,300 jobs; including prominent figures at CTV National News, and closed several of its radio stations including 1290 CJBK in London;
- On June 22, Bill C-18 ("The Online News Act") received royal assent, which immediately resulted in Meta (owner of Facebook and Instagram) and Google to announce that they will block Canadian news link from being shared on their platforms;
- On June 27, Postmedia confirmed that they have signed a non-binding Letter of Intent with Nordstar Capital LP (owner of Metroland Media and the Toronto Star), which, if the transaction is successfully completed, would combine the country's two dominant newspaper companies. (These negotiations have since broke off.)

Postmedia, owner of the Beacon Herald, has also made significant reductions in its staff earlier this year. These reductions have included both journalists and sales staff, and the impact of these changes is obvious when reading their newspapers. There are fewer local stories being told, and merging with Metroland certainly isn't going to help that matter.

One of the problems with Postmedia and Metroland is that

their subscriber count is in serious decline, as people figure "why do I need to buy these papers when I see their news stories for free online?" In turn, their print product becomes less attractive to advertisers. It's a downward spiral that I'm not sure how they escape from.

Our model with the Stratford Times is in many ways the opposite of what Postmedia does. We give away our paper for free (both in print form and via online PDF), and we make it available at convenient locations across Stratford and the surrounding area. We have reasonable advertising rates, and we're adding (not subtracting) to our locally-based staff.

We started the Stratford Times as a monthly newspaper, with the hope to increase our print frequency as we could afford to do so. Thanks to the support of the advertisers that you see in this newspaper, we're pleased to announce that, starting this month, we will double our print frequency. Starting now, our newspaper will come out twice a month: on the 2nd Friday of each month and on the 4th Friday of each month.

I want to say a sincere thank you to everyone who has supported and encouraged us along the way. We plan to continue to improve and enhance our local news coverage of the Stratford area that comes from the relationship that we have with local businesses, organizations, readers and contributors.

The news business certainly faces challenges, but we know that people will always value and appreciate local news coverage, and we plan to be here to fulfill that need. Becoming a "twice a month" newspaper is a step in the right direction and puts us closer to the end goal which is becoming a weekly newspaper.

## Letter to the Editor

It more than caught my eye when reading through the latest edition.

Imagine!!

Book review of "Dotson" under the byline of Queer Book of the Month Club... AND... "Drag Queen Storytime", a live event attended by parents and their children.

In recent times, there has been much reporting of an-

ger, disdain, and hostility towards anything that features LGBTQ viewpoints, how refreshing it was to learn and listen without hearing nastiness and diatribes.

Thank you for including the articles.

Thank you very much.

Paul Simpson,  
Stratford

Hi. I have been coming to Stratford since the mid 1960s, and discovered a paper copy of the Times last year at the B&B I always use. I was pleased to see the option to sign up for a digital copy each month, and always look forward to reading it. There have been a number of interesting articles about local activities (many of which happen when I am not scheduled to be in town) and historical events, but the Times also has better information than the Beacon Herald about new restaurant openings. Since I am now visiting a couple times a year, new restaurants are always on my list of things to do.

The current issue talks about the possibility of increasing the frequency of publication, if local financial support is available. I'm not sure if twice a month issues would really help infrequent visitors like me, but if you could

find a way to increase your digital subscription base, that might address some of your financial concerns related to increased frequency. It sounds like a lot of print versions are claimed each month, since you are frequently replacing them, but are you able to keep track of how many out of town visitors find a copy and decide to subscribe to the digital version? Maybe you could encourage local residents, lodging proprietors and restaurant/retail shop owners to actively make print copies available to visitors who might not otherwise see or pick up copies on their own, which could lead to an increased digital circulation.

At any rate, I am very happy to continue reading the digital version, and making sure I am up to date when I come into town. Thanks.

Bruce McNaughton

# STRATFORD TIMES

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# Dog Days of Summer launched in Market Square



**WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?** Humane society ambassador dog Angel greets young Duncan and mom Caitlin Messenger. (LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

**LISA CHESTER**

*Stratford Times Correspondent*

The market square was "pawsitively" packed with pooches and their parents to launch the Dog Days of Summer event by the Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA).

The event on June 22nd officially kicked off the welcome of dogs and their owners to a dog friendly downtown Stratford. The promotion is meant to encourage people and their pets to venture out in the downtown core together rather than leaving them home alone.

"It allows people to experience the downtown, So many people like to bring their dog with them wherever they go, there's lots who travel with their dog so we are doing everything we can to show them they are welcome," said Jamie Pritchard, general manager of the BIA.

Participating stores and restaurants will be supplied with a sticker for their premise saying "Well Behaved Dogs Are Most Welcome" and the BIA has purchased fifty water bowls to distribute to businesses downtown. There are two dog waste bag dispensers now conveniently placed by the public washrooms of market square and on York Street.

The BIA has consulted with the Huron Perth Public Health unit and they have provided guidelines when deciding whether or not a pet is welcomed into the businesses. More importantly, dogs are only permitted in an outdoor eating area of a food service premise as long as food is not prepared in the eating area.

The Dog Days of Summer event began with an opening speech by Mayor Martin Ritsma and a ribbon cutting for the market square's bag dispenser.

"I want to thank the BIA who is always doing something creative in the community to enhance the lives of people that come to downtown Stratford. The initiative of the canines in downtown, as we all know, has the therapeutic benefits of dogs to their owners," said Martin Ritsma as he addressed the crowd. "When I was a principal in high school my dog Norman used to come to school with me every morning. He'd spend

the day with me and staff and students."

The ribbon cutting followed and was represented by Mayor Ritsma, Jamie Pritchard, Christine Foster of Pawsitive Difference Professional Pet Care and Heidi Rolleman of The Barkery. Both Foster and Rolleman have committed to ensuring the bag dispensers are full.

Also present were representatives of the Humane Society taking donations of food and answering questions with their Humane Society Ambassador, a beauty of dog named Angel.

A dog show was held in which dogs were entered into categories for best dressed, tallest dog, shortest dog, longest tail and best trick.

Little Max and dog mom Debbie Becker won paws down for his shark costume. Six year old Wilbur, and Irish Wolfhound and his dad John Bynum took to the red carpet for tallest dog, an easy win given that Irish Wolfhounds are said to be the world's tallest dog although I think a Great Dane might beg to differ.

Wilbur also entered the competition for the shortest dog, though that should be the cheekiest dog. The winner of the contest was a little fellow named George. For the longest tail, Wilbur conceded in favour of the other contestant Flynn, a mix of a German Shepard and a Standard Poodle with great size.

Judges had the most difficult time deciding upon the winner for best trick as they witnessed a varied display of shaking paws, crawls, dance, agility training and acrobatics. Ultimately it was the acrobatic Zola that won, with honourable mentions going out to Charlie, Ernie and Toby.

The BIA is compiling a list of businesses in the downtown that will welcome dogs into their premises and will post it to their website, which can be found at [www.downtownstratford.ca](http://www.downtownstratford.ca)

"It's nice for owners to know they are welcome into many shops and patios of Downtown Stratford with their fur babies. Perhaps this will entice folks to come from further afield who love the idea they can enjoy a road trip without worrying about their pet crossing its legs back home!" exclaims Pritchard.

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# Stratford Celebrates Canada Day with Exciting Festivities

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The city of Stratford came alive on July 1st to commemorate Canada Day. A series of vibrant events and activities unfolded throughout the day, bringing together residents and visitors to celebrate the nation's rich heritage.

The day began with the opening of the Stratford Perth Museum at 10 a.m. Children and family members participated in an array of exciting Canada Day activities. Engaging in Canadian trivia, scavenger hunts, craft activities, and even Canadian Karaoke were some of the fun things attendees could participate in.

Later that afternoon, the downtown area transformed with a number of Canada Day festivities. Outdoor food trucks lined the streets, including the new Annie's Fish and Chips Gluten-Free food truck, which sold out of their haddock croquettes well before early afternoon.

In addition to the many food options, the sounds of live music and captivating performances filled the heart of the city. The talented Full House Brass, Lauren Neilson, and other local musicians took to the stage to perform for onlookers.

A number of restaurants stayed open on July first to accommodate residents and visitors in the downtown core. Families also visited The Boathouse to float across

the Avon River and take Canada Day pictures with a special "Canada Day Balloon Arch" by the water.

Order of Canada Member Jean Aitcheson leads the Canada Day parade in downtown Stratford. John Nater, MP, Matthew Rae, MPP, and Mayor Martin Ritsma also took part as the parade as floats made their way down Stratford streets.

Later that evening, the festivities shifted to the Stratford Education and Recreation Centre (SERC) for the highly anticipated "Proud to be Canadian Day Celebration," hosted by the Kinsman Club of Stratford. This annual concert and fireworks display has been a cherished tradition in the Stratford community for almost three decades.

The Kinsman Club expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to organize this memorable celebration. "As part of Kin Canada - Canada's only all-Canadian Service Club - it is our history and tradition to celebrate Canada Day," stated Kin Bob Walters.

Local musician Steve Adair, popularly known as Yeager, took the stage, followed by the talented New Boys band. The bands played a number of songs, including iconic tunes by Canadian legends such as Tragically Hip and Neil Young.

Meanwhile, food trucks once again lined the area, offering a diverse range of delectable options to satisfy every craving. Among the crowd's favourites was



## DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION

Kaitlyn Ewing from Stratford celebrating Canada Day with her pups Joker, Eggy and Fox.

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Ken's Fries.

Families and friends gathered throughout the area, setting up lawn chairs and blankets, with anticipation building for the night's grand finale; a dazzling fireworks display illuminated the night sky just around 10 p.m.

This fireworks event would not have been possible without the generous support of corporate sponsors, including the City of Stratford and Heritage Canada. Along with The Kinsman, their contributions recognized the importance of fostering community spirit and national pride.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Any Canada Day Parade would not be complete without the presence of parade Marshall Jean Aitcheson, who became Perth County's recipient of this year's "Order of Canada" along with Mayor Martin Ritsma.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The Ron Neeb Farm brings out five antique John Deere tractors from 1934 and up, with Canada Flags waving, in support of the annual parade in Stratford



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# Celebrating National Indigenous Month



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

## SYMBOL OF FIRST NATIONS

Symbolistic Teepee raised at the Falstaff Community Centre in recognition of National Indigenous History Month.

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

*Times Correspondent*

Celebrating National Indigenous Month in Stratford: Supporting and Honoring the Indigenous Community

National Indigenous History Month is a time to celebrate and honour the rich cultures, traditions, and contributions of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Here in Stratford, the community came together to recognize and support the Indigenous community through a series of events and initiatives. A number of events were organized in partnership with Christin Dennis, an Aamjiwnaang First Nations member and 'Sixties Scoop Survivor.'

These activities aimed to foster understanding, promote inclusivity, and raise awareness about Indigenous history and heritage in Stratford.

One of the key events held during National Indigenous Month was organized by Dennis at the Falstaff Community Centre on June 21st.

This event featured the Ojibwe spirit horses, which hold immense cultural significance within Indigenous communities. The Ojibwe spirit horses represent strength, resilience, and the deep connection between humans and nature.

As a symbol of First Nations communities, a teepee was also raised this month at the Falstaff Community Centre.

Dennis noted, "Raising the teepee was a symbol to help educate indigenous and non-Indigenous people about the teepee and how we can use these places for healing and sharing stories and serves as a reminder of the connection to the land and traditional way of life."

The Local Community Food Centre or-

ganized a Strawberry Moon learning circle with Patsy Anne Day, also a 'Sixties Scoop Survivor' and Haudenosaunee First Nations Community member. This gathering provided an opportunity for individuals to come together, share knowledge, and learn about Indigenous culture, history, and the significance of the Strawberry Moon.

The Stratford Museum also organized immersive nature exploration activities and learning circles, allowing participants to deepen their understanding of Indigenous connections to the land.

Through guided tours and interactive experiences, attendees learned about Indigenous agricultural practices, traditional plant knowledge, and their sustainable relationship with nature.

While National Indigenous Month is a dedicated time to celebrate and honour Indigenous culture, it is crucial that our support extends beyond a single month.

Dennis noted that asking questions, taking part in community events, and not being afraid to be wrong are the primary stepping stones to allowing opportunities for learning, "people will make mistakes, and that's okay. We expect that; that's how we learn to continue to ask more questions."

Other ways to support the Indigenous community include purchasing local Indigenous art and products, advocating for reconciliation and participating in meaningful conversations and programs offered by Indigenous peoples.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about Indigenous culture or upcoming events, Christian Dennis is happy to talk; you may reach out by email at [sitting1213@gmail.com](mailto:sitting1213@gmail.com)

# Downtown Stratford BIA presents roadmap for future public art projects

EMILY STEWART

*Times Correspondent*

The Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA) will now have a blueprint to help them create new public art projects.

The BIA announced the step-by-step plan in a June 6 press release. The BIA worked with Toronto-based STEPS Public Art (Sustainable Thinking and Expression on Public Space) starting in May 2022 to create the public art plan.

The executive summary in the plan said more than 500 of Stratford's stakeholders, including business owners, residents, city staff, councilors, arts and culture organizations, and property owners were involved in the plan's development. The summary listed seven areas of focus:

- Accessibility and wayfinding
- The ecosystem of emerging artists
- Education around public art
- Funding and accessing support for public artwork
- The heritage conservation district and designated buildings
- Limited knowledge and representation of local Indigenous culture and history
- Underutilized public space

The Downtown Stratford BIA will use the public art plan to make the city core a year-round culture destination, engaging residents, supporting a robust and creative community, form cross-sector partnerships, develop a network of integrated art, and fostering placemaking and placekeeping for Indigenous and equity-deserving groups.

Jamie Pritchard, the general manager for the Downtown Stratford BIA and Pamela Coneybeare, owner of La Osa, member of

the beautification sub-committee, and former Downtown Stratford BIA chair presented the public art plan during a Stratford City Council meeting on June 12. Council unanimously approved the public art plan. Coun. Bonnie Henderson was absent.

"I'm very happy the motion was put forward and unanimously decided to accept our plan and adopt it and use it for future city planning," Pritchard said.

He spoke of joy at the council meeting, referencing Paul Kalbfeisch's book "The Joy Experiments," and noting cities thrive and grow with joy.

"Art projects are something that bring joy. They bring discussion. They start controversy. Everyone sees art in a different way," Pritchard said. "Once you create an area of joy, more people want to come and visit there. They want to stay longer when they're there and sometimes even live here to experience the city."

He compared planning public art projects with the plan to traveling with a map to get to a destination.

"If you just started driving and didn't know where a certain city was and kept driving, maybe someday you would end up there, but if you have a roadmap - I'm guessing Google maps now - to help you get there along the way, it's a much easier task," he said. "We learned a lot of things before we worked on the art plan, and have found that now we've got an A to Z guide of how to get to your destination."

To find out more about the Downtown Stratford Public Art Plan, visit [downtownstratford.ca/projects-programs/public-art-strategy-for-downtown-stratford](http://downtownstratford.ca/projects-programs/public-art-strategy-for-downtown-stratford).



(DOWNTOWN STRATFORD PHOTO)

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# Insight from the Ontario Chief Electoral Officer during his recent address to The Rotary Club of Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The Ontario Chief Electoral Officer, Greg Essensa, addressed the Stratford Rotary Club in June, shedding light on his responsibilities, challenges faced, and efforts to enhance voter engagement.

The role of the Chief Electoral Officer is to ensure the smooth functioning of elections, and Essensa has over 30 years of municipal, provincial and international election experience.

Essensa discussed that his role as Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer holds a significant authority position as an independent officer. The Election Act and election finances grant him the power to oversee the electoral process, including the regulation of political parties and third-party candidates.

Essensa notes that his primary responsibility is to ensure that all stakeholders, from voters to candidates, are "equipped with the necessary information to make informed choices during elections," he said.

The Chief Electoral Officer noted that he travels extensively, having visited various regions, including James Bay and several indigenous communities in the north. He notes that his experience gives him a deep understanding of Ontario's diverse jurisdictions, comprising 124 ridings in total.

Ontario has more political parties than



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

**Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa and Gerry Thuss Stratford Rotary Club member after discussion regarding past and upcoming elections.**

the federal level, totalling 23 altogether. Essensa said, "The province's 29-day voting period is the shortest in the country," he went on to say, "The 2022 election witnessed a substantial decrease in Elec-

tion Day participation but a significant increase in advance voting, which was seen across the country."

Ontario recently implemented the use of an app that provides crucial information

to voters, such as registration status and polling locations. Essensa noted, "This innovative approach aims to enhance voter accessibility and engagement, and future elections will see further improvements to the app's functionality."

Despite ongoing efforts to facilitate voter participation, Essensa said only 44% of Ontarians exercised their right to vote in the 2022 election.

Looking ahead, Essensa said, "Combating misinformation and disinformation poses a significant challenge." He emphasizes the importance of educating voters to discern reliable information and reinforcing the public's trust in the electoral process.

Ultimately, the Chief Electoral Officer's goal is to instill confidence in the electoral system. "Maintaining a healthy and strong democracy relies on the collective efforts of all stakeholders involved in the electoral process," Essensa noted.

The address by Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer underscores the critical role played by independent officers in safeguarding democratic principles. The electoral process aims to foster active citizen participation through effective communication, technological advancements, and initiatives to combat misinformation.

By ensuring transparency, accessibility, and voter confidence, Essensa noted that "Ontario's democracy can continue to thrive in the upcoming 2026 election."

## "A Wrinkle in Time" scavenger hunt launched by the BIA

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

A new scavenger hunt has been launched by the Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA) inspired by the Stratford Festival's production of "A Wrinkle in Time". The production has proven to be a family favourite and has been described by the Globe and Mail as "fun and fast-paced".

In the play, a young heroine leads her brother and a friend on a journey through space and time, galaxy to galaxy, to save the world and rescue her father who mysteriously disappeared while working on a scientific concept.

Adding to the fun of the production is the scavenger hunt running from July

1st to September 4th. The hunt consists of thirteen stops for time travellers of all ages. Read the clues and hunt for the story-inspired answers inside participating businesses on York St, Ontario St, Wellington St, Albert St, Market Place and Downie St.

The scavenger hunt is offered online only using your phone or other portable device. Simply follow the link on the landing page of the BIA, downtownstratford.ca. There are thirteen clues to solve by searching downtown businesses for props supplied by the Festival.

Answers can be plugged in on the fly while traversing the downtown in quest of each stop. Finally, fill in your name and contact details, and submit your entry for prizes. In order to win, correct answers

for at least ten of the thirteen riddles are required. There are four draws for prizes to be held July 17, 31, August 15 and September 5th. The prizes for the first two draws are a pair of tickets to Stratford Festival's "A Wrinkle in Time" and the next two draws are for \$50 in Downtown Dollars.

Jamie Pritchard, general manager of the BIA says, "Our scavenger hunts are so popular with kids of all ages and this one is no exception. Bring the family down to search the businesses of the Downtown BIA for authentic theatrical props that have been kindly loaned to us from the Stratford Festival Warehouse. Fill in a minimum of 10 of the 13 riddles with the correct answer and you have a chance to win a great prize!"



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

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# STRATFORD TIMES

**ATTENTION:**

**The Stratford Times is now being printed TWICE a month:  
2nd Friday of each month & 4th Friday of each month  
Please have advertisements, obituaries, event notices, etc.  
submitted by the preceding Tuesday.**

**stratfordtimes@gmail.com**

## Small-Town Strip Club looks towards next chapter in musical journey

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

A local band that entered a contest known for featuring the biggest names in Canadian rock music finished third.

Small-Town Strip Club, a rock band that has played together since 2017, were one of the bands competing in the 97.7 HTZ-FM Rocksearch contest. Johann Yundt, the vocalist for Small-Town Strip Club, said beloved Canadian rock bands such as The Glorious Sons, the Trews, and Finger 11 all won the contest in the past.

A panel from HTZ-FM and affiliates narrowed 12 bands from 120 applicants, then a public vote picked the six bands to play live at the St. Catherines venue The Warehouse. A judging panel selected the top three bands before deciding a winner. Small-Town Strip Club placed third in the competition.

"We gave it our all and we finished as finalists, not champions," Yundt said.

Before performing with Small-Town Strip Club, Yundt performed solo with an acoustic guitar from the time he was in high school. The now-drummer of the band, Jimmy Flood, saw him at one of his shows.

"He notified me he was jamming with some individuals and they don't have a frontman or a lead singer and they seemed to like all the same music that I do," Yundt said. "He asked if I wanted to jam with them one day and we jammed."

Small-Town Strip Club, also featuring bassist Noah Bolger and guitarist Brady Lewis, started off as a cover band, but now they play original music. The band enjoys The Black Keys and Canadian rock bands such as The Glorious Sons, Arkells, City and Colour, and The Tragically Hip. Yundt aspires to have a career like the Sam Roberts band.

"Just like a true Canadiana band. They seem to live seemingly normal lives behind their rock star stuff, they're not go-

ing out and ruining their lives," he said. "They're writing good songs and have had a really attainable, awesome career traveling Canada and traveling the world."

Yundt wants the band to eventually release an album and said they have about 20 songs written so far, and he wants them to continue advancing in their careers.

"We want to continue to build the hype and play with some bigger bands," he said.

Small-Town Strip Club will perform at the Bunker on July 15 at 8 p.m.. The band will also play at the Rum Runners in London, Ont. on July 28 opening for The Lost Keys.

On Sept. 30 at the Stratford Rotary Complex, Small-Town Strip Club will open for the James Barker Band.

Visit <https://small-townstripclub.bandcamp.com> to check out the band's music, and follow Small-Town Strip Club on Facebook and Instagram for the latest updates.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## Queer Book of the Month Club

Iona Iverson's *Rules for Commuting*

by Clare Pooley

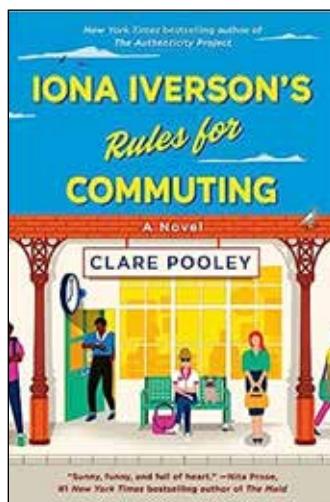
@SPL: FIC Poole

Iona Iverson takes the train in to London every day, carrying her little dog, dressed in outrageously colourful and eye-catching outfits. She's a magazine columnist, who is teetering on the edge of losing her job thanks to the young and flashy new editor in charge - he is convinced she's too old and past it to be successful.

On her car there are other regulars. But as her *Rules for Commuting* state, you don't talk to other commuters. Still, she has her own nicknames for the regulars, and one morning Smart-But-Sexist-Manspreader chokes on a grape right across from her, bringing Iona into actual communication with Mr.-Too-Good-to-Be-True, a nurse who saves the day. Looking on is Impossibly-Pretty-Bookworm, a young woman who has a life crisis after seeing this brush with death.

These characters, once they've connected, are irrevocably linked. They start talking regularly, and even doing things together outside of the commute. And there are the inevitable complications that arise from each one's home life; a controlling boyfriend, an over-involved mother, a financial crisis, bullying, job issues, and more.

Iona is the heart of this group of commuters, but when



she suddenly stops taking the train, the group coalesces around their shared purpose to find her and make sure she's alright.

Iona's whole life revolves around her work, especially now that her beloved wife Bea is no longer living with her. And when her young upstart editor maneuvers her into resigning, the commuting group discovers what's up and rallies to save her, both financially and creatively.

This was a charming and funny book, with an original premise. Its strength is in the characters & the many spiralling plotlines. Each person has foibles, and is both likeable and unlikeable, as real people are.

Although there are serious issues that each of them face, the book concludes with

everyone well, with problems overcome -- most of them, anyway. There are some things that can't change but they're beautifully dealt with, and the final pages showing the connection between Iona and Bea are beautiful and moving. Bea has always told Iona that "They want us to be small, so we have to stand tall", and that's what each of the characters learn in this book, in differing ways according to their lives. It's an uplifting read with characters who will keep you reading.

Melanie Kindrachuk

Public Service Librarian, Stratford Public Library

## Stratford Public Library's Wonderpasses encourage exploring

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Whether you're looking to travel to a provincial park, visit another municipality, or explore the Stratford Festival behind-the-scenes, a Stratford Public Library card can lead you to your summer plans.

The library posted about Wonder Passes on June 20 on their social media pages. The passes include access to Upper Thames River Parks, Ontario Parks, the Stratford Festival Treasures Tour: Costume Warehouse and Archives, the Set Changeover Experience, and PC Connect and are available to Stratford Public Library patrons.

The Wonder Passes web page on the library's website lists details for each of the passes. The Upper Thames River Parks pass can be borrowed for two days and offers admission for one vehicle and its passengers or four people walking or biking to either Fanshawe Conservation Area, Wildwood, or Pittock parks up until Oct. 15. The Ontario Parks passes are available year-round and grant day access to any provincial park in Ontario for a week.

The Stratford Festival Treasures Tour and the Set Changeover passes include admission for two people and can be borrowed for a week for patrons looking for a behind-the-scenes look at the beloved festival.

"By providing them through the library, they remove barriers to accessing and permit participation in social and cultural based experiences within our community," Brandi Gillett, community engagement supervisor of the Stratford Public Library, said of the Wonder Passes and other non-traditional items.

On June 7, both the Stratford Public Library and PC Connect announced free PC Connect passes will be available at all Perth County Information Network (PCIN) libraries. The pass gets two adults and two children from the same household on any PC Connect bus, which travels around Perth County, London, and Kitchener-Waterloo.

"We recognize that transportation isn't throughout the county, isn't accessible to everybody," Gillett said. "It's a wonderful opportunity for librarians to help support individuals that need access to various areas."

She added that there are several non-traditional items available at the Stratford Public Library, including Internet mobile hot-spots, board games and puzzles, a seed library, and bird-watching kits. The library also offers maker kits that feature multimedia items including digital cameras, scanners, drawing tablets, ring lights, microphones, and other tools. The kits are in addition to the MakerSpace Open Labs for patrons to work on their projects from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

"Of course, not everybody finishes their projects within the hours of the Open Labs," Gillett said. "This is a way that people can continue to work on their projects and the activities from the MakerSpace at home."

Visit [splibrary.ca](http://splibrary.ca) for more information.



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Expiry: August 31, 2023

# Boost trade with Stratford Made

BETTY JO BELTON

*Stratford-Perth Archives*

For sound environmental and economic reasons, we are often encouraged to “shop local.” This is hardly, however, a new idea.

The “Made-in-Stratford Exhibition and Carnival” held for a week in June 1922 showcased goods produced around the city. It was announced that “practically every product that is manufactured in this city – and they are many and unsurpassed in general excellence – is to be on view...the actual process of manufacture is to be demonstrated in many cases.” Visitors were encouraged to return every night because “you’ll miss something good if you don’t.” Displays were set up for everything from Stillman’s Pasteurized Butter to Imperial Rattan’s Reed Furniture (suitable for the Verandah, Living Room, Sun Room and Bedroom) to J. Cahill’s Fine Havana Cigars to Gerlach-Barklow’s Artistic Calendars. W.G. Brown’s Refreshment Parlour offered free samples of their new Heather Cream Toffee. There were nightly dances and tumblers and clowns on hand to entertain the crowds. Over twenty-one thousand visitors toured the sixty exhibits set up at the skating and curling rinks – linked by a temporary walkway.

The Grand Trunk Railway, which at that time, employed upwards of 1,400 people in Stratford was acknowledged as “the city’s most important industry” and described as “among the largest and most modernly equipped locomotive shops

on the continent.” The GTR’s exhibit, shown in this photograph donated to Stratford-Perth Archives in 1985 by the late Gordon Beadle, was “most elaborate and outstanding.” On Wednesday, June 21 the Grand Trunk shops were opened for public inspection. The “champion first aid team” gave a demonstration of their skills. Friday, June 23 was “Grand Trunk Night” at the exhibition and the GTR Band and Quartette were on hand to provide music for the dance hosted by Mr. J.C. Gordon, Superintendent of Motive Power at the shops.

At the July 3 City Council meeting, it was decided to send as many of the exhibits as possible to the Canadian National Exhibition later that summer. The City, Chamber of Commerce and the sponsoring manufacturers agreed to co-operate on this project. A booth displaying views of Stratford parks, information about electrical power sources and factory sites available in the city would be added to the exhibits. One end of the space to be rented – about ninety feet wide – was to be taken up by the GTR’s exhibit. CNE officials who had visited the railway’s booth at the Stratford exhibition had described the detailed information about the inner workings of the repair shops as “an entirely new departure” from the schedules and maps usually displayed by railways.

This article is based on information and images from the collections at Stratford-Perth Archives. [www.stratfordpertharchives.on.ca](http://www.stratfordpertharchives.on.ca)



Grand Trunk Railway band members in 1922.



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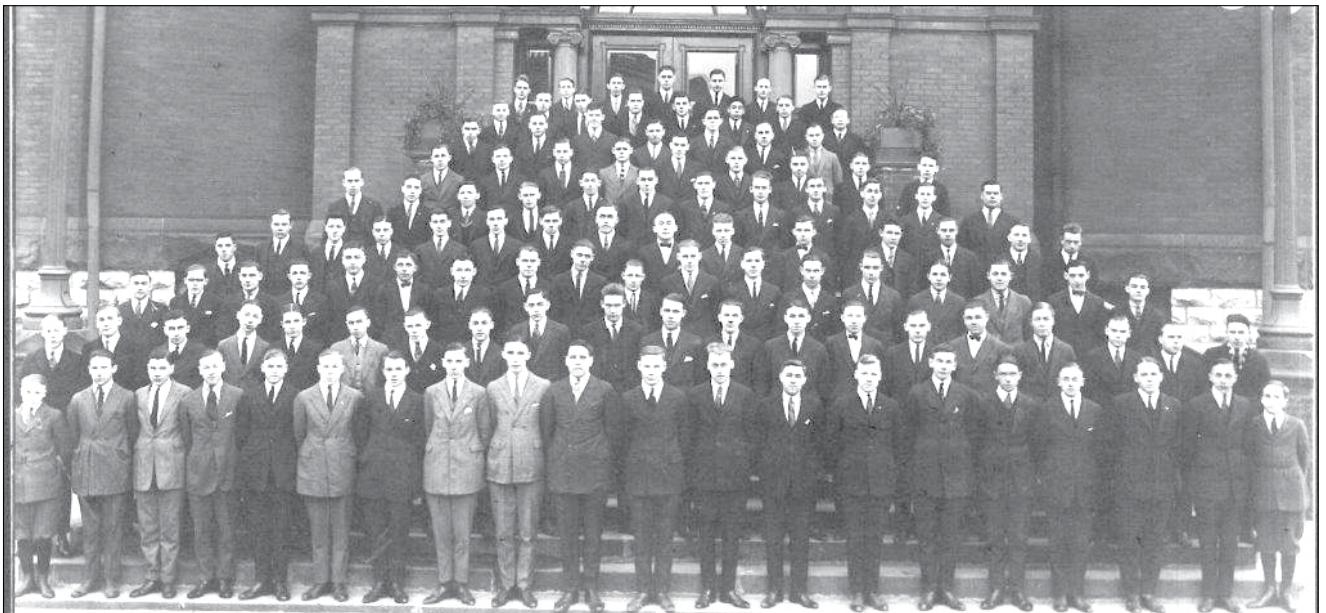


@Stratford\_Times

## Weekend Quiz

- 1) How many triangles are on a backgammon board?
- 2) What geographic term for a bay derives originally from the Greek word kolpos meaning bosom?
- 3) What condiment brand features the Palace of Westminster on its label?
- 4) The Hundred Years War, during the 13th and 14th centuries, was fought between which two countries?
- 5) In 1834 who invented raised point writing using a six dot system enabling the blind to read?
- 6) The archaeological site of the ancient city of Troy is in which country?
- 7) What country's name derives from an Iroquois word for village?
- 8) Which Shakespeare character is known as The Moor of Venice?
- 9) What is the previous and common alternative name of the Indian city Mumbai?
- 10) Which city, home to Coca-Cola HQ, hosted the 1996 Summer Olympic games?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31



Apprentices studying at the Grand Trunk Railway Shops in Stratford in 1922 gathered for the traditional group photo on the steps of City Hall.

# John Kastner Announces Retirement from the Stratford Perth Museum

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

After over a decade of exemplary leadership, John Kastner, the General Manager of the Stratford Perth Museum, has announced his retirement from the position effective December 1, 2023.

Under Kastner's leadership, the Stratford Perth Museum underwent significant changes that propelled its growth and enhanced visitor experience. Physical modifications, such as relocating the front door to the side, vastly improved accessibility for all patrons. Furthermore, Kastner revamped the museum's layout, creating a better flow for visitors to explore the exhibits.

"Only 186 people walked through the doors of the museum the first year," Kastner stated, "I wouldn't say 'rock bottom,' but we needed to do something."

One of Kastner's notable achievements was securing iconic exhibits for visitors, and he did this by forging relationships and working in collaboration with others.

With a big assist from the Stratford Festival's artistic director Antoni Cimolino, Kastner was able to bring Shakespeare's First Folio to the museum; this huge

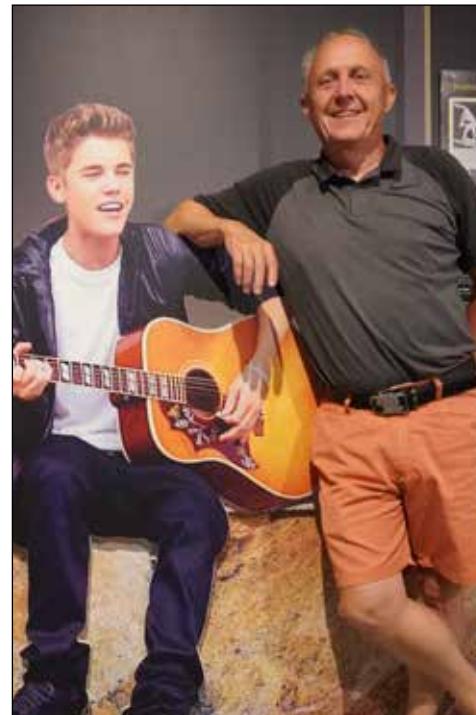
achievement brought in visitors from all across the world. This tie with the Stratford Festival was a pivotal change in the trajectory of the Museum's success.

With a 33-year career in journalism, Kastner noted the importance of community connections in his success as the GM at the Stratford Perth Museum, "Getting to know your community; coaching kids hockey, sitting on boards, and just being involved in the community is so important," he said, "these are the soft skills that helped the museum."

Another remarkable accomplishment was establishing a lasting relationship between the Stratford Perth Museum and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. This resulted in a significant exhibit in Stratford that saw a record-breaking 10,000 people during its time here in Stratford.

Kastner was also instrumental in organizing a Harper Lee exhibit, which coincided with the Stratford Festival's production of the iconic book, 'To Kill a Mockingbird.'

The pinnacle of the museum's success came with the opening of the Justin Bieber exhibit in February 2018. Despite freezing temperatures, enthusiastic fans eagerly lined up before the museum's opening hours to catch a glimpse of the exhibit.



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

## BIEBER FEVER

John Kastner at the Stratford Perth Museum with the life-size Justin Bieber cutout.

"We opened the doors at 9 a.m. and had to close them by 9:15 a.m. That was our biggest day ever," Kastner reflected.

Kastner's ability to secure grants was crucial to the museum's success, particu-

larly during the challenging times brought about by the pandemic. Recognizing the need to adapt, he utilized the difficult circumstances as an opportunity to expand the museum's offerings.

Kastner spearheaded the construction of an outdoor theater, which provided a safe space for events during the pandemic and became a significant revenue source for the museum, even today. Around 40 shows and performances will take place at the Player's Backstage theater this summer alone.

Looking toward the future, Kastner expressed his hope for continued growth for the Stratford Perth Museum. He emphasized the importance of staying focused and maintaining a sense of humility, quoting, "No matter how far you go down the road, you're still the same distance from the ditch." This quote underscores the importance of remaining vigilant and never losing sight of the museum's vision and goals.

As John Kastner prepares to retire, the Stratford Perth Museum reflects on a decade marked by groundbreaking exhibits, enhanced accessibility, and the establishment of a unique identity. Kastner's indelible contributions have undoubtedly shaped the museum's legacy, leaving behind a strong foundation for future growth and success.

## HPHA celebrates 25 Years of Discovery Week with Western University

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

A partnership between Western University's Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry and rural healthcare settings across Southwestern Ontario celebrated a milestone anniversary.

A May 29 press release from the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) announced over 170 medical students from Western would have their Discovery Week displacements across 29 communities as part of the program's 25th year in running. Discovery Week, which occurred the week ending June 3, gives the students a chance to experience what it is like to work in healthcare in a rural community.

Dr. Shanil Narayan, a general internist and regional academic director of the Huron-Perth Academy, is thrilled about Discovery Week reaching its 25th year, especially since he's witnessed the program develop over his 20 years of being in Stratford and area.

"It's exciting because we continue to see the energy of the students come through, but also exciting because many of our doctors in the region have been part of that program as well," Dr. Narayan said. "Now we have previous students engaged as preceptors for the new students, so it's nice to see that cycle evolve."

Felix Harnos, the associate director of distributed medical education and regional strategy of the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, is also pleased about the

milestone anniversary. He credited dean Dr. James Rourke for founding the program back in 1998.

"It has become a defining aspect of medical education in Southwestern Ontario, which is lovely," Harnos said. "It's also a testament to all of the people including physicians and administrators of various sites that have contributed to the longevity of this program."

Dr. Naryan said the community-based relationships and the people involved in Discovery Week make the program successful. Students participating in the program are three to five times more likely to return to the area they worked in after graduating. The program also breaks stereotypes about traditional versus community-based medicine and the capacity of rural health care centres.

"The students come out and are exposed to dynamic, engaged, innovative people," he said. "I think when they come out and they see people connected with our communities, people who are excited about their work, I think that has an impact. It expands their impression of what medicine can be."

The patients also enjoy interacting with the medical students during Discovery Week.

"The patients really do appreciate the idea that these students will be their future and an opportunity for them to come back into our communities as well," Dr. Narayan said. "We very much value that relationship and the opportunity for building it in the time ahead."

## The Kiwanis Club of Stratford 2023 Concerts in the Park

WEDNESDAY & SUNDAY EVENINGS - 7-8:30 p.m.

JULY 16	<i>Strings &amp; Traps</i>
JULY 19	<i>Stratford Concert Band</i>
JULY 23	<i>Weston Silver Band</i>
JULY 26	<i>Stratford Concert Band</i>
JULY 30	<i>Our Little Band</i>
AUGUST 2	<i>Stratford Concert Band</i>
AUGUST 6	<i>Kitchener Musical Society Band</i>
AUGUST 9	<i>Stratford Concert Band</i>
AUGUST 13	<i>The New Boys</i>
AUGUST 16	<i>Stratford Concert Band</i>
AUGUST 20	<i>Michael Kelly Cavan</i>
AUGUST 23	<i>Stratford Concert Band</i>
AUGUST 27	<i>The Thundering Velvet Band</i>
AUGUST 30	<i>Stratford Concert Band</i>
SEPTEMBER 3	<i>The Jazz Gents</i>

The funding for the Sunday concerts above is provided by the Kiwanis Club of Stratford. All concerts are held at the Kiwanis Pavilion Band Shell in Upper Queens Park and begin at 7:00 pm sharp. Bring your family and friends to experience the live performance of music!



# KIWANIS CLUB OF STRATFORD

## *Celebrating 75 years!*

75 years of giving back to our community!



This year will be our 15th garlic festival... after a short intermission brought to you by COVID. This growing event includes garlic vendors from all over Ontario, as well as wine producers, growers, chefs, food producers, and so on, many of whom also give presentations to attendees. Another VERY popular aspect is our tasting and pairings – helping you to know which wine to pair with your garlic ice cream (yes really!) We also run the Kiwanis café, to keep everyone fed... yes, we might serve something garlicky! ..... as well as an amazing silent auction

Begun in 1927 and taken over by the Kiwanis club in 1952, ours is the longest running music festival in Ontario. We have missed only one year, in 2020 – for obvious reasons! So this year is our 96th year, 95th festival. Each year, entries represent an ever increasingly diverse selection of arts from a growing geographic region.



**Concerts in the Park** have been a tradition in our Upper Queens Park – adjacent to the Stratford Festival Main Stage – since 1987! They attract hundreds of people every summer Sunday evening to listen to a variety of local bands and musicians

The Stratford Kiwanis Club built the bandshell in which these concerts – and many others – take place. We also recently replaced the aging and splintery wooden seating with composite recycled wood and plastic benches, in our signature color!

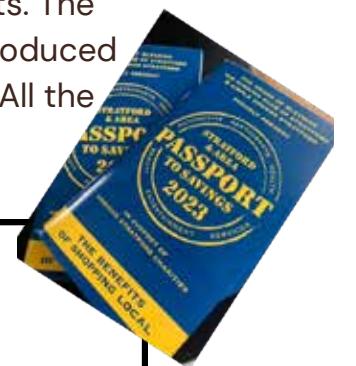


The **Christmas Basket Fund** project is one close to many of our members' hearts... it's embraced every year by the greater community, and truly illustrates not just the spirit of Christmas, but the spirit of SERVICE. The Kiwanis Club of Stratford took on the organizing and coordinating of this important project in 1980. Each year, 1000's of dollars of food – and more recently, grocery gift cards – are distributed to those in need

### **Aktion Club**

... a Service Leadership Project where adults living with disabilities have a venue to serve their community and develop lasting friendships.

The **Stratford Passport to Savings** fundraising project is carried out in partnership with the Stratford House of Blessing and Simple Dreams Stratford. The committee produces this discount booklet that contains discount offers from Stratford and area merchants. The first Stratford Passport to Savings booklet was produced in 2011 and to this day it remains a popular item. All the proceeds are divided equally between the three charities each year.



**These are just some of the many important projects the  
Kiwaniis Club of Stratford has undertaken in the past 75 years.  
If you would like to join us in this engaging work, we meet weekly on  
Monday nights for dinner and fellowship.  
For more information, please go to: [kiwanisclubstratford.com](http://kiwanisclubstratford.com)**

*KIWANIS is a global community of volunteers dedicated to  
improving the lives of children, one community at a time*

**KIWANIS WEEK in Stratford: July 28- August 3!**

# Stratford's first Jane's Walk fosters sense of community

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

A group of residents walked all over the city discussing climate change, diversity, equity and inclusion, affordability and homelessness, and active transportation on a warm Saturday morning.

The Provocation Ideas Festival, Stratford held the city's first Jane's Walk on June 17 with the theme "Is Stratford a Healthy City?" A press release from festival organizers said Jane's Walk is an annual free grassroots community walking event encouraging discussion on local issues and their solutions. The walk honours Torontonian writer, theorist, journalist, and activist Jane Jacobs.

Walkers met in front of the Stratford Public Library to hear Ryan Erb, executive director of United Way Perth-Huron, talk about affordability and homelessness in Stratford. The group then met former Stratford City Councillor Kathy Vassilakos advocate for active transportation in the city in front of the Stratford Transit Terminal on Downie Street.

Stratford Pride President and Board Chair Bruce Skeaff talked about diversity, equity, and inclusion at the Stratford Pride Centre - focusing on examples of support for the LGBTQIA+ community and discrimination the community still faces in the city. The walk ended at the Bru Garden with environmental activist Sammie Orr talking about climate change and sustainability. Local musician Dan Stacey performed and participants ate lunch at the eatery after the discus-

sions.

"I was really pleased with how it went," Ron Dodson, the coordinator for Jane's Walk Stratford, said. "What I heard and what I saw was people building community. I heard really good questions. I saw people who were engaged and were very interested in providing solutions and were not in any way promoting division."

A total of 44 people participated in Jane's Walk in Stratford. The event aimed to make participants more aware of community issues in a positive way and encourage them to come up with solutions.

"This is an opportunity to build that community towards a solution," Dodson said.

Linda Axford participated in Jane's Walk in Stratford several years after running one in Burlington, Ont.

"Jane Jacobs' sense of community versus roads and buildings is very important," Axford said.

She enjoyed all of it, particularly the discussion on providing housing for those who are homeless, and the sense of hope felt during the walk. After the walk, Axford said she plans to ask how she can get involved with United Way Perth-Huron.

The Provocation Ideas Festival in Stratford will focus on the Promise and Perils of Technology in November, which will include discussions surrounding artificial intelligence (AI). Every speaker at Jane's Walk had an introduction that was written by AI.

Visit <https://www.provocation.ca/2023-events-stratford> for more information on the November events.



(EMILY STEWART PHOTOS)

## JANE'S WALK

Above, Former City Councillor Kathy Vassilakos talks about active transportation outside of the Stratford Transit terminal on Downie Street. Vassilakos was one of the Jane's Walk Stratford speakers on June 17. Below, Stratford Pride President and Board Chair Bruce Skeaff held a speech on diversity, equity and inclusion, in the Stratford Pride Centre.



# SpringWorks brings North American debut of Pinocchio to Stratford

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

SpringWorks Festival has announced the North American debut of the critically acclaimed Slovenian puppet show, Pinocchio, on July 21st at 7pm at Factory 163. This one night only showing is by the Maribor Puppet Theatre from Maribor, Slovenia.

The Maribor Puppet Theatre is considered one of the best modern puppet theatres in Europe. As the second puppet theatre in Slovenia, the establishment of the company was an important step towards the development of Slovenian puppetry. The company's production of Pinocchio thoughtfully and sensitively appeals to viewers of all ages through creativity, imagination, and an understanding of puppetry art.

"It is quite exciting because it is one of the top companies from Europe coming here and it is one of the best. It's a partnership situation in which several of the best summer festivals come together to facilitate companies coming from Europe. This is a tease, to the beginning of our international puppet and music festival," said Eileen Smith, artistic producer for SpringWorks.

This new adaptation of the classic story of a wooden puppet that wishes to be a boy takes the audience back to the origins of the story.

"It's kind of cool because it is object the-



(BRIANNE TICE PHOTO)

atre, as opposed to marionette, and Gipetto is the carpenter. All the characters are named after the tools a carpenter would use and so the wood comes to life and tools come to life to tell the story," said Smith.

Pinocchio longs to be a boy and faces challenges to meet in order to make his dream come true. The production is an interesting layering of metaphor, the nature of being tested, and dreams coming true.

After the puppet show, there will be a panel discussion with the artists to talk about European puppetry, about the company, about Slovenia, what it's like to be a touring company among other topics. This gives the audience an opportunity to ask questions of the artists among which is the performer, Miha Bezeljak and the director Matteo Spiazzi.

"As well, because the Slovenian Embas-

sy is facilitating all of this, we'll have Slovenian beverages and cake etc to purchase so you can have a little taste of Slovenia. It's a whole evening of delight," said Smith.

Tickets are \$35 each and a purchase of 4 tickets will have a 10% discount. Tickets can be purchased online and at the door, though, attendees are encouraged to purchase ahead of time given the size of the house at Factory 163. To purchase online the link is [SpringWorksFestival.ca](http://SpringWorksFestival.ca)

## STRATFORD TIMES

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# Don McDougall Appointed as Member of the Order of Canada for Visionary Leadership and Philanthropy

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

*Times Correspondent*

General Mary Simon announced the appointment of 85 exceptional individuals to the Order of Canada. Among the newly appointed members is Don McDougall, who has been honoured as a Member of the Order of Canada for “his visionary leadership as the founding director of the Toronto Blue Jays club, as well as his entrepreneurship and philanthropy.”

McDougall held the position of president at London's Labatt's Brewery during the establishment of the Toronto Blue Jays Major League Baseball franchise in 1977. More locally, he is known as the past owner of Novatronics, an aerospace manufacturer based in Stratford, and also the founder of Rambri Management.

The Order of Canada is one of the country's highest civilian honours, recognizing outstanding achievement, dedication, and service to the nation. Established in 1967, it celebrates individuals who have made significant contributions to various fields, including arts, science, sports, philanthropy, and public service.

Upon receiving news of his appointment, McDougall expressed a mix of gratitude and humility. “First emotion, definitely overwhelmed. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be given this honour,” McDougall remarked.

Drawing inspiration from Mark Messier, he acknowledged the importance of teamwork in his success: “No One Wins Alone; I've had a whole team of people behind me along the way.” McDougall told *The Stratford Times*.

Diversity has played a pivotal role in McDougall's life and career. From his early involvement in politics during high school and University to his active engagement in church and community affairs, McDougall has consistently championed inclusivity and collaboration. He has been associated with esteemed educational institutions such as the University of Waterloo and Kings College and currently serves as the chancellor at PEI University.

Despite this prestigious appointment, McDougall remains grounded and down-to-earth. “My friends aren't clicking their heels at me; I'll still have to buy them beers every so often, I think,” he stated.



When asked about advice for aspiring business professionals, McDougall emphasized the significance of making important life choices, embracing educational opportunities, and giving back to the community.

Reflecting on his remarkable journey, McDougall highlighted resilience as one of his greatest attributes. Recounting a challenging moment when he was terminated from Labatt Brewing Company at the age of 41, he shared, “I've always been able to look forward with the glass half full, that to me, has been my most enduring aptitude; when I get knocked down, I get right back up with enthusiasm.”

Above all, McDougall considers his family his greatest accomplishment. His wife, Marion, has been by his side for 62 years, and he takes immense pride in their five children and eleven grandchildren, who are each forging their own paths in life.

Don McDougall's appointment as a Member of the Order of Canada not only acknowledges his exceptional leadership and philanthropy but also serves as an inspiration to countless Canadians.

## A Roadmap for Ending Disability Poverty in Stratford, Ontario: A Call for Collaborative Action

DEREK BARNES

*Community Engagement Facilitator*

Stratford is a vibrant community that prides itself on inclusivity, compassion, and support for all its residents. However, as this National Access Ability Week comes to a close, an urgent issue demands our attention and collective effort: the persistent poverty faced by individuals with disabilities. That was the conversation EPIC, our advocacy working group here at The Local Community Food Centre, along with community organizations like Facile Perth, Community Living Stratford and St Marys, and L'Arche helped facilitate at an event we called the Disability Justice Forum last February at which representatives from all three levels of government – MP John Nater, MPP Matthew Rae, and Stratford mayor, Martin Ritsma – came together with grassroots disability advocates to discuss policy change and create a pathway toward ending disability poverty in our community.

One crucial step at the federal level toward achieving this goal is the swift passage and funding of the proposed Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). This proposed legislation is a federal initiative aimed at providing financial support to individuals with disabilities across the country. It is designed to address the gaps and limitations of the existing disability support programs, such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and provide a more comprehensive and equitable system.

Since meeting with community members with lived experience to listen and

learn from their stories, MP Nater has tirelessly championed the enactment of the Canada Disability Benefit Act, even arranging for one of our most passionate disability advocates, Karen Wood, to testify at a HUMA subcommittee meeting. Just this week, we dropped off hundreds of postcards to MP Nater's office with messages from community members demanding that the federal government prepare the budget for the passing of the bill, which he has agreed to deliver to Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland on our behalf.

We are hopeful to see the CDB passed, funded, and ready to roll out by the end of 2023, but there is no time to waste. As our current postcard campaign emphasizes, people with disabilities can't afford to wait.

In addition to this potentially transformative piece of federal legislation, however, it is crucial to address the financial aspect of disability poverty head-on. The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) plays a vital role in providing financial assistance to individuals with disabilities. However, the current rates are woefully inadequate, leaving far too many struggling to make ends meet. Doubling the ODSP rates is not just a matter of basic fairness; it is a necessary step toward ensuring that individuals with disabilities have the means to lead dignified, fulfilling lives.

We are hopeful, however, that the recent \$800 increase in allowable income before clawbacks will help many ODSP recipients who are both able to work and able to find suitable, accessible employment. We

are working with Partners in Employment as well as members of the Stratford

and District Chamber of Commerce to find perfect matches between employers looking for potential employees willing to contribute their unique skills and experience. Meaningful employment can be a vital source of pride and purpose in addition to essential income.

Furthermore, we must recognize that transportation is a fundamental aspect of participation in society. For individuals with disabilities, the inability to access affordable and accessible transportation is a significant barrier to employment, education, healthcare, and community engagement. To break this cycle of exclusion, we need to provide free public transportation to all individuals with disabilities who rely on social assistance programs to survive. By doing so, we can empower them to actively participate in all aspects of community life, fostering independence and reducing poverty.

Affordable and accessible housing that provides autonomy, dignity, safety, and choice for low-income community members with and without disabilities is another piece of the puzzle that was identified at the Disability Justice Forum that needs to be solved by our municipal government. Not a simple task, we know.

It is important to acknowledge that addressing disability poverty requires a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach. All three levels of government and our business community must work together, pooling their resources, expertise, and political will to bring about real change. Col-

laborative efforts can ensure that policies are effectively implemented, resources are allocated appropriately, and progress is monitored to track outcomes.

Ending disability poverty is not just a matter of charity; it is a matter of justice and human rights. We must recognize that the potential and talents of individuals with disabilities are hindered by the structural barriers they face. By removing these barriers and providing the necessary support and resources, we unlock the full potential of our community.

As residents of Stratford, we have the power to advocate for change. Let's urge our local representatives, provincial leaders, and federal government to prioritize ending disability poverty. We must amplify the voices of those directly affected, listening to their experiences and taking their insights into account when crafting policies.

Our community is strongest when everyone can fully participate and contribute. By taking meaningful action, passing and funding the proposed Canada Disability Benefit, doubling ODSP rates, providing meaningful employment opportunities, affordable and accessible housing, and providing free public transportation, we can lift all community members with disabilities above the poverty line and allow them, in the words of our friends at Disability Without Poverty, “to be prosperous, realize their power, pursue their passions and participate in every aspect of society.” Together, let's build a community that embraces diversity, fosters inclusion, and ensures a brighter future for all.

# Huron-Perth Public Health Launches "Check What We Inspect" Website

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

In a significant stride toward greater transparency and accountability, the Huron-Perth Public Health Unit has introduced a user-friendly website called "Check What We Inspect."

This online platform allows the public to access inspection reports for various establishments, including restaurants, mobile food trucks, catering premises, grocery stores and other businesses serving food.

The website will also include the status of beach water quality and convictions of tobacco and e-cigarette retailers in the future.

With the new website, residents can make more informed decisions about the places they visit and ensure their safety and well-being.

The "Check What We Inspect" website

serves as a centralized hub for accessing inspection reports conducted by the Public Health Unit.

The initiative aims to promote transparency and enhance public confidence in the health and safety standards businesses across the city uphold. By making these reports accessible to everyone, Public Health hopes to encourage establishments to maintain high standards and address any deficiencies promptly.

It also serves as a valuable tool for businesses to identify improvement

areas and showcase their commitment to transparency in their business.

Public Health officials have worked diligently to develop an intuitive and user-friendly interface for the website, ensuring that navigating and retrieving information is a seamless experience for visitors. The reports are presented in a clear and concise manner, offering key details about each inspection.

The launch of "Check What We Inspect" represents a significant milestone for the Huron-Perth Public Health Department in leveraging technology to engage with the community

and foster a culture of transparency.

"Disclosing inspection results online allows the public to access inspection reports more readily," says Lori Holmes, Public Health Manager. "When supporting local businesses, look for Check What We Inspect signage at the entrance to know that the premises are inspected."

The "Check What We Inspect" website is now live and accessible to the public. It can be accessed at [www.hpph.ca/check](http://www.hpph.ca/check). The Public Health Department encourages residents to take advantage of this valuable resource and contribute to a healthier and safer City of Stratford and Huron-Perth.

With the launch of this innovative platform, Huron-Perth Public Health Unit is setting an example for other jurisdictions to follow, emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability, and community engagement in maintaining the highest standards of public health and safety.



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RankMyAgent Best of Stratford 2022

## St. Mike's Grade 9 student setting new heights in 400-meter hurdles at OFSAA

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

Tessa Burdett, a Grade 9 student at St. Mike's in Stratford, has shown exceptional talent and determination in her first year of competing in hurdles. Despite being initially nervous, Burdett's remarkable performance has earned her numerous gold medals and sparked great enthusiasm for her athletic future.

Burdett's journey began with her first hurdles meet, where she experienced a mix of nerves and excitement, "I wanted to quit because I wasn't sure I was good at it, but my mom kept me going," she noted.

However, her anxieties quickly faded as she showcased her natural talent for the sport, "After my first meet, I actually really liked competing, and I was really good at it, too," She noted.

Burdett demonstrated consistent excellence at various levels, including the Western Ontario Secondary School Athletic Association (WOSSAA) and OFSAA North meets, where she took home gold medals, beating other competitors by fractions of a second.

Burdett's commitment and focus propelled her to new heights in high school athletics, the OFSAA Championships. She embarked on a series of competitions that would ultimately lead her to the On-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

### 400-METRE HURDLE

Tessa Burdett leading the competition in hurdles (Burdett wears Yellow, Black and Gold) at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) Championships, where she again won gold with her second-best personal time of 12.12 seconds.

Burdett's personal best time of 12.10 seconds in the hurdles event has further solidified her status as a rising star in the track and field community, "a number of University track teams followed me online and also shared some of my achievements on their social media accounts," Burdett noted, "it is really cool to be recognized by such big teams."

Beyond her immediate success, Tessa's achievements have also garnered attention from scouts and coaches, piquing their interest in her potential as a scholarship athlete. Notably, her remarkable performances in both hockey and track have positioned her as a promising candidate for scholarships in these sports for

future spots in universities across Canada and the US.

With aspirations to pursue a future in athletics, Tessa has set her sights on continuing to develop her athletic career throughout high school and into university. Her dedication, skill, and passion make her a prime candidate for scholarships that could help pave the way for her athletic and academic success.

Tessa's remarkable accomplishments in her debut season as a hurdler serve as a testament to her exceptional talent and work ethic. As she looks ahead to future challenges, the support and admiration of her school and local community will undoubtedly accompany her on her journey.

Keep an eye out for future athletic success as Burdett continues to exceed expectations, representing St. Mike's and Stratford Ontario.



### 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.

The Buddy Coffee Check Programs continue every Tuesday at 10:30 am. Good chance to talk to other veterans. The Fall Veterans Dinner is coming up in late September, paid for by the Poppy Fund, all Vets welcome. More info to follow. Contact the Branch at 5192714540 for any questions or concerns and Bill will get back to you. Have a good summer.

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

804-B Ontario St., Stratford N5A 3K1  
[stratfordlegion008@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordlegion008@gmail.com)

## 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 2023 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](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com).

# Sabrecats impress at OFSAA Track & Field finale

Several members of the Stratford Sabrecats Track and Field program earned strong results at OFSAA last month.

Owen Miloje, a grade 10 student at Bluevale CI in Waterloo, came to us a year ago. Since then, Miloje has worked hard to become one of the best throwers in Canada. At OFSAA, Miloje threw a four-metre personal best to earn the Silver medal in Junior Boys Discus. His hard work and dedication to our sport saw him improve six spots from last year's championship.

"Owen has a great deal of talent that he has used to hone his technique to exceptional standards," said Ian Morton, one of the coaches of the Sabrecats program. "He has also been very successful with all other throws, competing in both Shot Put and Javelin at OFSAA West, and Hammer Throw in club competitions. We are really excited about the summer for him."

Jash Singh is a grade nine student at Stratford District Secondary School. Having joined us part way through the school season, Jash has worked hard on tweaking and improving his technique in all the throws. His discus success has been fantastic. Throwing a personal best at OFSAA, Jash found himself finishing fourth in a very strong field of throwers.

"Jash is new to throwing this year, and has already found some great success,"

Morton said. "He showed a great deal of poise and focus on his way to his impressive finish. He is poised to have a great summer as he continues with his three main events and starts to learn Hammer throw as well."

Brooke Wilhelm, a Junior student at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School, earned her way to OFSAA with a personal best throw at the qualifying meet. At OFSAA, Wilhelm finished 18th in the Junior Girls Discus. She has juggled a very busy schedule in order to improve her throwing. Morton told the Times that he is very happy with the progress made by Wilhelm.

"Brooke worked hard to build her technical prowess and threw well at OFSAA in a very difficult group of throwers. Even though she missed out on throwing her personal bests, she still threw very well. I'm very proud of her improvement over the course of this school season, and am expecting a great deal more improvement through the summer."

Colton Hawkins of St. Marys put in plenty of work this past year which resulted in a personal best of 3.35-metres and a silver medal at OFSAA West. Hawkins then jumped a very good 3.15-metres at OFSAA and finished in a very strong seventh place in a great field of jumpers. Morton described Hawkins as "an incredible athlete" and mentioned

that Hawkins has his sights set on the U18 National Championship in August.

"Pole vault is a very difficult sport that requires courage, strength, speed, explosiveness, control, and precise technical skills, not to mention a little bit of craziness," Morton said with a chuckle. "Colton has worked hard on his craft, adding a full meter to his jumps from last year. He is getting so strong and great at his jumping that we are running out of poles that will work for him. At OFSAA, we were trying some different poles to help him, but that is always a tricky thing and ultimately it didn't quite work."

Payton Blight started throwing with the Sabrecats during her grade eight year at St. Marys DCVI and is now one of the best U16 throwers in the province. Her breakout meet happened last summer at our club provincial championships in which she earned a provincial bronze in Discus. This has continued this year with Blight qualifying for OFSAA in Discus Throw. Throwing is very technical, involving precise movements that happen in a split second.

Along with this technical proficiency, explosive power is needed. Blight went into the OFSAA Discus competition knowing that it was going to be a tight race with many good throwers. She started the competition with a personal best throw, ensuring that she would

make the top eight, and earn six throws. She proceeded to throw another best of 28.16-metres and sat in the Bronze Medal position heading into round five where she was unfortunately passed by another thrower. Morton said that Blight has a big summer ahead of her having already earned a place at the National meet.

"Payton worked hard to respond but came up just a little short. Throwing events are amazing, much like jumping and running, always striving for an extra centimeter, always working to be faster, stronger, and more precise. Payton is at the start of a long journey but is already rising above most others. We have many meets this summer, but Payton has already thrown the standards necessary to compete at Nationals in August for Discus, Javelin, and Hammer Throw. She will be in the mix at Nationals for a couple of medals."

Morton also praised the entire group of Sabrecats for their work and dedication to their sports.

"We are very proud of all of our athletes. We're a young club and have been finding some great success. We are very hopeful this continues in the years to come and are so excited for all our athletes. To have so many great results, so many stories of perseverance, and so many examples of overcoming adversity, it shows that the hard work of all of our athletes pays off."



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# Vanderbilt's Overholt a first-team All-American

SPENCER SEYMOUR

*Times Regional Reporter*

St. Michael's Secondary School alumnus Brooke Overholt capped off a strong post-secondary athletics career by being named a first-team All-American at the NCAA Track and Field Championships held in Austin, Texas earlier this month.

This was the first time Overholt earned her place as a first-team All-American in her collegiate career. In the 400-metre Hurdles event final, Overholt posted a personal-best time of 55.50 seconds, good for fourth place in the competition.

Overholt recently spoke to the Times about her latest accomplishment which she said "means a lot" with it coming at the conclusion of her collegiate tenure.

"This was my last year and my last college meet so I just wanted to put everything I had out there and see what I could do," Overholt said. "With all the work I've put in these last few years, it was a great way to end."

Representing Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, Overholt was part of a Commodores women's track and field squad that brought historically-good results back to the institution. Overholt was one of five Commodores to earn either first- or second-team All-American honours and her finish helped the Commodores post its best overall team score since 1997.

According to Overholt, who came to Vanderbilt for her final year after spending four years at Cornell University in New York, the move to the Nashville-based school allowed her to continue growing as an athlete,

"I didn't get to compete as much as I would have liked to [at Cornell] largely due to the pandemic and some injuries," explained Overholt. "When I came to Vanderbilt, it was great to spend my last year in the SEC (Southeastern Conference) with it being a more competitive conference and an environment where I'm getting pushed to be better every day. I'm very grateful for the experience and I think my time here has helped me grow as an athlete so much."

"My coach that I had for my first three years at Cornell moved to Vanderbilt so for this last year, I was able to reconnect with him and get back to working on my



(VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY TRACK & FIELD/CROSS-COUNTY'S SOCIAL MEDIA PHOTO)

**Brooke Overholt, a St. Michael Secondary School alumna, has capped off her strong post-secondary athletic career by capturing a fourth-place finish in the NCAA Track and Field Championship 400-metre Hurdles and, in the process, became a first-team All-American.**

hurdle race setup. It's also great being at Vanderbilt because it's warmer and there's more time you're able to be training outdoors than in Canada or New York. That extra hurdle training I've been able to get here has been invaluable. Vanderbilt is also really good at supporting their athletes and providing everything you need, from equipment and facilities to nutrition guidance."

While speaking to the Times, Overholt said that she is "a totally different athlete" compared to when she began her post-secondary athletic journey and later elabo-

rated on this statement, saying it's largely related to the more fulsome nature of her training regiment.

"It's not just when you're at practice that you're working," said Overholt. "It's taking those hours after practice to make sure that you are eating enough, sleeping enough, and getting the extra recovery that your body needs to be ready for the next day. It's definitely been a learning process over these five years and this year, I feel like I've been able to put it all together."

"I'm a lot stronger and faster than I was coming into my post-secondary career. In high school, I didn't lift weights or know the things that I know now. I feel like now, I'm able to be a lot stronger which allows me to be faster, more explosive and have a higher turnover."

One wrinkle in Overholt's appearance at the NCAA Track and Field Championship was the timing of the meet. As it took place in Austin, Texas, she was competing notably later than her usual meets. This meant that her preparations for the event were modified to allow Overholt to better compete at her best with the later-than-usual timing.

"It was different for sure racing that late at night. Going in, I had to be cognizant of preparing to compete later than I normally was used to. My coach and I worked going in to make sure I was ready to compete, so we were practising later than normal, just

to condition my body to be able to compete that late. And on the day of, I had a warm-up early in the day but other than that, I was conserving my energy so that I had plenty of energy to compete at night."

Overholt isn't waiting too long for her next competition as she will begin the phase of her athletic journey – attempting to earn the chance to represent her country on a national stage.

"I compete in Edmonton next weekend," Overholt said with a humble chuckle. "Then, I'll be going to the Canadian Nationals with the goal of making the Canadian national team that is going to the World Championships this year."

As she reflected on her achievement and the successful conclusion to her collegiate athletic career, Overholt mentioned that she's cognizant and thankful to all the people who have helped her develop, not just during her post-secondary years, but also dating back to her high school days.

"It really takes a community for some to achieve something like this. There are so many people who have been involved in my developmental process, starting with my family and club coaches in high school, up to my coaches now. All of those people and the things they've done to help me have been critical to how I've performed and grown and it wouldn't have been possible for me to reach this point without those people and the things they did for me."

## U14 Stingers Year in Review

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

*Times Correspondent*

The path to success is often paved with hard work, dedication and perseverance. For one passionate volleyball team, their journey began with promising wins at local tournaments, leading them to achieve their goal of finishing top-10 at the National tournament in Ottawa this May.

The Stingers U14 girls' team started strong, consistently finishing amongst the top 3 teams during a number of semi-final games and tournaments throughout the beginning of the year.

In January, the team travelled to a tournament in Cleveland, Ohio where they were exposed to some very competitive teams. Team coach Lori McCabe noted, "The girls came away a changed team after the tournament."

"Cleveland really helped to push us to new heights," says Evie Leppington, teammate, "they're very competitive in the USA, so we learned a lot there."

In the following tournament hosted in Niagara Falls, the U14 Stingers finished 3rd in the province, "the highest level they have ever achieved," noted McCabe.

McCabe went on to say, "It was obvious that their effort and talent had the potential to move them to new heights." Through the beginning of the season, and moved with confidence into the provincial tournament held in Toronto.

After a tough start and a disappointing finish at the provincial tournament in Toronto, the Stingers went on to the National Invitational tournament in Ottawa, where

they truly shined, "The heart of this team is they never give up; they always believe they can win," stated McCabe.

The team persevered and came home in 9th place overall. This is a huge win for the team, and McCabe proudly told the Stratford Times, "What we did this year is amazing for a small town like Stratford."

Liv Leppington was a notable player on the team and tried out for one of the Provincial teams. She was accepted into the Regional team and will now travel to The University of Guelph, where she will train in July, "I'm excited and nervous; there will be scouts and coaches there, so it's all very exciting," she said.

The team moved into the National Invitational tournament, where they truly shined, "The heart of this team is they never give up; they always believe they can win," stated McCabe.

The team persevered and came home in 9th place overall in Canada. This is a huge win for the team, and McCabe proudly told the Stratford Times, "We placed 9th in all of Canada; that's amazing for a small town like Stratford."

McCabe and Assistant Coach Brad Hernden will meet once again this September to train the team and hopefully bring the girls home top placement metals for years to come.

"These girls are amazing; we practised 3 times a week, and they all showed up every single time. Their commitment is unmatched, and they are the best. It was a magical season, and I'm excited to see what we can accomplish next year," noted McCabe.



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For every customer that switches to paperless billing in June or July, Festival Hydro will donate \$10 towards the purchasing of capacity-building, lab equipment for Stratford General Hospital.




# Stratford Tennis Club holds annual Regional Tournament



## MEN'S A

Pictured above are the teams who competed the Men's 'A' Final in the annual Stratford Tennis Club's Regional Tournament. Kristian Kopic and Ryan MacLean from the Waterloo Tennis Club defeated Wayne Rabley and Sung Min Yoon, also from the Waterloo Tennis Club. The winners used raw power to outthit their opponents.



## WOMEN'S A

Kim Straus and Lori McCabe from the Stratford Tennis Club defeated Ana MacMillan and Roxanne Chartrand from the Waterloo Tennis Club in the Women's 'A' Final. The local team was successful hitting deep shots and putting the returns away with well placed volleys. The tournament saw 27 doubles teams from across southwestern Ontario attend.



## MEN'S B

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Left, Joaquin Bardallo and Eric Minardi from the Waterloo Tennis Club defeated Nathan Duh and Greg Vivian from the Stratford Tennis Club in the Men's 'B' Final. The Stratford cousins put up a good fight but could not overcome the Waterloo pair.



## WOMEN'S B

Hajnalka Pope-Kis and Monica Eickmeyer defeated Marta Andrekovic and Sarah Heaton in the Women's 'B' Final. Both teams are from the Stratford Tennis Club. Hajnalka hit deep ground strokes with top spin with her partner, Monica, putting the returns away with her lefty volleys.

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# Warriors' roster taking shape ahead of 23-24 season

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Warriors have been hard at work filling the holes in their lineup for the upcoming GOJHL season.

One of the most notable names added to the roster is **Carson Harmer**. The Fullarton native was a third-round pick of the Saginaw Spirit in this past Spring's OHL Priority Selection. Harmer got his first taste of Junior 'B' hockey with Stratford in their championship series against Leamington, in which Director of Hockey Operations Jason Clarke felt Harmer did quite well.

"It's going to be a big development year for Carson," Clarke told the Times. "He has signed with Saginaw and he's got his eyes on being a contributor at that level and he definitely could turn into that. He's shown already at our level that he can handle the big moments. The pressure that comes with being a 15-year-old kid jumping into a Sutherland Cup final and playing top-six minutes, which he did for us, is enormous, and he handled it very well."

Harmer isn't the only OHL-drafted player joining the squad, with 2022 12th-rounder of the Sarnia Sting **Michael Denney** putting pen to paper with the Warriors. Clarke said that Denney has a decent shot at cracking the Sting's lineup this Fall but if he doesn't, the Warriors will be excited to have him in their lineup.

"Michael is going to bring us skill, speed, and grit. He's a guy that plays much bigger than he is physically. If there's one term I would use to describe him, I'd call him a 'gamer.' There is a chance he sticks in Sarnia which would be great for Michael but I certainly hope we have the good fortune to have him in our lineup as he would be a great piece for us to add."

**Joey Brehmer** is one of several Affiliate Players (APs) to transition into full-time roster members. In this year's Under-18 OHL Draft, Brehmer was picked in the second round by the Sudbury Wolves. Clarke praised Brehmer for his work ethic.

"This is a really honest, hard-working player. Joey doesn't cheat in any facet of the game. He comes in and works his tail off every day whether it's in practice or a game. He is going to go to all of the dirty areas and do what needs to be done to win at this level."

Adding to the cache of skill the Warriors are replenishing is the soon-to-be-18-year-

old **Drew Agnew**. The Lansing, Michigan product scored 26 goals and 50 points in 24 games with the Capital City Capitals high school program. At six-foot-three, Clarke is excited about Agnew's combination of physical and offensive presence.

"I like the combination of speed, size, and skill that Drew brings. He had a really good season for Capital City and we're looking forward to him getting accustomed to our league and hopefully adding an offensive punch to our group."

A pair of acquisitions come with junior experience, **Tristian Huinink** and **Liam Gorman**. Beginning with Huinink, the Woodstock resident turns 19 this September and brings a hulking six-foot-four, 227-pound frame that he puts to good use. As for Gorman, he possesses a good two-

Clarke believes the two will help inject physicality into the lineup that became so depleted with one of the overagers the team lost at the end of last season.

"We like having a big, physical presence, which is what Tristian brings. I think it's important that we have a big pushback and physical element as I do believe we get every team's best game every Friday night with the atmosphere at the Allman Arena. He's also got some good speed that makes him more than just a one-dimensional physical presence. Coming from Junior 'C', he likely will go through a process of finding his place in our lineup but we believe he's got the tools to contribute to our team."

"We've liked Liam's all-around game going back to last year when we had him at our camp. Unfortunately, with how many returning guys we had, we just didn't have a spot for him. When he became available this year, we were very excited to bring him in. I think Liam plays best when he plays physically. Losing Keaton McLaughlin is a huge loss to us considering the physicality that Keaton brought so adding guys like Liam and Tristian are key to filling that void."

The Warriors hope they've found a reliable faceoff winner in **Zach Bell** from Strongsville, Ohio. Bell played high school

hockey with St. Edward High last season and posted 14 goals and 23 points in 27 games. Clarke said Bell's talent in the faceoff circle is matched only by his grit and quickness.

"Zach looks to have great speed and a level of tenacity that we like to see. In our June skate,

I'm not sure I saw him lose a faceoff. He has a really good compete level and he's a player you kept noticing each shift. We look forward to getting to know him and hope he can be a solid contributor to our lineup."

Switching to the blueline, there will be plenty of fresh faces on the backend for Stratford with five new rearguards signed as full-time roster members. Some aren't totally new such as **Keaton Bartlett**, who was an AP last year and whose projected development Clarke is excited about.

"Our hopes for Keaton are that he's able to come in and get comfortable playing at this level. Keaton has shown at different times that he can play at this level even though he's been in minor hockey and an AP the last two years. He has the skill level to play at this level and his hockey sense is good so I think the big thing for Keaton is just come in and start playing at this level regularly."

**Jaxon Broda** also served as an AP with the Warriors last season and will become a full-time roster member this year. When asked about Broda's upside and best qualities, it didn't take long for him to mention his skating ability.

"Jaxon's feet are excellent. He skates really well and he moves the puck nicely. Much like Bartlett, the goal for Jaxon is to come in and develop into a regular, everyday player. With the turnover we have though, it's pretty wide open in terms of who gets slotted in where so hopefully Jaxon can find his place in our lineup."

Also signed to the backend are **Jacob Wiseman**, **Cole Brooks**, and **Casey Bridgewater**. According to Clarke, the team believes he will be a stabilizing presence on the backend.

"Jacob is a solid, steady right-shot defenceman that we like. He's been a Captain and he's a proven leader so we think he'll be a very positive person in the locker room. He might not make very many flashy plays but he's just a solid blueliner who will make good decisions."

In the case of Brooks, who brings a six-foot-two, 180-pound frame, Clarke said there is quite a bit of optimism about the kind of two-way threat that Brooks could blossom into given his raw tools.

"Cole's size and skillset are very intriguing to us. He's a guy who we think can play up and down the lineup. We think he can be a good defender, especially utilizing his size in our small rink. I also think he has a good offensive upside. He shoots the puck well, he moves the puck well, and I think he could be useful on our special teams."

Clarke then spoke on Bridgewater, raving about his "dynamic, electric" style that

makes him impossible to miss.

"He's just one of those guys that, when you see him on the ice, you notice him every shift he takes. We'll see how Casey does as we know he's a young lad coming into our league but we think he possesses everything needed to be a quality player for us and hopefully develop into the player we think he can be."

In between the pipes, the Warriors have added **Noah Bender**. The native of Waterloo helped the Wellesley Applejacks win the PJCHL Championship this past season and Clarke believes that Bender is more than ready for the next level.

"He has shown that he can play in real high-pressure situations and be successful. He won a Junior 'C' title this year and there's no question when you get down to the finals, you're playing against a lot of 19-, 20-, and 21-year-old players who have played in multiple different junior leagues. For him to be able to get it done is fantastic for someone his age and he's ready for our level for sure."

Also signed in goal is **Trenten Bennett**, a Kitchener native who spent last year with the U18 Huron-Perth Lakers who also was a call-up for the Warriors. Clarke praised Bennett as a player who could always be called upon to be a dependable, hard-working member of the locker room.

"Trenten has been an AP with us through two seasons in both his U16 and U18 years. He's done everything we've asked and deserves this chance. With a spot available, he was an easy addition to our team. He worked so hard in an AP role which just shows the work ethic and character of a young man we want in our room."

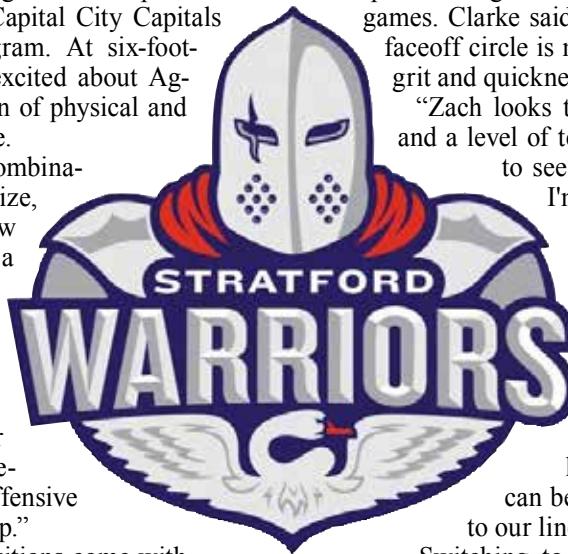
Clarke then spoke about the group of signees as a whole and how excited the hockey operations team is to see the new players work with the Warriors' staff.

"For all of our young guys, the big thing is that we're looking for them to come in and hopefully get comfortable within our team. Not only with our staff and coaches, but also our systems, our rink, and our league. Hopefully, they will learn fairly quickly what Junior hockey is all about as we think we have a really good crop of young players coming in."

"We're very pleased to have the staff that we do," continued Clarke. "I've always said that Dave is the hardest-working coach in our league. He's won Coach of the Year multiple times and that's not by accident. I have the full confidence in him that he can continually turn over rosters and get good results."

Looking ahead to the coming season, Clarke's ambitions revolve around striving to be back near the top of the standings.

"I want us to be defending the Cherrey Cup. Ultimately, I think we have to set the goal of being in the finals of our conference again and have that opportunity to defend the Cherrey Cup. Each year, I like to set a goal that we finish in the top half of the league. We don't necessarily have to be number one, but definitely in the top half of the league. I think the guys that we're bringing in are going to give us a good opportunity to be a very competitive team and challenge for another Cherrey Cup."



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

## STRATFORD STRIKERS

Despite an unfavorable result, Head Coach Charlie Rossi saw plenty of positives in the Stratford Strikers U11 effort against Waterloo in a game that the visiting side took 3-1 at Packham Rd. Liv Willemsen scored the goal. Mya Groenestege was "amazing in net," Rossi noted. Annie Thompson hit two crossbars for the Strikers. Peyton Tannahill and June Bernard were solid on defense.

The Stratford Strikers went on to tie their second game against the Orangeville Storm 2 to 2, with Thompson scoring both goals and Jillian Rossi and Willemsen splitting goalies.



## Joey Hishon wins Stratford Municipal Men's Invitational

STEWART GRANT

*Publisher*

This past Saturday, July 8, Joey Hishon was the only one who could match even par – shooting 70 to win this year's Men's Invitational at the Stratford Municipal Golf Course. Hishon edged Matt Smyth and Patrick Holloway by a single stroke.

Last year's champion, Chad Swartzentruber, shot 72 and finished in fourth place along with Brad Walsh. Swartzentruber led the field through 9 holes after posting a two-under-par 33, but four bogeys on the back nine foiled his attempt to repeat as Invitational champion.

Hishon, who finished in seventh place last year, had a steady day that includes three birdies, three bogeys, and 12 pars. His birdie on the 18th hole provided him with the margin of victory over Smyth and Holloway.

Willy Keller, with a 76, was the Flight B winner this year. He finished four strokes ahead of Bill Roach and Lonnie McKay.

The Flight C winner was Rick Kelly, who shot 82. Bud Dixon Jr. and Don Soper finished in second place with rounds of 84.

Tyler Vander Woude prevailed in Flight D. His round of 91 was five strokes lower than Joe McDonald who finished with a 96.

## Saturday morning, "Pink in the Park" U15 Fastball Tournament



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

**Lyla Straus up to bat for the Stratford Flames, sporting her Pink FLAMES Jersey in support of Breast Cancer Awareness.**

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

*Times Correspondent*

The Stratford Flames, strutting pink jerseys in support of breast cancer awareness, started strong in their first game Friday night with an exciting 9-6 win over Etoilés Rivésud from the Montreal U15 at Packham Rd.

Abby Van Bakel had a strong eye at the plate on Saturday with three walks and led the Stratford Flames to a 12-4 win vs. Corunna Lady Giants.

The starting pitcher, Macy Kollman, gave up five hits and four runs, striking out three

and walking four over the six innings on Saturday morning. Claire Gaulton stepped up later in the game to strike out six and walk nine runs in total.

Despite a good start, the girls had a rainy game on Saturday afternoon that didn't end the way the team wanted. Going into the top of the first inning, Rachael Barber doubled, and Emmerson Miller walked, each scoring runs for the Flames but losing to the Oshawa Lady B's 6-1.

The Flames moved on to the playoff round but were defeated, 7-0, by the eventual champions, London Lightning.

## Let Me Introduce...

### Jackie Catania ... More than just a Shop Keeper

APRIL TAYLOR

*Times Contributor*

It always strikes me how nice Stratford is when I leave work on a Saturday afternoon. I leave the building to find the city bustling, people ambling down the street with ice cream, sitting on the patios and the river filled with pedal boats and canoes and music and markets in the square I think, no wonder people love to visit our city.

The Stratford City Center does a great job at bringing events to the city and creating a lovely atmosphere for us all to enjoy. But do you know who else we should thank? The small independent businesses downtown. Many are involved, promoting and keeping the city vibrant. Small business is truly the backbone to a community and most participate, donate and promote using their own time and money. There's a gal who deserves special recognition, she is always supportive of other businesses and promotes special events in the city and so much more.

Without further ado let me introduce you to Jackie Catania one of the owners of Treasures gift shop, found on Ontario St. beside Balzac's. Jackie was born in England and emigrated to Canada with her family as a child. They lived in several cities before settling in Toronto. When Jackie's kids were born, she and her husband decided they would prefer to raise them in a small, friendly environment and chose Stratford, and they have never looked back. Jackie met her neighbor Cathy shortly after she moved here. They started to do craft shows together; difficult work lug-



ging things from sale to sale. Later they managed a store together and now they have had a successful partnership for 20 years. Have you been in their store "Treasures"? Well, if you haven't you must, there is something for everyone. Jewelry, jams, music, hats, Stratford inspired gifts, T-Shirts, things for kids and much more.

"Twenty years later, we're still here. We are proud of our little shop where we showcase the works of more than 200 local, Canadian, and fair-trade artisans. We

can't even describe how much we appreciate our customers and the wonderful artisans who generously share their creations with us. We're grateful for that every single day." Jackie tells us.

What I love about Jackie is her dedication to making Stratford vibrant, she is in "the know" about everything going on in town, happy to promote anyone just for the joy of seeing them succeed, and she is funny as heck! This is what she said when I asked why she had such passion for our little city ...

"Stratford is a small city with big-city conveniences, dining, entertainment, and amenities. It's a city that is full of life and bursting with talented people, many of whom I'm lucky enough to know, and even feature in our shop. Where else could you go to a local cafe and find farmers and actors mingling together? I love that I can walk into Balzac's in February and see actors studying their scripts – the first real sign that spring is coming! I love that I can walk down to one of the prettiest parks anywhere, and see gorgeous art, families enjoying a picnic, and swans tormenting the tourists. I love that I find the unique items that I can't find anywhere else in our gorgeous shops, and I love that I can window-shop admiring the beautiful displays at night. I love that the streets and sidewalks are bustling with locals and worldwide visitors in the summer, and peaceful in the winter months. I love that the locals really, truly care about each other, and never hesitate to pitch in when help is needed. There is so much to appreciate in Stratford, and I think that sometimes people need to be encouraged to step back and

just look at how blessed we are."

Another project Jackie has on the go is a Facebook Page called ... EVENTS Stratford with 8,800 followers. She and her friend Paul manage this active page telling us what is going on in town. She kept hearing that there's nothing going on in this in this town [I hear this too] Are you kidding? There are lots of activities and music events happening all the time. She thought someone should create a place where you can look up what's happening and since she knows many musicians and artists, she thought ... "Well, I guess it's up to me." She and Paul scour the internet to find events and encourage people to post and share their upcoming events.

I wanted to feature Jackie in this column because she has been quietly going about her business and helping others and spreading joy and positivity on her way. I leave you with some of Jackie's words of wisdom.

"For me, life is all about blessings, connections, and appreciation. Oh, and positivity. I've been blessed to have wonderful parents (although I wish I'd been more appreciative and demonstrative of that when they were both still alive), a beautiful family, a lovely business partner, a successful business, and the life we've built in and around one of the best little cities in the world. None was easy, nor was it handed to me. I've worked hard my entire life for everything I have and have done—but NONE of it would be possible without the love, help and special connections that I've made along the way. I live in appreciation of that, always." Well said Jackie, I agree one hundred percent.

# Stratford Kinsman hosts Father's Day Car Show

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Kinsman Car Show, a beloved Father's Day tradition, marks over 20 years of the beloved event with a spectacular showcase of vintage cars, rocking music, and a heartwarming display of community support.

The event at Lower Queens Park brought together families of all ages who shared a passion for classic automobiles and a desire to enjoy a great day out in Stratford.

Spectators "flocked to the event in droves," said Doug Young, Stratford Kinsmen, "with hundreds of eager onlookers enjoying the vintage cars."

Various organizations have managed the Stratford Kinsman Car Show over the last 20 years, each adding their unique touch to the festivities. This year, attendees were treated to an impressive lineup of over 200 vintage cars, ranging from a '20s classic to a number of '80s sports cars.

The event hosted car enthusiasts from Stratford, Kitchener/Waterloo, Guelph, and Woodstock, showcasing the participating communities' remarkable diversity.

The ambiance was further enhanced by the rhythmic beats of the '50s to '80s classic rock and country music, creating a lively atmosphere that resonated with both young and old alike.

One of the highlights of the car show was the presence of Jim McCann, a Strat-

ford local and a proud owner of three vintage Corvettes who initially got into cars after high school, "when I got out and got a job, I went and got myself a Camaro; I had that car for a little bit, and then I made a deal with a guy who had a Corvette, and that was my first one."

McCann, who has a deep passion for classic cars, seized the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and fellow Corvette enthusiasts. When not attending local car shows, he travels to Florida during winter to showcase his prized vehicles in various Corvette shows.

The Stratford Kinsman Car Show was not only a celebration of automotive history but also an occasion to make a positive impact on the local community. As part of their fundraising efforts, the event hosted a 50/50 draw, with proceeds dedicated to supporting various initiatives in Stratford. Among their notable contributions are donations to Wellspring, scholarships for local high schools, and support for youth soccer programs. Moreover, the Kinsmen remain committed to assisting other charities in need, with a current focus on addressing homelessness in the area, according to Young.

Looking ahead, organizers are already planning for next year's event with a slight twist. To ensure participants have the opportunity to spend Father's Day with their loved ones, the car show will be moved to the week before the holiday. This change

aims to accommodate the entrants, allowing them to showcase their cars while still enjoying a memorable Father's Day celebration the following weekend.



## IMPRESSIVE LINE UP

Onlookers at the Kingman Car Show downtown Stratford on Father's Day

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

## Strawberry season is in full swing at the end of June



### FRESH PICKED STRAWBERRIES

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The Walch berry family includes from L-R- Louisa Walch, Katy Dietrich, Maria Dietrich, Antje Mueller, baby Lydia Cornelissen, mom Gloria Cornelissen, Emmett Dietrich, mom and Oma Birgit Walch. (Absent were son Georg Walch, and father Augustin Walch)

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

Walch Family Farm Strawberries had visitors dropping by the popular farm from area counties because they know they can pick the red fruit themselves or buy them already picked, and know from past years, they are of high quality.

The family has been growing strawberries since 1975, first in Germany, then outside Kitchener, and for the last 30 years south of the Stratford city limits in Downie Township of Perth County.

The 4th generation Walch family, is proud of their heritage and history in

generations of strawberry growing, and say with recent rains this could be one of their best years ever.

The true matriarch of the family, Birgit Walch, is proud of her daughters and son for continuing with the business and hopes her 4 young grandchildren will follow in their footsteps to their 10 acre berry patch in the future.

They are open 7 days a week and will be open everyday of the Canada Day long weekend and hope with continued good weather, the season will continue till the 2nd week of July.

More info at [www.stratfordstrawberries.com](http://www.stratfordstrawberries.com)

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# Grand Opening of Coles and Keys Inc.

## Independent Eyewear Company Born from Friendship and Passion

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

A new chapter in the world of eyewear has begun with the grand opening of Coles and Keys Inc., an independent eyewear company founded by best friends and eyewear enthusiasts Nicole and Nikki. The doors to their boutique, located at 25 York St in Stratford, officially opened in June, unveiling a unique collection of handcrafted eyewear from around the globe.

Nicole, an experienced optician, and Nikki, a talented optometric assistant and frame stylist, decided to embark on this entrepreneurial journey after years of working together at a private clinic. With more than a decade of expertise in the eyewear industry, the dynamic duo wanted to create an independent eyewear boutique that truly reflected their passion for quality craftsmanship and bespoke frames.

"Opening an independent eyewear boutique has been our dream for a long time," shared Nicole, "We wanted to offer our customers something truly special - eyewear that is stylish and carefully crafted to the highest standards."

The journey to their dream location in Stratford was almost serendipitous, as Nikki explained: "We stumbled upon the



### HANDCRAFTED EYEWEAR

Grand Opening of Coles and Keys where Nikki and Nicole, owners standing out front of their new boutique

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

25 York St location almost by accident, for us; the town's artistic vibe and unique environment align perfectly with our

brand's vision. We are excited to be part of this vibrant community."

Coles and Keys Inc. stands out from the crowd by offering a carefully curated selection of independent, handcrafted eyewear sourced from various corners of the world. The duo takes great pride in showcasing stunning frames from California, Brazil, Japan, and even a Toronto-based company. These frames are often made to order, ensuring that customers won't find anyone else wearing the same frame.

Nikki noted, "At the heart of it, artistry is what gets us through the day," she said, "Being able to showcase people who care about quality and craftsmanship and to be part of a community that supports that independence is a dream come true."

Coles and Keys Inc. aims to create a personalized experience for each customer, taking into account their individual style preferences, face shape, and lifestyle. With their extensive knowledge in the eyewear industry, Nicole and Nikki are well-equipped to assist customers in finding the perfect frame that complements their personality and enhances their overall look.

The grand opening event was enthusiastic, with local visitors eagerly exploring the boutique's collection. Coles and Keys Inc. has undoubtedly raised the bar in eyewear fashion.

## Wellspring Cancer Support Group receives \$12,000 from Dave and Lenora Mountain's Annual BBQ

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

There are families in Perth County that never give up helping other families living with, or have been living with, medical issues that continue to need a "hand up" in one way or another.

An organization known as Wellspring Stratford is one of those organizations who help men, women and children diagnosed with cancer of one form or another.

Bring on David and Lenora Mountain from the Avonbank area of Perth South who host a Wellspring BBQ every summer on their picturesque rural property to raise money for this well managed local cancer support organization.

Volunteers prepare the meal of Perth County smoked pork chops with all the fixings. This year's BBQ was their 14th anniversary, feeding over 220 again for the yearly sold out fundraiser.

David Mountain says it all started when his sisters, Marilyn Herman and Bonnie Hueston, were actively involved with Wellspring Stratford, which is a branch of the London Cancer organization.

They continue to help and provide funding for cancer support, which can come in many forms in the quest to offer those in the battle fighting this terrible disease.

He states that "Bonnie is still a very



Pictured, from left, Tracey Jones, Executive Director of Wellspring Cancer support of London and Stratford region, Lisa Stacey, office manager of Wellspring Stratford, along with David and Lenora Mountain, hosts of the annual Wellspring fundraising BBQ, on their rural property north of St. Marys.

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

active volunteer, having gone through breast cancer herself", while he is also a prostate cancer survivor.

Both are still living active lives and as David says, "unlike some of their neighbours and friends who have not

been as fortunate".

He goes on to say that most everyone has been touched by cancer in its many different forms and all that attend the BBQ every year like to support the Wellspring Stratford group who pro-

vide funding for various activities that assist the person with their fight against cancer, as well as support for the family members.

Lisa Stacey, Wellspring Stratford Manager, sends out requests for financial support and says she is proud of prior attendees who are always willing to give much needed funds to operate the caring organization.

She says they are very appreciative of the BBQ hosted by the Mountain family every year that brings in much needed funds. Many who cannot attend every year still send tax deductible donations to Wellspring since those givers know the money goes to a very worthwhile cause.

The BBQ, including donations, brings in close to \$12,000 per year.

Lenora and David say they see lots of old friends every year, along with many new ones, who come from Niagara, Hamilton, London as well as Stratford, St. Marys and surrounding areas.

The couple say they enjoy seeing everyone in their lawn chairs relaxing and chatting, knowing they are helping someone who might be battling cancer, while also knowing there is help through an organization like Wellspring Stratford.

More info is available by calling Lisa at 519-271-2232 or [lisa@wellspring-stratford.ca](mailto:lisa@wellspring-stratford.ca).

# Web-Crawling on the Wild Side



**SHEILA CLARKE**

*Times Freelance Columnist*

As our summer has unfolded, we've longed for rain and longed for clear skies. The hotter, drier summers and the tinder dry forests on fire with hazy skies are unnerving. Can we change this crazy picture? Let's go for a walk on the Wild Side-!

For starters, let's work on the haze. Better quality air comes to us as a gift from two main directions: Oxygen releasing plants and lower (much lower) fossil fuel combustion. (and no forest fires!)

Work on the long dry spell is a bit trickier. The warmer the planet becomes, the more erratic the weather patterns become. However we do know



that abundant plants, trees and forests will increase rainfall.

In our last Web-Crawling column, we looked at energy moves we could make (Web-crawling with the Elephant) to reduce

Greenhouse gases from fossil fuels. Let's web-crawl on the Wild Side and explore what we can do to better temperatures, rain and air quality through planting.

We can come from three directions, lawns, flower beds, and rewilding.

The lawn, ah the lawn! That great love affair we have with North American lawns. Did you know that manicured lawns are very recent? They've arrived on our doorstep :) from two directions:

English estates that were grazed by estate deer herds, and from a multitude of chemicals that were developed to remove "green" camouflage during war-

time. Looking "rich" meant having an estate lawn like the great country houses. Turns out wartime chemicals (after the war) were happy to help everyone get the estate "look" by removing all the plants that weren't lawn grass. Gasoline power mowers were not far behind.

There were side effects- potential health hazards, and an upside down world for our plants and wildlife. Before the age of the perfect lawn, gardens were pretty much allowed to do their own thing, with some special flowers planted here and there. You might even call them wild gardens. They were homes for native plants that had grown in those areas for centuries, and they were homes for native insects that had developed over thousands of years with those plants for homes and food. That web of life supported both soil organisms and birds, who both depended on those native plants and insects.

Try letting your lawn grow longer, and don't worry if a few other plants begin to make it a home. Letting your lawn stay at approximately 3 inches or more has a number of benefits. The longer blades of grass mean that the grass can absorb more sun, be a healthier plant, develop deeper roots to hold the soil better, and absorb more moisture from the ground. The longer blades create more shade, which

also saves watering costs.

Another possibility, flower beds, can be homes for native and other plants for pollinators. Web-crawling Through the Lawn shared exciting ideas for creating areas in your yard for native plants, special places to welcome those pollinators, native insects and birds.

Lawns and flower beds- and what?? Rewilding? Welcome to the Wild Side- the idea you may have bumped into called Rewilding! I've seen parks in England with areas of approximately an acre left "wild." There have been some native plants strategically placed in the rewilded area. Native insects, flowers, pollinators and birds abound. Rewilding is alive and well in Europe, and is gathering steam here in North America. In a way rewilding is just a return to the past, before postwar chemicals entered our yards and parks, and before we began to manicure nature, mimicking the Downton Abbeys of Europe.

Here in Stratford, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority has undertaken rewilding along several stretches of Lake Victoria along the north shore. Native grasses, wild flowers and certain shrubs species have been used to add biodiversity, hold the banks in place and add beauty to the shoreline.

Native grasses have also been used to replace traditional lawn grass along the TJ Dolan Boulevard near Center Street. The City's Energy and Environment Committee has planted Big and Little Bluestem plugs. The root systems hold soil in place, promote water infiltration and add plant diversity to the area. Eventually as the plants mature, maintenance costs will be saved.

Add diversity to your lawns and encourage our native plants, shrubs and trees. Every small step we take adds to the help our planet needs. Walk on the wild side with Nature!

*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.*

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# Stratford and District Horticultural Society Garden Tour a blooming success

LISA CHESTER

Stratford Times Correspondent

The Stratford and District Horticultural Society (SDHS) held their annual garden tour on July 2nd, a rainy but warm day. About 370 people came out to tour the nine gardens that were selected by committee this year. Organizers, including Larke Turnbull, were pleased with the turnout given the weather.

“That number is down from about 400 last year, but good considering the weather. I was a greeter at one of the gardens Sunday morning and a steady stream of visitors came through, protected by a variety of colourful umbrellas and some in rubber boots,” said Turnbull.

Gardens featured on the tour are selected by committee, and often come by word of mouth. One does not need to be a member of the horticultural society to be featured in the tour. The gardens change each year, with a five year time limit before they can participate again.

One of the gardens featured on the tour is owned by Mike and Ann Matthews.

Mike is also the current president of the SDHS.

They have lived in their house for six years, in a new subdivision, where they started their garden from scratch. The early years were spent hardscaping, putting up the fence and the decks. Today it is a lush, vibrant garden in front and back with pollinator elements and monarch caterpillars munching on Bronze Fennel.

Visitors to the property are welcomed by a huge front garden bordered by a beautiful walkway of flagstone created by Matthews himself.

“I got a quote of around \$1500 and thought that was way too much. I went to Ed’s concrete and they had a sale so I got two skids for \$300 including delivery and tax. My wife said I wasn’t to buy anything so I needed to know how much it would cost normally and he said it was \$1500 a skid plus delivery and taxes! I had someone dig it out and we laid the gravel and stones and it came to about \$1800 total,” shared Matthews.

They also brought in about twenty yards of dirt rather than the top soil a builder

normally lays. Plants have been selected so that there is always something in bloom, from early spring through to fall. There’s daffodils and tulips in the spring, now there are daylilies blooming, the irises are almost done but the bubble gum coloured bee balm and milk weed is about to pop. The snapdragons came back by root, not seed. During the winter the garden is well insulated with snow and the layer of mulched leaves Matthews gathers in the fall keeping the soil at about 32 degrees.

In the back is a well-manicured and colourful garden with a mix of perennials, annuals, and annual hanging baskets. Shade comes from the lovely pergola Matthews built and a tidy sitting area beside the shed. In one corner is a huge repurposed bird cage painted blue providing curiosity. Rocks are used as garden borders with boulders providing interest.

The best advice he’s been given on gardening is to enjoy it, “Just enjoy it. Don’t worry about, yes, that’s the way it is now, but in a week, next year it will be different. Enjoy weeding, enjoy everything about it. The planning, going to the nurs-

ery, the planting, the pulling, just enjoy all aspects of it”

Matthews has some advice for new gardeners trying to establish gardens in a new subdivision. “The biggest problem with a new subdivision is the soil. Typically its farmland that is good nutritious soil but I don’t have a tractor I can plow my garden with and I can’t weed cement. The water doesn’t drain. So the choices are to amend the soil with organic material that takes a while or replace it with triple-mix.”

A fun element of the tour this year was a plant identification contest. One plant in each of the featured gardens was selected for identification. The plants were oakleaf hydrangea, meadow rue, bush honeysuckle, false blue indigo, baneberry/bugbane/acetosa simplex, orange globe flower, bronze fennel, Canada anemone, and ornamental onion.

The winner of the perennial challenge, a hanging basket from Sebringville garden centre, was Collette Bondi from Stratford. The winner of the pass for two to Whistling Gardens was Judy Chamberlain from Tavistock.



A tour of the gardens belonging to Mike and Ann Matthews. Left, deck and pergola built in the first years by Mike. Right, a corner to contemplate life.

(LISA CHESTER PHOTOS)

## SDSS Eco-Club presented with the Canadian Youth Climate Action recognition plaque

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The Climate Momentum group in Stratford is back with their “Climate Mixers” after a two-and-a-half-year break due to COVID-19. Their first meeting was in association with Geoff Love from Pivot Green. This volunteer lead organization connects and celebrates people, businesses, and communities with stories and ideas to inspire restorative climate action.

Climate Momentum and Love presented the Canadian Youth Climate Action Award to the SDSS Eco-Club for their outstanding achievement in promoting sustainability in the community.

Bill James Abra, the Volunteer organizer of Climate Momentum, noted, “Climate Momentum is a volunteer-led, Stratford-based, climate action group that is looking to build a sense of connection in the community.”

The group held their first meeting at The Parlour Inn, Patrick Room, where over 35 volunteer committee members, SDSS students and community members met for the first time in years.

Climate Momentum is known for its service in working with the city of Stratford and students at SDSS in Declaring a Climate Emergency in February 2020, as well as pushing for the city to hold Climate Action meetings throughout the pandemic, head virtually, and later in person.

More recently, the group worked with the Stratford BIA to help bring the Car Free Fridays to life in downtown Stratford, promoting bicycle transportation around the city.

At their latest meeting, Love, Pivot Green President and Climate Momentum member presented students from the SDSS Eco-Club with a plaque in recognition of their Canadian Youth Climate Action Award.

In presenting the award, Love noted, “We raised \$6,000 for the

award and received 18 applications from Vancouver to Newfoundland, including the Toronto area. Most of them are university programs, which underscores the exceptionalness of the SPSS program here in Stratford.”

The students from SDSS are just winding down their year, and a number of them will move on to universities and colleges around Ontario in September.

A recent Instagram post outlined their full achievements throughout the year, including gardening kits, tree planting, trash pick-up and an Urban Farm project, “where students worked together with Lucas from The Local Community Food Centre to create an urban farm near the SDSS campus,” the Instagram post read.

If you’re interested in learning more or attending upcoming Climate Momentum Group Mixers, please visit their website at <https://climatemomentum.ca/>



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

SDSS Eco Club members at Climate Momentum Mixer at The Parlour Inn in June

# Beloved Razzamajazz returns to Avon River for 33rd Year

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

Live music will once again grace the Avon River as the beloved attraction, the Razzamajazz Pontoon Boat, sets sail on June 20th for its 33rd year. Operated by a dedicated group of volunteers, this unique outdoor concert experience has become a staple of Stratford's cultural scene. With an impressive lineup of local talent, Razzamajazz promises another season of music on the river.

As the pontoon boat floats along the Avon River, onlookers are treated to the talent of local musicians who transform the vessel into a floating stage. This year's lineup includes Chuckee Zehr, Conn Smythe, HWY 19, Trish Harris, Townline Slym and a number of other musicians, promising a blend of music to suit everyone.

The continuation of this cherished attraction requires community support. Razzamajazz is actively fundraising to cover its operating costs for the season.

The City of Stratford has committed to matching all donations up to \$4,000, emphasizing its



Skipper Dan Scarborough with The Razzamajazz Pontoon Boat after releasing it into the water for the first time June 20th, 2023

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

commitment to preserving local cultural offerings.

However, community support is still necessary. Dan Scarborough, also known as Skipper Dan, the driving force behind Razzamajazz, said, "Every donated dollar counts, and we

need the community to help keep the Razzamajazz on the water."

"With a goal of \$9,000 to sustain operations for the season," Scarborough noted, "every contribution plays a vital role in ensuring the continuity of the

Razzamajazz."

Dan Orchard of C.A.S Power Marine Ltd. in Ayr has pledged to match Razzamajazz's fundraising efforts in a new development. This substantial support will enable the committee to acquire a brand-new electric

motor, costing approximately \$15,000. This significant investment aligns with Razzamajazz's commitment to reducing its environmental impact and fostering sustainability.

"We are incredibly grateful for the support from Dan Orchard," expresses Scarborough. "His generous contribution will help with our long-term sustainability efforts and keep the Razzamajazz going for years to come."

The combination of community donations, matched by the City of Stratford, and the support from Dan Orchard and C.A.S Power Marine Ltd., will ensure Razzamajazz can continue enchanting audiences while fostering a greener future for years to come.

To contribute to Razzamajazz's fundraising campaign and help secure the future of this beloved attraction, donations can be made to Dan Scarborough by eTransfer to razzamajazz1992@gmail.com or by cheque payable to The Razzamajazz and dropped off or mailed to: Skipper Dan Scarborough 190 Lightbourne Ave. Stratford, ON N4Z 1E1

## The Local Community Food Centre hosts their 2022 year-in-review AGM

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The Local Community Food Centre hosted its 2023 AGM covering the impact for the 2022 year in June.

In 2022, food insecurity remained a top concern across Ontario due to skyrocketing costs of food due to inflation and economic uncertainty, as well as insufficient income support programs.

Board Chairperson Gary Wreford discussed the challenges post-COVID-19 due to decreased government funding and also addressed finances and hiring a new Executive Director in 2022. From here, Wreford discussed that 2023 would be another year of rebuilding and committing to increase fundraising efforts.

Wreford noted, "While it has been a challenging year, we have been able to keep up the good work that The Local is well known for. We have been, and still are, transitioning from our operation during the last two years of COVID. We are currently in a "Re-imagine Project" that we expect will help us determine how The Local moves forward," he noted.

Margaret Smart, The Local Community Food Centre Executive Director, noted changes due to COVID, "We recognize that there are things below that surface that we need to continue to rebuild and repair and restore," she said, "because the foundations



were shaken during COVID."

The Local Community Food Centre offers food access programs that help encourage healthy eating habits for families across the city of Stratford and Perth County. These programs consist of an Access Market where community members are able to purchase fresh, affordable food every week.

Smart noted, "It is community and food and the opportunity to bring people together around a universal need for good and healthy food that helps drive our programs."

The Local had a very heavy impact on the Stratford community in 2022, offer-

ing 27,286 meals to those in need as well as over 203 food-skill classes. Over 1,680 volunteer hours were noted.

Community Meals are provided for lunch and dinner weekly, and The Local also has a "Pizza Bake" where fresh pizzas are made in an outdoor oven throughout the summer.

The Food Skills program provides community members with increased food-skill education programs to enhance well-being and health. It includes programs such as the Urban Farmers Program, Seed, Feed and Lead and also includes a community

garden where a 3.5-acre site with allotment gardens, an edible forest and an orchard offer the community can enhance their knowledge and share gardening tips and information.

Most impactfully noted was that 79% of those surveyed say that their mental health has improved due to their involvement at The Local; one community member noted, "Participating in the gardens and being outdoors with others has been good for my physical health, too."

93% of those surveyed said they felt an increased sense of belonging and support since coming to The Local, "If you have that sense of belonging, it impacts your mental health. A sense of purpose and gives you the ability to help someone else," another member noted.

The local offers educational opportunities to enhance involvement within the community and provides tools and attainable actions to foster belonging in Stratford. These programs are training programs and promote inclusion, advocacy and healthy living.

Smart ended with an impactful statement to bring staff and board members into the 2023 year. "If we keep that vision before us, we will be united in our efforts to continue to build this place until all that it can be, and we will see that incredible vision continue to come to life at all levels right here, at The Local."

## Things you should know about funerals & costs



STUART LENDER

Times Contributor

Folks – it has always been important to me in funeral service, that people get empowered with information. That said, every now and again, I will be using this space for more informational articles to compliment my usual metaphysical musings. The information herein, is courtesy of Rutherford Cremation & Funeral Services; and as such, applies to the Province of Ontario.

What better one to begin with than today's topic: THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT FUNERALS & COSTS

Death and taxes are inevitable. They've both been around for a long time. Funerals too. But funerals as we think of them, are neither inevitable these days nor must they take the shape of what we consider to be "normal." When people ask me what is normal, I make it quite clear that there is only "what you want."

Contrary to how it may seem, there are many aspects to making funeral arrangements that are very much under your control and I'll go over what those are shortly.

Funeral home price lists will have a number of packages with varying names and services. They may have packages that are so varied in their descriptions that the clarity of the list becomes an exercise in breaking a code as to what it is you want, and what it might cost. This becomes all the more difficult if one is not used to the terminology. Regardless of the numerous options available and the manner in which package costs are broken down, there are always things that can be added if desired and things not necessarily needed.

**TYPES OF FUNERALS:** To keep it simple, there are technically four types of services and they are listed here in (usual) order of most costly to least costly:

1. **TRADITIONAL SERVICE** - a service with the body present.
2. **MEMORIAL SERVICE** - a service where a cremation or aquamation has already occurred.
3. **GRAVESIDE SERVICE** - a service held at the graveside only, either full body or remains.
4. **BASIC DIRECT CREMATION OR AQUAMATION** - no visitation or service that the funeral home is involved in.

In addition, the term **CELEBRATION OF LIFE** might be used and/or listed as a service, which can indicate a great many things. To me, a Celebration of Life Service connotes a service or "gathering" that is less formal, more casual and has the feel of inviting people to your home for catch-up time or a sharing of conversation. Some people use the term to mean "party." A celebration of life is quite open to interpretation and the manner in

which you would like to honour someone. A body or remains may or may not be present.

**COSTS:** When looking at a price list, the packages themselves are usually broken down into three main categories. For example, within any of the service types listed above you will have costs listed for:

1. **PROFESSIONAL & STAFF SERVICES** - meaning professional fees, coordinating rites and services, documentation, preparation of remains, transport of remains, staffing, facilities, vehicles, etc.
2. **SUPPLIES** - meaning things you purchase like a casket or an urn, cremation jewellery, vault, stationery, etc.
3. **DISBURSEMENTS** - meaning things the funeral home pays for on your behalf, that go to second parties and are put into the contract; like the cost of the cremation fee that gets paid to the crematorium, or the cost of a newspaper notice that gets paid to the newspaper, or the municipal death registration fee to the city. Others might be a clergy honorarium, or flower costs, etc. All of these are "disbursements."

These three sub-headings under any one of the funeral home packages, comprise the entire contract. Within those sub-headings things may be removed if not needed or added if desired, depending upon what you wish to do.

**THINGS TO NOTE:** Without sitting down with a funeral director and going over your specific wishes, there are only two types of services that can be quoted over the phone in their entirety, including all applicable taxes, right off

the bat – a basic direct cremation or a basic direct aquamation. The reason these two can be quoted complete is due to the fact that there are no real variables in them. They are pretty straightforward.

Be aware that sometimes, when a funeral home tells you the cost of a service, or you see the service on a price list, it is probably the cost of only the Professional & Staff Services and not the supplies or disbursements that would go into that service. Why? Because as I said earlier, other than a basic direct cremation or aquamation, the funeral home can't know what supplies you want or what disbursements are needed or desired without going over options with you - but they can give you the cost of the Professional and Staff Services because those are the funeral home's costs. The other stuff depends upon what you want to do. So, make sure you know what they are quoting you.

**KEEPING COSTS DOWN:** There are ways in which the costs of a funeral need not get out of hand. Here they are. The most variable cost of any funeral home service is that of a casket or the urn that is chosen. There are caskets that range from \$1,500 up to \$14,000. There are urns that range from \$200 up to \$3,000. In between that wide range are some beautiful selections. Likewise, the family might have a receptacle, a family heirloom, that holds remains into a cookie jar, a fire extinguisher, an empty shell from a naval vessel, etc.

There are also numerous options as to where a service might

be held that will cause the price of the service to change.

There are disbursements that are not a necessity, like a newspaper notice (it's free on a funeral home website), or flowers, or an honorarium if you have a family member who wishes to speak instead of clergy. It's the disbursements that you have the greatest control over.

If the wishes of the deceased were never specified you might select one that fits what it is you want to do. Keeping in mind, cremation or aquamation gives you the luxury of time. Once the cremation or aquamation has taken place, you may do a service wherever and whenever you wish. You have the time to confer with friends and family over how you would like to honour the deceased.

**AND FINALLY:** There are those who feel that if there is no public funeral service being held, there is no caring, and this is simply untrue! The two are not synonymous. Besides the two most obvious reasons for not having a public service: the deceased did not wish it or there are no family or friends left to warrant it – the important thing to keep in mind is that in some way, at some time, that person's life should be honoured and there are many big and little ways to do that with or without a funeral home being involved.

**UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL.**

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

## The serenity of staycations: embracing the joy of home



IRENE ROTH

Times Freelance Columnist

With the price of everything soaring, it could be time to rethink our vacation plans for this summer. Not only will you save money, but you'll also feel more rested and peaceful as a result.

There's a common misconception that the word staycation only applies to staying at home as you take time off. However, a staycation can extend from

your home to a local destination that's within driving distance, such as a cottage or cabin.

Here are some of the benefits to taking a staycation.

- Staycations tend to be more budget-friendly since you don't have to spend money on transportation, accommodation, or expensive activities. You can save on travel costs and use that money for other purposes or leisure activities closer to home.
- Staycations are incredibly convenient because you don't have to deal with the hassle of packing, long flights, or navigating unfamiliar places. You can enjoy your time off without the stress of travel logistics.
- Staycations provide an opportunity to unwind and recharge without the pressure of an itinerary. You can indulge in leisurely activities, visit local attractions, pamper yourself at a spa, or simply relax at home.

- Staycations can allow you to discover hidden gems in your own city or region that you may have overlooked in your day-to-day routine. You can visit local museums, parks, restaurants, or engage in outdoor activities, fostering a deeper appreciation for your surroundings.

- Staycations can be an excellent chance to strengthen relationships and spend quality time with loved ones. You can plan activities, outings, or even stay in and enjoy quality bonding time without the distractions of work or other obligations.

- Staycations offer more flexibility and room for spontaneity. Since you're not bound by travel schedules or reservations, you can make plans on the spur of the moment and adjust your activities based on your mood or the weather. This freedom can add a sense of adventure and excitement to your time off.

- Staycations offer uninterrupted personal time, allowing you to engage in activities you truly enjoy or pursue personal hobbies and interests. You can catch up on reading, binge-watch your favorite shows, engage in creative projects, or simply indulge in some well-deserved downtime.

- With a staycation, you don't have to spend a significant amount of time traveling to your destination. This means you have more time to relax and enjoy your time off rather than being stuck in transit.

- Staycations often provide more downtime for relaxation compared to vacations far away. You can sleep in, have leisurely mornings, and spend your days engaging in activities that help you unwind and rejuvenate.

Remember, the benefits of a staycation can be unique to your specific preferences and cir-

cumstances. Take advantage of the opportunities that staying at home or near home can offer and make the most of your time off in a way that suits you best.

With a staycation, you can have the best of both worlds. You can get away to a cottage for a week or two and then come back and rest at home.

Or you can go camping and then come home and rest. Many people love getting out into nature and enjoying the great outdoors. If this is something you enjoy, then by all means look for some camp grounds that are available to enjoy with your family and friends.

Regardless of what you choose to do this summer, be sure to enjoy every moment of the next few months, because they will go by so fast. If you don't, you'll blink and fall will be upon you and you haven't done anything enjoyable.

# Humane Society hosted successful pop-up event

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth (HSKWSP) hosted a pop-up event as both centers were nearing capacity.

“We have 200 animals in care between our two centres, and almost 80 pets currently available for adoption,” stated Kathrin Delutis, chief executive officer of HSKWSP. “We are hoping our community will choose to adopt this week and give a pet a loving home.”

The event took place Wednesday, June 21st and June 22nd, from 1:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

All adult dogs and cats, as well as small animals, had a reduced adoption fee in order to incentivize new families to take the leap and find animals their forever homes, “Our goal is to find forever homes for the animals currently in our care,” stated Amanda Hawkins, senior manager of animal care at HSKWSP. “For each home we find, it opens up a space for another pet in need.”

Between the two locations, staff have seen a total of 1,025 animals come into care since the beginning of 2023, and there are currently 73 pets waiting for a spot at the shelter. Hawkins noted, “Our goal is to find forever homes for the animals currently in our care,” she stated. “For each home we find, it opens up a space for another pet in need.”

The pop-up event worked, and the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo &



## HERE COMES THE SUN

Sunshine and her new owners smiling for the camera at the Stratford-Perth Humane Society Location during the pop-up event

Stratford Perth found loving homes for 64 in-need animals in and across Kitchener, Waterloo, Stratford and Perth County. These include 14 dogs, 40 cats and 10 small animals!

When asked why the rate of animals being surrendered has increased in recent months, Hawkins added, “The most cited

reasons for surrender were for financial or medical reasons, with pet owners finding themselves unable to afford care, pay veterinary bills or retain long-term medical support for their animals. We’ve also seen an increase in calls from people asking if we have support services and how to access them.”

Among the support options available to pet owners is the Pet Pantry program, which helps support pet owners in urgent need of pet food and basic supplies due to a personal crisis or financial limitations. The HSKWSP also offers low-cost spay-neuter and microchipping services.

Among the newly adopted animals was Sunshine (pictured here with her new owners), one of 13 puppies born at the Stratford location earlier this year; her new owner happily said, “We heard about the pop-up adoption event from a family member and decided to come in to take a look and fell in love with her.”

In a recent statement, The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth noted, “The Humane Society cares for animals in both their animal centres, as well as with the help of a large number of foster parents at both sites. They have recently found themselves near capacity, with lost and stray pets continuing to come in from their 13 service areas across Waterloo Region and Perth County and community members calling for rehoming support. Operating as a registered charity, the HSKWSP does not receive any government funding for its charitable programs and services and relies on the generosity of its donors and fundraising events and activities.”

If you are interested in donating to the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth, please visit [kwsphumane.ca](http://kwsphumane.ca) or find them on social media @kwsphumane.

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# Riddles

What's the perfect cure for dandruff?  
Baldness

Why did the king go to the dentist?  
To get his teeth crowned

Why did the sick skunk stay in bed for a week?  
Doctors odours

Why is an elephant big, grey and wrinkly?  
Because if it was small, white and smooth it would be an aspirin

Which thing makes our home safe?  
A lock.

What do call a snail on a ship?  
A snailor

Take off my skin -- I won't cry, but you will! What am I?  
An onion.

What can go up and come down without moving?  
The temperature.

The more you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?  
Foot steps.

# Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 31



# Pet of the Month

## CHARLIE

Meet 5-year-old Charlie! He can be a real shy guy, but after some good treats and extra loving, he comes out of his shell. Charlie absolutely loves to play with his toys! He would do best in a quiet home – for that reason a home with older, respectful children or adults only would be the best fit! Charlie is a sweet boy but will probably hide from you until he feels safe in his new home. If you can give Charlie all the attention and patience he deserves, please fill out an adoption survey online at <https://kwsphumane.ca/adopt/process>.



# Word Search

## ICE CREAM FLAVOURS

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

- VANILLA
- STRAWBERRY
- MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP
- BUTTER PECAN
- COOKIES N CREAM
- ROCKY ROAD
- COFFEE
- CHOCOLATE CHIP
- PISTACHIO
- NEAPOLITAN
- CAKE BATTER
- SALTED CARMEL
- BUBBLEGUM

## Community Breakfast in support

GARY WEST

*Times Correspondent*

There was lots of "Pride and Inclusion" at Stratford's Community of Christ Church on Forman Avenue on the last Sunday in June for a free full breakfast put on by volunteers and members of the church.

Hundred of dollars in donations went to local charities in the area.

Pastor Nancy Brookshaw, her family and the elders of the church felt that having a free commu-

nity breakfast, instead of a worship service once every month, could serve the community well which included the months of February through to June.

She felt it was a great way to welcome area residents, no matter what their faith, to show they have a welcoming place to come for a visit with friends and neighbours and enjoy a hearty meal together on Sunday mornings.

The Community of Christ family hopes to continue with the breakfast again in September once everyone is back to their regular routine.



Pastor Nancy Brookshaw with her Husband Scott Brookshaw, along with their two daughters, take a break with "Pride", while welcoming morning visitors to the church hall for their 5th community breakfast.

# CLASSIFIEDS

Email to inquire [stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com)

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

## The Contract Framing Group Inc.

The Contract Framing group is looking to fill positions of full-time employees to start immediately. We are a fun, fast paced company, specializing in wood framing of small to large commercial, industrial, and residential structures. We are looking to fill positions of all experience levels, **from Labourers to Foreman.**

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FEMALE CAREGIVER NEEDED for mildly autistic adult female for one week of camp August 13-19th in Guelph. Call/email for details. No texting. 519-273-7147, [srlavallee44@gmail.com](mailto:srlavallee44@gmail.com)

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FYI - I am currently writing my 48th mystery novel. Eleven of my Joel Franklin Mysteries have been published to date. The stories take place in Southwestern Ontario from 1928 to 1939. My books are available from Amazon, Fanfare Books in Stratford, Diana Sweets Marketplace in Listowel or directly from me. Visit my Facebook for more information.

TO DOT THE I - for editing and proofreading.

~email : [muses@quadro.net](mailto:muses@quadro.net)

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# COMING EVENTS

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## PARKVIEW UNITED CHURCH YARD SALE & CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

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Lots of great items!

**YARD & BAKE SALE**  
Saturday, August 19; 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
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**CITY WIDE YARD SALE**  
Saturday, August 19; 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
Stratford, ON  
Everyone is welcome to join in and make some cash while clearing out their clutter! Ask your neighbours and friends to join in and make your sale even bigger!

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## REAL ESTATE



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ROYAL LEPAGE  
Hiller Realty

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[homeandcompany.ca](http://homeandcompany.ca)

## SUDOKU

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

## QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) Twenty-four
- 2) Gulf
- 3) HP Sauce
- 4) England and France
- 5) Louis Braille
- 6) Turkey
- 7) Canada (from the St Lawrence Iroquoian word kanata)
- 8) Othello
- 9) Bombay
- 10) Atlanta, Georgia, US

# Home furniture

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