

STRATFORD *TIMES*

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Stratford Fall Fair back to full capacity!

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Stratford Fall Fair is heading this way, being held at the Stratford Fairgrounds from September 21 to 24, with free admission for all.

The Fall Fair is expected to be back at full capacity post-pandemic, notes Susan McGonigle, Stratford and District Agricultural Society Office Manager. "The event got hit very hard with COVID and had to shut down for two years. And that was a big heartache for all of us,"

The Fall Fair fun will start in full swing on Thursday evening with the traditional Seniors Euchre tournament, which is said to be a huge favourite.

Later that evening, there will be the family BBQ; McGonigle said, "Our family barbecue is very accessible to everyone; you can get yourself a hamburger or hot dog, a drink and a bag of chips for \$6."

The annual ambassador competition and opening ceremonies will also take place on Thursday evening, where everyone can attend for free and mark the official opening of the Stratford Fall Fair together.

One of Ontario's largest Farm to You animal exhibits will be available for the whole weekend, where children can experience touching a cow, sheep, pig or goat. McGonigle said this popular event gives kids an opportunity to see or even smell animals for the first time, "The Farm to You experience may be the first-and only-time children have been able to get to see farm animals in real life."

D.A. Campbell Amusements Ltd will offer a toonie day and fair-priced rides throughout the weekend for thrill seekers of all ages.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

UNIGNORABLE

United Way volunteers reveal the 2023/24 Campaign Goal to enthusiastic supporters.

United Way Perth-Huron announces \$2.5 million campaign goal

The campaign goal has been announced. United Way Perth-Huron endeavours to raise \$2,508,548 this upcoming year for #Unignorable Issues. The campaign kickoff held in Market Square September 15 brought many dozens of supporters together to Unite-For-A-Bite, a cold lunch sponsored by local business.

The 2023-24 goal represents an increase from last year, but the organizations they support are in need.

"These events are going on across Perth-Huron and it is a call to action. It is a call to action to each individual to do what they can and change the life of another individual in our community. United Way has done so many great things and one of them is bringing us together today. Whatever you can do to support, you are changing individual lives in our community," said Mayor Martin Ritsma.

Funds raised for the United Way go to partner organizations and individuals within the community. Lives are

changed in many ways each year.

"I think of all the partner organizations that receive funding from the United Way and it's such a valuable resource in our community. So many different causes are helped by the funds. I want to say a special thank you to workplaces that do charitable campaigns. I always find it so interesting the different variety and unique events hosted by workplaces to support the United Way," said John Nater, MP.

There are over three hundred workplace campaigns actively raising money. If your workplace does not yet have an active campaign, the United Way office has what you need to start one up. The United Way challenges people to sacrifice one day's pay over the course of the year to donate.

"We live in such a beautiful city but in the margins, in spaces that we don't see it's not so pretty. If you look beyond our culture and our art, there are challenges to

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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The City of Stratford will not be renewing Bingo Country's lease

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A letter to Geoff Whittaker and Jon Rinn at Bingo Country, dated July, 20th 2023, was sent from the City of Stratford to advise Bingo Country of the termination of their lease agreement between the City-owned Agriplex building and Bingo Country for the use of the Bingo nights, as of September 30th.

Bingo players and friends of Bingo Country were not pleased with the news and took to the streets outside of Stratford City Hall last week in hopes of gaining attention from City officials.

Brenda Ehnes, an advocate for Stratford Bingo and one of the protesters outside of City Hall on September 5, says, "Local charities depend on the revenue generated by Bingo; for some, it's all the money they get to support their cause." Terry Marklevitz, President of the Kiwanis Club of Stratford, agreed and took to Facebook to voice his concerns, "Bingo is a significant way for volunteer groups to raise money for programs that benefit our community."

Bingo Country was offered the Tim



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

PROTESTING FOR BINGO

Protestors outside Stratford City Hall on September 5th

Taylor Lounge, which can accommodate 91 players, but Stratford Bingo and Bingo Country say this isn't good enough. Angie Miller, Stratford Bingo staff member, says, "We must abide by AGCO regulations, and one of the biggies is that we require secure storage for our paper, pocket slots (think Nevada tickets) and the charity safe, which can only be opened by a secure armoured service."

Miller did note that the Tim Taylor Lounge will not have enough space for a sales counter or administration office and that they would not be able to use the space on STAT holidays or when other events are being held at the Rotary Complex.

Due to the amount of space needed for each

bingo player, Miller estimates they require at least 7,000 to 10,000 square feet of space, although they typically have around 40 players each night. The Tim Taylor Lounge, much smaller than the current Agriplex space, "just won't cut it," she says.

Ehnes notes that the alternative location offered by the city would also require extra setup, "The other two locations would require the Bingo to set up the equipment before bingo and remove it when the session is over. Neither option has storage."

Manny Puetz, Stratford Bingo board member, says there's a process to running Bingo, and it's not as simple as finding a new space, "To run Bingos, you need a Bingo Association, A private facility and licencing agreements, all of which have to work together."

City of Stratford Director of Community Services, Tim Wolfe, sat down with

The Stratford Times and said the main reason for this change is due to the fact that the Agriplex is not being uti-

lized appropriately, and the City needs the space for other programs, "The way the lease was set up is bingo has 24 hours seven days a week. So, they have exclusive use of that 300-capacity room. And the city can't use it as a multi-use facility."

Wolfe notes the facility will be transitioned into a multi-use space, which will be used for community events, cultural events, youth programs, day camps and a number of senior programs. The space will be bookable for anyone looking to use the space on a pay-per-use basis.

Wolfe noted that the Tim Taylor Lounge does have storage space that Bingo Country would be able to use; however, the storage space is, admittedly, smaller than the current location.

The concerns were discussed at the City Hall meeting on September 13th, where Councillor Bonnie Henderson advocated for Stratford Bingo, stating, "Two months to find a place is unreasonable." She discussed the amount of equipment needed to run Stratford Bingo and that moving it within the next two weeks would be hard for all involved.

As another alternative, Wolfe said Bingo Country would be to book the current space at the Agriplex. In his comments during the City Council meeting, he said, "At the end of the day, they can even book the current spot the rent, they can book that, it's a bookable room."

Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach did recognize the charity support from Stratford Bingo but did note, "The other thing that I wanted to clarify too, is that it's I think that it's great that Bingo supports a lot of charities, a lot of these charities are not located in the city of Stratford however."

Councillor Henderson put forward a motion that The City of Stratford give Bingo Country three months to find a new location, and Councillor Cody Sebben seconded this motion; however, all other present councillors opposed this motion and therefore, the City of Stratford will terminate Bingo Country's lease on September 30th, 2023.



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United Way

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

face. Skyrocketing prices, people struggling to cope with daily life, addictions, hunger and inequality is growing. Food bank usage has increased, mental health is declining, and the ranks of those experiencing homelessness or teetering on homelessness have grown to alarming levels. What we all need right now is some hope, a beacon of light to show us the way, and we are the United Way," said Elizabeth Cooper, United Way Perth – Huron and area community development manager.

She talked a bit about the social research and planning council and the work that they do to research and plan for the annual needs. This research presents real needs with real numbers to set the campaign goal.

Interested in starting a workplace campaign? Navigate to perthhuron.unitedway.ca for the campaign toolkit or call 519-271-7730.

Stratford Fall Fair This Weekend!

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Friday morning is achievement day for local Dairy 4H Clubs of Western Ontario. Showmen will showcase their skills in a number of competitions throughout the day. McGonigle notes this is very much in partnership with the local community, "We've done this for countless years and with the generous agricultural businesses' support, we are able to host this event." She continued, "It's a great experience for kids to watch, too."

The Western Ontario 4H show at the Stratford Fall Fair is a precursor for showmen to attend the Royal Winter Fair in 2023; therefore, the competition can be quite amazing for all who plan to attend.

McGonigle notes that a notable part of this year's events is the Free Kid's corners, "there will be Lazer tag and Lego making tables, face painting, pedal tractor racing and bouncy castle, all for free." She says that a big component of the Fall Fair is offering free, accessible fun for everyone.

Returning this year will be the Mini Prince and Princess competition on Saturday, where families can sign up their young ones to compete for the crown.

On Saturday, there will be a dairy goat show and miniature horse show that everyone can watch on as showmen compete with their animals. Saturday will also host the pet show, where attendees can bring their own pets to be judged in the com-

petition.

New this year is a new Ontario Fall Fair staple with "quite a following," notes McGonigle. The Western Ontario Outlaws Lawn Tractor Racing Club, a non-profit club that donates annually to charity, will be showing off their lawn tractor skills for attendees.

The Ontario Outlaws Lawn Tractor Racing Club says, "There's no prize money in the sport, called the 'poor man's NASCAR,' and machines can reach 100 km/h with engines having from 8 to 90 horsepower and cost from \$500 to \$5,000 to build depending on the racing class," which is sure to attract any motorhead.

On Saturday night, the Beer Gardens will open and be available for a fee to access the gardens, food and beer, followed by the Sunday church service the next morning.

McGonigle's excitement for the fall fair was hard not to love. She said of the event, "[It is] the most family fun you can pack into one weekend and is 100 per cent accessible to everyone." She also gives a big shout-out to the event sponsors, "Without our community partners and their generosity, this fair would not be able to run. And that's the truth."

If you're looking for city-size excitement in your own backyard, check out this year's Stratford Fall Fair this weekend at the Stratford Fairgrounds.



ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION Est. 1926



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 on September 22, paid for by the Poppy Fund, all Vets welcome. More info to follow. Contact the Branch at 519-271-4540 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.

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STRATFORD TIMES

Stratford's Community Newspaper

Established 2021

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Stratford's media landscape is better than most

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Last week's announcement by Metroland Media to declare bankruptcy, lay off 605 employees, and cease printing of over 70 weekly community newspapers was yet another example of how the media landscape is being drastically reshaped.

The closest newspaper impacted by the announcement was the New Hamburg Independent, which was founded way back in 1878 by George Dawson and John Gould. The newspaper was at its best during the many years that it was owned by the Ritz family. Eventually though, and like so many other family-owned newspapers, it was acquired by one of the big conglomerates, and under the Metroland banner it had deteriorated significantly in recent years – with no local office and no New Hamburg based reporters.

While New Hamburg remains well-served by the independently owned Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette (a sister paper to the Stratford Times), many communities in Ontario are now left without a reliable local news source as a result of the Metroland bankruptcy, and that's a terrible thing.

A moment like this causes me to reflect and appreciate the varied sources of local news and information that we have here in Stratford.

Although it suffers from unfair comparisons to “the good old days”, the Stratford Beacon Herald remains a very worthwhile read. There are other local newspapers (such as the Woodstock Sentinel Review) who have not

fared nearly as well as the Beacon Herald has under Post-media ownership. Galen Simmons does an exceptional job running all over the City getting the scoops and delivering them timely to the population. Covering the local sports beat, it's been wonderful to see Cory Smith return to better health and be back in action.

Stratford's local radio stations, CJCS 107.1 and 2day FM 107.7, are always well-represented at events throughout the city, lending their support and promotion. Their website, mystratfordnow.com, is a great source of local news. With two frequencies on the dial, radio listeners can keep up with local happenings in between either classic hits on 107.1 or recent jams at 107.7.

Stratford Today, a division of Village Media, was the news source likely most impacted by the recent ban on sharing Canadian news by Meta (Facebook), because their news is online only. To follow their regular news updates, visit their website at stratfordtoday.ca or subscribe to their daily email newsletter.

Podcasts have become very popular in recent years, and my favourite local podcast is The Stratford Slice, produced by Craig Thompson's Ballinran Entertainment. In each instalment of the Stratford Slice, Thompson enjoys a pleasant visit with an interesting local personality. The most recent one, for example, features a conversation with Rheo Thompson.

While there is much talk about how media is dying in this country, I think it's worthwhile to note that beyond social media, Stratford continues to have a large array of good options for people interested in local news and events.

STRATFORD TIMES

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ONE CARE Grand Parade in support of local seniors

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The annual Grand Parade supporting ONE CARE was held this past weekend on Saturday, September 16, at Upper Queen's Park Pavilion in Stratford.

This family-friendly fundraiser walk aims to help support local charities that serve and support seniors and their families across Canada. ONE CARE provides a wide range of services that enable seniors and people with health challenges in local communities to enjoy a better quality of life as they safely age at home.

ONE CARE relies on donations from events like the Grand Parade to ensure they can continue to help seniors and individuals with health challenges. Lindsey Martchenko, Fundraising Consultant for ONE CARE Home and Community Support Services, says, "Seniors in our communities need support now more than ever."

Due to the ongoing increased cost of goods in the economy, some seniors have



(FRED GONDER PHOTO)

difficulty managing their finances to help support daily activities to keep them home longer. The programs that ONE CARE provides help them stay in their homes as long as possible in a safe and healthy way. "The services that ONE CARE pro-

vides in assisting our senior population and those that are unable to handle normal day-to-day activities are so essential," says John Cossey, Owner of New Orleans Pizza in Stratford. "ONE CARE plays a significant role in keeping our community

the caring and supportive environment we have been blessed to live in."
















The net proceeds from the Grand Parade directly go towards clients in need of financial subsidy and client-related program equipment and facilities such as the purchase of accessible vans.

"We are the way that our community can support seniors and adults with health challenges and help them to be in their home and part of their community, where they want to be," says Kathy Scanlon, Executive Director of ONE CARE. "Increasing costs are a challenge for everyone these days, but some are hit harder and need the community to help."

ONE CARE thanks Compass Minerals, Foxtan Fuels, and Tuckersmith Communications who have generously come on board again this year as lead sponsors of The Grand Parade.

ONE CARE is a community-based, charitable, not-for-profit health organization local to Huron and Perth counties. For more information, visit www.onecaresupport.ca or call 1-877-502-8277.

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FIO Celebrates 20 Years of Excellence in Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

FIO Automotive celebrated its 20th anniversary, reflecting on its remarkable journey marked by community dedication, Japanese culture, and a humble commitment to innovation.

An anniversary party was held for staff and family at FIO's large property. Lunch was provided by Pine Ridge BBQ, Musical Talent for the afternoon by York Street Thought Process, along with a number of fun children's activities such as balloon characters, face painting, bouncy castles and popcorn, all provided in partnership with local community talent.

A special thank-you was noted to Strickland's Stratford Toyota, who brought a new Toyota Rav 4 to be displayed at the event. The team at Strickland's also brought the planning team a pizza lunch for all of their hard work in planning the event.

As a member of the Futaba family, FIO is the sole Canadian hub offering welded body parts, instrument panel reinforcements, and stamped components to the



FIO SHOWING EXCELLENCE

FIO Team with the RAV 4 from Strickland's Stratford Toyota

(FIO STAFF PHOTO)

Toyota Motor Manufacturing Company. FIO is a subsidiary company of Futaba Industrial, which is located in Aichi, Japan.

FIO truly stands out in its industrial achievements and devotion to its employees. Employee satisfaction and retention are at the core of the company's values.

Environmental responsibility is high on their agenda, as they've taken significant steps to reduce CO2 emissions and cut down on metal waste, highlighting their commitment to eco-friendly practices.

Furthermore, FIO's spirit of giving back shines through its support for the United

Way Perth Huron, Rotary Hospice, and its thriving Charity Garden, which is run by staff who generously donate fresh produce to local community charities.

Beyond their workplace, FIO extends its hand to local high school students, offering them valuable real-world experiences through their co-op programs. This helps to guide teens on their journey to choosing a well-fitted career path.

General Manager Jonathan Parish notes, "We've expanded every few years to meet Toyota's demands." This commitment to growth is matched by their investments in technology and engineering, ensuring they stay at the forefront of their industry.

Looking forward, FIO eagerly embraces the electric vehicle era by gearing up for the production of parts for the 2026 RAV4 model launch.

Stratford is fortunate to have FIO as an integral part of its community, and we look forward to witnessing their continued contributions and innovations.

Congratulations to FIO on 20 years of excellence!

Car Free Fridays come to an end for the year

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The final Car Free Friday for the year was held Friday September 8th at the Cooper Transit Terminal, hosted by the BIA. The bright sunny morning saw commuters gather at the BIA tent for coffee and juice supplied by Brch & Wyn. Car Free Fridays is a celebration of all kinds of active transportation be it busing, walking, biking, or even on a scooter.

Active transportation was given a substantial boost for the final event as the City of Stratford offered free bus rides for the day. This is the first time that bus service has been provided free of charge by the City.

"We tied it in with a council resolution

to a report that social services brought in a couple months ago about making those on programs like ODSP and Ontario Works, to offer free bus passes. So this is a trial to collect some data to see if offering free transit increases ridership. Along with that we thought it would make sense since the BIA and the City were partnering on Car Free Fridays then why not make it free on that day as well," said Michael Mousley, manager of transit for the City of Stratford.

The cost to the city is about \$5000 for the event. Annually, there are about 480,000 riders, though prior to the pandemic, there were about 620 to 640 thousand. Ridership has not returned because there are still a lot of people working from home, and students are being driven

on alternate buses.

"It is so exciting that the City of Stratford has teamed up with us on this important initiative!" says Jamie Pritchard, general manager, downtown Stratford BIA. "Despite the tremendous cost to the City, every City Council member voted to make this date a "free bus day" which further supports the importance of finding new ways to commute downtown without our cars. Leaving our cars at home helps the environment and opens parking spaces to visitors from out of town."

Also present at the Cooper Transit Terminal was a representative of Cycle Stratford, a bicycle club for individuals and families who enjoy cycling. The club is celebrating its' tenth anniversary in town, and enjoys about seventy members.

"We do regular rides every week, Sunday mornings at 9 am and Wednesday evening at 5:30 or 6:00 pm. We also do destination rides. Last year we did a

three day ride to Niagara. One of our objectives is advocacy work to promote cycling in the city and try to lobby the city to make it more bike friendly," said Roland Plum, executive of Cycle Stratford.

Members of Cycle Stratford were involved in the development of the recent draft Transportation Master Plan presented to Council which is now under public review and can be found on the engagestratford.ca site.

There have been four Car Free Fridays this summer, each has been well supported, taking cars off the street and freeing up parking for visitors to come and enjoy the downtown. This final Friday saw 11 sign up under the BIA banner and 10 sign up representing the City. The BIA was the winner by one and took the coveted commuter trophy. The giveaway contest winner of a thirty day bus pass complements of the City and \$25 Downtown Dollars complements of the BIA was Larry Kittmer.



(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

TAKE A LITTLE RIDE

Car Free Friday commuters sign in



16th ANNUAL MAYOR'S COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

The 16th Annual Mayor's Community Breakfast will be held Thursday, October 5, from 7-8:45 a.m. at the Best Western Plus – The Arden Park Hotel.

A buffet breakfast will be served, with a guest speaker from the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth.

The cost is a monetary donation to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. Receipts will be provided for amounts \$20.00 and over.

Everyone is welcome.

Pre-registration is required.

To reserve a seat, please call Lindsay Van Gestel at 519-271-0250 ext.5236 or email lvangestel@stratford.ca.

The event is sponsored by the Best Western Plus – The Arden Park Hotel, the Stratford and District Council of Churches, and Famme & Co. Professional Corporation.

More homes needed across Perth County, says Housing Needs Assessment Report

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

At the regular Perth County City Council meeting on September 7, council members were presented with the Perth County Housing Needs Assessment study findings by Erik Karvinen of Watson and Associates Economists Ltd.

The study was to provide a review and analysis of current and future housing needs within Perth County to help inform them of market demand and assess supply and policy-based factors that are likely to impact Perth County's housing needs over the next decade.

The report by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. suggested that Perth County requires approximately 3,515 affordable housing units to meet the existing and future population growth needed over the next ten years.

The study found that there has been an increase in housing needs over the last five years in Perth County, and over the next decade, Perth County is expected to have continued growth in population and employment.

Karvinen noted, "It is vital that municipalities offer a wide range of housing options to a broad range of income groups, including a provision for affordable housing."

The report noted that over the past five years, average housing prices and rental rates have increased faster than average household income growth, which has significantly affected affordability in the local housing market, similar to that seen across Ontario.

The study found that townhouses, stacks, apartments, and condos would be beneficial to meet the county's housing needs rather than single-family homes to help offset the financial burden on residents.

This in-depth analysis suggests that Perth County has a limited housing supply and does not meet the current population's needs. According to the report, addressing this concern should be considered a high priority.

In order to meet these needs, Perth County is suggested to focus on higher-density development, including tools to assist in project feasibility through flexibility and reducing the upfront financial obligations of the developer and/or reducing the operational costs of construction.

The Queens Park Walk for Parkinson's, raises a record \$92,000

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

History was made recently at the Parkinson's walk in Stratford where a record \$92,000 was raised in total for the organization.

Walk organizer, Barb Myers, whose partner Ron Harrison was diagnosed with Parkinson's, said the sunny day saw 77 registered walkers, 13 teams and well over 100 people in attendance.

A Shakespeare resident, Bill Schaffer, whose wife Kathy suffers from the disease, was the top donation getter at \$28,194.

"Ron's Racers" were the top team that raised just under \$10,000.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

PARKINSON'S WALK

Above: pictured is the top team "Ron's Racers" who raised \$10,000 at the recent Parkinson's walk at Stratford's Queens Park.

Right: getting warmed up to walk for Parkinson's is L-R- Ron Harrison, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Walk organizer Barb Myers, and Ron Louttit all part of Ron's Racers- the top fundraising team.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)



Rae Announces \$400,000 for Local Police Services

Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington, announced \$400,000 to help local police services expand their video surveillance programs and better protect our communities.

"Our local police services do important work to keep our rural communities safe," MPP Rae said. "This funding will help them investigate criminal activity and ensure our families and property are kept safe."

The Stratford Police and the West Perth Ontario Provincial Police will receive \$200,000 each to improve their surveillance programs. The Guelph Police Service will also receive \$200,000 through the Ontario CCTV Grant Program.

The funding is being delivered through the Ontario Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Grant Program and can be used to replace outdated equipment, expand or enhance current technology and install new or additional

CCTV surveillance cameras in areas where gun and gang violence, illegal drug activity and human trafficking are prevalent.

"Our government is taking action to keep Ontarians safe," said Solicitor General Michael Kerzner. "CCTV surveillance systems are an important part of local police work to detect, prevent, and deter criminal activity. The systems also enhance police efforts to investigate crimes and provide evidence necessary to lay charges."

This is part of a larger investment that will see 24 police services across the province receiving funding with more than \$2.8 million being allocated through the 2023-24 CCTV Grant program.

The Government of Ontario is investing \$163 million to immediately strengthen the province's efforts to fight crime including combatting bail non-compliance and auto thefts.



The Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada (ANAVETS)

Inviting all eligible Canadian Forces Personnel, Ex-Service Members, their respective spouses, widows, and dependents seeking assistance for programs and services offered by Veterans Affairs Canada to meet with our Service Officer the last Saturday of every month between 10:00am and 1:00pm (by appointment only).

All interested parties are asked to contact President Stephen Cooper at 519-271-3113 to book a date for a consultation.

151 Lorne Avenue, East Stratford, Ontario N5A 6S4

Picture Perfect Learning Solutions to host open house in new centre

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Picture Perfect Learning Solutions' new centre will offer lots of learning supports for neurodivergent students and residents of Stratford.

The centre on 945 Downie Street will host an open house from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sept. 23. The open house will feature information sessions every half hour on neurodiverse services and supports, autism support, the Improv Yourself group, the Davis® method, and one-on-one tutoring.

Nadine Schumont, lead facilitator of Picture Perfect Learning Solutions, said the centre will be offering early learners pod where students four to six-years-old learn concepts like change, cause and effect, and consequence.

The early learners' pod will run every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. There will also be youth pod days for students between the ages of seven to 18-years old. Picture Perfect Learning Solutions goal is to help 10 students leave the facility each year inspired to learn.

"They'll leave here and go with the love to want to learn, versus going and expecting people to be just forced to teach them because it doesn't work that way," Schumont said. "We have self-motivation and desire to learn and we understand and can ask questions, that children want to go to school and they'll want to learn and it turns the system around. It gives them a chance for success."

Schumont is inspired to help neurodivergent people after her own experience with dyslexia and ADHD. After being diagnosed in her 40s and starting university

around the same time, she turned to the book "The Gift of Dyslexia" by Ronald B. Davis to cope with her academic struggles. She also went to a Davis® facilitator for further support, where she learned that she is a picture thinker.

"It's like having a Mac computer and a PC computer. We have people who see in pictures when they talk and think and we have people who see in words."

She added that students who are picture-thinkers will struggle in school when words are introduced in lieu of visuals.

"The confusion that happens in school is we go to school and we're considered very creative, we're very active, we get along," Schumont said. "But then we get to Grade One and Two and pictures start leaving our world. They start showing more words to us. The confusion comes in because we know what a picture for a dog is or for an elephant, or for stairs, or for a wall, but where is a picture for the word 'the'? Where's a picture for the word 'and'? Where's a picture for the word 'upon' or 'if'?"

Along with the one-on-one tutoring and learning pods, Picture Perfect Learning Solutions also offers Improv Yourself improv classes. The classes bring neurotypical and neurodivergent people together and encourages social and communication skills.

"This is a great way for all ages, young and old, to come together, learn new strategies to communicate effectively," Schumont said. "Learn useful tools for kids to get their thoughts out of their mind."

Visit pictureperfectlearningsolutions.com for more information.

Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance Starts Process to Amalgamate

On September 7th, the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) Board of Directors unanimously agreed to start the process to amalgamate the four corporations of the HPHA.

Since its inception in 2003, the HPHA's four hospitals, including the Clinton Public Hospital, St. Marys Memorial Hospital, Seaforth Community Hospital, and Stratford General Hospital, have effectively operated as an integrated organization, including a single Board, Administration and Professional Staff. The HPHA is also the single employer of the hospitals' employees.

"This is an important and necessary step for the HPHA as we continue to provide the very best governance to our four hospital sites, and quality care to those we serve," said Board Chair Stephen Hearn. "The amalgamation will not affect our staff as they are already all employees of the HPHA, or the programs, services and staffing offered across our sites. It will also continue to ensure our four strong Foundations remain independent and raising funds vital for their own local hospital and healthcare priorities" he said.

This decision is a result of a recent review of the 20-year old Alliance Agreement. Required updates were identified in order to align with the new Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act that Ontario not-for-profit corporations must comply with by October 19, 2024, and other applicable laws, such as health privacy laws. These updates, combined with the HPHA's current, integrated operating reality reinforced amalgamation as the most responsible step in today's healthcare environment.

As the HPHA moves forward with the amalgamation process, interested members of the public will be provided various opportunities to understand the process and provide feedback. The organization is targeting April 1, 2024 as the effective date of the amalgamation to align with its fiscal year.

An evening of Scotch Mist with the Rotary Club of Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Rotary Club of Stratford is celebrating its 15 Anniversary of the Scotch Mist Night this year. The annual Evening of Scotch Mist event will take place on Saturday, October 14, 2023.

This formal affair is expected to seat 260 scotch lovers and friends alike. Rob Russell, organizer of the Scotch Mist Night and owner of MacLeods Scottish Shop, said that the night is one of the main sources of fundraising for the Rotary Club of Stratford, "It's turned into one of the biggest fundraisers for the club."

Emceeding the evening will be the famous David Prosser, Award-winning writer and editor, and Scotch ambassador, who will lead the way and is also said to be offering a special toast to the haggis.

The scotch available that evening is from a wide range of regions of Scotland. Russell said, "We try to mix it up a bit and not have them all from one region. We have ones from Island lowland Speyside and Isla Campbeltown, to name a few."

The event is said to promise an unforgettable evening of a five-course dinner paired with five exquisite, rare, and hard-to-find scotch pairings. Russell notes, "We pair the food with complimentary Scotch, and we will also have haggis and other traditional foods on the

menu."

Each Scotch will be piped in, and organizers will auction off three elusive bottles after each course. Different from years past, Russell notes, "Instead of doing 12 bottles, all at once, we're going to do three bottles at a time to break it up a bit," which is a bit different than years past, but Russell believes this will move the night along smoothly.

Scotch has a distinct flavour, and if you're not a fan, Russell notes it might be because you're not doing it right, "It's kind of like starting on black coffee. Most people start with a double-double. Black coffee is for those who have been doing it for a while, so scotch is kind of like that." The Scotch Mist evening might be the right place to start if you're not a fan of the amber liquid.

Russell notes there is still something for everyone, "we will also have wine and beer available at the event as well," he continued, "If people want to come to spend an evening with friends, they will still get a great meal from the Arden Park and have a great evening."

Tickets are available for \$175 each for this extraordinary experience. Tickets are expected to sell out fast. The Rotary Club of Stratford advises those interested in tickets to visit the website as soon as possible: www.ticketscene.ca/events/45327/

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Times Past

BETTY JO BELTON

Stratford-Perth Archives

Edwinna von Baeyer's paper on The Home Gardener of the 1880s, published in the Ontario Historical Society's book, Consuming Passions, describes how growing one's own food at home in order to extend the time when fresh vegetables were available and provide the ingredients for home canning became a status symbol. While earlier generations may have had backyard gardens out of necessity, by the 1880s "the rise of technology, availability of markets, and concentration of population pushed many people out of the garden. City and town lots were often too small to accommodate a vegetable garden in addition to the space needed for the family's stables, drying yards, and clothes lines. The general store, butcher, vegetable and fruit peddler and farmer's market frequently supplied needed provisions. In working class areas vacant land was often non-existent. Even where land was available, their long and arduous workday in the new factories, left little time or energy, let alone resources to garden...The ownership of a home garden in the 1880s faintly echoed the European linkage of land ownership to class, wealth, power and available leisure time."

For those who had the space and time for a garden, the Stratford Times of September 5, 1883 reminded them that it was "not too late for a crop", pointing out that "A most useful crop of turnips has been raised by sowing the seed even as late as the middle of September. Land that has been well manured for early potatoes, sweet corn or other crop may give a heavy yield of turnips." The September 17 edition the following year offered "advice for the vegetable garden for September" with tips to ensure continued crops of beans, beets, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, chives, cucumbers, endive, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, radishes and spinach. It was also noted that "the pickling season is on hand, and Mssrs. Barnsdale & Co. are prepared for it. They advertise extra vinegars, for pickling purposes in another column." E.K. Barnsdale did indeed advertise grape sugar vinegar as "the Best for Pickling."

Those who needed inspiration could find "recipes" in the September 3, 1884 Stratford Times. For grape pickles one is told to "fill a jar with alternate layers of grapes and sugar and cover with cool vinegar." To make chili sauce you needed



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Go to the Hub for Good 25c Tea

Above, Barnsdale Hub interior ca1910
Left, Barnsdale Hub ad 1908

to assemble "12 ripe tomatoes, 4 ripe peppers, 2 onions, 2 tablespoonfuls of salt, 2 tablespoonfuls of sugar, 3 teacups of vinegar and a little cinnamon. Peel the tomatoes and chop them fine, also the peppers and onions and boil all together for one hour. Canned tomatoes may be used if fresh ones are not convenient." In the same issue, you could learn about "a new dish with which epicures tempt fate and... is composed of sliced oranges, sliced pineapple, sliced bananas, sliced hard-boiled eggs, sliced cucumbers, vinegar and sugar. It is called a fruit salad." If you weren't frightened off by the thought of that combination of ingredients, Barnsdale's store would have been a good source for the vinegar and other ingredients needed for "fruit salad."

Born in England in 1850 Barnsdale had served in the British navy before he moved to Canada, reaching Stratford in 1871. By the next year he and his brother-

in-law, William Taylor, operated a store called Taylor and Barnsdale on the corner of Downie and Wellington. A few years later they moved to the store next door. After Taylor's death in 1883, Barnsdale began placing ads in the Stratford Times for the E.K. Barnsdale and Co. store. In 1892, Barnsdale established the Barnsdale Trading Co. with himself as President and his son, Albert C. Barnsdale, as general manager. In 1901 the store moved to 27-31 Market Place, behind City Hall, where it became known as the Hub. They had as many as 33 employees and 5 delivery wagons to keep up with customer orders. In this photograph from Stratford-Perth Archives, you can see how the store looked inside with its tin ceiling and elaborate showcases for counters around 1910 along with a newspaper ad from around the same time describing supplies like pickling spice, 5-gallon pickle kegs and ripe tomatoes available for canning season. In 1914, those who were gathering in Stratford for a town reunion were reminded in a news article that at Barnsdale's, "a full line of staple and fancy groceries is always on hand...A bakery and confectionery department is also run in connection, where one can always buy the choicest Bread, Cakes and Pies and the

purest of candies."

Elijah Kitchen Barnsdale was elected Mayor of Stratford for 1915. In a campaign ad he stated that "owing to my retirement from active business, if elected, I will give all my attention to the position and make the City Hall headquarters for municipal business. My many years' experience on Public School Board, Water Commission and as Alderman gives me intimate knowledge of city affairs." After his death in August 1916, it was reported that his body "lay in state at the city hall, whither it had been brought after the family service [at his home at 62 Church St] and...there was a steady stream of citizens passing before it...From all walks of life they came – professional, business men, merchants and labourers; men, women, and even little children – many of whom had been the recipients of evidences of the kindly spirit and love of fellowmen which inspired the whole life of the deceased... The funeral was a striking tribute...and ranked with the memorable civic obsequies for the Knox church fire victims three years ago – Fire Chief Durkin, Police Chief McCarthy and Constable Matt Hamilton."

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

Spruce Lodge Annual Car Show was “bigger than ever” this year

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Spruce Lodge hosted their eighth Annual Car Show on Wednesday, September 13, from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the Spruce Lodge parking lot, where car enthusiasts, family and friends alike could browse classic cars while listening to '50, '60 and '70s tunes.

Kim Luckhardt, Activity Coordinator at Woodland Towers and Hamlet Estates, said, “It’s really fascinating how far it has come over the years. When we started it back in 2015, we never expected we would get the turnout we did – 30 cars! Now, we have over 100 (often 140!)”

Many Spruce Lodge, Woodland Towers and Hamlet Estates residents came out to the event and showed enthusiasm while browsing vehicles from the 20’ all the way up to 90’. Luckhardt commented on the residents getting to participate and said, “Some of the vehicles in attendance were previously owned by some of our residents, including a 1932 Model A Ford, a 1980 red Corvette, and a 1930 Pickup truck.” She continued, “It is really special to see our resident’s reactions once they see cars they personally recognize.”

Oliver Davidson was there with his ‘67 Chevy short bed sidestep small window complete with a classic A&W tray with glassware, “I was always interested in vehicles, and at one time, I had a 1919 Model three and three models As, but of course I couldn’t keep everything.”

Like many other classic vehicle enthusiasts at the show, Davidson notes he regularly travels to car shows to connect with

others and show off his beautiful Chevy.

In his early years, Davidson worked as a small engine mechanic and noted he did plenty of the work himself on his vehicle over the years on his property in Sebringville; however, now living at Hamlet Estates, the ‘67 Chevy lives in his one-car garage, beating out the family car.

During the pandemic, the Spruce Lodge Classic Car Show did not run due to restrictions; however, the team at the care centres made the best of it and decided to organize Car Rallies instead. During this time, classic cars would drive around to all of the Retirement and Nursing Homes throughout Stratford.

Thankfully, the Car Show is back up and better than ever, and this year, Stratford’s local DJ ‘Jazzy Gerry’ was the emcee for the day, and Johnny Borton of Listowel performed the 50s, 60s and 70s tunes for all attendees.

From Simple Dreams, Richard and Ruth Kneider, served up ice cream in support of their charity along with Joe’s Diner, serving BBQ and Ken’s Fries, serving up their famous fries, which apparently almost ran out by the end of the day’s events.

Admission was by donation only, and all of the money raised was in order to provide enhancement and enrichment for resident programs at Spruce Lodge.

Due to the excitement surrounding this annual event, a Facebook Group called Stratford Cruises was formed. This group of Car enthusiasts has turned into an active online club of over one hundred local community members.

Keep an eye out for next year’s special event, as it’s surely not to be missed.



CRUISIN' IN STYLE

Oliver Davidson with his '67 Chevy short bed, sidestep, small window Pickup truck

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

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Terry Fox Run brings out many, including survivor Raven Petrie

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

Over one hundred people gathered in Upper Queens Park last Sunday, the 17th, to walk or run in support of the Terry Fox Foundation, raising in excess of \$13,000. Terry Fox was a light across the nation as he attempted to run

Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW

Sept. 3 Dan Klinard, Pain Court	\$50.00
Sept. 4 Ron & Magdalene Raycraft, Brunner	\$50.00
Sept. 5 Maryanne Jackson, Lakeside	\$50.00
Sept. 6 Donna Russell, Stratford	\$50.00
Sept 7 Nancy Krug, Mitchell	\$50.00
Sept. 8 Connor Nafzinger, Brunner	\$50.00
Sept. 9 Brian Leyser, Embro	\$200.00
Sept 10 Jen Trudeau, Tavistock	\$50.00
Sept. 11 Rick & Sheila Merkel, St. Pauls	\$50.00
Sept. 12 Sharon Haynes, St. Marys	\$50.00
Sept. 13 Mac Reitsma, Woodham	\$50.00
Sept. 14 Mike Bender, New Hamburg	\$50.00
Sept. 15 Chris DeBour, Lakeside	\$50.00
Sept. 16 Sherri Davis, Stratford	\$200.00
Sept. 17 Donna Dickson, Tavistock	\$50.00
Sept 18 Tracy Zimak, Calgary	\$50.00
Sept. 19 Verna Hoy, Stratford	\$50.00
Sept. 20 Sam Nijenhuis, Sebringville	\$50.00
Sept. 21 Clare McRobert, Granton	\$50.00
Sept. 22 Ron Brintnell, Kirkton	\$50.00
Sept. 23 Grant Rolleman, Stratford	\$200.00

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across Canada on his marathon of hope to raise money for Cancer research.

One of those participants this year is Raven Petrie of Stratford. She found out about the walk only the night before but was compelled to attend with her son the next morning. She has been on her own cancer journey since she was just a teenager and is still battling at the age of thirty.

"We only did a couple of laps but it was a last minute idea to even head out. I wasn't aware that Stratford did an annual Terry Fox walk, we always take part in Relay for Life, so when I saw the post online the night before I thought, hey, me and my little guy have got to do this so I went with him and my cousins," said Petrie.

Petrie took the opportunity to be a teaching opportunity for her son, to show him what fundraising and community in a common goal is all about. The Terry Fox story is one that is inspirational and she wanted him to learn more about it.

She was first diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in March 2010 in her last year of high school, robbing her of all of those special times graduates experience in their final year. It forced her to grow up before her time, and face the battle for her life.

"I was told after my first round of chemo I was in remission and things were fine and I would just have to go back for monthly check ins, but by the three month mark I was told that I relapsed and it has been an ongoing battle ever since," shared Petrie.

She has been through three clinical trials to try to find something that works, as the typical radiation and chemotherapy treatments were not working for her. But she is not deterred.

"The advancements in cancer research and treatments from when I was first diagnosed till now is absolutely unbelievable."

When she was first diagnosed she was told she wouldn't see her 21st birthday. But she did. She was told she would



CANCER SURVIVOR

Raven Petrie and family walked in support of cancer research

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

never have children. But she did. She says she has beaten the odds against her from the very beginning.

"Having my tribe of supporters that I have is what's gotten me through and if I didn't live in the community that I live in and have the family that I do has made all the difference. The positive mind set is one of the biggest things. You're being told all these things and all these odds against you and it's really hard not to go down that rabbit hole of believing all these things and try to keep a positive mind set and strive for a positive outcome."

Petrie has had several fundraisers over the course of her journey. The hidden costs of the illness are astounding, and a financial burden on families affected. The importance of the research dollars serve a purpose, and are saving lives. Without, she can say with surety that she wouldn't be here. Her message? Never give up.

SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL. 

Shine On Car Rally: A tribute to Dave Blackburn coming this October

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Rotary Club of Stratford, in partnership with the Stratford Perth Museum, is hosting the sixth annual Rural Routes Car Tour, previously known as the Dave Blackburn Memorial Shine On Car Rally.

The tour will start at the Museum and take participants on the 'rural routes' of Perth County and beyond. Along the way, there are said to be a few stops where participants will hear interesting stories about Perth County. Reenactors from the Stratford Perth Museum will present these stories.

There will be a quiz for participants at the end of the tour, and the highest score with the closest time to the official rally time will be a prize winner.

The event is a tribute to the late Dave Blackburn, a devoted Rotarian, car lover and former branch manager at the TD Bank in Stratford. It is said that during a trip to Portugal in 2013, Blackburn had the idea of introducing a car rally as a

potential new fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Stratford.

In his memory, the Rotary Club of Stratford, in partnership with the Stratford Perth Museum, presents the Rural Routes Car Tour with Dave in mind as they move forward with commitment, optimism and a sense of fun in his honour.

The tour finishes at the Boar's Head, where participants can enjoy good food and refreshments.

Even though the content of the tour is historic, your car doesn't have to be. Cars, pick-up trucks, and even RVs are welcome to participate.

The car rally is \$80 and includes a driver and navigator, and backseat drivers are \$25 each. The car rally begins at 10 a.m., with staggered departures from the Stratford Perth Museum.

The three-hour route includes several stops, all of them with a guide on site. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit www.stratfordperthmuseum.ca/shine-on-car-rally.

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Stratford, you've been waiting for a Greek restaurant, and it's finally here

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Comments on the quick service and great food are heard when walking into the newly established Athens Greek Souvlaki Restaurant. Customers noted the fun and happy vibe, saying, "This is the most exciting lunch I've ever picked up!"

The new restaurant is sure to be the most talked about place in town, not only because of its great food but also because of the energy and spirit of the restaurant owner, Terry Voulcaridis.

Dating back to 1969, Voulcaridis came to Halifax at 14 years old with \$20 in his pocket and his family, eager to build a life in Canada. He remembers eating at a Greek restaurant with other families at the time, and the owner told him something that has stuck with him since, "They told us if we want to stay in Canada, it's a land of opportunity. But we need to get our papers. And we need to work hard."

Voulcaridis came to Ontario with his family and stayed at St. Andrew's Church in Toronto. He said, "We slept in the basement of the church for six months. It was winter. We had no shoes. We had no long pants. We had no jackets." He continued, "The Salvation Army came; God bless them. They gave us long johns, boots and gloves. They give us their hearts. They're wonderful people who never discriminate."

Voulcaridis said he walked the streets every day looking for jobs, "Finally, one restaurant hired me, and I was making



COOKING WITH HEAT

Terry Voulcaridis making flames at the new Athens Greek Souvlaki Restaurant at 804 Ontario Street

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

\$9 a day. I worked from 10 o'clock in the morning till three the next day, seven days a week."

After his first Canadian job in the restaurant service industry, Voulcaridis got a business education and opened his first Toronto restaurant when he was only 18 years old, "I'd saved about \$5,000, And I opened the first restaurant called Burger In." From there, the young entrepreneur went on to open 14 other restaurants across the greater Toronto area and was living his Canadian dream, "I was making money right and left. I bought my first car. I was the happiest guy in the world."

Even during this time, however, Voulcaridis never forgot his upbringing and

made it his mission to support the community. Regularly giving back through donations to charities and even helping local agencies recruit foster parents for children in need, Voulcaridis always found it in his heart to give back and care for his community.

By the early 90s, Voulcaridis had restaurants branching into the Waterloo region, but unfortunately, the recession hit business pretty hard; he took time out of the restaurant business and moved to Florida for a few years before coming back to the Waterloo region.

Once back in Ontario, a

perfect opportunity arose, and Voulcaridis opened the first Country Boy restaurant in Kitchener-Waterloo, which was booming for 27 years until COVID hit in 2020, "I put my hands up to the sky and just said, this isn't fair for the sit-down restaurants."

Voulcaridis left the restaurant business again with hopes of opening up another restaurant when the timing was right, and thanks to good luck and great connections, the first Greek Restaurant was born here in Stratford.

Already making a name for itself in town, Athens Greek Souvlaki customers cannot say enough good things about the five-star dining experience, "This is a great place. The food was excellent. The service was fast and very friendly," one customer noted along with a five-star Google review.

Athens Greek Souvlaki is located at 804 Ontario Street, beside A&W Restaurant. They're conveniently open Monday to Saturday, 11 a.m. until 8 p.m. The restaurant serves up traditional Greek foods, such as gyro and chicken souvlaki alongside fries, rice and their famous lemon-roasted potatoes.

Check them out for the "Best Greek Food around."

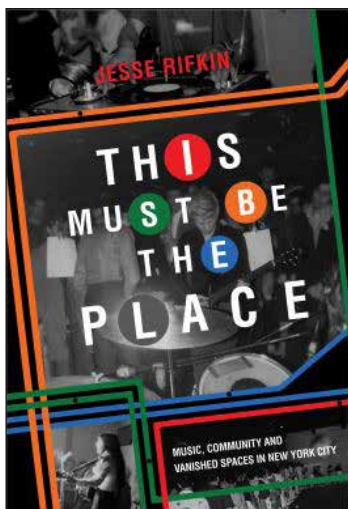
Book of the month

This Must Be the Place: Music, Community and Vanished Spaces in New York City, by Jesse Rifkin

@SPL: 782.42164 Rif

"NEW YORK IS OVER! (IF YOU WANT IT.)" blare the first words of Jesse Rifkin's biting funny take on why New York City has incubated - and killed off - so many of the scenes that defined 20th and 21st century American popular music. That challenge sets the tone for a book that slyly forces readers to examine their own role in shaping community.

In *This Must Be the Place*, Rifkin uses exhaustively-researched hot gossip to show how a cycle of lower rents, shifty zoning regulations, and erratic bylaws led to the rise and fall of folk, minimalism, new- and no-wave, punk, disco, funk and hip-hop. He is crystal clear on the role of queer communities and communities of colour in creating these cultures, and gives undercelebrated artists and musicians their full due for their legacies. Rifkin is a man who appreciates the true cultural heft of disco.



And, Rifkin doesn't shy away from gentrification's role in birthing and smothering the scenes in turn. The book's intrigue and snark take full flight in the chapters on anti-folk and indie rock. Each rises from Brooklyn as Bloomberg and Giuliani take office, their policies having taxidermized the Manhattan scenes into brands and property values.

Screamingly sarcastic, scandalously dishy, and deeply intersectional, this book is a must-read for any popular music lovers or urbanists. Each genre-focused chapter ends with a flawlessly-curated essential listening list. But, if you don't mind reading with music on, I'd recommend playing the albums as you read each chapter. It gives an incredible

sense of time-travelling the wildest, darkest, most beautiful days of NYC, as well as some hope for things to come.

Shauna Costache
Public Service Supervisor
Stratford Public Library

Weekend Quiz

- 1) What colour is Spock's blood?
- 2) Who starred as the Six Million Dollar Man?
- 3) Who is Dick Grayson better known as?
- 4) Who played The Fugitive?
- 5) Who was the King of Swing?
- 6) In which war was the charge of the Light Brigade?
- 7) What did Jack Horner pull from his pie?
- 8) How many feet in a fathom?
- 9) What is the name of Dennis the Menace's dog?
- 10) What is the animal with no vocal chords?

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

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(SAME BUILDING AS FEATURES RESTAURANT)

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STRATFORD CHEFS SCHOOL

CELEBRATING
40 YEARS
ANTICIPATING

Stepping back to take a look at the Stratford Chefs School: Staff perspective

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Eleanor Kane, co-owner of The Old Prune Restaurant, founded the Stratford Chefs School in 1983 when she joined forces with James Morris, Owner of Rundles. Together, they co-founded the Stratford Chefs School, which has now evolved into a world-recognized Culinary School for budding chefs.

The seamless arrangement between Stratford Chefs School and The Old Prune Restaurant - which was sold to Windsor Hospitality in 2010 - worked very well. The restaurant would run during its busy six-month summer season, and then the School would operate with the same staff for the remainder of the year. "It was a very entrepreneurial collaboration," said Kim Cosgrove, Executive Director and an Alumna of the Stratford Chefs School. "The staff would work at the restaurant in

the summer and then in the winter, they would train students, who they could hire during the following summer, it was genius."

From 1983 until 2016, students were taught in The Old Prune Restaurant until the Chefs School secured a \$500,000 loan from the City of Stratford to open their new Professional Kitchens and Dining Room space downtown at 136 Ontario Street. Cosgrove stated, "We got the loan in 2016. And we paid it back, with interest, in April of this year; we're very proud of that achievement."

The new location did not necessarily mean that the School intended to take on more students, as they believed in the 12-student ratio, which had been working well at The Prune. However, with the new space, the School could operate for the full 12 months of the year and run extra culinary programs, which have gained in popularity over the years.

With a teaching background and two years in the Netherlands working in an international academy training people for elite hospitality, Lab Service Instructor Christopher Cantlon said, "I firmly believe that to teach is actually to learn." He continued, "I enjoy both processes, and Stratford Chefs School affords me so many opportunities. Training in the kitchen and the dining room at a high level sets the School apart from other training courses."

"The program is designed to train people to own small independent restaurants," Cosgrove noted, "We don't do a lot of big banquet cooking. We usually do one big event per year so the students get that experience, but we mainly focus on entrepreneurship."

Cantlon also said that he truly enjoys seeing students grow throughout the two-year program. "I enjoy watching the first-year students grow in confidence as they

learn to serve dinners to guests." He continued: "It is a great pleasure to see second-year students develop their Front of House skills, their ability to address questions, and to speak in front of guests when they introduce the evening's chef."

Cosgrove (Class of 2003) notes the Stratford Chefs School attracts a specific type of person, and not just anyone is cut out to be a chef. "You have to have a little bit of spontaneity, especially when working in a restaurant setting. Things are changing frequently and students have to be able to think on their feet, which, in a way, can be really challenging."

The School's success is recognized worldwide, and the invaluable education that instructors and staff alike provide to students is unmatched. Cantlon noted, "I am honoured to be part of such an exceptional team of professionals to help train the next generations of chefs and culinary entrepreneurs."



School co-founder Eleanor Kane speaks to a Class in the early days of Stratford Chefs School.



(TERRY MANZO PHOTOS)

Eleanor Kane, Stratford Chefs School co-founder and former co-owner of The Old Prune Restaurant.



STRATFORD
CHEFS
SCHOOL

CELEBRATING • ANTICIPATING
40 YEARS

Current students living out their dreams at the Stratford Chefs School

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Anthony Vander Laan and Greer Marriott have completed their first year of training at the Stratford Chefs School and will be moving into their second year this October. Looking back on the first year, the two students have very similar outlooks on their experience and learning outcomes, which they are very proud to discuss.

Describing how the curriculum evolves through the first year, Vander Laan says he noticed how substantially his understanding of basic cooking fundamentals has expanded and improved. "It sounds simple, but now I have a much better understanding of how to treat each commodity properly. For example, how different cooking methods work or even how to stir up and create flavour in the right ways."

Marriott said her biggest improvement is in time management skills. "Being able to learn things at my own pace with the help of the teachers has been very nice."

Both students, moving into year two, will showcase their skills for guests in a Dining Room setting. Vander Laan said, "I'm looking forward to putting my skills into practice and actually serving the public." And Marriott noted similar excitement for the coming semester. "I'm looking forward to the service aspect of year two."

The in-depth program gives student chefs hands-on experience in the back-of-house preparing fine multiple course dinners, and in the front-of-house, serving each course and wine pairings to guests. The program's entre-

preneurial focus shines through. Vander Laan said that "Without a doubt, Stratford is far more in-depth and offers a very robust curriculum."

The students at Stratford Chefs School come from a wide range of backgrounds; Marriott, a young student just starting out in her career choice, says she's wanted to come to the Stratford Chefs School since she was a child. "I've always said I was going to go to the School from a very young age, I'm very lucky that they accepted me and I'm very happy to be here; it's been my dream School since I was a child."

On the other hand, Vander Laan worked as a Minister for years before changing career paths and returning to School to become a chef. He and his wife dream of owning and running a small Bed and Breakfast one day where Vander Laan can showcase his culinary skills and host people for a few nights while they relax and unwind.

Stratford Chefs School has had an immense impact on its students. Marriott notes the instructors have had a profound impact on her career choices so far. "Working with Chef - Instructor Eli Silverthorne [in the School's Open Kitchen Public Cooking Class Program] made me appreciate teaching people how to cook. I might go to teachers' college and become a culinary instructor, like him." She continued, "It's very rewarding to see all the happy people after they've learned how to cook a meal."

Vander Laan also expressed his appreciation for Stratford Chefs School and said, "I've always loved cooking and exploring new things to do when I'm cooking. Food is so necessary for all of us. So why not enjoy it?"

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
STRATFORD CHEFS SCHOOL ON
THEIR 40TH ANNIVERSARY!



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Dinner Prep underway with Chef Instructor Randi Rudner (left, in black apron) and Student Chef Greer Marriott (right) in the Stratford Chefs School Kitchens.

40 YEARS
& counting

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Chefs School on their anniversary!

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Chefs who found their own flavour after graduation

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

From formal French kitchens to lively taco restaurants, Stratford Chefs School students are taught to find themselves in their culinary skills and make it their own. Kim Cosgrove, Executive Director and an Alumna of the Stratford Chefs School, said, "This is how our program is unique. We do a lot of business training and food costing within the program. We teach not only about cooking, but entrepreneurship as well."

The late Chef Robert Stanton (Class of 1991) and Chef Alondra Galvez (Class of 2003) went into culinary entrepreneurship post-graduation and after travelling to find their niche. Although from the same school, both chefs went on to weave the tapestry of their upbringing with the fundamentals learned at the Stratford Chefs School in two very different ways.

The late Chef Stanton was famous for his pavlova and lemon pudding cake. He was a chef working in a number of cities across Canada and the US before settling down in Shakespeare as the owner of Harry Ten Shilling. His former wife and business colleague, Lynn Barber, remembers Stanton as a formal and hardworking chef who was very well respected in his workplace. "His cooking style was very formal; he normally only spoke French in the kitchen. He took his job very seriously."

Chef Stanton started working at Charcoal Steakhouse soon after coming out of university, where he received an honours degree in chemistry. Stanton's first shift at the steakhouse was Mother's Day weekend, one of the bus-

iest times of the month, and Barber said he talked about his experience there frequently. "He just fell in love with cooking because he found it so exhilarating. He loved it so much that he ended up going to the Stratford Chefs School that September."

Working under several influential chefs during his time, Stanton worked at Rundles and The Old Prune soon after graduating, where he found his love for French cuisine and the formality of working in a professional kitchen. Barber noted, "Robert always credited the Stratford Chefs School for teaching him the fundamentals."

Similarly, Chef Galvez travelled for almost 20 years before settling down to open El Cactus Taco Shop at the corner of Ontario Street in 2021. She said, "I lived in a couple of different places, including BC and Australia. I got a lot of experience working alongside professionals in the field all over the world and then again, here in Stratford."

Galvez noted the importance of the community connection she gained while being a student at Stratford Chefs School. "It's wonderful to have connections with the chefs and alumni at the School."

The culinary world is always evolving and growing, and Galvez hopes to expand on her current restaurant and offer a wider range of Mexican cuisine. She noted, "I would very much like to have a dining space where I can elaborate on some of the Mexican culture dishes; they're so diverse and so different, and I would love to showcase that."

Stanton's legacy will also live on as Barber is currently working with publishers to bring to life one of Stanton's dreams: a French cuisine cookbook in his name.



STRATFORD
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Chef Alondra Galvez (Class of 2003) (TERRY MANZO PHOTOS)



Lab Service Instructor Christopher Cantlon serves as Maitre D'Hotel for Stratford Chefs School's 2019 Escoffier Dinner Extravaganza.

40 YEARS

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Resilient Warriors bounce back to win Home Opener

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Warriors began their 2023-24 regular season at the William Allman Arena with a comeback win, led by a four-goal second period, in the first half of a home-and-home series against the Listowel Cyclones last Friday.

Early in the home opener, the Cyclones found the early advantage, seemingly taking advantage of a somewhat jittery Warriors squad and going up 2-0. The Warriors stemmed the tide just 52 seconds after Listowel took a two-goal lead in the opening frame when Cole Lewis scored Stratford's first goal of the season assisted by Carson Harmer and Haden Frayne. The Cyclones outshot the Warriors 13-8 in the first.

The second period saw the game completely flip in the Warriors' favour with the home team exploding for four goals, two of which were scored by Drew Agnew. Brayden Stumpf and Zach Bell also found the back of the net for Stratford in the middle stanza and the Warriors held a 10-8 lead in shots.

According to Head Coach Dave Williams, the offensive outburst in the second was a result of the team settling in and doing a much better job at playing their brand of hockey.

"We were really good in the second," Williams told the Times. "We were putting pucks into good areas of the ice and using our feet to move well and get on top of them. We were forcing turnovers in our offensive zone. We had a lot of new guys

and it was the first night so I'm not sure if maybe there were some nerves in the air but we got our feet moving and made better decisions through the neutral zone in the second."

Williams has preached patience with this year's Warriors team to start the season, recognizing the high amount of turnover will likely result in growing pains and a process to build chemistry with new teammates, making the result of their first game even more enjoyable.

"Obviously, we were happy with the result. Any time you get the win at home on opening night, it's a good night at the rink. I thought we started a little slow but we responded well, we got quick goals both nights after going down 2-0 and were able to give ourselves a bit of momentum."

"It's great to be back," Williams said. "It seems like we just left a moment ago. It was great to see some former players come out for the game on Friday and feel the excitement from the fans. It was also nice for the new guys to begin experiencing what we've become accustomed to in terms of how special a city Stratford is to

play in."

The following night, the Warriors and Cyclones squared off once again, this time in Listowel. In a Groundhog Day-style start to the game, the Cyclones once again jumped out to a 2-0 lead but, just under a minute-and-a-half after Listowel extended their lead to two, the Warriors cut it back to one, this time thanks to a goal by Joey Brehmer. Williams said that, while the team doesn't

want to make a habit

out of falling behind early, he was encouraged by their ability to respond to adversity.

"It was very similar to the night before

in terms of getting behind 2-0 in the first and then responding

quickly with the goal to make it 2-1 [for Listowel]. The energy we had was really good, I think the thing we look at coming out of these two games is making sure we start on time."

Williams added that the team's first-period troubles in the first two games may likely be born from a place of good with everyone trying so hard to impress.

"It could be a matter of simplifying what the first few shifts look like for our guys," remarked Williams. "I think our issues tended to be when we tried to do a bit too much early on in the game, which I think is natural for the start of the season, especially when you've got so many new faces. I think it's natural for the players to try to do that little bit extra to make significant contributions to the group so I think we just need to reinforce starting the game with a bit more simplicity."

Both teams added a goal in the second, including the first of the year for Michael Denney which tied the game at two apiece before Listowel retook the lead five-and-a-half minutes later. In the third, Jaxon Broda scored an unassisted shorthanded marker to make it a 3-3 tie and eventually

force overtime.

Just under four minutes into the extra frame, Brady Smith beat goaltender Matthew Perdue to secure the 4-3 win for Listowel. Perdue was strong in goal for the Warriors, making 48 saves on 52 Cyclones shots.

Looking at the weekend as a whole, Williams believed it was a net positive for the team while also recognizing a few areas of improvement for the group to focus on.

"So far, in watching us through the exhibition schedule and in our first two games of the regular season, I think if we can play with good pace and get on top of teams with speed on the forecheck, I think that's how we will be really effective as a group. We are going to spend more time on our special teams, we had some difficulty getting set up in Listowel's zone which is in part due to them being a more veteran group, but that will be one thing for us to work on."

"Three out of four points over our first weekend I think is positive for our group," Williams continued. "Hopefully, that will give us some confidence and momentum heading into the Showcase. Our guys are practicing hard and they are working hard on the details that we're stressing. The makeup of the group is strong and off the ice, they seem to really enjoy being around each other which is something we've found is important to having success."

The bench boss also mentioned that the team's attention to detail and scoring prowess in their first two outings impressed him.

"Our general details and structure to our game were pretty good overall in both games. Not only do we have a lot of new guys and our systems could be pretty new for a lot of them, but we've had guys in and out due to OHL camps so it can be tough when you're implementing new things and you don't have your whole group there. I was happy to see us score the number of goals we did too. Sometimes, when you have the turnover we had, you're not sure where all the offence will come from so it was also good to see us score eight goals in two games. I think it's good for the guys' individual confidence and their collective confidence."



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Stratford Dragon Boat Festival: Women's Breast Cancer Survivor Ceremony



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTOS)

PADDLING IN HONOUR

The 2023 Stratford Dragon Boat Festival was held on September 16th in Lake Victoria. The Women's Breast Cancer Survivor Ceremony kicked off the morning in honour of those struggling with breast cancer and those who passed on. Jennifer Stewart, director and actor, and Heather McGuigan, actor and singer from the Stratford Festival, sang as Dragon boats from all across Ontario carried paddlers whom the disease impacted in some capacity.

Nathan Graff honoured as first Eric McLeod scholarship recipient

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Minor Baseball Association (SMBA) awarded its first scholarship named after a dedicated member to a player demonstrating leadership and dedication.

The Eric McLeod Scholarship launched this year and is given to a SMBA player attending post-secondary or the first year of an apprenticeship program and demonstrates effort, volunteerism, and good conduct.

"Eric McLeod was an integral member of Stratford Minor Baseball for over two decades," Chris Redfern, vice president of the Stratford Minor Baseball Association, said to the Stratford Times. "After coaching his son Brett for many years, Eric decided to return to coaching as a "non-parent" coach and managed an age group of players to numerous OBA championships over 6 years, not to mention serving as a member of the board for many years."

Nathan Graff, who played with the SMBA's HL/Rep program from 2010 to 2023, is the proud Eric McLeod scholarship winner.

"It is an honour to receive an award named after a man who had volunteered countless hours within the Stratford Minor Baseball organization," Graff said. "Board members and coaches such as Eric are what make minor baseball such an exciting time for young children, and help mould them into young adults."

His accomplishments include earning two Ontario Baseball Association titles, two Intercounty Tier 1 titles, and four team MVP awards. Graff took on paid positions as an umpire and as an Optimist Diamond maintenance worker. He also volunteered his time during Ball Blast on final days, the last days of the season for the HL league, and HL league convening assistance.

"The importance of sportsmanship learned from my coaches, has taught me to always act with respect and kindness to my peers. The friendships I made with my teammates have continued outside of baseball and have created a lifelong brotherhood," Graff said. "I'd like to thank my Dad, who also spent many years as my head coach, for volunteering his time and supporting me throughout my childhood."

Redfern further spoke on Graff's leadership demonstrated throughout his many years on the team.

"He is always one of the kids to help prep the field for Batting Practice and clean up after games...has worked very hard on and off the field throughout his SMBA career," he said.

Graff graduated Stratford District Secondary School in 2021 and is in his third year of mechatronics systems engineering at Western University.

"After I get my degree, I hope to work in an automotive or robotics research and development position, where I can apply my knowledge and interest in mechanical systems," Graff said.

He also enjoys golfing and spending time with friends.

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)



U13 JR. WARRIORS

Pictured is Reid Musselman moving down the wing en route to chasing down the puck during the U13 Stratford Jr. Warriors exhibition game last Sunday against the St. Marys Rock. The Jr. Warriors were dominant in the contest, controlling the majority of the play and ultimately cruising to a 9-1 win.



STRATFORD Hunter Steel WARRIORS

UPCOMING GAMES

Friday, Sept. 23rd
8:00pm

at London

Dan Snyder Memorial Arena

Friday, Sept. 29th
7:30pm

Vs Ayr

Allman Arena

Saturday, Sept. 30th
8:00pm

at Caledon

Mayfield Recreation Complex

Friday, October 6th
7:30pm

vs Kitchener-Waterloo

Allman Arena

Saturday, October 7th
5:00pm

at Brantford

Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre

Sunday, October 8th
1:30pm

at Kitchener-Waterloo

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Kinsmen Club of Stratford and Stratford Perth Museum's Family Fun Day

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On Monday, September 4, the Kinsmen Club of Stratford, in partnership with the Stratford Perth Museum, hosted an unforgettable Family Fun Day.

This was the first year for the event, and Kinsmen Club of Stratford member Bob Walters noted that the event is expected to grow over the years and become a fundraiser for the Kinsmen Club, "This is the first time we've held this event. We generally try to break even or make money because we have community projects we like to support with events like this."

The outdoor event concert brought the community together for a day of music, food, and entertainment. Walters noted the entertainment that day was quite a hit for attendees, "Overall, the music was great. Everybody seemed to enjoy it."

The musical talent for the day included The Bracken Sisters, Jackson Adair, Eric Mahar, and friends, featuring Dr. Andrew Hussey, Neil and Todd Mulligan & Murray Patterson, Highway 19, Luke Robertson and The Yeager Band.

There was plenty of on-site parking at the Stratford-Perth Museum, and the Stratford Transit also offered on-demand



MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

Eric Mahar, and friends, featuring Dr. Andrew Hussey, Neil and Todd Mulligan & Murray Patterson, performing at the Family Fun Day on the Player's Backstage

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Shuttle service to and from the site for those wishing to attend.

The Stratford Kinsmen raise funds for notable community organizations, such as Wellspring, local high school scholarships, and youth soccer program support. Moreover, the Kinsmen remain committed to assisting other charities in need, with a current focus on addressing homelessness in Stratford.

Thankfully, the weather held out; although it was almost 30 degrees, those who attended were able to find shade along the building or trees throughout the afternoon. According to Walters, "The weather was great; it was almost perfect."

The event was a great way for families to spend their Labor Day holiday before returning to school on Wednesday.

The Kinsmen Club of Stratford thanked their corporate sponsor, the City of Stratford and Heritage Canada, for supporting this event. While the Family Fun Day was free to attend, the Kinsmen Club relies on the generosity of the community. Free-will donations were warmly appreciated, with the collected funds offsetting event costs and benefitting community projects.

Keep an eye out for Kinsmen Club of Stratford events coming early next year on their website, www.stratfordkinsmen.ca.

The Stratford 5km Run/Walk raising funds for The Local Community Food Centre

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Stratford 5k Run/Walk is set to take place October 1st, starting at 9:30 a.m., with a free kid's race taking place one hour before.

Last year's event raised \$10,000 that went directly towards the 27,286 meals served or sent home for those in need. It also helped provide 203 food skills sessions at The Local Community Food Centre. Dan Rajagopalan, event head coordinator, said he is hopeful about the 2023 event, "Our goal is to raise more this year for The Local."

This year, participants will have the chance to win big as the grand prize draw consists of highly anticipated Stratford Festival Tickets for two.

The Stratford 5k Run/Walk will navigate runners past Stratford's beautiful landmarks, such as the Festival Theatre, Tom Patterson Theatre, Lake Victoria, and Tom Patterson Island. The race is scheduled for October 1st at 9:30 a.m. There will also be a free kid's run prior to the race, where kids will receive a medal for participating.

This race will be chip-timed, and all runners, walkers and strollers are able to participate. Rajagopalan states, "We want



RUNNING FOR SUPPORT

Participants from last year's 5k run in support of The Local Community Food Centre.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

to encourage everyone, including youth in the community, to have an active lifestyle," he continued, "We'll have a prize for the fastest female and male under 17 as well as prizes for winners in the 40 to 49, 50 to 59, 60 to 69 and 70+ categories."

Something new to forward this year is the introduction of a 'No Frills bib.' Selecting the yellow bib means you are opting out of receiving a race t-shirt and medal; however, those who select this option will receive a ten-dollar discount at race registration.

Team Registration is available and is a fun way to involve the whole family or office in a great day of community fundraising. There will be a team category award, and the fastest three times from your team will be used to determine the winning team.

With over 40 percent of registrants coming from out of town, there will be plenty of parking thanks to the support of the Stratford Festival. Rajagopalan said that although the event is based around fundraising, the fact that so many people come

from out of town for the event is a bonus for the whole community, "It's a great way to bring in visitors and very good for the local businesses. People come from and all over Central and Southwestern Ontario for the run."

The Local Community Food Centre in Stratford, Ontario, empowers those with barriers to access and benefit from quality, nutritious food by offering opportunities to cook, grow, share, and advocate for good food for everyone in our community. Their programs empower people to advocate for themselves and assist them in building kitchen and gardening skills that help alleviate food insecurity in a dignified and non-stigmatizing way.

Those wanting to participate are asked to sign up as soon as possible, as there are less than 40 spots remaining in the Stratford 5k Run/Walk. The committee is also currently looking for volunteers for the event.

If you cannot make it to the run but would like to support their efforts, t-shirts can be purchased online, with all proceeds going to The Local Community Food Centre. Anyone wishing to participate, purchase a t-shirt or volunteer is asked to visit the Stratford 5k Run/Walk's website at stratford5k.com.

The fifth annual Handbags for Hospice event coming this fall

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With 2023 being the first official year back as a fully in-person event, the fifth annual Handbags for Hospice event at the Best Western Plus Arden Park Hotel is taking place on Thursday, October 19, 2023.

Handbags for Hospice is one of Rotary Hospice's signature annual events (the others being Hike for Hospice and Lights of Love, a memorial celebration). Like many other organizations that rely on community funding, the Handbags for Hospice event is set up like a gala where attendees can mingle with a glass of champagne while browsing the handbags up for auction.

The emcee for the evening is

Former Broadcaster Sabrina Pierson, and hosting the auction is none other than the famous Layne the Auctionista. Layne is a 'fundraising powerhouse devoted to moving the dial on philanthropy' and will surely give the event an extra kick of excitement.

This year, there are approximately 85 silent auction items and seven live auction items; five of those are experiences and getaways, and two are purses.

One person will receive the 'Golden Ticket,' which gives them access to their first choice from the big-ticket, live auction items, whether that is a getaway or one of the high-ticket purses up for auction. These tickets can be



purchased separately, and there will only be one lucky winner.

Another aspect of the evening is the wine wall, where tickets will be sold for \$20, and upon leaving the event, attendees will receive numbered, covered bottles of wine worth \$20 or more. This bottle could be worth much more and is a fun surprise that raises an additional \$2,000 for the event.

The event raises approximately \$100,000 for Hospice each year, and Lucie Stuart, Director of Fund Development and Stewardship at Stratford Perth Hospice Foundation, says, "It just happens that our silent auction items are primarily

handbags of various types." This is just a portion of the financing needed to support Rotary Hospice.

Community members and businesses across Stratford generously donate all of these available auction items and some of the experience getaways.

Planning for the event takes a large committee and almost a full year. Stuart said, "We are fortunate to have a dedicated committee comprised of 11 volunteers – many of whom also volunteer their time in our hospice home."

Individual tickets for this year's event are still available, costing \$85 per person. VIP tables are already sold out.

You can purchase tickets online at www.rotaryhospice.ca/handbags-for-hospice.

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SK8 JAM FOR SAM: Stratford skateboarders stepping up to support Rotary Hospice in memory

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

“Sam Beauchamp was passionate about skating, art, music and food. Probably in that order,” says Sam’s parents, Cathy Dawson and Luc Beauchamp, “He was kind and generous with an incredibly positive outlook, especially considering his position.”

Sam Beauchamp was known by his friends and the skate community as the guy with kind smiles, good laughs, and overall amazing energy, “he was the ultimate hype man, really,” says friend and fellow skater Brendon Whetham.

Sam had a seizure in 2013 at what friends would refer to as Sam’s second home, the Stratford skatepark. Later, doctors discovered Sam had frontal lobe glioblastoma, also known as a brain tumour. After failing to control the seizures with medication, Sam had brain surgery about a year after his initial diagnosis, and that was followed by intense rounds of chemotherapy and radiation.

Sam’s prognosis looked promising for five years, but this took a turn, and Sam again needed another surgery years later. Dawson recalls watching Sam enter the hospital that day, “We watched him walk through the doors to a lineup and start a conversation with an older man in the line, and they were laughing while they waited. That was Sam.”

Although some people would take this diagnosis as a sign to slow down or stop living life to the fullest, Sam excelled at life, making every moment count to friends, family and fellow skateboarders. Dawson told the Stratford Times, “Skateboarding allowed him to be free and ‘normal,’” she continued, “It allowed him to hang out with his friends. He would mentor younger kids in skateboarding, teaching them to practice jumps and slides and learn to have fun.”

Later, after Sam’s diagnosis progressed, he lost mobility on his right side; however, this still didn’t stop Sam from living life to the fullest of his ability. Sam’s aunt, Mary



Evans, said, “Sam found pleasure in creating street art, painting, stickering a wall in a local indoor skate park,” she continued, “Inner Circle Skateboarding became a happy place for him. He was excited to create and just be there, watching and participating in a life he loved.”

Whetham reminisced about Sam’s impact on their friendship and said, “When I told Sam that my wife and I were expecting a baby, he was so excited! He was always spoiling my stepson Aidan with stickers and hyping him up when he started learning to skate!” He continued, “He strongly impacted my family’s life; I love Sam like a brother, I miss him often, and I can’t wait till we can skate again.”

Sam Beauchamp died peacefully at Rotary Hospice on August 27, 2023, when he was 27 years old. The impact Rotary Hospice had on Sam was unmatched, and



SKATE IN SUPPORT

Sam Beauchamp

Sam’s art on broken skateboards a skill he perfected after his diagnosis progressed.

(CATHY DAWSON PHOTOS)

Evans said, “Once Sam arrived at Rotary Hospice, he was calm and comfortable. The kindness and compassion he was given is beyond words. He laughed; he appreciated the delicious meals and the kindness of the nurses.”

In Sam’s memory, friends and fellow skateboarders Nick Dunsmoor, Alex Hunt, Darrin McCulloch, Whetham and Alex Sparling decided to host “SK8 JAM 4 SAM” in support of a place that made Sam feel at home and safe in his final hours, Rotary Hospice.

SK8 JAM 4 SAM will take place on September 30, starting at noon at the Stratford Skate Park. The entry fee is \$5 per event, and contests start at 1 p.m. Food and drinks are available by donation and memorable event t-shirts will be available for purchase for \$25 each. A number of community partners sponsor the event, and there will be live music and “fun for all,” notes Sparling.

Sparling notes the event is for all ages, and kids are welcome to attend; the event is accessible for everyone, and all proceeds will go directly towards Rotary Hospice. “We wanted to make this a fun event; Sam was known by the kids at the skate park as ‘Sam the Sticker Man’ because he would always give the kids stickers. All of the kids in the park love him, and that’s how they will remember him.”

Sam has not only impacted the lives of friends and fellow skateboarders, says Sparling, but his legacy will now live on through the children who loved Sam, “I think Sam set a new vision for what it means to be a member of the skateboarding community for our kids. How it’s important to give back to our community, that’s Sam’s legacy living on.”

If you’re interested in attending or donating to the cause, show up at the Stratford Skate Park on September 30 – no need to pre-register.

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MS Creations preparing for plentiful oven mitts sales this holiday season

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Stratford maker Mitisha Smitjes is prepping for a busy holiday shopping season with oven mitts, pet bandanas, scrunchies, and other gifts.

Smitjes is the owner and operator of MS Creations. Her items with fun fabrics like pop-culture inspired patterns have been sold at events like comic cons and craft shows. Such events are back in full-swing post-COVID-19 Pandemic.

"It's been a really nice transition back into doing shows," Smitjes said. "Sales have been down online but have been up at shows so it is kind of interesting to see that fluctuation as well."

The most popular patterns at events depends on the event itself. Comic con attendees tend to flock to the designs with superheroes and Netflix shows like Wednesday. Craft show guests gravitate towards the patterns filled with swear words.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, when events had to be shut down due to health and safety protocols, online oven mitt sales boosted online around the world. Smitjes said a lot of people took up cooking and baking during the Pandemic and still use those skills. The oven mitts sales keep on growing.

"A lot of people have kept up with it and they just enjoy the fun prints and patterns. It's been really good," she said.

Smitjes was an Ottawa Comic Con vendor from September 8 to 10, about a week prior to the interview with the Stratford Times on September 15. While not much has changed with events since their return, many are thrilled to come back.

"There's a feeling of excitement and happiness overall for it to be back from the Pandemic, to be able to shop in person, to be able to talk to the seller," Smitjes said. "Even from my point of view, it's been nice to see the people that are taking them home and how much they love them and people coming back year after year. This past weekend in Ottawa, 'Oh I bought these last year and they're still amazing I love them and you make a great product. It's nice to have that interaction for sure."

The people make the in-person sales at shows great for Smitjes, who made lots of friends from both vendors and customers alike over the years.

"It's just a general sense of family and community and it's so nice to return to these events and see the customers and sell them one-on-one and talk to them and see the vendor family and just be there," she said. "That's my favourite part about the whole thing. It's nice to sell product but it's even better when you can see the people who love your product face-to-face."

MS Creations will next be at the Stratford Toys and Collectibles Show on November 12 at the Arden Park Hotel. After selling at the One of a Kind Show in Toronto and the Signatures Show in Ottawa, she will also be at the Stratford Makers Market's Christmas Market from December 1 to December 3 at the Stratford Rotary Complex. Smitjes is focussing on making oven mitts for the rest of the year.

"I'm super excited for the rest of the year," she said. "Bring on the Christmas!"

Follow MS Creations on Facebook and Instagram and visit mscreations.ca.



OBITUARY



MARION ALICE DAVIS

Marion Alice Davis passed away with her family by her side on September 6, 2023, in Stratford. She was 97 years young!

Marion will be lovingly remembered by her nephew, John Davis (Valerie), her nieces, Sarah Davis (Kirk Jones) and Rebecca Kussner (Bryan), her sister-in-law, Virginia Davis (nee Knell), her great-niece, Hannah Kussner, and great-nephews Jacob Kussner and John-Paul Davis Jones; as well as many relatives and friends.

Marion is predeceased by her parents, Fred and Elizabeth Davis (nee Burrows), her siblings, Betty, George, Melba, John, and Patricia, and her life-long friend, Joyce Jones.

She will be dearly missed by her friends at River Gardens, the home she grew to love after living at 56 Princess Street for 93 years. The family would like to thank the entire River Gardens staff for their amazing love and care over the past four years.

Marion lived a life filled with love, joy, laughter, and kindness. Family and friends meant the world to her as did her city of Stratford where she worked at Bell Canada, attended St. James Anglican church, and was an active member and volunteer in the community. She was a feisty, determined, and lovely person, a world traveler, a chef and baker extraordinaire, an enthusiastic Blue Jays supporter, and a mother hen to all.

Cremation has taken place and there will be a private family graveside service followed by a celebration of life in the near future.

Marion donated endlessly to multiple charities, many of which gave hope and opportunity to children. As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to Sleeping Children Around the World (www.scaw.org), Stratford General Hospital Foundation (www.sghfoundation.org), or St. James Anglican Church, directly, or through Rutherford Cremation & Funeral Services, 804 Ontario St. Stratford. 519-271-5062.

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Parkview United Church presents the Larry Mercey Trio

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

Parkview United Church is holding an exciting fundraiser this October. The Larry Mercey Trio will be appearing in concert on the 15th at 2:00 pm. Fans will also remember Larry Mercey from the multi-Juno award winning Mercey Brothers, the group that Larry founded with brothers Lloyd and Ray.

Larry first started performing at the age of sixteen in 1955 where he appeared on CKNX Barn Dance and became a regular. He formed the Mercey Brothers with brother Ray and appeared on Canadian television shows across the nation. Lloyd joined the group in 1966 and things really took off, with more hit songs and touring across Canada and Europe. The Mercey Brothers have the record for the most charted singles in



Canada.

"We used to keep putting out records. We used to look at it like going to Las Vegas and pulling the

handle and keep on putting singles out and try to get a number one. We were always Country, but back in that day we were everything.

There really wasn't a lot of Country Music stations, so we would do pop as well. We really didn't play a lot of Country bars, we played the best bars we could," said Larry of the early days.

Although they were successful here in Canada and abroad, the Mercey Brothers didn't really pursue the American market.

"I probably wouldn't be married to the same girl for 59 years if I did that. It was probably bad enough what we travelled in Canada. We were away a lot, but we would go to say Kingston for two weeks, and we wouldn't come home and play around there. Then we'd come home and play around home for two weeks. We always tried to get home as much as we could," said Larry.

The Mercey Brothers were together until 1989 and topped off the group's career with their induction into the Canadian Coun-

try Music Hall of Fame. After the group disbanded, Larry eventually formed the Larry Mercey Trio with George Lonsbury on guitar and Al Alderson on bass.

Guests to the concert will be entertained with music from the time of the Mercey Brothers as well as the music of the trio, some gospel and classic country. This concert is significant because it is the second of three dates Larry will play and then there will be no more.

"I'm 83, be 84 in December and it's becoming more work. I have to get the PA system out of the basement and lug it by myself. I would rather go out fairly on top, singing, rather than people saying that old guy shouldn't be out there singing anymore. As it happens, the last show will be in Hanover, it wasn't planned that way but, that's where it all started," said Larry.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 27

On Death and Dying pop-up with Stuart Lender

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A Death and Dying Pop-up that is offering information regarding the funeral process is being held on Saturday, September 23, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 125 Downie Street (just south of the Foster's Inn). The office of Town Crier Marketing generously donated their space for the pop-ups.

The pop-ups are not by appointment, and those interested in attending may stop in at any time between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. to ask questions or pick up valuable information on several topics related to death and dying topics.

Stuart Lender has been making a name for himself across Huron Perth due to his insightful and unique approach to death and dying. As a Funeral Director, Lender regularly sees families at their hardest times and, over time, decided he could help ease the pain for families and friends through proper education.

Lender has a different perspective on the role of a funeral home and says his information-based approach seems to catch the attention of those seeking funeral services and the general public. "The number one job of a funeral is not to take care of the person who's died. It's not to take care of the family. My number one job at a funeral home, as far as I'm concerned, is to educate the public and give them the information they need," he said.

The now-funeral director initially worked as a graphic designer at the start of his career but later found the job underwhelming as technology changed. He mentioned wanting to work as a funeral director to his then-wife and says he "geared up for the jokes," he thought would come along with such a unique career choice; however, Lender noted, "She looked at me, and she said you would be great at that job."

Being a funeral director is not the most common career choice for a young teenager, but Lender notes his passion started when he was young, "When I was about 16,



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

INFORMATION SESSION

Death and Dying Pop-up event brochures and information table at James A. Rutherford Funeral Home available to the public.

I thought about being a funeral director," and he noted his passion for education people on the process of death and dying over the last decade had been ever evolving.

Lender initially started writing updates and information on the funeral processes on Facebook. Information on everything from initial costs, cremation, burial, wills, myths and facts and even discussions around donating your body to science, nothing is off limits when it comes to learning, and Lender says, "death positivity is the willingness to discuss death because it is human and it is loving to do so."

One unique discussion that Lender says normally gets a lot of attention is his educational pieces on aquamation. This process is when the body is broken down in alkaline water as opposed to cremation, which uses heat. In Stratford, this option is only available at James A. Rutherford

Funeral Home, is 100% environmentally friendly, and leaves no carbon footprint.

More recently, due to the success of his online reach, Lender has offered a number of Death and Dying pop-up events, where he offers informative brochures and is there to discuss any questions or concerns people may have regarding death and dying.

These pop-ups have been a "big success," notes Lender; he continued, "The pop-ups, along with all of the posts I make online and in the Stratford Times, are accessible and free to everyone; I just want people to be able to make the best and most informed decisions."

Lenders' passion for his career as a Funeral Director shines through all of his work, whether on Facebook or his writing here at The Stratford Times. He says, "What's much more important to me is that



people's perception of the funeral home is that they will give you all the information you need."

You can catch Lender on Facebook, by email at rutherford@jarfh.com or at the last Death and Dying pop-up at 125 Downie Street on September 23.

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The multiple historic layers of Bath



PAUL KNOWLES

Times Contributor

“Oh! Who can ever be tired of Bath?” That question was asked by one of the fictional characters in Jane Austin’s novel “Northanger Abbey”. It turns out, Jane Austin herself could get bored with the city – but she did admit that while living there was not her cup of tea, visiting for a few days or even weeks was pretty great.

Well, I have no plans for living in Bath, but when it comes to visiting this small, amazing city at the southern tip of England’s Cotswolds, I am in, every time.

Bath is knee-deep in history. And while this can be said for many parts of the United Kingdom, it’s rare to find a place where so many layers of history are so immediately accessible to visitors.

Best known of the attractions are the Roman Baths, which date back to 60 or 70 AD. But as you stand in the square, facing the entrance to the popular historic site, you are surrounded by thousands of years of architecture. To your left is Bath Abbey, a magnificent church whose construction started in 1500, on a site of Christian churches dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period.

To your right is the famous Pump Room, a Georgian tea room added to the Roman Baths com-



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

The central bath at the Roman Baths, with Bath Abbey towering in the background.

plex in 1789. Bath is replete with magnificent examples of Georgian architecture, chief among them, the Royal Crescent, an amazing semi-circle of magnificent row houses, today highly sought after residences, with one restored as a Georgian museum, open to the public.

But let’s get back to the Romans and their baths. Which are much, much more than what we think of as a “bathroom”. This sprawling site was the hub of the community – the place where Roman Britons met to socialize, to do business, to buy and sell, to seek healing, and to worship. Oh, yes – they also bathed, but with complex rituals including hot, tepid and cold plunge pools, steam rooms, massage rooms, and the large swimming pool in the centre of the complex.

All of this in a religious context.

The baths are dedicated to a goddess – actually, a hybrid goddess. The Roman goddess Minerva (goddess of the wisdom, justice, victory, the arts and trade, among other things) was blended with a local goddess, who had been associated with the holy spring that is the original reason for these baths. No one knows how long the local goddess Sulis was worshipped here, but the Roman name for the site was *Aquae Sulis* – “Waters of Sulis.”

And as often happened, with the Romans, the two deities morphed into one, and the baths became the purview of the newly minted goddess *Sulis Minerva*. One of the spectacular finds at the baths is a gold bust of the goddess.

You could spend a whole day at the baths. And it is worth taking the time – the complex is breathtaking, and it’s easy to be swept

away by the sheer scope of the place, but there is great delight in the smaller details – the under-floor heating system created by the Romans; the clever architectural innovations; the gravestones and statues that tell us so much about the people of Bath in those early centuries.

Some of my favourite items are the curses, engraved on small lead or pewter tablets, that were thrown into the holy spring to draw the attention of the goddess to misdeeds done to the worshipper. They are often unwittingly funny, calling for terrible judgments to fall upon the person who did them harm.

The creators of the curses did not stint in their anger. One person, whose ring had been stolen, called down death and destruction on the thief and any accomplices: “...so long as someone, wheth-

er slave or free, keeps silent or knows anything about it, he may be accursed in his blood, and eyes and every limb and even have all his intestines quite eaten away if he has stolen the ring.”

Well! There is no record as to whether the curses worked, but they were clearly a popular device – archaeologists have recovered 130 of these ancient bits of rolled metal. As well, the exhibits at the bath include many other amazing finds from the Roman period – coins, jewelry, clothing – enough so that when your visit ends, you can almost feel as though you have spend a few hours hanging out with ancient Romans.

And then, because Bath is so rich in the layers of history, you can walk a few steps and visit Bath Abbey – where it is worth taking the time to read some of the hundreds of memorial plaques on the wall of the church. Not only will you learn much about those folks commemorated there, but the memorials span an era where the English language was being codified – there are early plaques with unique spellings, and even letters unknown to us, including the “thorn”, an archaic member of the alphabet that looks a little like a “y”, but was pronounced “th” – thus, our mistaken idea about “ye olde English pub”, which was never “ye” and always “the” – just spelled with a thorn.

Thus endeth the grammar lesson. Just one of hundreds of such historical tidbits waiting for you to discover in the fascinating city of Bath.

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



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

You might even encounter a Roman citizen or two during your visit.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

A busker performs in the square that fronts both the baths, and the Abbey.

Walking through Fire concert a step towards Reconciliation

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Juno-award nominated group Sultans of String and award-winning Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit artists will bring the world premiere of their Walking Through the Fire tour to Stratford.

The Stratford Symphony Orchestra will play with the musicians during the concert on September 29. The multimedia concert, which takes place the day before the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, will be at the Avondale United Church at 7:30 p.m.

Featured artists include Marc Meriläinen, also known as Nadjiwan, a musician and member of the Chippewas of the Nawash Unceded First Nation Cape Croker, Métis Fiddler Quartet's Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuck, and Ojibway elder Dr. Duke Redbird.

Chris McKhool, the leader of the Sultans of Strings, said the Walking Through the Fire project came about after Dr. Redbird worked with the group on The Refuge Project. Dr. Redbird had his poem "The Power of The Land" turned into the opening song on the album, which honours recent immigrants and refugees to Canada and their contributions. He asked McKhool when the Sultans of String would do something similar for Indigenous people.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Walking Through the Fire music project is also inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. One of the Calls to Action asks for the Canada Council for the Arts to prioritize funding a strategy for Indige-

nous and non-Indigenous artists to work together towards reconciliation.

"By doing collaborations with Indigenous artists, it's an opportunity to amplify their voices and hear what they have to say," McKhool said.

Nadjiwan knew McKhool for several years and wanted to collaborate musically with him for quite some time, so he felt like the project was a great fit.

"I loved everything that this project was about - bring Indigenous voices to the forefront and also to bring us to new venues and potential new audiences that we may not have had before, so it's a real cross-cultural collaboration," Nadjiwan said.

He added that music brings people together across all cultures.

"It's a way of humans expressing ourselves and we have been for thousands of years," Nadjiwan said. "Music is that easy digestible pill where you can hide some sort of thought-provoking message or some kind of story of greater meaning within a catchy melody or chord progression or beat. If a person likes a song for the melody or a beat and then if they start listening to the lyrics and they start learning what the song's about, if that inspires them to do some more research about the culture about a particular Nation or a particular issue, then that's all great too."

Tickets are \$45 for adults, \$15 for students, and free for children 12-years-old and under.

More information can be found on stratfordsymphony.ca/Walking_Through_Fire.

DIY Comedy tour making its way to Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Scott Porteous, also known as Herbert Henries was a contestant on Canada's Got Talent, Frank Russo, famously known for his performances at the Sudbury LOL Festival and Mike Payne known for his key performances at the Cottage Country Comedy Festival and the 2021 Burger King commercial are set to hit the Bunker Performance Lounge and Cafe located at 104 Wellington Street on October 4 at 8 p.m.

The trio of friends will perform independent shows across Canada and are guaranteed to make you laugh; whether it's with them, at them or around them, all night long. The stand-up comedy friends are ready and excited to perform in Stratford, the 'Festival City'.

Initially starting out as Facebook friends during the pandemic, the trio met online when one of the performers, Porteous, started an online forum so-to-speak where local comedians could write on different and relatable topics and provide feedback to each other. This started a unique friendship that has gone on to become a quest to make Canada laugh.

The trio not only performs but also is highly entrepreneurial and took it upon them-

selves to organize all of the dates and locations for their tour as well as design their own art for the website. Payne noted, "We booked it all ourselves and then all the artwork within the website and everything involved. Then, we started expanding our brand. We're going to start having satellite shows around different cities, too."

Travelling for upwards of 30 shows means the guys also sleep on some tight quarters sometimes and Payne noted one particular night was something he will never forget, "Scott decided in the middle of the night before was uncomfortable. So, he went and grabbed that felt blanket that was in every closet in every hotel room. This one was bright yellow, and he decided to sleep in a chair." Apparently, this looked to Payne like there was a "bright yellow ghost" in the room with them that night, and to this day, still freaks him out when he thinks about it.

You can purchase tickets and catch the DIY Comedy Tour for the October 4 show on their website at diycomedytour.ca.



Fire Chief urges residents to maintain smoke and carbon monoxide alarms

In 2022, Ontario experienced more deadly fires than in the past 20 years, claiming the lives of 133 people. As part of a new province-wide initiative, the Ontario Fire Marshal is promoting Ontario's first "Test Your Smoke Alarm Day" on Thursday, September 28 to increase public safety awareness.

Ontario Fire Marshal urges residents to conduct regular maintenance on these existing life safety devices, which are engineered to notify occupants of a fire or carbon monoxide hazards. The Fire Chief is also calling attention to a need for increased safety knowledge and home escape planning in people's residences.

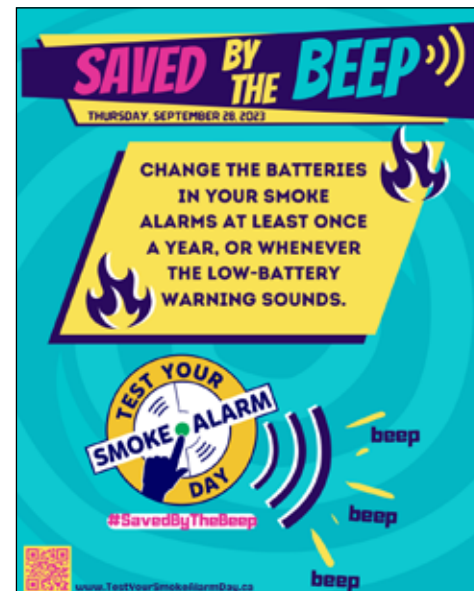
Smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms are the first line of defense in every home by notifying those inside of a hazardous situation. While recent

changes to Building and Fire Codes have enhanced the built-in detection fire and smoke technology in newer homes, existing residences must still provide a robust detection capability to remain in compliance with the Ontario Fire Code.

Regular monthly cleaning of your alarm will help remove dust and accumulations that hinder the operation of the alarm and that sometimes create conditions that lead

to false alarms. Vacuum your alarm regularly using a soft bristle attachment on the outer surfaces to remove materials such as dust, insects and spider webs. Pressurized air can also provide an effective method of cleaning the sensors.

Smoke and CO alarm manufacturers provide installation and operational and maintenance instructions with each alarm, with replacement alarms sold in stores and on-line.



Indigenous Art Market & Cultural Celebration at the Stratford Perth Museum

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Stratford Perth Museum hosted an Indigenous Art Market and Cultural Celebration this past weekend as a local platform for Indigenous artists and entrepreneurs to sell their products, network with fellow colleagues, friends, and family, and most importantly, create teaching and learning opportunities related to truth and reconciliation for the general public.

“The celebratory atmosphere of the event that we work to maintain, thanks to our generous Indigenous partners and teachers, will hopefully create a respectful dialogue and cultural exchange that brings people together to inspire positive change to improve our communities,” says Megan Patterson, Manager of Education and Programs at the Stratford Perth Museum

“Several moments throughout the day were a reminder of the importance of providing a healthy space for the Indigenous community members to showcase their art, states Patterson, “It’s also an opportunity for non-Indigenous community members to share in and learn more about the Indigenous community culture across Ontario.”

Dave Villada, Artisan Vendor and Drummer Cedar Hill Singers and his wife, Sofa Mantecon, Jingle Dress Dancer, came to Stratford from Kitchener for the



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTOS)

CELEBRATORY ATMOSPHERE

Drumming, singing, and dancing demonstration courtesy of Cedar Hill Singers and the Healing of the Seven Generations

day. The couple sold beautiful jewellery, leather work and Ceremony Smudging feathers and later performed for onlookers during traditional dance and song.

Patterson noted that the market was a wholesome day of vendors sharing their stories and trading gifts with one another as friends, family, and allies. She noted, “A defining moment was the drumming, singing, and dancing demonstration courtesy of Cedar Hill Singers and the Healing of the Seven Generations,” she continued, “This presentation was not only intended to teach those who were unfamiliar with these customs but also meant for those who practice and share in these heritage

working. Those partners are Healing of the Seven Generations, Haunting Live Podcast, Divine Oracle Readings, and Crystal Semaganis.

You can also visit the Stratford Perth Museum website at www.stratfordperth-museum.ca and click under the events menu: community connectors page or Indigenous Art Market & Cultural Celebration for local Truth and Reconciliation projects and artist and vendor listings.

The museum expects to host similar events twice yearly, once in the spring and again in the fall. Patterson said, “We will maintain our Free policy for visitors and vendors to reflect the Truth and Reconciliation initiative and encourage connections.”

traditions to feel welcome and a sense of home.”

“Partnerships and outreach are invaluable to safeguard self-determination and the delivery of accurate information,” says Patterson, “We have been very fortunate; our Indigenous mentors and teachers have been extremely generous in their guidance and are very understanding that this is a learning journey for all of us that essentially has no end because there is always more that can be done or improved.”

The Stratford Perth Museum encourages community members to reach out to their partners who tirelessly work in Indigenous advocacy, education, and net-



Parkview United Church presents the Larry Mercey Trio

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

Fear not, it’s not that Larry will stop entirely, there could still be appearances, just not the two hour shows. And if you need more, Larry has written a book. His autobiography entitled, ‘Have Mercey: My First Sixty Years’ chronicles his career with the help of scrapbooks kept. Armed with over twenty scrapbooks, he was inspired to write to tell his story for his grandchildren so they would know about his life.

“I started writing for my grandchildren and great-grandchildren. When I was sixteen as I was appearing at CKNX Barn Dance my mother used to keep a scrapbook and would write, whether it rained, snowed, what I sang and how much I got paid, even if my grandparents came out. I have the scrapbooks in all her handwriting. My mother passed away at the age of 42 so I kept up scrapbooks. I have something like 22 or 23 scrapbooks. So as I was writing the book I could take page by page

with memories and write,” he said.

And write he did, the book is over 400 pages of stories and pictures from over 60 years in the music business. He also gets personal. He talks about a stoppage of speech he had until the age of 27. He saw many doctors for it. It wasn’t a stutter, but a stoppage, so to speak. After seeing many doctors he finally saw a hypnotist. After a couple sessions, hypnotism changed his life. He also talks about the passing of his granddaughter Danielle Graham, who tragically died at the age of 30 in 2017. Stories about the road, stories about music, it’s all in there.

Those interested in purchasing a copy of Larry’s book can email him at larrymercey40@gmail.com. To purchase tickets for the October 15th concert call to reserve tickets. Contact Janice Wick at 519-508-1736 or the Church office at 519-271-1609. The tickets are \$30 each, and with a capacity of over 200, it is sure to be a fantastic time for all who attend.

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Creating Hygge in the Fall



IRENE ROTH

Times Freelance Columnist

As the days grow shorter, and the air takes on a crisp, invigorating chill, there's something undeniably special about the arrival of fall. The season's vibrant colors, cozy sweaters, and pumpkin-spiced everything evoke a sense of warmth and comfort that invites us to slow down and savor the simple pleasures of life.

This is one of my favorite seasons of the year. It's a season of inner brilliance when we can move indoors and cook yummy food, bake, decorate for the fall, and much more. It's also a time when we can take on inside projects, such as finally writing that e-book you always wanted or reading more or starting a book club.

Below, I'll explore the art of hygge, a Danish concept that beautifully captures the essence of fall and discover how to make the autumn season both comforting and hygge in your own unique way.

What is Hygge?

Hygge (pronounced hoo-ga) is a Danish term that encompasses a feeling of coziness, contentment, and well-being. It's about creating an atmosphere that fosters a sense of comfort, warmth, and connection with loved ones. While hygge can be enjoyed year-round, it's particularly well-suited for the fall season, when the weather naturally encourages us to seek out warmth and comfort.

Here are a few ways to create hygge in our lives.

Embrace the Aesthetical Qualities of the Season

To infuse your life with hygge this fall, start by embracing the aesthetics of the season. Incorporate warm, earthy tones into your home decor. Think burnt oranges, deep reds, and cozy browns. Soft, textured blankets, plump cushions, and flickering candles all contribute to the overall ambiance of comfort.

Natural elements like rustic wooden furniture and hand-

crafted ceramics can also bring a sense of authenticity to your space. Consider adding some houseplants to create a soothing connection to nature, even as the leaves fall outside.

Cozy Up the Inside of Your Home

The heart of hygge is creating a cozy and inviting atmosphere. Begin by decluttering your living spaces to promote a sense of calm and order. Then, layer on the softness. Add plush rugs to your floors, drape your furniture with warm throws, and stock up on fluffy pillows.

Lighting plays a pivotal role in achieving hygge. Aim for soft, warm lighting rather than harsh overhead lights. Lamps with dimmer switches, fairy lights, and, of course, the gentle glow of candles can transform your space into a soothing haven.

Enjoy Fall Feasts

Food is a central aspect of hygge. Embrace the flavors of fall by cooking hearty, comforting meals. Roasted root vegetables, soups, stews, and apple pies can fill your home with the enticing aromas of autumn. Invite friends and family to share in the feast, and you'll find that the act of gathering around a table and savoring a meal together is an es-

sential part of hygge.

Enjoy Warm Beverages

When it comes to hygge, a steaming cup of your favorite fall beverage is a must. Whether it's a pumpkin spice latte, a spicy chai tea, or a rich hot chocolate, these warm drinks can instantly evoke a sense of comfort. Take the time to savor each sip and appreciate the moment.

Embrace Nature

The fall season is a visual feast for the senses. Take advantage of the crisp air and vibrant foliage by spending time in nature. Go for a leisurely walk in the park or forest, and allow yourself to truly immerse in the beauty of the season. Collect colorful leaves, pinecones, and acorns to bring a touch of the outdoors into your home as seasonal decor.

Unplug and Reconnect

Hygge is about being present in the moment and fostering meaningful connections with loved ones. Put away your devices, and instead, engage in quality face-to-face time with family and friends. Cozy up with board games, share stories, or simply enjoy each other's company over a cup of tea.

Engage in Self-Care Rituals

Don't forget to pamper yourself during the fall season. Treat

yourself to a warm bath with soothing essential oils, or curl up with a good book and a soft blanket. Self-care rituals are an integral part of hygge, helping you recharge and find comfort within yourself.

Embrace the Season's Traditions

Fall is rich with traditions that can enhance the sense of hygge. Visit a pumpkin patch or an apple orchard to embrace the harvest season. Carve pumpkins and decorate your home with gourds and seasonal wreaths. These activities can bring joy and a sense of tradition to your autumn days.

As the fall season unfolds, embrace the art of hygge to create a comforting and cozy atmosphere in your life. Whether you're enjoying the simple pleasures of a warm beverage, snuggling under a blanket, or gathering with loved ones, hygge reminds us to savor the moments that bring us joy and contentment.

By infusing your life with hygge, you can fully appreciate the beauty and comfort that fall has to offer. And who knows, it can become one your favourite seasons of the year too.

Enjoy creating your unique hygge this fall!

Irene Roth

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Riddles

What lies at the bottom of the sea and shivers?

A nervous wreck

What do you call an American drawing?

A Yankee doodle

Have you ever seen a man eating tiger?

No, but in the cafe next door I once saw a man eating chicken

What's long and green and very dangerous?

A herd of cucumbers

What do you call it when you get struck by lightning?

A shocking experience

What kind of shoes does a mouse wear?

Sneakers

What has two hands but cannot clap?

A clock

Why did the policeman go to the baseball game?

Because he heard someone stole second base

Why can't you tell a pig a secret?

Because it will squeal on you

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 31



Pet of the Month



DAPHNE

Meet Daphne, a beautiful, medium size, mix breed female dog who is looking for her loving family! 6-year-old Daphne is a shy and nervous girl who takes some time to warm up to new people, but once she feels comfortable, she is a total snuggle bug who loves to cuddle and be close to her humans. Daphne has some special dietary needs due to her allergies, and will require a special diet for the rest of her life to manage her condition. If you think you can give Daphne a home, please fill out an adoption survey at <https://kwsphumane.ca/adopt/process>.



Word Search

AUTUMN

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

- ACORN
- APPLE
- AUTUMN
- CHESTNUTS
- CHILLY
- CIDER
- FALL
- FOOTBALL
- HARVEST
- HAYRIDE
- LEAVES
- RAKE
- SCARECROW
- SEPTEMBER

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The Township of Perth South is seeking a qualified equipment operator/truck driver who would be available to work on a seasonal basis for winter maintenance purposes from December 1st, 2023 until March 31st, 2024. Reporting to the Operations Manager, applicants will be experienced with the ability to operate various pieces of equipment, such as wheel loaders, road graders, and tandem dump trucks equipped with snow plow, wing, and sander. The operator may be required to perform other duties within the Public Works Department, along with other miscellaneous labour duties from time to time.

Applicants must have a valid "D" license with a "Z" endorsement. Experience in road and/or equipment maintenance would be an asset. This position is subject to weekend scheduling and 24 hr. call-out, with a minimum of 32 hours per week.

The salary range for this position is \$24.19 – \$29.69 per hour for 2023 and \$25.55 – \$31.36 per hour for 2024.

We thank all candidates for their interest, however, only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

Interested candidates are invited to submit a detailed resume expressing their interest to the undersigned clearly marked as "seasonal operator" by September 30, 2023.

Fred Tranquilli, CAO
Township of Perth South
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E-mail – ftranquilli@perthsouth.ca

Information gathered is under the authority of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and shall only be used for candidate selection purposes.

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182ND STRATFORD FALL FAIR September 21-24

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SK8 JAM 4 SAM Saturday, September 30; 12:00 p.m.

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of all ages and skill levels. Competition starts at 1:00pm, registration is open at 12:00pm.

GARDEN STRATFORD MEETING Monday November 6; 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Army Navy Hall, 151 Lorne Ave. E., Stratford
The meeting will begin with a Garden Chat/ Demonstration: "Making a Seasonal Table Centre" Speaker Presentation: "Container Perennial Trial Results", Rodger Tschanz, University of Guelph Meeting open to Everyone; free admission.

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) Green
- 2) Lee Majors
- 3) Robin (Batman and Robin)
- 4) David Janssen
- 5) Benny Goodman
- 6) Crimean
- 7) Plum
- 8) Six
- 9) Gnasher in the UK, Ruff in North America.
- 10) Giraffe

SUDOKU

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

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Outlet Hours:

Thursday to Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

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Jim Fierling
Dealer/Owner



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