

# STRATFORD TIMES

VOLUME 3 • ISSUE 14

MARCH 22, 2024

FREE



**JENNIFER ANDERSON**  
 REAL ESTATE BROKER  
 519.301.2736  
 www.jandersonrealestate.com

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

4304 Rd 119 Stratford 519-273-1881



**SPLIT RAIL**  
 COUNTRY STORE  
 Celebrating 15 Years  
 of Smilin' Country Service!



## Stratford Home and Leisure Show is back for their 40th Anniversary

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Stratford Home and Leisure Show is returning to the Stratford Rotary Complex in its 40th year April 13-14.

There is still space open for exhibitors, however spaces are filling up quickly.

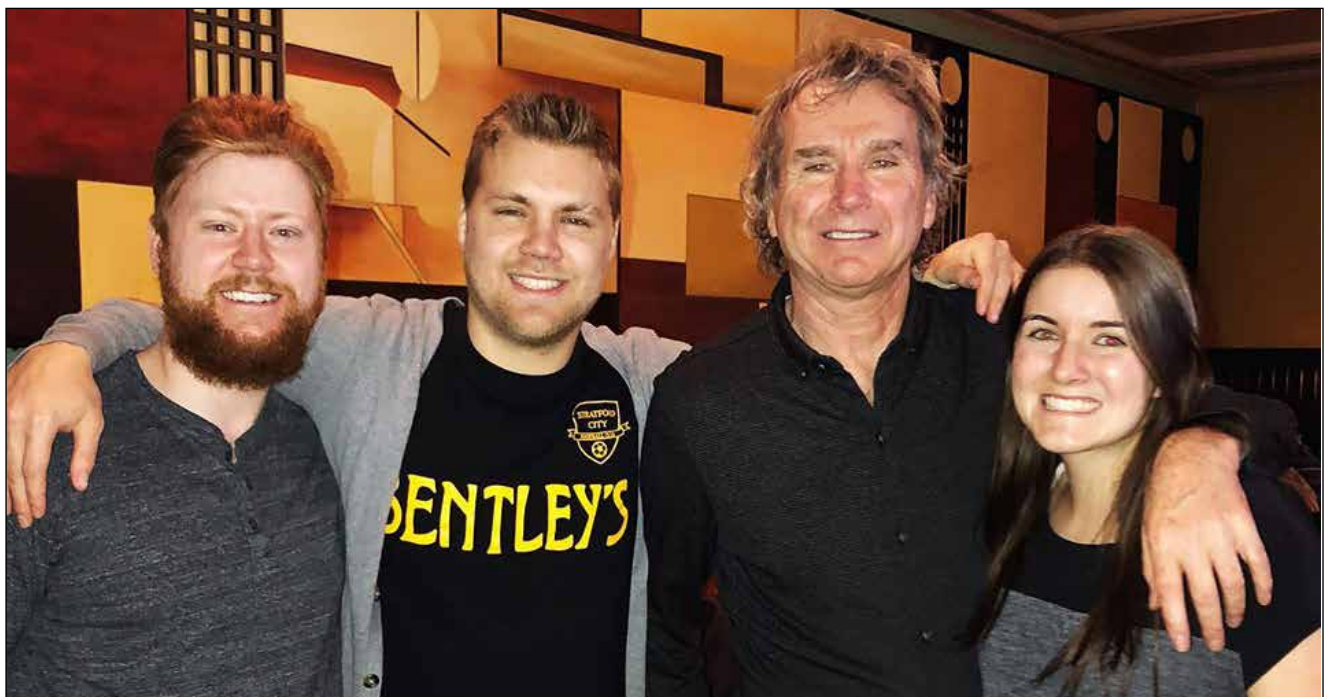
The show features diverse home-renovation exhibitors and vendors showcasing their products and designs. Perth Huron Builders Association executive officer Melissa Schenk says anyone looking to work on their homes this year should first stop in to see what local businesses have to offer, but the home show is also a community event, with something for everyone including booths by local businesses, food and fun.

"We've got anything and everything this year, including food booths like Simple Dreams ice cream, Girl Guides and The Best Little Pork Shop, and we have so many unique exhibitors to help you complete all of your home renovations this summer," Schenk said.

Homeowners looking for inspiration for their next renovation, those considering putting in a pool and local gardeners will all find something of interest at this year's show.

Both school boards will be back again this year, presenting hands-on activities where students can build and learn about the trades.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

### BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR 2024

Breen Bentley and his three children, Breen Jr., Tanner and Brooklynn, will be presented with the Business Leader of the Year award at the 28th annual Business Excellence Awards gala on May 2.

## Breen Bentley reflects on 40 years in Stratford and being named 2024 Business Leader of the Year

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Board of the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce recently announced Breen Bentley is this year's Business Leader of the Year.

"The bar business isn't always easy, but with a

lot of hard work, we've made it work," said Bentley, owner of Bentley's Bar Inn and Restaurant. "I was thinking about this and, you know, I'm proud of myself. I've made this business work and now I can show my kids and grandkids. It's great and I'm really proud of that."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

## Succession or sale?

A workshop for farmers in transition



How do I get started? Who should I talk to? Get answers to all your questions about the future of your farm.

Bring your family, and don't miss this unique opportunity to speak with a lawyer, accountant, farm management advisor, financial advisor, and real estate broker — all in one place, plus enjoy a hot buffet lunch.

**Date:** Wednesday, April 17, 2024  
**Time:** 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. or 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** The Arden Park Hotel | 552 Ontario St., Stratford

Space is limited. To book your spot, scan this QR code or call 519.271.5279.



Scan here



# Breen Bentley reflects on 40 years in Stratford and becoming the 2024 Business Leader Award Recipient

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Bentley's work in the restaurant industry started when he was only 10 years old when he was a dishwasher. Later, he honed his skills working in other restaurant positions, eventually leading him to graduate from the Stratford Chef's School.

After graduating, Bentley purchased the Jesters Arms, which later moved to its current location where it was renamed Bentley's Bar Inn and Restaurant.

"I didn't have a fancy education or a lot of experience, but I was street smart, in the right place at the right time and driven and determined to make it work."

Though many businesses decide to

narrow down and target a small portion of the community, or tourists in particular, Bentley says he always based his business on the people of Stratford. He said ensuring everyone feels welcome has brought him a successful 40 years on Stratford's main strip, and his restaurant is still known as the iconic Stratford pub everyone knows and loves.

"I wanted to build a place where grandma could come with her friend at lunch and have a quiche and a glass of wine. But I also want it to be the same place at five o'clock that her son could come after work with all the boys to have a beer. And in the same building, his wife comes with all the girls from the volleyball team, and later, the grandson closes up at last call with a couple of shots of Yeager with his friends."

Bentley's is built on bringing together family and friends, as seen from their always-full tables and friendly staff. Not only is Bentley's a family restaurant for his customers, Bentley also notes that his business is the foundation of his own family, and while he never thought all three of his kids would stay in the restaurant business, they all have.

"I'm a lucky, lucky guy – the luckiest. All three of my kids are interested in the restaurant business and keep this place alive. I was raised by a mom who taught me about hard work, and I'm doing the same with my kids. I couldn't be prouder of the kids and I couldn't have done this without family."

He also notes his appreciation for Stratford and being in what he believes is the best city in North America.

"You know, Stratford is full of beautiful churches and places. People here love the city. They are concerned about

the Cooper Lot, they're concerned about the swans in the river, and they all care so much about Stratford. You don't see this in other cities.

"We're surrounded by theatre, music and the best theatre in North America. As a city, we are truly blessed. I am blessed to be here in Stratford and I never take that for granted."

Bentley and his three children – Breen Jr., Tanner and Brooklynn – will be presented with the Business Leader of the Year award and will be the guest speakers at the 28th annual Business Excellence Awards gala on May 2 at the Best Western Arden Park Hotel.

The chamber board of directors decides the which local business leader will receive this award each year through a three-step, secret-ballot process. Nominations are put forth, a list is curated and secret ballots are cast. Votes are recast until there is a clear winner.

## Stratford Home and Leisure Show is back for their 40th Anniversary

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"Both boards will have gigantic booths and they'll be doing hands-on activities for students," said Schenk. "This is a great opportunity for kids to come and make something, and take something home."

Schenk said kids went home in past years with "arms full of handmade projects, such as birdhouses."

"It's a great way for students to experience some of the different machinery and learn a bit about skilled trades. All of those different hands-on activities give you a taste of each trade."

Tickets to the Stratford Home and Leisure Show are \$6 and can be purchased at the door. Admission for children un-

der 12 is free.

All the money raised goes directly into the community. It helps support community fundraisers such as team sports, Aquabox (clean water kits for disaster areas), Rotary Hospice Stratford-Perth, food banks and technical training at local schools.

The Stratford Home and Leisure Show is a great way to support local businesses and learn about new and upcoming trends and innovations in the home industry. It's a fun day out for the whole family with activities and events that appeal to all ages.

For more information on the event, visit [stratfordhomeleisureshow.com](http://stratfordhomeleisureshow.com).



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

**SHERRIE ROULSTON**  
Real Estate Broker  
email: [sherrieroulston@royallepage.ca](mailto:sherrieroulston@royallepage.ca)  
Direct: 519-272-3578

*A Passion for People*



## It's Tax Time Again

*Three locations to serve you...*

125 Ontario St., Stratford • 519-271-7581

25 Water St. N., St. Marys • 519-284-1030

210 Oxford St. E., London • 519-432-1663

[www.fammeandco.on.ca](http://www.fammeandco.on.ca)

**Famme & Co.**

*Professional Corporation*

CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

### STRATFORD'S INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mennonite Central Committee manager of donor relations and major gifts Darlene Bartha spoke about the suppression of women around the world and the need for women to have equal participation in peace talks at the Canadian Federation of University Women Stratford's International Women's Day event at the Stratford Golf and Country Club March 8.



# World Autism Day – flag raising at City Hall

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Stratford city hall will raise the Autism Ontario flag April 2 to honour World Autism Day.

The initiative aims to spotlight autism spectrum disorder and foster greater understanding and acceptance within the community.

World Autism Day, observed annually on April 2, is a global initiative dedicated to raising awareness about autism and promoting acceptance and understanding of individuals on the autism spectrum. It's a day to celebrate the unique talents and abilities of individuals with autism while also advocating for their rights and inclusion in all aspects of society.

Mayor Martin Ritsma says raising the Autism Ontario flag at Stratford city hall reminds the city of the importance of inclusion and empathy.

"Raising the Autism Ontario flag at city hall is an excellent reminder that we all have unique abilities," he said.

"People tend to categorize people based on a diagnosis, but if you take that away, we really see the abilities of people and what they're truly capable of."

Ritsma also looks back to singer-songwriter, pianist and savant Kodi Lee, who rose to fame after being a contestant and ultimately the winner of the 14th season of America's Got Talent.

"Kodi Lee, who is legally blind and autistic, showed the world his abilities and he was exceptional. It just goes to show that the world needs everyone's abilities, and a diagnosis is no barrier to what people are capable of."

By coming together to recognize World Autism Day, residents of Stratford have an opportunity to learn more about autism, challenge stereotypes and foster a more compassionate and inclusive community.

"We need every opportunity possible to allow those abilities to shine and to be developed," said Ritsma. "Raising the Autism Ontario flag for Autism awareness highlights everyone's abilities equally."

Throughout April, various events and activities will take place worldwide to raise awareness about autism further and celebrate the talents and achievements of individuals on the spectrum.

To learn more about autism, please visit [www.autismontario.com](http://www.autismontario.com).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

World Autism Day recognizes those with autism and their outstanding abilities

## BARGAINS AND DEALS SOURCE FLOORING

**IN STOCK** **BARGAINS & DEALS**

13" X 13" PORCELAIN TILES

FROM **\$99¢** PER SQ FT REG 3.99

**IN STOCK** **BARGAINS & DEALS**

24" X 24" PORCELAIN TILES

FROM **\$199** PER SQ FT REG 3.99

**IN STOCK** **BARGAINS & DEALS**

HANDSCRAPED LAMINATE

FROM **\$159** PER SQ FT REG 4.99

**IN STOCK** **BARGAINS & DEALS**

SUBWAY TILES

FROM **\$199** PER SQ FT REG 3.99

**IN STOCK** **BARGAINS & DEALS**

LUXURY VINYL PLANKS 5MM THICK

FROM **\$149** PER SQ FT REG 4.99

**IN STOCK** **BARGAINS & DEALS**

LOOSE LAY LUXURY VINYL 5MM THICK

FROM **\$199** PER SQ FT REG 5.99

**IN STOCK** **BARGAINS & DEALS**

2-TONE FRIEZE CARPET

FROM **\$199** PER SQ FT REG 3.99

**IN STOCK** **BARGAINS & DEALS**

3/4" THICK X 4" WIDE HARDWOOD

FROM **\$399** PER SQ FT REG 8.99

**VINYL & LAMINATE MOULDINGS**

100'S OF COLOURS IN STOCK!

**NO TAX!**

7' X 10" AREA RUGS STARTING FROM **\$199**

NOT EXACTLY AS SHOWN

### FULLY STOCKED! BIGGEST ON THE BLOCK!



1362 VICTORIA ST N. KITCHENER  
MON-FRI 9AM-8PM SAT 9-6 SUN 10-5



**BOUCHER & JONES FUELS**

**IN BUSINESS FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS.**



**Providing the 'complete package' of products and services at a competitive price.**

- Home Heating Fuel
- Gasoline
- Diesel Fuels (Commercial, Farm and Industrial)
- Propane (Residential and Commercial)
- Petro Canada Lubricants and Greases including Food Grade products.
- Bulk and Packaged Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF)

**Kitchener/Waterloo, Stratford and Surrounding Areas**

We have 4 Cardlock locations and access to the Ontario Wide Petro-Pass network.

For a consultation and competitive proposal, please contact Account Manager:  
**Mike Bonneville at 519-580-9193 or 519-743-3669 ext 360**  
[mikeb@bouchernandjones.com](mailto:mikeb@bouchernandjones.com)



# Series of Community Dialogues Planned on Renewal of Stratford's Grand Trunk Site

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The City of Stratford's ad-hoc Grand Trunk renewal committee will host a series of community events this spring to engage residents and start a dialogue on refreshing the vision and guiding principles for the 18-acre, city-owned property.

"Our aim as the communications committee is to give accurate information to the public," said John Kastner, communications subcommittee member of the Grand Trunk project. "One of the principles of communications is, if you don't tell the public what's happening, somebody else will.

"We want to ensure that the information received by the public is accurate, representative of what's happening and backed up with facts. It's our job to give a base understanding of the situation at the site and we wanted to start with these community dialogues."

The first event is planned for March 26 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in hall A at the Stratford Rotary Complex (353 McCarthy Rd. W). It will be an opportunity to learn about the history of the site, its condition



## COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Community members are invited to two community dialogue events starting this month to learn about the history and ask questions to the committee.

today and the process and work of the Grand Trunk ad-hoc committee.

"It's a history worth telling," said Kastner. "As a starting point, we wanted to talk a little bit about the history of this building because it's so fascinating. In the 1950s, 40 per cent of the homes in Stratford had somebody in the house that worked at the shops. Those were the glory days of that building, and the committee felt it was important to tell that story."

The second event is scheduled for April 13 from 2-4 p.m. in the city hall auditorium. This dialogue will include a panel of speakers who have been involved in significant and impactful urban revitalization projects such as downtown Guelph, Niagara Falls' new Exchange project and Kitchener's Tannery and Breithaupt Block.

Other discussions that will take place at the community dialogue events will include such topics as the carbon-footprint left by the current building and more information about the plan for future use.

All are welcome to attend both events. Further details about these community dialogues, along with links to register, are available on Engage Stratford at [engage-stratford.ca/grand-trunk-renewal](http://engage-stratford.ca/grand-trunk-renewal).

## Stratford residents are warned to be cognisant of ongoing grandparent scams

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Stratford police are warning area residents to be wary of ongoing grandparent scams.

At the March 13 police services board meeting, Stratford

Police Chief Greg Skinner warned grandparent scams are still prevalent in the area. Grandparent scams are still happening and on the rise throughout Stratford. Last February, 15 scams were reported in the area, and this year, there have been almost double that, with 26 scams reported.

Earlier this year, an alleged scammer was arrested in Stratford after three people contacted police to say they were victims of a grandparent scheme.

"They were able to scam one couple out of \$7,300 and another couple out of \$400," said Skinner. "Thankfully, thanks to the good work of our officers, on the third attempt, police were able to set up in an area where a courier truck was supposed to show up to pick up money."

Though the perpetrator was caught, Skinner notes, "Unfortunately, when that money's gone, it's gone pretty quick-

ly via Western Union or other financial institutions."

According to the February police crime report, another Stratford woman was the victim of a celebrity impersonation scam, losing more than \$50,000.

"This woman believed that she was sending money to celebrity Channing Tatum and unfortunately was the victim of these ongoing scams," Skinner said.

Police say these scams are still happening and prevalent. Though there have been successful scams reported, Skinner said five or six more were unsuccessful. However, it's still important to be cognizant of scams, he reiterated.

On a final note, Skinner says, "If it seems suspicious, it probably is a scam."

Anyone who thinks they've been a victim of a grandparent scam should call Stratford police at 519-271-4141.

**GRANT  
HAVEN  
MEDIA**

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

**STRATFORDTIMES**

Publisher

Stewart Grant • [stew@granthaven.com](mailto:stew@granthaven.com)

Regional Editor

Galen Simmons • [galen@granthaven.com](mailto:galen@granthaven.com)

Editor

Amanda Modaragamage • [amandajaneewriter@gmail.com](mailto:amandajaneewriter@gmail.com)

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Sarah Cairns • [stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com)

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • [heather@granthaven.com](mailto:heather@granthaven.com)

Billing Administrator

Cindy Boakes • [boakescindy1576@gmail.com](mailto:boakescindy1576@gmail.com)

Contributors

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

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2

[stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com) | 519.655.2341 | [granthaven.com](http://granthaven.com)

**SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US!**

**CALL 519-655-2341 OR EMAIL [STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM](mailto:STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM)**

**STRATFORDTIMES**

### Guiding Principles

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



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





# Stride for shelter to raise money for Shelterlink, House of Blessing

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

A fourth-year University of Waterloo student will be running from the main campus to the Stratford campus while raising money to help people experiencing homelessness.

Christopher Kalil, a global business and digital arts student at the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus, will run more than 50 kilometres on April 5 starting at 10 a.m. at 200 University Ave. W in Waterloo. The student wanted to give back to the community of Stratford after living in the city for the past three years during his studies.

"For the longest time, I've had what you would call a gift when it comes to running, or at least a way of doing well with it," Kalil said. "I found that if I had enough people rally behind me, then maybe we can do something productive and help the people in the local area."

He wanted to help people living in Stratford who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Along with Stratford House of Blessing, he wanted to fundraise for Shelterlink Youth Services as that shelter helps youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years old.

"I figure if I give money to an organization like Shelterlink, it's going to be given to people who will be able to invest in the right things for the homeless population

in Stratford when they come to them," he said. "I believe that, in the end, it will be to their benefit more than anything else."

Kalil is doing everything he can to maintain his fitness and recently ran 30 kilometres as part of his training. He has received plenty of support from both the Stratford and Waterloo communities, including Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma. He's been talking to fellow students in his program, faculty members of the university and members of local running groups.

"They're important to talk to because I'm trying to have people who are in Waterloo and people who live here come together and make this our own thing," he said. "Because, in a way, the people who live in Stratford and the people who live in Waterloo are two separate entities, even if they are in the same program."

Kalil is hoping to raise \$1,000 during the fundraiser. He's also looking for volunteers for the run day and sponsors for the event. The student would also like to see as many people as possible watch him run.

"I'd be thrilled to see people out there supporting me and that helps me more than anyone else can imagine," Kalil said.

For more information about Kalil's run and to donate, visit [my.charitableimpact.com/groups/stratford-homeless-support-federation](https://my.charitableimpact.com/groups/stratford-homeless-support-federation). His journey can also be followed on his Instagram @cwilliamkalil, and he can be reached by email at [cwkilil@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:cwkilil@uwaterloo.ca).



(CHRISTOPHER KALIL PHOTO)

## STRIDE FOR SHELTER

Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma supports Christopher Kalil's upcoming Stride for Shelter run. The University of Waterloo student will run more than 50 kilometres between the Waterloo and Stratford campuses to raise money for Stratford House of Blessing and ShelterLink. Photo courtesy of Christopher Kalil

# New study shows Stratford Festival infused \$147.3 million into local economy, \$276.7 million overall economic impact last year

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

A recent economic-impact study commissioned by the Stratford Festival shows the festival had an overall economic impact of \$276.7 million last year, \$147.3 million of which directly and indirectly benefitted Stratford's local economy.

Undertaken by Sport Tourism Canada in partnership with the Canadian Tourism Research Institute and the Conference Board of Canada, the study was intended to paint an accurate picture of how much the festival contributes to the economy of the city, the province and the country.

"It's something we do periodically just to have an assessment of the economic impact," festival executive director Anita Gaffney said. "I think it was 2017 the last time we did an economic-impact study. It costs something, so it's something we don't do every year. We thought it was a good time, as we are building back from the pandemic, to have a check-in on the economic-impact numbers.

"I also felt the numbers were always a little modest, so I feel like these new numbers are probably consistent with what is happening in other major tourism destinations. ... It's important for us to have these numbers when we speak to government representatives. It's important for businesses that are in town right now, but also those that are thinking about coming to Stratford. It's good for them to have some sense of economic activity associated with the presence of the festival."

The economic-impact data tracks direct visitor spending and does not include the residual impact to industries like construction. For instance, the building of the new Tom Patterson Theatre and the construction and renovation of hotels and other services would add to the economic impact but were not measured in this study.

Locally, the festival generated spending of \$147.3 million in the Stratford community, up 11 per cent from the previous study in 2017. Broken down, the study shows the festival generated \$24.4 million

in visitor spending at local restaurants, \$2.4 million on other food and groceries, \$12.3 million on accommodations, \$10.5 million on retail shopping, and \$8.5 million on non-festival entertainment and recreation.

The festival supports 1,466 full-time-equivalent jobs, 1,038 of which are in Stratford. The total local wages and salaries is approximately \$95.3 million, which indirectly boosts the festival's impact on local spending. The festival's nationwide total for salaries and wages is pegged at \$121.7 million.

The study found that 46 per cent of out-of-town theatregoers stayed overnight in Stratford and the average stay was three nights. The overall importance of the festival in influencing a visit to Stratford was 9.7/10, with 83 per cent of attendees indicating the festival was their sole reason for visiting Stratford. The study also found that in 2023 the festival supported roughly \$46.2 million in federal, provincial and local taxes through direct and spin-off effects throughout Canada.

"It's incredible to think of this theatre that Tom Patterson had conceived in 1952 to be an economic-impact player, and for it to have this kind of impact on the community," Gaffney said. "I've lived here my whole life. I know the community really well. It's interesting to see how the festival's presence impacts the things you'd expect like the restaurants, the overnight accommodations, but then it also expands beyond into the services that support those organizations like construction and other support services for the restaurants and accommodations industries. I feel there are so many kids who have benefitted from having summer jobs at the festival, and having the opportunity to see productions and ... have interactions at the festival through the (Canada Summer Jobs program).

"These numbers are big. ... What it means is businesses are present here because of the festival. The cultural life of people in the community is enriched because of the festival. It's good to have that reassurance."



# CELEBRATE LIVING WELL



LIMITED TIME ONLY

## FULLY FURNISHED 1-BEDROOM SUITE

SPACES AVAILABLE!

### CALL NOW 519.771.4973

Ask about our specials! Book a tour and enjoy a complimentary lunch with us!



511 Finkle Street Woodstock, Ontario N4VOC4 • 519.602.0282

Please visit us at the community for a personalized tour or for more information go to

# CedarviewSeniorLife.com



ReImagine Senior Living



# Perth County officials clarify scrutiny over draft official plan

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Area residents have recently scrutinized Perth County's draft official plan regarding proposed policies concerning agricultural activities and natural-environment designations.

Over the last two months, concerns about the implications for agricultural practices and tree-related uses within these designated areas were raised at open-house discussions throughout Perth County.

According to Perth County planning associate Aubree Erickson, the plan states that the natural-environment designation will not limit agricultural activities. Therefore, planning staff is addressing these concerns with residents throughout Perth County.

"This means that you can continue to farm directly alongside natural-environment designations," she said. "We are working on making it clear to the public that if a property is designated agriculture and has a natural-environment feature on it, agricultural practices take precedence."

The plan outlines requirements for new developments on agricultural lands with natural-environment features to ensure the preservation of natural features amidst potential development.



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

## PERTH COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN

Officials at Perth County offer clarification regarding ongoing concerns raised at open houses held last month.

"We are currently working on outlining the different scenarios where the adjacent lands will be applied to ensure that the public understands the current and proposed requirements," said Erickson.

According to the act, any non-agricultural development requiring an application under The Planning Act must demonstrate its "lack of adverse impact on natural features," which aims to protect the integrity of both agricultural and natural environments throughout Perth County.

Another concern heard during the official plan open houses was around the impact of natural-environment designations on woodlots and tree harvesting.

Erickson notes, however, that Woodlots are protected under bylaws and would not be included in proposed changes.

"Woodlots that meet a certain size criterion (0.5 acres) are already subjected to the Forestry Conservation bylaw. The bylaw applies regardless of whether the woodlot is designated or not."

Recognizing the need for more clarity and a better user experience, the county is committed to revising and reviewing policies to reduce confusion and enhance accessibility throughout the planning process.

Perth County says feedback from the public consultations has been instrumental in refining the plan.

"We are pleased that over 600 people attended the open houses," said Erickson. "The comments and questions that have been provided both at the public meetings and through directly contacting the department offer great feedback to incorporate into the next version of the draft new official plan."

The revised draft official plan will be posted online for public review at least one month prior to a statutory public meeting to provide an opportunity for further public comments in advance of the meeting.

"We encourage landowners to subscribe to receive notices when there are updates to the website page," said Erickson. "Review the draft official plan and the resources provided on the website and reach out if you have any questions or comments."

Physical copies of the county's draft official plan are available at all lower-tier municipal offices in North Perth, West Perth, Perth South and Perth East.

## Police Report

### Driver to be Identified

On Tuesday, March 12, 2024 shortly after 4:30 p.m. the Stratford Police Service observed a white Subaru sedan on Perth South Line 20 traveling east at a high rate of speed.

The vehicle was initially observed to be traveling at 125km/h in the posted 80km/h zone. Police turned around to attempt to stop the vehicle and observed it to increase its speed to 187km/h as it continued eastbound on Perth South Line 20 toward St Paul's.

Due to the high risk to public safety police did not pursue the vehicle.

The Subaru is described as a white sedan with a black hood and hood scoop. The vehicle does not have a front plate attached and the identity of the driver and the owner of the vehicle are unknown at this time.

A clip from the cruiser's dashboard camera has been attached, as well as a still photo of the Subaru.

The Stratford Police Service is asking for anyone with

information regarding the driver, or the owner, of the vehicle to contact Cst Thomas Lecomte at [tlecomte@stratfordpolice.com](mailto:tlecomte@stratfordpolice.com). Anyone with information who wishes to remain anonymous can contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS, or [www.p3tips.com](http://www.p3tips.com).

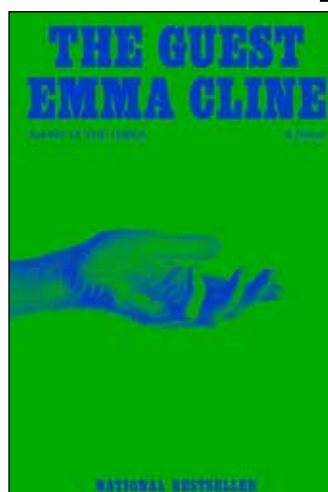


## Shelf Help

*The Guest* by Emma Cline  
@spl FIC Cline

Emma Cline's latest novel, *The Guest*, is set during a summer on Long Island. Alex has been staying with a wealthy man, Simon, as his guest, but she makes a scene at a dinner party, and is asked to leave his home. This is our introduction to her, and she's a character that leaves a trail of destruction in her wake. She's a manipulative opportunist, existing on handouts from rich boyfriends, and all the while drifting through life in a drug induced haze.

Having been thrown out of Simon's house Alex latches on to other wealthy people while circling around, and com-



ing closer to Simon again. Simon is planning to host a Labor Day party, and it's Alex's aim to turn up at the party, surprise him, and rekindle their love affair. It's not until the last pages that we find out the outcome of her plan.

*The Guest* has gained much attention, and favourable reviews since its release last year, and although Alex is an unlikeable character, one finds oneself rooting for her. This may be because the rich, older men she attaches herself to are not very pleasant either.

*The Guest* is a well written, anxiety inducing, but compelling read.

Heather Lister  
Public Service Librarian

## Weekend Quiz

1. Dinosaurs lived in what time period?
2. What is the largest species of deer?
3. What town do the Flintstones live in?
4. What has a gravitational pull so strong even light cannot escape it?
5. How many sides does the home plate have in baseball?
6. What do you call a group of lions?
7. Who released the 1987 song "Never Gonna Give You Up"?
8. What is the most common letter in Scrabble?
9. Who won the Oscar for best actress in 2024?
10. Which country is nicknamed the land of a thousand lakes?

This week's answers are found on pg. 30

**SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.**   
Support businesses that keep your community and its newspaper thriving



# Discovery Healthcare summer camp provides a pathway to a career in healthcare

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Announcements of emergency room closures due to staff shortages have been on the rise since the pandemic and the spotlight continues to shine on the need for an increase in a variety of health-care professionals across southwestern Ontario.

Discovery Healthcare summer camp aims to educate high school students about the possibility of working within the rural healthcare environment through its fun and interactive summer programs.

“We are thrilled to be able to offer youths in grades 9-12 an opportunity to learn about different careers in health care,” said Dr. Victor Ng, assistant dean of distributed education at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. “The camp provides high school students with an introduction to case-based learning and basic clinical skills, including casting, suturing and wound dressing.”

Running from July 15-19, The Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) will

host the camp at the Stratford General Hospital.

Each program provides a unique learning opportunity for high school students interested in pursuing careers in medicine, nursing, dentistry, paramedics, kinesiology, or other health-care professions.

“This camp is one of the ways in which the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry helps to address the ongoing health-care challenges and doctor shortages in our regional communities,” said Ng.

According to the media report released by HPHA, six million Canadians live in rural and remote communities, making up almost 20 per cent of the population, yet rural communities struggle to staff health-care facilities.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information reports less than 10 per cent of physicians practice in those areas, but that number has been increasing steadily since 2013.

The Discovery Healthcare summer camp is led by first- and second-year medical

students from Schulich Medicine & Dentistry at Western University. These future medical professionals spend the week providing mentorship and learning opportunities for the campers.

“By educating young people early about the health-care challenges in their communities and introducing our medical students to our regional communities as mentors and camp leaders, we are creating a pipeline of potential, future health professionals who understand the distinct needs of these communities,” said Ng.

Campers participate in unique learning opportunities such as clinical-skills sessions focused on suturing, casting, stethoscope activities and wound dressing, presentations by health-care professionals and opportunities for clinical job shadowing, discussions involving career paths for various health-care professions including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, EMS and dentistry, recreation sessions incorporating fun and team-building activities, and much more.

“Through a dynamic blend of interactive workshops, expert lectures and fun, Discovery Healthcare Camp not only strives to ignite a passion for health and medical sciences but also cultivates a spirit of curiosity and leadership in our participants,” said Ng. “The positive impact of this program extends far beyond the summer, shaping the future of health care by mentoring the talents and inspiring the bright and ambitious health-care professionals of the future.”

“We have heard anecdotally from past campers and camp leaders that they value this experience, and are excited to learn more about the community and keen to explore eventually working there.”

Discovery Healthcare aims to be a socially accountable initiative supported by the Office of Distributed Education at Schulich Medicine & Dentistry. By fostering a passion for health care among local youth, Discovery Healthcare will serve as an initiative to encourage the sustainability of the future health-care system.

## Notice of Service Disruption - Elevator at City Hall Annex (82 Erie St.)

Please note that the elevator at 82 Erie Street (City Hall Annex), will be out of service for six weeks, starting Monday, March 18, 2024.

This is to allow for work that's necessary to refurbish and modernize the elevator.

If you need to access the building during this period, and have a mobility challenge, please visit the ground floor reception desk to discuss how we can assist you.

Questions can also be directed to the appropriate department in advance at the following numbers:

Social Services – 519-271-3773 extension 6200

Building and Planning Services – 519-271-0250 extension 5345

Infrastructure Services – 519-271-0250 extension 5222

## Provincial funding will help boost PC Connect Initiative in Perth County

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The province announced earlier this month that the Ministry of Transportation has allocated an additional \$159,406 for Perth County and \$590,000 for the City of Stratford through the Community Transportation Grant Program to support continued operation of the PC Connect regional transit service.

“PC Connect provides an important service for our rural communities,” said Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington. “I remain committed to ensuring rural communities like ours, receive our fair share of transportation funding.”

The newfound financial support aims to sustain ongoing operations and alleviate the fiscal strain on forthcoming municipal budgets.

“I am so pleased to hear about and receive these additional funding dollars for both the City of Stratford and the County of Perth,” said Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma in a press release. “These funds continue to support and improve inter-community transportation between our local communities for work, medical services, education, tourism and social activities. As Mayor, I continue to value these strong partnerships with MPP Matthew Rae and our provincial government.”

PC Connect is described as a dependable, accessible, cost-effective bus service that facilitates connectivity throughout rural Perth County, Stratford, St. Marys, Kitchener-Waterloo and London.

PC Connect has provided more than 34,000 rides, en-

abling residents to access employment opportunities and social services, attend appointments, foster social connections and uphold an independent and active lifestyle.

“Our government is providing an additional \$749,000 to Perth County and the City of Stratford to support our rural transportation network,” said Rae.

“Whether it is travelling for medical appointments, shopping, or visiting family and friends, it is important that residents of Perth-Wellington have transit options. I will continue to advocate for provincial investments in our rural communities.”

The PC Connect public-transit initiative is a collaborative effort involving Perth County, Stratford, St. Marys and North Perth, which was made feasible with the support of the Government of Ontario.

The Provincial Community Transportation Grant Program will support this project until March 31, 2025.

For further details on PC Connect, visit [www.perthcounty.ca/pconnect](http://www.perthcounty.ca/pconnect)

**Maximize your return.**

**Conservative Advice for Intelligent Decisions**



Donna L. Hinz



**Franklin E. Hinz**

196 Ontario Street  
Stratford, Ontario N5A 3H4

519-273-1633 franklinehinz.com

**SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.**



**RIDE WITH PC CONNECT**

MPP Matthew Rae, Perth County Warden Rhonda Ehgoetz, Mayor Martin Ritsma, St. Marys Mayor Alan Strathdee and North Perth Mayor Todd Kasenberg are excited about the funding announcement for PC Connect

(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)



# Woodstock swans find new home in Stratford

LEE GRIFFI

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The pair of mute swans living in Woodstock's Southside Park for the past 12 years are returning to Stratford.

The Friendly City decided to end the program for several reasons, including the health and safety of the swans and city staff. Staff has been working with Stratford's experienced team and will be moving the birds to their new home later this week.

"Fortunately, the City of Stratford is in a position to welcome our swans back into their flock, so it seemed like the right time to make a change to the program," explained Grant Drygas, supervisor of forestry and parks in Woodstock. "Stratford has a great program and I know our swans, named RJ and Betty, will have a good home there."

Stratford's swan population was reduced by six in 2022 as a result of avian flu and Stratford's manager of parks, forestry and cemetery, Quin Malott, says they are fortunate to have the swans coming home.

"They know they will be well taken care of and they are basically coming home. It's perfect timing because we're looking for birds when we are usually trying to sell them, but because of the unfortunate incidents with the avian flu, we are looking to repopulate."

Stratford's annual swan release is scheduled for April 7, something Malott admits isn't the show it once was, but many people still look forward to it.

"We let the swans out and invite locals and others to come down and watch. At one time, there was a lot of hoopla around it with bouncy castles and food trucks, but

now it's just more of a release."

Mute swans are not native to North America and are considered an invasive species. A migratory bird aviculture permit is required and staff must follow strict conditions under the permit including clipping or pinioning their wings to prevent escape. While the swans spent the summer in and around Southside Pond, during the winter months, the swans were housed in a small, heated facility behind the parks department office.

As one of the largest species of waterfowl in the world, mute swans can weigh up to 19 kilograms (more than 40 pounds) with a wingspan of seven or eight feet. They also eat up to four kilograms of aquatic plants each day, often uprooting entire plants.

"We understand there are many who enjoy watching the pair of swans swimming in the pond, but ultimately they haven't had the desired effect on the number of geese and may be negatively impacting the natural ecosystem," said Drygas. "Communities in other parts of Ontario are now seeing a return of the native trumpeter swans, so we're hopeful that could happen here too."

The swans' size and aggressive behavior have also been a challenge for parks staff responsible for moving them to their winter facility each fall. Because the swans resist being captured, the process poses a risk of injury to both the birds and staff.

According to the Government of Canada, mute swans were brought over in the 1870s by European settlers looking to beautify parks and gardens. Their populations have since flourished in Ontario, from 500 in 1985 to more than 3,000 in 2012.



HOME SWEET HOME

RJ (left) and Betty are seen above before they leave Woodstock for their new home in Stratford. They are making themselves right at home and Woodstock will be getting updates about any potential cygnets on the way later this spring.

(CITY OF WOODSTOCK PHOTO)

## Protect your vision during the solar eclipse

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Stratford-area residents have the chance to swipe a pair of glasses that will allow them to safely watch the upcoming total solar eclipse this spring.

Romeo Optometry announced on social media that solar-eclipse sunglasses will be available at the optometry office for anyone planning to view the eclipse on April 8. Patients can pick up a free pair during their eye exam. Other patrons without an appointment, whether or not they're clients with the clinic, can drop in without an appointment and purchase a pair for \$5. Proceeds will support the local food bank.

Dr. Kelley Jacobs, optometrist at Romeo Optometry, said the solar-safety glasses must be worn during the total solar eclipse because the eclipse is far more damaging than the sun on a typical day.

"The eye is fooled by the amount of light in thinking that it's dark so the iris of the eye will expand creating a wider opening and much more maximum light is going to go in," she said. "Because it's dark for that seven minutes, you technically would have no problem physically just staring. The amount of UV that would go in is potentially dangerous and it has a very real capacity to damage the retina at the back of the eye."

The Stratford Public Library also announced in a

March 18 press release it will offer the eclipse glasses for free to patrons with a library card. The glasses will be available starting March 23 and the library will distribute one pair per family on a first-come, first-serve basis.

"Through the library, we are fortunate to be able to provide the glasses to help promote safe viewing and protect individuals in the community from potential harm," said Brandi Gillett, the community engagement supervisor for the Stratford Public Library.

She said patrons responded positively to the glasses, calling the service desk and asking questions when visiting. The library also has a curated list of eclipse-related resources including online- and broadcast-viewing options and books about different types of eclipses. The list can be found at [splibrary.ca/countdown](http://splibrary.ca/countdown).

"It's a really great resource for general FAQs about what the total solar eclipse is and how it is progressing through the area," Gillett said, "as well as just general resources for where they can watch and additional resources."

The Ontario Association of Optometrists said the glasses must be worn during the eclipse to safely view it. Regular sunglasses and unfiltered telescopes, binoculars and camera filters – even when used in conjunction with eclipse glasses – are not safe to use during an eclipse.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 10

## Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

### OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW

March 10	Soya McKay, Stratford	\$50.00
March 11	Dan Brown, Stratford	\$50.00
March 12	Jeannie Rae, St. Paul's	\$50.00
March 13	Blaine Myers, Stratford	\$50.00
March 14	Hugo Merkel, British Columbia	\$50.00
March 15	Tom Kittmer, Embro	\$50.00
March 16	Alicia Buuck, St. Marys	\$200.00
March 17	Don & Wendy Phillips, Sebringville	\$50.00
March 18	Dana Cossey, Mitchell	\$50.00
March 19	Scott Walsh, St. Marys	\$50.00
March 20	Deb Blum, Stratford	\$50.00
March 21	Fred Keller, Shedden	\$50.00
March 22	Rob Marquette, St. Pauls	\$50.00
March 23	Bob Wood, St. Pauls	\$200.00

ALL OF THE CALENDARS HAVE BEEN SOLD



Franklin E. Hinz

196 Ontario Street, Stratford

519-273-1633



# Our Buildings Tell a Story

## The Gordon Block

This heritage building on the southwest corner of Ontario and Downie streets at 2-12 Downie Street, commonly referred to as the Gordon Block, is on a five-sided parcel of land at one of Stratford's most prestigious downtown intersections. William Gordon, mayor of Stratford in 1884-1885, and later in 1907-1908, was the man behind the planning and construction, though the architect of the three-storey red-brick building is unknown.

The Gordon Block is representative of the early growth and development of the City of Stratford, and its construction date is traced back to 1893-94.

The building was the last brick commercial building of the 19th century constructed in Stratford's downtown core, thus signifying the end of a period of intensive expansion and commercial development from 1870 to 1900. Upon threat of demolition in the mid-1970s, the building was restored and now stands as one of the focal points in the downtown core. The preservation of the building's façade was historically significant in that it launched heritage conservation practice in Stratford.

The Gordon Block is an excellent example of a late-Victorian commercial building that incorporates design influences from a variety of architectural styles. Among the most notable of the building's



WILLIAM GORDON



GORDON BLOCK, 1925.

(STRATFORD-PERTH ARCHIVES PHOTOS)

features are the two pyramid-capped corner towers along the main (north) façade and the intricate brick corbelling along the roofline. As impressive as

those features may be, the Gordon Block is the first building in Stratford to be constructed of a cast-iron frame.

Timber frame construction had been predominant throughout the downtown core in the early days of Stratford, but in 1863 a municipal bylaw was passed in an effort to reduce the hazards of fire. The adoption of a cast-iron frame

not only helped to curb the threat of fire, it also expanded design opportunities by reducing the amount of space required for structural components. Given that new opportunity, the floor level of the building was designed as a solid curtain of plate glass, allowing uninterrupted views into the building from all three sides. That feature has been maintained.

A plaque on the building reads: "The last significant structure created during the 30 years of building and rebuilding the downtown 'in brick' 1870-1900.

erected by William Gordon, Mayor 1884-85, 1907-08. Cast 1978

William Gordon was the first Mayor of the new city of Stratford that came into being in 1885. Gordon Street is named after him.

Contributors: Paul Wilker and Gord Conroy



## Protect your vision during the solar eclipse

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Dr. Jacobs said if anyone were to buy the solar glasses online, they need to look for ones that have the safety symbol ISO-12312-2 from the International Organization for Standardization.

"That number specifically says a filter of that quality is safe to view through," she said.

Viewers also must avoid looking directly at the eclipse to prevent eye damage. Any damage from directly looking at the eclipse might not appear until at least four to 12 hours later. Symptoms of eye damage from the eclipse include blurry vision, blind spot in central vi-

sion of one or both eyes, distorted vision, changes in seeing colours, and an increase in light sensitivity, grittiness, or eye pain.

"You might think, 'Oh, I did it. I'm fine. Let's just try it again,' but you're not going to necessarily notice it right away," Dr. Jacobs said.

Still, she encourages viewing the eclipse safely. The last total solar eclipse occurred in the 1970s and the next one won't be seen in the area until 2150.

"I am saying to my patients, 'Get out and look at it with your glasses on safely because there's never going to be another one in our lifetime,'" she said.



(BRANDI GILLETT PHOTO)

### AVOID EYE DAMAGE

"Looking to view the once-in-a-lifetime total solar eclipse on April 8? The Stratford Public Library and Romeo Optometry will have the glasses available for safe viewing."



# Cycle Stratford is gearing up for another season

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As the weather begins to warm, Cycle Stratford is gearing up for another active season.

Cycle Stratford is hosting its Winter Social this Sunday, March 24, from 1-3 p.m. at Matilda Gallery & Art Bar (85 Downie St.) in Stratford. Anyone interested in biking this season is welcome to attend and learn more about the cycling club. Board members will be available to chat with potential new members.

Stratford Cycle is a group of dedicated cyclists who promote healthy living through movement. The group, founded in 2013, focuses on safe, recreational biking, fellowship and sportsmanship, and bike safety and maintenance.

Longtime board member Pete McDonnell says Cycle Stratford aims to be as open and accessible as possible. They welcome anyone who can maintain a reasonable pace on their rides, including beginners.

The club's Sunday rides split into two groups – a shorter, slower-paced group and

a longer, mid-level group – to accommodate different skill and fitness levels.

"We are a 'no-drop' ride club, which means no one gets left behind," McDonnell said. "Ideally, you can ride for about 20 kilometres and know a bit of bike mechanics, but we always have someone willing to help if you get a flat tire."

The season typically starts in May, and the cycling club also host other events like out-of-town rides and social get-togethers.

The club also participates in social events including Climate Momentum's Earth Day event and Bike Month in June. They also work to advocate for proper signage and bike lanes throughout the city, and they work with the City of Stratford to make cycling as safe as possible for everyone.

Cycle Stratford is actively looking for sponsorship from local businesses. Interested local businesses can email Jeanne at [programscyclestratford@gmail.com](mailto:programscyclestratford@gmail.com) for more information.

Cycle Stratford welcomes all to join them this weekend or visit their website at [www.cyclestratford.com](http://www.cyclestratford.com) for more information.



OUT FOR A SPIN

Fitness and advocacy at the heart of Stratford's local cycle club

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

# Paws and People: Healing for the whole family at Connection Chiropractic

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Many know them for their hilarious Instagram posts, but Connection Chiropractic is a dedicated team of professionals helping human and animal clients feel their best.

Garner completed the animal chiropractic program through the Veterinary Chiropractic Learning Centre (VCLC) in February

2020 and currently works on furry friends, which makes up a good portion of her practice.

First launching her practice in Hamilton, Garner started incorporating animal-chiropractic care alongside her standard, human-based practice, which was always a dream because of her deep connection to dogs and her ability to understand their feelings and needs.

"I grew up horseback riding and I've always loved animals," she said. "I love it when people bring their dogs to me and their dog turns around and starts giving me kisses. I think dogs really pick up on your energy, and I think I just connect with them really well."

Garner graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a Doctor of Chiropractic degree from the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC) and she has worked with humans and animals for most of her career. She moved from Hamilton to Stratford to take over another chiropractic practice in September 2022.

Connection Chiropractic provides whole-family chiropractic care and can see and treat adults, children, babies and, of course, family pets.

"Chiropractic care is about creating a deep connection with each patient as an individual. I take great joy in using my expertise to help them function and feel better, ultimately leading to healthier and happier lives," she said.

Garner says the best part about treating animals in particular is they don't hide their true feelings about treatment. She notes that seeing pain and negative symptoms get better after treatment is a truly wonderful feeling.

"Dogs can be really stoic animals and not show their pain, but as they age, they start to avoid things that hurt. Maybe they won't jump up on the couch anymore or they avoid walking up the stairs. After I see them, though, it's

so great to hear that, all of a sudden, they run up the stairs or start playing with their favourite toy again."

As they age, animals, like humans, can start to get aches and pains. While medical treatment may be necessary, animal-chiropractic care can address several musculoskeletal conditions. Similar to chiropractic treatment for people, the benefits of animal-chiropractic treatment include enhanced performance, function and quality of life.

Connection Chiropractic is currently accepting new patients (human and animal). Visit [www.connectionchiropractic.ca](http://www.connectionchiropractic.ca) for more information, and be sure to follow along on Instagram, @connectionchiro.



HEALING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Dr. Karen Garner with her family dogs, Sully And Pippa

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)



**TAVISTOCK COMMUNITY HEALTH INC.**

Tavistock Community Health Inc.  
Notice of Annual General Meeting

**WEDNESDAY  
APRIL 10, 2024**

Tavistock Men's Club  
78 Woodstock St. N.,  
Tavistock | 7:00 pm

A \$5.00 Membership Fee entitles you to a vote.



# Light Up the Night Kayaking to kick off first season with Flower Power themed paddle

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Organizers behind Light up the Night Kayaking and are already planning for their first paddle.

Light Up the Night Kayaking announced its 2024 season dates, starting with a Flower Power night on May 18 to celebrate the end of winter. The kayaking group paddles around the Avon River and decorates their boats with lights for an evening ride. Participants can choose to dress up related to the theme, like the floral or '70s-inspired theme for Flower Power night, or wear what they would normally wear for kayaking.

"We have a lot of people responding to (the first planned paddle) as well ... which is great," organizer Sue Clark said. "That way as well people that are in town, like we are, can make that plan now because sometimes, so often, people will tell us,

'Oh, I wish you would've told us sooner.' "

There will also be a Full Moon paddle in St. Marys on June 21 and a Canada Day event on June 28. Clark explained that she knew she didn't want to host a Canada Day event on July 1 as she knows families are usually busy camping, watching fireworks shows, or engaging in other activities. Light Up the Night Kayaking's other themes include Christmas in July on July 27, Hawaiian on Aug. 24, Superhero on Sept. 28, the Lantern Paddle on Oct. 19, and Halloween on Oct. 26.

Participation in the themed kayaking group has evolved over the years with the Light Up the Night kayaking Facebook group having around 1,600 members. Participating kayakers often become friends with other members of the group. Clark and David Price, who creates social-media graphics for the group, were talking about the upcoming season in Tim Hor-

tons and one of their fellow kayakers happened to be there and was excited about it. Clark said it was like running into an old friend.

"People are talking about going camping and they've never met before," she said. "It's bringing people together as friends."

Price said people outside of Stratford and area will also come to the Light Up the Night Kayaking events.

"Not only do you get to meet all of these cool, different people, they're from super far around too," Price said. "We've got a couple that comes down from North Bay every year. They've already said they're planning to come to a few of the events this year."

In addition to kayakers partaking in the evening events, there are also a lot of people watching throughout the night across the City of Stratford. Clark said she feels like a celebrity during the events as spec-

tators cheer and take photos.

"We're enjoying it because we're decorating and seeing each other," Clark said. "The people of Stratford that come and aren't on the water are also enjoying it and that's the two-fold I speak of a lot. It's not just for us, it's for them as well and it's like seeing the Christmas lights, but you don't have to drive around and see them, you just stand there and you can see us go by."

Whether someone has never participated before or they've participated in every single event so far, Light up the Night Kayaking welcomes all. Participants must bring lights to place on their kayak by law and for safety.

"Whether you just want to watch it from the shore or actually join us kayaking, canoeing, or paddle-boarding on the river, just show up, have a few lights on your boat and just be ready to have some fun," Price said.

**Spring Into Savings: Explore Pre-Owned Gems, Exclusive Spring Offers!**

<p><b>2009 Nissan Sentra SE-R</b></p>  <p><b>\$5,500</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 192,273 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2023 Nissan Sentra S-Plus</b></p>  <p><b>\$25,898</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 23,516 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2022 Hyundai Tucson AWD</b></p>  <p><b>\$31,899</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 21,910 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2022 Mazda CX-9 Touring</b></p>  <p><b>\$40,899</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 33,465 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2020 Subaru Impreza</b></p>  <p><b>\$27,998</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 29,595 KM</b></p>
<p><b>2019 Nissan Altima</b></p>  <p><b>\$19,395</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 95,446 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2020 Nissan Kicks SV</b></p>  <p><b>\$20,898</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 47,564 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2022 Nissan Versa</b></p>  <p><b>\$21,898</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 21,401 KM</b></p>		
<p><b>2019 Mercedes GLA-250</b></p>  <p><b>\$28,495</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 87,492 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2019 Ford Ranger Supercrew</b></p>  <p><b>\$33,898</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 80,655 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2020 Ford Escape Titanium</b></p>  <p><b>\$32,898</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 10,215 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2021 Dodge Challenger R/T</b></p>  <p><b>\$48,898</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 15,119 KM</b></p>	<p><b>2019 Hyundai Kona</b></p>  <p><b>\$20,495</b> + HST &amp; lic <b>LOW KMS - 52,086 KM</b></p>

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

**BAD CREDIT... NO PROBLEM!. We work with multiple banks and credit unions to get you APPROVED with the LOWEST RATE POSSIBLE! All Credit Approved with \$0 Down.**

**NISSAN Stratford NISSAN**

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

STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thu. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00 PARTS & SERVICE: Mon.-Sat. 8:00-5:00  
\*Our Service Department is Now Open on Saturdays\*

STRATFORD NISSAN





# Who's Who in the Region

©2024 Western Canada Press westcanpress@gmail.com



618 Huron St., Stratford [www.shopnofrills.ca](http://www.shopnofrills.ca)

For Canadians looking to stretch their grocery budgets without sacrificing quality, **No Frills** stores are the go-to destination for all their shopping needs. **No Frills** has carved a niche for itself by focusing on simplicity, fair prices, and a no-nonsense approach to meeting the household needs of everyday shoppers.

As consumers increasingly prioritize value and convenience in their shopping habits, **No Frills** is well-positioned to remain a trusted company for cost-conscious families nationwide.

**No Frills** with 250+ franchise stores purchase in huge quantities direct from manufacturers and distributors. This gives them the remarkable buying power of Loblaw Companies, Canada's largest food distributor founded in 1919.

**Craig & Jess' No Frills** in Stratford is owned and operated by **Craig and Jess Posthumus**, who are assisted by a friendly, helpful team. They continue to attract a loyal following of savvy shoppers seeking quality groceries at affordable prices.

Items featured include fresh fruits, vegetables, and organic produce, a large selection of quality meat, seafood, baked goods and treats, frozen foods, snacks, canned goods, deli, dairy, bottled water, plus personal care and health items and more!

In addition to the national brand products, **No Frills** offers President's Choice®, over 300 PC® Organics™ products, PC® Blue Menu™, PC® Black Label - exotic flavours from around the globe, environmentally friendly PC® Green™, Club Pack® large size or multi-pack items, and Naturally Imperfect™ line of products. Look for the simple check™ symbol on over 500 no name® products - the yellow brand that saves you money.

Earn points towards FREE groceries by using your PC Financial® MasterCard® or PC® Money Account to pay for purchases at **No Frills**® With the PC Optimum™ program, members earn points with every eligible purchase. Download the PC Optimum App - it automatically loads the newest offers to your email or phone.

**Craig & Jess' No Frills** provides PC Express™ online grocery and pickup for your shopping convenience.

**No Frills** Won't Be Beat®. "The **No Frills** thing to do" is to price match their competitor's flyers, through their Price Match program.

Become a Hauler by shopping at **Craig & Jess' No Frills**®. Gift cards are available, and much appreciated.

Like them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nofrillsstratfordon](http://www.facebook.com/nofrillsstratfordon) They are open 7 days a week 8:00 am-9:00 pm.

**A & A**   
*Automotive*

**A Clientele Built on Trust and Integrity Since 2010**

15 Griffith Rd., Stratford 519-275-3023  
[aandaautomotive@gmail.com](mailto:aandaautomotive@gmail.com)

At the heart of every successful auto repair operation lies a dedication to excellence and a commitment to customer satisfaction. Whether faced with routine maintenance tasks or complex mechanical issues, auto repair professionals work tirelessly to ensure that vehicles are restored to optimal condition, delivering both performance and reliability on the road. Recognizing the importance of timely service, **A&A Automotive** adheres to a punctuality pledge.

Addressing minor issues during routine maintenance is typically more cost-effective than dealing with major repairs that result from neglect. Regular inspections allow mechanics to identify potential problems early on, preventing them from escalating into costly issues. A well-maintained vehicle is an investment in avoiding hefty repair bills down the road.

**A&A Automotive** embraces cutting-edge diagnostic technology to unravel the mysteries beneath the hood. Equipped with state-of-the-art tools, the shop's diagnostic capabilities extend beyond the surface, allowing technicians to pinpoint issues with accuracy. This commitment to precision ensures that repairs are not just solutions but long-lasting remedies.

**A&A Automotive** provides a wide range of services, including lube-oil-filter service, troubleshooting, advanced computer diagnostics and expert repairs. This includes tire sales and service, brakes, suspension, steering, exhaust, climate control, fuel injection service, transmission maintenance, safety inspections and general repairs.

They install quality Carquest Auto parts, and provide a 2-year 40,000km nationwide warranty on all repairs.

When you notice an issue with your vehicle, bring it to **A&A Automotive** where their professional team will ensure that the problem is properly diagnosed and corrected.

We recommend you contact **Al** or **Kyle** at **A&A Automotive** to book a service appointment and start enjoying exceptional automotive repairs at a fair price.



*The Local Appliance Specialist Since 1962*

237 Huron Road, Sebringville 519-393-6181  
located 5 minutes west of Stratford 1-800-265-4567

Investing in new major appliances can be both an exciting and daunting task. Whether you're upgrading your kitchen with a state-of-the-art refrigerator or replacing a worn-out washing machine, making informed decisions is crucial.

Before diving into the world of appliances, take a moment to assess your needs. Consider the size of your household, your lifestyle, and any specific features or functionalities you prioritize. Your next step is to visit **Phelans Place**.

In an era of growing environmental awareness, energy efficiency has become a key consideration when purchasing major appliances. Look for appliances with ENERGY STAR® certification. Energy-efficient appliances not only help the environment but also result in long-term cost savings on utility bills.

Major appliances are equipped with numerous features and innovations designed to enhance convenience and efficiency.

**Phelans Place** carries numerous respected, high-demand brands KitchenAid®, LG, Frigidaire, Samsung, Whirlpool®, Maytag, Bosch, Electrolux, Amana, Elica, and Danby to mention a few.

**Phelans Place** features quality built refrigerators, freezers, gas and electric ranges, cooktops, wall ovens, microwaves, dishwashers, front and top load washers, gas and electric dryers, laundry pairs, ventilation, and complete accessories.

**Phelans Place** is a family-owned business that provides the service and selection that smart consumers are looking for.

By shopping at **Phelans Place** the process of acquiring new major appliances can be both satisfying and rewarding, ensuring that your home is equipped with reliable and efficient items for years to come. **Phelans Place** also offers package pricing, free delivery in their trade area, and removal of old appliances.

Stop by **Phelans Place** a local appliance store with a relaxed, no-pressure-to-buy atmosphere. You can also view their products and special promotions online at [www.phelansplace.com](http://www.phelansplace.com).

Like them on Facebook [www.facebook.com/phelansplaceappliances](http://www.facebook.com/phelansplaceappliances)



581 Huron St. Stratford 519-271-7707  
100 Mill St., New Hamburg 519-390-0265  
Sobey Plaza [www.petvalu.com](http://www.petvalu.com)

Going to natural foods is not just a trend for humans. Pet food manufacturers have also followed suit with the latest in wholesome dog and cat formulas containing high-quality ingredients and digestive enzymes, and herbal supplements and minerals necessary for maximum digestibility and absorption of nutrients.

Feeding your pet higher quality food can lead to a longer and healthier life, with lower veterinarian bills.

**Pet Valu** retail quality nutritional dry kibble, canned (wet), dehydrated food, and raw pet food. The products they feature have been formulated using top-quality ingredients that dogs and cats love.

**Pet Valu** offers a selection of high-quality products from leading brands: Performatrin Prime, Hill's, Blue Buffalo, Merrick, Primal, Stella & Chewy's, Royal Canin, Open Range, Acana, Wellness, GO!, Big Country Raw, and more.

**Pet Valu** features a selection of pet toys, treats and accessories. Choose from bowls, colourful collars and leads, pet sweaters, training aids, flea and odour control products, cozy pet beds, eco-friendly litter, portable crates, and pet barriers for vans and SUVs.

They also carry birds, exotics, small animals, and beautiful Betta fish in an endless variety of colors and fin types.

**Pet Valu** provides a self-serve dog wash - just \$15 per wash, plus a cat adoption program to ensure felines have a good life and find loving forever homes. Groomingdale's® offers professional pet grooming services.

**Pet Valu Canada Inc.** is Canada's largest pet specialty retail chain with 702 stores and head office in Markham, Ontario.

The Stratford and New Hamburg stores are franchise-owned and operated by **Kayla Orlek**, who has a wealth of experience in the industry. **Kim Kempen** has managed the local Stratford store for over a decade. She is assisted by a friendly staff.

**Pet Valu** invites you to stop by and experience a pet friendly atmosphere of people who care about your pet's dietary health requirements.

Ask about Your Rewards™/ VIP Plus™ frequent Buyer Bag Program. The last Thursday of every month is Seniors' Day, where you save 10% on regular-priced merchandise.

**Pet Valu** offers free shipping on orders over \$49.00, gift cards, and email subscriptions to keep you updated on exciting flyers, product launches, and helpful tips.

Like **Pet Valu** on Facebook to stay connected [www.facebook.com/PetValuStratford2362/](http://www.facebook.com/PetValuStratford2362/) or [www.facebook.com/PetValuNewHamburg/](http://www.facebook.com/PetValuNewHamburg/)



*Keeping You Independent*

305 Romeo St. S. Stratford 519-271-6700  
566 Queen St. E. St Marys 519-284-4348  
1-866-222-4843

37 Ontario St. N. Grand Bend 519-238-8015

Maintaining mobility is essential for independence, particularly for aging adults and individuals with mobility challenges. Home health care products available at **Action Health Care** make life easier.

As healthcare continues to evolve, the emphasis on home-based care is gaining momentum. The availability and accessibility of these supplies empower individuals to actively participate in their own well-being, fostering a sense of control and dignity within the intimate setting of the home.

Assistive technology plays a vital role in promoting communication, accessibility, and independence for individuals with disabilities or impairments.

Items available at **Action Health Care** include manual or power wheelchairs, powered scooters in various sizes, transport chairs, rollator walkers, stairs and porch lifts, **Action Health Care** has you covered. They supply crutches, bath lifts, power lift recliners, grab bars, transfer aids, ramps, sports and work bracing, incontinent supplies, mastectomy products, foot care supplies and orthotics supplies, dressing supplies and post-op items, safety equipment for bedroom and bath, personal emergency response systems, first aid kits, exercise equipment, and much more. Prompt, reliable delivery is available.

Staff members are certified fitters for compression hosiery and bracing. Equipment rentals are available.

**Action Health Care** deals directly with insurance companies, physicians, caregivers, plus physio and occupational therapists. They are a registered vendor with the Assistive Devices Program (A.D.P.), Veterans Affairs Canada, WSIB and various Insurance Companies.

The team at **Action Health Care Inc.** a family-owned company has been dedicated to personal customer service and exceptional product knowledge since April of 2002.

Local owner, **Mike Ford** and his team have numerous years of hands-on experience in helping customers on a very personal basis.

Visit them today or shop online at [www.actionhealthcare.ca](http://www.actionhealthcare.ca) Like them on Facebook.



*Offering service that you can count on*

18 Griffith Rd,  
RR#3, Stratford

519-271-9427

[www.dannystruck.ca](http://www.dannystruck.ca)  
[service@dannystruck.ca](mailto:service@dannystruck.ca)

**Danny's Truck & Equipment Repairs** established in 1979, performs high-quality truck and trailer repairs and maintenance. They provide guaranteed service you can always trust.

Local owner, **Derek Hoiting** knows that his customers have high expectations when it comes to having their vehicles repaired in a timely matter, to get them back on the road quickly.

Nowadays professional truck mechanics must continually adapt to varying technology and repair techniques. Modern, state-of-the-art integrated electronic systems and complex computers help regulate trucks and their performance while on the road. This rising sophistication requires highly trained technicians who can use computerized shop equipment and work with electronic components while maintaining their skills with traditional hand tools.

In their two huge service bays they provide professional repairs. This includes air conditioning, transmissions and electrical to suspension, certified safety inspections, light & medium duty truck repairs, coach & motorhome inspections & repairs, PTO & hydraulic repairs, custom PTO shafts or drivelines, plus grease, fluid level checks, annual & semi-annual inspections, brake check & adjustment, steering & suspension inspection, frame extensions & modifications, body work & repairs (No painting).

All repairs recommended or needed are recorded and supplied to customers.

When your vehicle's Check Engine Light comes visit **Danny's Truck & Equipment Repairs**. Appointments are preferred, but emergency situations are handled in a timely manner never leaving you stranded at the roadside. They provide a fast, reliable Mobile Service for brake lock-ups, truck & trailer repairs, no starts & battery boosting, vehicle lock-outs, hydraulics, computer diagnostics & code reading, diesel after-treatment diagnosing & repairs, and electrical system testing (AVR), and more.

When you are searching for the best repair service at a fair price, whether it's one truck or a fleet contact **Danny's Truck & Equipment Repairs** by phone or email.





# Wedding GUIDE

### SEW STYLISH

Sew Stylish is Oxford County's number 1 destination for wedding gown shopping

for the last 20 plus years. The store has had new ownership since 2019 where it has now become a more vibrant and fun environ-

ment to shop.(check out our instagram) We offer an environment where you can come in and relax and be yourself you will have a stylist with you every step of the way.

The small community mentality translates into personal service, the brides are our number one priority. We work with them from beginning to end to choose the right dress, order the perfect size and make any careful alterations. We are here to help you and offer our expertise through your appointment where we will make recommendations based on how different styles and fabrics suit your body type, and what tones and shades of white would look best with your skin. We also know our inven-

tory inside and out, and can find just what you're looking for. Did we mention we have the largest inventory around, our selection of gowns in sizes 6-32. With our in-house seamstress, you'll always get the perfect fit and won't have the stress to find a trusted and skilled artist yourself.

When you shop at Sew Stylish, it's all part of the experience, and the service. You will not need to pay in advance to book an appointment. Your dress bag and hanger are provided when you order your gown at no charge. Dress steaming is also included. And all brides will receive a goodie bag. At Sew Stylish, all free and part of the experience.



(TRACEY SCHUTT - BLACKMORE MEDIAPHOTO)

*sew stylish*  
BRIDAL BOUTIQUE  
WHERE BIG CITY  
Style  
MEETS SMALL TOWN  
Service  
125 Thames Street S  
Ingersoll ON

Bridal Boutique in  
Downtown  
Ingersoll Ontario  
That offeres dress  
options for every  
bride  
Every budget, style  
and size

# WEDDING?

## PARTY SUPPLY

### 35 YEARS

### 519-273-4353

### Tipsy Jack Mobile Bar Rental

Inquire about your event date and our backyard game rentals!

[tipsyjackmobilebarrental@gmail.com](mailto:tipsyjackmobilebarrental@gmail.com)



**TEAHEN HOMES PRESENTS 21 ORCHARD DRIVE**



Located in Phase 4 of Countryside Estates newest development is this modern beauty built by TEAHEN HOMES. This home's sleek design features neutral finishes that create a calming and sophisticated atmosphere. Clean lines throughout the home contribute to a sense of spaciousness and contemporary elegance. The main floor displays 2 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms, stone countertops on all surfaces, walk-in closet, and exquisite ensuite. The Engineered hardwood flooring is adorned with quality, offering durability, easy maintenance, and the perfect balance of natural warmth and modern appeal. The finished basement has been thoughtfully finished to maximize living space and functionality with an extra bedroom, bathroom and spacious family room. Our on-site design experts, plumbing division, custom in-house cabinetry team and real estate experts make building your next home a seamless and uniquely exceptional experience. Build your dream home with TEAHEN HOMES today. Represented by Lindsay Pickering. **MLS#40507156 \$1,049,000.00**



*Lindsay Pickering*  
BROKER



**RE/MAX** a-b REALTY LTD. BROKERAGE

**Lindsay Pickering**

519-276-9959

www.lindsaypickering.ca

lindsaypickering22@gmail.com

# MUSIC CENTRAL

ENTERTAINMENT

**PLAN YOUR DAY, YOUR WAY**

Contact us if you want your dance floor packed



**Weddings**

**Events**

**Photo Booth**

**WELCOME TO MUSIC CENTRAL**

London, Ontario and area's most respected Corporate and Wedding DJ company. We're known for our high-quality team and long resume of incredible events.

1496 Dundas St, London, ON | 519-680-0698  
musiccentral@musiccentral.ca | musiccentral.ca



443 Erie Street, Unit 2,  
Stratford N5A 2N3  
**519-273-2253**

*Enjoy the homemade goodness of the Black Angus Bakery and Catering. Choose from our wonderful and diverse selection of delectable treats and hearty delicious meals.*

*Using our Mothers' and Grandmothers' recipes we cook and bake with love those memorable foods that inspire nostalgic feelings of home.*

*Trevor and Susan are known for their friendly reliable service in providing the best quality homestyle cooked meals and sweets for the community for over 18 years.*

*We use only AAA Black Angus Beef, grain fed and locally raised by Tim Yungblut of Hickson as well as many other locally sourced ingredients and produce.*

*Customized wedding menus are tailored to your preferences and budget.*

*We cater to all aspects of wedding celebrations; from engagement parties and showers, to rehearsal dinners, BBQ's, Buck and Does and day after family brunches.*

*Prices include dinner service clean up, but do not include taxes, gratuity, linen, flatware, china, glassware.*

*Please get in touch to discuss your requirements!*

<https://www.blackangusbakeryandcatering.ca/wedding-menu/>

## Wedding & Graduation Sale

Suits from  
**\$249.99**

Tuxedo rentals from  
**\$229.99**

UP TO  
**50% OFF**  
store wide



*Zabian's*  
**MENS WEAR**  
ZABIANS.CA

On-Site Tailor  
519 539 8011

471 DUNDAS ST. WOODSTOCK  
open 7 days a week



# STRATFORD **TIMES** SPORTS

- STRATFORD'S ULTIMATE INDOOR GOLF EXPERIENCE -

**FORE EVERYONE**  
GOLF & MULTISPORT

**RAIN OR SHINE  
IT'S TEE OFF  
TIME!**

Enjoy Wings and a Domestic Pint  
for ONLY \$18.99

1060 ONTARIO ST., 519-305-5800



**GET NOTICED!**

Email [stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com) for details on how to get your ad here and support our local sports.

## Fighting Irish sweep Elora; tied 1-1 with Alvinston

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Bentley's Fighting Irish's second-round playoff series against the Alvinston Killer Bees is off to a thrilling start with each team having one win and both games being decided in overtime.

Game one between Stratford and Alvinston took place on March 15 and the Fighting Irish got the early jump, taking a 1-0 lead just one minute and 19 seconds into the opening period thanks to a goal by Ray Robbins. The Killer Bees took over the game in the second, outshooting the Fighting Irish 15-8 and scoring three unanswered goals, two of which were scored in the final minute of the period.

In the third, Stratford stormed back to life, scoring twice in the first three minutes and 43 seconds of the period. Ryan O'Bonsawin and Mav Petrie got the goals that tied things up at three apiece. The game remained deadlocked until,



(FRED GONDER PHOTO)

### 'SHADES OF BOBBY ORR'

**Matt Fuller #7 swoops in on Killer Bees goalie Nolan Dekoning #35 and scores and then leaps over the sprawling goalie to avoid injuring him.** with just over three minutes left in regulation, Graham Brulotte put the Fighting Irish ahead by one. It appeared that the lead would survive until a stunning goal by Alvinston's Bayly Fryfogle with just

one second left on the clock tied the game and forced overtime.

In the extra frame, Brulotte potted the game-winner to put Stratford ahead 1-0 in the series with the 5-4 victory. Darren Smith made 44 saves in the Fighting Irish's crease.

One day later, the series moved to the William Allman Arena for the second game of the

semi-final and, after Alvinston scored the game's first goal, Stratford scored three straight to take a 3-1 lead heading into the first intermission, including two by Brulotte and one by Cooper Leitch.

Stratford's lead evaporated in the second in the blink of an eye with the Killer Bees scoring twice in 32 seconds to tie the game at three apiece. A few minutes later, Matt Fuller stemmed the tide and retook a one-goal lead for Stratford.

Alvinston continued pushing, however, and the Killer Bees scored twice to go up by a goal, first with 4:38 remaining in regulation and then with just under two minutes left. This time, it was Stratford's turn to find a heroic game-tying goal in the dying moments of the third with Robbins tying the game at 5-5 with 30 seconds left in the period.

onds left in the period.

A highly exciting overtime came to an end with Aiden Preuter scoring the winning tally to give the Killer Bees the 6-5 victory and tie the series at one game apiece.

The Fighting Irish advanced to the second round by defeating the Elora Rocks in three straight games, the last of which happened back on March 9 when Stratford earned a 4-2 win to eliminate the Rocks from the playoffs. O'Bonsawin, Spencer Mills, Justin Murray and Cameron Stokes scored for Stratford while Zack Weir picked up the win in goal.

**SLO-PITCH PLAYERS NEEDED**

Shakespeare Swans are looking for players for our 55+ slo-pitch team.

- Women 50+, Men 55+
- Tues. and Thurs. mornings at 9:30 am
- Play in Shakespeare and KW (carpooling available)
- All abilities welcome
- Late May to end of September

It's all about fun, but we do want to win!!

**Call or text Bud Turner for more information: 519-949-3087**

**STONETOWN TRAVEL**

HEAD OFFICE:  
150 Queen Street East, St. Marys, ON N4X 1B4 | TICO #50010159

BRANCH OFFICE:  
210 Mill Street, New Hamburg, ON N3A 1P9 | TICO #50025796  
St. Marys 519-284-2332 | New Hamburg 226-333-9939  
[www.stonetowntravel.com](http://www.stonetowntravel.com) | [agent@stonetowntravel.com](mailto:agent@stonetowntravel.com)

Newfoundland & Labrador  
July 29 - August 9, 2024

Ireland  
June 5-16, 2024





# Warriors to meet Sugar Kings after first-round win over Brantford

SPENCER SEYMOUR

*Times Regional Reporter*

The Stratford Hunter Steel Ltd. Warriors have a second-round date with the Elmira Sugar Kings after defeating the Brantford Bandits in five games, with the series-clinching game going into triple overtime.

According to head coach Dave Williams, the Warriors expected a tough test from the Bandits in the quarter-final series, an expectation that was more than fulfilled.

"We knew Brantford was going to be a tough opponent," Williams told the Times. "It was a hard-fought battle and hopefully our group will be better because of how hard Brantford played us. We've talked a lot this year about the consistency of our play, and you can't just turn it on and turn it off when you decide you want to play. It's important to recognize how important a good start is and find a way to get to the type of game we want to play right away rather than get behind and try to find it as the game goes along because it can be really tough to find the game you want when you're behind."

The search for consistency has been a constant for the Warriors this year, but now in the post-season, Williams noted the need for consistency becomes even greater.

"The playoffs demand urgency," said Williams. "At this stage of the season, we are only guaranteed a limited number of games. If we want to continue to play, we have to play good hockey to give ourselves the chance to earn the next opportunity. The mistakes that you make and not playing to the best of your ability have far more cost at this part of the season."

Stratford began their series against Brantford March 8 with a 6-0 victory and four of the team's goals coming in the third period. Braydon Stumpf piled up three assists while Michael Denney scored a pair. Camden Daigle, Cole Lewis and Joey Brehmer also had two-point nights while Matthew Perdue made 24 saves in the shutout. Stratford's powerplay enjoyed a luminescent night, going three-for-eight.

Game two was a prime example of what coach Williams discussed when it comes to the difficulty of climbing back when your start isn't up to snuff as the Warriors fell behind 2-0 just four minutes and seven seconds into the game. The Bandits extended their first-period lead to 3-0 at the 11:43 mark but just 62 seconds later, Daigle finally stopped the bleeding and got the Warriors on the board.

However, the early lead proved too much for the Warriors to overcome as the Bandits came away with a 6-3 win. Evan Hjelholt posted a goal and an assist for Stratford.

It appeared as if the Warriors may have to combat another unfriendly start in game three when the Bandits got the game's first

goal just under five minutes into the first, but within a minute and 23 seconds of falling behind 1-0, the Warriors got goals from Stumpf and Liam Gorman to go up

by one. Brantford tied the game at two apiece in the second and, after a scoreless third, the game went into overtime in which Lewis potted the winning goal 89 seconds into the extra frame.

Coach Williams mentioned his squad needing to find different paths to victory was a major benefit to the Warriors heading into the next round.

"I liked that we had to win some different ways. Obviously, everyone wants every game to be 5-0 and have no flaws the whole way

through,

but we were pushed to play a bit outside of our

comfort zone. We had a few games where we fell behind and had to battle back and we also had the two overtime games where we had the lead and they tied it up. Hopefully, that serves us well going forward, recognizing the need to compete in every moment and that some nights you're going to have to win a bit uglier than you set out to."

The series shifted back to Brantford for game four, a contest that could be summed up in one word – whiplash. Harmer and Daigle bookmarked the first period with goals nine seconds in and with three seconds left. Daigle had the Warriors' only goal of the second frame, where the Bandits completely tilted the ice in their favour, scoring four goals to take a one-goal lead into the third.

However, the Warriors rediscovered their better side and scored three unanswered in the third en route to a 6-4 victory.

With their season on the line, the Bandits met the Warriors at the William Allman Arena for the fifth game of the series and took a 1-0 lead with the only goal of the opening period, outshooting the home side 13-7 in the first 20 minutes. Once again, a different version of the Warriors emerged from the dressing room for the second with Daigle and Stumpf both finding the back of the net to put Stratford up 2-1 going into the third.

A goal midway through the period tied things up at two apiece, a score that carried through the rest of the third, forc-

ing overtime. With two full, overtime periods still not producing a winner, the game went into a third sudden-death period and this time, just seven seconds in, Lewis netted the game-winning and series-clinching goal.

Williams was pleased with how his team handled so much extra hockey en route to securing the fourth and deciding win of the series.

"Especially with it being a game in which we had the opportunity to clinch the series, our group knew what was at stake. In between periods, you're trying to use that time to recharge and get some energy back. Both

teams started a player short that night and we both lost players

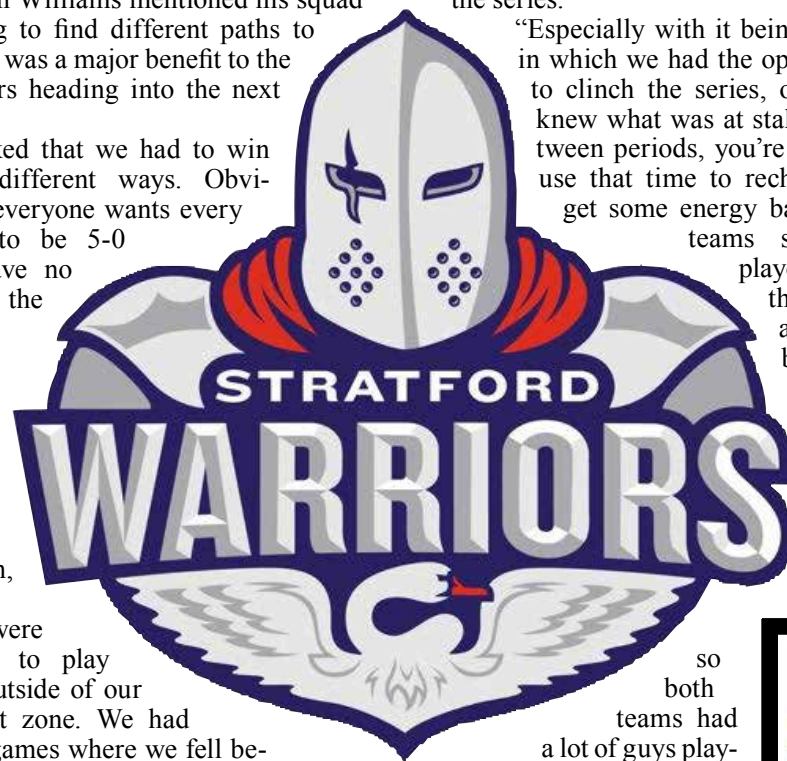
due to fights in the second period

so both

teams had a lot of guys playing a lot of minutes. We spent a lot of time talking about not cheating or taking shortcuts even as we were getting tired, but both teams were pretty sharp in overtime knowing what was on the line."

At the top of a list of many players who had good series for Stratford was Lewis, who scored both overtime winners for the Warriors, as well as Stumpf, who led the team in points and averaged over two points per game in the first round, and Daigle, who was second in points and tied for first in goals.

"The thing that stands out about Camden, Braydon and Cole is that they are all returning guys who experienced our run last year," explained Williams. "They experienced playing some incredibly good teams in some incredibly tough series. I think that experience has helped those guys and has served them well in recognizing the importance of every game and making them want to lead by example."



**STRATFORD  
Hunter Steel  
WARRIORS**

## UPCOMING GAMES

Friday, March 22 - 7:30pm  
vs Elmira - Allman Arena

Sunday, March 24 - 2:00pm  
at Elmira - Dan Snyder Memorial Arena

Monday, March 25 - 7:30pm  
vs Elmira - Allman Arena

Wednesday, March 27 - 7:15pm  
at Elmira - Dan Snyder Memorial Arena

Friday, March 29 - 7:30pm\*  
vs Elmira - Allman Arena

Saturday, March 30 - 7:00pm\*  
at Elmira - Dan Snyder Memorial Arena

Monday, April 1 - 7:30pm\*  
vs Elmira - Allman Arena

\*If necessary

Sponsored by

**TINA GRASBY** BROKER  
519-275-7663  
Home & Company  
www.getyourhome.com

**VISIT US WWW.STRATFORDTIMES.COM**



# Hoops for Fun wraps up another successful season

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

*Times Correspondent*

Nearly 310 students across Stratford and beyond conclude their Hoops for Fun basketball season this month.

After the biggest season yet, Hoops for Fun vice president Isabella Jezard said the increase in participation could be a result of using the large space at the Agriplex and bringing on skills-assessment coaches, who helped volunteer coaches develop students' skills.

Jezard also thanked all student referees who make the program possible.

"We honestly couldn't do it without our volunteer coaches and the amazing student referees that show up weekly," she said.

Hoops for Fun is a youth basketball program created to develop fundamental skills and a love of the game of basketball. The program is one of the biggest in the region and has been a big part of the community for more than 25 years.

The Hoops for Fun program is offered yearly to girls and boys from senior kindergarten to Grade 12. It aims to provide fun for all ages and abilities at an affordable cost, making it more accessible than other team sports.

In addition to weekly equal play on the court, team-building exercises and skills coaching, each kid receives a basketball and a team t-shirt they get to keep.

During the first three weeks of the Hoops for Fun program, coaches evaluate players at skills clinics to determine teams of equal-skill levels. In the fourth week, gameplay begins. Before each game, 30 minutes are allotted for skill development, followed by gameplay for approximately 30 minutes.

As the starting point for several athletes, Hoops for Fun has seen students move on to competitive programs and university basketball over the last 25 years. With the program

growing each year, Hoops for Fun aims to keep costs low for families while providing the best coaching and skills to all athletes.

For those interested in sponsoring a team, Hoops for Fun is always looking for companies to support its ever-growing program. As always, the program is on the lookout for great coaches. Anyone interested in coaching next season or sponsoring a team can email [steve.r@buysmp.com](mailto:steve.r@buysmp.com) for more information.

For more information on registration for next season, visit [www.stratfordbasketball.com](http://www.stratfordbasketball.com) or follow @stratfordbasketball on Instagram.



## HOOPS FOR FUN WRAPS UP THEIR 2023/2024 SEASON AT THE AGRIPLEX

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Over 300 students from across Stratford participated in Hoops for Fun, a program aimed at fostering basketball skills while keeping sports affordable for families.





# Team Keller celebrating gold medal victory at Special Olympics Canada Nationals

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Special Olympics Ontario Stratford curling team is beaming with pride after their gold medal finish at the Special Olympics Canada National Winter Games.

The curling team, known as Team Keller, flew to Calgary, Alberta to compete in Nationals between February 27 and March 2. Team Keller, featuring athletes Tiffany Keller, Jacob Ponsford, Curtis Bender, Meghan O'Donovan, and Dylan Haynes, won gold in the Rocky Mountain Division after winning 6-2 over South Saugeen in the 1st vs 4th semi-final and clinching a 5-2 win over Nova Scotia in the gold medal game.

The Stratford chapter of Special Olympics Ontario had more wins to celebrate in other sports. Mike Keleman earned a bronze medal in the men's 9th out of 16 in five-pin bowling and placed fifth in the team event. The London Blazers floor hockey team, featuring Mike Hitchcock earned gold in the 2nd vs 3rd semi-final after winning over Manitoba 3-2 and 4-1 over the Alberta Warriors in the Gold Medal Game.

All the curlers were thrilled to discuss their wins with the Stratford Times, with Haynes and O'Donovan proudly wearing their gold medals during the interview.

"It feels really good," Keller said.

"It feels really good," Haynes said. "I feel like a champion."

"It was rewarding," Bender said.

"I'm so proud winning a gold medal!" O'Donovan said.

Jane Larkworthy, coach and community coordinator for Special Olympics Ontario Stratford, said that the London International Airport was filled with supporters for the London Blazers and the rest of the athletes.

"When we landed, the whole departure lounge was full of people and they all applauded," Larkworthy said. "We came down to get our luggage and there were lots of people there to congratulate the athletes and they had signs and applauded



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## GOLD MEDAL VICTORY

Special Olympics Ontario - Stratford athletes had many reasons to celebrate after bringing home hardware from the Special Olympics Canada National Winter Games. Team Keller brought home gold after their success in curling and Mike Keleman earned a bronze medal in five-pin-bowling.

and treated them like rockstars."

The curling semi-final game was a close call for Team Keller. Larkworthy said there was a three-way tie with three teams each having two wins and a loss. The curling teams had to throw the button and the top four scores were considered. Keller was the last to throw and ended up in first place.

"It was a close one," Larkworthy said.

"It was a nail biter," Keller agreed.

Coach Dorie Woolrich, who is also Haynes' mother, said experiencing the National Winter Games was a bit emotional.

"I can honestly say it was very teary," Woolrich said. "Both Jane and I had to hold back tears a couple of times."

"I actually held it together pretty well until Dylan looked straight at me and said 'This is you. You did this,'" Larkworthy said. "I said 'I did not do this, you did this.'"

And then I started to well up and go somewhere else."

The athletes were on a tight schedule

throughout Nationals, with Larkworthy saying there was a lot of "hurry up and wait" with finding out when they would be competing. They landed in Calgary at 10 p.m. and would often have dinner at 1:30 p.m. before heading off to the venue.

Larkworthy was glad that every Stratford athlete came home with hardware.

"No one came home and felt like they were disappointed that they were the only one who didn't medal," she said. "I think that's wonderful."

When asked what post-Nationals plans are, Haynes said "get ready for next Nationals" in 2028. The 2024 Nationals had a unique qualifying process, as the athletes went right from the Provincial Qualifying round to Nationals. Normally, the athletes would have to compete in Provincials before moving on to the next round, but the COVID-19 Pandemic put a snag in all sports across Canada and the athletes were headed to Nationals based on the Provincial qualifying results.

"It'll be a longer process the next time around," Larkworthy explained. "We'll have to get through Provincial Qualifiers and Provincials, then the Nationals games, but to be perfectly honest I don't know where we're headed from here."

Soon, Special Olympics Stratford athletes will start their summer sports in the middle of May and will have an athlete banquet at the end of May.

## GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

Our local newspapers have both print and online editions. Advertising in both allows your business to reach a broader audience, including those who prefer traditional print and those who consume news digitally. Let's get started.



heather@granthaven.com

226.261.1837

St. Marys Independent The Wilmet-Tavistock Gazette STRATFORDTIMES INDY Woodstock Ingersoll Echo Goderich Sun NORFOLK FARMS BRANT FARMS

Fitness.  
Fun.  
Results.



- Step inside Genuine Fitness, let go of:
- Your endless to-do list
  - Your struggles to get fit in the past
  - Your stress and tension

GenuineFitness™

Speak with one of our coaches to find out if Genuine Fitness is right for you.

804 Ontario St., Stratford  
226-779-0548 | genuinefitness.ca



# Stratford District Secondary School Curling team heading to OFFSA championship in Kingston

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) has some new champions in their midst.

The Golden Bears girls curling team, consisting of skip Addison Hyatt, vice skip Annalise Glaab, second Deanna Halls, and lead Hailey Peters, has captured the WOSSA title, qualifying them for OFFSA in Kingston March 20-23.

The team is coached by SDSS math teacher Shane Restall and consists of three Grade 9 students and one Grade 10 student, making their feat even larger as curling is one of the last varsity sports that aren't divided into junior and senior teams.

The SDSS girls team had to play 34 ends of curling to get out of the Perth County play downs. They ended up being the second seed after beating Listowel and then losing to the Listowel girls in the final. After winning the semi final game at Huron-Perth, the girls again faced Listowel in the championship game.

This game came down to the final stone again, with Hyatt making her last shot and Listowel missing theirs' for the win.

SDSS was then off to WOSSA.

In the semifinal game, they played a hard-fought game against Woodstock Collegiate Institute and won in the last end 8-6. The championship game was played against London's Catholic Central, and the Golden Bears won gold with a score of 9-6.

Parent Heather Peters was proud in saying that this was the first team from SDSS this year to make it to the OFFSA championship, and their accomplishment was impressive for such a young team.

The girls now travel to Kingston where they are guaranteed to play five games in round-robin play. The top eight of 18 teams will make the playoffs.

Interestingly, the Golden Bears teammates started curling together when their 4-H clubs were involved with Curling in Tavistock in November 2022. The Tavistock Curling Club has been very supportive with extra ice time and has helped the



(HEATHER PETERS PHOTO)

## OFFSA CHAMPIONSHIP

Pictured with their championship trophy are Golden Bears curling teammates, from left, Addison Hyatt, Hailey Peters, Deanna Halls, Annalise Glaab and coach Shane Restall.

girls learn and grow into the team they are a curling team from Stratford has made it today.

Organizers also feel this is the first time

# Retired local principal publishes first of three youth novels

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Helen Orr, a Stratford-based writer and retired Avon Maitland District School Board (AMDSB) principal, recently released her first children's book, *Belinda and the Fairy Lair*, based on stories her father told her as a child.

In her first published book, Orr writes about Belinda, a witch with a house near a secret Fairy Lair. Though her neighbours on Forest Road don't know she is a witch, that she communicates with the fairies in the secret Fairy Lair, or even that her best friend is the Guardian Elf of the lair, everything could turn upside down after a small boy and his beagle discover the hidden lair.

"Belinda the Witch and the Guardian Elf are actually (my father's) characters," said Orr. "He would sit with us in the dark and make up stories to tell us. I remember elbowing him, telling him to continue. His stories were such a big part of my childhood."

The first novel is set in the forest and based on Orr's childhood memories.

"Children are so imaginative and creative," she said. "When kids go out in nature and they go out in the woods to explore, it really is magical for them and it helps their imaginations blossom."

The second and third books will be more adventurous for the characters as they embark on a journey outside the Fairy Lair and away from the home

they've always known.

Though Orr is known for her other work, including short stories and an essay printed in *Boomer Magazine*, she has always wanted to publish a children's novel.

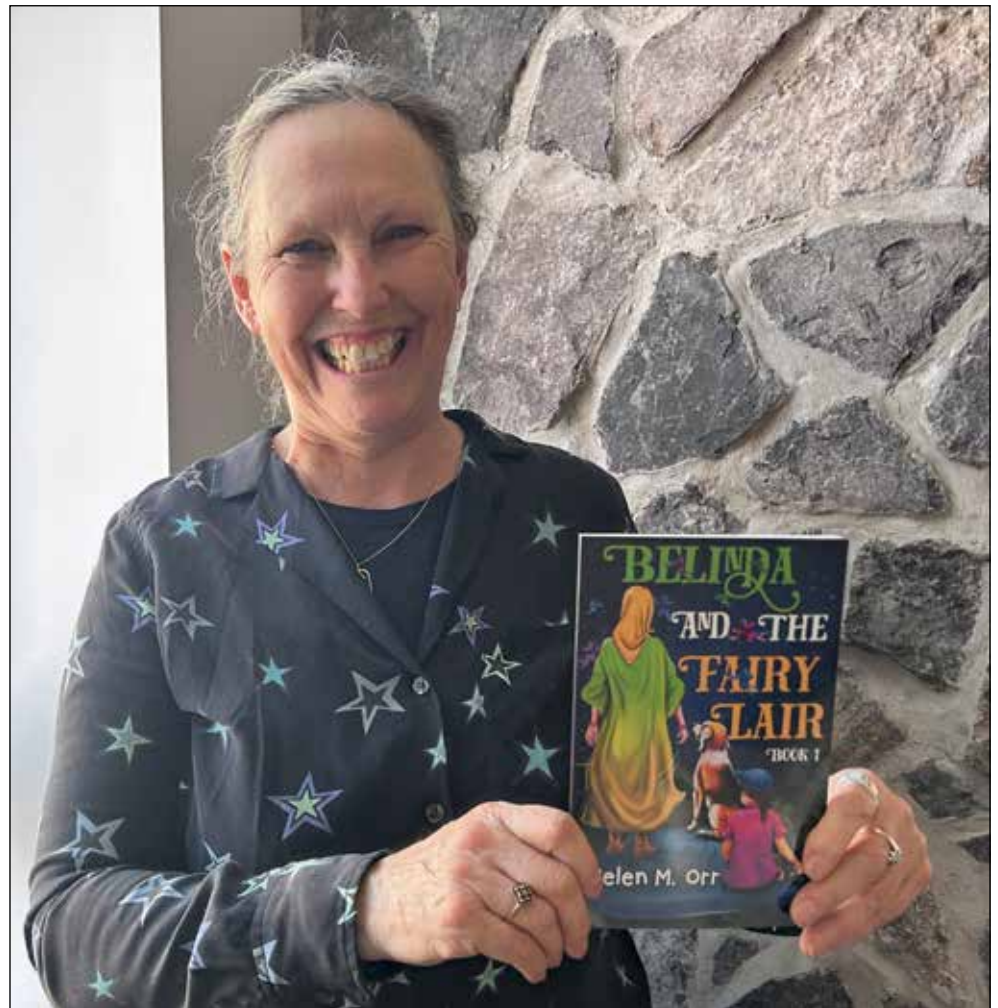
"I remember writing in our basement at home in Ottawa during very cold winters. We had an unfinished basement and a small room beside the furnace. I would go down and write about tropical islands or things that would help me feel warm," Orr said.

Coming from an educational background and having worked as a principal with the Avon Maitland District School board for over 15 years, Orr says to others wanting to write their first novel, "Just do it."

"I think a hurdle for most people is sharing it," she continued. "They're your little babies and you're scared to put them out into the world, and once you do, people then have an opinion on them, but that's so important."

"However, once you share it, you learn a lot about your writing. That is a strength and will help you find your own voice. Once you start sharing with other people and getting feedback on your writing, it really makes a difference."

If you want a copy of *Belinda and the Fairy Lair*, it can be purchased at Fanfare Books and online at [indigo.ca](http://indigo.ca). You can also follow along on Belinda's journey on the Instagram page dedicated to the series, [@belinda\\_and\\_the\\_fairy\\_lair](https://www.instagram.com/belinda_and_the_fairy_lair).



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

## IMAGINATIVE AND CREATIVE

Helen Orr releases first book, *Belinda and the Fairy Lair*, the first of a three part series for youth. Always wanting to write a children's book, Orr tells other writers to "just do it."



# Partnership with Stratford Festival results in new Fabled exhibit at Castle Kilbride

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

A partnership between the Stratford Festival Archives and Castle Kilbride has resulted in an exhibit exploring the childhood books of Laura Louise Livingston at the National Historic Site and museum in Baden.

Dubbed Fabled, the exhibit pairs classic books like *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, *Peter Pan*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *Romeo and Juliet* that were read by Livingston as a child with costumes from the festival archives' collection from past Stratford Festival productions.

"Laura Louise was actually born inside Castle Kilbride on May 24, 1918, and she lived pretty much her whole life here," said Castle Kilbride curator Sherri Gropp. "There were a few years where she went off to school and university, and when she was first married, she also lived a little bit in Kitchener. Then she moved back home in the 1940s with her children and spouse, and she stayed here until 1988 when they sold off the castle and all of the contents inside. Unfortunately, she passed away a few months later in 1988.

"When we opened a museum five years later, we started gathering those materials and we have amassed a beautiful collection of her childhood books. We always thought it would be really great to do an exhibit on them."

As Livingston was an ardent supporter of the Stratford Festival, having seen productions in the festival's inaugural season and attended each season after until she died, partnering with the Stratford Festival Archives to display Livingston's books throughout the 1877 Victorian home along-

side costumes from past productions was a collaboration that made total sense.

"The Stratford Festival Archives has an impressive collection and we are grateful to showcase their outstanding costumes at the castle," Gropp said. "It has been like a fairytale to co-curate with Stephanie Vaillant and the archival team. We feel like we are continuing a partnership that started back in 1953 when Laura Louise attended the inaugural year of the Stratford Festival."

According to Vaillant, the festival's interim archives manager, the costumes on display span from 1984 to 2022 and are accompanied by costume sketches, photographs, props and theatrical designs to help visitors fully immerse themselves in the stories. Highlights include the dress worn by Sarah Polley as Alice (*Alice Through the Looking Glass*, 1994), the White Witch's dress worn by Yanna McIntosh (*The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, 2016) and Peter Pan's costume worn by Michael Therriault (*Peter Pan*, 2010).

In addition to securing the costumes from the Stratford Festival Archives, Vaillant and Gropp also got permission from each of the costume designers to have them on display at the castle.

"While many of these stories are reflective of the time periods in which they were written, theatre allows for a much broader and more creative exploration of content," Vaillant said. "These new interpretations can create bridges between the stories of the past and the world of the present – a concept well represented by housing the display at historic Castle Kilbride. It is our hope that visitors will be as delighted by the creativity of the Stratford Festival's artists as we are with the castle, which is a



(DONNA KELL PHOTO)

## FABLED EXHIBIT

Costumes and props like these from the Stratford Festival's 2016 production of *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, as well as numerous other past festival productions, are on display now alongside the childhood books of Laura Louise Livingston at Castle Kilbride in Baden.

work of art in and of itself.

"From armour and ball gowns to pirates and fairies, there's something tucked away in every room of the castle just waiting to be discovered."

Fabled runs now until Dec. 29 at Castle Kilbride. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.eventbrite.ca/e/march-break-fabled-family-tours-at-castle-kilbride-tickets-837859990787](http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/march-break-fabled-family-tours-at-castle-kilbride-tickets-837859990787).

## Down the Rabbit hole with Off the Wall

SYDNEY GOODWIN

Times Correspondent

Did you fall down a rabbit hole? Have a craving for a tea party? Or perhaps you were asked why a Raven is like a writing desk?

If any of these things happened, then odds are you attended the Mad Hatter's Dance March 15, put on by Off the Wall Stratford Artists Alliance.

The Mad Hatter's Dance marked 20 years of similar events hosted by Off the Wall. Each year has had a unique theme, but the purpose has always remained the same; to provide funding for students in need.

"Proceeds from the fundraiser will be put toward the Desmond Heeley scholarship fund and the Glenn Elliott scholarship fund," said Susan Starkweather, Off the Wall's co-founder, adding Off the Wall works with these scholarships because they assist students who are struggling financially, helping to ensure everyone gets a chance to pursue their passion.

All guests and volunteers were dressed in whimsical attire, fitting for the theme.

"It's such a fabulous theme this year. Everybody knows what to wear and how to have fun with a theme like this," Off the Wall administrator Michele Boniface said.

The event was chock-full of eye-catching decorations and activities for guests to partake in; from getting your face painted by Off the Wall's Lana Mendez to sitting for a caricature done by Off the Wall chairman Jeff Marontate or hitting the dance floor and dancing to the live music of Downie Street Collective. For those in the mood for a drink, the Mad Hatter's tea party offered guests a Mad Hatter's cocktail or a Mad Hatter's herbal tea made up and handed out by Peggy Coffey (a.k.a Tweedle Dee).

Along with these activities, volunteers walked through the space throughout the evening offering guests tickets for a 50/50 draw. Sales of 50/50 tickets and refreshments, and donations to the volunteering artists all contributed to the final tally.

"After adding things up," Starkweather said, "it seems we have raised approximately \$10,000. This will go toward programming and the youth scholarship



(SYDNEY GOODWIN PHOTO)

## MAD HATTER'S DANCE

Left: Peggy Coffey seated with her array of toppings for the Mad Hatter Cocktails

fund."

The Mad Hatter's Dance was a great success for Off the Wall, and they are pleased to be passing that success onto students in need.

For more information on Off the Wall's programs or events, visit [stratfordoffthewall.com](http://stratfordoffthewall.com) or check out their Instagram account @offthewallstratfordartists.



# SDSS Robotics Club historic season comes to an end

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) robotics club has much to celebrate as their season came to an unexpected end at provincials in Markham Feb. 23-24.

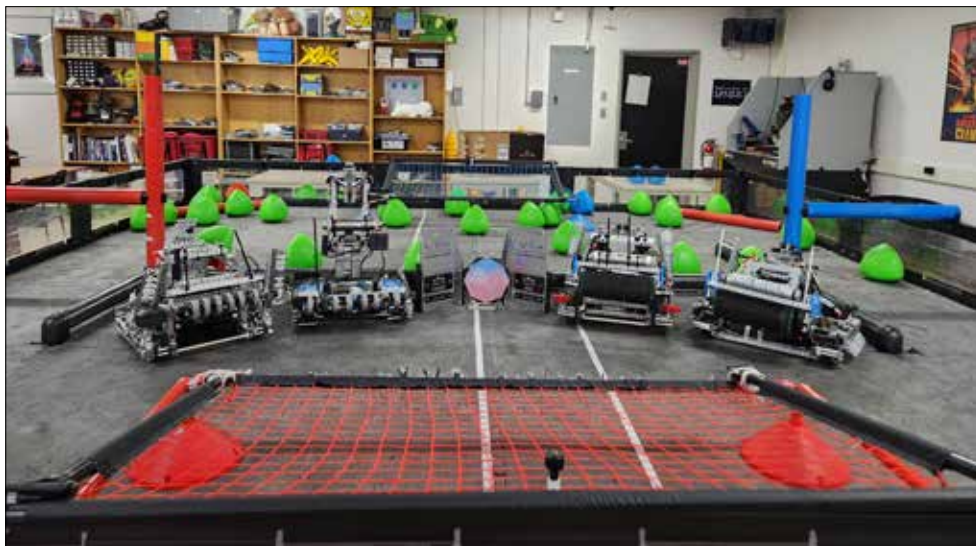
For the first time ever, the club took home a combined five trophies from three competitions; one tournament champ, two tournament skills, one design and one sportsmanship award.

Never before has all four teams qualified for provincials, but this fine group of students did. This achievement is especially impressive given only 80 teams of the 600 that registered qualified. All teams were excited to make it, as they had their eye on the larger prize of qualifying for the global competition. Despite the best efforts of team members, the SDSS robotics team did not make it to the global contest, but their performance still set a record for the school and the board.

Team B finished 27th in the province and Team D finished 36th. Team A and C qualified for sudden death rounds, putting them in the top 16 in the province. This is where things got complicated for the teams.

"I will spare you too many details, but there was some intense drama and intrigue before the final round that adversely impacted several top teams, including our A Team. This put them into a more compromised position than they wanted to be," said Andrew Bradshaw, SDSS engineering teacher and mentor to the club.

"In their first round of the final shootout, more bad luck befell the A Team as their robot got stuck against an opponent's robot for about 30 seconds of the two-minute match, which left them unable to do much more than fight that robot to get detached. In the end, they fell in heartbreaking fash-



## END OF A SEASON

The four robots of the SDSS robotics teams with the five trophies garnered through three competitions of the season.

(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

ion. After a season of dominance, they encountered confounding variables beyond their control that led to defeat. They were understandably distraught, but they can certainly be proud of the historic season they had and the professional way in which they represented Stratford."

Team C won its first sudden-death round, but lost in the semi-finals, finishing eighth in the province. Competition at this level is extremely tough and the individual results of each team is something for them to be very proud of, Bradshaw said.

"One of the challenges we faced early on was, before we did the rebuild of our robot, it was a shortbot because we thought one of the most important part of the robot was the intake, because you can intake more triballs and get a better grip. So, we wanted to be able to make a shortbot that also had a good intake and a good catapult

so that we can run skills and also do it at match loading," said SDSS student Declan O'Neill of Team C.

There are eight qualification matches that last two minutes each and, to prepare for the match, O'Neill tried a couple different things like listening to music and deep breathing. At provincials, he was pretty relaxed thinking it would be just like the other tournaments they had been in, so he managed to keep his composure.

"It was disappointing that we couldn't make it to worlds, but it's further than any other Stratford team has made it, which means a lot," added O'Neill.

"I expected it to be a lot different than it was," said robotics team member Even Johnson. "I expected it to be a lot more intense and fast paced. I think mainly my thought process behind that is that there is more on the line. With the other tour-

naments that qualify you for provincials, if you don't win or win an award you can always go to the next competition to try again. With provincials, if you don't win to qualify for worlds, you just stop. So, I thought it would be a more intense environment, then I realized when we were doing the matches it wasn't really different and it was mainly the same ideas and strategies.

"Although there were still some teams that were a little more high skilled than what we are have run up against, we didn't have a huge struggle going up against them, so I think it was a really nice experience going into something like that and seeing it first time."

The next game for next year's competitions will be announced in April at Worlds and, once it is defined, the teams will begin to design and build a new bot.

"Once it's announced, we will probably start 3D modelling robots and coming up with ideas and thinking up how things will go next year over the summer," said O'Neill.

"That's what we did last year, and it really gave us help. A lot of bigger organizations or teams not directly linked to schools can work on it at any time. Last year, Mr. Bradshaw let us take home kits over the summer to work in Merrick's garage so that gave us a pretty good head start. The drive train on that bot was made in Merrick's garage," said Sebastien Chung, the Team C lead.

There is always room for improvement and the club is now thinking about next year. Organizing time and details better is one area for improvement, prioritising what needs to be done. They also 3D modelled their robots this year for the first time and feel, with more use, they will be able to build a better bot.

# Ontario Welsh Festival returns to Stratford in April

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The Ontario Welsh Festival is returning to Stratford for the first time in more than two decades.

The Ontario Welsh Festival is a travelling festival that has been held in an Ontario city for 63 years. This year it will be held in Stratford April 19-21. It was last held in Stratford in 2003. Organizer Carys Wyn Hughes is excited to showcase her adopted hometown to her Welsh brethren and her Welsh culture to her hometown.

"It is a great way for anyone to celebrate, anyone who just has an interest, anyone who has Welsh connections, whether it's a grandparent from years ago, or someone like myself who is a first-generation immigrant to Canada," she said. "I have lived in the area since 1988. It's important; you become Canadian and it's important to become Canadian, and I'm proud, but it's nice to remember your roots and nice to share



that story, and the Ontario Welsh Festival does that for me, so that's why I became involved with it."

On the Friday night at the Arden Park Hotel, there will be a Noson lawen, which is a joyful singing Karaoke style event.

On Saturday, they are going to celebrate Stratford being dramatically different with a tour of the city showcasing what makes it what it is. This event will showcase the chocolate factories, the theatres and Jobsite Brewing.

Saturday night will also see a gala concert at Avondale United Church entitled the Voices of Wales featuring tenor Trystan

Llŷr Griffiths, baritone Steffan Lloyd Owen and accompanist Rhiannon Pritchard. A banquet dinner precedes the concert.

"There are about 300 attendees registered for the festival," Hughes said. "We try to use cities that are large enough and have enough to offer those that visit. Stratford definitely hits the mark on that. I believe we were last here in 2003 and it was an excellent conference at that time, so we thought we'd do it again. Also on Saturday there will be a greeting event where the mayor of Stratford, Martin Ritsma, will greet the delegates and there will be a

harp player from Ottawa that's going to showcase some tunes."

By showcasing the town and partnering with Destination Stratford, Hughes hopes delegates will come for the weekend and return to the Festival City again and again, which she sees as a great bonus for the economy. With the jam-packed schedule, they will only see a portion of what Stratford has to offer but it should be enough to make them want to come back.

Part of the festival's culture-sharing activities will include Welsh classes.

"If you've never heard Welsh

singers before, this will be a treat for you. I don't know what it is, but they are a different breed all together," Hughes said.

The concert is open to all and all are welcome.

Tickets can be purchased at Eventbrite, Voice of Wales concert Stratford. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and the concert is at 8 p.m. The cost of tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door, however concertgoers are encouraged to buy in advance as this event will likely sell out.

For a full list of events during the Ontario Welsh Festival, visit [ontariowelshfestival.ca](http://ontariowelshfestival.ca).



# Building lives up in Nicaragua through the Rotary Club's COMMIT!

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

Rotarian Doug Thompson has recently returned from his trip to Nicaragua where he and fellow volunteers have been raising lives up for over ten years. COMMIT! Stands for Canadian Outreach Medical Multi Impact Team and began as a group of three nurses and Thompson, a physician, who started out as a medical mission before evolving into much more.

"We started off doing medical missions and we saw there were a number of very poor areas in Nicaragua so we started working with the local brigades and went out to rural areas and did medical clinics. We saw that we would need housing to set up regular clinics so we fixed up housing to do that. Gradually the brigades took over those areas, we didn't feel the need for the medical aid there anymore."

So they switched over to some of the other needs of the area they felt more essential. The people needed clean water, they often got their water from shallow wells that would go dry or become contaminated in the rainy season. Some villages couldn't access water at all and it would be trucked in leaving residents to ration water each week. To date, COMMIT! has now drilled six wells in six

communities with water distribution systems reaching outlying areas.

Another area where they help is in farming. Water was scarce and soil was poor and crops failed often. Together, once the farmers' skepticism was set aside, they began organic gardening and are becoming more sophisticated with the pursuit of vermi-culture farming worms for composting for fertilizer to enrich the soil.

"The third area we noticed was they were all cooking in fire stoves in an enclosed area and it took a long time to gather wood for the fire and it was a health hazard with the smoke in the air inside. So we started a pilot project and build some eco-friendly stoves for them. We partnered with a group called Stove Team International and we were trained by them. We set up a fundraising project across Canada and talked about open fire stoves and the hazards they caused. We raised \$50,000 so we started a project down there building eco-friendly stoves. Today we employ local people as well to build so it is a micro economy," Thompson shared. They have built over 200 stoves but could do thousands more to meet the need

Another project that is helping to create a micro economy is the sewing project. Sewing students are learning to read and



(DOUG THOMPSON PHOTO)

## BUILDING LIVES

Members of the sewing club display some of the 60 shopping bags brought back to Canada for sale

make patterns to use on donated sewing machines. To make money, they have created shopping bags that Thompson brought back to Canada with him and are now being sold for \$10 to raise money for the project to continue.

"We said we'd take 20 bags, and see how they go at \$10 but they had sewed 60 so we said we would take them all and try to sell them. \$10 to them is a small fortune," recalled Thompson. "They just want the ability to help themselves, this builds them up. Feedback we get is that someone cares, and the other thing, both

for our farm projects and our sewing projects is that it gives us hope that there is a way forward for us, we're not stuck in this hole of poverty."

This fantastic project runs entirely on volunteers and donations. A couple events that raise donations is the annual golf tournament and the Charity Fashion Show coming up April 12th in Mitchell at the community centre from 6 – 10 p.m. Join in for an evening of fashion, all you can eat desserts and snacks, silent and live auction items and music all for \$35 to support a highly worthy cause.

# Optimist Club of Ellice donates \$2,500 to school EGG program

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

Optimist clubs in the Perth county area have made significant contributions for the betterment of youth programs in the community for many years.

Members of the Optimist Club of Ellice wanted to help students in schools from the area by supplying them with healthy and nutritious local food.

In that vein, they decided to donate \$2,500 to the school EGG program, through which hardboiled and peeled eggs, as well as uncooked eggs, are delivered free of charge to dozens of schools in the area.

Many Optimist clubs continue to budget funds for the local Nutrition for Learning program every year to help feed hungry students healthy snacks and lunches.



(BEV ROCK PHOTO)

## EGG PROGRAM

The Ellice Optimist Club donated \$2,500 to the school EGG program for local schools recently at the Rostock Hall. Pictured from left are Jim Allie, Con Crowley, Bill Hulman, Gary West, Henry Groenstage, Johanne Groenstage, Shirley Michiels, Louise Michiels, Matt Crowley and Mike Calder.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

## ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

At a recent rehearsal, conductor Dr. Jamie Syer works with Talitha Blois, Ella Cave, Georgina Hughson and Tabitha Campbell, all of whom will play Anne in the Stratford Kiwanis Festival of the Performing Arts' innovative benefit concert, Anne of Green Gables - The Musical. The concert will hit the stage at Avondale United Church in Stratford at 7 p.m. April 5.

**PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR HOUSE IS** 

Support businesses that keep your community and its newspaper thriving



# Stratford Winter Film Festival will return next year

LISA CHESTER

*Times Correspondent*

Now that things have calmed down and the founders have had time to reflect, it can be said that, yes, Stratford, there will be Stratford Winter Film Festival (SWFF) 2.

The February festival held their inaugural event over the weekend of Feb. 9-11, and it was well attended.

Passes were popular as it covered all nine films at five venues. Closer to the date, single tickets opened up that could be purchased for cash at the door for a single film. It is estimated that 500 people attended the festival in one form or another.

The Last Vermeer was voted the fan favourite.

"We sent out a questionnaire and every film got some votes which surprised us because we thought The End of Time wouldn't get a lot of love, but there were votes for it," shared

co-founder Bruce MacInnis

There were lessons learned in the curation of presentation. Noise was an issue over a much-quieter film like The End of Time. Timing of films also may have been restricting. Overall, however, attendees were very positive about the event and their experience. Revival House proved to be fitting venue the festival founders felt encapsulated what they would like to replicate.

"Those people were super happy that saw films there, and it just had a great vibe," said co-founder Craig Sangster. "And the volunteers everywhere were wonderful."

Each venue presented its challenge.

"There was sound in one, sightlines in another. We learned a lot about sound and screen heights," said MacInnis.

There was an uptick in business, especially in the downtown area, and the founders fielded some complaints around patrons not being able to get into the Bowl Bar because of SWFF

attendees. Mercer was packed as they offered a special on oysters in celebration of the Friday night opening. Saturday night saw patrons flock to the Relic Lobby Bar for the special and very delicious Mary Pickford cocktail.

Ask Shane, tell him I sent you.

The volunteers were also surveyed and the response was nothing new. They were aware of the problems, but there was a great deal of positivity about the experience.

"A standout of the festival was Mayor Martin Ritsma, who stood up and talked about the importance of it and why Stratford needs it, so he was pitch perfect," said co-founder Leslie Marsh.

Additionally, Shakespearean actor Emilio Vieira introduced a few films.

"He's very saleable. He's excellent. He's also captain of the cricket team here in Stratford. He's exactly the type of actor we want to associate with and bring into SWFF," said Sangster. "What we want to do is fill that winter

gap where there's very little going on and make things happen that is profitable to Stratford, happy for the people that live in Stratford and keeps us sustained."

Looking ahead, the founders don't want to be held to anything, but they are considering different and maybe smaller venues, or they might look into ticket flexibility. There are no shortages of ideas for next year.

"I think we need to make it more festival-y. In other words, have a few more live bodies as close to premieres as we can get, (and) local filmmakers, as much as we can do on a tiny, tiny budget. Now people have heard of us and we have better access to film distributors, so we can ask about premieres or, if it's a Toronto film, some actors or the director to come for SWFF," said Marsh.

In the end, feedback is that attendees definitely want a second year and the founders want to deliver.

## OnRush Music Festival lineup features both award nominated and emerging Artists

LISA CHESTER

*Times Correspondent*

Times are busy for Tim Harrison with the inaugural OnRush Music Festival rapidly approaching.

The acts are booked and the venues are readying for the event.

"All the acts have been responsive and the venues have been responsive and I'm learning lots and I'm happy to see that this is coming to fruition, to what we think it can be" said Harrison.

What made the whole experience "real" for the three festival founders was when they did a live podcast at the Bunker Performance Lounge. It was the first time they talked publicly about the festival to those they hope will attend.

"Curating was a challenging process," Harrison said. "The first step was does the artist's music fit for what we think will sell well for a first cut at the festival. Is it consumable? Second criteria was is there a performance there. Are we seeing a performance or someone just going through the motions. We want people to see their art in person and want them to engage with that. Thirdly, do they meet the 80/20 criteria – 80 per cent original music, 20 per cent cover. As well, is the material they are presenting tight?"

Once they had their short list, the founders had to figure out what bands would meld well with the festival and set budget allowances so everyone would be appropriately paid.



"I think the pay is on the generous side because this is valuable to the artist and to the community," said Harrison.

Leading off the festival on Thursday night at The Bunker is opening-night headliner Emm Gryner with Leanne Mayer doing a solo set, as well as a trio called Cabin Fever. Many will know Gryner as the three-time Juno Award nominee and multi-instrumentalist from St. Marys.

"Emm has shared passions. She has passion for the independent music business. She continues to be independent, which is fantastic (and) the changes in the industry haven't taken her passion away from her. Her support in getting people together and raising her voice in song; having her as a headliner says something about us," Harrison said.

On Friday night at The Hall is James Blonde, who has played the venue before. The band was interested in coming back as they sold out before and had a really good time playing. Following James

Blonde is Luke Roberston, another local to Stratford and well known in the music circuit.

"As a guitarist and singer, he is unbelievable. I want everyone to see Luke. He doesn't do much with social media. He's a pretty laidback kind of guy. I just want everyone to appreciate Luke," said Harrison.

Between those two on Friday night is the exception to the geographical criteria. The band, Harvey King and the Grindstone from Sarnia, will take to the stage.

"What Luke is offering will lead in to the sound of Harvey King and the Grindstone, and their bluesy rock will lead quite nicely into James Blonde," said Harrison.

Also just announced is a special second night at the Bunker. Friday night will see talented local musician Barry James Payne play with Sharon Katz and Jessica Sevier.

The Saturday night headliner at The Hall is indie royalty Bedoin Soundclash. They still release original, independent music together despite their international success. Following them up will be a band out of Kitchener called Arcade All-stars and a band called Zuffalo.

There will be a festival finale show at Revival House on Sunday where everyone can get together with the artists of the festival and mingle with community while listening to music.

There will be another Revival House show – a latecomer, but better late than

never. On Saturday, the Soul Motivators and Toronto's Kilcasa will perform.

Each night has been carefully curated with the audience experience in mind.

"I want the audience to go on a journey each night. I don't want it to be the same concept each night. I want each night to have its own atmosphere. The first night, we've got this great buildup from this trio singing bluegrass all the way up to Emm. That's quite a journey to go on. But the next night, you're not going to go on the same journey. There's going to be a different style, a different approach to the music. So, if you're trying to decide which night should I go; each night is going to be different, each a different journey, which we hope will have people wanting to come for multiple nights," said Harrison.

He hopes that attendees will leave the festival with a renewed belief that there is a possibility for a strong music scene here. He wants them to believe there is an opportunity for artists to deliver their art without being background noise and there is a place for both audience and artists to meet and share their passion for music and for the independent-music industry.

The OnRush Music Festival runs Thursday April 4 to Sunday April 7 and tickets for each night are on sale now. Tickets can be purchased at [www.onrushfestival.ca/tickets](http://www.onrushfestival.ca/tickets). There is also a page for those wishing to volunteer for the event.



# Embracing Change as a Path to Growth



IRENE ROTH

*Times Freelance Columnist*

There is nothing more certain than change. Everything else in our lives is usually in flux from how we look, to our life situation, where we live, who we're with, our careers, and so on.

In other words, change is an inevitable part of life. Yet it often carries with it an air of uncertainty, frustration, and discomfort. Regardless of how change manifests itself in our personal lives, careers, or society as a whole, embracing change is essential for growth and progress.

In order to face change and even welcome it, rather than fearing the unknown, we should

choose to adopt a mindset that welcomes change as an opportunity for learning, adaptation, and innovation.

Why Embrace Change, you ask? Well, here are a few things to consider.

### Change stimulates growth:

Just as muscles grow stronger with exercise, individuals and organizations develop resilience and adaptability through navigating change. Embracing change allows us to push our boundaries, learn new skills, and explore unfamiliar territories, leading to personal and professional growth.

### It fosters innovation:

Change disrupts the status quo and encourages creative thinking. When faced with change, individuals are compelled to explore new solutions, technologies, and approaches. Embracing change fuels innovation, driving progress and advancement across various fields.

### It enhances resilience:

Change often presents challenges and setbacks, but it also offers valuable opportunities for resilience-building. By embracing change, individuals develop

the ability to bounce back from adversity, overcome obstacles, and thrive in dynamic environments.

### It promotes flexibility:

In today's rapidly evolving world, flexibility is a valuable asset. Embracing change cultivates a flexible mindset, enabling individuals to adapt quickly to shifting circumstances, seize new opportunities, and navigate unforeseen challenges with ease.

Therefore, it is best that we embrace change. But how can we do so in an accepting manner. Here are a few tips to consider.

### Cultivate a growth mindset:

Adopting a growth mindset involves viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning, rather than insurmountable obstacles. Embrace the belief that your abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work, empowering you to tackle change with confidence and resilience.

### Stay curious and open-minded:

Approach any change with a sense of curiosity and openness. Instead of clinging to familiar-

ty, embrace the opportunity to explore new ideas, perspectives, and experiences. Cultivating an open mind allows you to adapt more readily to change and discover innovative solutions to emerging challenges.

### Develop the skills of being adaptable:

Adaptability is a critical skill in navigating change effectively. Cultivate adaptability by honing your problem-solving abilities, developing resilience in the face of adversity, and maintaining a flexible mindset. Embrace change as an opportunity to sharpen your adaptability skills and thrive in dynamic environments.

### Look for opportunities for growth:

Embrace change as a catalyst for personal and professional development. Instead of fearing change, actively seek opportunities to challenge yourself, acquire new skills, and pursue your goals. Embrace change as a pathway to growth, seizing the chance to expand your horizons and realize your full potential.

### Build a support network:

Surround yourself with in-

dividuals who support and encourage your efforts to embrace change. Seek guidance and mentorship from those who have successfully navigated similar transitions, and lean on your support network for encouragement during times of uncertainty. By fostering a strong support system, you can navigate change with confidence and resilience.

Embracing change can be difficult. It can involve stepping outside of your comfort zone and facing uncertainty. However, by cultivating a growth mindset, staying curious and open-minded, developing adaptability skills, seeking opportunities for growth, and building a support network, you can embrace change as a catalyst for personal and professional development.

Rather than fearing the unknown, embrace change as a pathway to growth, innovation, and success. This requires a change in mindset from one of similarity to one where we embrace change through resilience and perspicacity. Only in this way can we reach for the stars and realize that unless we're growing, we're constricting.

## Welcoming Ukrainians: English Support Classes a Success

VJ KNUTSON

*Times Freelance Columnist*

"You will need to drag them from the classroom for a break," I instructed my husband last Saturday regarding the English Support class our group of volunteers is hosting at the Falstaff Family Centre in Stratford.

The response to the classes, held every Saturday from 12:30 until 3:30 or 4:00 p.m., is enthusiastic. The students have expressed gratitude not only for the chance to practice their language skills, but also for the opportunity to congregate with fellow Ukrainians.

Volunteers have been working behind the scenes for six weeks to set this program in motion. Host Julie Ashley and volunteers Tabitha Cliff, Kiri-Lyn Muir and Nina Verhoef are the initiators, inviting me to help recreate some of the supports we have in place in St Marys.

In collaboration with the Ukrainian families in St Marys, we discovered that childcare would be an asset for these classes, and teens from the community volunteered to take on that task. Svitlana Smaglii, who currently lives with her host in Stratford, has been instrumental in gathering names and surveying the Ukrainian community to evaluate needs. As her English is strong, Svitlana has proven to be a great asset to our team and to me personally as a translator.

Our teacher, who also volunteers her



time, came from Ukraine in May 2022. I first met Tanya and her sister, Nadiia, via video chat as they were looking for a host. Nadiia's then 3-year-old daughter would pop up and giggle during our chats, and a pregnant Tanya would wave from behind her sister.

Ric and I met this family in person when we picked them up from the airport hotel after their first night in Canada. The conversation on the way to London, where they were being hosted, was lively, and we became fast friends. Now, we count them as our extended family. Tanya gave

birth to a baby boy in September 2022, and Nadiia, who supports their family of four by working at Cascades in St Marys, recently got engaged. The new family of five moved to St Marys in March and I celebrated by enticing Tanya to use her expertise as a language teacher (English and Chinese) and join our cause. Thank you, Tanya!

As a grassroots group, we do not fundraise, so everything we do relies on the generosity of others. After a recent article I wrote indicating we needed help with making tea, coffee, and snacks for the

Saturday classes, Marcia Matsui contacted me. Apparently, my email address was wrong in the last post, but Marcia persevered. Thanks to Marcia for adding that all-important extra touch to make our students feel at home.

A big thanks to the Falstaff Family Centre staff for meeting with us and agreeing to host the classes. Without you, we would not be able to do what we do. I know there has been some confusion about who is running the classes, as the Multicultural Association also has an office in this building, but our group is not supported or in partnership with that organization. We do, however, welcome any newcomers who wish to join in and are willing to expand to meet needs.

"How long do the classes run?" Ric messaged me last Saturday. "Should I suggest another break?"

I had to laugh. The same thing happened the week before. I had to notify the class that time was up. "Three hours is enough time. Just let them know to wrap up."

It's heartwarming to know that our efforts are so appreciated.

*(Disclaimer: I am a grassroots volunteer and not affiliated with local organizations raising funds for refugees. My goal is person-to-person, hand-to-hand, lifting up those in need. If you'd like to help, please message me at english.knuton@gmail.com, or reach out to the volunteers at Stratford Community Connects with Ukrainian Newcomers on Facebook.)*



## I'M GOING TO DIE. WILL I MATTER?



STUART LENDER

Times Contributor

I have a file in the notes app on my phone called "Quotes" where I store sentences and phrases that have struck me as significant. Some I have written. Some have been written by others. The profundity of any quote is only as good as it is meaningful to you when you read it or write it, and by far the most succinct and the most slap-me-in-the-face ditty that I have ever typed out is: I'm going to die. Will I matter?

Not open to a lot of interpretation as far as what it says but open to a world of speculation about myself. So, I ran down all my typed-out pearls of wisdom and was struck by the fact that my simply stated question forms

the crux of almost every single one of the others in some form or another.

Despite being a bit of a dreamer and idealist, I'm not delusional and I already imagine that there are people out there who have seen the title of this article and have already skipped over it as some would pass a homeless individual on the street, with only a short uncomfortable moment to deal with, while you, dear one, continue to read it.

So, you might already know the gem in the question once you ask it of yourself – certainly not in any denial of death or you wouldn't have pondered it, and not in the quick response of "absolutely I matter, I'm here aren't I," thinking, you're being positive. The gem is that when one looks fixedly into the face of the question, fearless, determined not to shift one's gaze – when we hold firm in whatever comes up for us – we will feel the blossoming of a brilliant flower, or the presence of a rotten one. And that can move us!

Philosophically we can say that every human being matters and performs a function in some way upon this planet, but the question isn't asked for the

philanthropy of others or this earth upon which we live. It's asked for ourselves.

It has been that question in my face pretty much my entire life, that I return to, to take stock. And it's because of my ongoing questioning that I can say, most every single hardship I have endured has taught me great and valuable lessons about myself. It's the question sometimes, that allows every simple joy to be deeply felt, every relationship, new or old or troubled, to be a non-regrettable welcomed one. It's the question that humbles me to admit error, to try more deeply, to understand, to empathize and to see how ridiculous, random and important my life is. To appreciate. But most importantly, to try to be a better human. With the power of that question, asked behind our thoughts and actions, in the midst of the days of our lives – good things can arise. I'll admit that the answer to the question can come up without necessarily dwelling on it – but rarely, and then often, through trauma. Usually, we're too busy doing stuff to notice! Stating: "I'm going to die," asking: "will I matter?" – is a big part of how eyes might be

opened, how staying aware of oneself might make a difference.

But along with our questioning might come some equally profound exultation or sadness. Sometimes it comes from recognizing we simply aren't satisfied with our lives. Sometimes it's from seeing the simplicity of how life could work compared to how it actually does. It's felt in the heart for many of us who know how complicated people can make things for themselves, until they're tied up into such a rock-hard knot that it's almost impossible to untangle it. It's felt when people are diminished through someone's personal criteria: compassion for them but not for them, equality for them but not them, not that sex, not those clothes, not that thought, not that faith, not that poverty, not that human.

Let's face it. We want to live and we want to live well, whatever that means for us. What isn't asked so often is, at what expense? Our own? Our children's? Our planet? Even our daily living routine. And sometimes, when we feel like we cannot make any difference in our small worlds, we toss effort aside, (I have certainly done that

a number of times), and we forget that being here already conjures up the fact that I'm going to die. And acting in one way or another already brings about whether I will matter.

Well, if you've read this far you might actually want to know what my answer to the question is. Yes – I will matter. And so may you. You have your own answer. For me, it's because I know that in every loving gesture in the face of adversity, life is lifted. In every individual who we successfully hear clearly, life is understood. In every vision that flies beyond our narrow life or way of thinking and in every goodness given without conditions – love is. I fail at these things sometimes. But I start them up again all the same.

We are, because of each other. Life is a sacred mystery and we are alive to live it and made of the stuff of stars.

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL.

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

## Web-Crawling Through the Green (Wash)



SHEILA CLARKE

Times Freelance Columnist

Greenwash? Excuse me? Green is good, right?

We know that the greening of our planet is becoming more critical by the day. We need to protect green spaces, plant more trees to absorb carbon in

the air, and ensure that the production of goods, such as fuel, food, and toys, is as green or sustainable as possible.

We also know that our planet's resources will not last forever. Therefore, it is key to ensure that our manufacturing processes are sustainable. If something says it's green, it must be good, right? Unfortunately, no. Advertisers use greenwashing to push consumers to buy products.

So, what is greenwashing?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, greenwashing is "misleading publicity released by an organization to present an environmentally responsible public image. Misleading information can mean misinformation (mistaken)

or disinformation (designed to fool you).

As climate concern grows, so too does the

amount of greenwashing designed to keep consumers consuming. Our current economy is based largely on continued growth- and that means inviting all of us to consume more. That's pretty tough when the planet's resources are limited. In many cases, advertising is built on inviting consumers to think that the products they purchase are environmentally responsible, green, or sustainable.

Sustainable production, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, is made in a way that causes little or no damage to the environment and is therefore able to continue for a long time.

Sustainability is also a vital concept concerning fossil fuels and the climate changes we are all experiencing. Every use of fossil fuels contributes to the Climate Crisis. According to NASA, 97 per cent of world scientists agree that fossil fuels are driving climate change. We need to find alternatives as soon as possible.

Greenwash is very much in evidence around fossil fuels.

The Narwhal magazine

pointed out that Shell Canada used greenwashing around fossil fuels to get people to download their phone app. In an ad, Shell Canada told Canadians that if they used the company's app to buy fuel at its gas stations, they could "drive carbon neutral," which is clearly inaccurate. Some companies have claimed that natural gas made from fossil fuels could be considered "clean energy" and "low carbon," which, again, is untrue.

The use of the word "natural" in advertising can be a red flag. Natural sounds green, doesn't it?

In fact, natural gas is still very much a fossil fuel. While lower in carbon emissions than coal and oil, natural gas is composed primarily of methane, a much more powerful climate-warming gas than carbon. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that about 6.5 million metric tons of methane leak yearly from the oil and gas supply chain.

For the planet and the future, keep an eye out for greenwashing in advertising. Look for the

words "natural" and "green."

In whatever way works for you, try to lessen your use of fossil fuels: more walking and biking, less packaging, less plastic, and less "stuff."

Updates:

1. Atmospheric Carbon in ppm (parts per million) as of March 2024: 421.5 ppm. The safe carbon level of 350 ppm, was passed in 1990- and is climbing steadily. In March of 2023, the level was 418.5 ppm.)

2. Did you know? Plastics come from fossil fuels. Hint: Peanut butter jars make great containers for leftovers. Bigger jars are great for bulk foods like rice, lentils, nuts, and pasta. Awesome!

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



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

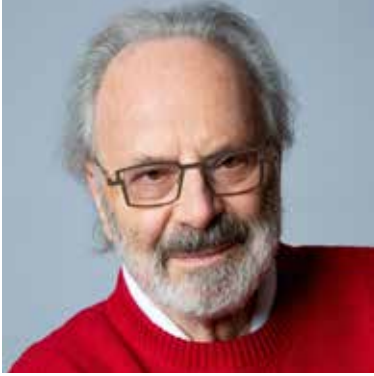
Inviting all eligible Canadian Forces Personnel, Ex-Service Members, their respective spouses, widows, and dependents seeking assistance for programs and services offered by Veterans Affairs Canada to meet with our Service Officer the last Saturday of every month between 10:00am and 1:00pm (by appointment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



# What Primitive Ancient Animals Can Teach Us About Being Human\*



THOMAS R VERNY, MD

Times Contributor

The intelligence of non-human creatures has long been a subject of fascination and study. Two such creatures, the octopus and the slime mold, have shown remarkable cognitive abilities that challenge our traditional understanding of intelligence.

John Hopkins Medicine defines intelligence as the ability to solve complex problems or make decisions with outcomes benefiting the actor, and has evolved in lifeforms to adapt to diverse environments for their survival and reproduction. Put more simply: taking actions to prolong one's life and to propagate one's kind.

Slime molds are truly ancient animals. They arrived on land close to a billion years ago. They may well have colonized continents that were home only to films of bacteria. Slime molds live in soil. They may spend their lives as single-celled organisms. But when food is scarce, they grow into multicellular, gigantic, pulsating networks of protoplasm that can move and reproduce. This ability to transition between single-celled and multicellular states suggests the presence of social intelligence

and adaptability. Furthermore, these social amoebae display a sophisticated division of labor; within each organism, some cells form the stalk and others become the spores that will seed the next generation.

Slime molds have a remarkable ability to orient themselves in their environment.

Biologists at Macquarie University, Sidney, demonstrated that *Physarum polycephalum* constructs a form of spatial memory by avoiding areas it has previously explored. This mechanism allows the slime mold to build an effective and robust food transportation network. Their results signify the presence in this organism of long-term memory as well as an ability to perform sophisticated computing tasks (3).

Not surprisingly, one of the leading scientists in this field, Soichiro Tsuda, Kobe University, Japan has suggested that *Physarum polycephalum* demonstrates emergent intelligence.

In other experiments at Hokkaido University, scientists subjected *Physarum polycephalum* to a series of shocks at regular intervals. It quickly learned the pattern and changed its behaviour in anticipation of the next shock. This memory stays in the slime mold for hours, even when the shocks themselves stop. A single renewed shock after a 'silent' period will leave the mold expecting another to follow in the rhythm it learned previously. T. Saigusa and his colleagues say their recent findings "hint at the cellular origins of primitive intelligence."

Some of you may have seen the documentary "My Octopus

Teacher." The film deals with naturalist Craig Foster who over the course of a year follows a wild common octopus in a South African kelp forest. Foster recounts the impact of the mentorship bond he formed with the octopus, imparting a lesson on life's fragility and the interconnectedness of humanity with the natural world. This experience led Foster to develop a stronger emotional connection with his son, Tom Foster, who became a diver and student of marine biology. The film is well worth seeing.

Philosopher of biology, Stefan Linquist of the University of Guelph, puts it like this: "When you work with fish, they have no idea they are in a tank, somewhere unnatural. With octopuses it is totally different. They know that they are inside this special place, and you are outside it. All their behaviors are affected by their awareness of captivity." Linquist's octopuses would deliberately plug the outflow valves by poking in their arms, perhaps to increase the water level. Of course, this flooded the entire lab.

There are many anecdotal stories of octopuses escaping from tanks in aquariums and shooting jets of water at particular individuals and equipment. This may sound more entertaining than indicative of intelligence but the stories also demonstrate that the animals can distinguish individual humans and show an element of planning and evaluation of their surroundings.

Studies with octopuses reveal their remarkable problem-solving skills and ability to learn by observation. Some octopus species have been documented dig-

ging for and using seashells and coconut shells as tools and protection, while other species have collected rocks and positioned them in front of dens as a way to keep safe. This shows that octopuses can learn, adapt, and use basic tools to interact with their environment – attributes traditionally associated with human intelligence.

Octopuses are strange creatures, with three hearts, eight arms and a nervous system distinct from any other animal. The three main parts of the octopus nervous system are the brain, the optic lobes, and the highly elaborated arm nervous system. Each of an octopus's eight arms contain three fifths of its neurons resulting in the equivalent of having a "brain" in each appendage that is capable of receiving and processing information about the environment.

Octopuses can change the color and texture of their skin to blend into their surroundings, an ability that requires incredible sensory and motor coordination. They also show signs of play and curiosity, indicating a level of consciousness previously thought to be exclusive to higher mammals.

Godfrey-Smith, professor of philosophy at Stanford University, suggests that we may need to rethink our understanding of the mind to accommodate creatures like octopuses. Their intelligence is not centralized but distributed throughout their body, suggesting a different kind of 'self'.

The recognition of cognitive abilities even in some of these most primitive invertebrate animals challenges traditional views that position humans as superior beings. It calls into question

practices such as animal experimentation, captivity in zoos, and the use of animals for entertainment. As our understanding of animal intelligence deepens, society faces ethical dilemmas regarding the treatment and rights of even the simplest non-human animals.

Many intelligent species are at risk due to habitat destruction, climate change, and human activities. Protecting the habitats of these animals is not only crucial for preserving biodiversity but also for maintaining the delicate balance of ecosystems. As a society, we must look to ecosystems and living things to teach us about the ability to coexist, adjust, and reimagine new ways of life. Just because these animals do not think the way we do, does not give us the right to destroy them.

*\*This post is adapted from The Globe and Mail, March 8, 2024.*

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

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

Community of Christ  
226 Forman Avenue 519-271-4539  
Proclaiming Jesus Christ  
with communities of  
**LOVE, JOY, HOPE & PEACE**  
Worship with us  
Sunday 10:00 a.m.  
11:00 a.m. – Fellowship and  
Coffee Hour  
We are a Welcoming Community

Worship  
With Us



**Stratford Associate  
Reformed  
Presbyterian Church**  
Quality Inn Festival  
(1144 Ontario St., Stratford)  
**WORSHIP TIMES:**  
10 a.m. and 3 p.m.  
stratfordarp.org

Invite readers to your worship services. Contact [stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com)

[WWW.STRAFORDTIMES.COM](http://WWW.STRAFORDTIMES.COM)



# Humane Society nears capacity, urgently needing fosters and adopters

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Humane Society of Kitchener-Waterloo and Stratford Perth's (HSKWSP) shelters are almost at full capacity and the organization is putting out an urgent call for residents to either foster or adopt.

The humane society sent out a press release recently noting there are 125 animals in between the two shelters and another 68 on the waitlist.

"We have so many animals in our care that if there's someone looking to add a new member to their family, they are bound to find their perfect match here at our centre," said Nasreen, the local humane society's communications and marketing manager. "If you adopt or even consider fostering, it opens up space at our shelter for another pet to be helped. And of course, we cannot provide the love and care we provide to animals who need it the most without the support of our community members."

HSKWSP is reliant on donations and does not receive government funding.

Fostering is a volunteer opportunity for residents who cannot otherwise adopt a pet to help an animal in need. The pet's stress and anxiety levels decrease in a foster home, and their happiness increases while waiting for their forever home.

"It's an extremely rewarding experience," Nasreen said. "It's incredibly rewarding to see the positive impact you can have on an animal's life, from their initial arrival to the day they find their forever home. Fostering also allows you to learn more about animal behavior, health care and compassion, which can be valuable skills that extend beyond the realm of animal welfare."

To make more room in the shelter spaces, the humane society will be reducing adoption fees for a few dogs that have been waiting for their forever family for quite some time. One of the dogs, Hazel, has been looking for nearly two years. Jack has been at the shelter for two months.

Along with fostering and adopting, supporters of the HSKWSP can either make a monetary donation to the or-



JACK



HAZEL

ganization or donate items such as pet food, collars, leashes and other supplies to the Pet Pantry program. More

information, including animals available for adoption, can be found on [kwsphumane.ca](http://kwsphumane.ca).

## Legion Wine Tasting Evening



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

### HEADLINE

'The Stratford Legion hosted 65 people at their March 8 Wine Tasting Evening. Sommelier Bob Latham lead the group through 3 samplings of White wine and 3 samplings of Red from Maelstrom Winery near Seaforth.

This was an energetic crowd being educated on the finer points of these wines, served by our many volunteers. The evening wrapped up with a light, healthy sack. Thanks to all those who came out to supporting the Stratford Legion Branch 8.'

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

### GARDEN STRATFORD GENERAL MEETING

Monday April 1; 7:15 – 9:00 p.m. **\*\*New Time\*\***

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

Featured Presentation: "Harvesting Your Crop at Peak for Flavour and Storage" with Professor Amy Turnbull, Master Gardener. Meeting Open to Everyone; Free Admission.

### OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Tuesday, April 2; 7:00 p.m.

93 Morgan St., Stratford

'Humour and Feeling Good' with Dr. Ken Shonk  
Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome.

### SPRING TEA

Sunday April 21; 2-4 p.m.

Legion Hall

The Stratford Legion Branch 8 and Ladies Auxiliary are hosting a 'Spring Tea'. The afternoon of tea includes finger sandwiches, dainties, doors prizes, a silent auction and lots of fun. Tickets are available by calling Anne, visiting Flowers on York 519-301-0914 or visit <https://tinyurl.com/2zyb2dfv>



# Riddles

If athletes get athletes foot then what do astronauts get?  
Missle-toe

Why was the clock in the cafeteria always slow?  
Because every lunch it went back four seconds

What is the hardest thing to hold that even the strongest person in the world has difficulty with?  
Your breath

What did the duck say to the waiter?  
"Put it on my bill"

Where does a 600 pound gorilla sit?  
Anywhere he wants

What did the doctor say to the rocket ship?  
"Time to get your booster shot"

What did the Nerds Candy want to be when it grew up?  
A Smartie

What did the bread say to the man?  
Nothing, bread can't talk

What did the bee say to the naughty bee?  
"Bee-hive yourself"

# Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 31



# Pet of the Month



## DAGWOOD

Meet 2-year-old Dagwood! He is a handsome large mix breed dog with a heart as big as his paws. If you're looking for an active and affectionate companion, he might just be the perfect fit for your family. Dagwood is all about the great outdoors! He loves going on long walks, hikes, or just a leisurely stroll in the park. Dagwood may look big but he is a softie at heart! His favourite thing to do in the world is to snuggle up with his humans. If you would like to bring Dagwood home, submit an application at <https://kwsphumane.ca/adopt/process>.

# Word Search

## MLB SPRING TRAINING CACTUS LEAGUE

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

- Dodgers
- Royals
- Rockies
- Rangers
- Angels
- Reds
- Athletics
- Cubs
- Padres
- Diamondbacks
- Brewers
- Giants
- Sox
- Guardians
- Marniners



# CLASSIFIEDS

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



## NOT EVERYONE TRAPPED BY ALCOHOL IS AN ALCOHOLIC

Families and friends are suffering too

**Al-Anon & Alateen could help**



App available

1-800-706-9833  
[al-anon.alateen.on.ca](http://al-anon.alateen.on.ca)



1-888-4AL-ANON • AL-ANON.ORG

### WANTED

A WORKING CAMCORDER that will play Hi-8 digital tapes. Phone 519-284-3774

### FOR SALE

ATTENTION: Collectors, and doll lovers from 4 to 104. FOUR, brand new (still in presentation boxes) 20" "Reborn" brand dolls; two with blonde rooted hair, and all in quality outfits on weighted, vinyl/soft bodies with eyes that open and shut; and may include bottles, diapers, birth certificates, pacifiers and rattles. Special price of \$115.00 each box, complete. Please call (non smoking) Stratford home at (519) 305-6275. These adorable 'babies' are looking for loving 'Forever Homes'.

## RUN YOUR CLASSIFIED AD HERE!

JUST \$10 + HST PER EDITION

Contact:

[stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com)

or call 519-655-2341

### WANTED

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

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

I WILL PAY CASH FOR ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES – Coca Cola Pepsi any pop company, Brewery items Kuntz, Huether Labatts etc. Old radios and gramophones, Wristwatches and pocket watches, Old fruit jars Beaver Star Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs Red Indian Supertest etc. Any small furniture.

If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me - 519-570-6920.

### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The Mesozoic Era
2. Moose
3. Bedrock
4. A Black Hole
5. Five
6. A pride
7. Rick Astley
8. E
9. Emma Stone (Poor Things)
10. Finland

**SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.**



QASHQAI®

## FACTORY APPROVED EVENT

MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup> - APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup>

LEASE A 2023 QASHQAI S AWD FOR

**\$58**

FOR

**24**

WEEKLY WITH \$3,295 DOWN

MONTHS FROM 3.99% APR



2001 Ontario Street, Stratford ON  
519.273.3119

[www.stratfordnissan.com](http://www.stratfordnissan.com)

STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thurs. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00

PARTS AND SERVICE: Mon.-Sat. 8:00-5:00. FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, OUR SERVICE DEPT IS NOW OPEN ON SATURDAYS

STRATFORD NISSAN





# BUSINESS DIRECTORY Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

## ACCOUNTING

**Famme & Co.**  
Professional Corporation  
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS  
125 Ontario St., Stratford  
519-271-7581 | Fax 519-271-2737  
office@fammeandco.on.ca

## CLEANING



- Mobile Auto Detailing
- Residential Cleaning
- Commercial Cleaning

www.boscocleaningservices.ca  
519-697-2376 | 519-694-2079

## CONSTRUCTION



"Serving Stratford & area since 1977"  
www.fraserpaving.ca  
Driveways • Parking Lots • Excavating  
Truck Rentals • Asphalt Patching  
Call Scott or Denise  
for a free quote.

519-271-5690

## CONSTRUCTION



**Jonathan & James  
Construction Inc.**

5875 Line 26, Fullarton, On NOK 1H0

519-949-3107

Construction Management  
General Contracting

info@jandjconst.com  
www.jandjconst.com

## CONSULTING



- Environmental Site Assessments
- Remediation
- Records of Site Condition
- Excess Soil Management
- Groundwater and Surface Water Monitoring

www.cxkenvironmental.com

**SHOP  
LOCAL.**

## HOME APPLIANCES

**PHELANS PLACE**  
Appliances  
APPLIANCES • PARTS  
237 Huron Road,  
Sebringville  
519-393-6181  
info@phelansplace.com  
www.phelansplace.com

## FENCING / DECKS

**ALL SHORES**  
Fencing & Decks  
519-273-2003  
info@allshoresfd.ca

## HUMANE SOCIETY

Stratford Perth  
**HUMANE SOCIETY**  
125 Griffith Rd, Stratford  
519-273-6600  
kwsphumane.ca

## INVESTMENTS

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

## JUNK REMOVAL

**DIAMOND DISPOSAL**  
BIN RENTAL OR FULL JUNK REMOVAL  
519-284-2221  
www.diamonddisposal.ca  
info@diamonddisposal.ca

## MORTGAGE

**RBC**  
Eric Miller  
Mobile Mortgage Specialist  
226-921-5248  
eric.miller@rbc.com  
Shopping around  
for a mortgage?

**SAVE  
LOCAL**

## MORTGAGE

**MORTGAGE ALLIANCE**  
LET ME FIND  
THE RIGHT  
MORTGAGE  
FOR YOU!  
PAUL BARTON | 519-272-9559  
pbarton@mortgagealliance.com  
Mortgage Agent Level 2

## MARKETING

**TOWN CRIER**  
MARKETING  
FREE CONSULTATION

## PHARMACY

**PharmaChoice**  
Stratford Medical  
Pharmacy  
• Travel Clinic  
• Compounding Pharmacy  
• Easy prescription transfers  
342 Erie St (Jenny Trout Centre),  
Stratford, ON N5A 2N4  
Phone: 519-272-0888  
www.stratfordmedicalpharmacy.ca

## REAL ESTATE

**Home & Company**  
REAL ESTATE CORP. BROKERAGE  
Toni McLean Sales Representative  
519-274-1120 Direct  
245 Downie St, Stratford, N5A 1X5  
tmclean@homeandcompany.ca

**Home & Company**  
REAL ESTATE CORP. BROKERAGE  
245 Downie Street,  
Suite 108  
Stratford, ON  
N5A 1X5  
Tina Grasby  
BROKER  
b. 519.508.HOME (4663) | m. 519-275-7663  
tgrasby@homeandcompany.ca  
homeandcompany.ca

## REAL ESTATE

**LUCIE STEPHENS**  
SALES REPRESENTATIVE  
519-703-0333  
RE/MAX  
SOLD!

## LIST WITH CHRIS!

**ROYAL LEPAGE**  
Chris Evans, Broker  
Hiller Realty Brokerage  
100 Erie St., Stratford, ON | 519-276-9101  
listwithchris@wightman.ca

**Liz Yundt, REALTOR, Coldwell Banker - Exemplary Service GUARANTEED!**  
I will always do my absolute best for YOU - I am persistent, hard-working, honest, enthusiastic, tenacious, and most importantly, thorough! I will listen to your needs and strive to meet your goals. Please consider me as your passionate real estate sales representative for you, my most important client!  
519.272.9017  
lizyundt.realtor@gmail.com

**DAVE FAIR**  
REALTOR®  
Make Real Estate a  
'FAIR' GAME  
www.davefair.ca  
905.866.7577  
ROYAL LEPAGE Hiller Realty

**Spencer Binkle**  
Sales Representative  
Direct: 519-801-5620  
spencerbinkle@royallepage.ca  
ROYAL LEPAGE Hiller Realty

**ADVERTISE HERE  
FOR AS LOW AS  
\$15 PER ISSUE!**  
Contact:  
stratfordtimes@gmail.com  
or call 519-655-2341

## SHARPENING

**STONECRAFT FINE SHARPENING**  
Knives - Scissors - Garden Tools  
Now BOOK ONLINE for  
FREE pickup/drop off at  
Stonecraftsharp.com  
Or contact:  
dani@stonecraftsharp.com  
519-998-7954

## TRAVEL

**STONETOWN TRAVEL**  
150 Queen St. E., St. Marys  
519-284-2332  
210 Mill St., New Hamburg  
226-333-9939  
www.stonetowntravel.com  
agent@stonetowntravel.com

## WATCH/CLOCK REPAIR

**Watch & Clock Repair**  
FREE ESTIMATES  
Watch batteries, bands & crystals  
All makes & models. New & Old.  
House calls available  
**Antiques in Time**  
45 York Street | 519-272-0411  
www.antiquesintime.ca

## WINDOW WASHING

COMMERCIAL - RESIDENTIAL  
**SQUEEKS**  
PROFESSIONAL WINDOW CLEANING  
JARED GOWAN | HEATHER GOWAN  
519-854-5254  
jaredsqueeks@live.ca / www.squeeksclean.com

## SUDOKU

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





**\$579**  
TAXES IN

**TWIN OVER TWIN, 3 COLOURS**



**\$449**  
TAXES IN

**STORAGE BED, GREY LINEN, DOUBLE OR QUEEN**



**\$2,249**  
TAXES IN

**PULL OUT SECTIONAL WITH STORAGE**



**\$1,199**  
TAXES IN

**SPECIAL BUY!**  
**DOUBLE SOFABEDS**

**2 STYLES,**  
**2 COLOURS**

Made in Canada

# Spring Renewal Event

**Twin mattresses**  
starting @ \$99

**QUEEN SET**  
**\$399**  
TAXES IN



**RESTOPEDIC**

- 416 coil
- Edge guard
- HD fibre pad

**QUEEN SET**  
**\$999**  
TAXES IN



**INTERLUDE**

- 1130 pocket coils w/ quantum coils
- Full layer copper latex
- Full layer Serene response

**SAVE**  
**60%**  
**2023 SELECTED**  
**MATTRESSES**

**QUEEN SET**  
**\$959**  
TAXES IN



**ENSLEY**

- 1090 pocket coil
- Airflow foam surround
- Posterized centre 3rd

**Queen Lifestyle**  
bases starting at  
**\$699 tax in**

**EVERY**  
**MATTRESS**  
**TAX INCLUDED**

**PLUS**

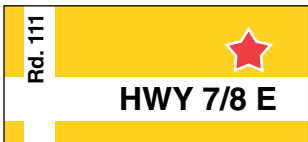
**FREE**  
**LOCAL MATTRESS**  
**DELIVERY & REMOVAL**

**PLUS**

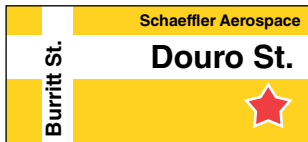
**FINANCING**  
**AVAILABLE**  
**OAC**



# Home furniture



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



**OUTLET:**  
519-273-7453  
617 Douro Street

Follow us on:



**Outlet Hours:**  
Thurs. to Fri. 10 to 6  
Sat. 10 to 5  
Sun. 12 to 4

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

[www.stratfordhomefurniture.ca](http://www.stratfordhomefurniture.ca)  
[www.homefurniture.ca](http://www.homefurniture.ca)