

STRATFORD TIMES

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Stratford police deem \$1.5-million Beer Store fire suspicious

The Beer Store on Huron Street in Stratford will remain closed for the foreseeable future after an overnight fire May 6, which Stratford police has deemed suspicious, caused \$1.5 million in damages.

According to the Stratford Fire Department, the fire was called in by a passerby shortly before 1 a.m. Upon arrival, the fire captain at the scene called for a second alarm, bringing a total of four trucks, two utility vehicles and 16 firefighters out to help quell the blaze, which fire Chief Neil Anderson said is believed to have started at the rear of the store in the storage and loading-dock area.

Fire department and police officials say flames were observed inside the store and the building was full of smoke. Staff from the neighbouring Tim Hortons were evacuated for safety purposes and the area was closed to traffic as firefighters fought the fire.

"At this stage, until the investigation is concluded, we are unable to provide specific details regarding the cause or extent of the incident," deputy fire chief Chris Van Bargaen said in an emailed statement. "However, based on initial assessments, we estimate the cost of structure and content loss to be around \$1.5 million."

Investigators said The Beer Store suffered extensive physical damage, including to the roof and storage areas. Smoke damage is also apparent throughout the entire building.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Flanked by his children and co-award winners, Breen Bentley delivers his show-stopping acceptance speech after being presented with business leader of the year at the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce's Business Excellence Awards gala May 2. Pictured from left are Tanner, Breen, Brooklyn and Breen Jr. Bentley.

Breen Bentley leaves audience in stitches at BEA gala

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Breen Bentley, winner of this year's business leader of the year award, delivered perhaps the funniest and most memorable keynote address in the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce's history at the 2024 Business Excellence Awards gala May 2.

Bentley, who was helped on stage at the Best Western Arden Park Hotel by his three children and co-award winners – Breen Jr. Bentley, Tanner Bentley and Brooklyn Bentley – spoke candidly about his and his family's

40 years running the popular Stratford eatery, Bentley's Bar Inn and Restaurant.

"It's been a hell of a tough journey. I should have opened a shoe store," said Breen Bentley. "I get pissed off all the time and I tell myself, 'You were nuts.' I can't even believe it myself. It's been 40 years. You've got to be nuts to do it for 40 years. It's 50 staff seven days a week 17 hours a day for 40 years except Merry Christmas – and COVID. COVID gave us a break and it slaughtered us."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 7

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Connecting with community is what Police Week 2024 is all about

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Despite rainy weather, the start of Police Week 2024 was a huge success, according to Const. Darren Fischer.

He told the Stratford Times there was a huge turnout to the community barbecue hosted by the Stratford Police Service (SPS), with upwards of about 600 people being served.

Police week is an annual celebration, aiming to increase community awareness

of all local police services do. Taking place from May 12-18 this year, it first started in 1970 across the nation to coincide with Peace Officers Memorial Day May 15.

This year, the SPS hosted events across its jurisdiction, which includes St. Marys and Perth South.

To start, on May 11 the SPS hosted the free community barbecue in Stratford's Market Square, catered by Joe's Diner. The Optimist Club of Stratford had a draw for Totally Spoked, a local cycling shop.

On May 13, Fischer was outside of the

St. Marys Public Library for Coffee with a Cop, where residents could enjoy a free coffee and conversation with Fischer.

On May 14, the SPS hosted a Car Seat Clinic at Fire Hall 2 in Stratford, inviting anyone with questions about their children's car seats to swing by and receive help from technicians from the Child Passenger Safety Association of Canada.

On May 15, there was a Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run, with participants running from Stratford Police

HQ on George Street downtown to Boston Pizza on Erie Street.

On May 16, another Car Seat Clinic was held at the St. Marys Fire Department and on May 17 there was a Coffee with a Cop event in Stratford as well.

In a social media post on the SPS' Facebook page after the community barbecue, police thanked the community for its help.

"This was a great way for us to engage," the post read. "We can't wait to do it again next year, only bigger and better!"



ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

Const. Darren Fischer outside of the St. Marys Public Library for Coffee with a Cop, just one of the events hosted by the Stratford Police Service for Police Week 2024.

Nearly \$1.5 million in provincial funding for HPPH won't impact last year's shortfall

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The nearly \$1.5 million announced by the provincial government this month will not affect the previously announced funding shortfall Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) had last year.

"Huron Perth Public Health appreciates the province's support for public health," Katherine Horst, communications coordinator for HPPH, wrote in an emailed statement. "The provincial information provided is what we have used to plan our 2024 budget.

"As this provincial funding was expected and was accounted for in 2024 budget planning, it will not impact the funding shortfall that HPPH announced in November 2023."

HPPH announced in November that a \$1.5 million deficit accumulated over the past five years meant staffing cuts had to be made, including four full-time nurses.

A total of 13.5 positions, roughly 10 per cent of its workforce, were eliminated

across the region and across departments. Some of the eliminations were done naturally through retirement and early leave incentives, but temporary contracts were ended and layoffs occurred.

On May 7, Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington, announced \$1,482,300 for HPPH along with \$469,700 for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health.

The combined \$1.95 million was part of a larger \$91.7 million investment in additional, one-time base funding for public health units across Ontario, according to a media release.

It restores the provincial base funding to the level previously provided under the 2020 cost-share formula and provides one per-cent growth base funding for the 2024 calendar year.

"Our public health units help ensure we have healthy and vibrant communities," Rae said in that same release. "This additional funding will ensure our public health units can continue to provide valuable services for our rural communities."

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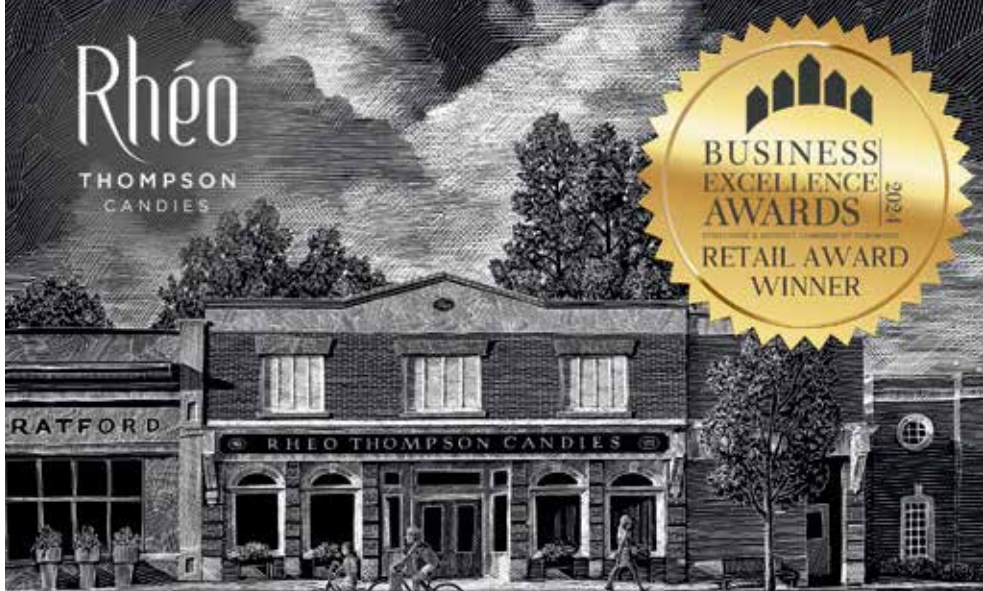
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The Beer Store on Huron Street in Stratford remains closed as the investigation into an overnight fire May 6, which Stratford police has deemed suspicious, continues.

Stratford police deem \$1.5-million Beer Store fire suspicious

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

On May 7, Stratford police released a statement deeming the fire suspicious and asked anyone with information about the cause of the fire to call police at 519-271-4141 or Crime Stoppers at 1-888-222-TIPS.

In a statement to the press, Beer Store vice president Ozzie Ahmed said he is thankful no one was injured in the fire and The Beer Store at 429 Huron St. will remain closed until the investigation is concluded.

“While we plan to reopen this store, the timing of the reopening will be determined once the fire investigation is

complete,” Ahmed said. “We understand that the closure of this location may cause inconvenience to our valued customers. We sincerely apologize for this and assure you that we are doing everything we can to reopen as soon as possible.”

Stratford police later said the City of Stratford issued an unsafe order on the building as a result of the fire.

While The Beer Store on Huron Street remains closed, Ahmed said customers can instead buy their beer from Beer Stores at 260 C.H. Meier Blvd. in Stratford, 112 Burns St. in New Hamburg or 571 Queen St. W in St. Marys.



Debris from a suspicious fire that caused \$1.5 million in damages at The Beer Store on Huron Street in Stratford can be seen at the rear of the building. (GALEN SIMMONS PHOTOS)

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From the editor's desk: Finding nutrition in my own backyard

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Did you know dandelions, that weed most of us try to eradicate from our yards by any means possible each spring, are edible?

Not only is each part of the dandelion – the flower, the leaves and the root – edible, apparently, they have an unbelievable amount of nutritional value and even have potentially cancer-fighting qualities.

While I knew dandelions are edible, I had no idea scientists have been studying the medicinal qualities of dandelions for more than a decade (and possibly longer). Recently, the topic of dandelions came up in conversation with my girlfriend (I can't remember how), and she mentioned she'd seen a news article about their use

in fighting cancer.

According to a post on the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center website, the flower, leaf and root of dandelions are used in traditional medicine for their diuretic, cholagogic (encourages the discharge of bile), antirheumatic (assists with inflammatory arthritis) and appetite-stimulating properties.

Studies suggest that dandelion has bad-cholesterol-lowering, liver-protecting, antiviral, anticoagulant, diuretic, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activities. Even more amazing, dandelion-root extract has demonstrated anticancer effects against melanoma and leukemia, as well as pancreatic- and colorectal-cancer cell lines.

Now don't get me wrong. I am not a doctor and I cannot recommend that

anyone begin eating dandelions for their purported medicinal benefits, especially since dandelion-root extract can cause allergic reactions and may interact with some prescription drugs. Science has more work to do in that respect.

However, I also learned that dandelion greens, which can be eaten raw or cooked, are an excellent source of vitamins A, C and K, and they also contain vitamin E, folate and small amounts of B vitamins, as well as minerals including iron, calcium, magnesium and potassium.

Dandelion roots, meanwhile, are rich in the carbohydrate, inulin, a type of soluble fiber found in plants that supports the growth and maintenance of healthy gut bacteria in your digestive tract. The root is often dried and made into tea or a

caffeine-free coffee substitute.

After reading all of that, I looked out my back door and realized all that nutritional goodness is available in abundance every spring in my own backyard.

So, what did I do? I spent three hours frantically and gleefully pulling up dandelions from their roots, washing them in our kitchen sink and separating the greens, roots and flowers for future use.

While I'm a little nervous about how they might taste, I'm excited to incorporate all three components into our diets in whatever way I can.

If you're still reading this and I haven't lost you in my dandelion obsession, I may write a second part to this column with the culinary and nutritional results of my foray in dandelion foraging.

Stay tuned.

STRATFORD TIMES

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Letters to the Editor

Concrete-block eyesores

I am writing this letter to state my disappointment that nothing for a number of years has been done to beautify the city owned property between the police station and Chocolate Barr's Candy shop.

I would have thought that the BIA with their mandate from 1973 to "promote and beautify" the downtown would have been on this years ago.

This would be the perfect opportunity to make a beauti-

ful garden with a walkway from the Cooper Site parking lot along with some flowers and benches to lead to the heart of our city.

The painted concrete blocks look like something a kindergarten class would do. I also wonder why past and present councillors and others involved with the beautification of our city have not noticed this eyesore.

Shame on those in charge.

-Rheo Thompson

Outdoor gym? Nothing wrong with it, but I think the city should put more attention to the few places we have to walk. The trail on the West of the lake, or river, which becomes flooded after some heavy rain. The same on the other side, and the other one behind the Stratford gallery, that gets muddy most of it. One day a lady showed me her duty shoes, and she told me that she walks along it every day. I know that they are doing some improvements but the places are enjoyed by locals and tourist as well.

Jesus Auyon
Stratford



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Get ready for sunshine, good times and great tunes at Stratford Live Music & Food

ALEX HUNT

Times Correspondent

The event will run from June 21-23 at the historic bandshell on Veterans Drive. Food Trucks and Vendors will be parked from the York Street parking lot up and along Veterans Drive to the gated licenced area.

“We have expanded our kid’s zone. Not only do we have face painting and collaborative activities with the Stratford Public Library and Stratford Lantern Parade, but we will also be hosting characters that will be dancing with the children along with photo ops,” said Carrie Clark, volunteer coordinator for the three-day weekend event.

“New this year, we have a by-donation community breakfast on Sunday from 10-11 a.m. that was organized with the Local Community Food Centre. A donation will get you entrance for the day and money collected during this hour will go to support the Local Community Food Centre.”

Another new component that will be added for this year are new accessibility mats to ensure all guests can enjoy what the festival has to offer.

The festival will kick off Friday night at 4 p.m. and will run 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday, then close on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. following the community breakfast.

Weekend passes will cost \$30 (new this year), Friday night’s opening is set for \$15, Saturday tickets will be \$20 and Sunday will close at \$10 per person. Children 12 and under are free.

Live music will be performed throughout the event including Juno Award winners Steve Strongman and Steve Marriner before headlining acts Just Heart on Friday night and the Dave Murphy Band on Saturday. Sunday will feature local bands for the event’s ‘We Love Stratford Day’ with headlining act Barry James Payne & String Bone. Youth artists supported by the Stew Laing Bursary will start off the day on Saturday.

“We love giving the opportunity for the youth to perform and be paid for their appearance as it’s important that they know their worth. Their talent is really remarkable.” said Clark.

Steve Toman, music coordinator for the festival, said they try to allow a maximum of 15-minute intervals for changeovers, to mention sponsors, vendors and activities for guests to participate in.

“We listen to the feedback provided and try to make improvements each year” said event volunteer Tina Groenestege. “We work so hard leading up to the event and sometimes question why we even do this. Then on the event weekend, we see the community come together having such a great time dancing, socializing, eating and laughing (and we know) all the time spent being able to provide this experience really pays off.”

The volunteers would like to thank all their sponsors and community partners that contribute to making this event happen every year.

For those who are interested in volunteering or becoming a sponsor, visit www.stratfordlive.ca.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

GREAT FOOD AND MUSIC

Stratford Live Music & Food volunteers are glad to bring back the event at the historic bandshell on Veterans Drive. Pictured in the back row from left are Vic Smith, Cathy McCue, Barb Smith, Rick Attridge, Pam Toman, Sandy McCann, Kati Peck, Steve Toman and Carrie Clark. In the front from left are Toni McClean and Tina Groenestege. (Absent is Matt Peck).

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CIBC PRIVATE WEALTH



Breen Bentley leaves audience in stitches at Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards gala

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“... Bentley’s, that joint in Woodstock, St. Thomas, Brantford, and Chatham and downtown Kitchener; it would not have worked. It wouldn’t have. Like the mayor said, we are shit lucky to be in Stratford. You go downtown, the streets are busy, the lights are on. We have one of the best city halls, I think, maybe in the world, the best theatre in the world, the best river in the world, the best bloody chocolates in the world. In downtown Stratford, there’s not even a bloody Starbucks. I think that’s beautiful ... because you’ve got individual, hardworking, private citizens working their asses off.”

Breen Bentley told those in the banquet hall for the awards gala that his success in the food-and-drink business comes down to a few key things. He has the unwavering support of his kids despite never pressuring them to follow him into the family business; he has the support of his friends and the people he trusts to give him the right advice when he was starting out and when he was dealing with life’s hardships; and, as an unabashed capitalist, he can recognize a good idea when he sees it, and he’s not afraid to steal it if he thinks it will be good for business and good for his customers at Bentley’s.

“I wouldn’t be here without Stratford,” Breen Bentley concluded. “And I’m not talking about a few people. I’m talking about a trainload of people. A big, damn train.”

In addition to Breen Bentley accepting his business leader of the year award, awards were presented to businesses across 10 other categories. All in, representatives from 73 businesses across Stratford, St. Marys, Mitchell and the surrounding area were nominated for awards at this year’s 28th Business Excellence Awards gala, which was emceed

by former Stratford-Perth Museum general manager John Kastner and Windsor Hospitality Inc. owner Shelley Windsor.

The winners were selected by a panel of judges chaired by Stratford Public Library CEO Krista Robinson comprising previous award winners based on each business’ history of growth, commitment to professional excellence, innovation and community engagement.

The following is a list of the winners in each category. Congratulations to all winners and nominees!

2024 Business Excellence Award winners:

• **Non-profit/charitable award:** Wellspring Stratford Cancer Support Centre

The non-profit/charitable award is given annually to a not-for-profit that has significantly contributed to the overall quality of life within the community and its citizens through programming and activities.

• **Service award:** Modo Yoga Stratford

The service award is presented to a service business that demonstrates a consistent adherence to the excellent business practices necessary to deliver the highest quality service and support to their clients or customers.

• **Enterprise award:** Vicwest

The enterprise award is presented to a manufacturing, agricultural, or distribution business or organization that has created, invented, or developed an innovative product or process that has resulted in a significant and measurable increase in any of the following areas: product or process development, employee culture, job creation, increase in sales growth, community involvement. The recipient business executes best practices in all areas of their operation to ensure maximization of its capabilities and capacity.

• **Emerging business award:** Chok. Fine Chocolates

The emerging business award is presented to an entrepreneur who has been in business for one to five years. They have investigated the opportunities, weighed the risks and developed a strong and successful business through effective business practices, community engagement and entrepreneurial spirit. This business has demonstrated significant business achievement, sustainable financial performance, exhibited resilience to economic challenges and has gone above and beyond in their business and in the community.

• **Hospitality award:** Social Thirty-One

The hospitality award is presented to an accommodation, food service, or tourism operation that has enhanced the allure of the community. This recognition is for those demonstrating a commitment to excellence in hospitality or customer service, staff knowledge, quality and consistency of product, and community involvement. The recipient business not only excels in their service but also plays a pivotal role in enriching the overall hospitality experience in the community.

• **Retail award:** Rhéo Thompson Candies

The Retail Award is awarded to an independent brick-and-mortar or online retailer whose business is located within the Stratford-and-district area. The recipient business excels in selling merchandise, demonstrating commitment, innovation and excellence in their field while providing exceptional customer service.

• **Skilled trades award:** D & S Downham Equipment Ltd.

The skilled trades award is awarded to a business that excels in providing skilled-trade services to individuals or

businesses. The recipient demonstrates a consistent adherence to excellent business practices and the high standards necessary to deliver quality service and support to their clients or customers.

• **Trailblazing award:** Lynn River Farm and Graze Farm Dinners

The trailblazing award is presented to a business that is characterized by its innovative spirit and pioneering approach. This business has introduced a novel idea or technology, which may even have revolutionized its industry. It exhibits adaptability, responding agilely to market changes and customer needs. This business type often leads in sustainability and ethical practices, showing a commitment to social and environmental responsibility. Moreover, it’s marked by strong leadership and a visionary mindset, inspiring others and driving progress in its field.

• **Professional award:** Peter Maranger & Associates Inc. (Co-operators)

The professional award is presented to a business that provides professional services to individuals or businesses. The recipient business executes best practices in all areas of their operation to ensure maximization of their capabilities, capacity and excellence in the outstanding service they provide. The recipient business demonstrates a commitment to the ongoing education, skills development or professional accreditation of its employees.

• **Business of the year:** D & S Downham Equipment Ltd.

The business of the year award is awarded to a business which has demonstrated a commitment to professional ethics, excellence in customer service, a willingness to engage in innovation, an ongoing responsibility to its staff and an involvement in its community over the years.



Amber Schalk presented Lisa Stacey, manager of Wellspring Stratford Cancer Support Centre, with the non-profit/charitable award at the 28th annual Business Excellence Awards gala in Stratford May 2.



Travis Blum presents the service award to Modo Yoga Stratford studio owner and teacher Christa Mabee
(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTOS)

“This is about squashing democracy in Stratford”: Residents challenge temporary city hall ban

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Mike Sullivan put it plain and simple. His recent ban from City of Stratford property is undue.

“This is about squashing democracy in Stratford,” Sullivan said. “They do not want the public commenting on their activities – period – and so this is an easy way for them to do this with a completely unfettered, unchallengeable declaration that we violated some policy or another.”

On April 4, both Sullivan and Barb Shaughnessy received notices from the city’s solicitor, Paula Lombardi of Siskins Law Firm, informing them they have been suspended from all city property for three months. Any and all communication must be done through Lombardi’s office.

Both letters were largely the same and resulted from their deputations at the Feb. 26 city council meeting in which Sullivan and Shaughnessy spoke on a few items and the city claims they were in violation of the city’s respectful-workplace policy.

Shaughnessy spoke on a zone change application for 245 Downie St., better known as the Bradshaw Lofts, that would allow units to be licensed as short-term-rental accommodations.

Shaughnessy argued that the property should be focused on long-term housing, a priority in Stratford and the nation as a whole.

Sullivan spoke on that item, in agreement with Shaughnessy, though he also spoke on a closed-meeting investigation report completed by the city’s independent closed-meeting investigator. That report found council wrongly voted on over 100 items behind closed doors between 2018 and 2023.

“Old habits die hard,” Sullivan said at one point in his delegation. “There is no penalty in law for council’s misbehaviour ... but who was responsible for creating the mess in the first place? The clerk creates the agenda for each meeting, including determining which items should be in-camera. It is then up to council to decide whether to follow the clerk’s agenda or to move items off the in-camera agenda and discuss items in public.

“In the end, it is the chair of the meeting and council who are responsible for knowing the rules.”

Though critical of council and staff, Sullivan does not believe he was in vio-



OLD HABITS DIE HARD

Mike Sullivan stands in front of Stratford City Hall, which he has been temporarily suspended from. Sullivan is one of a handful of Stratford residents seeking legal recourse for the city’s “heavy-handed” decision to ban them.

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

lation of the city’s respectful-workplace policy.

The policy, found on the city’s website, prohibits any disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour on city property, giving the examples of harassment, rudeness, or causing distress to city employees, among other reasons.

Shaughnessy, too, does not believe she was in violation of the policy. Furthermore, she told the Stratford Times a number of the city’s assertions are flat out false.

For instance, Shaughnessy said the city has claimed she made comments to a member of the public that made them concerned about the safety and civility of public meetings, made aggressive and hostile comments to a member of senior administration in the kitchenette during break, and her actions were noticeably aggressive during said break.

Shaughnessy claims she was never near or in the kitchenette during the break in the Feb. 26 meeting and the other allegations are also false.

Sullivan, Shaughnessy, Jane Marie Mitchell and Sharon Collingwood, rep-

resented by David Donnelly of Donnelly Law, have challenged the city’s banning of Sullivan and Shaughnessy.

“In my opinion,” a letter from Donnelly to Lombardi reads, “the proposed ban is unconstitutional and illegal. It gives the appearance of being retaliation against the courageous citizens for blowing the whistle on past illegal council conduct.”

Mitchell was given a warning alongside Sullivan and Shaughnessy after delegating on the 2024 budget, which was also approved at that February meeting. Collingwood did not receive a warning nor a suspension but joined the group as a representative of Get Concerned Stratford.

Sullivan was an NDP MP for the Toronto riding of York South-Weston from 2011 to 2015. As a former politician, Sullivan said he is acutely aware of the kinds of criticism politicians and public employees can get.

“I was a politician for a while,” Sullivan said. “You don’t like somebody criticising you or your party’s policies, but it’s part of what you are, you know? You take that with the job.”

City CAO Joan Thomson said in an emailed statement that the investigative process for the temporary suspensions are set out in the city’s respectful-workplace policy.

Anyone can report acts of disrespectful and inappropriate behaviour they witness in the workplace, which city property is. Once an incident report is submitted, it goes to the appropriate manager. In consultation with the director of human resources and the CAO, an appropriate action is taken, in accordance with the respectful-workplace policy.

In this incident, staff also consulted a third-party law firm to conduct a review, Thomson said, though did not name the firm.

If a person wishes to appeal any action, Thomson said the party must address their concerns in writing with the CAO within 14 days of the decision. The appeal will be reviewed by a director and the CAO, and they may consult legal advice at any time in the investigation.

“The person making the appeal will receive a letter outlining the outcome of the decision,” Thomson said. “If the appellant is not satisfied, all further inquiries regarding the incident shall be referred to the Ontario Ombudsman.”

Thomson revealed that since the policy came into effect in 2023, less than five individuals have received temporary suspensions.

Individuals who have received temporary suspensions are still able to participate in city business, but communication must be directed toward the city’s solicitor first and then approved.

In regards to the legal action taken by Sullivan, Shaughnessy, Mitchell and Collingwood, Thomson gave the following statement:

“The city council chamber is a public space and also a workplace, and we are responsible for ensuring it’s a safe and respectful place for everyone. As a result of a few recent instances of disrespectful behaviour in the council chambers, the city has taken necessary action with a few individuals. We want people to feel welcome in our public spaces, but we also want them to feel safe and respected.”

In their letter, Sullivan and Shaughnessy’s lawyer said the city has until April 25 to rescind the suspensions. As of publication, no such action has been taken.

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Where is the line between appropriate and inappropriate criticism? Mayor says its clearly defined in respectful workplace policy

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

News of the recent banning of Stratford residents from city property has quickly spread across the region, with many residents questioning what can and can't be said in the Festival City.

Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma believes that the line between appropriate and inappropriate criticism is clearly defined in the respectful workplace policy – and that he full-heartedly believes that the action taken by the city is the right thing to do.

“They're really intellectual people that are not foreign to politics,” Ritsma said about the residents who were suspended when asked whether the line between what is appropriate and what is not is clearly defined. “I believe it's clear, and if it wasn't clear, then I believe as well that they had time since it's been implemented to now to say, ‘Hey, can you explain why that is like

that? And why is that?”

“You're entitled to your thoughts, but there's a fine line between, your rights to express your thoughts, but also the rights of those people that are receiving some of those thoughts.”

Ritsma made that statement following the city council meeting May 13 when Tim Forster, the husband of recently suspended resident Barb Shaughnessy, delegated at council.

Though Forster asked to speak to council on the respectful-workplace-policy training session that was held in-camera on May 6, the majority of his delegation had to do with the recent suspensions.

Ritsma cautioned Forster partway through his delegation, urging him to stick to the agenda item.

Forster claimed city CAO Joan Thomson did not follow the procedure in the policy since alleged threats of violence were made but the police were not called,

which is what is defined in the policy.

Forster went on to call the proceeding events a “kangaroo court” that is wasting time, taxpayer money and sowing division.

“You can stop this obscenity,” Forster said, asking for council to rescind the respectful-workplace policy and any banning currently in place. “Go back to the drawing board and get it right this time.”

Coun. Cody Sebben put forward two motions on the subject following the delegation, saying that he would have preferred a warning be issued rather than an outright suspension.

He put forward a motion for staff to investigate having these decisions come through council.

Thomson said the decision to suspend the affected parties is an operational one.

“So, I would ask for some clarification,” Thomson said. “Are you asking for all operational decisions made by staff to come

before council before they are implemented?”

“Of course not,” Sebben said, clarifying that certain operational decisions are brought to council's attention and when that happens, he would like council to review them.

That motion was defeated with only Sebben, Coun. Lesley Biehn and Coun. Geza Wordofa supporting it. A subsequent motion to have an alternate form of mediation be used instead of the current suspensions also died on the floor with only Sebben, Biehn and Wordofa supporting it.

After the meeting, Ritsma did not want “to get into that,” regarding the accusations which resulted in the ban, saying that it is not useful at this point.

“I think the useful piece is that we have a workplace policy,” Ritsma said. “(It) specifically states that ... creating a safe and respectful workplace and public space is a shared responsibility.”

Police's new administrative building is up and running, but only a temporary fix to a much bigger problem

CONNOR LUCZKA

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Police Service (SPS) has long needed more space – and more appropriate space at that.

In fact, police chief Greg Skinner told the accessibility advisory committee at its May 7 meeting that it goes back longer than one might expect.

“I can go back and find minutes back as far as 1991,” Skinner said. “When they (the police services board) were talking about a new police station ... 17 George St. is not a building that was meant to be or was built to be barrier free – and to get there is going to be a challenge.”

Though progress has been slow going so far, in recent months much progress has been made.

Just this month, SPS revealed a new administrative hub located at 798 Erie St., just behind the Ford dealership.

The new location is primarily for back-office support and “alternate” reporting work. Front-line policing is still conducted out of 17 George St.

Freedom of Information requests, copies of reports, pardons, file destruction, taxi licences and record checks are being done at the new location, though record checks may also be done online as well.

The new location is also barrier-free, Skinner told the committee, and that was one of the reasons the site was identified and ultimately pursued by police.

The Erie Street location is not a permanent



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

ADMINISTRATIVE HUB

The new “administrative hub” for the Stratford Police Service at 798 Erie St. is where the public will go for anything related to Freedom of Information requests, copies of reports, pardons, file destruction, taxi licences and record checks.

solution, Skinner assured the committee. They have a five-year lease at the building and, in the future, the police services board still wants policing done at their downtown location at 17 George St., all under one roof.

In November, the board approved discussion on a new police station, be that a completely new facility or a renovation of the current location.

Since that decision, the board has honed in on adapting the current station for their purposes. An engineering report conducted but not yet released to the public has identi-

fied land on the station's property suitable for expansion.

A possible renovation is many years away, but under the deadlines of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), public buildings in Ontario are expected to be accessible and barrier-free by 2025, a fast-approaching deadline.

To get the building compliant on time, Stratford city council approved a \$200,000 capital project in this year's budget to construct an accessibility ramp.

Originally, the design was intended to be

a permanent concrete structure, but with the future of the building in flux, council and staff thought it prudent to cut costs and construct a metal, temporary structure. The original cost was estimated to be \$275,000.

Tim Wolfe, director of community services, and Mark Hackett, manager of community facilities, presented to the committee on the temporary ramp to be installed at the George Street location, which would finally make the location barrier-free.

Wolfe also pointed out that, if renovations on the building go through and a permanent ramp is constructed or even the main entrance be moved to a more accessible location, then the ramp may be disassembled and constructed elsewhere in the city.

“Unfortunately, in Stratford that is not the only building that we need to address,” Wolfe said. “We're well aware of that.”

The project is in the design process, with a consultant retained by the City of Stratford making a final design. The consultant is aware of the requirements the city and the committee are requiring, Hackett said.

Hackett said a design will be finalized in the coming weeks and then a request for proposal can be issued.

Diane Sims, co-chair of the committee, has long been advocating for an accessible police station. She was thrilled with the news and that it is finally moving forward.

“Two years ago this month, I spoke to the police services board of my experience there,” Sims said. “I'm quite excited that this is happening, (to) get in there and get fingerprinted.”

AMDSB boundary review to finish by end of June

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The lengthy school-boundary review process undertaken by the local public school board is wrapping up soon, though there is still much work – and many opinions to consider – before any final decision is made.

In the Pathways Innovation Centre at Stratford Intermediate School, parents gathered May 7 to express their opinions on the Avon Maitland District School Board's (AMDSB) review.

“Avoiding disruption, whenever possible, is the common-sense solution,” said Justin Erb, one of the parents that delegated at the meeting.

Erb, Sean Rowsome, Nicole Rogerson, Jody Wilson and Damir Filipovic presented at the special public meeting.

Although each has their own families with their own needs, all of them advocated for the least amount of disruption for their children and other children in the area.

Filipovic, for instance, said even a small increase to bus times can make a huge difference on his son and their morning routine.

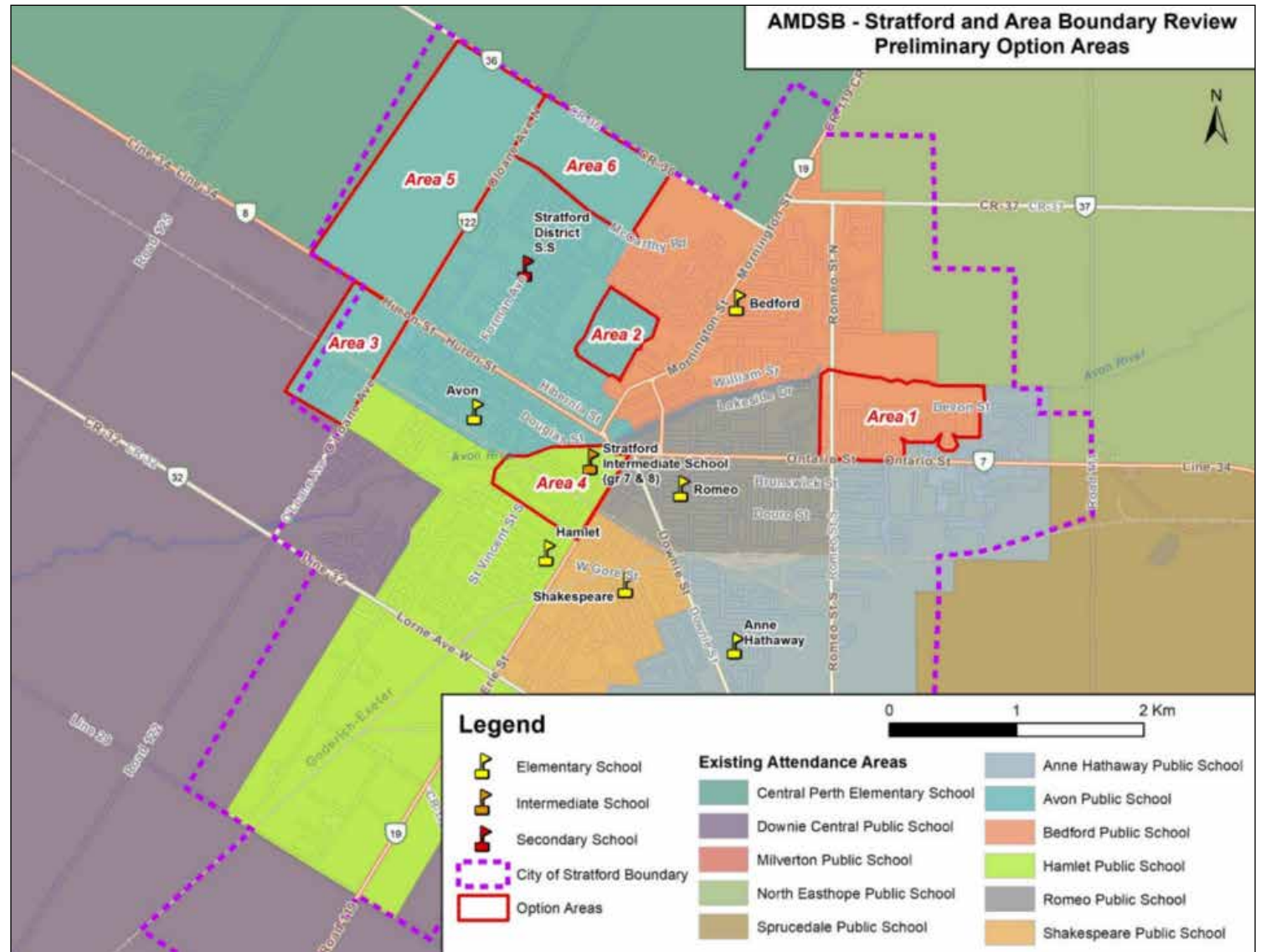
“Our middle guy has frequent accidents on the short bus ride, which is very challenging for him,” Filipovic said. “The bus ride to Downie (Central Public School), while only an eight-minute car ride, is 25 minutes there and 50 minutes home – that doesn't include the extra 20, 30 minutes it takes to just get them ready for the bus.”

Rogerson also said that there was a lack of foresight in a past boundary review. Five years ago, her subdivision was moved from Downie to Avon Public School.

“Now you're saying, five years later, we made a mistake there, you're now going to have to go back to Downie,” Rogerson said. “I feel that there wasn't enough open communication with either the City of Stratford, the planning committee, or what have you.”

This most recent boundary review began in October 2023 due to overcrowding at Bedford and Avon Public Schools.

With Watson, an independent consulting firm, a committee was formed with representatives from all communities involved.



(CONTRIBUTED IMAGE)

BOUNDARY REVIEW

The map of the Stratford school boundary review, complete with the six areas being considered to move.

After a few meetings, public feedback was sought and a survey was sent out in January 2024 with three options listed. An open house to review the feedback followed shortly.

Option one suggested:

- Area 1 students (currently directed to Bedford PS) be redirected to Anne Hathaway PS (both English track and French Immersion students).

- Area 2 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Bedford PS (both English track and French Immersion students).

Area 3 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Hamlet PS (English track only).

- Area 4 students (currently directed to Hamlet PS) be redirected to Romeo PS (English track only).

- Area 5 students (currently a growth area directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Central Perth PS (English track only).

- Area 6 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Central Perth PS (English track only).

- Area 6 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Central Perth PS (English track only).

Option two suggested:

- Area 1 students (currently directed Bedford PS) be redirected to Anne Hathaway PS (both English track and French Immersion students).

- Area 2 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Bedford PS (both English track and French Immersion students).

- Area 3 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Downie Central PS (English track only).

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11



Cheri Carter, a superintendent with the AMDSB, at the May 7 special board of trustees meeting. She told trustees that parents have consistently told her that their priority in this review is to have the least amount of disruption for their kids.



Nicole Rogerson, one of the parents that delegated on the school boundary review, pointed out a past “lack of foresight” in a boundary review, resulting in her children being moved. Now her children may be moving again.

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTOS)

Stratford Savour and Sip Trail returns

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Destination Stratford's Savour and Sip Trail is back just in time for a tourism season filled with outdoor dining, shopping and theatre.

Destination Stratford announced the Savour and Sip Trail returned on May 1 and will run until Oct. 31. Five vouchers for \$39.55 can be used for five of the 28 participating businesses in Stratford, St. Marys and Shakespeare.

"We released the Savour and Sip Trail for the first time last year and were blown away by the response, so we're happy to have it back for May to October again this year," said April Murray, destination brand manager at Destination Stratford.

Stratford businesses new to the trail include Mercer Kitchen and Beer Hall, Olive Your Favourites and the Corner Store Candy Co. Kelly Lindsay, owner of the Corner Store Candy Co., told the Stratford Times the candy shop was part of the Chocolate Trail and the Christmas Trail before Lindsay was asked to be part of the Savour and Sip Trail.

"Since it's a new trail for me, I don't have much experience, but my experience on the other trails has been great," Lindsay said. "I find that it brings a lot of new faces into the shop and introduces them to our shop and our candy."

About half of those who redeem a tourism-trail voucher also purchase other items from Corner Store Candy Co.

Aaron Bayer, owner of Olive Your Favourites, also joined the Savour and Sip Trail after being a part of the Christmas and Chocolate Trails, along with the Ma-



(APRIL MURRAY PHOTO)

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES

Just in time for picnic and outdoor dining season, Destination Stratford's Savour and Sip Trail returns for a second year.

ple Trail. He is thrilled to be part of the Savour and Sip Trail.

"The trails do so much to bring tourists around, in and out of our stores," Bayer said. "I've participated in the Chocolate Trail myself and was impressed with the gifts that the various stores offer for customers to redeem their vouchers at."

He said the tourism trails give participants recommendations for places to see in Stratford, which helps those who have never been to the city before. The trails can lead visitors to places like side streets they otherwise wouldn't have known about.

"York Street is – of course, I'm a lit-

tle biased – one of my favourite streets in Stratford," Bayer said. "But the trails definitely bring people down to the backside of Ontario Street where they may or may not visit based on a single day when there's only so many hours in the day and so much to see in the city."

Wendy Stanley, owner of Poppin Kettle Corn, will be participating in the trail for the second time after the great turnout in 2023.

"The feedback we got last year from the trail was fantastic," Stanley said. "People love to come to Stratford and explore using their map and their tickets to pick up the items from the stops

on the map. It's a great way to explore Stratford and to see what stores have to offer."

She also said the tourism trails give customers new and returning ideas about what's available.

"What is even more exciting is when they come back the next time and say 'Oh, I was here on the trail and we've decided to come again.'"

Murray said Destination Stratford's tourism trails encourage visitors to stay longer in the area.

"We're finding that more visitors are looking for more meaningful experiences," she said. "We receive inquiries on an ongoing basis that visitors are looking for hands-on experiences and feel connected to the destination through those experiences."

The Savour and Sip Trail also falls at the same time as Stratford Al Fresco, which allows visitors and residents to drink alcoholic beverages with their takeout food orders at designated Stratford Al Fresco dining areas.

"It's encouraging visitors to explore local retailers and restaurants," Murray said, "but also keeping that capacity at where it can be managed and having those visitors take those items to go, explore and create their own picnics and their own charcuterie boards or take them back to their hotel or their (bed and breakfast)."

Murray also recommends planning ahead and bringing a cooler and a picnic blanket when exploring the Savour and Sip Trail.

More information can be found by visiting visitstratford.ca/savourtrail.

AMDSB boundary review to finish by end of June

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

- Area 4 students (currently directed to Hamlet PS) remain at Hamlet PS.

- Area 5 students (currently a growth area directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Central Perth PS (English track only).

- Area six students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Central Perth PS (English track only).

Option three suggested:

- Area 1 students (currently directed Bedford PS) be redirected to Anne Hathaway PS (both English track and French Immersion students).

- Area 2 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Bedford PS (both English track and French Immersion students).

- Area 3 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Hamlet PS (English track only).

- Area 4 students (currently directed to Hamlet PS) be redirected to Romeo PS (English track only).

- Area 5 students (currently a growth area directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Central Perth PS (English track only).

- Area 6 students (currently directed to Avon PS) be redirected to Bedford PS (both English track and French Immersion students).

Additionally, Erb suggested an idea which eventually developed into a fourth option, which has areas two, five and six students, currently attending Avon, be directed to

Downie Central and Central Perth.

At the board meeting on March 26, trustees received a report, detailing progress on the review.

Superintendent Cheri Carter said the committee and staff's preferred option was option two, though option four was also a viable option.

Option two would redirect 264 students and option four would only redirect 120 existing students, but staff pointed out option four does not provide balanced enrollment in the city quite as well as option two, nor does it address pressures at Avon and Bedford fully.

At the April 23 meeting, another option was presented by parent Kira Hughes, which was a modified option four that suggested legacy students be allowed to remain at their current schools and border crossing be decided on a school-by-school basis.

At the special meeting on May 7, Carter confirmed Hughes' option was being considered by Watson. If it is viable, the modified option four may be considered.

"The least disruption the better, is what I've been hearing consistently from everybody that's spoken about this," Carter said.

A solution is required by the end of June; however, Carter indicated that a decision sooner rather than later would be preferable, if possible, so families can make summer plans knowing what the outcome of the review will be.

Any decision made will come into effect in the 2025/2026 school year.

Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW

May 05 Melba Bingeman, Embro	\$50.00
May 06 Lisa Fewster, St. Marys	\$50.00
May 07 Brian Boyes, Stratford	\$50.00
May 08 Chris Murray, Stratford	\$50.00
May 09 Michelle Witzel, Shakespeare	\$50.00
May 10 Verlyn Kittmer, Lakeside	\$50.00
May 11 Dave Harrigan, Lucan	\$200.00
May 12 Olivia Pethick, Stratford	\$50.00
May 13 Jeff Rundle, Woodham	\$50.00
May 14 Christine Brine, St. Marys	\$50.00
May 15 Murray Matthison, Stratford	\$50.00
May 16 Travis Runstedler, Stratford	\$50.00
May 17 Carl & Debbie Ribey, Hanover	\$50.00
May 18 Joan & David Harvie, Stratford	\$200.00

**ALL OF THE CALENDARS
HAVE BEEN SOLD**



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Wellspring Stratford fundraisers to benefit cancer patients and families in Stratford, St. Marys and surrounding area

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Two upcoming fundraisers, one an on-line auction and the other an annual golf tournament, will help Wellspring Stratford Cancer Support Centre continue to expand its programming and better serve cancer patients and their families in Stratford, St. Marys and well beyond.

Not only is the cancer-support centre hosting its 17th annual Wellspring Stratford Golf Tournament May 30 with a 5 p.m. shotgun start at River Valley Golf and Tube, but the organization that provides free cancer-support programs and services is also launching an online auction May 16-29 thanks to an influx of items donated to be auctioned off during the golf tournament.

"We started off having the golf tournament in May, and then when COVID came with all the restrictions, we changed it to September," said Wellspring Stratford manager Lisa Stacey. "It seemed to go pretty well except it was hard getting silent-auction items from organizations and businesses in Stratford during summer months.

"... So we decided this year, 'Why don't we try and go back to May?' ... We've had an amazing response with a new volunteer, Nancy Davidson. She used to run the MyGallery Auction and she volunteered last year. She bought some silent-auction items and when she came to pick them up, she said, 'Would you like help next year with the auction?' We gladly said yes and she, along with our amazing group of volunteers, managed to bring in 170 items."

While some of those items will still be auctioned off during the golf tournament and others will be held in reserve for fu-



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS

Wellspring Stratford Cancer Support Centre manager Lisa Stacey and volunteer Ange McNee hold two of the 170 auction items donated by local businesses and organizations that will be up for bid during an online auction May 16-29 and in person at the 17th annual Wellspring Stratford Golf Tournament at River Valley Golf and Tube May 30.

ture fundraisers, Stacey said Wellspring Stratford had more than enough to host an entirely separate online fundraiser in the lead-up to the tournament.

A few of the key auction items that will be available for bidding either online or in person at the golf tournament include a round of golf for four at the Hamilton Golf and Country Club, two tickets for the RBC Canadian Open at the Hamilton Golf and Country Club, two rounds at the Blue Mountain Golf and Country Club, and a pair of point shoes signed by Jenna Savella from the National Ballet of Canada, as well as a whole host of other, local items.

"I think, because the Canadian Open tickets and the Hamilton Golf and Country Club items can reach a wider audience, we'll offer those items online, and some of the other items like packages from the Mitchell Golf and Country Club and River Valley will be auctioned off at the golf tournament," Stacey said.

While those who would like to participate in the online auction can check the Wellspring Stratford Facebook page for details as they're released, tickets for the golf tournament can be purchased for \$95 apiece by visiting wellspringlondon.akaraisin.com/ui/StratfordGolf2024.

The cost of the tournament includes

nine holes of golf, a golf cart and dinner, as well as a \$30 charitable tax receipt. Those who would like to attend the tournament but don't want to golf can purchase just the dinner at a cost of \$45.

All proceeds from the event will go to support Wellspring Stratford's plethora of cancer-support programs including the new, Just Show Up program for area kids who have a parent or grandparent living with cancer, as well as a new Wellspring Stratford poetry book with pieces written by the Stratford-and-area residents Wellspring supports.

"This year, the Optimist Club of Downie sponsored a room here ... and one of their requests was if we could do a program for children, which we haven't done in the past," Stacey said. "Wellspring London has done a program called Just Show Up and we are now doing this program in Stratford in the fall. It's for children whose parents or grandparents are going through cancer. We've already set in stone different organizations to help us with this program. We've got a program at the Local Community Food Centre; they'll do a cooking class with us. Pursuit Climbing is going to do a morning with us. The Falstaff Family Centre, Cozyn's Garden Gallery, the list goes on.

"This is another way for us to connect with the community, help us bring these programs to our members and now be able to help children, which is absolutely next level."

In addition to those new programs, Wellspring Stratford offers a host of other programming focused around therapeutic arts, education and self-development, symptom management, individual and group support, exercise and movement, and so much more.

St. Marys and Stratford YMCAs receive nearly \$60,000 in Trillium funding

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

The YMCA of Three Rivers in both Stratford and St. Marys recently used an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant totalling \$59,700 to purchase adaptive and accessible fitness equipment for seniors and those living with disabilities in both communities.

After receiving the grant last year, YMCA of Three Rivers purchased and installed 12 new pieces of accessible equipment to help meet growing demand for physical-activity supports that promote inclusivity and participation in community spaces. This equipment includes recumbent steppers, recumbent bikes, an upper-body exerciser and raised platforms for body weight exercises and stretching.

In addition to the new equipment, onsite fitness professionals are available each week to help members learn how to use the new equipment safely so they can add new activities to their exercise repertoire with confidence.

"These changes have helped us foster a community hub where individuals can come together to exercise, connect and form friendships," said YMCA of Three Rivers director of health management programs Crystal Hughes. "By promoting accessibility and inclusion, we aim to combat social isolation, cultivate a sense of belonging and improve health outcomes for individuals with disabilities."

In a needs assessment 14 years ago, the St. Marys and Stratford YMCAs – now part of the YMCA of Three Rivers – identified a lack of support in the community

for people living with chronic disease and disabilities. Since then, the local YMCA has intentionally strived to improve to increase inclusion.

"The generous gift from the Ontario Trillium Foundation has made it possible for our Stratford and St. Marys locations to serve more people in our community in their pursuit of wellness," YMCA of Three Rivers vice president of philanthropy and marketing Lisa Hood said in an email.

The funding was made available to the YMCA of Three Rivers through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Capital grant program, which is intended improve access to programs and technology in community spaces and make it easier for Ontarians to participate in community programs. Funded projects are meant to:

- Improve access to facilities, programs,

activities and services;

- Improve existing spaces and support new build projects;
- Make programs and services better and more efficient; and
- Make better use of technology.

"It is important that our seniors have the opportunity to remain active during their golden years, and those living with a disability can also maintain a healthy lifestyle," said Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae in a press release announcing this funding on April 29. "This investment by the Ontario Government and the Ontario Trillium Foundation will do just this. This adaptive and accessible fitness equipment at both the Stratford and St. Marys YMCA locations will ensure everyone in our rural communities can remain active."

Stratford librarian recognized with Leadership in Adult Readers' Advisory Award

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

A Stratford librarian has been recognized for her work helping locals find the right books to read, and training her colleagues to provide similar assistance.

Stratford Public Library public-service librarian Melanie Kindrachuk was recently presented with the Leadership in Adult Readers' Advisory Award, an award that honours excellence in readers' advisory service to adults, but the Ontario Public Library Association.

"Readers' advisory is sort of a classic service that libraries offer. It's library jargon that basically means finding the right book for the right person at the right time," Kindrachuk said. "We have been doing that forever, but in the last few years – especially with (library CEO) Krista (Robinson)'s support, we have been building new training for our staff so everyone can learn the skills. You're basically learning what's available out there to help you find things according to people's questions. We always say, 'When you're doing readers' advisory, it's not about us, it's about the customer.' It's about what they want, it's not about what we like.

"We're trying to find something that meets what they say they want – their mood, what they feel like, what they're looking for. And generally, when we talk about reader's



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

READERS' ADVISORY

Stratford public service librarian Melanie Kindrachuk was recently recognized with the Ontario Public Library Association's Leadership in Adult Readers' Advisory Award. advisory, we're talking about fiction."

While Kindrachuk said recommending a book she's read before would be relatively easy, readers' advisory service is much more complicated. It's about asking questions about what a library patron likes and doesn't like to read, what they've read before, how they're feeling, what their preferred genre is and even what kinds of tele-

vision shows and movies they've watched.

From there, Kindrachuk and other staff can punch the right keywords into their library databases to come up with some suggestions. Depending on whether a patron enjoys or dislikes those books, the librarians can continue making suggestions, building those all-important relationships between library staff and community members.

"With readers' advisory, you're not just trying to find a book about something, but a book that has the right mood for what you're looking for," Kindrachuk said. "Do they like something that's really fast-paced and thrilled, do they want something more literary and slower. It's a good chance to talk to someone who's asking to see what they like, and you get to know people a lot more because you're talking about their preferences and what they're in the mood for, the kind of things they like. You get to talk about more than just books when you're talking to people."

Kindrachuk, who was nominated for the award by her colleagues at the Stratford library, said it's important for all staff at the library to stay up to date with what's available in the collection and what new books may be added to the collection in the near future so they can have those conversations with patrons, bounce ideas off other staff members and come up with suggestions on the spot.

"It's nice to know that she's being recognized for all her hard work not just for herself and our library, but for the profession in general as she is regularly sharing her skillset through committee work and presentations at conferences and such," Robinson said.

The award was presented to Kindrachuk at the 2024 Ontario Public Library Association's RA in a Day Event on April 30.



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STRATFORD NISSAN



New owners of Ken's French Fries thank community and team

HANNAH KAVANAGH

Times Correspondent

Ken's French Fries of Stratford has some new faces, but the same dedication as before.

Kevin and Laurie Zehr are the new owners of the 71-year-old food-truck business that sits every week in the Canadian Tire and Giant Tiger parking lots. This comes in the wake of Keystone Hospitality selling off some of its former properties, and Ken's was an opportunity the Zehrs didn't want to miss. With little experience in the restaurant industry, they took on the challenge for the appeal of its flexibility and family friendliness.

"We wanted to do something as a family, and working for ourselves," said Kevin Zehr.

The whole family is indeed involved. The two older sons, Ethan and Cody, are working at the food trucks. Ethan has experience in culinary schooling, lending to a homemade aioli he makes himself.

Currently, the mobility of the two food trucks is limited to a 25-kilometre radius for events. They hope to expand that in the near future.

In the meantime, knowing the reputation Ken's has in the community, the fami-

ly is dedicating themselves to the same fry standards as always.

"We knew it was really big in the community before," said Kevin Zehr. "People line up for as long as they have to, to get it."

Line-ups in the parking lots aren't new to Ken's, and the community outpouring of support for the new owners has not gone unnoticed.

"Good luck! Tradition continues!" said Facebook commenter Marcella A. Cahill upon the announcement.

Across social media, the community has wished the best for the Zehrs and put in requests for extra fries and new locations across Perth County.

"It's nostalgia and community," said Laurie Zehr.

They thank the customers and their team, both old and new faces, for continuing to support them as they work out what it means to own a longstanding business.

"Stratford has been amazing through the first week of operations," said Kevin Zehr.

For now, the focus for the Zehrs is getting situated, keeping morale up and making sure the fries stay delicious.

"We want to get back and focus on the quality and consistency of what Ken's has always been," said Laurie Zehr.



TRADITION CONTINUES

The Zehr family and their team stands outside one of Ken's food trucks.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

New hearing clinic all about connection

HANNAH KAVANAGH

Times Correspondent

When you first walk into Community Hearing Care (CHC), the first thing you'll notice is its distinct homey feel; a personalized touch specifically curated by co-owners Lucas DaSilva and Shelly Gansevles.

The independently owned hearing clinic is only three weeks old and stands as a labour of love for the team of two. Everything was thought of – from their barrier-free ramp and widened doors to the fireplace kept preserved with a lending library laid carefully on top, to the locally sourced furniture in the office. They even went in and painted the walls themselves during renovations. CHC remains the only independent and completely local hearing clinic in Stratford.

"We say support local, so we also have to support local," said Gansevles.

She's the office administrator and has 11 years of experience. She met DaSilva at their previous clinic where they partnered up to create an independent and personalized clinic experience for the community. DaSilva is a Conestoga College graduate and a hearing-instrument specialist registered with the Association of Hearing Instrument Practitioners of Ontario (AHIP).

The entire space is laid out to make it accessible for the two of them to work together smoothly. They're a finetuned



ALL ABOUT HEARING

Lucas DaSilva and Shelly Gansevles stand outside the Community Hearing Care clinic at 370 Ontario Street.

team ready to work. Now, they're waiting for the community to see them as a trusted business with familiar faces. They've been navigating website verification and media outreach to get their message out there.

"We're focusing on that people-centred care and it's just more about the service that people want," DaSilva said.

Relaxed, patient-centred care is what the team believes will motivate people to come to them.

"We were still renovating and people were already calling," said Gansevles.

They're able to bypass many barriers corporate companies may face. They also said warranties on hearing devices are manufacturer-related and therefore make it easier for clients to make the switch.

"It's not pressured. There's a lot of people who want a baseline hearing test and we're okay with them leaving," said Gansevles.

"They have to come to the realization that they want to do something about it themselves."

They believe their no pressure, non-product-pushing approach to care is what will appeal to the community.

As for services, DaSilva can provide full hearing testing and full wax removal. He also keeps on top of the latest technology for proper hearing-aid programming. To the two of them, patient-centred care means asking them daily questions about their life and how they connect with the world around them.

"People just don't ask certain questions to get a good feel for the patient, and that's where you make adjustments according to their experiences," DaSilva said.

Now, with a grand opening confirmed for June 20, the two are making plans to gear up for a summer of serving the community. They love the flexibility they have in showing up to community events, getting their name out there and connecting with Stratford.

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Interviewing a broadcast legend

REBECCA SCHREIBER

Times Correspondent

If it wasn't enough that, for my first job in radio, I wound up at a station that turned 100 years old, I recently got the chance to sit down and chat with one of its original employees – now a Canadian broadcast legend – Lloyd Robertson.

The first thing I noticed when meeting him was his big, blue eyes had an undeniable spark.

I sensed I was about to speak with not only one of Canada's treasures, but someone who held the same fascination and passion for media as I do. That same sense was reciprocated to me in our handshake – a first of many things I would discover we had in common.

As he spoke of radio and his time at CJCS as a 17 year old, it gradually dawned on me that not only was this man around in a time before television, he was a part of the very first shockwave of instant communication and personal entertainment as we know it.

He then dominated the next instant-communication-entertainment shockwave by becoming a household name anchoring for CBC and CTV. Lloyd has more media-trailblazing history in his pinky than all my industry experience combined.

During his visit, Lloyd chatted with a local CJCS Stratford legend in his own right, CJCS host Jamie Cottle (listen to the full interview at www.mystratfordnow.com/104826/cjcs-100-years-a-conversation-with-lloyd-robertson). Afterward, he graciously took the time to saunter through the narrow hallways of CJCS to chat with each of us – his successors in local radio.

So, what qualified me to interview a legendary broadcaster like Lloyd?

Well, nothing really, and I was painfully aware of it.

The second I hit record on my phone, I became a bundle of nerves and abandoned



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

Canadian broadcast legend Lloyd Robertson was recently back in his hometown, Stratford, to chat with CJCS host Jamie Cottle and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the radio station that gave him his start in media.

my pre-written questions. They weren't good enough.

Lloyd reported on the Apollo 11 Moon Landing and Terry Fox and the Marathon of Hope. He had countless interviews with prime ministers and public officials, both Canadian and from around the world. He reported on the resignation of Brian Mulroney, witnessed firsthand the Soviet Union and Germany before and after the collapse of communism, carried the torch in the Vancouver Olympics, co-marched the Calgary Stampede, covered the Y2K panic, 9/11 and the presidential inauguration of Barack Obama. The list goes on.

What could I possibly ask the legendary interviewer he hasn't asked or been asked before?

I froze because I challenged myself with an impossible mission.

Then Lloyd started us off.

His kindness and warmth completely disarmed me. He became my friend and, before I knew it, Lloyd stole the show (and

my interview).

Lloyd and his son-in-law sat with us in our conference room at the radio station. My editor, Galen, and I were about to learn from one of the best.

"I was always fascinated by the radio – the box in the corner sitting there – and I think, for me, I just kind of caught the bug," he told us. "... From the time I was about five years old, I was asking my father, you know, how do the voices get in there and who are those people and where do those wires go? And he did his best to answer those questions, so I developed a passion for it."

Then Lloyd asked me if I was passionate about radio. Somehow, I felt compelled to tell him my whole life story, despite realizing about halfway through I was rambling. One of the great masters of interviewing had gotten me talking without even trying.

After telling him I had a passion for writing, Lloyd took the chance to share his insights on the writing process.

"Well, writing is so much part of everything. You know, in broadcasting, a lot of ad-libbing is writing," he said. "Because what you do – and I used to do this all the time, especially on big broadcasts like, you know, queens' weddings, funerals ... election nights – I would say, 'Ok, at 8 p.m., this particular group of writings is coming on stream. What do I know about it, the morning of, to say about them?' And you develop what we would call a narrative."

"So, you develop a narrative flow. That's writing. ... Writing has many different forms, but you know, basically it's a story you're telling."

Then we talked about Stratford.

Lloyd grew up here and I moved here two years ago from Toronto for this job writing creative copy for radio. Though his CJCS and my CJCS were in different times and, in many cases, different worlds, it innocuously rooted us both in the welcoming community of Stratford.

No matter the era, regardless of the never-ending cycle of media formats, radio broadcasting thrives when its community engages with it. Lloyd adores Stratford and lights up when he talks about it, and I'm lucky to have experienced this warm

sense of community for myself.

"You're growing, you're working, you work a bit more, you grow a bit more, you learn more about yourself and about the community and about people. And, you know, a good writer absorbs life," he said.

As the conversation continued, the topic of being a national public icon who greeted Canadians in their homes every night at the same time came up, and I asked Lloyd whether people form their own, idealized versions of him in their heads.

"When you see someone on television, sometimes over a longer period of time, you know, if you're on every day or once a week, you reveal more of yourself, even if you don't intend to. And people notice that, you know. They reveal what kind of person you are. And I know that it happened with me when I was doing a special sometimes. You say something that reveals part what you are, but people love that. ... And that becomes the essence of what you are."

"And that should be obvious in your writing, too, eventually."

Lloyd said his friends are often asked, "What's he really like?"

"That's what they want to know. He's up there doing that thing every night. Some people can folly it up for a long time, but there is that old expression, 'You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time.'"

"I grew up with television and people grew up with me on television for a long period of time, so it took a while before people got used to the fact that, you know, somebody is going to be on television every night and I think you grow into it and then they become used to you and then they want to know about you. Then you become an identifiable force or source of some kind."

Lloyd Robertson is humility and class personified. He's the kind of guy who can connect with anybody, tell you how it is and then wrap it all up with a simple, "That's the kind of day it's been."

Writing this article, I'm still in awe of this opportunity I had. My first interview was with Lloyd Robertson.

In true Stratfordian fashion, what started with a handshake, ended with a hug.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

ENDED WITH A HUG

Stratford Times contributor Rebecca Schreiber meets with broadcasting legend Lloyd Robertson at the CJCS radio station in Stratford recently.

Learn about community land trusts through SAHA

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Affordable Housing Alliance (SAHA) will educate residents about community land trusts, co-operative ownership and why they are affordable housing options.

The alliance will have a Community Land Trust Information Night May 23 at the Local Community Food Centre from 5:45-9 p.m. The event will feature a question-and-answer panel, a community consultation and a presentation created by Martin Straathof of Ontario Farmland Trust, on his behalf.

The information night will also feature two short films from the Depth of Field: Films About Farming series featuring Lucky Bug Farm in Baden, Ont. and Ferme Coopérative Tourne-Sol in Les-Cedrés, Que.

The panel will include the following guest speakers:

- Jon Gagnon from Sun-

dance Commons

- Akane Yamaki and the Fair AirBnB Team

- Dominique Russell from the Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts

- Samantha Eby and Michael Piper from the University of Toronto's Re-Housing Project

- Boris Emanuel, executive director of Love Your Neighbor Communities and the Mill Block Community Hub

- Susana Redekop from Freedom Dreams Cooperative Education

- Scott Stager Piatowski from the Community Housing Transformation Centre

"I'm hoping that it will be a chance for people to see some examples of what other folks are doing," said Niki André, president of the SAHA. "And to be able to ask the kinds of questions that will help us figure out how we could do similar things here in Stratford, or in the surrounding areas that are a little bit small centre and rural."

André said community land trusts can work in Stratford to tackle the affordable housing crisis. Purchasing a house or even renting a property at an affordable price is becoming out of reach for many. While federal guidelines suggest spending no more than 30 per cent of one's income on renting, tenants are often spending beyond the guideline.

"When people are housed but they're spending 50, 60, 70 per cent of their income, then that becomes a very precarious position as they age or even if things should go wrong," André said. "If they're spending so much on their housing, then there's nothing left."

There are also concerns surrounding the scarcity of farmland. The Ontario Farmland Trust website says 319 acres of farmland are lost each day in Ontario.

"There's still this image of 100-acre farms, 200, 300-acre farms," André said. "But I know a lot of growers that are growing on a quarter-acre, half-acre. If they have an acre here, they consider

that lucky."

André said the average farmer is approaching retirement age, if not already, and could lose the homes on their farmland if they need to sell the property and no one takes it over. The decrease in available farmland also plays a role in food-security issues.

"We certainly don't want farmland to just become developments, but also there needs to be permanent housing for farm workers and farmers," she said.

SAHA is a volunteer-run organization looking for more funding and collaborations. André said she hopes the Community Land Trust Information Night consultations will provide a path forward in terms of what to do next. She is also looking for the City of Stratford to post available property and land.

More information, including registration, can be found by visiting www.eventbrite.ca/e/community-land-trusts-clt-information-event-tickets.

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STRATFORD NISSAN



Snack Stop filled with support from community

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Public Library received another boost in funding from the greater community.

The library received \$700 from the Teahen Family Nutrition and Wellbeing Fund, part of the Stratford Perth Community Foundation, to fund their Snack Stop nutrition program.

The Teahen Family Nutrition and Wellbeing Fund came from Courtney and Chris Teahen, who wanted the fund support wellbeing and nutrition programs for youth. The fund support both community and school nutrition programs.

"When we hear about food programs, nutrition programs, and we think about food insecurity overall, it's so important there are these programs so that our community can access them whether it's at a library or a school, to know that people can access nutritious snacks," said Heidi Culliton, executive director of the Stratford Perth Community Foundation.

Shauna Costache, public services supervisor with the Stratford Public Library, said she is pleased to receive the funding. Other members of the community have come forward with monetary and food donations to support the Snack Stop.

The Stratford Mosque was one of the first to reach out to the library. St. Andrew's Church makes muffins in their commercial-grade kitchen for the Snack Stop and also donated \$600 back in December. The Stratford Kinsmen also committed \$500 monthly for the next year.

"Community donors are coming forward all the time," Costache said. "People are coming with food and cash to help support and it's lovely to see people be there for each other."

The library came up with the Snack Stop during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Library staff noticed patrons would ask for snacks during curbside pickup. Throughout the pandemic, the need for a bite to eat in-

creased.

"As we reopened some of the doors to the public, we realized that some of the kids that were coming here for lunch from the intermediate school ... had food to eat and some were watching their friends eat," Costache said. "We were thinking, 'Is there anything we can do to address this as staff and as an institution that has pretty generous open hours?'"

The Snack Stop has apples, peppers and non-perishables such as pantry items and canned food, and runs during library hours. The library is open until 9 p.m. on weeknights, 6 p.m. on Friday and until 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

The Snack Stop is open longer than most food banks, which helps those in need during the evening and weekends as food banks are normally closed at those times. The library also doesn't keep track of who uses the Snack Stop or how many times they use it.

Costache said there are mixed feelings when running the Snack Stop.

"You're happy you can be there for

people," she said, "but you're so sad that the situation is what it is. I'm astounded by both the need and the willingness to step up to address it from the whole community. It's been pretty inspiring seeing people show up for each other."

Food insecurity is a growing issue with research done on a regional, provincial and national level demonstrating that the increasing cost of living far exceeds the financial capacity of residents to keep up.

"As these levels of need increase, you have to find a way to be able to address those needs," Costache said. "People come to the library thinking they're just here for books, but you can't help people with their information needs or their next great read if they're hungry. They've got basic needs that they need addressing before they can use the library as a library."

More information about the library's community support services such as the Snack Stop can be found by visiting splibrary.ca/services/community-supports.

Walk for Alzheimer's kicks off end of May across region

CONNOR LUCZKA

Times Correspondent

Get your runners laced up and your teams ready. The annual IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's, hosted by the Alzheimer Society Huron Perth, takes place across the region on May 25.

The annual walk is vital to the local organization, as Sarah Dunn, fund development assistant with the society, said.

"It is our biggest fundraiser of the year and crucial for us," Dunn said, "because we only get about 60 per cent of our operating budget through government grants."

The walk raises funds for the programs and services that the society offers for those living with dementia and their caregivers in Huron and Perth counties.

This year, the fundraising goal is \$130,000, higher than the \$123,000 raised last year. Dunn said they are optimistic they'll reach their goal.

"This disease is becoming more and more prevalent," Dunn said. "Currently 76,000 more Canadians are diagnosed with dementia each year, and with an ageing population that is only expected to increase."

By the year 2050, the society estimates that more than 1.7 million people will be living with dementia in Canada. Currently, there are 650,000 Canadians living with



dementia.

"On May 25, we're calling on you to make connections matter and show your support by walking or donating towards a walk event in a community near you," Cathy Ritsema, executive director at the society, said in a media release. "The funds raised at the walk stay in Huron and Perth counties and provide crucial funds for the Alzheimer Society."

To get involved, register for a local walk as an individual or team, start fundraising, using the hashtag #IGWalkForAlz and join everyone on May 25.

More than 150 communities nationwide host walks each year. The local society is hosting seven walks this

year, taking place in:

- Exeter – South Huron District High School
- Clinton – Central Huron Secondary School
- Goderich – Goderich District Collegiate Institute
- Listowel – Between the Lines
- St. Marys – Solis Park
- Stratford – Upper Queen's Park
- Wingham – Maitland River Community Church

The easiest way to register, Dunn said, is to go to walkforalzheimers.ca ahead of the walk, though registration will be open day-of as well.

Registration will open at 9 a.m. that morning and the walk will start at 10 a.m. sharp.

Weekend Quiz

1. When did Bon Jovi release *Livin' On a Prayer*?
2. Whose face is on all the Canadian coins?
3. What country do french fries originate?
4. From the periodic table, what element is Li?
5. On a chess board, what piece moves in an L-Shape?
6. What is the color part of the eye called?
7. How many ships do you have to sink in Battleship?
8. Hepatic disease is also known as?
9. What Canadian province is the largest?
10. A tree that loses its leaves is known as what type of tree?

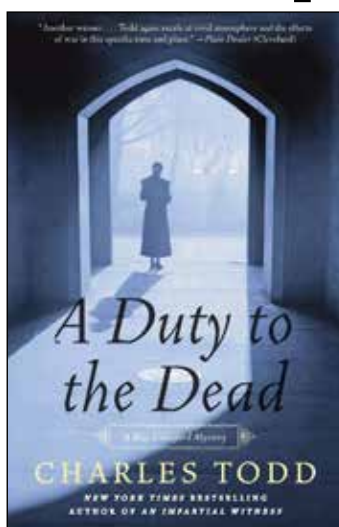
This week's answers are found on pg. 34

Shelf Help

A Duty to the Dead
Charles Todd

Fic Todd, LP Fic Todd (also available through Libby in eBook and Audiobook format)

Bess Crawford is a young nursing sister working on the hospital ship *Britannic* during World War I, when it is struck by a mine. Sent home to Britain to recover from her injuries, she takes time to honour the dying wish made by one of her patients: to bring a cryptic message back to his brother. Arriving at the home of the Graham family, she feels something is distinctly wrong; when the eldest brother of the family, who has been living in an asylum for the mentally unfit is brought home to die of pneumo-



nia, she becomes entangled in a sinister family secret. Readers will appreciate the detailed backdrop of WWI Europe and Britain, with all the attendant horrors and heartbreak. The cast of suspects provoke a broad range of responses in the audience, and a need to see the mystery through to the end; Bess is a fully realized protagonist, whose courage, independence, and unquenchable sense of justice lead her headlong into danger, and make her an irresistible heroine. *A Duty to the Dead* is a fantastic first novel in a compelling mystery series.

CJ Nyssen
Public Service Librarian
Stratford Public Library

STRATFORD **TIMES** SPORTS

U16 Stingers Jolt rock the competition in Detroit

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Contributor

The U16 Stratford Stingers Jolt volleyball team, with their exceptional performance, secured third place at the 2024 CAN AM Classic tournament in Detroit May 4-5.

The team, comprising players from Stratford, St. Marys and the surrounding area, outshone over 30 other Canadian and American teams to earn their place in the competition.

The Stingers had a tough but competitive start May 4 after losing the first game against Team L2261. Later, they turned it around in the rest of their games that afternoon, winning against Force 16 Adidas Select BL 25-19 in the second set and 15-7 in the third. In their final match, the girls won against the WAVE 16 Orcas 25-12 in the first and 25-21 in the second.

Megan Todd had some amazing blocks in the centre while Julia Daly blew the competition away with her stellar sets. Janelle Boyse and Julie Havenga offered up serves that the competition had difficulty keeping up with, while Lucy Thompson shone with her amazing digs as lib.

On May 5, the girls took on Leaside 16U Dynamite, a game in which they lost the first set by two points in a tough rally, 26-28, but came back with 25-21 win in the second and a 15-10 win in the third.

Selena Will wowed the spectators with amazing hits over the net while Katie Namink's blocks were outstanding. Marin Chateauvert pushed for a lead with her serves, Hannah Mogk rocked left side to score points for her team and Hailey Modaragamage shone as lib with some deep digs.

Moving onto the quarter finals, the Stingers Jolt took another win against Spirit VBC, winning 25-13 in the first but losing the second 23-25. The girls pulled it together in the third and won the set 15-11, moving them into the semi-final game against Athlete HQ 16-Stalker.

While facing the Stalkers, the Stingers Jolts were pushed to their limits. They took on a highly competitive team and lost their first and second sets, leading them to third place overall.

The final competition in Detroit for the U16 Stingers Jolt team was a great and positive end to the 2023-2024 season, and the team and coaches are looking forward to more competition next year.



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

ROCK THE COMPETITION

The U16 Stratford Stingers Jolt volleyball team took third place at the 2024 CAN AM Classic in Detroit May 4-5. Pictured in back row from left are coach Shawn Edwards, Marin Chateauvert, Megan Todd, Hannah Mogk, Julia Havenga, Selena Will and Katie Namink. In the front row from left are Janelle Boyse, Lucy Thompson, Hailey Modaragamage and Julia Daly.

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Coach Williams reviews 23-24 Warriors Part 2: forwards

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Hunter Steel Ltd. Warriors season is over but, when looking back on the year, head coach Dave Williams had many positives to talk about. That included a high-octane forward group that helped the team return to the Cherrey Cup Final.

One player who was part of last year's conference champion Warriors team and this year's conference finalist iteration of the squad was Braydon Stumpf. The Wellesley, Ont. native jumped from 23 points last year to 52 this season and led the team in points in the playoffs with 24. Stumpf's offensive production earned high praise from the head coach.

"Part of Braydon's offensive success was the experience he got last season," Williams told the Times. "He got to play lots of hockey last season and some really good hard hockey against really good players during our run to the Sutherland Cup Final. He also played with some really good mentors last year. Braydon took advantage of the opportunity he got this year to play in a bigger, offensive role and did a great job being a bigger, offensive

catalyst."

The Warriors' most prolific goal-scorer this season was first-year forward Michael Denney, who put up a team-leading 33 goals. In the playoffs, Denney added nine goals, tying him for second on the team. Williams explained why he was pleasantly surprised by the scoring touch displayed by Denney.

"Michael exceeded my expectations," said Williams. "My first thought of Michael through training camp was that he was going to be more of a pass-first, shoot-second guy. Him and I chatted in camp about him being a little more selfish with the puck and it was great to see him have the success that he had as the first-year guy coming in and scoring as many goals as he did."

Another blossoming offensive talent was Drew Agnew, who Williams believes is just scratching the surface of his full complement of skills.

"Drew came in having the offensive side of his game a little bit ahead of his play without the puck. He's come in and worked incredibly hard and I think he's ready to keep working on his play without the puck. We've seen him becoming more

CONTINUED TO PAGE 19

Coach Williams reviews 23-24 Warriors

Part 2: forwards

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

mindful of that side of his game I'm excited to see how he continues to get better as a player."

Every team has players they can depend on to provide the same elements every game and, for Stratford, one such model of consistency on the defensive side of the puck was Rhyse Brown.

"Rhyse joined us a little bit into the season and the great thing about him is that he played consistently most nights. I think he'd like to contribute more offensively, and I think that will come. He does a lot of little things well. His play without the puck is incredibly solid, and he was

able to take on a bigger role this year on the penalty kill which is equally as important as being a powerplay guy."

The Midwestern Conference's regular-season scoring leader and GOJHL Rookie of the Year was Carson Harmer. In 46 games, Harmer posted 28 goals and 65 points and didn't go more than two games at any point this season without recording a point.

"Obviously, Carson has a really good offensive skill set. He sees the game incredibly well and he works incredibly hard. As good as we've seen him play offensively, I think he's equally good without the puck. I think for a young guy, it's an incredible accomplishment to come in and lead our league in points so I think he has an incredibly bright future in front of him."

Another key contributor defensively was Zach Bell, who Williams praised for his character and willingness to do the less flashy work on the ice.

"We relied on Zach for his strong defensive play. He's a guy who was able to contribute to our penalty kill this season and play some key minutes that way. He's an exceptional guy in the dressing room, off the ice and in the community. I know his teammates have the utmost respect for him as a player and a person."

Though not the biggest scorer, Williams felt that the strides made during the season by Zach Schooley turned him into a very valuable part of the lineup.

"I thought Zach improved a great deal over this season. In our exit interview, I said to him that maybe one of the best compliments a coach can give a player is that, without him in the lineup in the playoffs, I felt we missed what he was contributing down the stretch. He was playing a fast and hard style and against both Elmira and Listowel, I think we missed what

he brought before he suffered an injury."

Versatility was a big part of what made Liam Gorman and Tyler Kelly useful parts of the Warriors' lineup, according to the bench boss.

"Liam played in some different situations with some different players. He was a guy that we were able to move up and down the lineup at different times. Before he got hurt against Bran-

ford, he was having a really good playoff. He showed he's a versatile young man who works incredibly hard and he always wants to improve."

"Tyler came in as a guy who had been playing defence before joining us," Williams continued. "At that time, we were a little bit heavy on the back end, so we shifted him to be a forward. He brought a really good attitude and wanted to help out wherever we needed him to play, regardless if he felt that was the best spot for him. He made a contribution to our powerplay and played some good minutes as a forward and, in that last round when we needed him to, he slid back to play defence."

Though the scoresheet might not always show it, there was seldom a night that Joey Brehmer failed to make a contribution. "I thought Joey had a really solid season that didn't always show up on the scoresheet. He had a solid offensive season,

but I think his game is significantly more than what he contributes offensively. He earned our trust as a coaching staff pretty quickly and if he keeps doing the things he does, I think he will find more and more offensive success as well."

The Warriors value a hard-hitting presence in their lineup, which they found in Tristian Huinink.

"Tristian had a solid first season with us here and had to battle adversity. He was plagued

a bit with injuries earlier on and that made it tough for him. But he has a physical presence on the ice and

other teams know when he's out there, and that's usually good for the other guys on the ice with them knowing that presence is there and giving them a little bit more room out there. He is loved by his teammates, and I know he loves his teammates. He's that guy who would do anything for any of his guys on the ice at any time."

In the playoffs, there were seemingly three guarantees in life – death, taxes and Cole Lewis scoring a goal. Lewis had 12 goals in 15 playoff games and had a nine-game goal streak.

"Cole is another guy who made a key contribution last year to us getting to the Sutherland Cup Final in a different role than he was asked to play this year. It was nice to see him transition from a defensive role to one that gave him more opportunity offensively. We were really happy to see him hit that 20-goal mark this season and then be a big contributor in the playoffs. He scored several key goals and you know, I think some of that probably was recognizing that, in big moments, there are opportunities for guys to have big games."

This year's Warriors team was led by hometown boy Camden Daigle, who ended his junior career as Stratford's captain. Daigle's GOJHL tenure, spent exclusively with the Warriors, included 74 goals and 163 points in 186 games over five seasons. Daigle added 17 goals and 39 points in 51 playoff games.

"Cam has been here five years and I'm really happy to see his last two years finish the way they did. His age group was a little bit unlucky with COVID and having to miss some of those experiences. He's incredibly passionate about the game of hockey and even more passionate about having the opportunity to play in Stratford as a local guy. He's never really looked at going anywhere else. I think he always took a huge sense of pride in being a local guy and being a key contributor to the team winning. He left his mark the last two seasons with us going to back-to-back Cherrey Cup Finals."

This is the second of a two-part feature on the Warriors and the seasons of each individual player. Part one ran in the May 3 edition of the Times.



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Stratford students compete at Forest City Mustang Invitational Track and Field Meet

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Stratford and District Secondary School students competed at the Forest City Mustang Invitational Track and Field Meet April 25 at Western University's Alumni Stadium.

Here's how they did:

SDSS Top 6 Results

GOLD
SG Long Jump - Olivia Mark (4.84m)
JB Pole Vault - Caden Diehl (3.30m)
SB 1500m - Luke Feltham (4:08.43)

SILVER
NB 1500m - Joel Gates (4:45.78)
JB Pole Vault - Cole Otten (2.30m)

BRONZE
JG Pole Vault - Peyton Barclay, Paige Taylor, Megan Grosse (2.00m)
JB 1500m - Noah Feltham (4:26.28)

4TH PLACE
JG 400m - Paige Taylor (1:03.78)
JB Long Jump - Caden Diehl (5.69m)

5TH PLACE
NG High Jump - Sophie Smith (1.30m)
NG Javelin - Gracie Radke (16.54m)

6TH PLACE
NB 800m - Joel Gates (2:19.56)



TRACK MEET

Stratford District Secondary Students competed at the Forest City Mustang Invitational Track and Field Meet April 25 at Western University's Alumni Stadium.

(COACH RANDY JOHNSON PHOTOS)



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Stratford District Secondary School athletes compete at Titan Bronco Track and Field Meet at Westerns

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Stratford and District Secondary School athletes recently competed at the Titan Bronco Track and Field Meet at Western University's Alumni Field. Here's how they did.

SDSS Top 6 Results

GOLD
 Caden Diehl - Junior Boys Triple Jump (11.95m, *MEET RECORD)
 Caden Diehl - Junior Boys Pole Vault (3.40m, *MEET RECORD)
 Owen Chambers - Junior Boys Javelin (41.15m)

SILVER
 Joel Gates - Novice Boys 800m (2:14.18)
 Joel Gates - Novice Boys 1500m (4:37.43)
 Jashan Singh - Junior Boys Discus (48.21m)
 Jashan Singh - Junior Boys Shot Put (14.94m)
 Cole Otten - Junior Boys Pole Vault (2.75m)

BRONZE
 Maddox Anderson - Novice Boys Discus (28.82m)
 Paige Taylor - Junior Girls Pole Vault (2.35m)

4TH PLACE
 Olivia Mark - Senior Girls 200m (27.06)

5TH PLACE
 Olivia Mark - Senior Girls Triple Jump (9.82m)
 Gracie Radke - Novice Girls Javelin (19.38m)

6TH PLACE
 Lucas Mueller - Junior Boys Triple Jump (10.93m)
 McKenzie Parsons - Senior Girls 1500m (5:42.42)
 Peyton Barclay - Junior Girls Pole Vault (2.05m)



Caden Diehl competes in Junior Boys Pole Vault.



Owen Chambers competes in Junior Boys Javelin.

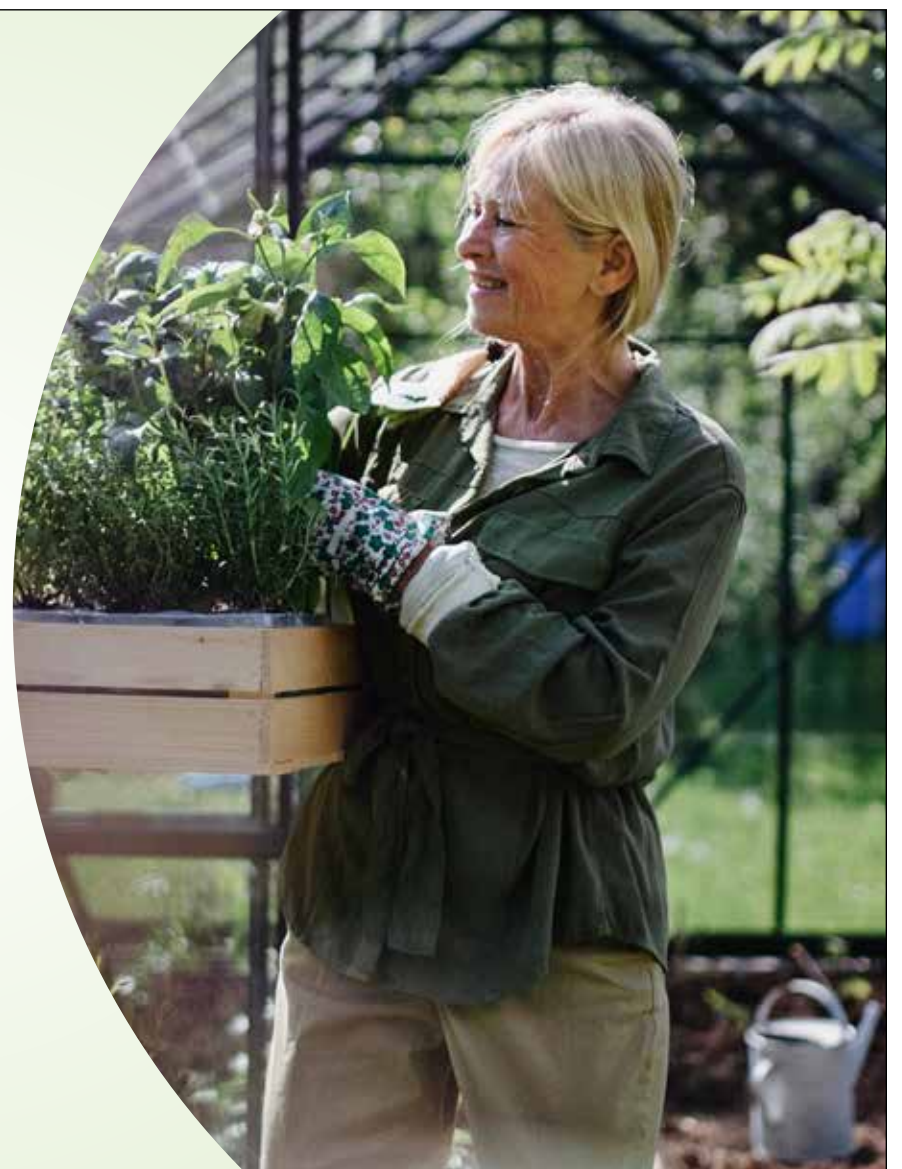
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Stratford District Secondary School athletes compete at Woodstock Spring Classic Invitational

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

The Stratford District Secondary School track and field team competed at the 2024 Woodstock Spring Classic Invitational meet on Wednesday, May 8. The Golden Bears came home with several personal best performances, including 31 top 8 finishes and 13 medals (two gold, three silver, and eight bronze).

Top 8 finishers include:

GOLD

Paige Taylor - JG 400 metre - 1:02.86
Rachael Barber - JG Javelin - 24.18m

SILVER

Olivia Mark - SG 200 metre - 27.16
Jashan Singh - JB Discus - 46.06m* (Jashan was one of two athletes to break the JB Discus meet record - previous record 44.76m - 2017-05-02 Chase Cookson, Parkside CI)
Maddox Anderson - NB Discus - 28.21m

BRONZE

Novice Boys 1200 metre Sprint Medley Relay - 3:09:57
Joel Gates - NB 3000 metre - 10:05.70
Chrissy Rupert - JG 3000 metre - 13:12.90
Hailee Phelan - SG Shot Put - 7.98m
Rachael Barber - JG Shot Put - 9.12m
Maddox Anderson - NB Shot Put - 10.55m
Preston Baillie - SB Long Jump - 5.71m
Olivia Mark - SG High Jump - 4.55m

4th

Junior Girls - 1200 metre Sprint Medley Relay - 3:52.57
Paige Taylor - JG 200 metre - 27.55
Mckenzie Parsons - SG 3000 metre - 12:50.84
Madie Costello - JG 3000 metre - 13:16.62
Katelynn McMahon - JG Shot Put - 9.06m
Katelynn McMahon - JG Discus - 21.78m
Peyton Barclay - JG High Jump - 1.35m
Maddox Anderson - NB Javelin - 25.87m

5th

Novice Girls - 1200 metre Sprint Medley Relay - 4:00.24
Ashton Maxwell - NB High Jump - 1.40m
Piper Broughton - JG 300m Hurdles - 57.33
Jashan Singh - JB Shot Put - 12.91m
Gracie Radke - NG Javelin - 20.63m
Hailee Phelan - SG Javelin - 22.86m

7th

Caden Ollson - NB 200 metre - 25.97
Alex Mueller - SB Javelin - 34.37m

8th

Sophie Smith - NG High Jump - 1.25m
Ailsa Raleigh - JG Long Jump - 3.69m

The Golden Bears are in action next Tuesday and Wednesday, May 14 and 15, at the Huron-Perth Track and Field Championships in Clinton.



Ailsa Raleigh competed at the 2024 Woodstock Spring Classic Invitational May 8.



Hunter Gilbert throws shot put.



Alex Mueller placed seventh at the 2024 Woodstock Spring Classical Invitational track and field meet May 8 with his throw of 34.37 metres.



Jashan Singh throws discus at the 2024 Woodstock Spring Classic Invitational May 8. Singh was one of two athletes to break the JB Discus meet record with his throw of 46.06 metres, earning him a silver medal.



Deirdre Parsons throws discus

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)



TWO SBA PLAYERS QUALIFY FOR DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Pictured from left to right is Zachary Bannerman and Owen Abercrombie. The two members of the Stratford Basketball Association (SBA) recently earned a spot on their respective development programs. Bannerman, who played this season for the U14 Stratford Revolution, was selected for the Huron Regional Development Team. Bannerman will be training in the hopes of being selected for a provincial event during the Ontario Summer Games being hosted in London this August. Abercrombie of the U12 Revolution was selected to the Tri-County Regional Development Team and will be aiming to be chosen to play in tournament featuring the best players in the province being held in July at the Toronto Pan-Am Sports Centre. Both players attended massive tryouts and were selected from amongst the best players in the region.

Stratford art bar celebrates one year of adding a little more colour to the community

ALEX HUNT

Times Correspondent

The Owner and staff at Matilda Gallery & Art Bar are proud to share their unique approach to the industry as they reflect on their one-year anniversary.

The celebration took place at the gallery and art bar at 85 Downie St. May 4 and featured live music and the works of 60 local artists, which are displayed and available for purchase.

“It all starts with our staff and the owner. There is so much love and creativity that goes into this place. What we do here is that we have our food and we add a creative flair to your dining experience,” said Leah Wells, general manager of Matilda Gallery & Art Bar and a local artist.

“When we were first opening a year ago, we were more of an art gallery, but we wanted to make it more interactive so we turned it into a restaurant as well. It has completely changed in every way and we now have a full bar and restaurant service with the focus still on the beautiful art and supporting artists.”

Sarah Filion, owner of Matilda Gallery



FIRST ANNIVERSARY

The proud staff of Matilda Gallery & Art Bar giving nothing but smiles to the community during their one-year anniversary. Pictured from left are Princess-Aya Gbehi-Guzman, Zachary Voros, Sarah Filion and Leah Wells.

& Art Bar, said the establishment is a safe space for everyone, whether it be a woman who wants to go to a bar alone and feel comfortable, introverts, the queer community and many more.

Matilda Gallery & Art Bar offers a wide

selection of food and beverages as well as featuring works from 60 local artists. Wells said the space encourages their guests to explore the colourful art between courses that are spread across the main floor and the recently renovated basement.

The gallery and art bar offers various events such as, Queer Bingo, holiday parties, art shows and more. People can also book the space for their own private rentals.

“A lot of the galleries that you’re accustomed to have a few pieces on the wall, and it can be intimidating,” said Filion. “I want to remove that factor from the art and encourage a very welcoming space where you walk in with the fun music playing and you’re grooving while you’re looking through the art and you feel comfortable in this space. We want to have a positive impact through colour.”

Filion says some of the challenges were integrating the food and beverage aspect within the gallery, a major learning curve for her and the staff. Through teamwork and dedication, the establishment has become what it is today.

Filion opened her first art gallery in Clarksburg in 2009 before expanding her business to Collingwood – Matilda Swanson Art Gallery – and Matilda Gallery & Art Bar in Stratford last year.

Filion says she has plans of future expansion.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Audition to be a part of history with the Perth County Players

SYDNEY GOODWIN

Times Correspondent

Theatre is all about pushing the boundaries of what the audience should expect and finding new ways to retell classic stories.

This is no different for the Perth County Players, which is holding auditions for the community theatre company's fall production of Spiderella and the Pantomime Villain Academy. These auditions will go down as a part of community theatre history as this show is going to be Stratford's first-ever Panto, and Perth County Players wants locals to be part of it.

Spiderella is a pantomime comedy that follows an ensemble of villains throughout various fairytales. The villains are fed up with how their stories always end and want a story where they emerge victorious. When a new, big baddie shows up named Spiderella, she teaches these villains how to defeat the heroes.

"We were just looking for something that was relatable to families, that had characters that kids would recognize. From young to old, from eight to 80, you will know a character from the show. It's just something fun for the whole family," said Kate Beath, co-director of Spiderella.

This is Beath's first time co-directing a performance with Perth County Players, but she has been with the company for a

long time as an actress, most recently in her role as Winnifred the woe-be-gone in Perth County Players' previous show, Once Upon a Mattress.

A Panto is a participatory musical comedy show. Everyone in the audience is expected to clap, cheer and interact with the scenes on stage. The show includes musical sequences, slapstick comedy and jokes that the whole family can laugh at.

"We think of theatre sometimes in the traditional sense. Our straight plays, our

Shakespeares, our traditional musicals. We've looked to other professional theatres, so we know other theatres do pantomimes and they are a roaring success. So, we're hoping that would be the same for Stratford," Beath said.

Perth County Players is looking for anyone aged 13 or older who enjoys singing, dancing or acting.

"We're just looking for someone who's not afraid to be a little ham, a little bit silly and have fun with things, and (someone)

who's not afraid to have that interaction with the audience," Beath said.

Auditions for this show are May 24 from 7-9 p.m., and May 25 and 26 from 2:30-4 p.m. at St Paul's Anglican Church (9 Douro St.) in Stratford. To book an audition, email perthcountyplayers@rogers.com.

To stay up to date with Perth County Players and to learn more about auditions, visit perthcountyplayers.com, or follow Perth County Players on Facebook and Instagram.

PERTH COUNTY PLAYERS FALL PRODUCTION

SPIDERELLA

AND THE

PANTOMIME VILLAIN ACADEMY

Stratford Concert Choir presents Summer Song at Avondale United Church

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Concert Choir (SCC) will perform in an evening of Summer Song May 25 showcasing Kathleen Gahagan on harp and aspiring baritone Braylon Belanger from the first-year music program at the University of Western Ontario.

The music to be performed was inspired by "Sumer is Icum in," a lilting medieval round. Conductor Stephane Potvin chose other music that reminded him of summer including three pieces by Morten Lauridsen.

"They all deal with the night," Potvin said in a press release. "May is my favourite time of year. I love to go outside when it's warm and there's still some cool air, and look at the stars. And those pieces just fit."

The harp seemed like a natural fit to add to the evening. Enter Kathleen Gahagan, a music graduate from McGill University with more than 20 years of performance experience. She will accompany the choir

as well as perform solos by Irish, French and Canadian composers including a couple pieces from the 13th century.

"The harp supports without overwhelming voices," said Gahagan. "I think it takes a special choir to be able to collaborate, a choir of musicians with well-developed ears who can really listen for the gentler supporting harmonies of the harp and use that as a foundation to build their own performance."

An exciting addition to the repertoire for the evening will be the premiere of an original composition by one of the choir members, Marco Burak, who sings bass. When Potvin heard that one of the choristers was a composer, he approached Burak to see if there was anything he had written that the SCC could perform. Burak thought "Ave Maria" would be the ideal piece to suggest.

"I wrote it initially as a solo vocal composition for voice and piano," he said. "It was designed to be a fairly simple piece, and I actually wrote it as a birthday present for one of my sisters who had recently joined her parish choir,"



With an interest from his conductor, Burak adapted it first for the choir and then again to include the harp.

"I liked Marco's style," said Potvin. "To me it has just the right combination of something tonal for the uninitiated and yet going far enough off the standard chords that it creates some really interesting harmonies."

Summer Song is yet another opportunity for Potvin to support and encourage young talent and will introduce Belanger, one of the students from Western to be auditioned for the SCC. Potvin recognized his talent and wanted to give him a chance. He will be singing "Le Colibri" by Ernest Chausson and "Le Premier Jour de Mai" by Charles Gounod.

Potvin summarises Summer Song by saying it's going to be introspective with lots of rich harmonies and musical colours, an eclectic mix designed to create a summery mood.

The concert is May 25 at 7 p.m. at Avondale United Church. Tickets are \$40 and are available online at stratfordconcertchoir.org or at Blowes Stationery.

Art in the Park Stratford returns for the season May 18

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

Art in the Park (AIP) Stratford is returning for the season May 18 with an amazing roster of now over 70 artists that could show on a given Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday until Sept. 29.

This will prove to be an exciting year of exhibitions of art for sale with 30 new artists having passed the stringent jury process to become a member of AIP. The independent jury process begins in March of each year for artists wishing to become a member and, once successful, new members can continue to participate every year they are in good standing.

“It is a very select jury process. There were 36 applications this year. After it all, it left us with 30 artists that I send an email out to and welcome them to the family,” said Bev Hewitt, juror coordinator.

As with everything, it is inevitable that Art in the Park Stratford would evolve with the times, and there is now a new category of art that particularly excites Hewitt. Attendees will see only one artists in this category, but it is sure to explode as the style grows.

“We opened up a category of digital imagery because it is out there, but we said it can’t be totally computer based. You can use a computer if you elabo-

rate on what you’ve got, and we would make the decision of whether it’s acceptable or not. This youngster (Daniel Rusen-Steele) is here in Stratford and he’s studying art at university and he’s in a category all by himself. His stuff is amazing. I can’t wait to see his stuff at the park,” said Hewitt.

The other categories include clay, glass, jewelry, leather/fabric, painting/print-making, photography, sculpture/carving/collage and wood. Returning longtime members like David Humphrey, Annette Goodale and John Olin Gardner are sure to bring the continuity that attendees love with over 40 members returning. Of course, Mathias Muleme, the lon-

gest-serving and last founding member of AIP, will be there, especially at the height of the season. The 30 new artists bring with them new styles and perspectives that will ensure diversity.

“There’s some interesting new stuff, which is a bonus. You don’t have a fixed roster of artists because some drop out and new ones come in, so there’s always changing styles and an exchange of knowledge. There’s a lot of camaraderie,” said Hewitt.

Art in the Park is located on Lakeside Drive between Front Street and North Street on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weather permitting.

Festival Sounds Chorus to host Crazy Dreams, a spring concert at St. Marys Pyramid Recreation Centre

WENDY LAMOND

Times Correspondent

On Sunday June 2, the musical group, Festival Sounds Chorus, is hosting a spring concert, Crazy Dreams, at the St. Marys Pyramid Recreation Centre.

The Stratford based chorus is made up of 21 female singers that come from Perth, Huron, Oxford and Middlesex counties. The group was formed in 1957 as a chapter of the Sweet Adelines International and perform a variety of music from traditional barbershop to modern show tunes.

The ladies meet for rehearsals every Wednesday evening at St. Paul’s Angli-

can Church on Douro Street in Stratford. The chorus members represent all age groups and have come together for the sole purpose of having fun and for the pure joy of singing.

Local native Brooke Dufton leads the group and shares her passion of teaching music and experience with the chorus. Dufton has a doctorate from the University of Toronto in vocal performance and has more than 20 years experience teaching.

The chorus covers a four-part a cappella harmony. The leads sing the melody and keeps the tune moving. The basses provide the strong support with the bottom notes. The baritones are often the

group that sing between the leads and basses and the tenors sing the highest notes. When all four parts come together, it brings out the magic of the music for the audience.

The chorus has performed locally in long-term-care homes in St. Marys and Stratford for Christmas, and has competed in Detroit and Flint, Mich. They recently performed at Caesar’s Windsor as part of Borderlines Region 2 competition placing ninth among many choruses from all over.

The members will learn the songs by listening to the tracks and then they come together at rehearsal to fit it all together.

“Over the 15 years I’ve been with Festival Sounds Chorus, I’ve come to treasure the relationships developed with the other chorus members, but the main reason to go every week is to sing,” chorus member Annamarie Murray said. “I’m proud of how my singing skills have developed over the years and after Wednesday night practices, I always drive home feeling energized with a smile on my face.”

Special guests that will be performing June 2 are Maple Reserve, Canada’s finest a cappella men’s

quartet, all originally from the Toronto area.

Stratford’s CJCS morning show host, Jamie Cottle, will be the host of the show. Money raised from the concert will go towards chorus expenses like the rehearsal hall, costumes, director, and music.

Tickets are \$30 and may be purchased from any chorus member, at the door or by calling 519-301-5636 or emailing sweetfestivalsounds@gmail.com.

The Festival Sounds Chorus is always looking for new members to join them on Wednesday nights from 6:30-9 p.m.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

21 FEMALE SINGERS

The Festival Sounds Chorus will perform in its spring concert, Crazy Dreams, at the St. Marys Pyramid Recreation Centre June 2.

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Our buildings tell a story: From pump house to Rothmans Art Gallery to Gallery Stratford

PAUL WILKER AND GORD CONROY

Times Contributor

In 1883, two years before Stratford became a city, it built a pump house at 54 Romeo St. S. The first section of the building was designed by architect George F. Durand, who also designed the Perth County Courthouse. With the construction of the pump house, Stratford secured its development and growth as a community.

In 1966, a modern pump house was constructed across Romeo Street, which left the original expanded pump house vacant. There was a possibility that the buildings would be demolished.

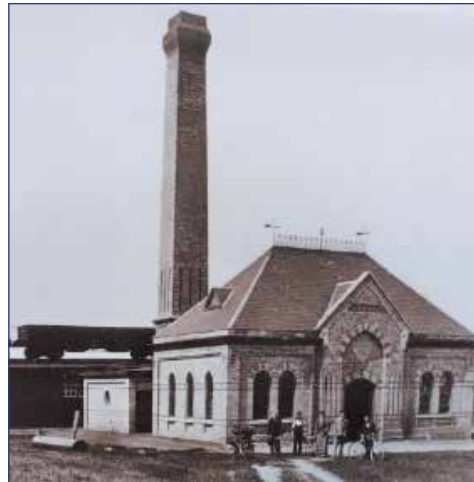
The Stratford Art Society, founded in 1945, prepared a feasibility plan to convert the buildings into a prestigious art gallery. In 1966, the Stratford Art Society became known as the Stratford Art Association. Its director was Robert Ihrig, an artist and designer with the Stratford Festival. With receipt of financial backing in 1967 from Rothman's Pall Mall of

Canada Ltd., the Stratford Art Association renovated and opened the doors of the successful Rothmans Art Gallery in Canada's centennial year.

In the 1970s, the cigarette manufacturer phased out its funding and the name changed to Gallery Stratford.

The original style of the pump house can be termed Municipal Gothic with notable Italianate tracery in the brickwork. The pointed windows were placed in pairs in inset panels with Moorish fanwork above them and patterned chevrons beneath them. The building is white brick with red accents. To meet increased water demands, sympathetic additions were later added to the original building and a garage built nearby. In 1985, Gallery Stratford's unique architectural exterior was recognized by the City of Stratford, which designated it a heritage building.

Robert Ihrig was the founding director of the Rothman's Gallery in 1976. He was a prolific artist and, when he died in 2005, he left a body of work that encompasses paintings, drawings, photographs, sculp-



The first portion of what was originally a pump house built at 54 Romeo St. S in 1883 was designed by famed local architect George F. Durand.

tures, books, blueprints, theatre designs, illustrations, mixed media, etchings, silk-screens, lithographs, films and notebooks with plans for screenplays, animated films, plays and exhibits. He exhibited and was involved with many art shows,



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The first portion of what was originally a pump house built at 54 Romeo St. S in 1883 was designed by famed local architect George F. Durand.

galleries, museums, collectives, art associations and alliances. He has permanent pieces at several places, among them Michigan State University, the Stratford Festival and Gallery Stratford.

To learn more about Stratford's built heritage, visit www.streetsofstratford.ca.

It must be spring, Lake Victoria comes alive



Victoria Mitchell, Ann Knowles, and Anita Jacobson in the thick of it. The trio were part of a group of volunteers with the City of Stratford's energy and environment committee that were pulling weeds and invasive species – like thistle and dandelion – on the north shore of Lake Victoria on May 10.



Jacobson encouraged people to volunteer and get involved. The work that the committee and its volunteers do protects native plants and promotes biodiversity in the park system. All it takes is a little know-how and some tools like gloves, spades, pruners, and gardening knives.

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTOS)



The family of geese glide through the bramble on the shoreline, heading to the clear, open waters of the lake.



Jada Kraemer and Ellie Shantz, employees with the city, contend with some of the weeds lining the path around Lake Victoria.

City recognizes local environmental heroes

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTOS)



Sadaf Ghalib, manager of climate change programs for the City of Stratford, presented the 2024 Green Recognition Awards to city council on May 13. The award program aims to promote sustainable practices in the community by highlighting the everyday work that residents and organizations do.



The Rotary Club of Stratford was awarded in the waste reduction and diversion category for creating and implementing an organization-wide sustainability policy, as well as green events program.



The Drop n' Swap program held by the Stratford Public Library won an award in the waste category, since it diverted approximately 500 kg of waste. Additionally, Vicwest Building Products won in the energy management and electrification category, though no representative was there to accept the award.



DYNA-MIG won a green building award for “ongoing decarbonization and carbon reduction efforts through plant operations,” Ghalib said. Between 2022 and 2023, DYNA-MIG has reduced carbon emissions by 14 per cent, improved water efficiency by 11 per cent, and reduced waste by over 33 per cent.



Brad Robertson won a green building award, after retrofitting a heritage home with smart design measures – all while retaining its architectural and heritage elements.



Jamie Pritchard accepts an award in the tourism and events category on behalf of the Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA). The BIA had a Car Free Friday initiative that encouraged workers downtown to use other forms of travel.



MTE Consultants won awards in three categories: waste reduction, energy management, and the green building award.



Schaeffler Canada Inc. also won in all three categories, after focusing on sustainability in its operations. Among other initiatives, Schaeffler’s recycling and waste reduction efforts achieved an 85 per cent diversion rate, redirecting 720 tonnes of waste from the landfill.

Perth County's Camp Bimini ready to welcome over 700 campers this summer

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

With warmer weather and longer days, the younger generation not only thinks about the end of the school year, but also that it's time to register for camp.

Camp Bimini located in southern Perth County on Embro Road (Perth Road 113) south of Stratford is getting ready to welcome 720 campers again for the summer of 2024.

Camp Bimini and its coordinator, Carol Young, conducted the Sunday service at Grace United Church in Tavistock recently and spoke about the picturesque, 16-acre camp on the shores of Trout Creek.

"The camp has been in operation since 1947 providing safe, welcoming and a nurturing place for kids, teens and adults to gather to spend time in nature, meet

friends and to grow and learn that they have great value and who they are really does matter," Yong said.

The non-profit church camp serves families of any denomination or no denomination, primarily within a 40-kilometer radius of Camp Bimini, and typically welcomes campers each summer with a staff of approximately 100 part-time and full-time, trained personnel.

The coordinator also says Bimini is more than cabins and trees, but involves singing around campfires at night with young kids discovering themselves through crafts and talent shows.

Covering the costs for kids whose families may not have the \$600 for camp registration continues to be a challenge, Young said.

To help in this cause and for more information, email coordinator@campbimini.ca.



ALMOST CAMP SEASON

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Pictured on Sunday promoting Camp Bimini at Tavistock's Grace United Church is, from left, Rev. Marg Smith, camper Jordan Belisle and camp coordinator Carol Young.

Students participate in tree planting in North Easthope Township

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

There was a beehive of activity recently in North Easthope Township east of Stratford.

The location was the Sebben family farm where hundreds of white cedar seedlings were planted as part of the 30th anniversary of the Upper Avon River Conservation Club.

Along with the club members, there was a group of grades 3 and 4 students from Ms. Clark's class at North Easthope Public School.

They came to help in the morning and by

noon the students and club members had planted 400 seedlings in the ground, properly spaced for growth and surrounded in a bed of mulch provided by the City of Stratford.

According to Craig Merkley and Brenda Gallagher from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), the club originated in 1994.

That's when a group of area farming neighbours in the Upper Avon River watershed were organized with the help of the UTRCA to carry out the tree-planting recommendations of the Upper Avon Valley Plan written in 1952.

The club has planted over 20,000 trees

and shrubs on most farms in the Avon River watershed over the years.

These plantings include field wind breaks, stream buffer strips and block plantings.

The club has tried to include local school groups, both urban and rural, as part of the plantings to help educate them of the benefits of the planting for future generations.

"The students that helped in this planting had an amazing day and were helping to promote Earth Day, culminating with the tree planting activity," said North Easthope Public School principal Charles Longston.

"At the same time, they are learning to

be great stewards of the land and the environment."

Merkley and Gallagher said the advantages of tree planting include reduced wind erosion, shading water to reduce the temperature for fish habitat, biodiversity and aesthetics.

On this day at the Sebben farm, a 3,000-foot windbreak was planted and funding for the project was provided by the Donald McTavish Conservation Fund.

McTavish was one of the originators who helped create the 1952 Avon River Watershed Conservation Plan, and his son, Murray McTavish, is still very actively involved and was there helping with the planting.



POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSE

Former educator and now Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma took part in the tree planting on the Sebben farm in North Easthope Township. He said "it was like being in his former element from school, working hand in hand with students for a positive environmental cause."



400 WHITE CEDARS

The hardworking members of the Avon River Conservation Club are shown planting 400 white cedar seedlings. Also included are North Easthope Public School students. Pictured from left are farm owner Andrew Sebben, teacher Ms. Clark, Craig Merkley, Roger Cook, Brenda Gallagher and student Noah Harper.

(GARY WEST PHOTOS)



SMILE FOR A CAUSE (OPTIMISM PLACE PHOTO)
Optimism Place Women's Shelter residential manager Hannah Skinner decorates Smile Cookies at a local Tim Hortons during the annual Smile Cookie campaign April 29 to May 5 which, this year, raised \$43,515.15 for the local women's shelter.



YARD SALE (GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)
St. Peter's Lutheran Church at Cambria and Nelson streets in Stratford is hosting its annual yard sale sponsored by the Mary Martha Society May 25 from 8 a.m. to noon. The sale will feature household items, jewelry, books, toys and much more with proceeds going to church missions. Pictured are Mary Martha Society members Sheron Benner and Brenda White with some of the items that will be up for sale.

Perth County Federation of Agriculture hosts MP John Nater and MPP Matthew Rae

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

The Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) has been holding a Spring Forum for many years, bringing together the Federation of Agriculture directors and leaders from local commodity groups in Perth County.

This yearly meeting was again held recently at the Mitchell Golf and Country Club with local township politicians along with MP John Nater and MPP Matthew Rae in attendance to discuss issues that each commodity faces in the county, present and future.

PCFA represents over 1,700 farmers in Perth county.

Commodity group representatives who presented at the meeting included egg farmers, dairy producers, chicken farmers, pork producers, beef farmers and grain producers.

The PCFA also presented three briefs of its own on farmland protection, abattoirs and the continuing shortage of veterinarians.

A common theme from several of the groups presenting was future farmland preservation.

PCFA stated in the brief that the province is losing 319 acres of farmland per day to development.

The federation encourages planners to use higher densities in urban areas. They also have concerns about minimum-distance separation in farming areas.

They feel that planners need to be educated on this and why it is important, including educating non-farming residents living in rural areas about normal farm practices.

Several of the commodity groups brought



SPRING FORUM (GARY WEST PHOTO)
Pictured are from left are Perth-Wellington MP John Nater, president of Perth County Federation of Agriculture Derek Van De Walle and Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae.

this up as well in their concerns.

The local Perth federation also made a presentation on the veterinarian shortage in rural areas of Perth County. The Ontario Government has announced a proposal to update and modernize the Veterinarians Act, which hasn't been updated significantly since 1989. The PCFA commended the continued work done on this issue so far.

A brief was also presented on the lack of abattoirs in Perth County. The need for butcher training, reducing red tape and harmonizing various regulations was thoroughly discussed by the politicians and members around the table.

The topic of access to rural high-speed broadband was also brought up several times. Rae provided some updates, saying broadband coverage in rural areas is one

of his government's highest priorities and installation continues to happen.

Some of the individual commodity group's concerns included the need for a federal partnership with egg farmers for research, and infrastructure investment and attracting more dairy processors to Ontario.

Also, federal trade in dairy products was a concern and standards of identity for milk, with some around the table saying plant-based beverages shouldn't be allowed to be called milk.

Chicken producers said

the government has to continue supporting supply management, and avian influenza is a big concern going into the future.

With pork, the producers stated they still want an ongoing commitment to risk management, land use and responsible development, and there should be a big push for investment in the pork-processing value chain.

The beef producers presentation included Canada's SRM removal rules, transportation of livestock rules, balancing international trade, opposing Bill C-282, the advanced-payment program and risk-management program, aligning the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act, and a commitment to preserving farmland while building meat-processing capacity for the future.

Perth County grain farmers' biggest concern was the government's will to advocate for Bill C-234, the carbon-tax exemption bill for fuel, heat and grain-drying charges.

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Navigating May Madness: Self-Care Strategies for a Busy Month



IRENE ROTH

Times Freelance Columnist

I just love the month of May. All the flowering shrubs are bursting alive and we start sensing the aromas of spring. Yet, there's so much to do. There's the cleaning and washing, raking and sweeping, and painting of fences and decks. There's also a lot of lawn work that needs to be done.

May can send us into a whirlwind of activity. As spring reaches its zenith, schedules overflow with graduations, weddings, end-of-school-year events, and the promise of summer's adventures.

Amidst the chaos, it's easy to forget about self-care. However, practicing self-care is crucial to maintain balance and preserve your well-being.

Here are some strategies to

navigate the May madness with grace and self-compassion.

1. Prioritize Your Time

In a month filled with obligations, it's essential to prioritize your commitments. Make a list of all your engagements and responsibilities you have. Then categorize them based on importance and urgency. This will help you allocate your time and energy efficiently, ensuring that you address the most critical tasks first. Remember, it's okay to say no to non-essential activities if you feel exhausted and overwhelmed.

2. Schedule Time for Self-Care

Just as you schedule meetings and appointments, block out some time for self-care in your calendar. Whether it's a daily yoga session, daily bubble bath, or a monthly massage, prioritize self-care as you would any other commitment. Treat these appointments with yourself as non-negotiable, recognizing that taking care of your well-being is essential for long-term health and happiness.

3. Practice Mindfulness

Take a few minutes each day to practice mindfulness meditation or simply engage in mindful activities, like taking a mindful walk or taking a few deep breaths. Ground yourself in the

present moment, letting go of worries about the future or regrets about the past. Cultivating mindfulness can help reduce stress, increase self-awareness, and enhance your overall sense of well-being.

4. Get Moving

Exercise is a powerful form of self-care, even when your schedule is packed. Find clever ways to incorporate movement into your daily routine, whether it's a brisk walk during your lunch break, a quick workout before breakfast, or a dance party in your living room. Exercise not only boosts your mood and energy levels, but also helps ease stress and tension, leaving you feeling refreshed and revitalized.

5. Nourish Your Body

With a busy schedule, it's tempting to rely on fast food and convenience meals. However, prioritizing nutritious foods can have a profound impact on your well-being. Make an effort to fuel your body with whole foods like fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains. Plan and prepare meals in advance to avoid last-minute unhealthy choices. Also, remember to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

6. Set Boundaries

Learn to say no to requests

that don't align with your priorities or values. Communicate your boundaries clearly and assertively, without feeling guilty or apologizing excessively. By establishing healthy boundaries, you can prevent burnout and preserve your well-being amidst the busyness of the month.

7. Connect with Loved Ones

Make time to connect with loved ones, whether it's a phone call with a friend, a family dinner, or a date night with your partner. Social support is essential for emotional well-being, providing comfort, encouragement, and perspective during challenging times. Prioritize meaningful friendships and cherish moments you spend with loved ones.

8. Embrace Imperfection

It's easy to succumb to pressure and perfectionism. However, striving for perfection only leads to stress and dissatisfaction. Instead, embrace imperfection and practice self-compassion. Accept that you can't do it all, and that's okay. Be gentle with yourself when things don't go as planned.

9. Seek Solitude

Find a quiet space where you can be alone with your thoughts, away from distractions and demands. Use this time for introspection, reflection, and self-care

activities that nourish your soul, such as journaling, reading, or simply enjoying a cup of tea in peace. Solitude is essential for maintaining inner balance and clarity amidst the external noise.

10. Practice Gratitude

Take a moment each day to cultivate gratitude. Reflect on the blessings in your life, no matter how small, and express gratitude for them. Keep a gratitude journal or simply pause to appreciate the surrounding beauty—the blooming flowers, the warmth of the sun, the laughter of loved ones. Cultivating gratitude can shift your perspective, helping you find joy and contentment amidst the busyness of May.

Therefore, navigating the busy month of May requires intentional self-care practices to preserve your well-being, prevent overwhelm and exhaustion. To enjoy the month of May, be sure to prioritize your time, schedule self-care, practice mindfulness, move your body, nourish yourself, set boundaries, connect with loved ones, embrace imperfection, seek solitude, and cultivate gratitude. By prioritizing self-care, you can navigate May madness with grace, resilience, and inner peace. And these are goals worth pursuing.

MUSINGS: High on the Wings of Song



MARK HERTZBERGER

Times Freelance Columnist

Have you ever noticed how music can transport you to a different place, another time, or perhaps even an altered frame of mind? Listening to Joni Mitchell's first album takes me back to the student apartment of a friend during my university days in Waterloo. Playing Gordon Lightfoot's Sit Down Young Stranger album replays memories of my early courtship days with Yvonne.

Scientists, of course, have been busy figuring out an empirical, measurable reason for why we should enjoy music. Apparently there's a neurological basis for all this. The human brain is hardwired for tunes. There are six neural centres that respond to sound. One of these is devoted exclusively to music.

Studies have also shown that endorphins and dopamine are released when we listen to music. Endorphins ("endogenous morphine") are peptides produced in the brain that block the perception of pain and increase feelings of wellbeing. They also foster social closeness. Dopamine is a sort of points reward program that gives us highs when we do something pleasurable – chocolate, sex, drugs (legal of course) - you name it.

Here's the most interesting take-away from all this research. If you listen to music, you get a high. If you perform music with others, such as in a choir, you



get a greater high. If you sing in a large choir, you get an even greater high. It's like dopamine on steroids. So who need drugs? Or chocolate for that matter, although that might be going a

bit too far. All you need to do is sing together.

Well, you are in luck. By sheer coincidence, the Stratford Concert Choir (SCC) needs more voices and is holding auditions in late May, early June, and late August. These auditions are very welcoming and non-threatening. I can personally attest to this. I tend to be anxious but felt very much at ease. To find out more about the choir and to register for an audition go to www.stratfordconcertchoir.org/join. Neither Yvonne nor I are professional singers but we have learned so much and reaped such incredible enjoyment as SCC members.

To be certain, this requires some practice and dedication but you will be part of a supportive group under the guidance of an amazing director. There is work to do but there is also humour, banter, and immense satisfaction. You will be introduced to beautiful music you had no idea

existed. When the songs come together, it feels like "riding a wave" as one choir member so aptly described it.

As it turns out (yet another serendipitous coincidence!) there is a concert on **May 25, 7:00 pm at Avondale United Church** as outlined in the poster accompanying this column. Tickets are still available, <https://www.stratfordconcertchoir.org/performances> so come check us out and enjoy an evening of great music while you're at it. Maybe we'll even see you at next choir practice!

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

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL: BREAKING IT DOWN AGAIN



STUART LENDER

Times Contributor

The pathway of a life, the life of any person, is simply a way to find themselves. No one has succeeded. Not completely. It's never fully attainable. Just when we think we know and have settled into the pocket of our most comfortable skin – change is there on the horizon – and we are watching its strange advance.

We might distract ourselves, but it approaches.

If you are like me and have reflected upon the various upheavals of your life (certainly you've had them, or you wouldn't be living at all), you might be able to clearly mark them out on the timeline – the traumas, the great changes. I'm grateful that while I have experienced several setbacks, almost all have proven themselves to hold greater lessons than the hurt they caused. And though the sky, alas, is never cleared of clouds for all the days of our lives, "setbacks" sometimes are simply resets.

After all, where is the starting line? Upon birth we enter the woods, and humankind finds itself in need of others to survive far longer than any species of which we're aware. Yet years later we are told to create the life we want, as unique as we

are, but within the boundaries of propriety and the examples of acceptance, so that none of us feel threatened. What do we choose as our guides? Whom do we follow? For some, is there a choice at all?

Some of us floundered. Some of us braced ourselves valiantly against the gale. But all of us looked forward and took a step. The early years, in whatever circumstances we found ourselves, were either lacking, sufficient or abundant – in love, money, family relationships, friendships, opportunity, education – and fate was blowing in the wind weaving its way through our days as it still and ever does. Underlying it all, roots were growing, personalities, preciously malleable and re-shaped, that led us down pathways unfamiliar until they became familiar within the cloud of time and then changed

once more.

And that all illusive starting line of our own childbirth, of which we remember nothing, and the place where we began to grope after the vague and uncertain aspects of some future potential, are as a dream to us now from this perspective – as is the ever-distant sense of some new world beyond this one when we "end." We hope. We pray. We allow ourselves the fall back into ourselves, while each day we reset, by the moon and by the sun.

We fill ourselves up in so many ways. We carry everything sweet, everything bitter – and empty ourselves in hate or in love or in some associated characteristic. And this is what we do. This is what we have done.

And this is what we are – holy vessels of emotion – in which

I am the days that pass within me. I am the conductor. There is nothing outside of me that should have the power to dictate my response to it. And I choose love for myself, because if I don't, I cannot function. And I begin to see the secret of this – that the more I choose it, the more I become it, the more I challenge the darkness I create... until I become a human amongst humans, closer to myself, nearer to others, who search themselves and their worlds as I do, looking for who they really are. And when this is realized; then and only then, can I and they, reach out, embrace, and talk.

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.

Welcoming Ukrainians: Mother's Day

VJ KNUTSON

Times Freelance Columnist

As I type this, my phone keeps pinging with messages. It's Mother's Day. Four well wishes from our own children and a slew of others from our Ukrainian "kids." I am truly blessed to have so many who call me "Mom."

The good wishes started Friday night when Vira, who is aspiring to open a gluten-free bakery, brought me a gift of fresh-baked pastries, including a lemon cake, iced cookies, muffins and what turned out to be my absolute favourite, waffle pancakes.

Yesterday, Lesia, our permanent Ukrainian guest, brought me fresh-cut flowers.

"For Mother's Day," she said, even though we are the same age.

Lesia is always bringing us presents – chocolate, fruit, salads and flowers. Although she was head of economics, cyberkinetics and mathematics at the University in Lviv, Lesia works at the local grocery store, cutting up fruit and making salads, as her English is not very strong. Despite all this, she remains cheerful and optimistic about life. She is such an inspiration, and now, a dear friend.

Then I heard from Alina, whose husband and brother first came to us in early April, 2023 after a friend of mine found them sleeping in a rental car in Toronto. Vadym and Ihor had planned to find jobs and a suitable apartment in Toronto ahead of Alina and toddler's arrival. Toronto was already burdened with asylum seekers and they were finding it tougher than expected. I offered to help the young men find work and a host family closer to us. Nataly, whose family we had hosted May and June of 2022, called Vadym and reassured him there would be work and support here. The young men arrived on a



Thursday evening scared and uncertain.

Work was secured the next day, and I found a host for 20-year-old Ihor. My husband, Ric, decided that Vadym could stay

with us and we would help his wife and son settle, even though we already had a Ukrainian guest living with us. It would be crowded, but we fell in love with these

young, wide-eyed men, who had already experienced such trauma at a young age. When Alina and baby arrived in May, we fell in love with them too. The family has since moved on, but Alina keeps in touch.

Later, 15-year-old Anastasia is coming over for help with her French homework. Nastia, as we call her, came over with her mom and stepdad. We bonded during our first tutoring session. Nastia had been close with her grandparents in Ukraine and when they both died, she felt great loss. Now she has adopted Ric and I as her Canadian grandma and grandpa, and visits frequently.

This evening, Nataly and family will visit to wish me Happy Mother's Day in person. It's been exactly two years since I received a call saying this family of five needed a home. They too had landed in Toronto and found themselves in a bad way. Ric immediately offered to get them and bring them here. Nataly, whose own mother died when Nataly was six, immediately called me "mom", such was their appreciation for our willingness to take them in and help them start a new life.


I could never have imagined, at the outset of all this, how deeply enriched our lives would become. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia is an act of terrorism, and so many people have been displaced, or worse, lost. Families have been torn apart and many have faced heart-wrenching decisions. And in the midst of such darkness, we have discovered incredible strength and resiliency. And, yes, love.

(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.)

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Riddles

Why was the music teacher not able to open his class room?
Because his keys were on the piano.

Why couldn't the shipmates play cards?
The captain was sitting on the deck

If a rooster laid a white egg and a brown egg, what kind of chicks would hatch?
None. Roosters don't lay eggs.

What did the vampire bring to the baseball field?
His bats

What kind of dog can jump higher than a skyscraper?
Any dog, skyscrapers can't jump.

What is black and white and read all over?
A newspaper.

What's the difference between a teacher and a train?
The teacher says throw out that gum and a train says chew, chew

What kind of witch lives at the beach?
A sandwich.

Why did the rooster cross the road?
Because he wasn't a chicken.

Why was the dog sitting next to the fire?
He was a hotdog

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 34



Pet of the Month



LAVENDER

Are you looking to add a big bundle of joy and energy into your family? Look no further! Lavender, who is almost two years old, is looking for her loving forever family. She is a beautiful, large breed dog with a heart of gold! Lavender is a super smart dog who is keen on learning new tricks and going on new adventures with her humans. She absolutely loves going on long walks or exploring the outdoors! Lavender would like to be the only pet in the house – who doesn't like being the centre of attention! If you would like to meet Lavender, submit an adoption survey at kwsphumane.ca.

Word Search

SPRING FLOWERS

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

- Tulip
- Daffodil
- Hyacinth
- Cherry Blossom
- Lilac
- Iris
- Peony
- Crocus
- Daisy
- Forsythia
- Magnolia
- Pansy
- Ranunculus
- Bleeding Heart
- Snowdrop

Community of Christ Church donates to Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

The Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth got a recently from members and friends of the Community of Christ Church on Forman Avenue in Stratford.

A total of \$1,379.40 was collected from the congregation and friends

during a full breakfast served in the church's kitchen and dining area.

On the last Sunday of every month, residents are invited to donate what they can and, at the same time, enjoy a full breakfast and help charitable organizations in need.

To date, there have been 13 breakfasts where thousands of dollars have gone

to aid 13 different charitable organizations in the area of Stratford and Perth County.

They hope to continue these events for years to come.

Reminder to everyone about the 10th

annual Hike for Hospice on Sunday, June 23 at the Tom Orr Trail at the Stratford-Perth Museum to raise needed funds for the hospice.

For more information, email lucie@rotaryhospice.ca.

St. Marys Independent The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette Goderich Sun
 STRATFORDTIMES Woodstock Ingersoll Echo

PUBLICATION DATES:
WOODSTOCK INGERSOLL ECHO: JUNE 7
ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT: JUNE 6
WILMOT-TAVISTOCK GAZETTE: JUNE 6
GODERICH SUN: JUNE 13
STRATFORD TIMES: JUNE 14

Introducing our Seniors Month feature, celebrating the remarkable seniors who enrich our communities during Ontario's Seniors Month in June. This annual nationwide celebration is more than just a tribute—it's a recognition of the invaluable contributions seniors make to the vibrancy of our community.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to align your brand with the spirit of Seniors Month and connect with a passionate audience eager to celebrate the seniors who have made a lasting impact. Reserve your space today!

Heather Dunbar - 226-261-1837 | heather@granthaven.com | www.granthaven.com

June is Seniors Month
 Working for Seniors

ontario.ca/SeniorsMonth Ontario



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

HOPE FOR THE BEST

Pictured in the front row from left are church volunteer Gary Goulding and hospice foundation director Heather Bryan. Pictured in the back row from left are Pastor Nancy Brookshaw, Julia Brookshaw and hospice volunteer Murray Schlotzhauser.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 1986
2. Queen Elizabeth II
3. Belgium
4. Lithium
5. The knight
6. Iris
7. Five
8. Liver disease
9. Quebec
10. Deciduous

SUDOKU

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

SHOP LOCAL. SAVE LOCAL.

CLASSIFIEDS

Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

OBITUARY



May 17, 1959 to April 27, 2024

Patricia Ann "Patti" McEwen, age 64 of Calgary, Alberta passed away on April 27, 2024. She was the chosen daughter of the late Keith and Ruby (Marple) McEwen of Stratford, Ontario. Patti attended

schools in Stratford and was a graduate of the Stratford Central Secondary School. She is survived by her son Michael Keith, whom she loved unconditionally; sister-in-law Shirley; nieces, nephews, cousins, and their families. Besides her parents, Patti was predeceased by her brother Lorie Douglas (2008).

In keeping with Patti's wishes, cremation has taken place. Burial in the Avondale Cemetery, Stratford, Ontario will take place at a later date.

Donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

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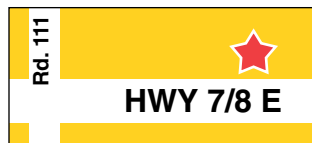


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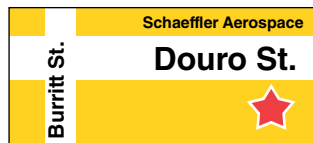


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