

STRATFORD TIMES

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Martin Ritsma hosts his first State of The City Mayor's Breakfast

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

On April 20th, Mayor Martin Ritsma held his first annual State of the City Mayor's Breakfast with the Chamber of Commerce at the Stratford Country Club.

Ritsma started by discussing the recent Canadian Dairy XPO that brought 17,000 visitors to Stratford. He reminisced about his humble childhood beginnings, living on the farm himself.

The total 2023 budget for the City of Stratford is \$143 million. Thirty-four million dollars is provided for improving infrastructure, just over \$1 million will go towards the Dunn's bridge, and the city will allocate \$8 million to complete the main roads.

The city needs another \$63 million over the next five years for infrastructure, which will come from user fees, tax levies, and government grants.

Ritsma noted the importance of an inclusive and diverse community, and discussed the plan for Perth County to increase female constables across the region to include thirty percent more females on staff.

Regarding police calls, Ritsma noted that fifty percent of the current police calls are mental health-related. Therefore, he plans to implement a mobile mental health and rapid response team to help de-escalate issues before the police need to be involved. Ritsma estimates that this holistic approach will help discharge up to eighty-eight percent of calls on the scene.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

SMILE FOR A CAUSE

In support of Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services, above Nate Jeffrey showcases a smile as big as the smile on his cookie from Tim Hortons. The Optimism Place supports women and children fleeing from domestic violence. The Smile Cookie fundraiser ran from May 1-7.

Food insecurities issues a product of rising costs

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The local United Way and public health unit are addressing all levels of government, including Stratford City Council, about what food insecurity looks like in the Huron Perth region.

Ryan Erb, the executive director of

United Way Perth-Huron, and Candace Cunningham, a dietitian for Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH), spoke about food insecurity at a council meeting on April 24. Results from the United Way Huron-Perth's food survey and the HPPH's Real Cost of Eating report were presented to council.

The Real Cost of Eating report found that groceries for a family of four in Huron Perth was \$249 per week, or \$1,076 per month in 2022. A family of four receiving Ontario Works (OW) as income would have \$261 left over for expenses excluding rent.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9



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Martin Ritsma hosts his first State of The City Mayor's Breakfast



STATE OF THE CITY

Mayor Ritsma speaks at his first annual State of the City Mayor's Breakfast.

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The next topic of discussion was homelessness in Stratford. Due to the current economy,

homelessness in Huron Perth has increased. At last count, there are 193 households in Perth County experiencing homelessness. Those experiencing homelessness can find connections to landlords, shower, and eat healthy meals at St. James Anglican Church. The new, low-income housing units on Britannia Street are expected to be finished in late summer or early fall and will offer twenty-six units to those needing assisted housing.

There will also be more access to transit. The new intercity transit system offers transportation for medical and shopping needs to Listowel and other cities. It allows access to the GoTrain and

VIA rail to those who cannot access personal transportation.

Healthcare was a central focus for Ritsma, and he discussed that the hospitals are now back to

100% capacity in the region, and the government has directly provided \$50 million over the next four years to improve wait times, staffing and equipment for the hospitals in Huron Perth.

Eighteen million dollars will go towards new chemo and pharmacy equipment, replacing an MRI

and CT unit, and five million dollars will go towards the SGH campaign and other funding to

Stratford Rotary Hospice, attracting fourteen specialists and eight additional family physicians over the next year.

There are plans for environmental changes, including stormwater management systems upgrade and an increase in the attention and implementation of the green bin program in schools and businesses across Huron Perth. This will provide over 90,000 metric tons of waste reduction in the region.

Ritsma notes that "small businesses are the heart of Stratford." He thanked those running small businesses in Stratford for their dedication to the city. He thanked Destination Stratford for

improving the visitor experience, including implementing a new washroom at The Boathouse for

visitors and community members. There is expected to be a steady increase in visitors to the Stratford Festival this year as we fully emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Stratford is expected to host more than 440,000 visitors throughout the Festival season. Ritsma recognized Stratford residents' resilience to the influx of visitors to the area as this will bring \$88 million to the local economy. Ritsma also thanked the Stratford Festival for its service to the community and their ability to employ over one thousand Stratford residents.

A central topic of discussion at this year's Mayor's address to the city was the industrial

production in Stratford. The city's global reach generated over one billion dollars in yearly sales.

Ritsma has almost completed his tour of the industrial plants across Stratford and notes their importance in robotics production, environmental work, and social causes.

Over fifty percent of the current workforce in plants across Stratford are from Kitchener-Waterloo

and London regions. Ritsma sees the need for improvement in affordable housing in the region to attract these essential workers to stay and allow them affordable housing close to their workplace.

More than seventy percent of the current applicants are immigrant workers, and Ritsma notes the importance of offering housing, acceptance, and permanent residency for these much-needed workers.

Ritsma closed the speech with his thoughts about the Stratford community, "In a community where we are valued, and where residents are measured only by the size of their heart, and the

kindness that they share, I believe that in the city of Stratford, there will always be more that unites us than divides us — a city where anything is possible."

investStratford, City of Stratford Launch Campaign to Support Attainable Housing

investStratford, City of Stratford Launch Campaign to Support Attainable Housing

The City of Stratford and investStratford continue to move forward with a project aimed at supporting the creation of attainable housing in the city. The project encourages private sector investment into housing within the community, while also identifying projects and initiatives that may be implemented by the municipality to assist in housing availability and attainability.

Following approval from City Council at its regular meeting May 8, 2023, the Stratford Attainable Housing Project will proceed with a three-pronged approach. That will include a draft Community Incentive Toolkit, a pilot housing project to advance City-owned land for housing, and an information and awareness campaign to inspire community action on housing featuring stories from citizens of Stratford experiencing the housing crisis first-hand.

The draft Community Incentive Toolkit provides guidance and resources for developers, builders, and community organizations to help encourage and incentivize the creation of attainable housing in Stratford.

The pilot housing project will use City-owned land to support the development of attainable housing through



Globally Connected | Community Driven

either the sale of the land or a private-public partnership. And an information campaign will help raise awareness and inspire action on housing.

Previously announced by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the project is funded through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program to the City of Stratford and investStratford.

Visit www.investstratford.com/attainable for more information about the project, and how the community can take action to support attainable housing.

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stratfordtimes@gmail.com
www.stratfordtimes.com

Editor

Stewart Grant

Graphic Design / Layout

Sarah Cairns

Administrative

Wendy Lamond / June Grant

Advertising Inquiries

Contact stratfordtimes@gmail.com

or call 519-868-1290

Contributors

Spencer Seymour, Hayden Bulbrook, Betty-Jo Belton, Julia Schneider, Gary West, Paul Knowles, Emily Stewart, Lisa Chester, Fred Gonder, April Taylor, Sheila Clarke, Irene Roth, Lauren Eedy, Lee Griffi, Stuart Lender, Amanda Modaragamage, Thomas R. Verny, Kate Orland Bere
(If interested in contributing to the Stratford Times, send us a note at stratfordtimes@gmail.com)



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Inspiration abound at the Business Excellence Awards

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

In his typically humble fashion, 2023 Business Leader Award Winner Don McDougall remarked during his keynote address last Thursday, May 4, that many of us might rather be watching Game 2 of the Leafs-Panthers playoff game that was taking place at the same time.

Certainly not – I only wish that I could have listened to Mr. McDougall speak during Game 3 as well, so to save my eyes from the Leafs' regrettable performance on that evening, and to continue taking in the wisdom of this legendary business leader.

The 2023 edition of the Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards was an exceptional event that I was fortunate enough to attend as a member of the media.

While the Awards continued during the pandemic, with one held outdoors and another back at the Arden Park with restricted capacity, this year's event was back to full capacity and bigger than ever, with 56 different businesses and organizations nominated. As Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae noted in his speech, "Stratford and area really punches above its weight in Ontario and Canada" for all that is accomplished locally.

Those recognized during the evening brought a myriad of inspiring business stories and lessons to those in attendance.

The importance of hard work was personified by Demetre's Family Eatery, who won in the Hospitality Category. Leah Carangounis, who accepted the award later in the evening on behalf of her husband Demetre, who she said was "probably in bed right now, as he's up at 4:30 in the morning to prep for the day". She said that the couple worked seven days a week for about 25 years, before deciding during the lockdown to "maybe

take Mondays off."

Compassion for others was also such a common thread among the award winners. Rotary Hospice was recognized in the non-profit category (for more, please see Gary West's article on page 26). I was also quite moved by the speech of Dr. Erica Dickie of Black Creek Mobile Veterinary Services, who said, "I help pets die peacefully in their homes. And many of you and others probably think, 'Oh my God, that's a horrible job,' and it isn't, it's an amazing job, because our pets are our family, and they mean so much to us, and every pet deserves to have the most peaceful ending possible... and also to recognize that a really big part of the experience is also about the families and the grief that happens is real."

Examples of teamwork were everywhere. Wild Hog Country Market co-owner Marvin Bachert praised their team that "understands our vision and goes in for it with all their heart." Upon the recognition of Jeff Stewart General Carpentry in the Commercial Category, Jeff was quick to credit others, including when he said of his 11-year employee, "We cannot do what we do without Chris Schofield." Paul Beeston, during his video tribute to Don McDougall, spoke about how everything with Don was about doing things together as a team.

Back to Mr. McDougall's keynote address, in which he humbly referred to his business career as a series of "happy coincidences". For those in the audience last Thursday evening, I believe it was a happy coincidence for all of us to be inspired by and to learn from so many fine business and organizational leaders of our region. I encourage everyone to take a moment to appreciate the entrepreneurial, hard-working, and community-minded business teams and non-for-profit organizational groups that make Stratford and area the special place that it continues to be.

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STRATFORD **TIMES**

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Stratford Kiwanis Club's Random Acts of Kindness

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

In celebration of Kiwanis Club of Stratford's 75th anniversary, volunteers congregated outside Tim Hortons' Huron Street location on a rainy Saturday. Armed with 200 gift cards, they handed out the cards to unsuspecting citizens - turning a dreary morning mood into surprised smiles.

The weekend of April 22 and 23rd was declared Random Acts of Kindness weekend by Kiwanis District 5, which encompasses five clubs: Cambridge, Elmira, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph and Paris-Brandt.

"There are a lot of clubs doing random acts of kindness, they challenged everyone so this is what we are doing. We haven't done this before, but we do a lot in the community. Last year we raised over \$100,000, and we spent \$100,000 in the community," said Terry Marklevitz, Kiwanis Club Stratford president.

Marklevitz was joined at Tim Hortons by Heather Herman, Vice President, and her daughter Grace Herman, greeting locals as they approached the door with the cards and a leaflet describing some of what the Kiwanis Club does in the community.

"It's important that the community gets to know about us and what we do for the kids, so we do things like this," said Marklevitz. "We're hoping for some free smiles and maybe if somebody finds out about us and the next time they see us, they'll remember that they got a free cof-



KINDNESS LIVES

Left to right, VP Heather Herman, student volunteer Grace Herman and President Terry Marklevitz

fee once as a random act of kindness."

For the 75th anniversary, there will be a celebration in the Fall, with more information to come, and their signature project this year will be helping Bedford School

with their playground, which to the volunteers of Kiwanis is a celebration in itself.

"We are also hoping to have a Kiwanis week declared and to fly our flag at City Hall," adds Heather Herman. A delegation

will appear before council soon with their request.

The Kiwanis Club of Stratford is completely volunteer based and is dedicated to doing work in the community that benefits children. The results of their efforts over the decades can be found throughout the city. Their signature project is the Kiwanis Festival of the Performing Arts. In the summer they fund Concerts in the Park on Sunday evenings in the Kiwanis Bandshell at Upper Queen's Park.

They also present the annual Garlic Festival, jointly produce the Passport To Savings Booklet containing thousands of dollars in savings, and the annual Christmas Basket Campaign and Delivery are all just some of the projects the Kiwanis Club of Stratford that give back to the community. Parks and playgrounds alike have benefitted from the generosity of the Club.

Studies show that volunteering with service clubs like the Kiwanis Club promotes improved mental health, enhances social networking, contributes to higher self-esteem, self-worth and life satisfaction. Volunteers develop life skills and leadership qualities that can lead to employment opportunities.

Those interested in volunteering with the Kiwanis Club are encouraged to send a request through the Contact Us Page of their website Kiwanisclubstratford.com The Club meets weekly on Monday nights at the Army Navy Air Force Hall on Lorne Avenue.

(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

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L'Arche Stratford's 50 years of connecting hearts and changing lives receives huge boost

LISA CHESTER

Stratford Times Correspondent

It was 1973 when founder Marjorie Pickersgill invited the first core members into the new community of people with and without intellectual disabilities. They share activities and make a life together, rather than live on the margins of society to experience loneliness and isolation.

"L'Arche currently has 34 core members, of which many live in group homes with assistants to support them, said Elaine Clark-Siberry, board chair and campaign chair. "There are also a large number in independent living situations, for example, in an apartment, where maybe they live alone, or two or three together. We have 24 of those. We also support a number of folks that use our day activities as well."

Some of the activities available include art, music, strolls along the walking track, and bowling. Hockey games are a big hit for them too. Many have jobs, in restaurants or delivering newspapers, as there are a wide range of abilities.

"Someone said L'Arche is a place for great friendships to happen, and I think that sums us up beautifully. Our values are all about friendship and creating a sense of belonging for everyone," said Clark-Siberry.

L'Arche has much to celebrate. Not only is it their 50th anniversary, their capital

campaign also received a huge boost of a matching donation up to \$1 million dollars. By the end of this year, the \$5 million 'Be Belong Become!' capital campaign could reach approximately 70% of their fundraising target.

The campaign is in support of a new purpose-built facility at 426 Britannia which will include space for housing, administrative offices, gatherings, and activities. The space on Britannia was originally purchased with the intent to renovate, however, the pandemic meant L'Arche's main focus was on the health and wellbeing of core members.

"It's three stories, around 20,000 square feet, and the top level was to be converted into six suites. The middle level was to be administrative offices and a lovely large art studio. The lower level was going to be community gathering space. So, obviously the pandemic had a big impact on us and in 2022 we struck a task force," said Clark-Siberry.

As many charities experienced, fundraising took a hit and the cost of supplies for the renovation skyrocketed. The task force took a look at the ongoing feasibility of the project and it was determined that given the age of the building there was too much risk involved.

After going back to the drawing board, the architect, GB Architect Inc. and project manager Feltz Design Build drew up

concept drawings and cost estimates for a new one-story purpose-built building.

"This increases living suites from six to eight which is wonderful, and we can still have our administrative offices and activity space all on one story, so everything will be accessible. We won't have the cost of maintaining an elevator and we can make it more environmentally responsible," said Clark Siberry.

The next step will be to demolish the original building and to begin the new build which they hope will happen this year. Fundraising has really been picking up with over \$250,000 generated since the beginning of the year; an amount which doesn't include the matching donation.

A day of celebration of the 50th anniversary will be held in market square on June 3rd. The public festival will include crafts, music by DJ Andy Van Sheik, an aerial performance on high-wire, a drumming circle and of course, Simple Dreams will be there with their ice cream.

The community is challenged to support the capital campaign with donations. Donors with a minimum donation of \$5000 for 2023 will receive a number of benefits which include recognition on social media, invitations to 50th anniversary celebrations, your logo or name displayed at each L'Arche 50th anniversary event and others.

Other opportunities to help raise money

include the annual golf tournament held on August 9th at the Stratford Country Club. There will be an after event to be held at Martin Ritsma's barn where everyone is welcome, not just golfers.

"Martin has been a tremendous supporter of L'Arche even before he became mayor," said Clark-Siberry.

There is also the Walk and Roll in October where pledges are made for those that walk around the lake.

The need for communities like L'Arche have grown. In 2021/22, the percentage of request for support for people with intellectual disabilities that could be met is only three per cent.

"There were 486 requests for residential support, and only 11 of those could be matched. So the need is substantial. I know we can't satisfy all the needs, but we will be able to increase our support. We are looking at six new core members and increasing our housing by thirty-three per cent. Day program services we are looking at going from nine to forty-six individuals. There is a tremendous need for respite in the community."

Be prepared to see more of L'Arche ambassadors in and around Stratford this year, as there is much to celebrate and much more work to do. The community also is always ready to accept new volunteers to assist with activities and outings, a rewarding and fun way to connect.

Provocation Ideas Festival makes Stratford debut with June events

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

A Toronto-based festival will bring more events to Stratford to enhance its already vibrant arts and culture scene.

The Provocation Ideas Festival will bring a pilot phase of events to Stratford. While most events will take place in November 2023, there will be some events this coming June.

There will be a book reading and signing of UK-based journalist Anna Lekas Miller's "Love Across Borders" at Fanfare Books on June 14 from 2 to 3 p.m. The book, which comes out on June 6, chronicles the struggles with immigration services that couples face. Lekas Miller has been through it herself in Turkey with Syrian journalist and her husband Salem Rizk.

"[She] is talking about and has written about something extremely topical in terms of refugees and their challenges in settling, and moreover refugee couples and how they face all the barriers to both come together as well as settle in a country that provides them with security," Mark Rosenfeld, founder of the Provocation Ideas Festival, said.

There will also be a Love Across Borders fundraiser at Avondale United Church on June 14 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Proceeds will go towards Stratford Hope, an organization that will help a refugee family settling in Stratford.

There will also be the first Jane Jacobs Walk in Stratford called "Is Stratford a Healthy City?" on June 17, starting at the Stratford Public Library at 9:30 a.m. and ending at the Bru Garden. The Stratford

events page on the Provocation Ideas website said United Way Huron-Perth executive director Ryan Erb, Stratford Pride Community Centre Chair Bruce Skeaff, former city councillor Kathy Vassilakos, and environmental activist Sammie Orr will host discussions throughout the walk.

"It's an opportunity, especially for people that live in Stratford, to go and visit different areas of the city and talk about affordable housing and diversity, equity, and inclusion, about transportation and innovations of transportation, the environment," Rosenfeld said.

The Provocation Ideas Festival will host more events in November under the theme of Promise and Perils of Technology, which will include a panel discussion and design camp run by the University of Waterloo's School of Interaction Design and Business.

Rosenfeld moved to Stratford in June 2022, which was one of the reasons why the city was picked for a pilot project for the Provocation Ideas Festival. Several were interested in the festival's events, especially during the off-season for the Stratford Festival in the late fall. With Stratford's already rich arts and culture scene, Rosenfeld said that the festival will fit right in.

"Because the purpose of the festival is to draw on the arts, to see the diversity of the arts, whether it's music, film, performance, theatre, discussion, there is a rich community out there that we hope to engage with and will engage with," he said.

All of the Provocation Ideas Festival events, including the Love Across Borders events and Jane's Walk, are free to attend. More information can be found via provocation.ca/2023-events-stratford.

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Letters to the Editor

The Best Bargain in Town!

45 dollars doesn't buy a lot these days. Maybe a half a tank of gas, a few groceries, a few fast-food meals, 4 packs of smokes and I have never actually bought a case of beer in my life but if I should want to it would apparently cost around forty dollars.

Recently, I discovered the deal of a lifetime. A few weeks ago, my dear friend was very unwell. It was in the middle of the night he was in poor shape, and I was alone and really scared. I called an ambulance. It was stressful, I was running between checking on my friend and going to the door to see if the ambulance had arrived. When I saw it pull up, I started to cry with relief, I was never so glad to see anyone. Two young men got out and I led them to my friend. They were

so kind and patient with us both. Not to mention they saved his life. At that point when our loved ones are in danger, we would pay anything in order to help them. Yesterday a bill for the ambulance came in the mail \$45. All that help for a measly forty-five dollars. I can't think of a better deal.

I am sure that was relatively easy call that night for those two ambulance attendants but for us it was life or death. Our health care system may be flawed and cracked but credit due where credit is due ... We still have it pretty darn good.

I hope those two guys read this and know how much I thank them.

April Taylor
Stratford

Sophia Cyr-Smith spreads Autism Awareness with fundraisers

LISA CHESTER

Stratford Times Correspondent

Autism is a disorder that affects many families. From the Autism Ontario website, “it is a lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder that affects the way a person communicates and relates to the world around them. It affects body language and posture, social interactions and relationships, how you engage with your interests, and sensory processing capacity.”

One young lady living with autism is twelve year old Sophia Cyr-Smith. She has made it her goal in life to spread awareness and kindness in support of Autism.

“I was inspired because I love to spread kindness, and I was born with autism,” shared Sophia. “There’s some good parts, but also some bad parts to it. The good is that I’m unique and I’m special. Some of the bad things is when I was younger, people didn’t always accept me into things. I would get kicked out of fun things because they didn’t know how to handle me.”

That’s why she is spreading awareness, kindness and acceptance for others that too were born with Autism.

“We’re trying to find a way that every-



A SWEET FUNDRAISER

Sophia and her mom, Angel Howard waiting on a customer with a sweet tooth.

(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

one will be allowed to do things, and be allowed to participate in things,” said Sophia.

This is her fourth time fundraising on her own. Since 2020, she has raised over \$2,000 for the Huron Perth Autism Chapter selling Crunch Pops.

“A crunch pop is a delicious rice crispy square on a stick, covered in gourmet chocolate and covered in gourmet toppings. We worked super hard to make them, sometimes we had to stay up till midnight,” said Sophia.

Together with her Mom, Angel Howard, Sophia made 450 crunch pops for the Mother’s Day Shopping Event and Autism Fundraiser held April 22nd at Stratford Secondary School. They didn’t sell out, as much as Sophia was hoping to, but business was brisk. Flavours of Crunch Pops include: worms and dirt, rocky road, red velvet, death by chocolate, deluxe classic sprinkle, chickadee, and sunny with chance of rain.

For those that missed the fundraiser, but still want to donate, e-transfers can be made to the email address sofiacyrsmith@gmail.com in support of the local Huron Perth Autism Chapter.

2023 Business Excellence Award Recipients

The Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce presented their 2023 Business Excellence Awards at a Gala at The Best Western Plus Arden Park Hotel on Thursday, May 4th. With a sold-out audience of close to 400 in attendance, the event celebrated the success of businesses in Stratford, St Marys, Mitchell and area over the past year in nine categories. Judged by a panel of seven judges, chaired by Krista Robinson (CEO Stratford Public Library) the awards are in their 27th year and reflected a history of business growth, commitment to professional excellence, innovation and community engagement.

The Judging Committee also included Dennis Goforth, (GoTech Networking Solutions) Lesley Spencer-Cooper, (Malt Staging) Heidi Rolleman (The Barkery) Bill Boon (Aisin Canada) Pam Angus (The UPS Store) Johan Bossers (A Touch of Dutch Landscaping)

Eddie Matthews, General Manager of the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce said, “It’s an evening to celebrate all area businesses and to recognize those who were nominated in the various categories.”

Shelly Windsor & Franklin Famme acted as emcees for the evening and set the tone for the evening with humour and grace.

Award Winners

The Business Leader Award went to **Don McDougall**. The award was presented by Danielle Walker (RBC).

The Hospitality Award is presented to an accommodation and/or food business which has demonstrated exceptional commitment to customer service, staff knowledge, quality and consistency of

product and enhancing the public stature of the community. This year’s winner was Demetre’s Family Eatery. The award was given by Laurie Stephens (MTE)

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. The award was presented to **Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth** and was presented by Amber Schalk (BDO)

The Entrepreneur Award is chosen to honour an emerging business which has been exceptionally entrepreneurial in exploring opportunities, weighing risks, growing their operations and demonstrating both business achievement and steady financial performance. Travis Blum (IG Wealth Management) presented the award to **Black Creek Mobile Veterinary Services**.

The Commercial Award recognizes a business which provided services and/or products to individuals or businesses and which consistently has delivered excellence in service and support of their product or service. **Jeff Stewart General Carpentry** was presented with the award by Darren Johnston (TD Commercial Banking)

The Innovation Award is presented to a business which has invented or developed an innovative product or process resulting in measurable and substantial increases in one or more areas – revenue, productivity, job creation, reduction in costs, and improvements in service – of products, management, manufacturing, customer service or technology. This year’s award was presented to **Strat-**

ford Perth Museum by Jessica Thompson (University of Waterloo - Stratford School of interaction Design and Business)

The Manufacturing Award is chosen to recognize a manufacturer who has shown strong sales performance, taken advantage of growth opportunities, manufacturing or product innovation, and invested in new marketing initiatives. The award was presented to **Lactalis** by Lynn Eidt (Famme & Co)

The Service Award is given to a business who has demonstrated a continuing commitment to best practices in customer service and support. **Humphrey Fleet Service** received this year’s award from Mitchell Sullivan (BMO Bank of Montreal)

The Professional Award goes to a professional practice which demonstrates best practices in all areas of their operation to ensure maximization of their capabilities and capacity through ongoing education, accreditation of employees and enhanced workplace opportunities. The award went to **Grit Engineering** and was presented by Jason Nevin (UPAuto)

The Retail Award is given to a retailer who has exhibited marketing and sales innovation, customer service excellence, and employee engagement. This year’s winner was **Wild Hog Country Market**. The award was presented by Meredith Forget (Perth County)

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. This year’s winner was **Humphrey Fleet Service**. The award was presented by Joani Gerber (InvestStratford).

The Chamber thanks the Presenting Partner of the Gala, RBC Royal Bank, the Platinum Partner – investStratford, and the Municipal, Reception, Sweet Treat, Prize, Red Carpet and IT Partners as well as the Gold, Silver and in-kind Partners for their commitment to acknowledging business excellence in their community through the 2023 Awards Gala.

The Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce congratulates all the nominees and winners for their business success and the recognition by their peers of the contribution that these businesses make to our communities.

See pictures on page 22.

LOVE
ACROSS
BORDERS

June 14 2023
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Avondale United Church
194 Avondale Ave,
Stratford

Author Anna Lekas Miller will read from her new book, *Love Across Borders*, and speak with former CBC As It Happens Radio Host Barbara Budd about the hardships of forced migration that countless couples face to be together. All proceeds go to Stratford Hope to support a refugee family. Pay What You Can.

Register at: provocation.ca/2023-events-stratford

The Empty Your Backpack tour makes its way to Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

Sam Demma, a Canadian-based motivational speaker and writer, was welcomed by the students and staff at St. Mike's Catholic School for his cross-country tour speaking tour on anti-bullying, kindness, and mental health.

The "Empty your Backpack" Tour seeks to improve the lives of millions of students across Canada and positively impact their mental health and wellness.

Demma has been featured on Breakfast Television, Your Morning, CTV News, City News, and numerous podcast platforms across Canada. He openly talks about his history of anxiety and feelings of depression throughout his high school journey, which makes him very relatable

to the teens he speaks to.

The Empty Your Backpack tour is Demma's first cross-country tour, where Demma discusses topics related to mental health and wellness, anti-bullying, and kindness.

The tour includes 82 presentations across Canadian high schools. It promotes the release of his best-selling motivational book with the same name, Empty Your Backpack, Unpack Your Beliefs, Take Consistent Action, and Create a Life of Meaning.

Accompanying Demma is a professional team of dedicated social media and recording experts that will be putting together a documentary of the Canadian tour to help promote the importance of mental health throughout Canada and into the USA.

Students at St. Mike's had the plea-



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

RELATABLE DISCUSSION

Sam Demma speaking to St. Mike's students during his cross-country tour.

sure of hearing Demma's personal story on resilience after an injury changed his dreams of becoming a professional soccer player. "It was very interesting and very funny; I really enjoyed how he spoke to our age group," states Jade Fritch, St. Mike's student.

Another student was inspired by Demma and said in an email, "My main takeaway was about goal setting. I found your passion for working toward your goals so inspiring".

Demma's own future goals include speaking across the USA, and he's anticipating the release of a new children's book on Kindness called "Be Someone's Taco."

The group has partnered with jack.org,

one of Canada's leading mental health charities; ten percent of the proceeds from the organized tour will be donated to them. The charity focuses on providing accessible mental health support for teens and young adults across Canada.

Demma has motivated teens across Canada with his enthusiasm for professional speaking and commitment to helping them understand they're not alone on their health and wellness journey to becoming their best versions of themselves through consistent action.

If you're interested in learning more, you can pick up Demma's best-selling self-help book on his personal journey at most retailers, and you can follow him on social media @sam_demma



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

STRATFORD HOSPITAL CANCER MONTH DONATION

On April 20th, the Kinsmen Club of Stratford, keeping in mind its motto of "Serving the communities greatest need", dropped by the Stratford General Hospital to give a \$1,000 boost to the "In Our Hands" Capital Campaign and especially the Chemo/Pharmacy renovations.

Pictured (L to R) are Kin President Trevor Exner, SGH Foundation Executive Director Andrea Page, HPHA President & CEO Andrew Williams, and Kin member Doug Young. At the time of the presentation, the \$30 million campaign launched in June 2022 was already 80% towards meeting its goal.



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Food insecurities issues a product of rising costs

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

A single person living on either OW or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) would be in debt after housing and food costs, with a person on OW with -\$265 remaining and -\$355 remaining for someone on ODSP.

The United Way Perth-Huron's Food Survey revealed that 33 per cent of survey respondents face food insecurity on either a moderate or severe level. In addition, 62 per cent of those facing food insecurity are in full-time employment and only three per cent felt their income met their basic needs.

The majority of survey respondents, at 88 per cent, cut back on their food budget to meet other expenses, the largest expense being rent and mortgage costs. There were 19 per cent of people who went an entire day without food every month, and three per cent had children who went an entire day without food due to food insecurity.

Kristin Crane, the director of the social research and planning committee with United Way Perth-Huron, said the results from the Food Survey shows that food insecurity is a sign of having a low-income.

"When you don't have that sufficient income, then what you're sacrificing is food and the result is food insecurity because there's just not enough income to cover the daily basic necessities," Crane said. "This really proved that for us at a local level and it also showed that wages in our region are just not sufficient to cover basic necessities and ties into what Public Health advocates for, United Way advocates for, and many anti-poverty groups and coalitions is wages do need to be

higher."

The percentage of Huron-Perth residents facing food insecurity is increasing. The Canadian Community Health Survey said 11 per cent of residents were food insecure in 2017 to 2018. Meanwhile, the Canadian Income Survey revealed 14.6 per cent of Huron-Perth residents were food insecure in 2022.

Cunningham pointed to research from University of Toronto's PROOF outlining the physical and mental health impacts of food insecurity. Food insecurity leads to several physical health issues such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease, as well as mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

Food insecurity also results in attention and hyperactivity issues in children, which in turn affects their schoolwork. Adolescents also experience increased depression and suicidal thoughts as a result of child hunger.

Other health implications include being more vulnerable to poor oral hygiene, infections, chronic pain, injury, and back issues.

"When we think about who is actually at risk of food-insecurity, it is low income folks and so we know low-income folks are experiencing all these things, not just those that are facing food insecurity," Cunningham said.

At the City Council presentation and in the May 3 interview with the Stratford Times, Cunningham said 50 per cent of adults are forgoing, delaying, or skipping prescription medications because they cannot afford it with the combined cost of food. She also pointed to research indicating adults facing food insecurity die

nine years earlier than their food-secure counterparts.

Crane said that while there was a percentage of respondents whose children went hungry, it is more the case that the adults go hungry so the children can eat. Still, the number of children attending school hungry is concerning. While breakfast programs at school help, they don't resolve the issue.

"You can't guarantee that those children made it to school that day, the day that there was no food because they may begin to feel those effects and the energy level and the mental focus isn't there," she said. "So it would be better to stay at home rather than to go to school if you are experiencing that today and there wasn't enough food for your family."

Around half of the respondents of the United Way Perth-Huron food survey said that they never used a food bank. Cunningham said there are more people who face food insecurity than there are those who are accessing food charity programs such as food drives and food banks.

Those facing food insecurity are more likely to ask for assistance from family or friends, or sacrifice other expenses. Food charities are seen as a last resort, and don't always provide what people want such as fresh produce and meats due to the lack of refrigeration available. The fresh meat and produce items are also the most expensive at the grocery store.

"We know through so much research that food insecurity is due to financial constraints. It's not due to the price of food," Cunningham said. "It's due to not having the income to buy the food at the price that they are

priced at and so, giving people food is not solving food insecurity because food insecurity is not a food issue. It is an income issue."

The United Way Perth-Huron works with the United Ways of Canada to address the issues on a national level. They also work with organizations like the Ontario Nonprofit network and the Tamarac Institution to share anti-poverty initiatives.

Crane encourages Huron-Perth residents to advocate by writing letters to local MPs and MPPs as well as having discussions at local libraries and anywhere they can about why addressing food insecurity is important.

"As soon as people start talking about them, decision makers or people with influence also take note and listen and start thinking 'OK, what is our community-wide strategy?' and it does have to start somewhere."

The HPPH works with organizations such as Poverty to Prosperity to address food insecurity. The health unit also does upstream advocacy by researching food insecurity and presenting it to various levels of government, for instance calculating the cost of groceries based on the lowest available food and calculating how much that would be per year. While HPPH does not provide services directly related to food insecurity, they will point to services such as 211.

Stratford City Council approved the letter to be sent to the Ontario government regarding increasing social assistance rates to address food insecurity unanimously. The letters addressing the need for Universal Basic Income to the Ontario government and Federal Government were defeated.

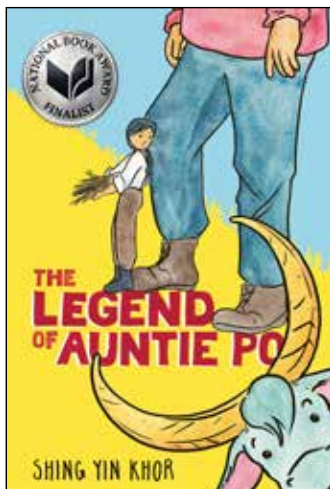
Queer Book of the Month Club

The Legend of Auntie Po, by Shing Yin Khor
@SPL: JGN FIC Khor

Set in an 1885 Sierra Nevada logging camp, *The Legend of Auntie Po* follows the adventures of expert pie-maker and storyteller, Mei. Mei's stories are always the best, because they star her Auntie Po – a ginormous Chinese matriarch who can cut down more trees than Paul Bunyan, and Po's companion, Pei Pei – an equally massive, baby-blue, sweetheart of a water buffalo.

Mei is the beloved daughter of the logging camp's cook, Mister Hao, the best cook in the mountains. But no amount of incredible food and tall stories can conceal the dark and brewing undertone of anti-Chinese and anti-immigrant racism ingrained in the American logging industry. Taking place three years after the passing of the Chinese Exclusion

Act, Mei looks to the legend and ancestor of her own creation for guidance to uplift her community as it weathers a storm of racist threats and hate crimes.



A finalist for the National Book Award, *The Legend of Auntie Po* is a graphic novel for ages 10 and up, elegantly illustrated with watercolor drawings. Though technically historical fiction, Mei's spunky attitude, wise leadership, and gigantic crush on the foreman's daughter can be appreciated by young readers across genre preferences. For lovers of the cozy, queer, and outdoorsy adventures of *Lumberjanes*, or the historical and rugged Chinese-American tale of *Prairie Lotus*, check out Shing Yin Khor's *The Adventures of Auntie Po*.

Emma Brommer
Public Service Librarian
Stratford Public Library

Weekend Quiz

- 1) The U.S. actress Kate Hudson is the daughter of which famous mother?
- 2) Mother Theresa found her missionary in which Indian city?
- 3) Who is called the Mother of Modern Physics?
- 4) What flower is associated with Mother's Day?
- 5) Mother's Ruin is the other name of which alcoholic drink?
- 6) Who is the mother of Prince William and Prince Harry?
- 7) "Mamma Mia" is a hit by which pop group?
- 8) In 1972, who had a hit with "Sylvia's Mother"?
- 9) What was Pebble's mother's name in the Flintstones?
- 10) Who recorded the hit single "Mother and Child Reunion"?

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

LOCAL MATTERS.



Remember that time when **Amazon** sponsored your church fundraiser?



Remember when **Facebook** bought a case of Girl Guide cookies to support your daughter?



Remember when **Google** provided free pizza to your child's soccer team when they won the championship?

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Park Hunger with Parkview United Church's second annual food drive for House of Blessing

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

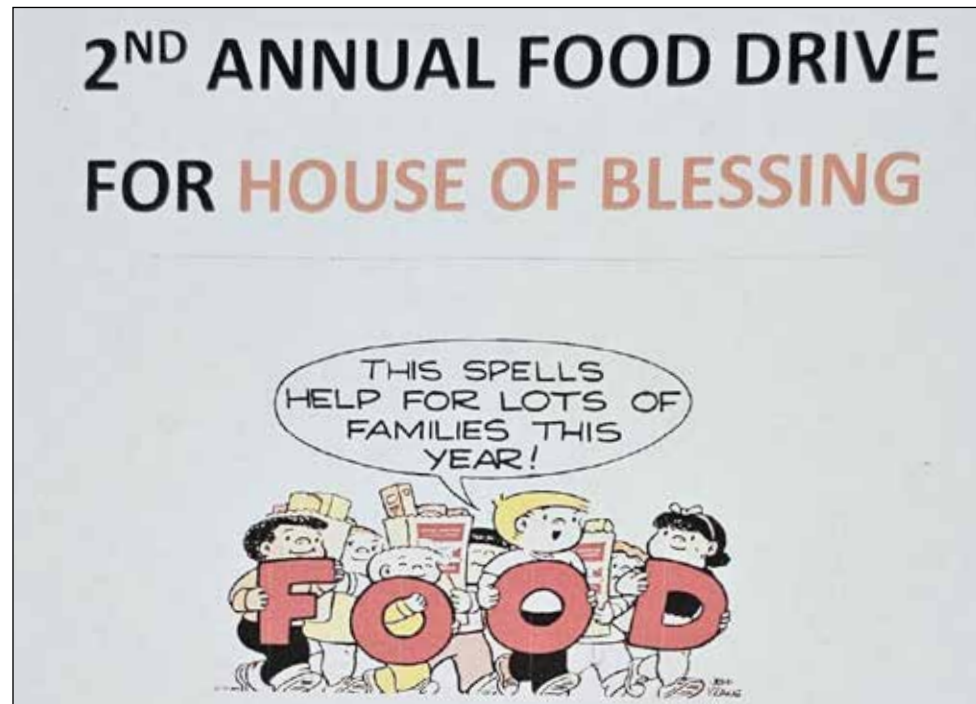
After the success of the inaugural food drive for the Stratford House of Blessing last year, Parkview United Church's Outreach Committee is busy planning for a second food drive on June 10th and 11th.

A spring food drive was inspired by the tremendous need experienced over the summer months.

"We talked about doing this as a Church but we didn't know when so I contacted House of Blessing to see when are your needs and what are your needs. Unbeknownst to us, one of the highest need times is in that June, July time period. The reason being, people are getting ready to finish school and go on holidays," said Richard Cook, co-chair of the Outreach Committee.

The timing of the weekend was meant not to interfere with Father's Day weekend, but to be inspired by the day. The food drive last year went very well. They raised over seven hundred pounds of food and over \$700 in cash donations.

"It was beyond our expectations, though we didn't know really what to expect. It was very well received and everything



went well. We had a full truck of food and a full envelope of cash to take over on the following Monday," said Cook.

This year, the need is said to be even greater and Parkview is hoping to increase the amount of donations. It is not just a

Church event, it is a community wide food drive and event.

"This year, we've added a couple things. One of the big things is House of Blessing now has enough refrigerator and freezer space that they can now take produce and frozen foods. We can't take it at the food drive because we don't have the facility, but those donations can be taken directly to the House of Blessing during regular business hours and tell them it's part of the Parkview Food Drive," said Cook.

As well, to instill the family event atmosphere, and to get the younger ones out and participating, on Saturday there will be hotdogs, freezies and pop available by donation. The radio station CJCS will be on-site broadcasting live on Saturday.

There are always lessons to be learned when planning an event. Last year one

of the big things they discovered had the biggest impact in getting the word out was print media. Last year much of their publicity was through a poster campaign on community mailboxes, word of mouth, and print media.

The food drive will be run much the same as last year. Volunteers will be on hand to help unload, you can simply pop your trunk or arrive on foot to place in the bin. It is located at Parkview United Church at 470 Ontario St from 8:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Saturday the 10th and from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. on Sunday the 11th of June.

Cash donations again are eligible for a tax receipt from the House of Blessing. In order to get a receipt, donors will need to provide their name, address, phone number and the dollar amount with their donation.

"If it's a nice day and you want to come and stand around for a visit and have a hot dog and contribute to our food drive then come on down," said Cook.

For those that are unable to make it to Parkview on Saturday or Sunday, they can contact the Church ahead of the planned weekend to make arrangements for pickup by volunteers on Friday June 9th from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm. Pickups are restricted to those within the city limits of Stratford.

"Most in need are dry goods; feminine products are very much in need, toilet paper, canned goods are always in need; Peanut Butter is a big one. The House of Blessing estimates that in 2022, the estimated value of the goods they share is well over \$900,000 and the need is substantially growing this year," emphasized Cook.

For further information, the public is encouraged to contact Richard Cook at 519-504-0494.

BOOKKEEPER/ACCOUNTING CLERK

We are a mid-sized, well established general contractor/construction company looking to hire an Bookkeeper/Accounting Clerk that is a detail-oriented, an enthusiastic individual to help us manage our books. Responsibilities include: data entry, MS Office (Word/Excel-intermediate/advanced) required, you will be the first point of contact, assist in all accounting functions.

Our company is fast-paced, yet a comfortable family-style environment. This position will be in office, remote working when weather or other circumstances arise that a remote day may be needed. If you are a confident multi-tasker who thrives in a fast-paced, growth-focused environment, then this job would be a good fit for you.

Accuracy, confidentiality, and excellent organizational skills are essential qualifications for this position. The successful candidate will excel at customer relations and be able to communicate clearly with the team and customers.

Responsibilities

- Provide accounting/bookkeeping functions/services with accounting department
- Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable (invoicing and collection)
- Posting and entering data accurately
- Prepare and maintain accounting documents and records
- Prepare bank deposits, general ledger postings, statements and bank reconciliation
- Reconcile accounts in a timely manner
- Daily posting of key data of financial transactions in database
- Provide assistance and support to company personnel
- Reconcile/validate, track and restore accounting or documentation problems and discrepancies
- Inform management and compile reports/summaries on activity in all areas of accounting
- Other administration tasks that will arise from time to time/reception
- Regularly update job-related knowledge

Requirements

- Proven accounting experience, preferably as an Accounts Receivable or Accounts Payable/bookkeeper position
- Familiarity with bookkeeping and GAAP accounting principles/procedures
- Competency in MS Office, databases and JONAS
- Hands-on experience with spreadsheets (intermediate/advanced)
- Accuracy and attention to detail
- Possess analytical thinking/skills
- Ability to perform filing and record keeping tasks
- Data entry and word processing skills, well versed in English language (written/verbal)
- Well organized and fast learner

Qualifications:

- Post-secondary degree/diploma, accounting or adjacent field
- 3 years of experience is preferred, general contracting experience is a definite asset
- Knowledge of construction management software (Jonas) is an asset or equivalent
- Strong organizational, analytical, interpersonal, and communication skills (written & verbal)
- Ability to work independently
- Intermediate/advanced Excel experience (Adobe, Microsoft Outlook, Word/Excel experience)

Please send your resume to employment@nithvalley.com

We would like to thank all applicants for their interest; however, we will contact the most qualified applicants only.



KIN CHALLENGE FOR CANCER SUPPORT

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Kinsmen Club of Stratford stopped in April 20th to give the group a cheque for \$1,000 in support of their programs. Pictured (L to R) are Kin President Trevor Exner, Bonnie Hueston (15 yr volunteer), Carole Normand (9 yr volunteer) Lisa Stacey, Wellspring Manager and Kin Doug Young. Located at 55 Lorne St, Wellspring offers programs and services ranging from Educational, Emotional Wellness, Chronic and Oasis to family programs at no charge for those experiencing cancers, caregivers and loved ones. These programs and services offered by Wellspring are funded solely through the generosity of individuals, foundation and organizations in the community. With that in mind the Kinsmen Club of Stratford are challenging you to bring your returnable Beer, Liquor & Wine bottles or cans to its spring "Drive through Bottle Drive" from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday May 27th at the Zehrs Parking Lot beside the Gas Bar. Or if you have 5 cases or more just call Kin Hal @519-271-1713 for Free Pick Up Service. Let's see if we can match the \$1,000 donation.

Canada Day Parade and Market Square Celebration

As part of this year's planned Canada Day festivities, the City of Stratford will host a celebration in Market Square on July 1 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This event will bring the community together for fun, family-friendly programming that will include entertainment, activities and food trucks.

Organizers are now taking applications for food vendors to participate in the event. The deadline to apply is Friday, May 12.

Applications are also being accepted now for the Canada Day parade being organized by the Stratford and District Saddle Club and Bethel Pentecostal Church.

This year's parade is scheduled to kick off at 6 p.m. from the corner of Lakeside Drive and Waterloo Street moving north-east from Waterloo Street to Mornington Street, heading west on McCarthy Road West and finishing at the Rotary Complex.

Fifty floats are expected to participate, and float registration is now open. The deadline to register is Friday, June 23 at 4

p.m. For more information about Canada Day, and to apply online to be a food vendor in the Market Square celebration or to register a parade float, please visit www.stratford.ca/canadaday



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

TREE PLANTING TEAM

On Tuesday, May 2nd Aisin Canada Inc. (ACI) team members, along with The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Mayor Ritsma, and grade 9 students from the Stratford District High School, planted 68 Eastern Red Cedars along ACI property grounds to continue the work of putting things back into the environment and sustaining the company's commitment to its core principle of Harmony with Nature.



Stratford Farmers' Market - one of the longest running farmers markets in Ontario

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Farmers' Market is one of the oldest farmers' markets in Ontario. The Stratford and District Agricultural Society is excited about the incoming warmer weather because that means a return to summer for vendors and visitors at the weekly destination at the Rotary Complex in Stratford.

Farm vendors from Perth County and beyond sell a variety of their products

indoors over the winter, but the addition of the summer vendors certainly adds to the excitement of buying fresh fruit and vegetables along with meat products and fresh baking.

The market also offers visitors a selection of pizza, popcorn, and homemade wood and knitted products.

Tavistock's Heidi Danen, who is also an Agricultural Society director, manages the busy market and says "there's something for everyone at the Stratford Farmers' Market, open 7 a.m. to noon every Saturday" all year round.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

SHOP THE MARKET

Stratford Farmers' Market manager Heidi Danen and treasurer Ruth Moore are pictured above with Orval and Jordan Zehr, who sell their farm's fresh graded eggs and produce every week at the market.

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Rose McQueen left a lasting impact on Stratford

BETTY JO BELTON

Stratford-Perth Archives

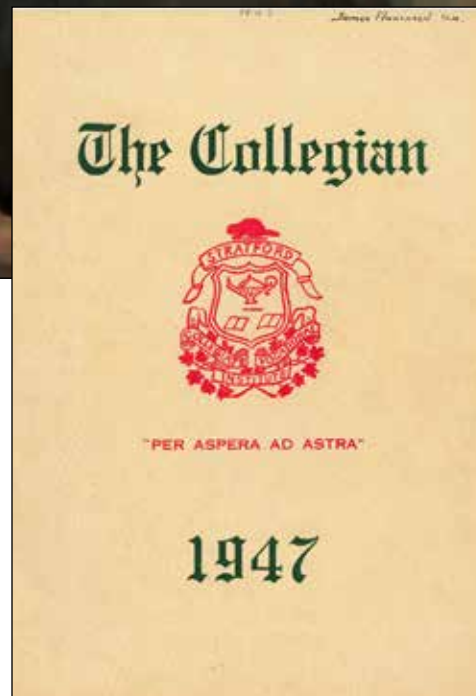
Rose McQueen (1881-1963) arrived in Stratford in 1912 to teach English and History at the Stratford Collegiate Vocational Institute – later Stratford Central Secondary School. She had a new honours degree in both subjects from the University of Toronto. When she retired in June 1947, students wrote a tribute to her in the year book describing themselves as being “privileged to attend her classes” and asserting that “much of the high reputation for scholarship which this school gained and maintained was due to Miss McQueen...In addition to giving her pupils the information necessary for them to do well at examinations, she developed in them the tastes, the attitudes, and the character which are the marks of true education.” The class of 1947 may not have realized that it was in one of Miss McQueen’s classes that the tradition of publishing the Collegian yearbook got started in 1918.

It was as the first president of the Stratford chapter of the Women’s Canadian Club in 1920 that Rose McQueen introduced famous British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst to give a very well-received speech called *The Woman Voter versus Bolshevism and Class War*. Emmeline Pankhurst formed the Women’s Franchise League in Britain in 1889 with her barrister husband Richard, with the aim of procuring the vote for women in local elections. She was eventually involved in or led a few organizations with the goal of winning the right to vote for women in Britain. In the years leading up to the first world war, Pankhurst and others were involved in acts of civil disobedience and hunger strikes when jailed – all in the name of the cause. You can see some of these events portrayed in the 2015 film *Suffragette* starring Meryl Streep as Pankhurst. Time named her one of the 100 Most Important People



of the Twentieth Century, stating that “she shaped an idea of women for our time; she shook society into a new pattern from which there could be no going back.” British women over the age of 30 won the right to vote in 1918. Later in life, Pankhurst became concerned about Bolshevism and joined the Conservative party. She travelled around England and North America for years warning audiences. Hence the topic of her talk for the Stratford Women’s Club.

Canadian artist Bruce Stapleton (1910-1981) was commissioned to paint McQueen’s portrait to hang at Central after her retirement. He was born here and attended Stratford Collegiate. His par-



ents were Archie and Helen Stapleton of Cambria Street. He moved to Toronto to study at the Ontario College of Arts

in his late teens. In 1938 Stapleton married Isobel Orr, daughter of R. Thomas Orr. They moved their family to Vancouver, British Columbia in the 1950s. He gained fame as an artist through his many portrait paintings and considered his portrait of his father-in-law, R. Thomas Orr, to be one of his finest. It was exhibited throughout Canada and the United States. Other local subjects include the portrait of Rose McQueen that hung at Stratford Central for many years and is now at Stratford-Perth Archives. It was last on display in 2018 as part of our Equal Time: Noted and Notorious Women of Perth County exhibit celebrating the 100th anniversary of women’s right to vote being recognized by the Canadian federal government.

Former students continued to visit Miss McQueen for the rest of her life at her home at 42 Waterloo Street south (now renovated as a law office). Some even relied on her for financial help during their own university programmes. She remained active in the community through her involvement with the United Church Women at St. John’s church, the University Women’s Club and the Stratford YWCA.

According to her obituary, Miss McQueen was also “a keen student of Shakespeare, and after the Shakespearean Festival here came into being founded by one of her former pupils, Tom Patterson, she was a regular patron as long as her health permitted.” Another former student, Dr. Ernest Stabler, later wrote a short book about her life. He described her as “a Stratford legend” who Tom Patterson credited with providing support and encouragement. “She lit the flame,” one of her students told Stabler “that started the Festival, and her spirit kept the fire going through the years.”

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

Bridging Communities: The Rural Urban Dinner

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

In an era where urban and rural communities often seem disconnected, finding opportunities to bridge the divide and foster a connection is crucial.

The Rural-Urban dinner began in 1927 when it was initially a community picnic with around 40 attendees. This year the event took place on April 13th at the Stratford Rotary Complex, where the organization hosted dinner for over 300 community members.

The community event is not looked upon as a fundraiser but rather a night of fellowship among various local Rotary clubs and agricultural/Perth County groups to socialize and come together as one.

Before the dinner, attendees had the opportunity to test local beer samples from Jobsite Brewing Company, wine provided by Pelee Island Winery, and cheese samples from The Milky Whey Fine Cheese Shop.

The master of Ceremony this year was Ken



RURAL-URBAN CONNECTION
Attendees at the 2023 Rural Urban Dinner.

(KRYSTA NESBITT PHOTO)

Nesbitt, senior financial advisor and Krysta Nesbitt, financial advisor, both of Nesbitt Financial Strategies. “It was great to see people in attendance that were farmers and people that are part of the Stratford Festival as well as people from all over the city,” Nesbitt states.

Mayor Ritsma was in attendance and noted the importance of farmers in the local community. His opening comments showed support for farmers and city dwellers and the importance of working together to help the community grow.

This year, the local actor and director Scott Wentworth was the guest speaker and discussed the evolution of the Stratford Festival and the new Tom Patterson theatre. And live music was performed by Rick Francis, a local Stratford musician.

The meal and drinks were served by a group of volunteers who dedicated countless hours toward hosting the event, “the number of people that it takes to plan and run an event like that was so fascinating and really inspiring,” states Nesbitt.

A central component of the Rural-Urban Dinner is celebrating local food and cultural heritage. Participants were treated to a delicious meal donated to the organization by 12 local restaurants, with ingredients from nearby farms and producers.

This farm-to-table experience showcased the region’s rich agricultural traditions and culinary diversity. It also fosters a sense of pride and appreciation for the local economy and highlights the importance of a sustainable food system.

The Good Road Now Forgotten

HAYDEN BULBROOK

Times Contributor

On a cool August day last Summer I took a drive west of Stratford. A brilliant turquoise cut through in slivers in the clouds easing my concern for rain. I had a destination in mind. It was a road less traveled. It was an old stretch of Highway 8 now unused and effectively severed by the closure to vehicles of the Whirl Creek Bridge. To explore its history, we must understand the context of what it meant to finally have good roads in Perth County and Ontario.

The desire for better and more logical roads predates the widespread adoption of the automobile, a movement that Henry Ford quite literally conveyed through mass production on his factory assembly lines. In 1894, the Ontario Good Roads Association was organized. Its aim was to inform the public of the important economic role that a good road system enabled and to publish information about highway construction. As with any technological breakthrough, there are winners and losers.

Closely intertwined in the Good Roads movement were agricultural interests as farmers sought more reliable transportation to bring their goods to market. Country roads had long been poorly maintained which challenged farmers' abilities to efficiently move goods across the next concession let alone the county, province, or to international markets. Conversely, merchants, livery stable owners, and innkeepers feared that the imminent prioritization to enhance some roads would come at the expense of the roads in which they were situated. If change was going to come - and it was imminent once the province recognized alongside the Good Roads proponents that good roads were economical and logical - those at risk of being sidelined had the most at stake.

By the early 20th century, the Good Roads movement had taken root. Though railway companies still laid numerous track mileage before the First World War, including electric radial lines and streetcars (which regrettably never quite mate-



The old Warren pony truss bridge across Whirl Creek.

(HAYDEN BULBROOK PHOTOS)

rialized in Stratford or Perth County), the automobile had arrived and it was about to shape a culture. In 1905, Ontario, Downie, and Brunswick streets in Stratford were paved with asphalt.

In 1907, Perth County had adopted a County Road System. By 1911, the province covered one-third of county road costs under the condition that roads were constructed in accordance with government regulations and were subject to government inspection. Between 1913 and 1918, \$366,002 was spent on roads in Perth County. Even as war raged in Europe, average annual spending on roads during the war years was \$56,949.40 or just over two-thirds of what was spent in 1913.

The Ontario government created the Department of Public Highways of Ontario (DPHO) in 1916 to oversee road transportation. The province, however, did not own any roads until 1917. The first provincially-designated stretch of highway was between Rouge River and Port Hope. The DPHO drafted preliminary route plans for Highway 8 in July 1918, though these only covered a stretch east of Hamilton toward Queenston connecting to New York State via the Queenston Heights Suspension Bridge. This crossing also made it Ontario's first international highway link.

Beginning in 1920, the province began designating stretches of road between

Goderich and Hamilton, including the familiar jaunt of the Huron Road through Clinton, Seaforth, Mitchell, and Stratford. The municipalities retained jurisdiction of the sections of road that passed through them. The province introduced a route numbering system in 1925 and the 250 km route from Goderich to Queenston was designated Provincial Highway 8, though already at that point the stretch between Stratford and Kitchener overlapped with Provincial Highway 7. In 1930, Provincial Highway 8 became known as King's Highway 8.

By 1920, Perth County had 204 miles of county roads and another 34 miles of provincially designated roads. In 1920, 2,579 passenger cars were registered in the County plus another 783 in Stratford. Those numbers increased to 2,897 and 909, respectively, the following year. Also by 1921, concrete comprised 0.5 miles of roadway, bituminous surface comprised 3.2 miles, stone comprised 9.8 miles, gravel was another 217.2 miles, and the remaining 6.1 miles were still dirt. Of the further 1,075 miles that comprised township roads, 829 miles had been gravelled.

This brings us back to the quaint and forgotten stretch of Highway 8. As Highway 8 was constructed between Mitchell and Stratford, it appears a logical course of action occurred between what is today Road 150 and Road 155. Rather than cross

times, thereby requiring three bridges, Highway 8 was diverted - or followed a pre-existing course - in a trapezoidal shape. This meant that only one bridge and one petite culvert were required. The former was the Whirl Creek Bridge that the DPHO constructed in 1921. In 1957, highway improvement projects between Sebringville and Mitchell led to the diversion of Whirl Creek effectively permitting Highway 8 to take a straight line with just one swift crossing atop a concrete bridge instead. Though this made the former Whirl Creek Bridge less important, it has effectively preserved it - for now. And while it is closed to vehicular traffic due to its mere three-tonne load capacity, it is believed to be the oldest remaining bridge built by the DPHO.

Rusted and slowly decaying year-by-year, this small 5-panel Warren Pony Truss bridge remains today as a relic of Perth County's early automobile history and, as such, is a nod to the Good Roads movement. An inscription on the northwest wingwall stating, "ONTARIO PROVINCIAL HIGHWAY 1921" displays this history and locks the bridge in time.

Though it is ingrained in us to complain about poor roads whether they are caked in snow and ice disrupting our holidays or pitted with potholes that wear out our vehicle's ball joints and tire rods, the fact remains our roads are a whole heck of a lot better than they were a century ago. To that, we owe a lot to the Good Roads movement of the early 20th century for improving the transportation routes that we today take sorely for granted.



Left, Remains of the old reflector housing on Whirl Creek Bridge now riddled with potshots. Right, "ONTARIO PROVINCIAL HIGHWAY 1921" inscription on the northwest wingwall of the Whirl Creek Bridge.



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Local Flavour

RESTAURANT GUIDE



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

The Stratford Mall Food Court has added another new tenant, as Hansik opened for business on April 5th. Hansik is a Japanese/Korean restaurant serving sushi and Korean products. Pictured above are proprietors Yongsik Kim and Hyejung Chung. Hansik is open from 11-8 Monday through Friday, 11-6 on Saturday, and 12-5 on Sundays. For more information, please visit www.hansikstratford.com.

Festival City Rotary Club BBQ

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

For the second year in a row, Stratford's Festival City Rotary Club held a very successful drive-thru Pork Chop BBQ at the Downie Optimist Hall and fed 740 hungry supporters.

Rotarian Jean Aitcheson said it was

a challenge at times - working through rain, wind, hail, and snow pellets; but the club was very happy with the outcome and thanked everyone for their support.

The money raised by the Rotarians will go toward supporting youth and local projects in Stratford and Perth County.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

FIRE UP THE GRILLS

Above, Perth County Pork Producers BBQing smoked pork chops to help fundraising efforts for the Festival City Rotary Club last week at the Downie Optimist Hall. Left, Festival City Rotarians Jean Aitcheson and Bill Helmuth welcomed drivers at their drive thru Pork Chop BBQ last week in St. Pauls.



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Luxury Birdseed Company Swooping its way into Stratford retailers this Spring

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

Flock and Ink, a luxury birdseed company founded in Stratford, is making a name for itself across Perth County and is currently being sold in boutiques in Stratford and St. Marys.

The seed is hand-mixed in small batches and packaged in creator and owner Kerry Ramsay's home with local and organic products and packaging from "as close to home as possible."

Once Ramsay's children "flew the nest," per se, Ramsay decided to begin creating her own small-batch seed blends for the birds in her family's backyard feeders.

As Ramsay began to watch and listen to which birds she would attract to her feeders, she found certain birds were attracted to certain types of fruit and seeds, which gave her the opportunity to create a line of products specifically designed for different Native Ontario birds.

This grew into something more once she started giving the birdseed out to family, friends and neighbours for Christmas gifts, "everyone loved it and tried ordering more, so I knew we had something."

The ingredients used in the bird seed are locally sourced, ranging from dried fruits, crushed almonds, sunflower hearts, Nyjer seed, raisins and even peanuts all to attract many unique Ontario birds.

Ramsay, a self-proclaimed "book nerd," pared her love of creating the seed with her love of books and created a unique line of this birdseed in which each package represents a literary journey based on



FEED THE FLOCK

Kerry Ramsay with her luxury birdseed, Flock and Ink line at Bradshaws, downtown Stratford.

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

historical novels.

Books such as *The Incredible Journey* by Shelia Burnford, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte and *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald are some of the novels represented on the delightful packaging of the birdseed products.

Each line of literary birdseed is unique to the individual store. Ramsay wanted to create a luxury product that could not be found anywhere else. Offering different lines to different locations allows the buyer to collect them all while shopping in local retailers around Stratford and St. Marys.

Ramsay has a background in teaching and is making a name for herself in many areas of entrepreneurship, including the popular podcast *PowerHER Platform*, where she interviews local Women on everything from business to finance and discusses how women can create a meaningful impact through the power of storytelling.

Ramsay notes that birdwatching is "quite enjoyable," and states, "Birdwatching encourages me to see the little things I might not have noticed. And what I've discovered is that it's the little things that matter most of all."

If you're looking for the perfect gift for a literary lover or birdwatcher and a way to support local entrepreneurship in Stratford, Flock and Ink is sure to please.

You can pick up Flock and Ink Birdseed at The Avon Theatre Store, Betty's Bookshelf (St. Marys), Bradshaws Stratford, Daisies and Doilies and Stratford Festival Theatre Shop.

Casual Cool Fashions at new Mosaic Outfitters store



GRAND OPENING AT MOSAIC OUTFITTERS

Left, Aaron and Shireen Beals, owners of the new store Mosaic Outfitters at 10 Downie St. Right, View of the inside of the store.

WENDY LAMOND

Times Correspondent

Saturday, May 6th was an exciting day for Shireen and Aaron Beals as they celebrated the grand opening of their new store, Mosaic Outfitters at 10 Downie Street.

Most of the merchandise in the store, which includes headwear, apparel, teamwear is made and designed by Shireen and Aaron themselves. The couple, who are from Toronto, were busy travelling around to markets and made the decision that they would like

to search for a commercial space. After taking a drive and ending up in Stratford, they were drawn to the liveliness and atmosphere or what Stratford has to offer and thought it would be a good fit.

The couple, who also run the Festival Square Market, will be hosting their next event on May 13th and every second Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is held inside the historical Festival Square building, admission is free and there will be 18 vendors on site.

For more information, please visit www.mosaicoutfitters.ca or follow the company on Facebook and Instagram.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTOS)

Al Fresco dining returns for fourth consecutive year with expansions into the park system

Building on the success of the 2020 Stratford Task Force Al Fresco economic recovery initiative, Destination Stratford is excited to announce the return of Stratford Al Fresco 2023.

To share our passion for good food, Stratford Al Fresco features expanded outdoor dining experiences (including paired wines, craft beers and drinks) and safe outdoor dining areas at various spots in the city. With spaces that fit over 200 people, you can dine outdoors with delicious takeout and accompanying drinks from participating Stratford restaurants. Al Fresco areas feature CRP tables (including accessible options), umbrellas, hand sanitizer stations, and waste and recycle bins.

This year, Al Fresco includes 17 tables (5 accessible) and umbrellas in Market Square, 15 tables (3 accessible) and umbrellas on Tom Patterson Island, 15 tables (2 accessible) within Memorial Gardens, and has expanded throughout the south shore of the park system from the Huron Street

Bridge right through to Upper Queens Park. Note that Stratford Al Fresco is in support of Stratford restaurants for curbside pickup or take-out only and liquor may be included subject to the requirements outlined.

Destination Stratford and Downtown Stratford BIA will be marketing Stratford Al Fresco and local restaurant picnic take-out options (including those with paired wines and beverages) as a safe activity for local residents and visitors to enjoy.

"We anticipate a busy season ahead and we're thrilled to provide residents and visitors with even more locations throughout our beautiful downtown and park system to dine Al Fresco and enjoy the incredible culinary offerings that Stratford is famous for," states Zac Gribble, Executive Director, Destination Stratford.

Restaurants are encouraged to sign up in order to be able to provide liquor with your Al Fresco takeout meals. Full Al Fresco details, dates and requirements can be found <https://visit-stratford.ca/al-fresco-dining/>

Destination Stratford launches new seasonal culinary trail to align with outdoor dining season

Picnic lovers rejoice! Destination Stratford is thrilled to announce the launch of a brand-new seasonal culinary trail that will align with the Al Fresco dining season.

Introducing the Savour & Sip Trail - a new culinary trail focused on showcasing local businesses who have carefully chosen savoury and sweet delights for trail participants to enjoy. The Savour & Sip Trail encourages Al Fresco dining this season by featuring take-out items to help create a unique Stratford dining experience through picnics, and DIY charcuterie boards to enjoy in various outdoor settings throughout the city and park system.

Trail participants will enjoy a wide variety of curated local offers such as cheese, meat, house made breads, local preserves, sandwiches, salads and an assortment of desserts and cold beverages. The products along the trail focus largely on locally made and prepared in Stratford/surrounding regions.

"We're all about encouraging visitors and residents to fully explore and celebrate the diverse and rich experiences throughout our city," said Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford. "In conjunction with our Stratford Al Fresco outdoor dining program, and building off the tremendous success of our Chocolate Trail and Bacon & Ale Trail, we are thrilled to introduce the new Savour & Sip Trail featuring over 20 locations at local restaurants, cafés and businesses."

The Savour & Sip Trail is available for sale,

starting today May 10th and will be available until October 31st, 2023; aligning with the Al Fresco dining season. This year, Stratford Al Fresco features expanded outdoor dining experiences (including paired wines, craft beers and drinks) and safe outdoor dining areas at various spots in the city. With spaces that fit over 200 people, you can dine outdoors with delicious take-out, trail items and accompanying drinks from participating Stratford restaurants.

With each trail purchase, you get to choose which six stops, out of the 24+ participating businesses, to redeem your six vouchers for a different savour and sip delight on your self-guided tour. The cost for six vouchers is \$39.55 (including HST). Savour & Sip Trails are available for purchase at Destination Stratford, 47 Downie Street; and Bradshaws, 129 Ontario Street. Vouchers do not expire and can be used over multiple days until the trail end date of October 31, 2023.

Complement your trail items with compostable cutlery sets that are available for \$2 at the Destination Stratford office. With so many locations to choose from, visitors are encouraged to plan ahead and pack their must-have picnic supplies such as blankets and baskets. As you collect items along the Trail, you'll also get to meet the local makers who craft the sweet and savoury indulgences that will create your perfect picnic experience.



We are extremely honoured to have been nominated and chosen as the winner of the Stratford Chamber of Commerce 2023 Business Excellence Award for Hospitality. A huge thank you to the person that nominated us. Thank you to our family, staff and patrons for making this award happen. Stratford is an amazing community and we are so proud to be a part of it for the last 26.5 years.

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SDSS Avocado culinary program helps raise money for refugee support

Hosted by Andrew Mavor, Madiha Hmidi, and The Avocado culinary program at Stratford District Secondary School, an enjoyable Middle Eastern meal was shared by 60 people on Thursday, April 27, 2023. Together with a Silent Auction, over \$8,000 was raised to be used by Stratford Welcomes Refugees to support sponsorship groups as they work with the Mennonite Central Committee to settle refugee families in Stratford. Since 2015 seven families have been settled. An eighth family came in late April and is being supported by a sponsorship group from Avondale United Church. The Avocado is the culinary specialist high skills major



program at Stratford District Secondary School. Teacher Andrew Mavor uses events such as this to train students on various aspects of restaurant service. With the support of Stratford Welcomes Refugees and a community-based

sponsorship group, Madiha Hmidi and her family arrived from Syria via Egypt in 2017. Her skills and experience in Middle Eastern cooking were very helpful to the students of The Avocado. Thanks to the generosity of









the community, Stratford Welcomes Refugees is well on its way to having enough money to support another sponsorship group. About \$24,000 has to be raised for a family of four, with the remaining money coming from Immigration, Refugees

and Citizenship Canada. The families which are supported in this program are screened and approved by the United Nations and the Canadian government and benefit a great deal from the support of their sponsorship group. While Canada is the only country using this Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) program, it has been so successful that both Australia and New Zealand are considering adopting it.

There is no more rewarding work than being part of a sponsorship team. People or groups interested in finding out more about sponsorship can contact SWR through its website at <https://www.stratfordwelcomesrefugees.ca/contact>

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2020 Mazda CX-9 Signature  \$45,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 27,283 km All-Wheel Drive	2022 Volkswagen Atlas Cross Sport  \$47,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 17,960 km All-Wheel Drive	2021 Mazda CX-9 Signature  \$48,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 24,383 km All-Wheel Drive	2020 Volkswagen Tiguan  \$34,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 44,772 km Comfortline All-Wheel Drive	2018 Mercedes-Benz CLA  \$38,995 + HST & lic LOW KMS 29,143 km 250 4MATIC Coupe All-Wheel-Drive

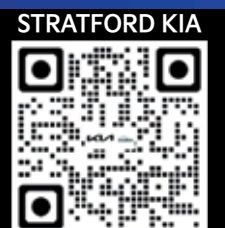
									
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Fighting Irish win WOSHL Cup

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Fighting Irish are the 2023 Western Ontario Super Hockey League Cup Champions.

After winning their first-round Best-of-Five series against the then-Erin Blitz in four games and a second-round sweep of the Elora Rocks, the Fighting Irish continued their run of dominance, sweeping the Tillsonburg Thunder in four games to become the second WOSHL Champion.

In Game One, a four-goal first period put Stratford on the path to victory, eventually downing the Thunder 8-3. Ray Robbins, Brody Smith, and Cameron Stokes each put up a pair of goals while Graham Brulotte and Cooper Leitch posted a goal and two assists. Darren Smith earned the win in Stratford's net.



the team's first title. Stratford took a 2-1 lead into the first intermission but in the second, despite outshooting their opponent, the Thunder outscored the Fighting Irish 4-1 in the middle stanza. In the third, Stratford erased Tillsonburg's two-goal lead to force overtime. In the extra frame, Petrie buried the game-winner and his second of the game that not only sealed their victory in the game but also the WOSHL Cup. Robbins, Stokes, Dylan Buckholz, and Matt Fuller also scored for Stratford.

After winning the championship, the Fighting Irish began to take the trophy to some of their community sponsors as a show for their support of the

team. They also posted a heartfelt thank-you to their fans on social media following their victory. Additionally, the team hosted a championship party with their fans on April 22nd.

RAISE THE CUP (FRED GONDER PHOTO)
Stratford Fighting Irish raise the cup after winning the Super Hockey League after Mav Petrie scored the winning goal.

Tillsonburg found their stride in Game Two but just couldn't overcome Stratford's momentum, narrowly falling to the Fighting Irish 3-2. Brulotte scored the game's first goal just four minutes and three seconds, but the Thunder tied things up less than two minutes later. In the second period, Riley Coome scored a powerplay marker followed by a goal by Warren Gorman. The Thunder got one in the third but couldn't find the equalizer, losing by a single goal despite outshooting the Fighting Irish 49-39 in the contest.

Game Three saw the Fighting Irish not only return to their home arena but also return to their dominant form, beating the Thunder 6-3. Stratford outshot Tillsonburg 42-28 in the game, including a 34-15 shot clock in the final 40 minutes. However, the first period didn't indicate that the Fighting Irish would take control of the contest in the second and third, with the Thunder jumping out to a 3-0 lead. Stratford roared back in the second with four unanswered goals, including three in the final two minutes and 39 seconds. A pair of goals in the third solidified the 6-3 score that held up as the final. Smith led on the scoresheet with a pair of goals, with the rest of Stratford's goals coming from Robbins, Stokes, Mitchell Casey, and Maverick Petrie.

With a chance to win the league championship in Game Four, the Fighting Irish showed their killer instinct and ability to overcome adversity en route to capturing

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STRATFORD FIGHTING IRISH 2023 Final Playoff Statistics

PLAYER	GP	G	A	PTS
Cameron Stokes	12	9	13	22
Cooper Leitch	12	9	9	18
Ray Robbins	12	6	9	15
Graham Brulotte	12	5	10	15
Brody Smith	12	6	5	11
Sean O'Brien	12	2	8	10
Dylan Buckholz	12	2	8	10
Matt Fuller	12	3	3	6
Riley Coome	12	2	3	5
Matt Granger	12	2	3	5
Mav Petrie	12	3	1	4
Steven DeGroot	10	1	2	3
Zachery Tierney	12	1	2	3
Mitchell Casey	12	1	1	2
Warren Gorman	12	2	0	2
Brenden Speziale	6	0	2	2
Colin Martin	10	0	1	1
Sebastien Nogueira	12	1	0	1
Tye Campbell	7	0	1	1
Devon Rymarchuk	1	0	0	0
Andrew Bogdon	2	0	0	0

#	PLAYER	GAA	SV%
	Darren Smith	2.38	.913
	Zach Weir	3.09	.911

Warriors' comeback falls short as Flyers win Sutherland Cup

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Midwestern Conference Champion Stratford Warriors didn't go down without a strong fight, erasing a 3-1 series deficit to force a Game Seven. However, in the all-or-nothing game on May 9th, it was the Leamington Flyers who came away victorious, winning their first Sutherland Cup in franchise history.

In Game Seven, after a scoreless first period, the Flyers put on a dominant showing in the second, outshooting Stratford 18-3 thanks in no small part to an early-period parade to the penalty box and making it next to impossible for the Warriors to enter the Leamington zone. This allowed Connor MacPherson to score a pair of goals, one of which came on a five-on-three man advantage.

The Warriors were unable to capitalize on two powerplay opportunities in the seventh game. Just one minute and 12 seconds into the third, Ryan MacPherson extended the lead to 3-0 before his brother Connor made it a four-goal deficit with just over two minutes left in the contest after firing a puck from the Leamington zone into an empty net for his third goal of the game. The hat trick put MacPherson up to 20 goals in the post-season, a major factor in his win-



(MIKE CHENNETTE/MCGINNY PHOTOGRAPHY)

TOUGH LOSS

Stratford Warriors' forward Keaton McLaughlin battles with a Leamington skater near goaltender Owen Willmore's crease during the Sutherland Cup Championship series.

ning Playoff MVP following the game.

Head Coach Dave Williams told the Times that the heartbreaking loss in Game Seven came down to a mix of the Warriors not playing their best game and the opposition turning in an excellent performance.

"We had battled back so hard after going down 3-1. It was great to get the win at home in Game Five and then to go back to their rink for Game Six, we knew getting the win on the road would

be a struggle, but I thought we played a really good game to tie the series. We were really optimistic about coming back home for Game Seven but I don't think we played quite to the level we're capable of while Leamington played really well in the final game."

Williams added that the Warriors simply couldn't turn the tides in their favour after Leamington gained momentum halfway through the first.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 20

STRATFORD WARRIORS 2023 Playoff Statistics (through May 8, 2023)

PLAYER	POS	GP	G	A	PTS
Sheldon Pryce	F	25	9	26	35
Zac McCann	F	24	12	19	31
Reid Oliver	D	25	6	23	29
Hunter Nagge	F	24	11	14	25
Jonas Schmidt	F	24	11	8	19
Patrick Cole	F	24	12	5	17
Camden Daigle	F	20	6	6	12
Keaton McLaughlin	F	23	6	5	11
Jordan Moulton	D	25	3	8	11
Zach Hatch	D	23	2	9	11
Luke Fritz	F	25	2	7	9
Cole Lewis	F	23	3	3	6
Braydon Stumpf	F	25	0	6	6
Jackson McLlwain	F	20	4	1	5
Nolan Adkins	D	25	1	2	3
Rhyse Brown	F	22	0	2	2
Haden Frayne	D	14	0	2	2
Dylan Dundas	F	13	1	0	1
Owen Robertson	D	15	0	1	1
Wyatt Adkins	D	12	0	0	0
Bo Doxtator	D	9	0	0	0

PLAYER	RECORD	GAA	SV%
Zach Burleigh	3-0-0-0	1.87	.920
Owen Willmore	15-7-0-0	2.34	.932

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Warriors' comeback falls short

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

"When we're having success, we're moving our feet, we're making good decisions with the puck, and we're limiting turnovers. I thought we started the game really well, we were doing the things that make us successful, but we started chasing the game and struggled to get back in control."

Even though they weren't able to complete the comeback, the Warriors' being able to take two straight from the high-powered Flyers to force a seventh game was an impressive feat, which Williams said was down to his team's determination and comradery.

"We did a lot of those good things that we know make us successful and that play to the strengths of our team. After the fourth game, we focused on limiting what we were giving up and making it harder on them, which is what we did in Games Five and Six. The other part was just how close-knit we are off the ice. This group had a genuine desire to win for each other so I think that was key to getting us back home for Game Seven."

According to the Head Coach, their Sutherland Cup opponent made it as hard

as possible to execute on their gameplan, a credit to the Flyers' ability.

"The big thing was trying to find consistency in our game. When we played with that consistency, I think we were able to get the results we were looking for. But when you're facing a team like Leamington, it's really tough because they make it extremely challenging to do the things that make you successful and play the way you want to play."



Despite not being able to close out this year's final series, Williams expressed a great deal of pride and happiness in the work the team put in this season and what the group was able to accomplish.

"We had a great season," William remarked. "The feelings are a bit skewed right now just because we wanted to win so much after all the time and effort that everyone has put in. However, I think the guys had a great year. We had a tough road through the playoffs, but our guys were resilient and we found ways to win games, even when we weren't perfect. In time, I think the guys will be able to look back fondly on this season and what we accomplished together."

Stratford Revolution 19UG 2023 OBL Pool E Champions



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

REVOLUTION UNDEFEATED

L-R Back Row: Coach Steve Goforth, Mia Lester, Paige De Jong, Annika Van Kooten, Emma Zorgdrager, Coach Jessica Finlay-Robinson

L-R Front Row: Alexis Hinds, Mia Morris, Jensen Pohl, Joy Belfour

Missing/injured list: Paige Barr and Georgia Neely

This talented squad of just 8 players (2 are on the injured list) ran away with the OBL Pool E Championship, undefeated at HoopDome in Toronto on April 22nd and 23rd.

Entering the final stretch of the 2022-23 OBA season, the pools were reshuffled after OBL Weekend #3 in March.

Stratford Revolution 19UG took the first two game wins of the new pool of seven teams in Thornhill April 2nd at OBL Weekend #4 with wins over fellow Pool E teams Ancaster Swish 39-31 and North Bay Spartans 45-34.

The final OBL Weekend #5 double header in Toronto ahead of Ontario Cup in mid May, netted this small but mighty Revolution squad 4 wins in a row. Saturday started the weekend off with a 41-25 win over PYBA – Imenson Power. Jensen Pohl scored 12, Alexis Hinds 10 and Annika Van Kooten and Emma Zorgdrager each added 5. The afternoon's 57 - 27 win over the Huntsville Hurricanes saw excellent action at both ends of the court, with strong defense and offence so Hinds could

add another 18 points to her day, followed by Pohl with 13, Zorgdrager with 6 and Mia Morris adding 5.

Back at HoopDome Sunday for another two games started strong with a decisive 53 - 28 win over the Toronto Lords. Pohl led with 24 points (6x three pointers in this game), Van Kooten with 12, Paige DeJong with 7 and Hinds adding 4 points. With only one more win away from clinching the pool undefeated, Stratford Revolution swept the weekend with a late Sunday evening 39 - 18 game against SBA Garcia. Pohl and Van Kooten put up 12 points each and Hinds added 6 points.

This team is excited to play and see how far they can go at Ontario Cup. Last season they came home silver medalists, so they hope to make it gold for 2023.

Weekend totals for players:

Pohl - 61
Hinds - 40
Van Kooten - 33
De Jong - 15
Zorgdrager - 14



Stratford Branch 8

ATTENTION: CANADIAN VETERANS AND EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL

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

Introducing our new Branch Service Officer William Rothernel, who can be contacted through the Branch Office for questions and consultations. Every Tuesday continues to be Buddy Check Coffee at 10:30 am till noon, all vets welcome. Next month, Branch 8 will be visited by our Acting Provincial Service Officer Brittany Campbell starting at 2 p.m. on May 18, 2023. Please make an appointment with our office.

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

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

Send in your sports reports

Coaches and/or parents are invited to send in your sports reports and pictures to the Stratford Times to let Stratford and area know how your teams are doing throughout the new 2023 season (and to create some great scrapbook material to be reflected upon in future years).

Game reports should be kept to a

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

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

Support businesses that keep your community and its newspapers thriving.

Pickleball Ontario Championship held in Stratford

There were 309 participants who took part in almost 1,000 games over the Saturday and Sunday. The players came from all across Ontario and also from Michigan and as far away as Alaska.

The games were opened on Saturday morning with greetings and well wishes from Daphne Reid, the President of Pickleball Ontario, Mayor Martin Ritsma, MPP Matthew Rae and MP John Nater.

Great Support and Sponsorship from Stratford Lions Club, Destination Strat-

ford and many local businesses.

Local winners were, representing Stratford Pickleball Association, Dave Price, Dave Ashkanase, Christine Kelly, Michael Hauck, Betty Morsink, Janet Shivas, Velma Hansford, Angela Leis and Merlin Leis winning combinations of Gold, Silver and Bronze in their respective Divisions and representing St Marys Pickleball Association, Dave Baxter, Marianne DeBrandere winning Bronze and Gold in their respective Divisions.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

APPROACH SHOT

Pickleball Ontario Championship Series Southwest Region took place at the Stratford Agriplex on May 5-7.

Local connections to OHL drafts

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

Several players chosen in either the OHL Priority Selection or Under-18 Draft have connections to Stratford and the surrounding area.

Fullerton native and affiliate player (AP) for the Stratford Warriors Carson Harmer was the first area product picked in the third round of the Priority Selection. Harmer was the Captain of the U16 Huron-Perth Lakers and recorded 20 goals and 40 points this season with the Lakers.

Five other members of the U16 Lakers were selected in the Priority Selection, including Stratford's own Zachary Houben, a forward picked in the fifth round, and goaltender Aidan Hill who was drafted in the 12th round. Both Houben and Hill were selected by the Ottawa 67's.

The remainder of the Lakers' contingent included defenceman Teague Vader of Gowanstown, who was picked in the fifth round by the Barrie Colts, along with



forward Jordan Visneskie of Mitchell going to the Erie Otters in the sixth round followed by Hayden Barch of Grand Bend going in the 13th round to the Saginaw Spirit

In the OHL's Under-18 Draft, the Sudbury Wolves used a second-round selection on Waterloo product and Warriors' AP Joseph-Karl Brehmer.

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It was an honour to be recognized as the top business in the commercial category for 2023. I certainly could not do what we do every day without the great people I have on my team and the love and support of my family. We are truly grateful for all their sacrifices and thankful they can celebrate with us the accomplishments of our business. This award represents what we have done and where we have been and is a great reminder of where we are going and our goal to continue to provide our clients with the highest levels of customer care that they have come to expect from our team.



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Business Excellence Awards



With this year's Business Excellence Awards falling on "May the Fourth", Masters of Ceremony Franklin Famme and Shelley Windsor had some fun dressing up as "Obi-Famme Kenobi" and "Princess Shell-Leia", then called up Chamber of Commerce GM Eddie Matthews to play the role of Yoda.



Perth-Wellington MP John Nater (pictured top left) not only expressed his congratulations to Business Leader Award winner Don McDougall (top right), but also delivered a special message from McDougall's longtime friend, Former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.



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Above left: Past Chamber Chair Travis Blum of IG Wealth Management presented the Entrepreneurial award to Dr. Erica Dickie of Black Creek Mobile Veterinary Services. Above right: John Kastner accepted the award for Innovation for the Stratford-Perth Museum, who pivoted during the pandemic with the introduction of Culture Cab. He said in acknowledging all who are responsible for the success of the Museum, "I'll be glad to carry this award home, but there's a lot of fingerprints on it."

Left: Grit Engineering won the award in the Professional category. CEO & Founder Montana Wilson and Civil Engineering Director Nick Preikschas accepted the award from presenter Jason Nevin of UpAuto.



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The New Matilda Swanson Art Centre is a staple in the “Stratford Experience”

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The Matilda Swanson art gallery has been a staple for those interested in Stratford’s visual arts for over a year, and they are now upgrading to a new space, across the road, beside the Avon Theatre Store.

The space, currently known as an art gallery, will now be revamped and renewed and will be known as an art centre, a new and innovative space for all.

The Stratford location, owned and managed by Sarah Filton, is the second, the first being located in Clarksburg, Ontario, which has been a place to showcase art to the town for over thirteen years. The sister locations were named after the owner’s favourite childhood movie, Matilda, by Roald Dahl, because of its magical and whimsical feel, which Filton wanted to portray in her own space.

“The new space is going to be one that will stimulate all the senses,” Filton states.

The new location will be spacious enough to offer a full range of art-inspired drinks and appetizers that attendees to the centre can enjoy while checking out the local art, as well as a roster of over 45 different artists from across Ontario.

The first art gallery showing will be



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

EXPERIENCE THE ART

The Matilda Swanson Art Centre's new location, beside the Avon Theater Store on Downie St.

the “Stratford Artists takeover,” opening on June 2nd and is open to display the work of Stratford artists only. The centre will open the door to Stratford creatives of all types and mediums and merge

professionals from unique creative backgrounds in a beautiful display showcasing local talent.

This initial show will run for a month and a half, whereas all the other shows

will be a month-long, opening on the last Friday of the month.

The new location will also host an array of special events that will appeal to all, “comedy nights, cabaret nights, club nights, and so some intimate gallery and some larger ones, but all centred around the arts,” Filton states.

After agreeing to the new space, the crew noticed a bonus to the location in that their back delivery door opened up to the rear entrance of the Avon Theater, giving those exiting shows a new and inviting space to drop in, grab a drink and look at local art. “So, when they're exiting, our doors are going to be open; we'll have a little sign to come on in.”

This new and innovative space will be open starting in May and will slowly add more features over the next few months. A liquor license, murals for the walls and fun light fixtures created by none other than a local artist will be added throughout the space over the next few weeks while the staff and owners invite those from Stratford to be the first to experience this amazing space.

This new space is part of the Stratford experience for locals and visitors alike. “We have a powerhouse of staff that I’m proud of. It’s been a journey, but it’s led me here, and I’m very excited to open this space for everyone.” Filton proudly states.



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City of Stratford to Launch Market Square Music on Fridays

Starting May 19, the City of Stratford will deliver a community concert series in Market Square on Friday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Produced by Stratford's own Juno-nominated Dayna Manning, each Friday evening will feature a new local artist including Dan Stacey and Kyle Waymouth, Barbara Fulton, Paul Mills and Graham Lindsey, Ben Bolt-Martin, and Lea Keeley.

Dayna Manning will kick off the first evening, and the concert series will continue each Friday until June 23.

Those wishing to attend are welcome to do so free of charge and are encouraged to bring their own chairs.

For more information, please visit www.stratford.ca/music

Date	Performer
May 19, 2023	Dayna Manning
May 26, 2023	Dan Stacey and Kyle Waymouth
June 2, 2023	Barbara Fulton
June 9, 2023	Paul Mills & Graham Lindsey
June 16, 2023	Ben Bolt-Martin
June 23, 2023	Lea Keeley



Singing for the Joy of It – A Community Choir Performance to Remember



KATE ORLAND BERE

Times Contributor

A delightful musical event took place on the evening of Tuesday, May 2nd at Avondale United Church. The artistic director of the Sing for the Joy of It community choir, Dan Van Winden, led this talented group of singers in their Joyful Hearts spring concert, skillfully guiding 120 joyful voices through 13 songs ranging from the psychedelic folk acoustic rock ballad, Jim Croce's legendary Time in a Bottle to the tango show tune Hernando's Hideaway, utilizing 4-part harmonies that soared within the church, lulling at times to a soothing, celestial vocal chorus.

Karen Rempel provided magnificent accompaniment; she had been working with director Dan Van Winden and the choir for months to prepare for this concert. Other accompaniment was provided by Kiki Dubé on Violin [Remember My Song]; Laurence Gauci on Bass; and Chris Adair, percussion – each of them excellent.

Two songs in the concert caused this listener to tear up: If I Loved You [From Carousel]; and Remember My Song, with the violin adding immeasurably to this song's emotional depth. If a performance can draw tears, it is a testament to talent. The dedication that the choristers, the accompanists, and the artistic director deliver in such a rapturous final performance astounds, in the depth of emotion they do transfer to the audience in their musical gifts.

After three years of Covid restrictions, everyone singing, playing, and directing were clearly happy to be there, as was their audience. Purely because of their love for singing, choristers join to experience that group joy – for they do not necessarily have musical training, or it is not a requirement to join. All join for the same reason - a desire to sing, to per-

form, to learn. Singers can be of any age or gender – although for singers 12 and under, they must be accompanied within the choir body by an adult singer. One mother-daughter duo remarked on how meaningful it was to sing side-by-side in such a talented choir group.

This choir was formed originally at the Knox Church under the direction of Paul Coates and accompanist Carol Carter. That initial group experienced great success, but Covid brought all performances to a halt. Now Dan Van Winden has taken up direction of the choir, along with his work at Avondale United Church as Music Director. Dan has found this experience to be rewarding, if challenging, and he is already thinking about nurturing Sing for the Joy of It to new heights this fall.

Dan Van Winden's musical training took place at Western University, taking both of his music degrees there, graduating in 2014 with his Masters of Music, Vocal Performance, and Literature. He offers studio vocal classes, and also works in the Human Resources Department of the Stratford Festival, beyond his work at the church and with the Sing for the Joy of It choir. His participation in various choirs has been a lifelong love; he now frequently performs as a soloist for various choral groups throughout southwestern Ontario. Grateful for this remarkable opportunity to lead this inspiring community choir, Dan is excited for potential future performance opportunities.

Sing for the Joy of It will break for the summer, beginning again to meet in the fall to rehearse for their Christmas performance. If you love singing, and you do or do not have vocal training, contact the choir at singforthejoyofit@gmail.com to request an email reminder for choir rehearsal fall start-up.

Come to sing joyful songs straight from your heart!

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Humane Society urges public to foster and adopt; aims to prevent abandonment

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth is encouraging residents to foster and/or adopt pets, along with helping the organization where possible.

The shelter is hosting an ongoing puppy shower for a four-year-old foster dog named Panda and her 13 puppies. In an April 28 press release, the Humane Society announced Panda came to the shelter pregnant and gave birth to seven boys and seven girls on April 18. Sadly, the smallest pup did not survive. However, the remaining 13 puppies and Panda are healthy and thriving.

The new mom and her pups will remain in foster care until they are ready for adoption.

"Panda went into foster care right before she had the puppies because we wanted her to be in a home environment that would keep her as low-stress as possible, a little more comfortable. It's also really great to have the support of a foster parent to provide the round-the-clock care when we know the puppies are going to be arriving at any minute," Calla James, director of community and outreach, said. "Our foster parent has done incredibly well, along with their family, to support Panda and the delivery of her puppies."

There is a major need for large-breed dog fosters in the Wilmot Township and Perth County Area. James said foster care is beneficial for the animals because it helps lower their stress levels.

"We're going from an environment where they could be outside or they could be in a home and they're being surrendered into our care and going into a shelter



environment can be very stressful - lots of noises and smells and new people," she said. "When we know that we can move them into foster care, it's just so great for their overall health and wellbeing."

For those who cannot have a pet permanently in their home, fostering is also a great way to provide companionship. The Humane Society covers all the food, medical, and care costs.

"It's a great way for you to offer that couch, offer that space for that pet to have care."

The Humane Society also encourages people looking for a pet to adopt, noting several studies show that having a pet decreases stress, increases physical activity, and provides companionship.

"To many people, the bond and relationship that they have with an animal is one

of the only significant relationships that they have in their life," James said.

The organization also wants pet owners to reach out if they are struggling, rather than abandoning their pets. An April 25 press release from the Humane Society said that the organization responded to several reports of dogs running around Mitchell and Perth County on March 23. The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth brought in eight dogs. Most of the dogs have found homes, with Hope still looking for adoption as of May 7 according to the website.

James said that the Humane Society does not want anyone to abandon their pets, but acknowledged the reasons why it may happen. With inflation, the economy, and rising property and grocery prices, some pet owners are facing a financial cri-

sis. Other reasons include medical issues and behavioral issues from the animal.

"If you ever feel that you are in that position, we really want you to understand that we are a judgment-free zone and we want you to give us a call," she said. "Where we don't have the resources to either keep you and your pet together, or the resources to take that particular pet in, we will try as best as possible to find resources in the community and beyond to try to help you and refer you to them."

The organization will work with pet owners to either ensure they keep their pet or take the pet in the shelter. Services include the Pet Pantry program to supply pet owners in need with food and supplies, low-cost vet services like microchips, rabbies vaccines, and spay neuter services, and virtual behavioral training classes. There is also emergency boarding available that can be accessed either with local emergency services or a social worker referral. More information about the Humane Society can be found via kwsphumane.ca.



PAWS for Laughs in support of the Stratford Perth Humane Society

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Correspondent

The Stratford-Perth Humane Society hosted a PAWS for laughs event to raise funds through a comedic night of laughs with hosts Eric Johnston, Jason Allen and Justin Shaw.

Johnston, headlining the event, led the laughs throughout the night at the sold-out event hosted by Revival House.

"The only regret I have is telling everyone they're getting a free kitten," Allan states when asked about his relationship with pets. The hilarious comedians showcased their skills at the event and easily related to the crowd of animal lovers, "I love making jokes about my dog because I think she hates me, so it's easy to joke about," stated Allan.

The Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth Humane Society posted their gratitude on their website and social media platforms after the event, which raised over thirteen thousand dollars that will go directly towards animal care at The Stratford-Perth Humane Society.

"Thanks to your support, we were able to raise much-needed funds for our furry friends. We couldn't have done it without



FUNDRAISING LAUGHS

Eric Johnston, comedian, headlining PAWS for Laughs event supporting the Stratford Perth Humane Society.

the help of our fantastic comedians, who had the audience in stitches all night long."

The Stratford-Perth Humane Society is part of the Kitchener-Waterloo region, and the two-night event was hosted first in Kitchener-Waterloo and then in Stratford. All proceeds for both events will directly support the Stratford location.

Currently, a dog named Panda resigned from the Stratford location and was expecting twelve puppies at the time of the come-

dy event. "When they're born, those funds will help make sure that they're looked after, all the food, medicine, and shots. When they get old enough, we'll do spay or neuter surgery, so it's between fifteen hundred and two thousand dollars for us to cover all the costs for that single puppy to get to a point of adoption," states Nick Burk, Director of Development at the Stratford Perth Humane Society.

The spring is known as "kitten season,"

where there is a rapid increase in the number of stray cats and kittens coming into the shelter. Financial assistance is always appreciated to care for and manage this increase in support. Burk states, "Financial assistance gives us the opportunity to be nimble. But we do have a growing need for programs like our pet pantry program, which is essentially a pet food bank for individuals in the community that can't necessarily afford to feed their pets right now. So, donations to that are great and supporting events like this."

In 2016, the Stratford Humane Society moved locations to a beautiful shelter on Griffith Road, where it is home to surrendered animals from across Perth County. The location has community cat rooms, dog runs, an animal kitchen and an in-house neuter clinic.

The spacious location offers educational opportunities, birthday parties, summer camps for kids, yoga and much more in their spacious community room.

If you are interested in supporting the Stratford Perth Humane Society or are interested in booking a special event at the Stratford Location, please reach out via their website at <https://kwsphumane.ca/>

St. Michael CSS to make a splash 'Under the Sea'

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Students, staff, alumni, and the greater community will bring a Disney classic to the St. Michael Catholic Secondary School stage.

The high school will present "The Little Mermaid" from May 15 to 19 starting at 6:30 p.m. at 240 Oakdale Avenue.

"After a two-year hiatus we wanted to return to the stage with a family friendly production that would involve a lot of people and help to rebuild community," Tina Robinson, the department head of arts at St. Michael, said in an email interview with the Stratford Times.

More than 100 St. Michael students are part of the production, with several more Stratford community members involved. Local elementary school students take on guppy

cast roles. Staff are creating costumes and sets, marketing the show, working front of house, producing, and organizing.

St. Michael alumni returned to the high school to either coach, assist with tech, and perform in the "Little Mermaid." Volunteers in the community are lending a hand by sponsoring the show, playing in the orchestra, and vocal coaching.

During the pre-show and intermission, the audience will have a chance to visit Ariel's Grotto and either purchase one of the treasures, snap a picture at the Under the Sea Selfie Station, and/or get a mermaid or merman makeover by those involved in the school salon.

"It just adds to the family friendly fun experience," Robinson said.

The students have been hard at work bringing "The Little

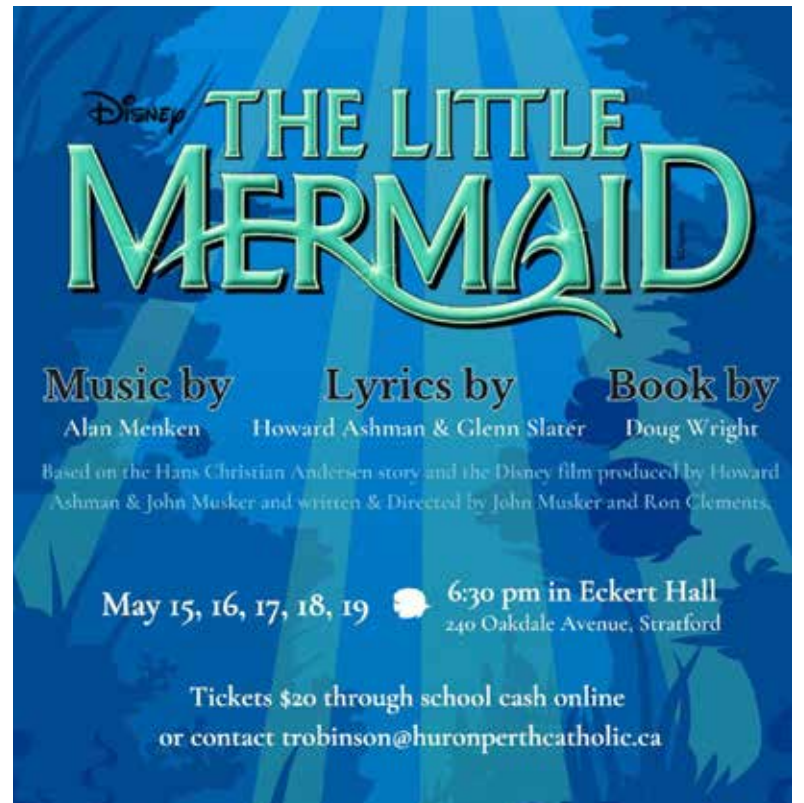
Mermaid" to stage since September 2022.

"For many, this is their first time on stage. They are very excited to show everyone what they have been working on."

The high school's musical theatre production coincides with the remake of "The Little Mermaid" starring Halle Bailey, Jonah Hauer-King and Melissa McCarthy. The movie will hit theatres on May 26 and Robinson hopes to take the cast and crew to see it. In the meantime, she hopes everyone can check out what St. Michael's production has to offer.

"We invite everyone to come and join us under the sea for a colourful, high energy Disney favourite!"

Tickets are \$20 each and can either be purchased through the school or by sending an email to trobinson@huronperthcatholic.ca.



Stratford-Perth Rotary Hospice Volunteers meet in Shakespeare during National Volunteer Week

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

During National Volunteer Week of April 16-22, Stratford-Perth Rotary Hospice volunteers were invited to meet at the Shakespeare Optimist Hall for an educational event and social gathering.

Mark Goden and Alex Allen, from Waterloo Region Hospice, joined the volunteers to talk about advance care planning (ACP) and to explain the importance of having a "power of attorney" or "substitute decision-maker" to make healthcare decisions for anyone in the event they cannot speak for themselves.

Hospice Waterloo Region operates the Gies Family Centre, an 11-bed residence located in North Waterloo and offers palliative support services in the Waterloo Region. They have a team of volunteer ambassadors that offer education sessions on advance care planning, as well as other topics relating to palliative care.

The large number of volunteers in attendance represented every corner of Rotary hospice - including reception, direct support, kitchen, garden, and the one-to-one community visiting program. Officials stated the volunteers who support the hospice residence are imperative to the comfort and care the residents and

their loved ones receive during their stay.

The visiting Hospice program supports clients living at home with a life-limiting illness with volunteers helping to navigate the ups and downs of living with a terminal illness.

The one-to-one volunteer will follow the client wherever their journey takes them, including hospital, or Hospice and support the family with bereavement. The volunteer is introduced at such a vulnerable and personal time, making the relationship they form with their client almost indescribable.

Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, in their new facility, is available to those seeking end-of-life care and their loved ones at NO cost to them. They rely on surrounding communities and generous donors to support the fundraising required to cover 50% of operational costs.

Rotary Hospice could not provide the same level of support, comfort, and care they do, without the community support and their 150 dedicated and compassionate volunteers.

For more information about Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth and the volunteer program, or the visiting hospice program, contact Katie Jervis at katie@rotaryhospice.ca or 519-508-4900 extension 730.



Volunteers at Shakespeare Optimist Hall recently learned about Advanced Care Planning and how it is an important part of programs offered by Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth.

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Art In The Park executive team excited for 2023 season

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

Art in the Park Stratford returns Saturday, May 20th, with a whopping twenty new members joining the association on Lakeside Drive. The executive team has been fired up the last several months planning and preparing for the season to start. The season runs from May 20th to September 27th, with artists displaying their work on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, weather permitting.

Art In The Park Stratford is a juried show and sale of a diverse selection of contemporary art and fine craft. Artists are on hand during each show to meet the attendees as ambassadors of the show and Stratford in general. The call for new artists went out the beginning of January, with an application deadline of March 1st.

The annual general meeting of the volunteer executive team was held in April, and the new artist submissions were also juried in April. There are three new members of the executive team, Lynne Huras, Christopher Cape and Paula Whitlock, who were all new to Art In The Park last year. With them comes new ideas, enthusiasm and possibilities for the non-profit.

There has been a concerted effort to utilize social media to advertise Art In The



Park, on Facebook and Instagram. Using these tools, they have been introducing the new membership and their work as well as new work from the existing membership. A new logo will become recognizable as it is used on their website, the five signs that will direct visitors to the show, handouts and more.

"We passed it on to Destination Stratford to appear on their website, and I'm talking to the Festival for advertising in the Visitor's Guide," adds Bev Hewitt, Art In The Park executive.

There are about sixty artists with unique

and intriguing pieces of work to explore, though the number showing on a given day would likely not reach that many.

"That would be chaos," laughed Hewitt.

Visitors can look forward to the return of wood turner David Humphrey, who has been a member for over thirty years, and founding member Mathias Muleme who specializes in "Intaglio" and "Collagraph" Printmaking, as well as Richard Beaty, a visual artist.

Returning for the second year is painter Brenda Storey who spent the winter experimenting on new ideas. Her quote on

Facebook, "Last season I began experimenting with watercolours on canvas. Over the winter I have been doing more in this format as well as continuing to work on cotton rag paper. I'm enjoying the larger scale and the flexibility in styles I can achieve. During my first season with AITP I found people were drawn to my portraiture so that has been my main focus for new works."

Among the new artists for 2023 is Eden Palmer, an artist working in acrylics/multi-media. Her quote appears on Facebook,

"I am interested in exploring the endless possibilities of my craft. I would describe much of my work as experimental and myself as the accidental tourist, pushing the limits of form, texture and aesthetic sensibilities."

Artists exhibiting at Art In The Park are encouraged to appear with their tools of the trade and works in progress so that the visiting public has the opportunity to see the process of creating a piece. People can ask questions and talk about art with the artist themselves.

More information about Art In The Park, in particular, artist bio's and samples of their work, can be found on their website www.artintheparkstratford.ca and on their Facebook page which is updated regularly.

Coming Soon to the Theatre Near You: the Meighen Forum and Opening Week

JULIA SCHNEIDER

Times Correspondent

As the Festival prepares for its post-pandemic re-emergence, we see a theatre intent on presenting ever more inclusive, attractive, and welcoming programs to new and established audiences alike. The Meighen Forum, a decade-old feature, shows this in its introduction of Themed Weeks, a new complement to the Forum's usual Peer Into the Playbill, Lobby Talks and other familiar offerings. With them and the long-time Monday Night Music concerts and Special Workshops, these weeks promise to add even more food to satisfy the mind, the spirit and now, also the appetite.

Starting in June, the presentations during these weeks will support the plays, add to our awareness of their social, emotional and intellectual context, and provide the opportunity to enjoy a celebratory feast that pairs the mental and emotional with a sociable gustatorial event.

The first Themed Week (of six) is entitled Pride Week and runs from June 5 to June 11. During the week special events will bring the comedy, poetry, and histori-

cal background to the experience of being gay in North America featured in Diana and Casey and other plays. It will also mount a Serving Pride Dinner and Celebration June 10 hosted by award-winning Drag Star Pearle Harbour (who will later present Agit-Pop! performances between June 15 and 17) and co-curated by two notable chefs.

July will start with a Season Deep Dive Week (July 3 to July 9) featuring an Elizabethan feast to fuel attendees and talks by Artistic Director Antoni Cimolini about the season and by him, Yvette Nolan and Thom Allison about the plays they are directing this season (Grand Magic, Women of the Fur Trade, and Rent, respectively).

CBC Ideas Week (July 17 to 23) will bring program host Nahlah Ayed to examine The Shock of the New -- The Twentieth Century with sessions on the analysis of events in 1919, 1938, 1963, 1973, and 1989. That will be accompanied by the Forum Dinner Tastes from Turtle Island (June 23) which will "take your senses on a journey across this land through traditional cuisine and techniques." (to quote this year's Stratford Festival Season guide.)

The first Themed Week in August (Au-

gust 7 to August 13) is Global Theatre Week. Dinner will be A Taste of West Africa (August 12) "an immersive experience of delicious flavours and spices in this West African culinary adventure." (Season guide) Talks by experts, including Dr. Mukoma wa Ngugi from Cornell University, will look at West African theatre, talk about the art of translation, and examine how the colonial experience is reflected in plays.

August will also bring a Readers and Writers Week (August 21 to August 27) with literary icon Margaret Atwood. On August 25 she will talk with Sam White, director of The Wedding Band, about creativity, impulse, artistry, and life, on August 26 about Gothic Literature, and on August 27 with Emma Donoghue (author of Room) about adaptations of novels to film. The Forum Dinner for this week will be Un Grande Pasto Italiano (A Grand Italian Meal), evocative enough without a description!

The September Themed Week is Scholars and Experts Week (September 11 to 17). It will look at the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's First Folio (September 15), the role of elders in cross-generational

learning (September 16) and Learning vs. Living (September 17) The accompanying September 16 dinner, Franken-Dine Molecular Gastronomy, will definitely challenge gravity, expectations, and the mind -- with guide Art and Food Historian Janet Dawson to help make sense of it all.

In the meantime, play previews continue as time ticks down to the May 29 – June 2 Opening Week with its openings of King Lear (May 30), Monty Python's Spamalot (May 31), Casey and Diana (May 31), Rent (June 1), and Grand Magic (June 2). More openings will follow soon after with those of Much Ado About Nothing (June 16), A Wrinkle in Time (June 17), and Richard II (June 17).

This is a very brief overview of this year's Meighen Forum focusing mainly on the Themed Weeks new this year. See the 2023 Stratford Festival guide or www.stratfordfestival.ca for more information about the plays and many more Meighen Forum offerings including the Stratfest@Home Film Festival in July and Encountering Ukraine: Readings in Solidarity, in September. Tickets are available online or by calling the Festival at 519-273-1600.

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Let Me Introduce...

Philip Yielding ARTIST and My Best Buddy

APRIL TAYLOR

Times Contributor

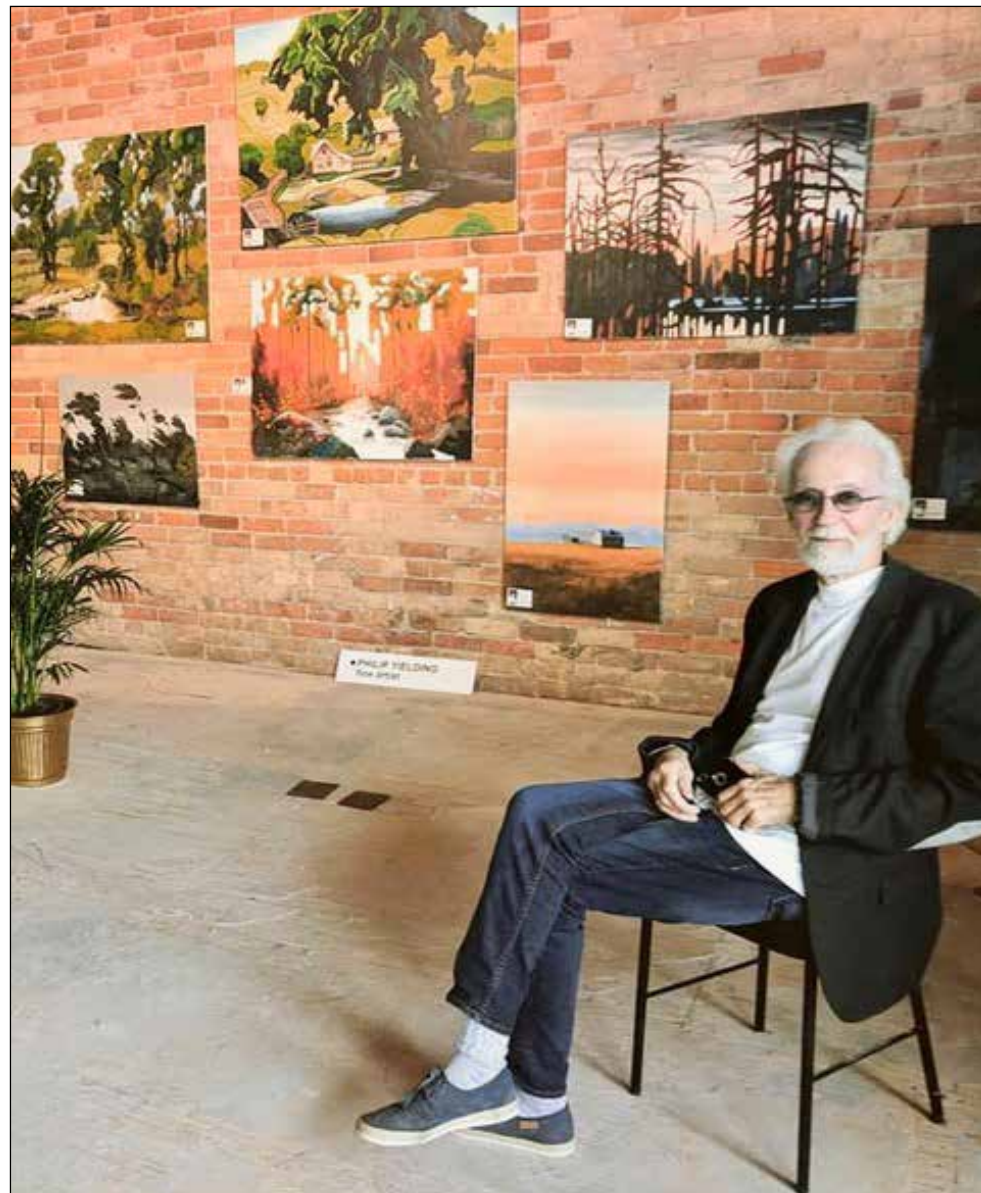
You might have seen us out and about - Philip and I, like Mutt and Jeff, hanging out in coffee shops. We go back a long time; so long now that we have become like family. As in any friendship, we bring our own interests and thoughts to it. I had never met an artist before, and it was intriguing to learn about not just the art itself but the mentality. Artists see the world differently and often choose a less linear life that we, the non-artist, may not always understand. My interest in art grew because of Philip's influence; I love going to the AGO and watching films about artists and when I travel, art is always a part of my itinerary.

"Paris is pregnant with layers of history, colored with the ink of artists who dared to dream of a world only they could see." - K. Kinrade

Some of you might remember Philip's dad, Art Yielding, who came to Stratford in the early 80's to minister at Faith Bible Church. Philip came to visit them in their new home for a weekend and went back to Toronto and packed up and moved here at once. "I couldn't believe how nice Stratford was and friendly; people actually said hello in passing and I knew it was the place for me," says Philip.

I recently read a quote by Paul Asay: "Forget Batman. When I really thought about what I wanted to be when I grew up, I wanted to be my dad." That is certainly true for Philip. His father, aside from being an ordained minister, was a businessperson. He invented a product called Sparkle 52 (it was war time so the government in those days took things out of necessity, this being one of them.) We now know that product as urethane. He was an artist as well, and back in the day the marquis at the cinema was hand painted. Mr. Yielding would paint the Hollywood starlet starring in the film. He also imported canaries, to mention something else this busy man did in his lifetime. He also worked alongside A.Y. Jackson for a time.

At a young age, Philip's talent for drawing developed and he was encouraged in that direction by his father. He was sent to a tech school for art. At 15, his dad came home and said, "Son, you are entering this contest." Philip often refers to this story beginning with "at one time my art was in almost every house in North



America." Hmm... What could that be? Well, he won that contest for Quaker Oats to design the original Aunt Jemima. Of course, our beloved Aunt Jemima has changed over the years and now she has been retired. It was a big deal for young Philip to win such a contest and the \$1,000 prize to go with it. That was a lot of money in 1954.

Do you remember the big mural on the River Garden Inn? Vic Hayter commissioned Philip to do a large mural covering the entire wall, measuring 100 ft by 25 ft. Philip was very much influenced by the Group of Seven, the Canadian Impressionists. He chose an autumn Northern Ontario scene in an impressionistic style. The wall was huge! How do you tackle that, standing close to the wall on a cherry picker not being able to stand

back and see what you are doing?

He also has a Stratford-themed mural at Spruce Lodge, reflecting the history of the railroad. There's another one on a wall on Huron Street. One I really liked was on the outer wall of Madelyn's Diner, a simple black-and-white silhouette of an outdoor cafe done with rollers. The thing with Philip is he makes it look effortless. I remember once he painted a large design on the wall of the salon. We had been redecorating the shop all weekend and it was getting late. He said, "I just want to do the mural before we leave." It was already 8 at night, and we were to open in the morning. He ripped the lid of a pizza box, poured paint on it, and used it as a palette. An hour later, there on the wall stood a beautiful lady fashioned after the artist Alphonse Mucha's Parisian

Art Nouveau work. It's quite something to see him work.

The Sign Years:

Over the years, Philip has done a lot of signs around town. What he enjoyed most about this aspect of his work was meeting and interacting with different business owners - listening to their ideas about their work and being part of the community. In the early years, all his work and lettering were hand done. It was like each sign was an original painting for that particular business. I must admit I liked those best. Then came the computer age, and he did more signs with individual cut-out lettering etc. He's done work for Fellini's, Pazzo, Mercer, Ross' Bike Works, Watson's Bazaar, lettered trucks and windows. Recently, he has completed the heritage signs on houses.

Art has always been part of this human experience we call life. Emperors and popes alike commissioned artists to paint or sculpt to create beauty, to tell a story, to praise the Almighty. I adore Rome for this reason. There, around every corner is a splendid creation, the work of the Greats, such as Bernini, Michelangelo, Canova, etc. on display. There for hundreds of years reminding us of all who were before us and leaving the legacy for us not only to enjoy the beauty but to teach us about our collective history. That is the job of an artist.

Paintings:

Philip paints most days. He has done personal commissions and sold paintings at the salon and has had several art shows on his own or with other local artists. It isn't easy being an artist - often being misunderstood, never really fitting in with the masses. It takes courage to be different. I think deep down, I would have liked to be an artist, but I am not brave enough. My 35-year friendship has allowed me to be part of that world if only from a distance. I have learned a lot and have met many other artists through Philip. I am grateful for that.

I asked Philip why he paints. His reply was, "it's a visual way of communicating and expressing my feelings. Something I do better with paint than words."

As Frida Kahlo once said, "I paint flowers, so they will not die." I think that sums it up. All of us do what we do, and when it's our final day we hope someone will remember what we did and what we stood for. In the case of an artist... they leave us with the beauty they created.

STRATFORD TIMES

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Stratford-Perth Museum
Cozyn's
Stratford Rotary Complex
No Frills
Sobey's
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Shoppers Drug Mart
Tim Hortons
Mornington Variety
Buzz Stop

Union Barber
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Queen's Inn
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Stratford Motor Products
Stratford Legion
Festival Marketplace
Stratford Nissan
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Erie Convenience
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AJ's Hair / Festival Square / Features
Joe's Diner
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Graham Energy - Hwy #7
Delmar Foods

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL: Out in the field



STUART LENDER

Times Contributor

I think a lot about dying. Sometimes it really helps with living. It holds out its gifts. It says: “Remember me and don’t look away. See me, so that you can see clearly what you’ve been given.

Sometimes I listen. When I do, all turns silent, all turns still. Nothing is being done – just a perception deep within that life is good but that it needs to be minded. Oddly, I sense that it’s in the letting go of things that brings me closer to living out in the field of life’s peacefulness; in the silence there. A particular silence where

you, as you, doesn’t exist. Where the small voice inside my head becomes mute, and “you” shuts down. I wonder if this is a form of dying, this shutting down awake. And then comes the laughter, at myself; at the trap I just placed myself into through my “wondering” and so, thinking again. Always thinking. Sigh... how hard to just “be” without myself in the room – thinking.

There’s a lady I know who’s dying. She knows this. She’s been told. She’s covered herself in it like the blankets of her bed that she’s pulled up to her chin. And she’s talking to me now, getting what she calls her “life” in order. She is animated and welcoming. One might even say happy. She is already halfway to knowing that the “life” she is speaking of getting in order isn’t the real one. We’re talking about details. What’s your full name? What’s your social insurance number? When were you born? Behind those details lies the full sweep of a sky of memories. I want to weep at the banality of the questions I’m asking, in the face of her graciousness in my

company. She is stepping through my questions, placing each one to the side before stepping out onto a vast field underneath a monumental sky. She smiles when we part ways, and I want to tell her so very badly, before I leave, that I know she is not her answers.

The baby rabbit we found was no more than four inches long. We took it in, picked it up from the curbside like a fragile teacup, and stood dumb at how such vulnerability was right there in our hands, making everything out beyond it seem dangerous. We named it “bun-bun.” We fed it from a bottle; formula, we were told, like a baby. We made it a home for recovery. When it could walk-hop we let it explore the basement carpet. Each morning we checked in on bun-bun and hoped he or she would be waiting for the hello we desperately wanted to give. Bun-bun grew a little. Became stronger it seemed. And then – not. We fretted over its decline. How the upward swing of strength and determination suddenly took its downward turn into weakness and finally, release. We buried bun-bun in the garden.

A week later I read how bunnies, when that frail and that young – need constant companionship and contact with the mother’s body. Our “lives” took us away from that.

On occasion I’m deeply aware of myself and what I’m doing. I mean, I notice myself walking, notice myself standing with someone on the street, talking. Like a movie. I see myself from over there. When I’m with another person, I can feel so grateful for them. The conversation. The sense of sharing time, sharing happenings, sharing an emotion – no matter what it is. Extending things beyond myself, my small family, my work, my world. Inclusion. The time is short-lived but re-energizing. Some invisible wall expands and gives me room to see the wider perspective. That’s the visual equivalent to stopping and really listening. A songbird suddenly heard. Hear it sing and suddenly all else falls away, except that one-of-a-kind trill. The power of focus. The one sound, within a cacophony of sounds we think of as noise. I pull at the threads of what I’m hearing, to unravel it. I

focus on each sound individually; the siren in the distance, the splash of a wheel in the puddle, the leaves attempting to free themselves in the wind but bound to the tree, a distant dog barking, the footstep behind me walking in the same direction, keeping pace, neither louder, nor softer than my own...

... where are they going? Where am I going? Am I wandering aimlessly right now through a world I cannot see or hear properly? Look up, I remind myself. Look up. Leave the sidewalk alone. The sky is immense. See it and listen to all that fills it. It’s breathing us in and out, in and out. We come. We go. We catch glimpses of our wonder. Signs of this planets’ gifted nature. But still, for me... nothing as gracious, nothing so sweet, nothing so imperceptibly grand as a smile on the face, before our last goodbye.

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL.

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

MUSINGS: The Pest House



MARK HERTZBERGER

Times Freelance Columnist

My great great grandmother, Catherine Bock, died in isolation on July 17, 1902. The circumstances of her final years and death paint a dark picture of health care and social assistance in Victorian Ontario – a stark reminder that things could get worse, even in our “modern” society.

Catharine entered the Waterloo County House of Industry and Refuge on January 3, 1898. She died there four and a half years later. The cause of her death is listed as “hemorrhage of lungs”, described in the American Journal of Clinical Pathology as “the most appalling manifestation of pulmonary tuberculosis”.

The House of Refuge (commonly called the “Poor House” or “Work House”) was constructed as a shelter for “the deserving poor” and was built in 1869 on a 140 acre work farm near today’s Frederick Street in Kitchener.



House of refuge, Kitchener

The “inmates”, in the deprecating language of the era, were: “the destitute, sick, insane, insolvent, decrepit, blind, orphaned, crippled and, until 1903, the children of any of those”. Special, secured quarters housed those who were branded in 19th-century terms as “idiots, lunatics, imbeciles, vagrants and drunkards”.

The “Poor House” also provided care and accommodation for those with chronic illnesses or

contagious diseases. Catharine’s tuberculosis likely relegated her to “The Pestilence House” or “Pest House” a cottage isolated in an adjacent field. There were no live-in staff and few amenities. Ironically, the Pest House is the only remnant of the House of Refuge complex that still stands – currently a private residence on Indiana St. in Kitchener.

What happened to Catherine’s body after her death cannot be

confirmed as the institutional registers for July 1902 are incomplete. If no one claimed her remains, they were likely buried in the field surrounding the House of Refuge, described as a “potter’s field”. She would rest in an unmarked paupers’ grave – a common grave for the burial of “unknown, unclaimed or indigent people”. In later decades, these graves were sometimes exposed during construction on the

property. Workers would simply bury the remains next to the foundations of the new homes.

Certainly, one might argue, health care in Ontario has improved since those dark times. Many would agree, though, that we still have a long way to go. Think about Covid and the isolation and treatment of our senior citizens in certain long term care homes. Unless we pay close attention to our health care system, darker times may be just around the corner. The past will surely come to call.

For more information on life and death in the Waterloo County House of Industry & Refuge, check out <https://waterloohouseofrefuge.ca/> or the excellent three part article by Rych Mills in the Waterloo Region Record.

Perth County had its own House of Refuge which once stood on the site of Spruce Lodge. For further information, check out “History of Perth County, 1825-1902” by William Johnston or contact the Stratford Perth Archives.

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.

From Striving to Savoring: Shifting Your Mindset with Chronic



IRENE ROTH

Times Freelance Columnist

Savoring life means consciously and intentionally paying attention to and enjoying the positive experiences in our lives. It involves focusing on the present moment, cultivating gratitude, and appreciating the small things in life that bring us joy and fulfillment.

It's important to note that savoring life is a practice that requires effort and intentionality. It may take time to shift your mindset and habits from focusing on what's wrong or lacking to appreciating and enjoying what you do have. However, with practice and perseverance,

savoring life can become a habit that brings greater joy and fulfillment to your life.

For individuals with chronic illnesses, it can be challenging to shift from striving to savoring. Here are some tips that can help:

Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness can help individuals focus on the present moment, which can be particularly helpful when dealing with chronic illness. Mindfulness can help individuals appreciate the small things in life and find joy in the present moment.

Set realistic expectations

It's important for individuals with chronic illnesses to set realistic expectations for themselves. This can help prevent disappointment and frustration, which can lead to a focus on striving rather than savoring.

Practice gratitude

Practicing gratitude can help individuals focus on what they do have, rather than what they don't. This can be particularly helpful for individuals with chronic illnesses who may feel like they are missing out on things that others can do.

Build a support system

Having a support system can be crucial for individuals with chronic illnesses. Having people around who understand and support them can help them focus on savoring life rather than constantly striving.

Find joy in the small things

Finding joy in the small things in life can be an effective way to savor life. This could be spending time with loved ones, listening to music, or simply enjoying a favorite food or drink.

Engage in activities you enjoy

Engaging in activities that bring you joy, and fulfillment can help you savor life. This could be a hobby, a creative pursuit, or even a simple activity like taking a walk in nature.

Practice self-compassion

Chronic illness can be challenging, and it's important to be kind to yourself. Practicing self-compassion can help you be more patient and understanding with yourself, which can in turn help you focus on savoring life rather than constantly striving.

Take care of your physical and mental health

Taking care of your physical and mental health is crucial when it comes to savoring life with a chronic illness. This could involve seeking medical treatment, practicing good self-care, and seeking professional support if needed.

Set boundaries

Setting boundaries can help you avoid overexerting yourself and becoming overwhelmed, which can make it difficult to savor life. This could involve saying no to certain commitments or prioritizing your needs and well-being.

Focus on the present moment

It can be easy to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets about the past when dealing with a chronic illness. Focusing on the present moment and being mindful can help you appreciate what you have right now.

Practice acceptance

Accepting your illness and its limitations can be a key step in savoring life. This doesn't mean giving up on improving your health or seeking treatment, but rather accepting that there may be things you cannot do or control.

Keep a gratitude journal

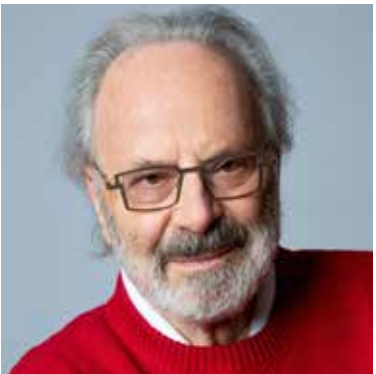
Keeping a journal where you write down things you are grateful for each day can help you focus on the positive aspects of life. This can be particularly helpful on tough days when it may be harder to savor life.

Remember, savoring life is a process, and it may take time to shift your mindset from one of striving to one of savoring. Be patient and kind to yourself and seek support and resources when needed.

Further, savoring life is not about ignoring the challenges of chronic illness or pretending they don't exist. It's about finding joy and meaning despite those challenges and focusing on what you can do rather than what you can't.

Overall, it's important for individuals with chronic illnesses to remember that savoring life is a journey, and it takes time and effort to shift from a mindset of striving to one of savoring. However, with practice and the right support, it is possible to find joy and fulfillment in life despite chronic illness.

PUSHING BOUNDARIES: Secrets of the Heart The Significance of the Heart-Brain Connection



THOMAS R VERNY, MD

Times Contributor

Heart Quotes

A loving heart is the truest wisdom.

Charles Dickens

Only do what your heart tells you.

Martin Luther

The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing.

Blaise Pascal

Common Heart Expressions

Follow your heart

If you find it in your heart

He died of a broken heart

Eat your heart out

A bleeding heart

A faint heart

Introduction

Consider these common expressions for a moment. Col-

lectively, they assume that the heart is not only a machine that pumps blood but also the seat of emotions (broken heart), reason (Pascal) and personality (bleeding heart.). Nobody says, "Follow your liver." Only a comedian would say, "The pancreas has its reasons of which reason knows nothing."

While these expressions and metaphors about the heart reflect centuries of folk wisdom, it seems that the ideas we acquaint in our collective unconscious with the heart as a center of thought, feeling and personality are closer to recent discoveries in neuro-cardiology than science previously assumed.

Not just a Pump

The heart contains an intrinsic nervous system that exhibits both short and long-term memory functions. The intrinsic nervous system of the heart consists of approximately 40,000 neurons called sensory neurites which relay information to the brain. It is possible that these neurons play a pivotal part in memory transfer.

What is truly surprising is the discovery that the heart also functions as an endocrine organ. In other words, just like the thyroid gland or the adrenal gland, it produces several hormones

including the cardiac natriuretic peptide. This hormone exerts its effect on the blood vessels, on the kidneys, the adrenal glands, and on a large number of regulatory regions in the brain.

More recently, it was determined that the heart also secretes oxytocin, commonly known as the love or bonding hormone. Concentrations of oxytocin in the heart were found to be as high as those in the brain.

The Heart and Mental Disorders

Previous studies have linked negative emotions, including depression, anxiety and anger, to a heightened risk of heart disease. Because these emotions tend to overlap and coexist, it's been difficult to assign a relative importance to any one of them.

When it comes to myocardial infarction, the medical term for a heart attack, evidence is accumulating that shows that if a person develops a major depression following a heart attack, a rather common occurrence, they will be consistently at a three-fold increased risk of death.

According to new research from Rice University and Northwestern University, people who recently lost a spouse are more

likely to have sleep disturbances that make them more vulnerable to develop inflammations which in turn raises their risk to develop cardiovascular illness and death.

These are examples of the perfectly designed eco system our body represents. The moment one of its elements changes everything else is affected. And hardly ever in a good way.

Sustained stress, anger and anxiety can disrupt cardiac function by changing the heart's electrical system, hastening atherosclerosis, and increasing systemic inflammation. "But negative emotions are only one-half of the equation," says Laura Kubzansky, Harvard School of Public Health. "It looks like there is a benefit of positive mental health that goes beyond the fact that you're not depressed."

In a 2007 study, Kubzansky followed more than 6,000 men and women aged 25 to 74 for 20 years. The protective effect of emotional vitality was distinct and measurable, even when taking into account such wholesome behaviors as not smoking and regular exercise. Kubzansky has found that optimism cuts the risk of coronary heart disease by half.

Conclusion

Research in the relatively new discipline of neurocardiology has confirmed that the heart acts as a sophisticated information encoding and processing center that enables it to learn, remember, and make functional decisions independently of the brain. Additionally, numerous studies have demonstrated that cardiac signals to the brain affect autonomic regulatory centers and higher brain centers involved in cognition and mood regulation.

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

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

Web-crawling with the elephant



SHEILA CLARKE

Times Freelance Columnist

We've traveled the web of life in many directions, exploring the connections between all living things- including us. We've been underground, above ground, into wetlands (squish), into natural gardens, and into the Donut Shop, looking at Doughnut Economics. In theory, this is a column about the Climate Crisis facing all life on this planet.

It's time we looked at the "E" question, the Elephant in the Room. The Elephant's name is Emissions. From the beginning, the climate crisis has been an Emissions story, with consequences for all life on Earth. For a while now I've been following the Guardian newspaper (UK) Environment newsletter, Down to Earth, published weekly.

Every week they list the Carbon (CO2) parts per million in the atmosphere, the primary cause of global warming, what we know as Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions. I've been tracking it for about 6 months.

In that time, it has been steadily increasing, a tenth of a decimal point at a time. I started at 418.4 ppm (parts per million), in March it was at 418.5 ppm, and this April it clocked in at 418.7 ppm. The safe level is 350 ppm, a level we passed in 1990.

Carbon emissions come largely from the burning of fossil fuel- gas and oil. The engines of the world, the ones that support the many things we buy, the vehicles that transport those goods - and us, from planes to buses to trains to cars- the engines that drive our world- and continue to grow that carbon ppm count.

27 per cent of emissions come from transportation, cars and trucks, big and small. 23 per cent come from Industrial engines creating "things" of all kinds- necessary, and unnecessary. A further 11 per cent stem from agriculture.

We can try to wait it out, but every indication says that we need to act, and soon. Maybe it's time to talk about the Elephant. We have a super-power: we are the consumers who create carbon emissions in what we use, what we do, and what we buy. Wait- you mean that WE, plain ordinary citizens have the power to turn this ship around?

Yes, we do! Decisions are actions. We can decide to ignore the climate crisis, or we can decide to tackle it. Let's decide to reduce our GHG emissions, our carbon output. We can make:

Individual Decisions:

I'll switch all my lights to LED.

I'll connect devices and "standby" appliances to power bars that can be turned off at night. (Stand-by appliances: game consoles, printers, dvd players, computers, extra TVs, microwaves, consume energy staying "ready" to spring into action!).

I'll use the sweater method- Drop my thermostat by a couple of degrees to find a level I can handle with long sleeves and a sweater.

I'll use the sun for light and heat and turn off unnecessary lights. If possible, I'll heat the room I'm in, and close the door. In the summer, I'll use the shades to keep the house cooler, and only use the A/C while I'm home.

I'll make travel decisions! I'll aim for an energy efficient car and I'll try to use public transportation when I can, instead of a car. I'll try for less air travel (It's a biggie- planes have huge emission impact. I'll check out Canadian holidays! awesome!)

As possible, I'll make my home energy efficient: insulation, heat pump, geothermal heating, weather-stripping, new windows (federal grants are available).

I'll explore re-use options- seeking "pre-loved" items where possible, and items that can be repaired, not tossed in the garbage. I'll try to buy locally- and Canadian, and reduce unnecessary consuming. Think need vs want.

I'll try to reduce my plastic consumption. Plastics are created from fossil fuels. I'll avoid plastic wrapping and packaging (and tell stores why!) and carry a re-usable mug or water bottle.

Engagement Decisions:

I'll find my community of other Emissions-busters. I'll join a group that is working for climate change, or at least get on the newsletter list. (Climate Momentum comes to mind :)

I'll talk to others about my concerns. I'll watch for Climate Cafes where hints are shared and speakers come to share ideas. I'll check with the Stratford Library; they regularly feature climate-related events.

I'll pitch in to help with environmental change to moderate warming trends: tree-planting! Native plants, shrubs and trees in my garden!

Speaking Up Decisions:

I'll encourage and support my municipal government in emissions-reduction, in the City fleets and buildings, and in the community at large.

I'll encourage my municipal government to meet and even surpass current net zero emissions targets.

I'll encourage my municipality to develop a policy that encourages biodiversity through native tree, shrub and perennial planting, to help moderate the effects of GHG emissions, and to support habitat.

So do we really need to do this? Won't technology come up with something? Won't the planet heal itself? Well, yes

and no and yes. We do really need to act, and no, there really isn't time for technology to stop the amount of carbon emissions we create. Yes, the planet will heal itself by eventually becoming uninhabitable for most life as we know it, until our massive carbon production grinds to a halt.

Indigenous cultures talk about making our actions responsible for at least seven generations into the future- how wise- and how important in today's world.

That Elephant in the Room, GHG/Carbon Emissions is tough,- but so are we. If we make up our minds to reduce GHG emissions, we can do it. Use your super power! Make your own emission-busting decisions, Engage with others who care, and Speak Up.

If you missed the Earth Day Street Party, there are two places you might want to check:

<https://engagestratford.ca/community-emissions-action-plan-survey>
and <https://www.stratford.ca/en/live-here/climate-change.aspx>

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

Stratford Master Gardeners hosts native tree and shrub sale

The ReLeaf Stratford project led by the Stratford and Area Master Gardeners will hold a native tree and shrub sale on May 13 at Avondale Church parking lot on Huntingdon Street from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Last year's sale was so successful that most species were sold out within the first hour. "Our group has increased the number of trees and shrubs available this year based on the amazing support we received from the community last year," said Don Farwell. "We know more about the native species that people want to plant in their yards and will have popular shrubs like serviceberry, dwarf honeysuckle and new jersey tea available." A total of seventeen different species suited to our local area will be on offer.

This year all native trees and shrubs have been ordered from two of the largest wholesale growers of native plants in Ontario. A description of the native species available and pricing is available on the ReLeaf project website at www.releafstratford.ca

"People in our community are concerned about climate change and declines in insect

and bird species. They want to improve the ecological impact of their property by increasing the biodiversity of their gardens with native plantings. This sale provides an opportunity for them to purchase native species to improve biodiversity in Stratford."

Last year, the ReLeaf Stratford project planted over 2,022 native trees and shrubs to increase biodiversity in Stratford with help from community organizations including the Stratford and District Horticultural Society, Stratford Field Naturalists, The Kiwanis Club of Stratford, the Rotary Club of Stratford and the Canadian Federation of University Women of Stratford as well as individuals in our community who supported our project by planting native trees and shrubs in their yards or by helping at public planting events.

The Master Gardeners gratefully acknowledge the financial support received for their public plantings from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and the Donald McTavish Conservation Fund held within the Stratford Perth Community Foundation.



LEGION 'SPRING TEA'

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Stratford Legion Branch 8 hosted 77 ladies, gentlemen and children to 'Spring Tea' on Sunday, April 30th. It was a very nice afternoon with door prizes and give aways. The crowd enjoyed great company, fancy sandwiches and deserts plus the tea of course, all prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary. Everyone was dressed up for afternoon tea. The Ladies Auxiliary also held a Bake Sale, and the goodies were all gone by the end of the afternoon. Door prizes were donated by Joyland's Billiards & Games, Cozyn's Garden Gallery, Watsons Bazaar, Fundamentals Books & Toys, FanFare Books, Rheo Thompson Candies and Legion Members. Zehrs provided beautiful flower centre pieces which went home with our guests and Treasures assisted with ticket sales. Thank you so much to these Stratford businesses for helping make the day a success and to those attending.

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Great gardens, spectacular sculptures, and more



PAUL KNOWLES

Times Contributor

“Have you come to see the Rodins, or the azaleas?”

The good news was, we didn't have to choose. And the even better news – as wonderful as Rodin sculptures and exuberant azaleas might be, there was so much more to enjoy, as well, during our visit to the Brookgreen Gardens in

Myrtle Beach.

When you think of Myrtle Beach, you probably have one of two ideas in your mind – the beautiful, 96-kilometer-long beach known as the “Grand Strand”, or the 90 or so golf courses in the area.

But there is more – and one of the best of the “more” is Brookgreen Gardens.

Full disclosure – the Rodin exhibition, featuring 46 of the sculptor's amazing works, was a temporary feature at the garden. However, although the Rodins may have moved on, that only leaves 1,400 sculptures, by 300 important sculptors, that are part of the permanent collection at Brookgreen. Five hundred and fifty are currently on display throughout the extensive gardens.

So whether you are a garden lover or an art aficionado, you will

love it here. And probably emerge after many wonderful hours as a fan of both.

Brookgreen Gardens came into being in the 1930s, the project of Archer and Anna Hyatt Huntington. Archer had inherited significant wealth; Anna was a noted sculptor. Together, they purchased four former plantations in the Myrtle Beach area, and founded what has become the most significant sculpture garden in the world.

I know – “plantations” is a hot-button word, and it should be. But I was impressed that the property includes an area that was, in fact, a slave village, with all the appropriate information about that horrendous period in history. There is no ducking reality, here.

There are several elements to the gardens. The largest area open to the public is, in fact, the garden.

There are also exhibition spaces, and the Lowcountry History and Wildlife Preserve, where the true story of the property is told, and where you can see native animals and birds – including a wonderful flock of Night Herons, one of my favourite southern birds. There are also excursions into the tidal creek wetland areas, via boat or ATV-style vehicles.

The gardens themselves

echo the concept of British landscape gardens. There are perennial and annual beds, but the overall idea is big, really big, with large sculptures, trees, shrubs, and panoramic views.

While art might be seen as the primary focus here, the horticultural aspect is equally strong – Brookgreen has been named one of the Top 10 Botanical Gardens in the U.S.

Guided tours are offered – our volunteer guide, Elaine Hakinson, was a wealth of information, and an enthusiastic fan of the gardens.

She told us that the reason for her unflagging delight is that Brookgreen is “ever-changing and amazing.” In fact, over the next three years, the garden will add an enormous conservatory, yet one more reason to visit an already spectacular destination. On a smaller scale, the sculptures in the gardens change a bit, too – between five and 15 new sculptures are added each year.

Overall, the place is wildly impressive. But it is the sum of many wonderful, unique parts – like the “Live Oak Allee”, a broad path under a canopy of those huge, quintessentially southern trees, well decorated with Spanish moss. Which, by the way, is neither Spanish more moss – it's an air plant, a bromeliad. Tuck that fact away for your next trivia party.

In addition to so much art and such terrific gardens, there is also poetry throughout the garden. Archer Huntington was a poet, and works he wrote or chose are subtly displayed throughout the garden.

Some of the sculptures are beautifully decorative, but others flat-out demand that visitors stop and contemplate the message. My favourite is called “Man Carving His Own Destiny”, by sculptor Albin Polasek. It depicts a man chiseling his own figure from a

block of limestone – an image stating the need for us to carve out our own destiny. I was surprised to learn that the life-sized work was donated by the artist, to Brookgreen.

One of the most impressive sculptures is entitled “Pegasus”, brought with considerably difficulty to Brookgreen in 1950. It's enormous – the granite sculpture had to be divided into three sections, each weighing 20 tons. It was created by artist Laura Gardin Fraser.

Elaine Hakinson is one of dozens of dedicated volunteers at Brookgreen, which also has a staff of 15 full-time horticulturalists, as well as professional art experts and curators.

There are a few intriguing twists, when it comes to visiting Brookgreen Gardens. First, admission is relatively inexpensive – \$20 adult, \$18 seniors, \$10 for kids 4-12. But here's the trick – your ticket is good for seven days, and if you are visiting Myrtle Beach with your family, one day in the sculpture garden and another in the wildlife area would make for two great days out.

Second, although this is a garden – which might indicate that winter would be the down time – the biggest nights of the year come during the Christmas/New Year's season. The event is “Nights of a Thousand Candles” – and the nights sell out months ahead of time. That's even though it can, in fact, get pretty chilly in South Carolina.

But people flock to the event because, whatever time of year it may be, Brookgreen Gardens is simply a magical place to be.

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@golden.net.

While supply lasts, see paint counter for details.

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(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)

“Man Carving His Own Destiny”, by sculptor Albin Polasek.

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Riddles

What did the mother rope say to her child?
Don't be knotty.

Who is bigger? Mr. Bigger, Mrs. Bigger, or their baby?
The baby, because he is a little bigger.

Why do mother kangaroos hate rainy days?
Because the baby had to play inside

Why did the monster's mother knit him three socks?
She heard he grew another foot.

Why did mommy's gift arrive the day after Mother's Day?
It was choco-LATE

What did the mother broom say to the baby broom?
It's time to go to sweep

Why did the kids give their mom a blanket for Mother's Day?
Because they thought she was the coolest mom

What did the mommy cat say when her kittens brought her warm milk on Mother's Day?
This is purrrrrfect

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 35



Pet of the Month



DAPHNE

Meet Daphne, a beautiful, medium size, mix breed female dog who is looking for her loving family! 6-year-old Daphne is a shy and nervous girl who takes some time to warm up to new people, but once she feels comfortable, she is a total snuggle bug who loves to cuddle and be close to her humans.

Daphne has some special dietary needs due to her allergies, and will require a hypoallergenic diet for the rest of her life to manage her condition. If you think you can give Daphne a home, please fill out an adoption survey at kwsphumane.ca.

Word Search

SPRING FLOWERS

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

- DAFFODILS
- TULIPS
- HYACINTH
- CROCUS
- LILY
- IRIS
- FORSYTHIA
- AZALEA
- LILAC
- MAGNOLIA
- SUNFLOWER
- DAISY
- SNOWDROPS
- PRIMROSE
- WALLFLOWERS
- LUNGWORT
- HEATHER
- FOXGLOVES



PATRICK FERYN

April 30th, 1956 - April 23rd, 2023

Patrick Feryn of Stratford, Ontario died peacefully surrounded by his loved ones on Sunday, April 23rd at the age of 66. Loving husband, partner and best friend to Jane, adoring Dad to Seana (Tyson) and Tessa (Corey) and dear Opie to Lily and Flynn. Proud son of Monique Feryn (nee DeBrabandere) and Louis Feryn (passed away in 2015), cherished brother to Elisabeth (Stewart), Susan (Kim), Michael (Jacinta) and Caroline (Ron), uncle and a friend to many with his infectious smile and quiet humour.

A kind and compassionate individual, Pat lived fiercely, never taking a moment for granted even after his diagnosis of PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy). He had a great love for adventure, travelling to many corners of the world with a particular fondness for travelling by paddle, bike, on skis or on foot. His family and friends were forever at the forefront of his mind and every choice or road taken was done so with them in his thoughts; even at the very end. It is worth noting that he was rare among people in that Pat was never heard to ever speak a bad word about anyone.

Pat enjoyed a productive 35-year career farming and supporting his clients as a consulting agronomist. He graduated from the University of Guelph (BSc.) He was active as a volunteer on many professional committees, including chair of the Soil and Water Sub Committee of the Soil and Water Management Research Corporation for several years, and a member of the Source Water Protection Committee since its inception in 2006 as the Agricultural Representative. Early on he participated in St. Joseph's Church Mission Committee. He was an active member of Stratford Rotary Club and the recent recipient of a Paul Harris Award, especially for his work as chair of the International Committee. Pat always had a profound interest in international travel and concern for third world issues. He had a special interest in the work of COMMIT, working in Nicaragua with Dr. Doug Thompson and Janice Rauser.

In his younger years Pat was a BIG BROTHER, and taught Jack Rabbit's Cross Country Skiing at Wildwood. Pat took great pleasure coaching his daughters at Hoops for Fun and Summer Soccer throughout their youth. The family spent many canoe camping trips in the wilderness parks in Ontario and BC and Alberta. He loved his annual wilderness canoe trips with his best buddies every year for over 30 years, and kayak adventures in Mexico, Belize and Cuba with Jane.

Pat chose to use MAID (Medical Assistance In Dying) to end his struggle with PSP. He was surrounded by the love and support of his family and closest friends. He gave the greatest gift of all, by donating his liver, kidneys, lungs and eyes to organ recipients and his brain and pancreas for medical research.

His accomplishments and continued desire to better the planet is certain to carry on, an eternal fingerprint representing the impact he had on others.

Pat lived spectacularly and will be missed terribly by all who knew him.

A celebration of life will be held on Saturday, June 10th at the Feryn homestead with further details to come. If you are interested in joining us in this celebration, please RSVP to <https://pp.events/celebratingpatferyn>. and we will forward further details closer to the event.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to:

- The Parkinson's Society of Southwestern Ontario <https://psso.ca>
- COMMIT through the Rotary Club of Stratford Foundation. <https://commitwithnphnicaragua.simplesite.com/417501794>
- Huron Perth United Way <https://perthhuron.unitedway.ca>

Arrangements entrusted to W.G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron Street Stratford Ontario N5A5T7 (519) 271-7411 www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com

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COMING EVENTS

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WALK FOR ALZHEIMER'S
Saturday, May 27; 10 a.m.
Upper Queen's Park
Walk to support more than 3,100 people living with dementia in Huron and Perth County. Register at walkforalzheimers.ca

THE BEARDS & THE BREWS MARKET
Saturday, June 3; 12-4 p.m.
Shakespeare Brewing Company, 2178 Line 34, Shakespeare
Free admission. 20+ vendors to shop.

STRATFORD TOYS, GAMES, AND COLLECTIBLES SHOW
Sunday, June 4; 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
Quality Inn, 1144 Ontario St., Stratford
Admission is \$2, children under 12 free with an accompanying adult. We will have over 40 tables full.

FISH FRY
Wednesday, June 7; 4-7 p.m.
Tavistock Men's Club Hall, 78 Woodstock St. N., Tavistock
Dine-in or take out. Adults \$25,

children (6-12) \$15. Get tickets from club members or call 519-655-2286 or email tavistockmensclub@outlook.com

LOVE ACROSS BORDERS
Wednesday, June 14; 7-8:30 p.m.
Avondale United Church, 194 Avondale Ave.
Author Anna Lekas Miller will read from her new book. All proceeds go to Stratford Hope to support a refugee family. Register at provocation.ca/2023-events-stratford

SUDOKU

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

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) Goldie Hawn
- 2) Calcutta
- 3) Marie Curie
- 4) Carnations
- 5) Gin
- 6) Princess Diana
- 7) ABBA
- 8) Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show
- 9) Wilma
- 10) Paul Simon

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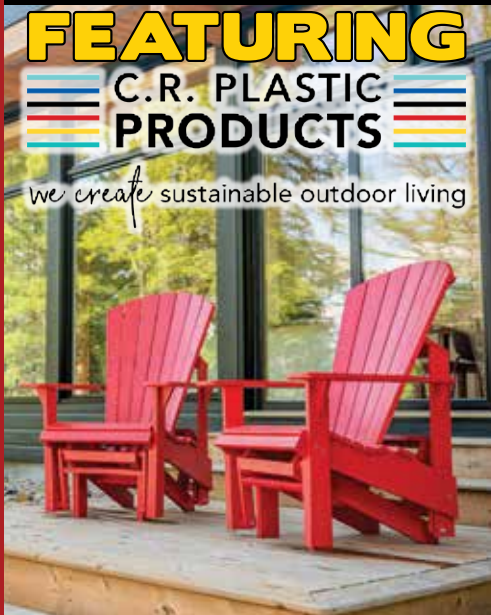
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