

STRATFORD **TIMES**

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OCTOBER 13, 2023

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L'Arche Stratford's 8th Annual Walk'n Roll!



AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The annual Walk 'n Roll in support of L'Arche Stratford is coming up on October 21, with registration beginning at 9:30 a.m. and the walk promptly starting at 10 a.m.

With this being L'Arche Stratford's fiftieth anniversary year, they too will be adding a "bit of fifty flavour to the event," says Stephanie Calma, L'Arche Stratford Executive Director.

Walkers are asked to meet at Upper Queens Park Bandshell, and once started, you can enjoy a walk around Lake Victoria and head back to the bandshell for remarks.

This year's event will also include an online event which takes place through the month of October where everyone is welcome to participate by walking or donating to the cause.

With a fundraising goal of thirteen thousand dollars for the Walk 'n Roll event, Calma says that's not the only reason to run: "Our mission is to bring the community together, not just our community, but the wider community as well."

Recently the demolition started on the new L'Arche building on Britannia Street, which has been a huge milestone, and now L'Arche Stratford has their sights set on construction dates for the new building, "our big focus is to finalize construction timelines and dates,

CONTINUED TO PAGE 4



IN MEMORY Skateboarder takes on the halfpipe with memorial painting for loved friend, Sam Beauchamp. See story on page 6. (AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Stratford House of Blessing Empty Bowls Event begins October 23rd

LISA CHESTER
Times Correspondent

Stratford House of Blessing is thrilled to announce the annual Empty Bowls event returns October 23rd in a more intimate way. This year the event will take place onsite at the foodbank as a means to bring the public closer to where their support goes.

"We wanted it to be more of an awareness campaign

this year because we're finding that our food donations have dropped and we have had to purchase more with money. We really want to make the community aware of what we do and how we help. So we are inviting the people in this year to give them a chance to see where their money is going and how their money has a direct local impact," said Kelsey Lauerson, resource coordinator for Stratford House of Blessing.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3

CHARITY DRIVE

Help us on October 15th

In memory of Ipsita Pattanaik, PAPA JOHNS Stratford and Stratford General Hospital request all the Stratford people to support us on **OCTOBER 15th** for a charity drive. The amount you spend at the store on that day, a part of it will be going to Stratford General Hospital and rest for her foundation. See the story within the paper about Ipsita.

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Stratford House of Blessing Empty Bowls Event begins October 23rd

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Additionally, they didn't have the resources to dedicate to a large scale event as has been done in the past. Their focus has been on internal demands. Where in previous years there have been well over 700 bowls, this year there will be 200 available to the public. Each bowl is beautifully decorated by local artisans and can be purchased for \$20 each.

This is a substantial decrease in their fundraising goal but their focus for the event this year is public awareness.

"We want people to be aware that we are here to help anyone that needs it, but that we also need help from our community. The noticeable decrease in scale kind of does indicate that we are looking for donations," said Lauerson.

Several local restaurants have partnered with the foodbank for the event, so the public can experience the journey from an empty bowl to a nourished soul. When purchasing a bowl, you'll have the opportunity to select a complimentary food sample from the local restaurant partners: Soup Surreal, Joe's Diner, Black Angus Bakery & Catering, and Bowl Bar (Keystone Hospitality).

The event presents an opportunity to those interested to come out and give a hand. "We are always looking for volunteers to come help, because our organization depends on our volunteers. We serve



(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

BOWLS FOR A CAUSE

Table at SHOB displaying some of the bowls available for purchase

quite a few people and we don't have a large staff. We have seven. We serve more than 1,000 people a month, that includes the people that come in as well as we offer delivery services. So the logistics and making sure there is enough food coming in and getting out, and keeping the lights on takes a lot of resources, so we do need volunteers," said Lauerson.

For those that cannot attend the event, which runs from the 23rd to the 27th, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., there remains the means to donate financially. You can donate online by navigating to their website shob.org and there is a "Donate" button there. Donors are also invited to come into the building to make cash or credit card donation. There are several ways to donate

listed under the "Donate" button that will meet the needs of all.

"Stratford House of Blessing Food Bank extends a warm invitation to anyone interested in learning more about their work. You're encouraged to stop by and see what they are doing, even if you don't plan to purchase a bowl," concludes Lauerson.

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Introducing Stratford's new Fire Chief, Neil Anderson

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The City of Stratford has appointed Neil Anderson as the new Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, effective September 26, 2023.

Anderson has served as Stratford's Deputy Fire Chief since March 2017 and, during that time, has also worked as the City's Community Emergency Management Co-ordinator (CEMC). Anderson also has been sitting in as Acting Fire Chief since July 2023.

Before that, he served in the Canadian Forces for nearly 30 years starting in 1989; Anderson joked, "That will give away my age, I guess." He worked in various fire service roles all across the country, including BC, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Ontario.

Anderson says his new role is an exciting one as this has been his passion for his whole life. However, in order to work towards his goal, he had to start as a Canadian Forces engineering officer, "I always wanted to be a fire chief. And I knew you couldn't change anything at the level I was at; therefore, after my ten years of firefighting [for the Canadian Forces], I was commissioned to an engineering officer and the job of an airfield engineering officer."

At that time, his job was to oversee and manage sustainability at the airfield. "My job was to create infrastructure at the airfield to make it sustainable, everything from electrical, plumbing, carpentry, as well as the airfield itself," said Anderson.

Later, working as deputy fire chief in Stratford gave Anderson a look inside the Stratford Fire station and helped him understand ways he could implement change for the better, "the only people who need us are the people in danger, so I want to be more accessible to people in the community."

Anderson wants to allow the public to access what's going on at the fire station

and engage with community members on a more personal basis, "I'd like to encourage [the firefighters] to go down to the waterfront, park the vehicle, have a coffee or an ice cream so families can walk around the vehicles and see it in person," he continued, "I encourage them to go out and shop locally for groceries, I think that's a great way to get them out there for the community to see."

One aspect of this is that it's important for the community to know and understand where their tax dollars are going, says Anderson, "Just like everything during COVID, the firefighter gear in the last two years has gone up over \$1,000 just for the jacket and the pants. That doesn't include the helmets, the boots, the gloves and all the other gear needed." He noted that this could increase costs upwards of \$10,000 annually just to fit new firefighters or replace older equipment.

Things to look forward to with the Stratford Fire Department is their regular community involvement with local charities, and Anderson notes he'd like to host an open house for the community in the new year as well, "I'm looking forward to hopefully having an open house in the New Year. We haven't had one for years, since before COVID-19 in fact. I'd like to show the public what our capabilities are and some of our equipment; it's pretty cool!"

Anderson notes his excitement about the new position, "I'm excited about the new position, excited to get a new deputy to help me out and work alongside with myself and look forward to a vision of pride and ownership in the fire department," he continued, "I want the firefighters to be more involved with the community and the community to appreciate all that we can do and what we have available for them."

Look for Anderson and the other Stratford Fire Fighters throughout the community this month for National Fire Prevention Month!



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Neil Anderson, new Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief for Stratford

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STRATFORD TIMES

Stratford's Community Newspaper

Established 2021

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stratfordtimes@gmail.com
www.stratfordtimes.com

Editor

Stewart Grant

Graphic Design / Layout

Sarah Cairns

Administrative

Wendy Lamond, June Grant, Cindy Boakes

Advertising Inquiries

Contact stratfordtimes@gmail.com

or call 519-655-2341

Contributors

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



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Letters to the Editor: Please email to stratfordtimes@gmail.com, or send to our physical office at the St. Marys Independent, PO Box 2310, 36 Water Street South, St. Marys, ON N4X 1A2.

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Stratford has a housing problem: this group thinks it can make big changes.

A new Stratford citizen's group will soon contribute to the discussion around the housing crisis in our city. SAHA, the Stratford Affordable Housing Alliance, formed in response to the the lack of appropriate housing for Stratford's residents and workers. Its fast-growing membership is becoming more active in the community.

In collaboration with The Local Community Food Centre, the group has begun a series of community consultations on housing. The first meeting, held on July 27, resulted in an ample list of problems and proposed solutions. They held their second meeting recently to set goals for action.

"Stratford has a great and storied history of community activism, on heritage preservation, on the environment and now on solving the housing affordability crisis," explains Mike Sullivan a member of the group. "We are uniquely positioned as a small city with plenty of spare land, after years of annexations. SAHA is asking that Stratford's council establish a plan to build housing that everyone can afford, while ensuring that the land stays in public control."

Group member Nicole Andre is clear about the group's goals. "We're petitioning City Council to work with us

in creating and implementing a Proportionally Mixed Income (PMI) Affordable Housing Plan, that centres Community Land Trusts (CLTs) as a way to keep publicly-owned land controlled by our community and the costs of our homes protected from arbitrary fluctuations in the market."

Jason Davis, a diesel technician who rents in Stratford, agrees. He has given a presentation on the problem to Stratford City Council, and is optimistic that SAHA will have input into upcoming decisions on housing availability and affordability, and hopes to develop an amicable working relationship with councillors. "All we have heard from the province and federal government is that we have to build more housing, yet we keep building and housing keeps going up in cost. We need to be building the right kinds of housing. I think we can achieve a great deal at the municipal level."

The SAHA webpage (bit.ly/SaySomethingSAHA) has recently opened to answer questions about the group's progress and intentions. The site contains a petition in support of the group's goals. Interested residents can also keep up with SAHA by subscribing to their updates, or contact them directly at affordablestratford@gmail.com.

Letter to the Editor

Good news: My wife and I enjoy visiting Stratford often for the festival, the music, the arts, the books and more. Not so good news: We object to the boorish, immature behaviour of drivers of overly loud vehicles that are a collective blight on the town and its streetscape. Please

maintain the former and do what you can to curb the latter.

Andrew Vowles
Guelph, Ont.

To the editor

A recent decision by the manager of the Community Services Department to cancel Bingo Country's lease at the rec complex with only two months' notice is shocking.

Bingo Country has been a reliable tenant at the rec complex since it opened 15 years ago and at the fairgrounds for many years before that. Two months' notice is nowhere near enough time for bingo to find a new venue.

This decision is clearly wrong for many reasons:

- Bingo is a primary social outing for many seniors in town. Surely causing more social isolation for seniors is something the city doesn't want.
- Many small charities in town rely on volunteering at bingo as a significant source of fundraising. This decision will rob them of funds and inevitably reduce their ability to do the good work that they do in our community.
- The city is turning away a tenant who has reliably brought income to the city for decades. That income will

be difficult to replace.

The CAO and her staff run the day-to-day operations of the city and council has an oversight role, similar to a CEO and board of directors at a corporation. Most of the time, city staff make good decisions. However, when such a poor decision is made, it is city council's duty to question that decision and ask staff to correct it. To their credit, Councilors Sebben and Henderson did just that at a recent council meeting. The rest of council seemed uninterested or even frightened to question staff.

Overseeing staff is arguably the primary duty of city council. I encourage citizens to contact these councilors with two questions: How can you possibly support this decision? And just how bad a decision must be made before you will fulfill your duty to oversee city staff?

David Yates
Stratford

To the editor

I attended the Stratford council meeting on Monday, September 11.

After the council covered several items, they proceeded to the leasing of the bingo hall. With very limited discussion, Mayor and Council, voted not to renew, or extend the lease on the bingo hall.

I have to give two council members, Bonnie Henderson and Cody Sebben, my highest praise for trying to bring options to the council that would resolve the bingo hall problem. It is unfortunate, everything they proposed was voted down.

My respect for the Mayor and councilors has dropped to a low level, seeing how they handled the problem.

For the mayor and council to throw the seniors under the bus, and trash their daily activity location at the bingo hall is hard to believe. This action tells me that the Mayor and council have no respect for our seniors.

Their decision will continue to fester to the next election where it will rear its head and remind the voters what the Mayor and council did to the seniors that Monday, September 11, 2023, the day they trashed the seniors.

Lorne Bolton
Stratford, Ontario

L'Arche Stratford's 8th Annual Walk'n Roll!

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

so that's where we are right now in terms of progress," notes Calma.

L'Arche Stratford has had a very successful year of fundraising so far, getting a one-million-dollar donation from a single donor, which has elevated their dreams and goals for the new property, they have now raised over 70% of their new, final goal, "We've been able to dream about how to pay off the property now

because we've had a very successful year."

Calma notes the fundraising success is due to the loving community and friends and she says, "We're not done yet," with regards to meeting their goal of paying off the mortgage of the new building.

To participate in the Walk 'n Roll in support of L'Arche Stratford, please visit their website at www.larchestratford.ca.

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Hundreds of athletes show up for SK8 JAM for Sam

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The skateboarding event in memory of Sam Beauchamp at the Stratford Skate Park raised over \$2,900 this past weekend, and athletes across Stratford attended the event to show their support and their skills.

Alex Sparling, one of the event organizers, took to Instagram to thank everyone for showing up in support of a dear friend, "From the bottom of our hearts, thank you, everyone. Hundreds of people came along, which was more than we ever thought it could be. We are forever grateful."

Sam Beauchamp, a community member and friend of the Stratford Skate Park community, died peacefully at Rotary Hospice on August 27, 2023, when he was just 27. Sparling noted, "Sam changed what it means to be a member of the skateboarding community in Stratford."

Lucie Stuart, Director of Fund Development and Stewardship at Stratford Perth Hospice Foundation, gives her thanks to all those who showed support, "What an amazing achievement from a day of fun," she said, "When we first met with the organizers, we mentioned that \$350 pays for one day of care for one resident. They decided to work towards that as a fundraising goal in memory of their much-loved former skate enthusiast, Sam. It's no surprise to any of us here that they far surpassed that goal. Their positive energy, enthusiasm and genuine love for their former member ensured the day's incredible success. Their fundraising success is a reminder that donations of all amounts add up to have a tremendous impact. Rotary Hospice is a home where every moment matters, and every donation counts."

Congrats to the winners of the SK8 Jam for Sam competitions, and a big thank you goes out to organizers on behalf of the Rotary Hospice.



SHOWING SOME SKILL

Rhodes Babcock shows off his backflip on a scooter, a very tough trick, while others participate in events and competitions throughout the day at SK8 JAM 4 SAM. (AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

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The City of Stratford aims to reduce emissions

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

At a recent City Council meeting, councillors discussed the City of Stratford Corporate Energy & Emissions Plan, a long-term strategy that was developed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and align with the goals of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

To help progress towards the 2050 goal, an interim target of 60% emission reduction by 2040 was recommended. This target will guide resource allocation and spending adjustments.

Implementing the plan requires upfront investments, with funding opportunities from grants and offsets. There will be budgetary impacts, including debt financing, to meet the climate targets. Stratford City Councillor Jo-Dee Burbach says, "The City's Climate Change Programs Coordinator, Sadaf Ghalib, will be keeping a close eye on funding opportunities and grants from upper levels of government and partnerships with community groups and other municipalities."

The in-depth plan is intended to help give the City of Stratford a roadmap for success to reach the goal of zero emissions, and Burbach said, "It's important that we have a plan with specific projects identified and outlined so we can immediately respond to any funding opportunities as they come forward."

Ontario Public Libraries Week celebrates life-long learning

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Public Library is honouring the many learning opportunities for all ages found in Ontario Libraries.

The library will be participating in Ontario Public Libraries Week from Oct. 16 to 21. There are several activities planned under the theme "Libraries for Life."

"Libraries are for life," Robyn Godfrey, adult outreach and collections librarian, said. "We encourage wonder, we encourage life-long learning. We have something for everyone for all ages and we really do try to be inclusive and equitable."

The Stratford Public Library and the Livery Yard partnered for the Read a Latte coffee cup design contest. Participants are encouraged to create a design based on the book they read, and a public vote will decide a winning design. Winners will either receive a \$20 Livery Yard gift card or a hot chocolate date for two voucher, for children under eight-years-old. The library will feature an interactive display where patrons can share how the community space helped them grow for a chance to win a fall reading-inspired goodie basket.

The Stratford Public Library will also run a Reader's Retreat on Oct. 17. The retreat provides a chance for patrons to have refreshments and a one-on-one consultation with a librarian about book recom-

The plan outlines 31 strategies to achieve its goals, including leadership in climate action, maximizing energy efficiency, transitioning to a zero-emission fleet, pursuing renewable energy sources, and partnering with external organizations.

Burbach notes that while it's important for city involvement, residents and businesses within Stratford can also play a key role in achieving the goal, "Residents and businesses are important partners in achieving Stratford's emission reduction targets," she continued, "While the City will be working hard to reduce our corporate emissions, a second critical part of our reduction strategy is to provide information and opportunities to businesses and individuals, as well as encouragement by highlighting those who are already successfully moving forward with innovative carbon reduction initiatives."

Regular monitoring and reporting on energy consumption and emissions will help assess progress and make necessary adjustments. The plan will be reviewed every 3-5 years.

The plan aligns with sustainability principles such as sustainable water use, responsible material and product sourcing, waste reduction, and transitioning to zero-carbon energy sources.

Burbach is staying positive about the City of Stratford Corporate Energy & Emissions Plan and says, "Together, we can successfully achieve our goals."

mentations.

The library will host the PA Days are Dog Gone Fun event with the Stratford Perth Museum on Oct. 20. The museum will run the Tales and Trails story walk of Stratford author Janet Hill's "Miss Moon: Wise Words from a Dog Governess", as well as DIY activities such as making dog collars and dog toys. Dogs can enjoy several activities at the museum in the afternoon.

The final Book Drop n Swap of the year, run in collaboration with Stratford Reads will take place on Oct. 21. While donations aren't necessary to participate, those who donate books between Oct. 19 and 20 will get the first chance to find the newest additions to their bookshelves during the early bird hours.

After Ontario Public Libraries Week ends, Godfrey encourages patrons to visit the library and ask questions year-round.

"Anytime that you're looking for something special to read, you can come in and ask," she said. "Never be afraid to ask a question. This is a public library. Come in, engage with us. Engage with the children's department, the YA department, the teen department, the Makerspace, we have so much going on all throughout the year."

To find out more about the Stratford Public Library's programming for Ontario Public Libraries week, visit splibrary.ca/events/ontario-public-library-week.



RECEIVING INVESTMENTS

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Britannia Street housing Project approved for \$1 million investment through the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to create six affordable housing units in Stratford

Britannia St Housing Project receives investment from Provincial Government

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With affordable housing becoming a more urgent and pressing issue across the province, the Ontario government has announced a \$1 million investment through the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) to create six affordable housing units in Stratford.

In partnership with the Government of Canada, the Ontario government is also providing more than \$3 million to create 33 affordable units in this development.

The three-storey building at 200 Britannia Street is now under construction. It will include 27 units, of which six will be fully accessible. The building will also include a community room with an adjoining outdoor covered patio and a community garden where residents can grow produce.

Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington, says, "This is a great day for our community, both here in Stratford and across Perth-Wellington," he continued, "I'm proud of the historic investments our government has made in supportive and

affordable housing, and I can promise that we will keep fighting to ensure homes are built in our community and across Ontario."

The City of Stratford was allocated over four million dollars through all Social Services Relief Fund phases to deliver critical services such as shelters, food banks and emergency services to those in need and service managers and Indigenous program administrators will have the flexibility to allocate that provincial funding to programs and services that address and prevent homelessness in their communities. This could be rent supplements, homeless shelters, and supportive housing including capital projects.

"Housing is a basic human need," said Mayor Martin Ritsma, "That's why the 200 Britannia Street and 230 Britannia Street affordable housing projects are so critical for our community. Everyone deserves to have a home that they can afford without having to compromise other essentials."

For more information, visit the city of Stratford website at www.stratford.ca and click on Live Here.

NOTICE OF RETIREMENT

After 42 years of practicing law Paul Parlee, Parlee Law Offices Professional Corporation will be retiring from the practice of law effective September 29, 2023.

Corporate Minute Books and corporate seals, as well as Wills and Power of Attorney currently in my possession will be transferred to my colleague:

Alexandra J. Bignucolo
108 Downie Street
Stratford, Ontario, N5A 1X1
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E-mail: alexandra@ajb-lawoffice.ca

Ms. Bignucolo is very able and willing to continue to provide legal services to my former clients.

Please feel free to contact Ms. Bignucolo if you have any questions.

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Officers shave their heads for a good cause

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Perth County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) partnered with Stratford Police Service (PS) to host a 'Cops for Cancer' event in Stratford on Saturday, September 30th, 2023, at the Army, Navy, Airforce Club, on Lorne Avenue in support of childhood cancer research.

Open to members of the public, the event ran from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The event raised more than \$14,000 with all proceeds generated supporting the Canadian Cancer Society. All funds go to fueling new pediatric cancer research discoveries, sending 600 kids each year to Camp Goodtimes, providing support services such as counselling, and advocating to improve the lives of children affected by cancer.

Several Perth County OPP and Stratford Police Service members and friends stepped up to have their heads shaved for donations. Scott Jackson, owner of Stone Town Barber in St. Marys, was there along with employee and barber Jack Taylor, giving out free head and beard shaves all day and took part in the main event, shaving the heads of Stratford Police and OPP officers alike during the sunny afternoon.

The Stratford Police Services



COPS FOR CANCER

Police officers from Stratford Police Services and the Ontario Provincial Police line up ready to shave their heads for a good cause at the annual Cops for Cancer event at the Army Navy Air Force Club

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Pipes and Drums Band were in attendance and played while officers were escorted into line to have their heads shaved. In addition, there was a by-donation BBQ and raffle table, with all the profit generated directly donated to the cause.

Perth County OPP and Stratford Police Services displayed several vehicles, includ-

ing cruisers, specialty vehicles, and an OPP motorcycle. Unfortunately, the anticipated helicopter was unavailable to be at the event due to the nature of the services. Kids and families who attended were able to get a close-up look at the vehicles while also meeting and chatting with police officers from both Stratford Police Services and The OPP.

Darren Fisher, Stratford Community Service Police Officer, said, "When I first was asked to take part in this event, I was told that the goal was \$10,000; I thought that was pretty lofty," but continued on to recognize and show gratitude to the community for their hard work in supporting and donating to this successful event.

Stratford Multicultural Association says the Stratford housing crisis is impacting Ukrainian Refugees at an alarming rate

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Refugees from Ukraine and other countries are arriving in Stratford with nowhere to live, says Municipal Multicultural Society board executive director, Councillor Geza Wordofa. He says, "People are sleeping on park benches and in the basements of churches; it's not fair, it's not right."

Yuliia Suliatytska, a Stratford resident and a Ukrainian refugee who volunteers with the committee, says she sees too many flaws in the system and doesn't feel refugees are being supported in Stratford, "I've been helping refugee and immigrant families who arrive here for two years, and now the number of people has increased. I have four families that cannot find a home because of the prices for rent. This is a big problem."

Although the discussion was about housing,

Suliatytska also notes the flaws in the system with jobs and career changes since coming to Canada are just as worrisome, "I have two degrees in education, and my friend is a neurologist with 31 years of experience in Ukraine, but here, in Canada, she works in a factory."

Because of the drastic increase in housing costs in larger cities, such as Toronto, Ukrainian refugees are finding smaller towns to settle down in, but when they get here, there isn't enough room in Perth County to house new individuals.

Katie McGarrel, a volunteer with the organization who works directly with those settling in St. Marys and Northern Middlesex, notes, "I'm concerned because we were short on housing. And I feel like this is an unsafe experience not just for the newcomers to Canada but for the people that already live here in Canada."

McGarrel says newcomers to Canada come

with little information from the Canadian Government, "We have an influx of immigrants with very little information about any support that they would receive once they got to Canada," which she believes is causing more harm than good.


Although funding from the Canadian government is helping in Ukraine, McGarrel says we are not doing enough in our own country to support the Ukrainians who come to live here, "I'm disappointed in the way with the amount of funds that are going overseas to support Ukraine. And yet we are not supporting what we have in our own country at this point."

Tim Sparks, executive assistant on behalf of Perth-Wellington MP John Nater, says, "We're building the wrong kind of city. We've got to have rentals as well. We've got to have the foot in the door kind of situation for people who come here who need low-cost accommodation, such as rooming houses," he

continued, "If we've allowed you in, I think there is an obligation here."

Sparks notes that although Stratford is a safe and giving community, there are still issues with landlord and tenant issues that raise concerns for people interested in allowing refugees to rent rooms in their homes: "And this community is a very charitable giving community. There's a lot of good intention here, but there are still issues."


McGarrel says as a final note, her thanks to Wordofa, "It wasn't for one of our developers that we work with. Taking them in, they would have had absolutely no place to go. And so, we're very grateful for him and his generosity." Although organizations like the Stratford Multicultural Association help with the refugee and the overlapping housing crisis, "it's not enough," says Wordofa and "something needs to be done to help newcomers to Stratford."



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The Bruce Hotel achieves the AAA Diamond rating: One of only four in all of Canada

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Bruce Hotel was recently audited by AAA and rated a Five Diamond Property, making it one of only four hotels in all of Canada to currently hold this status.

The Bruce Hotel is a boutique hotel set on six acres just steps from the Stratford Festival Theater. The stunning property is fully wheelchair accessible.

The AAA Five Diamond rating is more than just a typical rating system. The Diamond designations reflect the type of experience a property offers as a whole. This is to give those looking for a luxury stay a piece of mind when it comes to choosing a hotel.

The rating is not given out to just anyone, and there are meticulous, unscheduled hotel inspections that include a detailed assessment of the property's quality, cleanliness and condition.

Margaret Walton, The Bruce Hotel Events Coordinator says this rating has been a dream of the hotel staff for years, "the hard work that has gone into this from day one was so special. From the moment that the idea was incepted until we were able to finally achieve that now, nine years later. We all worked so hard

and the work gone into training our team consistently shows."

The elegant yet relaxed hotel features 21 rooms, and four suites in total, making it a small and quant location for visitors of Stratford. Walton says, "We are a boutique hotel. However, we have a lot of parts that I think set us apart from the rest," She continued, "It's our level of service. We have a lot of really committed people to ensure our success every single day.

As a living wage employer, Walton notes that The Bruce Hotel team plays a very large part in their success, "The single most important part is our staff, from housekeeping to the biggest department, every person is such a key player in ensuring our guest's experience will be the most important."

This AAA rating does not come without the hard work of the staff of the hotel, and Walton noted that this achievement is much more important than post-pandemic, "Our industry was struck so drastically in regards to staffing levels, and bookings, but after COVID-19, I've noticed our guests were really embracing the experience, which makes everyone happy."

Walton notes that hospitality comes from the heart and they could not have



The Bruce Hotel's full view of the stunning property

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

achieved this designation without the staff, "Our staff are of the utmost importance to us because when our staff are happy, our guests are happy."

The Diamond designations hold hotels

to a higher standard, so visitors get the service and amenities that are above and beyond the first-class experience.

Congrats to the Bruce Hotel, Stratford on their AAA Diamond rating.

Stratford Transit Public Information Session

The City of Stratford will be hosting a public information session on Stratford Transit on Wednesday, October 18.

The in-person session will be held in the Tim Taylor Lounge at the Rotary Complex, 353 McCarthy Rd. W., starting at

6 p.m. with a presentation on the City's accessibility plan for Transit and Parallel Transit.

This is an annual opportunity for members of the public to attend to provide comments and feedback on the Accessi-

bility Plan, which is a requirement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

Following the presentation and a question-and-answer period on Transit accessibility, a separate session will be held

where members of the public can provide comments and feedback on the Stratford Transit system as a whole.

For more information, please contact the Transit Office at 519-271-0250 extension 347.



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

WALK FOR AUTISM AT UPPER QUEENS PARK

Diagnosed with Autism at age four and a half, Wyatt Rabidoux (pictured) took part in the annual Walk for Autism at Upper Queens Park this past month with friends and family showing their support. Rabidoux's Mom, Tracy says no matter where they are her son, "just lights up every room he walks into."

Weekend Quiz

- 1) When did the Berlin Wall fall?
- 2) Who directed the movie "Jaws"?
- 3) What is the capital of Peru?
- 4) How many vertices does a cube have?
- 5) What is the 6th color of the rainbow?
- 6) What is the name of the princess in "The Princess Bride"?
- 7) In what U.S state would you find the Grand Canyon?
- 8) What animal appears on the Lamborghini logo?
- 9) Who was the first Blue Jays pitcher to win 20 games in a season?
- 10) Who is the roman goddess of love?

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

Fresh Idea Collective aims to provide female creatives and entrepreneurs space to connect in Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On September 20th, female creatives and entrepreneurs across Stratford attended the first-ever “Idea Lounge” event hosted by Fresh Idea Collective at The Pulp Fresh Bar in downtown Stratford.

Fresh Idea Collective was founded by Kerry Ramsay, a newly established Stratford resident who saw a need for female connection within the entrepreneurial world in Stratford. “Like many entrepreneurs, I’m passionate about creating something out of nothing and helping to solve common problems in not-so-common ways,” she shares. “By gathering with other women creatives and entrepreneurs regularly, I hope that together we will generate fresh ways of thinking while boosting our mental well-being and creating a stronger business ecosystem.”

With over twenty years of experience as a marketing coach and professor, Ramsay currently leads the Women’s Entrepreneurship Strategy program for the greater Kingston region through the WE-CAN Project led by Queen’s University remotely from her home in Stratford.

The Fresh Idea Collective events are sponsored in part by the Scotiabank Women Initiative, a Canadian initiative that aims to break down barriers to help increase economic and professional opportunities for women to be successful now and in the future.

Naomi Clement, Local creative entrepreneur and Business Owner of Naomi Clement Ceramics, attended the first event and said, “It was really refreshing to get out and meet other entrepreneurs in per-

son.” She continued. “I work from home, and it can get a little lonely. I’m also relatively new to Stratford, so it was lovely to get to meet people in person and connect face-to-face with other female business owners.”

“I like to think that what sets Idea Lounges apart from other networking events is the fun factor – like incorporating a roller-skating lesson into the evening or enjoying an intimate performance by a Stratford Festival actress,” says Ramsay. “By creating multifaceted events that engage all the senses, we aim to engage our attendees in a way that creates unique and memorable experiences while helping them grow their network and business.”

Ramsay says, “Other featured elements Idea Lounge participants can look forward to at future events include relatable speakers, open dialogue on issues facing women creatives and entrepreneurs, increased brand and business visibility, skill-building training sessions, network-expanding connections, and a safe and respectful networking environment that values equity, diversity and inclusion.”

Clement noted, “It was nice to be reminded that regardless of our industry, many of us share the same struggles of work-life balance and feeling connected to a larger purpose and community, and it was helpful to be able to talk about some of the big picture aspects of running a business with a group of like-minded individuals.”

In future months, Idea Lounges for female creatives and entrepreneurs will take place in various women-owned spaces, including the next three vents taking place as follows: October 18th at Retro Rollers



(CLEAR PERSPECTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY (STRATFORD)PHOTO)

Kerry Ramsay, Founder of Fresh Idea Collective

Inc., November 16th at Pistolnik and December 13th at The Livery Yard.

If you want to learn more or would like

to sign up for future events, please follow @freshideacollective on Instagram and Facebook.

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Stratford’s Royal Canadian Legion Branch 8 holds Honours and Awards Ceremony

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

The Royal Canadian Legion branch 8 in Stratford, which was chartered October 13 of 1926, while the Ladies auxiliary was chartered April 10 of 1927, recently held “Honours and Legion awards” at their Stratford location.

There were many awards and pins presented and note-

worthy were “50 Year” medal and pin to:

Comrades Michael Beale, Peter Chandler, William Holdaway, Lynda Mohr, Raymond Taylor, and Marianne Thalheimer.

“55 year pin and bar”- Comrades B.E. Bart and Robert Cassels.

“65 year pin”- Ladies Auxiliary- Comrade Gertie Baulk.



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

151 Lorne Avenue, East Stratford, Ontario N5A 6S4



Record Breaking Crowds attended this years 182nd Stratford Fall Fair

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

The official opening of the 182nd Stratford Fall Fair was one that three young Stratford area ladies will not soon forget.

Stratford Mayor, Martin Ritsma, who is also this years "Chair of the Fair", was on hand to bring greetings from the city and recognized the importance that agriculture brings to the area, that is so rich in farmland, crops and livestock.

Ritsma who is also "Past President" of the Stratford

and District Agriculture Society and thanked two area young ladies, for completing to become the Ag. Society's next Ambassador for 2023/2024, while also thanking Paige Fawcett, for doing an exceptional job as this past year's ambassador.



The newest ride were swings that move up to 60feet above the ground, while twirling at the same time.

(GARY WEST PHOTOS)



Three young Stratford fair goers, were loving the experience of petting a piglet with "Chair of the Fair" Mayor Ritsma.



L-R- Greta DeWetering runner up to Faith Knechtel, 2023-2024 Fall Fair Ambassador, who received the crown from Paige Fawcett, last years Ambassador, while Fall Fair Chairman and Stratford Mayor, Martin Ritsma offers his congratulations.



The ambassador's of this years fair were L- Greta DeWetering, and R-Faith Knechtel, getting in on the action of the EGG drop, where overhead, eggs were dropped from the Stratford Crane overhead cage, and both girls were successful in catching them without breaking.



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)



The Farm to You Show was a hit at the Stratford Fall Fair. Families from across Perth County could visit and pet farm animals that they otherwise would not be able to see in real life.

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

The 2023 Perth County 4H Beef cattle show was held on Saturday during the annual Stratford Fall Fair. Members from across Perth County competed in a number of categories, including Showmanship. Maddie Ethier, 20-year-old from Milverton, showed on behalf of the Perth County 4H Club and received a first-place ribbon in Showmanship with her yearling heifer KT Molly.

Times Past: Betty McMillan and Elected women of Stratford

BETTY JO BELTON

Stratford-Perth Archives

It's Women's History Month in Canada. October was chosen in 1992 so that the opportunity to celebrate contributions of women and girls to our society would coincide with the anniversary of the "Persons Case". On October 18, 1929, the final decision in the case of *Edwards v. Canada* established that Canadian women could be "qualified persons" and were therefore eligible to be appointed as senators.

Looking at the history of our local government, the first women to sit on Stratford's City Council were elected in 1958. They were Evelyn Moore, Dolores Whiteman and Winifred Kneitl. The next year Moore ran for Mayor, losing to C.H. (Dutch) Meier. Several more years passed before Betty McMillan, was elected for the 1975-76 term of office as Stratford's first female mayor.

McMillan's first run for a position on city council in 1967 was not successful. At that time, she was described as a "multi-lingual high school teacher" who was also vice-president of the Perth Women's Liberal Association and an executive of the Hamlet Home and School Association. She said that she decided to try for a spot in municipal government because "it's about time I contributed something to the city I love so much." Originally from Toronto, she had been living in Stratford for about 15 years. She tried for a council spot again in 1969 because she was "interested in the welfare of Stratford" and would "strive to give honest and unbiased service to all." She was involved with the United Church Women, on the world service committee for the YM-YWCA and helped with charities such as UNICEF and the March of Dimes. Her second run for Council was successful. When she sought reelection

the next year, she could point to her work on the recreation commission and as a director of the Stratford Kiwanis Senior Citizens Centre during its first year of operations. She also promoted the "pressing and immediate need" for a teenage centre, wanted to decrease unemployment by expanding industry in the city, and, to build a theatre arts school in Stratford. McMillan was not successful in a bid to be elected Mayor in 1972 but that left her free to represent Perth, Waterloo, Wellington and Halton on the board of directors of the non-profit Ontario Municipal Recreation Association. She later said that "sometimes they say 'It's nice to see a pretty face at our meetings'...When they say that they make you feel like an ornament, a decoration, something useless." By the end of the year, she was once again campaigning to become mayor because "if you get the chance to do something to make things better then you should take advantage of it." She lost that election but came back two years later to run against incumbent Mayor Keith Culliton.

A November 1974 news article described her as "used to being busy" as a full-time real estate agent who was active in community affairs. She ran because "a lot of people were approaching me about it...I feel that Stratford is ready for a woman mayor. People have had time to think about it. And I think they're getting used to the idea." While in 1972 many had greeted her on the campaign trail by asking why she wasn't at home with her children that had changed by 1974. McMillan speculated that may have been because there were already female mayors in London and Cambridge. She won the election by 88 votes to become Stratford's first woman mayor, taking office as of January 1, 1975. McMillan credited her win to an intense door-to-door campaign, saying she was "absolutely beat" from canvassing "about 5,000 out of 8,000 homes during the last two weeks... that's about 16 hours a day." She said that she expected her term to be "interesting, exciting and challenging." As it was International Women's Year McMillan was a popular speaker for meetings of many city organizations. At the Anglican Church annual dinner, she said that "women have



BETTY McMILLAN, 1975

not yet achieved the dignity and equality due them...equality of opportunity for women still means being better qualified and having to work twice as hard as a man." Perhaps that's why she also said that "a tough hide" along with enthusiasm, drive and a sense of humor were essential for anyone serving as mayor. She said at the end of her first year that she had no regrets in spite of having to deal with significant controversies over proposed redevelopment downtown and operations at

the police department. When her two-year term as mayor ended, McMillan did not seek re-election for the job, saying it was time for new candidates to be encouraged to run. She campaigned for and won a spot as a trustee for the Perth County Board of Education instead. McMillan won a seat on City Council again in 1978 and was reelected in 1980. She took another stab at being elected Mayor in 1982, losing to incumbent Mayor Ted Blowes.

McMillan remained busy. She bought a downtown art shop, Artisans, which sold the work of over 100 local artists while continuing as a real estate agent. In 1984 she was appointed to the Perth and Stratford Housing Authority, which managed assisted housing units for seniors and low-income families in Atwood, Listowel, Milverton, Mitchell, St. Marys and Stratford. When she died in 2019, Mayor McMillan's obituary reported that she had become an accomplished painter and that her room at Spruce Lodge, where she had once been Chair of the Board of Management, was adorned with her colourful art.

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

Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

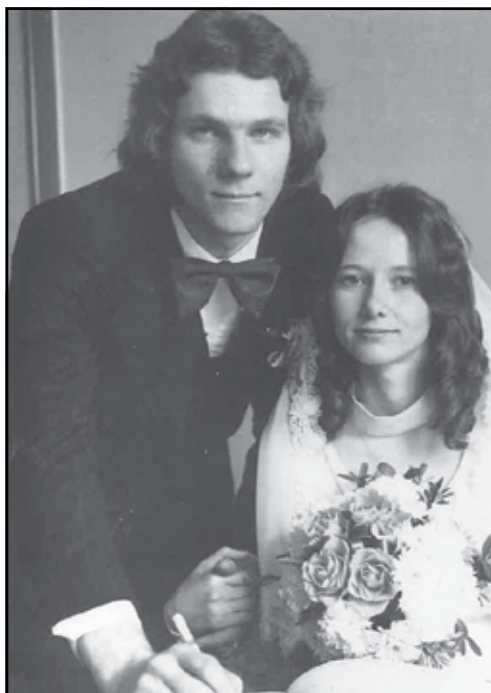
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Sept. 26 O'Brien Family, St. Marys	\$50.00
Sept. 27 Charlie Near, St. Marys	\$50.00
Sept. 28 Roger Gerber, Tavistock	\$50.00
Sept. 29 Lizet Scott, St. Marys	\$50.00
Sept. 30 Dennis Listen, Brantford	\$200.00
Oct. 01 Jarrett Richard, Oshawa	\$50.00
Oct. 02 Brian Kittmer, St. Marys	\$50.00
Oct. 03 Easy Lift Doors Ltd., St. Marys	\$50.00
Oct. 04 Matt Coulthard, St. Pauls	\$50.00
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Skeletons of Vivian Line return for their 10th Anniversary

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The well-loved Halloween tradition of the daily antics of the Skeletons of Vivian Line returns October 19th for the 10th year in a row. For the thirteen days of Halloween, Melissa McKerlie plans and executes a unique display of the skeleton family that she has accumulated over the years. To date, there have been over 200 unique displays.

"It's pretty amazing what's happening with the skeletons over 10 years, this was never the intent. Because of the community support it has blossomed into its own entity. Essentially it started as this simple idea of having posable skeletons for my son. We'd look through the magazines and he'd say, can we do this?" said McKerlie.

It started with three skeletons at the door, and McKerlie would pose them differently each day. She also wrote a little story about the scene that the skeletons displayed for her son. She would email it out to family and friends, then they would forward it on. One day, she posed the skeletons on the front yard and that's when it really took off.

"We are well over 200 (displays) now, with no repeats. A good part of that was as a result of COVID the City of Stratford asked us to



TRICK AND SMILE

The skeleton family of Trick, Or, Treat, Kin-Ann, Bones, and Pumpkin the rat, Scowley the Owl, dogs Grim and Reaper. Whatever antics could they be planning for this year?

brighten people's spirit and had us do different skeleton displays. When everyone was locked down we did over 40 different displays. I think the thing about the skeletons is they affect people in different ways. People during COVID were really struggling and I had one lady say that it was the one thing she looked forward to everyday and got her out of a really dark place," said McKerlie.

She is also partnering with Operation Smile Canada again, for

the fifth year. She has raised over \$80,000 and now has a goal set for this year of \$100,000

"We can do it. We've had tremendous community support, and we are going to do a limited edition 10th anniversary hoodie this year and all of the proceeds go to Operation Smile Canada. Starting on the 19th we begin the 13 days of Halloween, gearing up for the weekend before Halloween, the Saturday and Sunday when the kids can go trick-or-treating," said McKerlie.

Starting on the 28th, 29th, the displays will be building up and will culminate in the final display for the grand finale. McKerlie plans to take some favourite past displays and build on them further, bringing them to the ultimate ending on Halloween night. She's not giving away any details yet!

Some fan favourites have been ET, a pirate ship, and she says that people had a lot of fun dancing with the skeletons in front of the barn last year. Her personal favourite was Bones BBQ and Grill though there have been so many, it's hard to choose.

"I had a gentleman from Milton, who said he saw the display and he laughed all the way to work. They talk about it a work, and the whole point is to put a smile on someone's face and they laugh their way to work, that's the kind of thing that warms our bones," said McKerlie.

Additionally, as fulfilling as the stories are, it is knowing that because of the skeletons, the community has helped put a smile on a child's face. At over \$80,000 raised so far, the community has changed the lives of over 320 kids in just four years. Operation Smile Canada gives the gift of a smile to children born with cleft lip and/or palate and other facial differences in low- and middle-income countries.

McKerlie has not only entertained her son and fans, she has instilled in her son the charitable passion. He donated to Operation Smile Canada through his summer corn stand, Justin's Corn Stand.

They have revamped their website to allow users to more easily navigate through the years of pictures showing the bone tingling antics of the skeletons, and the daily story that accompanies each scene. They are also promoting it more in the schools.

"There's classes that take the stories and translate them into different languages, and creative projects that come from the skeletons. It's interesting to see how teachers follow them and use them in their classroom and as a learning tool. We've had parents say their kids are practicing their reading every night reading the stories," said McKerlie.

People follow on Facebook and Instagram, but it's easier to follow the skeleton's on the website or sign up for their newsletter. Anyone wishing to donate can do so on the website, or on site at 3217 Vivian Line in the donation box starting the 19th. As well, all the proceeds from t-shirts and hoodie's go to Operation Smile Canada and can be purchased from the website. The website is www.skeletonsofvivianline.com

Be a Bell Ringer for Halloween at St. James Anglican Church

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

A spooky tower stands on Mornington St that on Halloween is invaded by ghosts and Ghoulies. On Halloween night, kids of all ages are invited into the spooky tower attached to St James Anglican Church to ring the bells and rid the tower of all things scary.

This Halloween marks the first time the event has occurred since 2019. The pandemic, of course, got in the way. In 2019 there were over two hundred kids that came to celebrate the holiday and ring the bells with hopes for just as many this year.

The entrance off Mornington will be decorated to welcome trick-or-treaters, with eerie music playing by the organist to set the mood. Children will be invited to explore the church, as this may be the first time that they have visited one.

Head up the narrow wooden staircase to the spooky tower where the chime stand resides to ring the bells and rid the tower of all the ghosts, goblins and Ghoulies that have invaded in the spirit of Halloween.

"There's an endless stream of little kids, big kids, middle aged kids, senior kids, and I generally

have music here and they can try playing bells. It's been a lot of fun. People ask all kinds of questions like, are there ghosts in the bell tower or are you here every fifteen minutes to ring the quarter hour because we have a tower clock. It was put in in 1909," says Peter Ryde, St. James Church chimer.

Kids will be treated with a certificate signifying that they rang the bells, and there will be treats in the church available. There will also be coffee available to warm the adults. Kids can expect to see their hosts dressed up for the occasion too.

"We're dedicating the spooky tower to a fellow named Dave Parson who was the chair along with his wife Joan to the refurbishment of the bells. He passed away a couple of months ago. The spooky tower was his idea and so we are dedicating this year to him. He was six foot four, six-five and he would dress up as Fiona from Shrek. It was just hilarious, and his wife would dress as Shrek, but she was a petite thing," said Carol Boone, event organizer.

This is a rare opportunity to see inside and experience this historic building and bell tower. The tower was first constructed at forty feet when the church was built in 1870. In 1906 William Battershall, pa-



rishioner and philanthropist left \$500 to St James in his will to buy a chime of bells. Construction on the tower commenced and was finished in 1909 raising it to its present height of one hundred feet.

The bells were installed in 1909 and refurbished in 2010, at which time four new treble bells were added resulting in a superlative fifteen bell instrument that is

regularly played for church services, parish events, and weekly concerts of popular music each Wednesday year round.

"I encourage people to come up and see a very unique musical instrument, and try to play it," said Ryde. Of interest to note is the wall behind the chime pedals keeps a notation wall about things that have happened throughout

history. For example, events of historical significance like the assassination of President Kennedy to the mundane, bells not rung today, ring out of town.

"Little kids are the easiest because they have no preconceived notions of how to play, they just see numbers and think they can play by number," said Ryde.

"And they are so proud when they come down and ask, did you hear me play and we'd say oh yes, you were very good," added Boone.

The event is not done every year simply because they want to keep it a new experience for the kids, wanting to wait for another group of kids to grow up and come to Halloween for their first time. They do this every two years

"We've done three of these before 2019. The school board puts it up on their website and we're promoting it for all ages," said Boone.

Halloween, October 31st, is a Tuesday night this year, and all are invited to St. James Anglican Church to ring the bells between 6pm and 8pm. Please note that this will be a peanut free zone. St. James is located at 41 Mornington at Hamilton St. For further information call the church office at 519-271-3572.

Stratford 5K Run/Walk raises over \$20,000 for The Local Community Food Centre

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Stratford 5K was held on October 1st, seeing maxed out capacity at 300 participants running together to raise awareness and funds to support The Local Community Food Centre.

Last year's event raised \$10,000, and this year's event doubled that, raising over \$20,000.

Emceeding the event this year was a local favourite, Jamie Cottle from 107.1 CJCS, who announced names and times as runners completed the race. The finances raised at this year's event will help provide meals and cooking classes for those with financial barriers.

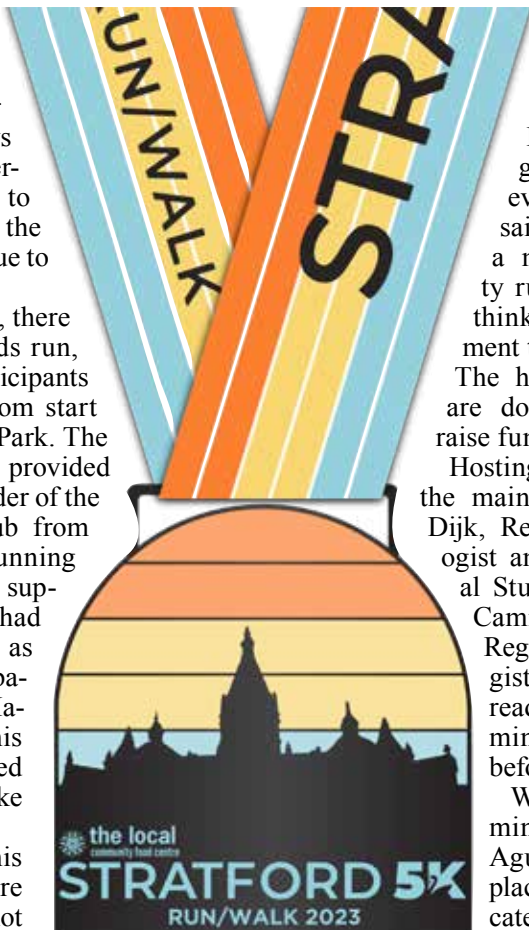
Deputy Mayor Harjinder Najjar spoke on behalf of Mayor Martin Ritsma and the City Council and thanked those in attendance who raised money for The Local, "Together, we can make our community a better place for everyone. Together, we can grow, cook, share and advocate for good food for all."

He joked about not running in the race but was there to show his unwavering support; Matthew Rae, MPP Perth-Wellington said, "The Local Community Food Centre' t-shirt and shared his support for the worthy cause, noting, "It's great to see that so many people have come

out for the second annual race. The local does great work within our community. I always appreciate the services they provide to our community and the services they continue to provide."

Before the 5k race, there was a 500-meter kids run, where young participants lined up and ran from start to finish at Victoria Park. The race warm-up was provided by Tom Doan, Founder of the Polar Pals Run Club from London. This fun running group showed up to support The Local and had everyone laughing as they dressed up as bananas and Super Mario characters. This had the kids pumped up and ready to take on the track.

John Nater and his son, Bennett, were in attendance to not only say a few words to support the race but



eagerly start the race with the official countdown and blowhorn.

Before the race began, Nater wished everyone luck and said, "It's great to see a maxed-out capacity run this morning. I think it is a great testament to this community.

The hard-working folks are doing their best to raise funds for The Local.

Hosting the warm-up for the main race was Renee Dijk, Registered Kinesiologist and owner of Ritual Studio and colleague Camryn Ross, also a Registered Kinesiologist, who got runners ready to go with a few minutes of exercise before the race began.

With a time of 16:03 minutes, Andrew Aguanno came in first place for the men's category and not far behind was Stephanie Aldea, who was not

far behind with a final time of 17:28 minutes and set a new best track time.

The event was a smashing success and exceeded organizers' expectations. With immense gratitude, the Stratford 5k Run/Walk took to Instagram to thank those who attended to run, walk, and stroll and also for those who supported and donated to the cause, "this event wouldn't be possible without the support of our community, together we can make a difference and help those in need."

Because of this year's success, this event will be an annual one in early fall for years to come. Keep an eye on their social media accounts for next year's event, as space is limited and quickly sold out this year. You can find them at @stratford5km on Instagram and Facebook.

As a final word, Nater said it best, "I always say that local is like a giant kitchen table where important conversations are had; new skills are learned and time is shared with friends. It's such a wonderful place that helps to support our community."

The Local Community Food Centre needs your support; they need community donations with rising food costs and limited funds. Please visit their website for more information or to donate: www.thelocalcfc.org.

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Shakespeare Elementary School fosters entrepreneurship

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Shakespeare students connected with their entrepreneurship side to host a Student Entrepreneurship Day at Sprucedale Public School on September 30. The parent council organized the event to help students show off their talent with homemade necklaces, baking and farm-stand produce throughout the gym.

One student in particular has a business that is taking off quite well and, since starting her business just eight weeks ago, has sold out over 600 pairs of earrings.

Sydney Robinson, owner of Pretty Little Earrings, decided to start a business selling earrings and, with her mom's help, sold out at her very first market in Waterloo, "there were people going through the bins as we were packing up," says Robinson's mom, Heather Robinson.

Robinson wanted to start her own business with her birthday money, says Mom and because she only had thirty dollars, she needed to start a tab with her parents. Robinson said, "I had \$30, and the supplies I needed were \$60, so I knew I needed \$30 extra from my mom to start my business."

The young entrepreneur started selling

the handmade earrings on Facebook Marketplace, where she regularly sells out, and was recently picked up by The Peach Basket and Co. at the Stratford Mall to showcase some of her earrings for the season.

Robinson will be at local community markets again in October and then again at Christmas for the holidays, but until then, her mom notes it's hard to keep up with the online demand, "We will start an Instagram account in the future, but for now, she's selling out just on Marketplace and at local markets."

Robinson's mom said that she didn't expect how fast the small business would grow, "We had to open up a bank account for her. She's slowly been paying me back; I take care of the overhead, and then she slowly pays me back. She's already made thousands," she joked.

Robinson tries to cater to everyone with rainbow earrings, farm animals and ones for specific careers, such as stethoscopes for nurses and doctors and teeth for dentists and dental hygienists. She truly has a pair of earrings for everyone. "My customers really love them," she said.

Although her earring business is thriving, Robinson has other plans when she grows up. She's looking at a career as a vet or para-



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sydney Robinson, owner of Pretty Little Earrings set up and ready to sell at the Sprucedale Public School Entrepreneurship Day in Shakespeare

place. Robinson says to keep an eye out for

medic, "I just want to help people," she says. You can find a wide range of earrings at The Peach Basket and Co. at the Stratford Mall and periodically on Facebook Market-

place. Robinson says to keep an eye out for upcoming markets and check their online marketplace, where you can find a range of styles for everyone.

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Stratford Pride Community Centre seeking input from LGBTQIA2S+

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Following the appointment of a new chair and president, the Stratford Pride Community Centre is sending out its first needs assessment survey for the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

Bruce Skeaff, the former board chair and president and the founder of Stratford Pride Community Centre, announced on Aug. 8 that he would resign from his position on Sept. 27. Brock Hart has since taken on the roles of president and board chair. A needs assessment survey was launched in late September asking for feedback.

Heather McDowell, executive director of the Stratford Pride Community Centre, said the needs assessment survey will be the first time the organization asked the community directly for input about how they feel in their community and what they need for support. There were

some hate-motivated actions towards the LGBTQIA2S+ community in Stratford in recent years.

"We know that the crosswalk got vandalized," McDowell said. "We know that there was some vandalism at Sirkel. We know that flags have been torn down, and so I think it's important to ask questions of the people that identify as LGBTQ2S+ and say 'How can we best help you? Do you feel safe in this community? Do you feel connected to the community? How can we better do that?'"

The survey went through plenty of consultation through public health, United Way Perth-Huron, academic institutions, and other members of the community. The community partners involved in the survey had posters up with QR codes. Posters have also been posted in places where members of Stratford's LGBTQIA2S+ community frequent such as the Stratford Public Library, Sirkel Foods, and Blowes Stationary Office Supplies.

The survey is also available via social media and been shared with the City of Stratford and the Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA). However, only electronic copies are available to ensure quantifiable data.

"Doing a paper copy, public health actually highlighted for us that if you say 'Do you like seafood, yes or no?' People will hand-write in a modified answer and it makes the data hard to render," McDowell explained.

United Way Perth-Huron also shared the survey with other municipalities such as Goderich, Listowel, and Northern Huron.

"We're ever-so grateful for our community partners," McDowell said. "It really shows that we're all trying to work to overcome some of the challenges of being in a rural community and servicing marginalized folks in a rural community, which can be very daunting."

So far, McDowell doesn't know exactly when the results from the needs assess-

ment survey will be released but hopes to have something out before the end of the 2023 calendar year. She also would like to see the survey distributed on a regular basis.

"It's really going to help shape our strategic direction, our programming direction," McDowell. "So, it's going to help build several client profiles of the people that we help, rather than us assuming that we know. I think as matter of good governance, any not-for-profit has an opportunity to check in with the people that they're helping and say, 'Am I on the right track?'"

Completed surveys will be accepted until Oct. 15 at 11:59 p.m. Participants can either remain anonymous or enter their name in a draw for a chance to win two \$50 gift cards of their choice.

Visit docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf8Lch_V2HzySGufkZ-pJvn-NLeRUi9LiGPUycC2yP1Eavxv3Q/view-form to complete the survey.

Queer Book of the month

Hollow, by Shannon Watters

@SPL: YA GRAPHIC WATTE

Just in time for Spooky Season, Shannon Watters (Lumberjanes) delivers chilling hijinks along with a queer romance in Hollow. Izzy Crane has just moved to the infamous town of Sleepy Hollow, which celebrates its connection to the legendary Headless Horseman with an unrepentant zeal. When students start claiming to be chased by the Horseman, Izzy is certain it's a prank or that there is some other explanation. Teaming up with her new friends Croc Byun and Vicky Van Tassel (yes, those Van Tassels), she sets out to uncover the truth. Only the truth



is stranger than the Legend of Sleepy Hollow itself. And her new love-interest, Vicky is in mortal danger. Hollow dishes up laughs and mystery in equal proportions, and is a fun and raucous read. The illustrative style of the book is reminiscent of modern-day manga, with the art providing much of the humour. Izzy and her friends are relatable and likable, and the supernatural bent of the story is suitably creepy without being scary. Highly recommended.

CJ Nyssen

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 Other members include: Chief Neil Anderson, Fire Administrator Emily Priestap, Fire Administrator Daelyn Cook, Captain Shawn McCormick, Captain Steve Dekok, Captain Jeff Lane, Captain Chris Gaylor, Captain Chris Beach, Captain Jay Canning, Captain Chris Beach, Captain Steve Ford, Captain Troy Schieckoff, Captain Rod MacDonald, Captain Brad McCann, Captain Greg Ankenmann, FF Jeff Allen, FF Brad Mayer, FF Justin Lingard, FF Niall Monaghan, FF Brian Bates, FF Kurtis Belanger, FF David Cameron, FF Chris Crozier, FF Brett Fairweather, FF Kyle Hamilton, FF Mike Handley, FF Kevin Hare, FF Mike Harper, FF Brent Hendel, FF Jake Jenkins, FF Corey Keller, FF Rick Kennedy, FF Steve Knischewsky, FF Kelsey Matheson, FF Andrew Micks, FF Derrick Robertson, FF Derek Ryan, FF R Steele, Dispatcher Shanna Core, Dispatcher Lisa Walter, Dispatcher Ingrid Doig, Temporary Dispatcher Eric Payne, Chaplain Mark Parker.



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Absent- Rob Brett



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Absent – Andrew Hodgkin, Jeremy Root, Tylor Walters



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Quick-starting Warriors win five straight

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Warriors picked up steam at the end of September and over the first weekend of October, winning five straight before their unbeaten stretch was ended by the Kitchener-Waterloo Siskins.

Beginning in Elmira for the team's first of two games at the GOJHL Showcase tournament, Stratford met the Fort Erie Meteors of the Midwestern Conference. A tight, scoreless game was finally broken open just under nine minutes into the third period when Hunter Coley scored the game's first goal for the Meteors. That would prove to be the game-winner with the Meteors adding two empty-netters late in the contest to secure a 3-0 victory.

One day later, the Warriors were back on the ice taking on the London Nationals and, unlike the day before, it didn't take

long for the Warriors to break the pair of goose eggs on the scoreboard. As the first period approached the three-and-a-half-minute mark, Michael Denney tallied his second of the year to make it 1-0 Stratford. Haden Frayne's first of the campaign made it 2-0 less than two minutes later.

London cut the lead in half later in the first but before the period ended, the Warriors had restored their two-goal lead thanks to the second of the season from Cole Lewis. In the second and third, both teams found the back of the net two more times, including the second of the game for Frayne and an empty-netter by Brayden Stumpf, leading to a 5-3 final score in favour of the Warriors.

Head Coach Dave Williams told the Times that the quick-strike offence at the beginning of the game was key to setting the table for the remainder of the contest.

"We got off to a good start," Williams remarked. "In all three of the games before the one against London, we felt like we had started a bit slower than we would have liked. We scored early and overall, I think our start was much better than it had been. When you score early, I think you play with a different confidence than if you're chasing from behind and maybe feeling like you have to play a bit differently. Getting that good start makes it easier to stay focused on playing the game you want to play."

The Warriors returned home to the William Allman Arena on September 29th to battle the Ayr Centennials and once again, Stratford came flying out of the gate. However, a gutsy second period also was a big factor in what would go on to be a 7-2 Stratford win.

For the second straight game, Denney opened the scoring for the Warriors, this time just 85 seconds into the game. Liam Gorman and Dylan Dundas both found their first of the year later in the opening stanza.

The Centennials displayed a strong pushback early in the second period, resulting in a goal by Jack Weiser to cut the deficit to two. However, the Warriors weathered the storm and eventually answered with a goal of their own, the third of the year for Lewis. Over the next seven minutes, Stratford added three more tallies, getting the second of the night from Denney and Lewis as well as the third of the season for Drew Agnew. Ethan Stover found the lone goal of the third period for the Centennials but the Warriors hung on to the five-goal spread.

Williams said that, even though the team didn't dominate the entire game, he gleaned many positives about the team's resolve and toughness in the face of challenging moments.

"Once again, we got off to a good start with an early goal and then taking a three-goal lead in the first. I actually thought Ayr did a really good job of taking back some of the momentum early in the second period. I thought we struggled and really had to battle five-on-five for a while because they were making things really tough for us. But when we scored that fourth goal, I think we found a different confidence that really turned things back in our favour."

"I think stretches like that can be really important," Williams continued, speaking on the second-period momentum swing in Ayr's favour. "Obviously, we want to be as dominant as we can and win every

game and control every shift but you're going to have nights when you have to win a little bit differently and find ways to stem the tide as the other team grabs the momentum. There will always be ebs and flows to the game and you want to minimize the time when the other team gains some momentum but, at the same time, it was good for us to get to learn how to play through some adversity."

One issue for the Warriors against Ayr and the start of the season as a whole was an issue being experienced by most teams in the GOJHL – anemic powerplays. Heading into this week, only four teams out of 23 in the league boasted a powerplay operating at 20 percent or higher. Williams believes the key for his group is to avoid overcomplicating the strategy with the man advantage.

"We've had a few guys move in and out of the powerplay rotation so moving guys around and having some guys out of the lineup can make it a bit trickier in terms of scoring how we would like to. I think the one thing we look at in terms of boosting our powerplay is simplifying things a little bit. Especially early in the season, I think it's common for teams to try a bit too hard to make the perfect play and score the perfect goal, so we just need to continue working on getting pucks and bodies to the net."

The Warriors were back on the ice 24 hours after their victory over the Centennials, paying a visit to the Bombers of Caledon. Although their offence didn't start in the first few minutes, Stratford scored twice in the opening period with goals from Gorman and Joey Brehmer. A third-period marker by Carson Harmer capped off a 3-1 win for the Warriors, the team's third consecutive victory.

Williams spoke on what he felt were the keys to the team's winning streak.

"Our work ethic and compete level have been good over the last couple of weeks. We're battling well and from a structural standpoint, the guys are trying hard to play the way we want them to play. In this last three-game stretch, I think they've been rewarded for their hard work and attention to detail."

"We talk a lot about trying to make our forecheck a big part of what we do," continued Williams. "We want to get on top of the other team with our forecheck to create turnovers. We spend a lot of time on working as a group of five, tracking from below the puck and trying to turn pucks back to eventually create opportu-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 17

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Quick-starting Warriors win three in a row

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

nities off of turnovers.”

Looking ahead, Williams believes the team’s process of building camaraderie and chemistry is going to allow the team to find continued success.

“As good as things have gone the last few games, we’re still cognizant that it’s early in the season. A big thing for this group has been just them having the chance to spend time together, whether that’s the Showcase weekend in Elmira or our practices or even time off the ice. I think we’re starting to see those bonds and that familiarity with each other and the coaches starting to be reflected on the ice.”

Warriors take two of three in triple-header

The first weekend of October saw the Warriors win of their three games, beginning with a 4-3 overtime thriller over the Siskins at the Allman Arena.

After a scoreless first frame, Lewis and Dundas each found the back of the net within the first two minutes of the second period to put Stratford ahead 2-0 in the blink of an eye. The Siskins cut the lead to one before the second was out, and after the Warriors made it 3-1 early in the third, K-W clawed back to tie the game and force overtime. In the extra frame,

Brehmer buried the game-winner.

The following day, the Warriors travelled to Brantford to take on the Bandits and came away with a 6-1 victory. Harmer and Tristian Huinink each potted a pair in the game while Gorman and Dundas also found the back of the net. Stratford scored four of their goals in the game in a seven-minute stretch of the second period.

Rounding out the three-game weekend was a trip to Kitchener-Waterloo for a rematch against the Siskins.

In a much tighter, back-and-forth contest, the Siskins managed to score twice in the second period which would prove to be enough for their eventual victory. Jaxon Broda

scored for Stratford just two minutes and 51 seconds into the third on the powerplay but the Warriors failed to find the equalizer, losing 2-1 and having their win streak halted at five games.

The Warriors have enjoyed strong goaltending so far this season from both Matthew Perdue and Trenton Bennett. Perdue, a Brampton native, has recorded a stellar 0.929 save percentage along with a very solid 2.48 goals-against average through six games. Meanwhile, Bennett has turned in great backup efforts, posting a 0.932 save percentage and a 1.67 goals-against average in three stints of duty so far this year.



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Tai Chi: a journey to wellness and harmony

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese martial art that brings mind, body, and spirit together in harmony. It comprises 108 unique fluid movements that promote stretching with a full range of motion and continuous turning of the spine.

The founder of the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism, Master Moy Lin Shin, immigrated to Canada from China in 1970 and began teaching Taoist Tai Chi to all that were interested. He had created a powerful system to cultivate mind, body and spirit based on Taoist teachings and training he had received from respected teachers in China and Hong Kong. To Master Moy Lin Shin, the art of Tai Chi is more than a set of movements, they form a spiritual cultivation and a way of life. They are a path that encompasses practi-

cal wisdom and a way to return to a more natural way of living.

Today, the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism is a Charitable International Organization with practitioners around the world. The Stratford Branch has been operating for almost forty years with around one hundred participants learning the art of Tai Chi.

“Pre-pandemic we were about 175, and have lots of room for more. If we get lots of people we’ll start more classes. We have our own building here so we can do as many classes as we have instructors for,” said Grant Dillman, president of the Stratford Branch.

Currently there are ten session leaders, with introductory sessions and continuing sessions. There is no grading, no belts to achieve. You get an overview of the movements and continue to practice the rest of your life.

Dillman has been involved in Tai Chi for about twenty-five years. He started because he was doing a different style of martial art, and was quite muscular.

“I realized that I needed to be fairly muscular, and muscles get in the way of speed. So I wanted to be ‘softer’ and I recognized that Tai Chi would make me through the movements softer, and then it wasn’t very long before I just gave up on the other martial art and continued on this because I found what I wanted to hear. Just the softness, the movement, the mental stimulation,” said Dillman.

There are many health and wellness benefits to Tai Chi. “A lot of the movements are pumping movements and helps your heart to pump, so your heart is easier even though you think you’re working hard. It’s also good for moving the Lymph around your body, the Lymph System doesn’t have a pump so the movement helps to



(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

MENTAL & HEALTH BENEFITS

Stratford's Taoist Tai Chi branch where practitioners meet is located on Ontario Street

move it,” said Dillman.

Practicing the art of Tai Chi is beneficial to those with chronic, serious, or mild pain, whether physical, mental or spiritual. The gentle movements create elasticity and open blockages throughout the whole physiology including musculoskeletal and circulatory systems as well as connective tissue and organs. The meditative aspect has a profound calming effect on the nervous system and the brain.

There are notable events happening throughout the year. There is the international centre near Orangeville, Ontario, that holds retreats open to participants and events open to the public. There is typically a large contingent of the Chinese community attending events as it is part of their culture.

Locally, they used to be involved in the Canada Day parade and brought the dragon that takes about twenty people to operate. There used to be demonstrations of Taoist Tai Chi at the dragon boat festival, and in local parks, in front of city hall as well as demos at New Neighbour Night at the Stratford Public Library. Slowly,

things are ramping up again post pandemic.

There are other styles of Tai Chi, as are many styles of Karate. Taoist Tai Chi is special because it is developed based on the teachings of Taoism. Though, no one is trying to indoctrinate anyone. It is special because of where it comes from, through the teachings of Master Moy and the monks he lived with.

“We don’t force you to come in, we don’t force you to change your ways. The two signs on either side of the door says everyone is welcome to come, and the other says everyone is welcome to leave. We’re open. Everyone can come in and have a look.”

Anyone considering starting is encouraged to come in. While you can see Master Moy perform a set on YouTube, people are encouraged to just come in. Sessions are posted on the door, there are introductory sessions for all ages and abilities. Those wishing to join can call 519-273-5614 or navigate to [Taoist.org/locations/stratford](https://taoist.org/locations/stratford) and send an email under the Contact Us link.



STRATFORD Hunter Steel WARRIORS

UPCOMING GAMES

Friday, October 20 - 7:30pm
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Sunday, October 22 - 7:00pm
at Elmira - Dan Snyder Memorial Arena

Friday, October 27 - 7:30pm
vs Kitchener-Waterloo - Allman Arena

Saturday, October 28 - 7:00pm
at Cambridge - Galt Arena Gardens

Friday, November 3 - 7:30pm
vs Brantford - Allman Arena

Saturday, November 4 - 7:00pm
at Cambridge - Galt Arena Gardens

Sunday, November 5 - 1:30pm
at Kitchener-Waterloo
Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex

Thursday, November 9
7:00pm - at Hamilton
Dave Andreychuk Mountain Arena

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Stratford's Smelliest Hockey Bag Contest

Has your hockey bag been laying around since last year? TMP is on the hunt for Stratford's Smelliest Hockey Bag! You could win a grand prize of 1 set of custom dye sublimated hockey jerseys for your entire team*!

The contest is open to all hockey players residing in Stratford, regardless of age or skill level.

All participants will be judged on smell intensity, hygiene negligence, and creativity.

How to Enter:

Interested participants must submit their entry by filling out a registration form available on the Stratford's Smelliest Hockey Bag Contest website <https://tallman.promo/hockey>. At the time of registration, all partici-

pants must make an appointment for their initial smell test.

Contest winners will be announced at the Stratford Fighting Irish Game Day Opener located at the Allman Arena on Saturday, October 21st.

Make TMP your go-to for all custom sport jerseys, embroidery services, and branded apparel! We are located here in Stratford at 193 Lorne Avenue West.

*The grand prize package of custom dye sublimated hockey jerseys for a team will include up to 20 jerseys in total.

Please see <https://tallman.promo/hockey> for more information.



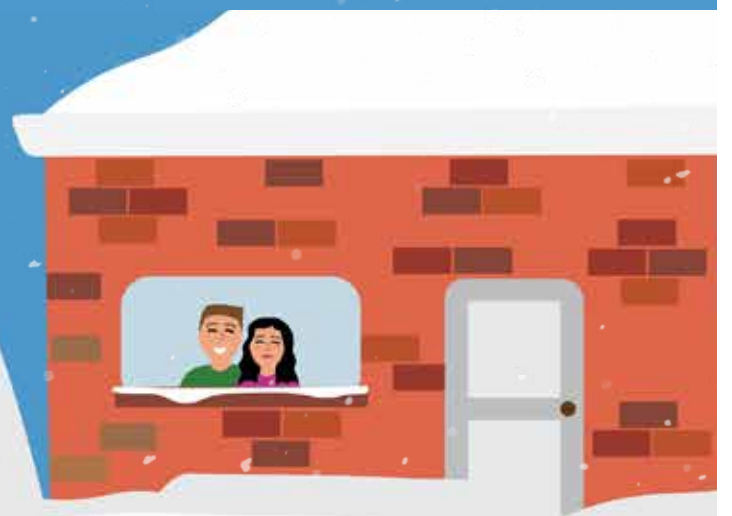
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Local Flavour

RESTAURANT GUIDE

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Crisp N Crust Eatery features unique flavours in Stratford

Bavneet Singh and Prabh Sharon were thrilled to open the doors of their new restaurant September 22. Crisp N Crust Eatery can be found at 20 Wellington St, a bright establishment that seats thirty-five. They currently employ four but are prepared to expand their team by another two new jobs immediately.

“We like to cook. We stayed together in London. We liked to cook together and started cooking for friends and family and we loved that. We started working in restaurants and then planned to open a restaurant,” said Singh.

“We turned passion to profession,” added Sharon.

There is pizza, chicken wings, burgers, quesadillas, wraps, and all sorts of sides. “There is basically something for everyone,” said Sharon.

What differentiates their menu from others is that they have Indian style pizza, which is something not available in Stratford. They make everything from scratch from the dough for pizza to breading their own wings. Quesadillas may be a Mexican dish, but theirs is with an Indian twist.

“When you taste it, you will taste the difference. Everything is a little bit spicy. Even our drinks have a kick to them,” said Sharon.

Customer favourites so far are the piz-



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Prabh Sharon and Bavneet Singh share a love of cooking

zas, which are said to be “to die for” and the chicken tikka wrap. “Everyone is asking for that now because it is a new flavour to Stratford” said Singh.

The dining experience is unique, offer-

ing games like cards and board games to customers to play while they wait together for their meals.

“I did that because when I would go and dine in a restaurant everyone was al-

ways busy with their phones. They come with their family but everyone is still on their phones. So what I did, I tried to bring games to the table and everyone is enjoying and indulged in the mood of the restaurant. I have some cards, I have UNO, and others that people can play,” said Singh.

There were many challenges to overcome in setting up their first restaurant. They searched for a place, and at first found one in first London, then Ingersoll but they weren’t right. They found their current address in Stratford and finalized it. It took about six months to get through the red tape with city hall before they could open.

Now that they are, Singh and Sharon are excited about their future.

“What we are planning, is to get licensed. We have applied for the license to sell liquor. After that, we want to transfer to some sort of sports bar so we will install tv’s where we will show games,” said Singh.

Their hours of operation are very accessible. They are open seven days a week, from noon till 11 pm Sunday through Thursday, and from noon till 1 am Friday and Saturday nights. Takeout is of course available through Skip The Dishes and Door Dash, as well as by calling direct for delivery at 226-637-1013.

Pazzo Company celebrates 25 seasons of serving Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Café Bouffon and Pazzo Pizzeria, part of Pazzo Company are wrapping up their 25th festival season and proudly celebrate the amazing accomplishment of thriving after a tough few years.

Because of this accomplishment, Café Bouffon is offering a limited-time \$59 Prix Fixe Menu after 7 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday this fall. Additionally, guests can enhance their prefix dinner experience with a hand-selected wine pairing for an additional \$35.

Pazzo Company started from humble beginnings as a pizza parlour in the historic cellar of 70 Ontario Street and has now grown into a staple for visitors and locals alike with a reach across North America due to their commitment to providing excellent food and fabulous service.

Like any new business, the pizzeria initially overcame challenges, like not being able to source dough during busy evenings to disconnected ovens on opening

night, but the company and staff continue to persist, and this is what makes the company thrive. Larry McCabe, owner of Pazzo Company and Stratford City Council Member, says, “This celebration isn’t just about survival through COVID,” he continued, “This celebration is about acknowledging that despite our ups and downs, we’re still here continuously adapting and thriving.”

Born during the challenges of the pandemic, the second restaurant, located upstairs, Café Bouffon, opened on November 19, 2020, initially as a pop-up in support of Lights on Stratford. The success of the pop-up illustrated to owner Larry McCabe that establishing Café Bouffon permanently would fill a much-needed void in Stratford’s culinary scene at the time. Café Bouffon brings sophistication to the forefront with its elegant ambiance, yet it remains delightfully unpretentious. The dining room boasts beautiful chandeliers, Louis XV mirrors, and wingback chairs that offer a relaxing view of the sun-



set.

The staff are the face of the company, and McCabe notes how important everyone is in the success of the business, “I have to hand it to our staff at Café Bouffon and Pazzo Pizzeria, we could not be the successful and thriving business we are without them.”

Kitchen staff are also essential in the success of local restaurants, and with renowned chefs, such as Courtney Noble, a Stratford Chefs School graduate, taking the reins, the French-inspired dishes are sure to please everyone’s tastebuds. Noble notes her love of local flavour and says, “My menu

is inspired by my love of French food and the bounty that Perth County has to offer.”

Sustainability is and has always been a priority of Pazzo Company. They source local produce and meticulously select wines based on sustainability. Collaborating with local farmers and bakers is of utmost importance, and McCabe notes, “Sustainable living is very important to me and to the company as a whole. We pride ourselves on the fact that we have great connections with local suppliers and farmers.”

Pazzo Company has also incorporated a Naturazzata Water

Filtration System from Italy to diminish bottle waste and do their part to care for the environment. Furthermore, their initiatives to use The Friendlier Company’s reusable takeout containers reflect their commitment to the planet.

Being mindful of community commitment and involvement, Pazzo took part in the Lights On Stratford in partnership with Destination Stratford from its inception and has now been selected to keep the light installation on the side of the building permanently to not only attract visitors during shoulder seasons but for locals to enjoy year-round, too.

McCabe ends with his humble appreciation for the community support, “We will continue to seek innovative ways to contribute to this community and to the planet, and we are proud to be a beloved spot for both locals and tourists alike.”

Stop in at Café Bouffon this fall for their delicious \$59 Prix Fixe Menu after 7 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday until October 31st.

New Agora Gallery space brings back conversations with visitors

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Cindy Hubert, owner of Agora Gallery, can now connect with her customers and visitors face-to-face for the first time in years with a new physical space.

Agora Gallery's previous location was in the Market Square area up until the COVID-19 Pandemic. Hubert created an online gallery and gift shop and ran pop-ups at the Bruce Hotel. Since the COVID-19 Pandemic came with challenges for art galleries and in-person events, Hubert created her website and e-commerce platform sooner than she would have otherwise.

She was offered the 100 Downie Street location by Mountain Galleries founder Wendy Wacko in the spring of 2023. She is subletting the space from Wacko and is in negotiations to renew the lease on the space.

"It's a beautiful space," Hubert said. "Mountain Galleries did an incredible job renovating it when they moved in. It's a lot smaller than my space was around the corner but it's so beautifully presented and the location is really good, so yeah, I absolutely love the space."

Agora Galleries has their 10th Annual Summer Exhibition in the new building, featuring 26 artists with some sort of connection to Stratford. The traffic coming in and out of the gallery depends on the Stratford Festival productions at the Avon Theatre across the street.

"If 'Spamalot's on, there's a lot of people coming in. If it's a 'Wrinkle in Time', there's people coming in, but not as many," Hubert said.

Along with featuring Stratford artists to add to the city's thriving arts and culture scene, Hubert launched Agora Gallery



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

CREATIVE SPACE

Cindy Hubert of Agora Gallery stands with some of the artwork featured in the 10th Annual Summer Exhibition, featuring artists with a Stratford Connection. The space on 100 Downie Street allows her to talk to patrons coming in about the artwork.

to provide a space for art education. She operated Gallery 96, an artist-run centre with training from artists who worked in theatre production. Agora Gallery came out of bringing the artists' work to the core, where residents

and visitors alike can come and learn.

"I want people to know about the fantastic artists that are here," she said. "I want to engage with people. I also know that galleries can be scary plac-

es for people. They find it a little intimidating sometimes, but I want everyone to feel welcome coming in. I don't want anybody to feel they're being sold to, and I want them to go away to feel like they know something more about Stratford and the artists here."

Most of the Agora Gallery visitors are local, with about 20 per cent of visitors coming from out-of-town. The new location is well-received.

"The local community's extremely supportive and of course, the artists themselves are very supportive as well," Hubert said. "Having the physical space means I can have those conversations with people and talk about the art in person."

The 10th Annual Summer Exhibition will run at Agora Gallery until October 15.

Visit shop-agora-gallery.ca for more information.

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Stratford Kiwanis Festival Empowers All Voices

Annual Benefit Concert Offers Inclusive Opportunity for Singers of All Ages and Abilities

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

In response to musical program cuts within elementary schools across the province, The Stratford Kiwanis Festival of the Performing Arts decided to step up and offer an annual benefit concert for participants of all ages and abilities. Pat McKinna, Executive Director says cuts to local school musical classes helped bring this program to fruition, "That kind of inspired this idea; to provide an opportunity for non-professional singers to perform."

With a creative team led by performance coach Stephen Woodjetts and director Diana Leblanc, all those interested in singing are asked to visit the website below

to fill out the form. The concert will take place next year, on Friday, April 5 at Avondale Church.

The Stratford Kiwanis Festival for the Performing Arts began in 1927. The festival now runs for approximately three weeks in April with an annual average of 1,000 entries and is managed by a small part-time staff and over 100 volunteers.

The featured musical for the 2024 season will be the Canadian Classic, *Anne of Green Gables*, The Musical which McKinna notes relates to their mission of inclusivity, "It's not only a quintessential Canadian favourite, but what happens to Anne is pretty familiar to all of us because she has a hard time fitting in, and she's bullied by peers, and yet she persevered."



Woodjetts will lead students, along with LeBlanc, throughout the program and notes the music and program itself were equally exciting to him, "Anne is the only show I've never done but wanted so dearly to do," he continued, "This is a lovely opportunity to share this magical piece of theatre with young and old."

This program is specifically

designed for everyone who wants to sing, McKinna notes, "There is no need to have any background in singing and all are welcome." She specifically notes that there will be no barriers that will discourage them from accepting everyone, "All are welcome, if someone is in a wheelchair or has mobility issues, we would like to be able to welcome you to the show, and there's no reason why you can't sing."

The benefit concert performers could also have a chance to be recommended to the Ontario Provincial Music Competition and potentially perform in 'Stars of the Festival' sponsored by W.G. Young Funeral Home Ltd.

Because the program is ongoing, McKinna would like those who are interested to know they

will be taking the opportunity to practice over the March break, and therefore, those who would like to sign up should have availability for a few days during March Break.

The program would not have been possible without the support of the Government of Canada's Community Service Recovery Fund.

Those interested in signing up or learning more are asked to visit the Stratford Kiwanis Festival of the Performing Arts website at www.kiwanisfestivalstratford.com

The Stratford Kiwanis Festival and Woodjetts are excited to see everyone, regardless of ability, out singing at the "I cannot wait to start work with Diana and our lovely singers," said Woodjetts.

SpringWorks presents The Family Crow: A Murder Mystery in time for Halloween

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

Just in time to get in the Halloween spirit, the internationally celebrated presentation of *The Family Crow: A Murder Mystery* will be appearing at Factory 163 on Saturday, October 28 at 7pm.

You're invited to experience this puppet show for 14+ at a pick your price model. Internationally acclaimed puppeteer Adam Francis Proulx is both writer and performer of this comedic mystery which has won awards at Orlando and Vancouver Fringe Festivals, Best new play from London, and best original script in Orlando.

"It is so silly fun. Adam Proulx is a very funny clever man. There is a circuit of Fringe Festivals all over North America that are very tricky to get into but he

gets accepted a lot and does tours so he's in Vancouver, he's in Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Orlando, touring this show. He's won Best of Festival, Patrons Pick," said Eileen Smith, artistic producer of SpringWorks.

It's a classic whodunit. A mysterious murder has occurred amidst the Family Crow and now Horatio P. Corvus (Sorter Outer of Murders) is on the scene to crack the case. Proulx plays all the characters with pun filled dialogue to bring delightful fun for all that attend.

"Because we are bridging Halloween, you can come in your best murder mystery garb or Steampunk, or come as you are, so we will welcome people to come in costume as you're inclined and have a sip on something and sense of occasion, a sense of silly fun. IF you like that genre,



(D KATZ PHOTO)

PUPPET SHOW

Family Crow a murder mystery

it is definitely an ode to the murder mystery," said Smith.

Smith hopes the audience will take away the spirit of delight, to come hang out with friends and have an awesome evening.

"Experience is a word that gets tossed around right now, but I think it's a reality humans like to connect and there's still a hunger for connection that is something more present since COVID, it's more conscious maybe. Opportunities to leave your home; there's conversation for the live performing arts about why would you leave your sofa. My job, passion, quest,

is to invite people into a place where it is worth leaving your sofa," said Smith.

There will be a meet and greet after the performance giving an opportunity to engage with Proulx and fellow attendees. This is a licensed event. Tickets are available at the Pick Your Price model of \$15, \$25, or \$35 plus HST making it accessible to all. Blocks of four tickets purchased together receive 10% off. Tickets can be purchased online at SpringWorksFestival.ca, and at the door if still available. Factory 163 is located at 163 King St.

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LIGHTNING AT 200 DURHAM STREET

Sometimes, the dead do tell tales

A Joel Franklin Mystery
Spring-Summer 1928

RON FINCH

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Let me Introduce ... The Hottest new Jazz Duo in Town ... VELVET & IVORY



APRIL TAYLOR

Times Freelance Columnist

Let me take you back in time ... It's 1946, New Your City. Imagine ... ladies in gowns and pearls whisking around the dance floor with their partners in a dimly lit lounge. A couple snuggled in a corner booth for two, drinking champagne. All the glam of yesteryear. A grand piano on stage and as a beautiful woman at the mic serenades us with her smooth salutary voice ... "Unforgettable, that's what you are ... Unforgettable, though near or far" and other favorites like George Gershwin's Summertime, and songs made famous by Nat King Cole and Ella Fitzgerald. Let's settle in and let the music become part of us.

Those places might have disappeared, but the music remains. Last Christmas I was out with my friend for dinner at the Bruce Hotel where Velvet & Ivory were performing. The atmosphere had a similar feeling as those old fashioned night clubs. A pianist at a gorgeous grand piano and a lovely lady singing mellow jazz with a few Christmas classics woven in. The dinner was nice but what gave it the feeling of a special evening was the music.

Music waves eternal wands,



(LAFS PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

– **Enchantress of the souls of mortals! Edmund Clarence Stedman**

But who are these guys?

Well, let me introduce you to... **Velvet.** You might know her as Beverley Maranger. Beverley, is a true blue Stratfordite, born and raised here. She and her husband are the owners of Co-Operators Insurance, they enjoyed raising their 4 children here in our lovely community. I have known Beverley for a long time and I remember her telling me years ago that she feels most like herself when she is singing. I asked her where her love of music began. I loved her answer. "I was raised in a Pentecostal Church, and I'd be standing on the pew as a little kid belting out hymns." she says. Music has always been part of her, as a child she was involved

in the school operettas, it's just simply who she is. Beverley trades her hat as a mom, wife, and office gal, dons an evening gown and becomes Velvet, singer of this new duo. I must say, she makes this transition seamlessly. "Jazz makes my heart happy but Gospel feeds my soul" Beverley tells us.

Ivory ... also known as Tim Elliot. Tim was born in St. Catherines to a musical family. Tim has had several stops on his journey between St. Catherines and settling in Stratford in 2015. Tim has two interests in life, music and people. As a young man Tim studied theology in New York City and worked part time playing the big base in bars at night. At that time in his life he choose not to be ordained as a minister. He found himself in various

professional positions. He made his way to Toronto and worked for CFRB radio and you might recognize his name as he hosted two programs on CBC Radio, Concerns and Panel-Options. He also met his wife of many years, Judy Maddren former host of World Report also on CBC. Tim decided to return to theology and was ordained in 1977. He was with the Angelica Church for 25 years. After retiring he began a counselling business and when he moved to Stratford he really wanted to devote time to his music. He got involved in the music scene and is part of the Stratford Symphony and joined a jazz band ("Our Little Band").

Tim was playing piano at the Stratford Symphony Orchestra, Christmas Carol sing-along. After the show Beverley's husband

Peter introduced himself and Beverley to Tim. It was kismet, right time, right place they were a perfect musical match. They formed a duo Velvet and Ivory. Beverley also joins in at times with the full band. "Music brings us joy and we love to share our musical gift, we are finding it to be fun and our creative partnership and it's allowing us to grow musically". I always ask people for a quote that means something to them because I think it's a good way get to know someone. Of course I asked Tim, his reply was a line by Duke Ellington "Do it as you see it and believe in what you see." Wise words for any situation. Beverley shared the words of John Woode "Character is who you are when no one's watching." That I know to be true of her. They have played a fund raiser for the hospice, and enjoy taking their music to Care homes just for the sheer joy of making people happy. When I spoke with them it was clear how important it is for them to give and support the community. I love that part and it was very clear that their true purpose of their music is to give and share, they are a well suited duo indeed.

So, what is next for Velvet & Ivory? I asked. We are open to music opportunities ... they both answered with enthusiasm. House concerts, Special events and lounge music etc.

Now that you know a little more about this musical duo you might like to see them. They play at the Bruce Hotel and have a show lined up at St. James Church on October 15 featuring musician Kevin Barrett 2nd Guitarist from the play Rent. I hope to get to this one, maybe I'll see you there.

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Learn about a different culture at Dancing Waters Boutique

SYDNEY GOODWIN

Times Contributor

If you've been in downtown Stratford, and have walked along the storefronts on York Street, chances are that you've seen the captivating store with the beautiful bowl of water out front. That bowl, called a dancing water dragon bowl, is the centerpiece and name sake of Dancing Waters Boutique.

Dancing Waters (previously named Symphony in Brass) has graced Downtown Stratford with stunning artifacts from different parts of Asia. Back in 2021, when previous owner Yoki Tong expressed a desire to close Symphony in Brass, business partners Koi Thompson and MaggieLiu jumped at the chance, offering to take over the company. "Stratford is really a Western people's town, especially when I came here 9 years ago," Thompson recounts, "When I heard my friend wanted to close the store three years ago, I said 'don't close, because our culture, Chinese, Japanese, Asian culture (doesn't exist) in Stratford.'" Together, Thompson and Liu became co-owners of the shop, reopening under the new name of Dancing Waters on November 13, 2021.

The items sold at Dancing Waters are like nothing else in the area, offering authentic Asian goods from China, Japan, and Tibet. Thompson explained that, when it opened nineteen years ago as Symphony in Brass, the store sold mainly brass goods made by Tong's grandfather in Hong Kong, until Cloisonné was introduced; "Cloisonné is enamelled brass, coloured brass. The technique is from a thousand years ago from China." Thompson went

on to describe the other items the store has on offer, such as ceramics, blue and white porcelain, Chinese handmade furniture, tea sets, pearls, and her favourite, the jade from China. These pieces are a large part of Dancing Waters' inventory.

There is always something new coming into the shop, so shoppers will always be able to find something they have never seen before and see the work of different cultures. Both owners get excited to see new customers come in, curious about the shop. "The young generation really likes Japanese culture, they buy the Japanese chopsticks, or dish," Thompson notes. It's not just the pieces that are being sold, but also the history of the item. Thompson talked about the beauty of sharing an object's story with a customer, what the significance of it is, and the journey that it has taken. Another way Liu and Thompson cater to the happiness of their customers and fulfilment of their requests is offering specialty orders. They get in contact with their connections overseas regarding products that aren't being sold in the store, or a specific antique the customer has their eye on. With this service Liu and Thompson go above and beyond to ensure their customers' satisfaction.

Dancing Waters is open throughout the year, between 10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., and is located at 11 York Street in Stratford. They can also be found keeping their social media up to date on Facebook under Dancing Waters Boutique, and Instagram, with the handle dancingwatersboutique. So if there's a gift you would like to get someone, or if you want to pick up something for yourself, stop in and get the chance to learn about something new.



DANCING WATERS BOUTIQUE

Maggie Liu (left) and Koi Thompson (right) posing in front of Dancing Waters on its opening day

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Welcoming Ukrainians

VJ KNUTSON

Times Freelance Columnist

"How do you do it? I like my privacy too much."

I get the question often. Ric and I have hosted five families since the start of the war, and while it is true that hosting Ukrainians has meant making concessions, privacy one of them, neither of us hesitated from the outset.

"Aren't you afraid? What if no one gets along?"

I think back to the first family we committed to host, and all the things I worried about – would they be comfortable enough, what would they eat, how would we communicate? Everything fell into place, in time, and admittedly, it took flexibility and a willingness to let compassion lead.

Watching the news, back in March of 2022, and seeing families with suitcases and children in tow fleeing the war, we felt compelled to do something. When it was announced that Ukrainians coming to Canada would need hosts, our "We can do that!" was spoken in unison.

We contacted local organizations, attended fundraisers and zoom meetings, and came up with no answers. We did police checks, had our home vetted, and still nothing. Eventually, I came across a Facebook group where the administrators were holding an information session at a church in Ivan, Ontario. Ric and I attended. A young Ukrainian woman and her 9-year-old son appeared on a big screen, and she shared the situation in Poland – how people were crammed into refugee centres or living ten to one hotel room. Food was in short supply and jobs were hard to come by.

Canada was offering displaced Ukrainians the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program. The invitation allowed 3 years of temporary residency and open work or study permit. Ukrainians would not be filtered through the refugee process but would need to find their own way, secure housing, and employment. The group at the church that day, recognized the need for ordinary citizens to step up and help.



Vasyliya Shyshkivska (The first family we hosted)

"Each of us has a gift to share," Richard Hone, the drive behind the movement, said. "We can help these people, person to person, hand to hand." Ric and I decided that we had room in our home, and time. I offered to volunteer, and we indicated our desire to host.

We joined the Facebook group: Ukraine Help Middlesex, and on the way home from the meeting saw that the women who had reached out from Poland was asking for help for her friend and three children. Ric and I offered our home, and the next day we were video chatting, with the

help of an interpreter. We reassured the mom, Tania, that we were here for her, and every day after, she and I kept in touch.

I would go on to be an ambassador for the grassroots movement, helping to place hundreds of families in Canadian homes. I had no idea how our lives were about to expand. Now, a year and a half later, I wish to share my story with you, in offer of support to others, be they hosts, or Ukrainian guests, or others in the community wanting to help.

The war is not over. More than half of the Ukrainian population has been forced to leave their homes. Close to one million have applied to come to Canada, and around 168,000 have landed so far. With Winter closing in and the CUAET program coming to an end (March, 2024), we are expecting an influx of Ukrainians in the next few months.

We still need help.

In the upcoming editions, I will share stories, and let you know what's happening in your own town. If you have questions or a story to share, please reach out at english.knutson@gmail.com.

Webcrawling in the Winter Garden



SHEILA CLARKE

Times Freelance Columnist

Something wonderful is happening in Stratford! Almost every street has at least one pollinator garden. That's pretty spectacular! That means pollen for pollinators, food for seed-eaters, homes for butterflies, moths and a host of other native insects, caterpillars for baby birds- That's called habitat! Awesome!

My own garden is beautiful in the autumn bouquet of asters and goldenrod, and filled with pollinators. (Braiding Sweetgrass gives special mention to the purple and gold garden of Autumn, something the author, Robin Wall Kimmerer, believes is recognized by insects, looking for winter food. That glorious combination are actually com-

plementary colours, colours that have high contrast when next to each other, so that the colours "pop," looking more intense together than on their own. In fact, Kimmerer says that those two plants together attract more pollinators than either plant does on its own.

Something else thrilling in the garden this year is the number of dragonflies and ladybugs. Those are some of the predators of the insect world, and their presence tells me that the garden ecosystem is in balance. No one species is overwhelming the garden ecology. There is food, there are insects to eat that food, and to be food themselves for predators and for birds and baby birds.

So the garden is beginning to get ready for winter. It's time. The nights are getting cooler, the day photoperiod is getting shorter, and some of the residents are departing. Some will migrate (some birds, not all). Some insects will burrow into flower and leaf stalks. The very important amphibians and reptiles all have their own ways of surviving, their systems will slow down to a very low metabolic rate, similar to hibernation, but for them it is called brumation. Turtles will

seek out water where it is deep enough not to freeze all the way to the bottom, and burrow into the mud. Frogs will mostly hibernate deep in water and mud, as will salamanders. Toads will find land burrows, below the frost line. Snakes will hibernate in hibernaculum (fun word :), burrows below the frost line, seeking warmth from each other.

There are three species of frogs that make their own special anti-freeze, and can remain in freezing temperatures over the winter. Those are wood frogs, chorus frogs, and the oh-so-welcome spring peepers that tell us that spring is here. They hibernate in leaf litter.

Leaf litter is also home to many insects over the winter. Those leaves that for so long we've raked up and burned are actually winter homes for many residents of the habitat garden. In those leaf piles you will find insects overwintering (Think Florida only different), and equally important, there will be butterfly and moth cocoons. You may ask why they would choose to wrap themselves in dead leaves in your garden?? FOOD is the answer. Your wonderful garden has the plants that the young moths and

butterflies, and the insects will need when they emerge into the warm spring sun. They know that, because they fed there in the summer and fall.

When the spirit moves you to clear out the garden, to chop everything off, to send those messy leaves into bags and trucks, this year take a walk in the woods. There is one small question. What happens in the forest? NOTHING. The leaves and flower stalks will gradually work their way into the underground factory that will turn litter into fertilizer, and the native creatures that needed that shelter over the winter will survive.

That takes real courage to resist that autumn raking tradition! Just remind yourself that lawns are new- only a few hundred years old. A lawn of one species of plant that never gets to seed and is too short to provide habitat is not the usual story of native plants. Before that, nature was in charge of a far healthier ecosystem- chemical free, native plants, a web of life that benefited all life forms, including humans. Make your garden a healthier place, and you will have done your bit for mitigating climate change, by supporting nature. Be a Garden Warrior!

Carbon Update: Remember when I quoted the Carbon parts per million (ppm) in the atmosphere in April, 2023? It was 418.7 ppm. Just fyi, in September, 2023, it was 419.8 ppm (The safe level is 350 ppm, passed in 1990). Congratulations to the brave souls who marched in the rain in the "End Fossil Fuels" march in Stratford. On Sunday, September 22nd. Over 70 heroes turned out with cardboard signs (not plastic), including Climate Momentum, Perth Sustainability, and the Eco-Club from SDSS. Thanks to Loreena McKennitt for her support, and to the speakers, Kathy Vassilakos speaking on fossil fuels and climate change, and the two co-chairs of the Eco-Club, Joycelyn Williams and Zach Kritzer. Breathe clean, seek alternatives.

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.

Embracing the Spirit of Thanksgiving



IRENE ROTH

Times Freelance Columnist

Thanksgiving is a cherished holiday that allows Canadians to come together, express gratitude, and celebrate the abundance of the harvest season. Thanksgiving offers a unique charm and opportunities for enjoyment.

I just love this time of year and this holiday. It is a sign that we are moving indoors and we can start cooking all our favourite foods and deserts. It is also a time for gratitude and sharing with those closest to us and those in our community.

There are many ways to bask during this wonderfully colorful and delightful holiday. Here are a few to consider.

Savor the Feast

The centerpiece of the Thanksgiving weekend is typically centered around a roasted turkey, accompanied by an array of delectable side dishes. We love to add our own twists, incorporating regional flavors and family recipes that make each meal extra special. From buttery mashed potatoes to sweet cranberry sauce and savory stuffing, the table is a cornucopia of flavors and textures.

To truly enjoy Thanksgiving, consider trying regional dishes such as tourtière in Quebec, butter tarts in Ontario, or seafood chowder on the East Coast. Food brings people together, and this holiday is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the rich culinary diversity that Canada has to offer.

Express Gratitude

Thanksgiving is about more than just food. It's a time to reflect on our blessings and express gratitude for the people and experiences that enrich our lives.

Embrace this spirit by sharing what you are thankful for with friends and family around the dinner table. You may want to start a new tradition where each person takes a moment to express what she is grateful for,

fostering a sense of unity and appreciation.

Try to Give Back to Our Community

Thanksgiving is also an ideal time to give back to the community and those less fortunate. Consider volunteering at a local food bank, participating in a charity run, or donating to a cause you care about.

There is so much need in our communities nowadays. By helping others, we can experience the true meaning of Thanksgiving and find joy in making a positive impact on our community.

Enjoying the Great Outdoors

Our stunning landscapes are a sight to behold during the fall season. To truly enjoy Thanksgiving, embrace the beauty of the great outdoors. Take a leisurely walk in the park, go on a hiking adventure, or simply enjoy the crisp autumn air in your backyard. The vibrant foliage and cool weather create the perfect backdrop for a day of outdoor enjoyment.

Create Colourful Decorations

Decking out your home with festive decorations can add an extra layer of enjoyment to Thanksgiving. Consider cre-

ating DIY crafts with family members, such as making colorful autumn-themed centerpieces or wreaths.

Decorating the house can be a fun and creative way to get into the holiday spirit and involve everyone in the festivities.

Engage in Fun Activities

Thanksgiving offers ample opportunities for enjoyable activities. Organize a family game night with board games, card games, or puzzles. You can also plan an outdoor scavenger hunt, complete with clues hidden in the autumn foliage.

Engaging in such activities fosters a sense of togetherness, and laughter can make Thanksgiving memorable.

Celebrate Different Pumpkin Dishes and Deserts

Pumpkins are a quintessential part of the Canadian Thanksgiving season. Incorporate pumpkin into your festivities by baking pumpkin pies, carving jack-o'-lanterns, or even visiting a pumpkin patch. The versatility of pumpkins adds a touch of whimsy and warmth to your Thanksgiving celebrations.

Share Stories and Traditions

Thanksgiving is an ideal time to share family stories and traditions. Encourage family mem-

bers to recount their favorite Thanksgiving memories or share stories of their ancestors. Learning about your family's history and traditions can deepen your connection to the holiday and create lasting memories for generations to come.

Take Time to Reflect and Relax

Thanksgiving is a time to relax and recharge. Take a break from the hustle and bustle of daily life and enjoy some downtime with loved ones. Whether it's curling up with a good book, watching a favorite movie, or simply lounging by the fireplace, taking a moment to relax and reflect on the blessings in your life.

Thanksgiving is a time to celebrate the harvest, express gratitude, and come together as a community. By savoring delicious meals, expressing thanks, giving back to the community, and engaging in fun activities, you can make the most of this special holiday.

Embrace the spirit of Thanksgiving and you'll find that it's a time filled with joy, warmth, and the beauty of the autumn season. What a great season!

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!
Irene Roth

Lights On Stratford Announces Major “Dandelion” Light Art Installation in Market Square this Winter

Now entering its 4th year, the multi award-winning Lights On Stratford annual winter festival, managed by Destination Stratford, will once again transform Stratford’s heritage downtown core and park system with luminous art and interactive light installations. The Lights On Stratford 2023/2024 theme is EMERGENCE - a noun that goes back to the Latin root emerge, meaning “bring to light.” Just as something comes to light or shows up where there was darkness or nothing before, an emergence happens.

In addition to announcing the now permanent year-round LIGHTWALL art installation on the heritage façade of 70 Ontario Street, festival organizers are now revealing another major light display that will emerge at the start of the Light Trail in Stratford’s Market Square this winter.

“Dandelion” was launched to acclaim earlier this year at Vivid Sydney, one of the world’s preeminent light festivals. It is now journeying over 15,000 kms from Australia to Canada for its North American premiere at Lights On Stratford. “I’m thrilled to be returning for our second year at Lights On Stratford and to introduce ‘Dandelion’ for its North American debut. Originally commissioned for Vivid Sydney with an astounding 3.5 million visitors in front of the iconic Opera House and Harbour Bridge, our studio, Amigo & Amigo, has been fortunate to see our work travel across North America, Asia, and the Middle East,” said Simone Chua, Director of Amigo & Amigo.

Inspired by the wind-swept petals (pappus) of the dandelion, an international symbol of playfulness, and in some cultures even believed to have medicinal properties, audience members are transported by the



(AMIGO & AMIGO PHOTO)

interactive Dandelion into the world of the fanciful and hopeful. Every 10 minutes, Dandelion boasts its natural talents to the audience, by spilling out into an eclectic and modern sound and light animation, inspired by wind, and the natural properties of the dandelion. Make a wish, take a deep breath, and come watch Dandelion blow! “The Downtown Stratford BIA is excited and honoured to support Lights On Stratford as the Gold Sponsor of the North American premiere of Dandelion,” said Jamie Pritchard, General Manager, Downtown Stratford BIA. “I have seen the video of it, but I am told it pales in comparison to experiencing it live and in person from the inside out, so I can’t wait. This show piece is sure to attract visitors from far and wide into the core of our city.”

Kaileigh Krysztofiak, General Manager of Lights On Stratford, has already experienced Dandelion firsthand. “In June, I was incredibly lucky to be invited to Vivid Sydney; one of the largest light festivals in the world. With the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House as back drop, Amigo & Amigo’s Dandelion made its glowing premiere. I spent several nights watching thousands of people in awe of Dandelion’s beauty and size, flocking to it to engage and play inside and out of the exhibit. The experience of “Dandelion” is a beautiful, joyfilled composition of sound, light and interactivity. I can’t wait for you to see it!”

Lights On Stratford’s unique approach and goals are captured in its manifesto:

- We bring light and joy to Stratford’s

public spaces.

- We are free to the public and accessible for everyone to participate.
- We are a cultural anchor tenant that enables additional events and experiences.
- We celebrate and embrace winter.
- We help grow a vibrant year-round visitor economy for the region.
- We improve the quality of life within our community.

And with over 80,000 patrons across the main light art installations last winter, this approach is resonating with patrons. It’s also connecting with artists too. “The support we’ve received from the Stratford community is truly unique, and the city itself provides a stunning backdrop for our light art,” added Simone Chua. “Amigo & Amigo are committed to supporting independent festivals like Lights On Stratford. These are events created by and for the community, representing a labor of love and dedication. They hold the power to bring art and people together in a way that is truly special.” “I keep saying that it takes a village to build a winter lights festival, and we’re now a global village with incredible local and international artists coming together to make Stratford shine bright with joy each winter,” said Zac Gribble, Executive Director, Destination Stratford and Festival Director, Lights On Stratford. “We’re incredibly excited about showcasing Dandelion in Market Square and look forward to announcing more festival displays and experiences soon.”

Prepare to be mesmerized this winter when interactive displays will light up nightly Thursday through Sunday from 5-10pm. The 4th annual Lights On Stratford is free to the public and set to launch on December 15th, 2023 until January 13th, 2024. Visit lightsonstratford.ca for more details.

Lucy Peacock to receive Stratford Festival’s Legacy Award

The Stratford Festival is honouring Lucy Peacock with this year’s Legacy Award. The gala, hosted by Sheila McCarthy, will be held at Toronto’s Four Seasons Hotel on Monday, October 2.

Peacock marks her 36th season with the Festival this year and has performed in more than 80 productions at the Stratford Festival alone. She has captivated audiences at major cultural institutions such as the National Arts Centre, The Segal Centre, Centaur Theatre, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, The Citadel Theatre, The Globe Theatre, Canadian Stage, Vancouver Playhouse, The Coal Mine Theatre, The Winter Garden and Broadway’s Lincoln Center.

“Lucy is that most rare and important thing: a fearless artist who will bravely and without shame go to dark places in order to realize a playwright’s vision,” says Artistic Director Antoni Cimolino. “This year, for instance, Lucy plays both the ridiculously greedy Germaine Lauzon in Michel Tremblay’s iconic Quebec tragicomedy *Les Belles-Sœurs* and the powerful racist matriarch in Alice Childress’s searing drama *Wedding Band*.”

Peacock, a National Theatre School graduate, joined the Stratford acting company



(STRATFORD FESTIVAL PHOTO)

in 1984, and her star rose quickly. In 1986, she played Ophelia in both *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*. In 1988 her enormous versatility became even more evident as she took on the lead role of Eliza Doolittle in the musical *My Fair*

Lady, along with the roles of Lady Anne in *Richard III* and Helena in *All’s Well That Ends Well*.

In 2006 her versatility once again wowed audiences when she gave a tour-de-force performance as all seven characters in

The Blonde, the Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead. This spectacular production was brought back the following year to meet the demand for tickets and also went to the Vancouver Playhouse.

Among her many other key roles are Titania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Masha in *Three Sisters* and Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, all in 1989; Rosalind in *As You Like It* (1990, 2000); the Princess of France in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (1992); Gwendolyn Fairfax in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1993); Desdemona in *Othello* (1994); Viola in *Twelfth Night* (1994); Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1997); Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* (1999); Elmire in *Tartuffe* (2000); Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* (2001); Regan in *King Lear*, which also toured to New York’s Lincoln Center; Lady Macbeth (2004); the title character in *The Duchess of Malfi* (2006); Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* (2006); Nana in *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again* (2010); the title role in *Mary Stuart* (2013); Kate Keller in *All My Sons* (2016); Volumnia in *Coriolanus* (2018); B in *Three Tall Women* (2021); and Queen Elizabeth in *Richard III* (2022).

Change HER World completes library build in Malawi

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Change HER World, a registered charity based in Stratford has just finished building a library in Malawi, a country in southeastern Africa.

“This library holds over three thousand books of all types that specifically relate to the African experience,” says Linda Willis, Founder of Change her World, “Most of the books are in English because that’s what the kids will learn in school. We have made a real effort to find stories related to the African experience.”

Linda Willis and Carol L. Hamilton-Williams, founder of the organization, have been working to provide educational opportunities and empower women in Malawi and most recently set to work getting a library made to help bring a more informal education and wonderment to children and women in the village. Wells says, “Our primary mandate is the education of girls and women. It’s removing the barriers that prevent them



HER WORLD LIBRARY

New Library helping change lives for children in Malawi

from going to school and being successful.”

Libraries were originally established in African countries for the benefit of the elite; however, Change Her World wants to change that, “Colonial occupiers established libraries, and those libraries really serve the needs of the elite, and highly educated,” Wells said, “It’s taken a long

time to transition that thinking into that libraries are for everyone.”

Before this initiative, there were no libraries in the village, and now, this library offers space for children to read, play, imagine, and even have access to computers. Eventually, this space will be accessible to adults to access computers to help with resumes and job applications.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Wills says the library is meant to help build learning opportunities for everyone, “It’s about learning and education, and not just formal education. Education takes many forms. You just don’t learn from sitting in school.” She continued, “This space will arouse curiosity, imagination, wonderment, and questions.”

The library will transition over time to allow more access and will hopefully be able to provide more computers, books, and sound areas for everyone in the community. Wells said the library will take time to transition due to costs associated with getting supplies and access in the rural area; however, she is hopeful that it will evolve into a space for the whole community, “It’s all about educating people and giving them hope and opportunity, and I think a library fits into that very well.”

For more information about Change HER World or to donate to this outstanding organization, please visit their website at www.changeherworld.ca or contact Linda Willis at l.willis@rogers.com.

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL: The Room



STUART LENDER

Times Contributor

There’s a silence sometimes, that rises in the room after they leave, after the conversation. I can feel it. It fills in like molasses poured into a jar, clinging to the wall. Sticky. Not easily forgotten. It isn’t so much the words that were spoken, but the sensibility left behind.

It doesn’t happen all the time. It happens in those appointments when emotion reigns. It happens too, when we share ourselves. Their life, my life, their hurt...

mine. Instinctual understanding. “I feel you now as I felt it then.” It could’ve been the death of a baby. It could’ve been a parent, a mother, a brother. But already this death has affected life – theirs, perhaps yours and mine in some way not yet describable, and it’s only been a day between.

I’ve known funeral directors who’ve said the job was to “direct”: control the operations of; manage or govern. I’ve always known it to be “guide”: show or indicate the way. That’s where I sit when I’m across from them. Every one different, every one on shaky ground, every one grieving in some way whether they know that or not. They speak about their dead, but I hear love and devotion, I hear regret, gratitude, I hear anger or indecision. And as I said – sometimes they leave the residue, thick, of what they’ve told me – left behind like shed clothing that they couldn’t wear any longer. Tossed aside on their way to the door as I see them out.

I recall, when I was a film stu-

dent at York University and we watched foreign films to learn differing ways of filmmaking. In many Japanese movies the camera would hold on a room where a conversation or argument was taking place, and the characters would walk in and out of frame. And when the scene was over and they finally walked off, the camera held the shot for several moments – an empty room where something profound just happened. Forced to witness. Forced to reflect. The room becomes a vessel for all of the tragedy, the joy or the hope played out.

Sometimes when they leave the funeral home, the room swells like those in the films. It fills up with hope or despair. Sometimes both. Certainly gratitude. My own. But that trickles in later, like a leak into the heart or from the heart, I’m not sure – a strange mixture of honour and shyness in making some difference in this sometimes helpless and hopeless world; born out of their loss and from the privilege of washing in the water of

someone else’s grief. Knowing that I will be the one who, for a time, is stronger than they and will be a part of their support.

I hear tell of burnout. I’ve heard of dissociated care. I know that when the “job” is done I should return home without an afterthought, but that’s not me. I can’t recognize myself within the world unless it’s the world of all happenstance, theirs and mine. After all, I live in that space constantly and that space feeds and informs everything. The room in which I sit with them is the room of this city, is the room of this country, is the room of this world, and I will exit the room one long day in the future. I smile at myself. Always the future, isn’t it?

And so, what can be done and how long can it be done for? I hope these days that I assemble into a life are worthy days. I hope that they say something. I hope that they show themselves to be fruitful in small ways – for friends I’ve known, for my beloved and benevolent daughter, for my partner

who shares her sometimes beautiful, sometimes broken, but always bountiful soul with me... and for strangers who sometimes reveal themselves beyond a conversation about the weather.

I hope the room I’m in keeps breathing and doesn’t choke on a sudden intake of breath. Too much shock or sadness. Slow and steady it goes; breathing in and breathing out. Filling it up with stories never completely forgotten. I’ll listen for them. I’ll feel the room filling – hefty breaths of pure and wondrous emotion. And all of it healing. Then after, with all affections spent, with the people gone and the door closed – I’ll let the silence of the empty room where something just happened, rest, and restore itself to four walls and a few chairs.

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

Lucy Peacock to receive Stratford Festival’s Legacy Award

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

Peacock’s musical work includes the lead role of Anna in *The King and I* (2003), Dolly Levi in *Hello, Dolly!* (2005), Morgan le Fey in *Camelot* (2011) and Mrs. Munch in *Wanderlust* (2012). She also hosted the hugely popular *Late Night with Lucy* cabarets in the early years of the Meighen Forum. For several years she volunteered her time to direct, host and perform in the annual *Expect the Extraordinary* fundraisers for Stratford’s Performing Arts Lodge, helping the charity raise more than \$200,000.

Peacock has shared the stage and worked

with some of the most iconic actors, directors and artists of this generation, including Christopher Plummer, John Neville, Richard Monette, Martha Henry, Antoni Cimolino, Brian Bedford, Sir Jonathan Miller, Carey Perloff, Robin Phillips, Susan H. Schulman, Brent Carver, Susan Wright, Janet Wright, Goldie Semple, Peter Hinton-Davis, Jackie Maxwell, Colm Feore, Seana McKenna, Peter Donaldson, Jillian Keiley and Robert Lepage.

Gala Co-Chairs Barry Avrich, Wendy Pitblado and David Simmonds express their delight in honouring Peacock with the Legacy Award, saying: “Lucy is an

artist who has devoted her career to perfecting her craft on the stages at Stratford and continues to deliver one exceptional performance after another. We are honoured to have Lucy join the esteemed group of artists who have received the Festival’s Legacy Award in recognition of their immeasurable contributions to the Stratford Festival and the entertainment world.”

Peacock is known for her compassion and commitment to the Stratford Festival company. She mentors, guides and teaches actors, working with both production and artistic management to accomplish

common goals of dignity and respect in service to the work.

“Lucy has been a deeply loved mentor to many young artists,” says Cimolino. “She also is a friend and champion to the more senior company members. And in those roles, she has supported several artistic directors as a counsellor and friend. I value her advice immensely.”

The Stratford Festival Legacy Gala will feature tributes and performances from Thom Allison, Gregory Hoskins, Antonette Rudder and Sara Topham. The Legacy Award will be presented to Lucy Peacock by Antoni Cimolino.

105 years old and still active in the community

Esther Priestly

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

It is a rare occasion when you are lucky enough to meet an inspiring lady who has just celebrated her 105th birthday, on September 18, and realize she is still “sharp as a tack”, and could still pass for someone much younger. She drove a car till she was 100.

Esther Catharine Hohl was born in Lisbon, just outside of Wellesley. Those were the days when there was a hotel in every small hamlet and Esther’s parents owned and operated one, along with running a clay tile yard. She can still remember loading hundreds of clay tile on a wagon every day.

Her mother Elmina, was an excellent seamstress and grew up in the house built by her father in Wellesley.

Esther and her husband Howard Doering, moved into that very house with their only child Barbara.

She says the big change in her life came when her parents bought a nearby farm, and she became her dad’s main “hired helper”.

She says “life was difficult during the depression years of the 1930’s, but having the love of horses, dogs, and cats kept her well occupied”.

Playing the piano, singing, and dancing

were her passion and met her future husband, Howard, at a local house party. She said back then, you made your own entertainment since money was hard to come by.

Esther is proud of the fact that she was baptized in the First St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Wellesley and is still a member to this day.

After her daughter Barbara, started school, she herself went to hairdressing school and later started her own career and business, and was a hairdresser till the age of 70, and always loved the visits with her clients.

After the loss of her first husband Howard, years later met and married Bill Priestly, and together would tour the countryside, in their antique car, looking for the best places in the countryside, to have lunch.

Barbara, says she is a special grandma to her 2 grandchildren and now 4 great grandchildren.

Esther lives in retirement at McCarthy Place in Stratford, and loves watching the Toronto Blue Jays and spending time with her special friends.

I had to admire how her mind was so sharp and I am sure her friends say she is a feisty lady with a strong faith, who had worked hard all her life, with an endearing sense of humour, even at 105!



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

WHAT IS THE SECRET?

Above pictured is 105 year old Esther Priestly (Doering) with her daughter Barbara Green, following a birthday celebration with family at Stratford’s McCarthy Retirement Residence.

Remembering Ipsita and continuing her tradition of giving

October 15th charity drive at Papa Johns

PREETHAM PARI

Papa Johns Stratford

Ipsita Pattanaik, co-owner of Papa Johns Stratford, passed away in March of this year. She was a very bubbly girl with a lot of energy and always motivating others to be a better person. She was never without a smile when greeting customers at the front counter.

Her boyfriend, Preetham Pari (me), is currently running operations alongside Chirag Garg.

Ipsita went to India for a minor surgery and due to an infection, unfortunately passed away. She was very outgoing, and everyone loved having her around. Some may recall the Halloween decorations Papa Johns had last year. It was the little things she did that brought the store to life. She always wanted to show the brighter side of the world we live in.

I have been in pizza business for 7 years now, starting from Domino’s Pizza. The love and appreciation we received is unparalleled to when we first opened the store. People wanted to come in and try us out. That’s when my late girlfriend at the time designed the flyer stating “STARDFORD”, which



brought in hatred towards the store. It was an error from our side, and we had apologized deeply for making that mistake. But I guess some customers did not accept that. We were constantly made fun of over social media. Our sales plunged and I was worried at the time as it was my first business venture. However, we slowly grew again, gave exclusive deals, got involved in our community by sponsoring the ice rink, supporting the homeless community, and sponsoring the staff at Rotary Club and Stratford Warriors. We have built a family this year who showed us unconditional love and loyalty. I am saddened to say that she’s not able to witness any of this. A lot of customers are still asking about her and every time I explain brings back a lot of memories about her time at the store (as it was our second home for awhile).”

The reason for putting up this column is because Ipsita Pattanaik used to run charity back home. Every birthday (October 27th) of hers, she offered food for orphans. To honour her tradition this year we have planned to support those kids and help a lot more in raising money through the store. As it’s a

small community we also wanted to reach out to the locals and are now collaborating with Stratford General Hospital. The funds raised will be shared to help children through patient care/equipment in the Maternal Child Unit at Stratford General Hospital and provide food to the kids on her birthday.

So, Papa Johns Stratford and Stratford General Hospital welcome all the people of Stratford and surrounding area to come out and support us on October 15th for a charity drive. All money spent at the store on that day will be going to the General Hospital and to the “her foundation”.

There is no turning back now. I have moved to Stratford, and I am sure to bring in more customers through love and value for their money. The experience and life lessons that I have learnt in my life has set me to respect time and life. If you lose them, none is going to return back. So please enjoy your moment and respect individuals, together we shall grow as family.

- Preetham Pari

Much love

PAPA JOHNS STRATFORD

+1 (226) 779-4235

1060 Ontario street Stratford

Families learn how Picture Perfect Learning Solutions helps children at open house

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

A centre specializing in support services for neurodivergent children welcomed families into their new space on the first day of Autumn.

Picture Perfect Learning Solutions held an open house in its new centre on 945 Downie Street on Sept. 23. Families learned more about the services while children interacted with sensory stations with items such as Play-Doh and pinecones. Facilitators also spoke to parents every half an hour about the services offered and their own experiences with neurodivergence.

Nadine Schumont, the lead facilitator of Picture Perfect Learning Solutions, said she had difficulty in school growing up due to then-undiagnosed dyslexia and ADHD. She was diagnosed in her 40s, around the same time she attended university and faced the same struggles in school she dealt with when she was younger.

"Growing up was not fun," she said. "It was a struggle being in school. School wasn't something I did or something I got through."

Schumont read Ronald B. Davis' book "The Gift of Dyslexia," which outlines neurodiversity and picture-thinking compared to word-thinking. The centre offers programs that use the Davis® method to help children who are picture-thinkers. She explained that as there are less pictures and more words in the classroom at



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

HEADLINE

Rebecca Dillow (left) and Roz Gunn are two facilitators at Picture Perfect Solutions whose own children benefited from the services offered at the centre. They shared their journeys with families attending the Open House on Sept. 23 at the new location on 945 Downie Street.

Grades One and Two, that can be a struggle for picture-thinkers.

"Our goal is to get you back into the school system in that area where you can grow and be there because you want to be," Schumont said.

Two facilitators, Rebecca Dillow and Roz Gunn shared their journeys with their own children. Gunn noticed her son was struggling in kindergarten. He was diagnosed with dyslexia in Grade Two.

"As I'm reading it, I'm thinking 'This isn't my son - my bright, gifted son, that I see all the time.' My heart sank thinking of all the struggles he's going to face in

school and in life," Gunn said.

She met Schumont while searching for tutors for her son and received "The Gift of Dyslexia" book from her.

"I quickly realized that on the flipside of all these labels that we gave him are these extraordinary gifts that he has. That's what we're offering here - a place for kids to grow into themselves and out of a silo, from the beginning without labels," Gunn said.

Dillow's twins, who are both picture-thinkers came to Picture Perfect

Learning Centre for different reasons, one who needed guidance on focusing and another who worked on social skills.

"What we want to do is help kids get to get to that place where they have the skills and the tools that when they enter the school system - if they enter the school system - that they actually are right on target and that they have skills that they need so they don't fall behind and so they don't feel insecure or embarrassed or just frustrated," Dillow said.

Picture Perfect Learning will have outdoor and indoor learning opportunities, as well as time to follow recipes in a full kitchen and learning about measurement.

One of the open house guests, Karen Luckhardt, said her son has benefitted from Schumont's programs.

"It has been a huge help. She has taught him some self-calming skills, ways to focus when he's out of focus at school," Luckhardt said.

She is proud to see Schumont's business growing and encourages anyone whose child would benefit from Picture Perfect Learning Solutions to learn more about the centre.

"Come check it out. Your child will reach their full potential once they have a program with Nadine. They'll notice a world of difference," Luckhardt soon.

Visit pictureperfectlearningsolutions.com for more information.

EWYN Weight Loss Studios brings personalized program to Stratford

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

A weight loss studio specializing in personalizing weight loss programs for each client and their needs opened its doors in Stratford.

Monique Boersen, owner of EWYN Weight Loss Studios in Stratford, worked at the London, Ont. location for two years and was looking at franchising opportunities when the owners from London sold it so she could open her own location. Boersen will review each client's lifestyle, medications, and other factors such as work situations to come up with a personalized weight loss plan.

"Everyone is so unique and everyone is so different," she said. "It's very important to have personalized because we want to be able to meet people where they're at so they can achieve goals that they're capable of achieving. Not everyone is able to do the same thing, at the same rate, at the same speed."

EWYN Studios only expects clients to keep in regular contact with the staff there to work on their weight loss goals. The program also involves improving their cardio activity.

"If someone really loves doing their

CrossFit five times a week, we actually alter the program so they get the right amount of protein to lose weight even though they have a very active lifestyle," Boersen explained. "People who haven't been active in a very long time, we don't have the same expectations for their cardio, but we do have an expectation that they increase their cardio from where they're at."

So far, reception from Stratford has been great and the business continues to grow. Along with Boersen, there are two other staff members at the Stratford location and all have lost weight from the program and managed to keep it off. Boersen lost 40 pounds and the other two employees have each lost over 100 pounds.

Boersen said everyone on the team keeps each other accountable to help them keep the weight off. She also likes the program because of the food plans.

"The food is regular food from the grocery store," she said. "It's just a matter of figuring out what portions to have and how to cook it properly that it's working to your advantage. You can just change a couple of things like changing your vegetable oil to olive oil. Little details that we happen to have that make all the difference."

Visit facebook.com/ewynstratford for more information.

STONETOWN TRAVEL

Come meet our travel partners!

Thursday, November 9, 2023

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

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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**

Maintain the Churchill Circle

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

The Churchill Circle in Stratford, which skirts the entrance to the former Stratford Fairgrounds, is always beauty at its best, that is manicured and weeded by tireless volunteers from "Garden Stratford" and the Stratford Horticultural Society.

Last week Wendy Hughes and Felicity Sutcliffe were busy weeding and cultivat-

ing the large circular bed, in preparation for the fall and winter months ahead.

They were proud to have just been informed of being selected in the "Best Garden" category from Communities in Bloom Canada, of which they were very proud.

The pair of Stratford residents, feel it is a work of love on their part, and are proud to keep the Festival City, looking beautiful for visitors during the busy tourist season.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

HEADLINE

The above photo shows busy gardeners, Wendy Hughs and Felicity Sutcliffe in Stratford's Churchill Circle, taking a break and showing the sign that states "Best Garden" from "Communities in Bloom-Canada".

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2024 Kia Carnival



2024 Kia Niro
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Riddles

What did one autumn leaf say to another?
I'm falling for you

How does an elephant get out of a tree?
Sits on a leaf and waits till autumn

What did the tree say to autumn?
Leaf me alone

How did the Vikings send secret messages?
By Norse code

What is a forum?
Two-um plus two-um

What was Camelot?
A place where people parked their camels

How did Columbus's men sleep on their ships?
With their eyes shut

What's the worst thing you're likely to find in the school cafeteria?
The food

What kind of food do math teachers eat?
Square meals

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 35



Pet of the Month



TRIGGER

Are you ready to welcome boundless love into your life? Meet 2-year-old Trigger, the most affectionate dog you will ever meet who is eagerly searching for his forever home. He is looking for a home with a single person, couple, or family with dog-savvy children. Trigger is a pro when it comes to strolls in the park or leisurely walks around the block. He walks beautifully on the leash and knows just how to make the most of his outdoor adventures. Despite his larger size, Trigger firmly believes he's a lap dog. He adores cuddles, snuggles, and being close to his human friends. If you're looking for a furry friend who's always ready to provide warm companionship and cozy moments, Trigger is your go-to guy. Apply at kwsphumane.ca.

Word Search

THANKSGIVING

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

- APPLES
- AUTUMN
- BREAD
- DESSERTS
- FAMILY
- FEAST
- FRIENDS
- GRATEFUL
- HAM
- HARVEST
- PUMPKIN
- THANKFUL
- TRADITION
- TURKEY



TAVISTOCK MEN'S CLUB SAUERKRAUT & BBQ PORK CHOP SUPPER

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Serving 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
TAVISTOCK MEMORIAL HALL
3 Adam St., Tavistock
Drive-Thru Pick-Up
\$25



Tickets available at Men's Club Hall,
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email: tavistockmensclub@outlook.com



FUNDRAISING BBQ

Ag. Society directors L- Laurie Neubrand and R- Elaine Landsborough serving up a sausage on a bun to Chara Lafleur of Oakville, who was in the city to see a Festival Play, and stopped by for lunch.

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

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No phone calls please.

We thank you for your interest, but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

COMING EVENTS

Email to inquire
stratfordtimes@gmail.com

SPOOKY TOWER

Halloween October 31; 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

James Anglican Church, 41 Mornington St., Stratford
Hey kids...here's your chance to ring the bells in the Spooky

Tower at St. James. There will be treats and certificates for all who ring the bells Everyone is invited, especially little ghosts and goblins.

certificates for all who ring the bells Everyone is invited, especially little ghosts and goblins.

BRIDGE

The Stratford Duplicate Bridge Club is offering a series of six lessons for new or less-experienced players. The lessons will begin on **Tuesday, October 17th at 1:30 pm** and run for six consecutive Tuesdays. They will be held at **The Burnside Agriplex on McCarthy Road in Stratford** and be led by Kevin Smith, an experienced duplicate Bridge player. Each lesson will end with guided bidding and play to reinforce the lesson content.

The cost is \$25 for all six lessons.

To register, please call the office of
The Lakeside Active Adults at 519-271-4310.

GARDEN STRATFORD MEETING

Monday November 6; 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

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

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

SAUERKRAUT & BBQ PORK CHOP SUPPER

Wednesday, November 8; 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Tavistock Memorial Hall, 3 Adam St., Tavistock

Hey kids...here's your chance to ring the bells in the Spooky Tower at St. James. There will be treats and

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) Nov 9, 1989
- 2) Steven Spielberg
- 3) Lima
- 4) 8
- 5) Indigo
- 6) Buttercup
- 7) Arizona
- 8) A bull
- 9) Jack Morris
- 10) Venus

SUDOKU

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

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