

# STRATFORD TIMES

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## Stratford loses one of their beloved swans, Kate

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

During the night last month, one of Stratford's beloved swans, Kate, was killed by a large animal that was believed to have made its way into town along the river.

Community members took to Facebook to share their sadness about Kate's loss with many comments revolving around the clipping of swans' wings, which was thought to be the reason for Kate's death. However, Quin Malott, parks, forestry and cemetery manager at the City of Stratford, says female, nesting swans will do anything to protect their eggs and Kate most likely wouldn't leave her nest in the face of danger, which ultimately ended her life.

"Fowl are most vulnerable to these kinds of animal incidents when they're nesting because instinct is they don't want to leave the nest," said Malott. "They want to protect them. Retreat isn't their first instinct at that moment; their first instinct is to protect the nest."

Though Malott said they had contacted a local emu farm in hopes of incubating the eggs Kate had laid, when they went to the water, it appeared another swan had already disturbed the nest, making it impossible to salvage the eggs.

"Nick was on the nest when we went down to the water, and unfortunately anything left wasn't viable," said Malott.

Though this incident is uncommon, Malott notes he's currently seeking ways to prevent it from happening again.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



### HERE FISHY FISHY

Morgan Power catches a shiner on his line while fishing off Lake Victoria in Stratford on Earth Day April 22.

(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

## Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce general manager Eddie Matthews to retire in June

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

It's safe to say Eddie Matthews didn't fully understand what he was getting into when he decided to leave a 40-year-career in radio – 20 years of which he spent as the iconic voice of CJCS and Juice FM in Stratford – to take on the role of general manager of the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce in 2019.

Having just announced he will be retiring from his position as general manager at some point likely in June to give himself more freedom to travel with his wife and find new ways to give back to the community, Matthews told the Stratford Times that leading

the chamber as the world plunged into the COVID-19 pandemic completely rewrote any expectations he had going into the job.

"I'm not patting myself on the back because our staff here is so good, but we're in a good spot right now (at the chamber)," Matthews said. "We're through COVID, but there's still businesses that are really suffering. We figured it's going to be a few years after COVID where they're still going to be feeling the effects of it, and many businesses are, so I'm hoping the next person that comes in (as general manager) will remain vigilant on promoting and supporting local businesses."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 7

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# SDSS Eco Club offers curated messaging around environmental sustainability during Earth Week

Instead of spreading one generic message of environmental sustainability to all their fellow students, members of the Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) Eco Club recently partnered with members of the community and local businesses to help their peers better understand and relate to environmentalism on a personal level.

During Earth Week April 22-26, the students arranged for people from the wider community to visit classrooms and have students visit local businesses and organizations so they could learn about how locals incorporate and promote the concepts of sustainability and reducing their carbon footprints in their everyday lives.

"We're having an environmental lawyer talk to law classes, we had (Stratford climate-change coordinator) Sadaf Ghalib talk to geography classes, we had someone from (Stratford environmental-activism group) Climate Momentum here today to talk to civic classes," said Eco Club member Lucy Chung. "Tomorrow, one of the Indigenous leads from our school board is coming to talk to one of the Indigenous studies classes and drama, and then we also have an eco-climate-activist singer coming to perform for music classes."

"We also had Bruce Whitaker in today to talk to the gym students about the rain gardens at the (Stratford All Wheels Park)," added club member Jocelyn Williams.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

## SEEING GREEN

Members of the Stratford District Secondary School's Eco Club planned a whole week of guest speakers and field trips related to environmental sustainability for their fellow students April 22-26.

"We've just been trying to educate a bunch of people about what our city is doing and what you can do for the environment. We had a whole subcommittee for this week alone and we tried to target specific people for specific classes ... to make sure it actually connected with the students instead of having somebody just speaking generally about saving the environment."

Other speakers for the week included Perth County economic development officer Justin Dias speaking to travel-and-tour-

ism classes about agri-tourism, local artist Claire Scott speaking to art students about recycled-art projects and agronomist Olivia Norrenverghe from Pioneer Seeds speaking with science students about sustainable agriculture.

In addition to the speakers, students in certain classes also had the opportunity to travel out into the community to learn about things like sustainable-manufacturing practices at Schaeffler Canada, robotics and engineering in dairy farming at Dotzert Farms and food waste at the Local Community Food Centre among others.

By connecting the concept of environmental sustainability to students' individual interests and potential career paths and educating students on what they can do personally to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions through initiatives like a daily trivia contest featur-

ing Stratford District Secondary School mascot Bruno the Golden Bear, the club members hope their fellow students will take what they learn and incorporate it into their own lives as they complete their high-school journeys and move on to bigger and better things.

"Climate change is happening now. It's not something that's going to happen. It is actively happening, but there are small steps we can take in just kind of reducing your carbon footprint – biking, walking to school and also, since this year's theme is reducing plastic waste, recycling properly at home and in your school," Chung said.

"One of our main goals in terms of looking at the guest speakers was to get students thinking about how in their prospective careers they can maybe connect that to environmental sustainability instead of just looking at environmental education as just environmental science," added club member Natalie Ditty. "... We want them to think about how, in the future, they can use their job in ways they may have not originally thought of as being connected to helping the environment."

Club members also used Earth Week to promote some of the projects they've been spearheading recently including working with the school board to ensure SDSS is recycling properly, working with the Local Community Food Centre on an urban-farm project, and the annual Plant Sale hosted by the Eco Club and SDSS Green Industries class.

On that latter point, club members are hoping area residents will stop in at the school between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. May 11 to purchase vegetables, succulents, herbs, ferns, pollinator plants and so much more in support of the school's Green Industries program.



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## Stratford loses one of their beloved swans, Kate

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"I did look into possibly maybe putting a nesting platform out in the water for next year," he said. "If there's a nest at the east end of the river where we think that the coyotes are coming from, maybe we can move the nests onto this floating platform. I still need to do a bit of research to see if this is an option."

Larger animals such as coyotes are uncommon in the downtown core, and disruptions to the swan population would likely be caused by raccoons or muskrats stealing eggs from the nest, said Mallott. However, he said in most cases, he and other city staff consistently monitor and care for the swans' well-being to protect them from harm.

"We monitor the swans every day," said Malott. "When they get too far astray, we bring them back and we try and come up with solutions to keep them safe, but at the end of the day, we put them on the water, to grace the water, but they're going to go where they want to go and they are wild animals."

Malott notes this loss affects not only those who live in Stratford but also the city staff who care for the birds every day.

"It's heartbreaking. Each swan has a name, which makes it more personal to everyone here at the city, so we understand how sad this can be for everyone."



**GREIVING** (AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)  
The loss of a beloved swan sweeps Stratford last month



# City of Stratford Unveils Draft Guiding Principles for Grand Trunk Renewal Project

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

At a recent council meeting, Stratford councillors reviewed and provided input on the draft guiding principles for the city's Grand Trunk renewal project.

The ad-hoc Grand Trunk renewal committee is spearheading efforts to develop a comprehensive vision for the site of a former Grand Trunk Railway locomotive repair shop' redevelopment. Drawing from the 2018 master plan and extensive community feedback, the committee has crafted draft guiding principles that embody the collective aspirations of Stratford's residents.

Emily Robson, corporate initiatives lead for the City of Stratford, addressed council to emphasize the importance of community involvement in the project and its principles.

"I really just want to emphasize that a significant amount of community consultation was done on this project in 2018," she said. "The committee's undertaking right now is about building on the insight and knowledge and determining what's right moving forward from the original draft and if there are any gaps that have come up in the intervening years."

The draft guiding principles outline seven key themes as follows:

- 1. Sustainable and fiscally responsible:** ensuring environmental, social and financial sustainability through innovative technologies and partnerships.
- 2. Celebrate past and future forward:** honouring heritage while embracing forward-looking solutions.
- 3. Inspiring and exhilarating:** creating a dynamic, new space that fosters creativity and community.
- 4. Distinct and diverse:** designing urban spaces that cater to diverse needs

and celebrate the site's uniqueness.

**5. Inclusive and connected:** building a welcoming and connected community hub with affordable housing and amenities.

**6. Integrated and multi-functional:** optimizing the site with a mix of uses to serve diverse community needs.

**7. Thrive and vibe:** creating cohesive, vibrant spaces that promote social connection and wellbeing.

The draft guiding principles have been developed collaboratively with input gathered through various channels, including public open houses and community roundtables.

Coun. Mark Hunter noted his support for the principles but also raised concerns about bringing the draft to the public for input, where they could be changed or modified and could cost taxpayers an unnecessary step.

"My interest is saving both time and money," said Hunter. "I want to be sure that bringing these principles for public input will, in fact, advance them."

Robson agreed but noted the importance of involving the community in the process.

"I think that might also suggest that finding a way of engaging the community now in a meaningful way is part of this process of gaining consensus on what we're trying to achieve."

With full support aside from Hunter, the draft guiding principles will now be presented to the broader community for consultation and feedback.

Residents will be able to engage through pop-up community events, online platforms and on-site activations.

Staff will report back with the final vision and guiding principles for approval later this year.



EARLY DEVELOPMENT PHASE

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

During her presentation, Emily Robson showed council some of the process that was used to develop the draft guidelines with this idea board.

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# Farewell Stratford Times

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As I sit down to write this farewell letter, my heart is filled with gratitude and nostalgia for the incredible journey I've had over the past year and a half. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as the editor and civic issues reporter at the Stratford Times newspaper, and I want to take this opportunity to express my deepest thanks to every one of you who has been a part of this journey.

To all my readers, thank you for your unwavering support and engagement. Your readership has been the driving force behind this newspaper's success, and I am truly grateful for the trust you've placed

in me. Your feedback, encouragement and constructive criticism have helped shape the Stratford Times into the vibrant community resource it is today.

During my time here, I've had the pleasure of meeting some truly amazing people within our community. From local leaders to passionate activists to everyday heroes, each encounter has left a lasting impression on me.

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to publisher Stewart Grant for believing in me and allowing me to serve as editor of the Stratford Times. His guidance, support and leadership have been invaluable, and I am grateful for the lessons I've learned under his leadership.

Working at the Stratford Times has been

more than just a job for me – it has been a journey of self-discovery and personal growth. As a former nurse of 15 years, transitioning into the world of journalism has been a fantastic experience. I've learned so much about myself, about writing and about the power of storytelling to connect, educate and inspire my community.

As I bid farewell to the Stratford Times, I am excited to announce that I will move on to a new chapter in my career that combines my passion for healthcare with my love of writing and communications. Starting in May, I will take on the communications, marketing and fund development coordinator role at Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. I am thrilled about this

opportunity to continue serving my community in a meaningful and impactful way, and I look forward to the challenges and adventures that lie ahead.

I would love to stay in touch! Please feel free to follow me on Instagram at @amandajane-writer or email me at amandajane-writer@gmail.com at any time.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude to all of you reading this for making my time at the Stratford Times such a rewarding and unforgettable experience. While I may be moving on, the memories and the connections I've made will always hold a special place in my heart.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your lives.

## From the editor's desk: the multitasking joys of working from home

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

In 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced most of us to stop working from the office, I'd already been working most-

ly from home for the better part of a year or two.

Sure, I'd drop in at the office to keep my boss at the time happy and to upload photos to the central server, but I did the majority of my work from the tiny little desk in the bedroom of my attic apartment, allowing me to roll out of bed and begin my work day without the hassle of a morning commute or even the need to brush my teeth or put on pants before I began answering emails and making phone calls.

While my work-from-home routine has evolved significantly since then – I promise I'm wearing pants as I write this – I have become a diehard supporter of remote work over the past five years, and the notion of returning to any kind of office makes about as much sense to me as ignoring all the public-health and other lessons we collectively learned from the pandemic.

Personally, I am way more productive without other people around. When I worked at an office, I'd often find myself distracted by conversations with coworkers, unnecessary trips to get coffee and literally anything else I could find to keep myself from doing actual work.

While there may be plenty of distractions at home and my penchant for procrastination hasn't improved much, I find instead of wasting time doing nothing productive at the office, I use those little breaks from work to do the household tasks that need to be done anyway like starting a load of laundry, emptying the dishwasher, or – as I'm planning on doing this week – filing my taxes.

I also find my eating habits are both healthier and less expensive. Instead of walking over to McDonald's or Tim Hortons for a coffee or some lunch, I make myself much better coffee at home and my lunches would make the authors of Canada's Food Guide proud. And, since I'm responsible for setting my own schedule, I can use the power of procrastination to actually get some exercise during the day – something that gives me that much-needed boost after lunch and helps

refresh my brain for the remainder of the day.

After working remotely for years, my girlfriend recently started a new job that required her to work from an office for the first two weeks and every Monday and Tuesday after that. While she appreciates the opportunity to socialize and collaborate in person with her co-workers, it's clear the all-important work-life balance is harder to achieve when she's at the office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

I realize we're both lucky to have jobs that allow us the flexibility to work from home and there are many professions that don't offer that luxury. For those employers that can however, giving employees who have proven they can work independently the option to work remotely demonstrates a level of trust and gives them the freedom to balance their work and personal lives, something that can really strengthen relationships between workers and their bosses.

I'm the kind of guy who will always be happier and more comfortable at home, so maybe I'm biased, but I really don't see the downside to letting employees work from wherever suits them best.

### Correction:

An error was published in a photo description on page 6 of the April 19 edition of the Stratford Times in the story, "Innkeepers Collective working with wider tourism-business community on cross-promotion opportunities." In the photo description, the author of the story wrote Carla Coles was representing Little Prince Micro-Cinema and Lounge at the Innkeepers Collective event. The Times has since learned that while Coles once worked for Little Prince, she is no longer employed by that business. We regret any confusion this error may have caused.

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# Thames River Clean Up crosses 25 years of making communities greener

ALEX HUNT

Times Correspondent

Stratford residents battle blizzarding conditions as they continue to rid the water banks of litter for the annual Thames River Clean Up on April 20.

Aisin Canada employees scour the shores of the Roadhouse Drain on Saturday morning and have been tending the area for the past 15 years.

“Harmony, society and nature, we are a Japanese company so it’s very important to give back to the community,” said Bill Boon, general manager-administration of Aisin Canada Stratford, in the neighboring Giant Tiger parking lot. “It’s something we need to do, for now, for the future, the young children out here and their children.”

Rosanne Stewart, manager of human resources and general affairs, said that the trash has gone down over the years since they first started but has begun to stabilize in the same amount in recent years.

Aisin Canada staff had collected around 12 to 14 bags of trash.

Cooper Standard employees attended their backyard drain at Plant 2. Darrell Chalmers, health safety and environmental specialist, said the company has been doing the clean-up for 12 years, which has greatly benefited the wildlife that gathers in the spring.



## CLEAN UP OF THAMES RIVER

AISIN staff members, Sophie Vanstone, Keith Sisson, Isabel Cowell, Luke Cowell, Alex Clarke, Rosanne Stewart and General Manager Bill Boon help in the cleanup at the river's edge last week

(ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

“It makes the community look better,” said Chris Desjardins, Environmental Rep. “Appearance wise and reduces the impact of pollutants on the environment.”

Over at the House of Blessing at the Waldie Drain, Bonnie Henderson, who has been the coordinator for the civil beautification and environmental awareness committee since 2007, speaks about what makes this event rewarding for her.

“Everybody’s got smiles on their faces, I think everybody feels good because we

are all doing something to make the earth a bit healthier looking and you feel good when you do stuff like that,” said Henderson. There are all kinds of stuff we find by the House of Blessing. We found a lot of clothes, mattresses, beds, dresses and tires.”

Todd Sleeper, head organizer, currently resides in St.Marys right along the Thames River said he didn’t think the tradition would become this successful.

“I started a letter writing campaign 25

years ago. We didn't have social media and I met a lot of people who wanted to help out, it was a tremendous response and everybody came up with a plan to clean up near their community,” said Sleeper. “A lot of people look forward to the Thames River Clean up every spring.”

Sleeper said that the homeless population living along the river banks has become an ongoing strain on the environment. “Homeless encampments are the largest source of plastics that are entering their waterways,” said Sleeper. “Basically, if you want to help the river, you have to help the people.”

“Homes are being built for these folks; people think there is nothing being done but they’re wrong. These individuals are homeless for many different reasons. Not just because of addiction, there’s also mental health and there are people who just can’t afford to pay rent.”

Sleeper said the first year started with 150 volunteers, with the second reaching over 1000. With 46 active clean-up sites among the towns and communities. Sleeper said that he’s searching for people to step into the coordinator position that comes with the duties of organizing the event within their community.

Those interested in becoming a coordinator for your community can call Todd Sleeper at 519-229-6926 or email at td.sleeper@hotmail.com.

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## BIKES FOR SALE

(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Stratford police Const. Darren Fischer stands with one of the dozens of unclaimed bikes recovered by police or donated that were up for auction at the annual Community Bike Sale at the Stratford Rotary Complex April 27. All proceeds from the event were donated to the Optimist Club of Stratford.



# Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce general manager Eddie Matthews to retire in June

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Though he knew going into the position that supporting and promoting local businesses was the name of the game – something he had a leg up on thanks to the relationships and trust he built through his previous career – no one could have predicted exactly how he and the chamber would support and promote local businesses that were, all of a sudden, simultaneously struggling to make ends meet as they navigated shifting public-health restrictions.

“We were all never on one ship. Some were on a big ship, some were on a small boat, and we all had a different way of navigating the waters of COVID,” Matthews said. “It was a good learning curve. I had been on the job for one year when COVID kicked in and I was still coming into work every day. I was the only one in the building. I felt like the Maytag repairman. It was a good opportunity to get one-on-one with a lot of businesses that were, like everybody, just sitting on the sidelines and finding out, ‘What do you need? What can we do? And who can we point you to that could be an asset or help?’

“The one word I’d heard about but never really gave it too much of a thought until COVID was advocacy and dealing with all levels of government, which I

loved. It was so interesting and it also showed you how much red tape there was in many cases.”

While Matthews and his staff worked hard to continue promoting local businesses through initiatives like the chamber’s Shop Local campaign – something Matthews credits chamber office manager Shannon Stewart for – and they continued providing and connecting businesses with the resources they needed to navigate rough seas, Matthews himself met with politicians from all levels of government to push for the financial support they so desperately needed and then worked to help businesses apply for funding whenever it became available.

Matthews was also instrumental in making sure the chamber’s annual Business Excellence Awards (BEA) Gala could continue. While the chamber couldn’t host the awards ceremony in May 2020, it wasn’t long before Matthews and his team came up with a plan to host the gala at the Movies Under the Stars drive-in theatre that October, an event that saw everyone but hosts Jodi Gerber and Courtney Teahen, as well as business leader of the year Franklin Famme, confined to their vehicles for the duration. Yet those business owners who won awards were still able to deliver their acceptance speeches through radio-style interviews with Matthews



EDDIE MATTHEWS

thanks to an FM broadcast transmitter.

“It went off so well,” Matthews said. “Shelley Windsor, who owns Mercer Hall, won two awards that night and was to the point of tears giving her acceptance speech because of everything that the restaurant industry had gone through. I still remember that acceptance speech. You know, that was right from the heart.”

The following year, the BEAs were back at the Arden Park Hotel, but the event was restricted to half capacity, another challenge Matthews and his team were happy to navigate to give businesses a reason to celebrate at a time when celebrations

were much fewer and further between.

“To keep it light-hearted, I had the yellow, plastic gloves and

I would go up and disinfect the microphone and podium after each speaker,” Matthews laughed. “After that, we were putting the future BEA galas together and people said, ‘Well, how did you do it before?’ I didn’t really know because I’d only done it that way for one year. But Shannon Stewart took control of that and we recreated it – kept a lot of the format the same.”

Looking back over the past five years, Matthews is proud of how the chamber has expanded its ability to assist businesses outside of Stratford’s borders in places like St. Marys, Mitchell and even as far as the Region of Waterloo.

“It’s not just the Stratford chamber of commerce, it’s the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce,” Matthews said. “The work we do in our district is just as important.”

While Matthews will stay on board as general manager until June, he will likely remain active with the chamber, helping whoever the new general manager will be hit the ground running and assisting in whatever other capacity he can.

“Eddie’s been an integral part of the chamber’s success since I’ve been on the board,” said chamber board chair Dana Walton in a press release. “Our growth and innovation throughout the pandemic is a testament to his leadership. He’s not only an advocate for the business community, but he’s also become the voice – always aware of what’s happening and when, and making key introductions to support our community’s growth.”

“On behalf of our entire board and membership, we appreciate all he’s done for our business community and we wish him all the best.”

## Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth celebrates National Volunteer Week



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

### VOLUNTEER WEEK

Pictured are the dozens of Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth volunteers who celebrated together during National Volunteer Week at the Community of Christ Church on Forman Avenue in Stratford.

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth is celebrating its five year anniversary this year.

Staff recognized volunteers while celebrating this milestone and showed appreciation for all volunteers recently during National Volunteer Week, April 14-20.

“The theme for this year’s national volunteer week was ‘every moment matters,’ ” said Katey O’Donovan, co-ordinator of volunteers for Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. “This is perfectly aligned with Rotary Hospice’s vision of making every moment matter for those approaching end of life, their families and friends, something hospice volunteers do daily.

“Whether they are supporting residents and families at the

bedside, visiting someone who chooses to remain at home, baking in the hospice kitchen, taking care of hospice gardens, walking alongside someone who is bereaved, playing music, cleaning, or maintaining the hospice home, all these volunteers play a big part in making every moment matter.”

On April 16, 60 of the more than 140 volunteers of Rotary Hospice gathered to celebrate with one another. They were reminded of moments they made matter through their volunteering like special holiday dinners with families, anniversaries, or milestones the kitchen volunteers baked special cakes for.

Volunteers who have served for five years or more received their five-year pin and certificate during the recognition event held at the Community of Christ Church on Forman Avenue in Stratford.

## Weekend Quiz

1. What is the largest moon in our solar system?
2. How long is an Olympic swimming pool?
3. Yellowknife is the capital of what?
4. How many languages are written right to left?
5. What band sang “What Makes You Beautiful”?
6. How many days are in a leap year?
7. Who is the god of the sea?
8. What does NASA stand for?
9. What is the longest movie ever made?
10. What is the 18th letter of the alphabet?

This week’s answers are found on pg. 34



# 2024 Hog Jog will support Stratford Perth Hospice Foundation's plan for a new serenity garden

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The 2024 Hog Jog, scheduled for June 19 at the Rotary Complex (353 McCarthy Rd.), will benefit the Stratford Perth Hospice Foundation.

The funds from this event will allow Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth to develop a serenity garden on Greenwood Drive on the west side of the property. The garden will provide a peaceful, contemplative respite for residents and their families, the staff and volunteers, and the broader community.

"The serenity garden is meant to be a calming space that can be enjoyed by hospice residents, families, staff, volunteers and members of the local community," said Lucie Stuart, director of fund development and stewardship at Rotary Hospice. "It will provide a peaceful outdoor area where people can find solace during difficult times or just take a break. The garden is being designed to be accessible and welcoming to all."

Since 2005, the Ontario Pork Industry Council (OPIC) has organized the annual Hog Jog to celebrate the pork industry's people and products while giving back to local community organizations.

Over the last 16 years, Hog Jog has raised over \$583,000 for 16 worthy, local causes.

More than 400 runners have participated in the 3.5-kilometer, 10-kilometer



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

## FINDING SERENITY

Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth will begin construction of the new serenity garden this year thanks to the support from the Ontario Pork Industry Council (OPIC) Hog Jog.

and Weaner Run events, and enjoyed a delicious pork meal after the race.

A media release from the Ontario Pork Industry Council notes the Hog Jog's continuing success comes from the enthusiastic participation of runners and walkers, sponsors, neighbourhood and industry cheerleaders, and the many volunteers participating each year.

Opened in the summer of 2019 following a successful capital campaign, Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth offers 24-hour pal-

liative care 365 days a year in a home-like setting for those with a life-limiting illness and their loved ones – all at no cost to the individual.

"Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth provides compassionate end-of-life care to residents and their families from across our community," said Stuart. "By connecting with events like the Hog Jog run, we aim to raise awareness about the important work done at the hospice and give back to the community that has supported us for so many years."

To date, 343 individuals have called Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth their final home.

In addition to the clinical-care team comprising RNs, RPNs and PSWs, Rotary Hospice is grateful to have a roster of more than 140 trained volunteers who support not only the activities and individuals in hospice but also those who choose to spend their final days at their home of choice.

To register or for further information about Hog Jog 2024 including a course map, pledge forms and sponsorship and volunteering opportunities, visit [www.hogjog.ca](http://www.hogjog.ca).

Business-sponsorship details are also available. Contact Erin or Andreeana at [sponsorship@hogjog.ca](mailto:sponsorship@hogjog.ca).

**Optimist Club of Downie Inc.**

**OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW**

April 21 Shelley Bonnett, Embro . . . . .	\$50.00
April 22 Scott & Nana Simons, Stratford . . .	\$50.00
April 23 Brian Boyes, Stratford . . . . .	\$50.00
April 24 Ryan & Macie Sparling, St. Marys . .	\$50.00
April 25 Helen Ralph, St. Marys . . . . .	\$50.00
April 26 Todd Wilker, Baden . . . . .	\$50.00
April 27 Ken Smith, Tavistock . . . . .	\$200.00
April 28 Robin & Charlie Rossi, Stratford . . .	\$50.00
April 29 Tris Wicks, Pasadena, Newfoundland	\$50.00
April 30 Tricia Holmes Storey, Milverton . . .	\$50.00
May 01 Christine Thring, Stratford . . . . .	\$50.00
May 02 Sophia Bradley, St. Marys . . . . .	\$50.00
May 03 Heather Gingrich, London . . . . .	\$50.00
May 04 Laurel Poirier, Mitchell . . . . .	\$200.00

**ALL OF THE CALENDARS HAVE BEEN SOLD**

**Franklin E. Hinz**

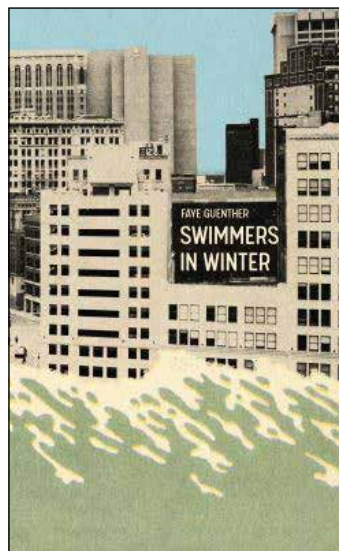
196 Ontario Street, Stratford  
519-273-1633

## Queer Book of the Month

*Swimmers in Winter* by Faye Guenther  
@SPL FIC Guent

This collection of six stories focuses on the lifestories of queer women in Toronto, moving in time from post WWII to an apocalyptic future. They are collected in three pairs; each two stories reference the same characters, from differing perspectives. And they all investigate the shades of relationships between women.

It's a literary collection, focused on both character and place. Readers who enjoy thoughtful writing focusing on the internal experience of the characters will be drawn in by this book, especially if they are also familiar with Toronto and can recognize the references to the city. The writing is lyrical and quiet, revealing the lives of very ordinary women, often middle aged or older.



Starting out with musicians in the 40s experiencing police raids on gay bars, then sharing a contemporary love triangle among waitresses, and finishing up with a soldier who was in Afghanistan and then the story of her descendent three generations on, this book ranges widely in time, even while the setting stays much the same. The experiences and feelings of these women don't change much, however; from trying to survive a hostile social milieu in the 40s to trying to survive in a hostile future, each pair of women reveal similar themes.

This was an unusual collection, looking at everyday, working class queer women, using a subdued narrative tone. While slower paced, the stories are memorable, and these characters will stick with you.

Melanie Kindrachuk  
Public Service Librarian



# Community Food Drive Fundraiser banks in success at Stratford Farmers' Market

ALEX HUNT

Times Correspondent

A family organized fundraiser brings in food to help provide for those struggling to feed themselves in the high economic climate.

Dawn and Cameron Hart decided in January to make it their goal to kick off the year with "Fill the Bucket" marking it the family's first organized community fundraiser.

The married couple utilized this experience to give back to the community and educate their two children on the valuable lesson on giving.

"Our family just really enjoys giving back to the community, and I like coming up with these ideas for fun events and fundraisers. It's really important to teach our children to give back," said Hart. "I think that's something that we will do annually, like we will decide which fundraiser we want to do and who we want to give back to."

Dawn and her family combined their love of farming and community to develop the fundraiser and were grateful to receive a tractor donation from Premier Equipment outside of Elmira to be used for the event which took place on Saturday April 27 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Stratford Farmers' Market.

By the end of the fundraiser, the tractor was filled with a bucket of food weighing 443 lbs along with \$280 in cash donations with all proceeds being directed to Stratford House of Blessing.



## GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Aubree Hart (daughter), Cameron Hart, Dawn Hart and Kasey Hart (son) celebrate their successful first family organized fundraiser with smiles all around at the Stratford Farmers' Market on Saturday April 27th.

(ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

"It's wonderful to be able to provide for some folks who are really struggling in today's economy; it's a privilege to be here for them and support them," said Eva Hayes, executive director at Stratford House of Blessing.

"In the position that we're in, we see

people coming in needing help but we also see generosity of our community where folks will come in and provide funds or drop off food for us; it's just incredible to see both ends of the spectrum."

Hart said that this year, she noticed

people were struggling with the high cost of food and decided on a fundraiser that would focus on supplying those needs for the community.

I thought it was a good fit to go along with the food idea and the Farmers' Market and I saw that they had an application for a charity table, which is allowed to be submitted once a year," said Hart. "I wasn't sure if House of Blessing had ever submitted one in the past, so I submitted them for a charity table and they were extremely enthusiastic about it and they were happy to support the idea."

Hart currently resides outside of Gad's Hill with her family and is currently on maternity leave from her events and marketing coordinator position at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo.

Hart said she has participated in a number of charities in the past and explains the most rewarding aspect of giving back to the community.

"The opportunity to serve other people, but also to teach my children the valuable lesson on caring for others," said Hart. "We are a Christian family and that's something that's really important to our values. It's something we want to teach our children about having a positive impact on other people."

People interested in donating to the Stratford House of Blessing can do so through pre authorized payments with credit card or PayPal, as well as sending or delivering a check. For more information call House of Blessing at 517-273-3433.

# Perth County donates \$2,500 in support of United Way's local 2SLGBTQIA+ research

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The United Way Perth-Huron recently received a grant that will further research on regional 2SLGBTQIA+ communities following the organization's previous Quality of Life report.

The organization announced on April 18 that Perth County selected the regional United Way chapter as one of the recipients of the Cultivating Opportunities grant. The \$2,500 grant will support the United Way's social research and planning council's work to improve data on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Along with Perth County, research teams from the University of Guelph are partnering with the United Way Perth-Huron.

"We're really happy to receive news that we were successful in receiving the grant and really pleased to see that Perth County was interested to partner with us on this initiative," said Kristin Crane, director of social research and planning for United Way Perth-Huron.

The Cultivating Opportunities grant provides funding to eligible non-profit organizations and registered charities enriching the communities of Perth and Huron counties.

"The Cultivating Opportunities grant pro-



## PERTH COUNTY'S SUPPORT

Pictured from left to right, Rebecca Scott, United Way Perth-Huron grant manager, Ryan Erb, executive director, Perth County Warden Rhonda Ehgoetz and Kristin Crane, director of social research and planning, hold the Cultivating Opportunities grant from Perth County.

vides an opportunity for council to support various organizations and projects across the county on an annual basis," said Tyler

(UNITED WAY PERTH-HURON PHOTO)

Sager, Perth County's manager of legislative services. "Applicants are assessed on approved eligibility criteria and how the or-

ganization or program aligns with the county's strategic plan. As such, the United Way Perth-Huron's application was deemed to meet the strategic-plan goals of the county and provides a benefit to the community."

Crane said the United Way Perth-Huron's most recent Quality of Life report found there's a lack of data of local sub-populations, or what she called "equity deserving groups." The social research and planning council also attended community safety and wellbeing committee meetings in both Huron and Perth counties, and frequently heard concerns over increasing discrimination towards the 2SLGBTQIA+ people – particularly during Pride Month events and when Pride flags are present.

"The foundations of equity are that everybody deserves and is entitled to quality of life and wellbeing and that you might have to do different actions for different populations or people in order to achieve the same outcomes," Crane said. "So, when there are certain problems that have arisen or challenges, then you need to back that up with solid information and data, but also solutions."

United Way Perth-Huron expects to launch an initial survey as part of this project in June.



# Times Past: The Legacy of the Mooney Biscuit and Candy Company

BETTY JO BELTON

*Stratford-Perth Archives*

The Mooney Biscuit and Candy Company at 245 Downie Street was once one of Stratford's most important industries. Goods in their distinctive royal purple and blue packages proclaiming their Stratford origins were shipped across North America. Perfection Cream Soda and Avon Chocolates were among the most popular products.

The Stratford Evening Herald of March 11, 1903 reported briefly that "the first stone in the Mooney Factory was laid yesterday. There was no ceremony attached thereto." However, increasingly enthusiastic reports appeared over the next few months commenting on the state of the stonework, installation of the boiler, testing of the ovens, and arrival of specialized equipment. In June an intriguing array of devices for the bakeshop had been installed. The "40 men and 100 girls" on staff were reported to be busy setting up the equipment needed to create fine creams, chocolates, gum, candies, marshmallows, cordials and many other varieties of confectionary.

Stratford's newest factory was in full swing as of August 17, 1903. An extensive addition was required just a year later and



yet another addition followed in short order. A 1904 fire insurance plan that maps



Mooney Biscuit & Candy Co., Stratford-Perth Archives Street Photograph Collection-Downie Street-5th Block

all of the buildings in the city shows the Mooney Biscuit and Candy building at the south-east corner of Falstaff and Downie streets. The shipping department was on the first floor with ready access to the railway sidings that ran directly to the factory on the south side of Falstaff Street. The biscuit department occupied the second floor while candy making took up the next two levels of the building. Eventually the building extended the entire block from Falstaff to Milton Street and had 130,000 square feet of floor space. One of the photographs from the collections at Stratford-Perth Archives seen here shows the mammoth structure. The other image is a very recent addition to the Archives. It shows the office staff in 1910 as captured on film by Stratford photographer William I. Becker.

The company later opened factories in Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver and warehouses and offices in several other Canadian cities. In 1914, at the height of its success, Mooney produced sixty thousand pounds of biscuits and cookies and fifty thousand pounds of candy and chocolates every day. There were thirteen hundred staff, nearly a quarter of them working in

Stratford, with an annual payroll of half a million dollars.

The head office of the company, along with founder William James Mooney, moved to Montreal around 1916. The 1925 insurance plan shows the Canadian General Electric Col. (Hot Point Division) occupying the Mooney factory building. The structure extends from Falstaff to Milton and a C.N.R. siding still runs along Falstaff. A 1949 fire insurance plan shows the original Mooney building occupied by National Grocers Co. Ltd. Warehouse. A portion of the addition remains at the corner of Milton and Downie – housing Tolton's Garage and Repair shop. Other businesses that have occupied the site include the Canadian Edison Electric Appliance Company, Kist Canada, J.L. Bradshaw Warehouse and Healthworks. Much of the original Mooney factory at 245 Downie Street still stands. It was designated a heritage building by the City of Stratford in 1991. It is now the home of The Bradshaw Lofts.

*This article is based on information resources available at Stratford-Perth Archives [www.perthcounty.ca/StratfordPerthArchives](http://www.perthcounty.ca/StratfordPerthArchives)*

## Letter to the Editor

I attended the two meetings of the ad hoc committee of the GTR/CNR buildings.

I was very impressed with the positive message that was shown for the development.

With Dan Matheson and John Kastner at the helm, I feel very positive about the project moving ahead.

At the meetings I noticed a sea of gray and white hair, that the demographic, showing 65% of Stratford is over the age of 55 years of age.

To show some encouragement for the Lakeside seniors, a portable Central Park could be set up on the east end of the main building. There would be trees, plants, benches to sit on and donated books to read. It could be open 8 am to 8 pm.

A static display of ways to combat cO2, would show how we can all help.

Because the park is portable, it could be removed at any

time.

On February 2018 the Lakeside seniors facility was sold, and the seniors were moved to a temporary location, until a location in the GTR/CNR would be developed.

Six years ago the, the Kiwanis property was sold for 5 million dollars.

I suggest that the seniors location be developed along the south side of the main buildings

With 5 million dollars plus 6 years of interest, could be used.

A library partnership could also be investigate along with the seniors development.

*Environmentalist  
Lorne Bolton  
Statford, Ontario*

# STRATFORD TIMES

**Contribute to your local  
community newspaper!**

**Send articles, sports  
or event recaps, and  
photos to**

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



# Multicultural Association of Perth Huron officially launches Mobile Food Bank program

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Responding to a need for after-hours and weekend support of locals experiencing food insecurity, the Multicultural Association of Perth Huron has officially launched its Mobile Food Bank program.

Though the association has been providing free food, personal-hygiene products and other household supplies to newcomers and other locals in need for more than a year, it recently launched the program as a way to support those who are unable to access support from area food banks during regular business hours Monday to Friday and promote the association's ongoing need for donated grocery store gift cards to support the program's goal.

"For us here, we have some difficulties. There are some people moving here from different worlds," said Charles Gak, who immigrated to Canada from Sudan and now volunteers with the multicultural association to help deliver food, supplies and gift cards to those who need them as part of the Mobile Food Bank program. "They came direct to (association executive director) Geza (Wordofa) here. Even they have children. They don't have access to a bus and they don't even have a place to go. In the meantime, they are waiting for the government to do something for them, but if they don't get nothing, they can't wait.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

## HELPING FOOD INSECURITY

The Multicultural Association of Perth Huron has officially launched its Mobile Food Bank program serving locals in need after hours and on weekends across Perth, Huron, Oxford, Wellington and Middlesex counties who can't access food-bank services during regular business hours. Pictured from left are association volunteer Charle Gak, association executive director Geza Wordofa, and volunteers Hira Dhariwal and Asrat Negawo.

"I remember last year one day, a Ukrainian came to this country. I went with Geza and we went everywhere helping them. Canadians support the Ukrainians. ... Now there is a problem in Gaza and even in Lebanon – they have economic problems – and in other countries in Africa like The Congo, and also in Haiti. And they are coming here. We need to do

something."

According to Gak and the other volunteers who help deliver food, supplies and gift cards to those who need them across Perth, Huron, Oxford, Wellington and Middlesex counties, some newcomers either don't understand or are unable to navigate the process they need to follow to access support through local food banks.

Others, meanwhile, including area residents native to Canada, are unable to make it to their local food bank for support during normal business hours for any number of reasons, chief of which is a lack of available public transportation in rural areas of the region.

"Our main goal is to fill the gap," Wordofa said. "The main thing is weekends. From Friday to Sunday, that's three days. It can be critical. Food is a human right. You have the right to eat. Rent is expensive, gas is expensive. I never expected people coming to us with a shortage of something. We are not a super-rich organization, but we do what we can.

"In a big city, you can see the people suffering. Here, you don't always see it."

Wordofa is asking locals to donate gift certificates from their area grocery stores in any amount to the multicultural association either by calling the association's emergency hotline at 1-888-308-6274 or emailing info@maph.ca. Those in need of after-hours or weekend support can also reach out to the multicultural association to request assistance at that phone number or email address.

Donated gift cards will either be given to residents in need directly so they can shop for groceries themselves or, for those who can't get to a grocery store, the association's volunteers will purchase specific items and deliver them personally.

# A 'community connector' event, Climate Momentum hosts third annual Earth Day street party

HANNAH KAVANAGH

Times Correspondent

Saturday, April 20 marked Climate Momentum's third annual Earth Day street party event at Factory 163 in Stratford, bringing both awareness and festivity to a family-friendly day for the community.

The event hosted old and new faces with tables lining the walls and middle of the venue, all detailing different environmental and climate-focused groups in the community. Drinks and food were provided, live music was played and information about the environment was everywhere. Their message was about connection and engagement in the community.

"You're not alone. ... We really see it at this point now as a community connector, folks interacting with organizations that they normally wouldn't have access to," said Kaitlyn Kochany, co-chair organizer of the event and member of Climate Momentum.

Climate Momentum is a climate and environmental action group based in Stratford and Perth County that focuses largely on civic advocacy and climate-change awareness. Their volunteer-based organization aims to "engage Stratford residents of all ages in the conversation about climate change," according to their website. Their Earth Day street party is their largest organized event.



(HANNAH KAVANAGH PHOTO)

## EARTH DAY STREET PARTY

Kaitlyn Kochany, co-chair of the street party organization, stands at the entrance of the venue.

"I feel that the environment ... obviously something needs to be done about it, and being a part of this club lets me feel that I'm making a difference," said Lucy Chung, high school student at Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS). Their school has participated in the street party every year and was one of many that joined the festivities.

Among the old faces were also new groups, including one that offered resources on introducing a plant-based diet, the Wildwood Conservation Area, Stratford Creative Reuse and Recycle, Cycle Stratford and many more.

"You have to start somewhere," said Jane Marie Mitchell of Perth County Sustainability Hub. "It's sort of an awareness thing, but (we're) having a good time at the same time."

The event filled the venue with people of all ages. According to Bill James-Abra, head of Climate Momentum and co-chair of the street party, the organization itself is growing.

"We're going to be focusing our attention on how we're going to scale up the organization to make it easier for folks to engage, easier for folks to find a niche where they can help out and take on maybe a bit more through the year," said James-Abra.

"So that's the path we're on right now, which kind of excites me, actually."



# Small business graduate from Starter Plus thrives in the streets of Stratford

ALEX HUNT

Times Correspondent

New business owners provide the recipe of running a successful company and the value of never losing sight of your passions.

Nikki Wagler and Nicole Streicher, owners of Coles and Keys Inc, an independent optical boutique, are successful graduates of the Starter Company Plus 2024 program. Run by Stratford Perth Centre for Business, the program is designated with the objective of mentoring and providing business owners with the tools to successfully operate their respective companies.

The Program is aimed at entrepreneurs that reside within Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County. Supported by the Province of Ontario, The Starter Company Plus Program enrolls seven applicants through five weeks of business training during the months of February and March, training them on planning, marketing, cash flow and other factors that tie into running a successful operation. Upon successfully completing the program, graduates receive a \$5,000 grant to help run their business.

"The program allowed us to look at what we have already done and where we can make changes with our business moving forward," said Nikki Wagler. "Sitting in a room with seven other entrepreneurs gave us great time to collaborate with each other."

"This gave us such a mind of knowledge because it was other people asking different questions that maybe we haven't considered and I found that just as valuable as



## OFF TO NEW ADVENTURES

Nicole Streicher and Nikki Wagler, recent graduates of The Starter Company Plus program, cross their one year anniversary as a business at Coles & Keys Inc. located on 25 York St. in Stratford.

the information that the program and mentors shared with us."

Wagler said that the informational sessions featured a hybrid method with some

taking place online and in person. Wagler and Streicher opened their business in March 2023 and graduated from the program this past March, matching their first

anniversary since opening their doors to the community.

Wagler believes that the company's success is funded on the idea of creating a welcoming space for their clients that promotes art expression and embraces personality, along with growing alongside a community that supports and belongs to these categories.

"The designers that do the work believe in the creation process, the art and the expression and for us to showcase that art for people's faces," she said. "We really focus on personality and finding out what brings out the light in each person."

Wagler says that all the frames they carry are pre-designed by designers who have been in the business for over 30 years.

One of the key challenges that Wagler and Streicher had ensured over the course of running their business was gaining the trust of the community due to the time invested nature of the industry. They overcame this obstacle by ensuring that their clients are being met with high quality care and friendliness.

Wagler elaborates on what sets their small business aside from other practices in the eyewear industry. "We don't ever want to grow too large that we dominate or take over; we want to focus on being that optical boutique that always has that time for our clients," said Wagler. "We would like to expand our collections and grow our variety, we never want to grow too big for our bridges, we are community over competition."

Coles and Keys Inc. is located on 25 York St. in Stratford.

(ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

# Crawford Lawyers opens its doors on Albert Street

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Crawford Lawyers held its grand opening April 24 at its new location, 61 Albert St. in Stratford.

Dennis Crawford was called to the bar in 2013 and has been practicing law in Stratford since. He currently practices civil litigation, focusing on construction liens, real-estate disputes like failed purchases and business disputes. He will also be moving into wills and estates at his new location.

At the Crawford Lawyers grand opening, Crawford thanked those who have supported him during his transition into business ownership. He noted working closely with RBC for financial services and Heather Holland at McCutchen and Pearce for her support in accounting. He also thanked his wife, Dr. Nicolla Crawford, for her ongoing support.

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater attended the event to present Crawford with a new business certificate, give remarks to his long-time friend and joke about past times.

"Dennis, congratulations. This is a wonderful location right in the downtown

core. You're going to be a great service to Stratford and its residents."

Nater discussed Crawford's volunteerism with OntarioHVACscam.com, noting how proud he was of his friend and a local community member fighting for what's right and trying to end a loophole in the current Ontario legal system.

Crawford said Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae has been instrumental in supporting him with his work on the project.

"I've had great people supporting me in the public advocacy I've been doing in the last couple of years with OntarioHVACscam.com," said Crawford. "We've been advocating for changes in this niche area of the law that's been exploited by bad actors. In just the last few weeks, the government announced that they plan to legislate in this area. So, even though he's not here, I want to thank Matt Rae for all his support as we work through that project."

Crawford Layers is currently accepting new clients. Please contact them by email or phone at [reception@crawfordlawyers.ca](mailto:reception@crawfordlawyers.ca) or at 519-305-8906.

For more information on Crawford's initiatives with HVAC scams, visit [www.ontariohvacscam.com](http://www.ontariohvacscam.com).



## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

John Nater Perth Welling MP presents Dennis Crawford of Crawford Lawyers with a new business certificate and congratulates him on opening the doors on Albert Street.

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)



# The Painted Baker to offer favourite breads and new baked goods

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The latest business to move to the York Street district will offer a chance to try breads from around the world, and some loaves familiar to Stratford residents.

Restaurateur Milo Jones will be opening his new wholesale bakery, The Painted Baker, later in the spring. The bakery at 7 York St. will feature items previously found at the Butcher and Baker such as white bread, whole wheat bread, multi-grain bread and sandwich loaves.

Jones is also perfecting his specialty, bread-making techniques so the Painted Baker can feature sourdough and Italian breads like focaccia and ciabatta. He will also bring his seven years of pastry work to the bakery by offering croissants, Danishes, turnovers and cinnamon buns. Jones plans to incorporate products from nearby business Olive Your Favourites into his bread.

"For the people who know me and know what I've done in the past, they're going to be happy with the return of what they know," Jones said. "But there is very much a push that will be happening with the Painted Baker where there will be a lot of new and interesting things that we have been looking into and trying to perfect and introduce as well."

Jones said the Painted Baker will pro-



## BREAD AND PASTRIES FOR ALL

The Painted Baker, owned and operated by Milo Jones, will feature breads sold at the Butcher and Baker as well as pastries and other specialty breads.

vide products for which customers will know and recognize all the ingredients.

"I've said this to other people that I've spoken to; it almost seems like, as years go by, you need a PhD in order to decipher what goes into a lot of the stuff that you buy from a grocery store," he said. "Whereas I try to keep mine very simple."

He will also always have loaves of white bread at an affordable price, combatting the high cost of grocery bills.

"I think it's important to people to have

fresh bread in their diets, something they can feel comfortable eating," he said.

Jones came up with his bakery's name while on a drive with his father. His dad suggested "the illustrated baker" after one of his favourite movies, The Illustrated Man. However, Jones felt The Painted Baker was easier to roll off the tongue.

As someone who grew up in Stratford, Jones always admired the York Street area, particularly Buzz Stop Fine Coffees and Teas, and is happy to have his busi-

ness there.

"Every store on there has always felt very carefully placed by whomever owns the various buildings," he said.

Jones also likes being near the Avon River and appreciates that the buzzing business district is also quiet. The area works well for the small-scale bakery focusing on quality. He hopes to have his products on the menu at local restaurants and serve breakfast treats to customers on the go during the upcoming festival season.

"York Street is a very busy street on-and-off season with people who live here and people who visit," Jones said. "It's close to a number of amenities where people will be staying."

Updates, including when The Painted Baker will open, can be found by following @the\_painted\_baker on Instagram or The Painted Baker on Facebook.



(MILO JONES PHOTOS)

# Bayers begin new chapter with Bru Garden

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Bru Garden's new owners are Strat-

ford residents with three popular restaurants in the local hospitality industry.

The restaurant announced in an April 17 Facebook post that Mike and Cathy Bay-

er, who own Gilly's Pubhouse in Stratford and St. Marys and the Erie Drive-In, will be taking over the Bru Garden.

"It's another adventure for us. It's never a dull moment, so we're looking forward to it. I think it will fit nicely with the rest of what we're doing in town and we're excited about it," Mike Bayer said.

The Bru Garden offers a casual atmosphere where everyone is welcome to dine-in or grab takeout, which is what is offered from Gilly's and the Erie Drive-In.

"It's a very different aesthetic and atmosphere for sure, but it's a very casual atmosphere and that's kind of our sweet spot," he said.

The unique outdoor-dining atmosphere in the core of Stratford also appealed to the Bayers.

"It's got that backyard feel," Bayer said. "You don't feel like you're in the middle of the city when you're sitting there, having a drink or enjoying a bite to eat, and I think that's really the appeal to us – just the uniqueness of the space."

He also said that the change in ownership has been smooth thanks to the guidance of previous owners Anthony Jordaan and Kim Hurley. The Bayers introduced table service

since taking over to eliminate long line ups and wait times for customers having their meals at the restaurant. Takeout orders can still be placed.

The Bru Garden opened for the season on April 26 with the intention to keep the same food everyone stopping in the restaurant knows and loves for the first few weeks.

"We don't want to change any of the existing menus ... so we'll be offering what people are used to," Bayer said.

Eventually, Bayer would like to introduce some new drinks and food as the weeks go by, along with expanding restaurant hours to seven days a week.

Currently, the Bru Garden is open from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at 156 Waterloo St.



## CASUAL ATMOSPHERE

Mike and Cathy Bayer, new owners of the Bru Garden, are looking forward to providing pizza, poutines, and cold drinks to customers while introducing table service.

(MIKE BAYER PHOTO)

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# Rotary Club hosts Rural-Urban Dinner in Stratford

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

Hundreds of rural and urban residents from Stratford and Perth County converged on the Stratford Rotary Complex April 18 for the Rotary Club of Stratford's annual Rural Urban Dinner.

They were treated to a banquet of many flavours from farms and restaurants in the area and also witnessed the induction of an Atwood Dairy farming couple and a Staffa area Sheep farmer onto the Stratford-Perth Museum's Agriculture Wall of Fame.

Both Steve and Karen Dolson, and Sandi Brock, said they were honoured and humbled to be nominated and have their names included with wall of fame alumni.

Chairman for the evening was Rotarian Brent Shackleton who introduced guest speaker "Farmer Tim," who has thousands of followers on social media and spoke about the everyday life of being a farmer.

Tim May is a dairy farmer and farms with his family in the Rockwood area north of Guelph.

His talk, which he highlights on his web platform, includes the good days but also the trying days of farming, including growing crops in extreme wet weather and also extreme drought.

He also highlighted dealing with the stress of farming along with the stigma of

mental illness that can occur any time, and in anyone within the farming population.

Farmer Tim also included farm activists in his talk and feels they are becoming more aggressive and know how to frame animal agriculture in a negative way for consumers.

He said those activists target livestock farmers of any kind and really have a problem understanding farmers treat their animals like family members.

He said he witnesses some of the misinformation the food-buying public are reading on social media and tries to tell the real story on farming.

Wrapping up the evening, Peter Maranger, who is the president of the Rotary Club of Stratford, thanked both those in rural and urban communities for coming together for decades, embracing friendship and embodying the spirit of Rotary.

The Rotary Club of Stratford has been serving Stratford and area since 1922 and Maranger hopes the public will continue to support Rotary initiatives like the Aquabox program, the Rotary Respite House, the COMMIT (Canadian Outreach Medical and Mission Team), along with continued support of the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth.

New members are always welcome. Contact club secretary Charlene Gordon at [secretary@rotarystratford.com](mailto:secretary@rotarystratford.com) or 519-273-5126 for more information.



(GARY WEST PHOTOS)

## BANQUET OF MANY FLAVOURS

Above: Pictured are the hundreds of rural and urban banquet goes April at the Rotary Club of Stratford's annual Rural-Urban Dinner at the Stratford Rotary complex.

Below: Stratford-Perth Museum general manager Kelly McIntosh presents Atwood dairy farmers Steve and Karen Dolson with a plaque in honour of their induction onto the Museum's Agriculture Wall of Fame during the Rotary Clubs Rural-Urban Dinner in Stratford.





# Successful Perth County Stewardship Program will see more than 15,000 trees planted

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Perth County and its member municipalities, including North Perth, Perth East, Perth South and West Perth, were thrilled to announce the success of the 2024 Perth County Stewardship Program.

This initiative, aimed at bolstering environmental conservation efforts and safeguarding the region's natural resources, marks a significant step forward in the county's commitment to sustainability.

"The real goal of the stewardship program is to help landowners adequately preserve their ecosystems and farmland resources while reaping the benefits of carbon sequestration," said Hannah Cann, Perth County's resiliency and stewardship coordinator.

The Perth County Stewardship Program is dedicated to supporting projects that protect the soil, water and air quality of Perth County.

Applications for the program opened in December 2023. This year's program focuses on tree planting, fragile land reclamation and forest-health assessments.

"Tree-planting initiatives enhance biodiversity, protect agricultural lands and mitigate climate-change impacts," said Cann. "So, it's very exciting and great to see farmers and rural landowners so interested in stewardship, planting windbreaks and retiring marginal lands."

Cann said Environment Canada recommends 30 per-cent forest cover for a good ecological status, but Perth County currently has about 10 per-cent forest cover. Therefore, increased tree planting sup-

porting native species contributes to the landscape's resilience and provides vital ecosystem services to rural communities.

"Perth County has extremely low forest cover," she said. "If you go back 200 years, Perth County was densely forested. Because of the rich agricultural land, forests have historically been cleared."

The 2024 program has received an enthusiastic response from community members with 44 applications received. Of these, 77 per cent were for windbreaking projects, which help fortify agricultural lands and mitigate wind erosion.

With a total funding of \$75,000 and a request for over \$90,000, Cann says county staff looked at different possibilities for funding all projects while also supplying appropriate funding for large-scale projects.

"The council was pretty conservative in estimating how many applications we would receive," she said. "I don't think that the working group anticipated an

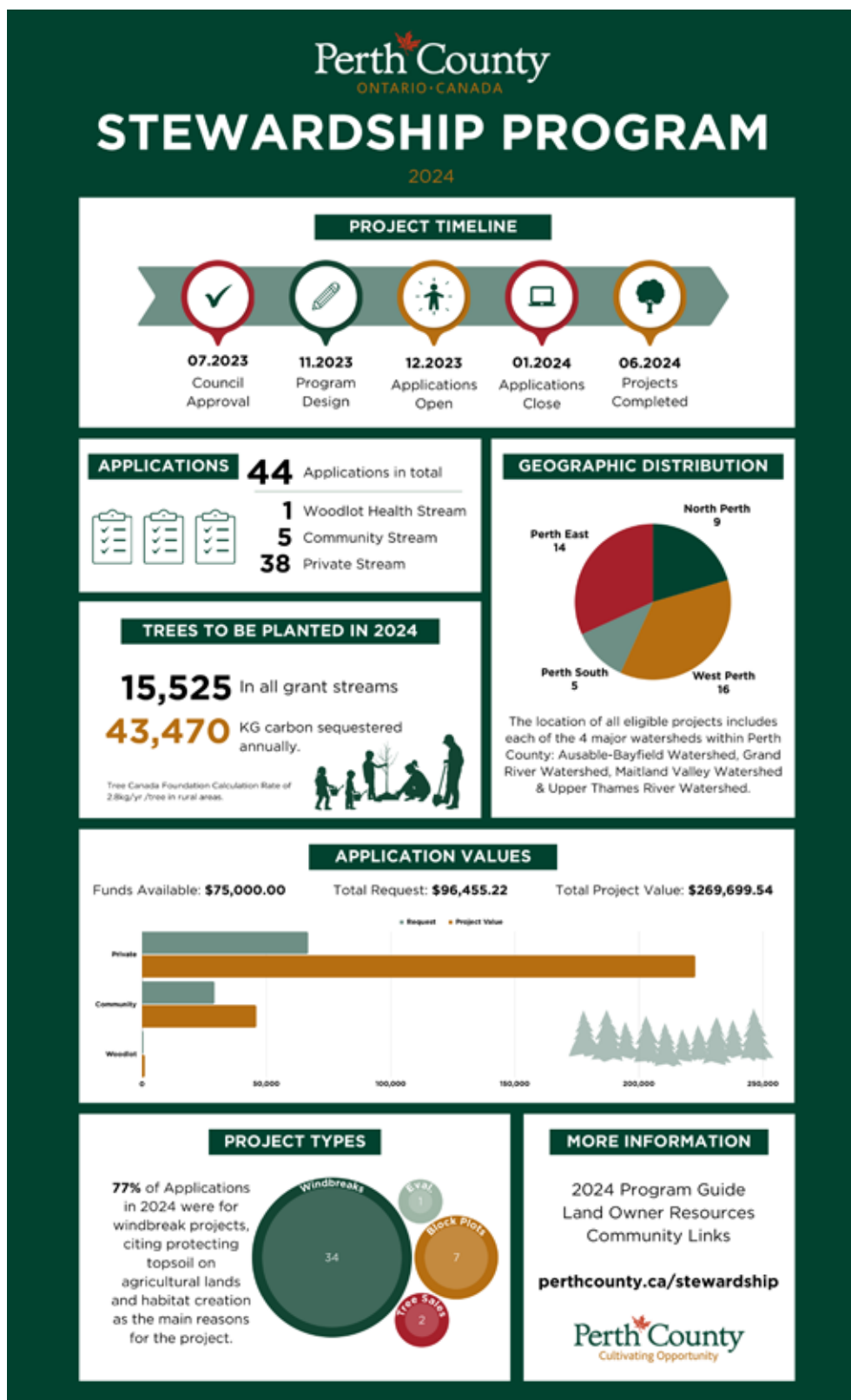
oversubscription in the first year, but it was so great to see so many applications."

Planting will begin later this year, and 15,525 trees will be planted in total, resulting in the annual sequestration of 43,470 kilograms of carbon.

"Each tree can sequester 2.8 kilograms of carbon per year," said Cann. "That doesn't seem like a lot, but with around 15,000 trees being planted this year, those trees will sequester over 42,000 kilograms of carbon every year. Trees will absorb carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, which improves our air quality."

As the program moves forward, Perth County remains committed to growing and adapting to the evolving needs of its residents and environment, and Cann hopes to increase funding for future projects.

For more information on the Perth County Stewardship Program and how to get involved, please visit perthcounty.ca.



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# Perth-Wellington MPP tables Growing Agritourism Act

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Perth County's growing agritourism industry aims to help boost the economy and bring city dwellers closer to the farming community where their food is made and grown.

Many have participated in local agritourism, including Perth County's Farm Hop Tours last year. Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae wants to continue to help grow this unique tourism opportunity in Perth County.

"Agritourism is ripe for growth over the coming years in Perth-Wellington and across Ontario," said Rae. "This legislation, if passed, will remove barriers to investment, provide consistency across Ontario's agritourism providers and ensure participants are aware of the inherent risks associated with farm activities."

The Growing Agritourism Act aims to mitigate some of the risks involved with agritourism operations on farms across the province. To benefit from the liability protections in this bill, agritourism operators would have to clearly inform



## GROWING AGRITOURISM INDUSTRY

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Farm animals at the 2023 Stratford Fall Fair promote learning and understanding about local agriculture for city folk.

visitors of the inherent risks associated with farm operations.

The Growing Agritourism Act, the first of its kind in Canada, will remove barriers to investment in the agritourism

sector across the province.

"This bill will serve as a benchmark for the rest of Canada to strive towards," Rae said. "Many of our farm families in Perth-Wellington and across

Ontario are choosing to offer agritourism activities on their farms. They are opening their homes to the public to share their love of the land and animals. It is important we ensure

all parties know the inherent risks associated with walking onto an active farm operation."

In 2022, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture conducted a local food and agritourism survey of its membership. More than 40 per cent of the respondents indicated they would sell value-added products ranging from baked goods and wool to preserves and prepared meals, and provide on-farm experiences.

Agritourism provides opportunities to diversify farm income and raise awareness of the farm and agriculture sector with urban neighbours.

This is MPP Rae's second private members bill since being elected two years ago.

"As the popularity of agritourism continues to grow in Ontario, our members need some level of protection so that they can continue to entertain and educate families about agriculture and provide a family fund experience like no other," said Kevin Vallier, CEO Farm Fresh Ontario. "The Growing Agritourism Act is a game changer for our sector and our members."

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# New business: Stratford Walking Tours aims to educate locals and visitors alike

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A new business is aiming to educate locals and visitors about Stratford's cultural, architectural and civic heritage.

Stratford Walking Tours is a locally owned company founded by Perth County native Lauri Leduc, who participated in the Stratford Perth Centre for Business Starter Company program last year.

"When Lauri applied to the Starter Company Plus program, we immediately knew this was a business that Stratford needed," said Holly Mortimer, a business advisor with Stratford Perth Centre for Business. "Inside our grant program, we've watched her grow her idea, create a solid business plan and build community partnerships that will, in turn, allow her to run a profitable and exciting business for both tourists and locals alike. Stratford Walking Tours will benefit our tourism and small-business sectors while highlighting the rich history of our city."

With a passion for history and a commitment to promoting Stratford's cultural heritage, Leduc offers guided walking tours of the city's downtown core that run roughly two kilometres.

The tours provide participants with a unique opportunity to explore Stratford's architectural wonders and delve into its fascinating past, including some scandals and interesting facts such as Stratford's history with the famous Thomas Edison.

"He worked with the Grand Trunk Railway, but he kind of got in trouble a lot," said Leduc as she took the times on a tour of Ontario Street. "He was supposed to be the night watchman, and the rumour is that he created some kind of device that would wake him up. But one

day, the alarm didn't work, so he didn't push the right alarm for the train and almost caused an accident. Apparently, he hightailed it out of town soon after."

Stratford Walking Tours aims to meet a previously unaddressed need in Stratford, offering both locals and visitors an immersive experience delving into the city's rich history and architectural treasures.

Leduc, who grew up in Perth County, was inspired by her 18-month stint living abroad in the United Kingdom, where she avidly participated in numerous walking tours. Leduc aims to share her passion for Stratford's heritage and breathe life into its storied past.

"I lived in England for two years, and while I was there, I went on a lot of tours," said Leduc. "We moved back to Perth County to be closer to family and my husband joked that we should run tours here, and that really stuck with me because I saw a gap here for tours."

Leduc notes that Destination Stratford offers audio tours and, although this is a great option, these types of tours can be hard for some people to follow due to self-guided maps. Her tours will be in-person and visitors can stop, ask questions and have a personal guide without having to worry about where to stop.

Designed to appeal to both tourists and locals alike, the tours will run on Saturdays and Sundays in May and June, and from Fridays through Mondays in July and August.

Locals are encouraged to participate as there is always something new to learn and it's a great day out in the downtown core.

For tour schedules and booking information, visit [stratfordwalkingtours.ca](http://stratfordwalkingtours.ca).



**RICH HISTORY AND SCANDALS REVEALED**

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Stratford Walking Tours owned by Lauri Leduc opens this year for locals and visitors alike.

# Hometown hero: young charity runner with a message of hope

HANNAH KAVANAGH

Times Correspondent

He set out on his 50-kilometer run on April 5 at 10 a.m. in less-than-ideal weather conditions with two goals on his mind. The first was to raise money and awareness for homeless shelters in his community, and the second was to offer hope.

Now, he's a hometown hero. 25-year-old Christopher Kalil, global business and digital arts graduate, accomplished his goal during his Stride for Shelter from the University of Waterloo main campus to the school's Stratford campus. Changing his route for mud and distance considerations, he raised over \$1,000 for Stratford House of Blessing and Shelterlink, two groups in the community that offer resources and support to those experiencing homelessness.

Kalil attributes the run to the spirit of giving.

"More than anything, I wanted to give back to the community I've been living in for the past couple of years," Kalil said.

The community supported him before, during and after the run. Pursuit Climbing in Stratford, for instance, was instrumental in his training and moral support in the last 10 kilometers of his run.

"The community response was great," Kalil said. "I'm floored, I really am."

He's grateful for the support from people

like Mayor Martin Ritsma, who had met with Kalil prior to the organizing of the Stride for Shelter and helped promote the run on social media.

"He's got a heart as big as a lion and certainly a personality to match," said Ritsma, who later nominated Kalil as a hometown hero to local station 107.7 2dayFM, citing his dedication to real problems in the area.

"One thing is creating funds ... but it's creating awareness and keeping those important issues in front of us," Ritsma said.

Now Kalil has a free Domino's pizza to claim as a reward, and a message to send.

"I want to show people, especially in my generation, that it's okay to hope," Kalil said.

"If you apply yourself and believe that your individual contributions can make a significant difference, as small as it may be, it's a difference nonetheless."

As for the future, Kalil says he will continue running for good causes, but he isn't sure what future fundraiser runs will look like. Maybe they'll be closer to his hometown of Burlington, but for now, he believes that getting the support of his university through more marketing is a possible next step.

For now, he said he's flattered by all the support he received.

"I have no concerns for the next generation because he represents them well," said Ritsma.



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(@CWILLIAMKALIL INSTAGRAM PHOTO)

Chris Kalil (front) after his Stride for Shelter run, through which he raised just over \$1,000 for charity

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## Head coach Williams reviews 23-24 Warriors Part 1: defencemen and goaltenders

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Times Regional Reporter

The Stratford Hunter Steel Ltd. Warriors may not have become back-to-back Cherey Cup Champions, but the team still enjoyed a fantastic season that saw the young Warriors' squad return to the conference finals.

Head coach Dave Williams spoke to the Stratford Times about the contributions and development of all his players, starting with one of the team's most consistent and important performers, goaltender Matt Perdue.

"Matt was consistent from the first day he got here," Williams said. "He was a key contributor to the success that we had in the regular season. He gave our guys lots

of confidence knowing that he was back there. Our penalty kill was better because he was back there and I think, up until him having his surgery, especially in that second round, game two and game five were games on which he had a huge impact. It's awesome for him to get his next opportunity to play at Newman College which I think is a reflection of how great he was for us."

At the dawn of the Midwestern Conference final, Perdue went down to injury which propelled Carter McDougall into the starting-goalie role. McDougall, who had a rocky start to the year with the St. Marys Lincolns, found much better success with the Warriors.

"Carter came to us in a situation where Matt (Perdue) had established himself as

the number-one goaltender. Carter came in with a really good attitude. He worked incredibly hard and he was ready for anything that we asked of him. He got put into a tough situation having not played through the first two rounds, so we were ecstatic that he had the playoffs that he did against his former team."

One of several players in their first year with the Warriors was defenceman Jaxon Broda, who Williams credited as among the most skillful rearguards in the midwest.

"Jaxon had a really solid first year. What's evident when you watch him play is he has really good offensive skills which are as good as I think anybody in our league. He's a very dynamic player for us offensively and, throughout the year, he

continued making progress towards becoming a more complete player."

The word electrifying has been used frequently to describe the game of Casey Bridgewater, with Williams discussing how the rookie defender's mobility allowed him to make things happen with the puck.

"Having the opportunity to play in the McPherson Tournament was nice recognition for a young player such as Casey. As one of our two 17-year-olds, he came in and made an impact right away which isn't always an easy thing to do for young players, especially players coming out of

U16. He made an impact on both sides of the puck and the one thing that you notice about Casey right away is how well he skates. He is a dynamic skater and

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# Head coach Williams reviews 23-24 Warriors

## Part 1: defencemen and goaltenders

with how hard he works, I think he's got a bright future."

Though he plays a much-different style than Broda and Bridgewater, Cole Brooks became a very useful part of Stratford's back end.

"It was probably a bit of an adjustment for him coming from his team last year, but he found a way to have a good year for us. Cole is a terrific teammate off the ice. He works incredibly hard both in practice and in the games. He's a guy that I thought really improved and, as the season went along, you could start to see that he was playing with more confidence," Williams said.

Like Brooks, the character and defensive responsibility were at the top of the list of reasons why Williams enjoyed deploying Evan Hjelholt as part of his blueline.

"We had a lot of really good guys in the dressing room and Evan was right up there among the best. I think he just loves being at the rink. He's always at the rink; he uses his time productively. I think he was continuing to try to make progress with the offensive side of his game, but he played some good minutes and was a really solid defender for us, especially five-on-five and on the penalty kill."

The Warriors had a hometown product on their back end in the form of Haden Frayne, who brought a steady, reliable

presence to Stratford's defence.

"Haden had a really solid season. He's a guy who battled incredibly hard last year with eight defencemen to play on a nightly basis and his work ethic, character and leadership skills are outstanding. He does the same thing on a nightly basis. I think he's a really good example for all of our guys when it comes to the importance of being consistent and committed with your effort on a nightly basis."

Kaeden Burger was acquired by the Warriors mid-season and, according to coach Williams, brought a very noticeable presence to the group.

"Kaeden had to battle a little bit because we had a few extra bodies on the blueline. I think he plays with a lot of emotion. He's a vocal guy who wants to see the best out of himself and his teammates. I thought he was playing some of his better hockey down the stretch and into the playoffs."

The lone overage rearguard on the Warriors was Owen England, who led by example with his reliable and uncomplicated brand of hockey.

"Owen is more of a quiet leader in the dressing room. He made a big contribution on the defensive side of the game, being a big body with a long stick in the defensive zone. I think he probably would have liked to have contributed a bit more offensively, but I think it's really

important sometimes to have that simple, steady game. Owen focused on being a good defender and having that good first pass so even though he didn't have the highest point total, he played a really important role for us every time he went over the boards."

Last but not least was Jacob Wiseman, who Williams described as the ultimate team player.

"Jacob is another guy who had to battle, given the number of bodies we had. He made really good improvements over the season. He's the consummate team-first guy all the time. He's another guy who is well-respected in the dressing room by his peers and coaches because he's got that big shot and he's such a team-first guy."

Looking at the season as a whole, Williams credited the team for proving everyone wrong as many didn't think the Warriors would be back as one of the finalists for the Cherrey Cup.

"My initial thought was that the group over-achieved, but maybe that was us not giving the group enough time or credit at the start of the season to see what they were capable of doing. This was an easy group to come to the rink and coach. They worked incredibly hard. The average person gets to see them maybe once a week and we see them four or five times a week. We get to see all that effort they put in. This group was as hardworking as any group I've coached.

"The other thing that stands out is just how close they were off the ice," Williams continued. "These guys are always at the rink early for any event. They were always doing things together. That's such an important part of a group to have success and I don't think it's something that can be artificial or created by coaches or management. I think teams that have really good seasons have a group of players that respect one another and want to work hard to win together."

*This is the first of a two-part feature on the Warriors and the seasons of each individual player. Part two will run in the next edition of the Times.*



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# Free Ice cream For a Greener Planet

ALEX HUNT

Times Correspondent

JENN and Larry's ice cream shop continues the tradition of giving customers a free vanilla ice cream cone in exchange for a bag of litter during Earth Week.

Jenn Stacey-MacLean and her father, Larry Stacey, opened the shop on 49 York St. 15 years ago, and the Earth Day exchange has been running for about a decade.

Larry Stacey retired in 2017 and since then, Jenn has been running the shop with her staff.

From April 20 to 21, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., anyone with a bag of litter or a photo of it to show proof of the pickup could exchange it for a free vanilla soft-serve ice cream cone.

"The idea just came from my brain, it was an opportunity to give back to my community and for kids to give back to their community and get a little treat as a thank you from JENN and Larry's," said Stacey-MacLean. "This year people took a picture of what they collected and they showed me proof, before they would bring it to me back in the day but we evolved over the years."

85 Earth Day cones were distributed for this year which has shown a decline from previous years.

For the past two years, Sutton First Choice Realty Ltd. Brokerage has been a proud sponsor of JENN and Larry's.

"It's family time, family and friends get



## CLEAN FOR ICE CREAM

Jenn Stacey-MacLean with her mother Gail Stacey are proud of the Earth Day cone exchange that has been a tradition for a decade at JENN and Larry's in Stratford.

together and help the planet, its job and now kids say to me that they pick up the garbage now, its awareness, once you do it, you're aware," said Stacey-MacLean.

"Being in a customer service-based business, you treat everyone the same. When someone is coming in for ice cream, either it's to help them feel better on a hard day, it brings joy or if it's an event for a family to spend some quality time and get some ice

cream."

Stacey-MacLean said that she's grateful for the community's response towards her business and its values. MacLean recognizes that it's a difficult financial time for people and appreciates the gesture of customers paying a visit to her shop where she's able to share her ice cream with the community.

"I'm a touchstone for many people, and many of them come to say hello to me, and

that makes my day. I'm here to give a smile and provide whatever help someone needs during a difficult time, and this goes both ways. My community has lifted me up several times, especially during the pandemic."

Stacey-MacLean says she's pursuing branching out in serving events such as fundraisers, sports banquets, and other special events after previous positive experiences over the years

"Throughout past years we have had people ask us to attend events. Ice cream brings people together, it's incredible how ice cream can make you happy and it's a little thing but it can leave such a huge impact," said Stacey-MacLean.

To book JENN and Larry's services for an event, call Jenn Stacey-MacLean at 519-801-5932.



Jenn Stacey-MacLean and her father Larry Stacey opened JENN and Larry's 15 years ago and continue to bring smiles to families and friends in the streets of Stratford.

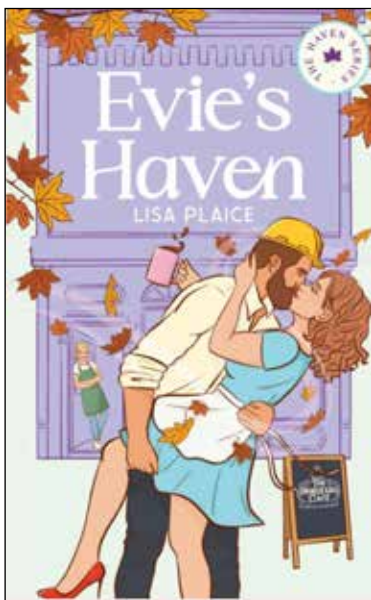
# Take a walk in Evie's Haven

SYDNEY GOODWIN

Times Correspondent

There are many things that spark joy in people; a nice cup of hot coffee on a chilly day, a heartwarming love story, or curling up with a good book.

If any of these things pique your interest, then come down to Brch & Wyn, located at 245 Downie St. in Stratford, May 4 from 12-2 p.m. to be part of the book-launch party for Evie's



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

First-time author Lisa Plaiçe will officially launch her book, Evie's Haven, at Brch & Wyn May 4 from 12-2 p.m.

Haven, written by debut author Lisa Plaiçe. Evie's Haven is a contemporary Romcom set in Southern Ontario that follows the life of Evie Jones, a 40-something year-old widow struggling to simplify her life and convince her 18-year-old daughter not to fly the nest just yet.

"Most Romcom's tend have a heroine in her 20s. So, it's a Romcom more so directed towards the middle-aged ladies, though of course anyone can read it," Plaiçe said, explaining how important it was for her to write about a character that she and others in her age bracket can properly relate to.

Plaiçe began writing Evie's Haven two years ago and, throughout the process of writing the manuscript, she kept the core of the novel intact the entire time, and when the time came to work with a publisher to get Evie's Haven published, Plaiçe found the perfect one for her, StoreyLinesPress – an independent publishing

house located right here in Stratford that has worked with Plaiçe every step of the way.

"Barbara Storey is just so supportive. She holds your hand, she helps you navigate through everything. I couldn't have done it without her," Plaiçe said.

This first book is the start of a three-part trilogy in the Haven

universe.

"We start with Evie, then next is Beth's Haven, then the final in the trilogy will be Sandy's Haven. In every book you get to see the same universe, but through somebody else's eyes," Plaiçe said, explaining her plans for the next books in her series.

The book-launch party will in-

clude delicious cakes, fun raffles and limited-edition Evie's Haven swag that isn't available anywhere else.

For more information about Plaiçe and to stay up to date on her work, check out her website at [authorplaiçebooks.com](http://authorplaiçebooks.com), or check out her Instagram @plaiçelisa.

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# New dog waste bins installed in more areas across Stratford

EMILY STEWART

*Times Correspondent*

Dog walkers in Stratford can now dispose of their dogs' waste in three new bins.

The City of Stratford announced the community services department's installation of the Sutera bins on Facebook in an April 18 post. The lime green Sutera bins divert dog waste from landfills and are sent to a facility that uses the contents to create energy. The bins also have an underground component that gets rid of the smell and contamination from the waste.

The new bins can be found at Anne Hathaway Park, Avondale Cemetery, and Upper Queen's Park. In 2023, the city installed bins at the Stratford Dog Park off of Dunn Road, a north shore pedestrian way off of William Street near James Street, and the entrance to the TJ Dolan Natural Area off of John Street.

"We're providing a service where people don't have to carry around dog waste with them when they're out for a walk," Quin Malott, manager of parks, forestry, and cemetery, said. "This is more of an incentive to clean it up because you have a place to dispose of it right away and you're not walking around with it."

The locations were picked based on the areas that had the most dog waste in the large garbage cans. After the first three out

of six bins were installed 700 kilograms of dog waste was diverted from the landfill within six months. The garbage bins in the areas used to be half-full within a couple of days, and would get heavier.

"When a lot of dog waste is in the bottom of a 45-gallon drum, they get quite wet. If it's wet, they get quite heavy, so this eliminated those extra heavy cans," Malott said. "So, this eliminated those extra heavy cans when they can divert the material into the Suteras."

The Sutera bins also stay put year-round, whereas the metal drums for garbage disposal would have to be brought in during the winter as there were far less outdoor summer activities like picnicking.

"This way, we can keep these out and dog walkers still have a spot for disposal," Malott said.

Malott also said that there's lots of positive feedback on the Sutera bins, with residents pleased about the waste diversion and city staff finding that the outdoor garbage cans are much lighter.

All of the bins for this year have been installed. Malott said that if there are any areas that have an excessive amount of dog waste in garbage bins, more might arrive in the future.

"We'll monitor areas. We think we got the big six areas where we know there was a lot of dog refuse put in those cans," he said.



## CLEANING UP AFTER FURRY FRIEND

The City of Stratford installed three new Sutera dog waste bins, including at the Avondale Cemetery. (QUIN MALOTT PHOTO)

# Stratford's downtown will include more art this coming season

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

Thanks to the Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA), Stratford will see improvements in downtown art this spring, starting with the new installation of bench art outside of Shoppers Drug Mart at 211 Ontario St.

Local artist Lauren Kenney has been one of the artists who has their artwork displayed in the downtown core, including the new bench, which shows an illustration of Revival House gardens.

Though her art is displayed across the world, she says it's that much better to have it displayed close to home.

"It is a treat to see my illustrations in Stratford's downtown," said Kenney. "A lot of my work gets sent off to be used in other parts of the world, so it is very common that I don't have the chance to see or interact with the piece beyond its creation on my screen. I've really enjoyed having some of my work close to home and in a place that I am walking and driving past regularly."

Kenney said partnering with the BIA has allowed her the freedom to show her love for some of her favourite parts of downtown and she hopes it prompts others to enjoy those areas, too.



## MORE ART TO GRACE THE STREETS

Lauren Kenney, a local artist displays a lovely spring picture on the bench near Shoppers Drug Mart downtown. (AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

"This project with the BIA has offered an opportunity to illustrate and celebrate some of my favourite corners in Stratford's downtown, and has prompted lots of walks around downtown to look for inspiration," she said.

Jamie Pritchard, BIA general manager, and Kim Griffiths, BIA membership and

animation liaison, said improving the aesthetic of downtown can help attract more tourism and even locals to shop and play downtown, which in turn helps the businesses grow.

"Everything we do helps attract people to downtown," said Pritchard. "When people look around and see art and flow-

ers, they want to spend time there. It helps attract more people to our downtown."

Pritchard added art installations deter vandalism and promote a healthy downtown core.

Projects currently underway are more steel-box projects aimed at beautifying the typical metal shipping containers downtown look more appealing to visitors.

Griffiths said the space currently used for snow storage during the winter on Waldies Laneway, behind the LCBO, will be spruced up. The cement block there will be painted and moved to make the space attractive for sitting, making it usable in the spring and summer months.

Many of the projects are supported by grants and budget allocation for beautification projects.

"Stratford is a place where many people are drawn, specifically for arts and culture," said Kenney. "The addition of art in previously undecorated or unexpected places in the downtown offers a chance to delight viewers as they visit and explore, or for local folks moving through their everyday."

For more information about projects that are underway this spring, please reach out to the BIA at [info@downtown-stratford.ca](mailto:info@downtown-stratford.ca).





(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

### STRATFORD LEGION SPRING TEA A BIG SUCCESS!

The Legion and Ladies Auxiliary hosted 85 ladies at a Spring Tea on Sunday April 21st. As well as enjoying tea, finger sandwiches, dainties, and deserts, everyone enjoyed great conversation with family and friends. There were several groups with 3 generations enjoying the afternoon. We want to thank our many supporters including Zehrs, Cozyn's Garden Gallery, Fanfare Books, Watson's Chelsea Bazaar, Stratford Massage Therapy Clinic, Value Village, Stratford Home Hardware, Stratford Home Hardware & Building Centre, Rheo Thompsons Candies, The Cooperators, MacLeod's Scottish Shop and CIBC. The Ladies Auxiliary had a Bake Sale and we wrapped up our Silent Auction. Thanks to everyone for supporting the Royal Canadian Legion.

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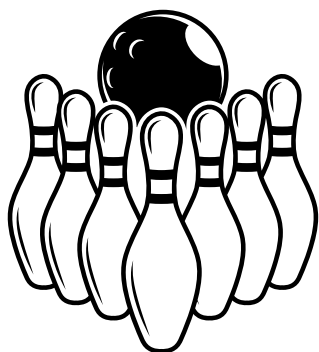
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## INNERchamber string quartet performs



### JOHANNES BRAHMS

(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTOS)

Above: Guest performer Sharon Wei on viola performs with the INNERchamber string quartet at its Signing Off concert at the Local Community Food Centre April 27.

Right: INNERchamber viola player Jody Davenport and cellist Ben Bolt-Martin perform as part of the INNERchamber string quartet April 27 as part of their free, Signing Off concert at the Local Community Food Centre.



### Stratford Branch 8

#### ATTENTION: CANADIAN VETERANS AND EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL

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

The Stratford Branch 8 Veterans Service Officer William Rothernel, with the support of Veterans Affairs Canada continues to serve the needs of all Canadian Veterans in need of assistance or advice on all service-related situations.

Call our Branch office at 519-271-4540 to speak to Bill.

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# Izzy Martchenko, 7, continues MS Read-a-Thon tradition despite change to official fundraiser

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Nothing can stop Stratford seven-year-old Izzy Martchenko from reading.

A voracious reader from an astounding young age, Izzy has raised thousands of dollars for MS Canada and people like her mom, Lindsey Martchenko, who are living with multiple sclerosis as part of the annual MS Read-a-Thon fundraiser since she first learned to read. This year, despite the official Read-a-Thon being moved to September, Izzy is leading her class, which calls itself Team Book Worms, in reading as many books and raising as much money as they can before the end of May.

“MS Canada decided to move the official Read-a-Thon to September, but that would make us lose an entire school year and this wonderful teacher we have right now,” Lindsey Martchenko said. “They have this platform called We Challenge MS and you can do your own fundraiser. ... The great thing is, Izzy can still compete in the actual Read-a-Thon and all the books she reads now will count in September.”

“My teacher (Madame Glenn-Lynes) really wanted to do a Read-a-Thon with me this year and when the real Read-a-Thon is actually going to be happening, I’m going to be in Grade 3, so I can’t do it with her,” Izzy said.

With the goals of personally reading 400 books and raising \$5,000, Izzy is already



## RAISING MONEY FOR MS CANADA

Izzy Martchenko, 7, and her mom, Lindsey Martchenko, are hoping the Stratford community will once again get behind Izzy’s efforts to read 400 books and raise \$5,000 as part of her annual Read-a-Thon for MS Canada.

(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

more than halfway to the finish line, at least financially, following her book sale April 27 at Bedford Public School which brought in well over \$2,100.

At the book sale, Izzy also sold wormy worms donated by Kuddly.Kreaturz and three candy mixes – Izzy’s Chaotic Mix, Everything but the Bagel and Animal Planet – created in partnership with Cor-

ner Store Candy Co. Izzy will continue selling the candy mixes at \$5 for a small bag, \$10 for a medium bag and \$20 for a large bag until May 12.

Similar to previous Read-a-Thon fundraisers, Izzy is also partnering with K8thegr8 Designs to sell stickers, mugs and shirts and her Izzy-wich sandwich will be available for purchase at Sirkel

Foods at some point before the end of May with a portion of the proceeds from the sale of those sandwiches going to support Izzy’s fundraising efforts.

Though Izzy reads as much as she can with or with or without the added motivation of the annual Read-a-Thon, her efforts to raise awareness of and money for MS Canada while pushing others to do the same is fueled by the love and concern she has for her mom.

“I want (my mom and people like her) to not have MS anymore and I want them to be fine so they don’t have to go get medication or have other stuff that you need when you have MS, and (feel) pains,” Izzy said, adding she worries about her mom when she sees her suffering from her symptoms.

Thanks to the efforts of Izzy and others who dedicate themselves to raising money for MS Canada, MS patients like Lindsey Martchenko are seeing improvements in their treatments and overall outlooks. While speaking with the Times, Izzy’s mom shared that a recent MRI showed one of her brain lesions is beginning shrink – something that is almost unheard of – thanks to a new medication she started taking a few years ago.

To keep up to date with Izzy’s fundraising efforts, follow Izzy the Bookworm on Facebook. To donate directly to Izzy’s unofficial Read-a-Thon fundraiser, visit <https://tinyurl.com/42k4ay99>. To donate to Team Book Worms, visit <https://tinyurl.com/44k34bp6>.

# Local women-owned businesses gather for Passion to Profit Idea Summit in St. Marys

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

One hundred-and-twenty women entrepreneurs from across Perth County gathered at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club April 29 for a full day of learning and networking.

The sold-out Passion to Profit Idea Summit was organized by Kerry Ramsay, founder of the Fresh Idea Collective, and supported by various local sponsors including signature partner KDB Law.

“The goal of the Passion to Profit Idea Summit is to help women-identifying entrepreneurs create meaningful financial goals for their businesses while learning the key strategies they need to help make those goals a reality,” said Kerry Ramsay, a former marketing professor who now leads the women’s entrepreneurship strategy remotely for the greater Kingston region through Queen’s University.

The keynote speaker at the summit was Hadriana Leo of Money Navigator International, who offered attendees a training session on “Positioning Your Mind for Profit: Learning How to Manage Your Money Mindset.”



## OVER 100 WOMEN GATHER FOR LOCAL EVENT

Kerry Ramsay, Founder of Fresh Idea Collective speaks at the Passion to Profit Idea Summit at the St. Marys Gold and Country Club earlier this week.

(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

“Your attitude about money is going to very heavily impact your experience with money and how you interact with money. In fact, it actually impacts what money can do for you,” she told women at the conference.

Holly Mortimer, business advisor for the Stratford Perth Centre for Business, was also speaking on how to “Become Your Own Profit Tracker: How a Simple Cash Flow Statement Can Boost Your Bottom Line.”

A panel of six other local women en-

trepreneurs also spoke at the event and provided ideas and insights based on their experiences with their own businesses.

Last fall, the Fresh Idea Collective began hosting monthly, sold-out events in women-owned spaces throughout Stratford and St. Marys.

More than 250 women have participated in the monthly meetups across Stratford and St. Marys, which provide guided-networking sessions and training, and fun experiences such as roller skating, business-book exchanges and axe-throwing.

“Like many entrepreneurs, I’m passionate about creating something out of nothing and helping to solve common problems in not-so-common ways,” said Ramsay. “By gathering with other women creatives and entrepreneurs on a regular basis, we are generating fresh ways of thinking while boosting our mental well-being and creating a stronger business ecosystem.”

To learn more about upcoming Fresh Idea Collective events, follow @freshideacollective on Instagram and Facebook.



# Perth County to install speed-radar signs in 22 reduced-speed zones countywide

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

To combat speeding in communities across the county, Perth County council voted recently to pay \$308,000 for the purchase and installation of speed-radar signs in 22 reduced-speed zones countywide.

At the April 18 county council meeting, councillors voted to draw the required funds from the county's \$3-million capital roads reserve to purchase and install the signs this year, despite the project not being included in the 2024 capital budget.

"Since 2020, public-works staff have utilized four solar-powered, speed-radar signs to promote speed awareness and track speeds in our reduced-speed zones," county public-works director John McClelland said. "The department has received positive feedback from the residents of the towns and villages where the signs have been deployed, with the only negative being the minimum frequency they are up at any one location."

In his report to council, McClelland detailed criteria recommended for the permanent installation of speed-radar signs in the county. Those criteria include:

- the sign must be within a reduced-speed zone along a county owned roadway located in a town, village or built-up area;
- the reduced-speed zone is on a through road where there are no

stop controls within or at the end of the reduced-speed zone;

- the speed limit on either end of the reduced-speed zone is 80km/hr;

- the location for speed-radar signs will be within the reduced-speed zone approximately 80-100 meters from the beginning of the reduced zone;

- other installations, location or removal of the permanent speed-radar signs will be at the discretion of the director of public works; and

- the permanent speed radar sign program will be reviewed every 10 years and/or if there are issues with maintenance or the effectiveness of the program.

Based on that criteria, staff identified 22 locations where permanent speed-radar signs will be installed. Giving councillors the option of having all the signs purchased and installed at once or purchasing and installing them through a phased-in approach, staff ranked the 22 locations based on traffic volumes and 85th percentile speeds.

Topping the list of ranked speed-radar-sign locations was Perth Line 72 in Donegal followed by Perth Road 119 in Brunner, Perth Road 121 in Poole and Perth Line 26 in Harmony.

"I looked at the 22 locations and I can definitely see them all being on here, then I was looking at the ranking and I was somewhat dismayed that Harmony was up fairly high ... and then St. Pauls was like four

from the (bottom)," Coun. Jim Aitcheson said. "Of all the traffic that speeds through Harmony, probably 90 per cent of that speeds through St. Pauls because that's your cottage traffic, your truck traffic, everything. I was kind of surprised St. Pauls would be that far down and Harmony up where it should have been."

Aitcheson also noted that Wartburg, which was ranked at 12th on the list, and Rostock, ranked at 20th, are located on the same road and he questioned why the rankings differ so drastically.

"We had to choose some criteria in order to rank these, and we thought that was best facilitated through how busy is the road traffic volume and the 85th percentile speed we observe within the reduced-speed zone," McClelland said. "As it pertains to Harmony and St. Pauls, our traffic volumes are taken on an average annual daily traffic basis. So you're correct, the traffic in the summertime heading to cottage country is going to be higher. We look at traffic volumes on an average over the course of the year. Harmony also is a 50 km/hr reduced-speed zone whereas St. Pauls is a 60 km/hr reduced-speed zone."

"You saw a report earlier in the year regarding Kurtzville, and we compared both Harmony and St. Pauls in that report, and you saw basically similar 85th percentile speed even higher in Harmony than St. Pauls. That could be just from the characteristics of the roadway, it could be from enforcement."

With the speed-radar signs expected

to cost roughly \$7,000 each, council was unanimous in its decision to not only purchase and install all 22 signs at the same time, but to do that this year as opposed to setting them aside for the 2025 capital budget.

"I want to speak in favour of being all in here," Coun. Todd Kasenberg said. "I think this is a fine opportunity for us to show immediate leadership on this issue. We know that these signs are well-appreciated by local environments. People who are living in these areas have expressed appreciation for the temporary signs when we used them, and I think we show clear leadership in suggesting that we are concerned about the safety of these areas on our county roads."

In addition to the 22 permanent signs to be installed across the county, McClelland said staff will still be able to use the four temporary signs as needed to track and control speeding in high-traffic, reduced-speed zones that don't meet the criteria for a permanent sign including Milverton (Perth Road 131), Dublin (Perth Road 180), Shakespeare (Perth Road 107), Millbank (Perth Line 72), Fullarton (Perth Road 163) and Gowanstown (Perth Line 88).

Data collected by the signs will also be shared with local police to help guide traffic enforcement.

Near Stratford, the county will install speed-radar signs on Perth Line 26 in Harmony, Perth Road 119 in Gadshill, Perth Road 130 in Avonton and Perth Line 20 in St. Pauls.



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### CLEANING UP NATURE'S GARBAGE

(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Members of Stratford's energy and environment advisory committee worked to remove invasive weeds along the crib wall on the north shore of Lake Victoria on Earth Day April 22 to give native plant species – specifically the big blue stem native grass they planted there last year – room to grow. Pictured from right are committee members Anita Jacobsen and Craig Merkley.



# New Gallery Stratford Curator/Director talks future plans to come

ALEX HUNT

*Times Correspondent*

Gallery Stratford prepares to open its doors to individuals of all backgrounds as it searches for a permanent director.

Robert Windrum will act as the next interim director/curator after Lina Jabra's departure. Windrum previously held the position in the art gallery for six years, from 1998 to 2004. After his own departure, Windrum shifted his focus on becoming involved with several charity organizations, along with becoming the Director of Philanthropy at Sunnybrook Foundation.

Windrum says that he's delighted to return to the role and speaks on the future plans he has in store for the gallery.

"I've learned a lot about fundraising and to cultivate, solicit, steward and renew donors and how to build those relationships, I think there's a lot of potential for this at Gallery Stratford," he said.

"My prime objective is to create a base of sustainable funding and stability that will set the next person up for success, as well as growing a donor base, community support and strengthening our relationships with funding agencies."

The selection process is expected to take up to a year.

"We are looking for somebody who is a unicorn. It's a difficult role to find the perfect balance, some people are very strong administrative organizational leaders or very strong territorial thinkers; we want



(ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

## GALLERY SEARCHING FOR NEW DIRECTOR

Robert Windrum, Interim director/curator plans exhibition details with Stratford artists Grahame Lynch and Colleen Schindler at Gallery Stratford last weekend.

to find the best person who has the best balance between those two roles."

Windrum elaborates that the role will welcome individuals of all backgrounds, with the ideal candidate being able to connect with communities that represent the voices of various cultures. Gallery Stratford is striving to implement a deeper diversified approach for its future.

Windrum's first organized art show will

run from April 27 to June 9, featuring the works of Stratford artists; Grahame Lynch and Colleen Schindler.

Lynch and Schindler share a marriage partnership and are currently on sabbatical leave as creative professors at Toronto Metropolitan University.

"Stratford has an incredibly vibrant arts community that we wanted to come and engage with, be a part of, and contribute

to," said Colleen Schindler. "I've always made art, it's just in me. I need to do it whether somebody buys it or not, that's just a bonus, but it's a nice feeling when I put something up and somebody understands or appreciates it, I'm trying to extend experience."

Both Lynch and Schindler focus on different art styles that reflect their individual interests and tastes. Schindler uses various methods of painting, stitching and pastel techniques that represent her intimate view of life with inspirations drawn from exploring landscapes and her recent residency in France. Lynch showcases his flair for photographic imagery through different collaging and shading techniques.

"Most of the work is printed as Sion types, most people will be familiar with this style as an architectural blueprint," said Lynch. "What I like about it is you process it in the sun and you develop it in the water, it's a very physical process and nowadays we often get involved with digital methods."

Lynch and Schindler are now currently partaking on another residency in Ireland.

"The Summer exhibitions will continue to be very exciting, there will be something for everyone, artists talk, fundraising, and the showcasing of works from a private collector."

After a new permanent director/curator has been selected, Windrum plans to make a return to the artistic field and pursue small business ideas.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

## CENTRALIA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY (C.C.A.T.) ALUMNI

1979 Graduates, had their 45th class reunion at Arden Park Hotel in Stratford last month. Many now work as dairy and hog farmers in the Stratford and St. Marys area, and some members live in other areas of Ontario.

Pictured is the complete class of 1979 submitted by Wayne Barber, from the graduating class.



# Ontario Welsh Conference and Festival held in Stratford

GARY WEST

*Times Correspondent*

It was called the “Dramatically Different Tour” as a bus load of visitors of Welsh heritage stopped in Stratford April 19-21 as part of the Ontario Welsh Association Conference.

“It was a wonderful weekend and started on Friday with afternoon tea and Welsh

cakes,” said organizer Carys Wyn Hughes.

Saturday included a stop at Stratford city hall where the visitors were welcomed by Mayor Martin Ritsma who outlined what Stratford and Perth county are famous for.

They then had a tasting and tour of Chocolate Bars with owners Derek and Jacqueline Barr.

Then they were on to Job Site Brewery where they sampled fresh-baked pizza

before seeing the Stratford Festival’s theatres.

They then moved on to Avondale Church for the Voices of Wales concert featuring with Steffan, Trystan and Rhiannon.

The visitors said it was an amazing evening of song.

“Sunday wrapped up with Cymanfa Ganu-a, festival of song. The church was filled with voices that reached the rafters,”

said Hughes, who also boasts a proud Welsh heritage. “It was a full weekend of celebrations for those that are proud of their Welsh heritage.”

Next year’s Ontario Welsh Festival will be held in Niagara Falls.

The interested Welsh patrons came from all over the continent along with those from Wales, as part of the annual conference.



## WELSH HERITAGE

Pictured is the large group of Welsh visitors surrounding Mayor Martin Ritsma at Stratford city hall April 20.

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

# Happy birthday Doreen Alexander, 100 years young

LISA CHESTER

*Times Correspondent*

A lot has happened over the last 100 years, including the birth of Elsie “Doreen” Hall to U.K. immigrants Elsie and John Hall on May 8, 1924.

She was one of five other siblings; the eldest son died at age two of the Spanish flu, two brothers Ron and Doug and two sisters Bernice and Barbara.

Doreen grew up in Toronto with her family. Her father, John, was a market gardener and landscape gardener who competed in many flower shows and gave lectures about gardening. Early memories abound, but one that sticks out is a trip to Leamington at the age of four with her mother, brother and father who was going to study the greenhouses there. To travel by car at the age of four was a marvel and she was intrigued by the fact there were no trees along the journey. Southern Ontario had been deforested and a man named Edmund Zavitz eventually spearheaded the reforestation in the 1930s.

Life was wonderful with summers spent at the family cottage on Lake Simcoe where visitors came, badminton was played and the beach was a lure for lakeside walks. Doreen went to school at Northern Secondary School and graduated Grade 12. She always liked school and learning new things.

Doreen inherited a love of gardening and entered what would be her first and only flower show in 1939. The war came and changed things for everyone. In 1942, at 18, she and other women were driven from Toronto to Victory Aircraft in Milton. They were involved with the building of the Lancaster Bomber. Doreen did the welding. The bombers were then flown by



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

**Elsie “Doreen” Alexander, pictured here at her home in Spruce Lodge, will turn 100 on May 8.** female pilots of the Air Transport Auxiliary to military bases, often overseas.

On Victory in Europe (VE) Day, all the employees were sent home early. It was May 8 and Doreen’s birthday. People were celebrating in the streets and the streetcars couldn’t operate through the crowds, so Doreen had to walk home making her very late. Her family was frantic. They hadn’t heard the news yet because they didn’t have a radio, but it was true, the war was over.

She eventually trained and worked part time as a comptometer operator until the technology became obsolete in the ‘60s.

Doreen scandalously fell in love with a man four years her junior. In 1948, she

married George Alexander in a luxurious, handmade wedding dress, a post-war rarity. Together they had two daughters, Nancy, a geologist, and Janet, a physiotherapist. As a family they enjoyed living in Peterborough and southeast Scarborough near Lake Ontario.

Unfortunately, Doreen lost most of her vision in her 40s. Because of this loss, she patiently participated in many ophthalmology research studies. She belonged to a monthly women’s group all her adult life called Mother’s Night Out. They would attend local theatre, try new recipes together, crafts, explore restaurants, share travel stories and enjoy many good laughs together.

After raising their family, in their 50s, George and Doreen travelled all over the United States, Ontario and western Canada in their RV up until their 80s. They loved learning about the history of the different areas they visited and being in a warm climate in the winter. Sadly, George passed away in 2011 after 63 amazing years together.

Doreen always loved gardening and the outdoors. The Alexanders also had a cottage to enjoy the peace of nature. Doreen attributes her long life to the simple meals she and George shared and their love of walking. Her motivation in life comes through the loss of her father at the age of 52. She felt he was cheated out of many years of his life and has often joked she would live to be 104 to live out those extra years that ALS denied him.

Of all the developments that have happened over the last 100 years that has puzzled her the most is the advent of the cell phone making landlines obsolete.

These days, Doreen enjoys her exercise classes and any musical performance that appears at Spruce Lodge. She especially appreciates the duet bike rides around the grounds of Spruce Lodge.





# Welcoming Ukrainians: A Week in the Life

VJ KNUTSON

*Times Freelance Columnist*

“Hello, we as a family recently arrived...in Canada on the CUAET program for Ukrainians. We are looking for a job... can you help us?”

“I have a need for a couple with cat. They are from Zaporizhzhia that is now under Russian occupation. No one wants to take them because of the cat.”

“...maybe you can help me with advice on how to be. A week ago, my back seized up. It hurts my leg. I can hardly walk. How do I get to the doctor?” (Translated from Ukrainian).

“How do all these people get your contact information, VJ?” my fellow volunteers ask. “She has her own Wikipedia page”, another jokes.

There was a time when I was helping Ukrainians all across Canada, volunteering with an international effort to help displaced people get out of the refugee centres in Poland. In those days, I knew

of employers hiring in different areas. Along with my team of volunteers, we had a roster of hosts from West to East. Things have changed.

Settlement services, through the YMCA, can now help newcomers with resumes and job applications. They are knowledgeable in immigration related issues, from assessing level of English and enrolling Ukrainians in level specific English courses, to helping fill out documentation for any eligible programs.

Partners in Employment also offers aide for newcomers seeking employment. Ukrainian resumes are long and complex, and not at all like our streamlined versions, so this is the first area where job seekers need help. From there, they need to be connected with employers who can accept those with limited language skills.

Employers have limits on how many international employees they can hire, and many local businesses have reached that limit, so finding jobs is not as easy as it was the first year of the war.

Securing hosts is another issue, entire-

ly. There is no longer a roster of potential hosts to choose from. The government has continually ignored this problem, relying on the good-heartedness of Canadians. There is no support, financial or otherwise, for people who open their homes to Ukrainians. A couple in their 60s, for whom I was able to find work, have decided to return to Ukraine, as no host, nor rental accommodation materialized.

I understand. My husband and I continue to host (our fifth time around), as do two other families in our town. Apart from the added expense, there is an emotional toll on hosts who vicariously live the trauma of their guests. Everyone is growing weary, yet the war continues, and the need is far from over.

I wrote back to the gentleman asking about medical care, with a map to Urgent Care (he's in London), and a reminder to bring his OHIP card. My message was in English. When I checked up with him later that day, he said he was unable to find anyone to help him translate my directions, so he ended up in a Chiropractor's office.

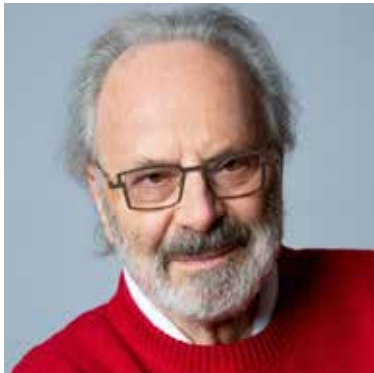
“Did it help?” I asked. “No,” he replied. I attempted clearer instructions for the next day.

Our volunteer efforts are still very much needed. We continue to offer English support classes on Saturdays, which are being well received. Thanks to those who have come forward to make these classes a success. From my perspective, this is just the beginning. There is so much more we can do.

In the meantime, I've just received a message ask me if I can help edit a letter for Permanent Residency, so I'll sign off here.

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

## “Out-of-the Clump” Research on Alzheimer’s Disease Hope for the Future



THOMAS R VERNY, MD

*Times Contributor*

Dementia refers to an array of symptoms characterized by failing short-term memory, confused thinking, and decline in language skills. Of all the dementias, Alzheimer's disease (AD) constitutes approximately 60 to 80 percent of cases. John Elfein, predicted in Statista this year that by 2050, 1.1 million people in Canada will have AD.

Two drugs, Lecanemab and Donanemab, have been hailed as part of a new class of monoclonal antibody (MOA) drugs that could mark a turning point for Alzheimer's (AZ) drug research. These drugs are incredibly expensive (US 26,500/year) and carry risks of brain microbleeds and swelling. More importantly, they do not cure or even halt the disease, they delay it by about six months on average. (19). At least 98 unique compounds tested in Phase 2 or 3 trials that pursued the various MOA classes have failed over the years. Dr. Howard Chertow, Associate Professor, Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery, McGill University commented, “They're not a home run.”

Personally, I think they're more like a strike-out, in view of the fact that most neuroscientists and the drug companies employed by them may be looking in the wrong places in the wrong way.

In 2006, a research paper published in the highly regarded journal *Nature* asserted that the development of AD is caused by the formation in the brain of abnormally high levels of the naturally occurring protein beta-amyloid that clumps together to form plaques and the intracellular accumulations of neurofibrillary tangles of tau protein that disrupt cell function. In 2023, a critical review in the journal *Brain* collaboratively written by scientists from Denmark, the US, Italy, and Australia stated that “Despite the importance of amyloid in the definition of Alzheimer's disease, we argue that the data point to Aβ playing a minor aetiological role.” They further asserted that the search for more effective ways to treat AD should involve more than amyloid as the single causative agent.

In the following article I propose to discuss the currently leading “out-of-the-clump” research, a term coined by Donald Weaver, University of Toronto, that may eventually usher in new and better ways of dealing with AD.

One of the most auspicious of these novel directions comes from the above-mentioned Donald Weaver who found that a significant resemblances between bacterial membranes and brain cell membranes exist. Beta-amyloid erroneously mistakes the brain cells for invading bacteria and attacks them. As a result, brain cells

gradually decay, ultimately leading to dementia. According to Weaver, AD is an autoimmune disease.

If this theory gains traction in the scientific world, treatments that are effective in autoimmune diseases such as celiac disease, Crohn's disease, diabetes type 1, eczema, etc. may prove successful in the treatment of AD.

In addition to this autoimmune theory of AD, many other new and varied theories are appearing. John Mamo of Curtin University in Bentley, Australia, demonstrated already in 2021 that the liver in addition to the brain also makes amyloid protein.

It follows that finding ways to either prevent the liver from manufacturing the amyloid protein or, to at least destroy it, before it enters the circulation ought to be explored.

A recent study from Portugal suggests that AD is a disease of the mitochondria. Mitochondria are tiny organelles (similar to organs like heart or liver but much smaller inside cells) that generate most of the chemical energy required to power the cell's functions. The authors of this study reported positive outcomes in AD with animals fed a diet rich in antioxidants.

This is good news because we are in familiar territory here. We have known for a long time that antioxidants scavenge free radicals from the body cells and prevent or reduce the damage caused by oxidation. Of course, further research is necessary before it is proven that antioxidants in humans can lessen the risk of developing AD or, benefit people in early stages of AD. However, consumption of antioxi-

dants like vitamins A, C and E, the minerals copper, zinc and selenium, as well as nuts, fruits and vegetables, pecans, blueberries, and dark chocolate, seems well proven to benefit the health of everyone, at any stage of life.

Scientists from the University of Bern, Switzerland contend that AD is the end-result of a brain infection particularly with bacteria from the mouth. (6). In view of this it will not surprise you that a recent paper advanced the hypothesis that nose picking could play a role in increasing the risk of developing AD. Actually, following all the warnings about the importance of handwashing during the COVID epidemic, this information is not surprising. Our hands and fingers swarm with viruses and bacteria. Digging around our noses is encouraging these little critters to hop on the olfactory nerve train and take a vacation in our brains.

And while we are on neuroinflammation a new study from Boston found that a suppression of INPP5D, a gene found in microglia, induces neuroinflammation and increases the risk of AD. Microglial cells are part of the immune system of the brain and protect the brain in case of inflammation or injury. These findings open new avenues for the development of microglia-centered therapies for AD and related illnesses.

Scientists from Charles University in Prague found that ailing microglia and astrocytes (connective tissue cells) contained abnormally high concentrations of iron. Consequently, the potential benefits of iron reducing approaches in the treatment of neurodegenerative

diseases such as AD need to be considered.

Recent research has focussed on probiotics as potentially beneficial in preventing the development or slowing the progression of AD. Probiotics are foods or supplements that contain live microorganisms that help to maintain or improve a diverse microflora in the gut. A systematic review of the literature on the effect of probiotics on AD by scientists from Malaysia in conjunction with researchers from Baghdad in 2022 write, “Probiotics are known to be one of the best preventative measures against cognitive decline in AD. Numerous in vivo trials and recent clinical trials have proven the effectiveness of selected bacterial strains in slowing down the progression of AD. It is proven that probiotics modulate the inflammatory process, counteract [with] oxidative stress, and modify gut microbiota.” This and many other academic papers present robust evidence on the role of probiotics in alleviating the progression of AD.

As opposed to drugs, probiotics are readily available in foods such as yogurt, buttermilk, sauerkraut, pickles and many others.

If we are going to make significant advances in the prevention and treatment of AD, we urgently require new approaches outside the old amyloid plaque box. Here I reviewed a number of such studies that promise to make a difference in the near future.

Understanding the condition, its origins, and effective strategies for prevention should be a top priority of our health care system.



# A Guide to Savoring Every Minute of the Spring Season



**IRENE ROTH**

*Times Freelance Columnist*

Everything is looking so lush now. The grass is greening up and the trees and shrubs are budding out. Everything is on the brink of a new horizon and a new season. What a wonderful time it is! I just love the spring season with all its hopes and vibrancy.

The days are longer, the sun is brighter, and we may be planning our garden. This can be an uplifting time of year. But it can also be a time that will go by so fast that we won't even realize it and the hot, humid weather will be upon us.

Spring, with its promise of re-

newal and rejuvenation, invites us to step outside and embrace the beauty of nature unfolding before us. From blooming flowers to longer days filled with sunshine, there's no shortage of reasons to revel in the magic of this enchanting season.

Here's are a few ways you can fully embrace spring and savor every minute of its splendor.

### **Immerse Yourself in Nature:**

Spring is the perfect time to reconnect with the great outdoors. Take leisurely strolls through parks adorned with blossoming trees and vibrant flowers. Listen to the cheerful melodies of birdsong and feel the gentle breeze caress your skin.

Whether it's a hike in the mountains or a picnic in the countryside, spending time in nature can rejuvenate the soul and uplift the spirit.

### **Celebrate the Blooms:**

One of the most captivating aspects of spring is the explosion of color as flowers burst into bloom. Visit botanical gardens or flower festivals to marvel at the dazzling array of blossoms on display.

Better yet, plant your own gar-

den and watch as it comes to life with tulips, daffodils, and cherry blossoms. Cultivating flowers not only adds beauty to your surroundings but also fosters a sense of accomplishment and connection to the natural world.

### **Indulge in Seasonal Delights:**

Spring brings with it an abundance of fresh produce bursting with flavor and nutrients. You may want to visit farmers' markets to sample juicy strawberries, crisp asparagus, and tender greens. Experiment with seasonal recipes that highlight the bounty of spring, from vibrant salads to refreshing fruit desserts.

Embracing local, seasonal ingredients not only supports farmers and promotes sustainability but also allows you to savor the true essence of spring on your plate.

### **Embrace Outdoor Activities:**

Embrace outdoor activities that help you celebrate this great weather. Whether it's cycling along scenic trails, kayaking on tranquil lakes, or simply basking in the sun with a good book, there's no shortage of ways to en-

joy the great outdoors.

You may also want to invite friends and family to join you for a leisurely picnic or a friendly game of frisbee in the park. Engaging in outdoor pursuits not only promotes physical health but also fosters a sense of camaraderie and joy.

### **Capture the Moment:**

Spring is a fleeting season, characterized by rapid changes and ephemeral beauty. Take the time to capture the magic of spring through photography, painting, or journaling. Create a visual diary of the season's transformation, from bare branches bursting into leaf to fields ablaze with wildflowers. By journaling about these moments, you not only create lasting memories but also deepen your appreciation for the wonders of nature.

### **Practice Mindfulness:**

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to overlook the simple pleasures that spring has to offer. Take a moment each day to pause, breathe, and immerse yourself fully in the present moment. Take note of the delicate scent of flowers on the breeze,

the warmth of the sun on your skin, and the symphony of life unfolding around you.

### **Embrace Change:**

Just as spring brings about physical changes in the natural world, it also presents an opportunity for personal growth and renewal. Reflect on areas of your life where you'd like to instigate positive change and take proactive steps towards realizing your goals.

Whether it's pursuing a new hobby, decluttering your space, or fostering deeper connections with loved ones, embrace the spirit of renewal that permeates the season.

Spring is a season brimming with possibility, beauty, and rejuvenation. By immersing ourselves in nature, celebrating the vibrant flowers and gardens, indulging in seasonal delights, embracing outdoor activities, capturing the moment, practicing mindfulness, and embracing change, we can savor every minute of its splendor.

So, let's step outside, breathe in the fresh air, and embrace the magic of spring in all its glory.

## Web-Crawling Down The Grocery Aisle



**SHEILA CLARKE**

*Times Freelance Columnist*

Greenwashing, making something look sustainable and environmental when it really isn't, thrives in the fossil fuel industry, including plastics.

There's another spot where greenwashing aims for the gut—literally. You may realize that North America is experiencing high rates of diabetes and obesity. Accidental, you say? Not so fast.

Our modern-day lifestyle has led us further and further away from healthy food. Far fewer folks are willing to cook a meal with fresh food—or even know how. At the same time, we're drowning in advertising that tells us that processed and pre-packaged foods are healthy.

Guess what? They're not.

Research is increasing around the world to suggest that "Ultra-processed foods are high in calories, added sugar and sodium, and low in fibre," according to Dr. Zhang, chair of the Division of Nutrition at Tufts University in Boston. "Two-thirds of the calories children consume in the US are ultra-processed, while about 60% of adult diets are ultra-processed," Zhang said.

Dr. Monteiro, a professor of nutrition and public health at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, noted that "they are formulations of often chemically manipulated

cheap ingredients such as modified starches, sugars, oils, fats, and protein isolates, with little if any whole food added."

There's an easy solution — buy real food and cook it at home. It's that simple, experts say. However, experts also agree that giving up the convenience of ready-to-heat and ready-to-eat foods is difficult in today's fast-paced world. In addition, it's nearly impossible to avoid temptation, as over 70 per cent of the US food supply is made of ultra-processed food. They look so good on the packages, and they truly hit our taste buds. The taste is certainly no accident. Food companies have laboratories that test additives that will make you a forever fan of processed food. (Piedmont Medical Centre, GA)

The real secret is that cooking from scratch can be fairly quick, taste wonderful, and be way healthier than packaged, pro-

cessed foods.

One of my favourite cookbooks is Google! I put in a few ingredients that I may have on hand and ask for a recipe. The real fun is that many of the recipes that appear are a) simple and b) from other cultures- and they're so tasty! Spices and herbs can turn rice or pasta into a delicious curry, an Italian dish, or maybe Mexican.

If you're interested in cooking, The Local Community Food Centre at 612 Erie St offers free cooking courses with their fantastic chef, Lucy Dillinger. According to Dillinger, all their courses are easy cook-from-scratch recipes that use fresh, healthy ingredients.

It takes "won't power" to step away from those oh-so-tempting ultra-processed packaged foods. Be strong- be creative- and be healthy.

### **Updates:**

1. Carbon parts per million (ppm) in the atmosphere as of late April, 2024: **422.1ppm**. Safe level, 350 ppm passed in 1990.

2. Remove plastic from your life: [tinyurl.com/CFUWplastic](http://tinyurl.com/CFUWplastic)

3. Many plastic items in the grocery store have a set of three arrows forming a triangle with a number in the middle—but it doesn't mean the item is recyclable. It's a resin stamp indicating the type of plastic it is. Only numbers one and two are recyclable.

*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.*

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# OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Not the usual rides, glitz and amusing animals of Orlando



PAUL KNOWLES

*Times Contributor*

We discovered this place with a collection of parks, just outside Orlando, Fla. It has great rides, a restaurant named for an animal mascot and amazing displays of over-the-top glitz.

Disney World? Well, we did also visit Disney – more of that in the coming weeks – but I am talking about an elegant, small city named Winter Park, a destination that is really the opposite of Disney, except both are great places to visit.

Winter Park had its beginnings as a winter getaway for well-to-do folks from the chilly north. It was originally named Lakeview – it adopted its current name in 1887. It has grown – the population is now something near 30,000 – but it hasn't moved far from those roots. Today, it is still known for its stately homes, beautiful natural settings, high-end shopping and dining, and focus on the arts. Winter Park is also home to the highly reputed Rollins College, a liberal-arts college founded in 1885 by Congregationalists from New England.

All of that may explain why this certainly is not Disney.

Winter Park's parks are just that. The city is dotted with green spaces, often used for arts events



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

**One of the quaint, wood-lined canals that are part of the Winter Park Scenic Cruise.**

and concerts. One highlight is the Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival in mid-March. Held in Central Park and along adjoining streets, it attracts over 200,000 visitors each year.

Okay, I promised you rides and that doesn't seem likely in this setting, does it? But the thing is, Winter Park is situated on not one but three beautiful lakes. They're linked by quaint, narrow canals lined with wooden planks and a venerable operation called Winter Park Scenic Tours has been conducting boat tours of the lakes and canals since 1938. That's 33 years before Disney World opened.

The tour suits the ambience of the town. It's leisurely and friendly. The guides are very well informed, excellent communicators and funny as heck. The company operates about 10 small boats; they leave the docks in a minia-

ture flotilla.

The time on the lakes is interesting, and the dozen or so passengers on each small boat get to see Rollins College and the elegant homes – celebrity owners are specifically not identified out of respect for their privacy – but the highlights are the passages through the one-lane canals lined with trees and gardens and tiny boathouses, always including the possibility that somebody is going to have to back their way out of the canal to make room for an oncoming vessel. In our case, it was oncoming kayakers that did an about face to allow our passage.

These comfortable tours are a highlight for any visitor to Winter Park and they cost – wait for it – \$20 for an adult and half that for a child. Winter Park may have a justifiable reputation as a high-

end community, but that price is totally low-end for anything Orlando and worth every penny. Yes, Americans do still use pennies.

There are plenty of places to eat and drink in Winter Park across the spectrum of price and cuisine, but we were quite taken with the gastropub with an animal mascot. Not a cute rodent, but a beast dubbed The Ravenous Pig, which is the name of the place. It could also describe some of the diners, I suppose, including yours truly.

The Ravenous Pig is owned by the head chef and the menu changes every day depending on what produce is best and freshest.

The food is great, the wine list very good, the products on the on-site brewery are excellent, but the best thing about it was the service – everyone from the guy doing the free valet parking to

the person at the welcome desk to the manager were over-the-top friendly and helpful.

The walls of the place are well decorated with unique art and sculpture, often featuring pigs, of course, but that is not the over-the-top glitz I referred to earlier.

Winter Park is home to a number of good museums and galleries, and chief among them, from my point of view, the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of Great American Art.

What makes the Morse special is this is the home of perhaps the most comprehensive collection of the spectacular work of glass-making genius Louis Comfort Tiffany anywhere in the world.

Most of us know about Tiffany lamps – and there are plenty of those here – but this museum houses dramatic Tiffany windows, miraculous mirrors, elaborate vases, amazing jewelry and, in fact, entire rooms including the gob-smacking Tiffany Chapel, a unique and lavishly decorated chapel which Tiffany created for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

I'm not sure this chapel inspires worship of anyone but Tiffany. It's that impressive!

We came away convinced that Winter Park is an ideal break for anyone on a theme park pilgrimage to Orlando. Those parks are definitely fun, but Winter Park's stylistic ambience coupled with the warm welcome we encountered everywhere makes for a delightful and relaxing day out.

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



Our guide/captain on the boat cruise.




The astonishing Tiffany Chapel, now at the Morse Museum.



# COMING EVENTS

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


CANADIAN FIDDLE CHAMPION  
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[scottwoods.ca](http://scottwoods.ca)

**Saturday June 1 at 7:00 pm**  
**Elma-Logan Recreation Complex**  
**200 Nelson St., Monkton**  
Proceeds support the Monkton Lions Club

**GARDEN STRATFORD GENERAL MEETING**

Monday May 6; 7:15 – 9:00 p.m. **\*\*New Time\*\***

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

Featured Presentation: “Roses at the Royal Botanical Garden” with Alex Henderson, Curator of Living Collections/ Horticulturalist, Royal Botanical Garden. Meeting Open to Everyone; Free Admission.

**OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP MEETING**

Tuesday, May 7; 7:00 p.m.

93 Morgan St., Stratford

“How to Avoid Scams and Frauds” with Constable Darren Fischer (Community Resource and Media Relations Officer) Stratford Police Service. Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome. 519-273-4327

**AN EVENING OF SUPPORTING VETERANS**

**GALA DINNER**

Saturday, June 15; 6:00 p.m.

Legion Branch 8, Stratford, 804 Ontario St B1

Three course meal with feature speaker NHL alumni Tim Taylor and musical performance by Dayna Manning. \$150/person. For tickets call 519-271-4540 or email [stratfordlegion008@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordlegion008@gmail.com)

## HAVE A SPECIAL EVENT COMING UP?

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**50 Golden Years**

**Ken and Gloria Hutchison**  
1974 – May 11 – 2024

*Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary!*  
*With lots of love,*  
*Grant and Beryl*




*Love is patient,  
Love is kind...*  
1 Corinthians 13:4

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LOVE, JOY, HOPE & PEACE*

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Pastor - Jack Hetzel  
8:45 Bible Class & Sunday School  
10:00 am Worship Service

Live Streaming: St. Peter's Facebook Page  
The Lutheran Hour over CKNX 920/AM  
9:00 am Sunday  
Everyone Welcome! 

*Worship With Us*



**Stratford Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church**

Quality Inn Festival  
(1144 Ontario St., Stratford)

WORSHIP TIMES:  
10 a.m. and 3 p.m.  
[stratfordarp.org](http://stratfordarp.org)



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



# Riddles

What's the perfect cure for dandruff?  
**Baldness**

Why did the king go to the dentist?  
**To get his teeth crowned**

Why did the sick skunk stay in bed for a week?  
**Doctors odours**

Why is an elephant big, grey and wrinkly?

**Because if it was small, white and smooth it would be an aspirin**

Which thing makes our home safe?  
**A lock.**

Take off my skin -- I won't cry, but you will!  
What am I?  
**An onion.**

What can go up and come down without moving?  
**The temperature.**

The more you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?  
**Foot steps.**

What can burn the eyes, sting the mouth, yet be consumed?  
**Peppers**

# Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 34



## Pet of the Month



### SKIPPER

Two-year-old Skipper has a love for the outdoors! Super high-energy, this fella loves going on new adventures and long walks and hikes. Skipper is looking for an active home that can give him the lifestyle he craves for. Skipper loves all the attention to himself and wants a loving forever home with no other pets or young kids. If you're looking for a loyal companion to go on camping trips with you, Skipper is your guy! Check out his complete profile on our website and submit an adoption survey at <https://kwsphumane.ca/adopt/process>.

# Word Search

## NHL PLAYOFFS

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

- Stars
- Knights
- Jets
- Avalanche
- Canucks
- Predators
- Oilers
- Kings
- Panthers
- Lightning
- Bruins
- Maple Leafs
- Rangers
- Capitals
- Hurricanes
- Islanders



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## OBITUARY



**MARJORIE MAY SEWELL,  
DANCING QUEEN**

Marj Passed away on Friday, April 12, 2024 in her 96th year, having barely slowed down until her very last days. Born August 21, 1928, in Waterford, ON., she often reflected on her younger years tying tobacco leaves and picking strawberries for 10 cents a quart before meeting her husband George in business college.

From her career as a legal secretary at a bustling law firm in Kitchener to her country house in the Wildwood Conservation Area, she ultimately retired in Stratford where she continued to thrive.

In recent years, you could still spot her on the Razzamajazz river boat dancing and waving to Stratford Festival tourists, or on the dance floor at Lakeside Every Saturday night with friends Randy, Liz and Mac. Year-round she stayed ferociously committed to daily YMCA swims with an infamous swim crew and mingling with fellow neighbours at the Church St. apartments.

If you knew Marj, you would have seen the ever-growing maze of antique treasures she collected over a lifetime of hunting and (seemingly less) selling. You may have grabbed a rosebud chocolate on your way out her backdoor, tasted her butterscotch sauce or been gifted a container of homemade fudge.

But above all, to know Marj was to know her vast community made up of all ages and walks of life. Her spirit never wavered, forever socializing with warmth, a sparkle in her eye, and a spicy sense of humour. Marj in her purest form exemplified what it means to stay young at heart. If ever a choice, she always chose happiness.

We'll remember her as she was in her element, on a sunny summer day sitting on her porch in a cheerful plaid button-up, sharing chocolate covered caramels with friends and family.

Join us for a celebration of life on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 from 2-4 pm., at the Flour Mill, 6 Water Street, South. St. Marys. ON

Predeceased by her husband George Gilbert Sewell (1998), brother Keith and sister Ola Van Wagner (Melvin 1989) and her nephew Wayne Van Wagner (2020) (Leslie). Survived by her daughter Carol Ann Miller (Tom predeceased 2017), son John David Sewell, brother Jim Maddeford (Judy), granddaughters Brooke Barber (Blake), Amy Brennan (Pat), Alex and Anne Sewell (Isaac), and great-grandchildren Emma, Reid, Niamh, Enya and Quinn, nieces and nephews Nicole Auld (Brian), Mike Maddeford, Glenn Maddeford, Anita (Van Wagner) Miller (Matt), Randy Van Wagner (Ann), and niece-in-law Leslie Van Wagner.

As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to The Razzamajazz (Cheques payable to The Razzamajazz or by email money transfer, made direct to this charity be email: [Razzamajazz1992@gmail.com](mailto:Razzamajazz1992@gmail.com)), or donations to YMCA of Three Rivers (Stratford) or Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth through the W. G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron Street, Stratford. [www.wgyoungfuneral-home.com](http://www.wgyoungfuneral-home.com)

## OBITUARY



**VALERIE MARGARET MADDREN  
March 12, 1924 - April 24, 2024**

"Soon be Christmas!" was proclaimed by our mother (often holding a glass of wine) on the 26th of December. She loved celebrations. It is with love and wonderful memories we share the news of the peaceful death of Valerie Margaret Maddren in her 101st year at Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, Stratford, Ontario on Wednesday April 24.

Valerie was predeceased by her parents Gladys May and William Fossey, her brother Ken, and sister Joan Hodges. Her husband Eric Stanley Maddren died in 1989. Left to keep her spirit alive with stories and good memories, are her son Chris Maddren (Sylvia) and daughters Judy Maddren (Tim Elliott), and Penny Vivian (Kevin). Grandchildren Kristina and Caroline; Jeremy, Simon, Ben, and Pippa; and Allison, Alex, and Pamela. She counted (so far) 16 great-grandchildren.

Born in London England, Valerie was a veteran of WW2, serving with the ATS, driving officers to radar installations along the south coast of England. The family of four came to Canada in 1952, and Penny was born in Windsor.

In Grimsby, Ontario, Valerie started out as a stockroom 'girl' at the new Zellers, and then rose to be Assistant Manager. She was a powerful but understated role model for her daughters. She was also a Girl Guide Captain, a faithful blood donor, a driver for cancer patients to their appointments, a bridge player and an active volunteer at the Grimsby Art Gallery. St. Andrew's Anglican Church was a cornerstone in her life. In 2018 Valerie moved to Stratford where Judy and Tim live. The family is very grateful to the staff at Anne Hathaway Retirement Residence and for the exceptional caring team at Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth.

Cremation has taken place. A funeral will be held at St. Andrew's Grimsby at a later date. Arrangements entrusted to the W.G. Young Funeral Home in Stratford. [wgyoungfuneralhome.com](http://wgyoungfuneralhome.com)

Donations in Valerie's memory can be made to St. Andrew's Anglican Church, 7 St. Andrews Ave, Grimsby, ON L3M 3R9 or Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, 80 Greenwood Dr. Stratford, ON N5A 0J1.

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

## QUIZ ANSWERS

- |                              |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Ganymede, Jupiter         | 7. Poseidon                          |
| 2. 50 metres                 | 8. National                          |
| 3. The Northwest Territories | Aeronautics and Space Administration |
| 4. 12                        | 9. Gone With The Wind (238 minutes)  |
| 5. One Direction             | 10. R                                |
| 6. 366                       |                                      |

## SUDOKU

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

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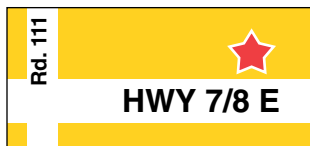
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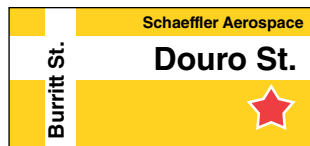
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