

STRATFORD TIMES

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City aims to start 15 home child-care centres in region this year

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

In Ontario there are 47 municipalities charged with administering child-care services for their regions. Since 2022, the City of Stratford is one of three where licenced home child care is not available – though that is set to change in 2026.

According to a management report presented to city council on March 9, preliminary work on a home child-care agency has been undertaken by social services staff in an effort to start administering support and oversight for area home-based child-care providers that wish to be licenced. As licenced providers, they would be eligible for the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system and could receive funding from the city.

The intent for this year is to establish 15 homes under supervision of an agency and a full-time home child-care visitor. Each home may support six children total and can be located in Stratford, St. Marys or Perth County, for a total of 90 spaces in the region.

Late last year and early this year, 88 licenced spaces were open. Additionally, 106 spaces are also scheduled to open this year. Despite that recent surge,

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

An eager Perth County OPP member helps the Perth East Fire Department put out a blaze in Gads Hill on March 7. For more on the fire, see our story on page 2.

Stratford's newest Order of Canada member reflects on recent investiture

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Patricia O'Malley, the most recent Stratford resident to become an Order of Canada member, pointed out that for a moderately-sized city, it has certainly left its mark on the nation.

"I think it's interesting for people to know how unusual this city is in terms of the number of people who live here and who are members of the Order of Canada," O'Malley said, highlighting that she will be joining seven other local members – all women no less – to share their stories at

the Iris Collective event Voices of Distinction at 2 p.m. on March 28, located at the Stratford Public Library.

O'Malley made that connection at the most recent Stratford city council meeting on March 9, having been invited into council chambers to share her experience and be congratulated by council in-person. She pointed out that while her investiture was publicized Dec. 31, 2025, she found out in the fall.

"The day was a long time coming," O'Malley shared. "I got a phone call in the middle of October from an email saying 'please call,' and it was from the Office of the

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3

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City aims to start 15 home child-care centres

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

licenced child care remains a sore point for many area parents. According to a late-2025 report, on average only about 16 per cent of area children up to the age of five have access to licenced, full-time child care.

The gap in coverage is not unique to the area, nor to just the province. According to an October 2025 report from Stats Canada, 58 per cent of children up to the age of five were in child care. About half of those parents reported difficulty finding that care, up slightly from the last time that metric was measured in 2023 (46 per cent).

Finding available care was the main challenge (65 per cent of parents), followed by finding affordable child care (42 per cent of parents) and finding subsidized child care (35 per cent of parents).

The Province of Ontario has set a pro-

vincial access rate target of 37 per cent by 2026, a target that is unlikely to be met, and even if it is a large portion of parents in the area will remain without access to care.

Stratford was given a goal of 461 CWELCC spaces for children aged zero to five for its service area. The City of Stratford has 261 CWELCC spaces remaining under its directed growth targets and if all targets are met, the area will have a maximum access rate of 29 per cent.

As of Dec. 31, 2025, there were 1,772 children aged zero to five on the waitlist for licenced child care.

In a unanimous decision, council approved the new agency and a full-time home child-care visitor. The total staffing and supplies cost for one year is expected to be \$137,350. If it exceeds \$172,720, the remaining costs will be shared by the city, St. Marys and Perth County.

As the term of the current CWELCC agreement ends Dec. 31, 2026, it is currently unknown if future affordable CWELCC spaces will be made available. Council discussed briefly what would happen if upper levels of government cease funding the spaces and Kim McElroy, director of social services with the city, clarified the department would analyze a business case for the homes.

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Fire in Gads Hill kills 140 livestock; no other injuries

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

A structure fire in the Town of Gads Hill has killed 140 livestock.

On March 7, just before 5 a.m., members of the Perth County OPP, along with Perth County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Perth East Fire Department, responded to a reported structure fire on Wilmot Easthope Road.

The structure contained 140 livestock,

all of which are deceased. No one was injured as a result of the fire.

Fire crews successfully contained and extinguished the fire, with the assistance of an eager OPP member. The Office of the Fire Marshall was engaged and deemed the fire to be non-suspicious.

Wilmot Easthope Road between Perth Line 45 and Perth Line 43 was temporarily closed while emergency services responded but has since been reopened.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

On March 7, members of the Perth County OPP, along with Perth County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Perth East Fire Department, responded to a reported structure fire on Wilmot Easthope Road in Gads Hill.

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The Shakespeare Optimist Club is again selling Cured Hams for Easter. They are \$20.00 for boneless or bone-in hams (3 & 4 lbs).

Pick up dates are Thursday, March 19 & 26 with some also available on March 10.

At the same time, in conjunction with the Tavistock Men's Club, Sauerkraut will also be offered in 2-1/2 lb bags for \$5.00

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Stratford's newest Order of Canada member on her recent investiture

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

Governor General. I actually thought that it might be somebody that I knew that had been nominated ... The first thing he said was, 'I wanted to tell you that you went into the Order of Canada.'

"... That was very interesting because at that point it wasn't announced until the 31st of December and the whole rule was you can't tell anybody. So that the longest secret I've ever kept."

O'Malley, a chartered accountant and long-time Stratford resident, originally hails from Winnipeg, Man. As noted in the Governor General's announcement last year, over the course of her career she "redefined financial reporting and standard setting. Her leadership in developing and implementing the International Financial Reporting Standards ensured greater

consistency and transparency in accounting practices."

O'Malley is a trailblazer, known worldwide and flourishing in senior roles traditionally held by men.

"I can't think of a better time to acknowledge a strong woman in leadership doing things that were once thought only men's jobs," Mayor Martin Ritsma said, referencing International Women's Day on March 8. "So at this time I'm going to be honoured to recognize Patricia on behalf of the City of Stratford."

After receiving a certificate from the city, O'Malley went around the horseshoe, receiving handshakes and congratulations from each councillor.

For more information on the Iris Collective event, visit <https://tinyurl.com/k3sf2d3p>.



(CITY OF STRATFORD PHOTO)

Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma stands with Patricia O'Malley in council chambers on March 9. O'Malley regaled council with her experience being invested in the Order of Canada this year – pointing out how many Order of Canada members call Stratford home.

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Sherwin Law announces affiliation with Stratford firm

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Since 1996, Claire Sherwin can count on one hand how many consecutive weeks off he's had.

"In the last 30 years I've had two consecutive weeks of vacation," Sherwin told the Times in his home-office on Wellington Street in St. Marys, a building he has been in for nearly that whole tenure. "... I'm really blessed. I have a 22-step commute in the morning from the breakfast table to the desk ... on a negative note, I will tell you I never get a snow day. It doesn't interfere with the 22 steps."

Sherwin hopes that can change soon, however. In accordance with best practices for prudent planning, Sherwin has come to an affiliation agreement with McDonald, Simon, Stewart & Reidy LLP, a Stratford-based firm serving Perth County for over 50 years. As Sherwin explained, this affiliation is not a retirement announcement – rather a vacation announcement. He and his wife have planned a vacation for the whole month of June and are planning to have more time off in the coming years. With the affiliation, Sherwin can be assured there are resources at home that he can call upon to assist when he is not available.

Importantly, affiliation is not a merger nor an acquisition.

"It's a long-term plan," managing partner Mark Simon of McDonald, Simon, Stewart & Reidy explained. "So when Claire wants to fully retire he's got the resources for things to be taken over. And in the meantime, if he wants to take a little more downtime, he's got backup. It's really tough for sole practitioners to be able to take time off, because they don't have another lawyer to hand stuff to, so the affiliation gives him the personnel backing and everything else he needs to adjust and live more of a firm life."

For his clients, this partnership also means more opportunities. While Sherwin was proud of how little he has stepped foot in a courtroom in the last 25 years (zero), preferring to come to agreements through mediation. McDonald, Simon, Stewart & Reidy LLP, on the other hand, has had plenty of recent experience at court.

"If you come through the door and you and your wife are not of a mind to enter into a mediation and resolve this thing quickly and effectively and reasonably economically, then I can send you over to see one of Mark's partners," Sherwin said. "... So it expands the breadth of service that is available to clients."

Both Sherwin and Simon said that client-service is the pre-eminent ideal for their firms and was one of the like-minded factors that originally brought the two together.

Their offices have been linked since January of this year, with McDonald and his colleagues Shawn Stewart and Luke Reidy already having worked out of Sherwin's back offices already.

Sherwin reiterated that the affiliation is not a retirement announcement.

"It's sometimes said, 'If you like what you do, you never work a day in the life,'" Sherwin stated. "I like what I do ... I was 71 in December and I don't think I'm going to be able to do this forever. So this is a safe-guard."

"That's kind of the beauty of the affiliation," Simon added. "There's no hard end date ... If Claire becomes addicted to the long vacations, then they may get longer, and other work may be covered by us more frequently. But really, there's enough flexibility to figure out whatever timing works best."

For more information on Sherwin Law's services, visit <https://www.sherwinlaw.ca/>.

For more information on McDonald, Simon, Stewart & Reidy LLP, visit <https://www.mcdonaldsimon.com/>.



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

Claire Sherwin stands outside his St. Marys office with Mark Simon of McDonald, Simon, Stewart & Reidy LLP, a Stratford-based law firm. The two offices have announced an affiliation.

Perth County stewardship intake oversubscribed again as council debates program's future

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth County council received the results of the spring 2026 intake for the Perth County Stewardship Program on March 5, with demand for the grant program once again exceeding available funding even as some councilors continued to question whether the county's annual contribution could be better spent elsewhere.

According to a report from Warden Dean Trentowsky, who also serves as chair of the county's agricultural working group, and county resiliency and stewardship coordinator Hannah Cann, the spring 2026 intake drew 33 applications across three of the program's four grant streams. Together, those applications represent 8,084 trees and shrubs proposed for planting, 20 acres of restoration and nearly 10.3 kilometres of windbreak, with a combined project value of more than \$235,000. The total grant request came to more than \$119,000, roughly 19.5 per cent above the program's 2026 budget.

This year's intake included applications in the landowner, community and living snow fence streams, while no applications were received in the woodland stream for forest-management plans. The four available streams this year included grants for private landowners planting 50 or more trees and shrubs, forest-management plans, community-led restoration and tree-sale projects, and living snow fences planted along rural roads to reduce drifting snow.

The landowner stream accounted for the bulk of applications and funding requests, with 21 applications requesting just over \$65,300. The community stream received 10 applications requesting about \$42,200, while the two living snow fence applications requested nearly \$12,000 combined. In total, county staff said the projects would plant 6,383 trees through the landowner stream, 1,441 through the community stream and 260 through the living snow fence stream.

The agricultural working group recommended the two living snow fence applications be funded in full because of their public-safety benefits along roadways, with the remaining landowner and community stream applications funded on a prorated basis to stay within the \$100,000 envelope. That approach would reduce grant awards in those two streams by roughly 15 to 19 per cent, similar to the approach taken when the program was oversubscribed in 2024.

Staff also noted there was strong uptake across delivery methods. Of the applications received, nine used conservation-authority planting services, 12 used private contractors and 12 involved volunteers or landowners planting the projects themselves. Seventeen applications sourced trees through a conservation authority, 12 through contractors and four through nurseries.

The greatest number of applications came from West Perth, which accounted for 15 submissions, followed by North Perth with seven, Perth East with six and Perth South with five. Staff said that pattern is consistent with previous intakes and many applications continue to come from sub-watersheds identified as high-priority restoration areas.

Council discussed the intake results in closed session after a wider discussion about the value of the stewardship program itself in open session.

That broader conversation followed concerns raised earlier this budget season by Coun. Rhonda Ehgoetz and current deputy warden Sue Orr, who asked for a review of the program, budgeted at \$100,000 this year, to determine whether those funds could be used more effectively elsewhere in the county budget.

Those concerns echoed questions raised last fall, when

Ehgoetz argued the county may be duplicating services already offered through the local conservation authorities and suggested council needed to take a hard look at the program during budget deliberations. Orr similarly expressed concern at that time about opening the spring 2026 intake before council had fully debated the program's future.

"Some external grant programs offer grants for stewardship action similar to the Perth County Stewardship Program ... however important limitations become clear upon closer review," Cann told council while delivering an overview of the program March 5. "Many programs are geographically restricted and apply only to certain or specific conservation authority boundaries or select areas of the county. Others are limited to agricultural operations, excluding non-farmers or rural landowners who are interested in tree planting and land stewardship. Minimum project sizes often two acres or more create additional barriers, particularly for small- and medium-scale projects where the community impact can be significant."

Additionally, Cann said some funding programs require environmental farm plans, creating additional administrative burden for applicants, while many of the available programs have short or unpredictable application windows with inconsistent annual availability and often long and onerous application packages.

"The (Perth County) Stewardship Program provides stability, reliability and ease of access where these grants fall short," Cann continued. "Stewardship projects delivered by the county benefit from the local knowledge, established relationships and an understanding of the land and community context. ... Applicants to (the program) are eligible to stack external grant funds with the county grant up to 100 per cent of project costs. ... Allowing landowners to stack grant funds across multiple grants enables them to do more stewardship action with less barriers."

At the March 5 meeting, Cann presented a broader defence of the program, outlining both its origins and its results to date. Created after county council directed staff in 2022 to develop a clean-water project, the stewardship program was broadened through consultations in 2023 into a wider environmental-stewardship initiative. Tree planting emerged as the top priority during that consultation process, which included more than 270 residents and stakeholders, 160 survey responses and more than 30 structured interviews.

Staff's comprehensive report says the program has now planted 28,429 trees, restored 51.31 acres, established 43 kilometres of windbreak and generated \$724,478 in total project value in its first three years. The report also states the county has leveraged \$2 in outside or private investment for every \$1 it has committed to the program, and estimates supported tree planting is offsetting about 10.45 per cent of the county's operational emissions.

"I think this is a remarkable report," Coun. Todd Kasenberg said. "I'm excited by a number of the results that are being documented here and appreciative of the investments that we've made. I have argued, of course, for some time that we need to make more of these investments. ... How do we move from a program that largely focuses on tree and forest health ... into a clean-water program ... given that in our regional neighbourhood, we seem to be the ones without a named clean-water program?"

"It was always the intention of the program to start with a tree-planting offering because they were the most requested by the public," Cann replied. "That being said, based on the funding available, there was always going to be an expansion of grant streams offered as more

funds became available."

With several new grant streams expected to come online as early as next year, Cann said the county could begin offering opportunities for funding aimed at supporting projects that address drinking-water protection, water quality and aquatic habitat, erosion control and invasive species management among others.

"I think this program needs to have adjustments to it," Ehgoetz said during the council discussion. "I don't mind giving money to people planting trees; I have a real problem giving my taxpayers' money to people to dig the hole, get the ground ready and everything else. They can do that if they want. ... We're not (planting as many trees as we can) because we're giving them all this money to do that."

In response, Cann told council the county had removed labour as an eligible cost supported by the program for 2025, however that led to 20 applications from conservation authorities alone being rejected. While labour was restored as an eligible cost for 2026 based on public feedback, Cann said the damage was already done with some potential applicants choosing not to apply for funding this year.

Coun. Walter McKenzie agreed with the notion of adjusting the program slightly, specifically when it comes to paying for the costs associated with delivering trees to successful applicants from nurseries or other suppliers located outside the county. He noted, however, that many residents don't have the time or expertise to plant trees themselves, and suggested labour-cost eligibility is an important part of the stewardship program.

"I feel that the (conservation authorities) do an excellent job of stewardship and they're really serious about getting trees in the ground," said Orr. "It's more effective to go directly through them. Ausable Bayfield (Conservation Authority); there was an advertisement that they've planted a million trees – that's 50,000 trees a year since 2006. I think there should be effort to work directly with the conservation authorities."

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What is the blue birthstone for March?
2. What day is International Women's Day celebrated each year?
3. The month of March is named after Mars, the Roman god of what?
4. In what year did the first official Paralympic Games take place?
5. How many degrees make up a triangle?
6. The "Ides of March" refers to what famous assassination?
7. What was the name of the first stealth bomber introduced for warfare?
8. Which film franchise features Marty McFly?
9. What is the birth flower for March?
10. What's the oldest pub in Ireland?

This week's answers are found on pg. 27

Perth South, Perth East declare intimate partner violence an epidemic -- joining all other area municipalities

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth South council has unanimously declared intimate partner violence (IPV) an epidemic in the township following a presentation by local advocates highlighting the scope and impact of gender-based violence across Perth County.

At its March 3 meeting, council voted in favour of the declaration after hearing from Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services executive director Donna-Jean Forster and board member and Perth South resident Deborah Pratt-Weersink, who outlined the prevalence of IPV locally and the importance of municipal leadership in addressing the issue.

"Intimate partner violence has been increasing in our community and the negative impacts of intimate partner violence on the residents of our community and, in particular, women and children have consequences that last for generations," Forster said. "We encourage Perth South to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic and continue to work collaboratively together with our whole community to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all."

The declaration makes Perth South the 111th municipality in Ontario to formally recognize intimate partner violence as an epidemic. The presentation and declaration follow similar actions taken recently by other municipalities across the

county. Last month, St. Marys council declared IPV an epidemic after hearing a presentation from Optimism Place, joining West Perth, Stratford and North Perth in recognizing the issue.

Later the same day as the Perth South decision, Perth East council also passed a declaration following a similar presentation, becoming the 112th municipality in Ontario to do so. With those two declarations, all six municipalities within Perth County have now formally recognized intimate partner violence as an epidemic.

Forster told Perth South councillors IPV continues to have a significant impact across the region. Statistics shared with councils across Perth County show that in 2024 alone, there were 994 reports of IPV in the county, resulting in 227 charges laid.

The effects extend beyond police calls. According to data presented to council, probation and parole services supervise an average of 115 clients each month who are serving probation related to domestic-violence offences.

At Optimism Place, 203 women and children stayed in shelter in 2024, while another 200 women accessed IPV-related services without requiring residential support. Since 2022, 50 Perth County women have been assessed as being at high risk of intimate partner homicide and have received coordinated safety supports from community partners.

"Every year at Optimism Place, we see about five to 10 women, along with

their children, from Perth South who access our shelter for residential stay," Forster said. "In addition, we have about 15 women and their children (from Perth South) who are accessing our community-based services such as counselling, support for family court, parenting supports and other family supports associated with experiencing intimate partner violence.

"Every single day, at least one woman from Perth South calls our 24-hour support phoneline for support for themselves or someone they know who is experiencing intimate partner violence."

Forster also noted the issue often remains hidden, with many incidents of violence never reported. Research shows that 44 per cent of women who have been in an intimate relationship have experienced some form of psychological, physical or sexual abuse.

Supporters of the declaration say formally recognizing IPV as an epidemic is an important step toward raising awareness, supporting survivors and encouraging coordinated community action.

The declaration also aligns with the priorities outlined in the Perth County Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, which identifies gender-based violence and intimate partner violence as key focus areas for the region over the next decade.

Forster said the declaration is not intended to be purely symbolic, but rather part of a broader effort to increase educa-

tion, improve access to supports and encourage residents to recognize the signs of abuse and help those experiencing violence.

"The numbers in here are disturbing to say the least," Perth South Coun. Jeff Bell said after the presentation. "To think that one of our friends and neighbours are calling for support on a daily basis; that's very concerning."

"I just wanted to thank you for the links that were included in (the declaration letter) for the education," Coun. Jaime Martin added. "I've had an opportunity to go through it briefly; it's excellent. It's really well done, particularly the tools that it gives somebody because we know it can be difficult when it's clear (IPV) is going on, but they don't know what to do. These trainings were particularly good; I thought it left me with some training, with some skills. ... The more people that can take this training, the more equipped our community is to help support people who are in these relationships."

While there were a number of training and educational resources included in Optimism Place's IPV declaration letter, available online as an attachment with the Perth South March 3 council agenda, Forster highlighted Stop Violence Against Women's (Stop VAW) upcoming IPV community information session at Milverton Public School on April 13 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

For more information and to register, visit <https://tinyurl.com/4tj2jdan>.

Student nutrition program relies on community partnerships to feed southwestern Ontario students

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

The Ontario Student Nutrition Program (OSNP), run by the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), invited community members to learn about the program and how it impacts local children across southwestern Ontario.

Brittany McDonald, community development coordinator for Huron-Perth OSNP, discussed the operations and how they aim to focus on equity, inclusion and community partnerships to connect children across the region with healthy and nutritious food options.

The program, funded by the provincial and federal governments, provides 12-13 cents per student per day. The program serves more than 15,000 students daily, distributing fresh produce and non-perishable items.

The provincial government, through the

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), provides about \$0.12-\$0.13 per student per day. The federal contribution tops up the provincial amount by roughly \$0.05-\$0.08 per student per day. Combined, that means most schools receive roughly \$0.18-\$0.22 per student per day in government funding for the nutrition program.

Although the government funding is a great asset, McDonald says the amount is not enough to provide nutritious meals to all children and, therefore, community partnerships are a must.

"We're grateful for the government funding we receive, but it simply isn't enough to provide a truly nutritious program for all students," McDonald explains. "Without community partners stepping up, far too many children would be left without consistent, healthy food at school."

With additional funding from partners

like the President's Choice Children's Charity, Tim Hortons Smile Cookie/Make Happy Tummies campaigns, Grocery Foundation and Breakfast Clubs of Canada, the OSNP is able to provide service to more than 500 schools and counting.

Locally, the Stratford-Perth Community Foundation (SPCF) is one of the key partners that helps top up what provincial and federal funding can't cover, helping close the funding gap for children across Huron-Perth.

McDonald described this new partnership, which started in September, as a big asset in supporting children across the region.

"The support from the Stratford-Perth Community Foundation has been a real game-changer for our schools," says McDonald. "Their funding helps us close critical gaps so that children across Huron-Perth can count on consistent access

to nutritious food, not just whatever our basic government allocation can cover."

McDonald also highlighted the need for better coordination with schools and community partners to address food insecurity during school breaks and weekends, noting this is something they're working on alongside SPCCF.

"We do a good job of feeding kids during the school day, but hunger doesn't stop on weekends or over the summer," says McDonald. "That's why we're working more closely with school boards, public health and partners like the Stratford-Perth Community Foundation to figure out how we can reach families during those gaps in support."

The OSNP program promotes food literacy, especially with cultural foods, providing one-pagers for schools to educate students. Fifty-one per cent of products are sourced locally within Ontario. To learn more, visit www.osnp.ca

Little Leaf's partnership with Green Seal cultivates innovation in the industry

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

For five years, Little Leaf has been aiding and educating the community about the health benefits of cannabis. As one of the first dispensaries in town, they have grown with their customers and evolved into a shop known for its dependability, consistency and knowledge in product and service.

"We're finding more stores recommending people come here which is nice to me, it tells me that they do care about the customer getting the right information. They don't have the information to supply so they are sending them to us," said co-owner Paul Thompson.

The product menu has evolved into more craft flower and local licenced producers that meets the level of quality customers have come to rely upon and expect from Little Leaf.

"We don't believe that cannabis is a manufactured product. It's grown. It needs love and tenderness. It needs an environment to grow and flourish like every plant needs and we find that local, smaller local independent growers give that love and attention and are more aligned with our beliefs," explained Thompson.

Even before opening the store, co-owners Thompson and Leanne McPhie were thinking outside the box and reached out to Green Seal's Chad Morphy in an effort to get to know industry neighbours. What they found was like-minded management that had the same community mentality as



(LISA CHESTER PHOTO)

Little Leaf Cannabis Co. co-owners Paul Thompson and Leanne McPhie will be happy to talk to consumers about how they pursued innovation with Green Seal to produce Stratford's first branded strain.

they did, thinking they would like to partner with them to brand a product strain.

This began the five-year journey that culminated in the release of branded product cultivated by Green Seal specifically for Little Leaf Stratford. This industry

innovation could not have come about without the dedication and pursuit of excellence by Green Seal. Working together was a leap of faith.

"When the opportunity arose for us to be able to put out our own flower and pre-rolls we trusted that be-

cause Chad knows us, and what we stand for and the quality of our service, we trusted that he would match a flower and a pre-roll that would complement what we were offering our customers," said McPhie.

"It is available all across Ontario. They launched it under their brand but also under ours in our branding. The whole point of creating this was a community focused brand grown locally with quality under a local retailer to reflect the Stratford community which we know is artisanal, artistic flavours of Stratford. For those connoisseurs, they will certainly appreciate the quality," said Thompson.

Purchasing this locally produced branded flower from Little Leaf directly affects the Stratford community economy as an independently locally owned supplier that is owned by and employs locals. Thompson and McPhie have done seminars upon seminars and branched out into the community to get the message and benefits of cannabis out.

"We're continuing to fight what we believe to be the right fight. The fight for the consumer to get the good quality product at its best value while supporting independent growers across the country," said Thompson.

Little Leaf Cannabis Co. is located at 804 Ontario St., Unit 4, and will welcome the public with as much time as they need to learn about and understand the health and wellness products on hand. Ask about the local Stratford brands. To learn more, visit their website at littleleafcannabisco.com.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

The Stratford Country Club was flooded last weekend as rains came and snow melted quickly, covering most of the low-lying areas of the green.

Optimist Club of Downie Inc.

OPTI-CASH CALENDAR DRAW

Feb. 22	Lydia Puetz, Vancouver	\$50.00
Feb. 23	Matt Routenburg, Woodstock	\$50.00
Feb. 24	Deb Hoy, Wallaceburg	\$50.00
Feb. 25	Ellyse McCarthy, St. Marys	\$50.00
Feb. 26	Roy Jacobs, Toronto	\$50.00
Feb. 27	Zack & Bri Dunsmore, Mitchell	\$50.00
Feb. 28	Jeff Orr, Stratford	\$200.00
Mar. 1	Ian Camden, St. Marys	\$1,000.00
Mar. 2	Erin & Jason Richardson, Mitchell	\$50.00
Mar. 3	Bob Smith, Thorndale	\$50.00
Mar. 4	Richard Lucas, Ilderton	\$50.00
Mar. 5	Sarena & Jeremy Renaud, London	\$50.00
Mar. 6	Wayne Faulhafer, Stratford	\$50.00
Mar. 7	Lanssa Baker, Shakespeare	\$200.00



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Stratford 3rd Age Learning courses for seniors open for spring registration

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

Stratford 3rd Age Learning (S33AL) is now open for April-start courses for adult learners.

Courses aim to provide seniors with opportunities for active learning. Unlike traditional passive learning methods such as listening to speakers or watching plays, S33AL emphasizes active engagement, stimulating various parts of the brain and fostering a more dynamic learning experience along with connection to others.

The ever-popular Aging with Optimism course is back, starting April 10. Leader Jean Hewitt will teach students why the body ages, what changes occur each decade, and how we can decrease the risks for mental and physical concerns people associate with this stage of life.

"This is absolutely a wonderful course. I've taken this course myself," said Denise Winger, Stratford 3rd Age Learning registrar. "Participants will learn about what worries them most about getting older. It is clear that maintaining independence, rather than simply living longer, is the

goal for most people. So this course will discuss how we can increase the chances of that happening."

Novel Approaches to Thinking and Problem Solving is taught by leader Perry Broome and starts April 1. Participants will learn and practice creative approaches to thinking, generating new ideas and solving problems.

"It is not Sudoku and crossword puzzles," said Winger. "In this exciting course, participants will team together and practice creative approaches to thinking, generating new ideas and solving problems."

Another popular course, run by Louise Liu, is Balance and Focus, which starts April 7. Students will learn about breathing, mental focus and balance from a teacher who learned the gentle, fluid movements of tai chi as a child.

Liu will teach simple exercises that let participants shift their weight while maintaining focus and balance, helping to decrease the risk of falls and sharpen the mind.

Local resident David Prosser will lead a course called Hot Topics in the News. Participants will engage in lively discus-

sions about major news stories and gain a better understanding of how pieces of the news fit together and where things may be heading.

"Whether you're a total news junkie or you feel out of touch and bewildered by the daily torrent of headlines, or if you'd just like a bit more insight into what's going on in the world, this course is for you," said Winger. "It should be very interesting, given the situation in the United States right now."

A second chapter to the original Write Away program, Write On will have Evelyn Scott teach students how to stay motivated and inspired in their writing journey. The course will focus on creativity through prompts, exercises and working with others in the class to offer constructive feedback.

A new addition to Stratford 3rd Age Learning is Jump In to Ukulele, taught by Doug Peterman. This hands-on course will help students understand the wide world of the ukulele. Students can expect to play music by the end of the first session. Students will also learn about various ways of writing music and how to use

different techniques on this instrument.

Lastly, Winger herself will be teaching a new course called Culinary Delight – The Art of Presentation. This hands-on class will teach students how to garnish and plate appetizers. Participants will learn the artistic and practical skills required to transform dishes into visually stunning culinary creations.

Stratford 3rd Age Learning is for anyone looking to expand their knowledge, but it's also about connecting with others, said Winger.

"We want to provide opportunities for socialization along with education in a safe and accepting environment," she said. "There are people who take classes who have lived in Stratford from day one, and there are people who have relocated here after retiring. Maybe they grew up here and went off to pursue a career, and then came back. Some people moved here to be closer to their children, but there are many reasons they may not know many people, so we also like to foster connection."

For more information on upcoming courses, please visit www.s3al.ca



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Social Resilience in Retirement was a men's course offered by Stratford 3rd Age Learning. Class participants: Chris Gillan, Dave Renaud, David Spence, David Swick, Gary Austin, Pat O'Reilly, Paul Stanley, Peter Buckley, Rick Paradis, Ross Campbell, Tom Naylor. Leader Doug Peterman.

Experts agree winter was colder, snowier

JEFF HELSDON

Times Correspondent

Those who believe the weather this winter was more like winter used to be would be correct.

"It has been colder and snowier than normal, but many would say it's just a classic Canadian winter. It's the way winter used to be," said Doug Gillham, senior meteorologist at Weather Network.

He admitted winters like the present one are less common, but pointed out 2022 was comparable, and last winter was cold, but not for as long. The winters of 2023 and 2024, however, were milder.

"Winters like this have become less common," Gilham agreed.

January thaws are common, but this year saw the thaw in the second week of January rather than in the middle of a cold spell, followed by consistent cold from Jan. 18 until mid-February, with the exception of

temperatures crossing the freezing line on Feb. 10.

Two cold winters after a couple of mild ones spark debate over whether climate change is occurring. Gilham explained warming goal temperatures have moved the "goal posts" where warm winters will be warmer and cold winters not as cold as it once might have been.

"It certainly doesn't mean you can't have a classic Canadian winter. It just means they won't happen as often and be as severe," he explained.

Environment Canada meteorologist Steven Flisfeder said December was two to three degrees below seasonal medians, as was January. February was colder than normal, but warmer weather at the end of the month pushed it closer to normal.

Saying he didn't have great data, Flisfeder said it did show more snow this winter, with areas closer to Lake Erie getting more snowfall.

Another way to look at the data is the number of Cold Weather Alerts issued by Southwestern Public Health. There were six issued from January to March 2025, but 10 were issued in January and February 2026. The threshold for cold weather alerts is -15°C without windchill or -20°C with wind chill.

Examining this year's weather from a technical perspective, a weak La Nina current in the Pacific Ocean generated a wavier jet stream pattern over North America. Gilham explained this can make southern Ontario winters either warmer or colder. This year, it disrupted the polar vortex, allowing the coldest air in the hemisphere to move over eastern Canada and farther south. Low temperature records were broken all the way down to Cuba.

The situation in western Canada was different.

"At times, the prairies were severely cold, but also had re-

cord-breaking warmth," Gilham said. "They had a temperature roller coaster."

The south coast of British Columbia didn't get much of a winter at all.

After the two mild winters in 2023 and 2024, some southwestern Ontario residents may have had a false complacency that winter isn't as bad as it used to be, believing they don't need snow tires anymore, and making other wrong assumptions. Or, likewise, with the last two winters being cold, they may assume cold winters are back to stay.

With two cold winters under our belts, Gilham said not to make assumptions about next year. He again emphasized not to make conclusions about climate change either.

"You can't take one season in your particular area and say it proves or disproves climate change," he explained. "Globally, it is warmer overall. You have to look at the big picture long term when you're

talking about the state of the global climate."

Locally in Stratford, residents will have noticed the national data firsthand.

During the City of Stratford's infrastructure, transportation and safety sub-committee on March 9, director of infrastructure services Taylor Crinklaw highlighted the sheer amount of snow that blanketed the city this winter for council's information.

About 448 centimetres of snow fell on the city from November to March. About 2,000 truck loads of snow hauled 30,000 tonnes of snow out of the city.

"... Which is quite substantial compared to previous years," Crinklaw told council. "I have not seen this in my tenure since I've been here. It's been much longer since we've done that much snow."

With files from Connor Luczka, Times editor

Annual International Women's Day Breakfast highlights local and global accomplishments

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Stratford chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) held its annual International Women's Day Breakfast at the Best Western Arden Park Hotel on March 7, a day before the annual international event celebrating women and their accomplishments.

"Being here this morning signals something powerful – the importance of championing a future for every girl and every woman has the opportunity, the support, and the environment to thrive. I really believe in the power of the sisterhood. I love the sisterhood in this room, and I love the allyship in this room," said keynote speaker Maryscott "Scottie" Greenwood.

Guests listened to Greenwood, Manulife's global head of regulatory and public affairs, speak about her collaborative work with journalist Gloria Steinem and share statistics on women's role in boosting the global economy and the longevity of peace agreements. The Boston Consulting Group said equal participation from men and women entrepreneurs

could mean a \$5 trillion boost in the global economy with a rise in six per cent global GDP, for example. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom reports that if a woman is involved in negotiating, peace agreements are 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years.

Greenwood also discussed the ways Manulife, whose global colleague base is made up of 56 per cent women, support women through initiatives like the Maven program, which connects individuals and their families to medical and wellness specialists for either maternity, parenting, midlife health, and/or family building. She praised Stratford and the CFUW often for its scholarship opportunities.

Retired diplomat Deanna Horton and Greenwood had a Q-and-A discussion where Horton asked questions from the audience. The pair discussed Canada-US relations, women in politics, financial literacy and the importance of staying assertive and confident.

Katie DeBlock Boersma, founder of KDB Law in Stratford, closed the event by sharing her own story starting and running an all-women law firm offering



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Deanna Horton and Maryscott Greenwood during the Q-and-A fireside chat portion of CFUW Stratford's International Women's Day Breakfast on March 7.

a flexible work schedule to accommodate a busy schedule taking kids to appointments and buying groceries, as well as offering paid house cleaning services for the team so they can take a break. DeBlock Boersma said that she received criticism for her idea before it came to fruition, but her supporters helped her.

"It was so hard to be brave and the way

I could be brave was community. It was the women who decided to join my team, it was my family, it was my friends, it was my incredible husband saying to me 'You can do this,' and we did," she said.

CFUW's annual International Women's Day Breakfast is a fundraiser for its scholarship program, awarding young women continuing their education.

DIY Musician Workshop takes deep dive into navigating and thriving in today's music business

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The music business as it exists today is a free-for-all with rapidly changing models and processes leading to bewilderment and uncertainty for those trying to navigate their way through to success.

Finding success in the industry takes hard work and creative determination with a plan. After over fifty years in the business, Barry James Payne's pedigree in music covers all aspects from writing songs, performing, managing, promoting and even publishing a magazine about the industry for seven years.

Backed by decades of experience, Payne has developed the DIY Musician Workshop beginning Monday, March 16 at the Bunker Performance Lounge and Café from 7-10 p.m. This free 20-week workshop takes participants on a deep dive of the industry as it was compared to how things are now in the digital age.

"This will be of interest to anyone that needs direction and needs to understand how the music industry works. So, if you're a musician who is struggling with what to do today because it has changed so much then this is for you," said Payne.

Whether new to the business or struggling to adapt to the changing landscape of streaming and the tools used to produce content, the workshop will help to provide opportunities for self-management and pro-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Beginning March 16, local musician Barry James Payne facilitates a free 20-week DIY Musician Workshop for those wanting to learn how to navigate the music business in a digital age.

motion.

"The industry has turned upside down. All the things we used to do you can't really do anymore. The way that music is received and listened to nowadays is just not the way it was even 10 years ago, so there's a big change," Payne said.

Within the younger generation is a skillset already, given they have grown up with tools

like a cellphone, but there is much more to it than that before monetization can occur. The workshop teaches the legalities and requirements of developing online content and followings. The workshop would also be of interest to someone that is interested in talent management as the first six to eight weeks covers the business side of music.

The group setting fosters encouragement

and the exchange of ideas as well as accountability through working together to achieve a common goal. Every week participants will come together to discuss the projects they have been working on.

"It gives motivation that they are going to do this project and come back in a week's time and see how everybody did and what they did, sort of like a weekly show and tell," said Payne.

There will be tangible results by the end of the 20-week period, expects Payne. With everything learned, and the tools at hand, the commitment to following the plan will result in online marketing that sees an increase in whatever the data points are. These could be listenership, followers, online engagement.

"There's a reality that musicians are learning about the online marketing world, and that is you have to be consistent. And you have to try things. If you do it consistently, you will eventually be able to build a base on which to create your career from. A base that will follow you and buy your merch, your stream, your songs. I truly believe there is a process that works for anybody at any age and genre," said Payne.

This once offered free 20-week workshop is not to be missed. Those interested in attending can register at www.stringbone.ca/diy. The workshop commences March 16 and will be held every Monday subsequent (with the exception of holidays).

Liesa Hartman's favourites found in new café

Hartman's Coffee and Tea

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Liesa Hartman's newest venture, Hartman's Coffee and Tea, comes from her life-long goal.

Hartman always wanted to open the micro-café, but it hadn't felt like the right time until recently. She thanks property owner Bruce Whitaker for bringing her vision of sharing her favourite beverages with the community to life on 2 Ontario St. and noted that the opportunity comes at a great time as her children are older.

"I think all the businesses of Stratford offer something fun and unique, that's one of the joys of living and shopping in Stratford. Additionally, there's quite a few java spots in town and we all offer something a little different and complementary. For my shop, my place is 100 per cent me," she said to the Stratford Times. "It's all my favourite things all in one little spot utilizing all the coffee, tea and hospitality experiences I've amassed over the last 15 years here in Stratford. I really get to share how I like to enjoy coffee and tea with all the

people who stop by to visit."

The café features a variety of coffee, tea, and alcohol from all over Ontario such as Woodstock's Street Ahead Roasters, Listowel's Boundary Roasting Co., Toronto's Copper Tea, London's Paradigm Spirits, Alton's GoodLot Farm and Farmstead Brewing, Prince Edward's Traynor Family Vineyard, and Stratford's Black Swan Brewing. A selection of caffeine-free teas from Thes Du Nord, based in Quebec, is also available.

Hartman's Coffee and Tea is 300 square feet and Hartman is trying to maximize the space as much as possible with shelving and purchasing volume. There are eight swivel chairs at the bar-top seating area near the window. Most of the baking onsite in a small commercial oven.

"I always wanted one of those easy bake ovens as a kid and now I got my wish," Hartman said.

Hartman is feeling energized with the community support so far since opening the doors to the café and is looking forward to future endeavors with Hartman's Coffee and Tea.

"It's been bonkers and humbling and I can't wait to get back in the shop and do it all over again. I'm so inspired," she said. "There's so much I want to do and create in that little space."

More information about Hartman's Coffee and Tea can be found online by visiting <https://hartmans-coffee-tea.square.site> or the Facebook and Instagram pages.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Hartman's Coffee and Tea features all of Liesa Hartman's favourites. The new micro-café on 2 Ontario St. has already had a warm reception since recently opening.

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Moon-bound astronaut Jeremy Hansen's roots run deep in Downie Township

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

When Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen heads to the moon next month aboard NASA's Artemis II mission, he will carry with him not only the hopes of a country, but also deep family roots in Perth South.

Hansen, who is set to become the first Canadian to leave Earth's orbit, has a strong connection to a Perth South (Downie Township) farm where his grandfather, Alvin Good, was born and raised, and where generations of the Good family have lived and worked.

For Hansen's mother, Nancy Hansen, that farm was a constant part of her childhood. After her mother died when she was three, Nancy Hansen and her siblings spent nearly every summer on the family farm with their grandparents, Cora and John Good, while Nancy Hansen's uncle, Robert Good, ran the operation.

"We spent almost every summer on my grandparents' farm," Nancy Hansen said in a recent interview with the Times. "We helped Robert with some chores, and we did have to clean out the pig pens and feed the chickens. ... He never worked us real hard, but as a kid you think you're working hard."

That connection to Downie Township continued into Nancy Hansen's adult life. After she married Gary Hansen, the couple remained close with the Good family and frequently returned to what Nancy Hansen said was always known simply as "the farm."

Once Jeremy Hansen was born, he became part of that tradition too.

"The Good family's quite close," Nancy Hansen said. "I bet you once a month we were up at the farm."

Before Jeremy Hansen started kindergarten, Nancy and Gary Hansen spent



(NANCY HANSEN PHOTO)

Astronaut Jeremy Hansen in front of the space shuttle, Artemis II, that will take him and his fellow NASA crew members to the moon after it launches next month.

several weeks living at the farm while a trip to Hawaii, helping care for the children and the farm in their absence.

Today, the farm remains in the family

and is now run by Robert Good's sons, John and James Good.

Nancy Hansen said there is no question her son's time on farms – both at his childhood home near Ailsa Craig and in Downie Township – helped shape the work ethic that eventually carried him to the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Canadian Space Agency and now the cusp of a lunar flight currently set to launch on April 1.

"He learned a lot of hard work values on living on a farm," she said.

According to a recent Canadian Geographic profile, Jeremy Hansen first became fascinated by space as a child after seeing a photo of Neil Armstrong on the moon in an encyclopedia. That moment set him on the path he has followed ever since.

"One day, I told my family. I told teachers, and people started to use that inspiration to push me," Jeremy Hansen told Canadian Geographic.

Even now, as he prepares for one of the most significant space missions in Canadian history, Jeremy Hansen remains characteristically humble.

"Where I always land is gratitude and being very humbled by the opportunity," he told the magazine.

For Nancy and Gary Hansen, pride in their son is mixed with understandable nerves as launch day approaches.

"We're pretty happy for him, nervous too," Nancy Hansen said. "It's a bit of a dangerous mission, but he's wanted to since he was five years old."

And while Jeremy Hansen's journey is taking him farther from Earth than any Canadian has ever gone, Nancy Hansen said his connection to Perth South remains strong.

"Downie Township means a lot to our family and to Jeremy too," she said. "We spent many, many hours on that farm."



(NANCY HANSEN PHOTO)

Future Canadian Astronaut Jeremy Hansen at the Good Homestead in Downie Township (Perth South), which was originally owned by his great-grandparents, Cora and John Good, and operated at the time this photo was taken by his uncle and aunt, Robert and Marylyn Good.



(NANCY HANSEN PHOTO)

A photo of Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen's maternal grandfather, Alvin Good, after he enlisted to serve in the Second World War. Good was born and raised on his parents' farm in Downie Township (Perth South).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Future astronaut Jeremy Hansen with his uncle and aunt, Robert and Marylyn Good, who lived on a farm in Downie Township (Perth South).

Your Library Corner: Adventure awaits this March Break

BRANDI GILLETT

Stratford Public Library

March Break is just around the corner, and the Stratford Public Library has prepared a full week of free, fun activities for children, teens and families. From March 16 to 20, the library invites the community to “escape” into creativity, play, and imagination with daily drop-in programs. No registration is required and everyone is welcome.

Most programs from Monday to Thursday take place in the library auditorium, while Friday’s events will pop up at the Stratford Mall. Families can pick up a printed March Break schedule at the library or download one from the library’s website, www.splibrary.ca.

The week begins on Monday, March 16 with Creation Stations from 2-4 p.m. Kids can build, craft and experiment with handson maker challenges. Later that evening,

families can enjoy Stuffie’s Great Escape at 6:30 p.m. – a special storytime where children bring a stuffed animal, tuck it in for a sleepover at the library and return the next day to see what adventures their stuffed friend got into overnight.

On Tuesday, March 17, children are encouraged to come in their pajamas for the morning PJ Party from 10:30-11:30 a.m. There will be stories, songs, games and crafts. That afternoon, older kids and teens can join the energetic and creative KPop Demon Hunters Party from 2-4 p.m., complete with crafts, games and karaoke.

Wednesday, March 18 is all about LEGO. LEGOpalooza runs morning, afternoon and evening, offering a full day of building fun. Younger children can enjoy simpler builds in the morning, schoolaged kids can take on bigger challenges in the afternoon, and families can build together in the evening.

On Thursday, March 19, everyone is invited to escape

winter at the Beach Party from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Kids can dress in summer clothes and enjoy sunny stories, songs and sensory sand play. In the afternoon, Game Quest: Escape Into Play runs from 2-4 p.m., starting with a round of BINGO before moving into board games and game-making fun. The day ends with a GlowInTheDark Karaoke Party at 6:30 p.m., featuring neon lights, glow sticks and popcorn.

The week wraps up on Friday, March 20 at the Stratford Mall. Pop In and Play takes place from 10-11:30 a.m., offering storytime and creative activities for young children. In the afternoon, kids can experiment, tinker and build at the Mini Maker Lab from 2-4 p.m.

Teens also have special takehome craft opportunities during March Break with March Break Create, including a pineapple candle on March 16 and a galaxy snow globe on March 19.

With so many creative, playful and familyfriendly programs, the Stratford Public Library is offering something for everyone this March Break. It’s the perfect chance to meet friends, try new activities and make great memories together.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Children’s librarian Trish MacGregor leads a storytime in the children’s section of the Stratford Public Library. This March Break is full of activities for youth at the local library.

Queer Book of the Month: *Heartstopper*

SYDNEY GOODWIN

Stratford-Perth Pride

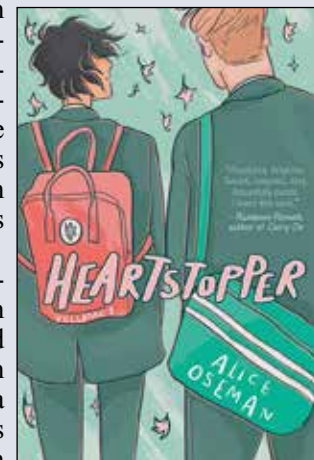
Heartstopper, written and drawn by Alice Oseman, is a British coming-of-age graphic novel going into the nuances of life of Charlie Spring and his budding friendship with the captain of the school’s rugby team, Nick Nelson.

The two quickly become friends and soon Charlie is falling hard for Nick, even though he doesn’t think he has a chance. But life throws Charlie for a loop when the two boys realize Nick may like Charlie more than either of them expected. Volumes one and two of the story go into the beginning of Nick and Charlie’s love story, subverting expectations and coming to understand one’s own sexuality. Nick’s character goes through an important journey of self-discovery throughout the first two volumes of the series, exploring what his sudden attraction to Charlie means for who he is, and what being bisexual means to him.

Oseman explores the stereotypes that follow gay and bisexual men, how damaging they can be, and how no matter who you love, it doesn’t dictate who you are. They take a character who portrays all of the classic stereotypes of the popular jock character and make him more than his sport and his looks.

Nick’s attraction to Charlie isn’t shown as a joke, unmasculine or wrong, but instead is shown as a realistic portrayal of the sudden realization of not falling under the heterosexual norms that are thrust at youth throughout society, an experience that many 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals know all too well.

Heartstopper can be purchased at Fanfare Books, or borrowed to read at the Stratford-Perth Pride’s library.



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STRATFORD **TIMES** SPORTS

Warriors clinch home ice in the first round in the final week of the regular season

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

Now that they know their first-round playoff opponent, the only remaining question for the Stratford Hunter Steel Warriors is who will hold home ice advantage at the start of the playoffs, as the regular season nears its end.

As they head into the final week, the Warriors and their first-round playoff opponent, the London Nationals, are tied at 66 points with two games remaining.

Head coach Dave Williams states that the team recognizes the importance of the upcoming games against the Waterloo Siskins and Chatham Maroons.

"We want to continue to work on things that we feel we need to be better at. As you know, we start the playoffs again. You know, it's a big game for everybody this weekend, really, it's a big game for Waterloo, Friday night, Sunday down in Chatham, it's going to be a big game as well for both teams," Williams said.

"It's the same thing we're trying to build, you know, as much consistency in the game that we can, so that when we start against London, we're ready to go. So ideally, we'd like to have home ice, but I



(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)

Stratford Warriors forward McQuen Haylock levels Waterloo Siskins defenceman Damon Radley in front of the Siskins bench at the William Allman Memorial Arena on March 6.

mean, you've got to be prepared to win on the road as well."

On March 6, the Warriors hosted their last regular-season home game against the Waterloo Siskins. The Siskins aimed to stay in the playoff race as they trailed St. Thomas by one point for the final Western Conference spot heading into the last week.

Cruz Ferguson started scoring for Stratford in the first period, netting his 25th of the season, his eighth with the Warriors, at 4:12, aided by Coen Galbraith and Quinn Kipfer. Waterloo equalized with 10 minutes remaining in the period thanks to David Bodzai's goal. Jackson Halloran then put the Siskins ahead with just 90 seconds left in the first frame.

The score was 2-1 in favour of the visitors going into the third period when Galbraith scored his 12th goal of the season, assisted by Ferguson and Kipfer, just 66 seconds into the frame. However, Waterloo replied with Bodzai's second goal of the game, which proved to be the

game-winner at 7:41 of the final period.

Netminder Noah Bender stopped 27 of 30 shots for Stratford in the losing effort.

The Warriors headed to the final game of the regular season on March 8 in Chatham with an opportunity to clinch home ice in the opening round of the playoffs. A regulation loss would have the Warriors finish fifth place in the conference and start the playoffs on the road in London.

With the first period scoreless, Jaxon Priddle scored to put the Maroons on the board at 5:04 of the second period. Max Wildfong from Evan Arnold and McQuen Haylock at the midway point of the period put the Warriors level at 1-1.

In the third period, Ewan McChesney gave the Maroons a 2-1 lead 58 seconds into the final frame. With home-ice advantage hanging in the balance, the Warriors pulled Bender for an extra attacker with 1:32 remaining in regulation.

The strategy proved effective as Wildfong scored his second goal of the game, and 22nd of the season, with 70 seconds

remaining in the period. As the final second ticked off the clock, the Warriors secured an important point in the standings and clinched the fourth seed in the Western Conference, earning home ice advantage for the Sutherland Cup playoffs. The game remained tied at 2-2 through overtime, leading to a shootout for the second time in their regular-season meetings. After nine rounds, the Maroons won when Santiago Jimenes scored the winning shot in the tenth round.

Bender stopped 36 of 38 shots in the shootout loss for Stratford.

The GOHL announced the first-round schedule on March 10. The best-of-seven Western Conference Quarterfinals begin on March 13 at the Allman Arena. Stratford will hold Games 1, 3, 5 and 7, while London hosts Games 2, 4 and 6.

GOHL Western Conference Quarterfinals (#4 Stratford Warriors vs. #5 London Nationals)

Game 1: London vs. Stratford (William Allman Memorial Arena) March 13, 7:30 p.m.

Game 2: Stratford vs. London (Western Fair Sports Centre) March 14, 7 p.m.

Game 3: London vs. Stratford (William Allman Memorial Arena) March 16, 7:30 p.m.

Game 4: Stratford vs. London (Western Fair Sports Centre) March 18, 7 p.m.

Game 5: London vs. Stratford (William Allman Memorial Arena) March 20, 7:30 p.m. (if needed)

Game 6: Stratford vs. London (Western Fair Sports Centre) March 22, 7:30 p.m. (if needed)

Game 7: London vs. Stratford (William Allman Memorial Arena) March 25, 7:30 p.m. (if needed)

Stratford Warriors

2025-26 Stats

(as of March 9, 2026)

Player	Pos	GP	G	A	PTS
Jonas Schmidt	F	37	20	19	39
Max Wildfong	F	48	22	14	36
Quinn Kipfer	F	44	14	22	36
Colin Slattery	F	41	12	24	36
Coen Galbraith	F	48	12	22	34
Will Coward	D	45	3	23	26
Evan Arnold	F	41	14	10	24
Lucas Minard	F	47	12	12	24
Aaron Green	D	42	9	13	22
Joseph Curtin	D	49	4	17	21
McQuen Haylock	F	48	5	15	20
Dax Vader	F	46	6	13	19
Drew Hodge	D	49	4	15	19
Haden Frayne	D	44	4	13	17
Dominic Marshall	F	49	11	5	16
Grady Murphy	F	44	9	7	16
Rhyse Brown	F	44	4	9	13
Cruz Ferguson	F	18	8	4	12
Jaxon Broda	D	19	2	7	9
Mateo Craievich	D	37	0	8	8
Colten Brenzil	F	3	1	0	1
Cody Billings	D	1	0	0	0
Goalies	Record	GAA	SV-%		
Noah Bender	17-11-0-2	2.61	0.905		
Gage Hurst	12-1-3-1	2.19	0.895		

GOHL Western Conference Standings

(as of March 9, 2026)

Team	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS	GF	GA
Chatham Maroons	37	8	2	3	79	243	146
Elmira Sugar Kings	37	10	2	1	77	233	139
St. Marys Lincolns	36	11	3	0	75	209	120
Stratford Warriors	30	13	4	3	67	183	133
London Nationals	32	16	1	1	66	223	169
Strathroy Rockets	26	21	2	1	55	185	183
LaSalle Vipers	25	22	3	0	53	188	180
St. Thomas Stars	24	23	2	1	51	189	189
Waterloo Siskins	22	22	4	2	50	150	148
Listowel Cyclones	20	27	2	1	43	146	164
Komoka Kings	16	31	2	1	35	162	218
Sarnia Legionnaires	0	50	0	0	0	83	341

Resilient Aces move forward

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Humphrey Fleet Service U18 AA Aces enjoyed an excellent week, advancing to the semifinals of the OWHA Southern Tier-II Championships and earning a spot in the OWHA Provincials.

The Aces visited the Grand River Arena in Kitchener for Game 3 on March 5, holding a three-point to one (1-0-1) series advantage and requiring either a win or a draw in regulation to advance.

Brooklynn Ahrens scored for the Aces midway through the first period, but Kitchener equalized with less than five minutes remaining in the first. The Lady Rangers then took the lead 46 seconds into the second period. Although Stratford had two power plays during this period, they couldn't create significant scoring chances. With 2:03 remaining in the period, Kitchener extended their lead during a brief power play.

The Aces continued to struggle on the powerplay during the third period, while the Lady Rangers clinched Game 3 by scoring an empty net goal with 1:41 remaining. With Kitchener's win, the series would be decided in a 10-minute overtime.

After a back-and-forth first half of overtime, Ahrens scored on the rebound

to give the Aces a 1-0 lead with 5:05 remaining in the period. Kitchener was pushing for an equalizer and pulled their goalie for an extra attacker with 1:13 left, but Skylar Macey scored into the empty net, sealing the victory and series for the Aces.

Macey and Ahrens, filled with joy, shared their thoughts on overcoming the Game 3 loss and coming back in extra time to win the series.

"It feels incredible. It was obviously really nerve-wracking going into overtime, but being able to put one in early and then put an empty knuckle and just really sealed it up and made it feel really good," Macey said.

"We kind of forget the game, because it just kind of starts fresh. It goes back to zero-zero, so just to kind of start as you're starting a game, just getting heck on the bench to get ready for it.

"But this is what it feels like to be an Ace, and it's fantastic to score a goal, to lock it in, and it's just an amazing feeling, for sure," Ahrens said.

"We gotta walk in for those 10 minutes, and it's just a switch of a mindset. We just had to forget the game that happened before and the periods, and we just need to get a goal and secure it."

Head coach Sean Cameron expressed pride in the team for overcoming the

tough loss in Game 3 and rallying back to secure the series-clinching victory in the extra period.

"Well, it was kind of interesting. Because the scenario was set up the way it was, they beat us in the first game, and then we went to the extra 10-minute period. And you know, it was just a total mind switch, and the game was over, and then we had to go out there for the four-on-four overtime. I'm just so proud of those girls," Cameron said.

On March 7, the Aces travelled to the Midway Arena in Midway to face the Saugeen Maitland Lightning in another series-deciding matchup, this time for a spot in the provincial tournament later in the month.

Forward Macey Fischer scored the sole goal for the Aces on the powerplay, with one second left in the second period. In the third period, goaltender Callie Aldridge and the Aces successfully maintained their one-goal advantage, securing qualification for the OWHA Provincials, which will be held in Etobicoke and Mississauga from April 7-9.

Cameron reflected on another series-clinching win and on the progress the team has made this season.

"It means everything to us. And you know, we started back in August, and we had a plan. Sometimes plans don't work

out the way you always think they will. But we focused, we got prepared, and, you know, we put the work in. We had a fairly new squad this year with 12 new girls on our team, and it took us a little extra time, but, man, the second half of the season, I'm just so proud of those girls. Winning today is a huge victory," Cameron said.

"We played a very good team in Saugeen Maitland, it means everything to us, especially winning one nothing. It just shows how tight the two teams were, both games. Game One was 2-1. Game Two was 2-1, and Game Three was 1-0. When you have a tight series like that, it's all about the details, and we were able to pull out the win today."

Stratford Aces vs. Saugeen Maitland Lightning (OWHA Provincial Play-downs)

Game 1: Aces 1 Lightning 2

Game 2: Lightning 1 Aces 2

Game 3: Aces 1 Lightning 0

Stratford wins series 2-1

Stratford Aces vs. Kitchener Lady Rangers (Tier 2 OWHA-Southern Round 2 Series)

Game 1: Stratford 1 Kitchener 1

Game 2: Kitchener 1 Stratford 4

Game 3: Stratford 1 Kitchener 4

Game 4: Stratford 2 Kitchener 0

Stratford wins series 2-1-1

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Please contact Branch 8 - 519-271-4540
email: StratfordLegion008@gmail.com
or the Branch Service Officer Steve Zurbrigg - 519-305-1125
email: SteveZurbrigg@gmail.com to arrange an interview.

804 Ontario St., B-1, Stratford N5A 3K1
stratfordlegion008@gmail.com

MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)

Miles Hurley flies up the ice chasing after a loose puck during the U10 Stratford Warriors game last Saturday.



(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)

Sabelle Ische releases a shot towards the net during last Tuesday's U13 B Stratford Aces game.



(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)

Edie Murray skates up the ice carrying the puck during the U15 C Stratford Aces game last Tuesday.



(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)

Owen Blain unleashes a quick shot off the rush during the U18 Stratford Warriors game last Thursday.

Try Aces Day returns with new goalie component

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

An annual girl's hockey event is returning to Stratford and will now include an opportunity for girls to learn more about being a goalie.

The Stratford Aces will bring back its Try Aces event to the Rotary Arena on March 22. The event gives young girls interested in hockey a chance to try the sport.

"It's very exciting for us within the Stratford Aces organization. This Try Aces Day is the staple event for us to

generate interest of all little girls in the area who are interested in playing hockey and it's just a great way for girls to find out more information about our organization as well," said Jessie Jacob, director of special events.

New to Try Aces Day this year is the goalie component, where an aces alumna will coach any girls in the U9 and U11 divisions interested in becoming a goalie.

"Goalies are a pretty essential part of any hockey team and that is one position that doesn't get filled all the time, so we are excited," Jacob said.

The 2025 edition of Try Aces Day brought 75 girls who never played for the Stratford Aces before on the ice. Out of that cohort, 41 girls joined the U7 program and continue to play for the Aces. Jacob said that opportunities like Try Aces Day give girls a chance to play hockey with other girls and grow as a hockey player.

"Just them being able to develop their skills with other females is highly important. We've seen so much growth with our U7 program this year from when they started in October to where they are now and I think it ultimately

comes down to them being able to participate with other females and not having to worry about the competition with little boys," she said. "I also think that the future is bright for them and so we want to provide all the opportunities for them that we can."

The Try Aces event will start with U7 players (birth years 2020 and 2021) hitting the ice at 11:30 a.m., followed by U9 (birth years 2018 and 2019) at 12:10 p.m. and U9 and U11 hockey goalie ice time at 1 p.m. Registration can be done online by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/yuxnbcph>.

**Send us your sports reports!
Stratfordtimes@gmail.com**

U18 Warriors season over in heartbreaking loss to London

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

The Stratford U18 AA Warriors' season ended after a Game 5 defeat to the London Jr. Knights White in the ALLIANCE U18 AA-A Bristol Playdowns semifinals on March 8.

On March 5, at the Stratford Rotary Complex, the series was tied 1-1 heading into Game 3. The Knights took the lead with over four minutes left in the first period. Stratford equalized 58 seconds into

the middle frame, but London regained the lead with 22 seconds remaining in that period, making it 2-1 before the third. In the third, London extended their advantage with three goals, securing a 5-1 victory and a 2-1 series lead.

Game 4 took place at the Nichols Arena on March 6. With the season on the line, the Warriors blanked the home side 4-0 to force the deciding Game 5 back in Stratford. The series concluded on March 8.

The opening frame of Game 5 produced plenty of offensive firepower from both

teams. Stratford opened the scoring 2:37 into the period, only for London to respond 22 seconds later. The Warriors retook the lead 44 seconds later, but London tied the game with under 10 minutes left. Stratford took their third lead of the period with 7:03 remaining, but the Knights scored two goals in over five minutes to put the visitors ahead by a goal heading into the second period.

London padded into their lead in the second period to lead 6-3 heading into the third period. The Warriors scored twice

early in the third to pull to within a goal but were unable to get the equalizer as they dropped game five 6-5.

ALLIANCE AA-A Bristol Playdowns Semifinals – (2) Stratford Warriors vs. (3) London Jr. Knights White

Game 1: London 6 Stratford 0

Game 2: Stratford 6 London 5

Game 3: London 5 Stratford 1

Game 4: Stratford 4 London 0

Game 5: London 6 Stratford 5

London Jr. Knights White wins series 3-2

U16 Lakers start showdown series with the 99ers

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

Following a first-round sweep of the Elgin-Middlesex Canucks, the Huron-Perth U16 AAA Lakers started their ALLIANCE U16 AAA semifinal series versus the Brantford 99ers.

During the three-game regular season series, the Lakers swept the 99ers, winning two of the three games by a goal. Before the series, head coach Jason Brooks said the team is ready for the challenge of facing one of the league's top teams and is also getting ready for the upcoming OHL Cup later this month.

"So we know this series is going to be a war. We know it's going to be a battle, but we know it also sets us up well for whatever comes next. If we're fortunate enough to win the series, you're going to need to be at your best to play the winner of London and Sun County, but you also need to be at your best for the OHL Cup. So playing Brantford is a really great test that we're looking forward to facing," Brooks said.

Brooks understands that the team cannot focus on the OHL Cup and wants them to prioritize winning the ALLIANCE championship.

"Quite honestly, we looked at winning against Elgin as a kind of two-check mark type series. Obviously, if you win it, you move on to the second round of the Alliance, which is a big deal. But if you win that series, you guarantee your ticket in the OHL Cup, which gives these guys something they've been striving for all season, which is to play in that event," Brooks said.

"Realistically, it's off our plate. We're not focusing on it now. We're not even looking at it. It's there. We know it's there, but the priority, and the sole priority, is Brantford and battling them in this series to move on to the alliance."

Declan McCotter, Callum Brooks and Evan Miller understand the importance of the upcoming series and must perform at their best.

"We just got to grind out the wins, compete to the very end, so just work hard for the full 50 minutes and come up with the W," McCotter said.

"We're going to have to play hard, play fast, shut down the top guys and get pucks

on that, and you know it's going to come. It's going to be hard, but we'll just have to stick to our game plan and get the job done well," Brooks said.

"Play hard, shut down the top guys and keep them out of our house, and I think we've got a pretty good chance of winning the series," Miller said.

The series opener took place on March 6 at the Stratford Rotary Complex. In the first period, both teams focused on tight defence, with the only notable opportunity occurring with 4:45 remaining when the Lakers' Ethan Bridges hit the crossbar with his shot.

During the second period, the Lakers' penalty issues proved costly, as Brantford's Calder Anderson scored on a five-on-three power play. He beat Lakers' goalie Rylan Da Costa with 3:22 remaining to give the 99ers a 1-0 lead. The score stayed the same into the third period until 6:34 when Callum Brooks, on the power play, shot through a screen in front of the 99ers' net, beating goalie Ryan Slama for his sixth playoff goal, assisted by Bridges and Finch.

The turning point occurred just over a minute later when the Lakers were given a four-minute powerplay. Huron-Perth capitalized, with Wyatt Finch scoring his first postseason goal from near the blue line to give the home team their first lead of the game.

Huron-Perth added more insurance with 3:02 remaining in regulation, following an excellent cross-ice pass from McCotter to Bridges in the offensive zone, resulting in a successful one-timer. McCotter scored an empty-net goal from the neutral zone with 91 seconds remaining, sealing the Lakers' 1-0 series lead.

Following the game, Jason Brooks expressed his thoughts, emphasizing the team's reaction after a difficult first two periods.

"Yeah, our first two periods weren't great. Brantford put a lot of pressure on us. We didn't really move our feet. We kind of stood and watched them. Rylan Da Costa was unbelievable, holding us to within one goal and giving us a chance in the third. We skated from the third power play, and some timely goals came through," Brooks said.

"Then we're able to kind of keep the

pressure on, and getting that third one was big, near the end of the third and then obviously the empty netter. But you know what? It's playoff hockey, and it's never always going to be perfect, but find a way we'll take it, regroup and try to be ready for Sunday down there."

On March 8, the Lakers travelled to the Wayne Gretzky Centre in Brantford for Game 2 against the 99ers.

During the first period, the 99ers initiated the scoring with Aiden Silos netting a goal at 1:54. Shortly thereafter, Silos added his second goal, extending the 99ers' lead to 2-0. The Lakers received a four-minute, five-on-three power play that could shift the game's momentum. However, their advantage was brief, as most of the powerplay was spent in a three-on-three situation, resulting in no goals.

During the second period powerplay, the Lakers finally managed to get past Brantford netminder Ryder Kowtaluk when Joseph Haskett, assisted by Christian Circelli, scored with 3:15 left, narrowing the gap to just one goal. However, before the period concluded, the momentum shifted back to Brantford as Silos completed his hat-trick, giving the home team a 4-1 advantage going into the final period.

Da Costa replaced starting goalie Tyler Wilkinson before the third period began. Still, the Lakers were unable to mount a comeback, allowing the 99ers to tie the series at one game each.

Brooks expressed that the team was unable to generate opportunities, a shortcoming that contributed to their loss in

game two.

"We got behind the eight ball, but down to 1-0 like we did and just weren't able to battle back. We've been able to do that throughout the playoffs, been able to battle back in games, and today we didn't," Brooks said.

"Some of our decisions weren't the best, and some of our puck battles weren't the best, and ultimately that ended up costing us, but we talked about it as a group before the playoffs even started. Playoffs are a long journey. There's going to be ups and downs, and our challenge now is to regroup and reassess and go back to work and get ready for Thursday."

Game 3 is at the Stratford Rotary Complex, with game time set for March 12 at 8:45 p.m.

U16 AAA ALLIANCE semifinal schedule (Huron-Perth Lakers vs. Brantford 99ers)

Game 1: Brantford 1 Huron-Perth 4

Game 2: Huron-Perth 1 Brantford 4

Game 3: Brantford vs. Huron-Perth (Stratford Rotary Complex – Rink B) March 12, 8:45 p.m.

Game 4: Huron-Perth vs. Brantford (Wayne Gretzky Centre) March 14, 12 p.m.

Game 5: Brantford vs. Huron-Perth (Stratford Rotary Complex – Rink B) March 15, 3:15 p.m. (if needed)

Game 6: Huron-Perth vs. Brantford (TD Brantford Civic Centre) March 16, 8:15 p.m. (if needed)

Series tied 1-1



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Tyler Cook 844

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Brooke Louwagie 314-732
Irene Louwagie 302

Monday Seniors

Marlene Crerar 246, 264-688
Brian Wagler 230
Steve Van Klooster 248, 207-662

V-Ettes

Linda Barraclough 201

Tuesday Morning Ladies

Helen Fulton 243

United League

Paul Boyd 206
Glenn Rohrer 204
Steven Walker 204
Mike Ormond 215
Autumn Stadtlander 257
Karin Carter 270

Stratford Pin Pals

Thomas Holland 141
Jeremy Rathwell 101
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Luke Patterson 159, 194
Tiffany Keller 217
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Dan Noon 163
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Franny Hitchcock 183
Rob Vannatter 173
Lucas Forte 164
Michael Ambrozic 200
Sara Schweig 158

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Bowlasaurus

Dominic Rowe 109
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Abby Smith 156,165
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Ryan Scheerer 185,208, 329(169 POA)-722 triple

Senior

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Dominic Boyles Keating 184, 205, 219
Jake Sippel 202
Zachary Clarke 176, 189, 201
Alex Ward 171, 204-507
Payton Petrie 210, 223-576
Claire Turner 217
Julian Colalillo 185, 234-595 series
Mayla Laukka 189, 229-595 series

March Break fun rolls into Mike's Bowling Lanes

NICHELE BUTCHER-BONTRUP

Times Contributor

Looking for something fun to do with the family this March Break? Mike's Bowling Lanes is inviting families, friends and visitors to roll into a week full of laughter, friendly competition and classic five pin bowling fun.

March Break is the perfect time to unplug from screens and enjoy some fun family entertainment.

The team at Mike's Bowling Lanes has lanes ready for bowlers of all ages and skill levels. Whether you're a seasoned

bowler chasing a strike or a first timer just learning how to roll the ball down the lane, everyone is welcome.

Contact Mike's Bowling Lanes at 519-271-2092 or through its Facebook page titled, Mike's Bowling Lanes - Stratford.

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Tuesday: 9-11 a.m. and 12-11 p.m.

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Thursday: 12- 6 p.m., glow in the dark bowling 4-5 p.m. and 9:30-11 p.m.

Friday: 12 p.m. to 12 a.m.

Stratford Makers Market Food Fest returns

JULIA PAUL

Times Correspondent

A celebration of local food, community connection and charitable giving is returning to Stratford this spring. The Stratford Makers Market will host its second annual Food Fest on Saturday, March 21 at the Stratford Rotary Complex, offering residents and visitors a chance to shop, sample and savour an impressive range of Ontario-made food products – all while supporting a local cause.

Organized by the Stratford Makers Market team – Sara Clarke, Rosalie Preikschas and Abby Rivers – Food Fest is designed for everyone, from families and food lovers to tourists and community members eager to support local businesses. The one-day event runs from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the fully accessible Community Hall at the Stratford Rotary Complex, chosen for its size, accessibility and ample free parking.

Food Fest brings together a carefully curated mix of food vendors offering everything from hot meals to take-home treats. Shoppers can expect a wide variety of options, including tacos, pierogies, bao, soft pretzels, frozen pizzas, frozen beef, breads, pies, desserts, tea, coffee, spices, sauces, jams, pickled products, cannoli, candy, popcorn and more. The goal, organizers say, was to create the most diverse food-only market possible. Fresh vegetables are the one exception, with attendees encouraged to visit the Stratford Farmers' Market earlier that morning.

What sets Food Fest apart from other regional food events is its focus on local Ontario food businesses, all gathered in one space. Vendors are selected through a juried process that prioritizes quality, va-

riety and minimal category overlap, with an emphasis on supporting Stratford and Perth County businesses whenever possible.

Organizers said the event grew out of demand. Nearly half of the applications for its Christmas Market were food vendors, and the feedback from the first Food Fest was overwhelmingly positive.

The Stratford Makers Market has been hosting community markets in the city for four years, traditionally centred around Easter and Christmas. Following the success of last year's inaugural Food Fest, the team decided to replace the Easter Market with Food Fest going forward.

While the day is all about food, the impact extends beyond shopping. Entry is by cash donation, with all proceeds going to the House of Blessing in Stratford. Since 2022, Stratford Makers Market events have contributed more than \$90,000 back into the community, and the goal for this year's Food Fest is to raise at least \$5,000 for the local charity.

The event is family-friendly, with a small kids' area offering colouring and sensory play items, and vendors providing vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options. Organizers encourage first-time attendees to come hungry and plan to spend at least an hour exploring the market and enjoying lunch.

Updates, vendor spotlights and event details will be shared through the Stratford Makers Market's Facebook and Instagram pages. Vendor applications for this year are full, but businesses interested in future markets can sign up for the newsletter at stratfordmakersmarket.com. Community members interested in volunteering or sponsoring the event can contact stratfordmakersmarket@gmail.com.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Abby Rivers, Rosalie Preikschas and Sara Clarke smile in front of Stratford City Hall. They are welcoming all lovers of food to the 2026 Food Fest at the Stratford Rotary Complex on March 21.

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Editorial

Time to end daylight savings time



JEFF HELSDON

Times Correspondent

Ontario was a leader in the concept of ending daylight savings time, but has been somewhat of a laggard in putting it into play.

MPP Jeremy Roberts brought forward a Private Member's Bill, which was passed, to end Daylight Savings Time back in 2020. The bill was contingent on both New York State and Quebec also making the switch.

The connection with Quebec is due to a large percentage of the federal workforce being divided

between Hull, PQ and Ottawa. Having the two groups on different times would result in confusion.

The situation with New York was a little different, but was mainly based on having the New York and Toronto stock exchanges operating at the same time. New York has also passed a law to change, but it is contingent on its border states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont also changing.

While the hands on the clock continue to go around, or at least ahead and back an hour, it seems the majority of residents anywhere a survey was done are in favour of ending the time switch and moving to permanent Daylight Savings Time. British Columbia residents just changed the clocks for the last time on the weekend as the time change ended.

While Ontario residents wait for the legislation passed six years ago to come into play, the

time change serves as an important reminder to test and check the batteries on smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, as well as completing cleaning in accordance with the instructions.

Ensuring these crucial safety devices are functioning properly can make a difference between life and death. While we are waiting for politicians to get their ducks in a row, we need to take a moment for this crucial safety check.

Letters to the editor: Lakeside seniors could move to the GTR now

Federal Minister Catherine McKenna visited Stratford in 2020 and looked at the plan for the city bus location, and the mayor pointed out that the seniors centre, that would be opposite the buses.

Seniors would have bus service to and from the GTR, and because a covered walkway would give the seniors, handicapped, and anyone else that would use the covered walkway to the buses.

HOW WOULD THE COST BE COVERED? The cost of

CORRECTION: In the March 6 edition of the Stratford Times, the article on the House of Blessing's Empty Bowls fundraiser on page six incorrectly stated that bowl painting sessions run Monday to Thursday between 10 a.m. to noon and 1-3 p.m. In reality, the sessions run Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m. The 2026 Empty Bowls fundraiser takes place Nov. 6. The Times regrets any confusion this error caused.

the senior centre would be paid from the \$4.9 million that was paid by The Stratford Festival Theatre in 2018 for the Tom Patterson Theatre on Lakeside Drive. The money was to be used for the relocation of the seniors centre to the GTR.

A temporary location for the Lakeside seniors was at the REC CENTRE. This PROMISE was made by the mayor. When the seniors arrived they found that the areas designated were very FRAGMENTED and not all together.

The Lakeside seniors have been waiting since 2018 in their FRAGMENTED TEMPORARY LOCATION at the REC CENTRE location or to have their place in the GTR, AS PROMISED...

After looking at the Rob Ritz proposal, which had a location at the GTR for the Lakeside seniors, could see promise. Their centre could become a reality if the council would support Rob Ritz's proposal.

Remember, that Stratford's population make up is 65 per cent of the citizens are over 55 years of age.

I hope we do not have our seniors wait any longer in their FRACTURED waiting location.

Their centre could become a reality, I only hope if our council supports Rob Ritz, a plan that I have never seen as so fitting for the GTR.

The council would leave a LEGACEY that would be talked about for many years to come.

CITY TAXES WILL NOT BE REQUIRED for this.

Lorne Bolton
Stratford.

Re: Scotiabank datacentre needs more scrutiny

The February 20, 2026 opinion by Robert Ritz regarding council's decision to purchase the Scotiabank Data Centre

for a new Stratford Police Department building raises several important questions and valid concerns as to financial prudence of the decision, and its impacts on the future of the city, in particular on the development of the Grand Trunk site.

I believe there is another aspect of the decision that is equally concerning – the process followed by council. Although council held a vote on a motion to enter into a letter of intent in open session, that motion was the outcome of an in-camera decision that considered a “confidential report.” However, no report or analysis of any type was included in the agenda for the open session. The public does not know what fiscal and other impacts were considered or what alternative actions were evaluated. Further in the absence of any public consultation, the views of the public could not have been considered.

Given the city's significant housing developments, geographic expansion and population growth, the need for a new police facility seems obvious. The question is whether the Scotiabank property is the best option, but the lack of relevant information and analysis makes it impossible for the public to form a reasoned opinion.

The current situation is uncomfortably similar to what happened some four years ago, at the end of the previous Council's term, regarding the proposed glass factory. The current council has promised to be more open and transparent, and I urge them to act on that promise by making public the reports and other analyses related to the issue, and to hold a public meeting on the matter prior to proceeding further.

Patrick O'Rourke
Stratford.

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Opinions

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL: SOUL FREE



STUART LENDER

Times Columnist

There is a precious commodity out there in our societal network and it appears to be wearing thin. And when it's completely threadbare it will be easy for those with nefarious intentions to tear a hole in the fabric of our way of life, end-to-end, and dismantle the foundation of society itself. Sound alarmist? It isn't – because without the societal aspect of which I speak, everything within the construct of society becomes unclear, untrustworthy and based upon protectionism. And we have, of late, seen merely a smattering of the results of that ego-driven and delusionally self-absorbed way of being. Decorum won't allow me to tell you, in this article, where that might be observed.

What is the commodity of which we seem to be letting go? Integrity. Definition: "The quality

of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness. The state of being whole and undivided. Internal consistency or lack of corruption."

The most interesting part of that definition to me is the "state of being whole and undivided," the "internal consistency" mentioned. While those who would weaken the entire community for the sake of personal gain may not realize how their actions ultimately lay the foundation for revolution, there have always been those throughout history whose false integrity and outright lies were used to cover up ulterior motives just as it is by some today. That hasn't changed. It's just that in this century's ability for global immediacy, and now artificial intelligence through the internet – our sense of assurance of truth, justice and security is in the process of becoming eroded more quickly and with more powerful tools. "Actions speak louder than words" has become "listen to my words and ignore my actions." "I can't believe my eyes" is becoming a literal statement.

I would be remiss, however, if I didn't mention, that we human beings are still ultimately in control of our destiny, through how we act individually and how we come together for a cause, despite our insignificant differences. And most differences are just that – in-

significant, particularly when one needs to keep the eye on the bigger ball. The old issues that once divided are inconsequential when it comes to the one issue that matters. The world could and should come together through the same technology that is being used to tear us apart, causing us to look left and look right, but not ahead where the future lies. And therein lies the crux of the matter. Fractured individuals with no integrity, using deceitful methods to also fracture the society in which they live, in order to control it.

The desire for controlling the masses has been there for millennia, and it was once understood that the manner in which one conducts oneself would either uphold a community or do it harm. A belief system, no matter how good or bad, was a moral construct, a code that allowed people to follow and belong – a show of integrity was once sealed with a handshake. That was as good as a contract. If we broke our word we would be disgraced by others, but more importantly, we'd feel ourselves disgraced.

But now the construct itself, the sense of right or wrong is being tampered with and deconstructed from within through a deliberate blurring of lines – of what it is we are shown (illusions) and/or what we are being told (lies). All to the point where the weakest individ-

uals within society (read: those lacking clear moral judgement) may be led as oxen under a yoke. One could argue that many in society are now deliberately being misled by those few who want to keep people divided as the means to their power, to foster confusion and self-doubt – and nowhere is this more prevalent today than between the haves and the have-nots, those with extreme wealth and those who constantly reach for it.

Two things have become blatantly clear with the individuals who would be kings through their maniacal endeavours to rule – money is indeed the "root of all evil," at least on a global scale, and the clear and present danger is not sexual orientation, religion or race per se, (nor should they ever be) – but greed. I would never begrudge someone their wealth if they worked for it, and hopefully much of it was achieved altruistically (if wealth can ever be so), but the conflict stems from the top down, not from side to side.

The result of this formerly veiled menace of extreme wealth and control is becoming radioactive, and as such, illustrating just how deep the loss of integrity goes – to the point, perhaps, where one must ask how much money one actually needs. I am not a religious adherent, but I do believe all one has is their soul

and that it is realized through gentle everyday acts of kindness towards oneself and one another – so that we, indeed, remain "whole and undivided," as the integrity definition states. And if there is a question concerning what is meant by "soul," it is time to do some searching for it.

Underlying it all, of course, is the glaring light of our universal and yet highly personal journey from birth to undisputable death. This distinct reality has whispered in my ear since childhood, sometimes coldly, between times of distress and salvation, sometimes warm and wise, while reclining in gratitude. And, of course – through my work. And through that work's periodically sobering reflection on *how my life has gone thus far*, lies the answer to the question of *how I should be acting now*. Inward reflection always fills my pockets with the true currency – never diminishing, always replenishing – until the end of days, when I reach into my pocket for yet another shiny golden coin to give away, and realize I've spent the last and emptied myself out.

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

More than what you produce



IRENE ROTH

Times Columnist

In today's fast-paced world, productivity is often treated as the ultimate measure of success. We celebrate long to-do lists, busy schedules and the ability to accomplish more in less time. Phrases like "getting things done" or "being productive" are worn almost like badges of honour. But in the midst of this constant focus on output, many people quietly begin to believe something that simply isn't true: that their worth is measured by how much they

produce.

This belief can be especially damaging for those living with chronic illness, disability or periods of life where energy and capacity are limited. When society constantly praises speed and efficiency, it can make people feel as though they are somehow falling behind or failing when they cannot keep up with the pace others seem to maintain.

But the truth is that our worth has never been determined by how many tasks we complete in a day.

Human value does not come from productivity. It comes from being human – from our kindness, our compassion, our creativity and the relationships we nurture. These qualities cannot be measured on a checklist, yet they are often the things that matter most in life.

For many people, redefining productivity begins with recognizing that life unfolds in seasons. Some seasons are filled with activity, growth and

outward achievements. Other seasons require rest, reflection and healing. Both are necessary parts of a meaningful life.

Unfortunately, our culture rarely acknowledges the importance of rest. Instead, rest is often framed as laziness or lack of motivation. Yet rest is not the opposite of productivity – it is a vital part of sustaining it. Without rest, our bodies and minds cannot recover, learn or adapt.

For those living with chronic illness, this truth becomes even more important. Energy is not unlimited, and pushing beyond physical limits can lead to setbacks that make things worse. Learning to pace oneself, to listen to the body, and to prioritize what truly matters is not weakness – it is wisdom.

Redefining productivity may mean shifting our perspective from "How much did I accomplish?" to "Did I care for myself and others today?" On some days, success might look like completing several tasks. On other days, it might simply

mean getting out of bed, preparing a meal, or taking a short walk.

These may seem like small victories, but they are victories nonetheless.

Another way to rethink productivity is to recognize the many contributions that cannot easily be measured. Listening to a friend who is struggling, offering encouragement to someone who feels discouraged or sharing your experience to help others feel less alone – these actions may never appear on a productivity chart, yet they carry immense value.

Our presence in the world matters in ways that extend far beyond output.

It is also worth remembering that creativity and insight often emerge during moments when we are not actively striving to produce. Some of our most meaningful ideas arise during quiet walks, daydreams or peaceful pauses when the mind has space to wander. In other words, stepping away from

constant productivity can sometimes open the door to deeper growth and understanding.

Redefining productivity does not mean abandoning goals or ambitions. Rather, it means placing them within a healthier framework – one that honors both effort and well-being. It means understanding that doing less on some days does not diminish your value as a person.

You are not a machine designed to produce endlessly.

You are a human being whose life holds meaning beyond measurable achievements.

When we begin to release the belief that our worth is tied to output, something remarkable happens. We create space for compassion toward ourselves and others. We begin to appreciate the quiet contributions that enrich our lives and communities.

And perhaps most importantly, we remember that our value was never something we had to earn through productivity in the first place.

Opinions

Gen Z struggling on jobs front



BRUCE WHITAKER

Times Columnist

My son's friend cracked a joke that landed somewhere between funny and scary: "No need to be stressed out about today, as it's gonna to get a lot worse." It sums up a mood I keep experiencing whereby young people are living for today without serious discussions about life because the future looks grim.

With three sons in that age group, I've got a front-row seat to Gen Z – those aged 13 to 28. They grew up with smartphones

and social media as the norm, and now they're living with the consequences. They are finding it tough to know where they fit when jobs are changing so fast. They are asking themselves what jobs will still exist next year, what won't, and how to build a career in that uncertainty?

On the surface, Canada's job numbers don't look terrible as unemployment was 6.8 per cent in December (4 per cent in Stratford). With baby boomers retiring, you'd think doors would be opening for younger workers. But zoom in and the picture gets messy.

Youth unemployment (ages 16-24) is hovering around 13 per cent and has jumped faster since 2022 than for older adults. The biggest gaps showed up in 2023-24 and they continued in 2025. The youth job market feels brutal and is hyper competitive. Think of trying to merge onto the 401 from a secondary road and nobody's letting you in.

A big part of the problem is

the collapse in entry-level jobs. Those first-rung roles including administration, sales, customer service, web and multimedia, have disappeared in large numbers. That's where young people usually get workplace basics and their first real experience.

AI is speeding that up by automating tasks and many employers are consolidating roles or leaving them vacant instead of hiring inexperienced workers. In the U.K., entry-level jobs dropped by about a third since 2022, right when tools like ChatGPT began to spread.

AI isn't the whole story. Inflation, rising energy and borrowing costs, and global uncertainty have squeezed business margins, making employers cautious about hiring. The net result is fewer chances for young people to get the experience they need.

It's not just about pay cheques. Mental health among young people is getting worse both a cause and a consequence of unemployment. Roughly a third

of young people say they have a mental-health issue, and most say it gets in the way of finding or keeping a job. The uncertainty of job hunting, money stress, and repeated rejection make getting into steady work feel even harder.

Big-picture policy and strong leadership matter, but there are practical moves we can make now. Train young people for resilient jobs by boosting vocational programs, apprenticeships and hybrid skill sets that mix hands-on trade skills with digital and AI know-how. Protect and create entry-level roles and short-term programs so youth can learn on the job. Fold mental-health supports into employment programs.

Our local Avon Maitland District School Board has taken a savvy step. The board is letting students pick one of five high-school paths, apprenticeship, college, community, university or workplace, and follow hands-on courses and real training. Key options include co-op place-

ments, Specialized High Skills Major certifications, dual-credit college courses and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.

I talked with one of my sons who is apprenticing in the trades. Trades are less vulnerable to AI but not immune. We talked about how he'll need to be both technically strong and digitally savvy if he wants to afford a house or take the vacations he wants. Being the person who knows the trade and uses AI tools to get work done smarter could make him indispensable.

This isn't about a lazy generation. It's a structural problem that needs honest talk and practical fixes with more entry points into work, training that matches the changing market and better mental-health supports. If we want Generation Z to do well, we need to give them opportunities, the right skills and a lot of encouragement.

Next article (April 10): Managing our thoughts for a better life.

Tear it down or think it through?

ROBERT RITZ

Guest Columnist

Stratford is facing a pivotal decision that will influence its future for generations, particularly concerning the former Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) shops site and the potential demolition of its historic structure. What's concerning is not only the direction being considered but the process by which this decision is unfolding. Why the shift from using the building for community uses as described in the 2018 masterplan and as recommended by the council-appointed ad hoc committee?

Decisions of this magnitude – irreversible and deeply tied to our city's identity – must be rooted in transparency, rigorous analysis and meaningful public engagement. Currently, it seems these conditions are not being met.

The GTR building is more than just an aging industrial site; it's one of Stratford's most significant historical landmarks, linking our past as a railway and manufacturing hub. Its design allows for substantial loads, suggesting that, with proper planning, it can be adapted for contemporary needs rather than demolished.

There's a growing narrative suggesting that demolition is the most practical solution, particularly amid claims that parts of the building are beyond repair due to fire damage. However, the last thorough structural assessment in 2012 by RJC Engineers concluded that even the fire-affected areas were capable of rehabilitation. If conditions have changed since then, this should be validated through updated, independent engineering assessments. Otherwise, it's puzzling why demolition is being presented as the only option.

Before making a final decision, the city owes it to its residents to explore all possibilities, especially adaptive reuse, using up-to-date and verifiable data. The comparison between demolition and rehabilitation is intricate and multifaceted.

Demolishing such a large building isn't merely about taking down the above-ground structure. The GTR shops include extensive underground infrastructure, thick concrete floor slabs and large pier foundations, making demolition costs significantly driven by the removal of these elements rather than the superstructure. Accurately determining these costs necessitates a detailed investigation of subsur-

face conditions; assumptions alone cannot guide such a consequential decision.

Other factors must be accounted for as well. If the site is cleared, any soil contamination must be fully remediated before new construction begins. Conversely, adaptive reuse can minimize excavation and the associated environmental risks. Furthermore, site constraints, such as setbacks from the adjacent rail corridor, limit the position of new construction, while the existing building already exists within these boundaries.

Thus, the idea that demolition is the simpler or cheaper choice deserves a more critical examination. More importantly, we must consider what will be lost.

Once the GTR building is demolished, it's gone forever – not just a piece of Stratford's architectural heritage, but a versatile structure that could support a variety of civic, cultural or mixed-use developments. The trend worldwide increasingly favours repurposing buildings, recognizing it as both an economically and environmentally responsible choice.

Stratford has faced crossroads like this before. Over a century ago, a proposal to locate a CPR corridor and marshalling yard along the Avon River lacked fore-

sight, prompting citizens to intervene and redirect the course. Once again, we find ourselves at a juncture where long-term vision should take precedence over short-term convenience.

Now is not the time for a hurried judgment but for careful due diligence. This should at least encompass an updated structural evaluation by qualified engineers, a targeted investigation into the building's underground conditions to establish accurate demolition costs, and a thorough assessment of the building's potential to accommodate new uses. Importantly, these findings must be communicated openly with the public.

Transparency is crucial to sound decision-making. When discussions occur largely out of public view, confidence in the integrity of the decision wanes, regardless of intent.

The GTR site offers a transformative opportunity for Stratford. Done correctly, it can serve as a pillar for the city's future, fulfilling practical needs while honouring its past. However, if we rush or fail to give full consideration, it risks becoming a decision that future generations will question.

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\$15.00 Speaker: Jeff Laustsen (Zion Lutheran Church)

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Monday April 13, 2026, 7:15 – 9:00 p.m.
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STRATFORD TIMES

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STRATFORD TIMES

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Sobey's

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Avon Pharmacy

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Ottawa offers superb options for food-lovers



PAUL KNOWLES

Times Columnist

Let's be honest, Ottawa is to the rest of Canada what a very spoiled child is to the rest of the family. Ottawa gets way more than its share of good stuff, from museums to art galleries to arts venues and more. It's the nation's capital, the centre of the country, and it shows.

Now, while that may irk taxpayers looking for cross-country fairness, it's really good news for tourists visiting Ottawa. In truth, this is one of my favourite cities.

I love the art galleries and museums, the intriguing architecture in the federal government district, the walking areas along the river, the history and most definitely the food. Ottawa is, without question, a destination for "foodies" with a plethora of restaurants offering unique and delicious cuisine.

On our last visit to Ottawa, we were able to sample two of the best eateries in the city: Gitanes, at 361 Elgin St., and Arlo Wine & Restaurant, 340 Somerset St. W. Both have been named among Canada's top 10 restaurants. Since we were staying at the downtown Alt Hotel, both were within easy walking distance.

The Gitanes experience is defined as "fine French dining in



Gitanes features French cuisine using local ingredients.

(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Ottawa's Golden Triangle." There are two themes here: a superb wine cellar and French cuisine that features Canadian ingredients – a marriage made in foodie heaven.

The two restaurants have one thing in common – absolutely superb service. The staff are welcoming, friendly and have somehow combined being attentive and unobtrusive at the same time – no mean feat. Our waiter started to present the wine list and then said, "Maybe you'd like to meet the sommelier." So, we did. Sommelier Bernard Joseph was a gold mine of information and advice and eventually delivered to our table a bottle of Chateau Haut-Segottes Saint-Emilion Grand Cru 2018. I could pretend to know how special that is, but all I really know is it was delicious.

And it paired beautifully with

our meals. Between us, we enjoyed Steak Frites (a specialty of the house), a moules and sausage appetizer, a lamb saddle and focaccia bread. Dessert was a Basque cheesecake and (unlikely as this sounds) an absolutely delicious foie gras sundae. Every bite demanded we savour. It was, in short, a beautiful meal, unique and well presented. The starters were mainly priced at \$23 to \$28; the mains ranged from \$40 to \$50. There is a \$105 tasting menu.

The next evening, after we had spent much of the day strolling the inviting streets of Ottawa, we dined at Arlo. The co-owner and chef is Jamie Stunt; our host, restaurant manager Simon Hodgson, told us chef Stunt has "deep roots" in the Ottawa region. His seasonal menu has been described as "playful and refined."

That also describes the restaurant, itself. One description of the place says, "Arlo feels like a dinner party at a stylish friend's home." That's pretty accurate. When we visited, the place was full, and yet – wonder of wonders – not one person was on a cell phone. People were enjoying food, drink and conversation, not necessarily in that order.

Arlo is known for a wine list that features rare and unique natural wines, so I was looking forward to a glass of something special. But to my surprise, Hodgson told me they also feature some special beers from time to time; he had checked my bio, and discovered that I occasionally write about breweries, and so had brought in a bottle of a "Cantillon Drogon Lambic," a rare Belgian sour beer. I decided to be polite and sample it – and then con-

tinued to sample until the 750-millilitre bottle was empty. Now, that is exceptional service!

For dinner, our starters were a cucumber and melon salad (which was a work of visual art), and scallop tartare, perfect with the beer. Our mains were schnitzel and Caesar, and duck frites. I had finished off the Cantillon Drogon Lambic and found that a Cotes du Rhone wine went well with duck. Or, with just about anything, for that matter. The starters at Arlo range in price from \$24 to \$27; the mains, from \$40 to \$48.

I love the motto on the bottom of the Arlo menu: "be excellent to each other." Good advice.

Does Ottawa deserve to be listed among the top "foodie" destinations in the country? Without question. And frankly, if you compare prices with some more run-of-the-mill restaurants, you'll find the quality and superb service at eateries like Gitanes and Arlo make for very good value. Our thanks to Sarah and Vlad of Ottawa Tourism who arranged our very tasty visit.

One quick recommendation: after dinner in Ottawa, make your way to a restaurant called the Rabbit Hole (and yes, you should eat there on another evening). But tonight, your destination is the "secret" speakeasy called the Jackalope hidden below the main restaurant. There, the bartender will craft a unique drink matched to your tastes. You have to ask at the door of the Rabbit Hole, and you will be escorted to the speakeasy, if there is room. Tell 'em Paul sent you.

Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and past-president of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@golden.net.



Gitanes sommelier Bernard Joseph.



At Arlo, it's all about food and conversation – no one was on their phone!



The manager at Arlo had brought in a special beer just for this writer!

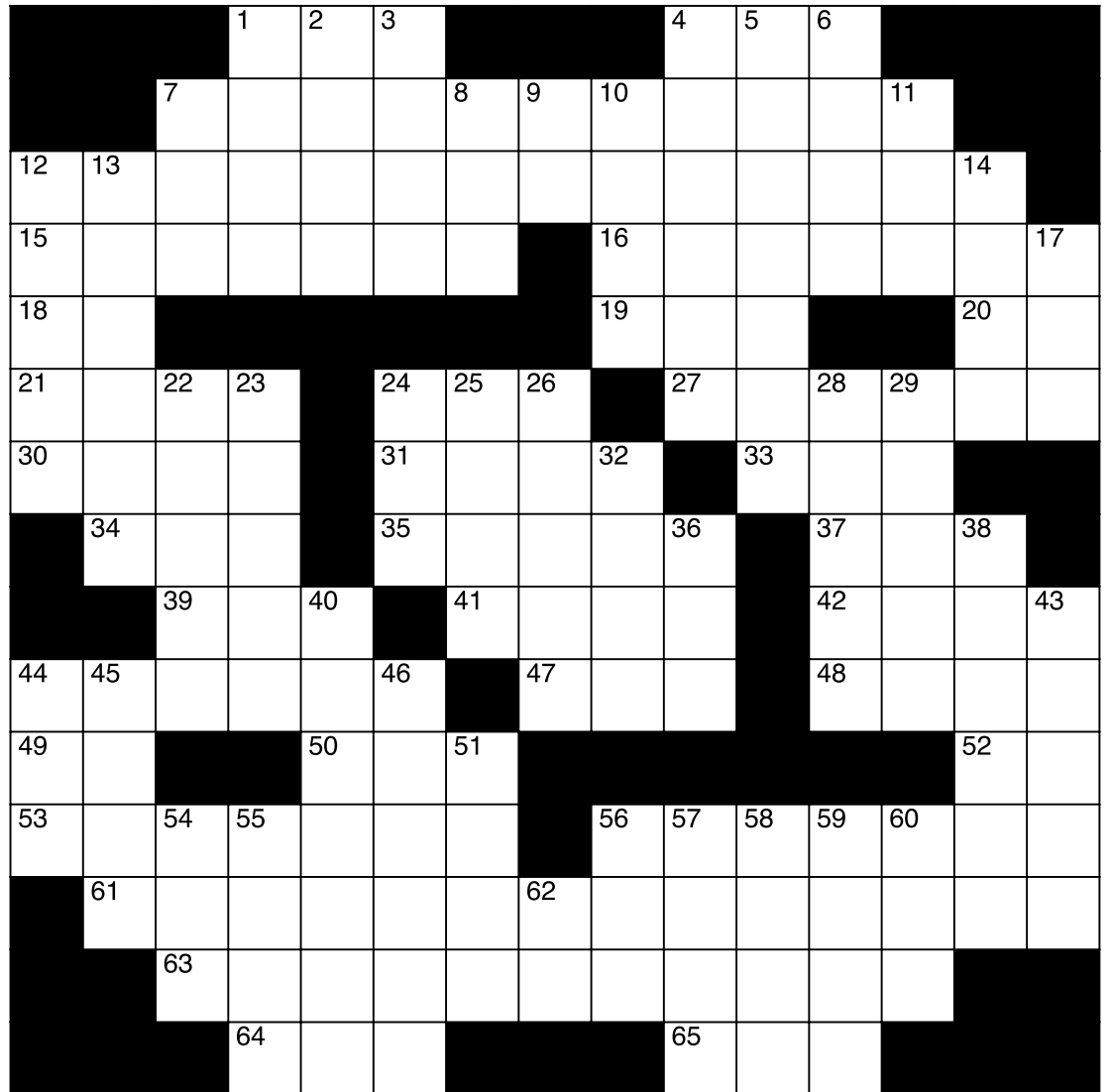
Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Blockchain-based entity
- 4. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 7. Painted with glue
- 12. Legendary crooner
- 15. Structure made with strips of wood
- 16. Tropical fruits
- 18. Commercial
- 19. Comedienne Gasteyer
- 20. The Ocean State
- 21. Ancient Scot
- 24. Basics
- 27. Stated propositions
- 30. Scottish island group
- 31. Expression of annoyance
- 33. Large tree
- 34. Engine additive
- 35. Conspiracy
- 37. Drunkard
- 39. Someone who is morally reprehensible
- 41. Ancient Syrian city
- 42. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls
- 44. Carry (slang)
- 47. Sweet potato
- 48. European river
- 49. The Golden State
- 50. Windy City ballplayer
- 52. New Testament
- 53. Possess spiritually
- 56. A treeless grassy plain
- 61. Popular historical novel
- 63. In a law-abiding way
- 64. A place to sleep
- 65. Criticize
- 3. Relating to the ear
- 4. Occupant
- 5. Member of Great Plains people
- 6. Social media firm
- 7. Digital audiotape
- 8. Midway between east and southeast
- 9. Chronic, progressive disease
- 10. Chinese lute
- 11. Not wet
- 12. Moves wings up and down
- 13. Communication devices
- 14. Swiss river
- 17. Female sibling
- 22. Receive
- 23. Relating to a type
- 24. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 25. Steep bank
- 26. Taxi driver
- 28. Moves into without difficulty
- 29. Bicycle manufacturer
- 32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
- 36. Fugitives are on it
- 38. Bitter-tasting organic substance
- 40. Die
- 43. Matched
- 44. Literary genre ___-fi
- 45. Cannot
- 46. Pounded
- 51. British rock group
- 54. Debt relief order
- 55. 2006 NL Cy Young winner
- 56. Green vegetable
- 57. Tough outer skin of fruit
- 58. ___ Spumante (Italian wine)
- 59. Ailments
- 60. Famed singer Charles
- 62. Camper

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Impression in a surface
- 2. Computer language



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Pet of the week



RUSSELL

Russell is a happy-go-lucky young pup who approaches life with enthusiasm and a wagging tail. Full of energy and curiosity, he's always ready for fun and loves being part of whatever is going on around him.

Like many young dogs, Russell is still working on his manners and learning the ropes, but he's eager, playful, and ready to grow with a family who will guide him along the way. With a little patience and training, this cheerful boy has all the makings of an amazing companion.

If you're looking for a fun-loving pup who will keep you smiling and bring plenty of personality into your life, Russell might be your perfect match! Adopt Russel from the Stratford Centre: <https://kwsphumane.ca/adopt/dogs>



Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 27

CLASSIFIEDS

Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

OBITUARY



MARJORIE HELEN HESSE

Marjorie Helen Hesse passed away at the Stratford General Hospital on March 5, 2026. Born in Stratford, March 26, 1930, she was the daughter of the late Nelson Loghrin and Jenny Mae McEwin.

Dear mother of Stephen and his wife Brenda; mother-in-law to Diane Hesse and Nancy Ladouceur-Hesse. Grandma to Laurie, Craig, Amelia (Adam Harrison), Alexander, Gabriel and Jonah. Great grandmother to Myles, Reese and Wyatt. Also survived by sisters-in-law Mary Loghrin, Marjorie Loghrin and many nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by her husband Don, sons Paul and Peter, sisters Frances Lawson, Reta Moffett (Bill), Elaine Jordan (Frank), Donna Loghrin and brother Bill Loghrin.

The family wishes to thank the staff at Woodland Towers for their excellent care and compassion.

A private family interment will be held at Avondale Cemetery. Memorial donations in Marjorie's memory may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the charity of one's choice. www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com

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