

STRATFORD *TIMES*

VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 15

NOVEMBER 21, 2025

FREE



Jennifer Anderson
Team Leader - BROKER
519-301-2736



Jamie Gerber
REALTOR®
519-276-7995



ANDERSON
REAL ESTATE GROUP



ROYAL LEPAGE



Hiller Realty

160 King St. Stratford
Independently Owned and Operated Brokerage
AndersonRealEstateGroup.ca

AROUND THE WORLD WITH STONETOWN TRAVEL

150 Queen St E, St. Marys, ON N4X 1B4
519-284-2332 agent@stonetowntravel.com
TICO#5002839

JOIN US ON ONE OF OUR GROUP TRIPS



EXPERIENCE DUBAI WITH GOWAY
JANUARY 16-27, 2026



BALTIC CRUISE
AUGUST 11-22, 2026



CHRISTMAS MARKETS ON DANUBE
NOV. 26 - DEC. 5, 2026

www.stonetowntravel.com

Paris Jewellers robbed 5th time in recent years

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Paris Jewellers has been robbed for the fifth time in recent years, according to the Stratford Police Service. On Nov. 13 at 4:45 p.m., police received numerous 911 calls regarding a robbery at the prominent jewellery shop in the Stratford Mall. Reportedly, three suspects entered the store armed with sledgehammers, smashed several display cases and fled the scene with an unknown amount of jewellery.

All staff members present were able to leave the area when the suspects arrived, and no injuries were sustained. Victim Services Huron Perth has been contacted to provide support.

The suspects fled the mall and entered a grey Honda Civic with tinted windows and black rims, bearing an Ontario licence plate BRTM868. The vehicle fled the scene and travelled eastbound on Ontario Street leaving the city. This vehicle was later determined to be stolen out of the greater Toronto area just a few days prior.

The three suspects involved in the robbery have been described as having slim builds and an estimated height between 5'5" and 5'7". The three suspects had their faces and heads covered with a mask and hood, and they were all wearing dark coloured clothing.

As Darren Fischer, community resource and media relations officer, told the Times, since the identities of these suspects are unknown, police cannot confirm if

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

Mark Rosenfeld, founder of the Provocation Ideas Festival (PIF), describes True Tapestries: Threads of Stratford Stories to an enraptured audience on Nov. 15. True Tapestries will be an anthology of Stratford-based stories, written by and for locals, and it all started with an evening of readings that night.

Stratford's kaleidoscopic stories front and centre in True Tapestries reading

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Stratford Festival actress Barbara Fulton took to the stage at the Stratford Perth Museum on Nov. 15 to read Linda Webster's "To Flush or Not to Flush," a story chronicling her mother's act of private protest when the City of Stratford changed its water-usage fee sometime in 1992, charging property owners a flat rate.

"Mom was damned if she was going to be cheated on her share of municipal water," Fulton read. "There was

something about being a child of the 1930s depression and a product of being raised on a farm that made her see red when she felt she was made to be responsible for someone else's debt. She was raised in an environment of hard work, where you took responsibility for yourself. You paid your own way, and you paid cash on the barrel.

"She was so incensed at this change in city policy, especially considering it as unexpected departure, that at the end of each month, she stood in her one and only bathroom and ceremoniously raised her right index

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



LYONESS
REAL ESTATE

BRENDON LYONESS
REALTOR®



RE/MAX a-b REALTY LTD. BROKERAGE
STRATFORD • WOODSTOCK • INGERSOLL • ST. MARYS • NORWICH

"LIST WITH LYONESS"

YOUR LOCAL REALTOR®

519.272.6106

BRENDON@YKTRE.COM

Paris Jewellers robbed 5th time in recent years

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

this robbery is related to the other string of robberies that occurred in recent years.

On Jan. 3, 2024, four men robbed the store and left with a “large amount” of jewellery. A few days later two of them were arrested with some of the contraband in Niagara Falls. On Nov. 26, 2024, a man stole an unknown quantity of merchandise and was later arrested. On Feb. 5, 2025, Paris Jewellers was robbed by five men, with four later being arrested and charged. On June 22, 2025, the store was again robbed – this time by four men. None of the suspects in that robbery have been arrested.

“It has been confirmed that previous incidents were related to incidents occurring in other communities,” Fischer said. “However, we are not able to confirm if this incident is related to any recent incidents in other locations at this time. At this time there is no information regarding the identity of the suspects in this incident, including where they reside.

“The Stratford Police Service actively works with businesses impacted by incidents of this nature to work collaboratively ... on any environmental changes that



could be made to help reduce the risk of victimization to that business and its employees,” Fischer went on to say.

Police are asking for anyone with information to contact 519-271-4141 ext. 2. If you have information and wish to remain anonymous, please contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS or www.p3tips.com

As of press time, no suspects have been arrested.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Paris Jewellers was robbed for the fifth time in recent years on Nov. 13. The suspects, pictured here, fled the mall in a stolen grey Honda Civic and remain at large.

Stratford's kaleidoscopic stories front and centre in True Tapestries reading

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

finger, making vigorous contact with the tank handle,” Fulton continued. “Then she flushed and flushed and flushed – until she felt that she had used in water what the city was now charging to her.”

As Fulton finished Webster's story, reciting how Webster feels pride over the “Empty Tank Revolution of 1992,” Paul Shilton, composer and musician with the Stratford Festival, sang the 1968 Johnny Cash song “Flushed From the Bathroom of Your Heart.”

“I’ve been washed down the sink of your conscience,” Shilton sang. “In the theatre of your love I lost my part. And you say you’ve got me out of your system ...”

“I’ve been flushed from the bathroom of your heart,” the audience joined in.

That reading and performance were just one of the many story-song pairings on Nov. 15, during the True Tapestries: Threads of Stratford Stories presentation put on by the Provocation Ideas Festival (PIF), the museum, the Stratford Public Library and Blue Moon Publishers, a local publishing house.

Inspired by the CBC's Vinyl Café, the evening featured live storytelling

from area thespians and a hand-selected collection of Stratford stories that reflected how multifaceted the city is. Stories ranged from civil disobedience to first forays in theatre to how newcomers have made a home in the city, to name only a few subjects.

According to Jennifer Paquette, creative director of True Tapestries, about 40 stories were submitted for the series. The selection committee – composed of Paquette, Marion Adler, Judy Maddren, Karim Rushdy, David Stones and Heidi Sander – selected 11 stories: Webster's “To Flush or Not to Flush,” Donna Wilding's “Make a Wish,” Paul Wilker's “A Not So Merry Man,” Katie Diotallevi's “How I Met the Festival,” Wilker's “The Choir-boy and the Bean,” Judith Harway's “Turtle Cove,” Keith Reynold's “Risk,” Joe Oliver's “The Lilac Bush,” Diane Jermyn's “Secrets,” Felicity Sutcliffe's “Stratford Hope” and Rachel Kelleher's “The Grief that Does Not Speak.”

“One of the criteria was how would this translate to the spoken word,” Paquette explained. “And they really did ... I had asked composer, musician Paul Shilton to do the music for the show. ... I came to him with some suggestions of music that could accompany the stories and we just threw ideas around. ... We tried to match the music with the story and the vocalists that we had in the show. And it was one of those magical things that it just really came together very well.

“Along with the audience, the team involved, the house was just packed with story enthusiasts,” Paquette continued. “And whether it be through spoken word, music, poetry, the short story, even family lore ... All of us there just love stories and you could really feel the joy for story in the room.”

Along with the reading on Nov. 15, an encore performance is scheduled for Nov. 22, though it is already sold out. Those that missed the readings will still be able to read them at a later date. The stories will be published in a two-year collection by Blue Moon Publishers sometime next year. PIF founder Mark Rosenfeld indicated to the Times that the plan is for True Tapestries to return annually, a sentiment shared by Paquette.

“We were just thrilled to receive so many stories, and we valued all of them, and we look forward to hearing more,” Paquette said.

SHERRIE ROULSTON
Real Estate Broker
email: sherrieroulston@royalpage.ca
Direct: 519-272-3578

A Passion for People

THE HURON PERTH HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE PRESENTS

COMMUNITY UPDATE & ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

The Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance invites you to join us for an evening of connection and conversation with our team and community health partners.

Engage, learn, and share your thoughts about the future of healthcare in our area.

NOV 24 Clinton
Libro Hall
6-8pm

NOV 25 Seaforth
Seaforth Community Centre
6-8pm

NOV 26 Stratford
Stratford General Hospital
6-8pm

NOV 27 St. Marys
Pyramid Recreation Centre
6-8pm

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AHEAD OF TIME

SCAN ME

WRAP UP THE YEAR WITH LAUGHTER AND SONG

ANNIE RUNS UNTIL DECEMBER 14!

**CRITIC'S PICK
"ONE OF
STRATFORD'S BEST"**

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

**"YOU MUST WATCH
THIS DELIGHTFUL
NEW PRODUCTION"**

TORONTO STAR

"CROWD-PLEASING"

THE NEW YORK TIMES

**DON'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW — SECURE YOUR SEATS TODAY AND
MAKE THIS MAGICAL MUSICAL PART OF YOUR HOLIDAY TRADITION.**

Stratford
FESTIVAL

ANNIE

BOOK BY **THOMAS MEEHAN** | MUSIC BY **CHARLES STROUSE** | LYRICS BY **MARTIN CHARNIN**

ORIGINAL BROADWAY PRODUCTION DIRECTED BY **MARTIN CHARNIN**

BASED ON "LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE"® BY PERMISSION OF TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY, LLC

2025 SEASON SPONSOR: OPHELIA LAZARIDIS

PRODUCTION CO-SPONSORS: ROBERT & MARY ANN GORLIN, RIKI TUROFSKY & CHARLES PETERSEN AND PETER & CAROL WALTERS

PRODUCTION
CO-SPONSOR



Editorial

Redefining productivity while working from home



AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Reporter

As I've grown more confident in my writing, I've also become more productive – and, most importantly, more comfortable with how I work. When I first joined the Stratford Times, I would spend hours crafting and reworking every story, only to go

back and rewrite entire sections because a sentence didn't sound quite right. It's a common hurdle for new writers – we want everything to be perfect. I wasn't hard on myself, though. I knew that confidence and rhythm would come with experience, and now I finally feel like I'm finding my groove.

Over time, I've learned how to build sentences that sound natural and engaging, all while staying true to my own voice. I like to think that readers can recognize my writing now – and I've even been told that my style feels a little different, likely because of my background in healthcare. I tend to write in a more narrative, human-centred way, blending storytelling with

research, rather than sticking to the punchier, straight-news tone of some of my colleagues (which are also great).

Once my writing process became smoother, I started taking on more and more assignments. Suddenly, I felt like I had extra time – but instead of enjoying that flexibility, I filled every spare hour with more work. My days stretched longer, and though I was producing more, I began to feel burnt out. It turns out that being busy isn't the same as being productive.

After some reflection, I realized that productivity isn't about how full my schedule looks – it's about the quality of the work I produce. Am I meeting deadlines? Yes. Am I proud of the

stories I'm telling? Also yes. Am I giving community members the time and attention they deserve when sharing their stories? I truly believe so.

So, if I'm meeting those goals, is it really necessary to fill every hour of a 40-hour week? I've learned that it's okay to work fewer hours – say 30 to 35 – if I'm creating thoughtful, high-quality stories that serve my community well.

This mindset shift has allowed me to find balance again. With a bit of breathing room in my schedule, I've started exploring new ideas – like helping on the sales side, brainstorming creative projects (including my ongoing daydream of somehow coaxing Stewart into buying

a magazine brand with me) or spending more time out in the community meeting new people.

Those unstructured hours used to make me feel guilty, like I wasn't pulling my weight. But now I see them as opportunities to connect, recharge and grow as a writer. Whether I'm chatting with someone in New Hamburg or reading quietly at Brch & Wyn in Stratford, those moments feed my creativity and help me bring richer, more meaningful stories back to the paper.

True productivity, I've learned, isn't about cramming as much as possible into the day – it's about leaving space for the kind of work, reflection and connection that make the writing worthwhile.

Letter to the editor: New recycling bins wrong on many levels"

We lived in Toronto when wheeled recycling carts replaced blue recycling bins a couple decades ago. The responsible first step was a form where the residents could choose the size of cart that suited their circumstance.

Now, in Stratford and other Ontario communities, wheeled blue recycling carts are being deposited at our properties. Ginormous bins. One size fits all bins. With-

out consultation with residents or, it seems, with many or any municipal governments. That's so wrong on many levels.

The new, privatized system that starts in January is an action of the province. So, the Ford government has the power to amend this rollout so a choice of bins occurs.

Our representative here in Perth County is a Progress-

sive Conservative. Mr. Rae sits on the government side. I call on him to raise his voice so common sense prevails and the bin rollout is amended here and elsewhere.

Ken Dodd
Stratford

CORRECTION: In the article on this year's Business Excellence Awards on page 11 of the Nov. 14 edition of the Stratford Times, Home & Company was mistakenly called Home & Country. The Times regrets any confusion this caused.

**GRANT
HAVEN
MEDIA**

Restoring small-town
journalism, one community
at a time!

STRATFORDTIMES

Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Editor

Connor Luczka • connor@granthaven.com

Times Reporter

Amanda Modaragamage • amandajanewriter@gmail.com

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Sarah Cairns • stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Billing Administrator

Cindy Boakes • boakescindy1576@gmail.com

Contributors

Galen Simmons, Spencer Seymour, Julia Schneider,
Gary West, Paul Knowles, Emily Stewart, Lisa Chester,
Fred Gonder, Sheila Clarke, Irene Roth, Lee Griffi,
Stuart Lender, Sydney Goodwin, Alex Hunt, Julia Paul,
Patrick D. Burk

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2
stratfordtimes@gmail.com | 519.655.2341 | granthaven.com



Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



STRATFORDTIMES

"I know the paper is free, but can I get a subscription anyways?"

Yes. We understand that some people might like the convenience of the Stratford Times arriving at their home (located near or far) through Canada Post, so we do have subscriptions available for this purpose.

The price for a subscription is \$77.00

To subscribe, please e-transfer granthavenmedia@gmail.com and include your full mailing address in the comments, or send a cheque with mailing address to Grant Haven Media, PO Box 2310, St. Marys, ON N4X 1A2.

STRATFORDTIMES

Guiding Principles

1. Everyone has a story
2. The news should be free for all to enjoy
3. Good news beats bad news
4. A Newspaper should be a community effort (contribute to your local paper!)
5. Newspapers document history
6. Newspapers strengthen communities
7. Advertisers, big or small, should profit from their ads (meaning sensible ad rates)
8. Newspapers should be locally-owned and operated

Humane society launches holiday fundraising campaign

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

As the holiday season approaches, the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth (HSKWSP) has launched its annual "Hope for the Holidays" campaign. This is a heartfelt initiative to ensure that vulnerable animals receive the care, safety and love they deserve.

As the HSKWSP's largest fundraising effort of the year, Hope for the Holidays invites the community to make a meaningful impact by supporting animals in need. Over the past year, countless pets like Agnes have found care and a second chance thanks to the generosity of donors.

Agnes is a dog that came into the humane society's care with deep wounds, fever and damaged ears after an attack. Today, she is recovering beautifully and learning to trust again in her foster home. Her story, and so many others, are only possible because of community support.

"This time of year is about hope and giving," said Victoria Baby, CEO of the HSKWSP. "Every donation, no matter the

size, helps transform lives. Your support ensures that animals like Agnes receive the care and compassion they deserve."

There are several different ways in which you can support local animals this year: adopting, giving your time by hosting a food or supply drive, or organizing a fundraiser, donating or shopping the HSKWSP's wish list and making an animal very happy this holiday season.

To make every donation go further, the HSKWSP is excited to feature matching gift opportunities throughout the campaign from generous community partners. The first of the season comes from long time supporters of the humane society, Mark and Debbie Thompson, who will match up to \$10,000 made between Nov. 17-23, supporting animals at the Stratford location.

The HSKWSP invites individuals, families and businesses to help make this season truly special for the animals who need it most. To avoid any mail delays, donations can be made quickly and securely online at www.kwsphumane.ca/events/hope-for-the-holidays or in our centres.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Agnes came into the humane society's care with deep wounds, fever and damaged ears after an attack. Today, she is recovering beautifully and learning to trust again in her foster home. Her story, and so many others, are only possible because of community support.

Say hello to your new recycling cart.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

For the first time in years, Stratford's Dairy Queen on Ontario Street, will make their ice cream treats until one week before Christmas. Owners Karen and Erik Anderson were listening to their customers and extended their season until Dec. 14 this year. Longtime DQ employees Hannah Rolleman and Alisha Moffat, pictured here, said they love meeting their customers and are glad to be staying open this year.



2 Loveys Street East, Hickson Ontario

Discover this charming 4-bedroom, 2.5 bath home on a spacious corner lot with a detached 1 car garage. Step into a fully fenced yard with a new deck perfect for entertaining. Conveniently located a short drive from Tavistock, Woodstock, Shakespeare, and New Hamburg.

\$639,900

Now priced at \$10,000 below the current bank appraised price.

Call 226-779-1063 to book a private showing of this beautiful home.

Loreena McKennitt honoured, met with Queen Camilla

DIANE SEWELL

Guest Contributor

Earlier this month, award-winning Canadian singer/songwriter Loreena McKennitt was one of the honoured guests at two back-to-back events in London, England recognizing the transformational power of words and stories, with reminders of their potential to elevate the human condition and bridge cultures.

On Nov. 4, McKennitt was introduced to her majesty Queen Camilla during a reception for about 30 people at Clarence House, the private residence she shares with King Charles III. Hours earlier, she was honoured during a ceremony at the Athenaeum, a prestigious 200-year-old private club in London devoted to intellectual debate and pursuits. There, McKennitt was presented with a gold medal and the title of Honorary Life Patron by the London and Casablanca-based non-profit Scheherazade Foundation, founded in 2020. She was also made Honorary Fellow of the non-profit Hoopee Share Literacy Fund which provides books in 27 languages, believing stories have more power when read in one's own language.

Queen Camilla's reception was held to recognize the first anniversary of the World Story Bank, launched by the Scheherazade Foundation to create a global treasury of multicultural stories that impart universal values like kindness, cour-



(THEO WOOD PHOTO)

Loreena McKennitt meets her majesty Queen Camilla at Clarence House in London, England. McKennitt was there to be honoured by the Scheherazade Foundation in a proceeding which recognized the transformational power of words and stories.

age and justice to children and adults alike. Queen Camilla, who is patron or president of over 100 charities, places a strong emphasis on promoting literacy and hence her hosting of the event. The global treasury of books will come from all corners of the world, based on the belief they are more than mere entertain-

ment, akin to instruction manuals to the world.

"Loreena was selected by our awards committee, comprised of youth in 30 countries, because of the way she bridges cultures," explained author, filmmaker and the foundation's executive director Tahir Shah, who works alongside his daughter Ariane. He is also the son of the late Idries Shah, an Afghan author, thinker and teacher in the Sufi tradition.

"The Scheherazade Foundation was established to bridge cultures in unusual ways and to harness the knowledge we believe is in folklore and traditional stories the world over. We see it as the marrow within the bones of society," said Shah. "We're working to recalibrate the human condition at a time when the human condition is under threat from social media, AI, mass urbanization and other forces."

British-Canadian physicist and 2024 Nobel Prize winner Geoffrey Hinton, known as "the godfather of AI," was also honoured by the Scheherazade Foundation and appointed Honorary Life Patron, recognized for warning people of the potential risks with AI. He too was at the Queen's reception and shared a conversation with Loreena.

"It is a great honour to be recognized as someone who has collected cultural rituals and brought them through my music into the public sphere," said McKennitt. "A lot of people at the receptions were aware of my music, which was both lovely and surprising. And it was such a privilege to meet Queen Camilla. I thanked her for all her work in children's literacy."

McKennitt and Hinton now join the impressive list of the foundation's other gold medal recipients, which include Nelson Mandela, Annie Leibowitz, Chris Hadfield, Joan Baez, Mother Teresa, the Dalai Lama, Isabelle Allende, Gloria Steinem and 25 others. Life pa-

trons and gold medal winners, explained Shah, "are people who have inspired and touched us and made us understand where as a community and a world we need to be going."

McKennitt has known Shah personally for roughly 10 years and they've met on several occasions. She dined with him and his family when she was recording her 2018 album *Lost Souls* at Real World Studios in Bath, England. Shah is also aware of her philanthropic endeavours, such as the family- and children-focused Falstaff Family Centre in her home base Stratford and Loreena's *Stolen Child Project*, devoted to examining the contemporary child's experience and the impact of social media.

It was in the 1990s that McKennitt was introduced to Idries Shah's book *The Sufis* and she credits it with having a significant impact on her thinking, not from a religious standpoint, but "as a way of processing life," something she references in the notes to her 1994 live recording of *The Mask and Mirror*. It was also through his book that she was introduced to the concept of "polishing the mirror of your soul," an idea she has referenced many times since then.

As she explained in her 1996 documentary, *No Journey's End*, "I've a belief that voice is the instrument of instruments in so far as it is connected to the human being, and it has a great range of articulating and expressing ideas and feelings. The Sufis have an expression of 'polishing the mirror of your soul,' and perhaps my voice becomes that polishing aspect: that it is a vehicle of expressing things in a very primal and instinctive way, and I think that is part of the strength of what I do. You try not to have any barriers. You've opened your soul; you've opened yourself up."

The Scheherazade Foundation is named after the wise heroine and principal storyteller in *A Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of teaching-stories and folktales, the oldest known version being a 9th-century Arabic manuscript. After finding his wife unfaithful, King Shahr-yar beheads her and every subsequent bride the day after they're wed – until Scheherazade comes along. Night after night she tells the King stories, stopping at critical points, creating a cliffhanger so the king will spare her another day in order to hear the rest of the story. As the foundation explains:

"Weaving a fantastical world of imagination over months and years, Scheherazade finally brings peace to the kingdom by freeing the king from his ire, saving the lives of the hundreds of young women he might otherwise have slain."

"The Scheherazade Foundation takes its inspiration from Scheherazade's example. By learning from her out-of-the-box thinking and the wisdom within storytelling, we aim to bridge cultures and to resolve divisions within society. In this way, we believe it is possible to find fresh solutions to universal problems – by learning from humanity's most precious resource: the stories we tell."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

This year's Tim Hortons Smile Cookie goes toward United Way Perth-Huron, helping to sprinkle some hope throughout the community this holiday season. Through Nov. 17 to Nov. 23, patrons can go to any Tim Hortons location in Stratford to purchase a cookie for \$2. Proceeds from sales are split equally between Tim Hortons Foundation Camps and United Way's work addressing mental health and well-being.

New living wage a reflection of strained housing market

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

The cost of housing and a lack of affordable options for residents of Perth-Huron across the income spectrum are primary drivers for the recently announced increase to the area's living wage, which rose from \$23.05 per hour in 2024 to \$24.60 this year.

Announced by the United Way Perth-Huron and the Ontario Living Wage Network during Living Wage Week Nov. 10-14, a living wage shows how much a worker must earn to make ends meet and enjoy modest participation in the community. The calculations gather expenses for three types of households: two adults supporting two small children, a single parent with one child and a single adult. Results are aggregated and include any applicable government taxes, transfers and benefits.

"This year, the main driver is cost of living related to housing, primarily," said United Way Perth-Huron executive director Ryan Erb. "We've been seeing housing increase for a number of years and rental housing, even right now in this region, has not begun to come down. So, what we're seeing is a reflection of the market, frankly."

According to Erb, the housing market is responding to a lack of housing supply across the spectrum, especially housing appropriate for those living on lower incomes or those who require specialized supports. As demand in the area increases with major draws like the Stratford Festival, the Stratford Chef's School and the University of Waterloo, Erb said there are fewer options that meet the needs of the community, with many residents paying much higher than a third of their monthly income.

"There is not enough housing that is affordable to the needs of the people in the community," Erb said. "So, there isn't the right housing, there isn't affordable housing for seniors – people that want to downsize from their large house to something that's affordable for them. There isn't the right housing that's available for people who are middle income – people who are raising children are having a hard time getting into the housing market – and rental rates, because of all of that, are con-

tinuing to grow.

"... We have all these pressures on housing over and above the regular housing needs of our community, and those are all good things that we face in our community, but it does mean there's just more competition in this particular region."

Erb said part of the solution to the housing crisis is working with the Ontario Living Wage Network to certify local businesses as Living Wage Employers, ensuring they are paying their workers enough to live locally.

"A minimum wage as opposed to a living wage means you're paying more than 30 per cent of your income towards housing," Erb said. "We know from surveys and conversations with people in the community, oftentimes people are spending far more than 30 per cent of their income in that regard. And so, a minimum-wage job, even though we're thankful the government has begun to index it to inflation over the last couple of years, it still doesn't keep up with the gap that exists. We're talking about \$7-an-hour difference between what it costs to live in the community and what minimum wage is."

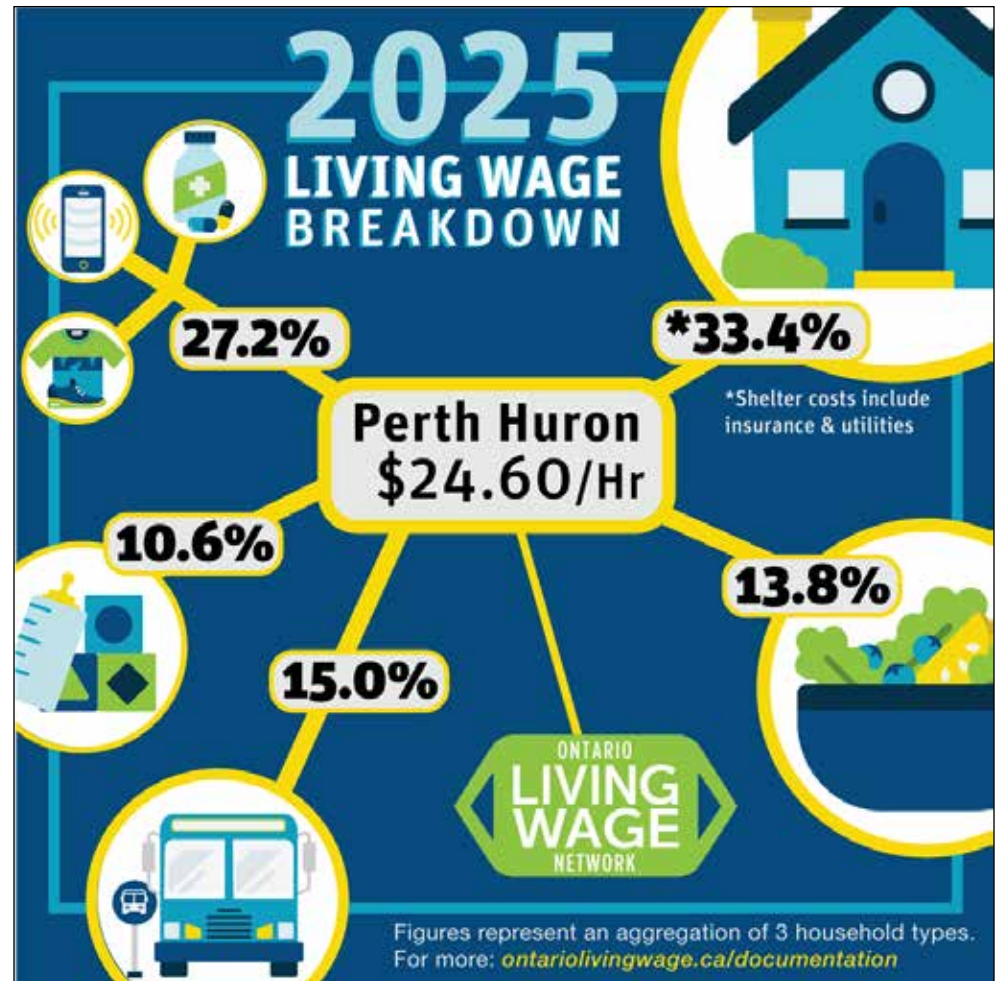
"... We don't pretend (paying a living wage) is an easy thing for every business to do. ... But we have lots of evidence from businesses themselves that it improves their bottom line by improving productivity, reducing turnover, improving the mood of the workforce. ... We know when we pay people at this level, they're spending money locally in the economy. This is actually good for the local economy."

Erb said the other piece of the puzzle is working with all levels of government to both increase the local housing supply to meet the growing demand and find ways to reduce the cost of living in other areas.

"Government has a role to play here. Things like \$10-a-day child care, if it were to be fully implemented, would actually reduce the living wage, right? We can think about this as a community. It's not only on the employers; it's also on government, it's also on all of us to talk about."

At \$24.60 an hour, the 2025 living wage for Perth-Huron is broken down as follows:

- 33.4 per cent goes to housing and related expenses like insurance and utilities;



(UNITED WAY PERTH-HURON PHOTO)

This graphic shows the breakdown of the 2025 living wage, \$24.60 per hour.

- 27.2 per cent goes to expenses like clothing, medication and phone;
- 15 per cent goes to transportation, which has become more expensive in rural areas like Perth-Huron due to a lack of regional public-transit options;
- 13.8 per cent goes to food, another cost

that continues to increase but not at the same rate it has in recent years; and

- 10.6 per cent goes to costs associated with raising children.

To learn more about the living wage or becoming a living wage employer, visit perthhuron.unitedway.ca.



Herd Dispersal Live Auction Sale

for **118 Bred Cows/Heifers**
Saturday November 22, 11:00am to be held at
554447 Mono-Amaranth TLine, Mono, ON

Directions: Go west through Orangeville on Hwy 9 to County Rd 16 (Veterans Way at Greenwood Cemetery), turn north 5 miles to farm on East side. OR From Shelburne go east on Hwy 89 for 2 miles to Mono-Amaranth Townline, turn south & go 5 miles to farm on East side.

Cattle:

(40) Heifers: (10) Char, (20) Black, (10) Simm & Blk - 1st time calvers, bred Angus, vaccinated, double moved

(26) Heifers: (7) CharX, (8) Black, (11) Red - bred Simm/Red Angus X, vaccinated, all double moved

(15) Heifers - Black, bred to Black Angus bull, vaccinated

(10) Charolais cows - all bred Charolais - vaccinated

(11) Cows: (4) Black cows & calves, (4) bred cows, (3) black heifers - bred Angus/Simm X, vaccinated

(10) Charolais Cows & Calves - (4) first calf heifers with calf at side, vaccinated

(2) Charolais Cows

All Cows will be preg checked prior to sale.



Lunch Booth Washroom Available

Terms & Conditions: Cash or cheque with proper I.D. on day of sale. Owner & Auctioneer will not be responsible for any accidents or loss on day of sale. All announcements on day of sale will take precedence over printed ads.

Auctioneers: Kevin McArthur (519) 942-0264 / Scott Bessey (519) 843-5083
www.theauctionadvertiser.com/KMcArthur - Email: mcarthurbessey@gmail.com

**GRANT
HAVEN
MEDIA**

Wondering how local media
 can help grow your business?
 Let me help tailor a
 customized marketing plan
 for your business goals.



heather@granthaven.com

226.261.1837

St. Marys Independent The Paris Independent The Wilmet-Tavistock Gazette STRATFORD TIMES Woodstock Ingersoll Echo Goderich Sun
 Simcoe Advocate NORFOLK FARMS BRANT FARMS NIAGARA FARMS INDY

Destination Stratford's Christmas Trail ties with 2024 edition for largest of its kind



DESTINATION STRATFORD PHOTO

The beloved Christmas Trail includes a variety of businesses from Stratford, Shakespeare, St. Marys and Mitchell, including nine new participants.

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The beloved Christmas Trail by Destination Stratford returns for the holiday season.

The Christmas Trail vouchers can be purchased for \$39.55 (including HST) at the Destination Stratford Office on 47 Downie St., Bradshaws on 129 Ontario St., or the Wine Lab in St. Marys on 16 Water St. S. Trail goers can choose up to six participating local businesses to visit on the trail until the vouchers expire on Dec. 20.

"The Christmas Trail offers an authentic Stratford experience for both visitors and locals to enjoy. It encourages holiday shopping, exploration, and community connection throughout the season," April Murray, destination brand manager, told the Stratford Times. "Over the years, the trail has become a favourite for families, couples, friends and even corporate groups. It guides participants to local retailers, helping them discover hidden gems, unique gifts and festive treats along the way."

The Christmas Trail includes a variety of businesses in Stratford, St. Marys, Shakespeare and Mitchell. Murray added that the trail receives lots of positive feedback from participating vendors, with many returning.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for businesses to get creative, offer unique holiday items and showcase retail shops during this special time of year. We also continue to see a strong return rate from businesses that participate year after year. They recognize the tremendous value the trail brings to their stores, which often translates into increased foot traffic, sales and repeat visitors," she said. "While it's difficult to put an appropriate dollar amount on the trail's economic impact, we believe it's quite significant."

Locals and tourists alike also enjoy the Christmas Trail.

"Trail-goers not only visit the featured stops but also discover neighbouring businesses along the way. Plus, the trail gives people even more reasons to explore Stratford, leading to more dining, shopping and overnight stays," Murray said.

The Christmas Trail, first launched in 2014, has nine new businesses participating in the 2025 edition. Both the 2024 and 2025 editions of the trail are the largest in the program's history.

"The trail continues to introduce more people to a variety of local businesses, benefiting everyone involved," Murray said.

More information about the Christmas Trail can be found online by visiting <https://visitstratford.ca/christmastrail>.

Rae announces \$125,000 to support mental health of local first responders

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

As part of the Ontario government's \$32 million investment through the Mental Health Supports for Public Safety Personnel (MHS4PSP) program, local emergency services will be receiving funding to help provide specialized supports for our first responders.

"Our provincial government will continue to stand with our first responders, so they can protect our rural communities," said Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae. "Our public safety personnel work tirelessly to protect and support our communities, and they deserve access to mental health services that meet their unique needs. We are committed to building strong and resilient first responders – and, in turn, strong and resilient communities."

First responders and public safety personnel are frontline workers who respond to emergencies and 911 calls. This can include fire, police and emergency health services. These individuals are at a higher risk of experiencing occupational stress injuries because of routine exposure to traumatic events while responding to emergencies.

The program will provide funding to create specialized supports, ensuring those who protect Ontario have the help they need, when and where they need it, a media release from Rae's office stated.

The Fire Services departments of North Perth, the Town of Minto and the Town of Mint's Mapleton Fire Rescue will each receive \$25,000. The County of Perth's Emergency Health Services and the Stratford Police Services Board will likewise receive \$25,000 each – netting a total investment of \$125,000.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.STRATFORDTIMES.COM

Library's upcoming programming encourages connection, sharing passion

ALEX HUNT

Times Correspondent

In a fast-moving world, sometimes it's good to slow down and connect. The Stratford Public Library encourages connection with its upcoming programming.

Over the decades, the library has evolved into a community hub offering a variety of programs with a focus on providing connection and socialization to locals. From children to adults, there is something for everyone to enjoy, learn and grow from.

"Our library is an open and welcoming space for everyone – whether you're here to read, learn or simply connect with others. It's a place where community thrives," said Brandi Gillett, community engagement supervisor at the library. "All of our programs are free and designed to be easy to access. Most don't require registration, and if they do, you'll find clear details on our website."

Upcoming library kids and teen programs include:

- BattleBots is taking place this Saturday from 10-11:30 a.m. Kids around the age of nine can design and build their own robots, then compete in exciting challenges.

- Tween Dinosaur Disaster will roar on Nov. 28 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tweens (Grades 4 to 7) will divide into teams and race through the library, completing challenges and survival puzzles.



(ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

Library assistants Diane Danen and Ian Murray, community engagement supervisor Brandi Gillett and public service librarian Taziah Fioze-Booker pose in the Stratford Public Library.

- Kids Holiday Edition programming will take place throughout December, offering activities such as Crafternoon, Legomania, Movin' and Groovin' and Once Upon a New Year.

For the adults:

- A virtual L.M. Montgomery Presentation will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 25 from 7-8 p.m. In this presentation, scholar Emily Woster will explore how Montgomery's love of books shaped her writing and kept her connected to her muse during her

years in Ontario.

- Musical Appreciation Afternoons are taking place on Nov. 28 and Dec 5, 2-3 p.m. In these sessions, music connoisseur Ann Reynolds takes us on a journey through musical worlds from Toronto to Europe and beyond. Each session features themed selections and Reynolds' commentary to bring the music to life.

- Craft and Connect: Make Holidays Edition will take place on Dec. 3 and 10, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Attendees can bring and work on their holiday crafts or try one of the libraries projects. This no- or low-tech program is all about relaxing, creating and connecting with fellow makers.

The library also hosts a Thursday night Writer's Club, Chess nights, Storytimes, Book Clubs and other programs.

Gillett said that the library team has learned that people are craving more opportunities to connect. The library's programs are built around that need – creating spaces for genuine human connection and moments of joy.

"As librarians, our mission is to serve the community. We're here for the people – every program, every service is about meeting their needs," said Gillett. "Seeing the impact of people coming together, share their passions and form real connections through our programs and services is truly beautiful."

Shelf help

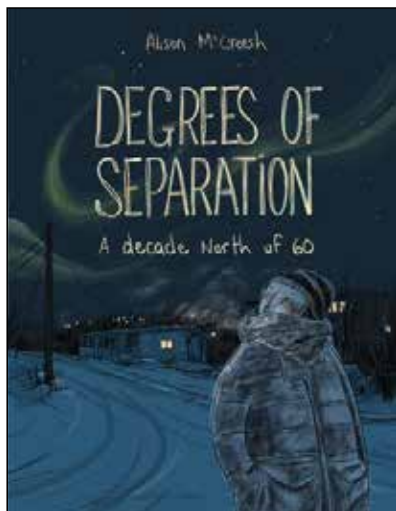
ALIDA LEMIEUX

Stratford Public Library

Degrees of Separation: A Decade North of 60, by Alison McCreesh
@SPL: GN FIC McCre

Pulled by her sense of adventure, 21-year-old Alison McCreesh left her hometown of Chicoutimi, Quebec in 2008 and hitchhiked to the Yukon. A summer job working in an ice cream parlour in Dawson City marked the beginning of a decade of life, travel, and work throughout the circumpolar region of the world. *Degrees of Separation* is McCreesh's love letter to the north; a settler's chronicle of connection-building with the land, community, and history there in graphic memoir format. It's also a diary of day-to-day life navigating the challenges of "adulthood" and becoming a mother, often without indoor plumbing!

Degrees of Separation is told in a series of vignettes: some with lots of dialogue and some with no text at



all, letting the greyscale drawings speak for themselves. Once I realized the book was not a continuous narrative, this storytelling format worked for me. Memories from our own lives bounce around out of chronological order, and sometimes McCreesh's do too. As both storyteller and character, McCreesh is endearingly quirky, funny, and relatable. Her blend of travelogue, history, and slice of life storytelling might be a good entry point for readers who are new to graphic novels. McCreesh even includes a contextual orientation at the beginning of the book and extensive illustrated notes at the end that provide more historical and cultural context for readers.

A minor caution: this book is heavy to hold and the text is small, which may present a barrier to some readers. Otherwise, *Degrees of Separation* is a lovely visual companion to books like *Kihiani* by Susan Aglukark or *The Right to Be Cold* by Sheila Watt-Cloutier, and readers who enjoyed *Ducks* by Kate Beaton will find connections in McCreesh's themes and art style.

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. Bermuda is located in which ocean?
2. What is the highest female voice in a choir?
3. What university is home to the Fighting Irish?
4. What is also known as Japanese horseradish?
5. The wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald occurred on what day?
6. Who hit No.1 in 2008 with the song 'Touch My Body'?
7. What is the talking dog's name in *Family Guy*?
8. What's the fancy name for a squirrel's cozy little home?
9. What country will host the 2026 Winter Olympics?
10. Who played Tony Soprano in *The Sopranos*?

This week's answers are found on pg. 27

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US!
CALL 519-655-2341 OR EMAIL STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM

Little Leaf marks five years of connection, education and community

JULIA PAUL

Times Correspondent

Five years after opening its doors at 804 Ontario St., Little Leaf Cannabis Co. Inc. has grown into more than a retail store. For co-founders Paul Thompson and Leanne McPhie, it's a place where education, compassion and conversation meet – a community hub where cannabis is reframed not as a taboo, but as a tool for wellness and connection.

"When we first opened, our goal was to create a space where people could feel comfortable learning about cannabis," said McPhie. "We wanted it to be warm, welcoming and completely judgement-free – a place where people could just come in, ask questions and feel seen."

Little Leaf celebrates its fifth anniversary on Dec. 12, marking half a decade of changing perceptions and helping residents navigate an industry that continues to evolve. The store has earned a loyal following through its focus on education and relationships rather than quick sales.

"We realized early on that we're not really in the business of cannabis – we're in the business of relationships," said Thompson. "Cannabis is just the conduit. The more we know about a person, the better we can help them find what truly fits their needs."

That philosophy has guided every part of Little Leaf's approach. While many stores operate as cash-and-carry outlets, Thompson and McPhie designed their shop to be



Little Leaf Cannabis co-founders Paul Thompson and Leanne McPhie stand together inside their Stratford store ahead of the company's fifth anniversary on Dec. 12. The pair are proud of how far their locally owned shop has come since opening five years ago, growing from a small idea into a trusted community resource for cannabis education and wellness.

conversational – a place where customers can take their time, learn and make informed decisions. Some visitors come in simply to talk or ask questions, without pressure to buy.

"We've built trust over time," McPhie said. "Some of our customers have been with us since the very beginning. We've walked with them through different life changes, helping them find what works for their individual needs. It's not about selling a product – it's about caring for people."

Over the past five years, Little Leaf has seen the market expand from about 700 available products to more than 5,000. Yet Thompson says many customers still don't know how to navigate the options. That's where education plays a key role.

"The most common questions we get are about sleep, arthritis, pain, anxiety and focus," he said. "People are looking for natural solutions that improve daily life. It's

our job to help them find the right fit – not the strongest or cheapest option, but the one that truly helps."

In addition to its retail offerings, Little Leaf has introduced a number of services rarely found in the industry. The shop offers cannabis pressing, bong cleaning, grinding and a delivery service. Through a sister company, CANNXTION, the owners also organize community events such as cannabis education nights, workshops

and entertainment venues helping bridge the gap between cannabis culture and mainstream understanding.

Their efforts haven't gone unnoticed. Little Leaf has received multiple nominations for local Business Excellence Awards, and the store's wellness sales now account for between 12 and 18 per cent of its total – far above the provincial average of two per cent. Thompson and McPhie credit their team for much of that success.

"Our staff are the heart of Little Leaf," said Thompson. "We don't see ourselves as managers and employees – we're family. Everyone here shares the same goal: to make sure each customer leaves feeling better than when they came in."

Looking ahead, the founders say they'll continue building on their mission of trust, transparency and education. A major announcement is expected in the coming year, which they plan to reveal during their anniversary celebration.

"We just want people to know there's an alternative out there that's all-natural," McPhie said. "Whatever you're dealing with, there's an option that's safe, tested and trusted. That's what Little Leaf is all about."

As Little Leaf turns five, its roots in Stratford run deeper than ever – a reflection of how understanding, empathy and curiosity can transform not only a business, but an entire community.



LET ME FIND THE RIGHT MORTGAGE FOR YOU!

PAUL BARTON | 519-272-9559
 pbarton@mortgagealliance.com
 Mortgage Agent Level 2 Lic# 10530



Paul Thompson, Kris Middleton, Rebecca Schrieber and Leanne McPhie stand behind the counter at Little Leaf Cannabis Co. in Stratford. The team's motto, "Little Leaf. Big Experience." appears on the wall behind them – a message they say captures their focus on education, care and customer experience.

GEAR UP FOR THE HOLIDAY MAGIC WITH JOYLAND'S JIGSAW PUZZLE ADVENT CALENDARS AND FESTIVE PUZZLES!

JIGSAW PUZZLE ADVENT CALENDARS*



HOLIDAY JIGSAW PUZZLES!*

All items pictured are while supplies last! Grab them before they're sold out! Joyland also has many more hidden gems just waiting to be discovered.

Joyland's
 Billiard & Games Warehouse

**64 Linton Ave
 STRATFORD, ON**
 BOARD GAMES - DARTS
 JIGSAW PUZZLES - BILLIARDS - AND MORE!

Apple SelfStorage
 St. Marys

Locally Owned

**Protect What Matters,
 Store Safely With Us**

- Climate Controlled Units
- Paved, Drive-Up Units
- Individually Alarmed Units
- Inventory Security
- Outdoor Trailer/Van Parking
- 24hr Surveillance
- Electronic Access
- Equipment Storage

60 Rd 120, St. Marys
 applestorage.com 519-284-1476

Stuff-A-Cruiser season is back

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

The Stratford Police Service is excited to be jumping full into the festive season. It announced that it will continue to support the Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South communities through the annual Stuff-A-Cruiser Drives.

Over the next month, members of the Stratford Police Service Community Resource Unit will be out in full force supporting the Stratford House of Blessing and Salvation Army at various locations collecting food and toys for those who could use a little extra support.

They will be starting with toy drives in St. Marys and Stratford, as listed below:

- St. Marys Toy Drive in support of the Salvation Army of St Marys, located at Canadian Tire (84 Wellington St. S, St. Marys) – Nov. 15 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Stratford Toy Drive in support of the House of Blessing and Salvation Army of Stratford, located at Walmart (920 Ontario St., Stratford) and Canadian Tire (1093 Ontario St., Stratford) – Nov. 22 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Stratford Food Drive in support of the House of Blessing and Salvation Army Stratford, located at Zehrs (865 Ontario St., Stratford), No Frills (618 Huron St., Stratford), Sobeys (581 Huron St., Stratford) and Walmart (920 Ontario St., Stratford) – Nov. 29 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- St Marys Food Drive in support of the Salvation Army of St Marys, located at Your Independent Grocer (780 Queen St. E, St. Marys) and Foodland (84 Wellington St., St. Marys) – Dec. 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Stratford Police Service is excited to be supporting the House of Blessing and the Salvation Army with the Stuff-A-Cruiser campaign once again and are looking forward to seeing the amazing support community members provide each and every year.



STRATFORD TIMES

*"I know the paper is free,
but can I get a subscription
anyways?"*

Yes. We understand that some people might like the convenience of the Stratford Times arriving at their home (located near or far) through Canada Post, so we do have subscriptions available for this purpose.

The price for a subscription is
\$51.43 + GST = \$54.00

To subscribe, please e-transfer
granthavenmedia@gmail.com and include
your full mailing address in the comments,
or send a cheque with mailing address to
Grant Haven Media, PO Box 2310,
St. Marys, ON N4X 1A2.

Robert Ritz to share his vision for Grand Trunk site this week

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

In keeping with the holiday season, local architect Robert Ritz has a present for Stratford city council – and the whole Stratford community.

His company, R. Ritz Architect Inc., has a vision for the Grand Trunk site and it will be shared with the community at an open house on Nov. 25.

Ritz has attended and delegated in the many ad hoc meetings held over the past two years to decide what form the Grand Trunk project should take. He has listened carefully, considered different perspectives and created a plan he hopes will respond to the complex needs of Stratford.

In presenting his plan, Ritz is hoping for a response from the people who best understand the importance of the Grand Trunk site – those who live and work in the city. Organizers say that feedback is essential and are soliciting opinions from the public.

When adapted with the input of residents, the plan will be presented to city hall for their consideration, at no charge.

"This is an opportunity to participate in the creation of a landmark that will change the face of our city and provide badly needed services for our population," an invitation from Get Concerned Stratford reads. "You are warmly invited to participate in planning the future of the Grand Trunk site."

The unveiling takes place at the Army, Navy and Air Force Veteran's Association at 151 Lorne Ave. E at 7 p.m. on Nov. 25.

The vision for the Grand Trunk site has yet to be determined, though the aforementioned ad hoc Grand Trunk renewal committee has been disbanded. City consultant Svec Group is currently investigating pricing for keeping part of the Grand Trunk superstructure and will be back to council in the future with the workings of a plan.

Ritz's vision is a separate endeavour independent of council and the committee's work.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Robert Ritz will be presenting his firm's vision for the keystone Grand Trunk site this week. Pictured here is a rendering being shared on social media about the presentation.

DISCOVER YOUR DREAM CRUISE VACATION!

JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL TRAVEL
PRESENTATION FEATURING TWO
LEADING CRUISE COMPANIES
SHOWCASING UNFORGETTABLE
DESTINATIONS AROUND THE WORLD!

NOVEMBER 24, 2025

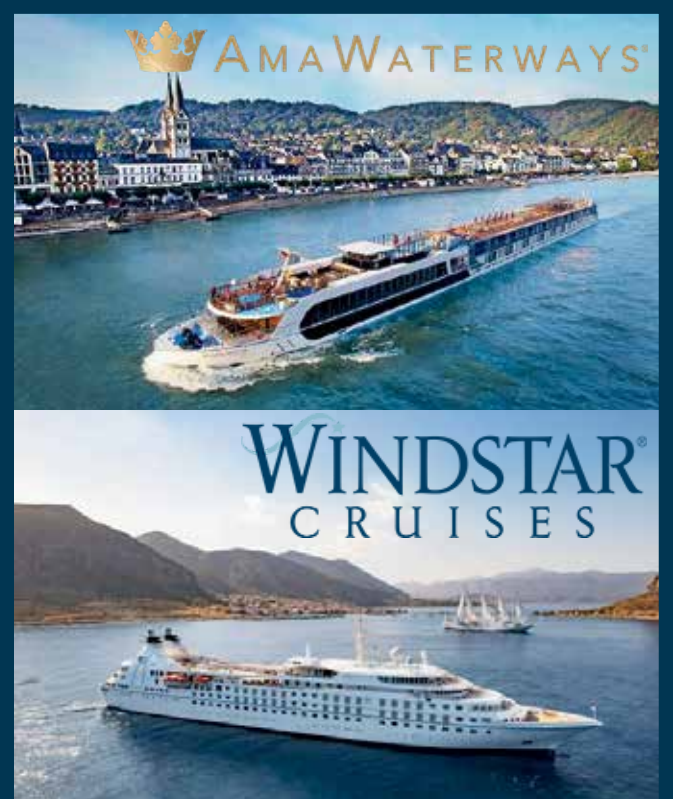
3 p.m.

Wilmot Recreation Centre
(Room A), 1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden

7 p.m.

Pyramid Recreation Centre
(End Zone), 317 James St S, St. Marys

To RSVP, email
stew@stonetowntravel.com
or call our office



St. Marys Branch (TICO #5002839)

150 Queen St. E., St. Marys, ON N4X 1B4

519-284-2332

agent@stonetowntravel.com

**STONETOWN
TRAVEL**

New Hamburg Branch (TICO #5002840)

210 Mill St., New Hamburg, ON N3A 1P9

226-333-9939

newhamburg@stonetowntravel.com

STRATFORDTIMESSPORTS

Kipfer made OHL debut, Warriors sail past Welland and outlast the Corvairs in cross-conference play

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Hunter Steel Warriors played two cross-conference games last weekend, hosting the Welland Jr. Canadians and travelling to Caledonia for a matchup with the Corvairs.

Quinn Kipfer made his Ontario Hockey League debut with the North Bay Battalion against the Sarnia Sting on Nov.9. Kipfer said to the Times he enjoyed the opportunity to play his first OHL game.

"It was exciting and really cool to finally get my debut. I got to spend the weekend with them (Battalion), and I made my debut; they just made me feel comfortable, and I was able to jump in and play my game," Kipfer said.

When asked about the pace comparison between the two leagues, Kipfer added that the OHL's pace is more aggressive than the GOHL's style of play.

"OHL is a faster pace. I think more of a skilled game than in the junior B loop," Kipfer said.

"It's a bit tougher, a bit more of a grind, harder style of play, where in the OHL, every guy can make a play, and it's a little more skilled and faster to make those deci-

Stratford Warriors						
2025-26 Stats						
(as of November 17, 2025)						
Player	Pos	GP	G	A	PTS	
Lucas Minard	F	17	11	2	13	
Jonas Schmidt	F	11	5	8	13	
Colin Slattery	F	17	5	8	13	
Max Wildfong	F	17	7	5	12	
Quinn Kipfer	F	15	5	7	12	
Jack McGurn	F	17	4	8	12	
Rhyse Brown	F	16	3	7	10	
Dax Vader	F	16	2	7	9	
Dominic Marshall	F	17	6	2	8	
Will Coward	D	17	0	8	8	
Grady Murphy	F	16	6	0	6	
Evan Arnold	F	9	4	2	6	
Aaron Green	D	10	2	4	6	
Haden Frayne	D	15	1	5	6	
Coen Galbraith	F	16	0	6	6	
McQuen HayLock	F	16	1	3	4	
Matthew Blake	D	14	0	4	4	
Joseph Curtin	D	16	0	4	4	
Drew Hodge	D	16	0	4	4	
Mateo Craievich	D	12	0	3	3	
Beckham McLeod	D	6	0	0	0	
Goalies	Record	GAA	SV-%			
Noah Bender	7-2-0-1	2.06	0.929			
Gage Hurst	3-0-0-1	1.70	0.931			
Connor Davis	1-1-1-0	3.34	0.841			

sions."

Goaltender Noah Bender has been a solid acquisition for the Warriors. The 18-year-old native of Waterloo has a 6-2-0-1 record in nine starts, with a 2.17 goals-against average (GAA) and .926 save percentage (SV%), both of which are in the top ten of the league's qualified goaltending categories.

When it comes to Bender, the focus is not to be ahead and have a short memory, while allowing the Warriors to win every time.

"My mindset whenever I'm in that is always just staying in the moment, not focusing on past or future, just focusing on stopping the next shot," Bender said.

At press time, the Warriors entered the weekend with the seventh-best record in the Western Conference, tied with the sixth-ranked Waterloo Siskins, both with nine wins. Despite playing the fewest games in the GOHL, the Warriors ranked seventh-worst overall with 52 goals scored and ninth out of the 12 teams in the Western Conference.

In preparation for the weekend's games, head coach Dave Williams says the team needs to get into the habit of winning the games and stay aggressive when generating scoring opportunities.

"We just want to try and build some momentum. I mean, we're able to win two games on the weekend, and with the parity in the league, this seems like we need to try and put some streaks together, no matter how long. But you need to try to put some wins together. So, keep focusing on what we're trying to do," Williams said.

"We're still struggling a little bit to score goals offensively. I keep reminding the guys to shoot pucks in good areas. Get selfish when they have the puck in good areas, making sure we're finding ways to the net. It's a simple recipe."

Assistant captains Joseph Curtin and Rhyse Brown say the focus is to build on the wins from last weekend and put together a lengthy streak.

"We know it's a big weekend; we've got to start building on these wins. We can't keep splitting weekends. We got to add some wins together, so it keeps this streak going," Curtin said.

"I think we just got to come up with the same energy that we came out with last weekend. Play hard for all 60 minutes in both Welland and Caledonia, and results come our way if we play how we played," Brown said.

On Nov. 14 against the Welland Jr. Canadians, the Warriors hosted their annual Hat, Mitt and Scarf Toss game, with all items collected in the rink following the Warriors' first goal going to the Stratford Connection Centre.

After Welland struck first at 11:32 of the first period, the goal from Dominic Marshall with 3:17 left put the Warriors on the board, and the fans tossed their donations onto the ice for collection.

The score remained at 1-1 until the game turned into a goal-scoring frenzy in the second period. It began when Jr. Canadians retook the lead with an early goal in the early stage of the middle frame. Goals from Grady Murphy and Colin Slattery gave the Warriors their first lead of the game, but the visitors tied the game at three at the midway mark of the period.

Lucas Minard joined the goal-scoring downpour with two goals in 34 seconds to give the home side the lead for good. Jack McGurn ended his month-long scoring draught with 54 seconds remaining to give the Warriors a cushioned 6-3 lead heading into the third period.

Welland drew one closer 1:39 into the final frame, but Stratford pulled away late with Minard's first career GOHL hat trick, and Rhyse Brown scored his second straight game with a goal. Goaltender Gage Hurst had a shaky fourth career GOHL start but stopped twelve of sixteen Welland shots for his third win of the season.

Marshall spoke to the Times after the game about the special goal. "Pretty good. It's a lot of energy in the air, and obviously things are flying, so you feel good," Marshall said. "You always want to score a goal like that when you're a kid. It's an awesome goal to score."

Minard credited his linemates, who were

GOHL Western Conference Standings							
(as of November 17, 2025)							
Team	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS	GF	GA
Chatham Maroons	17	2	1	2	37	110	65
Elmira Sugar Kings	16	2	1	0	33	96	42
St. Marys Lincolns	14	5	1	0	29	75	44
London Nationals	14	7	0	0	28	95	73
Stratford Warriors	11	3	1	2	25	63	42
St. Thomas Stars	12	7	0	1	25	80	66
Waterloo Siskins	10	5	3	1	24	60	50
LsSalle Vipers	10	10	2	0	22	74	81
Strathroy Rockets	7	12	1	0	15	78	85
Komoka Kings	6	12	2	0	14	61	85
Listowel Cyclones	6	13	1	0	13	47	64
Sarnia Legionnaires	0	21	0	0	0	33	144

fundamental in his performance.

"Yeah, I thought my linemates had a huge deal about that. Schmitt (Jonas Schmidt) and Dax (Vader) both played great. Just happened to find the net three times," Minard said.

Williams was pleased with the team's goal-scoring output but knows they need to clean up the miscues.

"The positive for me is we scored eight goals. We've been struggling a little bit. Hopefully, we'll gain some confidence from putting some of those pucks in the net. But I thought we were a little sloppy at times with the puck," Williams said.

"We could have managed the puck a lot better. The positive is scoring some goals, thinking something that we've chatted a lot about and have struggled to do, but don't like to give up on either."

The Warriors travelled to Caledonia on Nov. 16 for an evening matchup with the Corvairs at the Haldimand County Caledonia Centre.

Caledonia got on the board first in the opening period, but Kipfer responded for the Warriors at the 8:09 mark of the second period. From the second period onward, the Warriors controlled the game with solid defence and clutch goaltending by Bender, as well as timely goal scoring.

Minard notched his fourth goal of the weekend, 12th of the season, early in the third period as Stratford led 2-1.

The second goal by Kipfer with 33 seconds left sealed the game and secured the Warriors' fourth straight win.

Team captain Haden Frayne was pleased with the team's performance.

"Yeah, it was definitely a fast game, a heavy game. I thought we did a great job all night, on closing fast, on them, taking away all their time and space," Frayne said. "They were hitting hard, but we brought the intensity right back. It was a great game from all of us."

For Williams, the team grinded through to pick up a win in a challenging arena.

"Yeah, it's always tough to come. You don't have to play back-to-back, especially when you're coming and playing a team that didn't play the night before, but I thought we kind of stuck with it. Would have been nice to have scored a few more goals in there, but it wasn't for a lack of trying, especially in the second period," Williams said.

"I think we probably should have found the back of that a few more times and might have made the night a little bit easier for us, but nothing wrong with having to play right to the final buzzer and kind of grind away to find a way."

Next up for the Warriors is the first multi-game homestand of the season. The St. Thomas Stars come to town for the first time this season on Nov. 21, and the Strathroy Rockets face the Warriors for the first time this season in a late-matinée matchup on Nov. 23.

Stratford Irish soar past Strathroy Jets in a road OT win

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

In a game that lived up to its potential, the Stratford Irish came back to defeat their archrival, the Strathroy Jets, 5-4 in overtime on Nov. 14.

For the second straight game, the Irish got to a hot start in the opening frame. In a span of 24 seconds, the visitors took a 2-0 lead on goals from Thomas Maia. Maia has recorded four points in the last two games (two goals and two assists), while Ray Robbins has three points over the previous two games

with the assist on the second Maia goal.

But the Jets took off with three unanswered goals to close off the wild first period to take the lead 3-2 after twenty minutes.

Christian Polillo tied the game for Stratford 56 seconds into the second period, but the Jets responded with the late goal before the period



ended and went into the third with a 4-3 lead.

With under eight minutes to play in regulation, Cole Theissen scored the game-tying goal for the Irish on the powerplay and sent the game into overtime. With four points, Theissen has tallied seven points (two goals and five assists) in the last two games.

In the extra frame, Irish team captain Zach Magwood scored the game-winning goal to give the Irish a critical extra point to keep pace with the unbeaten Alvinston Killer Bees in the Metropolitan South Division.

With two more points, including the assist on the OT winner, Polillo has tallied five points in the last four games. Irish Goaltender Zachery Weir made 36 saves for his third win of the season.

The Irish return home to the William Allman Memorial Arena on Nov. 22 as they welcome the Six Nations Ironmen in a conference matchup.

U16 Lakers continue to roll with the road win over the RedHawks

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

The Huron-Perth Lakers U16 AAA squad continued their strong start to the 2025-2026 ALLIANCE season with a dominant 5-1 win on the road over the Cambridge Jr. RedHawks on Nov. 14.

Joseph Haskett got the Lakers on the board in the first period with his fourth

goal of the season midway through the first period. Colton Van Geffen notched his second goal of the season on the powerplay late in the period to give the Lakers a 2-0 lead after twenty minutes.

Callum Brooks scored his tenth and eleventh goals of the season in the second period to put the Lakers' lead at 4-0 through 40 minutes of play.

Evan Fisher's sixth of the season gave

the Lakers a commanding 5-0 lead before Cambridge scored midway through the final frame to prevent a shutout bid by Lakers goaltender Rylan Da Costa. Ethan Bridges led the Lakers with three assists.

Huron-Perth improved to a league-best 13-1-0 this season. Head coach Jason Brooks was pleased with the team's overall performance.

"I thought we had a good first two periods. We skated well. We got in on the forecheck, created a lot of turnovers, and then capitalized on our chances," Brooks said.

"We got a little bit comfortable with our lead in the third. Maybe got a little casual, but ultimately, I'm happy we got the two points. We got the win, and (that's what) we came here to do."

**BLACK
FRIDAY
SALE**

\$0

BRING YOUR OWN PHONE

UPFRONT COSTS

FREE SIM Card

NO Activation Fee!

+ plans as low as \$55/mth

Keep your number and save \$90!

Monday, November 17 to Friday, November 28

 **mornington**



**Samsung
Galaxy
S25 FE**

as low as
\$0/mth*

Reg \$29.81/mth

purchase
as low as
\$0



**Google
Pixel 10**

as low as
\$8/mth*

Reg \$31.41/mth*

purchase
as low as
\$148.90



**Google
Pixel 10 Pro**

as low as
\$22/mth*

Reg \$40.25/mth*

purchase
as low as
\$478.65

**NO trade-in
required**

**NO device return
required**

**No activation or
upgrade fees**

 **mornington**

140 Downie Street, Stratford
800 250 8750 mornington.ca

See store for details. Prices subject to change. Some restrictions may apply. May be subject to errors, changes, and limited availability of stock. Taxes may be extra. Black Friday Sale is November 17 to 28, 2025. All devices are 128 GB models, except iPhone 17, iPhone Air, Samsung S25+ models which are 256 GB. Phone colours may not be exactly as shown. *Monthly TAB and purchase prices shown are based on a \$70/mth plan. Lower monthly plans (\$30 to \$69.99) may be available with adjusted monthly or purchase phone price. Customer must sign to a monthly, two year term plan during the Black Friday Sale. If line or account is canceled before the two year term has ended, the customer is required to pay the remainder of the phone cost. Pre-ordering a device does not obligate the customer to sign a two year term during the Black Friday Sale, nor are there any obligated costs to the customer.

Stratford's Spencer Hyde voted National Hot Rod Association's rookie of the year

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

First year Funny Car driver Spencer Hyde, originally from Stratford, was named the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA)'s Rookie of the Year at the 2025 Mission Foods Drag Racing Series Awards Ceremony at the Pechanga Resort and Casino in Temecula, Calif.

Hyde, who races for Hall of Fame tuner and team owner Jim Head, received the most votes from a national media panel recognizing his on-track performance as well as his contributions through media coverage and fan engagement.

"It's a huge feather in my cap to come out here as a nobody and do well," said Hyde. "We're at a 50 per cent win-loss ratio, which is pretty tough to do your first year out here. You've got a guy like Tony Stewart, who won it last year, other big names in our sport. Last race in Vegas, I lined up against Del Worsham, who was Rookie of the Year in 1991. To be added to this list is a huge honour. I hope to be another Rookie of the Year who goes on to win big races and championships."

A top ten finisher in the high-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Rookie of the Year winner Spencer Hyde, originally from Stratford, thanked his team and family for their support during his rookie season at the 2025 Mission Foods Drag Racing Series Awards Ceremony at the Pechanga Resort and Casino in Temecula, Calif.

ly competitive Funny Car class, Hyde won the Las Vegas Four-Wide NHRA Nationals Mission Foods #2Fast2Tasty Challenge early in the season and raced to two final round appearances at the New England Nationals (Epping, N.H.) and the Sonoma Nationals (Sonoma, Calif.), respectively. He was also the No. 1 qualifier at the opening race of the NHRA Countdown play-offs during the Reading Nationals (Reading, Pa.). He secured two additional semifinal finishes and six quarterfinals finishes throughout the 20-race season.

In addition to his on-track success, Hyde has been a frequent guest on the NHRA Nitro Alley Stage during national events with NHRA announcer Hannah Rickards talking with fans about his rookie season.

The Canadian-based driver has joined numerous motorsports podcasts throughout the season, engaging with the hosts about his racing accomplishments and his first year behind the wheel of a nitro Funny Car. Hyde was also a guest on season two of the hit show, Talkin' Funny Cars with Buddy Hull, where he shared how he got into drag racing and what he has loved about racing in the Funny Car class thus far.

SEND US YOUR SPORTS REPORTS!
STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM

THE SALVATION ARMY

Stratford
Registration

<https://tinyurl.com/385e7bw4>

THE SALVATION ARMY

Christmas
FOOD DRIVE

TWO DAY EVENT

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 28TH
Located at Giant Tiger
1-4pm

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29TH
Located at Sobeys and Giant Tiger
9am-2pm

Most needed Items
Lunch Snacks, Canned Pasta, Cereal, Mixes (i.e. Muffin, Cookie, Pancake)

MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Vaughn Crawford fires a shot on goal from the slot during last Saturday's U11 B Stratford Aces game.



(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)
Liam Orchard dishes the puck to a teammate during the U11 BB Stratford Warriors game last Wednesday.



(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)
Maggie Nahrgang releases a quick wrist shot during the U11 C Stratford Aces game last Tuesday.



(PAIGE CAMPBELL PHOTO)
Lucas De Wit launches a shot from the point during this past Monday's U16 BB Stratford Warriors game.

Mike's Bowling Lanes High Scores Nov. 10-16, 2025

PinPals Thomas Holland 108 Emily Jones 104 Gregory Jones 116	Caleb Derks 142 Noah Saunders 139 Roland Rains 171 Talia Klomp 162	Seniors Austin Bauer 185 Peyton Boyles Keating 184 Jake Sippel 191, 516 triple Zachary Clarke 249, 593 triple Dominic Boyles Keating 235, 648 triple Alex Ward 233 Sydney Smith 213, 547 triple Wiatt Robinson 183 Austin Martin 245 Payton Petrie 288, 727 triple Payton Kainz 213, 607 triple Owen Martin 208 Devon DeYound 188	Jeron Van Dyk 85 Christian Payton 113 Kerrie Culliton 165 Andy Van Schaik 186 Dan Noon 237, 375 triple Rhett Chapman 79 Maddie Jenner 76 Lucas Forte 142 Norm Schenk 193 Michael Ambrozic 211, 365 triple Luke Patterson 192 Tiffany Keller 166 Meghan O'Donovan 151 Michael Hitchcock 169 Derek Wray 158 Jacob Kaufman 179
Bowlasaurus Annika Klomp 100 Theo Brown 109 Owen Farthing 113	Juniors Abby Smith 202, 495 triple Myla Douglas 243 Hugo Black 248, 565 triple Tyler Koch 155 Brent Louwagie 169, 473 triple Sydney Shillolo 181, 472 triple Anna Ward 153, 451 triple Brienne Bauer 222 Charlee Koyle 153 Lauren Furtney 228, 561 triple Ryan Scheereer 194, 531 triple	Special Olympics: Connor Boston 80	
PeeWee Lincoln Butcher 115			
Bantams Coen Everitt 204 Scarlett Illman 254 Austin Lingard 104			

SDSS grads' film, *When The Party's Over*, wins big at Forest City and Ontario youth film festivals

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Student filmmakers and former Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) students Peer Wahlquist and Emelia Auster had their moment in the limelight recently after the film they made with their friends and fellow BearCast film club members in Grade 12 took Best Narrative at two youth film festivals.

Directed by Wahlquist and written by Auster, *When The Party's Over* is about a group of friends who, during an unexplained apocalyptic event, decide they want to spend the last day of their lives partying together at one of their houses. The film was shot in February over the course of one 12-hour day inside a friend's house in Stratford, with their friends and fellow film-club members serving as actors and crew.

Wahlquist edited and submitted the film for consideration at the Forest City Youth Film Festival in London, where it took home Best Narrative on Oct. 28. While Auster, who is now attending the University of Edinburgh in Scotland,

couldn't attend the screening and awards ceremony in-person, Wahlquist, now a film studies student at Sheridan College in Oakville, made the trip to London and video conferenced Auster in so the pair could experience the event together.

After winning at the London youth film festival, the film was then entered into the Ontario Youth Film Festival, where it won the top prize in the same category during a virtual screening and awards ceremony on Nov. 13.

"It was very fulfilling for me, personally, because it was something we'd been gearing this film towards for a long time," Wahlquist said. "I had decent prospects for the Forest City festival, even though I was really nervous the day of, but I had no idea how we were going to perform at the Ontario Youth Film Festival since last year, there was a very strong film that won. And there were some very strong films this year as well, so I wasn't sure how we were going to perform, but we ended up sweeping the top narrative category, which is very exciting."

"I am surprised and very happy, but



(PEER WAHLQUIST PHOTO)

Pictured from left are Emelia Auster (video-conferenced in from Scotland), Peer Wahlquist and Rowan Watson, who plays Polly in *When The Party's Over*, at the Forest City Youth Film Festival screening and awards ceremony in London Oct. 28. The student film won best narrative at that film festival and, later, the Ontario Youth Film Festival on Nov. 13.

"I'm mostly very proud of our team because they put so much into it and we really could not have done any of it without all of our friends who put so much time and patience into us and this project," Auster added.

While the provincial screening and awards ceremony was entirely virtual, Wahlquist said he enjoyed having the opportunity to watch his and Auster's film the way it should be watched, on the big screen at the Forest City Youth Film Festival. Not only was it a thrill to watch their work with the best high-school filmmakers in the area, but Wahlquist said it was particularly gratifying to hear it in high-fidelity surround sound and watch it in high dynamic range (HDR).

"We had these cameras that could shoot it in HDR, so we did it in HDR, and then I did a lot with the (sound) mixing as well," he said. "This was my first time mixing a film on industry standard software and I asked my friend, who's an audio engineer, to kind of help me out with how I should mix this as professionally as I can. So, to finally be able to actually hear my mix in a space that can support the high fidelity that it is was really exciting for me. There's so much low rumble in the film; that really enhanced it in my opinion. This was how it was supposed to be watched."

Both Auster and Wahlquist said they also had the opportunity to learn from

the work of their fellow filmmakers, both from the immediate region and from across the province. Specifically, the pair noted the differences between filming a project featuring a large ensemble cast like theirs' and projects featuring smaller casts.

"The main difference between our piece and the others in the competition is that we were very privileged to have a pre-existing team of so many people," Auster said. "We were in a very different style of production because we knew we had a much bigger crew to work with, so I think that's ultimately what was able to set us apart – because, you know, the power of friendship."

"What I thought was very cool about (the films from the Ontario Youth Film Festival) was a lot of them shot on location; one of them shot at Times Square. Often, when I'm starting to work on a project, I think about and I talk with Peer about what we can feasibly do as we are often working within constraints. Our piece is set in one house because we knew that was what we had, but it's interesting to think about how much further we could go."

Both Auster and Wahlquist have taken their film festival wins as encouragement to begin work on a new film they hope to shoot with their friends when they come back to Stratford for the summer next year.

**Busy days,
any day.
Delicious
is always
on hand.**

Get your
free
menu!

Every day, open your freezer to
over 200 meals made especially
for seniors, delivered for free*
with no contracts.

Locally owned
1-877-404-4246
HeartToHomeMeals.ca

PROUDLY
CANADIAN

**HEART TO
HOME MEALS**
DELICIOUS MEALS MADE FOR SENIORS™

*Some conditions may apply.

HAVE A COMING EVENT COMING UP?
Contact: stratfordtimes@gmail.com or
call 519-655-2341

Kerry Ramsay's *Helium* encourages lifting others up with community

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Kerry Ramsay, founder of Fresh Idea Collective, hopes her new book will carry on the mandate of uplifting others through coming together as a community.

Ramsay held a launch for her book *Helium* at the Livery Yard during the evening of Nov. 13. Ramsay read some passages from her book to the audience and gave examples of women taking charge and building community, such as the Livery Yard's Liesa Hartman and the Iris Collective, co-founded by Jo-Dee Burbach and Cranla Warren. Keeping women in entrepreneurship in mind, Ramsay said that for those too busy to read a book cover to cover, *Helium* was designed in a way where readers can digest the book's concepts with summaries and highlights throughout.

Ramsay was touched that many supporters came down for her book launch, including her parents, husband, members of the Stratford and area community and her friend Karou Miller, a tea sommelier and owner of Kingston's Cha Cha Tea.

"Tonight was just a beautiful night," Ramsay said. "It was community in action, and this is what the book is all about and honestly, I hope that anyone who reads this book can experience this same feeling of what it feels like to be lifted and to lift others because that's what it's all about."

The Fresh Idea Collective is a support-based networking group empowering women entrepreneurs across Perth County. Ramsay compared the idea of supporting women as a community-driven leader to a helium-filled balloon, like the bright yellow balloon on the cover of her book, lifting.

"In a similar way, I think we all are lifted when we are part of community and not only that, but as women we all have the potential to become community-driven leaders," she said.

Helium can either be purchased at Fanfare Books or Got it Made in downtown Stratford, with more locations to be announced. More information about the book, including preordering, can be found online by visiting <https://www.freshideacollective.com/helium>.



(CLEAR PERSPECTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

Kerry Ramsay, Fresh Idea Collective founder, reads a passage from her book *Helium* to the audience at the book launch, which took place on Nov. 13 at the Livery Yard.

Avondale's Carolfest to drive Christmas spirit

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Avondale United Church's annual Carolfest will get visitors ready for the holidays with lots of performances, including getting the audience to sing along.

Avondale will have their annual Carolfest on Nov. 29 starting at 7 p.m. The event will be hosted by award-winning actress Laura Condlin, who had multiple performing roles at the Stratford Festival over the years including Miss Hannigan in the 2025 production of *Annie*. Carolfest will also feature guest speaker David Prosser, a writer and editor with several Stratford Festival publications, and performances by the Stratford District Secondary School Jazz Concert Combo band, the Stratford Concert Band and the Carolfest Choir.

"It's really an evening that encompasses all the arts," said Avondale community engagement coordinator Aleah Graff.

The church will accept free will donations for the Stratford House of Blessing

Food Bank and Toy Drive, ensuring families in need receive holiday cheer.

"The need is always greater and greater every year, it seems," said Carolfest organizer Doris Barkley.

"Especially around Christmastime with their toy drive so it's really important to be able to contribute in that way and make sure that every child has the holiday that they deserve," Graff added.

"And food on the table," said Barkley.

The audience at Carolfest can expect interactive performances.

"There will be lots of singing and we get the audience participating so it's not just a concert that you're sitting and listening to, but you're actually getting involved yourself and getting in the spirit of Christmas," Barkley said.

Graff is looking forward to the multi-generational line up.

"It's nice seeing the talents come together, the older generation influencing the younger generations and vice-versa. For me, that really screams community when we're able to work intergenerationally."



(DORIS BARKLEY PHOTO)

Carolfest's lineup features local talent of a variety of ages. The annual concert will take place at Avondale United Church on Nov. 29.

STRATFORD TIMES

Erie Street Esso
Strickland's Toyota
Fix Auto
Stratford KIA
Expressway Ford
McDonald's - Erie St
Tim Hortons - Erie St
Stratford Mazda
7-Eleven - Erie St
Joe's Diner
The Urban Barber
Erie Convenience
Mr. Sub
Balzacs Coffee
Shoppers Drug Mart - Ontario
New Orleans Pizza

Zehrs
Food Basics
Tim Hortons - C.H. Meier
Festival Marketplace
Stratford Nissan
Stratford Subaru
Stratford Honda
Quality Festival Inn
McDonald's - Ontario St.
Papa Johns
Fore Everyone Golf
WalMart
Stratford Motor Products
A&W
Toner & Ink Shop
Rutherford Funeral Home

Athens Greek Restaurant
Stratford Legion
Gino's Pizza
Rosso's
Buzz Stop
Union Barber
Mornington Variety
Split Rail
Stratford Rotary Complex
Agriplex
No Frills
Cozyn's
Sebringville Esso
Dave's Diner - Sebringville
Stratford-Perth Museum
Sobey's

Shoppers Drug Mart - Huron
Circle K - Huron
West End Pharmacy
Tim Hortons - Huron
Stratford Hospital
Video 99 - Erie St
Jenny Trout
Stratford Medical Pharmacy
Stratford Chamber of Commerce
A.N.A.F.
Stratford Hyundai
Daisy Mart
Foodland
Stratford Variety
Brch & Wyn
Stratford Place

Stratford Chefs School
HH Delea
AJ's Hair
United Way Perth Huron
Sinclair Pharmacy
Blowes Stationery
Stratford Tourism
Coffee Culture
Stratford Public Library
The Parlour Restaurant & Inn
Dick's Barber Shop
The Livery Yard
Town Crier Marketing
North End Pharmacy
Annie's Seafood Restaurant
Avon Pharmacy

Pick Up Locations

As *Annie* continues this holiday season, lead actress reflects on her year as iconic redheaded orphan

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Harper Rae Asch found out that she was going to play the iconic redheaded orphan Annie in the Stratford Festival's 2025 production of *Annie* in September 2024. Now, over a year since that revelation, she is still kicking her heels across the Festival Theatre stage.

"It's been going really good," Asch shared with the Times in an interview just moments after a matinee performance wrapped. "I'm really excited that we've been extended, because we get to bring this into the holiday season, because the show is based around Christmas. And it's really exciting because we get to have all these festivities. The lobby's decorated for Christmas. And it's really exciting."

Asch was five years old when she got the acting bug. She joined a new school and its production of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* as an ensemble cast member. A year later at six years old, Asch got her first solo. It was sometime later, when she was nine years old, that she had her first professional gig outside of school. The rest, she said, is history. She landed the role of Annie in Stratford at 11, the same age as her character.

Asch has been coming to Stratford ever since 2023 to see performances like *Twelfth Night*, *Something Rotten!* and *Wendy and Peter Pan*, to name a few. In 2023, she saw *Rent* at the Festival Theatre, a memory that has stuck with her since.

"After the show, we got to meet Lee Siegel, he was one of the main characters in *Rent*," Asch said. "And he took my phone, and he was like, 'Hey everyone, it's Lee Siegel with Harper, and one day she's going to be performing here.'"

"It's really cool," Asch went on to say about sharing the stage with actors she

once admired from afar. "Dan (Chameroy), Laura (Condlin) and Jen (Rider-Shaw), I've seen them perform so much on the stage and I'm huge fans of them. They're so inspiring to me. So it's really cool to get to share the stage with them."

Often described as an actor's gym, Asch said that the biggest lesson she has learned while performing in *Annie* has been to treat every performance like its opening night. After all, she said, they want to give the audience magic even during mid-August, when daily performances start to wear on the performers.

Another thing that has come through this year has been her relationship with her castmates. Along with Asch, 10 other girls play the orphans in *Annie*, each bringing an immense amount of talent, hard work and dedication – dedication that should be seen, she added.

Following rave reviews, the festival announced the extension of *Annie* for an additional six weeks, with the production scheduled to wrap on Dec. 14. Asch said she is looking forward to performing the Christmas-abound show during the holiday season – and audience members should too.

"Who doesn't love Christmas?" Asch asked. "I'm really excited that the audience will be in the Christmas spirit, the holiday spirit, and I think it will just be so exciting to again bring these new audiences in and to really get that Christmas spirit going."

"It's such a festive and family show," Asch continued. "It's set around the Great Depression, but Annie has this sense of optimism, which really sends a message to all of our audiences that, you know, 'the sun will come out tomorrow' and things will get better. And I think it's a big message of empowerment and hope. So I'm really happy that audiences have really enjoyed our show. I'm really happy that we've been extended because we get to welcome new audiences to come see our show."

For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/WhatsOn/PlaysAndEvents/Production/Annie>.



(DAVID HOU PHOTO)

Harper Rae Asch's Annie leads Grace Farrell and Oliver Warbucks (played by Jennifer Rider-Shaw and Dan Chameroy, respectively) in the 2025 Stratford Festival production of *Annie*. The show has been extended into the holiday season, until Dec. 14.



(ANN BAGGLEY PHOTO)

A behind-the-scenes look at the *Annie* actresses getting ready for a production. Over the course of the year, the 11 girls playing the orphans have grown closer and stronger with each and every day, according to Asch.



Solid Gold Realty (II) Ltd., Brokerage | Independently Owned and Operated

**OPEN HOUSE
NOVEMBER 29TH FROM 1-3PM**



**IS YOUR PROPERTY GETTING
TO BE TOO MUCH?**

Why not move to a condo where the
outside work is done for you!

Milverton Meadows Condos, 33 Murray Court, Milverton
2 + 3 Bedroom units available. Act now! 2 Bathroom units available all with
in-suite laundry .. Fridge, stove, microwave, washer, and dryer all included.
Call your realtor today and book a showing. Starting at \$342,000.

ADDRESS: 3 Arthur St. S., ELMIRA | DIRECT: 519-503-2753
EMAIL: leonmartin@remax.net

STRATFORD TIMES

"I know the paper is free, but can I get a subscription anyways?"

Yes. We understand that some people might like the convenience of the Stratford Times arriving at their home (located near or far) through Canada Post, so we do have subscriptions available for this purpose.

The price for a subscription is \$77.00

To subscribe, please e-transfer granthavenmedia@gmail.com and include your full mailing address in the comments, or send a cheque with mailing address to Grant Haven Media, PO Box 2310, St. Marys, ON N4X 1A2.

A Stratford Christmas to make its return to the Festival Theatre stage for a third year

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Christmas magic is in the air as Stratford actor Monique Lund is set to join co-hosts David Rogers and Sheila McCarthy, along with a stellar lineup of performers, to take the stage at the Festival Theatre for the third annual A Stratford Christmas show.

The third-annual holiday benefit show in support of the Stratford Arts and Culture Collective (SACC) will take place on Dec. 20 at 2 p.m. Now a local holiday tradition, the 2025 version will be a family-friendly holiday celebration that will include seasonal favourites and soul-stirring classics performed by a whole host of artists from both near and a little further away.

“It’s all about Christmas, all about holiday fun,” said David Hogan, the show’s director who helped launch A Stratford Christmas with Rogers, Hogan’s fellow artistic director at Victoria Playhouse in Petrolia, and the SACC back in 2023. “It’s a great opportunity for soloists to come out and parade their gorgeous talent and celebrate Christmas. It’s very much like a grand presentation with great humour because David (Rogers) and Sheila McCarthy are very funny people.

“We like to use local talent, so we’ve invited two new local artists this year, and then Monique Lund, who’s also a local in Stratford, is going to host with David and Sheila, who are also local and live in Stratford. We want to keep it as local as possible, but there are some gorgeous talents who live in Toronto who are coming and performing.”

Created in the same vein as Victoria Playhouse’s annual Starbright Christmas show, this year’s A Stratford Christmas features a lineup of performers including ac-



(STRATFORD ARTS AND CULTURE COLLECTIVE PHOTO)

A Stratford Christmas returns to the Festival Theatre stage on Dec. 20 at 2 p.m. Pictured are co-hosts Sheila McCarthy, David Rogers and Monique Lund.

tor, dancer and vocalist Luciano DiCicco, veteran Stratford Festival actor and vocalist Barbara Fulton, actor and vocalist Elena Howard Scott, Stratford singer-songwriter

and flutist Allison Lupton, opera and musical theatre performer Annie Ramos, singer-songwriter and actor Kate Suhr, performer and recording artist Michael Vanhevel and Stratford vocalist and Avondale United Church music director Daniel Van Winden.

While Lund, another veteran of the Stratford Festival, has performed as part of the A Stratford Christmas lineup in the past, this year will mark her first as co-host alongside Rogers and McCarthy.

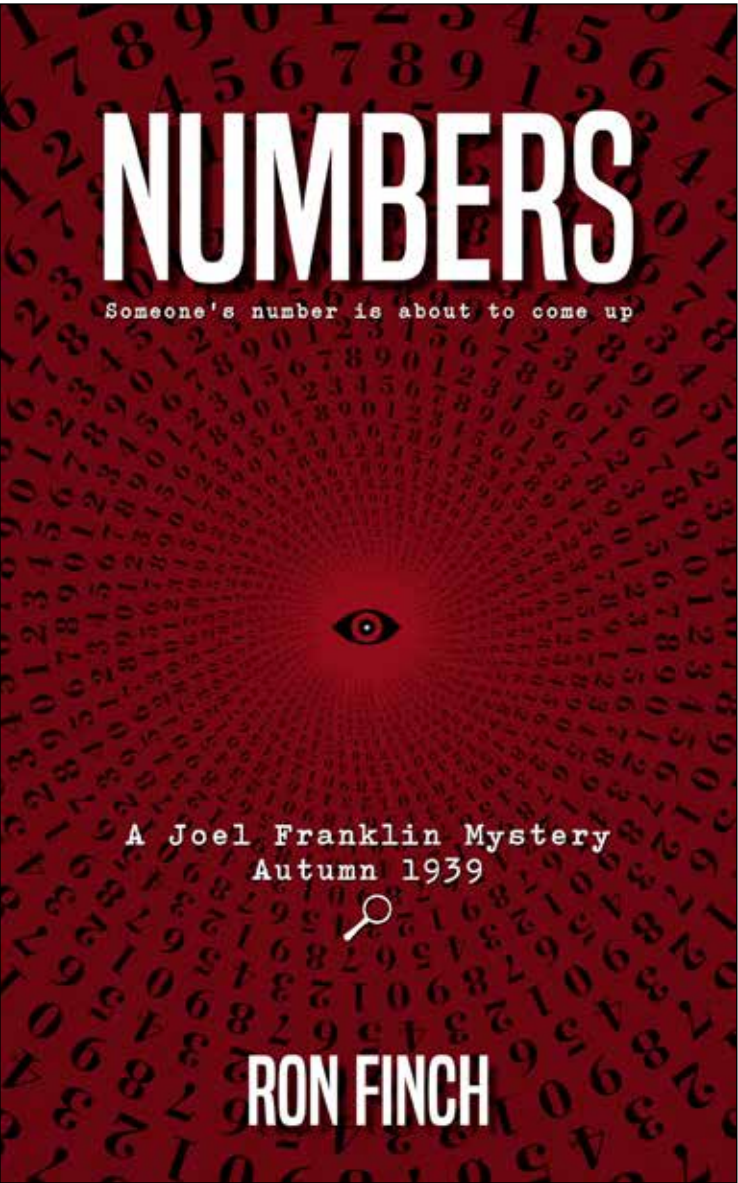
“David and Sheila just wanted a third – three’s funny,” Hogan said. “Monique is very funny and very talented, so the three of them will just charm everyone.”

Funds raised by this concert will go to the SACC’s mission as the umbrella organization for over 20 local organizations to provide support and see the construction of a community-based performance space at the Grand Trunk site. The SACC has proposed the creation of a state-of-the-art theatre that serves as the heart of a partnership among the YMCA, the Stratford Public Library and the city’s thriving arts and culture scene.

This dynamic space is intended to provide a stage for performances, a classroom for learning and a gathering place for people of all ages to connect and be inspired.

“I love their mission and I love their goal, but I love art and I love art 24 hours a day,” Hogan said. “So, when the (Stratford) Festival is (in its offseason), then there’s other stuff happening and we keep it local and we keep artists just busy and communicating and involved. So really, I just love their mission. ... And what a great place to do it, right? Stratford! It’s really extraordinary, so I’m thrilled.”

For tickets to A Stratford Christmas, visit www.stratfordfestival.ca/Christmas. The show’s runtime is approximately 140 minutes including intermission.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Local author Ron Finch has released the newest novel in the Joel Franklin mystery series. Following Det. Franklin as he’s on the trail of a killer cult, *Numbers* tells the story of a nerve-racking game of human chess as Franklin tries to outmanoeuvre the shadowed cult leader. *Numbers* is the 15th installment in the series and available on Amazon. Finch, a London, Ont.-native, is in his 80s now and started writing just after his 75th birthday. Prior to writing, he worked at his local paper the London Free Press and as a teacher of mathematics and physics, eventually became a secondary school principal.



Baby Faces of 2025

Baby's Name _____

Male or Female _____ Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Weight (birth) _____ Weight (now) _____

Parent(s) Name _____

Siblings (Name[s] & Age) _____

Grandparents _____

What I Liked best about 2025: (a reply your baby might make)

EMAIL YOUR PHOTO TO STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM BY DEC 12TH AND SEE YOUR LITTLE ONE IN OUR JAN 1ST YEAR IN REVIEW EDITION.

STRATFORDTIMES 

ONLY \$50 TAX INCLUDED

Stratford's second ever panto hits the stage this weekend

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Perth County Players are set to stage Stratford's second ever pantomime production, *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood*, and organizers are promising it to be a family-fun show residents won't want to miss.

"It's based on two stories, Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood," play director Tony Benton said. "We're bringing the two stories together. What sets a panto apart from any traditional plays is a couple of things. One of them is audience participation. So the audience will participate in the show. They'll boo the bad guys, cheer the good guys. ... And the show itself is based on fairy tales. It's big, it's loud, it's silly and it's basically designed for both kids and adults to enjoy on different levels."

This year marks an exciting milestone. Benton, a long-time community theatre member, has stepped into the director's chair for the first time, bringing a fresh and lively take on this classic tale. As Benton said, the Perth County Players are a large cast and this play was selected because of that. It's a big production with a lot of big parts.

The production also features many new faces to the Perth County Players stage, including Desmond Coles as the heroic Robin Hood and Emma Folkema as the



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

The Perth County Players are set to stage Stratford's second ever panto this weekend. *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood* hits the stage at the Stratford Intermediate School starting on Nov. 21.

delightfully funny Grovel. Fans will also be happy to see familiar favourites return, such as Jessica Damen as the dazzling Wilhemena Scarlett and Leasa Barclay as the ridiculous Snivel, henchman to the devious Sheriff of Nottingham.

Performances will take place on Nov. 21, 28 and 29 at 7:30 p.m., and on Nov. 22, 23, 29 and 30 at 2 p.m., all at the Stratford Intermediate School. As Benton said, a few years ago the players were unable to use the stage at Stratford City Hall and

performed at the local school – a performance space which fit like a glove. It has been home to the players ever since.

Tickets range from \$15 to \$25 each. For tickets and more information, visit www.perthcountyplayers.com.

Yes, it's that time again —
Christmas is coming fast!

Share the Spirit of Christmas with the
STRATFORDTIMES

Get a head start on the season with the **Stratford Times's Christmas Greetings**, publishing **December 19** — a great way to wish the community a Merry Christmas and thank your customers for their support.

A portion of proceeds will be **donated to Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth**, helping provide care and comfort to local families.

Don't wait — reserve your greeting today!

heather@granthaven.com
226.261.1837 | granthaven.com

**GRANT
HAVEN
MEDIA**

Get ready to have a Wicked good time with Stratford-Perth Pride

SYDNEY GOODWIN

Times Correspondent

Editor's note: Sydney Goodwin is the program coordinator for the Stratford-Perth Pride Centre.

Stratford-Perth Pride (SPP) has been putting together local get togethers since the summer, hosting an event the first Sunday of each month to socialize with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as well as allies, and they're getting ready for their next event: a theatre viewing of *Wicked: For Good* on Dec. 7 at 1 p.m.

Since its move, SPP has been working on its visibility within the city, making sure it is known that there is a safe space for queer individuals and allies to come and spend some time learning, meeting new people, reading, or even just needing a rest. A big way it is doing this is by starting community social outings; from a picnic in the park to a game night hosted in the centre, SPP has been providing a fun event the first Sunday of every month for people to meet others and maybe step out of their comfort zones.

As the colder weather approaches, centre staff have been thinking about ways to continue to provide these social events, adapting to the cold weather and the ear-

lier sunset. The idea of a movie night was thought of while these events were first being planned, but there wasn't a set idea of what movie they would watch, it needed to be something that would catch a lot of people's attention, something that a majority of people are excited about and would want to go to see; that was when the idea came to them: *Wicked: For Good*.

Wicked: For Good is a highly anticipated movie, many waiting excitedly since the first movie came out Nov. 21 of last year. This musical-turned movie is widely considered a queer story for its LGBT themes ever since it's stage debut back in 2003, due to the storyline of the main character, Elphaba, as she goes through life being labeled an outcast, wrong, evil and a mistake — words that ring familiar for many of those within the queer community.

The show's biggest song "Defying Gravity" gives great light to this, as it's about Elphaba being sick of living how others expect her to live, that she's through with hiding who she is for the comfort of those around her. These similarities to the LGBT experience is something that many queer viewers notice and is one of the main reasons why so many hold the story so close to their hearts, using Elphaba as their strength for living their truth, no matter what.

Opinions

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL: FICTIONS



STUART LENDER

Times Columnist

For someone such as me, in a profession such as I am – there are often numerous scenarios that provide reason to pause. At the best of times, I'm inclined to do so anyway and take in the moment, but some can only imagine the potential for that pause in funeral service.

When I was working in Toronto, there were a number of funeral homes that provided their services for what was called "coroner's calls" – calls that came in from the police or a coroner, to obtain someone who had died and transfer them to the pathology unit of such-and-such hospital,

or the office of the Chief Coroner. Inevitably they were suicides, homicides or accidents. These people were nameless strangers to me. The calls were deliberately short of information and often all I knew was the location for pick-up and the location for drop-off. On these calls you brought along such things as scissors, straps, masks, a hazmat suit and rubber boots, just in case. I think you get the idea. These calls did not mean that it was the funeral home you worked in that was even the one chosen to provide any service beyond the transfer you were called to do. It was the antithesis of what it is that makes me satisfied in my work – serving folks who I get to know a little about and share with through the commonality of understanding their emotion. In a word... a shared empathy.

But certainly, coroner's calls had their merit for one inclined to reflect. It was through them that I dwelled amongst lives I could not imagine – finding mostly the one commonality highlighted – our fragility. It was largely those coroner's calls where a certain fearlessness was cemented. Every individual's situation and the

world's façades became thin. I began to see folks as walking upon the precipice of their comfortable and/or dangerous lives and perhaps not realizing just how close they were to potentially playing out different outcomes. The boundaries of our lives became blurred.

While I am most privileged to make things easier for families and friends and provide some solace through my work, the coroner's calls illustrated their fictions for me to read in any way I chose. I have seen hangings, overdoses, gunshots, jumpers and burn victims, among other things – and I completely understand when folks ask me about those scenarios because they too have their fictions running in their heads – to better understand what sometimes is beyond their understanding.

And inevitably, when I arrived at any scene that wasn't an accident, I found myself wishing that I could have talked to those now dead, before this thing happened. I played at having been able to help them overcome their addiction, to show them that loving someone does not tie into dying for someone, that taking their

lives in the way they have was unnecessary – because I would have convinced them not to. How arrogant of me. What do I know of their experience in these worlds where something like this could happen? My expertise comes through in the myriad number of discussions I've had with those who have loved, experienced a death and are left alive. That's where I live.

What these people have all too profoundly shown me though, is that there is almost always someone left in shock and nursing a broken heart. Or is that projection? There must have been somebody who knew them, somebody who might have saved them. And yes, sometimes that would be the one weeping on the sidelines as I zip up the bag. The one being propped up in shock by the police officer. The one sitting on the curb with their face in their hands or the family sitting stone-faced in the kitchen, unable to comprehend.

I try to hold up the universal aspects of love, compassion, friendship, humanitarianism and spirituality – things that can be given from the open hand and the

open heart. Nothing need be done but that, to benefit in the giving. These attributes do not ask the question: who is worthy? They don't ask: through what belief, through what action makes these people qualified to receive love? When it is in us to give regardless. Dormant sometimes, but there.

I want to believe in the power of love, but I know that the fuel and the spark of it so often starts with empathy. That's where the real power resides. Empathy – the soil. Love – the flower. They are the two essentials for a sense of belonging. Yet all too often I'm left with the feeling that love and empathy didn't do their job. And yes, I realize, it's not always like that. Love and empathy haven't failed human beings, sometimes it's the other way around – human beings have failed them – because we, confused, fragile and self-centred angels that we are, didn't recognize them within ourselves.

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.

**Congratulations on your achievements at the
Stratford Chamber Business Excellence Awards**

14 Erie Street, Stratford | 226-906-0906
www.kdb.law

Opinions

As I See It From America: Take care of each other



PATRICK D. BURK

Times Contributor

I must say, your wonderful city never seems to disappoint. Our recent trip to see *Macbeth* was amazing. It is always a wonder and a treat to bring some friends up to see not only an amazing show but to take part in the aura that we call the “Stratford effect.” From the gracious greetings from our friends at the Arden Park – the food and service there is amazing – to the wonderful theatre experience, the magic still sparkles. We are rapidly planning our next three or four visits, have purchased our tickets for next season and have made our hotel and motel reservations. Our love affair with Stratford and its incredible and hospitable people continues.

I ran into a very nice young lady in the bank who asked me about our current situation down here in the states with our government. She was wondering how we were affected and what I thought the outcome was going to be. I am concerned that many in your country are of the opinion that what they read and hear about the current state of affairs in the U.S. is the general feel of our whole country. I can assure you that is not the case. In fact, recent polling only shows about a 33 per cent approval rating of the whole miserable situation. The vast majority are doing what they can to correct and repair what has been happening. That will take some time.

On election night this year, the progressives and the Democrats all had amazing victories. From smaller local races to statewide races, we are seeing the rebuking of the MAGA dialogue. It hasn’t been easy, but with hard work it can be done. One young local gentleman in my community became the first progressive Democrat to be elected citywide in over 20 years, quite the accomplishment. In another small city near us, the incumbent mayor was overwhelmingly re-elected and brought a whole new team

to city council. I found that to be incredible, not to mention the wins in New York City, the States or Virginia and New Jersey and the passing of the proclamation in California by a wide margin. It seems that with hard work, the tide is turning. Presidential Lame Duck status seems to be the state of our union.

I have been reading about many things in Stratford and would like to commend you on your open conversation concerning the homeless. This is a universal problem and concern. In my own city we are having the very same discussion, and we are trying to work towards a solution. The biggest problem that many of us are seeing is that there is no affordable housing and the pathway to removing yourself from the homeless situation is not very clear. It takes not only cash but a whole lot of items that need to be checked off the list to provide for those that cannot find a place to live under usual conditions. A recent discussion has ensued down here concerning the “business of homelessness.” People providing extended stay rentals in motels or substandard housing at an exorbitant cost, not having them in the best of habitable shape and forc-

ing those that have no other method of existence to just accept what is available.

The choice of many of these individuals is to save the money, bear the brunt of the weather and be able to maintain their own freedom, not slaved to the financial implications of finding an extended stay rental or all that it requires. Mental health and social services usually can step in, but even with that intervention, many still cannot be made to accept the substandard form of housing. In Stratford, I am hoping that these individuals are treated with care, love and concern. I am certain that all your residents realize that it is our duty to take care of those that have the least and to understand that one small thing can change the direction of a life. Your comfortable existence can change in a flash. Sadly, that open conversation is not that apparent down here. “If you don’t talk about it, it doesn’t exist.”

I must commend those that were responsible for the new crosswalks. I was very impressed, and they just add so much to the community. The dedication to the veterans and those that served is crucial. It is a reminder to everyone about true sacrifice and ser-

vice. I also see that the construction over Blowes is complete and will be providing much needed housing for your growing tourist trade. Isn’t it exciting that the visitors are starting to return in record numbers and support your restaurants, places of stay and businesses? That is an amazing thing. I think it is because many of the Americans feel the same way that I do. It is almost a time out from all that we hear and experience on a day-to-day basis. Positive things are happening in Stratford, and we do notice them.

It has been a real joy for us to share your fair city, get to know the people who put in a lot of hard work to make it all happen and to spend some time there learning and acquiring more and more good vibes. It feels great to see growth like the new film studio that is being discussed on Downie Street. As a community you all must be very proud, and you should be! Stratford is a pure pleasure for us each and every time we visit. It is our home away from home and it is beautiful. Keep up the great work and take care of each other.

Please let me know how you feel about this article at burk.patrick1956@gmail.com.

Travel the Blue Trail – wherever it’s going!



JULIA SCHNEIDER

Times Columnist

Things are tough these days for foreign film lovers who want to see them in a movie theatre. Streaming services have limited showings at the same time that theatrical releases have dwindled, leaving few opportunities for viewing. Though I try not to think too much about this, on a recent Friday night I was surprised to find an exception staring me in the face.

I’d just finished some business at Stratford City Hall and wanted a change of scene: where could I go? By chance I took the elevator upstairs instead of heading out the back door and there found

the Stratford Film Festival in full swing. I knew about the festival but hadn’t checked its listings; now I found temptation before me. There were two films that evening; the first, *The Blue Trail*, started in just ten minutes.

Festival co-founder, the very welcoming and knowledgeable Megan Smith-Harris, filled me in on this film. She told me it had been acclaimed at the Berlin International Film Festival before its North American debut in TIFF recently. She also told me it was from Brazil.

Now, I’ve only seen two Brazilian movies in my lifetime, *Pixote* and *Bye-Bye-Brazil*, both when I lived in Toronto in the early 1980s. Both made a big impact on me, the first due to its depiction of gritty street life, the second to its far-out characters and setting. Based on this, and the way Brazil is in the news so much these days due to COP30, I was interested in *The Blue Path*. I decided to stick around, get a ticket and grab a seat.

I’m glad I did.

The Blue Trail transported me far beyond Stratford to a very real and relatable yet dystopian Brazil-

ian village at no particular date. Its main character, Tereza, is a 77-year-old woman who works at an alligator meat processing plant and lives on her own. She appears to be self-sufficient and contented but arrives home one day to find herself awarded an honorary plaque for her services to the nation as well as a banner over her door.

“Do I have to pay for this?” she asks.

She doesn’t; it comes from a Brazil that is looking down on its people (from an airplane flying ominously above) and honouring those who have made it what it is – while at the same time announcing its plans to send everyone over 75 to a remote “colony” as part of their “honour.” The immediate result for Tereza is that she is fired from her job due to her age, loses her autonomy and loses her ability to decide what she does with her money; now everything has to be approved by her adult daughter, with whom she is not close.

She talks to a friend – who tells her some people look forward to going to the colony – but Tereza definitely does not. *The Blue Trail* is all about the desperate, fasci-

nating and sometimes tragi-comic stratagems she uses to avoid a fate that seems to her (and also increasingly, the viewer) like death itself.

She tells her friend that taking a plane is her one desire before her mandatory departure but finds that to get a ticket on one she needs her daughter’s permission, which is not forthcoming. In fact, all legitimate commercial operations need someone’s else’s approval; a statutory power-of-attorney applies to anyone over 75.

To get around this Tereza finds an under-the-radar boat operator who, for cash, will take her up the Amazon River to a place where she can get an ultralight aircraft flight. Both the boat and the flight turn out to be dead ends. Tereza seems resilient and determined, but the odds against her now seem insuperable.

Along the way we are treated to extraordinary shots of the Amazon as it snakes its way across the screen; this film is a feast for the eye. Its director, Gabriel Mascaro, is fully in control of a fantastic story that may have as its base Brazil’s growing aging population. Tereza is captured after her last stop and taken back by boat to

her starting point after her escape to freedom fails.

The rest of the movie deals with how, by means of a clever stratagem, Tereza escapes the transport waiting for her. She then meets up with a saviour (the nun who sells digital Bibles off a boat but confesses to Tereza she isn’t religious), foresees the future through a snail’s blue drool, and wins at the Golden Fish gambling casino, where one can win – or lose – everything. We last see her on the boat she now owns, with the nun as they both travel on down the Amazon, kindred spirits and free souls – though Brazil is still proclaiming its control from a plane that’s hovering over the river.

Tereza is a protagonist with whom anyone – but particularly those considered “seniors” – can readily identify and cheer on for her age-defying chutzpah and wiles. How many movies show women that way? The movie is very different, in good ways, from the usual movie fare. It is a real find – if you are very lucky enough to find it, as I was at Stratford’s Film Festival.

Viva la difference and long live the festival!

Opinions

Repeal Bill 5, part five: Individual rights and democracy



SHEILA CLARKE

Times Columnist

In Canada, we take pride in our legal system. We describe our society as based in law. In theory, our laws are consistent; they protect everyone and they apply to everyone. This is particularly important with regard to individual rights and democracy. We are a parliamentary democracy, which means we elect our representatives by the beliefs and the philosophies they hold. The head of government is a member of parliament, in place at the pleasure of his or her party members, and the voting public which has elected that party. This structure is in place federally and provincially. Above all, and surrounding us all, is the importance of the legal system. We are all subject to the law.

The law has taken an interesting turn. In recent years, new laws dealing with a particular

topic came before the legislature after a relatively lengthy period of research and public input, ranging from professional and scientific groups to individual citizens. The final products of these processes were voted into laws by which we are governed.

Bill 5 has areas of serious concern, as noted in this series of op eds, especially Indigenous rights and endangered species; those are all represented by groups. Another voice that struggles to be heard is the individual – the citizen, the taxpayer. There are two areas of Bill 5 that affect the individual.

Previously the government had removed right of consultation on any land use and claims from any other than immediate neighbours to the properties in question. Other interested parties in a particular land use, such as a conservation authority, a municipal planning representative or a near neighbour or community, could not be represented. However, the individual neighbour property owner still retained the right of consultation.

A new protocol called "Permit by Registration" removes that right. If a project provides an action plan and assures the government that it will follow all legal requirements, the project agent simply fills out an online

form, signs it, and may begin construction. Anyone adjacent to that property has no recourse to point out concerns about the impact the project will have on their land. There is no mandate for consultation, as in previous protocols (Permit by Approval). Inspections will follow, but with the new interpretations in Bill 5 of environmental laws once the damage is done, there is no possibility of restoring that environment.

The other element of Bill 5 that concerns individuals is that of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). They are remarkable definitions of areas that the government wants to develop for economic significance or strategic importance to the economy – in the estimation of a very small cohort indeed. The persons determining the importance of a Special Economic Zone will be the Lieutenant Governor in Council (Cabinet), and specifically the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. This Minister has the power to designate a specific project or class of projects as a "designated project," if it meets the criteria established in the regulations.

How does this impact the individual? Through three potential paths: the first is ownership of property. There are legal firms that specialize in support

of those whose property is expropriated by a government for projects. Those law firms are watching SEZs very carefully.

Secondly, some projects will affect public health. Scientists and Indigenous peoples have noted the presence of huge deposits of methane sequestered in the peat bogs of the Ring of Fire. Methane is 80 times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. With the decisions being made to seize particular lands without regard to the environmental consequences, we hold every individual at ransom with air quality, forest fires and massive storms, to which adaptation is simply impossible.

And thirdly, there is a remarkably unique interpretation within SEZs. We are a country of laws. The laws apply to us all – except in SEZs, according to Bill 5. The mandate to set aside laws that interfere with the expedient development under consideration may be set aside by, again, the Lieutenant Governor in Council (Cabinet), and specifically the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

The government is assuring us that labour relations will be important in company operations in SEZs, that environmental laws (as altered by Bill 5) and health and safety laws will

be respected. That is not written in Bill 5, and rests within the cabinet. The individuals working in SEZs will have no recourse if they are harmed. The bill ensures that the government cannot be held responsible for harms caused by Bill 5.

Is the individual at risk with Bill 5? Yes, but more to the point, democracy is. Our system of government is based on elections whereby we entrust our lives and livelihoods to the keeping of a government defined by law. It is deeply concerning that laws would be devised to avoid the tradition of laws that protect the individual – and our surroundings – our property, our health and the nature we love.

For more information visit repealbill5.ca.

Submitted by Repeal Bill 5, a local coalition of advocates dedicated to repealing the Protect Ontario by Unleashing Our Economy Act, on behalf of Sheila Clarke, an educator and a passionate advocate for the environment and an equitable and just society – for today and for future generations.

Sheila Clarke is a Stratford advocate for the environment, of our community and of our planet. She is a member of CFUW Stratford, Stratford Climate Momentum, and the Perth County Sustainability Hub.

COMING EVENTS Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

STRATFORD SCRABBLE CLUB

Anne Hathaway Residence 480 Downie St., Stratford
Meets every Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. for 3 games.
Check our website for further details stratfordscrabble.ca

CROCKINOLE

Every Tuesday at the Agriplex in the Ritsma Room from 1-4 p.m.

FRIDAY NIGHT EUCHRE

Friday Nov. 21.
Legion 804 Ontario St B1, Stratford

Doors open at 6 pm, play starts at 6:30 pm. Register your team of 2 people for \$20. Prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Call Dave at 519-703-6544, Anne at 519-301-0914 or the Legion at 519-271-4540 to register your team.

EXPERIENCE FANSHAWE AT OPEN HOUSE

All locations are open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, November 29

- Meet faculty and current students from all areas of Fanshawe
- Drop-in and ask about your program interests, career options and becoming a Fanshawe student

- Hear from college experts on student life, admissions, financial aid, and more!

- Explore our campuses at London, Woodstock, Simcoe, St. Thomas, Clinton and Tiverton

MINI MISTLETOE MARKET

Saturday November 29; 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

St James Anglican Church

41 Mornington Street, Stratford

All things Christmas! Baking, savouries and home-made crafts just in time for Christmas giving. Be sure to visit our Snowflake Cafe and enjoy tasty treats as our guest.

Invite readers to your
worship services.

Contact

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Worship
With Us



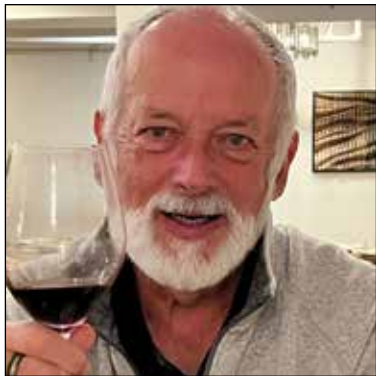
Community of Christ
226 Forman Avenue 519-271-4539

Proclaiming Jesus Christ
with communities of
LOVE, JOY, HOPE & PEACE

Worship with us
Sunday 10:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m. – Fellowship and
Coffee Hour

We are a Welcoming Community

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The shared vision of two couples creates a dining dream



PAUL KNOWLES

Times Columnist

"I love it when a plan comes together."

I'm guessing that none of the four young partners in the astonishing new Niagara-on-the-Lake restaurant, Revé, are old enough to remember that quote. But it applies because Revé is indeed the result of a plan that has come together, beautifully. Or, to quote from their website, "Four individuals with one collective dream: to curate a journey like no other."

That "journey" involves unique and amazing food, and all of the stories behind the culinary creations. And the four individuals are two young couples: Anna Katherine and Kevin Gillingham, and Nicole Pisarenko and Adriano Cappuzzello.

In many ways, this is a love story; love for food, love for the land, love for culture and love for each other.

Cappuzzello is chef. He's a native of Sicily, where his culinary story began. That's also where his and Pisarenko's story began – she was on a study trip from Geroge Brown College when she met Cappuzzello.

Katherine and Gillingham come to the restaurant business as event planners, but they shared the vision of running a superb restaurant with their friends.

And so, less than three months



The fire of the candles and the moss on the ceiling feature invoke Revé's connection to the land and nature.

(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

ago, Revé opened.

The moment you walk in the door, you begin to experience the story. Suspended from the ceiling is a unique bit of living décor – a large, moss-covered panel. Katherine explains their goal was to create an atmosphere to reflect the philosophy of the restaurant – food that is farm to table, locally sourced from the Niagara Peninsula and south-western Ontario.

And, oh, what food! Guests can order from a menu, but the hosts prefer that they don't because the true experience at Revé is to dine at the chef's counter, seated near the open fire, anticipating the next astonishing taste to come your way, each a step in a 10-course blind journey.

So, we did. A visit and a story from Cappuzzello accompany each course. He explains the dish and tells the story behind it. Many

of the tastes involve a wonderful combination of Sicilian and Canadian cuisines, like our third course, an exquisite beef tartare, prepared by Cappuzzello as a memory of Sicilian tuna tartare. But the grass-fed beef comes from Heatherbrae Farms in Wellesley!

Cappuzzello, who has worked in Michelin Star kitchens throughout Europe and Canada, consistently finds a way to combine the magic of uber high-end recipes with food prepared by his Sicilian mother and grandmother, such as delicious venison, dubbed "Mama's Pizzaiola," made with cherry tomato, oregano, black garlic zabalone and undoubtedly several more secret ingredients.

The menu celebrates international flavours from Sable Fish that reflects Korean barbecue to Beef Bavette, a taste of France. Adapted and improved, of course, by Cap-

puzzello and his talented team.

I won't elaborate on all 10 courses because they will undoubtedly be changed by the time you dine at Revé. That's part of the charm; you don't know what you will be eating, but you know it will be amazing, an experience that stretches for hours.

Each course – a small serving, beautifully presented – is served on dinnerware handmade specifically for Revé by a glass artist in Sicily. And by the way, you can have a flight of wines paired with your food – in our case, several superb wines from Ontario or Sicily.

I mentioned that each course includes a story. In truth, Cappuzzello's personal story is captivating. Because his father knew the owner, Cappuzzello was able to get a summer job in a Michelin-Star restaurant in Sicily when he was only 14 years old. He immediately

announced to his family that this was to be his calling, and he didn't want to go to school anymore. His parents overruled that idea, but Cappuzzello continued to spend all of his out-of-school hours in high-end restaurants, learning the culinary arts.

At age 17, he moved to Madrid, working in a small restaurant where he was the chef. He told me he spent his off hours visiting other restaurants, for the first time encountering cuisines like Vietnamese and Mexican.

Cappuzzello then moved to Malta, "Where I got to work with Chef Andrew Pace. He's a visionary. He opened my eyes."

Eventually, after working in top-of-the-line restaurants in Italy and Berlin, he came home to Sicily where he met Pisarenko, who in turn brought him home to Canada. He continued to work as a chef, including at Langdon Hall, but now, his personal vision – shared by Pisarenko, Katherine and Gillingham – has become a reality in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The 10-course Chef's Counter tasting menu costs \$225; wine, either individual or a matching flight, is extra. If you normally eat at a fast-food joint, that will seem like a lot, but if you are a foodie, or more simply a lover of good food, you'll be hitting the website to make a reservation.

We sat next to a couple who were making their third trip to Revé in only a couple of months. They praised "the hospitality, the food, everything!"

They were right; Revé is just that good.

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.



The visionary owners of the new restaurant; from left, Chef Adriano Cappuzzello, Nicole Pisarenko, Anna Katherine and Kevin Gillingham.



The simple exterior of the restaurant, in a Mary Street strip mall, belies the culinary masterpiece inside.

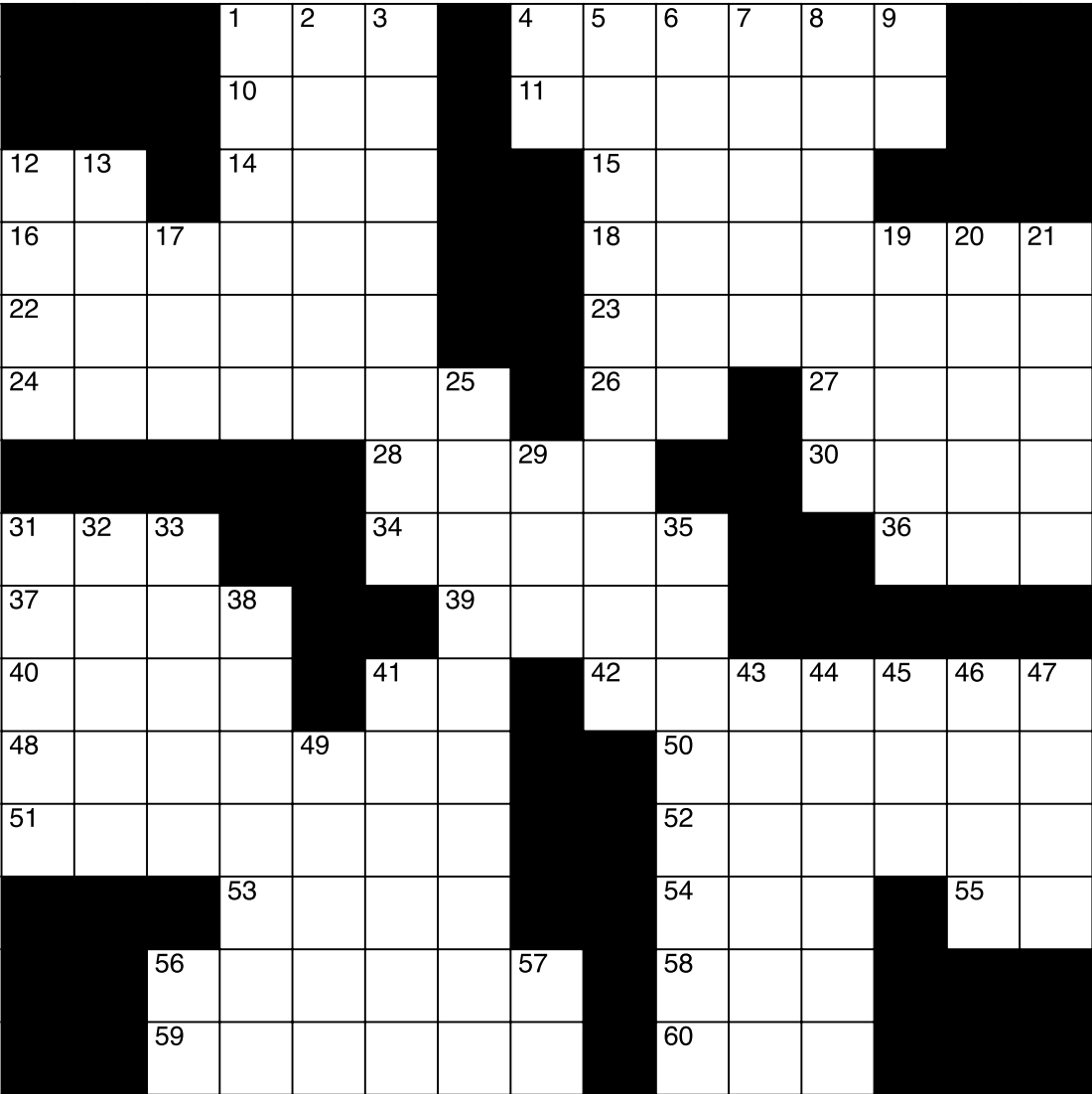
Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Popular broadcast network
- 4. Train line
- 10. Go quickly
- 11. Straightforward
- 12. Canadian province
- 14. Swiss river
- 15. It can be straight or curved
- 16. Edit
- 18. Utter repeatedly
- 22. Gotten up
- 23. Sea vessel
- 24. Agents of one's demise
- 26. Not out
- 27. Something to scratch
- 28. A round water pot
- 30. Slang for cylindrical green fruit
- 31. Promotions
- 34. Masses of matter
- 36. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 37. Nightstand item
- 39. The content of cognition
- 40. Arab ruler
- 41. Northern U.S. state
- 42. Chewed in small bites
- 48. Hawaiian island
- 50. More thin
- 51. Of one
- 52. Rigid bracelet or anklet
- 53. Barbary sheep
- 54. Not even
- 55. Atomic #106
- 56. Haggle
- 58. Boxing's GOAT
- 59. Division of a group into opposing factions
- 60. Vietnamese offensive

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Horse-drawn carriage
- 2. Prejudices
- 3. Peacefully
- 4. University athletic official
- 5. Soldiers
- 6. Large mollusk
- 7. Take out again
- 8. Sour or bitter in taste
- 9. Songwriter Tunstall
- 12. Husk of wheat
- 13. Flexible covering in some birds
- 17. Energy
- 19. Night monkey genus
- 20. Small nails
- 21. Colorless volatile liquid
- 25. In a way, changes integrity
- 29. Mark Wahlberg's stuffed animal
- 31. Remember it
- 32. "Good Will Hunting" lead man
- 33. Pleasant facial expression
- 35. Sea vessel
- 38. Lacking poetic beauty
- 41. Tall, swift and slender dog
- 43. Sports personality Michelle
- 44. Robber
- 45. Liquefied natural gas
- 46. Snakelike fish
- 47. Sediment at bottom of a liquid
- 49. Crimean seaport
- 56. Bad grades
- 57. Popular S. Korean rapper



SPONSORED BY:

Adult Learning Programs of Perth, Upstairs at the St. Marys Public Library

(700 Church Street North, St. Marys, ON)

Phone: 519-284-4408 | Cell: 226-374-8231

alearning@town.stmarys.on.ca | www.adultlearningperth.ca

Facebook: @AdultLearningProgramsofPerth



Pet of the week



BRUTUS

Brutus is a big-hearted, big-bodied boy looking for a family to call his own! This handsome large-breed mix is playful, loves to run and get the zoomies, and turns into a total cuddle bug once he feels safe.

Coming from the streets, Brutus can be nervous in new environments, but with patience and gentle encouragement, his sweet, affectionate nature shines. He's still learning the ropes of indoor life and may steal a shoe or two, so a crate or puppy-proofed space is helpful.

Brutus is searching for an adopter who understands—or is eager to learn about—working shepherd breeds and their need for exercise, structure, and mental stimulation. Learn more about Brutus at www.kwsphumane.ca!



Pure
Pets

Sponsored by:

123 Waterloo St. S., Stratford ON,
519-305-7387

www.purepets.biz | purepetsstratford@yahoo.ca

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 27

Stratford Irish Present

TEDDY BEAR TOSS

IRISH

VS

ALVINSTON KILLER BEES HOCKEY CLUB

ALLMAN ARENA

SATURDAY DECEMBER 6TH

PUCK DROP 5:30PM

TOSS WILL OCCUR FOLLOWING THE FIRST IRISH GOAL - OR BETWEEN 2ND AND 3RD PERIOD

ALL STUFFED ANIMALS TOSSED WILL BENEFIT LOCAL CHILDREN THROUGH PERTH COUNTY CHARITIES

IRISH

X

Krispy Kreme DOUGHNUTS

2025 DOUGHNUT DRIVE

\$

\$16 PER DOZEN

PERCENTAGE OF PROCEEDS DONATED TO LOCAL CHARITY

SCAN OR CODE TO ORDER

PLACE ORDERS BY NOV 29TH

ORDERS WILL BE PICKED UP AT STRATFORD

IRISH HOME GAME DEC 6TH VS

CLASSIFIEDS

Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

WE ARE HIRING

JOIN OUR TEAM AS A NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVE!

Are you a motivated self-starter with a passion for sales and marketing? Do you thrive in a flexible work environment where you can set your own schedule? If so, we have the perfect opportunity for you!

Location: Work from Anywhere!

Schedule: Your Own Schedule

Type: Commission

About Grant Haven Media: At Grant Haven Media, we are committed to delivering top-quality news and information to our readers. As a leading newspaper company, we take pride in our dedication to journalistic excellence and community engagement. As we continue to grow, we're looking for enthusiastic individuals to join our dynamic sales team.

If you are interested, contact Heather Dunbar at: heather@granthaven.com

RH CONSTRUCTION

Building the Future, Restoring the Past

HELP WANTED – CONSTRUCTION LABOURER

Opportunity to build a career and learn a trade! We offer a clean, safe, and supportive work environment with a positive, cheerful team.

We're looking for a motivated, honest, and hardworking individual to join our residential construction crew. General knowledge of tools and residential construction is an asset. For the right person, this position could lead to a Carpenter Apprenticeship in the future.

REQUIREMENTS:

• Ability to work independently

• Valid G class driver's licence and clean driver's abstract

• Strong work ethic and willingness to learn

• Must be able to report to our shop in Tavistock each morning

• Cell phones are to be kept in lunch boxes and used only during breaks

SALARY: Based on experience.

If you're ready to start or grow your career in residential construction, please submit your resume to office@rhcons.ca

WANTED

\$ Cash Paid \$ for your RECORDS and LPs. Jazz, Blues, Rock, Pop, Folk, Soundtracks, and more. Selectively buying CDs, Cassettes, Turntables, and Stereo Equipment. For more information: DIAMOND DOGS MUSIC 114 Ontario St. Stratford / 226-972-5750

WANTING TO BUY – All collectibles including sports cards, beanie babies, Funko pops and stamps. Highest prices paid. Free appraisals. Are you downsizing or need an estate clean out? We can help. Call or text Stan anytime 519-868-3814.

Fair value offered for your vinyl records, cassette tapes & hifi components. Please contact Sound Fixation, 519-801-5421, 4 George St. W, Stratford.

I WILL PAY CASH FOR ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES – Coca Cola Pepsi any pop company, Brewery items Kuntz, Huether Labatts etc. Old radios and gramophones, Wristwatches and pocket watches, Old fruit jars Beaver Star Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs Red Indian Supertest etc. Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me - 519-570-6920.

FOR SALE

Hundreds of shade trees, fruit trees, apples, pears, peaches, plums, sweet and sour cherries, apricots, nectarines, blueberries, haskapp grapes, raspberries, elderberries etc. Lots of spruce, pine, cedars for windbreak and privacy hedges. Sizes 1-8 ft. in containers ready to go. Flowering shrubs and much more. Mon-Sat 7:00am to 6:00pm Martin's Nursery, 42661 Orangehill Rd Wroxeter, ON N0G 2X0 (1 Conc. North of Wroxeter on Belmore Line)

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

ACCOUNTING

Famme & Co.
Professional Corporation
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS
125 Ontario St., Stratford
519-271-7581 | Fax 519-271-2737
office@fammeandco.on.ca

EAVESTROUGH

EAVESTROUGH CLEANING
Fully Cleaned, Downspouts
Unblocked, Free Estimates,
Quality Workmanship
Stratford
519-273-4713

FENCING / DECKS

ALL SHORES
Fencing & Decks
519-273-2003
info@allshoresfd.ca

HANDY MAN

bcamHandyman
Forty Years of
Home Improvements
Bruce Burleigh
519-703-1936

MARKETING

TOWN CRIER
MARKETING
FREE CONSULTATION

MORTGAGE

Mortgage solutions to suit your needs.

Rona Marquez
Home Financing Advisor
226-921-4536
rona.marquez@scotiabank.com
Scotia
© Registered trademark of The Bank of Nova Scotia

REAL ESTATE

ROYAL LEPAGE **Hiller Realty**

Tina Grasby BROKER,
Royal LePage Hiller Realty
ph. 519-275-7663
tinagrasby@royallepage.ca
www.tinagrasbyrealestate.com

TRAVEL

STONETOWN TRAVEL
150 Queen St. E., St. Marys
519-284-2332
210 Mill St., New Hamburg
226-333-9939
www.stonetowntravel.com
agent@stonetowntravel.com



REAL ESTATE


LUCIE STEPHENS
SALES REPRESENTATIVE
519-703-0333
RE/MAX **a-b REALTY LTD. BROKERAGE**
SOLD!

Sutton **Liz Yundt, Realtor®**
FIRST CHOICE
Sutton Group First Choice Realty
Ltd Brokerage
151 Downie St., Stratford, On
I will always do my absolute best for you!
Cell: 519-272-9017
lizyundt@sutton.com

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. North Atlantic Ocean
2. The soprano
3. Notre Dame
4. Wasabi
5. Nov 10th, 1975
6. Mariah Carey
7. Brian Griffin
8. A drey
9. Italy
10. James Gandolfini

WATCH/CLOCK REPAIR

Watch & Clock Repair
FREE ESTIMATES
Watch batteries, bands & crystals
All makes & models. New & Old.
House calls available
Antiques in Time
45 York Street | 519-272-0411
www.antiquesintime.ca

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

Community newspapers
are **NOT** junk mail.



Community newspapers are trusted local voices that keep Canadians informed, connected and engaged. They are local businesses that report news that matters most to the communities they serve. CUPW and Canada Post need to ensure that the processing/delivery of unaddressed community newspapers resumes immediately.

newsmediacanada.ca

News Media Canada
Médias d'Info Canada

WWW.STRATFORDTIMES.COM

Reality?
Reality check

Canadian newspapers are powered by journalists, not AI. They check the facts so you can trust what you're reading. That's why 4 in 5 people in Canada come back each week for more. Thanks for keeping it real with us.

nationalnewspaperweek.ca

CANADA'S NEWS MEDIA
CHAMPIONS
OF THE TRUTH



Home furniture

STOREWIDE INVENTORY CLEARANCE SALE



**No Pressure
Sales Team**

**SOME ITEMS
BELOW COST!**

Relax, You're at Home

**OUR LOWEST PRICE
GUARANTEED UNTIL 2026**

**PROUDLY
STRATFORD
OWNED**



519-273-9330
2954 Hwy 7&8 E

Mon. - Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5,
Sun. 12-4

Follow us on:



www.stratfordhomefurniture.ca
www.homefurniture.ca