

# STRATFORD TIMES

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## Pedestrian, 86, dies after weekend crash at Stratford Mall

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

An 86-year-old Stratford resident died after a collision at the Stratford Mall last weekend.

On Sunday, Aug. 16, shortly after 11 a.m., the Stratford Police Service responded to a report of a pedestrian being struck by a vehicle in the parking lot of the mall.

A pick-up truck reportedly had entered the parking lot where it struck a pedestrian near the SportChek entrance to the mall.

The Stratford Fire Department assisted with removing the pedestrian from under the pickup truck and the pedestrian was transported to hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Later that evening, police were notified that the pedestrian had passed away as a result of the injuries.

The pedestrian was identified as an 86-year-old resident of Stratford, while the driver of the pickup truck has been identified as a 38-year-old resident of St. Catharines.

The investigation into this matter is ongoing. Anyone who witnessed this incident or has camera footage is requested to contact Const. Thomas Lecomte at 519-271-4141 ext. 8132 or tlecomte@stratford-police.com.



Friends of the Tipi of Huron-Perth begin raising two of the 44-foot-long poles on Aug. 18.

(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

## Community comes together to raise 40-foot-tall tipi at Stratford Perth Museum

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

On a typical summer morning Aug. 18, community members and friends gathered on the grounds behind the Stratford Perth Museum, bringing bags of equipment and rope, carved wooden poles about 44 feet long and a heavy canvas.

With an area about 30 feet in diameter carved into the brush set out, the men and women went about their work: raising a tipi.

"We had this tipi up at Gowanstown," explained Christin Dennis, one of the organizers for the endeavour. "The tipi came to being by the Sixties Scoop (Healing) Foundation. I'm also a Sixties Scoop survivor, and I wanted to create a venue for people to come to learn about Indigenous culture and Indigenous ceremonies and traditions, and that's how the tipi came to be."

The Tipi of Huron-Perth, as it is officially called, is a project through the Sixties Scoop Healing Foundation (as Dennis said), the Listowel-Wingham and Area Fami-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2



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# Community comes together to raise 40-foot-tall tipi



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTOS)

Work begins to raise the tipi, with many area friends coming to help organizer Christin Dennis that summer morning. With over 20 44-foot-long poles, a diameter of 30 feet, the tipi is expected to be 38-40 feet tall, a huge space able to fit many visitors within.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

ly Health Team, the Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society and Kaswentha Two Row Now.

Being in an off-the-beaten-path part of Gowanstown, Dennis explained that it was too far for a lot of people in

the region to trek to. The team behind the tipi wanted to create an expanded venue, a place that everybody could come to and learn more about Indigenous customs, when Stratford resident Loreena McKennitt suggested to them the Stratford Perth Museum may be interested in being a host.

Located just on the edge of Stratford, on the Tom Orr Memorial Perth County Historical Walk, the tipi will be accessible year-round for residents, visitors and area schools. Professionally engineered and permanent, it will also have a full hardwood floor, though that feature will be coming in the future.

With over 20 44-foot-long poles, a diameter of 30 feet, the tipi is expected to be 38-40 feet tall, a huge space able to fit many visitors within.

During its tenure in Gowanstown, over 1,600 children visited it. Now more easily accessible, organizers hope more people than ever will visit.

"It's also a part of truth and reconciliation," Dennis pointed out. "And we look forward to having talks about that, but it's mostly more for teaching and for knowl-

edge. And we're going to have elders and knowledge carriers of different Indigenous groups – such as Inuit, Métis, Cree, Ojibwe and Haudenosaunee – coming in to teach about their cultural ways of doing things. It just gives people a nice broad spectrum because there's over 533 different Indigenous cultures in North America. So if we all have a difference, there's a difference."

Kelly McIntosh, general manager of the museum, told the Times the museum is thrilled to have the tipi on the grounds through this one-year pilot.

"We're hoping that it extends beyond that," McIntosh said. "This is like many things we do. We're funded to find all the educational potential of a place like this, and with what we do it's just an absolute gift that the Tipi of Huron-Perth is coming here and that we can help them get the word out so that Chris can get as many people here ... It's a pilot program. I expect it's going to be very successful, and the Tipi of Huron-Perth has a home here."

For more information on the tipi, visit <https://tipiofhuronperth.ca/>.



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# Summer is not quite over at SPL

End of summer party at Stratford Public Library invites families for a final hurrah to end the season

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

The Stratford Public Library invites children of all ages and their families to an end-of-summer celebration party on Wednesday, Aug. 26, from 1 to 4 p.m. in the Library Front Garden, where everyone is welcome to enjoy an afternoon packed with crafts, games and activities.

"Summer at the library is about so much more than reading," says Trish MacGregor, children's librarian. "It's about discovering something new, making things, playing, connecting with others and having fun. The End of Summer Celebration is a chance to recognize all of those experiences and bring families together for one more afternoon of summer fun."

Families can also come early for a pre-celebration at the library, with a kazoo party from noon until 12:30 p.m.

"We decided to have an additional noon

kazoo program day before the party to help set the tone," said MacGregor. "The noon kazoo program has really taken off and is quite popular, so we'd love for everyone to experience that."

This summer, program participation at SPL has grown again, with the library seeing more than 1,000 kids participate in over 40 programs all summer long.

MacGregor says she's truly proud to see children and families come to the library, participate and keep reading.

"It's been such a great summer," she said. "The community has been very responsive to all of our programs. We've been able to offer more programs than we've done in the past, especially for children ages seven to 12. We've also been able to offer a preschool program. It's really been pure joy here at the library."

"Even when there aren't programs, the library is just buzzing with people," con-

tinued MacGregor. "Families have been coming in for the discovery centres, and doing the Tinker Table, and getting books and just hanging out at the library; it's so wonderful to see."

The popular TD Summer Reading Club has also seen more kids than ever. Starting eight years ago, just over 200 kids participated, and this year the program saw a record 1,255 children commit to reading this summer.

"It's so exciting to see kids reading all summer, and part of the excitement is that we were fortunate to have the local TD support us for some of our prizes," said MacGregor. "We were able to offer more substantial prizes for the children who are in the club. We also have wonderful community sponsors who have donated ice cream, movie passes, climbing passes, gaming, popcorn and slushies. All of these sponsors help motivate children to

reach their reading goals.

"I'm really proud of the kids and their families for remembering how important it is to read every day to keep those reading skills sharp through the summer," continued MacGregor.

Kids participating in the BINGO Summer Challenge can also bring their completed cards to the party to collect a special summer reward. First place for a completed card will receive an SPL tote bag, second place for a completed card will get a coupon from a local business and third place for a completed card will receive an SPL water bottle.

BINGO cards can be turned in for prizes up until Monday, Sept. 28.

SPL would like to extend a special thank-you to TD for bringing a colouring wall for families to enjoy.

For more information, visit <https://splibrary.ca/summer>.

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# Choir! Choir! Choir! returns to Stratford for SACC fundraiser

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

The Stratford Arts and Culture Collective (SACC) is inviting Stratford residents to do more than simply watch its first fundraiser of 2026 – this time, the audience is the show.

Choir! Choir! Choir! returns to the Stratford Festival's Avon Theatre Sept. 21 at 7:30 p.m. for a one-night-only, interactive celebration of the music of Queen, with proceeds supporting SACC's ongoing effort to establish an affordable, community-based performance space in Stratford.

SACC co-founder and director Chris Leberg said the Toronto-based Choir! Choir! has performed around the world, including at Carnegie Hall in New York, but Stratford residents may remember the group from its sold-out SACC fundraiser at the Avon Theatre in 2024.

"Everyone had so much fun with ABBA two years ago, we said, 'You know, let's get the guys back,'" Leberg said. "Certainly, this being their only appearance in southwestern Ontario this

fall, we were lucky to get them."

Led by Daveed Goldman and Nobu Adilman, Choir! Choir! Choir! turns the traditional concert experience on its head by making everyone in the theatre part of the performance. No singing experience is necessary.

Leberg said Goldman and Adilman take the stage with a large screen behind them displaying the lyrics. The audience is divided into sections, with each section taught a different part before everyone comes together to perform the song.

"They will divide the audience into two or three sections, teach each section parts of the song and then they put the whole song together," Leberg said.

This year's show will celebrate the music of Queen under the fitting theme, "We Will Choir You." While the complete song list remains a surprise, "We Will Rock You" will be among the music filling the Avon Theatre that night.

Beyond giving Stratford residents an opportunity to sing their hearts out, the evening will support SACC's long-term goal of creating a centrally located, affordable performance venue for local arts and cultural organizations.



(IMAGE COURTESY OF SACC)

Choir! Choir! Choir! returns to the Avon Theatre on Sept. 21 at 7:30 p.m. in support of the Stratford Arts and Culture Collective (SACC).

SACC envisions a roughly 400-seat theatre with proper acoustics, lighting and a stage large enough to accommodate groups such as the Stratford Symphony Orchestra, along with choirs, concert bands, dance companies and children's theatre organizations.

Leberg said nearly two dozen local arts and culture organizations support the concept, with the community envisioned as the venue's primary audience and tourism as a secondary consideration.

All proceeds from the Choir! Choir!

Choir! fundraiser, after expenses, will go into SACC's building fund for that future performance space, which is intended to form part of the Grand Trunk community hub.

"We're looking for as much support from the community as possible," Leberg said. "There's still lots of really good seats left."

Choir! Choir! Choir! takes over the Avon Theatre Monday, Sept. 21, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at stratfordfestival.ca/choir.

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STRATFORD NISSAN

# Filmmaker brings Anishinaabe artist Michael ‘Cy’ Cywink’s creation story to Stratford

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For filmmaker Cory Bilyea, bringing the story of her longtime friend and mentor, the late Anishinaabe artist Michael “Cy” Cywink, to Stratford represents a full-circle journey decades in the making.

Bilyea’s documentary, *The Creation Story of Michael ‘Cy’ Cywink*, will be screened at the Falstaff Family Centre, 35 Waterloo St. N., on Sept. 12 at 2 p.m. Presented by Bilyea’s EagleEyes Media Productions and the Falstaff Family Centre, the two-hour film chronicles Cywink’s life, travels, art and decades spent sharing Anishinaabe culture and mentoring young people.

Bilyea first met Cywink in Toronto in the 1980s when she was a young Indigenous person who had been raised in a non-Indigenous home as part of the Sixties Scoop.

“I ended up meeting other Native people while I was there. Mike was one of them, and he started me on my learning journey, I guess is the best way to put it, about what being Indigenous means,” Bilyea said. “He’s been my best friend since I met him.”

The two eventually reconnected after Cywink spent years travelling and studying, and remained in touch despite living hours apart.

Around the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cywink told Bilyea he wanted someone to make a documentary about his life. Bilyea, who had recently studied media production but had never made a documentary, volunteered.

“It was just grassroots. It was me, my camera and my tripod and the light,” she said. “I literally put the camera down, pushed record and just went, ‘Go.’ And he started



(EAGLEEYES MEDIA PRODUCTIONS PHOTO)

**A self portrait by Michael “Cy” Cywink.**

to talk. It’s just amazing, the stories this guy has.”

Those stories span what Cywink called his “earth walk,” including the beginnings of his artistic career, his travels, his work mentoring Indigenous youth in Toronto and his time in the United States. The film also features three art demonstrations Cywink performed specifically for Bilyea’s camera.

An internationally celebrated artist and Indigenous teacher, Cywink painted hundreds of murals throughout his roughly 40-year career, including more than 50 in schools. Through those projects, Bilyea said he worked with Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, sharing the Seven Grandfather Teachings and demonstrating how art could be used for healing and learning.

“He was in his element when he was with the youth,” she said. “He just absolutely loved the next generation.”

Cywink died at 71 just two weeks before the documentary premiered at the Blyth Festival, transforming what had been a collaboration between two longtime friends into a tribute to his life and legacy.

Bringing that tribute to Stratford is especially meaningful for Bilyea. As a young person in the child-welfare system, she once lived in a group home directly across the street from what is now the Falstaff Family Centre.

“Returning to this exact physical space decades later, not as a child in the system, but as an Indigenous filmmaker bringing Cy’s healing and teachings to the community, feels incredibly destined,” Bilyea said. “It represents the exact kind of resilience, reclamation and full-circle healing that Cy championed throughout his life.”

With Truth and Reconciliation events continuing to grow locally, Bilyea said she hopes the screening gives Stratford-area residents a deeper understanding of Indigenous culture and the importance of preserving Indigenous stories through Indigenous voices.

“For too long, Indigenous stories have been told through an outside lens, which often leads to misrepresentation or lost nuances,” she said. “Control over the narrative ensures that our traditions, our humour and our history are portrayed accurately, respectfully and on our own terms.”



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# Double the entertainment – Avondale to host two coffee houses Sept. 19

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Following the success of their last coffee house, Avondale United Church will host two coffee house show-cases.

Avondale United Church will host a Coffee House in their Emmanuel Hall on Sept. 19, with a matinée performance and an evening performance. There will be a variety of musicians and spoken word artists such as Trish and Slim, Terri Sparling, Barry James Payne, Rev. Keith Reynolds, David Bates, and youth poet laureate Arlo Dunne.

"I think it's just fantastic that Avondale's able to operate as a venue not only to welcome very talented musicians and community partners, but also to bring everybody together to witness those talents and meet those kind of people and I'm just looking forward to this being another opportunity to do so," said Aleah Graff, community engagement coordinator of Avondale United Church.

Proceeds from the ticket sales will support the congregation's outreach programs like the Avondale Food Shelf.

"We're happy to give people some really, really good quality entertainment if they'll give us a bit of their money and then we'll make sure it goes to something that helps our community," said Paul Harris, member of the music series planning committee and one half of Trish and Slim.

The church also held a coffee house a few years ago when the COVID-19 restrictions were dissolving.

"People were still a little uneasy about doing entertainment stuff and we didn't want to do anything really big at that point and so we decided if we're going to get back into this, what we could do was to do something small, which was to do a coffee house-style event" Harris said. "It was very well received because it's very personal, it's very intimate and it has a very, very nice community feel to it."

"When we did it about four years ago, it turned out to be a lot more popular than we thought it would be and

we were kind of crowded in our hall space, so that's why we decided to have two this year," added Karen Brown, another member of the music series planning committee and other half of Trish and Slim.

Emmanuel Hall will have tables set up for people to sit together in groups to watch the performances. The setting fosters community and encourages attendees to meet new people.

"You may only buy one ticket and be sitting at a table with three other people that you've never met before, but you'll chat while you're watching and that'll be nice too," Harris said.

The afternoon matinée will run from 2 to 4:30 p.m. and the evening performance will be from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, and \$10 for children and includes refreshments like hot apple cider, coffee, tea and baked goods. To purchase tickets, either call 519-271-7946, visit the box office at 194 Avondale Ave., or visit online via <https://ticketscene.ca/events/64218>.

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STRATFORD NISSAN



# Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival returns Sept. 19

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

The Rotary Club of Stratford is excited to announce the return of the Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026, along the Avon River in downtown Stratford. The event is free to the public.

“The Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival is about far more than racing,” said Robert Ritz, event chair. “Every team that takes to the water, every volunteer who gives of their time and every person who comes out to cheer contributes to something much bigger than a day of racing.”

This year’s festival will feature 48 boat teams from Stratford, St. Marys, Woodstock and several other communities across southwestern Ontario.

One such team is Clan MacDougald, a strong competitor in the festival for over 25 years. The family-based team spans four generations and aims to celebrate family and instill a culture of fundraising and community support.

“My wife and I actually moved to Stratford and woke up one Saturday morning soon after we got here, and went, ‘What’s all that racket?’” said Doug MacDougald, Clan MacDougald team captain and Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat volunteer. “It ended up being the Dragon Boat Festival. So, the next year, we entered a team, and we’ve been doing it ever since.”

MacDougald says competing in the fes-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

**The MacDougald family, members of Clan MacDougald, gather during last year’s Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival. The family-based team spans four generations and has competed in the festival for more than 25 years. The Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival runs this year on Sept. 19.**

tival has become a long-standing family tradition.

“It’s been the best extended family and four-generation get-together over the last 25 years,” he said. “Our team involves both my siblings, my children, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, first cousins on both sides, second cousins, maternal

and paternal family and their children and their grandchildren. So we’ve got four generations in our family photo and three generations always in the boat paddling.”

New this year is the Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival Community Team Challenge, a peer-to-peer fundraising initiative in support of the Local Com-

munity Food Centre and Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth. Funds raised through this year’s Community Team Challenge will be shared equally between the two organizations.

“This is new for us, but we hope it can really bring in more funds for the great local charities,” said MacDougald. “Right now there are five teams you can donate to, and hopefully more come on board once the initiative picks up. We have such an amazing community, and this is just one more way for them to donate to the Dragon Boat Festival.”

Since its inception, the Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival has raised more than \$1 million to support local charities.

“Together, we are creating community, supporting local charities and making a lasting difference,” said Ritz. “That is the true spirit of the Rotary Club of Stratford and the Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival.”

The Rotary Club of Stratford extends its deepest thanks to all of the sponsors, including the long-standing commitment and generosity of its presenting sponsor, Gilly’s Pubhouse.

To donate to a team or a race participant, please visit: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/rotary-club-of-stratford-charitable-foundation/p2p/Rotary-DragonBoatCommunityTeamChallenge/>.

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## Here For Now Theatre review: *Early Genius* captures the essence of a classroom full of kids who think they know it all

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Remember that kid in your class back in elementary school who thought he knew it all?

They would answer every question the teacher asked, whether called upon or not, and took every opportunity to show their classmates just how smart they really were.

Now, take that kid, multiply them by four and imagine you’re their new substitute teacher. That’s the challenge substitute teacher Dennis Frobisher (Kevin Kruchkywich) faces in playwright Steve Ross and director Sheila McCarthy’s world-premiere production of *Early Genius* at Here For Now Theatre this season.

The play follows Frobisher as he does his best to help four kids with genius IQs, all under the age of eight, navigate social situations, life changes and the world around them after stepping in to cover for their previous teacher, who is off on maternity leave.

While at first, the students – Beatrice Fielding (Madeline Elliot Kennedy), Harriet Gray (Naomi Ngebulana), Anthony Monaldo (Andrew Perun) and Percy Simmons (Aidan de Salaiz) – show disrespect for their new substitute by calling him “Miss” and outwardly questioning his av-

erage intelligence, before long, he begins to win them over by teaching them how to have fun, make friends and just be kids – experiences their intelligence had prevented previously.

This is one of those brilliant productions where as soon as you take your seat, you feel transported to a different time in your life. The colourful classroom furnished with little red desks and a larger, blue teacher’s desk, complete with a white board, student cubbies and posterboard projects hung on the wall, took me right back to elementary school.

And once the play began, the performances of the actors – particularly those portraying the students – completed the illusion. Though at first, those actors looked like a bunch of young adults dressed in clothes that were maybe a little too young for them, their performances captured the short attention spans, lack of a filter and inability to sit still you would expect from four extraordinarily smart kids.

Kruchkywich’s performance as the substitute was also spot on. Initially intimidated by his new students and unable to keep up with them intellectually, he soon realized the best way he could help them learn and grow was to teach them things most kids had already learned by their age – making friends, standing up to bullies, showing respect for others and navigating



(HERE FOR NOW THEATRE PHOTO)

**Madeline Elliot Kennedy, Andrew Perun, Kevin Kruchkywich, Aidan de Salaiz and Naomi Ngebulana in Here For Now Theatre’s *Early Genius*.**

the challenges of the world around them.

Since the kids in this play have higher IQs than most adults they meet, it was clear they saw themselves as better than their less academically inclined peers. By the end of the story, however, Frobisher manages to cut through their intelligence to appeal to the kids they really are, ultimately preparing them for some of life’s

most difficult challenges.

This play is at once heartwarming and hilarious – a clear marker of the playwright’s considerable comedic talent – and was one of Here For Now Theatre’s best shows of the season.

*Early Genius* ran at Here For Now Theatre from July 29 to Aug. 9.

# STRATFORD **TIMES** SPORTS

## 18U Nationals wrap up season at OBA tournament

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

*Times Correspondent*

The Stratford 18U Nationals participated in the 18U OBA 'A' Tournament held at Clarington from Aug. 13-16.

Stratford started their tournament on Aug. 13 against the Tecumseh Seguin Rangers. Tecumseh was ahead 5-2 going into the bottom of the second inning, but the Nationals began their rally. Colin Priestap hit a three-run homer that evened the score.

In the fourth inning, Reed Bowles hit a two-run home run to put the Nationals ahead 7-5. After a blank fifth inning,

the Rangers took the lead by scoring five runs against Stratford reliever Ethan Priestap. They added one more run in the final inning, making the score 11-7 as they headed into the bottom half.

Stratford attempted a late comeback with James Robinson hitting a solo home run with two outs. Following consecutive singles and a two-run RBI single by Cooper Yantzi, the Nationals narrowed the score to one run.

Caden Diehl's intentional walk placed the Nationals on first and second, positioning Logan MacMillan at bat. However, he was ground out on a fielder's choice, concluding a close 11-10 defeat

to the Rangers.

Colin Priestap led the Nationals with three RBI's, with Cooper Yantzi notching two RBI's, Dawson Davidson and Alex Everett recording an RBI each.

With the Nationals facing elimination, the team faced the North London Nationals on the morning of Aug. 14.

Stratford took the lead in the second pitch of the game when Bowles homered his second of the tournament.

In what proved to be a pitchers' duel, Bowles' homer was the only run Diehl needed in the elimination game. Diehl dominated on the mound, pitching all seven innings with just one hit, four

walks and six strikeouts in 93 pitches, securing Stratford's 1-0 victory.

In the afternoon game, Stratford faced the Wyoming Wranglers in the tournament's third round. Despite the best efforts, Stratford was stymied by the Wranglers as they mustered only one run on one hit and five walks, and their season came to an end on a 7-1 loss.

Everett pitched five innings with seven strikeouts but allowed five earned runs on five walks and seven hits.

Stratford ends the 2026 season with a record of 17-21, 8-6 in tournament play.

## Stratford Strikers weekly recap

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

*Times Correspondent*

For the third year in a row under head coach Scott Herman, the Stratford Strikers secured the league title. This time as a U15 team, they clinched first in the Southwest District Soccer League (SWDSL) U15 Girls Division with a 5-3 victory against the Guelph Jr. Gryphons at VFG Wealth Field in Stratford's Festival Hydro Community Park on Aug. 17.

Following the victory, Herman reflected on the league title and understands the task of finishing strong and securing another title in 2026 as they compete at the Nothers Cup Semifinals on home field at SERC Tennis Field on Aug. 28.

"It's a good, good feeling. The girls de-

serve it. The girls are the ones out here putting in the hard work. These girls are easy to coach, so they put the hard work in, and they earn it," Herman said.

"We're going to keep going, play our game. I didn't think it was our best performance tonight, but we kept working hard, so we're just going to build off that and finish the season strong ... and keep going."

Peyton Ward led the team with the brace, while Jessica Blake, Danica Voros and Mya Groenesteghe also scored goals for the Strikers in the win.

The Herman-led squad previously won SWDSL titles in U13 in 2024 and in U14 last season. Stratford's next matchup is against Waterloo United at RIM Park in Waterloo on Aug. 24.

The U16 Girls Strikers had their only game of the week on Aug. 11, when they played against Waterloo United at RIM Park in Waterloo.

Goals from Reese Campbell and Linley Porter led the visitors to within striking distance of the league championship following a 2-0 win. At press time, the win puts the Strikers nine points clear of second-place Oriental SC with three league games remaining.

Stratford can clinch the championship against the Puslinch Predators on Aug. 18 in Puslinch. Then on Aug. 21 at Victoria Park in Fergus, the Strikers face FEDS United with the trip to the U16 Nothers Youth Cup finals on the line.

U18 Boys Strikers wrapped up their 2026 season in winning form, defeat-

ing Huron-Perth United 6-0 on Aug. 12 at Cowan Field, and a 4-0 win over the GPF Eagles at the Columbia Icefields in Waterloo on Aug. 17.

In the home finale, Jelle Zeilstra, Ype Zeilstra, Sebastian Voros, William Pepper, Greyson Roth and Piers Murray scored for the Strikers. In the regular season finale, Stratford's goals were scored by a brace from Rogan Catalan and singles from Murray and Jack Haines.

The two wins put a nice bow on a strong finish of victories in the closing weeks of the season, as Stratford finishes in second place in the SWDSL U18 Boys Division with a 10-4-1 record and 31 points.

## Stratford Skating Club ready for 2026-27 season

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

*stratfordtimes@gmail.com*

The Stratford Skating Club (SSC) is excited for the upcoming 2026-27 skating season. The new season will be hitting the ice this coming September. This year, the SSC will once again be running all of their popular programming.

The SSC will be offering their Pre-school, Canskate, Adult Learn to Skate, Synchronized Skating and Figure Skating sessions. Their very popular Pre-school programs (skaters three and four years old) and nationally recognized Canskate programs (skaters aged five and up), will be hitting the ice this coming September at the historic William Allman Memorial Arena.

The Preschool and Canskate sessions offer all skaters, young and old, the opportunity to get onto the ice and enjoy Canada's favourite pastime. Skaters of all levels are welcome to join these sessions

as there are different levels for beginner level skaters and experienced level skaters on the ice. Skaters work through various progressions which help them on a number of different skills. Some skaters will start never having skated in the past and the SSC offer them a fun opportunity to experience the ice under their feet and how to get comfortable with the ice and move on it. Other groups will be working on furthering their skating development – forwards and backwards skating, crossovers, turns and jumps on the ice and edge development.

The SSC also offers a wide range of Figure Skating sessions. Their Introduction to Figure Skating program is a great program that introduces all skaters to the sport of figure skating. Development of basic skating skills is supplemented with the teachings of early figure skating jump and spin development.

The Intermediate and Senior figure

skating sessions offer skaters the opportunity to further develop their figure skating skills in the various disciplines of free skate, ice dance and skating skills. Skaters in these levels have the opportunity to enter into figure skating events in other communities.

Once again this year, the SSC will have a Star-Four-level Synchro Team. This is a great way to enjoy the sport of figure skating while doing it through a team lens. This year, the Stratford North Stars Synchro team will be competing in two different Synchro events.

Returning this year after last year's successful launch is the Adult Skating program. This program is designed for adult skaters that are looking to learn to skate, further their skating knowledge or even start some figure skating skills. The SSC looks forward to continuing this exciting program.

This year, the SSC will once again be

hosting the Skate Ontario Provincial Series Stratford December Classic competition in December. This event has grown to one of the largest provincial series events in the Ontario. This year, the event will be four days in length, running at the Stratford Rotary Complex from Dec. 17-20. This is a province-wide event that brings skaters from every part of Ontario to Stratford. Skaters are not only competing within their individual event, but skaters final marks are tracked and the top marks of the 2026-27 skating season are then invited to the Skate Ontario Provincial Championships.

Registration for all our programming for our upcoming season is currently open. Please feel free to visit their website, [www.stratfordskating.ca](http://www.stratfordskating.ca), or you can email [stratfordskating@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordskating@gmail.com) or call 519-275-2379 for further information.

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## West End Pharmacy is by the community, for the community

CONNOR LUCZKA

Times Editor

The independent West End Pharmacy, located at 426 Huron St. on the corner of Forman Avenue, has served the community for over a decade through a commitment to patient care that extends far beyond traditional pharmacy services.

As owner Maulin Patel said, there are a few differences that separate community pharmacies like his own.

"A community pharmacy is one that's more involved in the community and serves the community," Patel said. "... It serves the community that it is located in and it tries to make sure (it) provides all the services that the community may need in relation to pharmacy ... We provide consultations. We do point of care testing, we do compounding as well, and then we have minor ailment prescribing.

"... We're more personable," Patel continued. "We know a lot of our patients more personally as well. We try to have a personal connection with our patients rather than just having them as just clients of the pharmacy. So we try to develop that strong relationship with them, or we naturally tend to develop a relationship with them. It's more, I would say, like a family type of a relationship even though it's a business."

West End Pharmacy has been operating in the region for over 10 years, serving Stratford, Crystal Lake, Sebringville and the surrounding area. It was originally started by well-loved pharmacist George Jansen, before he retired a few years ago.

Patel's own journey in the pharmaceutical industry began in 2010 when he graduated from Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University in India, later receiving his bachelor of pharmacy in 2012. Coming to Canada, he became a licenced pharmacist in Alberta and Ontario in 2021, the same year he began working at West End Pharmacy.

Patel took over ownership after Jansen retired in 2023. He shared that Jansen's high standards of service were the focus of the transition, as the whole team made sure the business would operate as it always had. That meant



prescriptions needed to be ready fast enough, patients should not be waiting or disappointed and patients remained the topmost priority.

The transition, through the help of staff members, was smooth, and Patel is pleased to say that the standards Jansen set out are still prevalent in the store.

"By the grace of God and the blessings of everyone, and the support of everyone," Patel said about the pharmacy's success. "It's definitely been because of all that we've been able to carry over and provide the same services and provide the same level of service.

"We try to go way above and beyond for any of our patients," Patel said. "We will even go out of our way to make sure if a patient needs a medication, you know, how we could get it to them and how we can make sure they get it. If there are issues financially we try to get them different options to see (if) there are different options where they can apply to the government. ... Sometimes it's seniors that are not very good with the computer, and most of the applications are computer based, so we try to take out our time and help them with this application, so that you know they're not feeling that pinch of financial burden or anything like that as well."

With fast services, including refills ready same day (for the most part), Patel told the Times that they have everything a resident needs.

For more information, visit <https://www.westendpharmacy.ca/>.

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# Editorial

## Municipal election season is a good time to remember how to disagree



GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

There is nothing wrong with disagreeing with your neighbour about who should be our next mayor or councillor.

In fact, with nominations for Ontario's Oct. 26 municipal election closing Aug. 21 and conversations increasingly turning to the candidates putting their names forward, I hope we're doing plenty of disagreeing over the next couple of months.

Those conversations around dinner tables, over backyard fences, at work and online are an important part of becoming informed voters.

The challenge is remembering that, in municipal politics especially, the people we're talking about and disagreeing with aren't strangers.

When we argue about a federal or provincial politician, chances are most of us have never met that person. In a municipal election, the candidate whose policies you're criticizing might live three doors down. Their kids might play hockey with yours. They might own the business you visit every week or be someone you've volunteered alongside for years.

That closeness is one of the things I love about municipal politics, but it also means disagreements can become personal very quickly.

And social media only makes that easier.

There is something about typing a comment from behind a screen that can make us say things we would never say to someone sitting next to us at a hockey game. A disagreement over taxes or development can quickly turn into an attack on someone's intelligence, character or motives. Someone responds in kind, others pile on and, before long, nobody is talking about the issue anymore.

Worse still, those words don't disappear when the election is over.

That's why it's important we learn how to disagree without making those disagreements personal.

We should be able to tell a friend or neighbour we think they're wrong. We should be able to challenge a candidate's record, question their promises

and point out when their numbers don't add up. Candidates asking us to trust them with public office should expect that scrutiny.

But we can do all of that without questioning whether someone is a good person simply because they see an issue differently.

Before posting that angry comment, ask yourself whether you would say the same thing to that person's face. Criticize the position instead of the person. Ask someone why they believe what they believe instead of assuming you already know. And, perhaps most importantly, recognize that changing your mind after hearing a good argument isn't losing a debate.

It's learning something.

That matters because municipal elections traditionally struggle to attract the same level of voter attention as provincial and federal elections,

despite local councils making decisions that have some of the most noticeable impacts on our everyday lives.

Property taxes, roads, recreation, policing, fire protection, planning and development, housing, parks and infrastructure are all influenced by the people we elect locally.

Over the next two months, we should talk about this election. Read the coverage. Study the platforms. Attend debates. Ask difficult questions and discuss the answers with people who don't necessarily agree with you.

That's how we become better-informed voters.

Just remember that on Oct. 27, we all still have to live here together.

Democracy depends on our ability to disagree.

Community depends on our ability to do it respectfully.

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**Publisher**

Stewart Grant • [stew@granthaven.com](mailto:stew@granthaven.com)

**Editor**

Connor Luczka • [connor@granthaven.com](mailto:connor@granthaven.com)

**Times Reporter**

Amanda Nelson • [amandajanewriter@gmail.com](mailto:amandajanewriter@gmail.com)

**Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries**

Sarah Cairns • [stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com)

**Business Development**

Heather Dunbar • [heather@granthaven.com](mailto:heather@granthaven.com)

**Billing Administrator**

Cindy Boakes • [boakescindy1576@gmail.com](mailto: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, Patrick D. Burk

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2  
[stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com) | 519.655.2341 | [granthaven.com](http://granthaven.com)



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### Quote of the Week

*"For too long, Indigenous stories have been told through an outside lens ... Control over the narrative ensures that our traditions, our humour and our history are portrayed accurately, respectfully and on our own terms."*

- Indigenous filmmaker Cory Bilyea on her documentary on artist and friend Michael "Cy" Cywink.

**STRATFORDTIMES**

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# Opinion

## As I See It From America: A lot of people have lost faith ...



**PATRICK D. BURK**

*Times Columnist*

What a pleasure this past week has been. I was so very privileged to be the director of our theatre's wonderful production of Chicago. This great group of 30 young people did a tremendous job bringing this complex, 1920s Americana story to the stage. It could not have been more perfect. From the very talented leads to the entire ensemble, we were graced with stellar performances, soaring vocals and hypnotic and alluring choreography. I was impressed and fortunate to witness one of the finest productions I have ever produced and directed.

The splendid thing about this musical is that it is a fable of sorts. It dabbles in everything from illegal liquor, infidelity, murder, jealousy, jazz music and celebrity. It provides a solid representation of how all these things impacted the lives of the people in 1920s-Chicago. The very first line of the show is *"Ladies and Gentlemen, you are about to see a story of greed, corruption, violence, exploitation, adultery and treachery ... all those things that we hold near and dear to our hearts."* How these themes are portrayed and how they affect the people in the show is an impactful tale.

The audience is treated to everything from the song and dance of famous murderesses to the bumbling of a husband that had no idea about his wife's dalliances with a furniture salesman and the deadly outcome of that relationship. Add in the grifting and unethical matron of the local prison and you are treated to a fine array of characters that simply blow your mind. Our sold-out audiences, this past week were presented with the songs, stories and dances

by one talented cast and yes, their minds were totally blown.

While our minds were being treated to this incredible on-stage tale, our real lives were subjected to more and more uncertainty and increased confusion. That is what it is like to be living in the U.S.A. these days. We were treated to the announcement that there would be more tariffs. We were handed a tremendous amount of national debt and our "war" in Iran is rife with terrible news on how our own service men are being treated and that the concerns of their families are "fake news." How can this be happening?

I found an article from two weeks ago on how the Europeans were not even looking to America as a source of anything but laughable governing and entertainment. Whole countries have expressed that they are not even willing to talk or negotiate with our current leader. At one point in the article there was a call for the people of the United States to remove him from office. "Why can't you accomplish this?" The idea sounds like a plausible thing,

but I doubt that it will happen. His own party is in abject fear of him and his MAGA cult and until the failures of an election and an impact lowering his political capital happens, he will be maintained. The emperor has no clothes, but he still carries a pretty big stick!

One other thing that has been happening is the impact on our mid-term elections. I know our whole system doesn't make much sense to Canadians. You seem to have at least a sane election process, unlike to pile it on for months and years and inflict absurdities that is the emphasis of our process. It is exhausting, overwhelming and designed to limit involvement by the general population. Under the current administration they are trying to curb and limit it even more, disenfranchising the elderly, poor and minorities. I am hoping that the basic system stays together long enough so that a significant improvement can happen before it is too late.

Well, at least the show this past weekend was a bit of bright magic in the day-to-day lives of

our audience members. I was so proud of all that this cast accomplished. It just proves that when all else fails, turn to some great theater and entertainment. That will fix you right up. I am currently visiting your fine city and accomplishing that very same thing, amazing productions and the generosity of your hospitality. There is no better place in the world than Stratford, of that I am very certain.

With all that being said, it is interesting, however, that at our performances and since, there were a few mentions of the opening line of Chicago and how it does relate to our own political system. You know the one about *"greed, corruption, violence, exploitation, adultery and treachery,"* but perhaps one of the ending lines says it much better: *"A lot of people have lost faith in this country."* We need faith. We need hope. Let's hope that change comes very soon.

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

## WEB-CRAWLING THROUGH THE GARDENS



**SHEILA CLARKE**

*Times Columnist*

We have two gardens, a meadow in the front yard and a forest in the back. It would be hard to describe the joy they bring us and the peace, in these times. The meadow is a sun garden, where I plant every kind of native plant I can get my hands on. You may have noticed that insect numbers are tanking – in your garden, on your windshield, in nature. Pesticides and lack of habitat are the culprits. That's really bad news for insect-eaters: birds, toads, salamanders, turtles – and for pollinating gardens and crops.

Our front garden is a sun-habitat carnival. It doesn't look special, just loads of plants. The key is there are all different types of plants! They're mostly native, because native insects need na-

tive plants. Each insect has a special plant where it lays its eggs – called a HOST plant. If I plant as many different native plants as I can, then I can help a variety of native insects survive, to pollinate plants and to feed birds and other insect-eaters.

Culver's Root hosts a buckeye butterfly, purple coneflowers host silvery checkerspot butterflies and wavy-lined emerald moths, pearly everlasting hosts American lady butterflies and the lowly clearweed, that most people think is a weed, hosts the eastern comma, red admiral, question mark and Milbert's tortoiseshell butterflies. That's just a sampling! We all know that milkweed hosts the monarch butterfly, but most insects are very specific about where they lay their eggs for nutrition for their young.

Goldenrod is the real powerhouse of my meadow (no it's not an allergen! Ragweed is the allergen and it blooms at the same time, giving goldenrod a bad rep). Goldenrod is called a keystone plant; it's so important. It hosts over 115 to 125 species of butterflies and moths. It also supports dozens of specialized pollen-and-nectar insect species and provides essential late-season

food for migrating and overwintering wildlife. Wow!

The backyard is the centre of our connection with nature, and our centre of peace at the end of the day. It's shady and green, with a wealth of native trees and shrubs (which are also host plants). We share it with wildlife. We eat dinner there every evening that we can, watching a wide variety of birds at the feeders, squirrels, chipmunks and insects that are not as plentiful these days. However, our resident chickadees managed to raise two broods (requiring six- to nine-thousand native caterpillars per nest to feed to adulthood) which were a hoot to watch bombing around the backyard learning how to feed. The green of the yard, the abundant growth and the connection with nature have been demonstrated to bring calm and to lower stress levels – and create such an important habitat.

Our Stratford Community Climate Action Plan notes the importance of nature around us. The CCAP notes that "nature-based solutions such as those directly related to adaptation and resilience focus on preserving and expanding the city's tree canopy cover, which helps sequester

carbon, while providing significant co-benefits such as providing shade, moderating microclimates, providing stormwater storage, improving air quality and enhancing energy efficiency of buildings. It is a lifeline for local wildlife, water quality and bolsters resident wellbeing and health. The city has considerable influence over land use planning matters to help preserve the existing tree canopy cover and aim to enhance it through effective partnerships with the community, local conservation authorities, the private and not-for-profit sectors."

My heart sank as I heard nearly unanimous (all but Couns. Cody Sebben and Geza Wordofa) support for removal of beautiful, mature trees and a virtual absence of meaningful green space attendant to the Huron Street development at 315 and 317 with Upper Avon Holdings. We seem increasingly prone to wedge housing development into every inch of space, without consideration of the importance of green space for gardens, trees, flowers, places for children to play and quality of life. Our disregard for habitat for our fellow travellers in nature is chilling, and ultimately dan-

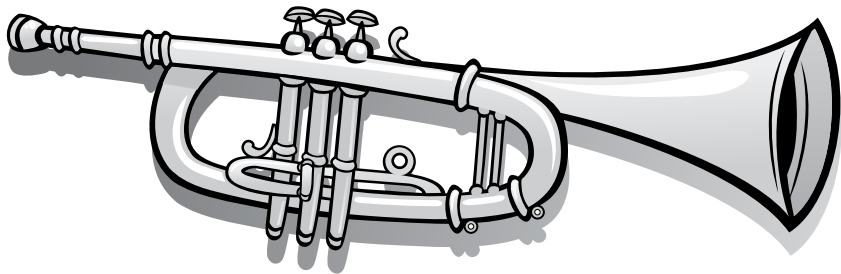
gerous. Wetlands have steadily disappeared from farmland and development properties, as has critical habitat in mature trees, that will take decades to replace. It would be my hope that those mature trees could remain at the Huron Street site, and that green space will form an integral part of future development. Our city supported the Community Climate Action Plan, passing it on Aug. 12, 2024.

### UPDATES:

1.) Carbon parts per million (ppm) in the atmosphere as of Aug. 15, 2026: 428.02 ppm.

Coal is a powerful fossil fuel. The top exporters of coal are Indonesia and Australia, followed by Russia, the United States, Mongolia, South Africa and Colombia. Top users of coal for energy are China and India by a wide margin, followed by the United States, Indonesia and Japan. Efforts continue to encourage countries to eliminate coal mining and use.

2.) A new to me native shrub: I've been introduced to shrub-by cinquefoil. Native, a host plant for butterflies and moths and loved by pollinators! Great to add to your spring or autumn planting!



## Sometimes you should toot your own horn.

I recently received the best compliment a funeral director can receive. It is what I strive for through the privilege that is my work.

"I just wanted to drop you a note and say thank you for all the support and guidance you have given me over the past few months. I was talking with a friend last night and said that you are not only professional, but that you share your personal, human side as well, and that makes the difficult journey easier to navigate. It felt like making the voyage with a friend."

**That is everything.**

### Rutherford Cremation & Funeral Services

804 Ontario St., Stratford | 519-271-5062  
rutherford@jarfh.com | www.jarfh.com

## United Way Perth-Huron installs AC unit in Stratford Connection Centre

EMILY STEWART

*Times Correspondent*

United Way Perth-Huron has funded the Stratford Connection Centre's new air conditioning unit, improving the safety and comfort of those accessing the centre, staff and volunteers.

"It's just as important to provide cooling as it is heating," said Ryan Erb, executive director. "Sometimes, we think of the Connection Centre as a place for people to be out of the cold weather in the winter, but we also have to understand that we need to make sure that that place is comfortable for people in hot summer days as well."

The Connection Centre is run by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Huron-Perth and provides support services, basic needs and meaningful relationships to those facing or at risk of homelessness. The local United Way funds the centre's operating costs.

Erb said that getting a new A.C. unit in the Connection Centre, which operates out of an older church building, is "long overdue."

"We've talked about it for a couple of years and we wanted to make sure it was



**United Way  
Perth-Huron**

possible at that site and there are difficulties in old buildings sometimes so it took a little bit longer than we hoped to get there but now that it's worked through, we are excited about moving forward," he said.

The cost of installing the new air conditioning unit is within the \$40,000 range.

"We're happy to receive donations," Erb said. "United Way has used reserves to pay for it because it needed to be done quickly, but now we are looking for people to help support."

Donations can be made online via perthuronunitedway.ca, designating funds to the Connection Centre. Anyone looking to donate can also make arrangements by calling 519-271-7730 or visiting the office at 32 Erie St.

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worship services.**

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**stratfordtimes@gmail.com**

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*11:00 a.m. – Fellowship and  
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## STRATFORD **TIMES**

## Pick Up Locations

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 John's  
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

**WWW.STRATFORDTIMES.COM**

# COMING EVENTS

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

## STRATFORD SCRABBLE CLUB

Anne Hathawy Residence 480 Downie St., Stratford  
Meets every Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. for 3 games.  
Check our website for further details [stratfordscrabble.ca](http://stratfordscrabble.ca)

## STRATFORD ASTRONOMY GROUP MEETINGS

St. Michael Catholic Secondary School, 240 Oakdale Avenue, Stratford

Rear parking lot off Matilda. Room #1104 - 1st Tuesday of each month from

September to June. 7-9 p.m.

We are night sky enthusiasts. Everyone is welcome to attend. See our website at <https://stratfordastronomy.com/> or call 519-275-4472 for more information

## JOIN US FOR SUMMER AT KNOX

Knox Presbyterian Church

142 Ontario St., Stratford

August events include Book Club on Tuesdays, drop in watercolour painting on Wednesdays, Stained Glass Tours on Thursday - all starting at 10:30 a.m. Free community dinner on August 19 at 5 p.m! Visit <https://pcweb.ca/knoxstratford/> or call 519-271-0373 for more details! Everyone welcome!

## BLACKSMITH DEMONSTRATION

On Saturday, August 29, starting at 10 a.m., come to the Brocksden Country School Museum for an incredible demonstration of how a blacksmith used his forge!

## FOOD TRUCKS

Monday, August 24; 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Grace United Church Tavistock

Berlin 95, Ish n Chips, El Milagro

Donations to Camp Bimini

## WHATEVER WEDNESDAYS!

Youth Unlimited YFC Stratford

Wednesday, August 26th; 1-3 p.m.

Memorial Baptist Church - 113 Bruce Street, Stratford

A youth (12-18) drop-in program for... Whatever! Check out activities like giant soccer, tie-dye, basketball, and more. Run indoors or outdoors depending on weather.

Questions? [www.yfcstratford.com](http://www.yfcstratford.com)  
info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

## YOUTH HIKING TRIP

Youth Unlimited YFC Stratford

Friday, August 28; 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. - Ages 12-18

Meet at Bethel Pentecostal Church for transportation.

Hiking roughly 9.5 KM around Rattlesnake Point & Crawford Lake Conservation Area (near Milton). Enjoy amazing views, a replica Iroquoian village, and a picnic lunch together. Questions & Sign-Up (Required to come!): [www.yfcstratford.com](http://www.yfcstratford.com) info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

## FOOD TRUCKS

Monday, August 31; 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Grace United Church Tavistock

Born2Eat, Los Rolling Tacos, Fo'Cheezy

Donations to Tavistock Agricultural Society

## OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Tuesday, September 1; 7:00 p.m.

93 Morgan St., Stratford

Speaker – Paul D'Souza from Coloplast

Learn about ostomy products and services from Coloplast Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome.

519-273-4327

## WHATEVER WEDNESDAYS!

Youth Unlimited YFC Stratford

Wednesday, September 2; 1-3 p.m.

Memorial Baptist Church - 113 Bruce Street, Stratford

A youth (12-18) drop-in program for... Whatever! Check out activities like giant soccer, tie-dye, basketball, and more. Run indoors or outdoors depending on weather.

Questions? [www.yfcstratford.com](http://www.yfcstratford.com)  
info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

## YOUTH CAMPFIRE NIGHT

Youth Unlimited YFC Stratford

Thursday, September 3; 7-10 p.m., Ages 12-18

80 East Perth Road 130, Sebringville

We're wrapping up our summer with a chill hangout by a campfire, making s'mores and other campfire cuisine.

Questions & Sign-Up (Required to come!): [www.yfcstratford.com](http://www.yfcstratford.com) info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

## FRIDAY NIGHT EUCHRES

Friday, September 11; 6 p.m.

Legion 804 Ontario St.

Sign up your team of 2 for \$20 by calling the Legion at 519-271-4540, Dave at 519-703-6544 or Anne at 519-301-0914. Doors open at 6 p.m., games start at 6:30 p.m.

## YOUTH AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Hosted by Youth Unlimited YFC Stratford

Mondays, 3:00-4:45 p.m., September 14/26-June 21/27

382 Britannia Street, Stratford

Free drop-in for students aged 11-18. Join us for snacks, board games, video games, and connection! Questions? [www.yfcstratford.com](http://www.yfcstratford.com) info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

## EDMONTON ELKS VS TORONTO ARGONAUTS

Saturday, September 19

The Stratford Legion is hosting a bus trip to see the Edmonton Elks vs Toronto Argonauts football game. It is a 3 p.m. game and the Badder bus leaves from the Cooper Lot at 12 noon. The cost is \$105 p.p. Contact Dean at 273-4463 to reserve and pay for your spot. Tickets are selling fast!

## STRATFORD MISSION DEPOT WITH FOUNDER JEAN AITCHESON

Wednesday, September 2; 2 p.m.

Christ Church, 595815 Oxford 59 Huntingford

This Reaching Ontario Sharing Education (ROSE) program is co-hosted by the Braemar W.I. and the ACW of Christ Church. It is a wheelchair accessible building and all are welcome. Refreshments will be served. questions [lauragreen77@gmail.com](mailto:lauragreen77@gmail.com)

## THE SECOND HAND BOOK NOOK SALE

Tavistock Fall Fair, in the arena

Friday, Sept. 11; 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 12; 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 13; 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Lots of books, magazines and puzzles for sale

For more information, call 519-590-1617

## GARDEN STRATFORD GENERAL MEETING

Monday September 14; 7:15 – 9:00 p.m.

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

Featured Presentation: "Flower Shows in UK - Harrogate Show in England/ Castle and Gardens", Roland Craig Meeting Open to Everyone; Free Admission.

## YOUTH UNLIMITED YFC STRATFORD GOLF TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER

Wednesday, September 23

Stratford Golf & Country Club

Golfer sign-in: 3:00 PM, Shotgun Start: 4:00 PM

9-hole, best-ball tournament. \$300 fee per golfer, or \$1000 per team of 4.

Contests, prizes, and giveaways! Registration required to participate. Questions & Sign-Up (Required to Participate): [www.yfcstratford.com](http://www.yfcstratford.com) info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

## YOUTH LUNCH PERIOD PROGRAM

Hosted by Youth Unlimited YFC Stratford

Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., September 30/26-June 16/27

382 Britannia Street, Stratford

Free drop-in for high school students. Join us for snacks, games, connection (and occasional pizza parties!).

Questions? [www.yfcstratford.com](http://www.yfcstratford.com)  
info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

## PURE HEART PROGRAM

Hosted by Youth Unlimited YFC Stratford

Wednesdays, 3:00-4:30 p.m., September 30/26-June 16/27

382 Britannia Street, Stratford

Free art program for students aged 11-18. Join us for discussions, guest artists, art instruction, and more! Questions? [www.yfcstratford.com](http://www.yfcstratford.com) info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

## FRIDAY NIGHT EUCHRES

Friday, November 13; 6 p.m.

Legion 804 Ontario St.

November 13 – The next Stratford Legion Friday Night Euchre is Friday Nov. 13th. Sign up your team of 2 for \$20 by calling the Legion at 519-271-4540, Dave at 519-703-6544 or Anne at 519-301-0914. Doors open at 6 p.m., games start at 6:30 p.m.

**HAVE A COMING EVENT  
COMING UP?**

**Contact: [stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com)  
or call 519-655-2341**

**STRATFORD  
TIMES**

**Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.  
Contact: [stratfordtimes@gmail.com](mailto:stratfordtimes@gmail.com)**

## PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

- The Community Calendar is for non-profit organizations to promote their free admission events at no charge. Event listings can include your event name, date, time and location as well as a phone number, email address or website.
- If your event is not free admission or you would like to include more details than stated above, you have the following options:
  - Coming Events Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$10 + hst
  - Coming Events Boxed Word Ad in Classified section (50 word max.) - \$15 + hst
  - Display Ad - Sizes begin at a classified business card size for \$35 + hst

# OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Soothing your spirit in Grenada's rainforest



PAUL KNOWLES

*Times Columnist*

It's not a surprise that, when travellers visit Caribbean islands, they often have two thoughts in mind: the beach and rum punches. And there is no doubt that most Caribbean islands have great beaches, and no lack of rum drinks.

But the best Caribbean destinations offer so much more, and it would be a shame to miss the wonders you will find if you dare to leave the beach resort and start to explore.

In my view, Grenada is definitely one of "the best Caribbean destinations." I have a special fondness for the "Windward Islands" – the nations that are in the eastern part of the Caribbean. And when I was in Grenada, earlier this summer, the beach played very little part in a menu of fantastic activities – although there is no doubt that the four-kilometre-long Grand Anse white sand beach is one of the best in the world.

But we turned our focus inland, and spent one of our days exploring Grenada's spectacular rainforest.

Grenada has 3,800 acres of protected rainforest. The diversity of plants is

mind-boggling: there are over 100 varieties of ferns, alone.

One of my favourite stops was at Annandale Waterfall and Forest Park. This being the rainforest, it wasn't too surprising that it was, in fact, raining. But this being a tropical island, it also wasn't too surprising that the rain was warm, and nobody seemed to care that we were getting wet. Because the plants and flowers were astonishing, and the waterfall is beautiful.

Annandale is a 30-foot waterfall on a stream that emerges from the rainforest, and plunges into a beautiful, emerald pool below... open for swimming if you so choose. It's one of nine waterfalls in Grenada, which is a volcanic island (there are hot springs you can visit), and so, rises sharply from the oceanfront to the heights of the rainforest.

Not to wax overly botanical, I wandered along paths bordered by dramatic heliconia, lush bougainvillea (the national flower of Grenada), "shampoo ginger," bird of paradise flower, torch ginger and large, bright yellow flower called "buttercups" that bear no resemblance to any buttercup I have encountered in Canada. Plus dozens of plants I wouldn't even begin to try to identify. The rainforest is simply beautiful, and I noticed that all of us travel-writing colleagues almost immediately relaxed, and stopped to savour the visual delights

around us – in spite of the rain.

Annandale Falls is just a small part of the large rainforest, which includes the Grand Etang National Park and Forest Reserve. There, visitors will encounter a cornucopia of unique delights.

There is an extensive lake that is actually a volcanic crater. There are beautiful birds, rainbow eucalyptus trees with bark the colours of the rainbow, and rather shockingly large giant frangipani caterpillars.

But the highlights are the Mona monkeys.

As you enter the park, you encounter this posted warning: "Notice. The Mona monkeys within the Grand Etang National Park live in the wild and can be very unpredictable. If you choose to interact with them, you are doing so at your own risk. The management of the park assumes no liability for any injury sustained as a result of such interaction."

That notice certainly echoed in my head a few minutes and a short distance away, as a Mona monkey sat on top of my head. Because there are some gentlemen who have apparently trained the wild monkeys to prance about on visitors' heads, arms and shoulders in return for food.

Or perhaps – and I might actually lean toward this explanation – the monkeys have trained the gentlemen. It sure seemed like the monkeys were in

charge, at any rate.

Our minibus driver stopped where these monkeys are likely to be found, and next thing we knew, we had become climbing posts for Mona monkeys. It was a ton of fun – and no tourists were hurt in the making of those photographs. Nor were any Mona monkeys.

Grand Etang National Park features several walking and hiking trails. The hikes through the rainforest range from relatively easy walks to a challenging trail that climbs up Mount Saint Catherine, the highest peak on the volcanic island.

Of course, as wonderful as the rainforest is, Grenada offers a lot more for visitors to enjoy (including, naturally, the beach). There is the unique and astonishing Underwater Sculpture Park (which I had the chance to re-visit, and which I will write about in a subsequent feature). The island is home to seven chocolate factories (and once you have had Grenadian chocolate, you may never go back), and – you knew we're get back to this – five rum distilleries, which offer the most generous tasting experiences you are likely to encounter anywhere.

The tours of the chocolate factories are fascinating, and the tours of the rum distilleries are tasty, as well. Our visit took us to Belmont Estates for chocolate, and to Clarke's Court rum distillery.

But tempting as those



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

**Annandale Falls, one of nine waterfalls in the rainforest of Grenada.**

options are (and yes, you should yield to temptation in this case), nothing will soothe and inspire your soul like spending time in Grenada's amazing rainforest.

*Paul Knowles is an au-*

*thor 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](mailto:pknowles@golden.net).*

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We offer competitive wages combined with a comprehensive benefits program to encourage long term employment.

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**Or email to [markv@fgc.ca](mailto:markv@fgc.ca)**

**Only successful candidates will be contacted.**

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**Tropical beauties: heliconia and red ginger lily.**



**Bougainvillea is the national flower of Grenada.**

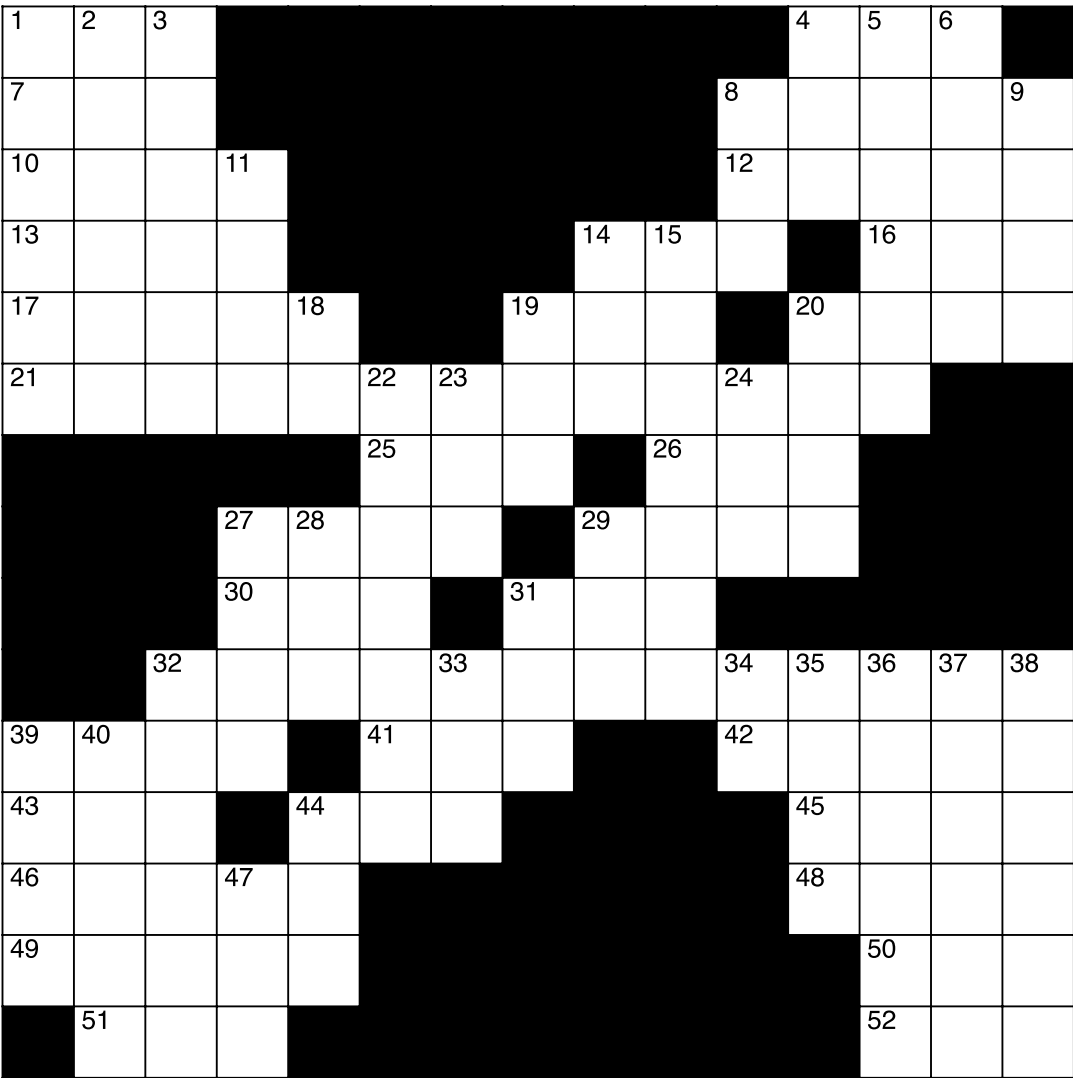
# Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Microgram
- 4. Fixed charge
- 7. Each
- 8. Feeling of humiliation
- 10. Coat with sticky substance
- 12. Powerful “Severance” family
- 13. Japanese city
- 14. “Pulp Fiction” actress Thurman
- 16. Hat
- 17. Place where rockers work
- 19. Psyche
- 20. Snakelike fishes
- 21. Where people live
- 25. Body part
- 26. Old towel
- 27. One’s essential being
- 29. Japanese alcoholic beverage
- 30. Boxing’s GOAT
- 31. Wet muddy ground
- 32. Christian Laettner is one
- 39. A place to store lawn tools
- 41. Large tub for liquid
- 42. Old World lizard
- 43. One-time European member group
- 44. Healing student
- 45. Nuclear weapon
- 46. “Kiss of the Spider Woman” actress Sonia
- 48. Silk garment
- 49. About some Norse poems
- 50. Woman religious community member
- 51. Congressman (abbr.)
- 52. Two-year-old sheep

CLUES DOWN

- 1. An insane person
- 2. “Homeland” actress Danes
- 3. Buttock muscles
- 4. US federal agency
- 5. Birds of prey
- 6. Electronic communication
- 8. Ocean
- 9. Terminates
- 11. Low-pitched sound from a bell
- 14. Exclamation: yuck!
- 15. A place to attach a boat
- 18. Exclamation of surprise
- 19. Make a mistake
- 20. Border line
- 22. Have religious faith
- 23. Klutz
- 24. Large tree
- 27. House of \_\_ rulers
- 28. Red deer
- 29. Small coin (French)
- 31. Popular sandwich
- 32. 10-year period
- 33. Not good
- 34. Government lawyer
- 35. Egypt’s intelligence agency
- 36. Without an occupant or incumbent
- 37. Stain with one’s hands
- 38. Crippling
- 39. One point east of southeast
- 40. Large, united groups
- 44. \_\_ and cheese
- 47. Alcoholic beverage



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



### CATALINA

Meet Catalina! This sweet, 1 year old tortie girl is ready to find the forever home she's been waiting for. She's a big fan of life's simple pleasures: chasing jingle balls, enjoying tasty treats, and ending the day curled up beside her favourite people for a cozy cuddle.

She's looking for a patient adopter who will give her the time, love, and understanding she needs to build her confidence. Once she feels safe, her sweet personality shines through.

If you're looking for a gentle companion who is equal parts playful and cuddly, Catalina could be the perfect match. Meet her at our Stratford Perth Animal Centre or online at [kwsphumane.ca/adopt/cats](https://kwsphumane.ca/adopt/cats)



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# CLASSIFIEDS

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

## OBITUARY



### CAMERON BRUCE COLQUHOUN

With great sorrow, the family announces the passing of Cameron Bruce Colquhoun, peacefully at the age of 75, at Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth, August 10 2026. Granddaughter Briar Rose and wife Marlene were at his side.

Cam was the loving husband and partner to Marlene Mc Lean, for 43 years. He was a caring stepfather to Eric Law, Andrew Law (Ana Galac) and April Geoffrey. He is survived by grandchildren, Briar White (Devon), McGregor and Aesa Geoffrey, Kai and Teo Galac-Law and great grand daughter Presley Cameron White. He is also survived by Marlene's sister June Palmer Nagtegaal (Harry).

The Colquhoun roots run deep in Perth County. His great-great-great Grandfather and Mother, Arthur and Isabella Colquhoun, purchased their Staffa farm from the Canada Company in 1858. Five more generations were born in the Staffa area, including Cam's father.

Cam is predeceased by his father K.W. "Dan" Colquhoun and mother Jean (McDougall) of Clinton. Cam enjoyed growing up with three brothers, the late Laurie, (Charon), Dan (Vicki) and Neil (Joanne) rafting and fishing on the Maitland and Bayfield rivers and roaming the forests, building forts and campfires. He took pleasure from happy times visiting with his dear sisters, Mary Jean (the late David Beattie), Debbie (Steve Wilkinson), Kelly (the late Brian Wise), Shelley (Pat Denomme) and cousins, Cindy Fleet (Butch), Caroline Demers (Dan) along with numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

Cam was part of the last generation of pupils to attend school in a one room school-house, with Mrs Marion Powell, at SS#1 Stanley Township in Huron County. He went on to Clinton public school. Cam (Tucker) graduated from Central Huron Secondary School. Always "ten feet ahead of himself", he distinguished himself as the first ever W.O.S.S.A Track and Field Champion at CHSS, competing in high jump, triple jump and long jump. A lifelong athlete, he played hockey, baseball, and golf.

In 1969, he moved on to Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, Toronto, completing the National Canadian Board exam of 1973 in first place. He practiced chiropractic for 37 years in Chatham, Ingersoll and then Dorchester. Cam genuinely appreciated those who put their trust in him as their chiropractor. He retired to Stratford in 2010.

Over the years, Cam and Marlene shared a mutual partnership, travelled, and had fun in the sun in St Maarten. He played sports, was an avid reader and enjoyed performances at Stratford Festival theatres. The annual Colquhoun family golf tournaments and dinners were a highlight of his summers.

He was admired for his fortitude and perseverance throughout his illness. He is missed by those who watched him on his daily walks with his Scottie dogs.

Arrangements and expressions of sympathy are entrusted to Youngs Funeral Home, Stratford ON. In accordance with his wishes, a cremation has taken place and there will be no funeral or service. Internment will be at the columbarium in Avondale Cemetery on a later date.

Donations to the Chemo Unit at the Stratford Hospital or the hospice as expressions of sympathy.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Dr Sean Blaine, Kate Nesbitt and the community palliative team, Dr Stephen Welch and team at Verspeeten Family Cancer Center, the chemo unit at Stratford Hospital, Sinclair Pharmacy, the Ontario Health Care system, friends and neighbours, Dr Eric Thomas and the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth staff and volunteers. Thanks to all family members who supported Cam, Marlene and Briar in recent weeks. A very special thank you to granddaughter Briar Rose for her love and support and "every night visits" with Grampa in hospice.

The time you won your town the race  
We chaired you through the market-place  
Man and boy stood cheering by  
And home we brought you, shoulder-high.  
A.E. Houseman

## OBITUARY



### THOMAS, GARY LORNE

**JULY 17, 1937 – AUGUST 15, 2026**

Gary fell ill on his 89th birthday but, not surprisingly, endured his weakened condition for weeks, allowing his loving family to relive good times and in the process learn more about a life well-lived.

One of his fondest memories was coaching "the 11 iron men", a team of 11 and 12 year-old boys, including future Detroit Red Wing players Nick Libett and Henry Monteith, to the 1958 National Peewee Hockey Grand Championship in Goderich, Ontario. The team reunited in 2013 when they were inducted into the Stratford Sports Wall of Fame.

A reporter recently asked one of Junior B's most successful hockey coaches, now retired, who had the most influence on him over the years. His answer, "Gary Thomas, my Tyke baseball coach." Fortunately, hundreds of Stratford and area kids were privy to Gary's coaching prowess back in the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s.

He also enjoyed tremendous success pitching for the Stratford Nationals / Kraven Knits until age 35, throwing a 2-hit shutout in one of his final outings. In 2019, he was named one of the 'Greats' to play for Stratford in the Intercounty Baseball League, alongside elite players like Kevin Aitcheson and Ron Musselman. Participation badges and runners-up trophies weren't for him; he coached and played to win.

In 1949, Gary won the Stratford Soap Box Derby riding in a metal soap box christened "Miss Canada", constructed in the CNR shops by his father, renowned Beacon Herald sportswriter Harold "Winger" Thomas. (Brother Marvin repeated the feat each of the next 3 years.) "Miss Canada" is currently stationed at the Stratford-Perth Archives.

Beginning in 1967 with an open-air ice pad, followed later by the enclosed rink, a baseball diamond and a playground, Gary was instrumental in establishing Lions Dufferin Park. He was also President of the Lions Club in the early 1970s.

Gary was raised on Whyte Ave. by Harold and Pearl (Mitchell), the best cook who ever lived, along with twin siblings Marvin and Marlene, the second best cook who ever lived. All 3 children excelled in sports and in the classroom. In 1956, Gary began working full-time at Monteith & Monteith and enrolled in correspondence courses to become a Chartered Accountant (CA). His friends and teammates started calling him "CA", and it stuck.

In 1958 he married a beautiful, young school teacher, Joyce Clutton, and remained by her side for 68 years... 'Til death do us part'. By the time Gary completed his final exam

in 1961 to earn his CA designation, he and Joyce had a young child, another on the way and a mortgage. Around this time, he was invited to try out with the Detroit Tigers.

Smart man that he was, Gary spent a couple days on the field in Briggs Stadium, Detroit before "voluntarily" returning home.

Leisure time was spent in the living rooms and backyards of the Rosses, the Catnias, the Wynnes, the Robinsons and the Gordons.

In 1975, the Stratford Shakespearean Festival came calling and, with the blessing of the Monteiths, Gary changed employers for the only time in his adult life. He guided the organization through difficult times of high inflation and declining attendance, first as Treasurer and later as General Manager. By the time he escorted Queen Elizabeth II through the halls of the newly renovated theatre in 1997, the Festival had been reborn and he was presented with a medal by the Governor General of Canada. It's possible that not every employee appreciated his ability to balance the books, but safe to say all respected his commitment and leadership.

Was he flawless? He was not, as evidenced by his decision in the summer of 1969 to borrow a family member's 2-bed camper and tow it to Ottawa for a family vacation... along with Joyce and 4 young children. On the other hand, his children - Nancy (Major), Peter, Ric and Andy (as well as all of their friends at the time) - will be ever-grateful for the in-ground swimming pool that he and Joyce constructed largely on their own in 1970. In return, the children did exactly as their father requested and married "extremely well" (his words) to Marcel, Judy, Kim and Barb, respectively.

Their love and support for Gary and Joyce over the years was and remains remarkable, along with that of grandchildren Katie (Andrew), Ethan, Ryan, Sophie, Courtney (Coletton), Kenzie, Sam, Haley and Jonathan, all of whom connected with their grandfather multiple times during his illness. And let's not forget great-grandchildren Caleb, Nora and Layne. As Marlene's marvelous husband Bob Kydd used to observe during Sunday dinners, "I've never known a family that got along so well". Marvin's partner of 25 years, Pat Savage, would agree.

Thank you, thank you to the wonderful staff in the Medicine Unit at Stratford General Hospital, including Erika, Lindsay, Alexa, MJ, Morgan, Carly, Tina, Sarah, Heather, Terri, Mindy, Jodie, Mary, Caitlyn, Alicia, Mo, Junior, James, Jeremy, Ross, Drs. Walji and Dhillon and countless others for the best care imaginable.

In accordance with Gary's wishes, there will not be a funeral service or visitation, but a Celebration of Life will be announced at a later date. Donations to the Stratford General Hospital Foundation or the Stratford Festival Endowment Foundation can be made as expressions of sympathy.

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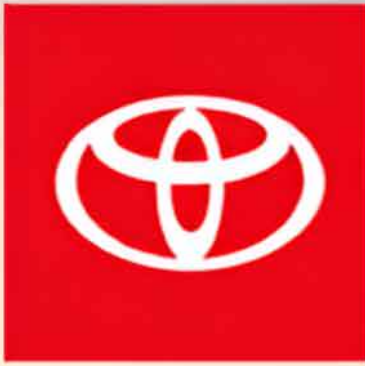
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