DATA CENTRES IN STRATFORD? PAGE 7

185 YEARS OF FALL FAIR PAGE 7B

STRATFORD TIMES

VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 6 SEPTEMBER 18, 2026 FREE

STONETOWN TRAVEL

ST. MARYS • NEW HAMBURG

Travel made easy.

519-284-2332

Hear better. Age better. Live Better. Call today!

COMMUNITY HEARING CARE

Stratford's **only** local and independent provider

Lucas Dasilva
Hearing Instrument Specialist, Reg'd AHIP
Clinic Co-Owner

Shelly Gansevles
Office Administrator, Clinic Co-Owner

519.271.HEAR (4327)
communityhearingcare.ca
370 Ontario St, Stratford, ON N5A 3H9

Mark Hunter brings business experience to Stratford mayoral race

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

Mark Hunter is no stranger to the Stratford city council chambers. He has served on council as chair of the finance and labour relations committee and is now running for mayor of Stratford.

Hunter has over 30 years of business management experience and is also a lawyer. He believes he can use that experience to provide strong, focused leadership at city council.

"Good leadership means setting priorities, making informed decisions and following through to ensure important projects get completed," said Hunter.

He says that his desire to serve as mayor comes from a simple goal: to make Stratford an even better place for everyone to live.

"I want to help protect what makes our community special while making thoughtful improvements that will benefit families, businesses and organizations across our city," said Hunter. "I love the many things that make Stratford such a special place to live. We have a strong industrial base, a world-class theatre, a vibrant downtown, a beloved hockey team, beautiful parks and so much more."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Organizers for the first Stride for Shelter pose with a banner. For more information on the fundraiser for Shelterlink. For more, see our story on page 4.

'VIA Rail is never on time': Nater presses rail service over chronic Stratford delays

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For passengers relying on VIA Rail to travel between Stratford, St. Marys and Toronto this summer, arriving late wasn't the exception. It was essentially the rule.

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater is calling on VIA Rail Canada to address what he describes as an "unacceptable" level of service on the Toronto-Sarnia route after data showed trains serving Stratford and St. Marys were consistently delayed throughout the summer.

In a Sept. 10 letter to VIA Rail interim president and CEO Mathieu Paquette, Nater said he began looking into the issue after a constituent told him, "VIA Rail is never on time."

"While I had assumed this was an exaggeration, when I looked at the facts, it was true: VIA Rail is quite literally never on time," Nater wrote.

Historical train data provided to the Times for trains 84 and 87 between July 1 and Sept. 7 paints a similar picture. Of the 134 journeys listed during that period, only one was

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

Stacked
PANCAKE & BREAKFAST HOUSE

$6.99 Breakfast Special

MON - FRI
7 AM - 9 AM
Dine-In Only

925 Ontario St Unit No- 5B, Stratford

Open Everyday | 7 AM - 3 PM

Uber Eats

stackedpancakehouse.ca

SKIP THE DISHES

‘VIA Rail is never on time’: Nater presses rail service over chronic Stratford, St. Marys delays

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

recorded as on time, and that was a bus replacement for Train 84 on Aug. 16 rather than regular rail service.

Across the other 133 trips, the average recorded delay was approximately 67 minutes. Train 84, travelling from Sarnia to Toronto through St. Marys and Stratford, averaged a delay of roughly 69 minutes, while Toronto-to-Sarnia Train 87 averaged approximately 65 minutes.

Some delays stretched well beyond that. Train 84 was recorded 234 minutes late July 2, while Train 87 was 213 minutes late Sept. 2.

Nater said those delays have consequences beyond simply leaving passengers waiting at a station.

“The consistently late trains are more than just an inconvenience for travellers; they have real impacts on the lives of residents and visitors,” Nater told the Times. “The delays have caused missed appointments, missed connections for both rail and air travel, and missed events for both business and pleasure.”

He said unreliable rail service can also have an economic impact locally, particularly given Stratford’s reliance on tourism.

“With tourism playing a major role in our local economy, the unreliability of these trains poses yet another impediment to bringing tourists to our community,” Nater said.

In his letter, Nater acknowledged VIA does not own the tracks and freight traffic is beyond the passenger rail service’s day-to-day control. However, he argued the persistent delays demonstrate an unacceptable lack of transparency for passengers and questioned whether VIA is committed to maintaining service along the North Main Line.

Nater asked VIA for written confirmation trains 84 and 87 will continue operating, an explanation of what action will be taken to address the delays and a response to his previous invitation for Paquette to travel by rail from Montreal to Stratford to experience the challenges firsthand.

In the short term, Nater said he wants VIA to better coordinate departure times to avoid freight traffic. Longer term, he would like to see agreements with the companies that own the tracks guaranteeing VIA access during the relatively short periods when its trains use the North Main Line.

“At the very least, I would expect VIA Rail to immediately display a greater degree of transparency for consumers and post the actual expected arrival and departure times rather than some idealized time that is never met,” Nater said. “This would at least provide some reassurance of timing for a consumer.”

In a statement provided to the Times, VIA Rail acknowledged the ongoing reliability issues.

“VIA Rail recognizes the ongoing on-time performance challenges affecting trains between Toronto and Sarnia and understands the impact these delays have on passengers and the communities we serve,” a spokesperson said.

According to VIA, much of the problem stems from circumstances beyond its control because it does not own the tracks used by the trains.

“Contributing factors include freight traffic, track conditions and associated speed limitations, as well as maintenance and improvement work on the rail infrastructure,” the spokesperson said.

VIA said it remains committed to serving communities along the route and is working with the infrastructure owners to identify ways to reduce delays and improve reliability while focusing on those parts of its operation it can control.

Asked whether VIA could do more to warn passengers travelling between Stratford, St. Marys and Toronto about potential delays so they can adjust their plans, the rail service encouraged passengers to check its real-time train-status tracker at tsimobile.viarail.ca before travelling.

For Nater, however, improving the underlying reliability of the service remains the priority.

“I am hopeful that VIA Rail will take action to improve its on-time performance,” he said.

Stratford expected to grow to over 50K over next 30 years – does the city have what its residents need?

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

According to a lands need assessment done by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., Stratford’s population is expected to grow to 52,900 residents by 2056, an increase of about 15,800 people.

While Watson’s report indicates there is enough residential land to meet the growing housing demands the Festival City will face, it doesn’t have enough commercial or industrial land to accommodate the wave of jobs expected to flow through.

Employment is forecasted to grow by about 8,300 jobs between 2026 and 2056, with growth occurring across all sectors. There will be a significant need for additional non-residential land, according to the assessment: approximately 29 gross developable hectares of additional commercial and/or institutional land and approximately 91 gross developable hectares of additional employment area land to support future industrial growth.

The assessment was done as part of the City of Stratford’s ongoing Official Plan (OP) review, the guiding document which informs the city’s planning and land use. It was presented at the Sept. 14 Stratford city council meeting, the last of five papers meant to inform the public and council ahead of the OP’s eventual presentation at a future meeting.

To view the whole report from Watson, see the agenda of the meeting, which can be found at https://tinyurl.com/y7bvhtx5.

Mark Hunter brings business experience to Stratford mayoral race

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

According to Hunter, what truly makes Stratford special is its people. He acknowledged that Stratford is known as a friendly, welcoming and supportive community, and he is proud to call it home for himself and his growing family.

"My family's steel sales company has been proud to call Stratford home since 1977, and the support of local businesses has helped us thrive," said Hunter. "My wife, Denise, and I love living here, and we are proud that our adult children plan to make Stratford their permanent home as well."

He said his love of Stratford and his knowledge of business and leadership will help him understand the community's needs, and that doing so means listening, working with others, and keeping the community's best interests at the centre of every decision.

Hunter says his priorities are keeping taxes in line, attracting small businesses to Stratford and improving roads and infrastructure.

He says that as someone who pays both residential and business taxes, he understands how important that balance is for the city and its residents.

"I will prioritize spending so that we focus our resources where they are needed most while maintaining a close eye on the budget," he said. "I will also work to attract new businesses and investment to Stratford, helping diversify our tax base and reduce pressure on residential taxpayers."

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Mark Hunter is running for mayor of Stratford, with priorities that include keeping taxes in line, attracting small businesses and improving roads and infrastructure.

Hunter also plans to address housing and rising costs without increasing taxes for taxpayers. He plans to work with outside non-profit organizations to expand the supply of affordable housing while minimizing reliance on property tax dollars.

An ongoing question for Stratford residents is what will happen with the Grand Trunk site, and Hunter says he will continue to work on the project and secure funding for the massive project.

"The new library and YMCA approved by council in April are an excellent start, but they are just the beginning," he said. "We need to continue working diligently to secure outside funding and move forward with the next phases of this exciting opportunity for Stratford."

Lastly, Hunter plans to improve communication between city hall and Stratford citizens.

"Today, information is available, but too often residents have to search for it," he said. "I will work to create a consistent and reliable system for regularly bringing important city information directly to our community. Better communication will strengthen transparency, accountability and public participation and make city hall more accessible to everyone."

During the campaign, Hunter can be reached by email at Hunter4Mayor2026@gmail.com or mark@huntersteel.ca. You can also reach him by phone at 519-273-3151.

STRATFORD TIMES
Contribute to your local community newspaper!
Send articles, sports or event recaps, and photos to
stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. Who is lead singer of Pearl Jam?
2. What is the name of the AI chatbot developed by OpenAI?
3. What sport is featured in the television series *Ted Lasso*?
4. Which social media platform is known for its "For You" page?
5. What is the best-selling console of all time?
6. What is the name of the fictional city where Batman lives?
7. Which company owns Pixar?
8. Which famous toy has the slogan "You can be anything"?
9. What year did Canada fully abolish the death penalty?
10. Mach 1 is known as what?

This week's answers are found on pg. 23

Stride for Shelter plans 24-hour run to raise money for Shelterlink

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

When the nights get darker quicker and the cold is unrelenting, many of Stratford's unhoused don't have many options and need to "keep moving."

Could you do the same?

Stride for Shelter, a group of residents wanting to make a difference in Stratford, is launching its inaugural, community-led fundraising event designed to raise funds and awareness for youth experiencing homelessness in the Festival City.

The concept was inspired by Mayor Martin Ritsma, who completed a 24-hour fundraiser to raise awareness of homelessness, according to community outreach lead Alex Boersen, as well as something he heard in the City of Stratford's winter warming centre.

"I do a lot of volunteering at the warming centre still," Boersen explained. "I run my own practice (Redline Recovery Counselling), but I do some volunteering through the winter and just talking with some people, that's kind of the strategy, honestly. When there's nothing, you just have to keep moving. Everyone says you just can't stay still."

With the support of Ritsma, Stride for Shelter aims to raise awareness of youth homelessness while generating a direct, measurable impact. The approximate cost to house one youth for one night through Shelterlink Youth Services is $300. In the event's inaugural year, its fundraising goal is $35,000 – enough to provide safe shelter for approximately 300 youth for one night.

The event will take the form of a 24-hour endurance run/walk on Nov. 21-22 at the Stratford Education Recreation Complex (SERC), where participants will complete one, two-kilometre loop per hour over a continuous 24-hour period, symbolizing the ongoing and urgent need for safe shelter during all hours of the day.

Its beneficiary, Shelterlink, will receive all funds raised to support its housing and support services for vulnerable youth in the community. The inaugural Stride for Shelter event also coincides with Shelterlink's 35th anniversary, offering a meaningful opportunity to celebrate the organization's longstanding impact in Stratford while rallying community support for its continued work.

As Boersen said, there will be participants that will run and walk for that whole 24-hour period, but participants won't need to go that whole marathon. Additionally, those interested in supporting the cause can sponsor the event.

"Even if you only do one lap, or you can come and just be there, and you want to register at the event, that would be helpful too. … We want people to push themselves, but the whole idea is this is really hard. We're going to try to do something hard."

For more information, visit Stride for Shelter's information page through the Shelterlink website, www.shelterlink.org/events/stride-for-shelter. Additionally, organizers will be posting updates on their social media channels on Facebook and Instagram.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)
An example of one of the spaces provided by Shelterlink Youth Services.

Litany of charges laid after alleged downtown assault

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

On Friday, Sept.11, the Stratford Police Service received multiple 911 calls regarding a male attacking a female in the area of Albert Street and Waterloo Street South, in Stratford.

Witnesses reported that a male was observed attacking a female with a large metal bar when an individual passing by intervened. The individual who intervened was also assaulted while preventing further assault to the female. The subject male then fled the scene prior to police arrival.

Police located the male who was identified as a 27-year-old male resident of Stratford. After a brief foot pursuit, he was apprehended and arrested without incident.

The male was taken into custody at Stratford Police Headquarters where he was charged with two counts of Assault with a Weapon, Aggravated Assault, Possession of a Weapon for Dangerous Purpose and Resist Arrest. He was held in custody to attend a bail hearing at a later date.

The female victim was transported to hospital for non-life-threatening injuries.

Police would like to thank the individual who intervened in this matter and prevented further harm from being caused to the female victim.

STRATFORD TIMES
SCAN TO READ THE ONLINE PAPER
www.granthaven.com

Who does house calls nowadays?

WE DO!

Get informed NOW,

while you don't need to know it, so when it's time for you to know it, you're clear!

INFORMATION IS CONTROL WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST

Rutherford Cremation & Funeral Services
804 Ontario St., Stratford | 519-271-5062
rutherford@jarfh.com | www.jarfh.com

ROBERT RITZ

New Leadership for Stratford's Future

A MAYOR FOR A CHANGE

"As Mayor, I will bring a practical approach to City Hall."

- Focused on Affordability
- Responsible Spending
- Transparent Engagement

PUT RESIDENTS FIRST

RESPECT THE TAXPAYER

RESTORE PUBLIC TRUST

ritzfor26.ca

Authorized by The Robert Ritz for Mayor Campaign

SAVING UP TO $200,000 ON A NEW HOME TODAY MEANS MORE FAMILIES IN MORE HOMES TOMORROW

Learn how you can save up to $200,000 on a new home
ontario.ca/MoreHomesFaster

Ontario

Paid for by the Government of Ontario

Shelf Help with SPL

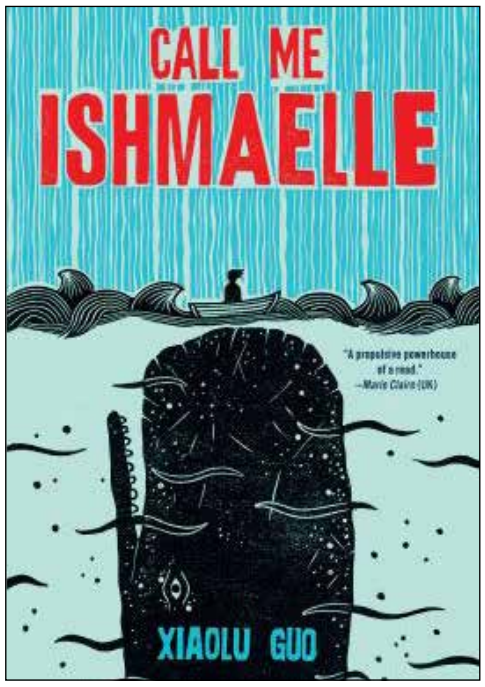
ALIDA LEMIEUX

Stratford Public Library

Call Me Ishmaelle by Xiaolu Guo
@SPL: FIC Guo

Men have to throw themselves into the jaws of danger, taste blood, overcome the dark out there in the depths to overcome their own darkness. That's why I was bobbing up and down on this cork of a boat, in the wild sea.

Set in the mid-1800s, the story is told by Ishmaelle, a 17-year-old girl grieving the death of her parents and baby sister and the departure of her older brother, Joseph. Following in Joseph's footsteps, Ishmaelle flees her home on the Kent Coast of England for a life at sea. She disguises herself as a boy and finds work first on a merchant ship to America and then on the whaling ship, Nimrod. Xiaolu Guo's story closely follows the plot of *Moby Dick*, in which a single-minded captain leads his crew on an epic quest for revenge on the white whale that bit off his leg, but from a female outsider's perspective. Ishmaelle is both a fly on the wall, observing the culture and motivations of men with curiosity and fear, and she is Ishmael: a strong, capable sailor in her own right, who finds purpose and companionship as a man aboard the Nimrod.



Call Me Ishmaelle is a gender-bending reimagining of Melville's classic, a must for readers who enjoyed *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. You don't need to have read the original to get thoroughly swept up by this swashbuckling and quietly philosophical interpretation.

Opened or closed for business? City to develop data centre policy after provincial framework releases

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After a slightly amended motion put forward by Coun. Jo-Dee Burbach at the Stratford city council meeting on Sept. 14, staff will be developing a policy that addresses data centres and their place (or lack thereof) in the city.

"The intention of my motion is to give council or to give Stratford a better idea of what right size, what the right type of projects could be, what types of, again, risks are we looking at, and what type of opportunities?" Burbach said. "… So it's not necessarily to block all opportunities, but it is actually to give better direction to anybody who would like to bring some investment here to say 'This is the right size, the parameters, these are the things that we're concerned about.'"

"… I think thinking that through before proposals arrive at the door is probably a really good idea."

A data centre is a facility that houses computer servers and supporting equipment. Although they are not new facilities and have long been used to store, process and manage data, they have recently been a contentious issue due to the rise of AI, which need increasingly larger data centres for large language models to operate. Some need a huge amount of water and electricity to operate and as many of the tech companies which develop and manage AI are American, the issue of Canada's sovereignty is also a concern. Some Canadian municipalities have issued a moratorium on data centres, which was considered by council at its meeting, but ultimately was not deemed necessary.

"We don't have any parcels of land that are as large enough that we would have something so large," Adam Betteridge, director of building and planning with the city, stated. "Now, there are parcels that are technically large enough, but they aren't designated and/or zoned to allow industrial uses.

"Now, by all means, that's council's prerogative as to whether you want to consider (a moratorium). I don't know whether it's necessary, but I do want to stress that that's a council decision and what type of message it would be stated by council on creating a moratorium on data centres in Stratford. We as planners will be looking at it from sort of the three perspectives. There's the social perspective, what type of jobs they will be, what type of benefits it brings to the community. Let's look at it from an economic development perspective, and then obviously the environmental perspective. So it's not to say that we are looking at it from one lens, we'll be looking at it from a fulsome lens, and that's what all municipalities and planners are doing across the government."

Since Burbach put forward her intent to create a policy last month, the Province of Ontario has indicated its intent to put together a framework on data centres. Per an amendment from Coun. Lesley Biehn, city staff will wait for that provincial direction before developing a draft policy.

As the city's Official Plan (OP) review is ongoing and nearing completion, the subject of data centres will be a part of that new plan, though chief administrative officer (CAO) André Morin indicated a comprehensive examination of data centres will come after the review is presented.

Museum starts $120K campaign for new canopy with large donation

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

The Stratford Perth Museum is proud to announce that Tradition Mutual Insurance Company of Sebringville has committed $50,000 as the lead naming sponsor of the museum's new outdoor performance and community gathering space, the Tradition Mutual Blue-Sky Canopy.

The gift launches the museum's $120,000 Blue Sky Canopy Campaign, a capital project that will transform the Player's Backstage into a flexible outdoor venue for concerts, family programming, educational activities, community celebrations and cultural events for years to come.

Construction of the canopy is scheduled to begin this fall and will be completed by Avon Building Solutions following the conclusion of the museum's outdoor concert season.

"This is so much more than a weather shelter," said Kelly McIntosh, managing director of the Stratford Perth Museum. "It's an investment in our community. The Tradition Mutual Blue-Sky Canopy will transform our outdoor space into a more welcoming and adaptable venue for concerts, educational programming, family events, celebrations and community gatherings. We're incredibly grateful to Tradition Mutual for believing in this vision and helping us bring it to life."

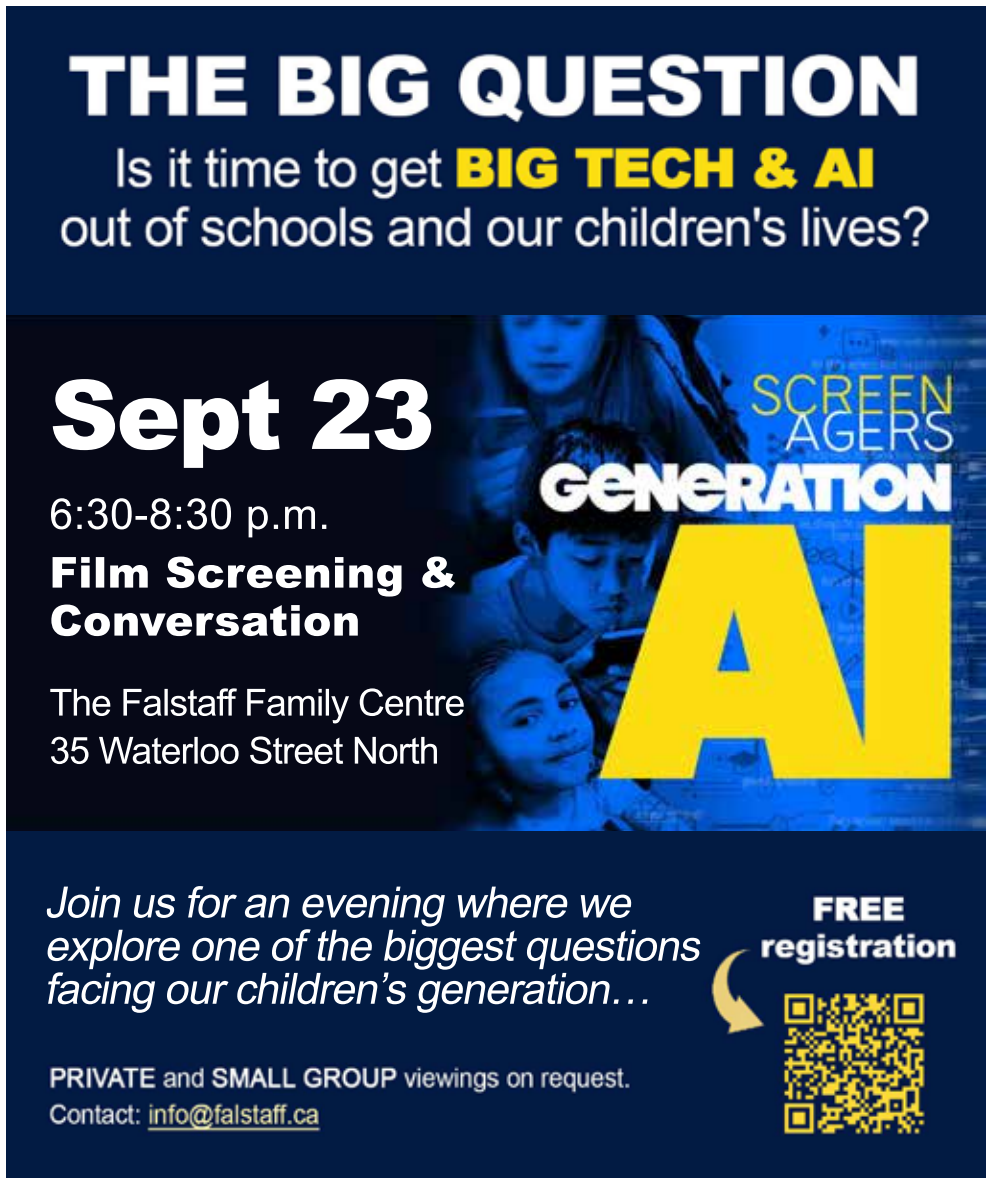
As lead naming sponsor, Tradition Mutual's support will be recognized through the naming of the structure as the Tradition Mutual Blue-Sky Canopy, along with permanent donor recognition and ongoing acknowledgement as the venue becomes a cornerstone of the museum's growing outdoor programming.

Charles MacLennan, president and CEO of Tradition Mutual Insurance Company, said the project reflects the company's longstanding commitment to strengthening communities that it serves.

"As Tradition Mutual celebrates its 150th anniversary, we are honoured to support projects that reflect our longstanding commitment to the communities we serve. We believe thriving communities are built through connection, shared experiences, and strong local partnerships. The Stratford Perth Museum plays an important role in preserving our region's heritage while creating opportunities for people to come together. We're proud to support the Tradition Mutual Blue-Sky Canopy, a community gathering space that will foster learning, celebration, and connection for generations to come."

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

A rendering of how the Tradition Mutual Blue-Sky Canopy will transform the outdoor Player's Backstage venue at the Stratford Perth Museum.



Rock the Muse gives attendees opportunity to vote for the headliner

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

Who will headline this year's Rock the Muse concert at the Stratford Perth Museum? You decide.

Rock the Muse: Rockin' Our Roots will take over the museum's Players Backstage on Oct. 3 from 2-11 p.m. All of the following 10 musicians scheduled to perform are either from Stratford or elsewhere in Perth County:

- Barry and In Yellow Cards
- Contain the Dogs
- Jada Kraemer and Driver 8
- Javelin
- Meredith Mae
- Nora Joy
- NUB
- River Rock
- Thurston
- Uncle G

"Come for the music, stay for the community. You'll hear original local talent you won't find anywhere else," managing director Kelly McIntosh said to the Times.

This year, the attendees will get to decide who will headline the sixth annual Rock the Muse through ticket sales. Anyone purchasing a ticket online can enter the name of the performer they'd like to see headline as a promo code or through the band's direct QR code. Those who want to purchase physical tickets can also message the act directly.

The act who sells the most tickets will get to headline the annual event.

In a press release, Rock the Muse organizer Ethan McCarroll said, "We wanted to give the community more ownership over the night. Rock The Muse has always been about celebrating local talent, so letting the audience decide who headlines just felt right."

Voting will close on Sept. 25. Tickets are $30 each and can be purchased online via

https://tinyurl.com/5dtwtryc.

All proceeds from Rock the Muse will support the Stratford Perth Museum and its programming.

The event will also feature a bar, community partner booths and merchandise on the grounds of the Players Backstage.

"You've got this beautiful outdoor space that just feels different from your typical venue. There's room to spread out, bring a lawn chair and really settle in for the day. And because it's hosted by the museum, there's this natural sense of community woven into the whole experience," said McIntosh. "It's not just a concert, it's a Stratford gathering. People come back year after year because that setting genuinely makes the day feel special."

Earlier this year, the Stratford Perth Museum held concerts including The Lemon Bucket Orkestra, Hello Heather and the Milkers, the No Aloha Festival, and Tragically Hip tribute band The Almost Hip, in addition to Stratford Summer Music concerts.

For more information about upcoming events at the Stratford Perth Museum, either visit stratfordperthmuseum.ca online or its Facebook and Instagram pages.

The hottest Summer time savings at Stratford Nissan

2016 Toyota RAV4 LE - AS IS

$12,499 + HST & lic
MILEAGE - 283,770 KM

2018 Cadillac XT5 LUXURY

$18,988 OR $124 B/W
MILEAGE - 115,218 KM + HST & lic

2025 Hyundai ELANTRA PREFFERED

$23,495 OR $153 B/W
LOW KMS - 36,204 KM + HST & lic

2025 Nissan Sentra SR

$23,888 OR $156 B/W
LOW KMS - 19,060 KM + HST & lic

2025 Nissan Kicks SR

$29,888 OR $195 B/W
LOW KMS - 8,865 KM + HST & lic

2026 Toyota Corolla LE

$30,495 OR $224 B/W
LOW KMS - 13,803 KM + HST & lic

2024 Toyota RAV4 XLE

$32,888 OR $214 B/W
MILEAGE - 93,721 KM + HST & lic

2025 Nissan Rogue SL

$32,888 OR $214 B/W
LOW KMS - 28,540 KM + HST & lic

2023 Mercedes-Benz CLA 250

$33,888 OR $253 B/W
MILEAGE- 57,463 KM + HST & lic

2024 Toyota RAV4 XLE

$33,888 OR $253 B/W
LOW KMS- 36,766 KM + HST & lic

2022 Ford Explorer ST

$36,777 OR $295 B/W
MILEAGE- 104,325 KM + HST & lic

2024 Nissan Pathfinder SL

$42,999 OR $321 B/W
LOW KMS - 57,477 KM + HST & lic

2023 RAM 1500 REBEL

$53,888 OR $376 B/W
LOW KMS - 43,913 KM + HST & lic

*While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, we are not responsible for any errors and omissions. Please see your dealer for current pricing. Plus tax and licensing. Bi-weekly payments are based on an interest rate of 7.99% O.A.C. Some terms and conditions may apply.

Find Your Perfect Match: Pre-Owned Cars for Every Taste and Budget!
BAD CREDIT... NO PROBLEM! All Credit Approved with $0 Down.
T&C APPLY, O.A.C

NISSAN Stratford NISSAN
2001 Ontario Street, Stratford ON
519.273.3119
www.stratfordnissan.com
STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thu. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00 PARTS & SERVICE: Mon.-Sat. 8:00-5:00
Our Service Department is Now Open on Saturdays
STRATFORD NISSAN

After 25 years, Shannon Bunnett and Stepping Stone Orthotics continues to serve

CONNOR LUCZKA

Times Editor

For a quarter of a century, Shannon Bunnett and her business Stepping Stone Orthotics has assisted Stratford residents with their foot health needs – and that tradition continues today.

Bunnett told the Times much has changed in that time. Computerization has become more prevalent, but she still prefers to do things the old-fashioned way.

"I'm still old school," Bunnett said. "I like things made from scratch. So in general, I still do things the old way with respect to how I cast the feet and a lot of the materials that I use. I have a grinder on site that I can adjust orthotics and tune them up … And with my training, that will always be part of how I practice, and that's something that hasn't changed, thank goodness, because computers I feel can only do so much. We still have to know how to adjust an orthotic because everybody's different, every foot is different, everybody feels things differently, and maybe their medical conditions change or things change with their feet that we need to be able to modify their custom orthotics based on that.

"… Footwear is super important," Bunnett continued. "And we're sort of experts with footwear with respect to how they fit, how they work with an orthotic, and recommending footwear that's appropriate for my patients based on their foot type, their activity, their medical conditions."

As a Canadian Certified Pedorthist, Bunnett provides gait analysis, a range of motion testing of the lower limb and casting for custom foot orthotics for patients.

She added that each foot is unique and changes over time as well. One small difference can make a world of difference for patients.

"It's okay to come back and see me for a follow up for an adjustment because something small that I can do could make a difference," Bunnett said. "And the other thing too is that orthotics wear out. I know shoes are expensive, and I know orthotics are expensive, but they are fabricated from raw materials that can compress and wear out.

"As a pedorthist, I need to be able to know what to do with your orthotics. Do they need to be tuned up? Do they need to be replaced? Is it still working for you? Can I adjust it a certain way and make it work better for you?"

Stepping Stone Orthotics is located at 457 Huron St. For more information, visit https://www.steppingstoneorthotics.com/.

Stepping Stone ORTHOTICS
Shannon Bunnett, C. Ped (C)
Provider of Custom Foot Orthoses & Footwear Education

457 Huron Street, Stratford, ON
519.272.1023 | www.steppingstoneorthoitcs.com

Local Independent Pharmacy since 2008
WEST END PHARMACY
We offer senior discount of 15% on all option+ store brand products on ALL days of the week.
We also offer blister packaging services at no extra fee.
SERVICES
- Medication compounding services
- Prescription refill orders ready same day/next day
- Free medication delivery on weekdays
- Veterinary prescriptions dispensing
- Travel health services (Approved Yellow Fever Vaccination Centre)
- Minor ailments prescribing
- Point of care tests (INR)

426 Huron Street, Stratford | 519-273-7200
info@westendpharmacy.ca | www.westendpharmacy.ca

Stepping Stone ORTHOTICS

Elgin Audiology
Hearing & Balance Clinics

DEMO DAY!
Wed., Sept. 23
BOOK NOW!
Free Adult Hearing Check & Hearing Aid Demo
elginaudiology.com
150 Huron St., Stratford
519-305-8000

Full eye exam with 3D eye scan from $99
STRATFORD BOOKING APPOINTMENTS NOW
- Direct billing to most major insurance plans
- Collect PC Optimum™ points on eligible purchases
- Two-pair offers available
- Two-year frame and lens warranty

BOOK ONLINE specsavers.ca
OR CALL US AT 519-273-8761
Specsavers

Artists and Aprons celebrates the people, flavours and artistry of Stratford

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

For photographer and author Richard Bain, Stratford has changed considerably from the city he remembers growing up in on West Gore Street.

Back then, Bain recalls the Limelight Restaurant and Erie Barbecue being among the few options when his family went out for dinner. Today, Stratford's renowned theatre scene is surrounded by restaurants, artists, artisans and other creative people who have helped shape the city into something he believes is unique.

That evolution is at the heart of *Artists and Aprons*, Bain's newly released fourth book celebrating his hometown.

"It's unlike any other city that I have seen in all of my travels," Bain said. "It's my hometown, it's my wife Joan's hometown."

The 120-page book combines Bain's photography of Stratford's arts and culinary communities with roughly 30 pages devoted to the Avon River and the natural and architectural beauty surrounding it. Readers will find images of performers, chefs, potters, Art in the Park, Stratford City Hall and the city's famous swans, among others.

While *Artists and Aprons* includes roughly a dozen recipes, Bain said it differs from his 2018 book, Savour Stratford, which had a stronger culinary and recipe focus.

The new book came together in about eight months, beginning with photography last fall before Bain ramped up the project this spring.

Several familiar Stratford names participated, including actors Seana McKenna and Rod Beattie, singer-songwriter Loreena McKennitt, Mayor Martin Ritsma, actor Diana LeBlanc and others. Colm Feore wrote the foreword, his third time contributing to one of Bain's Stratford books.

The book is also dedicated to Feore and his wife, director and choreographer Donna Feore.

Bain said what struck him while creating the book was the willingness of people throughout Stratford's creative community to support each other rather than view one another as competition.

"They just totally accept the fact that everybody in this town is there to work together, to promote the arts, to promote the aprons, to really showcase Stratford to the world as a unique place and a place I'm so proud to call home," he said.

Born in Stratford before moving to London as a teenager, Bain graduated from Western University and eventually built a career in professional photography. His work has appeared in dozens of books, with *Artists and Aprons* marking his 35th book focused on Ontario and fourth devoted specifically to Stratford.

(RICHARD BAIN PHOTO)

Stratford-born photographer and author Richard Bain has released *Artists and Aprons*, his fourth book celebrating his hometown and its arts, culinary and creative communities.

Bain hopes the latest will offer visitors something to take home while also encouraging Stratford residents to look again at what surrounds them.

"If they take it and they just look through it, they'll realize what a remarkable town Stratford is," he said.

Artists and Aprons is available locally at Fanfare Books and the Stratford Festival's Theatre Stores.

Yantzi Home building centre

75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

IN-STORE SPECIALS! 2 DAYS ONLY!
September 25 - 26, 2026

SAVE 65%

PHANTOM CHEF

7 Pc. Nylon Kitchen Utensil Set
Heat and scratch resistant.
4140-161

Was $19.99
6.97 Set

SAVE 52%

canada wire

Outdoor Extension Cord
16 gauge. 3 outlet. 13A. 15 m. 3628-634

Was $39.99
18.97

SAVE 52%

Dyna-Glo

Barbecue
Porcelain coated cast iron cooking grates, warming rack.
6421-161

35,000 BTU
3 Burners
468 Sq. In.

Was $399.99
189.97

SAVE $90

BENCHMARK

Tool Chest & Cabinet
6 drawers, 2 locking casters.
220 lb weight capacity.
24.25"W x 42.9"H.
1112-525

Was $249.99
159.97

SAVE 25%

CROCK-POT

2 Qt. Round Slow Cooker
High, low and warm settings, removable insert.
3826-638

Was $26.99
20.17

SAVE 60%

HOME ESSENTIALS

30" Lawn Rake
With flexible poly tines and hardwood handle.
5062-362

Was $24.99
9.97

SAVE 54%

BENCHMARK

8" Bypass Pruner
3/4" cutting capacity.
5067-202

Was $11.99
5.47

SAVE $100

Milwaukee

M18™ Cordless Combo Kit
1239-002

Was $299.99
198.00 Kit

FREE 18 Pc. SHOCKWAVE Impact Duty™ Driver Bit Set 1286-329 (retail value of $25.99) **WITH IN-STORE PURCHASE OF** M18™ Cordless Combo Kit 1239-002

CELEBRATION HOURS
Friday 7:30am - 5:30pm
Saturday 8:00am - 4:00pm

985434 Perth-Oxford Rd.
Tavistock, ON

FACE PAINTING

SATURDAY,
SEPTEMBER 26TH
10 AM - 12 PM

VENDOR BOOTHS

ALL DAY FRIDAY

Locally owned. Genuinely Canadian.

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. SAVINGS AVAILABLE IN-STORE ONLY AT THIS LOCATION
NO ONLINE ORDERS. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES.

75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

IN-STORE SPECIALS! 2 DAYS ONLY!

September 25 - 26, 2026

SAVE 50%

BeautiTone

Signature Interior Acrylic Paint
Eggshell.
3.40 L - 3.64 L. 1852-366/440

Was $45.99
21.97 Each

SAVE 73%

BENNETT

PACK OF 3

9.5" Paint Tray Liners
1656-131

Was $7.49
1.97 Pack

SAVE 70%

BeautiTone

9.5" Lint Free Rollers
240 mm x 10 mm.
1655-626

PACK OF 3

Was $14.99
4.47 Pack

SAVE 82%

Project Select

Foam Brushes
50 mm/2". 1613-734

PACK OF 10

Was $13.99
2.47 Pack

SAVE 9%

Home

Plastic Utility Pail
19 L. 4544-390

Was $5.69
4.97

SAVE 70%

HOME ESSENTIALS

4 L Watering Can
Assorted colours.
5012-303

Was $9.99
2.97 Each

SAVE 68%

melnor

7 Pattern Metal Hose Nozzle
5042-001

Was $24.99
7.97

SAVE 52%

HOME ESSENTIALS

Folding Camp Chair
Blue or black.
6335-469/470

Was $19.99
9.47 Each

SAVE 73%

HOMEPAK

8" Cable Ties
8634-908

PACK OF 100

Was $8.99
2.37 Pack

SAVE 76%

Light Duty Poly Tarp
8' x 10'. 5472-759

Was $13.49
3.17

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. SAVINGS AVAILABLE IN-STORE ONLY AT THIS LOCATION. NO ONLINE ORDERS. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES.

ENJOY REWARDS WITH EVERY PROJECT* Join now at sceneplus.ca/register Scene+

*Scene+ loyalty program available for qualifying purchases at homehardware.ca and participating Home Hardware, Home Building Centre and Home Hardware Building Centre locations in Canada. Must use valid Scene+ membership card at time of purchase List of qualifying goods/services and full Scene+ program terms and conditions at www.sceneplus.ca/terms-and-conditions.

75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

IN-STORE SPECIALS! 2 DAYS ONLY!

September 25 - 26, 2026

SAVE $50

Chelini

EXCLUSIVE

Marriot Dual Flush Lined Toilet
3/6 L flush. 16-1/2".
Elongated bowl.
Includes seat.
3274-862

Was $239.99
189.97

SAVE 30%

Tuck Tape

Sheathing Tape
Adheres to plastic, metal and smooth surfaces. Resists UV rays.
60 mm x 55 m. 2611-202

Was $11.49
7.97

SAVE 25%

LEPAGE

PL® Premium Fast Grab™ Adhesive
Reduces the need for clamping and bracing.
295 mL. 2030-582

Was $15.49
11.47

SAVE 75%

HOME ESSENTIALS

9" Caulking Gun
Steel construction, spring release plunger for quick loading.
2034-025

Was $9.99
2.47

SAVE 20%

CLR

Calcium, Lime & Rust Remover
828 mL. 4520-968

Was $9.99
7.97

SAVE 73%

HOME ESSENTIALS

3 Pc. Kitchen Scissor Set
Includes 4-1/2", 6-1/2" and 8" blade sizes.
4464-370

Was $14.99
3.97 Set

SAVE 17%

BERNARDIN

Regular Mason Jars
500 mL. 4448-501

Was $16.99
13.97 Pack

SAVE 75%

HOME ESSENTIALS

6 Outlet Power Bar
Surge protected, with on/off switch.
2-1/2' cord.
3665-723

Was $19.99
4.97

SAVE 70%

Home

Split Leather Work Gloves
S/M or L/XL.
5525-266/373

Was $9.99
2.97 Pair

SAVE 58%

GRILLPRO

Disposable Butane Lighter
6311-048

Was $4.29
1.77

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. SAVINGS AVAILABLE IN-STORE ONLY AT THIS LOCATION. NO ONLINE ORDERS. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES.

PAIR UP FOR MAXIMUM POINTS* Learn more at **homehardware.ca/sceneplus** Scene+ | Scotiabank

*Scene+ loyalty program available for qualifying purchases at homehardware.ca and participating Home Hardware, Home Building Centre and Home Hardware Building Centre locations in Canada. Must use valid Scene+ membership card at time of purchase List of qualifying goods/services and full Scene+ program terms and conditions at www.sceneplus.ca/terms-and-conditions.

75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

IN-STORE SPECIALS! 2 DAYS ONLY!

September 25 - 26, 2026

SAVE $80

omni MAX

4-in-1 Portable Air Conditioner
Cool/heat/dehumidify/fan. 13,500 BTU cooling, 11,000 BTU heating. Includes remote control. For rooms up to 450 sq. ft.
3813-089

Was $479.99
399.97

SAVE $150

BENCHMARK. LIMITED 5 YEAR WARRANTY

Grasscycler Gas Lawn Mower
Push. 2-in-1 mulch or side-discharge. 173CC. 21". 5124-070

Was $299.99
149.00

SAVE 65%

BENCHMARK.

Carpenter Pencil
Built-in pencil sharpener.
1040-003

Was $7.99
2.77

SAVE 70%

BENCHMARK.

7 Pc. Magnetic Extension Multi-Driver Set
Includes 7 assorted 1" bits.
1058-103

Was $8.99
2.67 Set

SAVE 30%

C·I·L

Winter Guard™ Lawn Fertilizer 22-0-12
Covers up to 769 m².
10 kg. 5024-140

EXCLUSIVE

Was $39.99
27.97

SAVE 70%

wilson

Wasp & Hornet Killer
450 g. 5045-907

Was $12.99
3.87

SAVE 50%

Garant

Pro Series Round Point Shovel
Tempered steel blade, 48" premium ash handle.
5069-267

Was $49.99
24.97

SAVE 55%

Bird Feeder
1.1 lb seed capacity.
5453-086

Seed sold separately.

Was $19.99
8.97

SAVE 17%

Scott

Shop Towels
55 sheets per roll.
4532-802

Was $3.49
2.87 Roll

SAVE 48%

DAP

Home Seal™ Foam Sealant
All season. Ideal for smaller gaps and cracks.
454 g. 2030-908

Was $15.49
7.97

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST. SAVINGS AVAILABLE IN-STORE ONLY AT THIS LOCATION. NO ONLINE ORDERS. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO LIMIT QUANTITIES.

ENJOY REWARDS WITH EVERY PROJECT* Join now at sceneplus.ca/register Scene+

*Scene+ loyalty program available for qualifying purchases at homehardware.ca and participating Home Hardware, Home Building Centre and Home Hardware Building Centre locations in Canada. Must use valid Scene+ membership card at time of purchase List of qualifying goods/services and full Scene+ program terms and conditions at www.sceneplus.ca/terms-and-conditions.

MADE IN CANADA FABRIQUÉ AU CANADA

This symbol identifies products made in Canada with domestic/imported materials.

While every effort is made to supply advertised items, we reserve the right to limit quantities and not every item may be stocked by every "Home" Dealer. We will be pleased to provide a rain-check on any item that may not be available during this promotion - except where indicated in the advertising copy. Regular Prices and Save messages shown in this flyer are based upon pricing levels immediately before and after this sale event. Home stores are independently owned and operated and pricing may vary somewhat by location. Please check with your local Home store for possible variance of pricing shown and corresponding savings shown on items advertised in this flyer. Items reduced in price return to regular price at the end of the sale. Some items may reflect our already low Day-To-Day price. Certain items may be subject to additional fees or charges, including environmental handling or disposal fees which may vary by Province. We reserve the right to correct printing errors. We also reserve the right to adjust prices upwards or downwards to match severe fluctuations in the lumber and building materials market. Prices do not include tax. Accessories shown with products advertised are not included unless otherwise stated. Before beginning any home improvement or renovation project, check with your local building inspector's office. This also applies to any of Home's material package projects shown in this flyer. Local Building by-laws may require modifications to our project plans and specifications. Cutting and assembly required on most projects. Lumber and Building Material sizes shown are industry standard and may not exactly represent the products measurement. (eg: lumber referred to as 2x4 actually measure 1-1/2" x 3-1/2"). ™*Trademark of The Bank of Nova Scotia. ®Registered Trademark of The Bank of Nova Scotia. ®Scene+ and the Icon Design are registered trademarks of Scene Plus IP Corporation, used under license. *Visa Int./Licensed User.

STRATFORD TIMES SPORTS

Warriors open season on the road

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Hunter Steel Warriors kicked off the 2026-27 season by renewing their "Battle of Highway 7" series against the St. Marys Lincolns at the Pyramid Recreation Complex on Sept. 11.

Starting this season, bragging rights will be on the line for the two arch-rivals. On Sept. 8, the Warriors announced the creation of the "Highway 7 Regular Season Champions Series" on their social media channels. If the two teams split the four-game series, the winner will be decided by goal differential.

Colin Slattery opened the scoring for the Warriors as the team captain redirected a shot from Gibson Grendel at 1:43 of the first period.

The Warriors got into penalty trouble several minutes later, and the Lincolns capitalized with two power play goals before the period's end, with both coming on separate five-on-three sessions.

St. Marys would grow their lead with two goals in the first three minutes of the second period, but the Warriors battled back, with Drew Hodge notching his first of the season, on the power play, from Will Coward and Dominic Marshall at 8:23, and Grady Murphy's first of the year from Coen Galbraith and Marshall at the midway point of the middle frame.

Stratford pressed for the equalizer in the third period, but came up short as they dropped a 5-3 decision. In the loss, Stratford netminder Gage Hurst managed to shake off a tough start and stopped 28 of 32 shots.

After the game, Warriors head coach Dave Williams liked what the team saw at times, including the comeback effort, but cited execution issues.

"There were definitely parts of the performance that I liked. Again, they're a good hockey team, so they're going to get their moments. There were definitely moments in the game where I thought we played the way we like to play and the way we need to play," Williams said.

"And credit to our guys too, being down 4-1. I like that we stuck to it and got ourselves back into the game. We saw lots of hockey left. We got ourselves back to 4-3. So we'll build on that."

Stratford travelled to Woodstock for their first official meeting with the Navy Vets at the Southwood Arena on Sept. 12.

Woodstock scored first with 6:31 remaining in the first period, but Chase Martin answered for Stratford, netting his first GOHL goal assisted by Broda with 4:02 left in the period. At 2:48 into the second period, the Warriors took their first lead of the game as Ethan Bridges scored his first GOHL goal with an assist from Broda, marking his second assist of the night.

The lead held up until Woodstock tied the game with 2:49 left in the middle frame. For the second straight game, the Warriors gave up two quick goals in the early stage of the period, this time in the final frame. Slattery's second of the season on the power play from Broda and Grendel closed the deficit to within a goal with 7:50 left, but the comeback effort came up short again with a 5-3 loss. Stratford netminder Travis Vanderzwaag stopped 14 of 18 shots in the loss.

Reflecting on the two games, Williams was dissatisfied with the outcomes but saw positive signs.

"Obviously, we're not happy with the two results. You know, just like maybe we've gotten a bit ahead of ourselves for exhibition and to where we are now, and there's definitely been parts of the games over the last two nights that we've liked. Even tonight here in the first two periods, we did a pretty good job of possessing the puck," Williams said.

"We didn't give up a whole lot through two periods, but we still found ourselves tied, and I think there's something to learn. Feel like we took our foot off the gas a little bit in the third, and they kind of kept coming, and you know, we found ourselves behind chasing the game."

Williams also liked the performances from the rookies, Martin and Bridges, in the first weekend in the GOHL.

"A couple guys here tonight, Chase (Martin) and Ethan (Bridges), got their first goals of the year, so you know that's what we're going to need when you move guys in and out of your lineup from year to year," Williams said.

"You need the new guys to come in and contribute some offence. So it's good to see those two guys score goals, and that gives them a little boost of confidence to start the year when they get that first one."

Next up for the Warriors is Sept. 18 at the William Allman Memorial Arena against the Chatham Maroons. Game time is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Stratford Warriors netminder Gage Hurst makes the save against the St. Marys Lincolns at the Pyramid Recreation Centre on Sept. 11.

Stratford Warriors 2026-27 Stats

(as of September 14, 2026)

Player	Pos	GP	G	A	PTS
Jaxon Broda	D	2	0	3	3
Colin Slattery	F	2	2	0	2
Gibson Grendel	D	2	0	2	2
Dominic Marshall	F	2	0	2	2
Ethan Bridges	F	2	1	0	1
Drew Hodge	D	2	1	0	1
Chase Martin	F	2	1	0	1
Grady Murphy	F	2	1	0	1
Will Coward	D	2	0	1	1
Coen Galbraith	F	2	0	1	1
Colten Brenzil	F	1	0	0	0
Carter Brownlee	D	1	0	0	0
Mateo Craievich	D	2	0	0	0
Aaron Green	D	2	0	0	0
McQuen Haylock	F	2	0	0	0
Declan McCotter	F	2	0	0	0
Ethan McPhee	F	2	0	0	0
Lucas Minard	F	2	0	0	0
Francesco Sanita	F	2	0	0	0

Goalies	Record	GAA	SV-%
Gage Hurst	0-1-0	4.09	0.875
Travis Vanderzwaag	0-1-0	4.12	0.778

Stratford Aces compete at the Stoney Creek Showcase

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

During the weekend of Sept. 11 to 13, the Stratford U18 AA Humphrey Fleet Service Aces took part in the U18 AA Stoney Creek Showcase in Hamilton.

In their first game of the round robin on the morning of Sept. 11, the Aces faced the Markham-Stouffville Stars. Led by goals from Megan Graham and Jule Cameron, the Aces edged the Stars 2-1.

Stratford faced the Bishop Kearney Selects in the afternoon game and lost 3-1. Emily Stiles from Cameron and Macy Fischer scored the lone goal for the Aces.

On Sept. 12, the Aces faced Team Illinois in the morning and suffered their second straight loss, 4-3 in overtime. Hannah Dalton scored two goals, Brooklynn Ahrens scored once and Graham contributed two assists.

In the late afternoon game to conclude the preliminary round, Ahrens scored a pair of goals, including the overtime winner, leading the Aces to a 2-1 win over the Whitby Wolves. Kylin Wilson got an assist on the Aces' first goal. The Aces finished the round robin tied for fourth in the Carter Division with a record of 1-0-1-1 with six points.

In the placement game on Sept. 13, the Aces settled for a 2-2 draw with the East Ottawa Stars. Kacey and Macy scored for the Aces.

Graham led the Aces with three assists and four points, while Ahrens led the team with three goals in the tournament. Netminders Callie Aldridge and Leicia Baldwin combined for a 2.17 goals-against-average in five appearances.

Next up for the Aces is an exhibition weekend at the William Allman Memorial Arena against the Mississauga Chiefs on Sept. 19 and the North York Storm on Sept. 20.

Send us your sports reports!
Stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Editorial

Stratford Times secures two national awards, Grant Haven Media publications recognized

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

The Canadian Community Newsmedia Awards (CCNAwards) celebrate the best in community publishing from across the country. Therefore, it was a thrill earlier this week to see several of our journalists recognized for the valuable work they do in their communities.

The 2026 competition included more than 650 entries in 29 different categories which spanned the areas of editorial, photography, multimedia and general excellence from the 2025 calendar year.

Our company's original newspaper, the St. Marys Independent, recorded a trio of third place finishes within the General Excellence section for newspapers with circulation of 1,500 to 6,499 copies. The Independent, under the leadership of editor Galen Simmons, took the bronze for "Best All-Round Newspaper," "Best Editorial Page" and "Best Front Page." In each of these General Excellence categories, the Nunatsiaq News (Nunavut) and Town and Country This Week (Athabasca, AB) took the first and second place spots, respectively.

UNDERFUNDED ROADS PAGE 8 LITTLE PRINCE AWARDED PAGE 22

STRATFORD TIMES

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 20 MAY 16, 2025 FREE

BERGER PLUMBING 519-274-0160

Berger Plumbing is a full service company for all your plumbing, heating and excavation needs! Fully licensed and insured plumbers and gas fitters on staff.

A Passion for People ROYAL LEPAGE Hiller Realty SHERRIE ROULSTON Real Estate Broker

Measles outbreak grows across Ontario: Over 1,400 cases reported

AMANDA MUSHARIGA-GAVAGE

Stratford police Chief Greg Skinner, accessibility advocate Diane Sims, and Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsema gleefully cut the ribbon for the police station's new accessibility ramp. The ramp and accompanying barrier-free front entrance means that the station finally has a zero-threshold entrance after nearly 20 years of petitioning from the city's advisory committee.

After nearly 20 years of petitioning, Stratford Police HQ finally has barrier-free access

CONNOR LUCZKA

Stacked PANCAKE & BREAKFAST HOUSE $6.99 Breakfast Special

925 Ontario St Unit No- 5B, Stratford

Open Everyday | 7 AM - 3 PM

stackedpancakehouse.ca

"I feel like the St. Marys paper truly has something for everyone," said Grant Haven Media publisher Stewart Grant. "Spencer Seymour consistently puts together one of the best sports sections in Canada; Wendy Lamond captures so many of those small-town feel-good stories that make St. Marys special; Nancy Abra provides excellent regional coverage of nearby Thorndale; Mary Smith provides unparalleled historical features from the Stonetown; Alona Vasylieva's Ukrainian Corner is a weekly must-read; and this is just a sampling of what's inside each issue."

Simmons also won third place for "Best Local Editorial" for his June 12, 2025 column entitled "Little St. Marys stands up to provincial giant."

Stratford editor Connor Luczka won first place for "Best National Editorial (print circulation up to 9999)" for his patriotic April 4, 2025 editorial "A eucatastrophic nation." He also won top honours in the category of "Best Local Civic Journalism (print circulation up to 9999)" for his May 16, 2025 article entitled "Do municipalities have legal authority to fight strong mayor powers? Not according to experts."

Tillsonburg editor Jeff Helsdon won first place for "Best Business Writing (print circulation up to 9999)" for "A look inside Shaw's, Tillsonburg's own ice cream plant." Helsdon also won second place for "Best Historical Story" for his Oct. 9, 2025 article, "Reimagining Tillson's journey to launch Dereham Forge."

Finally, the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette took third place nationally for "Best Agricultural Edition" with its 24-page March 27, 2025 special. Along with stories from editor Galen Simmons, the farm feature included articles by Lee Griffi, Emily Stewart, Gary West, Julia Paul, Luke Edwards, Jeff Tribe, Diane Baltaz, Tim Rau and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

"Looking back at the Gazette farm edition, it's clear that it took a lot of editorial planning along with a strong cast of journalists with varied backgrounds," said Grant. "The Best Little Pork Shoppe, Windrose Farm, the late Donald Hart, Silver Creek Nursery, Danzel Holsteins and Golspie Dairy were among those to be featured in this award-winning edition."

Grant added that any of Grant Haven's past articles and editions from recent years can be accessed by visiting the company's website at granthaven.com, selecting the newspaper of choice from the drop-down menu, and viewing the PDFs from the Past Issues menu.

Quote of the Week

"We must slow the pace at which we improve the capabilities of AI models. Progress will still seem fast, and we must make wise use of the time we gain."

– Excerpt from Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei's essay published on Saturday, Sept. 12, in one of the many warnings issued by industry professionals this past week regarding the potential dangers of rapidly-advancing artificial intelligence.

STRATFORD TIMES

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

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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

STRATFORD TIMES

Publisher
Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Editor
Connor Luczka • connor@granthaven.com

Times Reporter
Amanda Nelson • 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, Patrick D. Burk

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

ocna

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

Opinion

As I See It From America: Perhaps that is the problem

PATRICK D. BURK

Times Columnist

There are many things I have been trying to wrap my head around over the past few days. In many ways it seems that in the United States we get hit with more and more negative issues and yet, there is a sense of hope. All indications point towards a possible major change politically in the very near future. Our mid-term elections are now 47 days away. Comments, polls and predictions all look favourable towards a correction. There is less and less support for the current administration and a call for a major change in all aspects of our federal government. Let's hope that will prevail and the much-needed course of action comes to fruition.

With that being said, I can report that there are many who are in a real quandary about what to expect and how to deal with all of it. I was talking to a young lady the other day who deals with college admissions and foreign students and was surprised that the federal government is going to start limiting and restricting admissions and visas based on a very large increase in financial ability. This will seriously limit the number of students who can take advantage of our college and educational systems and opportunities in the United States. Once the welcoming institutions of education for foreign students are curtailed, what indeed is next?

I was also dismayed at how a total faction of our population can be vilified by the right-wing aspect of our government and that somehow this is acceptable. I am of course talking about how our Muslim population was treated during the recent memorials for the 9/11 attack on America. While there were mouthpieces demanding that the officially elected Mayor of New York, Zohran Mamdani, must not attend the memorials because of his Muslim birth, there was the inexplicable erasure of memory that the current president was meeting with the country from whence the principal high-jackers and terrorists were citizens at the time of the attack. Mamdani was nine years old when the United States was attacked and became an American citizen in 2018. His background when this horrific part of American history took place was not a factor at all. His parents hold dual citizenship as his mother, an acclaimed filmmaker from India, is Hindu and his father, a prestigious professor at Columbia University, is Muslim. Both have no ties to extremism. Those are the facts.

It is truly a sad day when the important remembrance of such a tragic day is left by the wayside as some right-wing fabricators use all the rhetoric they can to increase the politicalization and unattributed racist issues to make a non-sensical and nonfactual point. The tragedy and lost lives and those affected after the fact, should have been the focus on all our minds, but instead the insults and accusations started to fly resulting in sound bite after sound bite of nasty, hateful recriminations. As was stated by many, all Muslims should not be tarred and feathered by religious association by this hateful bunch. It is unamerican and certainly not what our country is all about. I hope that is the thoughts and beliefs of the majority.

I only point all of this out as there seems to be such a difference when I view your news, political stories and look at all your success stories involving immigration and foreign-born citizens. No system is perfect, but it seems to me that you have such a positive handle on how all mankind can provide solid and wonderful experiences that we all can learn from. How in some cultures customs and ideas that are different or strange to many are in fact embraced as enlightening and uplifting. I believe that is the Canadian way, and it certainly is alive and well in Stratford.

That is the big difference. In the current United States government power and the fear of foreign change and the aspect of how minorities will have an impact on our country is the mantra of the right-wing mouthpieces. How can the rich white folk maintain the power and control that they so need to exist without limiting this part of our population. The poor and the elderly are being held hostage by increasingly harder voting standards and the closing of polling places. Lines are being drawn in all sorts of districts to dilute the impact of minority and urban voters, and the current elections may all be in jeopardy because of it.

As your elections approach, please give yourselves a pat on the proverbial "political back." Although you have issues as well, you certainly do not take them out on a certain race or religion. You provide for a fair and equitable process that includes all and you do it with a lot more timeliness and efficiency. Considering you are not a two-party system, that is amazing. As we struggle to see what is right and what is wrong with both of our main political parties, we lose track of a lot of differences and inclusion. In our attempt to make many fit the molds that we have acquired over the years, we have forgotten that there are many different voices, ideas and cultures. We have never effectively been able to adapt or include even a third party here, perhaps that is the problem.

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

Staging an audition: The ins and outs at Stratford

JULIA SCHNEIDER

Times Columnist

I suppose an audition is much like an interview: someone is looking for a job (as an actor), presents a portfolio of experience (like a resume), and prepares a passage from a play (is ready for questions), then shows up on time and is prepared to act.

Will they get the job? That depends – and that's where other factors may come in.

When it comes to auditions for Stratford, the pressure must be exceptionally high; after all, this is Stratford, the venue is the Stratford Festival, and everyone expects actors here to excel at their craft. It's not the place for a laid-back audition – if such there is – and the competition is enormous.

I wonder if it was always so. How about in the 1980s. That's when Antoni Cimolino, an ardent lover of Shakespeare and the Stratford stage, newly graduated from the University of Windsor's BFA program, presented himself for an audition here.

He wasn't chosen that first year. Instead, he was hired by a theatre that presented Shakespeare in a park in Toronto. So incendiary was his performance there – he lit up the stage! – that the next year (1988) he returned to Stratford as a member of the company … and the rest, as they say, is history.

But what about the earliest days, when Stratford was a new theatre town, its renown to come, its reputation still in embryo? What kind of background did actors have then? What did they bring to their auditions? Tony van Bridge is one example of an actor from those earliest days.

Valentine Anthony Neil Bridge was born in England in 1917 and went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts there to perfect his innate talent for acting. He was on his way to an acting career when the Second World War intervened, resulting in a three-year posting in Basra (Iraq) as a soldier.

After the war he got an acting job with the Young Vic Company and then with the Old Vic. As an aside, in these companies he became familiar with child audiences, of which he said "While they may be thoroughly nice as individuals, young audiences can be unmanageable as a mob," with a thrust Stage (at Edinburgh) and with a host of actors who included Butch Blake, Douglas Campbell, and Irene Worth, all of whom he met later in Stratford, Ont.

In 1954, at a critical point in his life, however, Tony van Bridge, as he now was called, his (second) wife, Betty, and their two children set off on the SS Atlantic bound for an uncertain, but certainly different, future in Canada.

His plans were indefinite, but developed quickly. Though he wasn't even sure he wanted to continue as an actor, someone suggested he talk to the Globe and Mail's theatre critic, Herbert Whittaker, who immediately interviewed him for an article he titled "Enter Mr van Bridge"; it served as a bridge to the new country.

Soon after he called the CBC and got an audition. When asked who he was going to portray from the Camp scene of Henry V, he said "All of them"; he'd memorized the whole scene in two days and proceeded to present it. Surprised and no doubt impressed, the CBC offered him a part in a drama starting the following week (it also featured James Doohan, later of Star Trek fame, and Stratford actor, Kate Reid, in its cast).

Previously he'd worked with Tyrone Guthrie in England, but now Guthrie was at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto, where he was publicizing the upcoming season at Stratford, and van Bridge went to see him there. He was hired!

He also reconnected with Douglas Campbell, who was now in Canada and part of a small group of actors called The Canadian Players; their mission it was to bring theatre to outposts where people had few opportunities to go to the theatre. How did they travel? By train, of course! Their advertised show time was "at 8 p.m. or one hour after the train arrives" and people awaited them and their plays with enthusiasm in North Bay and other points along the route.

Until van Bridge started at Stratford in 1955, the next year, he travelled as part of The Canadian Players which, besides Campbell, also included William Hutt, William Needles and Bruno Gerussi. He was putting down roots in Canada!

In his memoir, Also in the Cast, van Bridge makes this all sound easy, but was it? It must have taken a lot of spirit, talent and luck. But, as he writes about his decision to leave England and venture to a new life in Canada, "it stirs the blood."

Born in 1929, Christopher Plummer had a very different life and experiences both before and after arriving at Stratford.

Like van Bridge, he was a born thespian; as a student in Montreal, he was deeply involved in theatre. In his memoir, In Spite of Myself, he writes about how impressed Montreal High visitor Tyrone Guthrie had been when he saw him in a scene there from Julius Caesar; after graduation he got a lot of theatre experience in places from Canada to Bermuda (where a fellow actor was the ubiquitous Kate Reid).

Given this background, he may have regarded an audition at Stratford in 1953,

CONTINUED TO PAGE 18

Opinion

WEB-CRAWLING THROUGH COLLABORATION

SHEILA CLARKE

Times Columnist

Between heat and drought, between forest fires and storms, the summer has clearly identified a planet in trouble. The lack of correction has been called cognitive dissonance, a gap between knowledge and behaviour. We know that serious global warming and climate change is the product of continued fossil fuel emissions being added to the atmosphere. But our actions don't follow where our knowing is.

Our actions seem unwilling to acknowledge basic science, especially at power levels of our societies. Sometimes we feel like Chicken Little, running around chirping the sky is falling; we're running out of time to stop this runaway train.

Climate change is happening faster than scientists anticipated. The UN Report Limiting Overshoot released in September 2026 was a world warning of major importance. The planet is expected to exceed the 1.5° Celsius threshold and could reach a peak of 1.8° Celsius or higher by 2050 under its current course.

How does change happen? In the absence of companies and governments taking decisive action yesterday, it happens when people step out of their bunkers and get involved in change action. According to the most recent Statistics Canada report, 53 per cent of Canadians are "very" or "extremely" concerned about climate change.

Our challenge is to involve more of our citizens in individual and collective action. I am reminded of the fish story. If you give a man a fish, he will be fed for one day. If you teach him to fish, he will be fed for his lifetime. If we engage in one shot events, we may initiate change, for those who are interested. This is admirable. If we involve the community in creating opportunities for change, the effect will be multiplied. People are communicators. We talk to each other, engage one another in our enthusiasms, and most of all, we convince each other.

Collaborative planning and shared development is a strategy that can help to build support for individual and community action to counteract climate change. It's not easy. In this day of algorithms and diminishing levels of interaction with others – especially those who don't precisely align with our thinking, it's difficult to work with groups of people. Everyone has a better idea!

That calls for respect for each other, and really listening to "the other guy," followed by compromise. That is the key to building community action on climate change. So often we are willing to let someone else do it. That will not initiate change. Reaching out to our community with projects and working together results in lasting change.

We have seen that in Stratford. We saw respect for others build in the Climate Conversations, we saw community members collaborate in riverside natural habitat restoration, including the energy and environment committee (E&E) and Garden Stratford. We saw community groups pitch in with Rotary and E&E for tree planting and invasive plant removal, and we have seen Climate Momentum initiate communication and cooperation among other climate concerned groups in the city and bring important speakers into the city. The Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) has worked with community partners on vehicle idling, on the Bird Friendly City designation and on native plants. We are thrilled to have the support of the City of Stratford in the creation of both a Climate Change Manager, and an assistant to that role. The resultant Climate Change Plans, both Corporate and Community, are filled with opportunities.

In all of the city climate endeavours, change will be most effective if we work together in the community, with collaboration at the planning and presentation stages. Our community members want to be involved in change. That was clear in the Climate Conversations. Stratford is a wealth of creativity, waiting to share the load. For lasting change before the sky falls, working together may sound hokey; but with people, if we are prepared to respect each other and pitch in, it works.

If we want to avoid changing ocean currents, widespread species extinction, a hothouse Earth and massive, unpredictable fires and storms, we'd better start collaborating! Talk to your neighbours and friends – what can we do together to help? Hint: the ostrich strategy doesn't help.

UPDATES:

Carbon parts per million (ppm) in the atmosphere as of Sept. 13, 2026: 425.04 ppm. Before industrialization, it was 280 ppm.

Because our birds and helping insects need native plants, consider fall planting. It works well for native plants – they'll rest over the winter and greet you in the spring. We've been very fortunate in the number of native plants that have begun to appear at our local nurseries. Call ahead and plant on a warmish damp day!

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.

Staging an audition: The ins and outs at Stratford

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

presided over by Guthrie, with optimism. If so, he was sorely mistaken. There was one big problem: his reputation. As he put it, "Due to my wayward escapades as a youth (in Montreal) I gained … a fairly tarnished reputation."

He continues to say that a "quite powerful aging radio producer," who knew Guthrie, "was not my ally."

"So convinced was he that I was doing 'baddies' with his favorite lady soap opera star … that this Judas of Montreal proceeded to brand me as a womanizer, a libertine, a drunk, totally irresponsible, undisciplined and a black influence on any company.

"True or not, my report card had been taken seriously – I was turned down flat, not just for the first year (of the theatre) but for the second and third as well."

Instead, Plummer went south to play Shakespeare in Stratford, Conn. and elsewhere. When he returned to Stratford, Ont. in 1956, in the title role of Henry V, he began to transform his early reputation into his later, and transcendent, Canadian theatre reality … and made history in the process.

(Check out Plummer's complete autobiography at the Stratford Public Library.)

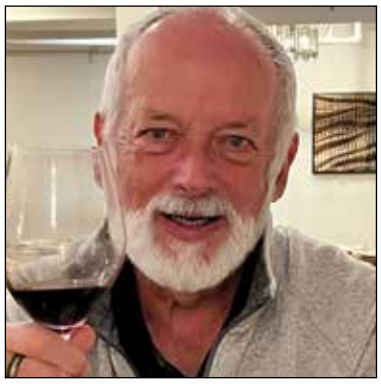
SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US!
CALL 519-655-2341 OR
EMAIL STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM

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: Why the world comes to Stratford



PAUL KNOWLES

Times Columnist

Members of the company, *Something Rotten*, including Dan Chameroy, third from left. (DARIANE SANCHE PHOTO)

As we sat in the Festival Theatre waiting for the lights to dim, I found myself wondering about the hundreds of people sitting around us. Where were they from? How many had travelled north across that now-controversial border?

It's easy to forget that familiar old Stratford is one of the key tourist destinations in Canada. But it certainly is, with multiple thousands of visitors coming to the community every season.

Once the play started – that fantastic, hilarious, energetic musical called *Something Rotten* – those thoughts disappeared,as I surrendered to the sheer delight of the performance. But a few days later, the question popped back into my head.

So, I went to the source. I emailed Stratford Festival publicist Helena Turpin and asked two questions: "Where do Stratford audiences come from?" and "How many tickets does the theatre sell?"

I found the answers fascinating and I decided to share them with you, including a full list of the nations represented in those audiences.

The answer to the second question is uncomplicated. In 2025, the Festival sold 482,000 tickets. Many of those are to locals, but that also represents a heck of a lot of tourists.

And I find the information about where these people come from to be very interesting. Helena told me that my question about country of origin was not something she had seen before, and that she was intrigued by the data she accessed through the online ticketing system. She called the findings "interesting and inspiring." I agree.

So here, stats and trivia lovers, is a full list of the countries from whence came Stratford Festival attendees this year. Top two, not surprisingly, are Canada and the United States – still sharing culture despite all the controversy.

After that, Helena shared the list in alphabetical order. People came to Stratford from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, Malawi, The Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Panama, Peoples' Republic of China, Portugal, Qatar, Singapore, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

And while the theatre is undoubtedly the biggest draw, there is so much more about Stratford to enjoy. This summer, we have attended outdoor concerts, we have picnicked beside Lake Victoria, we have dined in local restaurants, relaxed in pubs and enjoyed walks along the water, parks and streets boasting amazing front-yard gardens. And we attended plays.

The two most recent we took in have reminded me of the sheer excellence of Stratford theatre. This was most obvious because, in the case of both plays, somebody didn't show up.

The plays were *The Tempest* and *Something Rotten*. Both are on the classic thrust stage of the Festival Theatre – and two more different uses of that space cannot be imagined.

Both are brilliantly staged with great performances, but some of those performances were especially noteworthy because they were carried out by understudies.

Most impressive was the work of Ben Carlson in *The Tempest*. Carlson, who usually plays a lesser character, was elevated to the lead role of Prospero because he is understudy to Geraint Wyn Davies, who was unavailable.

I don't know about you, but when I see that dreaded slip of white paper tucked into the play brochure announcing an understudy, I feel let down.

Wrong. Carlson was amazing. He carried out his new duties flawlessly and convincingly. His interactions with Marissa Orjalo, who played the exotic spirit, Ariel, were emotionally moving. Altogether, an amazing accomplishment.

You might think that *The Tempest* – Shakespeare's final play written solely by the bard – and *Something Rotten*, a musical written only a decade ago – would have nothing in common. Essentially, that's true, except for the whole understudy thing. Because again, when we saw this terrific musical, one of the lead roles – Portia – was played by an understudy. And again, Michelle Bardach, stepping into the role, was amazing. No offense intended to the usual actor, but I can't imagine a finer portrayal of the character.

Something Rotten is actually something unusual in that it was presented at Stratford only two seasons ago. But it's back and I'm glad; it has become one of my favourite musicals ever. The entire cast is terrific, including the astonishing dancers put through their paces by the great Donna Feore, who both directed and choreographed the play. And I confess a special affection for Dan Chameroy, who plays the entirely outrageous Nostradamus, and my friend, Steve Ross, whose Shylock comes to a much better end than Shakespeare ever imagined.

I'm going on at this length about understudies because I think this is strong evidence of the excellence of productions at Stratford. This quality is maintained without missing a beat. And quality is the reason people have come from 30 countries or so to our part of the world.

Now that fall is upon us, we locals still get the opportunity to take in some of the finest theatre in the world. *The Tempest* is on stage through Oct. 24; *Something Rotten* runs through Oct. 31.

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.

Ben Carlson, who stepped in without a misstep as Prospero in *The Tempest.* (STRATFORD FESTIVAL PHOTO)

Michelle Bardach, brilliant understudy as Portia in *Something Rotten.* (STRATFORD FESTIVAL PHOTO)

Marissa Orialo as Ariel with members of the company in *The Tempest.* (ANN BAGGLEY PHOTO)

COMING EVENTS

Email to inquire 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

STRATFORD ASTRONOMY GROUP MEETINGS
St. Michael Catholic Secondary School, 240 Oakdale Avenue, Stratford Rear parking lot off Matilda. Room # l104 - 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://pccweb.ca/knoxstratford/ or call 519-271-0373 for more details! Everyone welcome!

STEPS FOR SUPPORT
Every Tuesday morning and once a month on a Monday afternoon.
Hosted by Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth www.rotaryhospice.ca
Stratford Location
This walking group is an opportunity for people who are grieving to connect while walking alongside others who are bereaved. Contact Jaclyn at sw@rotaryhospice.ca to learn more and register. This is a free program.

CAREGIVER CONNECTION
2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month at 1-2:30 p.m.
Arden Park Hotel
Caregiver Connection is a group for caregivers supporting someone with a life-limiting illness or decline due to aging. Learn about community resources, caregiver tools, and talk with others on a similar journey. All caregivers welcome whether you're a spouse, family member, friend, etc. supporting someone from near or far. Contact 226-921-7314 or referrals@rotaryhospice.ca to register. Free program. Hosted by Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth - www.rotaryhospice.ca

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 info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

GRIEFSHARE
Stratford Christian Reformed Church, 190 Athone Crescent (parking on the upper level)
September 14 - December 14
Monday 1:00-2:30pm
When a loved one dies, it can feel like you're alone. Few people understand how painful & isolating your grief can be. At GriefShare, you'll find a safe, comforting place where you can talk with others about your grief. Contact: griefstratfordcrcgroup2627@gmail.com
Register: griefshare.org/findagroup

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

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.

JAY NORRIS PRESENTATION ON GROWING ORCHIDS
Sunday, September 20; 2-4 p.m.
Richards Memorial Church, 360 Edgeworth Avenue, London, ON N5W 5C4
The London Orchid Society meets the third Sunday of each month. Jay Norris Presentation on Growing Orchids in Cases from Stratford, ON. His presentation is how he uses cases to create a tropical paradise for Orchids that grow better in warmer conditions. Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting for more information at www.londonorchidsociety.com; contact Daryl at 519-666-2927.

STRATFORD SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING
Monday, Sep 21st from 7:30-9:15 pm
St. Paul's Anglican Church 9 Douro St. (at Waterloo)
Free Open House class
For information contact stratfordscd@gmail.com or (519) 272-1398

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 info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

FALL BBQ
Thursday, September 24; 5:30 p.m.
Legion 804 Ontario St.
Wild Hog Oktoberfest Sausage on a bun with sauerkraut and fresh cut fries, all for $15 per person. There is not ticket needed. For take out call by September 22 at 519-271-4540 or 519-703-6544

STRATFORD SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING
Monday, Sept. 28; 7:30-9:15 p.m.
St. Paul's Anglican Church 9 Douro St. (at Waterloo)
Free Open House class
For information contact stratfordscd@gmail.com or (519) 272-1398

CFUW: MEET THE WOMEN CANDIDATES FOR THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION
Tuesday, Sept. 29; 7pm
Stratford Intermediate School, 60 St Andrews St.
Moderated panel - everyone welcome!

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 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 info@yfcstratford.com 519-272-1614

GARDEN STRATFORD GENERAL MEETING
Monday October 5; 7:15 – 9:00 p.m.
Army Navy Hall, 151 Lorne Ave. E., Stratford
Featured Presentation: "The Four-Season Gardener – Getting Ahead for Spring", Kim Hutten and Marilyn Park, Grand Erie Master Gardeners. Learn about winter sowing, early seed starting, and seasonal planning. Meeting Open to Everyone; Free Admission.

OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP MEETING
Tuesday, October 6, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
93 Morgan St., Stratford
Speaker – Jaci Sinclair, of Gentle Awakenings.
Learn about Chair Yoga and it's healing supports
Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome. 519-273-4327

ANNUAL PUMPKINFEST
Morningside Adult Community,
10 Homestead Place, New Hamburg
Saturday, October 10; 9-12 p.m.
Free admission and hot cider.
Live music, no crowds, pumpkins, bake table, fresh flower centerpieces, small & bulk root veg, apples, kale, squash.

OXFORD PHILATELIC SOCIETY CIRCUIT BOOK (STAMP) FAIR
Saturday, October 24, 2026
Church of the Epiphany, 560 Dundas Street, Woodstock
10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Free Admission & Parking
Stop in and buy some stamps and meet fellow stamp collectors.
About 8 participating stamp clubs. Contact: dheaton3e3@gmail.com
Website: http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford

STRATFORD TIMES

Deadline: Tuesday prior at 3 p.m.
Contact: stratfordtimes@gmail.com

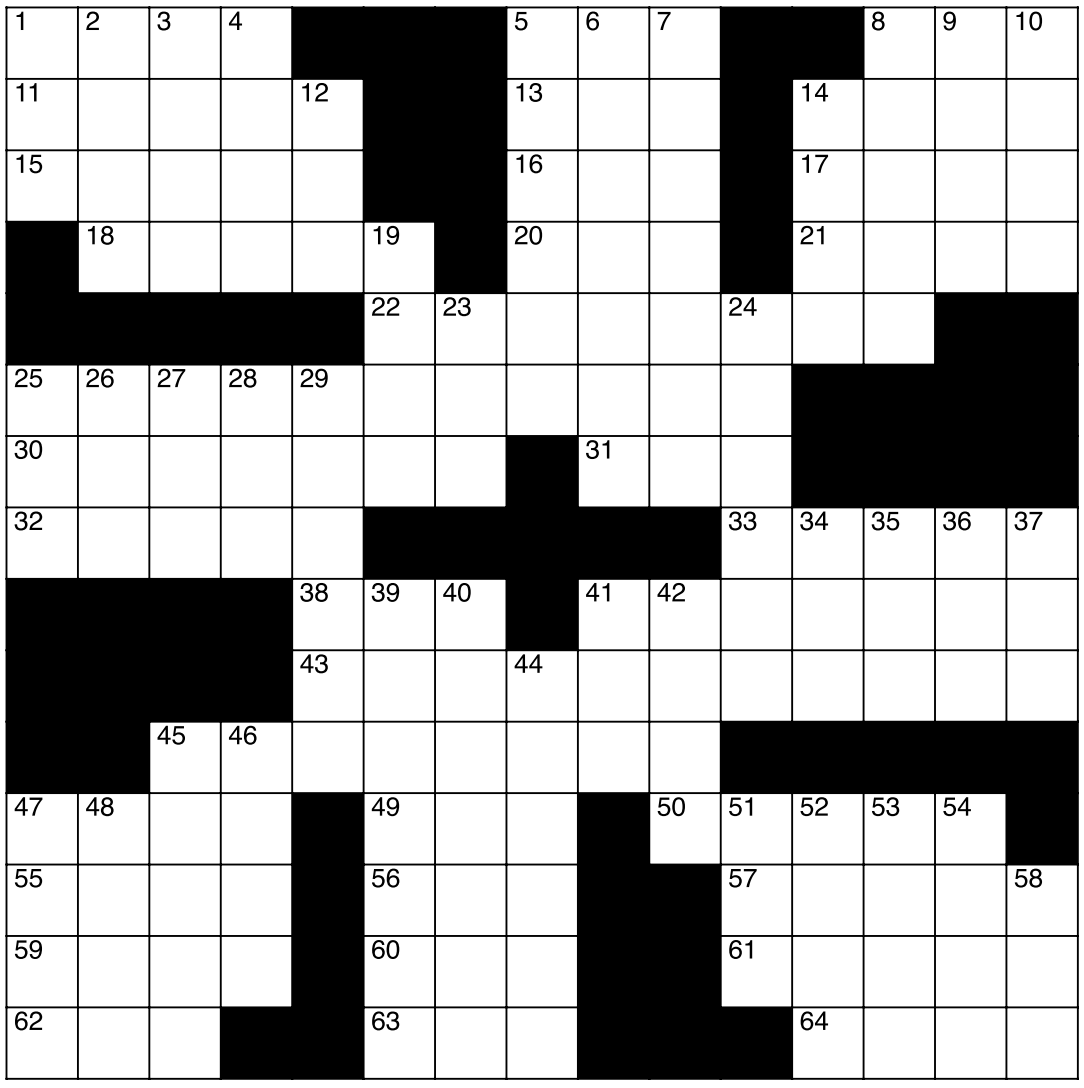
PROMOTE YOUR EVENTS WITH US! HERE'S HOW:

- **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**

Crossword

CLUES ACROSS
1. Egyptian bull god
5. A young canine
8. North Carolina university
11. “Oddbod” actor Tom
13. Midway between northeast and east
14. A place to shop
15. Mysterious “Severance” family
16. Single Lens Reflex
17. Malaria
18. Informal loan organizations
20. Twitching
21. Holm oak
22. Willing to consent
25. In an early way
30. Stuck it out
31. Language in Ghana
32. Obtain
33. Ancient Greek currency
38. One point east (clockwise) of due north
41. Popular baseball movie
43. Group of islands
45. Church building
47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
49. Late AC/DC frontman Scott
50. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
55. Thick piece of something
56. Breakfast food
57. One mole of solute per kilogram of solvent
59. Ancient Greek City
60. Bitterly regret
61. Don’t forget it
62. Dishonorable man
63. Affirmative
64. “__ and flows”

CLUES DOWN
1. Bridge-building degree
2. Expression of sorrow or pity
3. Lizard species
4. Turkish leader title
5. A way to bother
6. Blank
7. A fine, closely woven cotton fabric
8. Sports broadcaster Ian
9. Popular whodunit board game
10. Alkali flats mineral
12. Large African antelope
14. It’s delivered most days
19. Satisfy
23. Water soaked soil
24. Of a past era
25. Chest muscle (slang)
26. Ribonucleic acid
27. Doctor of Education
28. Coffee receptacle
29. Where rockstars work
34. International airport in Connecticut
35. Russian river
36. It’s used to make cabins
37. OJ trial judge Lance
39. A means to persuade
40. Short poem
41. A way to begin hostilities with
42. Multi-function radar (abbr.)
44. Joints
45. Blatted
46. Swedish rock group
47. Millisecond
48. __ podrida: Spanish stew
51. Doctors’ group
52. Trunk of a tree
53. Tattle
54. Metrical foot
58. __ Angeles



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

NATALIA

Meet Natalia, a sweet 3-year-old girl looking for a patient, understanding home. Naturally shy, she takes a little time to feel comfortable in new surroundings and greet people. But with a little time, she’s very affectionate!

With kindness, patience, and the chance to build trust at her own pace, Natalia’s loving personality begins to shine. As her confidence grows, so does the special bond she forms with her people.

She’s searching for a calm home where she can blossom into the affectionate companion she’s meant to be. If you’re looking for a truly rewarding friendship, give Natalia a chance and come meet her at our Stratford Centre or online at kwsphumane.ca/adopt/cats

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 23

CLASSIFIEDS

Email to inquire stratfordtimes@gmail.com

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. We are at the Pinery Market at Grand Bend every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call or text Stan anytime 519-868-3814.

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

Shade Trees; Maples, Oaks, Birch, Beech, Honey Locusts, Elms, Magnolia, Hydrangea Tree, Tulip Tree, Crab apples, Ivory Silk Lilac, Chanticleer Pear, Golden Weeping Willows and more. Apples, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Apricots, Nectarine, Blueberry, Haskap etc. Lots of healthy strong Spruce, Cedars and White Pine for your privacy hedges and windbreaks. Hundred of flowering shrubs. Reg Hours 7 a.m.- 6 p.m. Mon-Sat at Martins Nursery c/o Emanuel Martin. 42661 Orangehill Rd., Wroxeter, ON

Science Hill Campground
Lot 62 trailer sale $32,500.00 ravine facing lot
2013 Keystone Retreat, 39 feet, 19 foot living area slide INCLUDED
20' X 10'deck, shed, deck furniture, most furniture and kitchen equipment, 18 cu. Ft. Frig, king bed, dishwasher
Christena 519-494-1780

JUNK REMOVAL

JUNK REMOVAL – Garbage, Basements, Yards, Dump Runs. Call Mike 519-276-7766

WANTED

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

RUN YOUR CLASSIFIED AD HERE! JUST $10 + HST PER EDITION Contact: stratfordtimes@gmail.com

UPGRADE YOUR RIDE WITH STRATFORD KIA'S PRE-OWNED DEALS

2016 Nissan Rogue

$11,995 OR $43/wk + HST & lic
MILEAGE - 136,425 KM STOCK #: S27031A

2019 Nissan Altima 2.5 SV

$18,495 OR $66/wk + HST & lic
LOW KMS- 72,623 KM STOCK #: S26156A

2022 Subaru Impreza Convenience

$19,995 OR $72/wk + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 66,017 KM STOCK #: P22710

2023 Kia Forte

$20,495 OR $74/wk + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 83,988 KM STOCK #: P22734

2023 Kia Soul

$22,995 OR $83/wk + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 54,000 KM STOCK #: S26352A

2020 BMW X1 xDrive28i

$24,995 OR $90/wk + HST & lic STOCK #: P22738
MILEAGE - 80,440 KM

2024 Kia Sportage LX

$25,495 OR $92/wk + HST & lic STOCK #: P22718
LOW KMS - 78,967 KM

2024 Kia Sportage LX

$25,995 OR $93/wk + HST & lic STOCK #: P22672
LOW KMS - 75,257 KM

2025 Nissan Rogue SV Moonroof

$26,995 OR $97/wk + HST & lic
MILEAGE - 87,181 KM STOCK #: P22719

2022 Ford Edge Titanium

$27,495 OR $99/wk + HST & lic
MILEAGE - 84,000 KM STOCK #: P22730

2023 Kia Sportage X-Line Limited

$33,495 OR $120/wk + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 52,216 KM STOCK #: P22728

2023 Kia Telluride X-Line

$40,995 OR $147/wk + HST & lic
LOW KMS - 99,336 KM STOCK #: S26448A

2024 Mercedes-Benz GLC 300

$44,495 OR $160/wk + HST & lic
MILEAGE - 78,811 KM STOCK #: P22735

*While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, we are not responsible for any errors and omissions. Please see your dealer for current pricing. Plus tax and licensing O.A.C. Some terms and conditions may apply.

GOOD CREDIT? BAD CREDIT? NO CREDIT? EVERYONE GETS APPROVED
$0 DOWN, SIGN & DRIVE
T&C APPLY, O.A.C

Movement that inspires

(519) 508-5755
863 Erie St., Stratford ON
www.stratfordkia.com
SHOP INVENTORY NOW

STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thu. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00 PARTS & SERVICE: Mon.-Fri. 8:00-6:00; Sat. 8:00-3:00 (By Appointment Only)
*T&C APPLY, While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, we are not responsible for any errors and omissions. Please see your dealer for current pricing.

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

CONSTRUCTION

FRASER ASPHALT PAVING
"Serving Stratford & area since 1977"
www.fraserpaving.ca
Driveways • Parking Lots • Excavating
Truck Rentals • Asphalt Patching
Call Scott or Denise for a free quote for 2022
519-271-5690

Rice Vendetti
PAVESTONE PLUS LIMITED
THE PLUS STANDS FOR
FIBERGLASS POOLS
Professionally installed.
PAVESTONE.CA

ONLINE BOUTIQUE

PAINTING

Sisters
PAINT AND DECORATING
INTERIOR / EXTERIOR PAIINTING
OVER 30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, CLEAN, RELIABLE AND FLEXIBLE. OFFER COLOUR CONSULTATIONS.
Debbie Norenberg
519-503-3618

HANDY MAN

Bruce Burleigh
40 Years of Handy
(519) 703-1936

FENCING / DECKS

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

EQUIPMENT FINANCING SPECIALIST

CORE CAPITAL GROUP INC.
EQUIPMENT FINANCING
FAST APPROVALS • FLEXIBLE TERMS
HARDY
EQUIPMENT FINANCING SPECIALIST
647-993-1022
Hardeep.Thethi@corcap.ca
www.corcap.ca

SHOE REPAIR

Dmitri's SHOE & LEATHER REPAIR
Celebrating 20 years!
Anniversary sale 20% off.
See store for details.
• Shoe Sales & Repair
• Leather Alterations & Cleaning
• Sports Equipment • Zippers, Purses
• Scissor/Knife Sharpening • Key Cutting
• Lining Replacement
58 Wellington Street, Stratford, ON
519-272-2200

INVESTMENTS

Franklin E. Hinz
196 Ontario Street, Stratford
519-273-1633
www.franklinehinz.com

MARKETING

TOWN CRIER MARKETING
FREE CONSULTATION

OPTICIAN

Eyes to Buy Family Optical Store
EYE EXAMS ON SITE
20% off all in-stock sunglasses
1020 Ontario St., Stratford
519-275-3413
www.eyestobuyoptical.ca

ROOFING

ROOF TRUSSES & OPEN WEB FLOOR JOISTS
Residential/Commercial/Agriculture
Contact Zach at
Watson's Home Hardware 519-335-3551
zach@watsonshomehardware.com

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

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

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

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

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

TUTORING

Sylvan of Stratford
Get ahead this summer with Sylvan!
Your child is unique, and our solutions are too!
Whether your child needs to catch up or get ahead, our teachers are ready to help create a one-of-a-kind personalized program that will work for your child. Get support with Sylvan today!
SUMMER SALE ON NOW!
Free Assessment PLUS sale. Offer valid in London and Stratford only. Expires 06/26/2026
145-103 Ontario Street, Stratford ON
519-657-7323
southlondon@SylvanLearning.com
SYLVANLEARNING.COM

CROSSWORD

B	A	T	A			P	U	P		E	C	U
C	L	E	G	G		E	N	E		M	A	L	L
E	A	G	A	N		S	L	R		A	G	U	E
	S	U	S	U	S		T	I	C		I	L	E	X
					A	M	E	N	A	B	L	E		
P	R	E	M	A	T	U	R	E	L	Y				
E	N	D	U	R	E	D		D	E	G				
C	A	D	G	E						O	B	O	L	I
				N	B	E		S	A	N	D	L	O	T
				A	R	C	H	I	P	E	L	A	G	O
		B	A	S	I	L	I	C	A					
M	O	A	B		B	O	N		R	A	B	B	I	
S	L	A	B		E	G	G			M	O	L	A	L
E	L	E	A		R	U	E			A	L	A	M	O
C	A	D			Y	E	S				E	B	B	S

SUDOKU

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

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Eddie Vedder
2. ChatGPT
3. Soccer (football)
4. TikTok
5. PlayStation 2
6. Gotham City
7. Disney
8. Barbie
9. 1999
10. The speed of sound

HAVE A SPECIAL EVENT COMING UP?

Contact:
stratfordtimes@gmail.com
or
call 519-655-2341

ADVERTISE HERE FOR AS LOW AS $15 PER ISSUE!

Contact stratfordtimes@gmail.com

More Bard Behaviour

SOMETHING ROTTEN!

★★★★

(out of 4)

"A big-hit musical"

Toronto Star

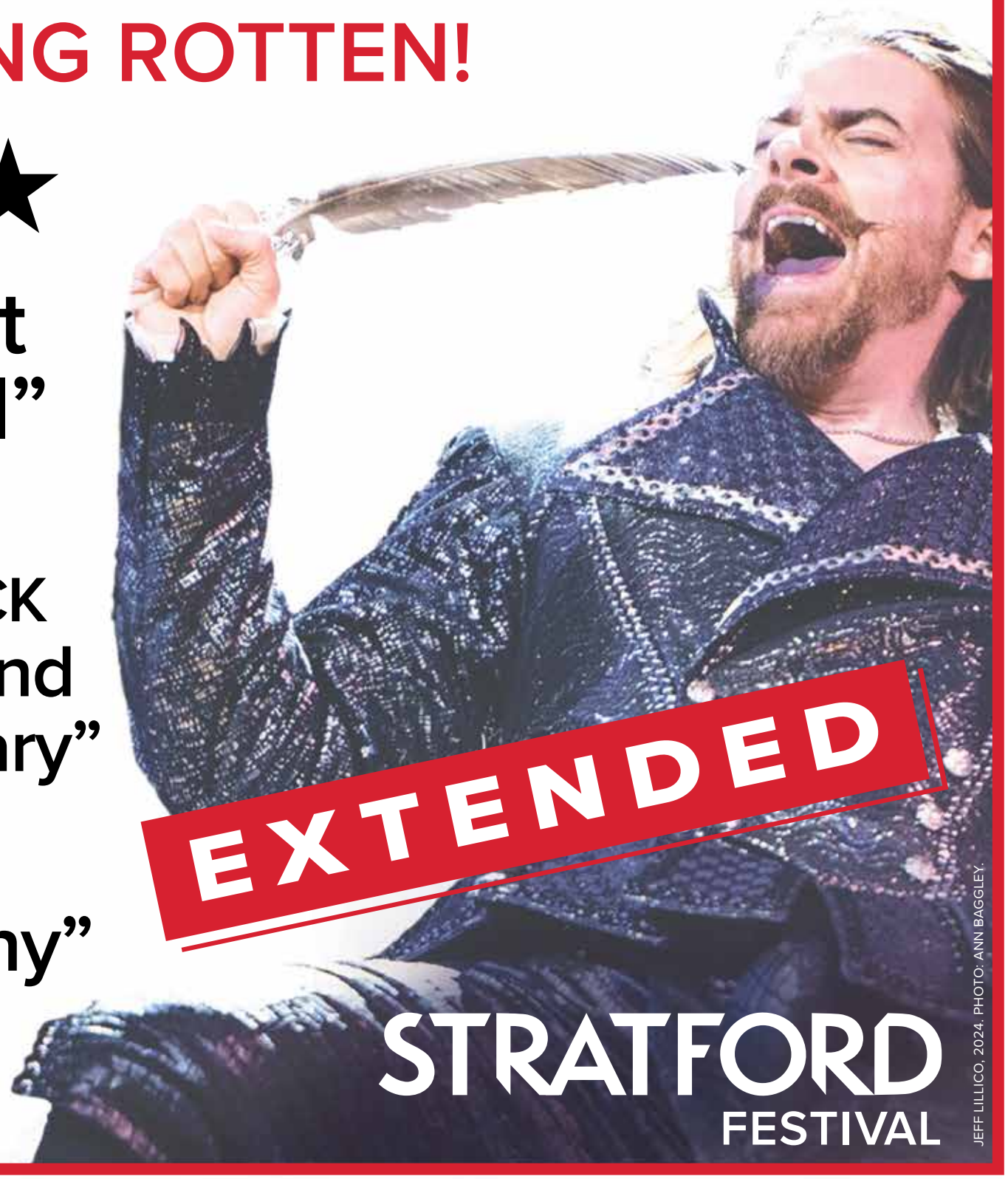
CRITIC'S PICK

"Big, bold and extraordinary"

The Globe and Mail

"Wildly funny"

Postmedia



JEFF LILLICO, 2024. PHOTO: ANN BAGGLEY.

More Must-See Theatre

THE TEMPEST | GUYS AND DOLLS | SOMETHING ROTTEN! | DEATH OF A SALESMAN | THE HOBBIT
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST | SATURDAY, SUNDAY, MONDAY | A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
OTHELLO | THE TAO OF THE WORLD | THE KING JAMES BIBLE PLAY

SOMETHING ROTTEN! BOOK BY KAREY KIRKPATRICK AND JOHN O'FARRELL | MUSIC AND LYRICS BY WAYNE KIRKPATRICK AND KAREY KIRKPATRICK
CONCEIVED BY KAREY KIRKPATRICK AND WAYNE KIRKPATRICK | 2026 SEASON SPONSOR: OPHELIA LAZARIDIS | PROUD SEASON PARTNERS: BMO, CANADA LIFE AND RBC ROYAL BANK

PRODUCTION CO-SPONSORS: Canso INVESTMENT COUNSEL LTD.

PRODUCTION UNDERWRITERS: JOHN & THERESE GARDNER, DANETTE GENTILE KAUFFMAN IN MEMORY OF GRETCHEN & DAN GENTILE

2026 FARM EDITION

STRATFORD TIMES
SCAN TO READ THE ONLINE PAPER
www.granthaven.com

OFA urges farmers to put safety first

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

www.ofa.on.ca

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is encouraging farmers, farm families and rural communities to make safety on the farm a priority all year long.

To support farmers with practical tools and information, the OFA has released a farm safety fact sheet, designed to help identify risks, start conversations and strengthen safety practices on farms of all sizes and types.

"The farm is more than a workplace, it's also home," said farmer and OFA executive member Paul Maurice. "Safety starts with planning and awareness, not luck. Taking the time to think through tasks, identify risks and put simple precautions in place can make all the difference in preventing injuries and making sure everyone comes home safely at the end of the day."

Common farm safety risks include long days and fatigue, heavy machinery and moving equipment, time pressure from weather and field conditions, road travel with slow-moving vehicles, multiple people working closely together, or working with animals that can behave unpredictably. When fatigue sets in or distractions creep in, the risk of injury rises quickly.

"Simple actions – like wearing high-visibility gear, maintaining equipment or taking an extra moment to assess a task – can help prevent life-changing accidents," said Maurice. "Farm safety is everyone's responsibility, and it starts with each of us knowing what to do to stay safe."

A few top farm safety tips:

- Keep equipment fixed and up to date.
- Take a break when you're tired or fatigued, and don't cut corners when you're in a rush.
- Shut down equipment before making adjustments or dislodging a blockage and keep safety guards in place.
- Don't let kids play around work sites or near equipment.
- Have a first aid kit and emergency contact numbers handy and take a charged phone with you when you head out for the day.
- When frustration hits because of breakdowns or long hours, take a breath, step back and reassess before moving on.

The full fact sheet is available at: ofa.on.ca/resources/tips-for-staying-safe-on-the-farm.

Farmers and rural residents can also access practical safety gear through the OFA online store, including high-visibility vests and farm safety signage to improve awareness around equipment, roadways and farmyards. Visit store.ofa.on.ca/collections/all.

To learn more about farm safety: agsafetyweek.ca.

FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES IN THE STRATFORD TIMES
CALL 519.655.2341 OR EMAIL STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM

MOUNTAINOAK CHEESE
FROM OUR FARM TO YOUR TABLE

We also sell Quark, Curds & Homegrown Beef
Gift Baskets and Gift Certificates
Call 519-662-4967 or orders@mountainoakcheese.ca
COME AND SEE US AT THE
WELLESLEY ABC FESTIVAL!
SEPTEMBER 26
TOUR & TASTING
OCTOBER 31ST & NOVEMBER 28TH
Reserve your spot www.mountainoakcheese.ca
Mountainoak Cheese 3165 Huron Road, New Hamburg
HOURS: Monday - Saturday: 9am - 5pm | Closed: Sundays and holidays

PEACE OF MIND 'TIL THE COWS COME HOME

Protecting What Matters Most To You Since 1893
afm Ayr Farmers Mutual Insurance Company
Home | Farm | Auto | Commercial

CFD
CANADA FARM DISTRIBUTORS LTD.
Quality Sales and Trusted Service Since 1972

519.655.2584 | info@canadafd.ca
Patrick Sommers | Tavistock, ON
Pressure Washers, Air Compressors, Generators, Incinerators, Water Treatment Systems and More!

FCC renews partnership with Canadian Centre for Agricultural Wellbeing to support National Farmer Wellness Network and crisis line

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURAL WELLBEING

www.ccaw.ca

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and the Canadian Centre for Agricultural Wellbeing (CCAW) have announced a renewed partnership to sustain and expand the National Farmer Wellness Network (NFWN) and National Farmer Crisis Line, 1-866-FARMS01 (1-866-327-6701).

The renewed investment of $1.8 million over three years ($600,000 annually) will allow the program to continue providing tailored, no-cost mental health and crisis support to Canada's farmers, farm families and agricultural workers.

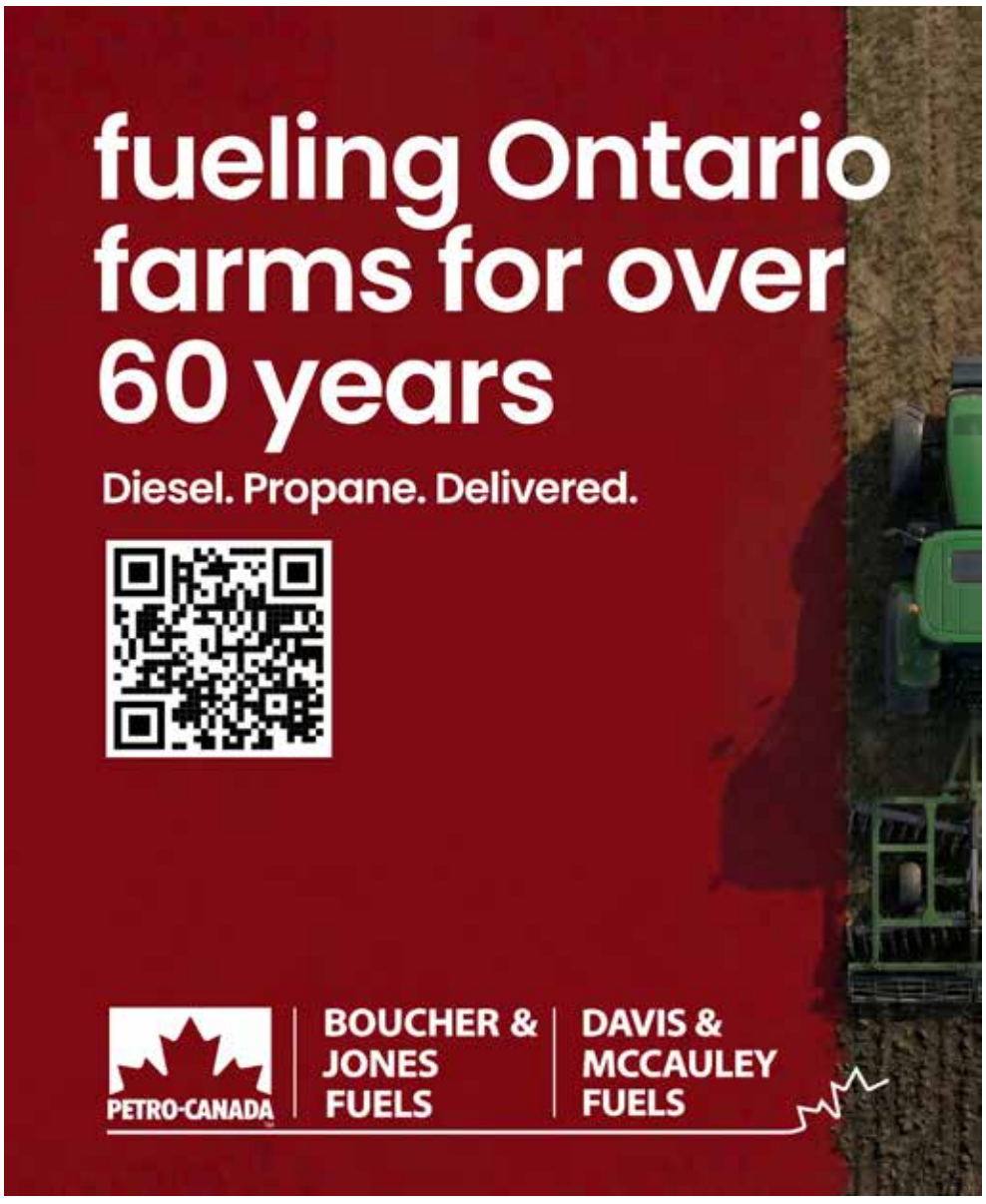
"The response to the National Farmer Wellness Network Crisis Line since its launch has confirmed what we always knew, there is a deep and urgent need for mental health support that speaks the language of farming," said Canadian Centre for Agricultural Wellbeing CEO and lead scientist Briana Hagen. "FCC's renewed investment means we can continue building on this foundation, reaching more farmers and agricultural workers who need immediate, culturally informed support. This partnership is about more than a phone line; it's about ensuring Canada's agricultural community knows it is seen, valued and never alone."

Since launching in February 2025, the National Farmer Wellness Network Crisis Line has connected agricultural workers across Canada with licensed mental health professionals trained through the Canadian Agricultural Literacy Program (CALP), specialists who understand the unique pressures of farming life. The renewal ensures that this vital service continues uninterrupted.

"Farming and ranching asks a lot of people," said FCC president and CEO Justine Hendricks. "Behind every operation are individuals and families managing uncertainty, long hours and immense responsibility. That's why FCC is proud to continue its support to the National Farmer Wellness Network so farmers and farm families have access to trusted mental health support from professionals who understand the unique realities of agriculture, whenever they need it."

Farming remains one of Canada's most demanding occupations. Financial volatility, geographic isolation, unpredictable weather and the emotional weight of caring for land and livestock create compounding mental health pressures that general support services are often ill-equipped to address. The NFWN Crisis Line was built specifically to meet farmers where they are, and this renewed commitment ensures it will keep doing so.

"Renewing this commitment means that farmers and farm families across Canada can continue to count on us, not just in a moment of crisis, but as part of an ongoing network of care," said NFWN chief programming officer Deborah Vanberkel. "The trust that agricultural communities have placed in this program is something we do not take lightly. With FCC's continued support, we are able to grow that trust and deepen our reach into every province."



SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US

CALL 519.622.2341 OR EMAIL STRATFORDTIMES@GMAIL.COM

Agricultural drones take flight after Health Canada pesticide approval

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

A Health Canada approval allowing pesticide application by remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), commonly known as drones, was granted in June, allowing farmers and small businesses across southwestern Ontario to spray pesticides in accordance with the Pest Control Products Act and the Pest Control Products Regulations.

While Canadian farmers have been able to use drones for mapping, scouting and crop monitoring, the major regulatory hurdle has been using them to apply pesticides.

Now that new approvals have opened the door for drone-based pesticide applications, small business owners, such as Justin Shieck, owner and operator of Norfolk Drone Services, say they believe farmers can now utilize the technology for greater efficiency.

Shieck was initially taken off guard when he read the report stating that pesticide spraying via drone technology was approved back in June, something he thought he wouldn't see until next year.

"There weren't even signs that this was going to happen by the fall … we were taken completely off guard about the approval."

Shieck says that countries like China, the United States and Australia have been using drone technology in the agricultural sector for around 15 years, and yet Canada is just starting to see the value after getting feedback from competing countries.

"In the states, drones are treated as another aircraft," he said. "What got me into this business was really watching how fast it expanded across the states and seeing YouTube video after YouTube video and news article after news article showing small businesses booming, with young 20-year-olds and different age groups of farmers enjoying what they're doing and bringing a cheaper solution for farming."

Shieck says he believes farmers throughout Canada will soon own and operate drones, similar to the way they own tractors, combines or other farming equipment. He says in farming, timing is everything when it comes to spraying pesticides or fertilizers.

(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Justin Shieck, owner and operator of Norfolk Drone Services, demonstrates agricultural drone technology. The June Health Canada approval allowing pesticide applications by remotely piloted aircraft systems opens new opportunities for farmers and agricultural businesses.

"Do I see every farmer owning one, like a Swiss Army knife in their toolbox? One hundred per cent, because farming comes down to timing," said Shieck. "Especially if you're deploying it out of the back of your barn, you can hit timing windows when you really need to."

Compared to small conventional tractors, drones can cover more ground in less time, at about 40 acres per hour; however, large self-propelled sprayers can cover more than 80 acres per hour. These large sprayers are often hard on fields and don't allow for the same mobility as a drone.

The Health Canada report noted that drone application is often the most practical option when fields are soft, wet or too difficult for ground application equipment; when pest outbreaks occur late in crop growth; or for areas that are either too large or inaccessible for ground application.

"If it's been raining a lot, I don't think anyone's pulling a rig through a field," said Shieck. "Then once a canopy gets high, you can't really spray beans or corn because it's too tall. In the fall, I really see drones tackling the heavy canopies where you're not getting that 25 per cent loss from driving over your beans."

Although Canada is behind in its approval, Shieck says it's not all bad news, and being able to track and assess what's happening in other countries before the Health Canada approval has benefited the budget.

"Canada is cautious," he said. "We take a more science-based regulatory approach than most places, and they do it for safety reasons. I would say it's not a horrible thing that we were behind. Watching and allowing other countries to spend a lot of money on research while we sat back and collected data was valuable. Now we have some brands approved, and we're not wasting that time or money on the trial and error they've already gone through."

The report notes that the approval also aligns Canada with other countries like the United States and Australia, helping Canadian agriculture stay competitive internationally during times when competitive prices are key.

"Using RPAS to apply pesticides can make farming more efficient by helping farmers protect crops while using fewer inputs – such as pesticides and other resources needed for crop production, including labour, fuel and equipment use," read the report. "This will support food security and help keep food affordable."

Drone operation is regulated by Transport Canada, whereas the regulation of pesticides is under the jurisdiction of Health Canada. Transport Canada considers aerial drones to be aircraft, and all pilots must understand and follow Canadian Aviation Regulations.

The data show that the risks of applying pesticides by RPAS are generally similar to those of conventional aerial application. However, drones also have the potential to apply pesticides very precisely, similar to some ground-based spot treatments.

Health Canada also concluded that pesticide residues on food crops resulting from RPAS applications are not higher than those resulting from conventional application methods, making foods as safe as with conventional applications.

Shieck's company, Norfolk Drone Services, offers agricultural drone services focused on precision spraying, spreading and mapping. Its main agriculture-related services include aerial spraying, granular spreading, mapping and aerial imagery, as well as drone sales, support and training.

The cost of a drone package varies, but Shieck says it is generally around $40,000 to $50,000 and includes multiple batteries and packages, including spray equipment that can be used for pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides and biological products.

Shieck encourages anyone interested to visit his website or reach out to him directly at www.norfolkdroneservices.ca

From pasture to plate, JC Cattle Co. builds connection between farmers and consumers

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

On a quiet pasture southeast of Stratford, a group of distinctly patterned cows graze, chew their cud and, for the most part, pay little attention to their visitors.

They are part of JC Cattle Co.'s growing herd of Canadian Speckle Park cattle, a breed that has become the foundation of a young agricultural business built around a simple idea: raise quality beef locally and give customers an opportunity to know exactly where their food comes from.

Based on a family farm outside Milverton, JC Cattle Co. is owned and operated by Morgan Kuepfer, her husband, Jonathan De Vries, and their friend and Jonathan's coworker, Christine Chalmers.

The business began after Chalmers and De Vries, who work together in agriculture, started talking about an empty barn on Chalmers' family farm, where her family had previously operated a dairy farm.

"Those two thought, 'Well, let's go fill it with some beef because we're getting sick and tired of paying the prices that we're paying for beef and high-quality beef at the grocery store,'" Kuepfer said. "'Let's see if we can raise some high-quality beef ourselves.'"

They started with two purebred, first-calf heifers. Three years later, JC Cattle Co. has grown to roughly 100 cows, not including calves and other animals in the herd.

Chalmers introduced her partners to Speckle Park cattle, a Canadian beef breed known for its distinctive black-and-white colouring and, according to Kuepfer, the quality of its beef.

The animals also proved well suited to the operation.

"They're great mums, they have a good maternal instinct, for the most part they're docile," Kuepfer said. "They're a really high-quality beef. So, because we were going direct to consumer and we wanted something that we loved too, it just seemed like a really good fit."

JC Cattle Co. raises its animals from birth through finishing, with cattle destined either to become breeding stock or enter the company's beef program.

That start-to-finish approach also allows the farmers to have greater control over how their cattle are raised.

Breeding cattle spend roughly six months of the year on pasture, depending on weather, and rotational grazing allows sections of pasture to recover while others are being grazed.

The company also has cattle grazing 40 acres near Cambridge in partnership with rare Charitable Research Reserve, where rotational grazing helps manage the ecosystem and habitat.

Most of the cattle's feed is grown by JC Cattle Co., while what it doesn't produce itself is sourced locally. Its animals receive a grass-and-grain diet through a non-GMO feed program. During the winter, cattle return to barns but continue to have indoor and outdoor access.

"We like to try to keep it as clean and green as we can," Kuepfer said.

That philosophy extends beyond raising the animals.

JC Cattle Co. takes what it calls a "nose-to-tail" approach, finding uses for as much of each animal as possible. Beyond traditional beef cuts, customers can purchase bones and fat, while the company renders fat into cooking tallow and products including skin cream, lip balm and soap. Bones are used for broth, while some organ meat and other products are supplied to the Bark for freeze-dried dog treats.

"We all love a steak or a roast or ground beef," Kuepfer said. "Those are great things. They're nutrient dense. However, there's so much more."

The business's direct-to-consumer model is equally important.

Kuepfer handles much of the marketing and sales while continuing to work as a supply teacher, while Chalmers and De Vries handle much of the daily cattle and barn work alongside their full-time jobs.

Customers can meet the farmers themselves at the Stratford Farmers' Market at the Rotary Complex on Saturdays and the Stratford Sunday Market behind city hall. JC Cattle Co. also operates an online store and offers free Thursday delivery to Perth County addresses.

For Kuepfer, giving consumers that direct connection to their food is part of what the three farmers set out to accomplish.

"People want to know where their food comes from," she said.

For JC Cattle Co., that means offering customers beef that is "clean and green and it's local and it's Canadian."

And three years into what began with two heifers and an empty barn, the farmers are still figuring out just how large their cattle "addiction" might become.

The herd, Kuepfer said, has been growing as they determine what remains manageable for the three of them.

"We've just been seeing what is still within our management style and reach and kind of just going with the flow."

For more information on JC Cattle Co., visit jccattleco.ca.

Huron, Perth honeybee hive losses lower than many areas

JOHN MINER

Times Reporter

When it comes to beehive losses, Huron and Perth County beekeepers can consider themselves fortunate compared to much of the province.

According to a spring survey by the Ontario Beekeepers Association, the winter hive losses in the region that includes Huron and Perth averaged 17.6 per cent, the second lowest losses in the province.

But beekeepers in some other regions reported losing more than half their hives, including northeastern Ontario, Greater Toronto and Hamilton area and central Ontario. Only northwestern Ontario had lower losses than Huron and Perth.

The overall average loss for Ontario was 45.3 per cent.

South Huron beekeeper Aaron Neeb calculates that to break even, beekeepers can only afford to lose up to 20 per cent of their hives over winter.

"Hive loss is a serious issue for the beekeeping industry," he said.

Neeb said the lower losses this past winter for the Huron and Perth region, which also includes Grey, Bruce and Wellington counties, is extremely positive news for beekeepers in the area.

Last year, the beekeepers in the region weren't as fortunate, reporting losses of 39.5 per cent.

The top reasons for hive losses, according to the Ontario Beekeepers Association survey, were winter weather, small clusters going into winter and queen issues.

Beekeepers reporting overwinter success attributed their lower losses to effective Varroa mite control, good sized clusters going into winter and effective fall feeding of their bees.

The mites are a serious issue for beekeepers, requiring regular monitoring and sometimes multiple treatments, Neeb said. Populations can grow exponentially during a season.

High mite levels can cause viruses and diseases that are difficult to eliminate.

To recover from losses, some beekeepers split surviving hives into two colonies, but that is a bit of a catch-22.

"Yes, you have a new hive, but it is not nearly as strong as it would be if left as a single colony. This can result in lower honey yields and, for some beekeepers with pollination contracts, fewer viable colonies to provide for pollination," Neeb said.

An added issue is that by the time fall arrives, beekeepers have two colonies that require supplemental feed and treatments to make it through the winter.

Ontario beekeepers also try to recover from hive losses by importing queen bees from places such as Hawaii, California, Chile and New Zealand. The downside is these bees are less likely to survive Canadian winters than queens reared in Canada, Neeb said.

A positive development for Ontario beekeepers, according to the provincial association, was the registration this spring of new mite control products.

Another initiative was announced by the University of Guelph – the Low Varroa Growth breeding program that aims to build resistance to the mites.

The research involves sampling hives twice in a season to compare mite levels and then selecting the ones with lower mite numbers for new bee colonies.

The Ontario Beekeepers Association is also calling for investments in research and extension to help beekeepers be more resilient in the face of high winter losses.

Ontario's beekeepers produced $40.8 million of honey last year, up from $33.4 million in 2024.

(JOHN MINER PHOTO)

South Huron beekeeper Aaron Neeb says the lower winter hive losses is extremely good news.

EASY LIFT DOORS LTD
1-800-667-3845
EASYLIFTDOORS.COM
515 JAMES ST S, ST. MARYS

INDUSTRY LEADING OVERHEAD AND GARAGE DOOR SOLUTIONS
Agricultural | Commercial/Industrial | Residential

STRATFORD
FALL FAIR
CELEBRATING
THE 185TH
ANNIVERSARY
FOR THE FULL SCHEDULE OF THIS YEAR'S FALL FAIR, SCAN THE QR CODE

RE-ELECT
HARJ NIJJAR
FOR CITY COUNCIL
PROVEN EXPERIENCE.
TRUSTED LEADERSHIP.
AUTHORIZED AND PAID FOR BY THE CANDIDATES CAMPAIGN

A look ahead: What can you expect at this year's Stratford Fall fair?

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The 185th Stratford Fall Fair is around the corner. From rides and attractions to agricultural and historical displays, organizers say this year will be one to remember.

"There's something for everybody to get involved with," said Laurie Neubrand, president of the Stratford & District Agricultural Society and chair of the Stratford Fall Fair board. "… We're maintaining the tradition, but it's also a celebration of the 185th Stratford Fall Fair. We were one of the first agricultural societies established in the province back in the year, I think it was 1841 … It goes back a long way, and everything has developed since then. So things get better and better."

The fair officially kicks off with its opening ceremonies and ambassador competition on Thursday, Sept. 24 at 7 p.m. Right after, the pie auction returns in the Community Hall of Rotary Complex.

Earlier on that day, there are a few additional events that precede the opening. The Seniors' Euchre Tournament takes place at 1 p.m., a Farm to You show takes place from 4-10 p.m., as do the Midway amusements, courtesy of Campbell Amusements, and the exhibits in the Community Hall.

On Friday, the 4-H Livestock Show kicks off at 9 a.m.

On Saturday, there is free lazer tag at the Agriplex, numerous activities at the Kid's Korner, a goat show in the green space west of the complex, a miniature horse show, a livestock show, a baby show and the mini prince and princess competition, among other attractions.

On Sunday, a church service takes place in the Community Hall at 9 a.m., two dog shows courtesy of 4 Paws Flying Entertainment, the Perth County Beef Club Achievement Day, the Show N' Shine car, truck, tractor and bike show, and the beloved egg drop, courtesy of Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma.

Ritsma, who has been part of the ag society and organizing body for many years, said the egg drop is a recent addition to the fair. Raised by crane, he drops an egg onto the crowd below who try to catch it unscrambled for a cash prize.

"We'll frequently hand out $5 for a great catch or maybe $5 for a not so great catch where you literally wear egg on your face," Ritsma laughed.

This year marks a significant milestone for the fair and the ag society, at 185 years. Neubrand told the Times it is an honour that they have had the opportunity to organize the event for such a long time.

"A lot of people make it happen over the years," Neubrand said. "People have come and gone, and we're always looking for new volunteers and helpers and ways for people to get involved. Fairs wouldn't go if it hadn't been for volunteers to keep it going."

To that end, the fair is still looking for volunteers. Anyone interested can contact the society at admin@stratfordfairgrounds.com.

The Stratford Fall Fair takes place Sept. 24-27. For the full schedule, visit https://tinyurl.com/bdjy8fbk, and for more information visit the ag society's website.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The 185th Stratford Fall Fair kicks off Sept. 24. Along with agricultural exhibits, shows, games and attractions, the fair is an important cultural anchor for the city. It predates the city and country, founded in the very first permanent structure of Stratford itself.

Honouring 185 Years of Fair Tradition!
Famme & Co.
Professional Corporation
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS
Three locations to serve you...
125 Ontario St., Stratford • 519-271-7581
25 Water St. N., St. Marys • 519-284-1030
210 Oxford St. E., London • 519-432-1663
www.famme.ca

Come for the rides, stay for the fun! Happy 185th Anniversary!
AL'S AUTO BODY
QUALITY COLLISION REPAIR SPECIALIST
Complete Collision & Refinishing
Repair to all Makes & Models • Frame Straightening
519-393-6164
4298 Perth Line 34, Stratford, ON

DISTINCTLY TEA
185 Years of Tradition, Community & Celebration!
18 York St., Stratford
519-271-9978
www.distinctlyteastratford.ca

Sutton FIRST CHOICE
Sutton Group First Choice Realty Ltd Brokerage
151 Downie St., Stratford, On
Liz Yundt, Realtor®
Celebrating the 185th Anniversary of the Stratford Fall Fair!
Cell: 519-272-9017 | lizyundt@sutton.com

A look back: 185 years of the Stratford Fall Fair

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

While today thousands of Stratford residents and visitors visit the annual Fall Fair for the rides and attractions, its history goes back deeper than one could ever guess. It predates Stratford as a city, as a town or village, and indeed Canada as a country.

In 1841, four prominent area citizens – John Linton, William Jackson, Alex McDonald and William Smith – started the Stratford Agricultural Society, according to Reflections: *A History of the Stratford Agricultural Society 1841-1991*, by local historian Dean Robinson. According to Robinson, the four founders invited area farmers, 17 of whom came, to a meeting at the Shakespeare Inn, the first permanent structure in Stratford that is located where Café Bouffon and Pazzo Pizzeria currently is.

It was in that timber building the society was formed and its first "exhibition" was planned for Oct. 14, 1842.

The fair opened at noon and had exhibits of farm animals and homemade items like woollen mittens and farm implements. There were 28 prize categories and the money totalled 20 pounds, five shillings ($45 Canadian dollars).

The ag society of the day and its fair continued to grow over time. In 1857, the society paid 200 pounds to the Canada Company for an acre of land that was to be a permanent fairground, located at the corner of Wellington Street and St. Patrick's Street – though those grounds did not last long.

By 1865 the fair had grown too large to be held there, bouncing around the city across the years.

In 1911, a committee decided on a 24-acre field near John Street and Britannia Street, which had a sale price between $3,500 and $4,000. This field would be home to the fall fair for many years, and residents and visitors can still see the stone entranceway today at the Britannia Street roundabout.

The Stratford Fall Fair was held on that site until 2011. The following year, it took place at the Stratford Rotary Complex and Agriplex off of McCarthy Drive, where it currently is today.

Although the fair changed throughout the years, adding exhibits this year, changing them the next, removing them entirely as the decades went on, the popular carnival attractions that are so prevalent and popular today were not so in its early days.

The ag society voted to include its first "midway" at the fall fair in 1923. It was not without its critics either, as many thought such games, amusement rides and entertainment had no place in the agricultural exhibitions and the operators "cast a seedy and immoral cloud" over the show. Nevertheless, the midway of the day proved popular enough to warrant its continuation and today the attractions of the fair are synonymous with the fair itself – without any seedy or immoral worries.

Additionally, the Stratford Fair Ambassador program is relatively new, given the fair's long history. It began in 1974 and those crowned were originally known as the "Queen of the Fair." The year's queen was primarily focused on promoting the fair. They would visit other fairs in the area, ride in parades, take an active roll in fair events and help organize the competition for the following year, among other duties.

Today, the role is much the same, though they are now known as ambassadors and both boys and girls may be named.

Fair ambassadors have the opportunity to partake in a regional competition, for title of District 8 Ambassador and get to represent fairs across Huron-Perth. As well as partake in the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE)'s Ambassador of the Fairs competition in Toronto, for title of CNE Ambassador and to represent the CNE at fairs across Ontario.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The old fairgrounds that many Stratford residents and visitors remember were not the first grounds that held the fall fair. They were purchased in 1911, but the ag society and fair began in 1841.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Stratford Fall Fair was — and still is — an opportunity to share agricultural practices and accomplishments. Originally held Oct. 14, 1842 by the Stratford Agricultural Society, which was founded only in 1841, its exhibitions varied over the near two centuries of its tenure in the Festival City, though animal husbandry has always been a staple. Pictured here are sheep gathered for an exhibit during the ag society's 100th year of operation, courtesy of *Reflections: A History of the Stratford Agricultural Society 1841-1991*, by local historian Dean Robinson.

185TH STRATFORD FALL FAIR

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Today, the fair is known for its amusements just as much as its agricultural shows, with many visitors and residents visiting its midway each year. It's hard to believe, given its popularity today, but there was a time when the midway was seen as too far afield for the fair.

Can seasonal patterns help inform fertilizer purchasing decisions?

LEIGH ANDERSON

Farm Credit Canada

As producers turn their attention to the 2027 growing season, buying fertilizer remains one of the most important – and uncertain – crop input decisions. The return of Chinese fertilizer exports has improved supply prospects for some nutrients, but ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the potential for disruptions to trade through the Strait of Hormuz continue to create upside price risk. At the same time, energy markets and global trade flows remain important drivers of fertilizer costs.

Against this backdrop, one question consistently comes up: How should producers approach fertilizer purchases in an increasingly uncertain market? In this report, we examine current fertilizer market conditions and explore how historical pricing patterns can help inform purchasing decisions amid ongoing uncertainty.

Fertilizer markets are sending mixed signals

Current market indicators highlight the diverging outlooks for nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers heading into 2027. Urea prices in the U.S. Gulf fertilizer market have retreated significantly from the highs reached earlier in 2026 and now sit roughly 15 per cent below pre-conflict levels, while DAP prices at New Orleans (NOLA) remain approximately 25 per cent above pre-conflict levels. The contrast highlights the different forces shaping nitrogen and phosphate markets. Unlike nitrogen and phosphate, potash prices have remained comparatively stable over the past year.

While Canadian fertilizer prices generally follow U.S. Gulf and NOLA benchmarks, transportation costs, exchange rates, regional supply-demand conditions and retailer inventories can influence the extent and timing of price changes. As a result, declines in benchmark prices do not necessarily translate into equivalent reductions in Canadian fertilizer prices.

Nitrogen markets easing, but risks remain

Part of the decline in urea prices reflects the seasonal slowdown that follows North American planting, a period often referred to as the summer lull in fertilizer markets. Prices have also softened due to the return of Chinese urea exports after several years of limited participation in global markets, improving product availability and easing pressure on nitrogen prices.

However, lower nitrogen prices should not be mistaken for lower risk. The Middle East remains a critical supplier of fertilizer products, feedstocks and energy, while the Strait of Hormuz remains a key global trade route. Any disruption to regional trade flows, shipping routes or natural gas markets could quickly reverse recent price declines.

Phosphate markets remain fundamentally tight

Phosphate markets continue to tell a different story. Elevated costs for sulphur, ammonia and natural gas – the primary inputs in phosphate production – have squeezed producer margins. So much so that in some cases, phosphate production has even been curtailed. With the Middle East accounting for nearly half of global sulphur trade, ongoing conflict in the region risks further increasing phosphate production costs and constraining supply.

Also supporting phosphate prices is the uncertainty surrounding Chinese exports. While lower U.S. tariffs on Moroccan phosphate may encourage some additional North American imports, they are unlikely to materially loosen global market conditions. Chinese export policy remains a key watch item heading into 2027.

Managing uncertainty through purchasing decisions

With fertilizer prices remaining difficult to predict, many farms are focusing on timing of purchases as a risk management tool. Most farms know their expected crop rotation and fertilizer requirements well before spring, and while prices remain uncertain, historical seasonal patterns can provide useful context for purchasing decisions.

Nitrogen exhibits the strongest seasonality of the major fertilizers. Over the past five years, Canadian retail prices have typically been the weakest during late summer and fall before strengthening into the spring application season, with average values peaking in April and May.

Phosphate displays a more moderate but still noticeable seasonal pattern. Prices for Canadian farmers tend to be relatively softer during the second half of the calendar year before gradually strengthening ahead of spring seeding.

In contrast, Canadian potash retail prices have exhibited relatively modest seasonal price fluctuations in recent years, giving producers greater flexibility to manage cash flow.

After summer fill programs, farmers are typically left weighing purchases between fall and spring application windows. Those with storage capacity may be able to separate purchase timing from application timing, while others may use supplier programs that allow fertilizer to be priced ahead of delivery.

Recent experience highlights why these decisions matter. Many producers viewed fertilizer prices as unattractive during summer fill programs last year, resulting in limited uptake. Fall fertilizer application was also weaker than normal, pushing a larger share of fertilizer demand into the winter and spring months.

Fertilizer purchasing decisions should also be considered alongside grain marketing plans. As discussed in our recent grains and oilseeds report, historical crop pricing patterns can help inform grain marketing decisions amid market uncertainty. Locking in favourable crop prices can help offset higher fertilizer costs and improve margin certainty heading into 2027.

Bottom line

Geopolitical events this past year have highlighted how quickly fertilizer market conditions can change. Historical pricing patterns suggest nitrogen and phosphate prices often strengthen into the spring application season, contrasting with potash prices which tend to show greater stability. While there is no guarantee markets will follow their typical seasonal path, the latter can be useful in guiding fertilizer purchasing decisions.

Many producers appear to be taking a wait-and-see approach as fertilizer markets move through the fall and into the new year. Given the uncertainty that remains, a phased purchasing strategy may be worth considering. While it will not always result in the lowest price, it can help balance opportunity, risk and flexibility.

Come visit McCully's Hill Farm and bring the whole family!

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

There's always something to do at McCully's Hill Farm, whatever time of year it is.

The farm runs a pancake brunch on Saturdays and Sundays in March where guests can enjoy pancakes, baked beans, sausage and McCully's maple syrup. McCully's will partner with organizations like the Optimist Club and Lions Club, as well as local schools, to raise money for charities like the Ronald McDonald House.

The maple tours also run in March where visitors can take a wagon ride to the top of the hill to meet farm animals, and then through the sugar bush and to the sugar shack to learn about maple syrup production.

"We meet a lot of people who remember making maple syrup with their grandparents or with their dads just boiling it on a small scale or some of them, on a large scale, but they're removed from it now so it's nice for them to come back and see it," said owner Dennis Aarts. "It's just a real Canadian thing. It's fun and unique so people really enjoy that."

During the summer, McCully's runs a day camp for children involving nature hikes, visits with farm animals and games.

Schools will also take tours during the spring and fall.

"School tours are a really good opportunity. We try to let the kids interact with the animals in a safe way. We have some animals that are used to being handled and stuff like that, so it's pretty exciting for them," Aarts said.

Throughout October on Saturdays and Sundays, McCully's runs the Harvest Festival which features a tractor-drawn wagon ride to see farm animals, the popular pumpkin catapult, a straw tent for children to play in, a corn maze and a horse-drawn wagon ride through the forest to see fall foliage.

"Usually, the forest is decorated Halloween-ish, so you could say it's a bit of a haunted forest," Aarts said.

Lucid Musings Photography runs Santa photos in McCully's greenhouse in November, with proceeds supporting the local food bank.

In addition to activities, McCully's runs a year-round store with items like homemade sweet and savory pies, tarts and cookies, preserves, soups, stews and chil-

CONTINUED TO PAGE B13

(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

McCully's Hill Farm located just outside of Stratford is a year-round stop for locals looking to reconnect with agriculture and have some good, old-fashioned seasonal fun.

From 2,000 bulbs to 40,000, Perth South flower farm continues to bloom

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

What began with 2,000 gladiolus bulbs and a couple acres of farmland near St. Pauls has blossomed into 40,000 flowers planted each year and a roadside business with customers who come from near and far to "pick their own rainbow."

For the past 19 years, Laura Hardeman Good, better known as the Crazy Glad Lady, has grown gladioli on her Perth South farm, selling the colourful cut flowers from her roadside stand and at the St. Marys Farmers' Market.

The business began when Good's youngest child was about 18 months old and she was preparing to return to work.

"We had just bought a new farm and I'm like, 'Do you think I could have a couple of acres? I'm going to try something,'" Good recalled.

The choice of flower came partly from the annual decoration service at nearby Avonbank Church. Good's mother-in-law would purchase flowers to decorate family graves, and Good wondered if she could grow them herself.

"I don't know that it ever turned out to be a savings for her," she joked.

What started with 2,000 bulbs grew year after year until Good reached the roughly 40,000 she plants today.

Those bulbs go into the ground over five or six plantings each spring, sometimes before her husband has planted his corn. This year, Good was planting in mittens.

(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Perth South's Crazy Glad Lady, Laura Hardeman Good, stands in front of her flower field where she planted 40,000 gladiolus bulbs earlier this year, which are now in full bloom.

Flowers generally begin appearing around mid-July and continue until frost, ideally carrying the season through Thanksgiving.

Good waits until each stem has three blossoms before cutting, giving customers a more colourful display than gladioli typically harvested earlier for wholesale markets.

At the height of the season, as many as 30 pails of flowers can line the roadside stand, with colours ranging from white and pink to deep reds and nearly black.

"When they're doing well, when they're in full flush, we have everything," Good said. "When you come, you get to pick your own rainbow. You get to take home what calls to your heart."

Growing that rainbow isn't without its challenges.

Tiny insects called thrips can burrow into the flowers and damage blossoms, while fusarium, a type of fungi, can kill plants after they emerge. Gladioli also require significant crop rotation, with Good saying she generally cannot plant them on the same ground again for about seven years.

That means finding new areas among the farm's wheat, corn and soybean rotation each season, preferably close enough to the road for passing motorists to enjoy the view.

And plenty stop.

Along with local customers, Good has welcomed people travelling through Perth County and even customers who made the drive from Toronto during the COVID-19 pandemic simply to buy flowers and bring some colour home.

"Just a chance to make somebody's day feel a little better, actually," Good said of what her flowers provide.

That idea inspired this year's "A Little Gladier World" campaign. Good offered four to six dozen flowers to people with ideas for sharing them with others, including residents of local nursing homes.

The inspiration came from a small rock someone once left at her stand bearing the message, "Today is a good day to be happy."

"I really like that they bring so much joy to people's lives," she said.

For Good, that connection is what has kept a small experiment growing for nearly two decades.

"It makes me really happy," she said. "I love it."

The Crazy Glad Lady sells gladioli seasonally from her roadside stand near St. Pauls and at the St. Marys Farmers' Market. Good can be reached at crazygladlady@gmail.com or 226-927-7963, and the Crazy Glad Lady can also be found on Instagram.

Come visit McCully's Hill Farm

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B12

lis, as well as seasonal produce and meats. For example, the store will sell fresh turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"We try to source everything as locally as we can, but of course you can't get local peaches and stuff like that, so same thing with our ingredients, we try to get things as locally sourced as we can," Aarts said.

The store also carries products from other businesses like Kintore Coffee Co., Sheldon's Berries, Barrie's Asparagus, and Heeman's Greenhouse in Thorndale. McCully's will also get peaches from Niagara and apples from Blanford-Blenheim.

"We've got a lot of good relationships with local places and I think that's important."

More information can be found online by visiting www.mccullys.ca.

100 ACRE FARM FOR SALE BY TENDER

23796 Valleyview Rd., Thorndale, Ontario

TENDER DEADLINE FOR OFFERS: OCTOBER 30, 2026, AT 1 PM

LAND

Consisting of Residential Lot 1 ½ acre (Principal Residence) 53 Acres workable cropland and with 41 acres systematically tiled and 12 acres with alternative draining ready to go. Soil type Bryanston Loam Soil. Non workable land 46 ½ acres consisting of 14 ½ acres bush and 31 acres of Thames River Valley land, and 1 acre of Thames River. Note, year 2007. Note, year 2007 as part of our Environmental Farm Plan (reforesting 20 acres of the above 31 acres). All acreage is approximate.

HOME FEATURE

1900 sq. foot (Main Floor) beautiful single story brick ranch home nicely landscaped, with attached single car garage (330 sq. ft), and attached 3 season sunroom, full basement – 1620 sq ft. and the furnace room 286 sq ft. All square feet are approximate. Driveway Centurian quad block, drilled well 215 ft. (excellent plentiful water). Septic tank and weeping bed, mature north side windbreak.

For further information and info package, and viewing of property for appointments please call:

GC Boyle Law Firm (519)284-2112
Email: gwendolen.boyle@gcboyle.ca

Be advised that the highest unconditional offer need not necessarily be accepted by the Sellers.

Oversupply and trade issues drive down dry bean prices for Ontario growers

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

The 2026 Ontario Bean Growers annual general meeting was held in Stratford earlier this year, where dry bean growers from across the region came together to discuss growing concerns around exports, particularly trade, transportation and domestic demand.

Alvin Klassen of Dry Bean World outlined current challenges as Canada continues to navigate overproduction of black beans and ongoing tariff changes that are limiting trade and creating uncertainty for growers.

"In the last five years, we've experienced several severe ups and downs in commercial markets related to supply and demand, with the influence of producer and dealer pricing," said Klassen.

Despite steady global demand for dry beans, many growers are finding it harder to turn a profit.

Prices across North America have dropped sharply in recent years – in some cases by nearly half – while input costs such as fuel and fertilizer have remained high.

"Throughout North America, we are now sitting where bean prices are half of what they were three years ago, and the cost of production hasn't gone down at all," said Klassen. "In fact, seed pricing hasn't gone down, and it's making it very difficult to sustain production."

The issue, Klassen said, comes down to supply and demand. A strong harvest has left a surplus of beans in storage – known in the industry as "carryover" – giving buyers less incentive to pay higher prices.

At the same time, export challenges and limited processing options in Canada are making it harder for farmers to move their crops efficiently, adding further pressure to an already strained market.

Jeff English of Pulse Canada said the organization is working to increase domestic consumption through its "Love Canadian Beans" campaign, which aims to raise awareness that many beans sold in stores are grown in Canada and encourage more people to include them in their diets.

"It's not about telling people how to eat but showing them how beans can be incorporated into everyday foods we already know and love," said English. "It's about giving some familiarity to supporting what we see as a great, sustainably grown Canadian crop."

English added advancements in bean-processing technology could also help grow the domestic market.

"Now that we have companies extracting proteins and starches from pulse crops, we should have an opportunity to put more protein into different foods – not necessarily calling them beans, but using them as a high-protein ingredient," he said.

(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

A fresh mixed bean salad is one of the many ways Canadians are encouraged to get more beans in their diet during the Ontario Bean Growers Eat More Beans campaign.

Bill Rosenberg, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, also addressed growers, highlighting the significant role Ontario's bean producers play in the province's agri-food sector.

"Our agri-food sector now generates around $52 billion in annual GDP," he said. "This is why Ontario is known around the world for safe, nutritious and delicious food.

"Eighty to 90 per cent of the beans grown here in Ontario are exported around the world, and that is something to be proud of," he added.

Overall, the message to growers was clear: while global demand is growing, the industry must navigate trade instability, supply chain risks and the need to build stronger domestic markets to remain competitive.

Ontario soybean farmers face price pressure as China shifts buying and Brazil ramps up production

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

Ontario soybean farmers are watching global trade negotiations closely as uncertainty around exports – particularly to China – adds to price pressure in a market already facing strong global crop supplies.

Brazil is expected to have a record soybean harvest in 2026, a development that analysts say will weigh on prices worldwide.

"There's forecast to be record production in Brazil, and when there's strong production, that has downward pressure on price," said Brian Innes, executive director of Soy Canada. "That's the first thing to watch for prices in 2026. The second is what happens globally with geopolitics and tariffs."

Innes said changes in trade relations between major economies – especially the United States and China – can have a direct impact on the prices Canadian farmers receive.

"Due to the Trump administration, tariffs on soybeans have changed," he said. "One thing to watch for in 2026 is how the situation between the U.S. and China evolves, and how the situation between Canada and China evolves. That can have an impact on price if tariffs change."

More than 70 per cent of Ontario's soybean crop is exported, with prices shaped by global demand, particularly from China. While China historically sourced much of its soybeans from the United States, it is increasingly turning to Brazil due to generally lower prices.

The Canadian and U.S. soybean markets are also closely linked through cross-border trade and processing, which could impact prices for Canadian farmers.

"Products flow back and forth across the border," said Innes. "For example, Ontario soybeans are shipped to Michigan, processed into soybean meal and then shipped back into Ontario. Soybean meal and soybean oil trade back and forth across the border, and that's why prices are very linked."

Soybeans are priced on global benchmarks – particularly U.S. futures markets – meaning Canadian prices move in step with broader world trends.

"The price that Ontario farmers see is based on what conditions Canada faces when exporting to the world, including China," said Innes. "In the past, the difference between Michigan and Ontario was largely tied to exchange rates, but now, with global trade disruptions, Canada and the U.S. face different tariffs and different market conditions."

Despite growing competition from lower-cost producers, Innes said Ontario remains well positioned as a high-quality soybean supplier.

Ontario is a global leader in identity-preserved and food-grade soybeans, a niche market that allows farmers to compete on quality rather than volume alone.

"We're living in a time of unprecedented global uncertainty, and if market conditions change for Canadian soybean exports, that will have an impact on price," said Innes. "But Canadian soybeans have been flowing under strong export conditions for some time, and that has meant strong demand for Ontario soybeans."

Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers welcome new strategy aimed at helping farmers

AMANDA NELSON

Times Reporter

With the ever-changing climate for food producers across Canada, including trade shifts, global conflicts and climate change, prices on Ontario produce continue to rise. In response, the federal government has launched Canada's first-ever National Food Security Strategy.

"Too much of what we grow is processed elsewhere, and too many Canadians still rely on imported food at higher prices," said Prime Minister Mark Carney. "Canadian farmers deserve more options to sell their produce, and Canadians deserve more options for where to buy their food."

The National Food Security Strategy includes a $3.2-billion investment over 10 years with a strong focus on strengthening Canada's food system through a mix of production, infrastructure and regulatory changes aimed at reducing reliance on imported produce, especially in winter.

"This is a significant and forward-looking investment that will directly benefit greenhouse growers across Ontario and Canada," said Richard Lee, executive director of Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG).

"The strategy acknowledges the essential role our sector plays in producing fresh, nutritious, safe vegetables year-round, while reinforcing Canada's position as a global leader in greenhouse vegetable production, reducing reliance on imports and strengthening supply chains."

A specific $750-million investment in controlled-environment agriculture (CEA), which includes greenhouses and indoor growing systems, aims to help growers build or expand greenhouse facilities, adopt new growing technologies and produce more fruits and vegetables year-round.

The strategy also aims to support more food processing closer to where crops are grown, meaning infrastructure to turn raw produce into packaged goods locally, reduced transportation costs and reducing spoilage and emissions from long-distance shipping.

The plan also hopes to reduce bottlenecks from farm to processor to retailer and help independent growers and vendors access markets more easily by supporting infrastructure for storage, transport and distribution.

One key point outlined in the plan notes the government is actively looking to cut regulatory barriers, or "red tape," aiming to help speed up approval for fertilizers and crop protection tools, ease the movement of goods across provincial borders and streamline agricultural regulations throughout the country.

"Through this made-in-Canada approach, we will process more of what our farmers grow here at home, creating jobs, driving economic growth and strengthening Canada's food self-sufficiency," said Heath MacDonald, Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food.

"By reducing red tape and helping innovative businesses get projects off the ground faster, we will unlock new opportunities for farmers, food processors and entrepreneurs across the agri-food sector."

OGVG says this support will help stabilize food prices in grocery stores, expand producers' market access and reduce the dominance of a few large retailers across the province.

"With the support outlined in this strategy, the greenhouse sector will be able to grow more food more efficiently, and at a lower cost," added Lee. "This benefits not only our farmers, but also Canadian families who are looking for affordable, locally grown food options year-round."

OGVG is a not-for-profit organization representing greenhouse farmers who grow tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers in Ontario. With a commitment to innovation, sustainability and food safety, OGVG members supply fresh, high-quality vegetables to Canadians year-round.

(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

The federal government has launched Canada's first-ever National Food Security Strategy, which includes a $3.2-billion investment and is aimed at strengthening Canada's food system through a mix of production, infrastructure and regulatory changes.

Usborne & Hibbert
Mutual Fire Insurance Company
Celebrating 150 Years

150 Years of Strength, Stability, and Peace of Mind.

At Usborne & Hibbert Mutual Insurance, we have been insuring farms and protecting our neighbours since 1876. We have 150 years of experience insuring small family farms, large commercial farms, and everything in between. When it comes to providing the protection farmers need, no one does it better.

Contact us today and discover the U & H difference!

usborneandhibbert.ca 1-800-422-3996

HOME | AUTO | COMMERCIAL | FARM

M. JONES LIMITED
Vacuum Pumping
Septic Tanks, Holding Tanks & Catch Basins

519-461-0956 mjones.ltd@outlook.com

WE'RE HERE
when you need us.

... when harvest feels long.
... when plans change.
... after a tough day.
... through every season.

FARMER WELLNESS INITIATIVE | Agriculture Wellness Ontario

1-866-267-6255
FarmerWellnessInitiative.ca

Free ag-informed mental health counselling for Ontario's farming community.
— in English, French, Spanish and Tagalog —
— intake available 24/7 —

Get started today
Scan the bar code to add the line to your contacts

No cost
The Farmer Wellness Initiative is 100% free for Ontario farmers, farm workers and their families with unlimited access

Available any time, anywhere
Intake and urgent support are available 24/7/365 from home, the tractor, the barn or the field

1 **Call** and answer a few quick intake questions

2 **Connect** with your counsellor for an appointment within a week

3 **Continue** counselling for as long as you need support

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership | Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario | Ontario | Canada