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Cleanfix North America breaks ground on major expansion in Stratford

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Reporter

The German company Cleanfix is expanding its North American location in Stratford, with construction expected to begin this November. The new 10,000-square-foot addition will increase production of reversible cooling fans – self-cleaning fan systems used in industrial and heavy-duty machinery across North America.

Cleanfix's fans are built for industries such as construction, municipal works, agriculture, forestry and waste and recycling, helping improve efficiency by automatically clearing dust and debris from radiators.

Once complete, the expanded facility will enable greater productivity, improved workflow and the integration of new manufacturing technologies. The project is also expected to create additional local jobs and strengthen the company's long-term presence in Stratford.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 5



Like many children, Bruno and Stella Sebben are getting ready for Halloween next week – and it shows in their front garden. Residents can spy their spooky decorations as they travel around Stratford, along with other displays across the city. (CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

Connection Centre will host overnight warming centre for homeless

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

After a unanimous decision at a special Stratford city council meeting on Oct. 20, the Stratford Connection Centre will be home to a “warming centre” for the city's unsheltered this winter.

“Our idea here is to find a gap solution and get us to that transition piece of what we call permanent supportive housing,” Mayor Martin Ritsma said about the initiative. “... And so that's the idea, the idea of spending as

little money as possible on shelter and warming centres, and putting that money towards (supportive housing) – and building a case with our province.

“I had conversation with (Perth-Wellington MPP) Matthew Rae saying, if this goes through, we need to have further conversation,” Ritsma continued.

The warming centre was first discussed in council chambers on Sept. 8, when Coun. Geza Wordofa put forward a motion to have a temporary shelter at the Stratford Rotary Complex this winter. Although he was the only

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Connection Centre will host overnight warming centre for homeless, hopefully by December

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

councillor to be in favour, many councillors expressed interest in the warming centre idea members of the Stratford Council of Churches had suggested, telling council that work has already been undertaken to start centres, engaging with stakeholders and investigating possible options.

This recently passed warming centre is the culmination of that work and has a few marked differences to a shelter.

The biggest difference is a lack of beds. As Catherine Hardman, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Huron Perth, said, there are a few reasons for that.

"If we have cots and sleeping arrangements it adds a whole other element around insurance, it changes the dynamic around how many people we can actually have, etcetera," Hardman said. "So right now, we can probably have 30 or 40 people, if people are sitting in tables and those sorts of things."

"We know that people may fall asleep and that's fine. And like I said, we do have couches and different things like that ... If that happens, it just happens, but it changes the dynamic if you put actual beds in there."

After the meeting, when asked if that technical difference between a warming centre and a shelter (being beds or no beds) might be too fine a line, Hardman said no.

"I don't think so, no," Hardman told the Times. "We have people who may sleep



St. Paul's Church will be operating an overnight warming centre this winter, an extension of the Stratford Connection Centre that also runs out of the Douro Street church. Although the centre isn't a traditional shelter with beds, it will have couches, warm meals and a place to stay. (CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

(at the Connection Centre) now, right? We're not so worried about that."

The warming centre will be operated out of the Connection Centre, which itself runs out of St. Paul's Church on Douro Street. It will have couches, tables and chairs, as well as refreshments and warm meals available. The service will largely be the same, other than the hours of

operation and staff. While the Connection Centre has other service providers always operating out of it, the warming centre will only have two CMHA Perth Huron social service workers and a private security guard. The Connection Centre is open noon to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday, and the warming centre will run seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

and then 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Doors will always be open, no matter the weather, and is expected to cost the city, which will foot the bill, \$350,000. The unbudgeted funds will be taken from the recent HST audit, as well as the city's Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve.

In addition to the new centre, council voted in favour of continuing to run its emergency accommodations program, which provides hotel and motel rooms for the unhoused. As Coun. Jo-Dee Burbach said during the meeting, while Stratford doesn't have a traditional brick-and-mortar shelter, the emergency accommodations program provides shelter for the homeless, just in a different method. The program costs \$300,000 for the six-month November to April period it operates.

Costing for the warming centre was based on the same six-month period, though Hardman and staff were doubtful that it would be able to start up so quickly. CMHA Perth Huron will need to set up the space and find qualified people to operate it.

"If we start hiring and get them trained, my hope would definitely be by mid-December," Hardman said.

Coun. Mark Hunter voted in favour of the service, though noted that even though this is one-time funding, the city should prepare for the future.

"As much as I love this to be a one-year-only program, I don't think the need for this is going away after this winter," Hunter said.

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Editorial

Size matters in the bedroom



GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

I could always sleep in any bed; it didn't matter where, when or on what I was sleeping, catching just the right number of Z's every night was never a problem of mine.

From soft mattresses to those that feel more like a sheet of plywood, and couches that are either too narrow or too short to a sleeping bag on the floor, I've

always found my way to a deep, restful sleep. Or at least that was the case until Julia and I decided it was finally time to upgrade to a king bed.

After more than a year sleeping in a queen bed with a dog that likes to carve out a space in between us and a cat that spends the night perched up near my head, and having moved into a home that has the space upstairs for the most luxurious of sleeping accommodations, we felt we deserved a little more space.

After purchasing our home and planning out our kitchen renovations, we knew we couldn't spend a lot on our dozy dream. So, we bought a modestly priced king bed on Amazon and one of those mattresses that's delivered to your door vacuum-sealed in plastic. To make that mattress a little more comfortable, we splurged and

bought a nice, memory foam mattress topper and a couple of those osteo-cervical pillows that help with neck and shoulder pain.

And boy, did it ever make a difference. At first, being accustomed to lesser mattresses for most of my life, I thought it was too much. Why should I need all this space and comfort? But then, within maybe a week, I grew to love our new bed, so much so that sleeping anywhere else began to seem unreasonable and what once might have been an overnight trip became much-longer, late-night drives just so I could make it home to my own bed.

I can't count how many times someone has invited me to stay overnight, and I've come up with an excuse that allowed me to come to home to my big, beautiful bed instead.

It's actually becoming a bit of a problem.

Recently, our new puppy, Piper, decided she would start going to the bathroom in our bed. The first time it happened, we hadn't yet purchased a second set of king-sized sheets, so we figured we'd just sleep in the old queen bed – which also has a mattress topper I once considered comfortable – in the spare room and clean the sheets in the morning.

Big mistake. Neither Julia or I slept more than 20 minutes at a time that night. Toss and turn for half an hour, fall asleep for 20 minutes, wake up in pain or numbness, roll over, rinse and repeat. It was so bad, Julia even opted to trade the bed for our couch, which tells you everything you need to know.

You can rest assured we ordered a second set of sheets for

our king bed the very next day.

And then, just this past weekend, Julia and I stayed at my mom's for a belated Thanksgiving celebration. While my sister slept upstairs on the pullout, we opted to take the double bed in the basement (I actually thought it would be more comfortable).

Of course, it wasn't. All night, it was the same story. We rolled into one another, accidentally kicked the dog, nearly fell off the edge of the bed and woke up with sore backs, hips and necks. Three days later, I still feel sleep-deprived from that bed.

And it's not just the size of the bed that matters to me anymore. We've slept in king-sized beds where the mattress was either too firm or too soft. I guess I'm starting to understand how Goldilocks felt; the only bed that's just right is the one we have right here at home.

Letter to the Editor: Let's be better scientists

In 1863, Thomas Huxley wrote a wonderful, classic, short essay entitled "We are all scientists." But there is, like everything, a spectrum of scientists, from good to bad. Some of us are quite good, while others, (yes, I'm thinking of someone in the White House), are quite bad. Yes, most scientists agree that bleach kills germs. Only very bad scientists would suggest drinking it. Hence, the problems in political discourse today, since most politicians seem to be very poor scientists. I'd recommend remedial science for all politicians, as part of their duties.

Even the most fundamental ideas today are questioned by

those lacking a sufficient background in scientific thinking (which we all have, it just needs to be nourished). Take the hypothesis, "Is the earth flat (or round)?" Ask many people today, and they'll mumble something about an explorer, etc., that they were told in school. But in fact, Eratosthenes, in the 2nd century B.C., no electricity, computers, etc., carried out a beautiful experiment using nothing more than observation, measurement and some math, and

knew the earth was round. And not only that, calculated its size. Anyone can replicate this experiment and follow his logic (have you?). But for thousands of years, this was ignored, and "the earth is flat" became the common mantra.

Nourish your science, and those scientists around you, to become better scientists.

Ed Montgomery

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Cleanfix North America breaks ground on major expansion in Stratford

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

A groundbreaking ceremony was held at Cleanfix North America's site on Wright Boulevard, attended by company representatives and several dignitaries, including Benjamin Haegele, CEO of Hägele GmbH (Cleanfix), Matthias Lüttenberg, ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Canada, Martin Ritsma, mayor of Stratford, John Nater, MP for Perth-Wellington, Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington and Yvonne Denz, president and CEO

of the Canadian German Chamber of Industry and Commerce Inc.

Haegele said he chose to establish Cleanfix in Canada because of its political stability, resources and community support.

"It's great to have our company in Stratford, Ont.," said Haegele. "Looking back on the last 15 years, it was the absolute right decision that we started on 90 Linton Avenue, and now we are continuing here on 250 Wright Blvd. to expand our facility."

He added that Stratford's unique European feel – with its cuisine, culture, industry and sports clubs – made it an ideal fit for the German-founded company.

Haegele also thanked Cleanfix employees for their dedication and contribution to the company's success.

"Everyone within the company is an integral part of the business and the community," he said. "Today is a day where we make progress, not just for our company, but our community, too."

Ritsma congratulated Cleanfix on its upcoming expansion and noted the importance of German investment in the Canadian economy.

"The relationship we have with Germany here in Stratford is exceptional," Ritsma said.

Ritsma added that Germany ranks fourth globally among all countries investing in Canada, underscoring the strong economic ties that have supported businesses like Cleanfix in establishing a successful presence in the region.



Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma shakes hands with Cleanfix CEO Benjamin Haegele after receiving a ceremonial spade to officially break ground on the company's new expansion on Wright Boulevard.



Local and international representatives gather to break ground on Cleanfix North America's new expansion in Stratford. Pictured from left are Jan Boettcher, Joani Gerber, John Nater, Matthew Rae, Matthias Lüttenberg, Benjamin Haegele, Martin Ritsma, Yvonne Denz, Steffen Erhardt, Brad Reibling and Ida Kleinsasse. (AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

United Way survey reveals financial anxiety impacts more than half of Canadians

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

More than half of Canadians feel financial anxiety, with some having sleep issues and family conflict because of it, according to the United Way Centraide's Financial Anxiety Survey results.

United Way Centraide's Financial Anxiety Survey, in partnership with Léger, revealed that at 55 per cent, more than half of Canadians have anxiety about their finances. About 41 per cent feel physical symptoms of stress when discussing money and 42 per cent said that if they were to lose their main income source, they could only cover basic expenses for a month.

Over one third of respondents, at 35 per cent, are having sleep issues tied to financial worries,



According to the Financial Anxiety Survey run by United Way Centraide and Léger, 55 per cent of Canadians face financial anxiety with some reporting trouble sleeping, conflict and tension in their families, and struggling to concentrate at school or work because of it. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

32 per cent face family tension or conflict, and three out of 10 struggle to concentrate at work or school. Those in lower-income households are feeling more stress amid finances, with

47 per cent losing sleep and 67 per cent facing financial anxiety.

"Financial anxiety is a signal. It tells us something is very wrong. Increasingly, we have

a have and have-not society," Ryan Erb, executive director of United Way Perth-Huron, said to the Times. "The middle class is disappearing, and we must find a way to redistribute wealth in Canada."

Locally, residents in Huron and Perth counties are concerned about finances.

"Far too many of us, right here in Perth-Huron, live without adequate incomes and the resulting stress is real," Erb said. "Almost half of our workers live on less than a living wage, \$23.05 or \$41,405 annually."

Erb acknowledged that income is not keeping up with the increasing cost of living.

"Income is not keeping pace with the cost of living. We all know too well the costs at the grocery store," he said. "How about housing? In recent years,

the cost to rent has nearly doubled while incomes have only increased by about 20 per cent. This makes us all anxious."

United Way Perth-Huron, as well as other chapters, offer a variety of services to help such as the Urgent Needs Fund for those facing financial challenges and mental health counselling. The organization also advocates to eliminate financial barriers.

"We calculate the living wage and encourage employers to pay them," Erb said. "We support income tax clinics for our most vulnerable, ensuring more receive the rebates they are entitled to."

To learn more about supporting the United Way Perth-Huron online, including donating or volunteering, visit <https://perthhuron.unitedway.ca>.

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Downtown Dollars return to support Stratford's local businesses

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Times Reporter

The Downtown Stratford Business Improvement Area (BIA) is encouraging residents to purchase Downtown Dollars this season to help promote and support local shopping in the city's core.

Sold in denominations of \$5, \$10 and \$20, Downtown Dollars make a great gift for teachers, coaches, colleagues and those hard-to-buy-for friends and family members, while offering a more personal touch than cash.

"They're a great gift for just about everyone," said Jamie Pritchard, BIA general manager. "They make great holiday gifts from employers to teachers, or just for the person who is always hard to buy for."

Similar to gift cards, Downtown Dollars never expire but can also be used at most downtown businesses, including

restaurants, cafés and clothing stores. Excluded businesses include cannabis and vape shops, as well as the LCBO.

"I'm at an age where I don't need any more knick-knacks," Pritchard said. "My wife and I tell our kids to get us Downtown Dollars because we're always here. We can go to a restaurant together, stop in at one of the local shops, get a treat from one of our amazing chocolatiers, have a cup of coffee and a scone at a café – there are just so many options to choose from."

Downtown Dollars are a thoughtful way to give loved ones a local experience, Pritchard added.

To purchase Downtown Dollars, call Destination Stratford at 519-271-5140 or visit in person at 47 Downie St. Cash, credit and debit are accepted.

For large or corporate orders, please arrange at least 48 hours in advance by emailing info@downtownstratford.ca



Kim Griffiths, membership and animation liaison with the Stratford Business Improvement Area, holds Downtown Dollars, which are now available for purchase to support local businesses this season. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Missing person located after nearly a week

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

The Stratford Police Service has located Brandon Taylor after nearly a week of public searching.

On Oct. 16, police issued a notice asking the public to help locate Stratford resident Brandon Taylor, after they issued a warrant for his arrest over an alleged incident of intimate partner violence. Police subsequently updated their search on Oct. 19, noting that there were concerns for his wellbeing

and he was deemed a missing person.

"Although an arrest warrant for Brandon Taylor exists, the Stratford Police Service would like to emphasize that his wellbeing is of paramount importance," police stated in a media release.

The next day, police shared that Taylor was located safely. He was arrested, charged with one count of assault. Police also ensured that Brandon was connected with the appropriate community agencies to ensure his wellbeing was cared for.

Veterans crosswalk to be installed on York Street in time for Remembrance Day – thanks to advocacy of dedicated locals

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Many Stratford residents have wondered why the Festival City does not have a memorial veterans crosswalk, a custom-painted crosswalk honouring the lives and dedication of this country's veterans, but it was Linda Scammell and Jodi Nakluski who decided to do something about it.

Nakluski, Scammell's daughter, explained that their family has a long history with the armed forces. Both Scammell's parents were veterans, as were her uncles. Additionally, Scammell has been a member of the Army Navy Air Force Unit 261 for 39 years, serving on its executive board and serving lunches and dinners out of its Lorne Avenue location for much of that time.

One day, Scammell had seen a post on Facebook about a veterans crosswalk in another community, which got her daughter thinking.

"Why can't Stratford have one?" Nakluski told the Times. "...You see very similar crosswalks everywhere. And I said to mom, 'Well, why don't we find a local artist that will design something?'"

Scammell and Nakluski, on behalf of the Army Navy, reached out to Nancy Groenestege, a prominent local artist, who worked with her network to design a crosswalk befitting of Stratford's legacy. At first they considered a stock crosswalk piece, but Scammell and Nakluski wanted something that would stand out and reflect this region's storied past. They wanted the Perth Regiment symbol incorporated in the design, though if it is to be maintained year after year such a complicated design wouldn't be feasible.



Stratford will be getting a memorial veterans crosswalk this year in time for Remembrance Day – and residents have the Army Navy Air Force Unit 261, residents Linda Scammell, Jodi Nakluski, Nancy Groenestege and City of Stratford staff to thank for it. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Additionally, there were other considerations to work through, as Groenestege explained.

"You want everybody to feel content about it," Groenestege said. "You don't want somebody feeling like, 'I really don't feel comfortable walking on the Canadian Flag' or 'I don't feel comfortable walking on poppies, right?'"

"In the beginning, I was just doing a bunch of rough thumbnails, sketching some ideas out, and then I started watching some old videos online of actual footage of the war – and then took some screenshots of it. I captured one of these three soldiers that were coming out of the ground, out of a dugout somewhere, and then I just worked the sketch off of those."

In addition to the three soldiers, the finalized design displays planes flying overhead and a field of red leaves, reminiscent of the Canadian icon though dif-

ferent enough that pedestrians shouldn't feel bad about treading on them. Groenestege explained that they decided to design the piece so that the best view is from the street, though made sure that at whatever angle the image would be clear and noticeable – and that the crosswalk can still function safely.

"The city, they were all really good about it," Groenestege said. "They were friendly about it. Nobody was in any way negative about anything. So it's just wonderful."

On Oct. 14, Stratford city council approved the installation at the infrastructure, transportation and safety committee meeting. The crosswalk will be painted close to Remembrance Day, so that it is fresh for this year's ceremonies at the Cenotaph, at the York Street and Veterans Drive crossing. The location was picked due to its proximity to the

war memorial and for when the Remembrance Day ceremonies occur, though both Scammell and Nakluski clarified that it will be a permanent, year-round fixture that will be maintained regularly.

Since Groenestege is fabricating the stencils and donating them to the city free of charge, the annual costs to upkeep are negligible. Scammell and Nakluski estimated that this year the only cost is \$300 for the paint, and that the Army Navy will supply the paint itself this year.

As of press time, the final design has not been painted yet – though there are many people eagerly waiting for when it is.

"There's a lot of people that are excited, that want to be there when we paint it," Nakluski said. "I'm sure when it gets done that day, there'll be a lot of people just sitting there."

Stratford Public Library honours Ontario Public Libraries Week with chances to interact with its space

EMILY STEWART

Times Correspondent

The Stratford Public Library is celebrating Ontario Public Libraries Week, which started Oct. 19, with interactive activities for patrons until Oct. 25.

The library's board members offered free coffee on the weekdays. Any library activity from renewing a library card, to checking out a book, to signing up for a library card, will give patrons a chance to enter in a draw for prizes. There's a scavenger hunt and social media activities.

The presentation "A House Built Up by Books: Stratford's John Davis Barnett and his Extraordinary Library" by Stratford Perth Archives' Betty Jo Belton took place on Oct. 22 and a Crafting with Books ses-

sion takes place on Oct. 24, both events after press time.

"The library is all about community and building communities, so interacting with the library, with its space is a very important component of what the library offers the community and it's just a fun way to learn about the library in a new way," said library CEO Krista Robinson.

One of the prizes in the draw includes the library tea blend made by local tea shop Distinctly Tea, which can also be purchased at the shop on 18 York St.

"It's a really nice blend that's designed to be nicely enjoyed when you are reading a book," Robinson said.

Dan Needles, author of this year's Perth County Reads Book Finding Larkspur: A Return to Village Life, came to visit the

Stratford Public Library on Oct. 22 and will be at the Perth East Recreation Complex on Oct. 24 at 2 p.m. in Milverton, followed by St. Marys' Pyramid Recreation Centre on Oct. 25 at 2 p.m.

After Ontario Public Libraries Week, the Stratford Public Library will host the "AI and You: A Beginner's Guide to AI, Digital Citizenship and Safety Online" on Oct. 30 from 6- 7 p.m. The event aims to teach patrons how to "break the fake" and beware of scams, as well as mis- and disinformation.

"With AI changing how we find and share information, libraries are extremely important more than ever and librarians, that's what we do. We help you figure out what's real and what matters and what's reliable information and there's skills that a computer just doesn't really have," Robinson said. "In

a world where anyone can publish anything, libraries teach us how to think critically and ask the right questions. That's something we could all use a little bit more of these days."

Robinson said that along with supporting libraries during Ontario Public Libraries Week, patrons can support them year-round by using the library and its services.

"We have free resources for people in all stages of their life from babies to seniors and there's books, programs, just general services to help people fulfill their life goals and there's also opportunities to give back by donating financially, donating their time through volunteering and just supporting us in the community," she said.

More information about the Stratford Public Library's programming is available online by visiting <https://splibrary.ca>.



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CiB delegates get a taste of Stratford



The Communities in Bloom national symposium was hosted in Stratford from Oct. 16-18, with delegates from across the world coming to see the Festival City. On the Oct. 17 walking tour, seen in the above pictures, visitors got a tour of Stratford’s “beautifully preserved architecture, vibrant gardens and rich history.” (CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)



Travellers may have spotted this 1930s coupé on the road between Stratford and Shakespeare, full of tourists that didn’t quite make it to a production at the Festival Theatre this year. The home owners said “they ran out of gas!” (GARY WEST PHOTO)

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Weekend Quiz

By Jake Grant

1. What does the abbreviation USB stand for?
2. Mace is the outer covering of which common spice?
3. Which writer adapted his own book for the 1989 film *Pet Sematary*?
4. The study of human behaviour and mind is called what?
5. What kind of animal is raised in a warren?
6. Who released the 1988 album *Look Sharp!*?
7. What is the most frequent number in the bible?
8. Which element has the atomic number 1?
9. What K-Pop group sings “Dynamite” and “Butter”?
10. The Gulf War involved the liberation of what country?

This week’s answers are found on pg. 27

2025 Ontario Pork Congress had outstanding financial year, as reported at annual meeting in Stratford

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

When the country went through the COVID-19 pandemic, many shows and organized events in the area had to shut-down and adapt – like the Ontario Pork Congress (OPC), which just had its annual meeting in Stratford on Oct. 20.

The OPC put on a virtual show, as many shows did, but it was found out not to be successful and financially it was devastating.

But even though difficult times were felt, the volunteer directors and OPC members persevered, and after Monday night's annual meeting, there was good news to hear.

President Kirk McLean was very pleased with the success financially of this year's 2025 Pork Congress. The accounting



The newly elected executive for this year's Ontario Pork Congress (OPC) includes Kirk McLean, Mandy Ropp, Drew DeBruyn, Abel Lopez, Joe Dwyer, Henry Groenesteghe, Victoria Stewart, Doug Ahrens, Dave Ross and Matt Aarts, as pictured at the OPC's annual meeting on Oct. 20. (GARY WEST PHOTO)

itors remained approximately the same but registrations for the two-day show were up.

With this amount of growth, year over year, the accountant also said the OPC is in a good financial position for future shows.

There was also good news to report from this year's Hog Jog that takes place on the first afternoon of the congress.

The Stratford House of Blessing reported they received \$49,000 from the Hog Jog committee and was truly thankful for such a large amount.

There continues to be increasing numbers needing the House of Blessing's services, each month serving 1,600 individuals in Stratford and outlying areas. The Hog Jog money will help with all their programs and updates to their equipment going forward into the future.

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Shakespeare's Carter Kuchma, a 7-year-old fighting to beat cancer

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

In August, the Kuchma family of Shakespeare had a diagnosis of their 7-year-old son Carter that parents hope they never have to hear and endure.

Carter, according to his parents Tyler and Diane, began feeling noticeably sick, on Aug. 1 of this year, noticing he was very lethargic with a pale complexion, but no other indications, of what might be wrong.

He then had a blood test, that revealed he had Type "B" Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (blood cancer).

Things had to move very quickly from his day-one diagnosis on Aug. 8, and was admitted that same day into London Health Sciences Centre, and stayed till Aug. 20, enduring cancer treatments.

Tyler and Diane said there were many long nights for Carter (with them by his side), in hospital, with surgeries, numerous blood transfusions and chemotherapy.

They said the "induction" month, was very hard on their son, with daily steroids causing mood swings, appetite loss and body changes.

"The medications kept him from walking for three weeks at the start," Tyler said about the process. "Once the initial 12-day hospital stay was over, there have been multiple times per week, travelling to London, for chemo and blood transfusions."

In an interview with the Times, Diane added that Carter is in consolidation and can now walk again.

"He is taking chemo treatments daily, with spinal in-

jections once per week."

His parents both say that Carter misses being a kid, playing with his friends and going to school, as he had been very involved in fastpitch at the Shakespeare ball park, since his family had moved to the village from Baden four years ago.

Carter, who has two sisters, Natalie, 11, and Hailey, 9, loves playing baseball, soccer, video games, playing with friends, going to the movies and loves eating out at restaurants.

A smiling Carter said Kelsey's is still his favourite.

He's also been involved in fishing and of course, playing with their very friendly family dog, Cali (one of his very best friends, who continues to comfort him through the rough days).

He has also been very busy in his young life, with rollerblading, camping, Lego, Minecraft, and says that math is still his favourite subject in school.

He can't wait to get back with his teachers and friends, and back to a regular daily routine again.

Diane and Tyler say they are so glad to have friends like Tavistock's Julie and Kyle Wynette, who's son Nash also went through what Carter is going through now.

Today Nash is very healthy and back playing sports and having a good time with his brother and friends again.

The Kuchmas continue to be very grateful for the support and caring from the Wynette family, along with many others, who might have been on this journey in the past themselves.



The Kuchma family of Shakespeare are cheering on seven-year-old son Carter after he was diagnosed with leukemia this summer. Carter told the Times he can't wait to get back with his teachers and friends, and back to a regular daily routine again. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

FINGERPRINTS

My father was a handyman,
one of those guys
who could build a ladder
to almost anywhere,
diagnose an engine's illness
through the unfailing stethoscope
of intuition,
produce from thin air
the metallic snap
of a measuring tape
to calculate within the most
minute scintilla
the depth
of an amoeba's breathing.

I seem to have acquired
none of these abilities.

Nails deny my hammer.
Wood and stone pursue their
own vision of shape and purpose.
My ladders seldom result
in ascension.

But I do have
my father's screwdriver,
an ancient Stanley,
paint-splattered and battle-smoothed,
the spent utility
of a scalpel after surgery.

No, it's use
does not imbue me
with some instant, cosmic power
of a Mr. Fix-It,
still the angles
do not conjoin,
all night the faucet
sneers its metronome drip.

But in my hand
that screwdriver
is a story told,
a work of higher purpose,

the fastening of light to dark,
of fingerprints to soul,
of moments to time passing,

the genetic hand-off,
so indelible and pure,
of who I am
and all the holy
and all the broken
of everything I have
endeavoured to be.

-- David Stones, Stratford poet laureate

Enter county-wide Every Voice poetry contest

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As October comes to a close, so does the inaugural Every Voice poetry contest – but it's not too late to enter.

Every Voice is a new initiative launched by the Stratford poet laureate, in partnership with Destination Stratford and the Stratford Public Library. It is an opportunity to have poetic voices from across Perth County be heard and recognized by the public and their peers, with two contest categories for youth (ages eight to 18) and adults (19 or older).

David Stones, the Stratford poet laureate,

told the Times that organizers want a "robust" contest.

"It's called Every Voice for a reason," Stones said. "We want every voice to be heard and every voice to speak up, especially those marginalized, if you will, the voices that don't often get heard as often as they should. ... I can assure you, there are hundreds, if not thousands of closet poets just in this county. You know, poetry can be a very internalized process. Many poets do write about their emotional or physical challenges in a very private way ... and this is an opportunity for them to have their voice heard, if they so wish."

This year's theme is "Resilience," which

organizers are defining as toughness, the capability to withstand difficulties and grow from them. Stones said that the judging panel, which includes himself, youth poet laureate Quinn Mayer, Heidi Sander and Mark Hertzberger, will be judging submissions based on creativity and uniqueness, as well as the use of poetic conventions like simile and metaphor, surprising words and how open for interpretation it is.

"Irrespective of the quality of art, we're really looking at how the artist, in this case, the poet or storyteller, the writer, has been able to interpret that theme of resilience and how different and how creative and how unique is

their art piece," Stones said.

Honourable mentions will be announced in January, as well as a short list of finalists. The winners will be announced at an awards event in April 2026 to coincide with National Poetry Month. First place will take home \$500, second place \$250 and third place \$100.

The contest has no entry fee. Those interested can submit two poems, each up to two pages long, of any poetic form (though they should be written in Arial or Times New Roman 12 point font).

The contest closes on Oct. 31. For more information, and a link to submit, visit <https://splibrary.ca/stratford-poet-laureate>.

Sir Alec Guinness' role in Stratford's history cemented with blue plaque at 108 Mornington St.

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Sir Alec Guinness may be well-known around the world as the generational actor that helmed such great films as *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Star Wars*, but he is also a key figure in Stratford's history – and recently that local legacy has been entrenched.

On Oct. 18, Heritage Stratford, an advisory committee for the City of Stratford, presented a historical blue plaque at 108 Mornington St. in honour of Guinness and the home he once stayed in.

The home was built in 1876 as the rectory for St. James Anglican Church. By the 50s it was home to Rev. Francis G. Lightbourne and his wife Marion Lightbourne. It was also where Guinness stayed when he was here for the inaugural season of the Stratford Festival.

Guinness was born in 1914 in Maida Vale London, England and got his first theatre job in 1934, playing in a series of plays at the Old Vic, a prominent theatre house in the U.K., throughout the 1930s – including taking on multiple Shakespeare roles.

During the Second World War he served in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, being involved in the Allied invasion of Sicily, and returned to theatre after (and even during) the war.

He continued at the Old Vic, but it was at this time that his profile exploded internationally. His film career began with such classics as *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, *Dr. Zhivago* and *Lawrence of Arabia*.

In 1953, Tyrone Guthrie invited Guinness to perform as the titular character of *Richard III* in the Stratford Festival's first season. Famously, Guinness spoke the very first lines of the festival when he walked out and opened the production: "Now is the winter of our discontent/Made glorious summer by this son of York." Not only did those words open the show, but they opened an over-70-year legacy of world-class Shakespeare being performed in Stratford.

Resident Georgina Cameron shared her memory of Guinness, as relayed by Heritage Stratford. She was a child in the summer of 1953 and often played with friends at the Optimist Playground. Each day, a man with an unassuming Canadian ac-

cent would walk by and chat with them. None of them knew who he was until they went to see a film and recognized him as Guinness. Cameron can still remember her friends' faces in the cinema, once they realized just who that man was.

Following that first season, Guinness continued his career stateside and back in the U.K. In 1959, Queen Elizabeth II knighted him for his service to the arts. He starred in *Star Wars* in 1977, introducing him to a whole new generation. He passed away Aug. 5, 2000.

On Sept. 27, legendary Canadian novelist Timothy Findley was honoured with a blue plaque at 72 Ontario St. Findley was also a member of the 1953 Stratford Festival season, where he first met and performed opposite to Guinness. Guinness would become a mentor to him over the years, even after he stopped acting to focus on writing.

Barb Cottle, a member of Heritage Stratford, said that the fact Findley and Guinness were honoured in the same year was serendipitous, given their past together.

"It was entirely a coincidence," Cottle said. "I was so pleased as I did the re-

search and discovered the connection. It seemed so nice to honour them together."

Heritage Stratford typically bestows blue plaques every two years, though the scheduling has been less structured since the COVID-19 pandemic. While the committee normally puts out an open call for suggestions, there have been so many great suggestions that Heritage Stratford is still working through past responses – though Cottle noted that residents are welcome to send suggestions to the City of Stratford and Heritage Stratford.

To learn more about Guinness, a page and short documentary video will be posted on the City of Stratford's website. Once posted, it can be found at <https://www.stratford.ca/en/live-here/blueplaque-program.aspx>.



To read more about the blue plaque presented in honour of Timothy Findley, scan the code and scroll to page 24.



Left: Roger Skubovious, owner of 108 Mornington St., accepts the blue plaque in honour of Sir Alec Guinness from Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma on Oct. 18. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Above: Guinness as the titular character in *Richard III*. By saying "Now is the winter of our discontent/Made glorious summer by this son of York," he opened the very first Stratford Festival season in 1953.



Perth-Wellington MP John Nater, MPP Matthew Rae and Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma gathered on Oct. 16 with other area leaders for a round-table discussion on challenges facing the community, such as economic development, tariffs and, perhaps most challenging, housing. The event was hosted by the Stratford District Chamber of Commerce and moderated by Aaron Martin, general manager of the chamber, and Joani Gerber, executive director of investStratford. (CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

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Stratford Perth Museum celebrates 22nd annual Innkeeper's Dinner

GARY WEST

Times Correspondent

If readers have ever been able to enjoy the Stratford Perth Museum Innkeepers Dinner in the past, then they know what a night it has become over the years.

For the first time in its history, general manager Kelly McIntosh welcomed the many supporters of the museum to the Tom Patterson Theatre's Lazaridis Hall on Oct. 18 for a night of good food, entertainment and fun, while at the same time, raising thousands for the museum.

It is no secret that the local museum stays busy year-round, bringing in more activities and talents, whether in the museum or at the outdoor Player's Theatre throughout the year.

This year's dinner, which was rebranded simply as Innkeepers' 2025, featured a special performance by long-time festival actor Cedric Smith on his guitar, accompanied on the string base by Ben Bolt-Martin, who offered a musical interlude that captured the soul of the museum, along with art, story and community in harmony.

This year, the museum honoured the memory of long-time supporters Bill



Cedric Smith and Ben Bolt-Martin brought laughter along with lively music at the Stratford Perth Museum's annual Innkeeper's Dinner, a fundraising event hosted at the Tom Patterson Theatre.

(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Strawbridge, DeAnna DesLaurer and Harry Visser. Their generosity enriched the Stratford Perth Museum, and whose lives were celebrated by everyone in the community.

The night was also enriched by Stratford storyteller Garvia Bailey, who brought to the evening some reflections of Black his-

tory (including her own) in Stratford and areas of Perth County.

Capping off the night was a silent auction of many local specialty products and then a live auction with

Brent Shackleton that featured auction items like a night of music with Dayna Manning and a night with Walt Wingfield, to name only a couple.

At evening's end, McIntosh thanked all those involved in "keeping the museum a happening place."

She thanked the Innkeepers' committee chaired by Tina Grasby, Ann Walsh and sponsors Home and Company, Rhéo Thompson Candies, Samsonite, Swanson's Jewellers, Stonetown Cheese, Jim Player Carpentry, investStratford, Orr Insurance and Investment, Stratford Blooms, Wild Hog Country Market and the Leonor.

She hopes to see everyone again next year, to help celebrate their 23rd annual dinner.



Stratford Perth Museum general manager Kelly McIntosh thanked everyone at Innkeepers 2025 for "keeping the museum a happening place."

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)



McIntosh and Garvia Bailey both spoke to attendees during the dinner. Bailey is part of the team spearheading an evolving Black history exhibit at the museum and shared some reflections of Black history in the region that evening.


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Warriors smash LaSalle Vipers but lose to St. Thomas Stars

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY
Times Correspondent

As the Warriors prepared for another game week, the trio of Rhyse Brown, Coen Galbraith and Dax Vader discussed what the team needed to do against the LaSalle Vipers and St. Thomas Stars.

"We just have to replicate our game this weekend and just keep moving forward and try to have the same performance (from last week versus Listowel and Chatham), and the outcome will show how we play," Brown said.

"Just put together a real two hard-working games. Just get in the dirty areas and do what you need to do," Vader said.

"We have to stay out of the penalty

box and get in the dirty areas and put the pucks on net," Galbraith added.

On Oct. 17 at the William Allman Memorial Arena, the Warriors flexed their offensive muscle and orchestrated a goal-scoring barrage in a strong 7-1 win over the visiting Vipers.

Max Wildfong opened the scoring for Stratford at 7:29 with his third goal of the season. Less than two minutes later, Colin Slattery notched his fourth of the season to give the home side a 2-0 lead.

Dominic Marshall scored his second of the season with 2:47 left in the period, and Haden Frayne's first of the year in the dying seconds gave the Warriors a commanding 4-0 lead through twenty minutes.

The Vipers drew one back at 3:47 of the second period, ending the Warriors' shutout streak on home ice at 151 minutes and 21 seconds. But Stratford were not to be discouraged as newcomer Evan Arnold scored his first with the Warriors late in the period to restore the four-goal lead.

Arnold struck paydirt once more with his second goal at 2:48, which expanded the Stratford lead to 6-1, and Marshall's second of the game capped off the scoring for the Warriors with 2:52 left in the game. Stratford Goaltender Noah Bender picked up the win as he stopped 25 of 26 shots.

Post-game, Warriors head coach Dave Williams liked the offensive performance the team accomplished, especially the details utilized in practice.

"It's nice for us to kind of break out and get rewarded a little more than we have around the net," Williams said.

"Hopefully scoring seven goals gives our group a little more confidence heading into Sunday at St. Thomas, maybe we'll grip the sticks a little less and be a little more confident around the net, and it is something we've talked a fair bit about the last couple weeks in practice and tried to really reinforce in practice, just making sure we're hitting the net as much as we can."

Acquired in a trade just hours before the game, Arnold shares his first im-

pressions with the club and the city, including scoring his first GOHL goal.

"It's great. I'm loving it here. I've been here probably for like five hours now. Love the community. The town's awesome, and people are just amazing," Arnold said. "It was just awesome hearing the fans go wild, and it was just a great, amazing opportunity and experience."

Marshall felt happy with the team's performance, especially with the bounce back in the third period.

"It was really good. I thought we played a good start, a good, hard start, a little struggle in the second, but the third came back. We came out flying. We're resilient the whole time," Marshall said.

"Feels good, yeah, love to score two ones. One's always good, but two's better. Framer (Frayne) set me up there, and Brownie (Brown) did too, and I'm glad I could put them both in for the boys."

Bender was appreciative of the team's all-around effort and made his job less stressful.

"It was a good team effort. Everybody showed up. Defence was good in front of me, our forwards scored lots of goals," Bender said. "Makes my job a lot easier."

The Warriors travelled to St. Thomas as to face the Stars on Oct. 19. Slattery opened the scoring for Stratford at the 3:25 mark in the first period. Stratford doubled their lead at 5:06 of the second period when Arnold scored his third goal in his second game with the Warriors.

After the Stars got on the board with under seven minutes in the period, Wildfong recorded his fourth of the season just over ninety seconds later, and

Stratford went into the third period up 3-1.

But the Stars soared back to tie the game in the third period and force overtime. After a thrilling overtime period, the game went to a shootout when the Stars prevailed. Despite the loss, the Warriors snatched a point in the standings.

Williams said he was discouraged with the team's third-period effort but wants to use this loss to improve their game.

"I thought they had lots of speed," Williams said in regard to the Stars. "Definitely a much better team than they had last year. You know, a little disappointing to have the game up 3-1, and to only get a point out of that. But hopefully we can learn a little bit. Part of being a good team is making sure you know that teams like that get back into it. I thought their youth showed up a little bit, and their pace of play there, you know. They came at us in the third, and it ended up with a point."

Despite the split, several Warriors extended their point streaks. With another three points over the weekend, Wildfong extended his point streak to five games, with three goals and four assists during the streak. Kipfer has averaged a point (one goal and four assists) in his last five, and McGurn has five points in his four-game point streak.

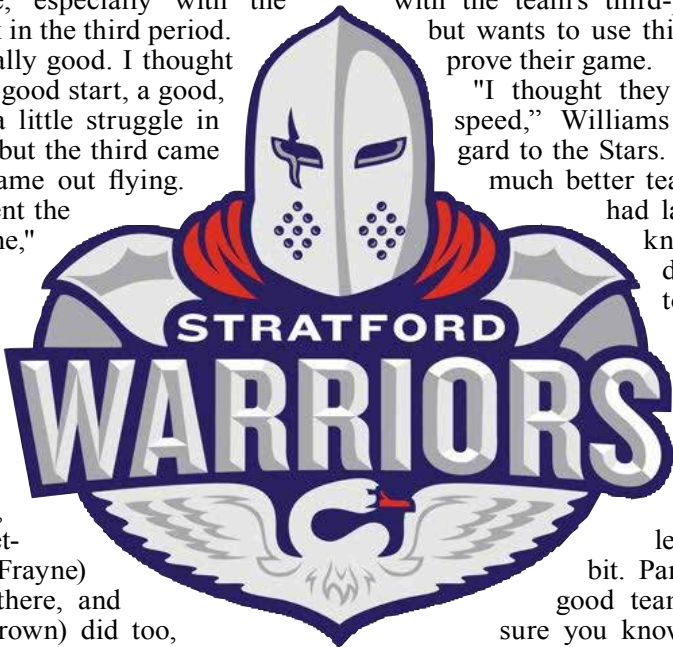
Ranked seventh in the Western Conference, the Warriors are facing two of the top five teams next weekend. On Oct. 24, they host the London Nationals at the Allman Arena and travel to Waterloo for the first time this season to face the Siskins.

Wildfong says the key for this week is to improve with their system and stick to the details, while Slattery understands the objective.

"I think it just starts with practice, doing what the coaches want us to do, and I think that'll lead the way to success throughout this weekend," Wildfong said.

"We got two big games here, so we're definitely hoping to come back and get revenge in both those games," Slattery said.

Stratford Warriors						
2025-26 Stats						
(as of October 20, 2025)						
Player	Pos	GP	G	A	PTS	
Jack McGurn	F	10	3	6	9	
Max Wildfong	F	10	4	4	8	
Colin Slattery	F	10	4	3	7	
Jonas Schmidt	F	7	3	4	7	
Quinn Kipfer	F	10	2	5	7	
Rhyse Brown	F	10	0	6	6	
Lucas Minard	F	10	4	1	5	
Dominic Marshall	F	10	3	2	5	
Grady Murphy	F	9	4	0	4	
Aaron Green	D	4	2	2	4	
Matthew Blake	D	9	0	4	4	
Joseph Curtin	D	9	0	4	4	
Evan Arnold	F	2	3	0	3	
Haden Frayne	D	9	1	2	3	
Dax Vader	F	10	1	2	3	
McQuen HayLock	F	10	0	3	3	
Mateo Craievich	D	10	0	2	2	
Coen Galbraith	F	9	0	2	2	
Will Coward	D	10	0	2	2	
Drew Hodge	D	10	0	2	2	
Beckham McLeod	D	3	0	0	0	
Goalies	Record	GAA	SV-%			
Noah Bender	3-1-0-0	1.73	0.939			
Gage Hurst	2-0-0-0	0.50	0.981			
Connor Davis	1-1-1-0	3.34	0.841			







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GOHL Western Conference Standings							
(as of October 20, 2025)							
Team	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS	GF	GA
Elmira Sugar Kings	10	2	0	0	20	57	25
Chatham Maroons	9	2	0	2	20	61	38
London Nationals	10	4	0	0	20	63	45
St. Marys Lincolns	9	3	1	0	19	43	28
Waterloo Siskins	6	2	3	0	15	35	29
St. Thomas Stars	7	4	0	1	15	51	36
Stratford Warriors	6	2	1	1	14	35	22
LaSalle Vipers	6	5	2	0	14	40	46
Komoka Kings	5	6	1	0	11	37	47
Listowel Cyclones	3	8	1	0	7	24	39
Strathroy Rockets	3	8	1	0	7	44	51
Sarnia Legionnaires	0	12	0	0	0	18	82

Irish get clipped by Bluebirds but beat the Ironmen for a split weekend

MICHAEL WILLOUGHBY

Times Correspondent

On Oct. 18, the Stratford Irish travelled to Tilbury for a match against the Bluebirds as they looked to extend their undefeated start to the National Premier Hockey League (NPHL) season.

In the first period, after Tilbury got on the board at the 4:49 mark, goals from Matthew Montgomery and Thomas Hernandez less than one minute apart gave the Irish a 2-1 lead. Tilbury responded with 4:17 left in the opening frame, but a goal from Cole Thiessen

put the Irish ahead 3-2 through twenty minutes.

Both teams exchanged goals in the second period, but the goal from team captain Zach Magwood gave the Irish a 5-4 lead going into the third period. Tilbury eventually pulled ahead late in the third to beat Stratford 7-6 in a game that featured seven lead changes and 133 shots on goal in total between the two.

The next night at Ohsweken, the Irish faced the Ironmen at the Six Nations Cultural and Recreation Centre. Stratford torched the Ironmen with four power-play goals en route to a 6-5 win.

Six Nations jumped to a 2-0 lead midway through the first period before Ryan Migliaccio and Anthony Starvou responded for Stratford to even the score at two apiece through twenty minutes.

Brady Hunter gave the Irish their first lead of the game early in the second period before the Ironmen tied the game at three in the midway stage of the period. Mathieu Henderson put the Irish ahead for good with over five minutes left in the period, and Thomas Maia added cushion for the visitors heading into the third period with the score of 5-3.

Six Nations responded 54 seconds

into the third period to cut the deficit to a goal. Still, Hunter's second of the game at the 8:18 mark of the period was the eventual game-winner as the Irish withstand a late Ironmen charge to improve to 3-1.

Henderson and Maia led the Irish with three points each, while Marek Pavlas made 46 saves and earned top star honours in the win.

The Irish travel to Strathroy to face the Jets on Oct. 24 and then return home to the William Allman Memorial Arena to face the Alvinston Killer Bees on Oct. 25.

Mike's Bowling Lanes high scores Oct. 13-19, 2025

PinPals

Thomas Holland – 136

Gregory Jones – 102

Bowlasaurus

Henry Barclay – 80

Evangeline Butcher – 136

Dominic Rowe – 116

PeeWee and Bantams

Chloe Illman – 77

Patrick Adair – 138, triple 392

Serenity Robb – 150

Scarlett Illman – 109, double 259

Tiernan Eckert – 75

Lincoln Butcher – 106

Stella St. Pierre – 261

Coen Everitt – 239

Rilynn Bennett – 90

Juniors

McKenna Morris – 150

Austin Janmatt – 192

Abby Smith – 150

Sydney Shillolo – 168, triple 423

Myla Douglas – 178

Brent Louwagie – 182, triple 455

Hugo Black – 160, triple 403

Charlee Koyle – 181, triple 413

Peyton Keating – 280

Anna Ward – 224

Lauren Furtney – 193

Brianne Bauer – 164, triple 443

Arik Scheuermann – 155

Hayden Martin – 163, triple 434

Seniors

Austin Bauer – 179, triple 463

Jake Sippel – 220, triple 558

Zachary Clarke – 272, triple 628

Dominic Keating – 226, triple 563

Alex Ward – 183, triple 571

Sydney Smith – 222, triple 537

Austin Martin – 220

Jocelyn Gethke – 212, triple 570

Owen Martin – 238, triple 631

Mayla Laukka – 248

Yulia Mooers – 207

Claire Turner – 197, triple 568

Devon DeYoung – 199

Payton Petrie – 255

Payton Kainz – 191, triple 565

Adult Leagues High Scores

Men's

Jon Gagan – 335, triple 825

Ladies'

Brooke Louwagie – 304, triple 812

United League

Autumn Stadtlander – 236, 239, 230

Paul Boyd – 203

Robert Anderson – 268

Special Olympics

Brianne Carlton – 87

Andy Van Schalk – 217

Derek Wray – 121

Nicholas Graham – 125

Aiden Winterer – 109

Phoebe Bootsma – 137

Rob Vannatter – 134

Leah Akroyd Snider – 184

Dan Noon – 124

Matthew Gratton – 144

Caitlin Breedon – 113

Sean Darling – 125

Matthew Fischer – 121

Michael Ambrozic – 139

Ulysses Selyms – 93

Christian Payton – 156

Jonathon Lew – 79

Luke Patterson – 267, triple 451

Sydney Cain – 126

Mitchale Guibo – 124

Sydney Martin – 95

David Murray – 94

Sara Schweig – 128

Mike Keleman – 119

Frank Enns – 147

Nicholas Quintana – 97

Rhett Chapman – 111

Piper Kearny – 89

Tiffany Keller – 135

Noah Armstrong – 88

Tyler Guibao – 131

Thomas Planke – 93

Meghan O Donovan – 145

Steven Schultz – 109

Marie Martin – 152

Luca Scipione – 84

Kerrie Culliton – 120

Wayne Schmidt – 102

Nasha Moylan – 108

Franny Hitchcock – 136

Lucas Forte – 114

Michael Hitchcock – 161

Russell Hubbard – 141

Jacob Kaufman – 261, triple 408



TAVISTOCK MEN'S CLUB SAUERKRAUT & BBQ PORK CHOP SUPPER

Wednesday, November 12, 2025



4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

TAVISTOCK MEMORIAL HALL

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Pick-Up Only \$30

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Starting October 1st to November 8th

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or email: info@tavistockmensclub.ca

or online: tavistockmensclub.ca

Send in your sports reports

Coaches and/or parents are invited to send in your sports reports and pictures to the Stratford Times to let Stratford and area know how your teams are doing throughout the 2025/26 season (and to create some great scrapbook material to be reflected upon in future years).

Game reports should be kept to a maximum of

100 words. Please include a brief description of what happened during your games, including the names of those who scored and any special efforts made by your players.

Please have all reports and pictures in by the end of the month by emailing stratfordtimes@gmail.com.

Mike’s Bowling Lanes hosts Downie Optimists family twosome tournament



Pictured are bowlers in the peewee division of the Downie Optimists Club Family Twosome Tournament, held on Oct. 19 at Mike’s Bowling Lanes. Kellar and Nicole Hvidsten won the division, taking first place with a total of 609. The runners-up were Jesse and Anne Marie Robinson, who scored a 434 total, and Bryanne Finch-Doucette and Christine Finch rounded out the top three with 341.



Pictured are competitors from the junior division. McKenna and Steve Morris took the top spot with 1,032, narrowly followed by Charlee and Jim Koyle, who finished with 1,002. Hugo and Tony Black were close behind at 994, while Austin and Mike Janmatt scored 953, and Hayden Martin and Kaylee Petrie scored 946. Abigail and Tammy Smith also had a strong showing, scoring a total of 706.



Pictured are competitors in both the bantam and senior divisions. Wiatt Robinson and Inga McLennan had a great showing, scoring 1,043 in the senior bracket. Alex Ward and Kirk MacGrandles posted a total of 998, with Sydney and Barry Smith coming in at 968, both in the senior field. On the bantam side, Serenity and Mel Robb put up 886. Spencer and Tasha Koyle scored a total of 785. Ava and James Tiegs totalled 720, and Joey and Tim Robinson recorded a 635 total score.



Pictured are more bantam and senior division bowlers. In the bantam category, Kayleigh Heegsma and Steve Mitchell won with a 948 total. Talia and Kayla Klomp had an excellent 927 total. Mason Morris and Lindsay McCann finished 816. Emmett and Richard Martin delivered a total of 814. In the senior division, Payton Petrie and Irene Louwagie won with a total of 1,257. Jocelyn and Joe Gethke totalled 1,143. Owen Martin and Kylee Petrie scored 1,098, and Dominic and Bradley Boyes finished with 1,084.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

STRATFORDTIMES

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New Orleans Pizza

Zehrs
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Tim Hortons - C.H. Meier
Festival Marketplace
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Stratford Subaru
Stratford Honda
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McDonald's - Ontario St.
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Stratford Legion
Gino's Pizza
Rosso's
Buzz Stop
Union Barber
Mornington Variety
Split Rail
Stratford Rotary Complex
Agriplex
No Frills
Cozyn's
Sebringville Esso
Dave's Diner - Sebringville
Stratford-Perth Museum
Sobey's

Shoppers Drug Mart - Huron
Circle K - Huron
West End Pharmacy
Tim Hortons - Huron
Stratford Hospital
Video 99 - Erie St
Jenny Trout
Stratford Medical Pharmacy
Stratford Chamber of Commerce
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Coffee Culture
Stratford Public Library
The Parlour Restaurant & Inn
Dick's Barber Shop
The Livery Yard
Town Crier Marketing
North End Pharmacy
Annie's Seafood Restaurant
Avon Pharmacy

Spencer Hyde gallops out of Dallas

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

Canadian Spencer Hyde Racing continued to turn heads during his rookie season, last week making the most of the Texas NHRA Fall Nationals and Stampede of Speed, the fourth race of the Countdown. The driver of the Head Inc. Nitro Funny Car continued to make waves in his rookie season, knocking out former Texas Fall Nationals winner Bob Tasca III in the first round and advancing to the quarterfinals.

"I came into this race really wanting to make a statement," said Hyde. "Monday is Canadian Thanksgiving, so my entire family was able to be in town for the weekend. And then of course, my fiancé, Courtney, calls Texas home. It would have been the perfect race to secure my first Nitro Funny Car win, but I am optimistic about what these last two Countdown races will bring."

After four qualifying runs made in front of huge crowds on Friday and Saturday, Hyde entered race day in the No. 9 qualifying position. This position was based on the strength of a 3.945 second, 299.28 mph pass he made on Friday night while competing for the Battle for the Saddle.

"The Battle for the Saddle is super cool," said Hyde. "The Texas Motorplex is an innovator, encouraging other tracks to give us racers opportunities to win big money during Friday qualifying. We gave it our best effort, and I'm hopeful



we'll get to try again for this honour next year."

On Sunday during the first round of eliminations, Hyde was up against the 2012 winner of the Texas Fall Nationals, Bob Tasca III. Tasca was first off the line, but Hyde was able to overtake him, punching his ticket into the next round.

"That first round win against Tasca was huge," said Hyde. "There are no easy wins out here. Everyone who qualifies for the show has the capability to win. I continue to get more and more comfortable in this car, and it's showing with my reaction times and how I'm able to handle the wheel."

Next up in the quarterfinals, Hyde faced the points leader and reigning world champion Austin Prock. While Hyde had the quicker reaction time with one of his best launches of the season, Prock was able to get around him after the 60-foot mark. Prock then went on to win the race, taking home his first cowboy hat.

"I really wanted to be the one wearing a cowboy hat at the end of the day," said Hyde. "Cowboy hats are already part of my wardrobe, and I even told Courtney I wouldn't bring one with me because I thought I could win a navy-coloured hat here. But I know our first Wally is just

around the corner."

Hyde has two races left this season to improve his points position in the Countdown to the Championship. He leaves Dallas No. 9 in the standings, hungry to move up in Las Vegas and Pomona, California. He and the Head Racing team will be back in competition in two weeks at the Dodge NHRA Nevada Nationals powered by Direct Connection on Oct. 30 to Nov. 2 at the Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. There will be two qualifying sessions on Friday, Oct. 31 and two more qualifying sessions on Saturday, Nov. 1. For tickets or more information on the NHRA Nevada Nationals visit nhra.com

Second show in Stratford added for McKennitt's seasonal performance

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

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Due to high demand, award-winning Canadian singer/songwriter Loreena McKennitt has added Dec. 10 as a second Stratford date for her celebrated seasonal performance of *Under A Winter's Moon* after the Dec. 11 performance sold out.

The locally-based artist is also bringing the concert back this December to the stage at Toronto's Koerner Hall and in neighbouring London, Ont.

There will be six shows in all, including Wednesday Dec. 10 and Thursday Dec. 11 at Copperlight (formerly Knox Church) in Stratford at 7 p.m., Friday Dec. 12 at Centennial Hall in London at 7 p.m., Koerner Hall on Saturday Dec. 13 at 8 p.m., Sunday Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets are on sale now through her website.

The holiday favourite, dubbed "a love letter to the season," features carols and tales that blend Celtic, Indigenous and Welsh cultures, interwoven with strands of the natural world revealed through an Indigenous lens. It also includes Gemini Award-winning actor Cedric Smith performing the nostalgic "A Child's Christmas in Wales."

McKennitt will be accompanied by Caroline Lavelle on cello and recorders and by members of the Stratford-based Celtic

group The Bookends, with Errol Fischer on fiddle, Pete Watson on guitar and bouzouki, Cait Watson on Irish whistle, with guest percussionist Romano DiNillo.

"I'm delighted we're able to present this eclectic seasonal performance again. It's such a glorious time of the year to draw from different kinds of reflective music and story-telling – past and present," says McKennitt.

The show begins with Ojibway artist Christin Dennis, also known as Gzhiiquot/Fast Moving Cloud, performing the story of Skywoman. *Under A Winter's Moon* is a two-set concert, with the first set consisting of performances by McKennitt and her band. The second set features actor Cedric Smith performing, in six parts, the late Welsh poet Dylan Thomas's "A Child's Christmas in Wales," each segment interspersed with more songs from McKennitt. In all, the show includes 15 seasonal tunes, with such favourites as "Coventry Carol," "Good King Wenceslas" and "Huron Carol."

McKennitt, who was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame in May, first performed *Under A Winter's Moon* in December 2021 as a series of live concerts in a historic sanctuary in Stratford, Ont. A recording of the concert was subsequently released as her 16th album.



Stratford Festival review: The goblins are back in full form, dressed in togas and waving pool noodles, for *Goblin: Oedipus*

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

When I walked into the Studio Theatre to review Spontaneous Theatre and the Stratford Festival's *Goblin: Oedipus* on opening night Oct. 17, I expected to watch a hilarious sendup of the famous Greek tragedy by the goblins, Wug, Kragva and Moog, similar to that of *Goblin: Macbeth* in 2023.

What I didn't expect was to be singled out by one of the goblins (for the life of me, I couldn't tell you which one), dragged onstage, given a red toga and a creepy white mask, and told I would be one of 12 male audience members to make up the Greek chorus – a fundamental theatrical device in ancient Greek drama consisting of a group of performers, traditionally men and boys, who comment on the action of the play, providing insight and context to the audience.

We were given a list of reactions, to be both spoken and acted out, to specific words from the play's text and two

poems to read at different points during the performance. As should be expected, they were all perfectly timed by the theatrical minds behind this play – Rebecca Northan, Bruce Horak and Ellis Lalonde – for comedic effect, especially when some of us (mostly me and the guy directly in front of me) missed our cues.

As a theatrical reviewer with the highest of ethical standards (yeah, right), I probably should have told the goblins I couldn't be part of their chorus. I should have told them I needed to watch the production unfold from my assigned seat, just like everyone else, to maintain that all-important separation between the play and its reviewer.

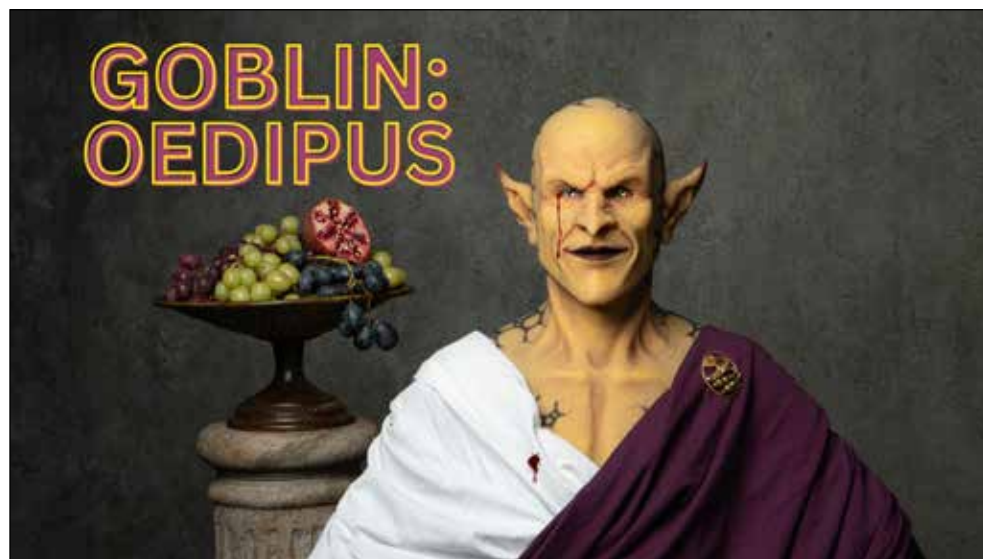
After all, how can I offer up an honest review of this production when I was seated at the back of the stage trying not to get distracted by the hilarity happening in front of me so I wouldn't forget to hit my mark? How can I review a play when I was part of it?

Have you ever said "no" to a goblin? It's not easy. They can be very convinc-



The goblins survey their Greek chorus. Regional editor Galen Simmons is seated in the back row, second from the left.

(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)



Goblin: Oedipus is onstage at the Stratford Festival's Studio Theatre until Nov. 1.

(SPONTANEOUS THEATRE PHOTO)

ing.

So, if you're looking for an unbiased review of this play, go read Ross' review on his front mezz junkies theatre-review blog. It's probably better than mine anyway.

What I can tell you without reservation is I had a blast being a small part of this production. From the strange and often comedic music performed by Moog and Wug's remarkably stirring performance as King Oedipus, to Kragva's hilariously exhausting performance as nearly every other character – except the Ambassador from Corinth, who Moog was adamant he'd play – *Goblin: Oedipus* was a laugh riot from start to finish without losing the gravity of perhaps one of the most horrifying and well-known conclusions in the history of theatre. If you know, you know.

Like *Goblin: Macbeth*, the best parts of this production involved the goblins' improvised interactions with the audience and, for this play, the chorus. One of the

high points of this production was when half of the chorus (thankfully, not my half) was invited to re-enact the murder of King Laius and his guards by Oedipus at the crossroads.

Armed with pool noodles, my fellow chorus members hilariously fought and died for their king, with one member of the chorus taking on the role of Laius and having the opportunity to do a little improvising of his own, to hilarious effect.

This type of improvisation, I'm happy to report, makes each performance of this production unique to the audience watching it, and I'm sure every performance will be equally as funny and entertaining.

So, whether you prefer to enjoy theatre from the comfort and safety of your seat or you'd like to be part of the action onstage, I can't recommend strongly enough that you go see *Goblin: Oedipus* at the Stratford Festival before it ends.

Goblin: Oedipus runs at the Studio Theatre until Nov. 1.



LOCAL MATTERS.



Remember that time when **Amazon** sponsored your church fundraiser?



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Casting and creative teams for 2026 Stratford Festival season announced

STRATFORD TIMES STAFF

stratfordtimes@gmail.com

While the 2025 season continues with four productions extended into autumn and mid-December, casting for the 2026 season has just been announced.

"The 2026 season marks my final year as artistic director and I could not be prouder of the extraordinary artists who have come together with such enthusiasm to create theatrical magic at Stratford," said Antoni Cimolino in a media release. "This season draws together many of my very favourite stories, glorious plays that offer boundless opportunity for artistic discovery. To bring them to vibrant life demands a company of exceptional range and depth, and I am thrilled to say that this outstanding ensemble meets the challenge with both brilliance and heart. These remarkable artists, among the most promising and accomplished of our time, are joined by visionary directors and creative teams, all eager to share their artistry with you next season at the Stratford Festival. This year, as in years past, I am in their debt."

Programmed around the theme of "This Rough Magic," next season's playbill features *The Tempest*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Something Rotten!*, *Waiting for Godot*, *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* and *The King James Bible Play*. It will see the return of familiar faces and some new ones – though organizers say that there is still some casting to be completed.

The Tempest

Director Antoni Cimolino's production of Shakespeare's late romance *The Tempest* will feature Geraint Wyn Davies as Prospero with Christopher Allen as Sebastian, Ben Carlson as Stephano, David Collins as Alonso, Ashley Dingwell as Miranda, Jonathan Goad as Caliban, Josue Laboucane as Trinculo, Gordon S. Miller as Antonio, Marissa Orjalo as Ariel, Fiona Reid as Gonzalo and Dakota Jamal Wellman as Ferdinand.

The cast also includes Celia Alo-ma, Jacqueline Burtney, Paul Dunn, Jakob Ehman, Katarina Fiallos, Michelle Giroux, Jenna-Lee Hyde, John Kirkpatrick, Allison Lynch, Jamie Mac (Boatswain), Rose Napoli, Landon Nesbitt (Adrian), Maher Sinno, Emilio Vieira and Michael Wamara (Francisco).

In addition to Antoni Cimolino, the creative team includes set and costume designer Julie Fox, lighting designer Imogen Wilson, composer Berthold Carrière and sound designer Ranil Sonnadara.

On an enchanted island, a deposed duke uses his magical powers to conjure a storm at sea, bringing him face to face with the brother who betrayed him. As old quarrels are resolved, love blossoms for a new generation.

The Tempest runs April 28 to Oct. 24, opening on May 25.

Guys and Dolls

This beloved Broadway classic will hit



Something Rotten! returns to Stratford in 2026 with much of the same cast as the 2024 smash run, pictured here. The Stratford Festival announced its 2026 casting and creative teams this week. (DAVID HOU PHOTO)

the Stratford stage in a production directed and choreographed by Donna Feore, featuring Dan Chameroy as Sky Masterson, Jennifer Rider-Shaw as Adelaide, Olivia Sinclair-Brisbane as Sarah Brown and Mark Uhre as Nathan Detroit, with Gabriel Antonacci as Benny Southstreet and Steve Ross as Nicely-Nicely Johnson.

The cast will also include Eric Abel, Michelle Bardach, Alex Batycki, Carla Bennett, Devon Michael Brown (Rusty Charlie), Wade Buller, Jacqueline Burtney, Jeremy Carver-James, Juan Chioran (Big Jule), Jarret Cody, Christine Desjardins, Josh Doig, Starr Domingue (General Matilda Cartwright), Henry Firmston (Harry the Horse), Jordan Goodridge, Alexandra Gratton, Bonnie Jordan, Alex Kelly, Bethany Kovarik (Carmen), Jeff Lillico, Amanda Lundgren, Gracie Mack, Anthony MacPherson, Jordan Mah, Chad McFadden, Jamie Murray, Stephen Patterson (Arvide Abernathy), Ali Powell, Brian Ross, Jason Sermonia and Zachary Williams.

In addition to Donna Feore, the creative team includes music director Franklin Brasz, set designer Michael Gianfrancesco, costume designer Dana Osborne, lighting designer Bonnie Beecher and sound designer Haley Parcher.

In the bustling streets of New York, a smooth-talking gambler wagers he can charm a pious missionary, while another high roller desperately fights to keep his game alive and his fiancée from walking away. In a city ruled by chance, love takes unexpected turns and both men soon discover they are risking far more than money.

Guys and Dolls runs April 22 to Nov. 1, opening May 26.

Something Rotten!

Back by popular demand after its sensational 2024 run, this vibrant production directed and choreographed by Donna Feore features Starr Domingue as Bea Bottom, Henry Firmston as Nigel Bottom, Jeff Lillico as Shakespeare and Mark Uhre as Nick Bottom, with Dan Chameroy as Nostradamus, Juan Chioran as Brother Jeremiah, Steve Ross as Shylock and Olivia Sinclair-Brisbane as Portia.

The cast will also include Eric Abel, Ga-

briel Antonacci, Michelle Bardach, Alex Batycki, Carla Bennett, Devon Michael Brown, Wade Buller, Jeremy Carver-James (Minstrel), Jarret Cody, Christine Desjardins, Josh Doig, Jordan Goodridge, Alexandra Gratton, Bonnie Jordan, Alex Kelly, Amanda Lundgren, Gracie Mack, Anthony MacPherson, Jordan Mah, Jamie Murray, Stephen Patterson, Ali Powell, Jennifer Rider-Shaw, Brian Ross and Jason Sermonia.

In addition to Donna Feore, the creative team includes music director Laura Burton, set and costume designer Michael Gianfrancesco, lighting designer Bonnie Beecher and sound designer Haley Parcher.

The Bottom brothers, two struggling playwrights in Renaissance London, need a hit. That's easier said than done when your chief competition is local rockstar William Shakespeare. The Bottom brothers' plan? Write the world's first musical!

This rollicking song-and-dance extravaganza is back by overwhelming popular demand!

Something Rotten! runs May 11 to Oct. 31, opening on May 29.

Waiting for Godot

In a special limited engagement running from May 14 through July 31, director Molly Atkinson brings Samuel Beckett's existential classic *Waiting for Godot* to the Festival Theatre stage, starring Paul Gross as Vladimir and Tom McCamus as Estragon with Jonathan Goad as Pozzo and David W. Keeley as Lucky.

The cast also includes Paul Dunn, John Kirkpatrick, Gordon S. Miller and Emilio Vieira.

In addition to Molly Atkinson, the creative team includes set and costume designer Cory Sincennes and lighting designer Jareth Li.

On a deserted stretch of land, two old friends wait endlessly for the mysterious Godot, passing the time with conversations that shift effortlessly between the mundane and the profound. As they argue, question and complain, their endless predicament begins to mirror humanity's search for meaning in an absurd and unpredictable universe.

Runs May 14 to July 31, opening on May

30.

Death of a Salesman

Director Dean Gabourie's production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* will feature Tom McCamus as Willy Loman and Lucy Peacock as Linda Loman with Josh Johnston as Happy, Matthew Kabwe as Charley, David W. Keeley as Uncle Ben and Joe Perry as Biff.

The cast also includes Sean Arbuckle (Howard Wagner), Shane Carty (Second Waiter), Michael Louis Johnson (Stanley), Karthik Kadam, Devin MacKinnon, Krystin Pellerin (Miss Forsythe), Irene Poole (Jenny), Chick Reid (The Woman), Ray Strachan (Bernard), Liam Tobin, Nadine Villasin (Letta) and Jennifer Villaverde.

In addition to Dean Gabourie, the creative team includes set designer Scott Penner, costume designer Denyse Karn, lighting designer Louise Guinand and composer and music curator Michael Louis Johnson.

An aging commercial traveller chases a fading dream of success, blind to the illusions that have shaped his life and shattered his family. As memories blur with reality, his desperate pursuit of worth reveals the quiet tragedy of a man out of step with the world around him.

Runs May 5 to Oct. 24, opening May 28.

The Hobbit

Directed by Pablo Felices-Luna, Kim Selody's theatrical adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* will feature Richard Lee as Bilbo with Tim Campbell as Gandalf, Sara-Jeanne Hosie as Old Took and Aaron Krohn as Thorin.

The cast includes Shane Carty, Laura Condlin, Heidi Damayo (Fili), Ijeoma Emesowum (Bombur), Karthik Kadam, Derek Kwan (Balin), Dominique Leblanc, Davinder Malhi, Michael Man (Bard, Gollum), Ray Strachan and Jennifer Villaverde (Kili).

In addition to director Pablo Felices-Luna, the creative team includes set designer Lorenzo Savoini, costume designer Ting-Huan, Christine Urquhart, lighting designer Michael Walton, composer and sound designer Debashis Sinha and movement director Sara Topham.

The hobbit Bilbo Baggins is reluctantly swept from his cozy home into a perilous quest across Middle-earth to help a band of dwarves reclaim their mountain home from a deadly dragon. Faced with trolls, goblins and a mysterious magic ring, he discovers that true courage often lies in the most unlikely of hearts.

Runs April 21 to Oct. 23, opening May 30.

The Importance of Being Earnest

Oscar Wilde's classic satire *The Importance of Being Earnest* returns to the Avon Theatre in a production directed by Krista Jackson and featuring Christopher Allen as Algernon Moncrieff, Joe Perry as John Worthing and Fiona Reid as Lady Bracknell with Ben Carlson as Rev. Canon Chasuble, Allison Lynch as Gwendolen Fairfax, Marissa Orjalo as Cecily Cardew and Lucy Peacock as Miss Prism.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 21

Inaugural Stratford Film Festival begins Nov. 6-9 at Stratford City Hall

LISA CHESTER

Times Correspondent

The new Stratford Film Festival (SFF) is prepared to welcome filmgoers to their inaugural annual festival Nov. 6-9 after presenting over 30 screenings during the last year. The four-day festival will feature full-length feature films, documentaries and shorts.

On Wednesday Oct. 15, SFF hosted an evening to showcase the films and introduce the lineup to film enthusiasts and friends of the festival. This well-attended event allowed the audience the opportunity to view each film trailer introduced by festival director Megan Smith-Harris.

"We're showcasing a dynamic mix of award-winning features, documentaries and short films from around the world, as well as a handful of films from right here in Stratford. Our 2025 festival promises to be an unforgettable four days of entertaining, thought-provoking films, conversation and community," said Smith-Harris.

Conversation will be encouraged on opening night with the Q-and-A following the screening of the documentary, *Beethoven's Nine: Ode to Humanity* with Canadian director Larry Weinstein. Weinstein made 36 films that have garnered dozens of awards from around the world, including three International Emmy Awards (and several other Emmy nominations) and 12 personal Canadian Screen/Gemini Awards, as well as major awards in Canada, the United States, France, the Czech Republic, Mexico and Australia.

"Larry Weinstein has an extraordinary gift for illuminating the emotional and cultural power of music. *Beethoven's Nine: Ode to Humanity* reminds us why art matters – and why Beethoven's Ninth continues to unite people across time and



Stratford Film Festival director Megan Smith-Harris welcomes Stratford to four days of film and fun, conversation and community.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

borders. We're thrilled to have Larry join us for a post-screening Q-and-A to share his remarkable insights," said Smith-Harris.

The second Q-and-A will follow the Saturday morning screening of the documentary, *Behind the Castle Doors: The Origin of the Hilarious House of Frightenstein*.

The directors, Morgan Baker and Tammy Heisel, will be on hand to expand the conversation of this cult Canadian classic from the childhood of generations. Also in appearance will be actor/producer Mitch Markowitz.

"Directors Morgan Baker and Tammy Heisel have crafted an affectionate, be-

hind-the-scenes look at one of Canada's most delightfully eccentric TV series. *Behind the Castle Doors: The Hilarious House of Frightenstein* celebrates the off-beat brilliance and boundless creativity that made the show a cult favourite. We're especially delighted to welcome Mitch Markowitz – one of the show's original creators – whose irreverent sense of fun helped shape this iconic piece of Canadian television history. And in true Saturday morning spirit, we'll be serving up a nostalgic cereal bar to complete the experience," said Smith-Harris.

Later that day will be an opportunity to dig deep into the film *Stealing the Sky* with a Q-and-A featuring director/actor Megan Follows. This is an ensemble comedy in which characters living in a loft facing demolition navigate identity, loss and connection as their city crumbles around them.

"It's such a privilege to welcome Megan Follows – an iconic Canadian actor and now a gifted director," said Smith-Harris. "*Stealing the Sky* is a beautifully observed film that explores how cities evolve and how people struggle to keep pace with change. Having Megan here to discuss her vision as both actor and filmmaker will be a true highlight of the festival."

Those are just three of the films offered during the four days, with many more programmed. There are 13 different screening events over the four days to choose from, which have been curated through submissions from over 40 countries. The Stratford Film Festival champions films and filmmakers from across the globe and around the corner bringing stories to inspire conversation and entertain at the same time. For more information on the films being showcased and to purchase tickets, visit stratfordfilmfestival.com.

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Casting and creative teams for 2026 Stratford Festival season announced

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

The cast also includes Sean Arbuckle (Lane), Ashley Dingwell, Katarina Fiallos, Michelle Giroux, Jenna-Lee Hyde, Matthew Kabwe, Josue Laboucane, Landon Nesbitt, Liam Tobin (Merriman) and Dakota Jamal Wellman.

In addition to Krista Jackson, the creative team includes set designer Bretta Gerecke, costume designer Cory Sincennes, lighting designer Imogen Wilson, composer Sarah Slean and sound designer John Gzowski.

Two dashing men-about-town create false identities to escape social obligations and win the hearts of the women they love, only to find themselves entangled in a web of deceit and absurd expectations. Set in Victorian England, this sharp-witted and hilarious comedy skewers manners, marriage and the pursuit of sincerity in a world obsessed with appearances.

Runs May 19 to Oct. 23, opening June 18.

Saturday, Sunday, Monday

Marking his final production as artistic director, Antoni Cimolino directs a brand new adaptation of Eduardo De Filippo's *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*, featuring Graham Abbey as Peppino and Rose Napoli as Donna Rosa with Rod Beattie as Antonio, Seana McKenna as Aunt Meme and Gordon S. Miller as Luigi Ianniello.

The cast will also include Christopher Allen, Celia Aloma (Maria), David Collins (Catiello), Ashley Dingwell, Paul Dunn, Jakob Ehman (Roberto), Katarina Fiallos (Giulianella), Michelle Giroux (Elena Ianniello), Jenna-Lee Hyde (Virginia), Matthew Kabwe, John Kirkpatrick, Josue Laboucane (Attilio), Allison Lynch, Jamie Mac, Landon Nesbitt, Marissa Orjalo, Maher Sinno (Federico), Liam Tobin (Michele), Emilio Vieira (Rocco), Michael Wamara (Dr. Cefercola), Dakota Jamal Wellman and Geraint Wyn Davies (Raffaele).

In addition to Antoni Cimolino, the creative team includes Set Designer Douglas Paraschuk, Costume Designer Francesca Callow, Lighting Designer Michael Walton, Composer Wayne Kelso and Sound Designer Ranil Sonnadara.

In this comic masterpiece, a lively Neapolitan household is thrown into turmoil when a simmering marital rift between the family matriarch and her withdrawn husband comes to a boil. As emotions flare and generations clash, laughter and love guide the family toward reconciliation and a deeper understanding of one another.

Runs Aug. 4 to Oct. 24, opening Aug. 22.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Directed by Graham Abbey, this production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will feature André Sills as Oberon, Michael Spencer-Davis as Bottom and Sara Topham as Titania, with Evan Buliung as Theseus, Thomas Duplessie as Demetrius, Ijeoma Emesowum as Hippolyta, Vivien Endicott-Douglas as Hermia, Jordin Hall as Lysander, Jessica B. Hill as Helena and Mike Nadajewski as Puck.

The cast will also include Tim Campbell (Egeus), Laura Condlin (First Fairy), Heidi Damayo, Sarah Dodd (Quince), Steven Hao (Snug), Sara-Jeanne Ho-

sie (Snout), Aaron Krohn (Flute), Derek Kwan, Cyrus Lane, Dominique Leblanc, Richard Lee, Tarique Lewis, Angel Lo, Davinder Malhi, Michael Man (Starveling), Silvae Mercedes (Fairy), Anthony Palermo (Fairy) and Rylan Wilkie (Philostrate).

In addition to Graham Abbey, the creative team includes set designer Lorenzo Savoini, costume designer Joshua Quinlan, lighting designer Kevin Lamotte, composer and sound designer Thomas Ryder Payne and movement director Stephanie Graham.

Strange things happen in the woods by night, with neither spirit nor mortal safe from the wiles of the trickster Puck. For mismatched lovers, romance runs delightfully amok, but true love triumphs at dawn. A whimsical comedy of love, mischief and magic.

Runs May 1 to Sept. 26, opens May 27.

Othello

Director Haysam Kadri's production of Shakespeare's *Othello* will feature Evan Buliung as Iago, Krystin Pellerin as Desdemona and André Sills as Othello, with Jordin Hall as Cassio, Jessica B. Hill as Emilia and Rylan Wilkie as Roderigo.

The cast will also include Sarah Dodd, Thomas Duplessie, Vivien Endicott-Douglas (Bianca), Steven Hao, Michael Louis Johnson, Josh Johnston, Cyrus Lane (Montano), Tarique Lewis, Angel Lo, Devin MacKinnon, Mike Nadajewski (Gratiano), Anthony Palermo, Irene Poole (Lodovica), Chick Reid (Brabantia) and Michael Spencer-Davis (Duke of Venice).

In addition to Haysam Kadri, the creative team includes set designer Brian Dudkiewicz, costume designer Gillian Gallow, lighting designer Siobhán Sleath and composer and sound designer Thomas Ryder Payne.

A beautiful marriage and a brilliant military career are destroyed by the masterful manipulations of a vindictive comrade. Heroism and dishonour walk hand in hand in this gripping tale of jealousy, regret and revenge.

Runs May 22 to Sept. 27, opens June 19.

The Tao of the World

The world premiere of playwright and director Giovanni Sy's production of *The Tao of the World* will feature Agnes Tong in the lead role of Arabella Flynn.

The cast also includes Scotia Browner (Fangirl), Tim Campbell (Trevor Flynn), Heidi Damayo (Millicent Tam), Manami Hara (Lady Helena), Sara-Jeanne Hosie (Eleanor Marwood), Matthew Ip Shaw (Edward Lim), Karthik Kadam (Devan Pillay), Aaron Krohn, Derek Kwan (Jackson Lee), Richard Lee, Nestor Lozano Jr. (Toto), Davinder Malhi, Michael Man (Wilson Wong), Silvae Mercedes, Nadine Villasin (Kamila) and Jennifer Villaverde (Anna).

In addition to Giovanni Sy, the creative team features set designer Lorenzo Savoini, costume designer Ming Wong, lighting designer Sophie Tang, composer and sound designer Mishelle Cuttler and choreographer Julio Fuentes.

Fusing Congreve's *The Way of the World* with the extravagance of *Crazy Rich*

Asians, this world premiere plunges into the opulent world of Singapore's wealthy elite, where lovers plot, rivals deceive and dynastic fortunes hang in the balance. Brimming with hilarity, romance and billionaires behaving badly, it's a dazzling restoration comedy for the modern age.

Runs Aug. 2 to Sept. 26, opens Aug. 20.

The King James Bible Play

Director Nina Lee Aquino helms the world premiere of Charlotte Corbeil-Coleman's *The King James Bible Play* featuring Vivien Endicott-Douglas as Han, Steven Hao as Willie, Deborah Hay as Martie, Cyrus Lane as Sir Henry Savile, Angel Lo as Anna, Gray Powell as John Bois, Michael Spencer-Davis as John Perin, Sara Topham as Cath and Rylan Wil-

ie as George Abbott.

In addition to Nina Lee Aquino, the creative team includes set and costume designer Robin Fisher, lighting designer Michelle Ramsay and composer and sound designer John Gzowski.

In this bold and provocative world premiere, two worlds unfold: one portraying the men behind the monumental translation of the King James Bible, the other a contemporary group of women creating a play about that process. Witty, incisive and deeply human, the work is a fascinating exploration of translation in all its forms: between generations, between genders and between what we inherit and what we choose to believe.

Runs Aug. 6 to Sept. 26, opens Aug. 21.



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Opinions

Under This Roof: A special house and its special people

JULIA SCHNEIDER

Times Columnist

If you are searching for a perfect story, with players and places all working to bring about an outstanding conclusion, you should look at the recently released documentary *Under This Roof*, the work of filmmaker Andrew C. Brown. It brings together footage from many different periods to tell how some extraordinary individuals have added to Stratford's heritage through their symbiotic relationship with one of its most notable houses.

The object of their enthusiasm was 77 Brunswick St, called the Artist's Cottage during the tenure of its last owner, Gerard Brender a Brandis. It started life in 1866 as a humble workman's cottage. Though small, it was properly considered a house rather than a cottage because it had a parlour in which to receive the reverend for tea; it also displayed Greek Revival style detail that set it apart from the ordinary and showed it had "aspirations." Though it only had two bedrooms upstairs, one of which housed the girls and the other the boys, its residents at one time totalled 13.

After a long time as a residence, 77 Brunswick came under threat during the 60s, when architecture was almost synonymous with demolition. James Anderson, Perth County's first archivist (1972-1991) and a strong advocate for Stratford's her-

itage, set his mind to saving it and succeeded. Anderson was no ordinary crusader; he took to the roof of the Perth County Courthouse on a hunger strike at one point to protest against a move to disband the Perth County Historical Board. As historian Dean Robinson puts it, "He was not afraid to walk the talk." In the 1980s he embarked upon a two-year reconstruction of 77 Brunswick. After he left it, the Cardiffs, a couple, took over and enjoyed its small space until Gerard Brender a Brandis, who brought a wealth of experience, artistry and attention to detail, bought it and moved in.

By this point in his life Brender a Brandis had experienced a lifetime of preparation for the role of artist guardian of the precious house. He and his older sister, Marianne Brandis, had immigrated with their parents from the Netherlands in 1947. The family settled in Terrace, B.C., where they stayed until 1956. While in Terrace he learned a great deal that would benefit him later in life. He says his family ethic was "I can learn to do that" which was important; one had to be resourceful in remote Terrace. For one thing, there wasn't much to do, so reading was extremely important to both brother and sister. Writer Marianne credits early reading as her introduction to the authorship that became her life's work. For another, there was food to grow, so Gerard

learned about botany, another of his passions.

And then there was bookbinding. By some fluke of fate, Gerard's Grade 3 and 4 teacher was a retired British colonel who had his students work, during school recess breaks, binding the school's textbooks, which were in bad shape. Gerard credits this unusual experience as the beginning of his love of the craft of bookbinding, which he perfected after his days in the classroom as at once a utilitarian and aesthetic endeavour.

"We were both detail people," Gerard says of himself and his sister. "It was important to get every detail just right."

After the accomplished botanist, artist and printmaker moved into 77 Brunswick in the early 1990s, he assumed the additional role of guardian of what was now called "the Artist's Cottage." During his tenure, Gerard invited many visitors into his cottage to see his 1865 printing press, a mammoth, nine-hundred-pound machine that his mother had helped him pay for and bring over from Britain. The house's 150th anniversary in 2016 was a tribute to him, Anderson, and all those in Stratford who didn't accept that architecture involved more demolition than preservation.

The documentary *Under This Roof* ends in 2019 when Gerard goes into a senior's home but his legacy and that of

his sister lives on. The house saved by Anderson and now owned by a consortium that values heritage and preserves its appearance and gardens, is still beautiful. Moreover, the writing of Marianne and art of Gerard and their attachment to each other are immutable. They are two unique individuals united by what Gerard calls their artistic temperament and the need for artistic stimulation. The two have worked together to create a number of books, including *The Grand River*, with text by Marianne and wood engravings by Gerard, its companion book *A Pebble's Journey* and *Making Light*. See also Gerard's book *A Gathering of Flowers From Shakespeare*, which is of special interest here in Stratford.

"We have always shared a mutual sisterly/brotherly love," says Gerard. "I am incredibly lucky to make this my life's work."

The legacy of his "most perfect press" also lives on. He has given it to local artist and framer Lucinda Jones, a long-time friend who, expressing her emotion, said "I am so happy I get to be able to work with it." As far as Gerard is concerned, the pleasure and satisfaction is mutual.

"The press is history," he says, "but also the future."

And so the house, the Brender a Brandis brother and sister, and the press all are ensured a future; a happy ending indeed.

Repeal Bill 5, part one: Indigenous voice and consent



CORY BILLYEA

Times Guest Columnist

The Ontario Government says it will honour the duty to consult Indigenous people, but what exactly does that mean? How they plan to conduct this consultation is a mystery, as the government itself isn't clear on what that looks like. The current passage of Bill 5 leaves more doubts than assurances that the government will actually put any real effort into fulfilling their duty.

As we wait with bated breath for the Ontario legislature to return to work to see what happens next, it might be worth noting that settler governments have not practiced meaningful dialogue with First Nations in any way, shape, or form since 1492. A trail of broken

treaties, forced relocations and the ever-encroaching stream of settlers in need of more land don't really help me to put my faith in their words now.

The fact that the resources they have already extracted from our Mother Earth have not now, nor ever benefitted Indigenous people, why would we believe that they will do so this time?

Bill 5 contains approximately 50,000 words. The word Indigenous appears eleven times. Four of those appearances replace the word "Aboriginal" with "Indigenous." So that leaves seven. That, in and of itself, is noteworthy and more than a little alarming.

To me, this means Indigenous people and consultation are not top of mind. Treaties are barely mentioned at all. The only mention of any treaty is in the Endangered Species Act/Species Conservation Act where it says, "For greater certainty, nothing in this Act shall be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from the protection provided for the existing Aboriginal or treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada as recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982."

While Bill 5 acknowledges Indigenous and treaty rights, it

does not detail specific measures to actively involve Indigenous communities in decision-making processes, such as those related to environmental assessments, species conservation or land use. The effectiveness of these protections would depend on how the government implements the legislation in practice.

The bill does not define or mandate the use of Indigenous protocols, such as community-led decision-making, cultural practices, or ceremonial processes, in project approvals or conservation efforts.

Although Indigenous traditional knowledge is mentioned in species classification, it is not integrated into other areas, such as environmental assessments, special economic zones or energy procurement.

While the bill acknowledges Indigenous rights and traditional knowledge in limited contexts, it does not comprehensively incorporate Indigenous protocols into its legislative framework. The reliance on constitutional protections and consultation mechanisms leaves the integration of Indigenous protocols largely dependent on how the government implements the legislation in

practice.

The Original Peoples (specifically the Anishnaabe) of this land that is now called Canada have a set of principles called the Seven Grandfather Teachings.

Encompassed in the teachings are a set of principles from Anishnaabe culture guiding individuals and communities toward living a good life with peace and without conflict. The teachings are Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth.

In our culture, these guiding principles are the basis for everything we do, including how we ensure that the next seven generations will benefit from what we do today.

Here's a breakdown of the teachings:

Wisdom is to cherish knowledge and use it for the good of the people.

Love is to know peace and to care for and protect others.

Respect is to honour all of creation and to give respect to receive it.

Bravery is to face challenges with courage and to do what is right, even when difficult.

Honesty is to be truthful in word and deed, and to be honest

with oneself first.

Humility is to know one's place as a part of the sacred creation and that one is not better than anyone else.

Truth is to know all these teachings and to act with sincerity.

As Indigenous communities continue to advocate for their rights and recognition, the implementation of this bill will be closely watched to ensure that it does not undermine the principles of equity, justice and partnership.

The path forward must involve not only consultation but also collaboration that honours Indigenous governance, cultural protocols and the shared responsibility to protect the land and its resources for future generations.

For more information visit repealbill5.ca.

Submitted by Repeal Bill 5, a local coalition of advocates dedicated to repealing the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, on behalf of Cory Billyea. Billyea is an Indigenous journalist working for Midwestern Newspapers, a member of the Six Nations of the Grand River, better known as Onkwehonwe, the original people. She is a survivor of intergenerational trauma caused by residential schools.

Opinions

UNTIL SOON. LIVE WELL: THERE IS A FIELD



STUART LENDER

Times Columnist

These words are born of thinking alone – surely. I am sitting in a café. I am writing about helplessness and rage, because I’ve felt them lately. I’m not feeling them now, however. I’m able to think about them rationally. They are often bedfellows, they are often born of each other and they are often misguided. But right now – I’m thinking about

them, I’m not “in” them.

When I feel either one, rare as it is, I am not in control – and I can clearly see that – stemming from helplessness is a profound weakness, a feeling of having no purpose or recourse. It’s tangible. And stemming from rage – an insult that smothers all senses, a blinding heat, and much later – a regrettable afterbirth.

Between these two extremes of human alienation – we act.

At a young age I developed a strong sense that being out of control was “uncool.” Definition: helplessness and rage. I default to a memory I have of a drunken man in a restaurant who shook my impressionably warm cocoon of privileged youth into a different reality by falling across a table and spreading it and himself throughout the room in a mess of glass and pasta! And a too young friend who overdosed and died for reasons of which, to

this day, I am still unaware. In the first instance, I was ten years old. In the second, fifteen. Needless to say, these things sprouted the first real sense of a helplessness I was completely unprepared for. There were others as I grew. Up until then, I always felt secure and protected through parents who loved me and a home that was a refuge.

Rage blossomed later – in university, trying to understand the bias and bigotry of the world. That one has sadly returned in a big way lately, causing me to pause and re-group and scratch the inner workings of the mind for the same reasons to these injustices I tried hard to understand back then. The reasons being: fear, pursuit of wealth and power, and being unable to love oneself without thinking someone else holds a lower card.

Those old reasons are in abundance today, and after the coun-

try-wide protest of “no kings” recently past in October of 2025, I draw solace from the steely determination of our brothers and sisters to the south. And yes – despite the differences, they are our brothers and sisters none-the-less. The seven million people who, despite being filled with justifiable rage, expressed themselves through peaceful determination. Those who, instead of washing themselves in the helter-skelter of bloodlust, morphed their rage, their desire for justice, into a descending cascade of water – a cooling rain in a single slicing sheet of moral solidarity.

Helplessness and rage indeed – dangerous bedfellows. Birthing each other. But when in possession of a moral truth under our control, there is magnificence – the shining out of the best of humanity: Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Eleanor Roosevelt, Susan B. An-

thony, Viola Desmond, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Nelson Mandela ...

As loving and frail and fearful and bold as humans are – those challengers for a more inclusive and loving destiny are us and we may be them. There is a gate that opens to the superiority of our soul and spirit and not the baser instincts of our human predicament, and we are the keepers of that gate. Rumi, the 13th century poet and mystic knew, even then, that there is a field of universal humanity, and when the soul lies down in that green grass, as he wrote – the world is understood and simply too full and vibrant to talk about.

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

As I See It From America: Some other sky ...



PATRICK D. BURK

Times Columnist

As of this writing, I am waiting with bated breath to go out and see what is happening with the “No Kings Day” protest. If you are not familiar with this concept it is based on the fact that many believe, and some even promote, that the current occupant of the White House may decide to never leave, in effect, use the United States military to take over the country and make himself a despot ruler. I used to think this was jest or at least the ravings of right-wing lunatics whose vision was clouded by racism, hatred and ignorance. I could not be any more inaccurate. It may actually be the plan.

During the Obama administration the right-wing Tea Party protests were all about keeping the “white rights” and not allowing the rights of people of colour to increase or implement new policies or programs such as affir-

mative action. Most of the right were afraid that America’s first Black president would indeed bend and manipulate the system for a better benefit for people of colour. Of course, this was not factual and indeed was not a concern at all. In fact, there was no evidence that there would be a substantial increase in any affirmative action programs or anything. Basically, fear of the right and ignorance of having a person of colour in the White House led to the Tea Party marches.

At the time of the Tea Party protests the Republicans were all about freedom of speech and the protection of the individual to speak their mind and to be able to disagree without recrimination from the party in power ... the evil Democrats. Now that the table is turned and the largest protest in American history is about to take place, the dialogue around freedom of speech, freedom of the press and individual civil liberties has changed. Did you know that there are elected and appointed Republicans that are saying that “those involved in the No Kings protest are basically illegals, lovers of Hamas or radicals.” Nothing can be further from the truth. I know of an 80-year-old woman that worked until she was in her 70s, raised four children, has grandchildren and great grandchildren, that is giving instructions and providing materials for protest signs

this weekend. She is also walking in today’s protest and she certainly does not fit the Republican description. She is America!

What I’m wondering is if this happens in your fine country? Have you ever had the prime minister revamp an entire branch of the government so that he can arrange to have his opponents or those that speak out against him arrested or harassed “legally” while laughing at the chaos that he has created? I am not familiar with much of your government particulars, but I am sure that I have never heard of anything like this in Canada. It does seem that there can be some division, many political party differences and institutions and often cross words over issues that are of concern to the many parties. But do the members of the Canadian government plan and attack their opponents as they do in the United States. Do you have entire departments manipulated for the sake of achieving some warped reward? If someone is elected to office, are they sworn in in a timely manner or left not serving their office because it will cause the ruling party some concern? This is the way of the world in United States politics. Manipulation and anger. Pettiness and retribution. Immaturity and childish revenge. Sometimes I feel like we are all in one big sandbox with fewer and fewer players

because one player is very busy kicking sand at all and trying to get his own childish way. Tantrums from the leader. Sounds almost like a boy Napoleon.

I have had many discussions with the people that reside in Stratford. This column has opened my eyes to many similarities, the homeless, infrastructure and taxation, jobs that are offered, the impact of the Stratford Festival and housing are just a few. You do have many of the same issues, but it seems that you do handle them with quite a bit more certainty and with a sense of humanism that is no longer apparent in the United States government. I am not saying that the results may not be your cup of tea or that you always agree, that certainly is not true, but do you try to damage the other side personally? Do you raise up and deride and threaten your political opponents? Do you try to hurt them individually? I have not seen this.

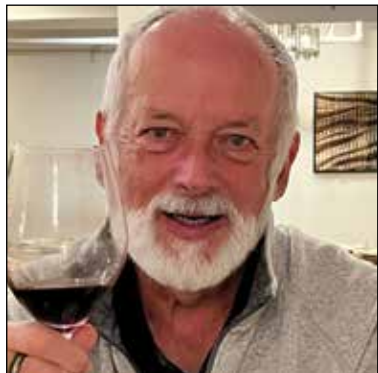
I can tell you that there are many in the United States that are living in fear. I just had a young teacher stop me today to find out what housing was like in Stratford. He thinks, from what we have told him, he would enjoy living there and is wondering what “plan” he needs to make and at what time would he have to cross the border to save himself and his young family. This is part of daily discussions down

here. If you are not part of the MAGA crowd, you may be in peril. There is even an impact on the local level, and many do not feel safe. Isn’t that sad? Isn’t that just angering? People of all aspects of life, seniors, professionals, young college students, families with small children, single people and married couples are all in this same place. Many are looking for safe havens. Many are ready to abandon life here for safety and sanity.

To many, the United States used to be the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. It is now becoming a place of fear, retribution and chaos. In many ways it is reflective of the “worst of man” and yet sometimes we still do see incredible caring and kindness. This is what happened in Nazi Germany. People saw it coming, didn’t know what to do and tried to maintain their kind and gentle ways only to be snowballed into submission, forced into leaving or living in fear. It is up to us to make sure that we get back that pot of gold and to see if that colourful arch of a rainbow can be recreated. We need the chaos, doom and gloom removed from our daily lives. The question now is, “What do we do to make the rainbows reappear on our horizon or do we look for them in some other sky?”

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

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: An unexpected delight in downtown Toronto



PAUL KNOWLES

Times Columnist

When you put the two words, “Toronto” and “Gardiner” together in the same sentence, the reaction is probably not all that positive because it conjures up very familiar images of sitting motionless in your car on the Gardiner Expressway – an experience even more likely this year because of all the construction on the notorious lakeshore highway.

But there is another “Gardiner” in Toronto, and it offers a much more pleasant experience. The expressway was named for Fred Gardiner, a Toronto politician, but The Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art carries the same moniker because of founders George and Helen Gardiner (no close relation to Fred that I can find).

The Gardiner Museum is, frankly, an unexpected delight. I have written from time to time about attractions that seem less than inspiring in my uninformed opinion, where I anticipate a 20-minute visit, which then turns into a number of intriguing hours. That was certainly the case with the Gardiner Museum.

The institution is located at 111 Queen’s Park, directly across from the main entrance of the Royal Ontario Museum. Once managed by the ROM, the Gardiner gained operational and financial independence about 30 years ago and has thrived



The Gardiner Museum featuring ceramics and porcelain in Toronto.

(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

ever since.

But what is it?

The Gardiner was founded by George and Helen Gardiner to house their collection of ancient American artifacts and European pottery and porcelain. As a former chair of the Toronto Stock Exchange, George Gardiner was free to indulge in a whimsical hobby, and so, began collecting ceramic art. That collection formed the foundation for what is now an ever-growing inventory of important ceramic pieces.

George Gardiner passed away in 1997 and Helen Gardiner in 2008, but their vision – and their continued philanthropy – has sparked two significant expansions to the museum and its collections. One such program, in 2004, saw the museum close for two years to allow a major expansion. A second is ongoing on the ground floor this year. The current \$15.5-million project is described as “the full-scale reimagin-

ing of our ground floor (which) will include the construction of a new, fully equipped makerspace, a Community Learning Centre and an Indigenous gallery space.”

But even with the ground floor closed for reconstruction, there is still a lot in the open exhibits to intrigue visitors to the gallery.

Now, let’s be honest here. We visited the Gardiner as complete novices, knowing virtually nothing about ceramics, and not sure we really cared. But the exhibitions, the information and the sheer quirkiness of the art and artifacts on display absolutely captured our attention.

For instance, soon after beginning our visit, we spotted some outrageously bold images on what were apparently dinner plates. The accompanying information told us these were original creations of Pablo Picasso.

Nearby was something completely different – a life-size, bright blue,

ceramic chainsaw, the creation of Native Canadian artist Mary Anne Barkhouse.

You might not immediately associate ceramics and porcelain with humour, but to my surprise, we found a great deal to smile about in the pieces on display at the museum. An English piece created in Staffordshire in the 1830s is simply labelled “The Ale Bench,” but there’s a lot going on in the work – a full-on dust-up between a drunken man and a rather aggressive female opponent! It made me laugh – still does, when I look at the photo – and honestly, I think that is as positive a recommendation as I can make for any tourist attraction.

And we also laughed at the highly detailed, admittedly weird, 19-character “Monkey Orchestra,” from the Meissen factory, around 1750.

Like many hobbies over the centuries, the creation and collecting of

porcelain has inspired huge excess, and such extravagance is certainly on display here. There is, for example, a 31-piece gold tea and coffee service made in Vienna in 1788.

Many of the pieces in the Gardiner collection have historical significance, such as the group of three Sevres vases once owned by French King Louis XVIII.

But one of my biggest surprises came from much closer to home – right here in Canada. I am a bit of a collector of Inuit sculpture, but all of my pieces are soapstone or serpentine or bone. At the Gardiner, I found a wonderful ceramic piece, “Man Skinning Walrus,” by Roger Aksadjuak (1972-2014), a Nunavut artist.

Unlike many such institutions, the Gardiner is open seven days a week, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (until 5 p.m. on weekends and holiday Mondays). The admission fee is very reasonable – what is suggested is \$15 for adults, \$11 for seniors, and free for 18 and under. However, during the current construction project, admission is actually by donation of a Loonie or more. And every Wednesday, the museum is open until 9 p.m., and admission is free after 4 p.m.

One highlight of the museum is the Clay restaurant, open every day except Saturday for lunch. The food is really good. It is also not inexpensive.

So, I highly recommend that if you know little or nothing about ceramics, you set your skepticism aside and visit the Gardiner Museum. I’m confident it will be a pleasant surprise.

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.



Pablo Picasso brought his unique artistic vision to dinner plates.



A ceramic chainsaw by Mary Anne Barkhouse.

Riddles

- Why was the computer cold?

Because it left its Windows open.
- Why did the computer go to therapy?

It had a hard drive.
- Why do programmers prefer dark mode?

Because light attracts bugs!
- What do you call a computer that sings?

A Dell.
- Why did the computer sneeze?

It caught a virus.
- Why was the smartphone so polite?

It always said "cell you later."
- Why did the PowerPoint presentation cross the road?

To get to the next slide.
- Why did the computer keep its drink on the floor?

It didn't want another crash.
- How does a computer get drunk?

It takes screenshots.
- What do you call an IT teacher who touches up his makeup?

A PDF file.
- Why did the keyboard break up with the mouse?

There was no connection.

Sudoku

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

Solutions on page 27

Pet of the week



BRIAR

Briar is a young, sweet-natured girl with a heart full of love. Gentle and affectionate, she's happiest when curled up beside her favorite person, soaking up all the cuddles she can get. She can be a bit vocal when left alone, so she'd do best in a home where someone is around often, or where her chatty side won't disturb close neighbors. If you're looking for a loyal, loving companion who adores quiet moments and cozy snuggles, Briar might be your perfect match! Visit kwsphumane.ca to learn more about this sweet girl!



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

- ACHES
- ANTIBIOTICS
- CHILLS
- CONGESTION
- CONTAGIOUS
- COUGH
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Stop in and buy some stamps and meet fellow stamp collectors. About 8 participating stamp clubs.
Contact: Don Eaton dhfe@silomail.com
Website: <http://www.rpsc.org/chapters/oxford>

OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Tuesday, November 4; 7:00 p.m.
93 Morgan St., Stratford
Speaker – Joanne Schreuders
'Securing Your Legacy' –Planning and preserving your memories. Social time and snacks. Everyone welcome.
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Friday Nov. 21.
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GARDEN STRATFORD GENERAL MEETING

Monday, November 3; 7:15 – 9:00 p.m.
Army Navy Hall, 151 Lorne Ave. E., Stratford
Featured Presentation: "Pollinator Pathways", Dianne Wheler and Don Farwell, Tri-County Master Gardeners
Meeting Open to Everyone; Free Admission.

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