

FREE

A WEST PERTH PUBLICATION

the Heronry

Issue Includes

David Doyle: Landscape Artist

Ordinary Extraordinary People

Cheeseburger Casserole

Community Recipes

A Pottery Connection

Community Ties

Nostalgia and Dreams

County Business Stories

Vol. 5

April 2026

"Snowshoeing along the North Thames" by David Doyle



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ABOUT THE FOUNDERS

Bert Vorstenbosch Jr has the super official sounding job title of “General Hype Guy.” He’s been determinedly outspoken about West Perth’s need for a community publication, and got so tired of waiting for someone else to do it that he decided he would do it himself. As the owner of several printing companies, Bert is in charge of distribution and printing, and his business, Mitchell Office Pro, is our primary sponsor.

Amelia McFarlane and her daughter are relatively new to West Perth, but since moving to Mitchell in 2023 she’s been itching to get connected in the community. In her role as The Heronry’s Business Manager, and Social Media Guru, she ensures we stay organized and that people get informed about our publication! In her spare time she plays the bagpipes and loves to share her music at special events.

A graphic designer by trade, Christina tB Hotz is our designer and editor. She and her family have lived in Mitchell since July of 2016. She has a love for small towns and a passion for community building. You can often find her helping out at the local pottery studio, or working outside her century home as she tries to wrangle it, and her extensive gardens into shape.

Special thanks to:

Christopher Creighton, Cheryl Schwartzentruber, Visnja Cuturic, Angie Moore, E.K. Johnston, Cathy Hutson, Rita Christie, Angela Walker, David Doyle, Maggie Turner, Maria Antone, Judy Hoffmeyer, David Kemp, Colin, Jennifer Morris, Kaye-Loni Curran, Laura Bere, Tracy McKone, Amber Barrett, Nick Hotz, and Norm Leslie Bradshaw

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wp.heronry@gmail.com

wpheronry.substack.com

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The Interview Process

This is our fifth edition of the Heronry and I'm slowly starting to figure things out. As I've mentioned previously, there's a fair amount of impostor syndrome that comes with a project of this size, but in order to ensure that I don't accidentally inspire impostor syndrome in anyone who is considering submitting their work to this publication, I thought I'd spend this editorial de-mystifying the process that I use to write interviews.

The first job I have is to find an interview candidate. This is a complicated process. I've had a number of people reach out with suggestions (which is helpful), but I'm always trying to balance various factors. In general, I like the idea of interviewing people who have otherwise not been featured in the news or other kinds of publications. That being said, it is undeniable that well-known people like Clare French, Bert Vorstenbosch Sr, or John Drummond bring a certain "fame" – and I'm not above leveraging that in order to expand our readership.

I am also trying to balance the gender, the age of the participants, and of course, the location of the interviewees. Mitchell has the highest population of West Perth residents, but it's important that ALL of West Perth is represented in some capacity. I'm finding age variation to be the biggest challenge.

To start with, the older people in our community are often interesting simply due to the fact that they've experienced more life than the rest of us! As well, those of us who are still actively involved in the workforce are often reluctant to be in the spotlight. Maybe it's modesty, maybe it's concern about being a gossip target, or just general shyness, but it's much less likely that someone under forty will say "yes" to being interviewed. And kids? Good luck getting most parents to sign off on anything that publishes specific details of their kids. It's completely understandable given the world we live in, what with social media bullying and privacy concerns, but it makes that whole "age representation" challenging!

take notes, and it's a pleasure to be able to sit and talk with people. I prefer to interview people in their homes as there's something about being in personal spaces that gives you a sense of who people are; it definitely helps with the writing process.

Once the interview is done, I head back home where I'm supposed to write notes about things I found particularly interesting. I suck at this part. Generally I end up mulling the interview over in my head *ad nauseum* until my deadline gets close enough to cause mild panic. Then I'll transfer the interview transcript over to a google doc, read through it, decide I never should have started this project in the first place, and try to figure out if I can just DO the interviews without having to write about them afterwards. Obviously this does not work. Once the actual deadline looms close enough, the anxiety stops and I'm able to figure out what it is I want to write.

After the article is written, I madly try to pair appropriate photographs (often resorting to stealing pictures from facebook pages). I *try* to take photos using my phone, but usually I'm so caught up in the actual conversation that I don't actually notice that the lighting is bad or they have a silly facial expression until it's too late to remedy it. Thankfully, many people have their own photographs that they're willing to send.

Finally it's time to add the interview into the current issue of the Heronry. It can be rather finicky to fit in all the content without accidentally forgetting to put in the answers to last month's Sudoku, or chopping off the last few lines of text in an article. Thankfully I've got a nice group of editors who have been helping make sure that the extensive amount of errors our first few issues sported will not be repeated!

Once the whole publication is proofed and sent off to the printers, I finally get to breathe easy... for about a week. Then the whole process starts over again, with me pledging that THIS MONTH, I will be better organized and not end up scrambling last minute to write something worth printing. Who knows? This month it might even happen!



The Planning Process Part 2

At this time, I'm currently in the research phase of this composition project where I'm reading books related to the history of these historical sites and the general history of the Huron Tract. I will be using the knowledge from this research to help inform the decisions I make to best capture the essence and characteristics of the historical sites in my compositions.

Come spring/summer, the second phase of my research will be visiting each of these sites and recording my reactions and impressions of visiting these locations as well as taking photos of the site. This information will provide a new context that will inform and may change the way I plan to compose these pieces.

I've visited a few locations in person the past few summers, including: the Fryfogel Tavern, the Goderich Gaol and Tiger Dunlop's Tomb / Gairbraid, so I've collected some research and photos at these locations. However, prior to or during my visits this spring/summer, I plan to connect with the site staff and local historical organizations about my project to inquire about additional resources and support as well as potentially schedule time to compose in these spaces.

Based on my research so far, below are a few of my ideas for the other three pieces I plan to write (Tiger Dunlop Tomb / Gairbraid, Castle Kilbride and Hicks House). Once I visit these sites and begin the composition process, my initial ideas may evolve and change.

Tiger Dunlop Tomb / Gairbraid

Last summer, I visited Tiger Dunlop's Tomb a couple times when I was in Goderich. My initial observations were that it's a peaceful and calm spot, with limited foot traffic as well as protected and shaded by trees. Beside his tomb, there are benches with a lovely view of the Menestung Bridge and Maitland River. There you can sit and listen to the birds singing in the tree and watch dragonflies zipping by. I want this piece to reflect the calm and

meditative nature of this site and to be a piece that listeners can sit and relax to.

Castle Kilbride

I envision this piece to be structured in a similar manner to a theme and variations format, where a melody is initially stated and followed by various altered versions of the melodic idea. I want to start with a simple melody that adds layers and gradually becomes more luxurious, majestic and ornate with each repetition. This structure reflects the career development of James Livingston, the man who built and lived in Castle Kilbride.

Born into a family of linen weavers, James found himself working in the flax industry before working his way up to founding and running his own business with his brother. This business eventually expanded into the linseed oil industry. He grew these industries in Upper Canada to the point he was nicknamed, the "Flax and Linseed Oil King." To pay homage to James Livingston's Scottish history, I plan to incorporate elements of Scottish music, including Scottish snaps, into this piece.

Hicks House

I plan to write this piece in two parts. My idea for this piece is that the melodic idea for the first part will represent the Commercial Hotel, the predecessor of the Hicks House that burned down. The first part of the piece will die away to represent the fire that took the Commercial Hotel and transition into the second part of the piece that represents the Hicks House, which still stands today. The second part of the piece will take the melodic idea from the first part of the piece and morph it into a completely different idea; to take inspiration from the "old" to make something "new". This melodic idea for the second part will be grandiose and lush to capture the grand structure of the Hicks House.

This summer/spring will be an interesting time full of learning and composing and I can't wait to share it with you!



April Horoscopes

Did you know that you are more than just your Sun sign? For the most accurate insight, read your horoscope in this order: Start with your Rising sign, as it reflects your overall life path and how experiences unfold. Then read your Sun sign, which speaks to your personality, energy, and where you shine. Finally, check your Moon sign for a deeper understanding of your emotions and what truly fulfills you.

Aries: March 21 - April 21 It's your season to shine, all focus is on you, my friend. Step into the true Aries archetype of the fearless risk-taker who jumps in headfirst and figures out the rest along the way. Happy Birthday, Aries!

Taurus: April 21 - May 20 The planet of love, attraction, and money, is moving through your sign this month. You may find yourself very much in the market for romance and renewed financial stability.

Gemini: May 21 - June 20 It's a great month for social activity, so keep an eye out for new potentials and possibilities that may arise through your social network, friend groups, clubs, or community circles.

Cancer: June 21 - July 21 The bold energy of Aries season may feel a little intense for the sensitive and nurturing Cancer this month. If you're willing to come out of your shell and to take a small risk or two, you may discover that things work out more beautifully than expected.

Leo: July 22 - Aug 22 Leo thrives in the initiatory energy of Aries season. You may start to see some noticeable gains in your professional life or public reputation. When Leo shines authentically, the world can't help but notice.

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22 There's a strong focus on matters related to large investments, mortgages, bills, taxes, or other financial commitments. Leaning into your natural Virgo strengths of analytical thinking, organization, and effective problem-solving can really help this month.

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22 You may find other people are taking up a lot of your time and energy. Call on your true Libra power: the ability to create balance, equality, and harmony so that your needs and the needs of others can coexist with grace and fairness.

Scorpio: Oct 23 - Nov 21 Change is calling to you. This could show up as a new diet, workout routine, or even a fresh job or shift in your day-to-day schedule. Now is the time to take a leap, trust yourself and embrace the change.

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 20 Your passion for the outdoors, sports, fun, and play is calling loudly and it's time to answer. Ride this wave of enthusiasm; it's the perfect time to embrace movement, adventure, and joy. Heck, you may even enjoy the spring clean up this month!

Capricorn: Dec 21 - Jan 20 Seeking harmony and cooperation within your home and family can set the stage for bigger achievements. When everyone is working together, you'll have a solid foundation that nothing can shake, allowing you to push confidently toward your long-term goals.

Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18 It's time to explore what truly excites and resonates with your authentic self. As the zodiac's rebel, don't worry if your choices start to turn heads. It's time to learn new things, spark up conversations with strangers and open your mind to all possibilities.

Pisces: Feb 19 - March 20 Your mind is on money, and money is on your mind. New developments in how you earn, manage, or relate to money may spark a renewed sense of self-worth and clarify your values.

Maggie Turner is a local professional astrologer, who loves to help heal and support people along their path in life with the amazing tool of astrology. Want to know more or book a personal reading? You can e-mail Maggie at magzturner9@gmail.com or find her on social media @mysticmaggzastro

Maria Antone

Maria is 13 years old and has always enjoyed multiple forms of art. She gets her inspiration from her big sister Raven and her mom. She is still exploring with different mediums and has proven herself to be talented in all areas so far.

While Maria has more passion for the outdoors, she still loves to make art occasionally during her downtime. She is always open to learning new techniques, and is proud of all her efforts! She enjoys making art for loved ones, as well as for herself; she uses it to decorate her room.

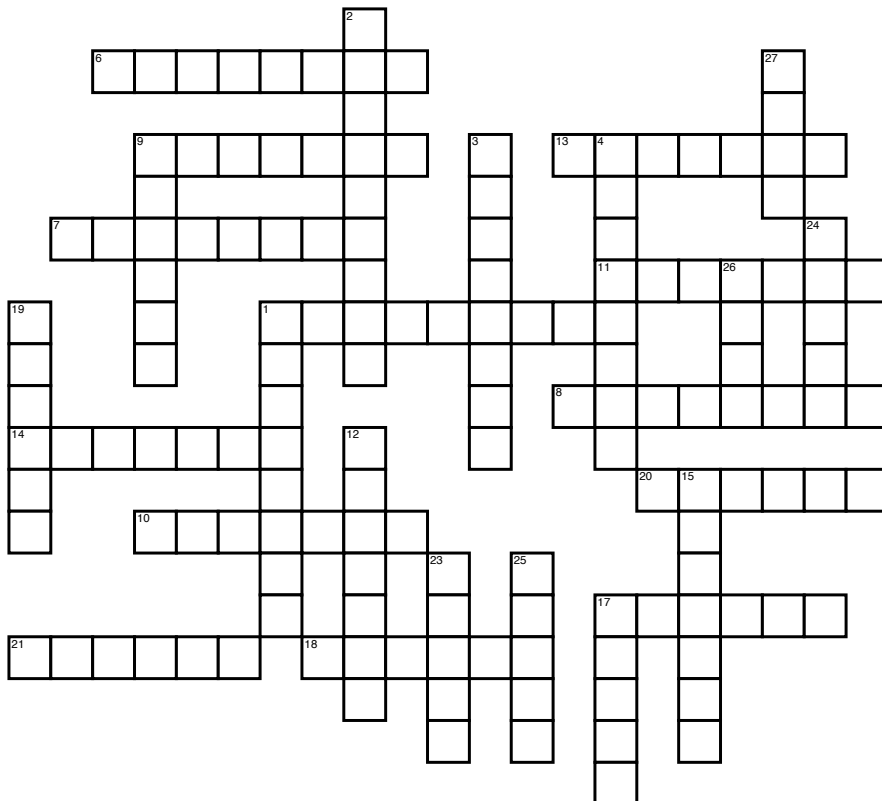


Crossword Puzzle

Across:

1. Popular sweet treat found in Easter baskets (9)
6. Bright yellow flower that blooms in early spring (8)
7. Weather prediction given by meteorologists (8)
8. Activity of putting seeds or plants into soil (8)
9. Rain often associated with the month of April (7)
10. Day when daylight and darkness are nearly equal (7)

11. Multicoloured arc that can appear after rainfall (7)
13. Ray of sunlight shining through clouds (7)
14. Loud sound caused by lightning (7)
17. Light and gentle wind (6)
18. Powder from flowers that spreads during spring (6)
20. Area where plants or vegetables are grown (6)
21. Small pool of water left after rain (6)



Down:

2. Seasonal movement of animals or birds (9)
3. Very young plant just beginning to grow (8)
4. Item used to stay dry in rainy weather (8)
5. Sound made by birds in the morning (8)
12. Tree flower in spring (7)
15. Reaction during pollen season (7)
16. First growth emerging from a seed (6)
19. Soft colour palette common in spring (6)
22. To produce flowers in spring (5)
23. Spring flower grown from a bulb (5)
24. Red-breasted bird (5)
25. Animal traditionally linked with Easter (5)
26. Structure to hold eggs (4)
27. Ground begins to warm and soften (4)



Indy Jones

Indy is a Vizsla – a Hungarian Pointer breed that's known for being a well-rounded breed in terms of intelligence and temperament. True to her heritage, she's very sensitive, incredibly smart, and family oriented. At age 13, she's a bit of an old lady dog, but her roots still shine through.

For the first few years of her life, she and her human, Colin, would spend hours hiking all over the trails in and surrounding their hometown of Stratford. As she's aged and they moved to Mitchell, she's lost some of her oomph. These days they tend to stick to the local areas like Fullarton Conservation Area, Sawyer's Bush, and the West Perth Wetlands.

That local proximity has brought it's own compensations. Indy is a dog who loves to run with a pack. Now part of the same group as Pippin (mentioned January's issue), she'll gambol around the various members in the group, begging for treats and occasionally playing with the pups. She's happier doing a short walk with the group than she is doing a long solo one. Indy likes to play (at least when she has the energy for it), but she's never been overly dominant or submissive. Mostly she hangs out doing her own thing, while enjoying the proximity of her dog friends and people.

Indy looooves people. When she was younger, despite her humans' best efforts, she was the type that would jump all over you, licking your face, or just wiggling like crazy due to how happy she was to see you. At 50lbs, she was convinced that she was a lap dog and needed to be RIGHT ON you whether you were watching TV or trying to sleep. As she's aged, her

legs have gotten too sore to do much jumping anymore, and she's become more protective of her space while sleeping. When around town she still loves to make new people friends.

Meeting new dogs is a bit more complicated than meeting new humans. If she's out with her main human, Colin, Indy is happy to be introduced, but if Colin's mom, Liz, is walking with her, Indy is very protective! She'll bark to warn other dogs not to come too close! During the winter you can probably recognize her by the blue coat she often wears. While it's not her favourite, she's pretty good about leaving it on; it definitely helps her stay warm when the snow drifts are high.

Although her muzzle is showing a lot of grey these days, Indy is constantly demonstrating that old dogs *can* learn new tricks. She's figured out which people she can manipulate into giving her treats. She doesn't hesitate guilting people with her attitude and will so go so far as pretending that she needs to go outside in order to steal the warm spot on the couch or bed! She's been a lifeline for Colin through the ups and downs and he is so thankful for her presence in his life.



Indy looking noble at the West Perth Wetlands

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Project Kayak Central

About a year and a half ago, David Price spoke to our Rotary Club about making kayaks available to people in West Perth. David is part of the Stratford group 'Light up the Night' that gets together once a month and invites people with kayaks or canoes to join them with their boats decorated with lights. I have been to the event and witnessed 80-100 people glowing in the night along the Thames River, so I was excited, but even the non-kayakers in our Rotary club quickly saw the opportunity. This could be a chance to provide the people of West Perth with a new way to enjoy Lions Park and our beautiful Thames River.

We're targetting a model that is similar to one in St Marys; for over five years they have been lending out kayaks through bookings that are processed by the St Marys Public Library. They have also put in a handicapped accessible launch. The launch provides a place for wheelchair users to safely use the river for fishing and is also a safe area for transitioning into a canoe or kayak.

Rotary formed a committee which took our request forward to town council mid-April of 2025. There we received the support of the West Perth Council and the promise of assistance of municipal staff. They may have not known some of us at the time, but they've been getting the chance to learn our faces!

Kayak Central is a plan with 2 phases. The first is the purchase and loaning out of kayaks that will be stored in an open storage rack/shack during the kayak season. Due to requirements that the rack be kept out of any flooding areas we hope to have it near or in the gravel parking lot off Blanchard St.

We are trying very hard to get phase one in place sometime this summer. The second phase will be to get a launch installed, which will likely take much longer.

Our West Perth community have been very supportive and enthusiastic so far! There are quite a few kayakers already accessing our park and the

beautiful river we have. The Rotary Club has sent out a fundraising request letter for our support for Kayak Central and for future Rotary events and projects in the community.

You may have seen some of our posters for the **Paddles 'n Pints Dance** in shops, arenas and other community places in West Perth. This is a fundraising dance to support Kayak Central, to be held at the Crystal Palace in Mitchell on April 24th. You can get tickets at Deck Dentistry, Mitchell Office Pro, Floral Treasures, and The Black Donnelly's.

A local group called *Strings and Traps* are coming to help us bop the night away and socialize with friends and new acquaintances. As well, Ken's Fries plans on being outside to make sure we don't go hungry, and Black Donnelly's Brewery will fill the niche of our local craft brewery. There will be a raffle and prizes to support the cause; come out and join us for a great time!

We keep hearing that the people of West Perth are pleased and excited for the opportunity to relax, cruise the river, and try out a new sport. This certainly is a way to get a new look at one of our oldest area resources - the water!

One of our members (Pauline Linton) put it this way, "They say it takes a village, but the Rotary Club of Mitchell believes it also takes a beautiful, serene river, a kayak and a summer day". It is our hope that creating Kayak Central by our lovely Lions Park will help make West Perth an even more "Pleasant Place to Live."

West Perth Community

These events are open to the general community. An asterisk means preregistration or an appointment is required. A do

April 1 - Wednesday

Tales & Tunes | 10:15am | West Perth Public Library
Progressive Euchre | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
Community Garden Clean up | 4pm | Veteran's Park
Please bring your own gardening gloves!
Chicken Noodle Soup | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

April 2 - Thursday

Ham Roll Draw | 5pm - Close | Mitchell Legion
DIY Crafts | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

April 3 - Friday

Mitchell Foodbank* | 1:30pm - 4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
Catch the Ace Draw | 4pm | Mitchell Legion
Drop-In | Closed | Youth Centre

April 4 - Saturday

Easter Egg Hunt | 7am - 3pm | West Perth Community Centre
Men's Community Breakfast | 8:30 - 9:45am | 101 Restaurant

April 6- Monday

Optimist Music Festival | 12:30pm | Knox Presbyterian Church
Optimist Music Festival | 6:30pm | Knox Presbyterian Church

April 7 - Tuesday

Rotary Club | 7:15am | Deck Dentistry Basement
Optimist Music Festival | 9:15am | Knox Presbyterian Church
Senior's Fitness | 9:30am | West Perth Community Centre
Mahjong | 1pm | West Perth Public Library
Crafter's Circle | 2pm - 3pm | WPPL (Library)
Minute-to-Win-It | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Mitchell Lions Club | 6:45pm | 160
Optimist Music Festival | 6:30pm | Knox Presbyterian Church

April 8 - Wednesday

Optimist Music Festival | 9:15am | Knox Presbyterian Church
Tales & Tunes | 10:15 - 10:45 | West Perth Public Library
Dessert Quesadillas | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Progressive Euchre | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion

April 9 - Thursday

Optimist Music Festival | 9:15am | Knox Presbyterian Church
Drop-In | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

Early ON's Play & Read | 9:30am - 11:30am | Kirkton C.C.
Paws4Stories* | 6:15pm - 7pm | West Perth Public Library
Legion Members Meeting | 7:30pm | Mitchell Legion

April 10 - Friday

Early ON's Play & Learn | 9:30am - 11:30am | Mitchell Arena
Mitchell Foodbank* | 9:30am - 4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
\$15 Lunch | 12pm | Mitchell Legion
Early ON's Baby Time | 1pm - 3pm | WPPL (Library)
Lego Building | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Catch the Ace Draw | 4pm | Mitchell Legion
Concert of Stars | 7pm | Upper Thames Elementary School

April 11 - Saturday

Brodhagen Community Centre, Dinner/Dance, featuring
Dianne and the Cavaliers | Brodhagen Community Centre
Doors @ 4, Dinner @ 5 (Dinner Tickets by April 4th), Dance @ 6 - 10 (tickets for dance only available), call: 519-301-8667
Annual Pool Tournament | 8am | Mitchell Legion

April 13 - Monday

Early ON's Play & Learn | 9:30am - 11:30am | Mitchell Arena
Spring Art Studio | 4pm | West Perth Public Library
Storytime with Teddy | 5:45pm | WPPL (Library)
Dungeons & Dragons* | 5:30pm - 8pm | Youth Centre

April 14 - Tuesday

Rotary Club | 7:15am | Deck Dentistry Basement
Senior's Fitness | 9:30am | West Perth Community Centre
Mahjong | 1pm | West Perth Public Library
Free Blood Pressure Clinic | 1pm - 3pm | WPPL (Library)
Crafter's Circle | 2pm - 3pm | WPPL (Library)
Rainbow Fruit Kabobs | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Kin Club Meeting | 7pm | Mitchell Legion

April 15 - Wednesday

Tales & Tunes | 10:15 | West Perth Public Library
Progressive Euchre | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
Spaghetti & Meatballs | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

April 16 - Thursday

Early ON's Play & Learn | 9:30am - 11:30am | Mitchell Arena
Mitchell Foodbank* | 9:30am - 4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
Paper Airplane Competition | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Paws4Stories* | 6:15pm - 7pm | West Perth Public Library

ity Events: April 2026

Floral sign indicates the event is not free.

April 17 - Friday

Early ON's Play & Learn | 9:30am - 11:30am | Mitchell Arena
\$15 Lunch | 12pm | Mitchell Legion
Mitchell Foodbank* | 1:30pm - 4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
Catch the Ace Draw | 4pm | Mitchell Legion
Night Drop-In | 7pm -9:30 | Youth Centre
Early ON's Baby Time | 1pm - 3pm | WPPL (Library)

April 18 - Saturday

Sensational Slime* | 11am | Arena Activity Room

April 19 - Sunday

Early ON's Play & Learn | 9:30am - 11:30am | Mitchell Arena
The Mitchella 3 Show (\$) | 2pm | Mitchell Legion

April 20 - Monday

Active Adults | 9:30am | West Perth Community Centre
Mahjong | 1pm | West Perth Public Library
Crafter's Circle | 2pm - 3pm | WPPL (Library)
Dungeons & Dragons* | 5:30pm - 8pm | Youth Centre

April 21 - Tuesday

Rotary Club | 7:15am | Deck Dentistry Basement
Senior's Fitness | 9:30am | West Perth Community Centre
Mahjong | 1pm | West Perth Public Library
Crafter's Circle | 2pm - 3pm | WPPL (Library)
Earth Day Activities | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

April 22 - Wednesday

Tales & Tunes | 10:15 | West Perth Public Library
Early ON's Play & Move | 10am - 11:30am | Downie Opt. C.C.
Progressive Euchre | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
Newcomer Services | 1pm - 4pm | West Perth Public Library
Jelly Bean Nests | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Junior Explorers* | 6:15pm - 7pm | WP Public Library

April 23 - Thursday

Early ON's Play & Read | 9:30am - 11:30am | Kirkton C.C.
Lego Lounge | 11am | West Perth Public Library
Early ON's Baby Time | 1pm - 3pm | WPPL (Library)
Indoor Games Day | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Paws4Stories* | 6:15pm - 7pm | West Perth Public Library

April 24 - Friday

Early ON's Play & Learn | 9:30am - 11:30am | Mitchell Arena
\$15 Lunch | 12pm | Mitchell Legion
Mitchell Foodbank* | 1:30pm - 4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
Catch the Ace Draw | 4pm | Mitchell Legion
Paddles & Pints Dance (\$) | 8pm - 12pm | Crystal Palace

April 25 - Saturday

Early ON's Play & Learn | 10am - 11am | PCFK
Floral Arranging 101* | 11am - 1pm | WP Community Room
Open Mic | 12:30pm - 4pm | Mitchell Legion

April 27 - Monday

Active Adults | 9:30am | West Perth Community Centre
Senior's Book Chat | 11am | Ritz Manor
Dungeons & Dragons* | 5:30pm - 8pm | Youth Centre

April 28 - Tuesday

Rotary Club | 7:15am | Deck Dentistry Basement
Senior's Fitness | 9:30am | West Perth Community Centre
Family Services | 1pm - 3pm | West Perth Public Library
Mahjong | 1pm | West Perth Public Library
Crafter's Circle | 2pm - 3pm | WPP Library
Drop-In | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

April 29 - Wednesday

Tales & Tunes | 10:15am | West Perth Public Library
Progressive Euchre | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
The Irish Cowboys: Dance | 1:30pm - 3:30pm | W.P.C.C.
Drop-In | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

April 30 - Thursday

Mitchell Foodbank* | 9:30am - 4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
Agilec Employment Services | 1pm - 4:30 | WPP Library
Catch the Ace Draw | 4pm | Mitchell Legion
Drop-In | 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Paws4Stories* | 6:15pm - 7pm | West Perth Public Library
Greater than Sum Band | 7:30pm | Crystal Palace

Event Submission Link



Submit your club meeting or community event to the Heronry and expand your reach! Submissions are due the 15th of the month prior.



Hungry Times

Most of us will know what it feels like to be hungry. The cues of hunger include discomfort, or a familiar rumbling which announces that food is required. When those cues arrive, most of us know how we are going to address them. We will just grab something on our lunch break or we know that there will be food in the house once we go grocery shopping. Meanwhile the cupboards still have many items in them - just not what we want to eat. We ultimately know that there will be an end to our hunger.

Some of the people reading this article will know what it feels like to genuinely go hungry. To not know where the next meal will come from because there simply isn't enough food or money to ensure that there is enough food to go around.

Food insecurity is defined as when people or their families have inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. Over one million Ontarians needed foodbanks in 2023-2024 and rent is one of the main reasons for visiting foodbanks. Mitchell has witnessed a seventy-five percent increase in foodbank usage over the past four years alone!

As the statistics have changed over the years so have the demographics of foodbank users. At one time foodbank usage was thought of as something done only by those receiving social assistance. In present day, there is a growing number of individuals that are working full time, but their income simply does not cover the cost daily living - let alone when an unexpected expense arises.

Regardless of who is experiencing food insecurity, the effects stay consistent. Adults experience poorer overall health physically and mentally and in addition to this

children may also experience negative impacts on their physical and mental development.

When the community donates food to their local foodbank it helps subsidize the cost of a hamper. The Mitchell foodbank provides roughly one week of food including: non-perishables, bread, meat, milk, eggs and produce. In addition, thanks in



part to community support, the foodbank can also offer hygiene products, feminine hygiene items, diapers, formula, and pet food. When the community provides monetary donations this allows for us to operate a location and purchase any items we are lacking including food or school supplies for our backpack program.

Volunteers are a significant part of our workforce. We could not do what we do without them. Volunteering provides the community with an opportunity to give back, develop relationships, gain experience, and gives perspective on the human experience.

Many times we forget how fortunate we are to have food on our shelves, (whether it is our favorite or not). How lucky we are to know where the next meal will come from, to know how our bills will be paid, and to know that someone genuinely cares about us. Many of us have a network, a community, or a village that we know, should times get tough, are there to support us.

Our goal at the foodbank is not only to provide some relief when it comes to making sure there is food on the shelves, but also to provide a space and a human connection so that people accessing our services feel respected and supported. We strive to provide hope in hard times to our community and we could not do it without all of you.



All Negatives

As I mentioned in the last issue, I would like to provide a bit of information (and hopefully, a bit of inspiration) pertaining to the growing trend toward making Alternate Process Photographic Prints. To make Alternate Process Prints, we will need a *negative* that will have an image the same size as the print that we want to make. But before we get too far into the technical aspects of making a negative, it would probably be a good idea to go over the steps and terminology needed to put the plan into action.

Some of the terms that will be used here were commonplace before the widespread acceptance of digital image making. Of these terms we are going to concentrate on the ones that refer to the ‘reading’ and making of the tool that will be used to make photographic prints — the negative (and to be exact, for our purposes, the black and white negative).



A negative of a group of tractors

Simply put, a negative is an image that is made upon a clear base and in which all values from light to dark are the exact opposite of the values as they exist in nature. What that means is that the sky in a negative will be dark, while the landscape will be light — reversed from what we would expect.

When we use a light-sensitive coating to make an image, the areas where light strikes the coating will darken whereas the areas that are not affected by light will not change. (This is a very simplified explanation, but you get the idea.)

To make Alternate Process Prints, a piece of paper is coated with a light-sensitive material and is then exposed to a bright light source (traditionally the sun) with the negative pressed firmly against the coated paper. This action will expose the light-sensitive coating on the paper. The dark areas of the negative will prevent the light from exposing certain parts of the paper while the paler areas of

the negative will allow the light to go through; this will result in the paper darkening in proportion to the amount of light it receives. The resulting print will have the skies and landscape restored to their natural appearance.

To make a working black and white negative from a digital image—either from a digital camera or the camera in your phone, you will need access the photo manipulation software on your computer.

Please be aware that I am not a computer person so my explanation may be a bit awkward, but I’ll do my best. I transfer phone images to my laptop for conversion.

Start by opening the image in the computer using Paint—a free Windows editing program.

Crop (cut down from the original by moving the borders in) the image if you wish.

Next, open adjustments, click on *Black and White* and then on *Invert Colours* and voila, you will have a black and white negative. This image will print well in most printers but most people say that ink jet printers are the best.

Finally, go to a store that sells “good stuff” and buy the best image quality transparent sheets that you can buy. This is crucial. Regular transparency sheets are too smooth and the ink particles tend to clump on the surface of the sheets and will not produce a good negative.

Good luck, good editing and good printing. I don’t want to overwhelm anyone with information, so next time I’ll go over some of the basic rules of composition as well as some that are specific to taking photographs, and then in a later issue I’ll get into the details of making prints.



Many vs Much & Less vs Fewer

A simple, basic primer on stuff you probably never studied as an English speaker:

English has Countable (1,2,3...) words that are singular or plural, even if they don't necessarily end with an 's'. e.g.: *a/one book, two books a/ one person, two people, one house, three houses*. English also has UNcountable words that have no singular or plural 's' form - meaning that you can't use a number in front of them. You would never ask someone for one information. These occur when words refer to a collection of items or abstract ideas. e.g.: *food, water, time, work, information, advice, equipment, love, respect*.

MANY & FEWER

Hot Tip: If it ends in -s, and/or it's an 's-less' plural, use 'many' and 'fewer'.

We use 'Many' and 'Fewer' with Countable words/ plurals.

<i>many books</i>	<i>fewer books</i>
<i>many people</i>	<i>fewer people</i>
<i>many houses</i>	<i>fewer houses</i>

MUCH & LESS

We use 'Much' and 'Less' with Uncountable (No 's') words:

<i>(not) much food</i>	<i>less food</i>
<i>(not) much time</i>	<i>less time</i>
<i>(not) much information</i>	<i>less information</i>
<i>(not) much work</i>	<i>less work</i>

Hot Tip: If it ends with an 'S', DON'T USE 'LESS'

Avoid using 'Less' with plurals. Use 'Fewer'

Incorrect:

There are less people here than there were yesterday.

Correct:

There are fewer people here than there were yesterday.

Incorrect:

Use this register if you have 10 items or less.

Correct:

Use this register if you have 10 items or fewer.

Use this register if you have fewer than 10 items.

Sudoku Puzzle

Fill in the grid with digits so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box have the digits 1-9 (no repeats allowed).

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



April Fools: Not us!

April 1st...April Fools Day? Well, I cannot be fooled into thinking that today, or any other day at this time of year, won't show us the crazy ups and downs of a new spring season here in West Perth. But I love spring! I love April! Not only because it is my birth month but because it really is the beginning of springtime. We could still experience the odd wintry day but the past season's icy grip is weakening. The sun's rays are now stronger, warming our earth and our souls. Softer air, smelling like life itself is gently blowing in, about to land. Many days I hear faint trickling sounds as remaining ice morphs to water. The chickadee's spring song echoes from our shrubbery.



Repurposing those old dead trees!

Much of rural life in April revolves around the weather. The wise have been preparing: strengthening muscles, improving cardio fitness, stretching routinely to preserve flexibility...all of this in preparation for our big spring "to do list."

Last month, I reflected on a springtime thirty six years ago when our family purchased this rural homestead on Line 26. In that year (1990) as of April first, we had not physically taken up residence here yet, but it was ours, and so, observing the springtime country routines and assessing how we would soon undertake all of the necessary tasks was "top of mind". Where we had come from in the far North, most years, real spring doesn't arrive until June!

No fooling! This property was definitely in need of some spring work, particularly the expansive grounds. The April thaw revealed thick scrub brush which had overtaken many areas of our yard. There were numerous standing dead Lombardy poplar trees to be removed. These gray sentinels stood lining the lane up to the farthest outbuilding.

Burms created from many decades of plowed furrows lined the perimeter of our land; these would need to be brushed out, weeded and levelled. Remnants of dried burdocks rose starkly from the landscape. Rusty, sagging page wire fencing had appeared from its hiding place under the snow banks. One lone and rickety drive shed, long having outlived its use had apparently been re-purposed into a small livestock barn as evidenced by its healthy rat population. This building stood, albeit with a perilous lean, at the very rear of our two acre lot. It presented us with a bleak portrait, as the old metal siding now rusting and peeling freely had once been painted black!

There was also a second outbuilding in the form of a two car garage. Its metal siding was in somewhat better shape but the appeal of the faded lime green colour with the black peeling doors left much to be desired. Outdated hydro wires bringing power in from the gravel road (then known as Concession 6) swayed in the breezes as they spanned the lifeless tree line heading towards the decrepit drive shed.

Oh my! There was a lot of room for improvement on our "new" rural property. Needless to say, our spring "to do list" was a long one back in 1990. We were young, strong and eager to begin work as the spring season fuelled our energies.

April Fools we were not! Our eyes were capable of seeing through the umpteen tasks ahead of us here and we saw the true potential that lay ahead. On that spring day, thirty-six years ago we began our adventure: our journey towards that potential at Windbreak Farm. Today, we realize it!

April Bird Bingo

Spot these birds as spring arrives in West Perth



Merganser



Mallard Duck



Cardinal



Black Capped Chickadee



European Starling



American Crow



Wild Turkey



Red-Tail Hawk



Dark Eyed Junco



Blue Jay



Song Sparrow



Downy Woodpecker



Bald Eagle



Robin



Tundra Swan



Merlin

Check off each bird you spot. Get a row for BINGO.



SUBMIT YOUR PHOTO

Send us a photo of you with your bingo card or share your bird photos and get featured!





Cheeseburger Casserole

Ingredients

- 4 cups of uncooked Macaroni noodles
- 2lbs ground beef
- 1 chopped onion (optional)
- 1 can of cream of cheddar cheese soup
- 1 can of tomato soup
- 1 can of cream of celery soup
- 1 can of cream of chicken soup (can substitute for mushroom or any other kind you prefer, I double up on celery instead of chicken)
- Salt and pepper
- Additional spices of your choice (I usually add a little garlic seasoning)
- Shredded cheese (optional)

Instructions

1. Cook macaroni noodles as per directions on bag
2. Brown ground beef and onions
3. In a large sauce pan, heat the 4 cans of soup and add salt, pepper and spices
4. Add in macaroni noodles and cooked beef to sauce. Stir.
5. Add in shredded cheese
6. Ready to be served.
7. Freeze half for a later date.

This recipe was one my grandma had found. It became a staple meal in my household growing up and now I make it for my 4 kids at least once or twice a month. It's a simple recipe that is easy to make and can be prepped and served in less than an hour. It's also a recipe that you can add extra ingredients to customize it to your own liking.

I never make mine the same as I'm that cook that doesn't measure very well; it's always a little of this and a little of that when I'm in the kitchen. I would also call this a budget friendly meal as the most expensive ingredient is the beef. The rest of the ingredients are ones that come on sale quite frequently and that most people might have in their cupboards.

I hope you enjoy this easy and simple meal as much as my family has for generations.

The Sugar Maple Restaurant

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Specializing in Homemade
Soups, Sandwiches & Salads

Burger & Fries,
Donuts and Other Baked Goods



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David Doyle Landscape Artist



Christina tB Hotz
the Heronry Editor

David Doyle ended up in Mitchell the same way that many of us did. He and his wife were looking at houses in the surrounding areas, put offers in on many of them, and for one reason or another, all those bids fell through. When their offer was accepted in Mitchell, it was with less than two weeks to go before they had to be out of their previous house in Stratford, and they ended up with a much larger home than they anticipated.

That house has been a huge boon. It backs onto the river, and while the backyard slopes so much that it's not the safest playing area for small grandkids to play unattended, it has an amazing view of the water. For an artist who loves to paint landscapes, he's got an incredible source of inspiration. The basement is only half embedded in the hill, which means that the light floods in through the sliding glass doors and various windows. It's the perfect place for a studio.



David in his studio

David works primarily in acrylics. Once upon a time he used watercolours and dabbled in other mediums, but the layering he does works well with the more controllable and fast-drying medium that is acrylic paint. (Personally, I think he'd get some phenomenal effects from painting with oil, but it's a bit tricky to deal with solvents and longer drying times when you also live with cats.)

Landscapes and light are his primary subjects. Back in the 70s, he went to the University of York and learned all about “non-representational art” which still influences his work. Usually when

people hear “non-representational art” they roll their eyes or mime falling asleep – usually because they assume that it's always going to look like a toddler got into the finger paints, or someone threw paint at a canvas and walked away. David's work is more similar to that of Van Gogh or Monet. Like so many landscape painters, he takes tremendous inspiration from the Group of Seven. Like them, his subjects are actual physical things like rocks and trees, but he's not concerned about making them look EXACTLY like the photograph he uses as inspiration. While he tried out photorealism in his painting when he was younger and respects the challenge, for him painting is more about the process of figuring out the brush strokes and colours that make his work sing.

His workspace is one of the tidiest I've ever seen from an artist. It includes a table that's absolutely covered in tubes and bottles of acrylic paint (kept organized in plastic trays), a few screens, and an easel with bits of weighted dental floss hanging off it (for making straight lines). The neatness of his workspace is reflected in the precision of his process. No haphazard flinging of pigment takes place in this studio! Every decision is made with as much care as possible, which theoretically results in a painting David deems “successful.”

He typically starts with a photograph. Usually it's one that was captured by his wife, Nancy, when they're out on one of their many kayak trips. The two of them love getting out on the water, and have even bought a tandem kayak that splits into three parts, which makes it much easier to transport! That photograph is then examined and cropped so

Ordinary Extraordinary People

that the most interesting part of it can become the focus of a painting. From there, David uses the grid method to help him draw the basic shapes onto his canvas. He'll then spend some time putting in the base colours that serve as an under-painting. Once the under-painting is completed, David says he often stops looking at the source photo completely. Detaching from the source image helps him come up with the unique patterns and textures that make his work unique.

He spends about three to four hours a day working on a painting and will often take over a month to complete it. Even when it's "done" he'll leave it up on the wall of his studio space so that it can spend some time "percolating" before it's "declared absolutely finished."

Photographs, because they're one dimensional, have a way of flattening perspective. Landscape artists in particular, often avoid them due to this difficulty. David actually embraces this aspect in most of his work. Rather than artificially trying to increase the sense of perspective, he often emphasizes the flatness with his choice of obvious brush strokes and intensity of colour. It's part of what makes his work interesting. There's a constant push/pull where your eye wants to move deeper into the landscape but the way that it's painted keeps pulling you up short. His work isn't trying to fool you – it's a painting and it celebrates that.

These days David isn't worrying about selling his work. He used to spend a lot of time trying to get into juried art shows and promoting his work at Art in the Park in Stratford, but not anymore. Now he's doing art purely for the joy of self-expression. The walls of his home are getting rather full of completed work, but that doesn't bother him. Many will end up finding other homes



as David takes joy in donating his work to fundraisers and organizations – including our own local library.

He believes firmly in the importance of the arts in our educational system, and shakes his head at the lack of funding for it in both the public schools and at the university levels. Prior to retirement, David worked as a teacher, primarily teaching art to grades 7 and 8, and he finds the undermining of the arts to be incredibly sad.

Especially now as a retiree he finds that those few hours a day that he spends in his studio are key to keeping his emotions in balance, and his mind sharp; if it is that beneficial to adults, how much more beneficial is it for our young people to be able to be given a healthy outlet for the intense emotions that so many of them experience? To him, the ability to create beautiful things that bring joy to is the key to happiness. The fact that those skills are being treated as expendable is incredibly tragic.

A few years ago, when he was still teaching painting classes in the evenings, David tried to do his best to combat the fading interest in the arts by getting a local artist's group going. The West Perth Public Library had installed an art hanging system, and they wanted to feature a rotation of work from local artists. Despite his best efforts, after a few meetings, the group fizzled. The art being shared in the Heronry has given David hope that an art group might still be forthcoming in the future. For now, he shares his work and his process on his facebook page and hopes to inspire other people to start on their own artistic journeys. If you're interested in talking about art things, you can reach David at mrcanoehed@icloud.com or see more of his paintings on facebook @david.doyle.476149.



The End of Owl Season

As spring is upon us and owl season sadly comes to a halt, I feel blessed to have seen so many owls this winter. It is also an incredible honour to be able to share these images with you in this month's copy of *the Heronry*. I am sharing a few different types of owls, and I'm excited to include the very rare Great Grey Owl! These owls usually stay very far up north. I only had to drive two hours to see and photograph him in his natural habitat. Coming this far south from his normal territory, how could I not go visit him briefly?

I had only ever seen them at conservation areas before this. Every owl sighting seems like a miracle; however, this owl was beyond miraculous! I felt totally awestruck in his presence. I didn't even want to take photos, I was stunned and just happy to be able to observe him.

Of course I did lift my lens and shot about 30 frames but mostly I just stood watching him in almost disbelief. He was so amazing! On my Beyond The Branch photography Facebook page I have uploaded a few short videos for anyone interested in seeing them.



Great Grey Owl

Of course I've also included both male and female Snowy Owls in this issue, as they are the highlight of winters in Perth County, and a shot of an Eastern Screech Owl that took residence in my owl box last year. This year the squirrels took over before any owls had a chance!

Onwards to spring! I am looking forward to lots of sunshine and hopefully will soon be sharing the many types of warblers and other birds that migrate through our area.

Happy Spring Everyone!



Male and Female Snowy Owls



A screech owl hiding in my owl box

Local Wildlife Photography



Tundra Swans: Submitted by Angela Walker



Northern Cardinal: Submitted by Rita Christie



Muskrat: Submitted by Rita Christie



Ring-necked Ducks: Submitted by Rita Christie



Song Sparrow - Just arrived!: Submitted by Rita Christie



American Tree Sparrow: Submitted by Rita Christie



A Pottery Connection

My article, Mitchell Pottery: A Lifelong Dream Fulfilled, appeared in the 2nd issue of The Heronry. Since the studio is also a pickup location for The Heronry, I told all my pottery students about the article. That is what unleashed an interesting set of coincidences. I mentioned in the article that I had started potting in a ceramics program in high school with my teacher, Mr. Pigeon, in Kitchener. After reading that article, a pottery student of mine, David Kemp, phoned me to ask, "Was his name Peter, by any chance?" I hadn't mentioned his first name, and I was astonished to hear the question. I had been wondering for decades about Mr. Pigeon's whereabouts and wellbeing; Google searches had turned up nothing. With David's intervention, a longstanding puzzle was solved. Moreover, I learned more about my community!

Here's David's story:

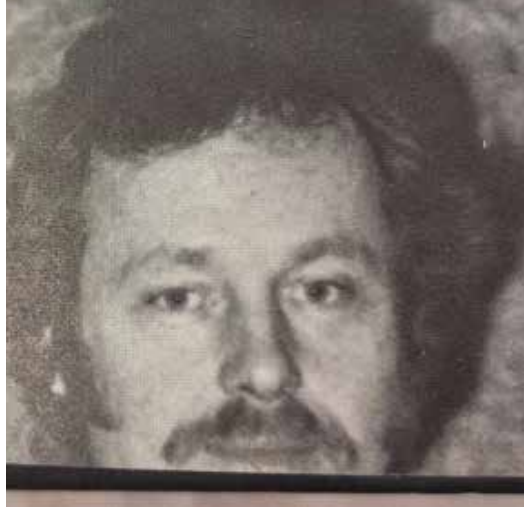
*So I went to pottery class this morning, Wed, Jan 21; had a great class and made 2 pots. I found out that Mitchell has a new monthly magazine, **the Heronry**, and I got 2 copies. There's an article by my pottery teacher, Visnja Cuturic, in the magazine and she says that she went to high school in Kitchener. Next, she mentions that she studied art for four years at high school and her teacher was Mr. Pigeon. That struck a chord.*

I had known a Verna Drake, the daughter of John Drake and Charlotte Norris from Staffa, who had married a high school teacher named "Peter Pigeon" and they lived in Galt; I wondered if there might be a connection.

I went home and through my connections I got in touch with Lorraine Bromley, a great granddaughter of the Drakes and her aunt, Pat Sim, and I presented the question: "Was

your cousin, Peter Pigeon a potter and art teacher?" Within a few minutes I had a response. "Yes, Peter Pigeon, who came to visit his grandmother in Staffa was indeed a pottery teacher in Kitchener. He is now living with his wife in France."

Visnja had also known the Pigeons' daughter, Debbie, from public school, and apparently, Debbie also was living in Stratford at some point.



Mr. Pigeon at the bottom of the 'Faculty' page of my 1979 yearbook.

In addition to these fun connections, Visnja and her husband live in the house in Mitchell that once belonged to Peter Pigeon's grandmother Drake's sister, Eliza Norris. An even more interesting coincidence was that the very next page I was scanning from my historical scrapbook collection was the obituary of Mrs. Hugh

Norris Sr., Mary Horton, who was Peter Pigeon's great grandmother, and who died in Visnja's house in 1937.

A side anecdote about my connection to Mr. Pigeon: in Grade 2, I had to do a project with Debbie Pigeon, his daughter, and because of that, long before I was ever a student in Mr. Pigeon's high-school ceramics class, and long before I met him in person, I visited his house. I don't remember much about it except for one strange detail. In their bathroom, the bathtub surround was very striking to my limited imagination at the time. It featured a recessed set of impressions of each of the family's derrières cast into the wall, side by side. I remember being fascinated, shocked, and perplexed all at once. I don't think that I mentioned it to Debbie, but I'm not sure. It stuck with me, though! I'm not even sure that I ever connected that event of seeing the Pigeon family's tushes to Mr. Pigeon after he became my teacher. Probably best!

A wonderful thing about my time at Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate and Vocational School (KCI), where I was in the “Academic Stream,” is that I received the Visual Arts Award, which now hangs on the wall of my office. It was remarkable that Mr. Pigeon allowed me to make big pots which took up a lot of valuable kiln space, and that I could take an “Independent” art course he supervised in Grade 13. We sat down together and created a curriculum based on what I wanted to learn, and I proceeded to develop my skills with clay independently, but with amazing mentorship from him. He was a very patient and open-hearted instructor. There weren’t many like him, I can assure you. I owe to Mr. Pigeon a love for both clay and teaching.

I’m sure that his ears are burning, since I’ve been discussing him a lot these days. Whether directly or indirectly, Peter Pigeon has had an influence on me and other students who have pursued our love of clay in one way or another.

Marsha Purvis, a Mitchell Pottery student who recently opened Pinestone Pottery, also went to KCI and knew Mr. Pigeon. We found out by accident that we had been at the same high school at the same time, but I am 4 years older. We discussed Mr. Pigeon over lunch at the Sugar Maple a few days ago.

At KCI, I also met my best friend, Marian Davies, in Mr. Pigeon’s Grade 11 ceramics class; she went on to obtain a B.A. in Fine Arts, Studio Major and has made some incredible sculptures. There, we also met Kirsten Abrahamson (BFA, MFA), who would become an instructor at Sheridan College, and whose ceramic work is featured at the Jonathon Bancroft-Snell Gallery in London. Marian and I recently reconnected with Kirsten, and of course, we discussed Mr. Pigeon, so I dragged out the yearbooks! We’re all in there! Amazing, the serendipity of it all! Thanks, Mr. Pigeon, *The Heronry*, and David Kemp for bringing us all together.



Yearbook Photos from the Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate and Vocational School. From left to right: Visnja, Kirsten, Marian, and Marsha



Photos from Mitchell Pottery Studio: From left to right: Visnja, Kirsten, Marian, and Marsha



Nostalgia and Dreams

Norm didn't exactly grow up dreaming of running a pinball game room in Mitchell. But in a strange way it makes perfect sense.

He grew up in Toronto, the oldest of five siblings, in the kind of neighbourhood where kids learn pretty quickly how to look after themselves. His childhood was busy, loud, and sometimes a little chaotic. Their backyard was cement, the streets were their playground, and life had a way of throwing curveballs early. "I was a complete troublemaker," Norm laughs. By fifteen, he was on his own.

Those early years weren't easy, but they shaped the person he would eventually become - someone who understands what it's like when life gets messy, and someone who believes strongly in second chances.

Growing up in Toronto, Norm spent a lot of time around pool halls and pinball machines. For him, they weren't just games, they were a place to escape the chaos around him. Somewhere he could have fun and forget about the outside world for a little while. That love stuck with him. In the 90s, Norm even played professional pool. But like many people, his path wasn't a straight line.

Over the years he worked a variety of jobs. Starting out as a baker, later driving courier routes at Pearson Airport, and eventually spending years working as a chef at places like Oakwood Inn in Grand Bend.

At 38, he went back to college at Seneca's King Campus and started working in the golf industry, eventually becoming a professional golf instructor teaching locally. Life took him in a lot of directions.

But the biggest turning point came in 2011, when Norm made the decision to leave city life behind and move to Clinton. "I needed a change," he says.

He worked hard to turn his life around and today proudly shares that he has been clean for 25 years. That journey, and everything he learned along the way, plays a big role in why he's doing what he's doing now.



Norm is thrilled to be open to the public!

Believe it or not, it all started with one pinball machine. Just one. Then there were two. Before long, there were nine. What started as a hobby slowly turned into something bigger. Norm had realized something important. There really wasn't much family entertainment locally, especially for kids. Too often they were left wandering around town with nothing to do. He started thinking

about what those pinball machines had meant to him when he was younger. Maybe they could mean something to kids here too?

At the Mitchell Fall Fair in 2025, he walked around with a survey and asked the community directly what they thought about the idea of local pinball spot. The answer was clear. People said yes.

For Norm, the mission behind the "Norm's Pinball Game Room" business is simple: kids, community, and connection. "Kids, kids, kids," he says with a grin. "Stress relief. Making new friends. Entertainment for everyone." The game room gives kids a place to go, something fun to do, and a safe environment where parents know they're looked after. It's also a place where adults can rediscover a bit of that old-school arcade nostalgia. Judging by the smiles on people's faces, it seems to be working.

Norm's Pinball Game Room officially opened its doors at 119 St Andrews St, Mitchell, in March, and he's excited to finally welcome the community in to see it all in person.

But the game room isn't the only way Norm connects with the community. Many locals also know him as the host of a growing online bingo night that has quickly become a favourite for people looking for a little fun from home. The games are always free to play, and prizes often come from generous donations by local businesses and community members who simply want to be part of the fun.

Norm laughs when talking about the joys of running bingo online. "Technology doesn't always cooperate," he admits with a grin. Like any online event, there have been a few glitches and learning curves along the way, the occasional hiccup that keeps things interesting. He says the support from the community has been incredible while everything gets fine tuned. "The support has been amazing."

Whether it's prizes being donated, people tuning in each week, or families playing along together at home, the bingo nights have become another way Norm brings people together.

His days usually start however he decides they should, though many of them involve delivery driving throughout the day as part of his other service helping locals pick up groceries, food, pizza or whatever they may need. But his favourite part of the day happens later. Nighttime is when he gets a moment to reflect on the day and all the people he's seen. "The smiles," he says. "That's the best part."

Sometimes it's kids excitedly running between machines. Sometimes it's parents thanking him. Sometimes it's a hug from a kid who just had the best afternoon ever.

Money, he says, isn't what motivates him. Helping people is. Those little moments are all the motivation he needs. Norm might describe himself jokingly as "surprisingly lazy," but if you spend even five minutes talking to him, you quickly realize he's the opposite. He's constantly thinking of new ideas.

Proven by all his business ventures.

When Norm first arrived in the area, he admits he didn't feel especially welcome. Building connections takes time in small towns. But over the years, that has completely changed. Now, he says, the support from the Mitchell community means everything.

Local businesses and families have supported him and he does his best to give back however he can - helping with community bingo, handing out prizes, and supporting kids whenever possible. Because to Norm, community works both ways. "Without support, my business and I would be nothing."

When asked what he's most proud of, his answer isn't about the business at all. It's about his journey. Being 25 years clean. Mentoring kids. And always keeping the door open for someone who might need a place to go. "I'm 18 forever," he laughs. What he hopes people feel when they walk into Norm's Pinball Game Room is simple: excitement - maybe even a little bit of a "wow" moment when they see the machines. But more than anything, he hopes it becomes a place where people can relax, have fun, and escape the everyday stress of life. Even if it's just for an hour. Because sometimes that's exactly what people need. And sometimes all it takes to start something special is one pinball machine.

It was a pleasure getting to know Norm and hearing more of his story. There's something powerful about sitting down with someone and realizing how many twists and turns life can take before a dream finally finds its way to the surface. Norm's journey is a reminder that dreams don't have an expiration date sometimes they just take the long road getting there. I'm grateful to have had the chance to write this piece about him, and I truly hope Norm's Pinball Game Room becomes exactly what this town needs. A place for fun, connection, and a little bit of an escape.

Do you have a West Perth Business? We publish your origin stories for free! Write your own, or contact us for help! Submission deadline is the 15 of each month.

Community Resources

Municipality of West Perth

Phone: 519-348-8429
westperth.com

Emergency Services

Perth County OPP

132 St George St. Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0
Administration: 519-348-9700
Emergency Services: 9-1-1
Non-Emergency Services: 1-888-310-1122

West Perth Fire Hall

170 Wellington St, Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0
Non-Emergency Services: 519-348-9031
Fire Safety Question: 519 595 2800 Dial 4

Local Hospitals

Stratford General Hospital

Stratford, ON
Phone: 519-272-8210 Website: www.hpha.ca

Seaforth Community Hospital Seaforth, ON
Phone: 519-527-8404 Website: www.hpha.ca

St. Marys Memorial Hospital St. Marys, ON
Phone: 519-284-1332 Website: www.hpha.ca

General Health Information

Huron Perth Public Health

Address: Stratford ON
Hours of Operation: Mon - Fri: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Toll-free: 1-888-221-2133
www.hpha.ca

Health Care Connect

A free program connecting Ontarians without a healthcare provider to providers accepting new patients.
Phone: 1-800-445-1822

Health811

Immediate health advice 24/7 from registered nurses.
Phone: 1-866-797-0007

Unattached Care Clinics

Non-Emergency Care for individuals who are without a family doctor

Stratford Family Health Team:

Phone: 226-766-0510

**Bluewater Area Family Health Team,
Exeter Medical Clinic,
Maitland Valley Medical Centre**
Phone: 519-870-9034

Listowel-Wingham and Area

Family Health Team: Phone: 519-291-4511

Mental Health Supports

Ontario Structured Psychotherapy

Provides support for Ontarians age eighteen and over with depression, anxiety, or related symptoms.
Phone: 1-833-944-9966

Mitchell & Area Community Outreach

Providing supports to enable disabled or elderly people to continue living independently
Phone: 519-348-9765

City of Stratford: Social Services Department

Phone: 519-271-3773 ext. 200

211

A helpline that easily connects people to the social services, programs and community supports they need.
Call or Text: 2-1-1
www.211ontario.ca

United Way, Stratford, ON

519-271-7730 / Toll-Free: 877-818-886
www.perthhuron.unitedway.ca

Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline

Phone: 1-833-900-1010

www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca

Farmer Wellness Initiative

24-hour support for farmers and their family members.

Phone: 1-866-267-6255

www.farmerwellnessinitiative.ca

Good2Talk

Free, confidential support services for post-secondary students in Ontario.

Phone: 1-866-925-5454

Text 'GOOD2TALKON' to 686868

www.good2talk.ca

Huron Perth Helpline and Crisis Response Team

Phone: 1-888-829-7484

www.hpha.ca/mentalhealth

Kids Help Phone

Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Text 'CONNECT' to 686868

www.kidshelpphone.ca

One Stop Talk

Phone: 1-855-416-8255

www.onestoptalk.ca

Optimism Place

24/7 Support Line: 519-271-5550

Toll-Free: 1-800-265-8598

After-hours: 519-272-2294

www.optimismplace.com

Counseling Services

Alcoholics Anonymous

If you want to drink, that's your business, if you want to stop, that's ours.

1-800-706-9833

Meeting locations found at web@aad4.org

Alateen

Support for teenagers with alcoholic adults

Online meetings every Wednesday on Zoom

HopePrevailsAlteen@gmail.com

Huron Perth Centre

Accredited community-based mental health centre for children and youth.

Stratford Office: 519-273-3373 ext. 2221

www.hpcentre.on.ca

Medavie Health Services

Mobile mental health program offering immediate help and referrals for people dealing with mental illness.

Phone: 1-877-872-6350

Email: ontariommh@medaviewhs.com

Family Services Perth Huron

FSPH provides individualized counseling, support services, advocacy, education and referrals.

Phone: 519-273-1020 / Toll-free: 1-800-268-0903

www.familyservicesperth-huron.ca

Shelterlink

Phone: 519-272-2294

Email: info@shelterlink.org

www.shelterlink.org

Victim Services

Phone: 519-600-4108

www.victimserviceshuronperth.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Huron-Perth

Phone: 519-271-6819

Toll-free: 1-888-261-9350

www.cmhahuronperth.com

Senior Services

Alzheimer's Society Huron-Perth

Phone: 519-271-1910

www.alzheimer.ca/huronperth

Mitchell and Area Community Outreach

Phone: 519-348-9765

Email: maco@ritzlutheranvilla.com

One Care

Phone: 1-877-502-8277

www.onecaresupport.ca

West Perth Village

Phone: 519-348-8612

www.westperthvillage.ca

Local Food Banks

Mitchell Food Bank

80 Rowland St, Mitchell ON (Upper Thames Missionary Church building)

Phone: 519-703-4880

Email: mitchellcfs@salvationarmy.ca

Hours: Fridays: 9:30am - 4:30pm

Appointments preferred

Monkton Food Bank

Delivery Only - Independently Run

Phone: 1-780-222-5050

Email: tiggerdigrr@gmail.com

Mobile Food Bank Fullarton

Phone: 519-271-2950

Please call if you wish to receive services

Thamesview United Church, 3178 Perth Road 163 Fullarton, ON

St. Mary's Food Bank

Phone: 519-284-2760

Email: st.marys@salvationarmy.ca

220 Queen St. E, St. Marys, ON

Stratford Food Bank

Phone: 519-271-2950

Email: stratfordcfs@salvationarmy.ca

230 Lightbourne Ave, Stratford, ON



Cartwright Chiropractic

35 Ontario Rd, Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0

cartwrightchiro.ca

519-348-4690

Service Clubs

Community in Kin Club

Tracy McKone

Kin Club Member



Hello, my name is Tracey McKone. I joined the Kinettes in 2010 because I wanted to give back to my community. I met some wonderful women through the club.

When I was diagnosed with cancer in 2012, my Kin members supported me including driving me to appointments. They became much more than a service group.

When the Kin Club started a new chapter here I decided I wanted to take part and I joined to help and give back to the club that had not only helped me but so many others through their fundraising efforts.

community events that bring unity to our area. The duck race in May is a wonderful family event. The coin auctions and the Yuk Yuk events the past two years have been great fun and extremely well attended.

The club would love to be able to host more events like these - not only to bring our community together but also to raise money and awareness to various needs in our area.

I highly encourage everyone to come out to a meeting and see what we are all about. It's

wonderfully rewarding. We meet the second Tuesday of every month in the basement of the Legion at 7pm and we can't wait to meet you!



Tracy as "Ms Quackers" promoting the Rubber Duck race



The Logan Road: Intro

Today we begin a quiet kind of journey; one that doesn't require a passport or a packed suitcase, only a willingness to look at a familiar road with unfamiliar eyes. We stand at the north end of Main Street in Mitchell, gazing up the Logan Road as it stretches into the distance. At first glance, it's nothing extraordinary: just a simple country road you've likely passed without a second thought. A ribbon of pavement. A crease in the fields. A line drawn between farms.

But give it a moment. Let your mind loosen its grip on the present. Drift back fifty, sixty, a hundred years or more, and the world begins to shift. The fields fold inward, hedgerows twist into earlier shapes, and houses shrink into their former, humbler selves. In the space of a breath, you find yourself walking the same road the early settlers walked, preparing to hear the stories carried in from the township's first days.

This series, The Logan Road Series, follows that road, not just the physical one, but the road of memory. Each chapter is a furrow turned over carefully, revealing the people, places, and small triumphs that shaped this stretch of Perth County. Logan Road is more than a route on a map; it is a thread stitching together generations of families whose names still echo in churchyards, school registers, and the quiet bends of the Thames. From the laughter inside one-room schoolhouses, to the clang of blacksmith hammers at busy crossroads, from the rise of mills powered by restless water, to the neighbours who built cheese factories and farmsteads and communities that endured

hardship and change. These are the stories that sit just beneath the soil.

Each furrow in this series explores a different corner of the Logan Road's history; the lessons learned in dust-filled classrooms or the sparks flying at the Tannery Corners. While also immersing ourselves in the hymns rising from Willow Grove, the steady churn of early mills, the families who built, worked, and stayed.

These are the fading echoes where the tumult of old road quieted into memory. Taken together, these stories form a mosaic of ordinary people living extraordinary lives simply by building a home, a school, a church, a path forward.

So let us walk the Logan Road again. This time, slowly, deliberately, with a historian's curiosity and a neighbour's affection. The past is never as far away as it seems.

Sometimes all it takes is standing at the edge of a familiar road, leaning into the whispering winds, and listening to what time has to say.

And almost every story, no matter who told it, circled back to the same place: the Hicks property. This is where we will lower our plow and begin to turn the soil, revealing the first furrow along the Logan Road. Enjoy.



Map of Logan Township

Kids Corner

Logic Puzzle

Five friends, Anna, Ben, Carla, David, and Ethan, visited the Spring Market one Saturday in April. Each person arrived at a different time, bought a different item, and had a different drink. Use the clues to determine who arrived when, what they bought, and what they drank.

People

Anna • Ben • Carla • David • Ethan

Items

Honey • Tulips • Jam • Bread • Maple Syrup

Drinks

Coffee • Tea • Lemonade • Hot Chocolate • Water

Times

9:00 AM • 9:30 AM • 10:00 AM • 10:30 AM • 11:00 AM

Clues

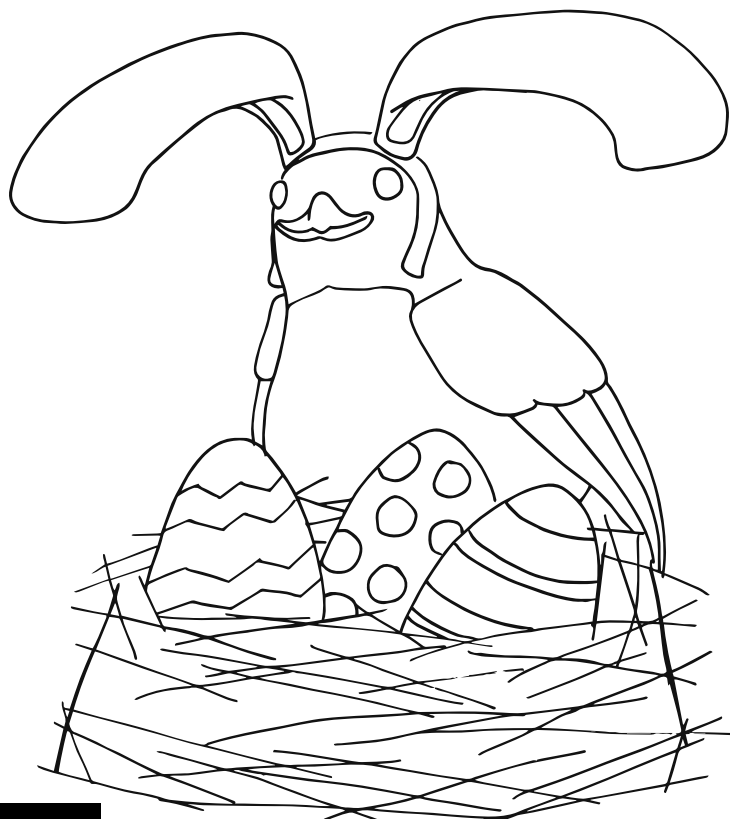
1. The person who bought tulips arrived earlier than the person drinking lemonade.
2. David did not arrive first and did not buy bread.
3. The jam buyer arrived exactly 30 minutes after Anna.
4. The person drinking coffee arrived at 9:00 AM.
5. Carla drank tea.
6. The maple syrup buyer arrived immediately after Ben.
7. The person drinking hot chocolate arrived later than Ethan.
8. The bread buyer arrived at 9:30 AM.
9. Anna did not drink coffee.
10. The person who bought honey drank water.
11. Ben arrived before Carla.
12. The person who arrived at 11:00 AM bought tulips.

Word Search

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

EASTER	DANDELION	SONGBIRD	SPLASH
BUNNY	MIGRATION	SPRINKLE	SHOWERS
TULIP	GERMINATE	EARTH DAY	PUDDLES
EGG	DAFFODIL	PLANTING	STORMY
WORM	SUNSHINE	HYACINTH	SPROUT

Colouring Page





Library Program News

Hello West Perth! I'm thrilled to be here as the new CEO for the West Perth Public Library! Everyone has already made me feel so welcomed as I've been settling in.

Originally from Dungannon in Huron County, I completed a BFA in Visual Arts from York University and taught English overseas for a few years before returning to Canada and completing my Masters of Library and Information Science at Western University. Since graduating, I have worked in a number of libraries in the area, including Perth East. I now call Lucan home, where I keep busy raising my daughters (6 & 9). As a family we enjoy swimming, hiking, and travelling. Personally, I also love cooking, baking, and dabbling in a wide variety of arts & crafts. And unsurprisingly, reading.



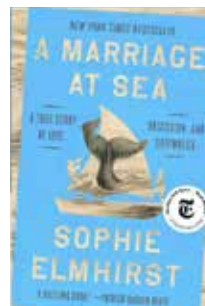
I've always been a bookworm, and love chatting about books and working around them all day (without the financial toll working in a bookstore would take). However, my appreciation for libraries extends far beyond books.

Libraries work hard to understand and listen to the needs of the community, and provide programs, resources, and services that are responsive to those needs. We provide a welcoming space that people can access for free, materials to meet a wide range of interests and needs, and programs for all ages. There is always something happening at the library, and we are always brainstorming new ways to improve and add to the services we offer. I'm already so impressed with the initiative and collaboration happening in West Perth, and I'm so excited for the chance to contribute to this great community!

In addition to our regular programming, in April we are excited for Spring Art Studio on the 13th and Floral Arranging 101 on the 25th. If you signed up for a free tree through our partnership with Neighbourhood Forest, look out for updates on pick-up, and tag us in your planting photos!

For details about our programs, please visit our website: westperthpl.ca, visit the library, or call the desk at 519-348-9234. Keep an eye out for our monthly events calendars, and let us know if you have any ideas for programs, services, or materials you would like to see! You can also find us on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.

I'm currently reading:



A Marriage at Sea: A True Story of Love, Obsession, and Shipwreck by: Sophie Elmhirst
The true story of Maralyn and Maurice Bailey, who, in 1972, survived 117 days adrift on the Pacific after their boat sank.



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Distribution Locations

Our distribution locations are always expanding! Many of our partners will have a sticker in their window, letting you know that you can pick up your free copy of *the Heronry* directly from them! If a distribution location is out of copies, please text Amelia at: 519-955-3210 so we can deliver some as soon as possible! You can also find us online at theheronry.ca and wpheronry.substack.com

- Mitchell Office Pro
- Wieterson's Country Store
- West Perth Public Library
- Stratford Perth Museum
- Edward Jones Financial
- Goettler of Dublin
- Dublin Mercantile
- Mitchell Pottery Studio
- Dublin's Family Restaurant
- Wieterson's Country Store
- Home Town Variety
- Cartwright Chiropractic
- Deep Roots Collective
- Koertland Auto Care
- McDonald's Independent
- Black Donnelly's Brewing Co
- Hoegy's Farm Supply Ltd
- West Perth Village
- The Sugar Maple
- Eidt's BMR Express
- Culligan's Real Estate
- Dental Hygiene Clinic
- JMS Auto
- YNCU
- Monkton Diner
- Deck Dentistry
- Farm to Family
- 101 Bar and Grill
- Kirkton Market
- Ontario Gun Shop



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Riddle Of The Month



A man leaves his house and runs. He runs straight ahead, then turns left.

He runs the same distance and turns left again.

He runs the same distance and turns left once more.

When he gets back home, there are two masked men waiting for him.

Who are the two masked men?



AI: The Business Model

Welcome to another installment of The Heronry's AI Awareness series. In this issue, we will discuss the extremely flawed business model that most gen AI companies operate under, and why that's detrimental to you.

(I need to make my own biases very clear before we start. I am a writer, and my books have been stolen to produce (at the very least) one generative AI program that is being used to generate profit I do not share. We are having a lawsuit about it right now, and there will probably be more. I cannot be completely objective about this, but I will be accurate.)

In the first article in this series, we talked about how generative AI is trained by feeding it thousands and thousands of examples. This creates the data set (or large language model) that the gen AI uses to make up its answers. Every time you use a funny comic generator, you're cannibalizing artists, and every time you generate an email, you're cannibalizing writers, none of whom receive any compensation.

In documents that appeared in court records, Meta employees discussed the option of buying books and research papers to train their AI, but decided not to because it was too much money and it would take more than four weeks to acquire permission. Instead, they opted to pirate the books*. Later, Meta would claim that books are both worthless and too expensive and complicated for the company to license**. It's clear that the entire industry relies on stolen words and art.

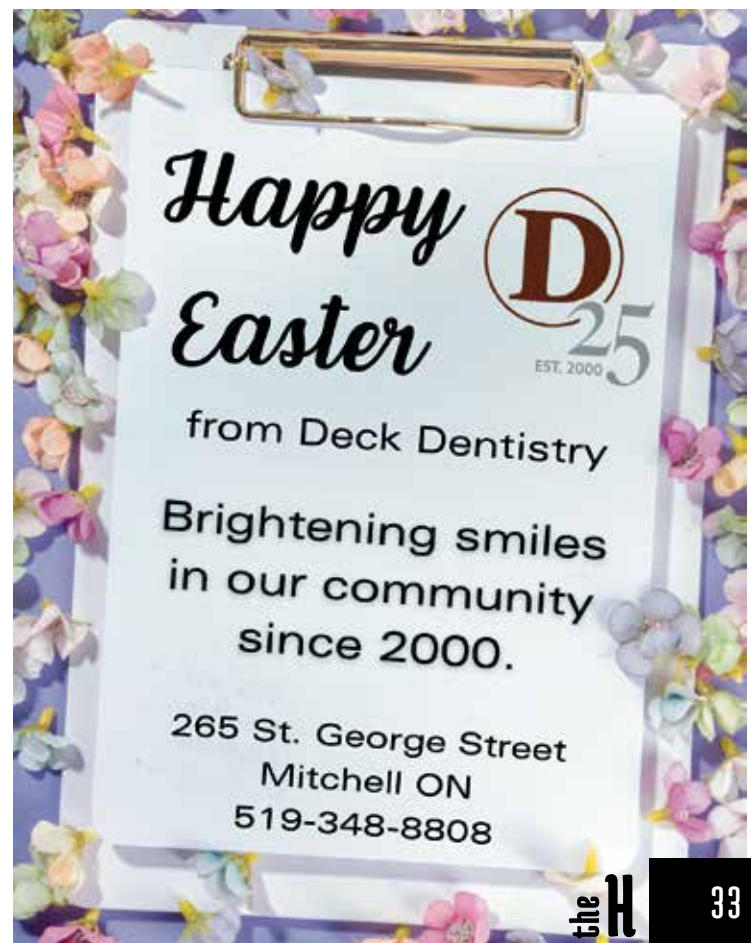
The other problem with AI companies is how they generate money. Like many companies, they are no longer content with simply making a profit. They must make significant gains, and then they must make even more the following quarter. Obviously this is unsustainable for everything, but in the case of AI, it's particularly insidious, because many of the companies rely on government money. Remember the banking bail outs? It will be like that when the AI bubble bursts, because governments have largely

spent money on speculation, not productivity+. Rich people will be paid to fail, and they will not be held accountable for any of the damage.

Currently, AI companies are selling extremely flawed products that fewer and fewer people want. They have turned to Universities and other educational institutions, which buy the programs thanks to political lobbyists. This creates something of a feedback loop, as AI doesn't actually help with education, something we will discuss in the next issue, when we look at the social and ethical issues surrounding AI tech.

So to recap: an entire industry built on stolen property is careening off the financial cliff, and since our governments and schools are so heavily invested in them, they will be considered "too big to fail", and bailed out. Not exactly good business.

*<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/03/libgen-meta-openai/682093/>
**<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/story/meta-ai-lawsuit>
+<https://thebulletin.org/2025/12/when-it-all-comes-crashing-down-the-aftermath-of-the-ai-boom/>



Previous Issue Puzzle Answers

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

Logic Puzzle Answer:

Sarah: Gardener, Parrot

Mike: Painting, Dog

Linda: Fishing, Cat

Riddle Answer: Since "All *but* nine run away, nine sheep are left.

Raising Support

KEEP WEST PERTH IN PRINT!

Here are some ways you can help keep the Heronry going!

- **Submit your art, poetry, and stories!** We're here to share the good things that are all around us but it's much easier when we have a bank of submitted content to choose from! Encourage your friends, family, and neighbours to submit their good things too!
- **Talk about our publication!** Whether discussing it with your friends and family, sharing and commenting on our social media posts, forwarding emailed articles, or tagging us in selfies of you holding up the magazine when you're on vacation - every part helps!
- **Encourage Local Sponsorship.** Suggest that businesses you work at or frequent advertise in the Heronry and, more importantly, thank the ones that do advertise with us for supporting this initiative!
- **Take out an advertisement or write a sponsored column.** If you're a business owner or someone who

Crossword Answers:

Across

- Leprechaun
- Heritage
- Emerald
- Rainbow
- Ireland
- Clover
- Celtic
- Spring
- Lucky
- March
- Green
- Pinch
- Pub

Down:

- Cloverleaf
- Shamrock
- Bagpipes
- Blessing
- Gaelic
- Fiddle
- Gold

DMKSMQTSOMFVQXPFWINDYKHGAFHBFPP
 PZBQFLTZCCXYJERDAZJDCKWDHTOTPL
 KTGNTTSXEILOBWDIDNFVOGECEPBHSVR
 MIHOIRHLAENTGRNUOSTHPEQEGTWEEY
 PZVYTAHENRINOEGYZTWMASZSIDOSSVQ
 FRMTESIPCACYXNJVGPGHVEBERRHMGQ
 GHCZNFRCRAUBKFEWQXAPYOAZDAMFGXD
 RHS PROCEGEULLWIIATGOOBIEICEPFW
 WDQAWGGCIWAULAQMNRRDTBCMNNZQIG
 AWXXJORHWGJSJLOAWILYBOZCIDJJWJ
 GSSAXDCAYUDATFXRSCHDVWFYEXSFOM
 KCFHDDSDULHPLSESSCOKAAMRRGRXCWBC
 SWDPLASNJESBTMRHHSIOQPHCOCPGDD
 EQYTMYYJKKKOJOUJRD AFFODILLHROL
 RGCXULBUQCWNRCCLZAAAMCXHDKMDEUU
 XFEJDIGCVYBBMGGZZKYJKEQINZCLELC
 TILPRGTIVDNSSTSEOJYWCCCADLENEK
 HJMXIHVVMMKTZHVVDULOWUSICNGVAF
 WGINVTFUNXSCGWVNPZYZVODRTATWRW
 KFWQBSSESBEDKGGYJKFPXUOHQHQIAJL
 GOZFWAIFLOWERSUSWTLGGLCMKLCKZW
 YAFEVVLHWNDTJSHAMROCKRHAFFEEERT
 NCZMYINENCITKVTDBXUURAOARWGYNUA
 ZCPOXNVBNPJKXBLOSSOMTFFWUXBIKV
 OCBFZGTWGXKXEDCWQPBTTECYTPWSDS
 WVDAMS NKHHKYJFIEHLFZNIWUTHZGHU
 EMYATKDVJQKPHNXTMODSQZPPYIGTRLG
 QUZLEPSSHOWERSGCZMZZKKBZXEPVGPBH
 FRESHGSCRCOGZDWXUIEKJGMZITYTJT

has a side-hustle, you can contribute to good things in your community by becoming a regular submitter of content or advertisements. Our readership is constantly growing and residents love to see local businesses celebrating the good things and people found in West Perth.

- **Donate directly to the Heronry!** We've enabled donations on our online substack (scan the QR code to be taken to our donation page), but like all online payment services, a cut of the substack payments goes to the service provider. The best way to donate will be to send or bring your donations directly to Mitchell Office Pro. We're looking into ways to represent individual sponsors and welcome your ideas! (T-Shirts anyone?)



We want to thank every person who has called or written to let us know how much they enjoy *the Heronry!* Your support is so encouraging and we appreciate every one of you!



Soapstone Carving

I first learned how to carve in a day-long workshop, at a local Lee Valley garden store; we carved a polar bear from a cube of stone. My mom loved their woodworking classes and when she sent me their list of classes to choose from, I was instantly drawn to soapstone carving. My heritage on my mother's side is Inuit and I knew soapstone carving held particular importance in the Inuit community.

We ended up taking one more class before my mom surprised me with my own file and a few sample pieces of stone to play around with. Ever since, carving has become one of my most freeing forms of expression. The length of time required to mould the shape by hand, in place of an industrial drill, creates a very soothing pastime. I've learned a great deal of patience from the pieces that I've tried to rush, even more from the ones I pick up now and again over months, sometimes years.

When a piece may crack, or simply look in the mood for a makeover, I will rework the stone, sand it anew and let the wax set on it's newest shade. The final step is my favourite, after hours of filing and sanding pale dry stone; water polishing and wax reveal the natural beauty of the stones themselves. Colours and designs I could never have imagined, as I pictured the piece it could be.

Carving feels like it has grounded me, not only in my forms of expression but in my cultural



identity as well. That journey of discovery is just beginning to unfold, and I'm beginning to realize how deeply I would have benefited from access to this art form in my youth, when I craved the peace and freedom that I've now found.

It would be wonderful to one day see Indigenous art forms like soapstone carving incorporated into Canadian art curriculums; giving the young people of this land a chance to embrace practices that can be both healing and expressive.

Recently my Mom bought me a second file, to teach a friend, and ever since I've known my path involved deepening my understanding of Inuit teachings and sharing this new passion of mine with others.

Carving can be such a relaxing and therapeutic art form; hours and worries alike fade away as the stone begins to take form. The wind carrying the stone's dust back to the earth it came from; revealing a creation of natural design fills me with tremendous peace.



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