

FREE

A WEST PERTH PUBLICATION

the Heronry

Issue Includes

Madison Eisler: Ambassador for Community

ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

Join Legion Concert Band!

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

The Mitchell Fair, 1953

WEST PERTH MEMORIES

Nature's Gifts Endure

A RURAL RESIDENT REFLECTS

Vol. 10

September 2026

Photo by Amy Heatherington

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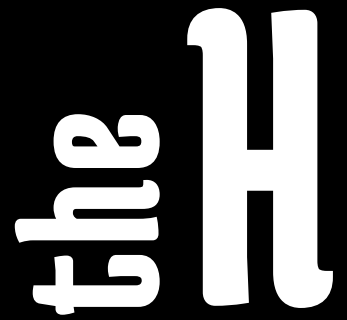
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4** **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** | ABOUT THE PUBLICATION
- 5** **A FAIR ISSUE** | THOUGHTS FROM THE FOUNDERS
- 6** **SEPTEMBER HOROSCOPES** | ASTROLOGY
- 7** **ALL ABOUT BLACK SQUIRRELS** | WILDLIFE AROUND US
- 8** **SOME FAIR HISTORY & CHARACTERS** | LOCAL STORIES
- 10** **ENDRA THE EKANS: CHAPTER 3** | JUNIOR AUTHORS
- 11** **MACK SCHELLENBERGER'S STAND** | FARMSTAND SPOTLIGHT
- 12** **MADISON EISLER: AMBASSADOR FOR COMMUNITY** | ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE
- 14** **JOIN THE LEGION BAND!** | COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS
- 15** **HEALING IN NATURE** | REGIONAL ACTIVITIES *SPONSORED*
- 16** **THE NEW BOB ROSS** | CREATIVE WRITING
- 17** **COME JOIN LIONS CLUB!** | SERVICE CLUBS
- 18** **WHY PROFESSIONAL CLEANINGS MATTER** | DECK DENTISTRY'S "DID YOU KNOW?" *SPONSORED*
- 19** **OUTDOOR ARTISAN MARKET** | MITCHELL BIA
- 20** **WEST PERTH COMMUNITY EVENTS: SEPTEMBER 2026**
- 24** **NATURE'S GIFTS ENDURE** | A RURAL RESIDENT REFLECTS
- 26** **THE MITCHELL FAIR, 1953** | WEST PERTH MEMORIES
- 28** **THE 5TH FURROW, PATRICK COLLINS: SWAMP & MUCK** | OUR HISTORY
- 30** **CHAPTER 1 - THE FIRST PART** | MEMOIRS
- 32** **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**
- 35** **A CARIBBEAN CONNECTION** | BUILDING COMMUNITY
- 36** **MITCHELL MEETS SPAIN!** | INTREPID TRAVELERS
- 37** **THE MANY FACES OF POPPY LANE** | LOCAL HISTORY
- 40** **LIFE'S BETTER WITH A LITTLE OINKTIMISM** | DIARY OF A FUNNY FARMER
- 42** **CLARE NICHOLSON** | YOUNG ARTISTS



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What's a Heronry?

A “Heronry” is the name for the nesting colony where herons raise their young. Even though they're solo hunters, they nest in groups for added protection. We thought that was an inspiring picture of how communities can function.

Who runs the Heronry?

When we published the first issue of *the Heronry* in December of last year, the idea was that the work would be roughly a 50/30/20 split between me (Christina Hotz), Amelia McFarlane, and Bert Vorstenbosch Jr. As the publication has grown and life has changed, it's morphed into a bit more of a 70/20/10 dynamic.

Ultimately it will likely be taken over completely by me (Christina), but for now, billing, and distribution is handled by Amelia and Bert, with most everything else on my plate. Being connected with Office Pro in downtown Mitchell means that there's an obvious place that people can go to ask questions or make suggestions; Amelia has been a rock-star fielding all of those.

Are you getting paid?

Not yet! The hope is that we get enough consistent financial support to be able to draw wages eventually, but for now, the hours of work that go into this magazine are uncompensated. (You can help by donating or sponsoring ads).

Can you interview (Insert Name here)?

We'd love to be able to interview every person who is suggested to us, but unfortunately we just don't have the time and manpower. Since we're volunteering our time and expertise, we have to be careful not to overextend ourselves. The best way to make sure someone gets the recognition they deserve is for you to **interview them yourself** and to submit that interview for us to publish. We also accept creative writing, poetry, and memoirs.

Is Bert your boss?

Nope! We're very egalitarian; this is more of a partnership than anything else. Bert's company and Amelia are

handling the financial aspects of things while we get established but that's only a temporary solution.

Why aren't you charging people money?

We look at *the Heronry* as a public service. In order for our community to reap the benefits, it needs to be accessible to everyone; this means that it needs to be free. We hope that people who really love what we're doing will donate via substack or by just dropping off donations at Office Pro in Mitchell. Eventually we'd like to register as a not-for-profit, but there are a lot of factors that go into being approved and we want to be sure that we have the nitty-gritty aspects of running *the Heronry* figured out before we take on any more challenges.

How do you find your writers?

It's a struggle! Some of our writers started out as featured people themselves, and others have popped out of the woodwork to volunteer. Sometimes I manage to convince a new person to give writing a try and they love it; other times they give it their best effort and realize it's not for them. Our number one rule is that no AI generating is allowed. The whole point of *the Heronry* is to build community, and you don't do that by getting a computer to write for you. Even using AI to edit is “iffy”; it all starts to sound the same, and we enjoy the collaboration that comes with going back and forth with writers.

Where can I get a copy?

We've got a list of distribution locations in every publication, and on our website as well! There are no guarantees that a distribution location will have copies though (they often run out), so it's always a good idea to give them a call to check before making a special trip to pick up a copy. Digital copies exist on our website as well, but we're leaning towards having that content just available on our substack platform - which allows people to get articles emailed to them directly.

More questions?

Email us: wp.heronry@gmail.com
Or call Christina: 519-994-1431.



A Fair Issue

It's September, or at least will be by the time you read this, and I'm not ready yet. As I put the finishing touches on this issue it's still August but the weather has cooled off considerably - hinting at what's coming. Personally, I'm not quite ready to pack up the summer clothing and swimsuits!

Ah well, we can rail against the change of the seasons as much as we like, but they will continue to roll over us no matter how much we dislike it. My youngest will probably continue to run around shivering in his shorts in protest, but the rest of us would probably be better off accepting the inevitability of temperature fluctuations and pulling out our long pants.

For this month's issue, I wanted to primarily focus on the Mitchell Fall Fair. I know it's not a special anniversary yet, but small-town fairs across Canada are fading away these days the same as downtowns cores are, and at *the Heronry* we are trying to help both of these good things keep going! (I dream of one day having a tiny little downtown space as an office and interview space for *the Heronry*, but I'm trying not to get ahead of myself; step one is getting paid!).

I officially met with Madison Eisler back in June, but decided to hold off on publishing the article about her so that it would be "on theme" for the fall. Turns out her one article has morphed into two, but the first is fitting our fair theme, and I'm not unhappy about having next month's feature article finished ahead of time!

This month also features other fair-themed content including a reprint of the fair schedule (found on p.23) and information about the new bus charter that the Ag Society is using to help get people to fairgrounds when all the parking is filled (p.13). Andrew Fournier has written about some Mitchell Fair characters—both historical and current, and we get the privilege of printing a story from Clare French. When we featured Clare as part of our first issue, he gave us a folder of articles and poems

and we could use whenever we saw fit. This one that he wrote about his Mitchell Fair memories from 1953 couldn't be more perfect for this issue.

We have even more history than usual in this issue than normal! In addition to Clare's piece, we have another two pages from Watson Adam's memoirs, as well as a two-part piece from Bert J Vorstenbosch.

In the first part of Bert's article, he outlines the many changes that the area now known as "Poppy Lane" has undergone during the years; in the second part, he tries to convince the reluctant populace in Mitchell that the change of the lane from unofficial parking to courtyard, is not the worst idea in the world.

I know a lot of our readers will have strong feelings on the topic, and I encourage everyone to be open to learning a bit about the project. I imagine similar discussions have happened in Mitchell pretty much every time something in that space has changed.

As I've been putting this issue together, we've already started planning out the content for October. We've got quite the election coming up this year! I'm not sure if Andrew and I should be taking credit for the incredible number of people who have put their names into the running for our Municipal and School Board positions, but whatever the reason for the increase in numbers, it's exciting!

The Heronry will do its best to feature each of the candidates in a strictly educational way; we will never tell you who to vote for, but we look forward to introducing the candidates to you! The right to vote and to be educated about who your representatives are is one of those "good things" that we want to encourage in West Perth. Thank you for coming along with us, and we look forward to sharing more with you next month!



September Horoscopes

Aries: March 21 - April 21 After a busy and hopefully enjoyable summer, focus now shifts back to your daily work and routines. Health and wellness matters may also come up, make adjustments for your own well-being.

Taurus: April 21 - May 20 Did you miss out on a fun adventure this summer Taurus? Not to worry, you still have some fun ideas planned for September. If anything, being able to refocus on your hobbies and passions should feel good.

Gemini: May 21 - June 20 You should be able to slow down now, Gemini. Home and family is now your main concern. What can you do around the house this month to get yourself back in the groove of things?

Cancer: June 21 - July 21 It won't be a surprise that day to day activities involving children and back to school routines are top priority. If you find that stressful, let your natural ability to care and nurture lead the way.

Leo: July 22 - Aug 22 All that summer fun might've dug a hole in your savings, Leo. Focus is on money, income and your livelihood this month.

Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22 Happy Birthday, Virgo! You've probably had your back to school routine planned out way ahead of time. Now it's time to get back to you. Why not celebrate those stunning organizational skills of yours by throwing yourself a wonderful get together.

Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22 Things may feel a bit more isolating in September for you, Libra. Maybe it's Autumn on the horizon that has you feeling the need to hibernate earlier this year. Whatever it is, it's okay to spend some time with yourself.

Scorpio: Oct 23 - Nov 21 The planet of love and friendship is in your sign this month, Scorpio. Not only is there more interest coming your way, you may

find yourself actually wanting to be more social. Go out and have fun with your friends.

Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 20 After all your worldly adventures, it's probably time to get back into the work routine and focus on your career. That doesn't mean social events and travel are off the table this month.

Capricorn: Dec 21 - Jan 20 You may be learning something this month that could help you with your bigger picture goals. Maybe you are the one heading back to school to pursue a higher level of education.

Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18 Something is changing this month Aquarius. Whether that's an established routine or something you share with another, it might be time to welcome in something a bit different.

Pisces: Feb 19 - March 20 Focus this month is on your relationships. This could be love focused, business partnerships or even legal negotiations. Stay practical and seek counsel if needed.

Maggie Turner is a local professional astrologer who loves to help heal and support people along their path in life using 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



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All About Black Squirrels

Are Black Squirrels a Different Kind of Squirrel?

You might think black squirrels are their own kind of squirrel, but they're actually not! The black squirrels we see around here are usually eastern grey squirrels, just with black fur. Eastern Grey Squirrels can be grey or black. So even though we call them black squirrels, they're still Eastern Grey Squirrels. Confusing, right?

What Do Black Squirrels Eat?

Well, everyone thinks squirrels just eat nuts, but that's not true! Yes, they do eat a large variety of nuts, but they also eat bugs, berries, fruit, seeds, and even fungi! If you are losing all the berries from your raspberry bush and you don't live in bear country, you can bet that it's a black squirrel that ate all your berries- or just a squirrel in general!

We have a bird feeder at our house and also a garden, and me and my Mom caught a black squirrel taking from both! He came around so often that we could tell it was him from anywhere! We call him Guilty Gus because he looked so guilty when my mom first caught him taking from the bird feeder. But when we took down the bird feeder, he went back to relying on his instincts to feed himself ...or maybe he started taking from somebody else's bird feeder.

Why Are there So Many Black Squirrels in Ontario?

Well, that's a good question. One possible reason is that we have very cold winters here, and their unique black coats may help them stay warmer in cold weather. Black squirrels are more common in colder parts of North America, including Ontario. So, our freezing winters might actually be one reason we see so many of them!

Are They Friends or Foes?

Black squirrels seem cute and cuddly, and don't usually attack, but they will raid our bird feeders, like Guilty Gus did, and dig holes in our gardens. Sometimes they can even get into our attics and make nests! That wouldn't be much of a problem if you didn't have any wires for them to chew through. Look, I don't have anything against them; sometimes they are friends, and other times, foes.



"Guilty Gus" by Grace Reidy

Why Are Black Squirrels Important?

One reason they are important is that they don't store all of their food in one den. They bury nuts and seeds and sometimes forget about them. Some of those forgotten ones can eventually grow into trees or other plants, and that's a plus for everyone...as long as the seeds weren't stolen from your bird feeder. They also eat fungi, and their droppings can spread tiny fungi spores around. Yes, even squirrel droppings can actually be useful! They are also prey

for lots of other animals, which makes them an important part of the food-chain and helps keep nature balanced.

What Can We Do to Help Squirrels?

One thing we can do is keep trees in our yards when it's safe to do so and plant more trees instead. Trees give squirrels places to live, hide, and find food. We could also put secure caps on our chimneys to keep squirrels from accidentally getting inside. And if you see a squirrel outside, you can usually just leave it alone and let it do its squirrel things.



Some Fair History & Characters

I moved to Staffa in 2012, after an extended and tumultuous romance with a young woman from Seaforth. We were married at St. Peter's in Brodhagen, them being okay with us being in a hurry, and us being in a hurry. One child, two children, three, and surprisingly quickly they were old enough to be asking to go to the Mitchell Fair and have some adventures.

You know how it goes. You blink and they go from baby to toddler. You blink again and they are crashing their bicycles and making your hair turn grey. Next blink, and they'll be borrowing the car, and leaving for school.

We've been to quite a few fairs since then, and missed a few because sometimes we just didn't have that extra in the budget to attend. When we go, I take the opportunity to go to the Crystal Palace, because it feels familiar – like the fall parish suppers when I was a bit younger. To me, the displays are all local voices saying “I'm part of this community, and this is what I made to show you.”

The Crystal Palace was built by the Fullarton, Logan and Hibbert Agricultural Society. Twice. In 1916, a carelessly discarded cigar took the original building in a fire, but by the next year it had been rebuilt.

It's beautiful. The central pillar, made from a whole tree, donated by a local merchant named William Forrester, holds up the roof like the centre pole in a circus tent made of bricks and traditions. And the circus is us: our community, our efforts, our people. We get to be on display, behind the scenes, and in the audience - all at the same time, if we choose.

The Agricultural Society and the Mitchell Fall Fair are so connected to the start of our community that the beginnings are unclear. The original charter is from 1855, but there were already agricultural fairs happening in Fullarton, Logan and Hibbert before that. The first fall fair in Mitchell doesn't seem to be recorded, but it likely happened before Mitchell

officially happened as a community. That's more bedrock than building, if you see what I mean.

It's been (at least) 172 years since the Mitchell Fair was first held, and our community continued to grow. A lot has changed while harvests came and went, but the Fall Fair is still here, Legion Bacon Burgers are still here, and we are here too.

The book “A Fair Legacy” was written for the 150th anniversary of the fair in 2004 by Dean Robinson. The historical research for the book was provided by Byron Morris who is the oldest living member of the Ag Society. Give it a read, especially if you want to learn more about our community. You might recognize someone you know, captured in a photo of the past. I recognized a few friends and made one of them blush. I am sworn to secrecy as to who, on the threat of sarcasm and teasing.

I interviewed Byron Morris, the oldest living member of the Ag Society to add perspective to the history of the Fair. From word one, he had me. The smile, the warmth, suddenly I wanted to just sit down and talk, and hear what he had to say.

Within the first minute or so, I had heard he's been married 61 years, was given a gun when he was 12 “to keep the critters out of the garden”, and had wrecked his lungs through a career of welding, and crop-spraying without protection.

I learned that he met his wife when they were 22, and they spent four and a half years getting to know each other before they were married at 26. He talked about the work he put into researching “A Fair Legacy”. Late nights at the archives, and going around with a stack of photos from fairs past, looking for names to put to the faces.

Talking with Byron made local history suddenly fascinating. Stories about horse races and starting gates, about the first arena in Mitchell and a card game on the roof, or the night a Music Union inspector shut down a dance because the band

were­n't mem­bers of the Music Union.

Appar­ently that sort of thing used to hap­pen. Byron de­scribed a man brush­ing past the ticket tak­ers and flash­ing a badge – just like the FBI in a movie. The or­ganiz­ers had to send the band away, call an in­ter­mis­sion, and rush in a new band. Wild stuff.

Or a stormy night in 1947, which pre­vented some rural mem­bers from at­tend­ing a meet­ing, and the So­ci­ety's name changed to the Mitchell Agri­cul­tural So­ci­ety.

After I had talked to Byron for nearly an hour, Byron's wife, Jean, came out­side and joined us. Just like Byron, she draws you in from the first word. She filled in de­tails about the his­tory, and re­minded Byron of sto­ries he hadn't told me yet. I hope I see them both again. West Perth has a cer­tain char­ac­ter to it, and it is cer­tain char­ac­ters like Jean and Byron that make it that way.

Two his­torical char­ac­ters need a men­tion as well. The first is Queen Vic­to­ria. Her Ma­jesty granted a Royal Charter for our fair, and no one knows why. Ontario Fairs do not have Charters – ex­cept for ours, which was granted in the name of the Monarch, and signed by...George Etienne Cartier! I know, it's super ex­citing.

George was part of the Lower Canada Re­bel­lion in 1837, was ex­iled to Ver­mont, and was back in Canada a year later to re­sume his law prac­tice. After bat­tle and ex­ile, law­yer­ing was not enough and he ran for office in 1848, and shaped the fu­ture of our coun­try. He pro­posed the cre­ation of the Grand Trunk Rail­way, he was a Fa­ther of Con­fed­er­a­tion, and for some un­known reason he signed the Charter for our Fair.

For 172 years, through the cre­ation of a coun­try, through wars and loss, and years of peace and change, our Fair con­tinues.

As do we. Happy Fair An­ni­ver­sary, every­one.

Peace,
Andrew

Crypt­nics: Cryptics by Nick

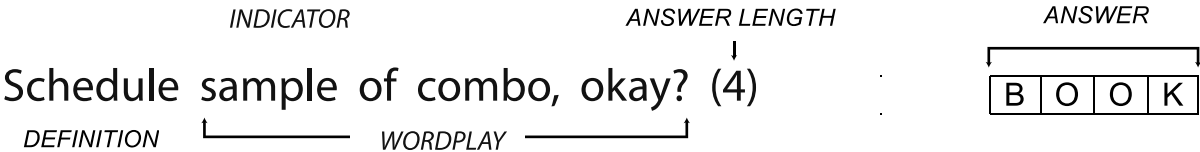
Nicholas Hotz
Local Resident



Round 1: Hidden Words

A cryptic is a word puzzle, often an odd phrase, that contains both a definition and wordplay clues that lead you to the answer. These are a specific type of puzzle that can take some time to wrap your head around. Answers will be shared in next month's issue.

Tutorial: The wordplay of "Hidden Words" cryptics feature "indicator" words that tell you the answer is contained in nearby text. Look for words similar to: "captured by," "possesses," or "sections from." In the following example, the phrase "sample of" is our clue to look within other sections of the puzzle; within "combo, okay" we find the word "book", which matches the remaining content, "schedule," which is the cryptic's "definition" - aka "to schedule, or to book an appointment."



- 1. Most art features famous person (4)
- 2. Orchard estate interior is most challenging (7)
- 3. Beethoven's later content was hot! (4)
- 4. Kangaroo sternly fosters chicken (7)
- 5. Sample of rarest ore supply brings back value



Endra the Ekans: Chapter 3

“Scyther Smack-Down”

Endra and Endrin left the stick pile in the middle of the night. As they were travelling Endra heard a swooping sound.

“Help meeee”, cried Endrin” suddenly.

Endra turned his head and saw a Murkrow carrying Endrin away!

“I’ll save you!” yelled Endra, but Endrin was already far, far away.

“I guess I’ll have to find her again. They are probably going to the Temple of Thieves. I’ll have to get to the walnut tree in order to get to the mountains.” He thought.

Endra began to search for the walnut tree. As he travelled he saw a family. They were a young Scyther with Scizor and Kleavor parents. “Hey guys, do you know how to get to the walnut tree?” asked Endra.

“No, but we know how you get to the After Life!” said the Scyther as he cut Endra’s back.

“Oww!” said Endra. Then he jumped up and bit the Scyther. Suddenly, he felt metal hit his head and everything went black.

A while later, Endra woke up and saw that he was in a small prison. “Hey! Let me out!” he demanded.

“Hmmm, let me think about that.... No!” responded the Scyther that had attacked him.

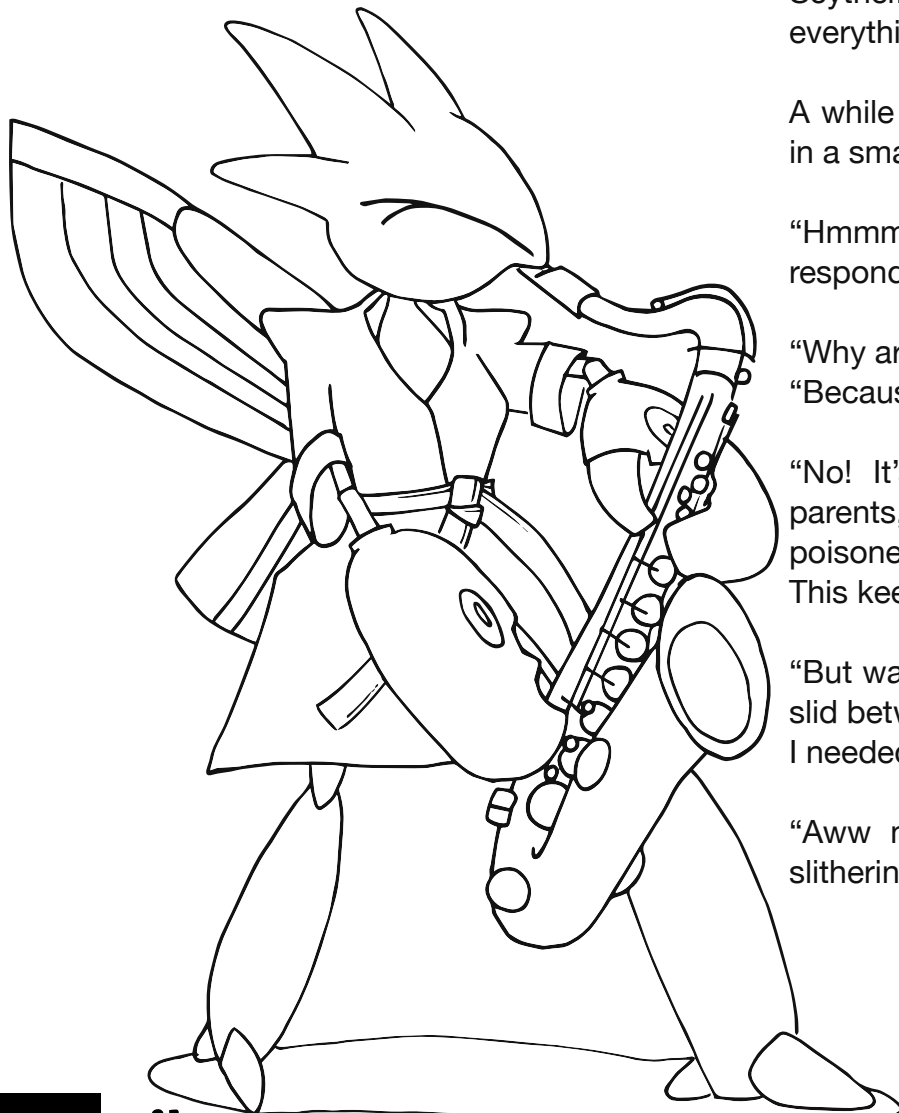
“Why are you holding me hostage?” asked Endra. “Because we’re evil!” the young Scyther replied.

“No! It’s because he bit you!” said the Scizor parents, “We needed to make sure you weren’t poisoned! Also, stop attacking random snakes! This keeps happening!”

“But wait, you didn’t notice **this!**” said Endra as he slid between the bars. “And, you brought me where I needed to go, the walnut tree!”

“Aww nuts,” said the Scyther as Endra started slithering away.

Colouring Page





Mack Schellenberger's Stand

Situated conveniently at the corner of Line 32 and Highway 23 south of Mitchell lies a treasure trove of fresh produce and quick snacks thanks to local West Perth resident, 12 year old Mack Schellenberger. Less than a five minute drive from my own home here in Mitchell, ON. Mack and his mom, Katie Schellenberger, were gracious enough to host me on a warm August evening; meeting me right at their stand located at 5993 Line 32 Mitchell, ON.

At 12 years old, Mack's firm handshake is the sign of a confident entrepreneur and he talked enthusiastically about his business, all while a very proud Mom beamed alongside him. Mack's home-grown produce journey started 2 years ago after he planted zucchini in his garden and quickly found himself overrun. With the simple idea of putting the excess squash in a wheel barrow at the end of the laneway with a sign advertising \$2 a piece, it didn't take long for the wheel barrow to empty.

Mack's farmstand is a family affair with Mom, Dad and his sister all helping in various aspects such as growing, harvesting, and advertising his products. During our chat, Mack mentioned his Dad frequently, highlighting the importance he has in the planning, planting, and growing of the garden. The smile on Mack's face tells me that not only is his Dad's help appreciated, but the time spent working together brings him joy too.

Mack's stand hosts a variety of products such as zucchini, beets, tomatoes, and even eggs fresh from the family's chickens. When asked what his favorite item on his menu is to eat, he said zucchini and cabbage. He recently tried a recipe featuring zucchini in an apple crisp that was a big hit.

At 12 years old, balancing a business and summer

activities can be challenging, especially when friends are over and the stand needs steady restocking. When I asked Mack about any other additional challenges of his business, he was quick to point out that weeding is not his favorite activity. His stand proudly boasts that their produce is herbicide and pesticide free, but that decision comes with increased labor for Mack. While weeding is not his favorite job, he is proud of the products he puts out.



Mark proudly shows off the produce he has available.

Another challenge Mack has faced this season is theft. Either with individuals helping themselves to items or not paying full price. While

this behaviour would discourage many, Mack has adapted by adding security features to the stand and keeping the stand moderately filled but restocked frequently.

Mack attributes the success of his stand to his parents who he jokingly refers to as his investors. Mack is grateful for the support of his customers whether they are locals or people passing by. He was also eager to share his appreciation for his regular customers at Top Notch Landscaping who faithfully stop every Friday and recently left Mack a generous tip. When asked what he will be doing with his hard-earned cash, the bright-eyed entrepreneur shared that he is saving up to purchase a square body pickup truck to restore with his Dad.

Madison Eisler: Ambassador for Community

Christina tB Hotz
the Heronry Editor



You might look at Madison Eisler and think, “There’s a girl who has it all together.” She’s a smiley twenty-two-year-old who has been meeting local celebrities and making a name for herself as Mitchell’s local fair ambassador. She smiles for photo ops, shakes hands with the mayor, and is batting a streak as part of the Fullarton

A’s. From the outside it looks like everything is coming up roses, but the truth is usually more complicated. It’s important to tell Madison’s full story, so this will be a 2-part article. The second part will be shared in a later issue.

To start, Madison is proud to be this year’s Fair Ambassador. She has been involved in the Ag Society in Mitchell ever since her mom, Julie, “Dragged her out to an event” when she was little.

It wasn’t her idea of fun initially, but she’s now “thankful that her mom forced her into it.” After ten years, she decided it was time to “step up” and she ran for the Ambassadorship, got runner-up and then this year nabbed the Title.

The Mitchell Fall Fair Ambassadorship was once titled “Queen of the Fair” and was run similar to a beauty pageant – complete with fancy fair and ball gowns. In 1998 the Ag Society decided to “Get with the times” and turned the pageant into an Ambassadorship instead. Other than having a fancy sash to wear at official events,

the role has changed significantly. It’s less of a “stand there and look pretty” situation (which is good

since the position is now open for applications by anyone between 17-22) and more of a “go learn from other Agricultural Societies and promote our fair” role, and it’s one Madison has embraced.

From visiting other fairs and Ag Societies around the province, to travelling to Toronto for conferences, she’s learned a lot about the challenges that small town fairs are experiencing. The main one, low volunteer turnout, is one she’s been working on.

Low volunteer rates are caused by a multitude of factors, but they’re the primary reason that many regional fairs are disappearing. When trying to recruit interest at local high schools, many students hear the word “volunteer” and even though those forty volunteer hours are a graduation requirement, many of them still expect payment. However this year, for the first time in who-knows-how-long, the “gate slots” have all been filled weeks before the fair date! The Ag Society couldn’t be more thankful!

Madison’s Ag Society involvement hasn’t just been volunteering, it’s given her a kind of second family to rely on. Spencer Dunsmore, the

current Ag present is practically an older brother to Madison, and many of the elderly members have taken on the role of surrogate grandparents. Madison wishes that other young people would take the chance on getting involved. She thinks that being part of an organization with such a long history is a great way to feel more deeply connected to the town.



Madison as a toddler at the Mitchell Fair



Madison decked out in her Ambassador Sash

It's \$20 to be a member, free to be a junior member (under the age of 18). If you want to get involved, email the mitchellsecretary@mitchellfair.com, reach out over facebook, or talk to someone who's already involved!

When she's not busy with Ag Society things, Madison is holding her own on one of the local ball teams. Madison has been playing baseball even longer than she's been involved in the Ag Society. At age four she started playing in Mitchell and moved over to the Fullarton A's when she was sixteen.

"The thing I love most about baseball is that it's a different kind of stress; the everyday stresses go away as soon as I step out onto the field," she says.

Her team is another one of those things that keeps her going. Like most teams, there are pockets of people who are closer friends than others, but the whole team enjoys spending time together.

Winning, of course, is the best. The emotional high that comes from a win, is hard to explain to people who haven't been there; and the triumph of a close game is next to none! Losing, while hard, can still come with its own rewards. "The team will rally together to encourage each other, and of course the process of playing was the whole point anyway", says Madison.

For her, the best part about baseball is the friendships and memories that come with it. "The bruises come and go, but the memories last a lifetime."

Madison's focus and skill is on display when she steps up to bat and slams that ball past the infield. She is more than willing to take time out of her week to teach some of the younger teams when their coaches are away, demonstrating patience as she corrects stances and grip. And just like with the Ag Society, you can hear her mom, Julie, cheering for her and her teammates from the bleachers.



Focused and ready to swing!

The baseball season is over for the year and soon Madison's tenure as Fair Ambassador will be done as well. She'll be wrapping up her duties during the three days of the fair itself. Those last three days are the culmination of her duties and she and all

the Ag Society members will heave a huge sigh of relief and satisfaction once they're over!

The new ambassador will be chosen on September 4th, the first evening of the fair, during the opening ceremonies. Madison will miss her active role as Ambassador, but she's not planning on stepping back from the Ag Society. She's got a new project that she's working on, and it's one

that we'll be diving into in our October issue.

The Mitchell Fall Fair starts at noon September 4th and runs to Sept 6th; stop by and meet Madison!

FALL FAIR BUS TRANSPORTATION AROUND MITCHELL

The Agricultural Society has chartered a bus to help pick up residents from various spots around Mitchell during the fair. LEASE NOTE: BUS WILL "PAUSE" During Parade!

Bus Stops in order: UTES MDHS → Campbell Dr/Napier St → Blenheim Crt/St/Napier St → Coburg/Napier → Frank/Nelson → Jacob Auctions → Kent/Wellington St → Drop off & Pick up at The Arena Entrance

Pick up Times Start - Running every 30 mins between stops

Friday: 4pm - 1am

Saturday: 10am - 1am

Sunday: 12pm - 1am



Join the Legion Band!

With the summer months slowly winding down (even if it doesn't feel like it outside) and September looming in the distance, it dawned on me that it's been 20 years since I first played with the Legion Band here in Mitchell. Back in Gr. 6 I had a sudden desire to learn the drums – possibly to break away from my piano practices – and I was introduced to one Claire French and the Mitchell Legion Band. For the next year or so I accompanied my grandparents and played the bass drum alongside Jeremy, attending concerts and parades alike. Unfortunately, I was 12, which meant that I eventually got 'bored' and stopped showing up when it became slightly inconvenient.



Jacob playing the bass-drum as a pre-teen

Flash forward to high school and I learned to play numerous instruments and was gifted a tenor sax and was asked if I would "join the Legion Band", as if I'd never left in the first place. While the guilt did keep me hesitant, I eventually capitulated and rejoined as my own instrument rather than as an accessory to the drummer. Even after I left for 4 years to attend university, I somehow found my way back into the Legion band after I moved back to Mitchell.

That's one of the charms of a volunteer band of community members: we all know that everyone has lives, so stepping away isn't looked down on even if it isn't for the most 'righteous' of reasons, because we'll always welcome them back if the interest and intent is there. As long as the desire to learn music is there, nobody is turned away from joining in on the fun.

I learned how to read sheet music at the same time I learned how to read actual words (thanks, Grandma). Yet at the same time, I know that my story isn't entirely unique either. Currently we've got two grade school students in the band, with both of them having started on fully solo instruments at the same age I joined to hit a bass drum. Sometimes all it takes is a small nudge and a willingness to make a horrid noise in front of a bunch of other people.

The Mitchell Legion Band will be started back up again in September, after you'll see us in the Fair Parade (and mini-concert the day before). If this somehow inspired you to pick up an instrument, or stare longingly at the horn

sitting in the corner collecting dust, you're welcome to swing by the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 128 on September 8th-15th at 7:30pm. We'll be starting fresh to prepare for winter, so if there's any time to play wrong notes it'll be then when the rest of us don't know any of the music either. Plus, you'll get to hear how certain pop songs would sound with a trumpet as the singer and have it worm into your head forever. Trust me, I'd say that's a good deal.





Healing in Nature

Our labyrinth was completed in 2012, but its creation began much earlier in my mind than it did in reality. Initially it took shape in the form of paper mache—a sculpted vision on a very large canvas. That was stage one, but a new design ultimately became part of the land that we live on.



An aerial view of the labyrinth

It took time to develop the plan. The correct plants had to be chosen and planted, and it took time to come together. Once it was completed and thriving, we decided we wanted to share with what has become a magical vibrant expression of nature's beauty with others.

In our labyrinth there are six clear walking rings, and six clear garden rings. Within these rings exists an abundance of diversity in plants, trees, and flowers berry bushes. Each of the living plants

has a presence that can be felt by the person that decides to adventure inward. The journey is not only one of the body exploring the space in the garden, but one that invites exploration of the self as well.

Walking each ring in a particular pattern helps re-balance the right and left hemispheres of our brains, which ultimately relaxes the autonomic nervous system. This experience delivers a freshness to the participants troubled or excited feelings. All the while allowing a “smoothing over” of the ripples of emotion that can disrupt us from our path.

It has been part of my intention since the early 2000's, to not only help find answers to the uncommon questions that plague us all, but also to build something that can help to re-establish our harmony. At times life is in harmony and at other times life throws us off balance, beginning to travel within, helps to source these answers from our own highest self, which is the best of all information always available to us.

So I would like to welcome you to my most sacred of spaces: Come walk the labyrinth, experience walking meditation at a setting in a country location where the wind blows, the birds sing, and the plants heal.

It's best to call ahead if you would like to visit. Groups are welcome.

Call: 519-625-1549 or cell 519-274-1086

Email waymarfarms1@gmail.com



The New Bob Ross

Roger took the next day to methodically set up his “studio.” He got some push-back from his wife regarding the loss of half of the rec-room, but in the end she agreed to it.

Roger’s studio set-up included a studio easel, a stand-alone paint palette, and a small side-table for paints, jars of water, brushes, and palette knives. He had also purchased an adjustable floor-stand for his iPad on which he would view New Bob and follow along. The whole arrangement pleased him and he was eager to get started.

The “New Bob Painter’s Series” had four parts to it, and according to the description, after these four sessions participants would have learned how to paint independently and with success. It seemed a bit optimistic to Roger but he was, by this time, all in.

With all his purchases in place, Roger got online and started Episode One. It went something like this:

A raucous instrumental version of “Taking Care of Business” began and the camera spun around wildly, eventually revealing New Bob at his easel. He withdrew a tattered old paint brush from his mouth and noticeably drooled onto his shirt as he did so.

“Welcome everyone and thank you for deciding to be a part of one of the most modern and innovative painter series to be had anywhere! I hope you got out to your local art supply shop and asked to be set up for the New Bob series. They will have chosen top quality materials for you to use, and boy, I am especially excited that you purchased the “Real McCoy: New Bob Products;” and hey, how about that New Bob apron, ain’t she a beauty?! Let’s get started.”

and then lock it down by lowering the top canvas bar on the vertical mast. Make sure it is on there good and tight. Now, pull the tap out from below the bottom canvas bar and raise or lower it until the canvas is positioned at a height that is best for you”.

Already Roger was feeling a bit overwhelmed. The idea of vertical masts and horizontal canvas bars all sounded rather nautical and Roger was a real man of the land, not the sea. Still, he persisted.

“Okay folks, let’s get ready to paint. Most artists believe in thorough preparation, but in my series you are going to learn how to get your hands dirty; no need for hours of prep work. First things first, God, I hate that white canvas. It kinda scares me, you know. Let’s give her a coat of paint so we don’t have to see her naked anymore.”

Roger watched in awe as New Bob instructed him to take out the New Bob Indian yellow and Van Dyke brown, squeeze a copious amount of each into a yogurt container, splash a bit of water in it and thoroughly mix.

“Did I tell you to cover your floor with plastic? If not, you better do it now.” Bob quipped. Roger did as instructed.

“Now, grab ahold of the tilting hinge mechanism on each side of your easel and loosen them off.” Roger did so and as he did the whole easel quickly rotated downwards and banged into a horizontal position. “Tighten them up to hold it in place.”

Then Bob got a hold of the yogurt container of paint and unceremoniously dumped it onto the centre of the canvas; Roger followed suit. Paint flew everywhere, mostly missing the plastic that he laid down. “Damn!” He looked around to see if his wife had witnessed this, and thank God she hadn’t. He paused the show and took the next hour to clean up the mess.

He returned to the series, “Now none of the brushes you bought were meant for this job, so grab an old house-painting brush or even an old rag.”

Roger located an old brush and followed along with Bob spreading this messy blob of yellowy-brown around the canvas until it covered it all. It also covered the plastic and more. Roger had to clean up once more.

“Let that dry, folks, and in the meantime I will demonstrate laying



The result of Roger's first art lesson.

out our basic design.” Using the prescribed “New Bob 2 background brush” Bob quickly scribbled a few horizontal and vertical lines on the canvas while mumbling something about the rule of thirds, horizon lines and background. “There ain’t gonna be any pretty little tree in this baby!” proclaimed New Bob.

“What the hell have I gotten myself into?” Thought Roger.

Service Clubs

Come Join Lions Club!

Did you know that many of the events and community programs you know and love—including the Santa Claus Parade, our animal barn, and the Annual Fish Fry—are proudly run by your local Mitchell Lions Club?

We’re always looking for new members, fresh ideas, and people who want to make a difference right here in our community!

When do we meet?

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:45 p.m. at Town Hall, from September through April. We also have one or two meetings during the summer months in preparation for upcoming events.

Curious about what we do?

Come check out a meeting! You don’t have to commit to joining—just come see what the Lions are all about and find out if it’s something you’d enjoy being part of.

Our goal is simple: **to make our community better for everyone who lives here.** We welcome new ideas, suggestions, and, most importantly, new people who want to help our community continue to thrive.

Taryn Zinger

Mitchell Lions Club Member



The Mitchell Lions Club gathered at the 2025 Fish Fry

For more information, email us at Mitchell.lions.club@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up with everything happening in our club and community.

Come be part of something bigger. Come grow with us. Come be a Lion!

We can’t wait to welcome new faces and to continue making West Perth an even better place to call home!



Why Professional Cleanings Matter

According to Statistics Canada, approximately 75% of Canadians visit their dentist and hygienist annually, at minimum. Sometimes, with certain individuals, we recommend additional visits (Cleanings every 3, 4, 6, 9) months because of existing gum disease, risk of future gum disease, smoking, or if you have a complex medical condition that may make gum disease more severe and progress quicker.

Having routine cleanings with your hygienist has more to do with maintaining your overall health, rather than being focused on having smooth, whiter teeth. Not having professional cleanings has broader health implications than many people think.

Oral and overall health are very strongly linked. Gum disease is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, pregnancy complications, etc. If not managed properly at home and with the help of your hygienist, the bacteria or biofilm found in your mouth causes inflammation to the gum tissue and overtime, chronic gum infection leads to bone loss around the teeth, halitosis (bad breath), loss of attachment and eventually tooth loss in more severe cases. This inflammatory process does not just exist in your mouth, but is closely interconnected with inflammation systemically (your entire body).

At home, your brush and floss only reach so deep—about 3 or so millimeters below the gumline. Professional cleanings difficult to reach areas, including of deeper tooth pockets and the spaces between your teeth and behind the back molars. Even with good brushing and flossing at home, plaque still can harden into tartar or calculus in hard-to-reach areas, and these only can be removed properly by a dental professional.

Dental cleanings disrupt and remove bacteria that contribute to gum disease which keeps it from maturing enough to cause problems, both orally and

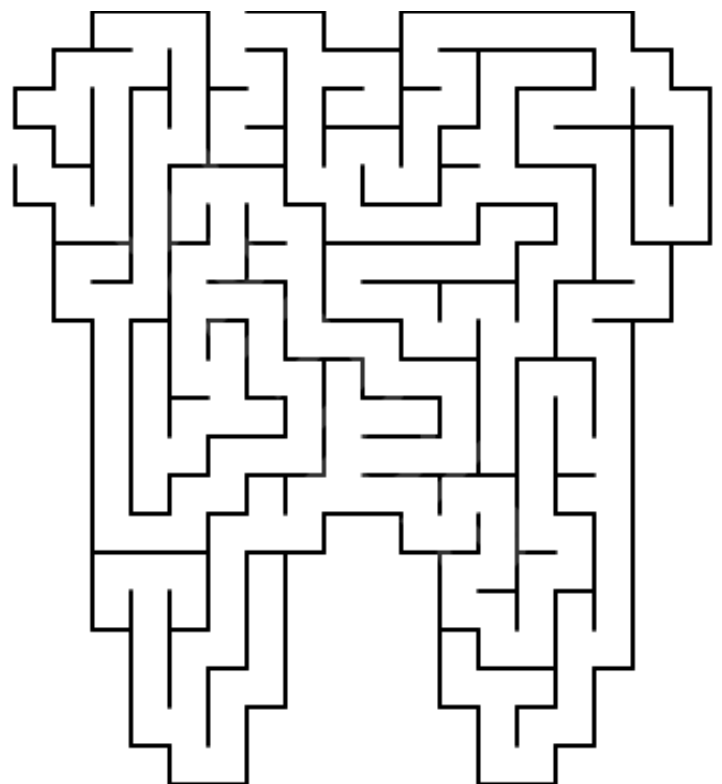
systemically. This helps create an oral environment that assists with tissue health.

Regular visits to your hygienist means we can catch things like recurring infection, increased gum loss, or tissue breakdown before they become irreversible. Catching things early also helps ensure those problems don't reoccur, and gives us professionals an opportunity to make ongoing customized care recommendations.

Between your cleaning appointments, be sure to brush for at least two minutes, twice a day. You should also use an inter-dental aid (floss, proxabrush, waterflosser, floss picks, etc), a fluoride toothpaste, and anything else recommended to you by your hygienist or dentist.

So next time you see that your dental appointment is coming up, be at ease knowing you are making a good choice by getting thorough cleaning via your hygienist and an exam with your dentist. We are excited to help you be a healthier YOU, one visit at a time!

Puzzle Maze





Outdoor Artisan Market



Our next Artisan Market at The Courtyard at Poppy Lane is happening on Saturday, September 19 from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Generally our markets will be happening the second weekend of the month, but September's is delayed in order to accommodate the Mitchell Fair schedule.

If you create handcrafted items and would like to participate in September's Market, vendor registration is open until Friday, September 11.

For this market, we are especially interested in finding at least one artisan who can offer a seasonal Make-and-Take activity for our visitors.

Are you registering as a Downtown Mitchell BIA Member or Associate? Be sure to check the appropriate box on the registration form. You may

be selected to utilize the FREE BIA-Sponsored booth!

The registration link can be found on the Downtown Mitchell BIA Facebook page. If you are not on social media, please contact us at biacoordinator@westperth.com, and we would be happy to assist.

Looking ahead, our next market in The Courtyard will take place on Friday, October 23, from 5:00 to 8:00 pm, followed by Trick-or-Treating on October 31, with the exact time TBD.

Watch for our upcoming calendar of events as The Courtyard begins to fill with fall activities presented by the Library, Youth Centre and other community partners.

Programming for this new space continues to evolve. Now that the decision to move forward with The Courtyard has been made, we can begin turning our ideas into plans, and plans into action. These things take time, but we're excited to see The Courtyard come to life, one event at a time.

Local Poets

THE KITE

Pastor Marc Fraser

Untethered by land
Unheld by hand
Seeking, never land

To glide
To wander
To soar
Into never land

Tethered by wind
Held by limb
Seeking, never land
To glide
To wander
To soar
Into never land



"The Kite" by Serene Dennis

West Perth Community

Most of these events are open to the general community though some have age restrictions. A diamond ♦ is for persons 55+ or living with disabilities/chronic health conditions

September 1 - Tuesday

♦Farkle | 1:30-2:30pm | Manor Lounge
Mitchell Foodbank* | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre
Legion Concert Band Practice | 7:30pm | Mitchell Legion

September 2 - Wednesday

♦Pickleball | 8-11am | Mitchell Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
♦Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge

September 3 - Thursday

♦\$40 Reflexology (by Appointment) | 9am-12pm | Manor
♦\$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
Canadian Mental Health Drop in Support | 1-3pm | WPPL
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre

September 4 - Friday

♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
M Foodbank* | 9:30-11:30am | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
♦WII Games | 2-3pm | Manor Lounge
Fall Fair | 12pm-10pm | Mitchell Fair Grounds

September 5 - Saturday

Men's Breakfast | 8:30am | 101 Restaurant
Dot Day Crafts -All Ages | 10:30am | West Perth Public Library
Fall Fair | 10am-10pm | Mitchell Fair Grounds

September 6 - Sunday

Fall Fair | 8:30am-10pm | Mitchell Fair Grounds

September 7 - Monday

Labour Day Holiday
Free Adult Soccer | 6:30pm - 8:30pm | Behind UTES

September 8 - Tuesday

Rotary Meeting | 7:15-8:30am | Deck Dentistry Basement
Blood Pressure Clinic | 1-3pm | West Perth Public Library
Crafter's Circle | 2pm | West Perth Public Library
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre
Drive Thru Food Bank Collection | 10am | Main Street United
Lions Club Meeting | 6.45pm | Mitchell Municipal Office
West Perth Council Meeting | 7pm | West Perth Offices
KIN Club Meeting | 7pm | Legion Basement

September 9 - Wednesday

♦Pickleball | 8-11am | Mitchell Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | Upper Thames
Missionary Church
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
♦Sing-a-Long | 2:30-3:30pm | Manor Lounge
♦Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge

September 10 - Thursday

♦\$12 Euchrama w/ lunch | 10am-3pm | Municipal Building
\$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre

September 11 - Friday

♦\$11 Brunch n Bunch-RSVP DEADLINE
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
M Foodbank* | 9:30-11:30am | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
♦WII Games | 2-3pm | Manor Lounge
Scottish Dancing Club | 7pm- 9pm | Knox Presbyterian

September 12 - Saturday

Childcan PJ walk | 4pm | Lion's park Mitchell

September 13 - Sunday

Carlingford school reunion | 1pm | St. Pauls Optimist Hall

September 14 - Monday

♦Pickleball | 8-11am | Mitchell Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
♦\$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
Babytime with EarlyON | 1-3pm | West Perth Public Library
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
*D&D Starts | 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Free Adult Soccer | 6:30pm - 8:30pm | Behind UTES
♦Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge

September 15 - Tuesday

♦\$15 Dining for Seniors Delivery Meal RSVP DEADLINE
Rotary Meeting | 7:15-8:30am | Deck Dentistry Basement
♦Senior Fitness | 9:30am | West Perth Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | M. Community Centre
♦\$11 Brunch n Bunch* | 10:30am | Manor Lounge
Mitchell Foodbank | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
Crafter's Circle | 2pm | West Perth Public Library
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre
Legion Concert Band Practice | 7:30pm | Mitchell Legion

Events: September 2026

Conditions, An asterisk* means pre-registration or an appointment is required. A "~" indicates join-up is seasonal. A dollar sign or price indicates the event is not free.

September 16 - Wednesday

♦Pickleball | 8-11am | Mitchell Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
♦Community Edu Coffee Hour: Advance Care Planning:
Rotary Hospice | 10:30-11:30am | Manor Lounge
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
Alzheimer Family Support | 2pm | West Perth Public Library
♦Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge

September 17 - Thursday

♦\$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre

September 18 - Friday

♦\$4 Pie Social-RSVP DEADLINE
♦\$40 Reflexology (by Appointment) | 9am-12pm | Manor
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
M Foodbank* | 9:30-11:30am | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
*\$YFC - Golf Fundraiser | 1pm | Mitchell Golf & Country Club
♦WII Games | 2-3pm | Manor Lounge
Drop-In Night | 7-9:30pm | West Perth Youth Centre
Scottish Dancing Club | 7pm- 9pm | Knox Presbyterian

September 19 - Saturday

YFC 2.5K Walk & 5k Run* | Registration: 9am | Lions Park
Artisan Market | 10am-4pm | Poppy Lane, Mitchell
Stories with Patsy Day | 11am | Pollinator Gardens
Open Mic | 12-4:30pm | Legion

September 20 - Sunday

Kids Day | All Day | Legion

September 21 - Monday

♦Pickleball | 8-11am | Mitchell Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
♦\$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
♦\$4 Pie Social* | 2:30-3:30pm | Manor Lounge
Drop-in | 3-5:30pm | West Perth Young Centre
Free Adult Soccer | 6:30pm - 8:30pm | Behind UTES
♦Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge
West Perth Council Meeting | 7pm | West Perth Offices
West Perth Singers | 7pm | Main Street United Church

September 22 - Tuesday

Rotary Meeting | 7:15-8:30am | Deck Dentistry Basement

♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | M. Community Centre
Family Services | 12:30-2:30pm | West Perth Public Library
Learn to Play Mahjong | 2pm | West Perth Public Library
Drop-in | 3-5:30pm | West Perth Youth Centre
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre
Lions Club Meeting | 6.45pm | Mitchell Municipal Office
Legion Concert Band Practice | 7:30pm | Mitchell Legion

September 23 - Wednesday

♦Pickleball | 8-11am | Mitchell Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | M. Community Centre
Tales & Tunes | 10:15am | West Perth Public Library
Spaghetti Day | 12-7pm | Legion
Newcomer Services | 1-4pm | West Perth Public Library
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
Drop-in | 3-5:30pm | West Perth Youth Centre
Stories with Teddy and EarlyON | 5:45pm | WPP Library
♦Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge

September 24 - Thursday

♦\$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
♦\$15 Dining for Seniors Meal* | 11:30am | Delivery
Agilec Employment Services | 1-4:30pm | WPP Library
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
Drop-in | 3-5pm | West Perth Youth Centre
Drop-in | 3-5:30pm | Youth Centre
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre

September 25 - Friday

♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | M. Community Centre
M Foodbank* | 9:30-11:30am | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
Drop-in | 3-5:30pm | Youth Centre
\$1hotdogs 4Members & Potluck desserts | 3-7pm | Legion
\$Tailgate Music Festival | 5pm | Keterson Park, Mitchell
Scottish Dancing Club | 7pm- 9pm | Knox Presbyterian

September 26 - Saturday

Catch the Ace Draw | 12-5pm | Mitchell Legion
\$20 Alymer's Ghost: Play | 12:30pm | The Crystal Palace

September 27 - Sunday

\$20 Alymer's Ghost: Play | 2:30pm | The Crystal Palace

continued on next page

September 28 - Monday

♦Pickleball | 8-11am | Mitchell Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
♦\$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
♦Senior Book Chat | 11am | Ritz Manor Apartments
Babytime with EarlyON | 1-3pm | West Perth Public Library
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
Free Adult Soccer | 6:30pm - 8:30pm | Behind UTES
♦Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge

September 29 - Tuesday

Rotary Meeting | 7:15-8:30am | Deck Dentistry Basement
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | M. Community Centre
Yahtzee | 10:30am | Manor Lounge
Learn to Play Mahjong | 1pm | West Perth Public Library
Mitchell Foodbank* | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
Blood Pressure (by appointment) | 1-3pm | Manor Lounge
Crafter's Circle | 2pm | West Perth Public Library
Drop-in | 3-5:30pm | West Perth Youth Centre
♦Pickleball | 6-9pm | Mitchell Community Centre
Perth C. Reads- Featured Book Discussion | 6pm | WPPL
Legion Concert Band Practice | 7:30pm | Mitchell Legion

September 30 - Wednesday

♦Pickleball | 8-11am | Mitchell Community Centre
♦G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
♦Aquafit | 9:30-10:45am | Spruce Lodge, Stratford
♦Active Wellness - Level 2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
\$5 Seniors Dance | 1:30-3:30pm | M. Community Centre
Drop-in | 3-5:30pm | West Perth Youth Centre
♦Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge

Event Submission Link



Submit your community event to the Heronry and expand your reach! Submissions are due by the 15th of the month prior to publication!

West Perth Events only! Club meetings, sports sign-up, and fundraisers welcome! Promotional items are welcome under our advertising category.

Reach out to wp.heronry@gmail.com for more information or call Christina at: 519-994-1431.

SAVE THE DATE

for a

Musical Gala

*Celebrating 80 years of the
Mitchell Music Festival: 1947-2027*



**Saturday, March 6, 2027 from 1-5pm
West Perth Community Centre**

(Snow date - Sunday March 7, 2027)

More info? Check out the Heronry every month!



Mobile

Internet

Television

Landline

1-800-265-4983

QUADRO.NET

FRIDAY - SEPT. 4TH 2026

MAGICAL MIDWAY | 2:30 - 11pm | Grounds
\$30 Porkchop Dinner (tickets at BMR) | 5pm | Arena
Tractor Pull | 5:30pm | Track & ⬢B
♪ Elysha Vorstenbosch Harpist | 5:45pm | Arena
KidZone | 6-9pm | ⬢D
Skyline Studios DJ | 6pm - 12am | Ponderosa
Inflatables & Little Tracks Petting Zoo | 6-9pm | ⬢D
Mitchell Legion Band | 6:15pm | Arena
Fair Opening Ceremonies | 6:45pm | Arena
Little Heron/Ambassador Program | 7:15pm | Arena
PAZ The Sports Guy | 8pm | Ponderosa
The Silver Starlets | 8:45pm | Arena
Crowning of 2026 - 2027 Ambassador

SATURDAY - SEPT. 5TH 2026

4H Dairy Show | 10 AM | Tim Horton's Pavilion
Antique Tractor and Car Show | 10am | ⬢D
Parade | 11am | Starts at UTES
MAGICAL MIDWAY | 12pm - 11pm | Grounds
Birds of Prey | 12:15 / 2:45 / 4:15 PM | Arena
Mitchell Horse Club Speed Show | 12:30pm | Track
4 Paws Flying Dog Show | 12:30 / 3 / 7pm | ⬢C
PAZ The Sports Guy | 1pm / 4pm | Ponderosa
Farm Safety | 1-4pm | Arena Conference Room
Kidzone | 1 - 7pm | Arena
Mitchell Legion Cornhole Tournament | 1pm | Ponderosa
The Silver Starlets | 1pm / 6:30pm | Arena
Inflatables & Little Tracks Petting Zoo | 1-7pm | ⬢D
Bentastic Magician | 1:45pm / 3:45pm / 8pm | Arena
♪ Skyline Showcase | 2pm | Ponderosa
♪ Elysha Vorstenbosch | 2:15 / 5:15pm | Arena
Fun Foam Show | 2:30 / 4:30pm | Outside Arena
The Silver Starlets Circus Workshop | 2:30pm | ⬢D
♪ Amelia McFarlane - Piper | 3:25pm | Arena
Smoked Pork Chop Dinner | 5pm | Arena
PAZ The Sports Guy (Juggling Workshop) | 6pm | ⬢D
♪ Crackerjack Palace Band | 7pm | Arena
Canadian Championship Wrestling | 7pm | Track
♪ Max Smith | 9:30pm | Ponderosa

SUNDAY - SEPT. 6TH 2026

4H Breakfast | 8:30am | Ponderosa
Church Service | 9:30am | Arena
Heavy Horse Show | 9:30am | Track
PAZ (Juggling Workshop | 9:30am | Ponderosa
Antique Tractor Show | 10am | ⬢C
Farm Safety | 1-4pm | Arena Conference Room
Birds of Prey | 10:45am / 1:30 / 4:30 PM | Arena
The Silver Starlets Circus Workshop | 10:15am | ⬢D
Baby Show Registration | 10:45am | Arena
Baby Show | 11:15am | Arena
Pet Show Registration | 11:30am | Arena
Pet Show | 12pm | Arena
4Paws Flying Dog Show | 11:30am / 2 / 4:30pm | ⬢D
MAGICAL MIDWAY | 12pm - 11pm | Grounds
Bentastic Magician | 12pm / 2 / 4pm | T.H's Pavilion
The Fun Foam Show | 12:30 / 3pm | Outside Arena
♪ Elysha Vorstenbosch | 12:30 / 3pm | Arena
PAZ The Sports Guy | 1 / 2:30pm | ⬢D
Inflatables & Little Tracks Petting Zoo | 1-7pm | ⬢D
The Silver Starlets | 1pm/3:30pm | Arena
KidZone | 1pm - 7pm | ⬢D
Beef Show | 1pm | Tim Horton's Pavilion
♪ Colby Quast | 2:30pm Arena | 4:30 Ponderosa
Power Wheels | 6pm | Track
Impact Derby | 6:30pm | Track
♪ Skyline Studio DJ | After Derby | Ponderosa





Nature's Gifts Endure

Looks like the time has come to say farewell to summertime in rural West Perth! September is the start of fall in the Northern Hemisphere and the transition has begun. We are still surrounded by a buzz of activity as our farmers' crop-harvesting continues – the steady drone of combines crawling along rows of soybeans a constant background sound.

There is a consistent soft “thud” every time a black walnut is let go to make contact with the earth below. There is a silence though, on rainy days as the first yellowed leaves gently float down to form their fall carpet. However, nothing makes me a truer believer in the arrival of fall than the ongoing “apple harvest”.

September is prime apple time! Bushels of juicy apples are appearing at local fall fairs, apple festivals, harvest festivals, markets and farm stands across our rural areas. For centuries, apples have been known as a symbol of abundance, renewal and prosperity. Our apples of today are descendants, beginning in the wild forests of central Asia thousands of years ago. Refined now to over 7500 cultivars available to feed billions! Scientific methods have created strains with consistent colour, size, shape, texture and purpose. The “perfect” apple is within everyone's reach.

Although of no “market” value, my favourite apples are our last remaining Heritage varieties and our “wild” apples. These Heritage varieties are in serious decline, many on the brink of extinction.

As we reflect back on the history of our area, we learn that almost every local farmstead had an orchard. Sadly, most of the original farm family orchards

are not kept up anymore. Some are just part of a pasture area, many overgrown with scrub trees and weeds, but despite this, the original heritage apple trees still stand! They lean precariously away from our prevailing winds but without fail, they crown themselves with fragrant blossoms every spring and faithfully yield hundreds of apples every fall. We come across these abandoned orchards

or remnants of them along quieter country roads where buildings stand empty and forlorn.

I like to find “yellow transparent apples” (some refer to them as harvest apples), “snow apples” and various varieties of the “russet” apple. For the most part these have become the basis of what we call “wild” apples around rural West Perth. These remnants of a time long passed are gems! The early

yellow apples, too soft in texture for eating, make the absolute best applesauce and pies imaginable. There is also every shade of reds, pinks, yellows and greens when it comes to our “wild”, mostly forgotten apples! Yes, they have blemishes, but in a good season there remains plenty of flesh to keep a cook happy in the kitchen for days.

When we moved to our property here on Line 26, there were remnants of an original orchard. Many of the trees were standing dead when we arrived in 1990, but there remained one old giant apple tree, standing strong, blooming and producing all on its own. It happened to be a variety of “delicious” apple. Mid-fall it would become so loaded with fruits that the branches would bow down to the ground. One wet and windy fall day, on Sept. 25, 2021, she bowed down so low that the whole tree was uprooted and fell to the ground!

Many of our readers will be familiar with the famous



Collecting fallen apples

book: "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein. We have personal proof that an apple tree has a lot to "give"; it gives until the end of its existence and actually far beyond. For over 31 years of our time here, our apple tree had been giving.

Clearly it was older when we came, so I suspect it had been giving for a long time before that as well. Our children grew up climbing her thick branches, swinging on the tire swing that hung low underneath her. We had rested in the coolness of her shade on hot summer days. Birds, too numerous to name, had been provided with a safe nesting area. Our kittens had a good place to practice climbing. We fed the extras to our rabbits, hens and our horses. Squirrels, raccoons and other wildlife had fruits to eat. The apples came in abundance every fall without fail. We ate plenty ourselves, made applesauce, apple juice, and of course many baked delights. Some were shared with those seeking large amounts to make cider. This old heritage tree left a large hole in our lawn

and an even larger void in our hearts when she toppled. But she would continue to give, as the firewood fed our stove which warmed our home in winter. We had our memories too, for recall in quiet times. Imagine the stories if these old orchard apple trees could tell them!

My husband, being a wood turner, kept several lengths of the larger trunk. After a couple years of curing, he turned wooden bowls from the old tree. The bowls came out with the most intricate and gorgeous grain patterns! We of course gave one to each of our children as a keepsake and we sold several to neighbours and friends. Our very own "Giving Tree" was still giving, long after she had met her demise!

An apple is a reminder that nature always has "gifts to give" in every stage of life, not only at harvest time.

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).

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

Whirl Creek
Scottish Country Dance Club

**Dance Your Way To A
Healthier Heart
Happier Outlook
Improved Coordination
New Friendships
And Fun!**

Starting Friday Sept 11
7pm to 9ish
at Knox Presbyterian Church, Mitchell

For more information contact David Kemp
kdavid96@yahoo.com 519-345-2208



The Mitchell Fair, 1953

Ever since the September beginning of school, we kids at the French farm knew what was coming. We'd been there before, and had experienced the joys of the Mitchell Fair many times, so we could hardly wait for parade day. Even our teacher at S.S. #4 Logan (Brodhagen School), seemed to anticipate Fair Day.

Early in September, he always found time to take the entire school out to the playground and march them around in formation. After all, for the teacher, the school's deportment was even more important than our annual Christmas concert. The whole area would be there watching his students in all their glory, as they marched down the Mitchell streets as a platoon. Yes, a good showing was imperative.

The teachers in the participating schools did their best to ensure that the students in their individual schools were well prepared for the Mitchell Fair parade. Mr. Brick Brickman, our Brodhagen school teacher, (and a fine one he was!) was no exception. He knew that his students must appear well-behaved, well-disciplined, and united in some way, in costume. As the time drew nearer, he would make plans and also reminisce pleasurably over some of the past Mitchell Fair parades.

"Remember the year that each and every student had to stop in at Mrs. Diegel's place in Brodhagen to be measured for their individually-tailored sailor suits— and all thirty-plus suits were ready to be worn well in advance of the parade day?"

"How about the year we march proudly to the marching cadence of Gary Sholdice on his snare drum?"

"The year of the cute little majorettes was great, but now those majorettes were part of the Brodhagen band, so they are unavailable to enhance the school's production for this year. But surely another idea will come."

There were many things to remember! Don't forget the preparation of the school's marching banner! It must be coordinated well with the school's overall costume theme. He'd leave its construction up to the girls in the senior grades, but then he'd have to choose two worthy students to carry it. Decisions, decisions, decisions!



Lined up for inspection at the fair 1949: (Picture Mitchell, 1857-1998)

Back at the French farm, two miles north of the village of Brodhagen, the morning chores were finished, and preparations were frantic as the family got ready for Mitchell Fair Day.

I was old enough to look after myself as I prepared to march with the Brodhagen Band in the parade, but my

younger siblings needed help (Thanks, Mom!) with their school uniforms. Somehow, everyone would get ready, and we left on time for the day we had anticipated for weeks.

At the marshalling area, I joined the Brodhagen Band, banned, as tune-up notes (not always tuneful) and band banter filled the air. We were old hands at this game. I was now a band veteran with at least one year's worth of parades under my belt. I knew well that Mr. Brickman would be putting the finishing touches to the Brodhagen School contingent just down the street. After all this preparation and work, nothing must be allowed to go wrong.

Finally the big parade began. Brodhagen Band marched from MDHS westward to Barthel's Service Station, and then south on Highway 23 to the

main corner. There, we turned left and proceeded up/down, (depending on your perspective) Main Street, to Wellington Street, where we turn northward to the Mitchell Fairgrounds. Entering the fairgrounds, we marched down the racetrack and passed the reviewing stand, so that the spectators on the bleachers could have a good look at everything in the parade. Each entry was unfailingly announced by the Fair MC as it passed in front of the grandstand.

The parade dispersed at a discrete distance past the reviewing stand, after the school sections had been marched into parallel positions in front of the grandstand, facing the reviewing stand. There, the teachers and their students would await the judge's decisions before the final parade dismissal. Then, and only then, could they enjoy the delights offered by the Midway, the exhibits, and the day's excitement.

Yes, the students in the marching school sections were then free to do as they wished, but not me, a cornet player in the Brodhagen band. Our band leader, Pete Hinzs, would dismiss us after the parade, but we had to set up in concert formation on the platform next to the reviewing stand and play band music between the horse races, which, then, were a big part of Fair Day in Mitchell. In fact, the races lasted most of the afternoon, and that sun was sure hot as we sat there waiting to play in our black wool jackets, heavy black band hats, and heavy gray pants! We were dismissed only at the conclusion of the last race – but at least the grandstand applauded after each number we played. Such is the price of glory.

Once free, I roamed the Mitchell Fair at will. As a lowly student in Grade 7, I was totally in awe of any MDHS student whom I saw in my wanderings. MDHS had activated the Cadet Corps for the occasion, and every student wore what looked like a snazzy uniform to my eyes.

The entire student body of MDHS had marched in the earlier parade, and the high school students, easily distinguished in their distinctive military cadet dress, seemed to dominate the Midway on the mall between the Crystal Palace and the old arena. Boy, were they having fun! Just think, in one year, I would join that exalted group!

Many of the high school students were paired off, boy and girl. And they seem to be having fun, greeting their friends, and trying many of the Midway games along the mall between the arena and the Crystal Palace. A girl's popularity seemed to be enhanced considerably if she carried stuffed midway prizes, no doubt earned by her escort at one of the many games placed along the mall. And he seemed to be so happy to win them and present them to his chosen date for the day.



The Midway (Picture Mitchell, 1857-1998)

Also on the midway mall, there was usually at least one fruit vendor, with bags, or bushels of apples, peaches, pears, or plums, tastefully displayed for sale.

As the French family lived away back in Logan Township, these booths afforded our only chance to enjoy some of these delicious fall treats, and

we would be sure to purchase at one of those booths before we left. With luck and a little more money, we might even be able to purchase a big, juicy watermelon – they did not grow well in our Logan Township gardens.

The fair crowds diminished in size noticeably as evening approached, as all the rural folk left to tend to the evening barn chores. So about 5:00 p.m., the French family left the fairgrounds and piled into our '51 Chevrolet for the drive home. Sometimes, if our financial situation allowed, we would stop at Barthel's service station for an unusual treat—a huge ice cream cone, all for just ten cents! Odd – we were always quiet and subdued on the way home. Not at all the boisterous, excited family that had started the day just six hours earlier!



The 5th Furrow

Patrick Collins: Swamp & Muck

Every historical sketch published in these pages begins the exact same way; with a name, a lot number, and a blank space on a nineteenth-century survey map. When we look at a modern property map of West Perth, we see clean lines, paved concessions, and well-drained agricultural fields.

To understand the people who established this county, we must look past the modern landscape and find the original blueprint. Reconstructing the lives of pioneers who left no diaries or letters requires a specific, repeatable methodology.

Because the primary data for Perth County's earliest settlers exists in only a handful of repositories, the researcher must act as a data analyst, cross-referencing records to find the human story hidden inside the bureaucratic margins.

When we look at the residents of Lot One of Logan Township for Concessions One through Five, the process begins with locating a baseline of names from an early 1845 resident list. Once you have a name and an approximate date, the hunt moves to the population schedules of the Canadian Census from 1845 through 1891, available through public databases like FamilySearch.org. It is through this method that the story of our next pioneer, Patrick Collins, is written in the faded ink.

If you open the pages of the 1851 and 1861 Census for Logan Township, Patrick's homestead appears

as a classic example of pioneer life. In a log house that was filled with the energy of a growing family, Patrick

and his wife Jane, managed to raise children while simultaneously dragging a farm out of a swamp. The census rolls list the names of children who grew up with the scent of woodsmoke in their hair and the ring of the axe in their ears, their young hands helping tend livestock and clear brush.



Patrick Collin's allocation.

Jane's grave marker still stands at St. Vincents' as does their daughter Kate's although it is broken and unreadable. They still provide a point where multiple records cross. This census also lists his children at the

time: Michael, Mary, Catharina (Kate) & Bridgette. Records indicate that Kate passed away four years later at the age of 21, the cause was unlisted, but Consumption (Tuberculosis), Typhoid Fever and Cholera were all common in 1865. These

devastating illnesses were often the cost of taming the frontier, bred by the very environment the pioneers were trying to conquer.

A family's history remains abstract until it is tied to the terrain they inhabited.



A section of the Huron Road, 1858.

When the Canada Company surveyors first moved through Perth County in the late 1820s and 1830s, they documented a landscape defined by water. Logan Township sits directly adjacent to Ellice Township, home to the Ellice Swamp; a massive, provincially significant wetland spanning thousands of acres that formed the headwaters of the North Thames River and Black Creek.

In the 1840s and 1850s, Logan Township caught the overflow of this high-water table. Because the land was dense with ancient hardwood forests

30	Patrick Collins	Farmer	Ireland	Cast Church	150	1	1	M
31	Jane Collins		do	do	48			
32	Michael Collins	Labourer	up Canada	do	23	1		S
33	Mary Collins		do	do	20		1	S
34	Catharina Collins		do	do	17		1	S
35	Brigette Collins		do	do	15		1	S

The 1861 census records listing all the family members: Patrick, Jane, Micahel, Mary, Catharina, and Brigette.

and lacked natural drainage channels, the forest floor acted like a sponge. When pioneers cleared the giant trees, the sun hit the ground, but without the deep root systems to pump the water out, the land frequently turned into a standing mire of black muck and cedar swamps.

To combat this, the front line of these properties required a corduroy road; a ribbon of raw logs laid side by side across the black muck so that wagons could cross the cedar swamps without sinking. Patrick Collins, wedged snugly alongside his immediate neighbors Edward Lynch on Concession Two and Thomas Markey on Concession Three, cleared the trees and laid these logs by hand. Together, this reliable front line of Lot One neighbors forged a necessary transport line for the community, making the journey easier for the families to come.



he spent his adulthood taming, but unfortunately, his stone no longer remains as proof. Like so many of that first wave, his stone stood exposed for generations to the relentless, biting elements of the Canadian climate. The rain washed the pores of the limestone, and the winter frost pushed at the hairline cracks, slowly softening the record of his dates and name, until the name and then the entire stone was gone.



Jane and Kate's Markers in the St Vincent de Paul Cemetery

The depth at which a researcher chooses to go is always dependent on the available information. Beyond digital indexes, anyone can dig deeper into their family history using regional museums, local libraries, and the Ontario Genealogical Society. The purpose of this work is not to expose every private detail of a family's past, but rather to create an awareness for the stones that are eroding, the lines in the records that are fading, and the stories being lost to time. Each name on a census mattered. Each entry represents a life that walked where we now do.

Today, I believe Patrick Collins rests quietly in the sacred ground of St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery in Mitchell, the resting place of his wife, Jane, and his daughter Kate. He lies secure in the West Perth soil

dry concessions of Logan, completely taking for granted the modern conveniences that began with his hard-won road. No marble statues stand in our public squares for Patrick Collins. But as the sun sets over the fields, casting long shadows across the dark earth, you realize his monument is already built. It is written in the bloodlines of the descendants who still call this county home, and in the very dirt that continues to feed the community he helped begin.

I would like to hear your stories and chase your roots through the rich soil of West Perth. Is your family from here or does your lineage go back generations? Perhaps you have an unsung hero, a unique and inspiring tale of this area and community to share. I would love to dig into your past, hear your stories and dedicate an article or two, to you the reader. If you would like to see a family highlighted, want to feature your family history or have another idea for this series, please let me or the Heronry, know; we'd love to help tell your stories.



Chapter 1 - The First Part

My grandfather Chester Adams, bought the farm in sections until he accumulated 104 acres at Lot 16, Concession 2 Logan Township. It was located at the north edge of Mitchell and ran north about a mile and a quarter from downtown; the Thames River ran along the back and was considered part of the farm until long after I left home. The river flats were eventually expropriated by the Thames River Valley Conservation Authority but until then the flats were a permanent pasture for our horses and cattle.

In 1908 my grandfather purchased a 2-story frame home in Mitchell sitting where the Beer Store is now located. A foundation was built for the house and two teams of horses moved the house on logs down the unpaved road over a two-week period until it came to its resting place on our property.

My grandmother Annie cooked meals from inside the house, for several of the workmen during those long days all while the house slowly moved to its new location. My grandfather had it clad in yellow brick and it is the only one of the original buildings now left.

There were three special ladies that occupied the house over the years: Grandma Annie, my mother, Mary, and Harry's late wife, Beatrice. They supported their husbands over the years, raising their children, maintaining the home, and working in the fields and gardens. Mom milked cows regularly as well. Chester & Annie raised Ruby, Garnett & Winnie. Garnett & Mary's first born, Kathleen Mary lived only six days. The other six: Pansy, Donna, Harry, Sidney, Watson (aka me), and Darrell were brought up with good morals and

work ethic and all had rewarding careers. Harry & Beatrice, the final residents of the home, also raised seven wonderful children, and provided a home for their baby granddaughter, Nancy, when their oldest daughter Gladys moved home. Gladys and Valerie passed away too soon with health issues. David, Karen, Tom, Peter, and Inez are retired from very productive lives. The three generations of children who occupied the home saw few changes in the interior of the house. During all those years, putting food on the table, clothes on our backs and education took precedence over house upgrades.

In 1909 my grandfather had a 30-foot-deep well dug near the back door; it supplied the family, horses and cattle with cold pure water for years. Several years after my brother Harry took over the farm from our father Garnett, he had a well drilled by the house for indoor plumbing; the house had running water for the first time. Harry's son David has two hobby horses there today and refurbished the original hand pump in 2020 and acquired clear pure water for his horses. This became necessary after the indoor pump seized; he cut the hydro to the main house at that time.

Between my father and brother, bits of the farm have been severed over the years. A house lot was sold at the mile & quarter marker and then another beside it. Later a parcel immediately north of the house was sold for a garden center of



The Adams Family home,

sorts. Dad also gave my brother Darrell a lot next to the Supertest Gas Station that was there when I was a child at the south end next to the town boundary. Another lot was given to the Orange Lodge where a small country church was moved to the location. About fifty years ago, Harry sold a parcel of land to the Lutheran Church for The Ritz

Villa Retirement Home which is now known as the West Perth Village.

Our mother spent her last few good years at the Ritz and played the piano regularly in a sitting room; it was like she was “back on the farm.” Two of Harry’s daughters, Gladys & Valerie, also spent their last years of life there. My sister Donna at 100 years and her husband John lived in an apartment called The Manor, which is directly south of the Ritz and is considered part of the complex. Harry moved to the Ritz in 2019 and still owned the farm at the time. By that point it was about half the original size and the land was being leased to a farmer friend. It has since been sold; the house has fallen into disrepair and will likely never be lived in again.

My Early Years

My earliest recollection of life is from when I was about three years old. It was summer and we had moved to the summer kitchen on the back of the house which helped keep the main house cool and kept the heat out of the four bedrooms upstairs. Mom decided to lay Darrell on a blanket on the floor with a bottle of milk for his nap. As I recall, this seemed like a novelty and I begged her for a bottle as well, and she obliged. I think Darrell soon went to sleep as planned but I didn’t stay there long.

Mom and Dad had the bedroom at the south-east corner, Pansy & Donna were in the north-east room, Harry and Sid were in the south-west room, and Darrell and I had the coldest room in the north-west. The main floor was divided in two with a wood/coal cooking and heating stove at the west end. The parlour on the north side had a small round stove for heating, but it was only used for family gatherings or Sunday afternoons. We’d gather around the piano when mom played and she taught us to harmonize – fond memories. I recall a pump organ back then but I don’t know where it went. There were door openings at each end of the double walls which separated the living area

from the parlour. In between were steep narrow stairs leading to the bedrooms. A latch-door at the bottom kept the heat from going upstairs and helped control the noise to allow for sleeping.

On the underside were rickety stairs to the cellar. There was a cistern there that collected rain water from the roof. A hand-pump was located over the kitchen sink by the rear window, which was used to pump water for washing, baths, cleaning – but not for drinking. Heavy dark drapery covering the wall

door openings kept the heat in the living areas. There was also a small storage space between the stairs which allowed access from the living area.

We kids had a small wagon that we played with, going up and down the gravel lane from the house to the paved concrete highway. We were never allowed to play on the road, although there were many times during the days when traffic was light. Sid always wanted to be the

driver– sitting in the wagon while steering with the handle in front of him. Being older he usually got his way, which resulted in Darrell and me doing the work. Harry usually was working with dad rather than playing. We often had a stick to place the one end on the back of the wagon for easier pushing. We also rode in the little wagon down the barn bank

As we got older, we played in the hay mows, which was fun. Another form of entertainment was to take a metal rim from a wheel about a foot across and try to keep it going as we ran up and down the lane. A stick with a cross stick nailed at the bottom was used to push it along and boy was it a challenge to keep it going over rough gravel.



Harry, Jim, Sidney, Watson, Darrell

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

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A Caribbean Connection

I moved from Toronto to West Perth earlier this year, and after settling into the community, I realized there was an opportunity to create more connections for people from the Caribbean and the wider Caribbean diaspora in the area. I'm from the Caribbean diaspora, with family roots in Trinidad and St. Vincent, and Caribbean culture has been a major part of my life for as long as I can remember.

I've played Mas since I was three years old and competed for many years as a Junior Queen and Female Individual. My involvement in Carnival has even led to me being featured in the Toronto Star, Toronto Sun and children's books about Canadian holidays. Carnival and Mas have always been much more than costumes and celebration to me — they've been a way of staying connected to my culture, creativity, history and community.

Moving from Toronto to a smaller community made me realize how important it is to create those connections wherever you live. That's what inspired me to start a facebook group: I wanted a space where people from different Caribbean backgrounds and the wider diaspora could find each other, share their cultures and experiences, discover events and traditions, and build genuine friendships.

It's been really exciting to see how quickly people have responded. The group has already grown to over 40 members, and people are sharing stories, connecting over their different islands and even discovering family connections. Someone recently

shared that they came looking for Caribbean events and ended up finding a long-lost cousin through the group. Moments like that have really reinforced for me why creating this space was worthwhile.

I'm still at the beginning of building the community, but my hope is that it continues to grow into something that brings the Caribbean diaspora together, celebrates our cultures and creates a sense of belonging here in West Perth.



If you're part of the Caribbean Community, come join us on Facebook and be part of a growing community in Perth County!

Crossword Puzzle

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

Two West Perth karate athletes will have the honor of representing Canada this October at the World Karate Commission (WKC) World Championships in Chiclana, Spain. Miles Linton, a 14 year old Mitchell teen, and his Sensei (karate coach or teacher), Eric Thomson, of Thomson Martial Arts on Ontario Road, have earned spots on Team Canada.

Miles, the son of Amanda and Paul Linton, is an ambitious young man who began a dog-waste clean up business when he was 11, adding grass cutting services when he was 12. You may have also seen him working this summer at the Lions Pool concession stand.

After a hiatus in his 7 year karate journey, Miles recommitted to karate in early 2025. He currently trains at both the St Marys and Mitchell locations of Thomson Martial Arts, and occasionally attends sessions with Eric at a dojo (karate school) in the Hamilton area. His mother, Amanda, says that the family enjoys meeting other competitors and their families. While competing individually, the support and encouragement in the karate community are wonderful.

Fellow parents rave about Eric Thomson who trains about 75 West Perth students in Shoto Kan Karate. Eric welcomes students of all ages and abilities with warmth, friendliness and inclusivity. While having a 22 year career in karate and being an internationally known athlete, he is a humble Perth County native who does not seek the limelight. He is an absolute wonder at working with kids, teens and adults of all ages. He leads classes with a casual joy that immediately puts even the most hesitant child at ease.

When asked what keeps him going Eric said: "I don't know, maybe the

physical and mental challenge? Watching the little daily improvements of the students and sharing what I know make it worth it!"

The pair leave Toronto on October 23 arriving in Frankfurt on October 24, then continuing on to

Seville, Spain. Their week-long schedule includes athlete weigh-ins, Team Canada photo session, opening ceremonies, point sparring and team events. The larger competition also includes continuous sparring, kata and weapons, across various age and weight divisions. The group will return home on Halloween.

Eric Thomson notes that it will cost about \$10 000 Canadian to send Eric & Nikki Thomson,

Miles and his Mom, Amanda to this international competition. The families will be covering these expenses themselves, but fellow parents from Thomson Martial Arts have stepped forward to help support the athletes.

The Thomson Martial Arts Parent Committee is inviting the community to participate in fundraising efforts to help offset the costs of this international trip. Please consider joining us for one of the following events.

A bottle-drive will take place from September 6th until October 2nd. Donations can be placed in the trailer located at 205 St George Street in Mitchell. Cans in clear plastic bags with the number of items written on the outside, bottles in cases or boxes.

A bake sale and open house will take place at Thomson Martial Arts, 36 Ontario Rd on October 2 from 5-8 pm. Cash donations will also be accepted. We hope to see you there!



Miles and Eric in front of the St Mary's Dojo location



The Many Faces of Poppy Lane

I hate change.

Ok, I don't really hate it– that would be an exercise in futility since changes happen all the time, but change can be challenging. There has been a lot of discussion around Poppy Lane, and the changes that have been spearheaded by the BIA and passed by council.

I thought it would be useful to dig into some of this history so that we can view these changes in context.

To start, where did Poppy Lane come from?

We have access to photos from the Campbell Collection that can help.



The first photo is taken sometime in the early 1900's; this was when the location we now call "Poppy lane" was part of Market Square in downtown Mitchell. This a photo of what was called "Deering Day". This was an established day when farm implements were shipped to town.



This next photo (previous column) shows the same location from a different direction. In it you can see the bandstand that stood at the corner of Market Square in the early 1900s.

As time marched on, so did Market Square. According to the history books, Market Square changed again around 1911 with the building of the Post Office and removal of the bandstand. (Below)



Over the years, Market Square continued to evolve. This picture is believed to be around 1921, showing the war memorial built in 1919 and featuring what looks like a new bandstand.



I love this next picture of Mitchell (see the next page). It shows how we used to park in the centre of the street, a practice which continued until somewhere around 1952, when it was abolished.

In the bottom left of the photo you can also still see a corner of the bandstand that still stood in Market Square.

(continued on next page)



Angled parking in downtown Mitchell, prior to 1952.



In 1959 things changed again. Assisted by the local Royal Canadian Legion branch, the site underwent redesign in August of that year. This update included new curbs, an expanded grassed area, and the relocation of the second bandstand; it was moved to Brodhagen. At this time, there was also a small building (seen beside the post office) that was built in 1928 and contained public washrooms; it was removed in 1974.

I could not find a picture of Market Square that shows the completion of the upgrades to the War Memorial but it probably looked quite similar to how things stand today. I wish I could have found out when the Market Square road access became known as Poppy Lane but I was unable to track down that information. We know that the earliest it could have been designated was in 1974 when the bathrooms were torn down.

So why the history review?

Well, a lot of people are upset about the changes to Poppy Lane. They want their parking access and don't see the need for a courtyard in the centre of downtown.

Well to me, these images show that for most of our community history, this area has seen constant change. They also show that throughout the years, the primary purpose of the area that was once known as Market Square, was to be a gathering place. Even as the War Memorial changed and took on a more prominent role, it was still a communal area.

I am not sure when over the last 30 years Market Square stopped being Market Square, but eventually it lost its community focus and became known as the location of the War Memorial and a lane for quick access to the post office.

As my business trips have taken me through many communities around southern Ontario, I've noticed that downtowns are dying. In an attempt to combat this trend, many groups and town councils are attempting to recreate features that all towns used to have – downtown community gathering spaces.

With this in mind, I began looking at how we could recreate that community space in Mitchell. Many spots were discussed, but I always came back to what was or had been the original community gathering space, Market Square, or what was left of it– aka the location called Poppy Lane.

As a downtown business owner, I brought my idea up at a BIA meeting, and for over two years we have been discussing and reviewing how we could make this work. Yes, we did look at other locations before deciding that Poppy Lane in the downtown core area was the best option.

When we first started the discussion with council and staff, we received a lot of both positive and negative feedback. With this feedback in mind, our presentation tried to address many of the concerns expressed.

After a lot of hard work and planning, we made our official presentation to the West Perth Council. We proposed that we close Poppy Lane to vehicular traffic and make it a walking/gathering space only.

We tried to address all concerns in our Presentation to Council but we know that other people having been asking similar ones.

Here are the answers to some of the more common questions. The presentation is still accessible, and anyone who wants a clearer picture is welcome to read through it.

Why does it have to be closed forever if you're only doing one market event one evening a month?

The vision for Poppy Lane is not only a monthly market, but also a pop-up event space and a continuous public space, where individuals can enjoy themselves without the worry of cars. Picture things like open mic evenings, crafting pop-ups, karaoke afternoons, and youth events!

What do we do with the loss of parking?

Technically there was no official parking on Poppy Lane, but for people who are used to parking there it looks like three spots are being lost. Those three spots will be re-established at what was the entrance to Poppy Lane. The fourth spot was not really a parking spot but a quick stop, grab your mail, and leave area. So, yes, some people will have to walk about an extra 60 to 70 feet from Main Street or will have to park on St Andrew St. Is this inconvenient? Yes, but we believe the benefits to the community will outweigh the inconvenience. Accessible parking is still there in the back and at the side of the post office, and regular parking is still there; its location has just changed.

Who is paying for this?

The vision we presented has the BIA covering the costs of establishing this idea. Can we anticipate all expenses? No, but we are doing our best to ensure that the Municipality will not be caught holding the bag. I have been around long enough to see how good intentions can leave tax-payers on the hook. This can happen when the committees fall apart or they disband before the project is finished and paid for, or it can happen when long-term upkeep isn't accounted for. Our plan covers as many contingencies as we could think of, but we will continue to work on updating it as time goes by.

How do we handle long term maintenance, snow and garbage removal?

Some of these will be, and have always been, handled by the municipality; the others will

be covered by the BIA. The BIA has its own functioning budget, and there will be tasks that will be performed by municipal staff and billed to the BIA. As we addressed in our presentation, we know that we will need to cover the cost of snow removal. Did we get caught last winter by the amount of snow? Yes we did, and we will have to adjust our plans, and adjust our budget, via fundraising or sponsorship to make sure last year's mess doesn't happen again.

How long is this going to take?

We, and many other local organizations like the Youth Centre, have lots of plans to use the space, but those events take time to plan and coordinate. Getting the space closed, getting people used to the fact this is now a space for foot traffic only, and coordinating the purchase of items for the space and the sponsorship of items does not happen overnight. It will take us some time to create what we're envisioning and we ask for your patience as we work on putting those pieces together.

Is the plan perfect? No; we know things were not organized well last winter and the space was very inaccessible. Our presentation to council addressed many of these concerns. Did we resolve them all? No, we did not. Many challenges are still being worked on, and we acknowledged this much during our presentation. However when we identify an issue, we also add it to the list of problems to be solved; we are committed to constant improvement.

Despite the various unknowns, the majority of West Perth Council agreed to support our vision for this area and what it could be.

It is the best idea ever? Maybe not, but we hope so. You are allowed to disagree, but we also hope that you'll be open to changing your mind. We ask that you come along with us on the journey as we work on developing our vision for this community space in the downtown core.

Bert J. Vorstenbosch

Chair BIA & Downtown Business owner (B&V Enterprises Inc)



Life's better with a little Oinktimism

In typical funny farm style, after two years, we were ready to add a new animal to the farm. Having pigs seemed like a natural progression. Pork was served regularly in our home (who doesn't love bacon?) and my husband had experience working on a hog farm as a teenager. We wanted to keep our pigs outside. This would allow them to forage for food, allow them to live in their natural environment, and lessen our daily chore workload. My husband completed his research and decided he wanted to raise a rare heritage breed of pig called English Large Blacks. They are as they sound, indeed large; the adults are easily 500 lbs. Their body length is longer than most pigs. Their ears are especially long and grow forward over their face to the tip of their nose and cover their expressive eyes. Their skin is all black, which makes them ideal to raise outside as they won't sunburn. Their temperament is exceptional. I must say, they are quite friendly and enjoy a good scratch.

Keeping animals outside isn't always easy as we do have Canadian winters to deal with. In the last two years, we have had a significant amount of snowfall which has required us to clear the snow around the fences to ensure that the electric is still working and pigs don't just walk over-top of the fence. Animals getting out is always a fear when they are kept outside and sometimes, things happen. That's why, when I received a call from my daughter who was on the school bus advising me that one of our pigs was out running down the road, I believed her.

I was making dinner between working night shifts on a snow-filled January afternoon when I received a call from my daughter who was on the

bus travelling home from school. It was a busy afternoon as my daughter needed to be driven to her after-school job at a local barn, my son needed to go to his sporting activity, chores needed to be completed, and we all needed to eat before I went back to work. I expected her to tell me that the bus was running late, but instead she seemed slightly panicked as she said that one of our pigs was running down our road. Knowing that our pigs had a very distinctive look, I believed her, and ran outside to do a head count. I found the fences intact and the faces of our two sows and one boar in their huts. The wiener pigs were all accounted for as well. Relief. When she arrived home, I reassured her that this was not our pig and we carried on with our day as I drove her to work.



Some of our pigs appreciating leftover corn

Within the country block, as I was driving eastbound, we came upon the full-grown black sow. She was trotting down the road between the four-foot tall snowbanks. I slowed to pass her, rolled down my window to get a closer look, and was shocked to see the distinctive long black ears covering her eyes. I called out one of my sows names, "Emmylou!" She stopped, looked at me, and then turned around and started trotting westbound. Now I was worried. Maybe my sleep deprived eyes had not counted right? I called my husband who was driving home from his job and told him about the pig, how I was sure it wasn't ours, but also how this was indeed a Large Black pig. During this time, the neighbours called my husband as well to tell him that our pig had escaped. They had a plan to redirect the pig to their barn, and my husband would stop by on his way home to ensure that it was not a Square H sow.

Getting everyone to their destinations was required,

so I carried on dropping off my daughter. After returning home, I thanked my neighbours for catching the sow. They were able to use their vehicles to close off the road and direct the sow down their driveway to the barn. She was quite easy to catch given that the snowbanks acted as natural barrier. I continued to hope that she wasn't one of ours and then collected my son to take him to his after-school activity. During this time, my husband stopped by our neighbours to see the escapee. He loves and knows his pigs well and at first glance, he knew that this pig was not ours. She was not a purebred English Large Black, but her features were very close to the breed standard.



One of our batches of piglets

Our neighbours did not want to keep her and suggested that we take her home. He called to tell me this as I was driving home from dropping off my son in Mitchell. Unfortunately, our neighbours had plans that evening and could not help to load the pig on our trailer, but he was hopeful that he could do this by himself. My goal was to try and complete as many of the evening chores as possible within the 30 minutes I had before I needing to leave for work. Ten minutes into chores, I received a call from my husband asking for help, as this sow was in standing heat (surprise!), and would not move forward with one person trying to direct her. I was back in the car, down the road, and fortunately we were able to get this big mama up the ramp on our trailer. We delivered her to our small barn, high-fived, and then I was on my way down the road

again to go into my night shift at the hospital. What a crazy two hours it had been. My city co-workers were highly entertained by my story that night.

We never did figure out who she belonged to. We reached out to our neighbours and others in the area who raised outdoor pigs with a similar look. Her origin was a mystery, so she became a part of the Square H story and lives with our two other Large Black sows, Emmylou and Wanda. Following our tradition of naming our animals after classic country musicians, she is lovingly called Tammy. Living on a funny farm can be quite the adventure. It is always busy, often hard, but sometimes life gives you a gift within a challenge.

Follow our shenanigans on Facebook or Instagram @The Square H

Local Poets

PLATEAUED

Ophelia Blackwell

My sanity has plateaued
like the burned, flat land
that lay before me.
It rests, like a stage
cleared for the next scene.

I sit on the porch,
the storm over, the sky cleared.
Legs stretched out, bare foot.
Relaxed, but still watching.
Staring.
Analyzing.

What is my future across that land?
What is my future, without fire?
Without storm?



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

Young Artists

Claire Nicholson

David Doyle
Local Artist



My interview with Claire was focused on her art and she brought along a number of her pieces. The first picture that she showed me was one of me, completed before arriving, and it was very well done. It was a thoughtful thing to do and started our conversation on a positive note. As we looked through the selection of her work I had to ask which was her favourite one. Claire decided on one that reminded me of looking through an aquarium, very colourful and quite cheerful. Other works included farms and featured a lot of people. Claire loves to draw people and animals, she was particularly fond of a painting she did of a white tiger. I was impressed.



and involved Minecraft characters. Being the age I am, I was totally unaware of these, but Claire is on it! As we spoke, Claire took out her pencils, markers and paper and quietly began to work; it is obviously her favourite thing to do.

Claire's great-grandmother, (Mandy's grandmother), was an incredible artist who had wonderful drawing skills. Mandy's aunt was a talented painter who found success selling her work. Both women lived in Texas which is where Mandy is from. She met her now-husband in Illinois. He owned a dairy farm there at the time, but his Monkton roots were calling; in 2010 they moved here to Mitchell. Most of their children were born here.

As many of you are aware, Claire is a three time cancer survivor. All that enforced downtime meant that she had to do things that don't require a lot of physical effort. Painting and drawing is the perfect way to pass the time without using up a lot of energy. Claire readily took to colouring and painting and by three years old she had created a bedroom full of art. In a very short span of time Claire has progressed in leaps and bounds.

Her art shows so much brightness and positivity. She has also traded her work with another young girl who she met at the clinics, and this too shows so much positivity.

When Claire began painting she used her fingers and painted on paper or even on herself. If you get too close to her, you might also become her canvas! Recently, Claire has been using a variety of mediums including acrylic and paint markers. Recent pieces involved the use of shading, something she is very interested in developing in her work. Her mother, Mandy suggested that a good set of shading pencils is likely in her future.

Last year Claire developed an interest in showing her work in the Fall Fair. Unfortunately, there wasn't a category that suited her style of work or suitable for someone her age so she did not compete. However, they decided to put one of her paintings up for auction as a fundraiser for a favourite charity (Childcan) and it received a bid for \$250. The charity received the money and the highest bidder gifted the painting back to Claire.

At this point I asked Claire what she wanted to do next in her art. She wasn't really sure, but she knows she is going to keep painting and drawing. Every week Claire needs to have an infusion and

while she is there she takes out her colouring books. She loves these books and they help her through those times where she has to sit and wait for the infusion to be over.



At home, everything can be made into a work of art; things such as broken down boxes work well. Claire painted a cow named "Oreo" for her father on a piece of cardboard. She also used cardboard to create a book cover which she painted and now uses as a folder to store her art work in.

Claire's brothers, Clayton and Dylan get in on the art act as well. Clayton has been creating for



his father from various things including sticky notes. It sounds like a wonderful creative home to be in.

It was an absolute delight to meet Claire and her family. I was so impressed with their positive outlook on life and of the creative and playful atmosphere they have created. Claire has so much support and she expresses her love of her family in her art. I look forward to seeing Claire's creations in the future, and I do see a very bright future ahead for her.



The Heronry calls!

Are you a West Perth Artist? I would be happy to meet you, see what you are doing and help you share with others. It doesn't matter how old you are or if you are super talented. You matter. Send me an email outlining something about you and your work and try to include some photographs.

Send questions or art submissions to:
d38400598@gmail.com.

PRESENTING

AYLMER'S GHOST

by TED JOHNS

Stage Assistant - JANET AMOS

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