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A WEST PERTH PUBLICATION

# the Heronry

## Issue Includes

*Paul Jackson: Practical Beauty & Bob French: Beauty Finder*

ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE X 2

*Pancit Bihon*

COMMUNITY RECIPES

*All About Owls*

WILDLIFE AROUND US

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LOCAL HAPPENINGS

Vol. 7

June 2026

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# What is a “Heronry”?

Hérons are often seen standing alone in our waterways but they’re actually communal birds; groups of them come together to raise their young. Various species of herons (and other birds) will often nest in the same area, taking advantage of community benefits, like protection, and foraging advantages. Those communities are made up of hundreds of nesting pairs, and are called “heronries.” Mitchell doesn’t have a colony of herons, but our founders liked the idea of starting a heronry of our own.

Like those colonies are for birds, our publication is meant to a safe and welcoming place for the diversity of people and stories that are found within our community. Each issue celebrates the people, places, and bits of history that make West Perth

unique. From resident spotlights, to art features, and family recipes, this publication is meant to highlight the often-overlooked things—things that, in our opinion, are the bedrock of our community.

Our editor and our growing flock of contributors are local residents who care deeply about this community and want to see it thrive. We believe every small town deserves a voice, and *the Heronry* is ours. It’s a place to share what’s happening, to lift each other up, and to be reminded of what makes living here so meaningful.

Whether it’s through donations, advertising, classifieds ads, or just sharing your love of this publication with your friends and neighbours, we appreciate all the support you’ve given us. Thanks



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# Time Flies

I'm not sure what happened. I blinked, and next thing I knew I was scrambling to put the June issue together! Every month I swear that I will get on top of things and that THIS TIME the final hours before the publishing deadline will be spent sipping tea and reading a novel in my hanging chair—because of course I'll have submitted it days prior. Alas, no such luck this month.

When prepping an issue it's always my intention to start early. If I want to achieve my resting goal, it would make sense to start the work during the last week of the month prior. But of course that is the best-case scenario. Usually by the time I get things together I'm so overwhelmed that I need a week to recover. And then of course I have to spend time catching up on all the other responsibilities (like vacuuming, doing a mountain of dishes, and maybe prepping the garden for the extensive amount of vegetables that I want to plant) that got shoved

to the side while I focused on getting *the Heronry* ready for publishing.

Things are complicated by the fact that I'm using software that is incredibly out of date (in part because I'm too cheap/poor to pay a monthly subscription fee), which means that while my lovely editing helpers can make suggestions and edits to content via Google Docs, I still have to manually transfer everything into the final document. There's no exact science to the layout either. I've designed a template, but sometimes we get an ad that's a quarter page when we usually have space for a business card, and other times an author's writing is just so good, that I want to add two extra pages just for them!

The problem with additions is that pages can only be added in multiples of four. If I do add them for the two pages of additional content, I then have to find something to put in the extra two! This usually involves extensive rearranging. I've missed-laid an article or advertisement several times already but thankfully everyone who I've "injured" in this way has been incredibly understanding!

The other complicating factor is timing. Our submission deadline is supposed to be the 15th, but there's always some reason why I extend it. Usually it's because the people who are frequent submitters have had life things come up that have delayed their submissions. Since I too am constantly running around like a chicken with its head cut off, I tend to accommodate them. I'm sure that I'll have to become more aggressive about the deadlines eventually, but the way I see it, without the submissions *the Heronry* wouldn't exist (or I'd have to write it all!), so we'll keep muddling through until we all get our acts in gear.

A huge thank you to everyone who submitted this issue! Our advertisers and writers are what make *the Heronry* possible, so please visit their websites or reach out to them; let them know you appreciate their contributions! We couldn't do this without them.

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<b>Country Versatiles</b>	<b>Elysha Vorstenbosch</b>	<b>Bob Lauze</b>
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2:00 pm Mitchell Lions Park	2:00 pm Keterson Park Tim Hortons Pavilion	2:00 pm Keterson Park Tim Hortons Pavilion
Join the Rotary Club & Lions Club for music, food, and fun!	Food Booth will be open at Keterson Park	Food Booth will be open at Keterson Park



# June Horoscopes

**Aries: March 21 - April 21** June seems like a busy month for you when it comes to everything from travel and the neighborhood, to siblings and extended family. It's a great time of the year to get social, I suggest having a BBQ and some cold drinks with some good friends.

**Taurus: April 21 - May 20** Money and your livelihood seem to be the main focus this month. All your hard work, dedication, and determination will eventually pay off Taurus, but don't forget to value yourself first and foremost.

**Gemini: May 21 - June 20** Happy Birthday, Gemini! The busy month of June is Gemini's playground. With so much to do and see you may be going non-stop. Make sure you slow down every now and then to take in all the wonderful moments. Most of all, celebrate yourself!

**Cancer: June 21 - July 21** Good old R&R seems to be what Cancer wants and needs this month. Hopefully a relaxing vacation is in the plans. If not, why not make an at home oasis? All you need is a comfy spot, a yummy snack, and a few hours without interruptions.

**Leo: July 22 - Aug 22** You'll surely be mingling this month, Leo. Whether it's just with friends, through sporting events/games, or as part of an organization or a club you belong to. It's also a very busy time of year for you.

**Virgo: Aug 23 - Sept 22** The way the world sees you versus the way you see the world may be something to reflect on this month. It's a good time to put yourself out there when it comes to your career or any kind of public recognition. You might be surprised by the results.

**Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 22** You have a wealth of knowledge to share, Libra. You could run a masterclass when it comes to moderation, negotiation, and facilitation. Perhaps a workshop of sorts is in order, so you can teach others the art of looking at both sides.

**Scorpio: Oct 23 - Nov 21** What do you share with others? I get it, it's hard for Scorpio to be vulnerable and release

control over certain situations. Take a few small steps this month towards opening up and allow others to take the lead for a change; you might even feel less stressed.

**Sagittarius: Nov 22 - Dec 20** It's all about relationships for you this month, Sagittarius. Why not take your partner on a date or two? Don't have a partner? It's a good time to ask someone out or meet a new special someone.

**Capricorn: Dec 21 - Jan 20** Gosh, you're always working, Capricorn! Just maybe this month you could set a few hours aside for quality time with loved ones or friends? Maybe you could even make a shift in your routine to allow for more downtime.

**Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18** Looks like there are some fun times in store for you this month, my friend! If you don't have anything fun planned yet; buy some concert tickets, go camping or have a game night. Shake things up a bit.

**Pisces: Feb 19 - March 20** Seems like you'd rather stay close to home and with your family in June. There's nothing wrong with that. I'm sure caring for your gardens and any animals you own will bring lots of joy.

*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](mailto:magzturner9@gmail.com) or find her on social media @mysticmaggzastro*





# All About Owls

*Hi, I'm Grace! I'm an animal lover, and I'm excited to share some fun facts about owls with you.*

## What Makes Owls Such Good Hunters?

Well, owls are such great hunters because of their sharp eyesight and their incredible night vision. Their eye sockets are also tightly locked into place, making them only able to see in one direction, which makes it easier to track down prey. Owls can also see prey from very long distances, so that they can track down more prey more often. But this makes up-close vision blurry, so they have sorta hair-like feathers on their beaks to sense close-up prey. An owl's talons also makes them superior hunters. Their talons are curved and rounded to make them able to hook the prey, then carry it away. An owl's talons are also razor-sharp and designed for killing. Their beak is sharp and built for tearing.

## What Types of Owls Are in Our Area?

Well, looky here! We have three common, native owls to West Perth. They are: the Great Horned Owl, the Eastern Screech Owl, and, last but not least, the Barred Owl! These three types of owls like to live and nest in the woodlands. The Great Horned Owl gets its name from the horn-like tufts on the top of its head. The Eastern Screech Owl gets its name due to its air-spitting shriek it makes. The Barred Owl gets its name from the "bars" (stripes) on its throat and belly.

## How Are Owls Able to Fly Silently?

Owls are able to fly silently due to their type of feathers. Most people will think that owls have a special type of dust on their feathers, but that's not true. An owl's feathers are a sort of velvety material type of texture with comb-like ends on them. But closer to the back of the feather, it is much softer and a bit more separated, canceling the ruffling sound most birds' feathers make. Owls also have a very large wingspan, helping muffle some of the noise.

## Why Are Owls Important?

Owls are important because they help balance out nature, like all animals! Like, without the honeybee, there would be no food, and everything would starve to death. It's kind of similar with owls! Without owls, no matter where you are, the place you are in may be flooded with mice! Mice are the primary prey of owls, and without owls, mice would be everywhere!

## What Can We Do to Help Owls?

I think what we can do to help owls (and avoid gruesome scenes) is to stop using mouse traps. Why not lure the mouse into the cage and then free it outside? We should also stop cutting down trees unless it is absolutely necessary. You don't know if you're cutting down a tree with an owl's nest in it! You might have just killed some poor, harmless chicks! We should also stop littering. Who knows if some trash blows into an owl's nest and kills the chicks in it? Just saying, you never know.

## Colouring Section

By Nick Hotz



*A Great Horned Owl, Eastern Screech Owl & Barred Owl*



# Rosebud & River



Rosebud is a Shepherd mix

Rosebud is a shy German Shepherd mix who loves to walk on the paths around Mitchell. She gets scared by loud noises and sharp sounds but she loves to hear the squirrels chirping in the trees. She is not a girl who loves to be petted but she enjoys watching people walk down the sidewalk.

While we walk, Rosebud is a smart girl always looking forward to the next street to go down and the smells our journey brings to her. She is a wonderful lady but she likes her distance.



River is a Lab mix

River is a happy boy, one part Lab and one part shoe-stealer. River loves to be petted and smiled at as we walk. He thinks everyone is his friend but he is excitable around other dogs. Since he does not realize that not all dogs want to wrestle with him we try to keep distance on our walks.

He is a big suck and enjoys the quiet moments in the day, especially if he can hold shoes in his mouth. River is happy being happy and if you happen to be walking by he'd love for you to pet him so long as there aren't any other dogs around.

*If you have a animal friend, please reach out to wp.heronry@gmail.com with photos of you and them and tell us about how wonderful they are!*



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## Cryptogram

*Each letter in the phrase has been replaced with a random letter or number. Try to decode the message.*

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
		5								6										26				9	

C                      U                      Y                      C
U

5   18   22   22   26   12   21   19   9
5   2   11   3   19   11   24
26   24
3   12   25

U
U
C   K

24   26   24   19   3   21   12   24
26   24
2   21   15   23   19
10   3   5   6



# The Walkom Farm Stand

Welcome back! This month's feature is the Walkom Farm Stand, located at 3403 Perth Road 163, between Mitchell and Fullarton. It's owned and operated by Tammi and John Walkom, along with their three kids, as part of their family farm. Tammi Walkom and I had a lovely chat in her living room where we got into the spring spirit and talked all things vegetable gardening!

Tammi's journey of sharing her home-grown produce started in 2020. While Covid had everyone social-distancing and avoiding grocery stores, Tammi saw an opportunity to sell the extra produce from her garden and offered a no-contact delivery service for boxes of assorted produce. Over the next summer or two, it became a pick-up produce box model and eventually they built a stand at the end of the laneway.



The Walkom Farm Stand, located at 3403 Perth Road 163

The Walkom Farm Stand mainly sells vegetable produce and farm-fresh eggs. Eggs will be available at her stand starting at the end of May and the stand will be open until fall. Garlic and garlic scapes are usually the first vegetables ready for sale in the summer. As vegetables mature in the garden, they'll be added to the stand as well. Expect to find things like peas, beans, tomatoes, peppers, etc. Baskets of grapes or berries are occasionally also offered when they're in abundance.

The Walkoms have some unique things going on at their farm. Tammi is quite proud of her very popular pawpaw fruit! Available in the fall, this fruit has a custard-like texture and a mango/banana flavour. It's something unique and well worth a try! Also in the fall, they partner with John's parents who live across the road; together they host *Walkoms' Pumpkin Patch Day* which is a family friendly event

that's open to the community!

Keep an eye on Facebook for stand updates. Tammi posts from her personal page and shares her posts to the Mitchell Buy-and-Sell page. They are also listed on the Discover More Flavour Farm Gate Program.

The most rewarding part of the experience for Tammi is getting to watch things grow and doing it as a family. "I love watching our stuff grow. It's fun for all of us. We go out as a family and gather as a family. And the kids go up and write on the chalkboards. It's a whole family thing."

One challenge Tammi faces is that when things don't sell at the stand, her family needs to try to use the products quickly before they go bad. But the opposite is true as well, sometimes the produce is in high demand, and Tammi might be short on things she'd like to use herself because it's been so popular at the stand.

Something Tammi wishes for, is that more people to understand that you can't really compare locally grown produce to the big box stores in price or in appearance. The Walkoms don't use any sprays or pesticides, so the produce doesn't always look as perfect as that from a grocery store but it's still excellent produce!

What's next for the Walkom Farm Stand? They've started the process of planning and erecting greenhouses on the property and hope to offer annual and perennial bedding plants one day. John also has a keen interest in growing trees of different varieties, so keep an eye out for this expansion over the coming years!

# Paul Jackson: Practical Beauty



Cathy Hutson  
Fullarton Resident

There is a talented artist hard at work right here in rural West Perth. Mr. Paul Jackson moved from his birthplace in Calgary, Alberta to Ontario in the early 1970s. The mid 1980s is when we welcomed him to our own neighbourhood in West Perth, and he's been an integral part of it ever since.

with the intricacy of the numerous “gingerbread” patterns prevalent on historical buildings in our area. During his spare time, he played with designs in his small basement workshop in Gadshill.

His workshop time was just a hobby until early in 2006 when “things got serious”. That hobby led to the successful business PK Millwork & Trim is today. Paul’s business has evolved into a “one-of-a-kind” shop that most people only read about in prominent woodworking magazines.



Paul in his woodshop

Paul was not always the master woodworker he is today. It was a path he chose to embark on after spending 18 years as a local UPS delivery driver. In the summer of 2005, after losing his wife and the mother of his son to a serious illness, he took a brief period of time to regroup and make decisions on what the rest of his life should look like. Today, he is a man who has 21 years of experience in the woodworking business. He has become a master of his craft, to say the least!

To put the growth in perspective, the early days would see Paul spending 60 hours to turn out 60 wooden spindles for a front porch design; today he typically turns each spindle on a large copy lathe in 10 minutes or so. His current shop is 1700 square feet; it houses four industrial lathes and numerous other tools of the trade. He is capable of turning a porch column up to 24” in diameter and 10 ft. long.

A deep appreciation for our historical heritage buildings has helped this master woodworker develop the skills he now uses daily. When it comes to replicating or restoring specialty woodwork this man can

Back in Alberta, Paul’s Dad had been the typical handyman of the olden days. It was in an 8’ x 8’ metal shed where his Dad housed the usual “tools of the trade” that Paul’s passion for artistry with wood was born. During his career as a delivery driver Paul would observe many local workshops and also



Paul specializes in matching gingerbreading

the varied fancier wood designs adorning houses scattered along the roads. He became fascinated

make whatever you can’t buy! A trip around the rich heritage districts of Stratford, London, Kingston, Toronto and even into some foreign countries

would offer one a first-hand view of Paul's work. He creates the timeless beauty that can be seen on many of our most grand historical verandas.

Although PK Millwork & Trim is a comprehensive business where one can order porch handrails, custom sawn spindles and balusters, curved window and door trims, historical mouldings and all types of architectural millwork, this man's creativity takes flight when it comes to "turning": the art of creating wooden pieces on a lathe. He is a true artist, as can be witnessed in his one-of-a-kind bowls, vases, plates and ornaments; each like none other.

I would be remiss if I neglect to mention the generous nature of Paul Jackson. He volunteers his time, talents and location every second Monday evening when he leads a local woodturners club. He is a believer in "paying it forward" especially when it comes to teaching his skills to our locals. The group is bursting at the seams though, so anyone interested in learning would have better luck reaching out to the Thames Valley Woodturner Guild in London for teaching.

Paul has been a proud member of the Thames Valley Turners Guild for over 20 years, his learning being nurtured by many world class wood turners. Recently this group of dedicated local woodturners has been supporting the Guild in the creation of "bravery bead bowls"; these are donated to London Sick Children's Hospital where they are given to children undergoing medical treatments for serious illness. The segmented bowls are very intricately designed; the children use them to hold beads they earn for various medical procedures and each bead holds a special meaning.

Another example of Paul's creativity is his somewhat hidden talent as an accomplished musician. He is a current member of our own Mitchell Legion Band and until recently had been an active member of the Stratford Concert Band that he's been playing with since 1992. He plays the flute and the piccolo. Since he has played these instruments since 1973, he plays them well! A lot of time has gone into practices, related travel, participating in parades, concerts and special celebrations.



A set of nested bowls with live edges

I asked Paul what he loves to do best in life. He was quite clear on his answer: woodturning. This is where he feels his creative side has the most opportunity to expand. He hopes that in the future he will be able to devote more time to use his artistic talents in this particular area of woodworking. He welcomes a challenge. Square plates and platters as well as urns and hollow forms are a new endeavour. The bowls and vases he creates are uniquely stunning. Our fall fair judges think so too!



A "Bravery Bowl" - complete with lid

sometime. Meet the working man and get to know the artist!

Anyone who has had the good fortune of doing business with Paul, let alone having him as a neighbour, is lucky. He brings artistry and a community spirit to everything he does. Come down to 3579 Road 160 in West Perth

# Bob French: Beauty Finder



David Kemp  
*Staffa Resident*

One cannot enter Bob and Marilyn French's Toronto St home and miss the many and varied woodturning projects displayed throughout. Bowls of every shape and size along with salt shakers and pepper grinders command places of importance on shelves and side-tables.

Bob says he turned his first bowl at MDHS over sixty-five years ago on a Beaver lathe, and he still has it. When he began planning retirement from his farming activities about fifteen years ago, he bought a small lathe at Jacob Auctions and started "playing around". Five years ago he invested in the more sophisticated unit that he still uses today.



Bob working on the lathe in his woodshop

Paul Jackson, a master craftsman with wood who lives outside Mitchell, has been a wonderful mentor to Bob. As mentioned in the previous article where Cathy Hutson writes about Paul, the mini guild has a wait list — so interested people should reach out to the Thames Valley Guild if they want to learn about woodturning.

Looking for new challenges, Bob has moved on from making bowls and pepper mill/ salt shaker combinations to more complex decorative pieces that use a variety of woods. While cherry is Bob's favourite, he also enjoys working with apple, which produces a beautiful grain as well.

A lovely small bowl I observed during my visit was made from a piece of

Four years ago, Keith Selves, another experienced turner who lives north of Kirkton, invited Bob to join the Thames Valley Wood Turners' Guild in London. The guild, which has about 85 members from across Southern Ontario, meets regularly and holds regular demonstrations in order to teach members new techniques. The members then work on incorporating these new skills into their work. Other guilds that operate similarly are located in Kitchener, Toronto and, in fact, can be found all over North America.

sumac the Frenches brought from Marilyn's home north of Holmesville many years ago. Red cedar, Bob says, can come out beautifully, but it is dusty to work with — similar to walnut. Willow is tough on both Bob and his tools because it gums up the works, however, he does have a couple of bowls in the curing process, and says they will be lovely when completed.

Bob says his most challenging project was a large vase about fifteen inches tall and eight and one half inches in diameter; it was made out of at least 550 pieces of wood glued into one block that was then shaped. He spent about a month and half to finish it last fall. Another uniquely challenging project of Bob's is a brimmed hat that he created out of a

Two years ago a few members from the West Perth area formed the "Upper Thames Mini Woodturners' Guild."

piece of white birch. He had the wall down to an eighth inch thickness and had to keep spraying it with water to keep it from cracking. Then he “drenched it in tung oil”, a technique he learned at the wood turners’ guild in London.

Bob’s approach to a piece of wood is to “see what God has planned inside it”. The piece may look useless and lack any sign of beauty, but he has found that once he begins to work with it, often something far more attractive than he imagined will result.

A great deal of Bob’s work is either recycled, as was one piece made from a friend’s old furniture, or is made from pieces of wood that are too small for cabinets or larger items. He even made a Christmas ornament from a 4X4 piece of pressure treated spruce as a prototype; it turned out beautifully with a very interesting green tinge.

He enjoys working with burls as they have beautiful grains that can only be discovered through the turning. Spalted wood of any species — that is partially decayed wood with streaks of mould through it — yields special effects in the final piece, which make them special materials as well.

Bob says good wood-turning tools are expensive, but necessary. He has some that his father, Joe, used when he turned wood, as well as those of his grandfather’s brother, Ed French, a Mitchell woodturner who lived in the early 1900’s.

Bob values the right tool so much that he has even ground down an allen wrench to perform a unique task.

There are many manufacturers of turning tools. However, conventional tools that are made out of highspeed steel are Bob’s preference; they are more expensive than many on the market, but worth it. Carbide tipped tools are also available but Bob prefers the conventional tools due to the smooth finish he can get — thus requiring much less sanding. (ONEWAY Manufacturing in Stratford is a local lathe manufacturer which manufactures both great lathes as well as great tools and Bob recommends them highly.)



Bob showing off his beautiful work. His birch hat is in his hands

Safety is critical and as such Bob always wears a face shield. He had one bowl “blow up” and he still hasn’t found all the pieces. A friend had a chisel break and strike him in the shoulder. Accidents never happen in slow motion and can have devastating effects. Safety gear helps prevent tragedy!



Two “Bravery Bowls” that Bob made as part of the Thames Valley Turners Guild’s project (mentioned in the previous article).

Bob’s advice for novice wood turners is to join a club; most members are only too happy to encourage a beginner. Another hint is to go to the internet where master wood turners offer helpful hints and videos. Every project is a new discovery, and as Bob’s

key cheerleader, Marilyn says, “They are always beautiful.”

Photos are courtesy of Nancy French



# Scottish Danceng

David Kemp is an interesting character. I met him at Mitchell Pottery Studio as I worked as an assistant for his *Intro to Throwing* class in the fall of 2025. He reminds me of my grandfather, who also wore plaid shirts on the regular, and shared a similar desire to keep learning and improving his mind.

David, (who will not share his exact age with me), lives in the farmhouse that his great-grandfather built in Staffa. He invited me over one morning to learn about Scottish Country Dancing. We argued (gently) as I wanted to interview him about his life, and he wanted to focus solely on Scottish Country Dancing. He also, thought it was important that the article be SHORT and (according to him), therefore more likely able to keep people's interest! (Personally I think most things about David Kemp are fascinating – but for now, we will keep to his topic of choice).

David Kemp was first introduced to Scottish Country Dancing when attending the University of Western Ontario in 1966. His teacher, Professor George Emmerson (Emmerson with two M's), led a Scottish Country Dance Club, and invited David to come. They started learning the dance steps in the beginning of September, and by November they attended a real dance at Althouse College! Since then he's danced those same types of dances across Ontario, in Baffin Island, Nunavut, on the legislature lawns in Victoria BC, and even in Scotland!

There's a fascinating history to Scottish Country Dancing, and it's tied up in the fact that at one point there was a purge of Scottish culture in part due to the uprising of Bonnie Prince Charlie, who tried to claim the English Throne in 1745. Things

like kilts, the Ceilidh, and speaking of Gaelic were banned, and all trappings of Scottish Culture were frowned upon. It was a dark time in Scotland.

After time passed and the bad feelings around the uprising faded, King George the Fourth brought about a renewal of the old customs, In 1923,

Miss Jean Mulligan and others organized and initiated the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, of which the King is the Patron. Chapters of the society exist all around the globe, and over 9000 dances are available to choose from—at all levels of difficulty.

David compares the dances to lego constructs. They are composed of different eight bar formations (like bricks) arranged in different combinations. This means you can learn the moves section by section and then put them together. It also means that you can take your time perfecting the formations and then join them together when you feel

confident in your abilities.

Coming this September, David is organising the *Whirl Creek Scottish Country Dance Club*, right here in West Perth. With a focus on gentle instruction, and with the goal of having fun, he invites individuals and families “from nine to ninety” to join him at Knox Presbyterian Church in Mitchell to learn the joys of Scottish Country Dancing! Anyone who can follow instruction and is able to walk without need of assistance can dance these dances, and there will be a nominal fee—just enough to cover the cost of the hall rental.

For more information he may be contacted at 519-345-2208 or by email at [kdavid96@yahoo.com](mailto:kdavid96@yahoo.com).



David Kemp and his daughter and granddaughter at a dance.



# Visiting Castle Kilbride

At the beginning of May, I visited Castle Kilbride in Baden, ON as part of my research for my solo harp album, *Tales of the Huron Tract: The Whispers That Lie Dormant No Longer*. I was blown away by how extravagant the interior decoration was. I could have stayed in that building for hours inspecting all the intricate artwork in each room and still discovered something new.

As I stepped through the doors from the modern Township of Wilmot Offices and into the century and a half old halls of Castle Kilbride, I felt like I was transported back in time. I also felt out of place and improperly dressed. As I walked the halls in the present, I imagined being in the past—wandering about in gowns and accessories of varying intricacy and detail instead of in my sweat pants and running shoes. I envisioned that, after an extravagant dinner, I would have retreated to the drawing room to lounge dramatically on a “fainting chair” and then discussed the latest gossip with my sisters (if I had any!) and close friends.

During my visit, I was excited to learn that Castle Kilbride has a history filled with music making. The Livingston daughters received a music education in various instruments including: voice, violin and piano. Any guests lucky enough to be hosted at Castle Kilbride would have likely been entertained with musical performances by them.

The trompe l'oeil murals and artwork on the walls and ceilings of the hallway, dining hall, drawing room and the room they call the ‘library’ were my favourite parts of visiting Castle Kilbride. Learning about the hidden details, stories and inspirations for these murals was fascinating. For example, there are four murals on the ceiling of the drawing room that are believed to represent four of the Livingston daughters who passed away in their twenties. Another example of art worth noticing, is in the ‘library’ where the four murals in each corner are believed to depict the four seasons and the mural above the alcove window points to the musical nature of the family by showing figures playing instruments.

One of my favourite rooms of Castle Kilbride was the belvedere, an architectural structure that is built to allow people to admire a scenic view. In the case of Castle

Kilbride, the belvedere refers to the rooftop cupola or small room full of windows protruding from the roof. Although the view from the belvedere has changed over the years to overlook the houses and bustling streets (and construction!) of Baden, I could just imagine looking out those windows onto a sea of blue flax flowers blooming in James Livingston’s fields. I wonder what James felt when he stared out at these fields of flax plants that built his successful business and wealth and I wonder how he would feel knowing that the flax industry he built in Ontario has declined—so much so that it has almost disappeared from the region.

### Three fun facts I discovered are:

1. Under the table in the dining room is a secret buzzer built into the floor that the family would step on to signal their need of assistance from staff. The only other buzzer in the house is located in James and Louise Livingston’s bedroom.
2. One of the tables in the ‘library’ is used to play a popular game called “Tops and Skittles” where players would spin a top to see how many skittles it would knock over to determine their score.
3. Castle Kilbride was the first private property in Baden, ON to have electricity and a telephone installed. The telephone was used to call the only other telephone in the area, which was located at the Livingston mill a couple blocks away.

One of my lingering curiosities from this visit is about the way James Livingston would have manufactured flax into linseed oil, linen and other flax products. With the decline of the flax industry in Ontario and the industry practices switching to automation, I’m left to wonder, how were flax plants processed into textiles and other materials, and how much of this information has been lost?

As I start writing the music, I’m inspired by the Livingston’s family history, including their involvement in music and the flax trade, and the interior design of the house itself. I hope the piece I create captures the memories that the house holds and pays homage to the Livingston family’s artistic and manufacturing pursuits.



## Composing Interesting Photographs: Continued

Last time, I described a few rules that can be used to make more interesting photographs.

This time, I'm going to go over a few principles and a framing suggestion that may also be of use.

There are eight principles widely accepted as providing the basis for sound design and composition and they are: balance, emphasis, movement, proportion, rhythm, unity/variety and contrast. I know these well, as they were elemental and essential aspects of teaching Grade 9 Visual Arts courses.

Balance refers to the arrangement of the visual elements in the composition so that each half of the image-- top/bottom, left/right-- are roughly equal in visual weight. That is, if you have a big tree on the left side of your image and a small tree on the right, you do not have balance. You do not have to have trees of equal size on both halves of the image, but the visual weight (the amount of light and dark) should be roughly the same even if the objects are not the same (big bark tree on the left, big dark rock on the right).

Emphasis refers to that part of the image that you want to stand out from everything else. If you are making a photograph of your goofy brother in a group of non-goofy people, you may ask him to do something particularly goofy to stand out. It'll ruin the photo for the non-goofy ones, but it will show emphasis.

Movement deals with, well, movement. If you are making a photo of someone speeding by you on a bicycle, you may want to stand close to where they will be passing so the the blurred image will give the impression of speed. If you want the face to be recognizable, then stand back a bit so the person passing through the frame will be slower and the image will be less blurred.

another chapter. Likewise rhythm. (Whoever decided that that was a reasonable spelling?) We'll cover these next time.

Unity/variety are grouped together even though they are opposites. Unity (through multiplicity) is commonly used to visually tie an image together by including many identical or similar objects. A picket fence or a line of similar trees are good examples of this. Subconsciously we search for a way to connect objects. Variety however works in the opposite way. If we cannot find visual unity, then our subconscious thingies search for a combination of varied shapes and forms as means to solving a visual puzzle. Think of a jumbled mass of vehicles in a parking lot.

Finally, contrast is the difference between light and dark, large and small, straight and curved, etcetera. As we were evolving as human beings many, many eons ago, recognizing contrast was a matter of survival. A quick moving object (cougar/deer) moving in a still environment provided the contrast needed to focus on that object and to determine whether we were the hunted or the hunter. The example may be a bit dramatic but the point is that without contrast, the subject is not easily spotted. A black dog playing in the snow is much easier to see than a white cat doing the same thing. That's contrast. If you really want to see contrast in a new light (sorry), download your phone pictures to a photo editing programme and change them into black and white images. Contrast will be easier to interpret there. *(continued on next page)*



(continued from previous page)

Finally, I'd like to suggest an old 'trick' that you can always fall back on if you can't remember any of the rules and principles that we've covered and you don't want to go back to taking boring pictures. If you see something that you find interesting and you want to make a picture of it, but it's visually too big to fit into the frame, the best way to photograph that thing is to move very close to it and concentrate on sections of the object. That is, get so close that the object ceases to exist in its entirety, and instead becomes a series of abstracted parts. Try this sometime with a bicycle. Move in very close (try the macro setting) and photograph disconnected parts of the bike. Spokes, half a seat, the junction of the frame tubes, etcetera. You may be surprised at how an everyday object recorded like this can be seen in a new way.

Next month we'll continue to explore compositional elements. I'll come up with a sensible interpretation of Proportion and Rhythm... if I can get over the mess of that wacky spelling.



**NOTICE OF  
NOMINATION FOR  
OFFICE**  
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ACT, 1996

**The 2026 Municipal and School Board Election in West Perth will be open as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, for nominations for the following positions:**

**Municipal Positions:**

- Mayor (1)
- Deputy Mayor (1)
- Councillors (9) divided into wards:
  - Fullarton (2)
  - Hibbert (2)
  - Logan (2)
  - Mitchell (3)

**Nomination Details:**

Submit Nomination **Form 1** in person or through an agent from May 1 to August 20, 2026, during business hours 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, and on August 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Include Endorsements **Form 2** with at least **25 signatures and a filing fee:**

\$200 for Mayor

\$100 for other offices

Withdrawal deadline: August 21 at 2:00 p.m.

If insufficient candidates are nominated, nominations reopen on August 26, 2026.

**School Board Positions:**

- Avon Maitland District School Board (1)
- Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board (1)
- Conseil Scolaire Viamonde (1)
- Conseil Scolaire Catholique Providence (1)

**If there are more certified candidates than positions, an election will be held via telephone/internet from October 19 to October 26, 2026.**

For further information, visit [www.westperth.com](http://www.westperth.com)

Dated April 22, 2026.

**James Hutson,**

Municipal Clerk / Returning Officer  
160 Wellington Street, P.O. Box 609  
Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0

**Tel: 519-348-8429 ext. 224**

**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).

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

# 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 or chronic health

## June 1 - Monday

Splash Pad Opens | All day | 17 Blenheim St, Mitchell  
◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life  
◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge  
West Perth Council Meeting | 7pm | 160 Wellington Street  
Brodhagen Woodworking Club (starts) | 7pm | Brodhagen C.C.  
◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15pm - 8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 2 - Tuesday

Rotary Club Meeting | 7:15am | Deck Dentistry Basement  
Mahjong Meet up | 1pm | West Perth Library  
EarlyON Baby Time | 1pm | West Perth Public Library  
◇ Farkle | 1:30-2:30pm | Manor Lounge  
Crafters Circle | 2pm | West Perth Library  
Youth Centre: Summer Painting | 3pm | 89D Ontario Rd  
\$ Family Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 3 - Wednesday

◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
Tales and Tunes | 10:15am | West Perth Library  
EarlyON Baby Time | 1pm | West Perth Public Library  
Progressive Euchre & Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion  
◇ Farkle | 1:30-2:30pm | Manor Lounge  
◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge  
Youth Centre: Hot Dogs | 3-5pm | 89D Ontario Rd  
◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 4 - Thursday

◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life  
◇ \$12 Euchrama w/ lunch | 10am-3pm | 160 Wellington St  
CMHA Drop-In | 1pm | West Perth Public Library  
Youth Centre Summer Drink Day | 3pm | 89D Ontario Rd  
Tween Crochet Crew | 4:30-5:30pm | W.P. Public Library  
\$ Family Swim | 7:15pm - 8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 5 - Friday

Mitchell Foodbank\* | 9:30-11:30am, 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St  
G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
\*AbraKIDdabra Comedy Magic Show | 11am | Mitchell C. C.

◇ WII Games | 2-3pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 6 - Saturday

Men's Community Breakfast | 8:30-9:45am | 101 Restaurant  
Read to the Animals | 11am | Animal Barn, Lions Park, Mitchell  
Mitchell Minor Baseball Day | TBD | Cooper Field, Mitchell  
\$ Open Swim | 1-2:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Family Swim | 3-3:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Open Swim | 5-6:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 7 - Sunday

\$ Open Swim | 1-2:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Family Swim | 3-3:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Open Swim | 5-6:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 8 - Monday

◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life  
EarlyON Baby Time | 1pm | West Perth Public Library  
◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge  
Stories with Teddy & EarlyON | 5:45pm | W.P. Public Library  
◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 9 - Tuesday

Rotary Club Meeting | 7:15am | Deck Dentistry Basement  
Mahjong Meet up | 1pm | West Perth Library  
Crafters Circle | 2pm | West Perth Library  
Youth Centre: Indoor Games Day | 3-5pm | 89D Ontario Rd  
Drop-in Blood Pressure Clinic | 1-3pm | W.P. Public Library  
Mitchell Foodbank\* | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St  
Mitchell Lions Club Meeting | 6:45pm | 160 Wellington  
Kin Club Meeting | 7pm | Mitchell Legion Basement  
\$ Family Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 10- Wednesday

◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
Progressive Euchre & Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion  
◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge  
◇ Sing-a-long | 2:30pm | Manor Lounge  
Youth Centre: Ice Cream Sundaes | 3-5:30pm | 89D Ontario Rd  
◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

# Events: June 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.

## June 11 - Thursday

- ◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
- ◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
- ◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
- Youth Centre: Summer Kick-Off | 3pm | 89D Ontario Rd
- Tween Crochet Crew | 4:30-5:30pm | W.P. Public Library
- A Parents Guide to Tween and Teen Safety Online with West Region OPP | 6pm | West Perth Public Library**
- \$ Family Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 12 - Friday

- ◇ \$4 Pie Social & Bunch and Bruch RSVP Deadline
- Mitchell Foodbank\* | 9:30-11:30am, 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
- ◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
- ◇ Social Chat-Topic: Summer | 10-11am | Manor Lounge
- ◇ WII Games | 2-3pm Manor Lounge
- Cornhole | 4:30pm | Mitchell Legion
- Youth Centre Night Drop-In | 7-9pm | 89D Ontario Rd
- \$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 13 - Saturday

- Youth Safety on Wheels | 9am | 169 St David St
- Open Mic | 1-4pm | Mitchell Legion
- \$ Open Swim | 1-2:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- Circuits & Saws | 2pm | West Perth Public Library
- \$ Family Swim | 3-3:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Open Swim | 5-6:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 14 - Sunday

- \$ Open Swim | 1-2:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Family Swim | 3-3:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Open Swim | 5-6:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 15 - Monday

- ◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
- ◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
- EarlyON Baby Time | 1pm | West Perth Public Library
- ◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
- ◇ \$4 Pie Social\* | 2:30-3:30pm | Manor Lounge
- ◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge
- West Perth Council Meeting | 7pm | 160 Wellington Street
- \$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 16 - Tuesday

- Rotary Club Meeting | 7:15am | Deck Dentistry Basement

- ◇ \$11 Brunch n Bunch\* | 10:30am | Manor Lounge
- Mahjong Meet up | 1pm | West Perth Library
- Crafters Circle | 2pm | West Perth Library
- Optimists Business Meeting | 7pm | 160 Wellington Street
- \$ Family Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 17 - Wednesday

- ◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
- ◇ Community Coffee Hour | 10:30am | Manor Lounge
- Progressive Euchre & Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
- Drop-In Autism Info Session | 1 - 2pm | 185 Wellington St
- ◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
- ◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge
- \$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 18 - Thursday

- ◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
- ◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life
- ◇ \$15 Dining 4 Seniors Delivery Meal\* | 11:30am | Delivery
- ◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge
- Tween Crochet Crew | 4:30-5:30pm | WPPL
- \$ Family Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 19 - Friday

- DublinFest Ball | TBD | Dublin
- ◇ \$40 Reflexology\* | 9:00am-12:00pm | Manor Lounge
- Group Exercise | 9:30am | Upper Thames Missionary Church
- Mitchell Foodbank\* | 9:30-11:30am, 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St
- ◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church
- ◇ WII Games | 2-3pm | Manor Lounge
- \$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 20 - Saturday

- Cornhole Tournament | TBD | Dublin
- ♪ Jabe and the Backstabbers | 1pm | Mitchell Legion
- \$ Open Swim | 1-2:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Family Swim | 3-3:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Open Swim | 5-6:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 21 - Sunday

- \$ Open Swim | 1-2:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Family Swim | 3-3:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool
- \$ Open Swim | 5-6:45pm | Mitchell Pool

*continued on next page*

## June 22 - Monday

◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life  
EarlyON Baby Time | 1pm | West Perth Public Library  
◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge  
◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 23 - Tuesday

Rotary Club Meeting | 7:15am | Deck Dentistry Basement  
◇ Floral Treasures Sale | 10am-2pm | West Perth Village  
**Mitchell Outreach Awareness BBQ Fundrasier | 11am |  
West Perth Village**  
Mahjong Meet up | 1pm | West Perth Library  
Mitchell Foodbank\* | 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St  
Crafters Circle | 2pm | West Perth Library  
Mitchell Lions Club Meeting | 6:45pm | 160 Wellington  
\$ Family Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 24 - Wednesday

◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
Newcomer Services | 1pm | West Perth Public Library  
Progressive Euchre & Fun Pool | 1pm | Mitchell Legion  
\$5 Senior Dance | 1:30-3:30pm | Mitchell Community Centre  
◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 25 - Thursday

◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life  
Agilec Employment Services | 1pm | W.P. Public Library  
◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Family Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 26 - Friday

◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
Mitchell Foodbank | 9:30-11:30am, 1:30-4:30pm | 80 Rowland St  
Wii Games | 2pm | Manor Lounge  
Cornhole | 4:30pm | Mitchell Legion  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 27 - Saturday

*Strawberry Moon Stories & Crafts with Patsy Day\* | 11am |  
Polinator Garden (Corner of Wellington and Rowland St)*  
\$ Open Swim | 1-2:45pm | Mitchell Pool  
\$ Family Swim | 3-3:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

\$ Open Swim | 5-6:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 28 - Sunday

Optimists Day At The Races | 1pm | Clinton Raceway  
Open Swim | 1-2:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
*\$ Cows and Classics in the Garden\* ♪ with Stratford  
Symphony Orchestra | 2pm | 3844 Road 155 RR2 Mitchell*  
\$ Family Swim | 3-3:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Open Swim | 5-6:45pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 29 - Monday

Challenger Soccer Camp | TBD | 185 Wellington St, Mitchell  
◇ G Exercise - Lvl3 | 9:30-10:30am | UT Missionary Church  
◇ \$10 Drop-In Yoga | 10am | Live Well 4 Life  
◇ Book Chat | 11am | Ritz Manor  
EarlyON Baby Time | 1pm | West Perth Public Library  
◇ Active Wellness - Lvl2 | 1:30-2:10pm | Manor Lounge  
◇ Cards | 7pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Open Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## June 30 - Tuesday

◇ Yahtzee | 10:30am | Manor Lounge  
Mahjong Meet up | 1pm | West Perth Library  
Crafters Circle | 2pm | West Perth Library  
◇ Blood Pressure Clinic\* | 1-3pm | Manor Lounge  
\$ Family Swim | 7:15-8:15pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
\$ Aqua Fit | 8:30-9:30pm | Mitchell Lions Pool

## July 1 - Canada Day!

Rotary's Soap Box Derby | 8am - 1pm | Mitchell Lions Park  
♪ Country Versatiles | 2pm | Mitchell Lions Park  
Free Swim | 1:30-2:45 pm | Mitchell Lions Pool  
Kids Bike Parade | 4pm | Route: Town Hall to Lions Park  
Family Games & Music | 4:30 - 6:30 | Mitchell Lions Park  
\$ Hotdogs & Burgers | 4:30 - 6:30 | Mitchell Lions Park  
Fireworks at Dusk | 6:30pm | Brodhegan Hall: 6708 Perth  
Line 44 - Rain Date: July 3



**Whirl Creek**  
Scottish Country Dance Club

**Coming to Mitchell September 2026**

For more information contact David Kemp  
[kdavid96@yahoo.com](mailto:kdavid96@yahoo.com) 519-345-2208



# Home Sweet Home

Well, it is June—early summer in West Perth—and it sure feels like it: everything so fresh, green, and lush. With clear blue skies, fiery rays penetrate our skin and the sun is so bright we need to squint to look any distance. Robins hop across warm earth, ever searching for a juicy morsel and barn cats are stretched long and flat soaking in warmth from above and below. I sit a spell and before long, my thoughts are taken back in time to thirty-six years ago, when, during the first week of June, we moved into our home here on Line 26.



An early 1900s photo of our home.

The “big” day had finally come! I dared to glimpse the thoughts our pioneer women may have experienced as far back as the 1840s when this area was settled. What emotions might they have felt upon arrival at their new homesteads? Excitement, hope, maybe? Perhaps both mixed with fatigue and fear.

What happens when one moves into a large, century old farm house with three young children and pets in tow? We call in relatives for a “cleaning bee”! Our crew consisted of my Mother-in-law and her sister, Aunt Bernice. The older ladies dispersed to the upper story bedrooms while I worked away in our kitchen area. At one point, Aunt Bernice excitedly scurried downstairs carrying at arm’s length, a small sealed plastic bag. With a concerned look, she gingerly handed it to me for identification, asking: “Why on earth would anyone store a bag of herbs in a bedroom closet”? I took one whiff: we had a stale bag of cannabis all right! This, the first of many surprises that we would uncover in our new home. So far though, the charm, the rich heritage this house contained was even more than we had hoped for.

So many original remnants of time gone by still

existed here. Memories of the past were kept alive, timeless treasures brought history lessons to life in each room. A steep climb to the third floor attic revealed a large copper cistern set into the wide pine boards covering the floor. Collecting rain water from the roof, it had obviously gravity fed an antique flush toilet in the second story water closet, along with a kitchen sink located directly below in the kitchen. The metal pipes for the gravity fed “pressure system” were still there, although now retired from use. A dumb waiter working on wooden pulleys was located in a main floor broom closet. It deployed to the root cellar and firewood storage area in the basement.

Piano windows in both the east and west walls were reminiscent of times when electric lights were not yet installed. From these, the early morning and late evening sun would light the rooms at a perfect angle.

Just taking in the beauty of all the intricately carved woodwork in this home set one’s mind to the rich history here. Tongue and groove ceilings, oak flooring on the main floor, pine on upper floors, smooth fir columns with hand carved capitals, all original to the 1910 construction of heritage country homes. This one had already stood as a guardian to so many families, a sense of pride for over 80 years already; a tradition that would continue.

Moving a family is a big job! By the end of the day, the children were settled, the pets adjusted, the relatives had departed for home, and peace had finally descended over our new residence. I remember the sense of comfort felt as we sat on our expansive front veranda, observing the sinking sun to the west. It was all encompassing: Home Sweet Home.



# Festival Reflections

The Mitchell Music Festival is almost 80 years old! Had it not been for Covid in 2020, we would have celebrated 80 years this year. Mitchell Optimists became stewards of the community music festival in 2002-03 when the local chapter of the Junior Chamber of Commerce (JCs) disbanded. The JCs provided us with start-up money and helped guide our way. Over the years, the festival has been blessed with generous donations of time and funds from individuals, businesses and community organizations.

Ern Harley, a music teacher by profession, started the festival in 1947. As we understand it, it was a one-day event with seven church choirs. Ern had seen this type of festival when he lived on the East Coast. Ern became a travelling music teacher for many rural schools. By 1949, the festival attracted youngsters from those schools and local town/village schools. The oldest festival trophy has names of winners beginning in 1949. The Harley family remains a part of the festival, supporting the Musicianship Award and other awards given throughout each year's festival.

For decades, community volunteers have helped keep the festival up and running each year. In fact, at one time, community leaders stepped in and assisted the Harley family with leadership and organization.

This year's adjudicator, Jim Westman, was new to our festival. Jim grew up near Kirkton and was part of our festival when he was young. The love of music gave Jim the opportunity to become a world-renowned baritone singer, singing with famous artists such as Elton John and the Three Tenors. Jim currently teaches at Western University.

A new feature this year was the 'Evening of Champions. Winners in each of five categories were invited to perform, once again, without an additional adjudication.

The adjudicator selected a winner from each category and the five awards were sponsored by the West Perth Singers.

The Anno Otten family was honoured with the Mary Ellen & Joseph Delaney Family Memorial Award. The award is given 'In honour of families who, from one generation to the next, celebrate the love of music at home and in the Mitchell Music Festival community'.

The 80th annual music festival takes place in 2027. Cathy Harley, daughter of Festival Founder Ern Harley, is planning to be here. Perhaps past and present festival organizers and volunteers would like to meet with Cathy at some form of social event? Please reach out if so.

Our adjudicator, Jim Westman, will be back for a second year. Jim's rapport with the young performers was engaging and insightful and we look forward to his return.

There has been interest shown in a community youth choir being organized and managed, apart from the music festival. Another area of interest for next year is a master class for music teachers, led by the adjudicator.

The Mitchell Optimist Music festival is often viewed as a stepping stone to higher levels of competition and accredited music festivals. While healthy competition is part of our mandate, our ultimate goal is to promote a life-long love of music. Music unites the generations and is the universal language of humankind.

The Mitchell Music Festival is a cherished community tradition. There is an open invitation to all who would like to offer their help in keeping music alive and well in our community. Folks interested in any of the various ideas mentioned here should email: [diannejosling001@gmail.com](mailto:diannejosling001@gmail.com).





# Pancit Bihon

Pancit Bihon is a popular Filipino noodle dish made from cornstarch or vermicelli sticks which are commonly referred to as “bihon”. Pancit Bihon is a Filipino staple food. It’s commonly served in everyday meals or on any special occasion. If you walk into a Filipino gathering, there’s a good chance you’ll find a huge serving plate of Pancit on a buffet table. A party is not complete without the Pancit!

I personally enjoy it paired with Lumpia (also known as “Springrolls” or Pork BBQ on a stick.

Pancit Bihon can be prepared in many ways with your choice of protein-filled meat such as pork, chicken or shrimp or a vegetarian version. Whatever your preference is, it creates a harmonious different flavor that everyone will enjoy. It’s a versatile dish, easy to prepare and is described as convenience food that is sure to be a crowd favorite.

## Pancit Bihon Recipe

Prep: 20 minutes. Cook 35 Minutes.

Serving size : About 2-4 people

## Ingredients:

225 grams Pancit Bihon\*  
 150 grams pork thinly sliced  
 150 grams chicken deboned and thinly sliced  
 2 cups cabbage chopped  
 1 cup carrots julienned  
 ½ cup celery thinly sliced  
 1 cup green beans sliced diagonally or snow peas (whole)  
 1 medium size onion chopped  
 ½ tbsp garlic minced  
 3 tbsp cooking oil  
 5 tbsp Datu Puti or Marca Pina Soy sauce\*  
 3 tbsp oyster sauce\*  
 2 tbsp chicken bouillon or 2 chicken bouillon cubes  
 4 cups of water  
 Salt & Pepper

\*available at MMJ Asian Mart in Mitchell

## Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large wok. Saute garlic and onion until lightly brown and fragrant.
2. Add pork and chicken, season with salt & pepper. Keep mixing and let it cook for about 2 minutes until it's nicely brown and juicy.
3. Remove pork and chicken from the wok and set aside.
4. In the same wok over medium heat, add 1tbsp of oil and add in the cabbage, carrots, green beans and celery. Stir fry for about 5 minutes, tossing frequently until vegetables slightly soften and set aside.
5. Put 4 cups of water in a wok and add chicken powder, soy sauce, oyster sauce, salt and pepper and bring to boil.
6. Once boiling, add the dried pancit bihon and lower the heat to medium low. Let the noodle soak up the broth, stirring occasionally until the noodles become soft and all the broth has been absorbed.
7. Toss in the reserved cooked meat and vegetables back in the wok and gently mix everything until combined.
8. Serve hot and enjoy!

## Notes & Alternative Ingredients:

Pancit Bihon is often enjoyed with freshly squeezed calamansi, lime or lemon.

Cube tofu, shrimp and Chinese sausage also known as “Chorizo” is also a great addition.

We typically use a Super Q for noodles . It has a superior texture, great quality and is not prone to breaking in the stir fry.

Datu Puti or Marca Pina soy sauces are among a few great soy sauces we recommend for Pancit. A good quality soy sauce is necessary to add a balanced, salty and umami flavor to your dish. It’s also great for marinating, braising, dipping sauce and seasoning.



# The Second Furrow: The Love Story of Samuel Graham and Sarah Jane Kelly

There is a fragile, almost miraculous kind of geometry to how our local history was written. We often think of pioneer families as deliberate blocks of granite; like a headstone, the people who planned every concession line bought their acreage with precision, and arrived with an unshakeable blueprint for the future. But if you sit with the old registries long enough, you realize that some of our deepest local roots weren't planted by grand design. They were planted by pure, terrifying chance.

If you look into the mid-1840s records for Logan Township, two miles north of where the Thames River cuts through Mitchell, you will find the homestead of Samuel Graham

and Sarah Jane Kelly. To the casual eye checking the old township maps, they look like any other settled pioneer household holding their ground against the timber. But if you pull on the thread of their arrival, the story shifts from a clinical land record into a sweeping tale of love found in the dark, crowded belly of an Atlantic immigrant ship.

Imagine the world they left behind in 1844. Samuel was a young man from the rolling green hills of County Antrim, Ireland; Sarah Jane was a daughter of County Down. In the nineteenth century, those two places were separated by miles of rugged Irish countryside, distinct local traditions, and the rigid social boundaries of the era. Under normal circumstances, their paths would never have crossed. They likely would have lived, loved, and been buried within a few miles of their ancestral parishes, their names never touching.

But the mid-1840s were not normal circumstances.

young souls down to the docks, packing them into the tight, creaking timber hulls of ships bound for Canada. It was during that grueling, multi-week Atlantic crossing; surrounded by the endless heave of grey water, the smell of damp oakum, and the shared anxiety of an uncertain future, that the boy from Antrim met the girl from Down. In the dim lantern light of the steerage deck, while the ship groaned against the waves, a connection was forged. It was a love born not of manicured courtships or family blessings, but of survival. By the time the ship dropped anchor and they set foot on the wooden docks of Ottawa, the decision was already made: they would marry here in Ottawa and not risk stepping into the Canadian wilderness as two lonely immigrants. Instead, they stepped into it as husband and wife, a new journey they would take together.



The original location of the Graham Farm

Whether it was love or faith, the newlywed Grahams didn't linger in the eastern settlements, pushing directly into the edge of the Huron Tract to claim a patch of heavy clay and towering hardwoods just two miles north of Mitchell. To stand on their concession 4 lot 15 in the late 1840s was to witness the definition of pioneer grit. Samuel brought the ring of his axe to the forest, but Sarah Jane brought the rhythm of life to the cabin, raising children in a rough-hewn log shanty that would, over the next two decades, become one of the most crowded and vibrant corners of the township. Sarah Jane gave birth to fourteen children in that wilderness home.

In a log cabin, where space was measured in feet and the winter frost routinely crept through the moss-chinked gaps in the logs, fourteen children meant a household that never knew silence. It also meant a continuous cycle of love and agonizing loss. In the mid-19th century, the frontier was a

cruel landlord. Eleven of those children survived to see adulthood, meaning Sarah Jane and Samuel knew the devastating, quiet ritual of breaking the frozen earth to bury three of their little ones before the community even had a formal cemetery. Each loss was a heavy stone added to the family's foundation, a grief borne in the deep silence of the back concessions.

Yet, out of that crowded log shanty came a success story. Samuel Graham wasn't just a man clearing trees; he was a builder of communities. His neighbours recognized the quiet authority of a man who had tamed both an Atlantic crossing and a Huron Tract forest and, in 1846, when the local settlers gathered to form their very first provisional government, Samuel was chosen as one of Mitchell's first three town wardens. The man who had arrived with nothing but a young bride and a few basic tools was now helping to draft the rules that would govern the life of West Perth.

For those of us who hunt for their ghosts today, the paper trail they left behind is a beautiful, chaotic mess. If you look at the old census rolls, church ledgers, and property deeds, you will see their last name constantly mutating. One year the English-speaking record keeper writes them down as Grimes. A few years later, a pastor spells it Graeme. Eventually, as the family gained footing and the town grew up around them, the ink permanently settled into Graham. It is a tangible reminder of how fluid identity was back then, how these early pioneers were so busy breaking the soil and raising their children that they let the world spell their names however it pleased, so long as the crops came in.

Today, when you drive those two miles north of Mitchell, the fields are wide, clear, and prosperous. The massive maples are long gone, replaced by the modern silhouette of barns and silos. Samuel and Sarah Jane rest now in the rich soil of the area, their long journey from the docks of Ireland to the town

councils of Perth County finally at an end.

Resting in the hallowed grounds of Woodland Cemetery, Mitchell, lies Samuel (est.1810-1902) and beside him, since the moment they boarded that ship, Sarah Jane (1826-1894). They don't have marble statues in the town square, but their true legacy isn't written in stone. It's written in the bloodlines of the surviving children who went on to populate the county, and it's recorded in the very existence of the roads we travel.



The inscription on the Graham Stone is almost illegible

The next time you look out over a West Perth landscape on a golden afternoon, remember the boy from Antrim and the girl from Down who found each other in the dark of an ocean voyage. They looked at a wall of wild Canadian timber, put their shoulders to the wheel, and turned a chance encounter on a stormy sea into the very bedrock of our community.

Today, we are able to see for miles across the open concessions, so often taking for granted the backbreaking work that created our

modern conveniences. Samuel and Sarah Jane's headstone remains today and, like their story, has begun to fade with time. Our weather doesn't care about transatlantic love stories or the grit it took to raise fourteen children in a log shanty. It simply works away at the limestone, blurring the letters of the names Grimes, Graeme, and Graham just as the census takers once did. But while time and weather conspire to soften these edges, the legacy itself remains set in granite. It no longer has the care and compassion of the mourning descendents, it may go unnoticed as we walk by the row it calls home, but we shouldn't just let it be forgotten.

Preserving these artifacts is essential if we are to maintain the connections to our past. If you have a headstone in need, are on a cemetery board, manage or oversee a local cemetery, or want to inquire on how I can help restore ancestor stones, please get in touch via [eternalcaresstoneservices@gmail.com](mailto:eternalcaresstoneservices@gmail.com).



## A Tale of the 2013 Mitchell Plowing Match

In the leadup to the Internal Plowing Match in 2013, I was approached by Tim Erb's wife, who was in charge of looking after the *Farm to You* tent. That year, it was going to be complicated for me to participate as I was committed to the Stratford Fall Fair doing a shearing demo. Despite this I ended up agreeing and had my assistant Randy help cover for me in Stratford so I could do the Plowing Match.

*Farm to You* had exhibits of bees, pork, eggs, water buffalo, beef, and dairy all under one roof. I was in the center of the tent and the main poll was a handy place to set up my EVO shearing machine. I also had a catchpen for about six sheep close behind me. It was set up so there was lots of room for school kids and adults.

To make the demonstrations more entertaining, I started by singing "Ryebuck Shearer" or sometimes "Click go the Shears" which would generally gather a crowd of 40 to 60 kids pretty quickly! I always tried to involve the kids especially.

The demonstrations started on a Tuesday and continued until Saturday. Each night I would take the sheared sheep home and bring fresh sheep for the next day. Things were going great, except for the fact that the sheep were supposed to have tags in their ears if they were moved off the farm. But the tags I was given were so soft that I could not push them through the ears.

It was a wet September and by Thursday things were getting muddy. At one point that day, my shearing machine just up and quit, though thankfully they quickly found an electrician to try and fix the problem, but he couldn't help much. I had been right in the middle of shearing a sheep and I did not have a backup of any kind. It was embarrassing, to say the least and I had to shut down the show.

I pulled my shearing unit apart and found that I had blown a fuse, but after replacing that I found out that the unit needed a high input one that was not

available in Mitchell, so off to Stratford I went. Eventually, I was able to find one at a Canadian Tire and then I was back in business, after quite the delay!

At the end of Friday I went to load the sheep to take home. The first sheep was no problem but when I went to load the second they both got away! This was just at the point late in the day where the kids were loading up to head home and so of course that is where these sheep headed first. My helper and I got to the gate in time though, and with the help of a teacher and the EMT's we caught them.

Randy, my helper, just set the sheep he had on its rump and it sat quietly between his knees until one of the EMT's got a lanyard around its neck. I went to get the truck and trailer and by the time I got back the poor EMT was exhausted trying to hold this sheep on the end of a lanyard; it was definitely not their usual type of job. We eventually got both sheep loaded, no kids were hurt, we thanked the gods and drove home.

The mud got the better of the plowing match and the Saturday events were cancelled, but I still had to go back on Sunday to get the last of the gear. Someone had parked in front of the closest gate, which meant I had to drive all the way through the mud of tent city to pick up my gear! But I made it through the muck and was able to head back to Stratford to complete my time at their fair, and all's well that ends well. It was an adventure for sure, but I didn't let it slow me down.



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# A Brief Introduction

Hello West Perth! As the returning Summer Children’s Program Coordinator at the West Perth Public Library, I can’t wait to get back to work with a new and improved set of summer programs this year.

I grew up right here in Mitchell and participated in the Summer Reading Programs almost every year (I still own the tie-dyed pillowcase I made my first summer). Library programs often kept me from going insane with boredom, and I think it’s so important for kids to have somewhere to connect with each other and have fun outside of a classroom.

After four years of working at the library as a Page throughout high school, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to create those programs as the Summer Children’s Program Coordinator. I had so much fun last

summer planning and running weekly STEM and art activities, as well as picking out books for story times and Library-on-Location.

After a long year away at university, I’m so excited to be back in town and back at the Library for another summer of programs. I’m delighted to announce that we’ll be continuing the STEM and art programs on Tuesdays and Thursdays this summer, with a brand-new list of experiments and activities. Library-on-Location will also continue on Mondays, with a list of old favourites and new locations to explore! This year we’ll also hold board games and DnD on Wednesday afternoons. I’ve learned so much from my last year of programming, and I can’t wait to see everyone again this summer for even more fun!

## Crossword Puzzle

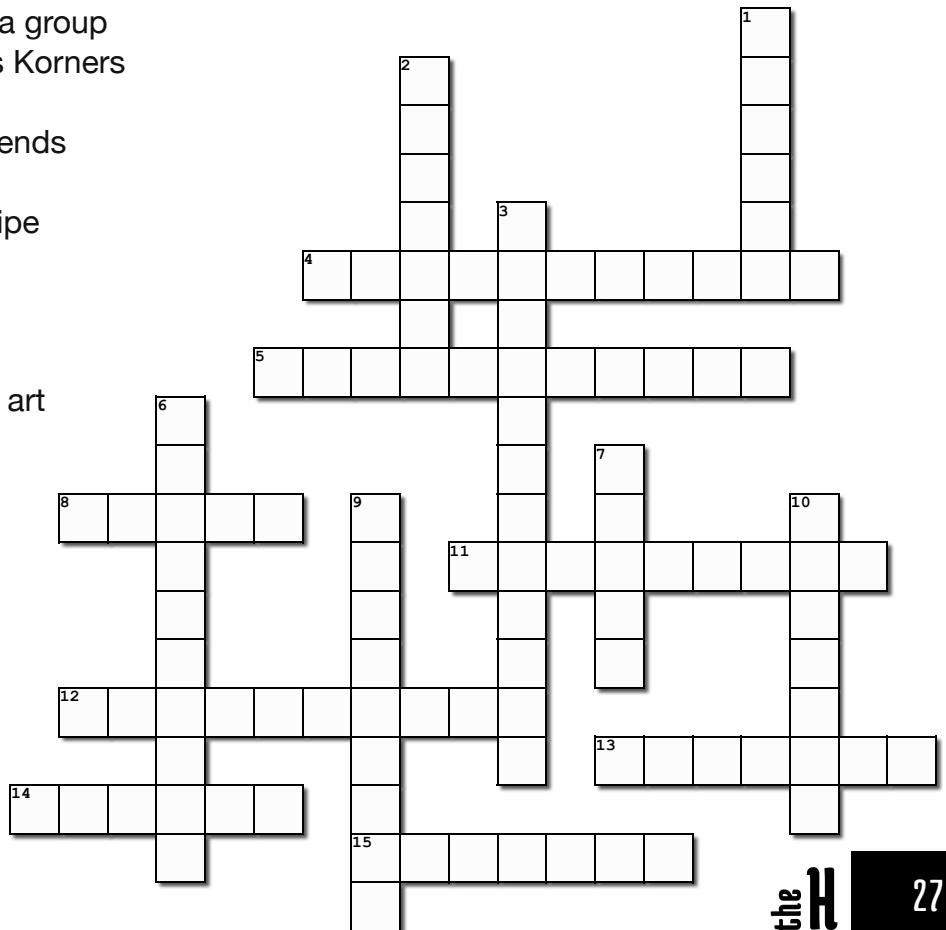
This month’s crossword clues reference May’s issue of *the Heronry*. If you missed it, you can find a copy online at [theheronry.ca](http://theheronry.ca). Distribution locations may also still have copies from May and a list of these can be found on page 30.

### Down

1. Featured in the town-wide sale event
2. Identity Jason hopes to support with a group
3. Friendly farmstand greeters at Koert’s Korner
6. Device Jason learned to walk with
7. The wiggly dog featured in Animal Friends
9. Study of stars that gives insights
10. Key ingredient in Nettie’s cookie recipe

### Across

4. Symbol of transformation in the youth art piece
5. Winter mode the family describes
8. Flower symbolizing prosperity in May reflections
11. The lifestyle described in the Funny Farmer diary
12. Where seedlings are grown for sale
13. Location for multiple community programs
14. Season of growth and renewal highlighted by the Founders
15. Referenced in both community and farmstand sections



# 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](http://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca)

### **Farmer Wellness Initiative**

24-hour support for farmers and their family members.

Phone: 1-866-267-6255

[www.farmerwellnessinitiative.ca](http://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](http://www.good2talk.ca)

### **Huron Perth Helpline and Crisis Response Team**

Phone: 1-888-829-7484

[www.hpha.ca/mentalhealth](http://www.hpha.ca/mentalhealth)

### **Kids Help Phone**

Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Text 'CONNECT' to 686868

[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

### **One Stop Talk**

Phone: 1-855-416-8255

[www.onestoptalk.ca](http://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](http://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](http://web@aad4.org)

### **Alateen**

*Support for teenagers with alcoholic adults*

Online meetings every Wednesday on Zoom

[HopePrevailsAlteen@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:ontariommh@medaviewhs.com)

### **Family Services Perth Huron**

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

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

[www.familyservicesperth-huron.ca](http://www.familyservicesperth-huron.ca)

### **Shelterlink**

Phone: 519-272-2294

Email: [info@shelterlink.org](mailto:info@shelterlink.org)

[www.shelterlink.org](http://www.shelterlink.org)

### **Victim Services**

Phone: 519-600-4108

[www.victimserviceshuronperth.ca](http://www.victimserviceshuronperth.ca)

### **Canadian Mental Health Association**

**(CMHA) Huron-Perth**

Phone: 519-271-6819

Toll-free: 1-888-261-9350

[www.cmhahuronperth.com](http://www.cmhahuronperth.com)

## **Senior Services**

### **Alzheimer's Society Huron-Perth**

Phone: 519-271-1910

[www.alzheimer.ca/huronperth](http://www.alzheimer.ca/huronperth)

### **Mitchell and Area Community Outreach**

Phone: 519-348-9765

Email: [maco@ritzlutheranvilla.com](mailto:maco@ritzlutheranvilla.com)

### **One Care**

Phone: 1-877-502-8277

[www.onecaresupport.ca](http://www.onecaresupport.ca)

### **West Perth Village**

Phone: 519-348-8612

[www.westperthvillage.ca](http://www.westperthvillage.ca)

## Local Food Banks

### Mitchell Food Bank

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

Phone: 519-703-4880

Email: mitchellcfs@salvationarmy.ca

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

*Appointments preferred*

### Monkton Food Bank

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Phone: 1-780-222-5050

Email: tiggerdigrr@gmail.com

### St. Mary's Food Bank

Phone: 519-284-2760

Email: st.marys@salvationarmy.ca

220 Queen St. E, St. Marys, ON

### Stratford Food Bank

Phone: 519-271-2950

Email: stratfordcfs@salvationarmy.ca

230 Lightbourne Ave, Stratford, ON

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- Wieterson's Country Store
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- West Perth Public Library
- Eidt's BMR Express
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- JMS Auto
- Goettler of Dublin
- Dublin Mercantile
- Mitchell Pottery Studio
- YNCU
- Dublin's Family Restaurant
- Monkton Diner
- Home Town Variety
- Deck Dentistry
- Cartwright Chiropractic
- Farm to Family
- Deep Roots Collective
- 101 Bar and Grill
- Koertland Auto Care
- Kirkton Market
- McDonald's Independent
- Ontario Gun Shop
- Black Donnelly's Brewing Co
- Mitchell Legion
- Hoegy's Farm Supply Ltd



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# Risking Failure

Last month I touched on the “why” we need to create. My focus is on painting, but we can be creative in so many other ways. We can be creative at work, at home, at play. Wherever and however we do it, it is an essential part of our lives. I also wrote a little bit about risking failure. It is this topic that I would like to write about this month.

I have created countless paintings, so many that my house is overflowing with them. I like to boast that I have the world's foremost collection of original Doyles! Sure, I have sold my fair share of paintings, but not all of my paintings are wholly successful. It is rather like a composer of music who strikes it rich with a “one-hit-wonder”. Successive attempts fail to hit the mark, but they keep on trying.

Creating art can be frustrating. Just when you think you have hit your pinnacle and have created your best piece ever, it gets rejected at a competition. Later on, after you stare at it for a while, the errors reveal themselves and you wonder how you missed it. The failure stung, but the truth prevailed. You learn, and you move on.

That's how it should be, at least for most of us. The worst case scenario for me is the story of those who tried once, ran into a wall and rather than finding a way over the wall, they quit. I know a friend who was very good at drawing. In high school he met another fellow whose talent far exceeded his. He put his drawing materials away and never again picked them up; to me that's more than sad, it's a tragedy.

As artists, we need to be a bit more resilient. There will be fans and there will be detractors. If you feel that your work is valuable or even if you just really enjoy doing it, then nothing else matters. We don't really (or shouldn't) need the accolades. A true sense of worth doesn't come from some external source, it comes from within. I love painting, I do it almost everyday, but I am not good at promoting my art so it often goes unseen. That is why I created a facebook page. It is my way of promoting myself

and, most importantly, of highlighting the process that goes into the making of a painting.

If you are considering taking up painting or some other creative endeavour, don't look at your work in a negative sense, or compare its value with other people's work. Instead, value your piece, and view other people's work in an inspiring way. For example, rather than bemoaning that you'll never be as creative as Emily Carr, change your thoughts to be something like, “I really love the way Emily Carr used expressive brush work. I wonder if I can try that too”. Find inspiration rather than comparison in the art that is around you.

My work is unique, it was created by me with whatever talent I have and with whatever influences I have encountered. It is by no means perfect and it has its detractors. But somehow I just keep going and every now and then someone tells me that they like what I do. That's always nice to hear, but fundamentally I am the one who has to be satisfied with my work.

I also love sports, playing hockey, pickleball, curling. I love trying to be creative in the games. I enjoy everything that comes with it. I have never been the best player, I have won few awards, but I am there, and that is what counts. It is the same with my art, even as I wallow around on the distant periphery of the art world, I have a sense of still being a part of it, of contributing in some minute way that somehow counts. I love it!

I would love to instill this love of “doing” to others, to help advance creative thinking and the joy of sharing. By doing what you do, by sharing it with others you are contributing to a better world. Let's keep it going and hopefully inspire others along the way!



# A Way to Heal

Most of us have at least one in our lives - someone who has a bit more trouble with life than others. They might have injured their brain in a car accident or a simple fall, suffer from a mental illness, or have or have had a problem with substance use. We all know these people; they are our kids, our friends, our parents, our neighbours. They might be us. They are certainly me.

I cracked my skull at age 13 by falling off a play structure at my school, and the former inhabitant of my brain went away forever. I don't remember much before age 20, and memories are pretty spotty until 25 or so.

There are some people reading this who know exactly what that is like. A high five and a hug to you all. We are still here.

I have mental health issues because of that injury, and with it and a family history of depression I have a hard time getting through most any day. I forget things constantly, and staying here (if you know what I mean) is a daily struggle.

There are some people reading this who know exactly what I mean. A high five and hug to you too. It is genuinely really hard, but we are still here. I lived through addiction, because I couldn't deal with the struggle of living in my own head. Living addicted is rough, and quitting took everything. Even after getting clean, I still had to live with withdrawal sweats every night for nearly a decade. Again, (and this one makes me grieve), there are people reading this who know exactly what I am talking about. We are still here, here and missing all our friends who didn't make it.

There are parents and siblings and family and friends reading this who knew what was happening and couldn't figure out how to help. Please hear me - it was not, and is not, your fault. By existing, and caring - you did help. Getting helped is just plain harder than trying to help. Getting better has to come

from some inner part as well, and (former addicts will understand this) an addict isn't going to get clean until part of them makes them do it.

See, the thing is that people like us just get arrested more often than other people. With traumatic brain injuries in particular, there is a lack of emotional and impulse control, and an increase in aggression. There are also mental health problems and an increase in substance use. When you don't fit in, aren't comfortable being in your own head, and don't understand other people properly, it is not hard to end up in cuffs. And after arrest, there is a whole new set of problems to solve, and everyday life was already too hard.

Part of being here and being human is that we expect others to behave rationally, while knowing ourselves to be irrational. We all know that we make bad choices, snap decisions, and sometimes do what our emotions and impulses dictate, not what is right, or good for us.

We all need to know that we all do this. We can't ever see into someone else's mind, we can only see what they do, and hear what they say. We can't see the addict begging themselves to stop, while they continue. We can't see that a brain damaged person is drowning in life, and showing anger as they try to stay alive.

But we can know and understand that we can't. We can try to help, and even a smile and a pleasant hello can be a help to a person in crisis. There are other ways we can help, and I know you all; the families who lived through struggles like mine, and my friends-not-met (we would be friends, we can understand), want to help as well.

Because I am still here, I have work to do, and I found a way that I can help and do that work.

Two years ago, because of my lived experience overcoming addiction and brain damage, I was invited to join the local Human Services and Justice

Coordination Committee. If your response to that is “What the heck is that?” you are in good company. The Human Services and Justice Coordination Committee brings together a wealth of experience from Government Ministries, and Societies and Associations that have a duty to assist the people of our province. It includes representatives from:

- The Ministry of Children
- Community and Social Services
- Ministry of the Solicitor General
- Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Attorney General
- Correctional Service of Canada
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Community Networks of Specialized Care
- ConnexOntario, Forensic Directors Group
- John Howard Society of Canada, Justice for Children and Youth
- Legal Aid Ontario
- Local Health Integration Networks,
- Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Ontario Provincial Police.

Quite the list, I know. Trying to follow and keep up with the conversations in the meetings is a serious challenge for me. Most committee members are professionals in their field, trying to do their best to help our community and our friends and families. Often, I have to research the items of discussion before and after the meeting, just to keep up.

The Human Services and Justice Coordination Committee makes a place for these groups to talk, and share results, and form collaborations. Collaborations that you see affecting the community around you.

Take Mobile Crisis Response Teams, as one small example. If someone is in crisis and the police are involved, treatment and help may be a better response than incarceration.

Or even closer to home, for some of us. Our County OPP carry “comfort kits”, meant to aid the unhoused, and the precariously housed. These kits include things like: hats, gloves, scarves, food, water and blankets. They also contain gift cards for Tim Hortons and for local pharmacies and transit. Comfort Kits are a small thing, and there is much work to do, but they are a step in the right direction.

Through these collaborations, there is even a budget to buy boots for those who are trying to get back into the workforce and cannot afford the upfront costs. Not much can be more “boots on the ground” than actual boots.

The Human Services and Justice Coordination Committees also include people with lived and living experience, like me. Experience of that painful list of life happenings and life choices that I made earlier. Our job is to advise and guide and help the courts and police and support services understand who we are, what we are experiencing, and how badly we not only need help, but want to help – and how we are also people, not just a problem to be solved.

We are making a difference. It’s not fast, it’s not easy, and it takes a lot of work, but that sounds like normal life to me.

At the beginning of this May, I had an opportunity to help again with this work and was one of the speakers at the Provincial HSJCC Conference in Toronto. I was there as one of the Lived and Living Experience Representatives, speaking directly to people like Mark Campbell, who is the President of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the Chief of Police for Strathroy–Caradoc.

Part of my job is also to see Mark as a person, not just an authority figure, and to be able to speak clearly about my experiences and to offer my perspective and advice on what needs to change. It can be intimidating, even for me, to be open and honest, and vulnerable. That vulnerability can sometimes fuel some people’s justification for looking down on, or shunning people like me. Fortunately, part of my deal with myself when I was getting clean was that I would always be open and honest, wherever, whenever, and however I could help.

It’s a rough deal sometimes, but also a good one. Sometimes I find out that it has helped someone who needed to feel understood, and that makes it worthwhile. Chief Campbell and I had a chance to talk after I spoke, and I found out that he not only sympathized, but also agreed with and already had started working

on some of the issues that I think need changing. I also got to see some of my colleagues in person, especially Ally Stevenson, our HSJCC Engagement and Communication Specialist. She is a big part of the behind-the-scenes work, pulling all these Ministries and Associations and people together so we can work with each other, and create new and needed collaborations.

I asked her to send me a brief biography of who she is, and what and why she does what she does. I know that it can be hard for all of us to see the people who work in government structures as being people too, and I want to introduce her to you.

*Hi! I'm Ally, the HSJCC Engagement and Communications Specialist with the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division. The Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee (HSJCC) Network is something I did not know existed until I came across the opportunity to work with CMHA Ontario. Since then, I have come to really appreciate the role it plays in bringing together partners across the human services and justice sectors to better coordinate, plan, and support people with complex needs who come into contact with the justice system.*



Ally Stevenson, HSJCC Engagement and Communications Specialist

*What first drew me to this work was my experience working frontline at the Ontario Addiction Treatment Centres (OATC) in Hamilton, Ontario. I started that role during the pandemic, supporting individuals seeking opioid agonist treatment. It was incredibly meaningful work, but it was also very challenging. It gave me a deeper understanding of the barriers people face when navigating complex systems, and it helped shape my passion for supporting change through research, collaboration, and systems-level work.*

*This led me to pursue a master's degree in forensic psychology, where my research focused on community reintegration and the experiences of individuals leaving custody. Through this work, I had the privilege of conducting two research studies*

*in collaboration with the John Howard Society of Durham. I remain very grateful for their openness and partnership. That experience reinforced how important it is to bridge community-based knowledge and academic research, especially when the issues being studied directly impact community members.*

*After graduating, I began working with CMHA Ontario, which has given me a broader perspective on how systems, policies, and community partnerships connect. In my current role, I support engagement across the HSJCC Network by helping to build awareness, strengthen communication, and share knowledge across the province. I also support webinars, conferences, and other knowledge exchange activities that highlight the work happening across Local and Regional HSJCCs.*

*I'm grateful for the opportunity to share a bit about myself.*  
- Ally Stevenson

Whether you are a person with lived and living experience, a family member who had to witness and suffer alongside another's suffering, or a professional like Mark Campbell or Ally Stevenson – we do have a voice in changing how our community works, how the courts treat people, and what the police policies are. If your voice wants to speak, speak. If your voice needs to yell, well, sometimes yelling is exactly what is needed.

If you want to help, or speak, or yell, (and I hope you do)—email me at [fournier.andrew@gmail.com](mailto:fournier.andrew@gmail.com) or contact your local HSJCC and offer to assist.

Peace, Andrew Fournier

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# AI: The Lost Technology

Welcome to the fifth installment of the Heronry's series on Artificial Intelligence. In this issue, we will be discussing the impact that AI has had on other developing technologies.

A bakery in Japan tried wrapping baked goods in plastic so that they could stick a barcode on them, to make scanning easier for their cashiers. People thought the wrapped baked goods were less fresh, and didn't buy them. They wanted a solution that didn't force their cashiers to memorize hundreds of codes or make their customers wait while the cashier looked things up. Fortunately it was 2013, and a Japanese tech company was in the process of inventing a scanning AI that could tell, by shape, what the pastry was. The AI did one thing: scan pastries and compare them to its dataset. It had a 99% success rate. In 2017, a cancer doctor watching a TV segment about the AI program realized that cancer cells look a lot like bread. The program was adapted, and now it saves lives world-wide (they still use the bakery version in Japan, too)\*.

We don't make AI like that anymore. The bread/cancer detector is analytic AI, and took almost a decade to make. It was trained to do a hyper-specific job. Generative AI can pretend it does a similar thing, and does it faster and cheaper, but it is nowhere near as reliable. One particular difference is that when gen AI is wrong, we can't tell where it went off track. With the bread detector, we can see where the mistake is, which allows us to correct it.

We could be funding targeted, effective analytic AI, but the fast money is in generative AI, and tech companies are more than happy to chase that money right off a cliff (Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has been quoted as saying that AI must be useful or they'll lose social permission to drain the planet's resources for it\*\*). The obsession with ever climbing profits is depriving us of the good things AI can do, and we can't even do anything meaningful with gen AI yet.

In a more practical sense, generative AI is ruining everyday technology as we speak. Your computer (or phone, or TV, or maybe even fridge) runs on RAM - aka memory. Like the cloud, RAM is a physical thing that has to be built into devices. This year, 2026, all of the RAM that we've produced has been spoken for: gobbled up by AI data centres. It's not just that new consumer electronics won't exist, it's that the companies that make them will go under, because they don't have the components they need to stay in business+. Capitalism at its finest.

So much of AI is a weird cycle. CEOs (whose companies depend on investment in AI) tell us we need it. Other CEOs want to look cool, or whatever, so they make their employees use AI, even though the AI is terrible. Governments who have invested in AI use it, even though it doesn't work. Schools use it, even though it's actively preventing kids from learning, because some bought-and-paid-for politician made it a policy. We are told, over and over, that AI makes us more efficient even though the evidence against that is mounting up almost as fast as the environmental damage AI causes. I sound like a conspiracy nutcase when I explain it, because it doesn't make any sense.

The thing I know for sure is that we have to stop.

\*<https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/the-pastry-ai-that-learned-to-fight-cancer>

\*\*<https://www.pcgamer.com/software/ai/microsoft-ceo-warns-that-we-must-do-something-useful-with-ai-or-theyll-lose-social-permission-to-burn-electricity-on-it/>  
+<https://www.pcgamer.com/hardware/memory/many-consumer-electronics-manufacturers-will-go-bankrupt-or-exit-product-lines-by-the-end-of-2026-due-to-the-ai-memory-crisis-phison-ceo-reportedly-says/>



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# To Bee or not to Bee

With spring in full effect, the countryside is blooming to life. The plum tree was first to be covered in little white flowers. The rest of the apple, pear, peach and nut trees are now following suit. This time of year always brings on feelings of hope for the future growing season and an appreciation for the beauty and diversity of the nature in our backyard. When flowers bloom, the next thing I typically look for is pollinators.

When we started planting our orchard, we realized that its success would be greatly improved if we could add pollinators to the environment. Two years ago we took on the challenge of adding bees to our funny farm. We did not do this blindly, after recognizing that beekeeping is challenging and considered hard compared to keeping other livestock. Besides the obvious risk of being stung, they require parasite and climate control, as well as feeding during certain times in the year. You cannot just “set and forget” as some would assume. We did our homework; took an online beekeeping course, spoke to other beekeeping hobbyist, invested in the equipment and purchased our first colony.

Adding the bees to our orchard was exciting. We received the colony just as our trees were blooming and the bees did their job well. Our orchard trees are still young, but they were almost all covered in fruit after they were thoroughly pollinated. Throughout the spring and summer, we had a routine of donning our bee suit so we could go through the hive to see the progress.



we hoped. It was fun to learn about their world, see how they communicated with each other with dancing movements and how they interacted in their environment. By late summer, they had created large stores of honey of which we were not allowed to share. When bees are establishing their colony during their first year, it is advised to leave all the honey for the bees so that they have enough food for winter. In late fall when the temperatures were dropping, we wrapped the hive in insulation and hoped for the best.

Last spring we opened our hive and found what looked like a scene from Pompeii. The bees appeared to be mummified and looked like they had collectively died at the same time. There were bees grouped together in the individual comb. It looked like brood was waking up and then died suddenly, while they were working. There was no honey left. The colony had likely run out of food stores and starved. It was very disappointing, especially since we knew that we would not have guaranteed pollinators to benefit the rest of our property. We debated on purchasing another colony, but that comes at an expense with no guaranteed financial return. We also had to reflect on our own ability, knowledge and available time to determine if it made sense for us to continue with this investment. It's hard to not feel responsible and we did not want to “fail” again.

Shortly after deciding to put our bee dream on pause, a friend of mine who kept bees, had caught a swam and did not have the space to keep them. He graciously offered the colony to us, of which we

accepted. The colony was introduced to their new home and quickly set up shop using the existing comb that was already established on the frames. Yet again, the colony expanded rapidly and created large honey stores. We were more diligent about maintaining routine pest control and providing the colony with food when the temperatures became cooler so they could build up their winter honey stores. When consistent cold weather arrived, we wrapped the hive in its insulation coat again and hoped for the best.

Through the winter, we would check on the bees from time to time. If you put your ear to the side of the hive (or your stethoscope if you have one), you could hear the internal hum of life. Winter was long and the snow was plentiful this year and when March arrived, the hive had grown silent. My husband and I suspected the worst. When the sunny days finally came, we did not see bees taking flight. We knew we lost the colony again.

Opening the hive this spring was not a priority for me. I knew the colony was gone, and remembering the mummified scene from the previous year was not an incentive. About a week ago, I took the

hive apart and found what we had suspected. Thousands of dead bees, some still in their comb, others together in clumps, starting to mold. What surprised me, was finding frames of honey stores still intact. Perhaps a small consolation for our loss, I spoke with other beekeepers; plenty had lost their colonies as well. We discussed the inconsistent winter weather temperature, the humidity of our climate, and other reasons for their possible failure. I am not an expert, so I won't pretend to know why they did not survive this year.

So now I am left with an empty beehive and fresh spring blooms on my fruit trees. I'm still hopeful that local insects, birds and nature will be attracted to my little natural ecosystem. Perhaps I will be able to attract a new swarm this year, but if I don't, that's ok. When I have more time to dedicate to this hobby, I will try again. Until then, I welcome other beekeepers to set up their hives on my little funny farm.

*Follow our shenanigans on Facebook or Instagram-  
@The Square H*



# CONTRIBUTE TO THE HERONRY

Here are some ways you can help!

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

community by becoming a regular submitter of content or advertisements. Our readership is constantly growing and residents love to see local businesses celebrating the good things and people found in West Perth.

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



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

## Previous Issue Puzzle Answers

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



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# Andrea Pol

For as long as I can remember, I have loved drawing. While I did learn a bit of colour theory and art history through high school, most of my learning came from experience—copying pictures from books and magazines. Never past learning, in recent years I have taken some online courses and regularly watch YouTube tutorials, which have taught me a lot about technique and using different media.

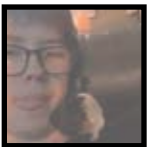
My favourite subject has always been horses, but I also like to draw and paint a variety of animals, as well as landscapes. I use different media, depending on the purpose and subject. Most often, I use graphite, watercolour, and pastel pencil, although it's always a fun challenge to do an acrylic landscape.

Many of my pieces are “just for fun”, and I also provide illustration for our church’s children’s magazine. Every year, I do a piece for my Christmas cards, and I often gift art to friends and family. It is mostly for pleasure, but I do accept commissions as well.

I find drawing and painting so relaxing, and it is exciting to see it go from a blank piece of paper, to a blur of shade and colour (every piece goes through an “ugly stage”), to a finished piece. I call art a gift rather than a talent, and I am very thankful for this gift, and for opportunities to share it with others.



## Young Artist Highlight



# Mason Kuntz



“I used to love watching “The Nightmare Before Christmas” all the time. It set the mood for both Christmas and Halloween, plus I love all of the characters in the movie and how the scene and setting is an autumn and spooky vibe.”



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