

FREE

A WEST PERTH PUBLICATION

the Heronry

Issue Includes

Clare French's Musical Fire

Ordinary Extraordinary People

Billie & Scout

Animal Friends

Tales of the Huron Tract

A Composer's Journey

Flexible Community

County Business Stories

Vol. 1

First Edition!

December 2025

Photo submitted by Curtis Bergsma



51 Ontario St, Mitchell ON
519-348-4023
miorders@mnoofficepro.ca
www.mnoofficepro.ca

*Your local one-stop shop for all your
business and home office needs!*



Office Supplies
Office Equipment
Ink & Tech
Accessories
Educational & Art
Supplies
& more



Business Cards
Flyers
Banners
Magazines
Laminating
Foam Core
Yard Signs



Name Plates
Name Tags
Custom Stamps
Cheques
Golf Balls
Note Pads
& more

WE DELIVER TO MITCHELL & AREA



Custom Apparel
Partnerships
Accessories
Promo Items
Thermal Printing
Embroidery
Pens



Dog & Cat
Food, Toys & Treats
Collars & Leashes
Bird Food &
Accessories
Reptile Feeders
Fish Food
Live Fish



Divisions of:



B&V ENTERPRISES INC



Confidential Shredding

51 Ontario Rd, Mitchell, ON, N0K1N0
519-348-4023 - www.bvei.ca



ABOUT THE FOUNDERS

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

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

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

Special thanks to

Christopher Creighton, Amy Hetherington, Jericho James, Elysha Vorstenbosch, Jen Lennon, Clare French, Flynn Sparrow, Angela Walker, Curtis Bergsma, Gary Duwyn, Nicholas Hotz, Rosemary Minnella, EK Johnston, and Cindy Schinbein for their contributions to this issue.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS THE HERONRY? Thoughts from the Founders	4
BERT'S MUSINGS ON PRINT Thoughts from the Founders	5
CLARE FRENCH'S FIRE Ordinary Extraordinary People	6
BILLIE JEAN & SCOUT Animal Friends	8
THE MITCHELL CLOCKTOWER Local History	9
WEST PERTH COMMUNITY EVENTS December 2025	10
A COMPOSER'S JOURNEY Tales of the Huron Tract	12
NOTES ON PHOTOGRAPHY Introduction	13
LOCAL ART HIGHLIGHTS Jericho James	14
COMMUNITY RECIPES Butterscotch Bars	15
IT'S FOR THE BIRDS Birding 101	16
LOCAL POETS Preparing for St Nicholas Dreams	18
FLEXIBLE COMMUNITY County Business Stories	19
COMMUNITY RESOURCES Local Resource Contact Information	20
MOVE YOUR BODY Wintertime Dances	22
A NOTE FROM THE LIBRARY Wrapping up the Year	23

wp.heronry@gmail.com

wpheronry.substack.com

theheronry.ca

What is “The Heronry”?

We’re all familiar with the blue herons that are ubiquitous around West Perth. We’ve seen them standing in our waters, and featured on many logos around town. When Bert first started talking about a community publication, we all spent a lot of time trying to choose a name. After tossing around a few ideas, we kept coming back to that well known West Perth icon. At the same time we also wanted to emphasize the community mindset we wanted to encourage. After a few Google searches and some quickly gained knowledge about the noises herons make, (they are NOT melodious) we chose to name this publication after the term given to heron nesting grounds.

Heronry 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 called “heronries.”

Like those colonies, our publication is meant to feature the diversity of people and stories that is found within our community. Each issue will celebrate the people, places, and history that makes 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 small team is made up of 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, a place to share what’s happening, lift each other up, and be reminded of what makes living here so meaningful.

you have a story you’d like to share, a resident you want featured, or an event you’d like to highlight, please send it our way. You can easily fill out our Community Submission Form online; just scan the QR code or visit the link on our Facebook page, or you can email us directly at wp.heronry@gmail.com.

We’re also looking for residents who are interested in contributing regularly to the content of this publication! If you love to write, take photographs, or want to share your art or knowledge with the community, please reach out to get involved!

The Heronry is completely free; this is made possible by the local businesses and sponsors who choose to advertise with us. If you’d like to see this publication continue to grow, the best way to help is by contributing your creative efforts, and by supporting our advertisers, or by becoming one yourself! Advertising with us not only helps businesses connect with residents, but it also keeps this publication accessible for everyone!

Thank you for picking up our very first issue and for being part of something new! We’re proud to call West Perth home, and we can’t wait to keep sharing its people and stories with you.

Distribution Locations

Keep your eyes open as our distribution locations are always expanding!

- Mitchell Office Pro
- West Perth Village
- Wietersen’s Country Store
- West Perth Library
- Stratford Perth Museum
- JMS
- Deck Dentistry
- www.theheronry.ca

Bert's Musings on Print

Thank you for taking the time to review our first issue of hopefully many publications to come. As one of several people involved in bringing this idea to life, I figured I would put my thoughts out there this one time only.

West Perth is already serviced by the Mitchell Advocate, so why have a monthly publication?

As my various businesses have taken me to other communities, they are serviced by a newspaper as well as forms of monthly publications; each serves a purpose. My thinking is that residents of West Perth are missing what I believe this publication can offer.

So what's missing? Simply put, we're missing a place for the community to submit personnel stories, special interest (Birding, music, aging, travel) articles, and other things that do not fit into a newspaper format.

West Perth is changing and this publication is one way for both long term residents and new residents

to reach out and get to know one another.

Isn't print a vanishing industry? As a person now involved in the printing business, I can tell you that assumption is far from the truth; yes, print has changed BUT is still one of many ways to connect with people.

Why not just keep the publication digital?

I have learned, sometimes the hard way, that you have to use many different mediums to reach everyone. If you do digital only, you exclude a great number of our residents and you'll find the same problem if you do only print.

The goal of this collaboration, between those of us involved, is to offer a free monthly publication to the residents of West Perth and others. For that, we will be reaching out for individuals and business to advertise with us AND submit articles. We hope you enjoy this publication and help support to keep this going on for years to come.

Clare French's Musical Fire

For Clare French, music has always been a steady flame that's warmed every stage of his life.

Raised on a farm just outside Brodhagen, French grew up in a home where music was simply part of the fires of life. His mother played the church organ every Sunday and, though she never had time to give him lessons, she showed him where middle C lived, both on the keyboard and on the music staff. That small spark, combined with a music primer he received from Santa one Christmas, was enough to ignite a lifelong passion.

By grade three, that spark had caught tinder and started to take hold. French could already read music and understand the steps and skips that create melody and harmony. His first trumpet, ordered from an Eaton's catalogue for about thirty-five dollars, was a cheaply plated model that eventually began to rust. But it worked well enough to fuel a young boy's growing enthusiasm and set him on a journey that would last more than six decades.

Even so, the fire flickered at first. "I wasn't making the sound I was supposed to," French recalls of his early days in the school band. His mother staged a mini-intervention, inviting his uncle over for a demonstration. "He sat across the table and played right at me," French laughs. "After that, I knew what I was aiming for." From that night on, the flame burned brighter.

By the time high school came around, that energy had grown into The Clarettes, a band French formed with a few buddies from class. The group became

a fixture at local events, birthday parties, and school dances, lighting up community gatherings until the members eventually drifted apart, as teenage bands often do.

Over the next sixty years, French kept feeding that musical fire. From local orchestras such as the Brodhagen Band, to dance groups like Chris Black and the Swinging Brass, he played with more than ten different ensembles, spending

countless weekends providing the rhythm and spark for community dances across south-western Ontario.

As his musicianship deepened, so did his role as a leader. A founding member of several groups, French often arranged music and mentored others. Though he doesn't call himself a composer, he takes pride in following in the footsteps of his favourite, Johann Sebastian Bach, who was known for reworking and writing variations on the popular tunes of his day.

A teacher by profession, French eventually took over leadership of the West Perth Legion band. He wrote

primers such as "What It Means to Be in a Band," organized practices and performances, and was always ready to play Taps at any Remembrance Day ceremony. Through it all, he passed his musical



Clare French (far right) & the Brodhagen band



Clare French (left) & the Royal Aires

flame to others, lighting up students, audiences, and fellow musicians alike. He was especially pleased to hear that Mitchell District High School has once again formed a jazz band, ensuring the next generation keeps the fire burning.

About a year ago, French noticed his own flame had begun to dim. "I realized I hadn't picked up my trumpet in months," he says. "You can't just let them sit and expect them to move smoothly. Just like a car, a trumpet needs to be played or it loses the ability to stay in tune." Rather than let his instrument grow cold, he sold it to a young student heading to the University of Winnipeg



Clare French. Taken at his Mitchell home in 2025

to study music, passing on the fire so that it can live again in new hands.

These days, French listens to music more than he plays it. He gets his fix from the jazz station while driving and still enjoys the sounds of the seventies and eighties. Though he admits he no longer has the wind or energy to perform, his love of music still warms him.

Ask him about his time with the Keith Bell Band or the Royal Aires, and you'll see that familiar spark return. For Clare French, the fire of music may have dimmed, but those embers still glow.



Mitchell District Highschool
presents



A CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Friday, December 12th, at 7:00 PM

Donations towards the MDHS Music Department accepted!



MDHS Gym

95 Frances St E, Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0



Billie Jean & Scout

Billie Jean is a hodge-podge of dog breeds including lab and a good dash of rat terrier. She was adopted by the Stokes family in 2022 and has been glued to her primary human's side in Mitchell ever since.

As a result of her rough start in life, Billie has a few upsetting proclivities that her people have been helping her overcome. The primary issue is that Billie needs to be recognized as ANIMAL BOSS. While she is an absolute sweetheart humans of all sizes, she has a tendency to want to eat cats, and cannot abide other dogs existing without establishing her authority.



Her main person, Mitch, has taught her to focus on him, but it is noticeable that she is sometimes mentally STRUGGLING to overcome her baser instincts when around other animals. She's been working very hard though, and deserves all the treats!

It was a hard day for Billie when the Stokes family brought Scout home. An Australian Shepherd, he was one of the more chill puppies in the litter. This phlegmatic attitude has served him well as

he has had to constantly demonstrate to Billie that he understands that his role in their family is to be her subordinate. He's slowly convincing her to play with him and they now wrestle every morning at breakfast. Scout is even getting bold enough to nip Billie when she ignores him in favour of expressing her excitement over getting to go for walks!

You can often see Scout and Billie walking with their people to and from kid drop-off at Upper Thames, or running around town with their humans.

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).

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



- ✓TUNE-UPS
- ✓BATTERIES
- ✓BRAKES
- ✓EXHAUST SYSTEMS
- ✓AIR CONDITIONING
- ✓ALIGNMENT

519-348-9744

143 HERBERT ST, MITCHELL

The Mitchell Clock Tower

Believe it or not, there was a time when almost nobody carried a watch. People relied on something bigger. Clocks on top their local post offices. It wasn't just about telling time, it set a rhythm of daily life.

Perth County has four of these historic installations, located in Milverton, Listowel, Mitchell, and Stratford.

The story of Mitchell's clock tower is a little bittersweet. Built in 1911, the post office had a stunning tower that could be seen from every direction. During the Centennial year in 1974, Canada Post demolished the old building and put up a new one. Someone from the Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee had the foresight to save and restore the clock in the 1990s. It was safely tucked away in the basement of town hall for years until 2022.

The Municipality of West Perth decided to incorporate the old clock into the hose tower of the new firehall. It was converted to work via electric operation and now faces Wellington Street, a modern nod to the town's history. More than an old timepiece, it is a symbol of a shared past. Still finding ways to be part of our present. This clock reminds us of a time when our community literally ran on the same schedule.



Stratford-Perth Archives: Campbell Family Collection

Leaf & Embers

Making Gifts a Breeze!

Mention this ad and get 10% off!
(one time use only)

December 2025

These events are open to the general community and are free unless otherwise indicated.

December 1

Parent & Tot Skating | 11:30am - 12pm | Mitchell Arena
Skating | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena

December 2

Senior's Fitness | 9:30am | Community Centre
Adult Skating | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
Mahjong | 1pm | Library
Parent & Tot Skating | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena
Crafter's Circle | 2pm | Library
Holiday Craft Night | Drop in: 3 - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

December 3

Parent & Tot Skating | 9am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
Public Skating | 11:30am - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
Adult Skating | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena
Treats and Eats | Drop in: 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre
Junior Explorer's Button Making | 6:15pm | Library

December 4

Indoor Dice Games | Drop in: 3 - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

December 5

Parent & Tot Skating | 9am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
Public Skating | 10am - 11am | Mitchell Arena
Adult Skating | 11am - 12pm | Mitchell Arena
Baby Time | 1pm - 3pm | Library
All Ages - Open House | 3pm - 7pm | Youth Centre
Knox Stew Supper | 4:30pm | Knox Presbyterian (\$)
Christmas Parade | 7pm | Main Street, Mitchell

December 6

Men's Community Breakfast | 8:30-9:45am | Grace Lutheran

December 7

Parent & Tot Skating | 9:30am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
Public Skating | 10am - 11am | Mitchell Arena
Last Stop Christmas Shop | 10am - 3pm |
Community Centre Proceeds to Food bank, Toy Drive, & Community Care Fund

December 8

Parent & Tot Skating | 11:30am - 12pm | Mitchell Arena
Public Skating | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
Community Christmas Dinner / 5:30 / Community Centre
Free tickets available at West Perth Public Library till Dec 4
Sponsored by Mitchell Community Churches

December 9

Senior's Fitness | 9:30am | Community Centre
Adult Skating | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
Parent & Tot Skating | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena
Blood Pressure Clinic | 1pm - 3pm | Library
Mahjong | 1pm | Library
Crafter's Circle | 2pm | Library
Youth Drop In | 3 - 5:30 | Youth Centre
Family Services | 4 pm - 5:30pm | Library
Mitchell Lion's Club Meeting | 6:45 pm | Town Hall

December 10

Parent & Tot Skating | 9am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
Public Skating | 11:30am - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
Adult Skating | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena
Holiday Veggie Trays | Drop in: 3pm - 5:30pm | Youth Centre

December 11

Youth Holiday Party | Drop in: 3 - 5:30 | Youth Centre

December 12

Parent & Tot Skating | 9am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
Public Skating | 10am - 11am | Mitchell Arena
Adult Skating | 11am - 12pm | Mitchell Arena
Christmas Concert / 7pm / Mitchell District Highschool

December 13

Breakfast with Santa / 9am - 11pm / Knox Presbyterian

December 14

Parent & Tot Skating | 9:30am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
Public Skate | 10am - 11am | Mitchell Arena
Because it's Christmas / 2pm / Main Street United (\$)
An evening of festive harp music with Elysha Vorstenbosch



December 15

Senior Book Chat | 11am | Ritz Manor
 Parent and Tot Skating | 11:30am - 12pm | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skate | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
 Stories with Teddy: ages 0-6 | 5:45pm - 6:30pm | Library

December 16

Senior's Fitness | 9:30am | Community Centre
 Adult Skate | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
 Mahjong | 1pm | Library
 Parent & Tot Skating | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena
 Crafter's Circle | 2pm | Library
 Mitchell Lion's Club Meeting | 6:45 pm | Town Hall

December 17

Parent & Tot Skating | 9am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skate | 11:30am - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
 Adult Skate | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena
 Snowman Crafts | 11am | Library

December 19

Parent and Tot Skating | 9am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skating | 10am - 11am | Mitchell Arena
 Adult Skate | 11am - 12pm | Mitchell Arena
 Baby Time | 1-3pm | Library

December 20

A Christmas to Remember / 7pm / Knox Presbyterian (\$)
An evening of festive harp music with Elysha Vorstenbosch

December 21

Parent and Tot Skating | 9:30am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skating | 10am - 11am | Mitchell Arena

December 22

Parent and Tot Skating | 11:30am - 12pm | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skating | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena

December 23

Adult Skate | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
 Parent and Tot Skating | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena
 Mahjong | 1pm | Library
 Crafter's Circle | 2pm | Library
 Mitchell Lion's Club meeting | 6:45 pm | Town Hall

December 24

Parent and Tot Skating | 9am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skating | 11:30am - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
 Adult Skate | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena

December 28

Parent and Tot Skating | 9:30am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skating | 10am - 11am | Mitchell Arena

December 29

Lego Lounge | 10:30am | Library
 Parent and Tot Skating | 11:30am - 12pm | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skating | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena

December 30

Adult Skate | 12pm - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
 Parent and Tot Skating | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena
 Mahjong | 1pm | Library
 Crafter's Circle | 2pm | Library

December 31

Parent and Tot Skating | 9am - 10am | Mitchell Arena
 Public Skating | 11:30am - 1pm | Mitchell Arena
 Adult Skate | 1pm - 2pm | Mitchell Arena

A Composer's Journey

This series will be focused on the process of composing an album of harp music as part of my master's degree. The focus of the album, "Tales of the Huron Tract: The Whispers That Lay Dormant No Longer," is on the stories associated with the various historical sites located along the Huron Tract, some of which date as far back as the beginning of the tract itself.

The Huron Tract is 1.1 acres of land developed by the Canada Company, a British land development company that aided in the colonization of a large area of Upper Canada, beginning in 1826. The tract stretches from Guelph all the way to Goderich, Ontario. Highway 8 now sits on where the Huron Tract was first developed.

The idea for this project started in the summer of 2024 when I worked as a summer student at the Fryfogel Tavern. During that time, I was introduced to the history of the Huron Tract - specifically that of the Fryfogel Tavern - as I provided guided tours as part of my job. Many of the visitors to the Fryfogel Tavern commented, "I've driven by this building for x-number of years and never stopped in until now," or "I had no idea what history this building held."

Inspired by my time working as a tour guide at the Fryfogel Tavern, I decided to use it to create an album that would allow me to share and highlight the stories surrounding the Huron Tract through music.

Tales of the Huron Tract: The Whispers That Lay Dormant No Longer will include 7 pieces for harp inspired by the following historical sites:

1. Blacksmith Fountain in Guelph, a monument that overlooks the location believed to be where John Galt chopped down the first tree when he began developing Guelph.
2. Castle Kilbride in Baden, is a grand old Victorian home built in 1877 for flax industrialist, politician and entrepreneur, James Livingston.

3. Fryfogel Tavern outside Shakespeare, the last erect tavern out of three that were built along the Huron Tract that offered shelter and food while settlers traveled to their purchased plot of land.
4. Hicks House in Mitchell, a hotel built by John Hicks, the founder of Mitchell, in 1873 after his second hotel, (the Commercial, built in 1857), burnt to the ground in 1872. Nowadays, the upstairs rooms are used as apartments and the ground level is used for commercial stores.
5. Van Egmond House in Egmondville (outside Seaforth), a house built by Constant Louis Van Egmond, son of Anthony Van Egmond who aided in the development of the Huron Tract and ran one of the three taverns built along the Huron Tract during its development.
6. Goderich Gaol in Goderich, an octagonal building which served as the County Jail from its opening in 1841 until its closure in 1972. It served as the jail for the Counties of Huron, Bruce & Perth until these counties separated. Then, the building only served Huron County, which was for the majority of its history. The Goderich Gaol housed many criminals serving a variety of crimes as well as provided shelter as the House of Refuge for the ill, destitute, and mentally ill.
7. Tiger Dunlop Tomb / Gairbraid outside Goderich, a small cemetery and burial plot where the founder of Goderich, Dr. William "Tiger" Dunlop, was buried after his death in 1848. This location was where Dunlop had plans to develop a new town called Gairbraid, named after a town near Glasgow, Scotland.

I'm currently in the research stage of this project and looking for all the information I can get. If you have any stories, historical information, or resources to share about any of these historical sites, please reach out to me at info@elyshavmusic.com.

Notes on Photography

This is the first note in a series I'm writing for the Heronry about the history, practice, influence and innovation of photography. From the estimated 3 photos per day produced in 1839 to the more than 1.2 billion made every day in 2025, the medium has undergone incredible change as it has brought incredible change to the world. There is barely an object that you can see or touch that has not, in some way, been affected by the art and science of photography.

Everything from automobiles to life saving pharmaceuticals to international space exploration owe a debt of gratitude to photography's influence. I hope to bring the colourful history and interesting—often quirky—characters out of the darkness of

time. Photography has left its indelible mark on the aesthetic and philosophical thinking of the past 200 years and has integrated itself into our lives, for better and worse.

Stay tuned for a look at one of the constants in our lives that we see so often but notice so rarely.

Next time, how the new, totally unexpected (and quite unwelcome) medium developed into an essential aspect of everyday life.

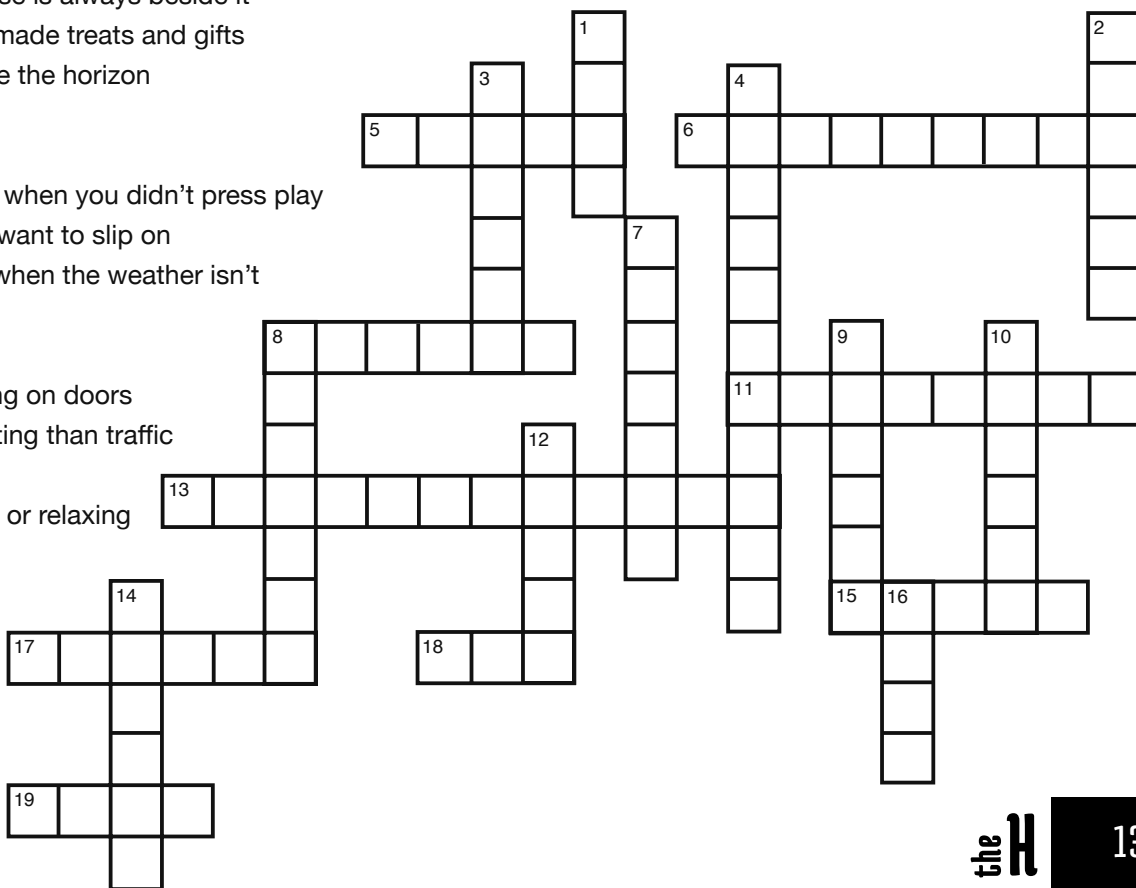
Crossword Puzzle

Across

5. Glide across ice instead of walking
6. The warmest seat in the house is always beside it
8. Seasonal place to find handmade treats and gifts
11. The kind of storm that erase the horizon
13. Classic cozy beverage
15. Winter layer that wraps
17. Music you might hear even when you didn't press play
18. A frozen surface you don't want to slip on
19. The feeling of being warm when the weather isn't

Down

1. Vehicle for snow travel
2. A circle decoration often hung on doors
3. A line-up of floats more exciting than traffic
4. Spiced up dough
7. A special day for celebrating or relaxing
8. Hand coverings
9. Bright seasonal decorations
10. Come together socially
12. Canadian winter gear
14. What a pond might do before hockey season starts
16. The reason you can see your breath outside



416-786-3365

**Group Rates
Private Classes
Date Nights**

**82 Huron Rd, Box 534
Mitchell ON, N0K 1N0**

Jericho James

Jericho comes by his artistic talents honestly. His mom, Jade, has quite the artistic flare herself (she designed the BJ's bluejay). Despite that, he chooses to get his art education from youtube videos, following along as the video does a step-by-step that shows him how to keep proportions even and lines strong. He's not a huge fan of colouring things in, and mostly works in pencil.

He finds drawing to be relaxing, and despite his love for it, is currently planning on being a large machine mechanic when he grows up. He says he will keep doing art as a hobby! We appreciate Jericho sharing his art with us, and encourage West Perth artists of all ages and talents to submit their artwork to this publication!



Untitled, Jericho James, Age 10

Colouring Page

Practice your own artistry skills and colour in the logo that was created as a part of a fundraising initiative for the West Perth Youth Centre.



Word Scramble

GADNBEROH _____

LNTORALFU _____

ONYREHR _____

UDLBNI _____

NKOTONM _____

RTHEP _____

NGOLA _____

LHLTECIM _____

SR LDSUELEA _____

TWHELELOMR _____

UNSBMOTLCA _____

AFATSF _____

Butterscotch Bars

Once upon a time, I could make butterscotch bars in my sleep. One pack of butterscotch chips, 1 cup of peanut butter, half a cup of butter, one bag of coloured miniature marshmallows. Way easier than pie. Then a few years ago, the size of the Chip-its bag and the size of the marshmallow bag changed, and suddenly my super-easy recipe was thrown for a loop. Fortunately, there were people on the internet who had done the math, and now I have a new recipe in grams, but there was one thing on the online recipes I noticed was missing: they never told you to freeze the marshmallows.

My favourite Moira Rose joke (from the hit CBC show *Schitt's Creek*) is the “fold in the cheese” bit. Baking can feel wildly unintuitive if you don’t know what some of the phrases mean (or unintentionally hilarious, if you’re making candy to “hard crack” with a kid), so I wasn’t very surprised when I posted a picture of my butterscotch bars and a bunch of people chimed in to ask how I’d gotten the marshmallows to stay like that. I don’t even remember my grandmother telling me; I just remember watching her do it every year.

So if there’s a family recipe you can’t quite duplicate and you don’t have a family member to ask

questions of, try to find out if someone else makes something similar. A lot of these recipes come from Kraft food labels, modified over the years to suit family tastes, so chances are pretty good someone out there knows the trick you’re missing. And if your nemesis is butterscotch bars, then try putting the marshmallows in the freezer before you do anything else.

Butterscotch Bars:

- 1 package of butterscotch chips (300g)
- 1 cup of peanut butter
- ½ cup of butter
- 1 package of coloured marshmallows (250g)
- 1 tsp of vanilla

Directions:

1. Put the marshmallows in the freezer
2. Line an 8x8 pan with parchment paper
3. Melt chips, peanut butter and butter over low heat, stirring until smooth. Remove from heat and let cool for 10 minutes
4. Quickly fold in the vanilla and marshmallows
5. Spread mixture into pan and then put the pan in the fridge for at least an hour
6. Remove from pan and slice into squares
7. Store in fridge or freezer



**Mitchell
Gymnastics
Club**

**Sign up
forms are
on our
website**

Spaces still available for our May Session

Limited January Spots Available

Birding 101:

AKA: What is Birding Anyway?

Now that I've got your attention, I am not a birder, and honestly really know nothing about birding. So what's the deal then? The ideal of this community publication is to let individuals know more about our community, so I'm doing just that.

How many people know that West Perth has a really excellent birding area at the West Perth wetlands?

The Municipality of West Perth website states:

The West Perth Wetlands include 65 acres featuring 3 rehabilitated ponds, 10kms of walking trails, and over 4700 trees and shrubs. Each part of this lush area is unique and provides wildlife and rare bird species with natural habitat. Location 3871 Wellington Street, Mitchell, ON



naturetrail.westperth.com

The Wetlands are at the south end of Mitchell, Ontario. Proceed down Frank St until you see Kinsmen Park and a baseball diamond. Turn right at the diamond and follow the road to the end where you can park.

Well now you know where our wetlands are located, but do you know the history of this town feature?

It took me a while to track this down as the West Perth Thames Nature Trail and Wetlands website disappeared and all the information went with it. After some frustrated searches I was pointed to the *internet archive (archive.org)* and presto, I was able to find what I believe to be the original website belonging to the Nature trail and Wetlands that had

seemingly vanished from existence.

Here it is a quick history of the Trail Formation of the Energy & Environment Committee.

In the mid 1990's, members of MAEG (Mitchell and Area Environment Group) raised concerns about the meadows, wildlife corridors and wetlands along the North Branch of the Thames River that were being eliminated. After a public meeting, it was recommended to council that a Committee to address environmental concerns be created. Thus it was that in 1998 the Township of West Perth Council created the West Perth Energy and Environment Committee.

Re-establishing the Trail

The original trail was actually a footpath that ran between the Dam and Rowland Street. When Willow Lane and the Ritz Villa were developed, more

people seemed to enjoy walking along the river. In the late 1970's, a design for an extended walking trail from the dam to the Ritz Villa was proposed to the Mitchell Town Council by Richard Lehen and Gerry Kehl. Council accepted the proposal and proposed the further development of the trail on the west side of the Thames River from Howie Morenz Park to Frank Street.

During the summer of 1979, two summer students, Bill Stephen and Brenda Osborne, were hired to rough through the trail from the railway bridge to Frank Street and install stairs in the pine forest just south of the railroad bridge. Later in the summer six or so Co-Op students from Stratford joined in to complete the work. (Today, this section of the original trail system is not part of the West Perth Thames Nature Trail. Instead the trail has been re-

routed along the east side of the Thames River). Through the summer of 1980, Co-Op students, some of whom were Rob Sawyer, Kevin Doerr, and Jan Wolfley, worked to complete the trail. Many individuals and groups came forward to assist.

One of the many that worked hard towards the establishing of the original trail system was the late Don McKerlie. The two benches that were placed along the north section of the trail still remain today.

Over the years, lack of maintenance caused the trail to become less defined in some areas. With the formation of the Energy & Environment Committee, interest in re-establishing the trail became a focus, and with Council's approval, the Committee proceeded to work towards the creation of the West Perth Thames Nature Trail.

With the establishing of the West Perth Thames Nature Trail the intention was to preserve and create environmental awareness of our natural areas and to encourage future generations to make wise choices in the preservation of our world.

West Perth Thames Nature Trail Mission Statement

To provide a nature trail as a way of appreciating our ecosystems and to participate in the sustaining and enhancement of that environment.

Goals:

- To maintain and develop our diverse natural heritage features.
- To nurture the involvement, interaction and education of present and future generations.
- Promote the awareness of this community as one that demonstrates sound environmental vision and practice.

Objectives:

To establish the trail to meet these goals, with the involvement of the community and to work together to implement and maintain the trail, to promote

environmental awareness and a healthy lifestyle.

It was felt that more progress could be made in smaller groups, so four sub-committees were created and members of the community were invited to join: Trail, Publicity, Promotion & Fund Raising, Education and Wetlands

Here is another tidbit: you will see a modified version of this logo all over West Perth (Info taken from the WPNT website). The stylized drawing of the Heron

was crafted by Ted Eglinton, (former) Trail Chair. At first glance the drawing appears quite normal, however, upon closer examination, and a little imagination, you will see the craftiness in the drawing. There is a "W" for West, a "P" for Perth and a "T"; W - wings P - body, tail T - legs and breast.

The Municipality of West Perth then began using a modified version of the logo for advertising purposes.

So there you have it, a very quick history of the West Perth Wetlands, its creation and where the logo you often see came from.

Now my request to y'all Birders (sorry could not resist): Please give us your birding stories. My hope is that we will have a monthly submission from at least one of the many individuals that that enjoy birding in West Perth. Share your triumphs, sightings, and photos with us!



Preparing for St Nicholas

(Abridged)

By Clare French

'Twas the month before Christmas, and time passing fast;
So Joanne started planning for Christmas at last!

Pull out storage boxes, and check what's inside-
We've lots of decorations -- we've nothing to hide.

Coordinate colours and try out each light -
Our Christmassy house should be quite a sight!

With six trees to do, there's no time to waste;
And if we start early, there's no need for haste.

Up went the ladder, and then up went Clare.
And each little light had to go just right there!

All lights in order, the timers were set -
Our lights are spectacular, the best I've seen yet.

Boxes are everywhere, we tread with much care;
Lest in our hurry, we break something there.

Bring out the garlands, the knick-knacks replace!
So many possibilities, and not enough space!

The tree in our own house is last to be done;
Several attempts produced the right one.

Yet - Christmas means family, you know what I mean -
And we were their hosts on December fifteen.

A sociable gathering, much laughter and chatting,
With good food, good drinks, and love everlasting.

The music of Christmas brings musical pleasure; the
concerts were special - the moments we treasure.

Lots of cars drive by here, and sure 'tis no wonder -
They gaze in admiration at lights and great splendour.
But to see the real glory, they should look inside
to see Christmas feelings that love can provide.

I'm proud of your efforts, not just now but all year;
All you do is your gift - and that makes you dear.

For sure you're a keeper, I want you to know
I'd be nothing without you - you're a wonderful show.

I wish you much joy in this holiday season!
Do I look happy? Sure, and YOU are the reason!

Dream

By F.T. Sparrow

Dream is a mighty solider

That stands against the storm,
That sings the weeping child to sleep,
And keeps me safe and warm,

And on the darkest nights I've seen,
I've heard the thrash of war,
Dream shields me from the violent beast
Pounding upon the door.

I've seen them in the coldest lands,
And in the bleakest times,
They hold my hand, whisper to me,
'You will be just fine.'

Flynn Sparrow moved to West Perth from British Columbia in June 2020. When they're not writing, they enjoy listening to music while on long walks with their dog. Flynn is an aspiring author who is currently working towards getting their Creative Writing Certificate through the University of Toronto.



**Artisinal Cutting Boards, Soy Candles
Engraved Board Games, & More!**

nate@beckerswaxandwood.ca

Flexible Community

In 2002 I (Jen) went out on a limb and started offering gymnastics in my hometown, one night a week at our local Legion. I had 25 students and 2 floor mats, but quickly The Mitchell Gymnastics Club took on a life of its own. I had no idea where I was headed, or a specific goal in mind. Twenty-three years later, we see 300+ students in a week, from fifteen different communities.

Many quiet introverted children have found their place and come out of their shell in our classes. Students with limitations have found something they could do, and plenty of parent dreams have come true.

One my favourite memories is of a little guy who passed away seven years ago. He loved gymnastics but had serious mobility limitations, and I worried I wouldn't be able to teach him much. As a team we did our best, but we had no idea that little friend would teach us so much more than we could ever teach him. The first time he performed a class routine in our big show, I saw the emotion and impact our club made for him and his family. I knew we needed to make that feeling part of our identity as a club.



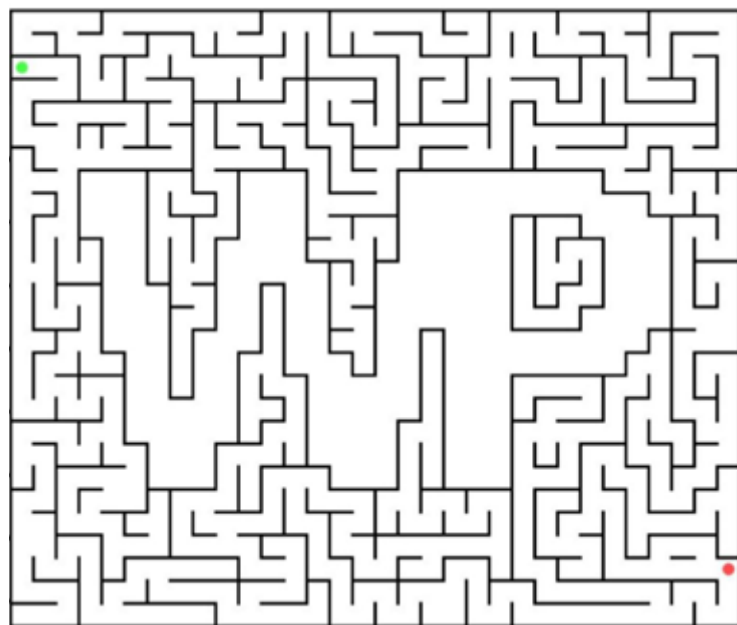
Our gym is built on this community aspect, and we are all about doing everything we can do in order to ensure that every student can feel good about who they are, and proud of what they can achieve.

We've seen friendships made and continue to grow far past their time with us. I've made amazing connections with students, who became coaches, then friends, then close enough to be considered family.

We've produced large shows with amazing group routines for more than 2000 people in the audience, performed at many memorable events, and had amazing opportunities I never could have expected. (Including being awarded Club of the Year from Gymnastics Ontario in 2019, for our little bitty club in the country).

Being part of the Mitchell Gymnastics Club and the community we've made here, is so much more than just the love of our sport. It is so special to me and my coaches, both past and present, and we hope to continue to share our enthusiasm and classes for years to come.

Maze Craze



Cartwright Chiropractic

35 Ontario Rd, Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0

cartwrightchiro.ca

519-348-4690

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 independantly

Phone: 519-348-9765

City of Stratford: Social Services Department

Phone: 519-271-3773 ext. 200

211

A helpline that easily connects people to the social services, programs and community supports they need.

Call or Text: 2-1-1

www.211ontario.ca

United Way, Stratford, ON

519-271-7730 / Toll-Free: 877-818-886

www.perthhuron.unitedway.ca

Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline

Phone: 1-833-900-1010

www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca

Farmer Wellness Initiative

24-hour support for farmers and their family members.

Phone: 1-866-267-6255

www.farmerwellnessinitiative.ca

Good2Talk

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

Phone: 1-866-925-5454

Text 'GOOD2TALKON' to 686868

www.good2talk.ca

Huron Perth Helpline and Crisis Response Team

Phone: 1-888-829-7484

www.hpha.ca/mentalhealth

Kids Help Phone

Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Text 'CONNECT' to 686868

www.kidshelpphone.ca

One Stop Talk

Phone: 1-855-416-8255

www.onestoptalk.ca

Optimism Place

24/7 Support Line: 519-271-5550

Toll-Free: 1-800-265-8598

After-hours: 519-272-2294

www.optimismplace.com

Counseling Services**Huron Perth Centre**

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

Stratford Office: 519-273-3373 ext. 2221

www.hpcentre.on.ca

Medavie Health Services

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

Phone: 1-877-872-6350

Email: ontariommh@medaviewhs.com

Family Services Perth Huron

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

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

www.familyservicesperth-huron.ca

Shelterlink

Phone: 519-272-2294

Email: info@shelterlink.org

www.shelterlink.org

Victim Services

Phone: 519-600-4108

www.victimserviceshuronperth.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Huron-Perth

Phone: 519-271-6819

Toll-free: 1-888-261-9350

www.cmhahuronperth.com

Senior Services**Alzheimer's Society Huron-Perth**

Phone: 519-271-1910

www.alzheimer.ca/huronperth

Mitchell and Area Community Outreach

Phone: 519-348-9765

Email: maco@ritzlutheranvilla.com

One Care

Phone: 1-877-502-8277

www.onecaresupport.ca

VON Perth Huron

Listowel Office: 519-291-5898

Stratford Office: 519-271-7991

www.von.ca

West Perth Village

Phone: 519-348-8612

www.westperthvillage.ca

Wintertime Movement

Winter in West Perth can get chilly. It is easy to slow down and stay inside. When we're stuck indoors, our bodies still love to move, stretch, wiggle, and dance around. A little movement can make a big difference to how we feel!

Here are a few fun, super easy ways to stay active this winter:

Snowflake Stretches



It's a gentle way to wake up your muscles and get your body moving. Imagine you're a giant snowflake floating through the air. Lift your arms up, sway side to side, and drift down slowly.



Winter Animal Walks

It's silly, fun, and great exercise without even feeling like exercise!

Pick a winter animal and copy how it moves.

- Stomp like a polar bear
- Hop like a snowshoe hare
- Waddle like a penguin



Hallway Dance

Turn your hallway (or living room) into a mini dance floor.

Put on your favourite song and have a 1-minute dance party.

It's quick, easy, and guaranteed to put you in a better mood.

Cozy Warm-Ups



Just a few simple moves to help your body stay loose and happy.

- Arm circles
- Knee lifts
- Toe touches
- Gentle twists
- One big deep breath

Staying active doesn't have to be fancy. If it gets you smiling and moving then it counts. So this winter, dance in the kitchen, stretch like a snowflake, march like a polar bear, and wiggle in your warm socks whenever you can!



Wrapping Up the Year

It's been quite a year at West Perth Public Library! We wish to thank everyone in West Perth for making 2025 so special and memorable. With your support, we introduced more free passes to local venues, puzzles to borrow, audiobooks for children, new and exciting programs for all ages... and, of course, the latest bestselling fiction, biographies, cookbooks, travel guides, and so much more.

The West Perth Library is proud to showcase talented Canadian authors and illustrators who give each of us a voice. Visit us in person or online. We look forward to your next visit!

You can see library's events on the Heronry's community calendar. Submit your own events on theheronry.ca or at wp.heronry@gmail.com.

Dungeon Masters Needed

A Collaboration between the West Perth Library
and the West Perth Youth Centre

Help out our local youth as they play a fantasy tabletop role-playing game where a group of players, guided by a Dungeon Master (you?!), act out a collaborative story!

Location: West Perth Youth Centre
Mondays: 5:30pm - 8pm during the school year
Contact West Perth Library: 519-348-9234

Must be able to pass a Vulnerable Sector Check.

Dungeons and Dragons experience is ideal, but volunteers can learn as they go. Any table gaming experience is an asset.

Teen DMs can earn Volunteer Hours for their time running a game!

Photo submitted by Angela Walker

Calling: All West Perth!

This is a locally funded and created initiative! Reach out and get involved in this community project! If you have a story to tell, art to share, a child to brag about, or a hobby to share, we want to hear from you! Send us your business origin stories, your poetry, and your passion projects! Showcase your work, your drive, and your community spirit! We're also looking for financial supporters to help cover the cost of print and production; please reach out for ad pricing.

Contact us at wp.heronry@gmail.com, stop by Mitchell Office Pro (ask for Amelia), or call and text Christina directly at 519-994-1431. We can't wait to bring you on board!

THEHERONRY.CA

[@WP.HERONRY](https://www.instagram.com/wp.heronry)

WPPERONRY.SUBSTACK.COM

WP.HERONRY@GMAIL.COM

the Heronry