

Friday, September 6, 2013

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inside

VENDOR LOOKS FORWARD TO RETURN TO ST. JACOBS

A Stratford small business owner says she is grateful for the outpouring of support she's received since losing her booth in last weekend's St. Jacobs Farmers Market fire. "It's really touched me," said Leslie Humphrys-Eliasziw on Thursday. "I got an e-mail yesterday from someone who was at the site saying 'I can see your window decor, I can see that in the rubble,'" she said.

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sports



Maverick Petrie was a long-shot to make the Stratford Cullitons out of training camp, but the 16-year-old's gritty play made it impossible for the team to let him go.

Page B1

quote this

As agencies we know we also have to use alternate media as well ... so that at the outset of an incident the correct information, the accurate information, is presented.

Chief Brad Duncan,
London police

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■ **AGRICULTURE:** Nuhn Industries' futuristic machine wins innovation award at major U.S. farm show



SCOTT WISHART The Beacon Herald

Ian Nuhn of Nuhn Industries of Sebringville is shown with the company's new lagoon crawler that's creating quite a buzz in the farming community. For video of the invention, visit www.stratfordbeaconherald.com.

Crawler makes manure almost sexy

BRIAN SHYPULA
Beacon Herald Staff

SEBRINGVILLE — A kick-ass looking amphibious lagoon crawler is making waves in agricultural circles.

Nuhn Industries of Sebringville made the machine for the North American Manure Expo near Guelph in late August. When photos of the prototype emerged the reaction was practically viral.

A buyer from California called the next day to say he wanted one.

"We've had this at two trade shows now and everyone just stops in and asks, 'What is this?' They are so impressed with it. It's

extremely eye-catching. It's big and when you tell them it floats they almost fall over," said Ian Nuhn, the 23-year-old designer.

The Nuhn crawler won the innovation award at the 2013 Farm Progress Show, the largest farm show in the U.S. in Decatur, Ill., Aug. 27-29.

In fact, it's the second straight show Nuhn Industries has come away with the innovation award from Decatur. Its manure header pump also won.

"Nobody's ever won two years in a row," said company president Dennis Nuhn, Ian's father. "For a little company from Ontario "

The pump can be found on the crawler, by the way.

“A lot of people think it's a jacked-up Ferrari.”

Ian Nuhn, designer Nuhn Industries

The bright red, knobby-tired crawler, though, is arguably the coolest piece of farm equipment ever made. It resembles something out of a *Transformers* movie, a futuristic cross between a dune buggy, boat and F1 racer. "A lot of people think it's a jacked-up Ferrari," Nuhn said, laughing.

While people are impressed by the looks, it also has a practical purpose that farmers demand.

The remote-controlled machine is used for agitating large-scale manure lagoons like those found in Western Canada and the United States.

Nuhn explained that solid manure settles in the bottom of the lagoons. Traditional pumps spray mostly the water from the lagoons, leaving the best nutrients for the soil behind.

He crawler is able to drive itself into the lagoon, re-circulate the water using jets and create a homogenized liquid the award-winning pump can throw about 100 metres onto a field.

"So when you spread it on the field you get a consistent nutrient application," Nuhn said.

Some people have tried mounting pumps on boats to achieve the same effect but there's nothing else like the crawler on the market.

Nuhn said there is a patent pending on the amphibious drive.

He and his dad had been kicking around ideas for the design for about a year. Then, 10 days before the North American Manure Expo, they decided to make a splash and build one.

The younger Nuhn worked practically two days non-stop on the computer design, then the company's production staff went to work.

see NUHN | Page A4

■ **PRISON:** Imeson killed Mount Carmel couple, Sarnia man

Triple killer seeks love with online posting

JANE SIMS
QMI Agency

The first apparent public words from a mass murderer who terrorized Southwestern Ontario are cast in the language of love.

Jesse Imeson, 28, who pleaded guilty six years ago to three counts of second-degree murder for strangling a Windsor college student and shooting to death a Mount Carmel couple, is looking for a relationship on the Internet through the website PrisonPenPals.com.

It's an unusual twist, since Imeson has no online access in prison. That means someone else would have had to post his profile.

"I would like to establish a romantic relationship constructed on the foundations of substance, honesty and passion," writes Imeson, who's serving a life sentence with no chance of parole for 25 years.

Imeson's prison dispatch — complete with a photo gallery — is said to come from the Pacific Institution near Abbotsford, B.C.

His defence lawyer, Donald Crawford, confirms the man in the photos is Imeson.

The *Free Press* couldn't reach Imeson, but relayed a request to talk to him.

The post says Imeson isn't interested in "casual correspondence," but wants someone "open



This screen shot of convicted murderer Jesse Imeson, taken from the website Prisonpenpals.com, appear to be taken in prison where he's serving a life sentence for killing three people. It's an unusual twist since the prison in Abbotsford, B.C., has no Internet access.

to the greater possibilities that may arise."

Imeson went on a killing crime spree in July 2007, first strangling Carlos Rivera of Windsor — his body found in Imeson's apartment — and then fleeing to the Grand Bend area, prompting a massive police manhunt.

He tied up and shot dead Bill and Helene Regier, 72 and 73, in the basement of their farmhouse just outside Mount Carmel, then stole their pickup truck.

see IMESON | Page A4

■ **HOUSING:** Motels used now called 'horrible places'

Better shelters for homeless hot topic at community forum

DONAL O'CONNOR
Staff Reporter

The need for something more than 10-day emergency shelter for homeless individuals — and in better quality rooms than are currently available — arose as a hot-button issue Thursday evening during a discussion on homelessness and affordable housing in Stratford and area.

Patti Miller of the Social Justice Club associated with the Local Community Food Centre termed two motels in Stratford that are used to provide temporary accommodation "horrible, horrible places."

"I wouldn't send my worst enemy to any one of them," she said, but social-services director Bill Tigert countered that the remark and others from Miller were "unfair and overly harsh."

"We use the resources that are available to us with the funds that are available to us," he said, acknowledging the motels to which social services refers people may not be "four star."

Unfair or not, the exchange and Miller's call for an immediate increase of \$100 in social welfare and a minimum wage of \$14 an hour added a sense of urgency to the need for affordable housing and a spectrum of complement-

ary supports for Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County citizens unable to afford market rents.

Based on a 135-page report prepared by OrgCode Consulting, the need to address affordable housing for people earning \$30,000 or less is not in doubt.

“I wouldn't send my worst enemy to any one of them.”

Patti Miller

Through intensive study of available data and interaction with the community, the consultant has determined there are more than 50 people each month within the county accessing emergency shelters and an estimated six or so more who are "unsheltered" who may be staying in cars or "couch surfing."

There is not a lot of purpose-built rental housing being constructed and there may be a need for smaller, more compact dwellings that are affordable, said OrgCode planning associate Gwen Potter-King, who outlined key findings of the report.

She cited an array of options for assisting those — including the working poor — who can't

make ends meet for housing. Options include housing subsidies, centralized information and improving on the variety of available housing in existing buildings through incentives.

"There are some real challenges in social-housing supply right now," said Potter-King.

Average market rents are not affordable to lower income earners, she said.

Average rent for a bachelor unit in Stratford in the fall of 2012 was \$520, whereas a single person on Ontario Works receives \$376 monthly for shelter allowance.

One thing the provincially-mandated report on affordable housing and homelessness is not recommending is a standalone shelter akin to those in larger cities.

Potter-King pointed out the fluctuation in would-be users, the spread of the county, and need for capital and staffing do not favour that approach.

Safe options linked to support services and extending emergency-shelter time according to need are among the options suggested for discussion.

The full housing report, which includes possible strategies for remedial action, is available on the Stratford website.

see HOUSING | Page A4

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WEATHER TOMORROW

Thunder Storms: High 25° Low 12°
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Closed Saturday and Sunday

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Stratford Region

Today



Sunny. Winds
very light.
High: 21°
Low: 13°

Tomorrow



Thunderstorms.
Winds light.
High: 24°
Low: 12°

Sunday

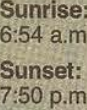
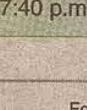


Mainly sunny.
Winds light.
High: 20°
Low: 10°

Monday



Partly cloudy.
Winds very light.
High: 21°
Low: 15°



Almanac

Today for Stratford:

High	21 (Normal 24.2)
Low	13 (Normal 12.4)
Mean	17 (Normal 18.3)
Record high	32.2 (1978)
Record low	2.8 (1942)
Precipitation record	28.2mm (1990)
Tomorrow:	
Normal high	25.1
Normal low	13.5
Record high	34 (1978)
Record low	4.4 (1976)

World

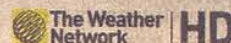
	tomorrow			
Amsterdam	m.sunny	22/16	Moscow	rain
Beijing	sunny	27/15	Mumbai	showers
Berlin	p.cloudy	26/12	Paris	p.cloudy
Brussels	p.cloudy	21/16	Rome	sunny
Hong Kong	showers	30/28	Sydney	p.cloudy
Jerusalem	sunny	28/17	Tel Aviv	sunny
London	p.cloudy	21/10	Tokyo	showers
			Warsaw	sunny



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Cogeco channel 767, Rogers 586, MTS 450

Please contact your service provider
for more details.



Southwestern Ontario Tomorrow



Sarnia

Friday, sunny. High 22, low 16. Saturday, thundershowers
(pop 70%). High 27, low 15. Sunday, mainly sunny with cloudy
periods. High 21, low 13. Normals: high 25.1, low 13.5

Kitchener

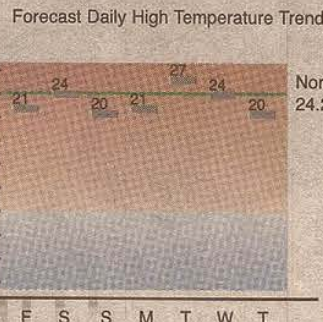
Friday, sunny. High 21, low 12. Saturday, cloudy with showers
(pop 80%). High 23, low 11. Sunday, mainly sunny. High 21,
low 9. Normals: high 23.4, low 11.5

Canada

	tomorrow	
Banff	showers	15/8
Brandon	p.cloudy	23/12
Calgary	rain	15/10
Charlottetown	p.cloudy	20/13
Edmonton	showers	20/12
Fredericton	p.cloudy	21/10
Grande Prairie	m.sunny	24/12
Halifax	p.cloudy	20/12
Iqaluit	showers	5/0
Jasper	p.cloudy	21/9
Kamloops	p.cloudy	26/15
Kingston	rain	20/12
London	tstorms	25/12
Moncton	p.cloudy	21/10
Montreal	showers	19/11
North Bay	showers	21/8
Ottawa	showers	21/9
Quebec City	showers	18/9
Regina	p.cloudy	22/14
Saint John	p.cloudy	20/10
Saskatoon	p.cloudy	22/14
St. John's	m.sunny	18/12
Thunder Bay	p.cloudy	25/11
Toronto	tshowers	23/14
Vancouver	p.sunny	20/15
Whistler	showers	21/13
Whitehorse	cloudy	17/10
Windsor	tshowers	28/17
Winnipeg	p.cloudy	25/13
Yellowknife	p.cloudy	21/13

United States

	tomorrow	
Atlanta	p.cloudy	29/20
Atlantic City	p.cloudy	26/16
Boston	p.cloudy	24/18
Buffalo	showers	24/9
Chicago	p.cloudy	31/19
Cleveland	p.cloudy	28/19
Dallas	sunny	36/24
Denver	p.cloudy	34/17
Detroit	p.cloudy	28/19
Flint	tshowers	28/16
Honolulu	p.cloudy	31/24
Houston	tshowers	33/23
Indianapolis	p.cloudy	31/19
Los Angeles	sunny	26/19
Las Vegas	p.cloudy	36/26
Miami	tstorms	30/24
Minneapolis	p.cloudy	32/19
Myrtle Beach	p.cloudy	28/20
New Orleans	tshowers	31/23
New York	p.cloudy	26/18
Orlando	tshowers	31/24
Philadelphia	p.cloudy	26/17
Phoenix	p.cloudy	40/29
Pittsburgh	p.cloudy	27/17
Salt Lake City	p.cloudy	32/22
San Diego	sunny	29/18
San Francisco	sunny	28/16
Seattle	showers	23/15
Tucson	p.cloudy	35/23
Washington	p.cloudy	28/19



RAIL SAFETY: London emergency responders meet with rail carriers

Social media important in disaster response: Duncan

RANDY RICHMOND
QMI Agency

London's emergency services must learn how to use social media to get accurate information out when disaster strikes, the city's police chief says.

The Boston marathon explosions in particular showed how quickly inaccurate information can spread, Chief Brad Duncan said Thursday after a meeting of emergency service leaders.

"We've seen in Boston and other areas where Twitter and Facebook and those kinds of social media engagements are proving somewhat problematic in major incidents," he said after the meeting.

Among the problems in Boston: social media identified a bombing suspect who was innocent.

"As agencies we know we also have to use alternate media as well ... so that at the outset of an incident the correct information, the accurate information, is presented," Duncan said.

City emergency service leaders met rail company and transportation agency representatives

Thursday to discuss rail safety in the wake of the Lac-Mégantic, Que., rail disaster that killed at least 47 people in July.

A runaway train run by short-line operator Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway and carrying crude oil derailed, sparking an explosion and fire that levelled the town's core.

With about 100 trains a day travelling through London, it was important to bring everyone together and learn how city agencies and rail companies are promoting safety and are prepared for emergencies, Mayor Joe Fontana said.

"After today, we understand each other's roles a lot more. We understand what needs to be done."

No resolutions came out of the meeting but there were several discussions that will form a report coming from the two-hour session, he said.

"Certain suggestions were made in how we can better prepare ourselves," Fontana said.

One of those was the use of social media to communicate

with the public, Duncan added.

It was important to learn all the agencies and companies involved have similar plans in place in case of a disaster, he said.

"We know the contacts we have now. The plans we have are similar to ours."

At the conference was Wes Logan, general manager of the Goderich-Exeter Railway, a subsidiary of shortline operator Genesee and Wyoming Inc.

The company runs about 4,000 carloads a year through London, mainly carrying grain, salt, wood products, fertilizer, and a small amount of oil.

The Lac-Mégantic rail disaster put a spotlight on North America's shortline operators and prompted new rules from the federal government.

"Absolutely," Logan said when asked in his company supports the changes. "We were already doing some of that stuff before so it's not a big change for us."

The company wants to be part of future emergency exercises in London, he said.

randy.richmond@sunmedia.ca

TIFF

Distributors only for Biebs film

STEVE TILLEY
QMI Agency

While there's no guarantee Justin Bieber will be at the Toronto International Film Festival, never say never.

Bieber's latest concert behind-the-scenes film, *Believe* — directed by Jon M. Chu, who did the 2011 Bieber-doc *Never Say Never* — will be screening at TIFF 2013.

The only catch is it's being

screened for buyers only, not the great unwashed masses.

Meaning unless your dad owns a movie distribution company, you're probably not getting in. And Bieber likely won't be making any red-carpet appearances.

But music fans shouldn't fret too much. Taylor Swift is going to be in town, walking the red carpet in support of the Paul Potts biopic *One Chance*, for which she wrote the song *Sweeter Than Fiction*.

And Maroon 5's Adam Levine will be making his acting debut (unless you count being a coach on NBC's *The Voice*) alongside Keira Knightley and Mark Ruffalo in *Can a Song Save Your Life*, which he's hoped to be in town supporting.

Justin Bieber, Taylor Swift and Adam Levine are among the music personalities connected to films being screened at this year's Toronto's film fest.



LOTTERIES: Unofficial results

MIDDAY DRAWS

Pick 2: 09

Pick 4: 9337

Daily Keno: 1, 2, 3, 16, 21, 24, 27, 31, 36, 39, 41, 42, 44, 46, 50, 52, 53, 55, 59, 69

Evening Draws

Pick 2: 89

Pick 4: 2437

Pick 3: 358

Encore: 477501

Poker Lotto: 2♣, K♠, 10♥, J♠, 5♦

Encore: 1193601

Daily Keno: 5, 8, 9, 12, 16, 21, 22, 28, 29, 33, 37, 42, 47, 48, 54, 58, 59,

60, 61, 64

Mega Dice: 12, 13, 20, 23, 26, 38

Bonus: 15

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WALMART CORRECTION NOTICE
Our flyer distributed between Aug. 28 - 30 and effective Aug. 30 - Sept. 5, 2013. Page 8: HP 15.6" Touch Screen Laptop with Windows 8 (#30720152) at \$468. The description indicates that this is a touch screen laptop. This is incorrect.
We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

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& balloon animals
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Sunday September 8th @ 10:30 service
"See the Magic, Hear the Word"
Sunday School Rally Day Service
See how Scott Hood teaches
the Gospel message through his magic

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comment

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King dreamed of an evolving Christianity

Martin Luther King Jr. made history 50 years ago with his “I have a dream” speech in Washington. What is less well-known was his vision of a new kind of Christianity suited to the changing demands of a world he foresaw would be transformed in the tumultuous years ahead.

His firm conviction that the faith he knew and loved was destined to evolve into something radically new was based upon his university studies. He was far from being your ordinary Baptist preacher. He had had a brilliant academic career, culminating in an earned Ph.D. in theology from Boston University.



TOM HARPUR

Significantly, his studies had truly widened his horizons, particularly the research he did for an essay which is now available online (<http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu>). In it, he reveals the extent to which the emerging Christianity of the first century was heavily influenced by the various forms of salvation and other cults in the pagan religions all around it at its birth. For example, Tarsus, St. Paul's home, was one of the centres for the worship of Mithras. Mithraism was very popular with the Roman army and became a serious rival of the early church.

King points out, “There is a decided tinge of Mithraism” in the epistles and gospels of the New Testament. Such designations of our Lord as the Dayspring from on High, the Light, the Sun of Righteousness, and similar expressions seem to come directly from Mithraic influence.

King notes that tradition held that the lord Mithra (a Persian deity) was born from a rock, “the god out of the rock.” He adds that Mithra's worship was always carried out in a cave and that the belief of the early church that Jesus was born in a cave grows directly out of Mithraic ideas. He says, “The words of Paul, ‘They drank of that spiritual rock ... and that rock was Christ’ also seem to be a direct borrow from the Mithraic scriptures.”

Because Sunday was the sacred day of Mithra, and since Mithra was also called Lord, Sunday must have been called “the Lord's Day” long before Christian usage, King notes. Dec. 25 is the birthday of Mithra and it was only taken over by the Christians in the fourth century as the date of the birth of Jesus.

Summing up this one pagan connection, King lists a few of the other similarities: Baptism and a communal meal were both important rituals for the two communities; the rebirth of converts was fundamental to both; the struggle against evil and an eventual triumph of good were also essential ideas for each; so, too, was the belief in immortality, the need for a mediator between God and humanity, and the importance of high ethical standards.

King vacillates a little between the error of seeing every similarity as direct borrowing and that of not seeing the deep connections at all. Some aspects of the new faith were derived directly from Judaism, for example, baptism. However, in his conclusion he states that there can hardly be any gainsaying of the fact that Christianity was greatly influenced by the mystery religions.

To discuss Christianity without mentioning other religions would be like discussing the greatness of the Atlantic Ocean without the slightest mention of the many tributaries that keep it flowing, King says.

What I find most intriguing is the way his provocative essay ends. He asks: “The staggering question that now arises is, what will be the next stage of man's religious progress? Is Christianity the crowning achievement in the development of religious thought, or will there be another religion more advanced?”

King received an A for his essay. I agree with his professor. By the way, I believe the answer to his second option may well be a resounding “Yes!”

Tom Harpur is a best-selling author on spiritual and ethical issues. www.tomharpur.com



Comedian Glen Foster's take on the newsmakers of the week. TONIGHT BYLINE 9 ET SUN NEWS WITH BRIAN LILLEY

pointofview

Vigilance for safety of kids can't stop at school doors

The safe schools movement in Canada has transformed the once jungle-like world of the nation's school systems, mostly for the better.

Locked-door policies, with surveillance cameras and entry buzzers; anti-bullying protocols; strict parental notification rules — the list of safeguards layered on for kids at school over the past generation has been nothing short of breath-taking.

It can all seem nanny-state-run-amok to some. But if kids are safer and feel more secure, who's to argue?

What's not so good, is our collective national adjustment to the needed safety precautions and mental checks the school year brings. This week's tragic death of a 14-year-old girl, struck and killed by a truck as she walked to class for the first day of high school, should be a wake-up call to us all about how little attention we pay, relatively, to the safety of kids coming to and going away from schools.

No, we're not talking about criminal acts that menace kids on the move — abductions by parents, for example, or worse, by complete strangers. Sadly, as we've seen in this country, there's no fool-proof security system to protect kids against

random violence or wars between parents.

On the other hand, we all owe kids a collective duty of protection we too often ignore by flouting the rules of the road and of common sense.

Consider — even without added accomplices like cellphones and ear buds — some of the culprits:

■ Drivers who blow past stopped school buses boarding kids.

■ Motorists who think school zone signs are markers for school sites, not speed limits.

■ Child-driving parents who crowd school zones in numbers so thick, they make chaos of orderly streets.

Nationwide, after a two-month hiatus, an astonishing five million school-age Canadians are suddenly on the move. Add in college and university students, and that figure swells to nearly seven million. That's nearly one in five of us.

It was in Toronto where Violet Liang died, but it could have been anywhere in Canada — along a rural road, at a big-city transit stop or on any of thousands of school streets. We don't know yet what explained the terrible collision. What we do know is, we can all do better.

— Greg Van Moorsel

Far-left's Klein, union an odd mix

Canada's union leaders love to say they are all about protecting jobs, but last weekend leaders of Canada's largest private sector union were promoting ideas that would end the very jobs their members hold.

Over the Labour Day weekend, the Canadian Auto Workers and Communication, Energy and Paperworkers unions merged into a new entity called Unifor. One of the keynote speakers was radical protester and hero of the far left, Naomi Klein.



BRIAN LILLEY

Klein wants fewer cars on the road and less oil and gas extracted. Strange then that she was invited to speak at a convention for a union that represents tens of thousands of workers in those very industries.

Perhaps it was those radical views, which Klein never backed away from, that resulted in Klein getting very little applause as she spoke.

She called for more public transit and less cars, more oil to be left in the ground. She urged the new union to embrace the fight against climate change but she has also said climate change action is not compatible with economic growth.

Not compatible with economic growth? That means no raises for workers, no new factories or new jobs, just leave everything as is, or — if you listen carefully to Klein — she wants a smaller economy.

Here's what Klein has previously argued regarding Canada's export-based economy:

“Climate change lends urgency to our fights for social justice, like nothing else before. We have to win these battles against free trade, we have to win these battles to re-localize our economies.” Most of the cars and trucks built in Canada are exported. Our parts plants supply factories in the U.S. Klein doesn't like the export economy, she wants small and local. That means unemployed and poorer.

Just last year, this hero to the leaders of the union representing auto workers called for fewer cars on the road.

“We should be developing policy that encourages the maximum number of people not to use cars.” Don't use cars? That means don't buy cars. That means fewer jobs in places like Windsor, Oakville and Oshawa where the Big Three have plants, unionized plants whose workers invited her to speak and push her agenda.

Klein doesn't just target the auto industry, she hates the oil industry, which — I will point out again — Unifor is heavily involved in by representing thousands of oil-patch workers, workers on rigs, on pipelines and elsewhere. But she wants less drilling.

“But we also need a government that's willing to say no. No, you can't mine the Alberta tar sands and burn enough carbon that you will have game over for the climate as James Hansen has said,” Klein told PBS recently.

It's shocking that Klein is still citing James Hansen who has been wrong in his predictions of doom so many times that any fair-minded person would see him as discredited. But he opposes Alberta oil, so he's useful to Klein.

Why would union leaders who represent oil workers, auto workers, manufacturing workers, workers in the transportation sector invite a woman who wants to see those industries shut down or greatly diminished to speak at their founding convention?

Because her politics strangely match theirs perhaps? Because they all hate Stephen Harper?

The union delegates in the room were not impressed, as I said, giving light and scant applause for Klein.

They should be furious though. In last week's column I pointed to falling union membership and said it may have something to do with the radical politics espoused by the leadership.

This is exactly what I was talking about.

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‘Who, my friend, can scale heaven?’

I missed the deadline. The date whooshed by like a rocket and I lost my chance to move to Mars. Permanently.

The prospect was slim, I know. Seven thousand Canadians are among over 165,000 hopeful Earthlings who paid for the privilege of submitting their application to be one of four lucky astronauts to colonize the red planet in 10 years.

MarsOne, a non-profit venture based in the central Dutch city of Amersfoort, is the brainchild of Bas Lansdorp. It is one of two private ventures with sights set on Mars. The planet has enchanted space enthusiasts for years, inspiring, among many things, Gustav Holst's composition The Planets: Mars the Bringer of War, H.G. Wells' War



BOB RIPLEY

of the Worlds, and my fave television show as a kid, My Favorite Martian with Ray Walston and Bill Bixby.

But MarsOne is the only project with the ambition of establishing a permanent colony on Mars. The second initiative, Inspiration Mars, plans in 2018 to send a two-person crew on a 500-day trip that will merely circle Mars before returning to Earth. Unlike government-funded space agencies like the U.S.'s NASA and Russia's Roscosmos,

MarsOne is generating its own financing for the \$6-billion project, in part by asking its potential space travellers to pay a \$40 application fee.

Once on Mars, the four travellers will grow hydroponic plants, and prepare the colony for a second delivery of four permanent settlers two years later. The plan of MarsOne is for the cycle to continue indefinitely until there is a thriving, largely self-sufficient human colony on Mars.

I have to face facts. While Martian gravity would be only 38% of Earth's, good for my aching joints, those who may one day live on Mars are in high school now. They are the ones we should be inspiring to dream. They are the ones who need to have their intellectual compass-

es oriented to pursue innovative, ambitious projects. They are the ones who may inspire others of their generation to exercise both body and mind for a grand adventure.

What can Mars offer us? Not much really. The benefits are in creating what it takes to get there. Space programs have brought back little other than a lot of pictures and a few rocks, but from going into space we now have microwave ovens and GPS, not to mention satellite images of storms and measurements of ozone layer depletion.

There are intangibles from space exploration, too. Canada's Chris Hatfield amped up interest in science when he brought the lure of the heavens down to earth with his Twitter feeds and music video from the

International Space Station.

Why go to Mars when many Earthlings can't get a decent meal? It's not a question of one or the other. Everyone on Earth can have a decent meal and we can go to Mars. In a recent interview, astrophysicist Neil Degrasse Tyson put exploration into fiscal perspective. “NASA is getting half a penny on a dollar — I'm saying let's double it. A penny on a dollar would be enough to have a real Mars mission in the near future.”

A penny for every tax dollar for Mars? Really? Yes, and 25 cents for social programs.

Maybe it's not just kids we should be inspiring to explore, but also the adults who pay the tax dollars and who decide who gets what piece of the tax pie.

Antoine Saint-Exupery said,

“If you want to teach someone to sail, you don't train them how to build a boat. You compel them to long for the open seas.” That longing drives our urge to innovate, and space exploration has the power to do that. Along the way, who knows what we will discover.

As Old Testament psalmists saw God on the waters of the sea as well as the heavens above the sea, we will discover more about our origins as we shoot for, not the moon, but Mars.

Rev. Bob Ripley is a retired United Church minister. The column headline is a quote from The Epic of Gilgamesh. bob.ripley@sympatico.ca

NUHN15000022550

money

DOLLAR	BRITISH£	EURO	S&P/TSX	NASDAQ	DOW	NIKKEI	GOLD	OIL	PRIME
									
DOWN 0.09¢ 95.18¢ US	DOWN 0.25¢ \$1.6377 CDN	DOWN 0.80¢ \$1.3781 CDN	UP 87.25 12,845.06	UP 9.74 3,658.79	UP 6.61 14,937.48	UP 10.95 14,064.80	DOWN \$18.90 \$1,371.00 US	UP \$1.14 \$108.37 US	UNCHANGED 3%

CURRENCIES
Day over day statistic

	Thursday	Wednesday
US DOLLAR	\$1.0506	\$1.0492
YEN	\$0.01049	\$0.01053

STUDS
Biggest % gains in stocks over \$5

1	NORBORD INC.	\$29.98	+10.79
2	CANAM GROUP INC.	\$9.89	+8.11
3	CONTRANS GROUP	\$11.00	+7.32

DUDS
Biggest % losses in stocks over \$5

1	MAGELLAN AEROSPACE	\$5.41	-5.91
2	AGNICO EAGLE MINES	\$30.34	-5.66
3	ARGONAUT GOLD	\$6.89	-5.62

GO FIGURE
Today's big financial number



\$985 M

Alliant Techsystems Inc., the world's largest ammunitions maker, will buy gun accessories company Bushnell Group Holdings Inc. for \$985 million as it shifts focus to a fast-growing shooting sports business from a spending-constrained defence industry.

■ **ANALYSIS:** It's important to use proper benchmarks when comparing your investments

Comparing apples to apples



DOUG RIDING
SPECIAL TO QMI AGENCY

How do you know how your investments are doing? If you are like most people saving for retirement, you will open up your statement when it comes in the mail and look at the bottom line. If the total is higher than it was in your last statement, chances are you are going to be happy. If it is lower, no doubt you will be unhappy and if each consecutive statement is lower than the last, you will likely be looking for a change of plans.

Comparing your statements from one quarter to the next does not give you a very clear picture of how effective your investment strategy is. While it is important to know if you are still on track to reach your financial objectives, a true measure of how well your portfolio is performing is to compare it against what is known as a benchmark. The real key here is to ensure that you are comparing your returns with the right benchmark.

A benchmark index will be comprised of the same or similar types of investments as are found in your portfolio and in the same or similar ratios.

For example, you may use a global balanced index as a benchmark to your investments. That global balanced index may have 40% allocated to bonds of different grades and maturities



Many people compare their investment returns against the wrong benchmarks when measuring how effective their investment strategy is.

and have 60% allocated to stocks of companies from all around the world. Those stocks may be represented proportionally of all of the stocks listed in exchanges around the globe. For example, if Canada represents 3% of the global stock market, an appropriate weighting of Canadian stocks may be 3% of the stocks in the benchmark index, depending on the index.

Many people compare their investment returns against the wrong benchmarks. For example, if all of the stocks in your portfolio are North American, a rise in the European stock market will not likely be reflected in your investment returns. Similarly, it would be inappropriate to measure the performance of a portfolio comprised of 100% Canadian bonds against the growth of the S&P 500,

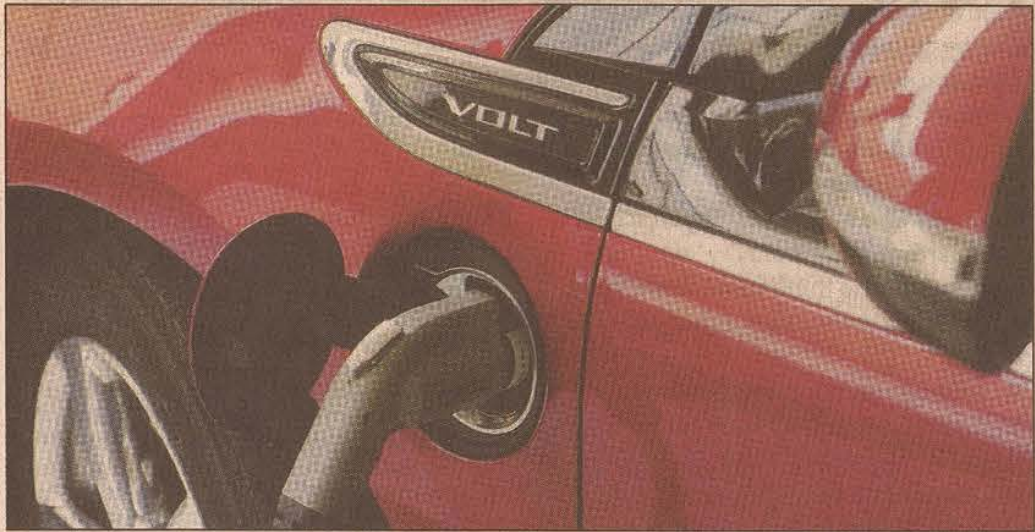
which is a measure of the top 500 stocks in the United States. If you have managed investments such as a mutual fund or pool of funds, you can evaluate how your money manager is doing by comparing them against their peers.

There are also services that rank mutual funds from different categories and grade their returns on a scale of 1 to 4. If

your fund is performing in the first or second quartile, then the manager is doing better in managing the investments than at least half of his or her peers for that particular time frame.

We cannot control what happens in the world markets, but we can control where we choose to invest our money. What's important is that we compare apples to apples.

■ **TRANSPORTATION:** Initiative will hopefully encourage broader adoption of electric vehicles



An electric car is charging up as part of the Drive Electric Orlando program in the parking garage of the Peabody Orlando Hotel in Orlando, Fla., on Thursday. The initiative is promoting electric car rentals.

Putting a charge into car rentals

BARBARA LISTON
Reuters

ORLANDO, Fla. — Promoters of electric cars are hoping to entice a few of Orlando's 56 million annual visitors to rent one at the airport and plug in at strategically placed charging stations at tourist hotels, theme parks and the convention center.

The goal of Drive Electric Orlando, which officially kicked off on Thursday with 15 Nissan Leaf cars, is to encourage broader adoption of electric vehicles by providing visitors with what amounts to an extended test drive during their stay.

"The best way is to get someone

behind the wheel to drive it," said Sam Ori, vice-president of the Electrification Coalition, a not-for-profit group of business leaders interested in developing an electric transportation system.

Electric cars have been slow to catch on around the United States in part because of sparse supportive infrastructure such as charging stations in some areas as well as consumer concerns about cars' limited distances on a single charge and the wait times for recharging.

The Orlando initiative is the first in the United States to exclusively target tourists, according to Ashley White, spokesperson for the Coalition, which sponsored

the plan.

Orlando is one of the world's largest rental car markets, thanks to Walt Disney World, other major tourist attractions, and the Orange County Convention Center, which is United States' second-largest convention center and helps draw 10 million business travelers a year.

The initiative will start with 15 electric cars available through Enterprise Rent-A-Car, and charging stations at 26 hotels.

All three major theme parks — Disney, Universal Orlando and SeaWorld Orlando — have committed to installing recharging stations, White said.

FARM MARKETS
Livestock

Ontario Cattlemen's Association's report as of Wednesday morning: **FED CATTLE:** All medium and large frame steers over 1250 lb. \$119.97-130.33. All medium and large frame heif-

ers over 1000 lb. \$119.71-126.37. Cows \$57.35-81.24. Veal calves 125 lb. and less \$60.00-100.00. **REPLACEMENT CATTLE:** Large and medium frame steers over 1000 lb. \$138.40-148.04; 900-999 lb. \$142.00-155.00; 800-899 lb. \$144.35-153.58. **SHEEP:** all weights \$86.00-90.00.

Grain
MITCHELL — Thompson Limited reports market opens as of 10:45 a.m. Thursday: Soft white wheat (Sept. 2013) \$195.09 a tonne (\$5.31 a bu.); Soft red wheat (Sept. 2013) \$195.09 a tonne (\$5.31 a bu.). Old crop corn (Sept. 2013) at

\$227.56 a tonne (\$5.78 a bu.); New crop corn (Dec. 2013) at \$156.69 a tonne (\$3.99 a bu.). Soybeans, old crop (Nov. 2013) at \$581.96 a tonne (\$15.84 a bu.); New crop soys (Nov. 2013) \$491.95 a tonne (\$13.39 a bu.).

Hogs
Ontario Pork reports Wednesday's CME Constructed (201) price at \$91.44 US per cwt. DW, down \$0.59 from the previous day. Wednesday's 100% formula price was \$173.52 per ckg DW, down \$1.99 from the previous business

day. Quebec's average price on Wednesday was \$180.44 per ckg DW 100 Index. Wednesday's opening lean hog futures price on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange for October 2013 was \$88.075 US per cwt. DW, down \$1.05 from the previous day's close.



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■ **FIRE:** Owner of The Healing Bath lost booth, products in Labour Day blaze

Vendor looks forward to return to St. Jacobs

BRIAN SHYPULA
Beacon Herald Staff

A Stratford small business owner says she is grateful for the outpouring of support she's received since losing her booth in last weekend's St. Jacobs Farmers Market fire.

"It's really touched me," said Leslie Humphrys-Eliasziw on Thursday.

"I got an email yesterday from someone who was at the site saying 'I can see your window decor, I can see that in the rubble,'" she said.

The market booth was the sole permanent retail location for Humphrys-Eliasziw's home-based business, The Healing Bath, which markets a variety of bath products made from imported Dead Sea salt and minerals.

About 60 vendors lost everything when the main market building, a two-story post-and-beam structure, was destroyed in a \$2-million fire early on Labour Day.

Humphrys-Eliasziw recalled she was pulling into the parking lot on Monday for her final day exhibiting at the CNE when her cellphone went crazy with mes-

sages. She sat in shock in her van watching video of the fire, she said.

"I could see my booth, I could see everything where I was. It was all very surreal."

On her way home from Toronto she drove to St. Jacobs, arriving at about 2 a.m. to see what was left of the building.

"And that's when it really impacted me. Oh my, it's gone, there's nothing there," she said.

While her head tells her everything will be OK because no one was injured and businesses and products can be replaced, she said, it's still an emotional struggle.

"The vendors, we all work together, we helped each other," she said of the close relationships she has developed at St. Jacobs.

She's been in touch with the market owners since the fire.

"They're going to try and accommodate or work something out so that we can be back up and running to hit the Christmas season," she said.

"I definitely will be back in St. Jacobs. It's just a matter of when."

Meantime, Humphrys-Eliasziw said she will continue to rent sales space in trade shows

and special events like this weekend's Stratford Garlic Festival as well as sell the products through the business's website.

She was fortunate that she had a good deal of stock with her at the CNE instead of in St. Jacobs. Still, she estimated her loss at about \$10,000.

Humphrys-Eliasziw imports about 23 tonnes of Dead Sea salt and minerals from Israel annually to make her line of bath products. Although the products have made it into swag bags at the Oscars in Hollywood, she said, the niche business is still "very small" and home-based. One of her daughters is the girl on the product labels. The whole family gets involved in packaging and labeling the products created by Humphrys-Eliasziw.

Canada's largest year-round farmers market on the outskirts of Waterloo partially re-opened Thursday with about 300 vendors set up outdoors and in the Peddler's Village building, which escaped damage in the fire. Premier Kathleen Wynne was on hand for the re-opening of the market.

brian.shypula@sunmedia.ca



SCOTT WISHART The Beacon Herald

Stratford's Leslie Humphrys-Eliasziw, owner of The Healing Bath, lost her booth in the blaze that destroyed the St. Jacobs market this week.

■ **ARTFUL EXHIBITION**

SCOTT WISHART The Beacon Herald

Stratford Camera Club members including Amanda Ryan and Rolf Boehler, at top, and Doris Dodd and Doug Bingham, above, were busy at Stratford Perth Museum hanging some award-winning photographs for the club's 50th anniversary juried photo exhibit. An opening reception and awards ceremony will be held Saturday from 1-3 p.m. at the museum. Nearly 50 prints will be on display until Oct. 5. For more information, visit www.stratfordperthmuseum.ca and www.stratfordcameraclub.ca.

■ **HEALTH:** Six-week program begins Sept. 19

Arthritis Society offers self-help workshop

Beacon Herald Staff

Help is on its way for arthritis sufferers.

The Arthritis Society is holding a six-week Arthritis Self-Management Program (ASMP) workshop in Stratford beginning Sept. 19.

The sessions run Thursdays from 2-4 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 95 Morgan St., through Oct. 24.

The ASMP was developed by Stanford University and was specifically designed to help people better understand their arthritis, learn ways to cope with chronic pain and take a more active role in managing their arthritis.

The program is led by volunteers who themselves live with arthritis to allow for a more peer-to-peer approach.

Irene and Jim Roth will lead the Stratford group.

"This work is geared to give you

all the tools you need to be an empowered person," said Irene Roth. "We can live the best life possible with this disability."

She said some of the benefits of the program include:

- You will feel more in control of how you feel and how to control your pain and break the pain cycle
- You will learn how to pace yourself
- You will learn how to put a workable exercise routine in place that works for you and makes you feel better
- You will learn how to sleep better and feel better
- You will learn how to cope with all the negative emotions that are associated with living with arthritis
- You will learn how to develop a support system of people of like-

minded people who will be there for you on tough days

■ You will learn how to deal with depression and depressive thoughts

■ You will learn how to stop all the negative talk that surrounds your life as an arthritis sufferer

■ You will learn how to manage your life better and how to live to the fullest

■ You will learn how to use assistive devices to help you with your pain and disability.

The program is \$35 per person to attend which covers the cost of a workbook that participants are given and are able to take with them upon completion of the six-week program.

Anyone interested in attending or would like more information can call 1-800-321-1433, ext. 1240, or visit www.arthritis.ca.

■ **ENTERTAINMENT:** One week of shows added Oct. 22-27

Festival extends Fiddler's run

The Stratford Festival is extending the run of the hit musical *Fiddler on the Roof* by one week.

Five performances were added beginning with Oct. 22 (8 p.m.) and matinees Oct. 24, 25, 26 and 27 (2 p.m.).

Tickets go on sale to Festival members today and to the gen-

eral public Saturday.

The musical, directed and choreographed by Donna Feore, stars Scott Wentworth as Tevye.

The Festival has now extended three productions this season.

Extra performances of *Mary Stuart* were added an unprecedented four times, the final of which run Oct. 16 (2 p.m.), Oct.

17 (8 p.m.), Oct. 18 (8 p.m.) and Oct. 19 (8 p.m.).

Taking Shakespeare was extended twice, with the final performances set for Sept. 24 and Sept. 27.

The rest of the Stratford Festival's 2013 season runs until Oct. 20.

■ **POLICE:** No injuries to driver, patrons

Car hits Mitchell restaurant

Beacon Herald Staff

MITCHELL - No one was injured when a car driven by an 87-year-old Stratford resident hit a restaurant at the corner of St. George St. and Ontario Rd. Wednesday evening.

Perth County OPP said the woman pulled into a parking space facing Dorothy's Restaurant and Bake Shop and stopped the car but then stepped on the gas while the car was still in drive.

The car lunged forward, jumped the curb and hit the

building, breaking the restaurant window.

No one inside the restaurant was injured and neither was the driver. Her Toyota Camry could be driven away from the crash.

The driver was not charged, police said.

■ **ANNIVERSARY:** Community invited to barbecue on Sept. 12

Y child-care program turns 20

Beacon Herald staff

Twenty years ago this month, the Stratford-Perth YMCA opened its first licensed child-care program in Stratford.

Next week, it will be celebrating that milestone anniversary with a community barbecue for past, present and future participating families and friends.

The barbecue will be held Sept. 12 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the YMCA's SERC child-care facility. There is a nominal fee of approxi-

mately \$3-\$4 per person for the meal.

In September 1993, the Stratford-Perth Family YMCA opened its first licensed child-care program in Stratford. The program located at SERC was opened with an anticipated enrolment in its first year of 44 children aged three months to five years.

In 1994, the programs expanded to provide licensed before- and after-school programs in a variety of Avon Maitland and Huron-Perth Catholic schools through-

out the city.

Over the years, programs have grown, expanded and adjusted to meet the needs of children, families and community, provided co-operative nursery school programs, and in 2009, an additional centre-based program for children three months to five years was added in Shakespeare.

Y child-care programs currently reach over 400 children from 265 or more families each day.

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Obituaries | In Memoriam | Thanks | Births | Celebrations | More

PARTRIDGE, Leonard - of Mitchell, formerly of Monkton, passed away peacefully at Stratford General Hospital on Wednesday September 4, 2013 at the age of 91. Beloved husband of the late Doris (Davidson) Partridge who predeceased him in 2005. Loving father of Larry and Lillian Partridge of Kinmount, Don and Ruth Ann Partridge of RR1 Atwood. Special grandpa of Terry and Tammy, Paul and Karen, Bruce and Cathy, Karen and Nancy. Missed by five great-grandchildren and six step great-grandchildren. Dear brother of Janet and Klaas Kroesen of Monkton. Fondly remembered by the Davidson family and many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents John and Mabel (Schade) Partridge, his sisters Wilma and her husband Clarence Connelly, Marion and her husband Kenneth McNaught and his brother John and his wife Dallas Partridge. Relatives and friends are invited to share their memories at the Brenneman Funeral Home, 141 John Street, Atwood, on Sunday September 8 from 5-9 p.m. The funeral service to celebrate Leonard's life will be held at Monkton United Church on Monday September 9 at 11 a.m. Interment in Elma Centre Cemetery, Atwood. As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations to Monkton Lions Club or Monkton United Church appreciated by the family.

www.brennemanfuneralhome.ca

MAHON, William James
February 1, 1917 - September 3, 2013

The family of William (Bill) Mahon announce his passing on September 3, 2013 after 96 years of good health and clean living. The son of Allan Smith Mahon and Alma Jennie Folkard of Halton County, he was predeceased by his wife Verlé Eileen Mahon (Van Sickle), and sister Marion McDonald of Galt. He was father and father-in-law to Barry and Karen Mahon of Staffa, Nancy and Bryan Boyce of Georgetown, Doug Mahon and Nikki Adam of London, and Paul Mahon and Jessica Buscher of Ailsa Craig. Also grandfather to Scott (Becky), Mark (Jess), Kurt (Dana), Erica (Mike), Andrew (Robyn), Lauren, Richard, Philip, Bridget and Erik, and great-grandfather to Lucas, Ethan, Natalia, Breccan, Ava, Owen, Lucy, Tyler, Anna, and Gracie. Born in 1917 on the family farm in Halton County near Campbellville in the shadow of the Niagara Escarpment, he was a farmer all his life. The family dairy farm featured registered Holsteins under the Hilton prefix, inspired by nearby Hilton Falls which he and his wife Verlé purchased shortly after being married in 1946 and owned until it was assumed by the province in the 1970s. In 1974 the family moved to Staffa in Perth County to expand the dairy herd for the next generation. He lived on that farm until Easter of this year. He was a member of the United Church through congregations at St. Pauls in Milton and Hibbert United in Staffa, including being a lifetime member of the St. Paul's Mr. and Mrs. Club. He served on council and the school board in Halton County, held positions with the Halton federation of agriculture, and later in life volunteered with Scouts Canada in Perth County. He always voted, believed the better of people, and watched the news even when it bothered him. He liked a hard-thrown ball, a well-fitted cow, and read every Perry Mason book ever printed. He never missed a meal, liked to sing, and greeted strangers with a smile and "how are you now?" A memorial service will be held at Lockhart Funeral Home in Mitchell on Saturday, September 14, 2013 at 2 p.m. followed by a reception at the Lockhart Reception Centre. Interment will be at a later date at St. David's Church Cemetery in Campbellville. Online condolences at www.LockhartFuneralHome.com.



BERDUX, Ralph - Ralph Kenneth Berdix, age 94 of Stratford passed away peacefully at Spruce Lodge on September 5, 2013. Ralph was born in Wellesley, September 29, 1918, son of the late George Berdix and the former Leonora Schmidt. Beloved husband of the late Laverne (Leinweber) Berdix who predeceased him September 14, 1998. Loving father of Barbara Marshall (Laverne) and Jim Hanlon. Grandfather of Jeffrey Marshall (Krista), Jodi-Lynn Menchenton (Dan), Tamara Mann (Les), Alicia Moore (Steve), Graham Hanlon (Brittany). Great grandfather of Cassie, Amanda, Kendra and Kylan Menchenton, Brooklyn, Madison, Sydney Marshall, Cierra Mann, Kobe and Audrianna Hanlon. Dear brother of Kathleen Lichty (Norman) and Norma Peterson (Gil). Also survived by a sister-in-law Betty Leinweber and several nieces and nephews. Besides his parents and wife he was predeceased by sisters Dorothy Miller (Gil), Helen Kraehling (Walter), Esther Glebe (Oliver), by brothers-in-law Ken Leinweber and Earl Leinweber (Dorothy). Ralph served as Sergeant in the Air Force during World War II. His life's passion was woodworking. He was a carpenter and cabinet maker by trade. He was a former member of Centennial United Church, Stratford. Friends and relatives may call at the W.G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron Street, Stratford on Sunday, September 8, from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. The funeral service will be held at the funeral home on Monday at 11 a.m. Rev. Tom Beecroft will officiate. Interment in Avondale Cemetery. As expressions of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Canadian Cancer Society through the funeral home.

www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com

■ GOTCHA!



SCOTT WISHART The Beacon Herald

University of Waterloo second-year student Misha Karpinska snaps a photo of first-year students taking part in an Amazing Race-style set of challenges in Stratford Thursday. Close to 120 students in the Global Business and Digital Arts program took part in the orientation, which included campus tours, an academic overview, and Stratford-themed challenges of the race.

■ **MENTORING:** St. Marys DCVI, St. Ambrose participating schools this year

Elements program seeks volunteers

Beacon Herald staff

Want to make a difference in the life of a young person?

The Perth District Health Unit wants to hear from you.

The organization is looking for adult males to participate in Elements, a unique school-based program for boys in Grade 7 and 8.

Volunteers visit a school once a week, for six weeks, for a one-hour workshop during lunchtime.

Based on a mentorship model, the program arranges for volunteers to do

activities with small groups of youth while also sharing their own life experiences and career choices.

"These teens are eager to connect with adults who show an interest in their lives," said public health nurse Meagan Melling. "Every year we receive very positive feedback from both the youth and volunteers about their experience participating in this program."

This fall, Elements will be offered at St. Marys DCVI and St. Ambrose schools.

Volunteers receive orientation and training by a public health nurse who

is also available at every session to offer guidance and support.

Elements has been offered for seven years in Perth County. The program is operated by the Perth District Health Unit with financial support from the Zonta Club of Stratford and On Stage Dance Studio.

Men who are interested in volunteering can call Health Line at 519-271-7600, ext. 267, or toll-free at 1-877-271-7348, ext. 267. For more information, visit www.pdhu.on.ca and click on "Careers/Volunteers."

■ NUHN

Crawler to rev up for area farm shows

FROM PAGE A1

"Everyone really dug in that extra mile," he said, praising the production staff that put in extra hours.

"It's cool to be a part of something like that," said shop foreman Frank Niekoley.

The crawler will be on display at next week's Outdoor Farm Show near Woodstock and the International Plowing Match near Mitchell Sept. 17-21. Afterward, it will go for more testing and field trials at a large manure lagoon in Georgia.

"We want to make sure the machine is flawless before we release it," Nuhn said.

Between seven and 10 orders have already come in. Nuhn said the ballpark

price is \$150,000.

The 23-year-old is the fourth generation to work at the family business, which started in 1902 with his great-grandfather's blacksmith shop at Wartburg.

Nuhn graduated from the honour's business program at Wilfrid Laurier University in April, but has basically been working at Nuhn Industries since he was 12. He taught himself computer design, robotics and automation.

In 2009, he won a gold medal in mechanical computer-aided drafting and design secondary school competition at Skills Canada.

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■ HOUSING

Motels derided during forum

FROM PAGE A1

Thursday's presentation at the Rotary Complex was attended by about two dozen people, including political representatives from Stratford and St. Marys and various social-service and emergency-support agencies.

Perth-Wellington MPP Randy Pettapiece was in attendance as well.

A steering group headed by Tigert will be gathering responses to the report before drafting recommendations for city council.

Tigert said he hopes to have a report to the province by the end of October.

■ IMESON

No Internet access at B.C. institution

FROM PAGE A1

Imeson had slipped the police drag-net and made his way to west Quebec. Eight days after the Mount Carmel murders, he was tracked down in a cottage at Portage-du-Fort, Que.

Inmates at the Pacific Centre don't have Internet access, said assistant warden Samantha Cater. "It would have to be someone outside the facility" who posted the profile, she said.

The Regier family declined comment.

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■ **G20:** Russia decides to talk about hot-button issue during conference usually reserved for economics



Russia's President Vladimir Putin, left, welcomes Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper to G20 Summit in St. Petersburg on Friday. GRIGORY DUKOR Reuters

Syria on dinner menu

DAVID AKIN
Parliamentary Bureau Chief

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — World leaders, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, spent a working dinner at the annual G20 summit here talking about the crisis in Syria.

The decision to put Syria on the agenda of what is usually a summit reserved for discussion of economic issues was made by this year's host, Russian President Vladimir Putin, leader of a country that finds itself on the defensive here over Syria.

Russia was accused by Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird on Wednesday of providing "moral, political and material support" to Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad, support that in Baird's

view, "has given him the ability to soldier on" for nearly 30 months.

But Dmitry Peskov, Putin's press secretary, said in an interview with *Russia Today* that "Russia has never been an advocate of President Assad. Russia has always been an advocate of (the) supremacy of international law."

On Thursday, Baird was a bit more muted in his approach to the Syrian crisis.

"A political settlement ... is the best hope to end the suffering of the Syrian people," Baird told reporters here.

Baird met here with his counterparts from Australia and France and noted they were "of like minds" with Canada.

Those "like minds" are convinced Assad has used chemical

A political settlement ... is the best hope to end the suffering of the Syrian people."

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird

weapons against his own people and must be held to account for that.

But Peskov, the spokesman for Putin, told reporters here that evidence that Assad used chemical weapons was "far from convincing" and he noted past failures of U.S. intelligence, particularly in falsely concluding that Iraq's Saddam Hussein had chemical weapons.

Putin had gone even further

than that on Wednesday, calling U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry a liar for Kerry's claims that Assad's opposition in Syria are "moderates." Putin believes they are terrorist al-Qaida elements.

On Friday, Baird and a handful of other foreign affairs ministers will meet separately on Syria while their leaders get back to the G20's basic agenda of economic issues.

"Canada will have a loud and strong voice in this regard," Baird said.

Meanwhile, British Foreign Secretary William Hague had talks with the president of the Syrian National Coalition to discuss what Hague called "non-lethal support for the opposition and a political solution in Syria."

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■ **G20:** PM wants to lower already enviable debt-to-GDP

Canada commits to lowering debt ratio even further



DAVID AKIN
PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — It was a boast of sorts.

Hours before the official opening of the annual summit of G20 leaders here, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced Canada was going to set a new benchmark for management of the Ottawa's debt even though the old benchmark was far and away the best in the developed world.

Harper now says that by 2021, the federal government will owe 25 cents for every dollar of overall economic activity in Canada. This is called the net debt-to-GDP ratio, a benchmark used by many international organizations to compare debt levels among different countries.

"Lower debt-to-GDP ratios will result in lower taxes for Canadians and a strong investment climate that supports job creation and economic growth across the country," Harper said in a statement.

It's an arbitrary target. There is no agreement among the world's economists about what the optimum debt-to-GDP ratio is, although most agree that lower is better.

Some argue that anything under 40% is healthy. For countries seeking admission to the Eurozone, net debt-to-GDP has to be less than 60%.

Well consider this: Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio last year was about 34.6% or 35 cents for every dollar of economic activity.

That was half of the average

in Canada's G7 peers. And now Harper wants to take it down to 25%.

Meanwhile, Harper's seatmates at the first working session of this G20 summit could only envy Canada's debt benchmark.

Harper had India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to his right that first session and Japanese PM Shinzo Abe to his left.

India's debt-to-GDP ratio last year was over 66% while Japan's was a whopping 134%.

So did Harper make a little debt small talk with this fellow prime ministers? Nope.

Instead, Harper talked up free trade. Canada is in exploratory talks with both India and Japan to liberalize trade and used his time to push stalled

trade talks forward.

Back in Canada, Harper may take some heat for his new debt benchmark.

In 2006, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty vowed that the overall ratio of federal and provincial debt to GDP would soon be zero. That objective was shelved when the recession hit two years later.

And then last year, Flaherty's officials in the finance department said in a policy paper that the net debt-to-GDP ratio in 2021 would be under 23.8%.

In announcing a target of 25%, then, Harper is actually softening his target.

No matter, though. Even at 25%, that would be a healthy benchmark in both absolute and relative terms.

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■ **CONTROVERSY:** Arseneault accuses rogue police officers of leaking information to media

Top Quebec union leader denies corruption allegations

MONTREAL — Quebec's top union leader vehemently denied accepting gifts and vacations from businessmen whose companies received payouts from the union's \$9.3-billion Solidarity Fund.

Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL) president Michel Arseneault accused rogue police officers Thursday of leaking the information to QMI Agency after the Crown twice refused to prosecute him for corruption.

QMI obtained a surveillance photo of Arseneault taken during Project Diligence, a 2009 provincial-police probe that examined alleged links between the QFL and the Hells Angels.

Police gathered months of wiretap evidence to try to prove Solidarity Fund recipients handed out kickbacks on 30 occasions.

But when the Crown dropped

the case, officers became incensed during meetings in Montreal and Quebec City, said a source. Detectives accused prosecutors of being afraid of the powerful union boss.

"You have no balls!" one officer told a prosecutor, according to the source.

Arseneault told QMI on Thursday that he was an "innocent third party" in the probe and that disgruntled cops timed the leak to coincide with the resumption this week of the Charbonneau corruption inquiry.

"This came out all of a sudden from one or more insubordinate police officers who aren't happy with the Crown's decision," said the union president, who is also chairman of the Solidarity Fund.

He issued a public chal-

lenge to journalists.

"Go and see the 2,300 Solidarity Fund partners across Quebec and if you find one who says I received extras I will resign my post immediately. It's totally false."

The union also responded to QMI's report by applying for intervenor status at the inquiry. Judge France Charbonneau is currently examining alleged links between unions and organized crime.

QMI has also obtained photographs showing then QFL director Jocelyn Dupuis vacationing on the luxury yacht of construction magnate Tony Accurso, whose firms received \$114 million from

the union fund.

A second photo taken on the vessel called *Touch* shows Jean Lavallee, at the time a fund board member, smoking a cigar and drinking a beer while relaxing in a whirlpool tub.

Dupuis can also be seen posing on the \$25-million vessel with a lobster smorgasbord piled nearly a metre high on a buffet table.

Arseneault is not seen in the photos but he admitted Thursday that he also vacationed on Accurso's yacht.

— QMI Agency



JEAN-FRANCOIS DESGAGNES QMI Agency files
Michel Arseneault denies he took vacations and gifts from businesses.

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Information and Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian scolded the Ontario government for 'indiscriminate' e-mail deletion, and now it needs to find a place to keep paper trail.

DAVE THOMAS/TORONTO Sun/QMI Agency

Gov't seeking storage space

ANTONELLA ARTUSO
Queen's Park Bureau Chief

TORONTO -- Ontario Liberals, stung by criticism that their political staff are abusing the computer delete button, are looking for a place to store 1.4 million boxes of government records.

The Ministry of Government Services is seeking a 20-year contract to provide advice and storage services to help the Liberal

government follow its own law, the Archives and Recordkeeping Act.

Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian blasted the government for "indiscriminate" deletion of e-mails by senior political staffers, a practice brought to light as a government committee struggled to get to the bottom of the \$585-million cancelled gas plants scandal.

Cavoukian ruled the e-mail

The successful proponent will be ... responsible for providing storage and retrieval, refile, interfile and related transactions for ministry requests."

Ministry of Government Services request for proposal

deletion violated laws and rules around keeping important government documents.

The request for proposals said the contract would be awarded through an open competitive process, and there was no esti-

mated value listed.

The contract would begin next April.

"The successful proponent will be principally responsible for providing storage and retrieval, refile, interfile and related trans-

actions for ministry requests," the request states.

The Ontario government has been taking steps to respond to Cavoukian's criticism, including new record-keeping training for staff. Opposition parties have said that the decision to destroy internal Liberal gas plant-related documents was an attempt to cover up expensive and politically driven mistakes.

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Seized exotic pets find home

CHRIS HOFLEY
QMI Agency

A gaggle of exotic animals are safe at Little Ray's Reptile Zoo after being seized from a home in Gatineau Thursday.

Following complaints from neighbours, Gatineau Police showed up at a 24-year-old man's home armed with a search warrant and found, among other animals, a 20-inch Caiman Spectacle crocodile that can grow to eight-feet-long and weigh 300 lbs. as an adult. Also taken from the home were five non-venomous snakes, including three that were slithering around the house. The snakes included one 91-inch Burmese python, three boa constrictors between 63 and 87 inches and one 42-inch royal python.

A three-foot-long green iguana, a snapping turtle and a bearded dragon found free in the house were also taken from the home.

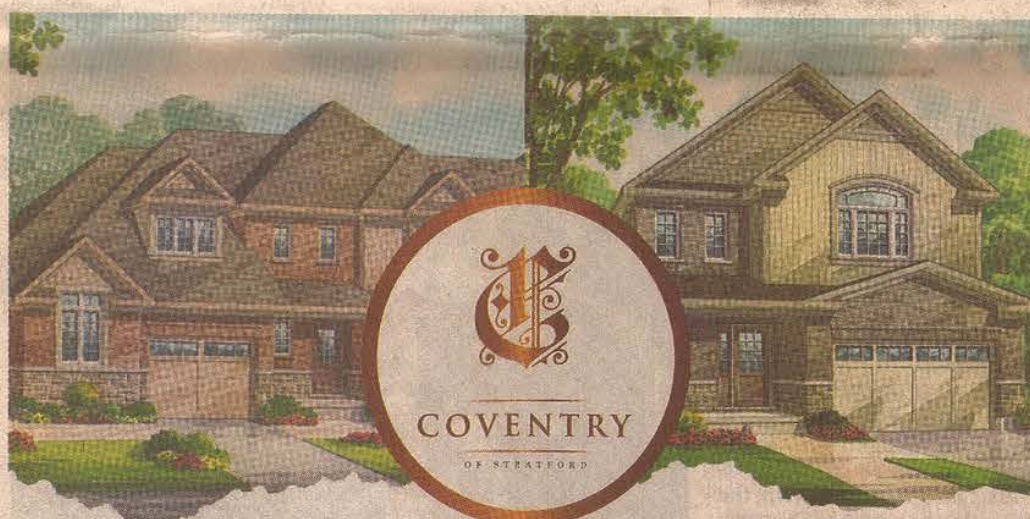
An unlicensed pitbull was seized and taken to the SPCA.

"We don't see that very often," said Gatineau Police spokesman Const. Pierre Lanthier.

Animal control officers recently visited the home, but the man — who was not home during Thursday's raid — wouldn't let them in the house, coming to the door with an "imposing snake" in his arms. The animals were taken Friday to ensure they were healthy and to determine their legality. However, Lanthier said most of the animals, including the crocodile, most of the snakes and the snapping turtle were being kept illegally.

The man faces a variety of charges including possessing non-venomous, but potentially dangerous animals, having exotic animals roaming freely in the house and owning an unlicensed pitbull. Each charge carries a \$100 fine.

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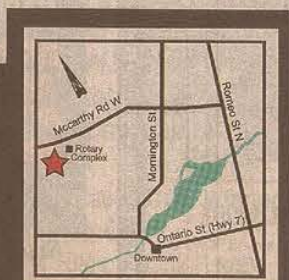
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