

Independent Shorts

• The St. Marys Community Players' production of Cabaret previewed at the St. Marys Town Hall Theatre last night. The show runs tonight through to Sunday, Nov. 1. Tickets for matinee shows beginning at 2:00 pm Oct. 24, 25, 31 and Nov. 1 are available, as are 8:00 pm showings tonight, Oct. 24, 28, 29, and Oct. 30. Tickets are \$20. For more information, or to order tickets online, visit StMarysCommunityPlayers.ca.

• Through the St. Marys Refugee Sponsorship Group, the first group of Syrian refugees will arrive in St. Marys before the end of the year. The town will be receiving four separate applicants, including three single women ages 56, 29 and 19, as well as a family of four which includes a husband, wife and two children ages three and one. Presbyterian Church Reverend Gwen Ament described their case as "urgent," and said the first six months of the program is being 40-percent sponsored by the federal government. The group's initial goal is to sponsor a family from Syria for 12 months in our community, and then expand this to the extent resources become available. Donations to the cause can be made at numerous local churches or online at donate.mccanada.ca/registry/st-marys-refugee-sponsorship-group. Online fundraising has already collected \$4,300 towards their goal of \$50,000. You can also find the St. Marys Refugee Sponsorship Group on Facebook.

• Films coming to theatres this week include the latest in the Paranormal Activity series, "The Ghost Dimension," Vin Diesel's "The Last Witch Hunter," the Bill Murray comedy "Rock the Kasbah," and "Jem and the Holograms," based on the 1980s cartoon.

BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

Shepherd Gourmet Dairy

By Dan Rankin

Our Business of the Week is your local producer of fresh, gourmet goat, sheep and cow cheese and yogurt, Shepherd Gourmet Dairy, located at 38 Enterprise Drive in St. Marys and owned by Stew Cardiff.

Feb. 1, 2009 was the day the first litre of milk was processed at their St. Marys plant, Cardiff said. Before that day, it was a long journey that brought Cardiff from running Cardiff Sheep Corporation and overseeing the twice daily milking of 1,450 sheep, to founding a dairy processing plant in Tavistock.

"We had a tragic fire in Tavistock," Cardiff recalls. "That really made us think twice about keeping on with the business, but we decided to rebuild here in 2008-2009. We took the risk, did it, and it's worked out well."

Since then, they have more than tripled in size from 13,200 sq. ft. to 50,000 sq. ft. They now employ 45 people from St. Marys and the surrounding area.

While the primary source of milk for cheese and yogurt when the plant

opened was sheep's milk, that has changed, Cardiff said. "Cow, because of the availability of the milk and the demand for the product, has become my largest market for product," he said. "Currently 65-70 percent of the milk processed here is now cow's milk."

As soon as milk arrives at the facility, every single load is tested to ensure there are no antibiotics present, Cardiff said. "Canadian milk products are extremely healthy, good for you, and free of antibiotics. You can't make cheese with antibiotics in it, because they're inhibitors and they inhibit the growth of the cultures we use to make cheese."

Shepherd Gourmet Dairy has "extremely high standards" for its products, Cardiff said. They're certified by the British Retail Consortium and registered with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, meaning they can ship their products anywhere in the world. Their personal brand is sold around Canada, and their products can be found in major grocery chains in-



Pictured, from left, are manager of quality assurance Alison Cardiff, president and owner Stew Cardiff, production manager Jon McPhail, and general operations and special projects manager Krysten Cardiff.

cluding Loblaw's, Costco, Metro and Sobey's.

Another point of interest at the plant is, right inside the office's main entrance, a little bunker cooler filled with yogurts and cheese. "We sell at wholesale prices here," Cardiff said. "One of my goals is that everybody in town will buy our products. The store is not a money maker for us, but it gives us instant feedback on our products." Contact Shepherd Gourmet Dairy by phone, at 519-349-2410, by fax at 519-349-2411, or by email at info@shepherd-gourmetdairy.com. Office hours run 8:00 pm to 4:00 pm Monday to Friday.

Once it gets the all-clear, the milk is turned into products including feta cheese, yogurt and ricotta. These are made using a mix of sanitary, high-tech, automated machinery and hands-on processing and packaging by Shepherd Gourmet employees for the best in quality assurance. Coming online at the plant in the next month or two will be a new "miniature waste water treatment plant" that will treat the plant's water before it goes down the drain. "It'll help the town with its capacity at its waste treatment plant," Cardiff said.

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DVD RENTALS
\$3.49 / 3 Days
NEW RELEASES WEEKLY!

M&M Variety
Movie Rental of the week:
Jurassic World
PG

Book oil sprays starting Sept. 8 - Nov. 13
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