

Independent Shorts

- The St. Marys Craft Show is taking place tomorrow, Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Pyramid Recreation Centre from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Stop by to check out the hand-crafted treasures on display by 63 local and regional artisans. The event supports Senior Services. Lunch will be available. For more information, call volunteer coordinator Jenny Mikita at 519-284-2340 ext. 629.
- The Emporium, St. Marys' new local artisan-crafted art and gifts store located at 153 Queen Street East, held its grand opening yesterday with live music from Kirk Sweetzir and Stephanie Martin. Sweetzir continues The Emporium's Sunday Showcase Series next Sunday, Nov. 15 from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm featuring live music by special guests Matt Fairthorne and Lucas Smith.
- Films coming to theatres this weekend include Spectre, the latest James Bond adventure, starring Daniel Craig and Christoph Waltz (currently at 65 percent on movie ratings site RottenTomatoes.com), and The Peanuts Movie, featuring characters from the beloved Charles Schulz comic strip (rated at 83 percent). When it opened in the United Kingdom last weekend, Spectre smashed the record set by Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban for the biggest ever opening weekend at the UK box office — surpassing the boy wizard's opening weekend haul by over 15 million pounds for a total of £41.3 million.

BUSINESS OF THE WEEK

Stonetown Artisan Cheese



By Dan Rankin

Our Business of the Week is your newly-opened local provider of authentic Swiss-style, hand-crafted cheeses, Stonetown Artisan Cheese, owned by the Weber family and located at 5021 Perth County Line 8 (Kirkton Road). The Weber family moved to this area from Switzerland in 1996 and started up a dairy farming operation soon afterwards. By 2008, when Hans and Jolanda Weber's oldest son Stefan came home from university, they started considering some other things they could be doing with the milk they were producing right there on the farm.

"We weren't ready then," said Hans Weber, president of Stonetown Cheese. "We knew we needed to

put in a lot of work and patience into this. So we put it aside."

When their second son Roland finished school, they brought up the idea again, Hans said, and for the past three years have now been developing a facility and working on producing Swiss-style cheese, which uses freshly-produced raw milk to preserve its organic properties.

In early 2013, they placed an ad in Switzerland looking for a cheesemaker. Soon, Ramone Eberle had reached out to them. "He's a master cheesemaker with 10 years of experience," Hans said. "He's the manager of the plant. When it's being made, the soon-to-be cheese is heat-treated, pressed, cut

into block and shaped, pressed some more, then submerged into a salty brine Hans said. "Then the cheese goes in the cellar where the temperature is around 12 degrees," he said. "You have to turn it there for the first two weeks every day and smear it with salt water."

All the attention required during its production ensures that it's safe to call Stonetown Artisan Cheese's products "hand-crafted" cheese.

Three varieties of cheese have been produced by the Webers to date; "Homecoming," a mild, younger variety in the style of a cheese Hans and Jolanda grew up with in Switzerland, "Wildwood," a slightly older variety whose rind is smeared with wine yeast for a darker look named in honour of Wildwood Conservation Area, and "Grand Trunk," their oldest variety, named after the historical railroad. Hans said that, like a good wine, their cheese tastes best when it has warmed up to room temperature.

"Homecoming" will run customers \$3.00 per 100 grams, while "Wildwood"

and "Grand Trunk" cost \$3.50 per 100 grams, though, Hans notes, "You get a discount if you get a whole wheel."

"Here in Canada, Swiss cheese is the one with the holes, but actually in Switzerland there are more than 450 different cheeses," said Jolanda, secretary treasurer. With their different varieties of cheese, the Webers hope to connect their customers to their homeland. That's also why they chose the Matterhorn, the famous peak in the Swiss Alps, as their logo. A painting of the mountain even hangs on the wall of their on-farm store, which was opened with a ribbon-cutting today. They are also currently working with a wholesaler so their products can be distributed across the province.

Stonetown Artisan Cheese is open Thursday and Friday afternoons from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm and Saturdays from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Call Stonetown Artisan Cheese at 519-229-6856, or them online at their website, Stonetowncheese.com, on Facebook, or Twitter (@Stonetowncheese).

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