

Independent Shorts

The Stratford Perth Museum (located at 4275 Huron Road, on Highway #8 just west of Stratford) is holding a volunteer recruitment night next Tuesday, Nov. 8, beginning at 6:30 pm. Anyone interested in helping out (including students who are after community service hours) is invited to stop by and learn more.

On Wednesday, Nov. 9, Perth-Wellington MP John Nater will be hosting a farmers roundtable event at the Listowel Ag Hall beginning at 3:00 pm. Nater is looking for feedback from farmers about the federal government's Growing Forward 2 suite of programming to find out what works and what needs improvement. If you're interested in attending, contact John.Nater@parl.gc.ca or call 519-273-1400.

After a bit of a post-summer lull, there are some big movies coming to theatres this weekend. For kids, there is Disney's "Trolls," an animated feature that brings those old wavy-haired troll dolls to life voiced by actors including Justin Timberlake, Gwen Stefani and Anna Kendrick (it currently has a 77 percent rating on the movie reviews site RottenTomatoes.com). There's also the new Mel Gibson-directed World War II film "Hacksaw Ridge," which tells the true story of how conscientious objector Desmond Doss became an American war hero (89 percent), and the new Marvel super hero film "Doctor Strange," starring Benedict Cumberbatch (90 percent).

<p>DVD RENTALS \$3.49 / 2 Days NEW RELEASES WEEKLY!</p>	<p>M&M Variety Movie Rental of the week: Panzer R</p>	
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Business of the Week

Transvaal Farm and Kitchen Smidgen Bakery

By Dan Rankin

This week, we focus on a local Business Owner of the Week, as opposed to a single business. The business owner in question, Cindy Taylor, is the driving force behind a few great enterprises around St. Marys and area including the Transvaal Farm Guest House and the new Kitchen Smidgen Bakery, which is holding its grand opening on Nov. 12.

Though many know her today as a part of the rural community and a fixture at the St. Marys Farmer's Market, Taylor said that she grew up a "city girl" from London, and that her parents first moved to the area - quite against her will - when she was nearly finished high school. After graduation, Taylor moved to Toronto, earned a degree in fashion, and enjoyed the big city life, making garments for a company that sent her on trips to Europe, Asia and Australia.

As the company began making some changes about three years ago, Taylor decided that she'd had enough traveling and went back to school. "I went to George Brown, got my baking and pastry arts certificate, and said, 'let's move to the farm!'" she said. "So I dragged my husband and teenage son to the farm - the same thing my parents did to me!"

It didn't take long for Taylor and her husband Scott McLauchlan to come up with a unique business idea to take advantage of their extra space and rustic surroundings. "We decided to take part of the house we live in now and make it into a guest house," she said. "It has a separate

entrance, and it includes the main floor, there are two bedrooms upstairs, a bathroom, and we put a kitchen in there. It's almost cottage-like. We wanted it not to be just another B&B where you lay your head and have breakfast in the morning; we wanted to take advantage of what the farm has to offer."

During their stay at the guest house, visitors have access to her brother George's "C'est Bon" goat cheese as well as goat's milk, Taylor's homemade preserves and baked goods, and farm fresh eggs, she said. They can also step outside and take what they like from the "massive" on-site vegetable garden. "A big part of their stay is really experiencing the farm," she said. The guest house opened last summer and, since they were accepted on the accommodation website Booking.com, business "went crazy," she said.

Taylor said visitors to the nearby Festival Theatre in Stratford make up only about 10 percent of their business. Mainly, she said, their guest house appeals to city dwellers from the GTA - though they've received guests from as far away as the Netherlands, France, Germany and Austria. "Most are coming for the farm experience," she said. "Lots of parents with two young kids from the GTA area who want to teach their kids that carrots don't actually come from a bag, and chickens aren't just at the grocery store." Tourists visiting Ontario find the location works as a good "home base" for day trips to Toronto, Niagara and some nearby beach-



es, she added. Transvaal Farm, located at 4675 Line 3, St. Marys has an "Exceptional" rating of 9.7 out of 10 on Booking.com based on 13 reviews.

This was Taylor's third year offering her popular baked goods and preserves at the St. Marys Farmer's Market. "I can't seem to bake enough for the demand," she said, adding that since coming to St. Marys she has had the goal to open a shop to sell her culinary creations. She recently took over the space formerly occupied by The Camper Restaurant, located at 36 Water Street South, tucked behind the Independent Newspaper office just west of the intersection of Jones Street and Water Street. Soon, it will be re-decorated inside and out and fashioned into the Kitchen Smidgen Bakery.

"It really was the absolute perfect size for what I was looking for," she said. Goodies such as her goat cheese chocolate truffles have helped her develop a

catering business at area weddings. This weekend, she'll be bringing a big batch of them to a trade show in the Niagara Region.

Taylor has a grand opening event planned for the bakery set for Saturday, Nov. 12 beginning at 8:00 am and running until 4:00 pm. The first 200 visitors will receive free cookies, she added. Some items customers can look forward to seeing at the bakery include scones, cinnamon buns, cookies, tarts, bread, Transvaal Farm preserves and several varieties of C'est Bon Cheese including the chevre, cheddar and aged 1812.

Initially, the bakery will be open only on Fridays and Saturdays, she said. "Then, hopefully late spring, depending on how things go, I'll look at increasing my hours," said Taylor.

For more information, find Transvaal Farm on Facebook, visit TransvaalFarm.com or call 647-393-3821.



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