



## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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3. Car-Free Friday - Visit us FRIDAY at Memorial Gardens
4. Little Women Scavenger Hunt - Wrap Up
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6. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - September 30th
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### Monthly Message from our General Manager



Downtown is alive and vibrant, there is always something going on and I am so happy to be part of it! The BIA has been working on many projects from Beautification Art Projects to Equity and Inclusion programs. We have reached out a couple of times to ask for your input in the way of surveys and I want to thank all that helped contribute to the direction of your downtown - your input is what guides us.

As you read this you probably have seen the Dragon boat exhibit that has been placed in Market Square to support the 25th running of the Stratford Rotary Dragon Boat Festival to be held September 17. This is sure to bring some folks into the downtown to see the boats up close. I have been watching the groups practice during my nightly rolls down by the lake with Cathy, Tarry, and Nova and the progression and skill levels have intensified.

The election is coming up and as with every municipal election along with the

changing of city hall council there is also a changing of the Board of Directors at the BIA. I ask you to think about your own experience and talents and to evaluate how your gifts could benefit others downtown. One of our current Board Members would be pleased to chat with you to review what it entails to be a board member - please reach out and let's make a connection.

Along with Board Members we are always looking for new members to bolster our sub committees with the many talented businesspeople of downtown. If you have interest in lending a hand to help shape our downtown community please reach out.

I have been meeting many of you and hope to keep meeting more of you in the upcoming weeks. If you see me rollin' along downtown on the silver ghost scooter please catch my attention, I would love to hear from you!

See you Downtown!

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## NEW BUSINESS



### **MATILDA SWANSON ART GALLERY**

Welcome to Sarah Filion, the gallerist - curator and owner - of the

recently opened Matilda Swanson Gallery at 100 Downie St! Here in Stratford and also at the original location in Clarksburg, the Matilda Swanson Gallery offers hundreds of paintings by more than 45 local professional artists. The art is beautiful and bright, traditional and abstract, folk and whimsical. Something for everyone!

Sarah is a seasoned gallerist, having opened her gallery in Grey County more than 12 and a half years ago. To help Sarah juggle the two galleries the artists themselves have pitched in to help her out at the Clarksburg location. Her work community is like family!

If you see something you like, Sarah's services include delivery, shipping and even trial periods to see if your home or office like the art as much as you do!

Matilda Swanson Gallery - a delightful name that Sara came up with herself - is open Friday 10-6, Saturday 10-8, Sunday 10-3. We look forward to some Grand Opening plans she has cooking for the near future!

**MATILDA SWANSON GALLERY | 100 Downie St**  
*@matildaswansongallery | [matildaswansongallery.com](http://matildaswansongallery.com)*

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## BOOTOWN'S GAMES and HOBBIES

Braad Harild and his team (Luke and Scarlett) from Woodstock have opened a cool, new space in the recently renovated plaza at 165 Downie St. Bootown's Games and Hobbies offers a space to play and purchase card games, miniature games and board games. An enormous selection of model kits and all the paints and brushes are available, too. Players, ranging in age from 15-35, typically come and stay anywhere from 30 minutes to the whole day, playing their favourite games with friends or people they've just met.

Friday Night Magic features the game of "Magic: The Gathering" from 6:30pm-10:00pm. Recently recognized by the industry as the "world's most complex game," Magic: The Gathering is a card game in which wizards cast spells, summon creatures, and exploit magic objects to defeat their opponents. In the game, two or more players each assemble a deck

of 60 cards with varying powers. They choose these decks from a pool of some 23,000 cards created as the game evolved. Though similar to role-playing fantasy games such as Dungeons and Dragons, it has significantly more cards and more complex rules than other card games.

On Saturday, the space is given over to those playing Warhammer, a tabletop miniature wargame with a medieval fantasy theme. This is a game played between two players. Braad's shop will be the title sponsor of the upcoming Mike Mudd Memorial Warhammer Tournament taking place on October 29th at the legion. So far 64 players have signed up with 50 of them signing on in the first three hours the spots were made available!

Bootown - a nickname Braad inherited 30 years ago! - is open Monday 1-9, Thursday/Friday/Saturday 1-9, and Sunday from 1-6. Braad ran a Hobby Shop in Woodstock for the past five years and while Stratford is his only shop now, he one day would like to open a second one back up in Woodstock. Prior to taking his loves of games from hobby to business, Braad worked at Toyota.

**BOOTOWN's Games and Hobbies | 165 Downie St**  
**@[bootownsgamesandhobbies](#) | 226.210.4692**

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## **CORNER STORE CANDY CO.**

Come on down to Sweet Street... you are in for a treat! Or two!!

Kelly Lindsay opened Corner Store Candy Co. last week at 27 York St to much fanfare. Opening day on Thursday, September 1st saw a line-up down the street and unique candies - like freeze dried Hi-chews, skittles and snickers - selling out completely! It seems every sweet tooth in town had seen Kelly's socials and wanted to be first in line to purchase the hard-to-find, international goodies she's sourced from all over.

Kelly has loved candy her whole life. Running errands for her parents to the local corner store when she was young, she got to "keep the change" and spend it on penny candy. Everywhere she travels she seeks out the candy shelves looking for types she's never seen before. Kelly has spent the last 20 years working in the financial world... a far cry from bonbons! Working her way up in banks from teller, to sales, to branch manager. She loved the people but had lost her passion for the tasks at hand. This is when she decided to turn her life long love into a business.

Fan favourites so far at the Corner Store are freeze-dried everything, candies from Japan and the UK, and curated-by-Kelly bulk candy mixes. Kelly's personal favourite is the Under the Sea mix, chock full of fish, whales, turtles and even "seaweed!" Kelly is happy to personalize these jelly mixes and also offers Candy Charcuterie Boards! Remember this idea for that next birthday party!

Corner Store Candy Co open Tuesday/Wednesday 11-5, Thursday/Friday 11-7, Saturday 11-4, Sunday 12-4. Enjoy!

**CORNER STORE CANDY CO. | 27 York St**  
[@cornerstorecandyco](#) | [cornerstorecandyco@gmail.com](mailto:cornerstorecandyco@gmail.com)

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## HUNGRY NINJA

Husband and wife team, Aaron Moir and Meiko Onuma, are the owners of Stratford's Hungry Ninja located at 5 York St. One of five locations across Southern Ontario, the Stratford outlet is already hopping with customers craving Japanese bowls and rolls! Sushi, udon and sashimi platters round out the menu if you're in a Far East state of mind. Only Ramen is served on Tuesdays!

As the(ir) story goes, a boy from Toronto met a girl from Tokyo... in New York

City, and now they are embracing life together. Four children, two dogs, five shops and more on the way... now that is busy!

Open Wednesday to Saturday, 11:30am - 7pm, with plans to expand the hours soon!

**HUNGRY NINJA | 5 York St**  
226.584.1630 | [hungryninja.ca](http://hungryninja.ca)

## CAR-FREE FRIDAY - FRIDAY, SEPT 9th



Visit us Friday using your favourite mode of active transportation!  
Walk, Jog, Scoot, Skateboard, Rollerskate...

Car-Free Friday will be set up at **MEMORIAL GARDENS** on **ONTARIO ST**  
from 8-10am.

We'll be offering hot BRCH & WYN coffee, cold juice and bells or bike lights  
if you are in need!

Participants will be entered into a draw to win another piece of custom-  
made license plate art (below!), made by Jeremy Witzel (City of Stratford,  
Public Works) of One Off Shakespeare.



## SUMMER SCAVENGER HUNT

Thank you to all the shops that hosted props for our Little Women summer scavenger hunt! The hunt is now complete.

Our grand prize winner of two tickets to the Festival and Little Women swag is: **Maddie Heffer-Bodrog.**  
CONGRATULATIONS MADDIE!



Planning underway for a possible holiday hunt again this year, so watch your email!

Thank you to the Stratford Festival for the donation of prizes!

**NOTE** - *If you were a host of a prop, please drop the prop to 47 Downie St between 9 and 5 Monday to Saturday.*



## NEW DOWNTOWN STRATFORD BIA WEBSITE ~ BLOGGERS WANTED!

Are your fingers antsy? Or your brain a whirl with small-business tips, industry insight, Stratford history? If yes and you are looking for a forum to write, we'd love you to send us your BLOG!

*A blog can be defined as when a writer shares their views on a particular subject.*

On our new website - to be launched later this month - we have a blog feature and would love this to be an area chock full of words from our BIA members. You can write "one and be done" or be a regular contributor. It's up to you!

The blog is to be non-commercial in nature and also not self-promoting. Ideas are (but certainly not limited to!) seasonal recipes, best book read of 2022, warm drink for the winter, accessible public art, travel ideas post covid, autumn flower arrangements, most interesting thing you observed on our downtown streets this summer! Or perhaps a great tip that would resonate with your neighbouring businesses. If you'd like to send us your idea before writing, please email: [members@stratfordcitycentre.ca](mailto:members@stratfordcitycentre.ca). We look forward to hearing from you and sharing your stories!

\*Remember, these blogs will be featured on the front page of our public website.

# National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30<sup>th</sup>



The BIA Board and Advocacy and Education subcommittee have chosen to observe September 30th as one to learn more about our collective history, support the Indigenous community here and across Turtle Island, that we call Canada, and take time for reflection. As such we will be closing our offices on this day and all staff will have the day off for reflection and learning.

We have an opportunity to consider what we might choose for this day; individually and collectively.

How do you intend to honour National Truth and Reconciliation Day this Friday, September 30th? We have suggestions.

- Participate in events in our area and the region
- Spend the day in reflection and conversation with friends and family
- Visit the Medicine Wheel Garden planted by Todd Torresan of the Haudenosaunee of the Oneida Nation alongside others at the Falstaff Family Centre
- Wear Orange T-shirts in support of the day (purchased from and made by Indigenous artists and businesses)
- Consider donating to an Indigenous organization locally or across Turtle Island
- Read the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Purchase a book by an Indigenous writer from one of our local bookstores, our local library, or an Indigenous-owned business online  
*@FanfareBooks1967 #FundamentalsBooksAndToys @SPLibrary*

May we grow as a learning city, acknowledging that the path to reconciliation and anti-racism is ongoing and requires the commitment and best of us all.

NOTE - If you missed our orange t-shirt group buy (image below!), you can purchase on your own directly from Resist Clothing at: <https://resistclothing.ca/collections/orange-shirt-day>.



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## *SOCIAL MEDIA Tips & Tricks from Sara*



### **BATCHING**

There are several ways in which "batching" will save you enormous amounts of time and energy when creating content for social media. Here are some versions of batching that successful social media accounts use to save time and create in one go.

#### 1. Automations for DM replies on Instagram and Facebook

These days Facebook allows you to create a general automated reply and up to 5 additional replies based on commonly asked questions in your DM's on both FB and IG. You can come up with replies to those questions all at once and save them. Use your pre-created batch replies to reply manually or program them into your Automations. This is a huge time saver.

#### 2. Batch create content

There are several content types you can create at once. But it all starts with

brainstorming new ideas and putting them into your content pillars (I've written about content pillars in past newsletters).

- Come up with as many ideas as you can think of.
- Source photos or set up photo and video shoots over a couple of days for multiple purposes. Or at least plan these ahead.
- Write captions for an entire month (before or after you've decided on which photo you intend to use to go with it).
- Design graphics ahead. Make sure they work within your branding or theme. (Canva is good for this.)
- Consider how you can repurpose the content you've created to tell a different kind of story or attract a broader audience. Photos that can be repurposed from past posts and turned into reels or carousels are examples of this. Use your analytics to see what kind of content your audience responds to.
- Schedule your content all at once for the week or month. Do this using a content calendar OR the tools in Facebook Business Suite.

### 3. Explore User-Generated Content

UGC is what has been created by others in relation to your business. Specifically by followers and fans. It's a free resource for sharing what others are saying about you. This comes in the form of reviews, posts, reels, and stories.

If you decide to go this route, make sure you download a helpful REPOST app. And always give credit to the original creator. You may even feel more comfortable asking permission to use it first.

Take some time to explore UGC by looking at mentions or tags of your business. Then save them for future use.

### 4. Research and create set lists of hashtags

Hashtags are still being used - predominately on IG - and increase engagement on a post by up to 13%. (I've written about these in past newsletters.) You can use up to 30 hashtags within your post, or as your first comment. You won't want to use the same 30 hashtags for every post. So make a list based on the various themes you post about.

For example - one list might be anything related to Stratford. Then another on everything to do with burgers and your burger feature. But always make sure your hashtags are related to your post.

Set aside one day a week or month and use it as your batch creation day. You will see for yourself how streamlined your social media accounts will become, and how much time and stress you save around content creation.

Good luck!

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*Please include us in your social media feeds so you can keep on top what's going on downtown!*

***We want to FEATURE your GREEN products on our socials!***

*Send us what you got!*

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Reach out to us through our Stratford City Centre BIA Social Media platforms and remember to tag us so we can share in our stories!

**Facebook:** @stratfordcitycentre

**Instagram:** @stratfordccbia

**Twitter:** @stratfordccbia

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## ARE YOU READY TO START, GROW OR EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS?

Apply September 6-20th



The time to start or grow your business is NOW! Innovations in business are at an all-time high and the way businesses can serve their customers is really exciting.

We're excited to announce the next iteration of the Starter Company Plus grant program is now open for applications!

This is a great opportunity for new and existing entrepreneurs to start, expand or buy a business all while learning to validate their ideas and grow their pathway to profit.

This 6-week hybrid live/virtual course takes you through all of the necessary stages of business planning and provides you with group learning and private mentorship opportunities with the potential to earn a grant upon completion of up to \$5,000 to use towards implementing your business plan.

Applications are NOW open until the 20th of September for our next start date of October 18th, 2022.

Click below to learn more and apply.

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## CANADA DIGITAL ADOPTION PROGRAM

Make sure you've applied for the CDAP Grant! Read below to see if you qualify.

As part of the Canada Digital Adoption Program, the Government of Canada has partnered with Digital Main Street and their ShopHERE powered by Google program to deliver the Grow Your Business Online grant to small businesses across the country.

Eligible businesses will receive a micro-grant of up to \$2,400 to help with the costs related to adopting e-commerce and supported by a network of e-commerce advisors.

We are now accepting applications for the Canada Digital Adoption Program. Once your eligibility has been confirmed, you will be introduced to an e-commerce advisor who can help with your e-commerce strategy.

See if you qualify and apply  
**HERE!**



## GUIDE DOG AWARENESS MONTH

DID YOU KNOW...

Many people who are partnered with guide dogs still face barriers to employment. *From the application process to the interview, or in the workplace, guide dog handlers have the right to be treated equally at every stage of the employment journey.*

Did you know it's illegal to discriminate against a job applicant, interview candidate, or employee because they are working with a guide dog?

Guide dog partnerships have the right to receive accommodations from an employer, prospective employer, or employment agency up to the point of undue hardship. In all of Canada's provinces and territories, human rights legislation prohibits discriminating against a person with a disability who is working with a guide dog. Penalties under human rights legislation in Canada range from \$100 to \$10,000.

**So, if it's against the law to discriminate against an employee or potential employee working with a guide dog, why does it keep happening?** Like many other forms of discrimination, it's deeply rooted in ignorance.

Employers often don't realize they're breaking the law by treating people differently because they are working with a guide dog. Employers have a responsibility to ensure that the rights of guide dog teams are respected – meaning that they must accommodate guide dog teams up to the point of undue hardship in a way that meets individual needs, fosters inclusion, and promotes full participation in the workplace.

As CNIB celebrates Guide Dog Access Awareness Month, you are invited to help make Canada more accessible and inclusive for guide dog teams by registering for one of the Guide Dogs in The Workplace information sessions throughout September.

- September 7 at 2:00 p.m. [Link: September 7 session Registration](#)
- September 15 at 12:00 p.m. [Link: September 15 Registration](#)
- September 20 at 2:00 p.m. [Link: September 20 Registration](#)
- September 29 at 1:00 p.m. [Link: September 29 Registration](#)

Also:

- Reading the attached Frequently Asked Questions – Guide Dogs in the Workplace resource - [Learning more about Guide Dog Legislation](#).
- Visiting our [Guide Dog Champions webpage](#).
- Showing your support for guide dog teams in your community by ordering a window decal that reads, "**Guide dogs welcome. It's the law.**"

"Thank you for helping us break down barriers for people who are blind or partially sighted. Together, we can create a more inclusive Canada." ~CNIB

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519-508-1415 | [members@stratfordcitycentre.ca](mailto:members@stratfordcitycentre.ca) | [stratfordcitycentre.ca](http://stratfordcitycentre.ca)

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