

# St. Marys Independent

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## Local shares harrowing experience in Puerto Vallarta as cartel chaos erupts



**VIEWS FROM THE BALCONY**  
Photos taken by Greg George, a St. Marys resident who was in Puerto Vallarta when chaos erupted from the killing of Nemesio Rubén Osguera Cervantes (otherwise known as "El Mencho"), a leader of a prominent cartel. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

## Domestic-violence survivor urges early action at Stop VAW session

AMANDA NELSON  
Independent Reporter

Intimate partner violence doesn't usually begin with bruises – it begins with control. That was the message Sydney Touzel shared with attendees at a Feb. 17 Stop Violence Against Women (Stop VAW) community information session in St. Marys, where she spoke candidly about surviving an attack in 2020 and the subtle warning signs she wishes more people understood. "A lot of people assume that it starts physical," Touzel said. "In my experience, there

was financial, emotional, gas lighting and then isolation. It started off very slow, which I think a lot of people don't realize. It started with tiny things like asking for my phone, asking where I was and then that escalated into arguments, which turned into things being thrown, then holes in walls and then things being thrown at me." Touzel has since become an advocate for survivors and recently raised nearly \$13,000 for Optimism Place in Stratford. Her focus during the session was on helping others recognize abusive behaviours early – before they

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3

CONNOR LUCZKA  
Independent Reporter

St. Marys resident Greg George was downtown in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico on Feb. 22, finishing an eight-day stay at a friend's condo. Speaking with Grant Haven Media, he recalled that it was unusually quiet at the crack of dawn that day. Usually, the streets below the condo would already be busy at that time. "Then I smelled some acrid smell and I leaned out over the balcony and looked up," George said. "There were two huge plumes of smoke. One was up on the mountain – Puerto Vallarta is kind of built on a couple of mountains – and then there was one closer to us, which turned out to be the gas station." Heading to the rooftop for a better view, George saw three fires burning which quickly turned to nine as explosions and gunfire began to

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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# COMMUNITY

## Local shares harrowing experience in Puerto Vallarta as cartel chaos erupts

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

ring out across the city. At that moment, he was not aware a local cartel leader had just been killed while en route to Mexico City.

According to the Associated Press, the leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), Nemesio Rubén Osguera Cervantes (otherwise known as “El Mencho”), was killed in a military operation undertaken by the Mexican army in the early morning of Feb. 22. Osguera Cervantes was supposed to be captured in Tapalpa but died from his injuries when a clash occurred with federal forces.

Puerto Vallarta, while quite far from the capital, is a coastal city in the state of Jalisco, the home of CJNG. After Osguera Cervantes was killed, the whole state was “code red” while many other states in Mexico were “code yellow.”

Over the course of the day, George and

his companions went into lockdown and watched videos taken from across the area – videos of people commandeering vehicles, setting up roadblocks and other harrowing actions. On their own streets, George said they saw smoke consume the city and roving motorcycle groups, assumingly a part of the cartel, causing havoc. During one particularly close incident, members smashed in a nearby mattress store and set it ablaze with Molotov cocktails. Without police or other emergency services, and without sufficient fire extinguishers around, neighbours were forced to evacuate and let the fire burn itself out.

“(This) happened yesterday, a motorcycle chased a taxi down our street and turned the corner at the block, and we heard a gunshot, a loud gunshot. No idea what happened to the cab driver, but it was that aggressive and that close,”

George said. “... Mid-afternoon, there were Mexican army helicopters with machine guns circling the valley here, right over us – literally just above our rooftops. It was like a scene from World War Two.”

George said he became aware of what occurred through word of mouth. Puerto Vallarta is a tourist destination with a large population of ex pats. Where he was, there were four condo buildings facing each other, filled mostly with tourists. As he and his neighbours heard information, they took to their balconies to shout to others across the street.

While he understands it has been an emergency, George said he has been concerned with the lack of available information for his fellow travellers. He did not have luck with consular services to register their passports with the Government of Canada, meaning all they could do was hunker down.

“The cartel had basically taken over the city,” George said. “Lots of things were going on within blocks of us. I think we were pretty much ground zero. So, the information that we were receiving was to shelter in place. There was not a lot of information coming from anybody.”

While his Feb. 23 flight was cancelled shortly after the violence broke out, George confirmed that Air Canada rescheduled a flight for Feb. 27, arriving back home on Feb. 28, after press time.

“I’ve done a lot of traveling, but I’ve never essentially been in a war zone like this,” George said. “(I was) concerned about the lack of available information, and while I do understand, yes, it’s an emergency situation, it was just difficult to know what to do except close your doors and (peek) outside to make sure that nothing is incoming.”

## The St. Marys Public Library will offer a week of family fun over March Break

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

From a galaxy far, far away to a cozy Storytime sleepover, the St. Marys Public Library has something for everyone this March Break, offering families and kids a chance to connect, play and learn together

“I think people will love the family trivia, it’s very community-oriented and a great way for parents to engage with their kids,” said Caroline Rabideau, library services coordinator. “It tests their wits, sparks creativity and helps build connections.”

Starting off on March 17 from 6:45-7:30 p.m., children can drop in for Stuffy Storytime, Sleepover and Scavenger Hunt. A Star Wars Party will be held on March 18 from 3-4 p.m. where children and families can enjoy popcorn, play Plinko, create custom buttons and participate in scavenger hunts.

Community members can visit the library on Drop-In Day March 20 from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. All visitors can enjoy crafts, board games, scavenger hunts and giant colouring pages. Family Trivia will

be held on March 21 from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

“I love the Star Wars party with the Plinko, and there will be prizes as well,” said Rabideau. “Having that theme is really fun and the whole week of activities for kids and families to engage in is just wonderful.”

Edith’s Storytime Adventures, hosted by library clerk Laura McAsh, will be held one Saturday every month at 10 a.m. Edith will make her next appearance on March 21 at the St. Marys Museum.

“We’re hoping to bring in teens as well,” said Rabideau. “We have free Wi-Fi, puzzles and games that can be borrowed. It’s a warm, dry space to hang out and make connections.”

The library has set up a book display for Black History Month. Shelf tags are installed throughout the library to indicate where visitors can read books written by black authors.

“We are also distributing on social media a Black History Month community reading list that includes selected reads

that highlight how black Canadians have played a vital role in building this nation,” said Rabideau.

The Government of Canada named 2026 the 30th year of Black History Month in

Canada.

“The library’s goal is to reflect a commitment to representing diverse perspectives and building an inclusive and stronger community.”



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# Stop VAW hosts community information session on intimate partner violence

CONTINUED FROM FRONT  
escalate.

She also emphasized the importance of communicating with police when it is safe to do so. Officers were called in her case on three occasions, but she noted police can only act when there are legal grounds.

“You don’t necessarily have to disclose every single thing that’s happened, but if you just give them one little bit of information that they can act on, that can make a mountain of difference, even just a nod when they ask certain questions. If you don’t say anything, they can’t do anything.”

Touzel’s remarks were part of a broader Stop VAW session hosted by Dr. Jennifer Olenewa, Stop VAW co-ordinator, who reviewed the different types of abuse and how to recognize the signs of intimate partner violence (IPV). Participants also learned how to respond supportively to someone experiencing abuse and what resources are available in Perth County.

Olenewa shared that in 2019, IPV cost \$7.4 billion – a number that has increased since the pandemic – and noted rural communities face higher rates of violence.

“More significantly, the rate in rural communities for women is 75 per

cent higher than women who live in cities,” Olenewa said. “So, there is a way greater risk of experiencing IPV in rural communities, such as Perth County.”

She added barriers in rural areas can include slower emergency response times, limited access to services, lack of affordable transit, isolation, firearms, limited internet access and fewer safe housing options.

Const. Darren Fischer, Stratford Police Service community resource and media relations officer, also spoke about when to contact police and explained the mandatory charge policy, which allows officers to lay charges when reasonable grounds exist, even if a victim does not want to proceed.

“Police will come. We provide emergency services and can be called 24 hours a day, 365 days a year,” Fischer said.

Stop VAW is hosting additional community sessions across Perth County, including one in Stratford at the end of April. To learn more or register, visit [stopvaw.ca](http://stopvaw.ca) and click on Events.

Anyone concerned about intimate partner violence can contact Optimism Place’s 24/7 support line at 519-271-5550 or 1-800-265-8598.



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Dr. Jennifer Olenewa, Stop VAW co-ordinator, speaks with IPV survivor Sydney Touzel at the recent Stop Violence Against Women information session at Little Falls Public School in St. Marys.

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# EDITORIAL

## The silver lining

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

Time is so strange. After what felt like the longest January in history, the last two weeks just flew by. The reason? The Olympics, I am sure.

Watching the highs and lows of the games kept us entertained, engaged and patriotic right up until the final day. At a time when the world can only be described as a dumpster fire, the timing of the Olympics was right on par with what we all needed to bring people together.

Can we talk hockey for a second. It is amazing what this sport does for our country. It was a win-win situation that the pubs were able to open early. Good for the fans but also good for business.

How many long faces were there when Canada lost? Two for sure in our household. I couldn't help but think, were there that many sad faces when Ivania Blondin won a silver medal in speed skating mass start. No, nothing but cheers and smiles.

So, why did it feel devastating when both the ladies' and men's hockey teams lost but still received a silver? Is it because of the old USA rivalry? Or is it how the

saying goes; you win a bronze but lose to get silver?

Either way, a silver is nothing to shake your head at. Many athletes leaving Italy empty handed would give anything to be on that podium.

It comes back to hockey and the fact that it is ingrained in our culture. When I think about the view looking down the slope in the Big Air skiing event, my pulse quickens and I can't help but think, these people are crazy and the danger element is huge.

As Canadians though, what will we remember? We will remember Sidney Crosby not being able to play, we will think about how many times Nathan McKinnon will regret missing the net and we will think about how we lost.

But did we really? It was a great game that could have gone either way.

It comes back to Canada's love of the sport. It is part of our country and who we are, and I believe this will never change for us, nor do I want it to.

Congratulations to all of our medal winners, whether it be gold, silver or bronze, and also to all of those who gave it their all and showed up to do their best.

### Bravo

We have 4 Bravos this week.

1) Bravo to the man from Meadowridge Drive who shovelled the entire pathway between Meadowridge Drive and the PRC parking lot this past Monday. For those of us who use the pathway daily, we appreciate your effort to make it safer for all of us.

2) Bravo to the PRC pool staff. While in the pool, my wedding band slipped off my finger and I didn't notice until after getting home. Mid afternoon they called and told me someone had found it and kindly turned it in. My sincere thanks to the pool staff who were very kind.

3) Bravo to Alona Vasylieva and her weekly column. I have to say it's the column I look most forward to in the paper. Not only do I love her lighthearted sense of humour but am frankly blown away that she can write these columns so well in a language she has only learned over the last few years. I've been trying to learn a second language using the Duo Lingo app and now have a much higher appreciation for those who move to a new country and have to learn a new language.

4) Bravo to the Guardian Pharmacy with their wonderful Olympic and Canada displays in the front window. Thanks for cheering on our beautiful country, and showing our Canada pride!

### Boo

We have 1 Boo this week.

1) Boo to the disgustingly large mounds of dog poop! It is left around our beautiful town. Some of the worst areas are along the Grand Trunk Trail walkway, as well as in the downtown core near the post office and Foodland. As a pet owner myself, I feel if you have chosen to own a dog, you should be responsible for cleaning up after it.

*\*Please note all Boos and Bravos must be signed in order to be considered. Bravos and Boos are submitted by community members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the St. Marys Independent.*

### Quote of the Week

*"For anyone who called us cheaters, for anyone who said negative things about Marc Kennedy, about us, about Canada, about our families, I hope that the image of us standing on top of the podium, embracing one another, smiling ear to ear with our gold medals, is burned into your brain forever."*

**- Brad Jacobs, skip of the Canadian men's curling team, that captured the gold medal at the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic winter games.**

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Overheard

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Now what do we watch?

Praying for all of those in Puerto Vallarta

Have you heard something humorous around town that you think might be of interest to others? Either email them to us at [info@stmarys-independent.com](mailto:info@stmarys-independent.com) with the title "Overheard at The Coffee Shop", call 519.284.0041 or drop by the office to let us know!

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St. Marys Independent

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you, but don't let it  
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showing up and letting  
ourselves be seen.

# Country Roots Fresh Market to host community open house next month



Stephanie Bickell, co-owner of Country Roots Fresh Market. (ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

The Easter Bunny is making a stop at Country Roots Fresh Market next month, with photos, an egg hunt, games and spring-themed activities for families to enjoy.

Country Roots Fresh Market will host their annual Spring Open House on March 28 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 1971 Perth Road 163. The drop-in event will feature a photo booth with the Easter Bunny, an egg hunt, in-store samples and outdoor games.

"It's a great way for the community to come together and have fun," said Stephanie Bickell, co-owner of Country Roots Fresh Market. "We also have colouring for the kids; we love giving them seasonal activities to enjoy. We will also have the regular lunch menu and maybe something

special closer to the time."

The market opened in June 2022 with a focus on providing the community with locally sourced food. Bickell said the business also caters small lunches, including sandwich platters and cheese trays.

Bickell said the business is planning to offer more seasonal events to engage the community, including outdoor markets. She added they are also preparing for Mother's Day activities and hope to expand their seasonal offerings in the future.

"We're working on expanding our growing capacity with flowers, plants and a few vegetables," said Bickell. "Our goal is to offer products that people can see from start to finish, from planting to harvest.

"It's really important to us that the community can connect with what we're doing and appreciate the process behind the food and plants we provide."

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**STONETOWN CRIER** The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**  
March 9 | 1 - 3:15 PM | Friendship Centre

Celebrate International Women's Day at the Friendship Centre! This event will feature inspiring activities, trivia, and a special talk from bestselling author, Rosita Hall. Wear purple, bring a donation or non-perishable food item, and connect with your community.

Register: [townofstmarys.com/internationalwomensday2026](https://townofstmarys.com/internationalwomensday2026)

**CIRCLE OF SECURITY**  
Mar 5 - Apr 16 | 12:30 - 2:30 PM | Friendship Centre

EarlyON is hosting an engaging program to help parents understand what their child is really asking for. This is a 7-week, in-person program with childminding available.

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**LIFESAVING SOCIETY SWIM INSTRUCTOR COURSE**

This course is ideal for aspiring swim instructors. It will be taking place March 16 - 19 from 2PM to 7 PM daily. Participants must be 15 years of age by the end of the course and have completed Bronze Cross certification.

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**HOME ALONE & BABYSITTING COURSE**  
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St. John Ambulance Home Alone Course  
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## Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Ron Ferguson.

Ron was born in Toronto and lived there until 1967. He has been married to his wife, Marianne, for 56 years. They have one daughter, Denise, and two granddaughters. Ron loves to curl and play shuffleboard. He also enjoys looking at St. Marys history pictures.

If you would like to nominate someone for Senior of the Week, contact us at 519.284.0041 or [info@stmarysindependent.com](mailto:info@stmarysindependent.com).

# St. Marys Museum secures public input for new strategic plan



(ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

Pictured from left are Abby Parsons, curatorial program assistant intern at the St. Marys Museum, Amy Cubberley, director of culture, tourism and engagement with the Town of St. Marys, and Emily Taylor, curator and archivist at the St. Marys Museum.

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

After closing a public survey on Feb. 23, the St. Marys Museum will use community input to help shape its 2026-2031 strategic plan and ensure it meets local needs.

“The reason we’re doing a strategic plan is that it’s a part of our provincial operating grant requirements. We are a recipient of the Community Museum Operating Grant every year,” said Amy Cubberley, the Town of St. Marys’ director of culture, tourism and engagement.

“As part of the application process, we have to prove that we are meeting ministry standards, and this year’s standard is a strategic plan.”

Cubberley said she will begin drafting the museum’s strategic plan, which is scheduled for approval in June. Public comments submitted through the survey will be incorporated into the final plan.

“I think the plan helps to define our place in the community,” said Cubberley. “I think the public survey was great because we can think we’re doing a really good job, but

the locals may have different opinions and ideas.”

Cubberley said the museum hopes to make its exhibits more interactive, but operating within an 1850s-era house presents some challenges. With artifacts generally having a no-touch policy, staff have been integrating more technology where possible, and it will be important moving forward.

Cubberley said the museum has seen more younger day trippers over the past two summers but is still actively looking for ways to better connect with teenagers.

“I think we’re in rebuild mode right now,” said Cubberley. “We offer school programming, but the pandemic was really tough on it. We shifted to online programming where we could, and there were a couple of years when we didn’t do any school trip bookings.”

“There was so much lost learning during the pandemic. We’ve adapted where we can, and we’re currently bringing our field trips to the schools, but we’re hoping to maintain those relationships with the schools and rebuild where possible.”

## WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. What countries were banned from the 2026 Winter Olympics?
2. True or False. Hamsters are nocturnal.
3. What is the mascot for Wilfred Laurier University?
4. What mathematician had an apple fall on his head?
5. Who came up with the “Modern Olympics”?
6. What is the longest muscle in the human body?
7. Are sea cucumbers plants or animals?
8. What three things did Jack steal from the giant?
9. When was the last time the USA won Gold in Men’s Olympic Hockey?
10. What country invented the saltine cracker?

This week’s answers are found on pg. 35



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# STRONGER TOGETHER

The St. Marys practice of Claire Sherwin under the name Sherwin Law is now associated with the Stratford Law Firm McDonald Simon LLP, the practice established by Hugh McDonald.

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# Local counsellor writes children's book to help kids manage emotions



(PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH MICHAEL PHOTOGRAPHY)

Shalyn Dussiaume-Good with her debut children's book *Mommy Says It's Okay*.

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

As both a counsellor and a mother of two, Shalyn Dussiaume-Good of St. Marys knows how challenging it can be for children to regulate their emotions.

She hopes her new book will make that process a little easier for all.

*Mommy Says It's Ok* will be available worldwide digitally on Amazon on March 1. Preorders are now available. The book is about children's grounding techniques for stress and anxiety relief Dussiaume-Good wrote during her maternity leave last year.

"Kids don't develop the ability to regulate their emotions on their own until they're about nine years old," said Dussiaume-Good. "This is a simple, child-friendly book that I hope can help parents and children work through emotional moments together."

A mother of two boys, Dussiaume-Good is experienced using grounding techniques with her own children and helping other parents through her counselling practice apply the same strategies to help kids navigate their emotions.

"These grounding techniques originated

with youths who have PTSD," said Dussiaume-Good. "It helps to take the person away from the trigger at the moment and bring them back to the present moment."

Dussiaume-Good said people who don't have the finances or benefits for therapy can apply strategies from the book to help their child emotionally self-regulate.

"Parenting isn't perfect and there's always something to learn," said Dussiaume-Good. "My son has ADHD; there aren't many resources for kids, and most parenting books are really complex, let alone trying to teach parents how to use them with their children."

Dussiaume-Good said it was important to make the book accessible to both parents and adults by simplifying techniques for all demographics to understand.

"I had a clear idea in my head of what I wanted each page to look like, but I can't draw to save my life," said Dussiaume-Good. "I connected with illustrator Ashley McKenzie, sent her my vision for each page and she brought it to life, which is really cool."

The book will be available in print on April 1. Dussiaume-Good said she has ideas for future books but wants to focus on the launch of her current project.

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# County to weigh options for forestry bylaw update after extensive public input

## Council discussion gets heated as warden warns against potentially problematic motion

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Perth County council will revisit proposed updates to its forest conservation bylaw in April after receiving a final report on months of public consultation that drew significant input from farmers, residents and municipal councils across the county.

At a special meeting Feb. 12, council directed staff to bring back options for a revised bylaw on or before April 2 that incorporate the ideas and concerns raised during the public-input process, which began last year following council's direction to review the existing bylaw.

"During this period, we received significant engagement across multiple formats. ... The consultation revealed the division in community perspectives," county clerk Tyler Sager told council. "One group strongly supports maintaining or even strengthening forest-conservation measures, citing Perth County's low forest coverage at nine per cent. Another group advocates for reduced regulation, particularly around agriculture exemption and alignment with provincial standards.

"Both perspectives are rooted in legitimate concerns – environmental protection

versus operational flexibility for agricultural landowners."

The review initially stemmed from work undertaken by the county's agricultural working group, which compared Perth's bylaw with those in neighbouring counties and recommended clarifying definitions, adding new definitions such as "windbreak" and "woodlot," and formalizing an appeal process similar to that used in Oxford County.

Since then, the proposed changes have prompted strong reaction from members of the agricultural community, including a petition submitted by a group of Perth County farmers calling for significant amendments to the draft bylaw.

The petition, signed by residents, landowners and agricultural producers from across the county, calls on council to expressly recognize and exempt normal farm practices protected under the Farming and Food Production Protection Act, set a minimum one-hectare threshold for regulated woodlands in accordance with provincial standards and categorically exempt windbreaks and tree plantations from being classified as regulated woodlands to allow landowners to remove, harvest and maintain those trees as they see fit.

"We know the benefits of windbreaks

and strategic plantations; the rural community wants the freedom to plant trees," said Perth South farmer Henry Koskamp, who, along with West Perth Farmer Gerald Kolkman, have been leading the charge against many of the proposed changes in the county's draft bylaw update, going so far as to draft an alternative bylaw, which they've presented to county and lower-tier councils over the last several months.

"... We need the support of the landowners of Perth County (to get more trees planted). As of this morning, we have 274 signatures on the petition with still more coming. They are in support of the agriculturally supported forest conservation bylaw for Perth County. We also need support from the rural farm organizations in Perth County. We have letters of support from the Perth Grain Farmers, Perth Pork Producers, Perth Dairy Producers, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario and the Perth County Federation of Agriculture, as well as the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. They're all supporting the same alternative bylaw, or at least the intent."

The petition also requests formal biosecurity protocols for forestry officers entering farm properties, protection from enforcement for the routine removal of dead

or hazardous trees, reinstatement of stewardship funding to lower-tier municipalities, and the establishment of an independent appeal committee made up of elected officials rather than municipal staff.

Both Perth East and Perth South councils have endorsed the farmers' alternative bylaw, while West Perth and North Perth councils have not.

On the other side of the debate, Sager told council many who provided input into the bylaw update were in favour of the county's proposed change in definition for "woodlot," suggesting reducing the size threshold for a woodlot in the bylaw from one hectare to 0.5 hectares would help protect the county's already low, nine per-cent forest coverage.

"Forests under professional management generally do better across most forest-health parameters, however, (our) forests also have multiple co-occurring disturbances. This could include windthrow, harvest, pests and disease," said Maitland Valley Conservation Authority watershed ecologist Erin Guthro as part of a joint delegation made up of representatives from area conservation authorities at the Feb. 12 meeting. "This suggests forest-management practices that puts

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9



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# County to weigh options for forestry bylaw update after extensive public input

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

economic returns over overall forest health will lead to more forest decline over time. ... A bylaw provides a minimum standard to level the playing field and ensure practitioners that follow good forestry practices are supported, and this is needed.”

“Woodlots really provide (flood and erosion-control services),” added Nathan Schoelier, stewardship and conservation lands manager at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. “... This is going to be most apparent in the coming months ... when we have the flow. ... You’re going to see a slower, more drawn-out snowmelt in these areas, then you’re going to see ponded water on the landscape. This is water that these woodlots are holding across our entire landscape, not just at point locations like a dam. That’s water that’s no longer rushing toward your infrastructure, whether that’s communities, your municipal drains, or even your private drains, and allows that agricultural drainage to do its job, and allows us to grow the food in those areas.”

### Tensions rise amid council discussion

Tensions surfaced at the Feb. 12 meeting when Coun. Rhonda Ehgoetz of Perth East introduced a motion to have council review Koskamp and Kolkman’s proposed bylaw at the same meeting, before staff had an opportunity to consolidate all feed-

back and present a full slate of options.

“The purpose of this meeting was for council to have an opportunity to discuss the forestry conversation bylaw. I don’t even see that on the agenda,” Ehgoetz said. “Now you want us to send it back to staff again and for them to come up with recommendations. I was hoping that council would come up with recommendations and questions this morning and go through the bylaw and see what we actually want.”

Ehgoetz suggested the process could be drawn out to the point where an updated bylaw won’t be approved by council before October’s municipal election removes council’s ability to vote on it. Instead, Ehgoetz moved to have county council review the farmers’ proposed bylaw line by line to incorporate pieces of it into the county’s draft bylaw.

“Before I ask for a seconder, I will indicate the following observations to my council colleagues,” Warden Dean Trentowsky began before being interrupted by Ehgoetz, who claimed the warden couldn’t comment on the motion before it was seconded.

“I have the chair; you do not,” Trentowsky responded, ultimately issuing two formal warnings to Ehgoetz. “... I am the head of council. As such, I have a duty under the Municipal Act to inform

this council the following. ... What your motion entails; you communicated this to us, all of council, in an email prior to this meeting. You communicated it not within the confines of a council meeting. So, my point is this has been done and you’ve brought the motion forward as such. It was communicated outside a meeting last night through an email to all of council.

“I have to raise to all of council’s attention the possibility of the following concerns: perception of a lack of transparency on the conduct of council business, perception of public bias, perception of insufficient fairness of process. These concerns could be under scrutiny by others, perhaps the integrity commissioner, perhaps an ombudsman, perhaps it could provoke a legal challenge for this council and this corporation. I would indicate that the unintended consequences of this motion may result in not being in the best interests of this council.”

After debate around process and timing, council ultimately opted to wait for staff’s comprehensive report, which will outline potential paths forward incorporating the range of submissions received. The updated bylaw, once drafted, will return to council for further discussion and potential approval after all the options are discussed at either the April 2 regular council meeting or a special meeting of council

called before then.

Ehgoetz later posted about the dispute between herself and the warden on the Mitchell Life Facebook page, claiming she was unfairly treated in front of her council colleagues and members of the public.

“To me, he is a bully, he embarrassed me, he intimidated council,” Ehgoetz told Grant Haven Media. “... I think he owes me a public apology. He thinks he was in the right to do what he did to me. I’ve never seen in my 25-plus years someone do that to another member of council in a public forum.”

When reached for comment about his comments on Ehgoetz’s motion, Trentowsky said he couldn’t comment further.

“Following the conclusion of this meeting; out of due respect and consideration for all of my Perth County council colleagues (including Coun. Ehgoetz) and for all of Perth County staff, I feel it is necessary that I withhold providing comments to the media until such time that this matter is fully dealt with at Perth County council.

“I must also withhold providing any comment or response towards any comments (including social media posts) that may be attributed to Coun. Ehgoetz (or others) following the conclusion of the Feb. 12 special council meeting.”

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# St. Marys Bowling Lanes honoured with Certificate of Inclusion from Autism Canada

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

Eight-year-old Wyatt Rabidoux is neurodivergent, meaning he is on the autism spectrum. Children who live with autism often struggle with finding a comfortable, safe environment that lets them be themselves and offers them understanding and encouragement.

Thanks to Helen, Gerry and Jesse Brockman at St. Marys Bowling Lanes, Wyatt has found that place.

Wyatt started bowling on Wednesday evenings approximately three years ago and has flourished since then. The Brockmans have gone above and beyond to make sure that Wyatt is welcomed and supported. They offer him one-on-one guidance and a place of belonging. He has built a special bond with Jesse Brockman who spends time with Wyatt at the lanes and has witnessed so much growth in him.

“Wyatt is a great kid with a good sense of humour. He genuinely cares about other people and has been a pleasure to teach. Over the course of the time he has been bowling, his ability to focus has improved,” Jesse Brockman said. “I enjoy the time I get to spend one-on-one with him and love watching him improve with each passing week.”

With all that the Brockmans have done for Wyatt, the Rabidoux’s wanted to do



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Hunter Rabidoux, Gerry Brockman, Helen Brockman, Wyatt Rabidoux, Ethan Rabidoux and Tracey Rabidoux pose for a photo after the Rabidoux family read the Brockmans a letter from Autism Canada and presented them with a Certificate of Inclusion.

something special for the family. They reached out to Autism Canada and explained how much care the Brockmans have shown them and Wyatt and how they have gone over and above to help him thrive. Autism Canada senior manager of program development and family support

Dominique Chabot replied with a beautiful letter and a National Recognition Certificate of Inclusion that was presented to a surprised Gerry and Helen Brockman last Wednesday evening by the Rabidoux family.

“On behalf of Autism Canada, it is with

heartfelt appreciation that we recognize the extraordinary kindness, patience and genuine inclusion demonstrated by the team at St. Marys Bowling Lanes,” Chabot wrote.

Wyatt’s parents, Tracey and Ethan Rabidoux, have also noticed a big difference in Wyatt’s concentration and engagement levels after spending time at the bowling lanes and with the Brockmans.

“When Wyatt first started bowling, he struggled completing one game. Now, he can get easily get through two,” Wyatt’s mom, Tracey Rabidoux said.

Wyatt tried other sports like soccer and hockey but didn’t find his niche until he discovered the welcoming environment at the bowling lanes.

Wyatt’s favourite part of the sport is knocking the pins down, he said with a big smile.

The bowling alley is not just another bowling alley for the Rabidoux’s. It is a place of comfort and familiarity where the Brockmans and other bowlers make them feel like family.

The Brockmans were very honoured and shocked by this acknowledgement.

Helen Brockman shared that the certificate will be proudly displayed at the bowling lanes.

“What a great recognition for our bowling family because that is what we are here, a family,” Helen Brockman said.

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# Strategic priorities committee endorses transit study recommendations

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

St. Marys is one step closer to reshaping how public transit operates in town after the municipality's strategic priorities committee voted Feb. 17 to recommend council endorse the findings of a comprehensive transportation needs assessment.

The joint study, completed by Dillon Consulting for the Town of St. Marys and the Municipality of North Perth, examined existing transit services, community travel patterns and future service options in both municipalities. The final report was delivered in January and presented to the committee last week.

"As a council and as a staff, we lacked the necessary data to make data-driven decisions (on transit) moving forward because we weren't fully understanding how PC Connect was performing, how it was meeting the needs of people and how other needs might exist out there," town CAO Brent Kittmer told councillors.

"... Dillon Consulting came into our community to complete a fairly comprehensive public-engagement program through open houses and surveys to understand the types of transportation people need, the kinds of rides they were asking for, where they wanted to go, as well as complete a review of how PC Connect was functioning and to make any recommendations for any areas where we might see some improvements."

St. Marys currently participates in the regional PC Connect transit service, which links Stratford, Kitchener-Waterloo and London. While that service has provided important regional connections since its launch in 2020, town staff acknowledged

a persistent gap in local, in-town transportation options.

The needs assessment, launched in 2025 with support from the federal Rural Transit Solutions Fund, builds on earlier conversations at council about improving local mobility and ensuring any future service reflects community demand.

According to the report drafted by Dillon Consulting and presented to the committee by transportation engineer Jacob Terry, the recommended approach for St. Marys is to maintain essential regional transit connections while improving local coverage by adjusting existing PC Connect routes. Specifically, the consultants recommend shortening Route 2 so it operates only between Stratford and Kitchener, and modifying Route 3 to travel through more of St. Marys, adding new fixed, in-town stops.

Community engagement played a significant role in shaping those recommendations. More than 200 St. Marys residents participated in an online survey, identifying downtown, the Pyramid Recreation Centre, areas near the hospital and neighbourhoods adjacent to downtown as the most popular internal destinations. Stratford, London and the Waterloo Region were the most frequently cited external destinations.

Respondents indicated the strongest demand for weekday service between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., as well as weekend service, and most expressed a preference for fixed-route transit over on-demand options.

"There really aren't any (stops) in the north end (of St. Marys)," Coun. Fern Pridham said of the fixed stops proposed in Terry's report. "I think I read somewhere in this survey that the north end was a heavy contributor in the survey results. So, I'm

wondering why, on the north side of the river, there wouldn't be some stops. And there's Holy Name School up there as well, and on the map, it doesn't show the extension of Glass Street and all the homes. So, that service area seems to be not really serviced."

"We did look at other routings through St. Marys," Terry responded, "including going up to the old train station. ... The challenge is balancing hitting more spots within the town with also maintaining some directness for going through the town. So, if you're going from Stratford to London, the more we deviate the service in St. Marys, the less appealing it is to people who ride it (from end to end). Also ... if you're taking the route from one end of St. Marys to the other, if we added too many stops, it may be less desirable and less people will take it."

Kittmer later added the route and its stops within St. Marys have not yet been finalized, something the town will work with its PC Connect partners in Stratford on after applying for support for the new Route 3 through the Ontario Transit Investment Fund (OTIF). Regardless of where the stops will be located, Terry said PC Connect would complete its route through St. Marys twice – to London and from Stratford – every two to three hours between 5 a.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays, and less frequently on Saturdays, with options for Sunday and holiday service.

Terry said adjusting the existing PC Connect network – rather than launching a separate, standalone local service – would be the most cost-efficient way to expand coverage while preserving connections to larger urban centres. Town staff noted the

changes are designed to balance improved access with fiscal responsibility, with St. Marys having budgeted \$150,000 in 2026 to support the service along with weighted contributions from its PC Connect partners, gas tax funding and OTIF funding, should the town's application be approved.

In addition to changes to PC Connect's Route 3 to better serve St. Marys residents with in-town transit options, Terry also recommended enhancements to St. Marys and Area Mobility Service to serve as an AODA-compliant go-between to help PC Connect riders with mobility issues access bus stops for cross-town and out-of-town travel.

"I like the thought of (expanding) something that's here, that's well-utilized in our community that I think struggles with some funding," Coun. Dave Lucas said. "So, I like the thought of expanding that service."

If ultimately approved by council, the recommendation would also see the town support a joint application to OTIF alongside Stratford, North Perth and West Perth – the latter of which recently joined the project – to implement the proposed service enhancements.

Council will consider the committee's recommendation at an upcoming regular meeting.

While councillors supported the recommendations in Terry's report, Coun. Jim Craigmile noted his concerns with the need for in-town transportation solutions for residents – especially those with mobility issues or those who don't have access to personal vehicles – in the short term. He discussed the possibility of subsidizing taxi service for residents in need; however no action was taken by the committee.

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# AED donated to St. Marys Legion Branch 236



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

At the February dedication ceremony, Legion branch service officer Mike Rumble, branch president Reg Rumble, Scott Rutherford of the Perth County Paramedic Service and representatives of the Near family.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Standing with the AED machine after delivery in January includes St. Marys Legion branch president Reg Rumble, Patrick Armstrong and Legion zone service officer Tom Jenkins.

## MIKE RUMBLE

Contributed Article

On Feb. 14, Branch 236 of the Royal Canadian Legion in St. Marys held a dedication ceremony for an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) donated through the Dave Mounsey Memorial Fund.

The device was dedicated in memory of Frank and William Near, two brothers from St. Marys whose story of service and sacrifice speaks to the personal cost carried by so many Canadian families.

Before the First World War, Frank Near worked as a barber and William Near as a freight agent in St. Marys. Frank Near enlisted on June 28, 1915, with the 33rd Canadian Infantry Battalion. William Near followed less than two months later, enlisting on Aug. 16, 1915, with the same battalion in London. On April 1, 1916, they sailed together from Halifax aboard the SS Lapland, crossing the Atlantic side by side into the unknown.

Though they tried to stay together, Frank Near was transferred to The Royal Canadian Regiment while William was diverted to the 7th Canadian Infantry Battalion. William Near applied to have Frank Near transferred to serve alongside him, but the paperwork never went through.

On Oct. 8, 1916, during the Battle of the Ancre Heights at the Somme in France, Frank Near's unit attacked the German position. The assault fell apart when other battalions encountered uncut barbed wire. Canadian forces suffered 1,364 casualties that day and Frank Near was listed as missing. His body was never recovered, and his name is commemorated on the

Vimy Ridge memorial.

William Near carried on. A year later, during the Third Battle of Ypres at Passchendaele in Belgium, he served as a battalion headquarters runner, carrying messages through shellfire. His last diary entry, dated Nov. 7, 1917, mentioned cold rain and writing a letter to his mother, Mary. The next night, William Near was killed while moving into the assembly trenches. He was buried in Belgium, but the location of his grave is lost to history. His name is inscribed on the Menin Gate in Ypres among the 54,000 missing.

It was this history that brought a small group together on Valentine's Day. The ceremony was attended by Scott Rutherford of Perth County Paramedic Services, who demonstrated the AED and explained the Public Access Defibrillation program; Reg Rumble, branch president; Mike Rumble, veteran services officer; and relatives of the Near family.

The Dave Mounsey Memorial Fund was established by OPP Sgt. Patrick Armstrong in honor of provincial Const. Dave Mounsey, who died in the line of duty in 2006. It donates AEDs to public buildings in memory of fallen law enforcement, fire, EMS and military members. To date, the foundation has donated 242 defibrillators, saving seven lives.

"Frank and William Near gave everything," said Mike Rumble during the ceremony. "The Near brothers couldn't come home. But because of them, and because of the Dave Mounsey Foundation, someone else can."

The AED is now available for public use at the Legion.

## Masons present 50-year pin to Bill Porter



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. JAMES-TECUMSEH LODGE #73)

On Tuesday, Feb. 17, St James-Tecumseh Masonic Lodge #73 presented V.W. Bro. Bill Porter with his 50-year pin. Pictured here is W. Bro. Clint Mock, master of the lodge, and V. W. Bro. Porter.

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# Four new constables welcomed at Stratford police services board meeting

AMANDA NELSON

Independent Reporter

Four new constables were introduced at last week's Stratford police services board meeting. All four graduated from the Ontario Police College in December 2025 and have since begun working with Stratford Police Service.

Const. Colby Bond, of Elmira, earned an honours bachelor's degree from Laurentian University, majoring in human resource management, before obtaining a graduate certificate in advanced police studies from Conestoga College. Bond previously worked as a facility attendant with Woolwich Township.

Const. Katie Brine of St. Marys graduated from Georgia College with a bachelor's degree in police studies. She previously worked in security at Wildwood Conservation Area.

Const. Garrett James of Stratford graduated from the University of Waterloo with a bachelor's degree in recreation and leisure studies. He previously worked as a detachment administrative clerk for the Perth County OPP.

Const. Olivia Chartrand of Stratford graduated from the police foundations program at Georgian College. She previously worked at Player Carpentry & Masonry.

"It's been a really welcoming group,"



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

**New Stratford Police Service members Const. Garrett James, Const. Colby Bond, Const. Katie Brine and Const. Olivia Chartrand were welcomed with open arms at the Feb. 18 Stratford police services board meeting.**

said Chartrand. "(Stratford Police Service) is a great service to work for and in such a short time, I think we've learned a lot and everyone's very supportive. On behalf of

all of us, we can all say that we feel very welcome."

Mayor Martin Ritsma addressed the group, thanking them for their upcoming service to the community.

"On behalf of the police services board, we certainly are thrilled to have young members join the association and do what we talked about earlier on – serving our community and ensuring its safety. So, thank you very much for doing that."

Stratford police Chief Greg Skinner addressed recent stigma surrounding policing, noting his gratitude for those who come forward to work for and with their communities.

"The police services have taken a bit of a beating in the media over the last few years, and it's been very difficult to recruit good candidates to be professional police officers," he said.

"The OACP has gone on a real recruitment drive to try to enhance the numbers of applicants to police services across the province. I am thrilled that we have such a calibre of candidates who have wanted to stay local, who have wanted to give back to their community and be part of their community. These four are exemplary candidates. I couldn't be more happy with the level of knowledge, skills and abilities that they're bringing to the service."

# Police Chief Greg Skinner announces retirement from Stratford Police Service

AMANDA NELSON

Independent Reporter

At the Feb. 18 Stratford police services board meeting, Chief Greg Skinner announced his retirement from the service.

During his announcement, he thanked the board, pointed out areas for improvement and highlighted the emotional toll of policing and the importance of reducing stigma around mental health.

"While the profession has done a lot to understand the impact of trauma, it is the cumulative exposure to stressful situations that impacts police officers most," he said. "We have made huge strides toward assisting not only police service members, but also members of the community who are suffering from mental illness, but we need to be more particularly focused on eliminating stigma."

Skinner also said believes there is a need for technological advancements in law enforcement.

"I remember 20 years ago or so being in a briefing meeting on a homicide investigation when the senior investigator said, 'I've never seen a computer that can solve a homicide,'" he said. "While technology may not actually conduct a physical arrest, it certainly is integral to providing evidence leading to that arrest and, more importantly, ensuring that innocent people are not convicted of crimes they didn't commit."

He praised Stratford's diversity and community spirit, emphasizing the need for progressive leadership to address systemic challenges and maintain public trust.

"You only get one hometown, and I boast about this being my hometown every chance I get," he said. "Other communities envy Stratford because of its diversity, the



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

**At the Feb. 18 Stratford police services board meeting, Chief Greg Skinner announced his retirement. Pictured, Skinner and Mayor Martin Ritsma, chair of the Stratford police services board.**

welcoming nature of its residents and business owners, its love of sports and arts, its international reputation, its world-class restaurants, and its focus on community safety and wellbeing. It truly is a great place to grow up, work, raise a family and grow old."

Skinner began his career with the Ontario Provincial

Police on Sept. 8, 1987. Over more than 30 years with the OPP, he served in a variety of operational and leadership roles across Ontario, ultimately attaining the rank of superintendent.

In 2018, he returned to his hometown to serve as chief of police for the Stratford Police Service. His appointment marked both a professional milestone and a personal homecoming, bringing his extensive provincial experience back to the community where he was raised.

During his tenure as chief, the Stratford Police Service advanced key priorities including enhanced community engagement, continued modernization of operations, officer wellness initiatives and strengthened partnerships with community agencies and stakeholders. Under his leadership, the service remained responsive, community-focused and committed to the principles of professional policing.

The board recognized Skinner's four decades of distinguished policing service and his lasting contributions both provincially and within Stratford.

"On behalf of the Stratford police services board and the residents we serve, I want to express our sincere appreciation to Chief Skinner for his decades of leadership and service," said Mayor Martin Ritsma, chair of the Stratford police services board. "From his early days with the OPP to his leadership here in Stratford, he has demonstrated unwavering integrity, professionalism and commitment to public safety."

The Stratford police services board will initiate the process to appoint an interim chief of police and begin recruitment for a permanent appointment in accordance with the Community Safety and Policing Act.

# Community Commons Capital Campaign celebrates first donor



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ST. MARYS LIBRARY BOARD)

The Community Commons Capital Campaign celebrated its first official donor last week, the Friends of the St. Marys Public Library, which pledged \$10,000 to the Town of St Marys' Community Commons at 14 Church Street project. Pictured from left to right are Carol Robinson Todd, Christina Kerekes, Barb Walsh, Steve Walsh, Heather Greenis, Megan Feeney and Jennifer Cronsberry.

# X-Ray machine at St. Marys Memorial Hospital paid off thanks to the community



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Cindy Bilyea, hospital X-ray tech Andrea Scott, Brian DeGroot, Huron-Perth Healthcare Alliance CEO Andrew Williams, Mark Kennedy, Pam Zabel, Mike Blair, Wendy Lamond and Bernice De Decker.

**BERNICE DE DECKER**

*Contributed Article*

In April 2025, the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation made a commitment to fully fund a new X-ray machine for St. Marys Memorial Hospital.

This past week, less than a year later, the foundation is very proud to share that the \$650,000 cost needed to cover the machine was fulfilled.

After recently announcing that we were just \$15,000 away from our goal, an incredibly generous community donor contacted the foundation and offered to con-

tribute the remaining amount to help us cross the finish line.

This achievement reflects the strength, generosity and shared commitment of our community. Reaching \$650,000 in under a year is truly remarkable, and it speaks to how deeply our supporters value access to high-quality care close to home.

On behalf of the foundation, thank you to every individual, family and business who contributed to the X-ray machine. Your support ensures that patients of all ages will continue to receive diagnostic care when they need it most.

## Community Commons at 14 Church St. N.

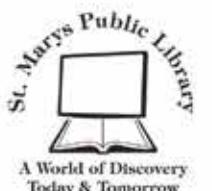
Every dollar invested into our public library generates **\$4.66** social return on investment. Your support to help us grow our space will generate a legacy for our community for years to come.

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# From Ukraine to St. Marys: A new life, a new voice

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

There have been many compelling stories about residents and business owners who fled the war-ravaged country of Ukraine following the unprovoked Russian invasion.

Across Perth County, cities, towns, villages and rural farm communities opened their doors to those escaping the conflict, welcoming them to Ontario and to Canada as they began rebuilding their lives.

Among those newcomers are Alona Vasylieva, her husband, Sergii Orekhiys, and their seven-year-old son, Alex, who arrived in St. Marys on Oct. 21, 2022.

With the help of longtime St. Marys residents June and Murray Grant, the family found temporary housing in a basement apartment in the Grants' home while they settled into their new community. With June Grant's Ukrainian background, the arrangement carried special meaning for both families.

Many readers will recognize Vasylieva's name. She is the same Vasylieva who now writes Ukrainian Corner columns for the St. Marys Independent.

During a recent visit over lunch, Vasylieva shared her personal journey – one she says her younger self would never have imagined.

"If you had told me years ago that I would be writing articles in Canada, I would have laughed," she said.

Growing up in a small town in Ukraine, Vasylieva admits her early career strategy was simple: choose a path that avoided math at all costs. Journalism became a quiet tribute to her mother, who once dreamed of becoming a journalist herself but was steered in another direction after

a difficult English exam.

Although Vasylieva did not initially see herself as particularly creative, she chose journalism at university to honour her mother's dream, never imagining where it would lead.

For many years, her office was "in the sky," working as an airline flight attendant. But when war broke out in Ukraine, she and Orekhiys knew they had to make a difficult decision for their family's future.

Starting over in Canada meant drawing on every skill she had ever learned.

"It's amazing how our brains remember things we thought we'd forgotten," she said. "When we began again here, it all came back."

Writing for the Independent was never a grand ambition. At first, she wasn't even sure her work would appear in the next edition. Instead, she began sharing honest reflections on Canada through the eyes of a Ukrainian newcomer.

By comparing her former home with her new one, she hopes readers gain a deeper understanding of both cultures.

People often ask whether she feels pressure to write. She describes it instead as a "sweet responsibility."

Some days, she says, the page remains blank. Other days, the words seem to flow straight from her heart.

Vasylieva balances writing about serious memories from Ukraine with lighter pieces meant to bring a smile – something she does easily herself.

Her story is one of resilience, gratitude and community – and a reminder of the compassion shown by St. Marys residents who opened their homes and hearts during a time of great need.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Alona Vasylieva and her husband, Sergii Orekhiys, visited over lunch to share their story of life in Ukraine and their new beginning in St. Marys.

## Police calls for service increase for St. Marys in January

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Officers with the Stratford Police Service (SPS) recorded a busy January in St. Marys as the number of calls for service increased by more than 10 per cent over the number of calls police responded to in St. Marys in December.

At the Feb. 18 St. Marys community policing advisory committee meeting, SPS Chief Greg Skinner presented policing and crime statistics from last month. While the number of calls for service rose from 166 in December to 183 in January, the statistics show an even steeper, nearly 34 per-cent increase when compared to the number of calls for service a year ago in January 2025, which was recorded at 137.

Police laid a total of 51 charges in St. Marys last month, up from 37 in December and just 27 in January 2025. Nine of the calls police responded to in St. Marys last month were related to mental health, up from just two in December and six in January 2025.

"The situation we had out in (Tumbler Ridge) British Columbia showed that the police really are not equipped to deal with mental-health issues," committee member Tony Winter said.

"I don't know much about the shooting out in B.C., but your comments are absolutely accurate," Skinner said. "We don't have all the education, background and experience that others have in the community, and we have to really focus on referrals in those situations so that we do

engage those other organizations with that expertise, whether that is MCRT (mobile crisis response team), social services, or the health-care system. We really have to engage those processes."

Skinner commended the Town of St. Marys for continuing to fund and support its community outreach worker as she continues to support vulnerable residents.

Police also responded to two domestic-related calls in St. Marys last month, down from four in December, and the same number of calls police responded to in January 2025. From those two calls last month, police laid one charge related to domestic violence in St. Marys.

"Last week, council received a delegation from representatives from Optimism Place who just provided some education to council on intimate partner violence with a request to declare an epidemic," said town CAO Brent Kittmer. "Council has and, really, the call to action for us is just to provide education. We supported the Optimism Place's Not Now campaign this year and we will continue to do that in the future, and then they provided us links for training we should provide internally to our staff. So, we'll start rolling that out to our staff over the next few months."

Police did not receive any calls in St. Marys related to violent crime last month, a trend carried forward from December. As for property crime, police responded to one auto theft, four frauds and three thefts under \$5,000 in St. Marys in January. Police also did not receive any calls related to drugs or alcohol last month, down from one drug offence and one impaired-by-al-

cohol offence in December.

Stratford police responded to a total of 13 motor vehicle collisions in St. Marys in January, up from eight in December, including one resulting in personal injury, 10 resulting in property damage only and two being classified as hit and runs. Police also issued 21 traffic tickets to drivers on St. Marys roads – nine for speeding, eight for driving without a valid permit, three for careless driving and one to a driver who failed to surrender a licence.

Also at the Feb. 18 advisory committee meeting, the first meeting of the year, committee members appointed Coun.

Marg Luna as chair and member Robert Zensner as vice chair. While this meeting was the committee's first of the year, Kittmer told members their next meeting on May 20 will be their last given the committee's quarterly meeting schedule and the municipal election in October.

At the May 20 meeting, Kittmer said the town clerk will attend to solicit feedback from members on the committee's mandate and governance model to help the town and its new mayor and council determine whether the advisory committee is achieving its purpose – part of an overall town review of all advisory committees.

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# Retired Perth County nurse urges support for Cuba after witnessing worsening conditions

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

Perth South's Jean Aitcheson has spent a lifetime caring for others, both close to home and around the world. Now the retired Stratford General Hospital nurse is urging Perth County residents to help the people of Cuba after returning from a recent mission trip.

Aitcheson was one of six women who travelled to Matanzas and Havana from Feb. 7-14 as part of the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church. The team carried financial resources, educational materials and medical supplies to partner churches supporting their local communities.

The group completed its visits and delivered supplies before departing from Varadero on Feb. 14. With flights to Toronto cancelled, they flew to Montreal and then travelled by train to Toronto before making their way home.

While the team was prepared for challenges such as power outages, fuel shortages and mosquito-borne illnesses, Aitcheson said the reality for everyday Cubans is far more severe – particularly in rural areas.

Electricity is available only a few hours a day and at unpredictable times. Gasoline is scarce; during their week-long stay, the group saw just one open gas station with long lines of vehicles waiting for a ration of fuel. Public transportation is extremely limited and many people stand along roadsides hoping to pay for a ride.

Water infrastructure is failing with broken lines and contamination issues common. Food shortages are widespread. Though Cuba once had a thriving agricultural economy, Aitcheson said fuel shortages, broken equipment, lack of seeds and fertilizer have crippled production. Many families rely on small backyard plots and a few animals to survive.

Tourism, once a major economic driver, has declined, further limiting access to foreign currency needed to import essential goods.

The mission team transported 12 suitcases weighing



From left, Canadian Women's Missionary Society president Cathy Reid and Jean Aitcheson open a suitcase of donated medications alongside a Cuban church volunteer and retired pediatrician.

50 pounds each, most filled with medications and medical supplies from the Stratford Mission Depot at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Stratford. Three suitcases of consumable medical supplies were delivered to a pediatric hospital, where administrators and surgeons expressed gratitude for even basic items such as a pediatric stethoscope and a single bottle of Tranexamic Acid used to control bleeding during surgery.

Hospital staff work extended shifts amid severe shortages of supplies, fuel and personnel. Many pharmacies and hospital shelves are bare.

Churches in Cuba serve as vital community hubs, providing purified water, feeding programs and limited access to medication through volunteer medical professionals.

Despite the hardships, Aitcheson described the Cuban



(JEAN AITCHESON PHOTOS)

Jean Aitcheson, right, displays surgical instruments to Cuban hospital administrators as a surgeon examines a tuning fork.

people as resilient and supportive of one another. However, she believes conditions are deteriorating rapidly and says Canadians can make a difference.

She is encouraging residents to donate unused medical supplies such as canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs and medications to the Stratford Mission Depot, which accepts donations at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon. Financial contributions are also welcome to help purchase additional supplies.

A private plane is scheduled to transport medical supplies at the end of March, and organizers hope airlines will resume carrying humanitarian shipments when routes reopen.

For more information, contact Aitcheson at jeanaitchesonjkhsn@quadro.net.

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The following groups will be helping us serve brunch this year with a portion of the proceeds going to support them:

Canadian Baseball hall of Fame, Inner Wheel, Downie Optimist Club, St. Marys Lions Club, Hope For Haiti, Don and Diane Taylor (on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society), St Marys Kinettes, Little Falls School (on behalf of Ronald McDonald House.)

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# Surge in seniors and drop in health-care workers hitting region

JOHN MINER

Independent Reporter

The economic region of Huron, Perth, Bruce and Grey counties is facing a rapid surge in its senior population at the same time as there is a disturbing drop in health-care workers.

The Four County Labour Market Planning Board called the situation “alarming” in its recently released report, “Navigating the Future of Care.”

“Healthcare is definitely a flashing beacon,” said Dana Soucie, executive director of the labour board.

According to the report, from 2014-2024, the four-county region had the largest percentage increase in the population

aged 65 and older of all economic regions in the province, up 42 per cent.

It is a portion of the population that generally requires more health care and has more complex issues than other age groups.

While this population sector was surging, the four-county region experienced a 10 per-cent decrease in the number of people employed in health occupations.

Out of the 11 economic regions in Ontario, the area covering Huron, Perth, Bruce and Grey counties was the only one to see a drop in health-care workers.

“The gap between labour supply in the health-care workforce and demand for health-care services continues to widen, heightening pressures on an already

strained sector that is struggling to attract and retain workers,” the report said.

The impacts include forced emergency department closures and extended wait times for patients.

The report cites wage differences and a higher cost of living as factors in driving some workers to leave the region.

The 2025 living wage rate – the hourly income workers need to meet basic expenses – was calculated at \$24.60 an hour in the four-county region, the second highest in Ontario just behind the Greater Toronto Area.

But the average overall hourly wage offered in the region has been consistently below the Ontario average, hitting a gap of \$5.60 an hour in the first quarter of 2025.

The rural nature of the region also presents particular challenges for attracting and retaining workers in the health-care sector, the report said.

Possible barriers include housing and other living costs, geographic isolation, increased workloads due to an older population with more complex health concerns, limited resources including outdated equipment, and family concerns such as lack of accessible or affordable childcare options.

Given the shortages in the four-county region, the report concludes it is critical that attraction and retention efforts be prioritized.

# St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary announces patient lounge mural

JANIS FREAD

St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

The project to create a mural to brighten up one wall of the patient’s lounge in the newly renovated west wing of the St. Marys Memorial Hospital will soon come to fruition!

We are pleased to announce that the design will be created by St. Marys artist Nancy Plummer who is known for her cheerful, whimsical and colourful art that brings a smile to anyone who views her paintings.

Some examples of her art currently hang in Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters on Queen Street. Nancy will be assisted in the application of the mural by a selection of fellow members of Stonetown Arts. More details will follow as we proceed with this exciting project!

For those who use a wheelchair and/or walker, the hospital Boutique will soon be offering colourful wheelchair side bags and walker bags for rolling walkers. Visit the Boutique, open Monday to Friday from noon to 4 p.m., after March 6 when a selection of bags will be available.

The Auxiliary’s fundraising plans for the spring of 2026 include the raffle of another beautiful quilt donated by Daphne Evely and the return of our popular Sip and Shop which will be held at the Friendship Centre on Sunday May 3, at which time the draw for the raffle will be held.

For updates on fundraising events or to become a volunteer, follow the Auxiliary on Facebook: The Boutique at St. Marys Memorial Hospital or email [smmhauxiliary@gmail.com](mailto:smmhauxiliary@gmail.com).

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## CHILDREN’S ART EDUCATION SPRING BREAK

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SPRING BREAK					
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YOUTH WATER COLOUR (1PM - 4PM) AGES 12+	YOUTH WATER COLOUR (1PM - 4PM) AGES 12+	YOUTH WATER COLOUR (1PM - 4PM) AGES 12+	YOUTH DRAWING (1PM - 4PM) AGES 12+	YOUTH DRAWING (1PM - 4PM) AGES 12+	YOUTH DRAWING (1PM - 4PM) AGES 12+

**YOUTH WATERCOLOUR:** Does your child love art? Come and paint with us in this fun and creative environment. We will explore basic and advanced techniques in this course.

**YOUTH DRAWING:** This workshop series is designed to help youth with their drawing skills. We will work in graphite, charcoal and other media. Each workshop series of three classes is \$90 (9 hours in total) Payment is to be made before the beginning of each workshop series.

For payment details, please contact the instructor, **Duncan** at [stmarysstationgallery@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysstationgallery@gmail.com). Classes run at a maximum of 8 participants. All classes will take place in the Studio at St. Marys Station Gallery. All materials and tools will be provided by the instructor. For any questions, or to register for a workshop, please email Station Gallery at [stmarysstationgallery@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysstationgallery@gmail.com). Space is limited.

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# St. Marys Kinettes announce the winners of their Fill the Fridge Draw



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The first-place winner in the St. Marys Kinette draw was Marlene Forman who chose the 52 President Choice gift cards.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The second-place winner was Jenny Mikiita, who won a \$250 President Choice gift card.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The third-place winner was Barb Walsh who won a \$100 President Choice gift card.

**WENDY LAMOND**

*Independent Reporter*

On Saturday, Feb. 14, the St. Marys Kinette Club held their Fill Your Fridge fundraiser draw.

The draw took place on Facebook live from the Broken Rail Brewery, which was celebrating its five-year anniversary at the same time.

The first-place prize was a choice of either 52 \$40 President's Choice/Sobeys gift cards or \$1,500 cash. The prize for second place was a \$250 President's Choice/

Sobeys gift card and the third-place prize was a \$100 President's Choice/Sobeys gift card. The club proudly sold 632 tickets. Tickets were sold at Cascade Cleaners, St. Marys Vet Clinic, Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters, Broken Rail and by members of the club.

Proceeds from the yearly draw will go towards Salvation Army food bank, Cystic Fibrosis Canada, the Wendy Richardson award bursary at DCVI, the Teddy Bear Picnic, Friends of the Library, the annual Easter Egg Hunt and minor sports like hockey, ringette, soccer and baseball.

Erin Leaman from Broken Rail drew the winners. All three were from St. Marys. First place went to Marlene Forman, second place went to Jenny Mikita and third place went to Barb Walsh. All of them took President's Choice gift cards.

"Although we were not a sell out at 800 tickets, we still profited to give back to the recipients we planned for as per our lottery license without leaving anyone out, and that is what matters," said project chair Terri Iredale.

The club wishes to thank everyone who purchased tickets and helped them sell

tickets which is what helps to keep this fundraiser going.

The club will be participating in the Coldest Night of the Year event taking place on Feb. 28. After that, the next event on their radar is on Saturday, March 7 – a St. Patrick's Day pub night taking place at the Legion with music by the Sheridan Band starting at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased from any Kinette member, by emailing [stmaryskinetteclub@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryskinetteclub@gmail.com) or calling 519-272-6129.

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# Kindness builds community – a message from our new director of community engagement

AMANDA NELSON  
Independent Reporter

I was always the kid who was told I was “too sensitive” or “too nice.” Even now, people still tell me I should be more direct, tougher, or “show them who’s boss,” but that has never really been how I move through the world.

Many readers know I began my career as a nurse. Later, during the pandemic, I finally followed my dream and began taking journalism courses through the University of Toronto, hoping to become a writer in some capacity one day. That leap changed my life in ways I never expected.

I’ve always preferred a good book or a small group of friends over loud parties or big crowds. I love meeting people one-on-

one in little cafés across the region, learning who they are and where they’ve come from.

Ten years ago, I might have thought that kind of sensitivity was a weakness. But writing for a local newspaper taught me the opposite. It’s actually what allows me to connect, to listen and to build relationships – and those relationships don’t just help me grow, they help our whole community grow too.

That’s why, when I was offered the opportunity to take on a new role at Grant Haven Media, I felt genuinely excited. Not only is it a position the company needs, it’s one that feels as though it was made for someone like me.

As the new director of community engagement, I see my role as a bridge be-

tween our company, our communities, our supporters and, most importantly, you – the readers. It’s a chance to help shape how Grant Haven Media is seen across southwestern Ontario, and to make sure local voices are heard, valued and reflected in the stories we tell.

Through this journey, I’ve learned a few things: I love writing, I love my community and, yes, I really do love my job (I’ve also been told I use the words “I love” far too often – guilty as charged).

What makes this even more meaningful is finding a workplace filled with people who feel a little like me. The kind ones. The observant ones. The people who might once have been labelled too soft, too eager, or too sensitive. Somehow, in this company of writers and storytellers, I found a

kind of family – people who notice things, care deeply and believe in lifting others up rather than pushing them down.

We don’t have to bully our way to the top. We don’t have to be the loudest voice in the room to matter. Sometimes simply showing up as you are – kind, thoughtful, curious and sincere – is enough to move you exactly where you’re meant to be.

I’m finally realizing that being the sensitive, friendly woman who loves people and stories might not just be okay – it might be exactly what is helping shape the world we need.

If you have a community event coming up, a story to share, or just want to say hello, I’d love to hear from you. Please email me at [amandajanevriter@gmail.com](mailto:amandajanevriter@gmail.com).

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# St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

## Joe Hutton serving as guide for Logan Lariviere at Paralympic Winter Games

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

St. Marys native Joe Hutton will be serving as a guide for Team Canada skier Logan Lariviere of Sudbury at the upcoming Milano Cortina Paralympic Winter Games March 6-15.

Hutton said getting to serve as a guide as part of Team Canada's Paralympic squad is an exciting new adventure.

"It's definitely a bit of a surreal experience for sure," Hutton told the Independent. "I'm coming from a skiing background. I've competed for many years at a fairly high level. I've competed nationally and internationally for six years or so, so it's a bit of a long time coming but also a new experience."

According to Hutton, the opportunity arose last summer thanks to a former university peer recommending Hutton fill a need for qualified guides.

"Cross-country skiing is a pretty small community when you get to the national level, especially in Canada," said Hutton. "I was fortunate enough to meet a bunch of great people and have the opportunity to ski, race and compete against a lot of people who become your friends, your community and your family."

"One of the girls that I was on a team with when I was in university, Brooke Ailey, had begun guiding for one of the visually impaired female athletes, and she'll also be attending the games. She had reached out to me this past summer and said, 'We're looking for a guide, and I threw your name in the hat. Would you be interested?' And of course I said, 'Sure, it's an amazing opportunity.'"

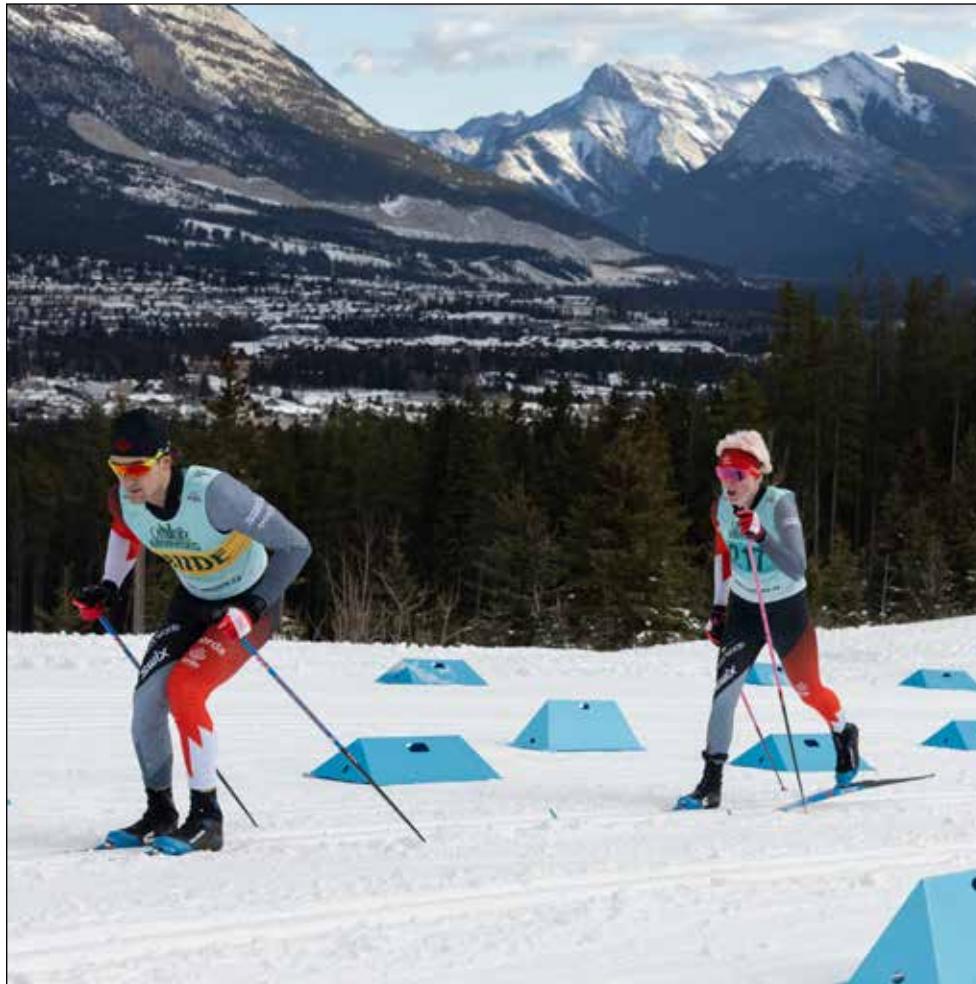
Hutton joked as he recounted his initial reaction to the offer.

"My first thought was, 'It looks like my winter's looking a lot different this year.' Logan (Lariviere) had to qualify for these games, so we didn't know, obviously, until fairly recently that this is going to be the case, but when I signed on to do this, the coaches were very honest with me about the commitment this would be because the goal was for Logan to make the Olympics and qualify for the Paralympic Games. I think it'd be pretty crazy of me to say 'no.'"

Hutton noted there were several very attractive reasons for him to agree to take on the role.

"From a selfish perspective, it allows me to stay in the sport. It's an amazing opportunity to be able to still ski, but from a more personal perspective, the athlete I'm guiding for, Logan (Lariviere), is 19 years old. He's graduated from high school now, and his job is to train full-time to be an athlete.

"I think of myself when I was just getting into high-level skiing at that age, and how



Joe Hutton (front) of St. Marys, leads the way for Sudbury's Logan Lariviere, who will be competing at the Milano Cortina Paralympic Winter Games in Italy March 6-15.

much skiing meant to me and the community it allowed me to be a part of," Hutton continued. "I think it's pretty cool that I'm able to give him that opportunity and be a part of how he's able to have those similar experiences that I had that shaped me into the person I am today."

Hutton further detailed how exactly skiing helped shape the person he now is.

"I think a lot of it stems from the life lessons you learn in skiing. The dedication to a sport and the passion that's required. Sure, there are sacrifices you have to make, but there are things to be learned in those sacrifices as well. Competing at the highest level in any sport is demanding, but it's also very rewarding."

Hutton discussed how he can pass along those lessons to Lariviere.

"I think it's in everything that you do," said Hutton. "There are a lot of other veterans on this team who have a tonne of skiing experience as well, so being able to work with those other veterans and help show the newer members the ropes, create habits, you share different ideas about how training should go and share those philosophies and have a person to talk through those ideas, is super helpful, especially when you're a younger athlete like Logan."

period of the World Cups, and then after Christmas, we went to Germany to compete in the second period of the World Cups, and it went really well. We have a lot of similar interests outside of skiing, and I think that helps us have a positive relationship outside of the sport as well, which then correlates onto the trail."

As of the Independent's press time, Hutton and the Canadian Paralympic team are in the middle of a 10-day staging period in Austria to get acclimated to the elevation, get rid of any jet lag and begin practicing. They will then head to Italy in the first few days of March, where they will stay for two weeks.

Lariviere and Hutton's slate of action begins on March 10 with the 1.5-kilometre sprint classic race. On March 11, they will compete in the 10-kilometre classic individual start. Thirdly will be the 20-kilometre interval start skate style competition on March 14. Depending on their results and coaches' discretion, they may also be part of the relay team.

However, the entire team, said Hutton, is a welcoming and positive environment to be a part of.

"It's a pretty incredible team," Hutton said of Canada's Paralympic team. "I think that's one of the key things that really blew me away. I've competed now for many different cross-country teams and select teams for different events, and there's something about this group of people. There are a lot of veterans going to this year's Paralympics, which I think helps. Just being surrounded by people that care so much makes it such a unique group of individuals that all come to this sport from different avenues yet have the same goal in mind to perform and be as competitive as possible, while also just being really good individuals. It's tough to put into words, but it's just a really fun group."

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Having had plenty of time to work together and build camaraderie with one another, Hutton said he and Lariviere have developed a good rapport.

"I'm feeling very good about working with Logan. We've now competed at two periods of the World Cups together. In December, we spent a few weeks in Canmore racing, training and competing in the first

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# Olive Aarts wins ringette gold at Ontario Winter Games

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Olive Aarts of St. Marys captured a gold medal in ringette as part of Team Blue at the Ontario Winter Games Feb. 20-21 in Orillia.

Aarts told the Independent the victory was two years in the making.

“Winning gold means a lot,” said Aarts. “It’s a huge accomplishment for me and all my teammates. Personally, it means even more. Last cycle of AAA at the Ontario Winter Games, my team lost in the finals in overtime, so coming into the finals this weekend, I always had that in my mind that I had to redeem that loss and make sure this time I left with gold.”

Aarts added the team’s quickly formed camaraderie played a major role in Team Blue coming away with the top prize.

“My team did so well this weekend because we really came together and played for each other. We kept improving every game, kept building momentum and played more connected than any other team. Every team was very skilled, but they didn’t fully come together as a whole like my team did. All the teams are made up of players from all over the province, so we barely get to play together, and ultimately, the team that builds chemistry quickly and effectively is very hard to beat. We played selflessly and stayed united throughout every game.”

Team Blue bounced back after dropping their first two games of the tournament, clawing their way into the semi-final against Team Black and winning 5-1. Aarts had an assist in the semis.

In the gold-medal game, Team Blue avenged their first loss of the weekend, picking up a 6-2 victory over Team Red. Aarts noted the moment the team had secured gold was a big relief for the group.

“I was very confident that Team Blue was the best team and was going to do very well this weekend,” Aarts said.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Olive Aarts, pictured, won the gold medal in ringette with Team Blue at the Ontario Winter Games Feb. 20-21 in Orillia.

“Yet when the game was over, it was super exciting and relieving to know all the hard work paid off. I felt so happy for my teammates who played so hard. Most of all, I felt grateful to be able to play the game I am so

passionate about, compete at this level and be beside a great group of players.”

Aarts capped off a strong individual performance at the games with the eventual game-winning goal in the gold-medal game.

“Individually, I’m happy with my performance this weekend,” said Aarts. “I stayed consistent throughout the games and then was able to step up in key impactful moments that really contributed to the team. I ended up with nine points in six games, which I am content with.”

That consistency and ability to step up in big moments was something Aarts described as an area she had been focusing on since competing in the Ontario Winter Games two years ago, when her team ended up with the silver medal.

“Over the past year, I have grown in my composure, confidence and ability to perform consistently at a high level. I have gained more experience and knowledge through various provincial, national camps, and development programs, which have strengthened my skills, mental toughness, leadership and work ethic, and I tried to bring this growth to my team this year.”

When reflecting on the weekend, Aarts described the supportive environment and the positive impact that support on the team’s end result had as standing out most.

“The most memorable part of the weekend was all the support I got from teammates, coaches, opponents and old AAA teammates as well. Even in a competitive environment, it felt great knowing people had your back and I love being able to return that support. Seeing my friends on every team cheer me on all weekend, and moments like players on the opposing team in the finals being happy for me when they just lost made the whole experience really special.

“My main takeaway from this weekend was how teamwork, support and collaboration matter so much,” Aarts continued. “A team that can play cohesively and really mesh well is very hard to beat compared to teams that rely on a couple players.”

## U11 LL Rock teams play at Canada Life Place



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured are members of the Nicholson Concrete U11 LL Boys Blue and Tremblett’s Independent Grocer U11 LL Boys Red St. Marys Rock teams, who had a special experience on Feb. 22 when they travelled for a game against each other at Canada Life Place, home of the OHL’s London Knights.

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# U14 A Snipers finish season third in Ontario; qualify for provincials

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Rotary Club-A.N.A.F. U14 A St. Marys Snipers wrapped up a strong season by finishing third in Ontario and earning a spot in the tier-one provincial championship.

Head coach Kim Garniss told the Independent what the provincial qualification means to the team.

“Reaching third place in the top provincial division means a lot to this group,” said Garniss. “Coming into the season, only two of our girls had ever played at the A level before, so to be sitting third in the province heading into provincials is pretty incredible. It really shows how much hard work these girls have put in all season, and how committed they’ve been to improving every time they step on the ice.”

According to Garniss, the Snipers’ growth and “strong team culture” have led the team to provincials.

“This team has gotten here because they’ve fully committed to working hard and constantly improving. When we keep the tempo up on the bench and bring that energy onto the ice, good things happen, and this group has really learned how to play with confidence, speed and intensity. That mindset and work ethic have allowed them to reach this point and be among the best teams in the province.

“Every single girl is striving to be the best she can be, and they all share the same drive to compete and win,” Garniss continued. “Coming into the season, some may have thought we’d be the underdogs, but the girls have proven that wrong at every turn. They’ve bought into our systems, they play for each other and they’ve built a strong team culture where everyone pushes one another.”

Garniss added much of the development of the team has come from building chemistry and self-confidence.

“This team has grown so much over the course of the season, but honestly, they came together right from the start. We have girls from Mitchell, Goderich and St. Marys, and from day one, they bought into the idea of playing as one team. Watching them build chemistry, trust and confidence each game has been amazing, and they’ve really proven what can happen when everyone is committed to the same goal.”

That bond, according to Garniss, has helped the group become one of the best in Ontario.

“What makes this team special is the bond they have both on and off the ice,” said Garniss. “These girls are genuinely friends and you can see it in the way they support each other, encourage each other and celebrate each other’s successes. They want the best for the team, not just for themselves, and that kind of attitude is huge. I think that chemistry has been a big reason for their success this season.”

St. Marys finished third in the province, only behind Dorchester and Greater Sudbury. The rest of the top eight in the top provincial tier includes Forest, Sault Ste. Marie, Arnprior-McNab, Timmins and West Ottawa.

Garniss explained what the Snipers will need to do to have success at the provincial championship.

“To have success at provincials, this team will need to keep doing what has gotten them here – staying focused, working hard and playing as a unit,” Garniss said. “We’ll need to play with speed, keep the tempo high and stick to our systems for the full game. At this level, every team is strong, so it will come down to consistency, smart decision-making and staying disciplined. If we play with confidence,



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The St. Marys Rotary Club-A.N.A.F. U14 A St. Marys Snipers will compete at the Provincial Championship. Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are Anna Hogan and Maelle Hachler. In the middle row, from left, are Meredith Stokes, Rachel Mabon, Kyla Graham, Madi McCutcheon, Liv McCutcheon, Lilly Garniss and Kenzie Shackleton. In the back row, from left, are Jordyn Schellenberger, Hadley Bolinger, Mary McCutcheon, Sam Hamilton, Lily Johnston and Scarlett Gloor.

support each other and bring our energy every shift, we know we can compete with anyone.”

As Garniss reflected on the season that led the Snipers to the provincial championship, a standout moment came at a recent tournament in Kitchener where not only did the squad take home a silver medal, they were also recognized for their character.

“One moment that really stands out this

season was being voted the most sportsmanlike team at the Kitchener ringette tournament. That recognition meant a lot to us because it reflects who these girls are; they compete hard, but they also respect their opponents, officials and the game. It speaks to the character of this group and shows that success isn’t just about wins and standings, but about how you carry yourself. That’s something the coaching staff is incredibly proud of.”

## Team Listowel claims inaugural Perth County Cup

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The inaugural Perth County Cup brought together curlers and supporters from across the region this past weekend, marking the start of a new community rivalry between the St. Marys Curling organization and the Listowel Curling Club.

After two days of competition across multiple curling formats, Team Listowel emerged as the first-ever cup champions, narrowly defeating Team St. Marys by just three points.

The Perth County Cup featured traditional team play alongside tankard, doubles, skins and skills challenges. The weekend officially opened with both teams being piped onto the ice during Saturday morning ceremonies, setting the tone for an energetic and memorable event.

Organizers say the goal of the Perth County Cup extends beyond the scoreboard. By

alternating hosting duties each year, the event aims to encourage travel between communities, support local businesses and build a longstanding county tradition rooted in sport and connection.

“The competition was tight from start to finish, and the atmosphere throughout the weekend reflected exactly what we hoped to create,” said Jason Clarke, St. Marys curling general manager. “This is about bringing people together, building a little friendly rivalry and creating something that grows year after year.”

The success of the inaugural event was made possible through the support of local sponsors, including Sue Bolognone, Broker – RE/MAX Midwestern Realty; RE/MAX John Wolfe; Van Allen Insurance Inc.; Synterra Security Solutions LP; and Broken Rail Brewing. Volunteers, players and community supporters also played a key role in bringing the Perth County Cup to life.

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# MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Briar Corneil sends the ring into the offensive zone during the Synterra FUN3 St. Marys Snipers (Vergeer) game last Saturday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Nash Near releases a shot from the slot during last Saturday's Radar Auto Parts U9 LL Boys White St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Harper Hillman blasts a shot from the point during the St. Marys Landscaping U11 B Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

William Essing one-times a shot on goal during last Saturday's Nicholson Concrete U11 LL Boys Blue St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Lachlann Thistle fires a shot on target from the edge of the faceoff circle during the U13 B Boys St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Alex Harlton drives into the slot with the puck during this past Sunday's Cascades U13 BB Girls St. Marys Rock game.

# Lincolns trying to find way through 'dog days' of season

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

A rash of injuries, bouts of inconsistency and special-teams woes have all been obstacles the St. Marys Lincolns are trying to overcome with the post-season right around the corner.

The Lincolns enjoyed a positive performance against the last-placed Sarnia Legionnaires, who, as of press time, have yet to record a point on the season. Assistant coach Michael Siddall told the Independent the team did a good job not letting the position of the winless Legionnaires in the standings cloud their focus on their game-plan.

"We were actually pretty happy," Siddall said. "A lot of times, we go into Sarnia, especially that arena, we come out not feeling great about ourselves, but we actually played really well in Sarnia. We competed really well, and we didn't cheat the little things. You can go into those games thinking it's going to be point night, but when you do that, you build bad habits. But our guys played the right way for 60 minutes, and they got rewarded for it."

Affiliate player (AP) Tyson Cartier had a banner night, scoring his first career Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL) goal as part of a two-point game for the 2025 15th round pick of the Peterborough Petes. Siddall noted having talent like Cartier in their affiliate player ranks was a big positive for the team.

"He's a guy that we're keeping our eye on, and depth in the playoffs is important," said Siddall. "Injuries and different things go on, so knowing that a young guy coming in is playing hard and playing the right way and can contribute positively on both sides of the puck is important. You might rely on a guy like that at some point in the playoffs. We've done it before, and had APs play in the playoffs before, so it's good to see a kid like Tyson do what he did."

Jakob Drobny had a stellar four-point game, which included a goal, which gave Drobny points in four of his last five games heading into the Lincolns' clash on Feb. 20 against the Strathroy Rockets. Declan Ready also had a strong night in Sarnia, scoring two goals and adding an assist, while Jacob Montesi and Jack Clarke each had three helpers.

Owen Voortman, Chase MacQueen-Spence, Callum McAuley, Blake Elzinga, Ethan Weir and Devun Colebrook also scored for the Lincolns against the Legionnaires.

One night later, however, after a great start to the game against Strathroy, the Lincolns faltered in the final 40 minutes, eventually losing 5-3.

The Lincolns jumped out to a 2-1 lead against the Rockets with a pair of powerplay goals by Weir and Elzinga.

However, according to Siddall, a drop in focus in the last two periods led to the Lincolns being outscored 4-1 in the second and third combined.

"We thought we played really well in the first period, but in the second and third, we took our foot off the gas. At times, we think our guys are just ready for the playoffs, and



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

**Declan Ready, pictured, skates with the puck out of the defensive zone. Ready scored two goals and an assist against the Sarnia Legionnaires on Feb. 19.**

it's the dog days of the year, where you're just trying to get to the playoffs. We've got to find that extra gear and stay focused for a few more games and then the playoffs, but we know our guys are big-game players and they'll ramp it up when we get into those important games come playoffs."

Another big reason for the Lincolns losing to the Rockets was, once again, struggles on the penalty kill. Going into their game on Feb. 25 against the LaSalle Vipers, the Lincolns have surrendered at least one powerplay goal in six of their last seven games and have allowed multiple goals while shorthanded in three of those seven games.

In total, the Lincolns have allowed 11 goals out of their 29 times shorthanded in their last seven games, translating to a porous penalty kill efficiency of just over 62 percent, down more than 20 percentage points from their season penalty kill rate before the last seven games.

Associate coach Mike Herman, who oversees the penalty kill, explained how a lot of the issues appear to be stemming from positional errors in front of their net.

"I've been on a search-and-destroy mission and going back to the last six games (in which the Lincolns have allowed powerplay goals) and looking at all the goals, and from what I can see, the big problems are around our net," Herman said. "A lot of teams will bring two people to the net-front when they go into an umbrella. That's not new, and we've always had a way of dealing with that, but for whatever reason, we're losing the net-front positionally. We're losing track of guys, and those guys are ending up with the puck, and it's ending up in the back of the net."

Herman further explained the awareness struggles, pointing to Strathroy's first powerplay goal of the game by former Lincoln

ing around you all the time, and we've always been pretty good with that, but it's slipped," said Herman. "The goal by (Quinn) Gavin-White for Strathroy; we were covering the other post with nobody there but weren't paying attention to what was going on around us, and Gavin-White just crept to that far post and scored."

On the injury front, along with defenceman James MacGregor remaining out, Ready and Oliver Lacko are also now on the shelf after sustaining injuries in the game against the Rockets.

The Rockets ended up going two-for-four on the man advantage, and Eddie Hickson and Zachary LeBlanc led Strathroy's offensive charge, each posting three points and being responsible for three of the Rockets' five goals.

Siddall commented on the team's lack of focus in the second and third frames, noting the group, which has clinched a playoff spot, is trying to stay locked in on the game in front of them rather than looking ahead to the playoffs.

"It is a psychological battle," Siddall said. "It just comes down to focusing in, and it's the leaders who are going to have to step up. We're not calling our older guys out by any means, but when you're going through something like we are, it's the leadership who has to step up and focus on the little things and make sure the guys are playing the right way. I don't think it was a stamina issue (against Strathroy). It was just a dip in focus."

 **ST. MARYS LINCOLNS**

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# Save the date: Lincs holding Alumni Night this Saturday

## Dressing room tours available

PAT PAYTON

*Lincolns Alumni Group Secretary*

The St. Marys Lincolns and the Lincs' Alumni Group are holding an Alumni Night this Saturday, Feb. 28, when the Lincs host the Listowel Cyclones at 7:30 p.m.

A registration table will be set up in the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC) lobby downstairs prior to the Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL) game. Any Lincs' Alumni (former players, coaches, trainers, executive members, etc.) and their spouses can pick up tickets for the game at the table.

The Lincolns and the alumni group would like to get as many team alumni out to the game as possible.

"Alumni Night is instrumental in engaging those from the past who made special memories here in St. Marys," said Lincs' president Brandon Boyd. "We're grateful for the alumni group who tackle these initiatives, bringing people together to celebrate the past, while opening lines of communication to remain in touch for future events."

"Whether you come for just the game or buy a membership, I know these guys have more good ideas coming down the pipeline, and this will be a great night."

Alumni group president Scott Graham agrees.

"The Lincoln organization is very fortunate to have such a strong alumni which continues to support the team year after year," Graham said. "We look forward to seeing many of the former members on Feb. 28."

### Dressing room tours available

Dressing room tours will be given just after the start of the first, second and third periods. Anyone wishing to get a dressing room tour should reach out to alumni group vice president Brian Hughes at [hughesbr52@gmail.com](mailto:hughesbr52@gmail.com).

This Saturday, alumni committee member Jacques Cousineau will also have a Lincolns' memorabilia display upstairs in the End Zone room.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

The St. Marys Lincolns and Lincolns' Alumni Group are hosting Alumni Night on Feb. 28 when the Lincs take on the Listowel Cyclones. The Lincolns Alumni Group will offer tours of the Lincolns' dressing room.

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# Brockman takes first at Mid-Winter Blues Tournament



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured is Rory Brockman, who took first place at the Masters and Teen Tour Mid-Winter Blues Tournament at the St. Marys Bowling Lanes on Feb. 21. Brockman placed first with 310 points over her average over six games, bowling scores of 220, 211, 234, 130, 262, and 219. Brockman will attend the Provincials on May 2 at Nebs Fun World in Oshawa.

# Fares, Yates compete at provincial doubles tourney



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

On Feb. 22, St. Marys Bowling Lanes bowlers Alexis Fares and Shaene Yates, pictured from left to right, participated in the Ontario Five-Pin Bowling Provincial High-Low Doubles Tournament. They represented the Grand River Zone and placed 19th out of a field of 48 competitive teams.

# St. Marys bowlers compete at Family Twosome tourney



Pictured on the left, from left to right, are James VandeGevel and Robin VandeGevel, who captured a silver medal in the junior bowlers' division at the Family Twosome tournament at Sunset Family Fun Centre in Port Elgin on Feb. 22, scoring a total of 1,108 to earn a spot at provincials on May 30 at Nebs Fun World in Oshawa. In the middle, from left, are Jeanne Lyons and Amanda Kittmer, who picked up a silver in the bantam bowlers' bracket with a score of 1,071 points, missing out on first by just five points. The duo will also compete at the provincial event on May 30 in Oshawa. On the right, from left, are Melissa and Ivy Kittmer, the bantam non-bowlers' bronze medalists, who totalled 881 points and narrowly missed the silver medal by just four points. The tournament was a four-game scotch doubles format with three divisions, including bantam, junior, and senior. Within these divisions were two categories; a YBC bowler with a bowling family member, and a YBC bowler with a non-bowling family member. There were 100 bowlers registered. The senior bowling team of Nathan McKeen and Gerry Brockman scored 1,051 points and placed fourth. The senior non-bowling team of Landon and Jason Ball scored 734 points and placed fifth. The junior non-bowler team of Natalie and Matt McKeen scored 768 and placed sixth.

(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

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**Community Liaison Committee**

The next Community Liaison Committee Meeting will be held on **Friday, March 6th at 10am** at the St. Marys Municipal Operations Center. Members of the public who wish to observe are welcome to attend.

Residents who wish to speak in front of the Committee may submit a detailed request in writing to the Committee. The request will be considered by the Committee and approved prior to the meeting.

Please submit all requests, questions, and concerns for the meeting to [kara.pelissero@vcimentos.com](mailto:kara.pelissero@vcimentos.com) by **Wednesday, March 4th at 10am.**

# Thorndale News

A section within the  
St. Marys Independent

## Thorndale Lions host Effective Speaking competition



(NORM JARY PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Thorndale Lions member Kevin Smith with Effective Speaking competitors Damien Phan, Madi McCutcheon, Ila Gill, Brinsley Brown, Penn Cole and Ryan Pickel.

**NANCY ABRA**

*Independent Reporter*

The Thorndale Lions held their Effective Speaking competition for area students at their Wednesday, Feb. 18 meeting.

This competition is part of the International Lions Clubs Multiple District A Ontario and Quebec Lions Clubs contest. It is the largest effective speaking contest held throughout Canada in both languages.

For over 36 years, the Thorndale Lions Club has hosted this annual student speech competition with the goal to provide students of the community an opportunity in competitive public speaking and self-expression. There were six students from West Nissouri Public School chosen to compete in this contest. For the junior di-

vision, grades four to six, Brinsley Brown, Penn Cole and Ryan Pickel competed. Damien Phan, Madi McCutcheon and Ila Gill represented the intermediate division for grades seven and eight.

The topic of their speeches was the student's choice. Each student in their allotted time delivered their speech in front of a panel of judges, Thorndale Lions members and the students' parents.

The first- and second-place speakers, Cole and Pickel of the junior division, and Gill and Phan of the intermediate division, will move on to the Lions District A-1 competition. This event is hosted by the Thorndale Lions and will take place on March 8 at 1 p.m. at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre.

## What's happening at the Thorndale Library in March



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Whitney and Kelly from the Thorndale Library provided a story time and craft at the Thorndale Winter Carnival on Family Day, Feb. 16.

**NANCY ABRA**

*Independent Reporter*

There's plenty to do at the Thorndale Library next month.

Especially with young families in mind, the Thorndale Library hosts storytime on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m., with the focus on fun, stories, learning songs and rhymes.

Special for Tuesday, March 3 is the Paper Bag Princess story and craft. With the theme of "Dare to be Brave," inspired by the famous storybook, *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch, young children will design their own paper bag princess and take-home story retell props.

The after-school hangout on Wednesdays continues until March 24, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Children aged seven to 11 can meet

at the library for interesting crafts, games and to have fun with their friends.

During March break, the library will host a games party on Thursday, March 17, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Children ages 8 and up can try out the Wii games or bring their own gaming devices or their favourite board game. Registration is required for this activity.

On Thursday, March 19, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and open to all ages, the Thorndale Library will be showing a movie on their big screen. Popcorn will be provided.

For more information about activities at the Thorndale Library or to register for any of the special activities, call 519-461-1150 or email [thorndale\\_staff@middlesex.ca](mailto:thorndale_staff@middlesex.ca).

## Did you know?

**NANCY ABRA**

*Independent Reporter*

Did you know the Thorndale Post Office has a special ink stamp unique only to this post office?

In 2008, Jocelyne Rioux, the post office assistant, wanted to do something special to put Thorndale on the map. Her goal was to get a special ink stamp that was unique to the community of Thorndale. After con-

sidering recommendations from area residents and incorporating connections to the railroad, an appropriate design for the stamp was selected.

"Not every post office has a special ink stamp," said Rioux. "After getting the design approved and permission from Canada Post, we have something unique to us. We use both stamps when receiving packages and parcels and when letters go through this post office to cancel the

corner stamp."

Rioux also explained that avid stamp collectors and train enthusiasts want this for their collections.

"I have gotten letters from all over Canada requesting our stamp."

Along with collectors' request letter, Rioux said they include a stamped envelope or postcard inside for her to rubber stamp it and send it back to them for their collection.

Curious why the stamp says, "Prickly Valley?" If you break down "Thorndale" into "Thor," which means prickle or barb, and "dale," which means valley, you get Thorndale's nickname – "Prickly Valley."

Next time you are sending out mail through the Thorndale Post Office, check out this stamp, unique only to Thorndale.

# COLUMNS

## UKRAINIAN CORNER: Roots and road trips – why Canadians move and Ukrainians plant

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

The last of the winter holiday chocolate has been excavated from the back of the cupboard, which officially means we are entitled to expect spring.

Now, I've lived in Canada long enough to know that "spring in March" is a cruel myth designed to sell rain boots. I don't actually believe in warm weather yet, but I am currently manifesting it by sending enough "springy" vibes to the universe to jumpstart a tectonic plate.

As we emerge from our six-month hibernation, it's time to talk summer plans. Having a foot in both Ukrainian and Canadian cultures is like living in a comedy of errors where one side wants to relax and the other side won't stop looking for a shovel.

For many Ukrainians, summer is synonymous with the dacha. It's a fixed plot of land, usually inherited, featuring a small house and a patch of dirt that demands your soul. It's about roots – literal and metaphorical. You return to the same soil every year to negotiate with your tomatoes, cucumbers and berries. It is a stationary sanctuary where the goal is to see how much of the earth you can transform into jars of pickles by September.

Canadians, however, are obsessed with movement. While some have fixed cottages, the "trailer culture" here is a massive, migrating beast. Statistics tell us that one in seven Canadian households owns an RV. It's all about "conquering" the wilderness – which apparently involves hooking a 30-foot portable mansion to a truck and driving 500 kilometres to a different lake every weekend.

If you drive on a Canadian highway in July, every second vehicle is towing something. Canadians love nature, sure, but they love it best when it's filtered through air



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

**Many Ukrainians have found that while they cannot control the horizon, they can nurture the earth beneath them. These gardens are a testament to a people rooted in place, waiting for the day when the soil offers only life – and the stillness of a land at peace – rather than the reminders of war.**

conditioning, a microwave and a real mattress. A trailer allows you to be in the middle of a rugged provincial park while still catching the latest Netflix drop.

Despite the lifestyle differences, both nations share an unofficial national bird: the mosquito. Whether you are in the Dnipro region or northern Ontario, the summer soundtrack is an identical, frantic rhythm: buzz-slap-curse.

And of course, there is the water. Canada has more lakes than the rest of the world

combined, and Ukraine's love for the riverbank is legendary. By July, both cultures feel fundamentally "wrong" if they aren't within splashing distance of a shoreline.

Picture a Canadian at a campsite: they park on a gravel pad, level the trailer, set up a folding chair and enjoy themselves.

A Ukrainian, meanwhile, would be pacing that same gravel pad by 8 a.m. looking for a gardening tool. We look at a campsite and see missed opportunities. "Why are we just sitting? Look at all this topsoil! We could have 40 kilos of tomatoes growing here by August. Why are you reading a book? We could be hilling potatoes!"

To a Ukrainian, nature is a workspace. We don't just "visit" the forest; we audition it for its productivity.

Then, there is the food.

Canadians: "Let's roast marshmallows!"

Ukrainians: "Where is the metal skewer? Where is the five kilograms of marinated pork neck? Is the village fed yet?"

My husband, Sergii, is a practitioner of "Old World Magic." He makes absolutely delicious shashlik (grilled meat over fire), but it is a project of epic proportions. He prepares four different marinades over the course of 24 hours. Every time we have a barbecue and I watch him performing these ancient rituals, I ask myself, "Why do Ukrainians always find the hardest way to do things?" Theoretically, we could just throw some corn and sausages on a gas grill and not end the night smelling like a forest fire. But no. To a Ukrainian, a campfire without enough meat to feed a small infantry is just a "light source," not a meal.

I'll be honest; I don't think Ukrainians can truly enjoy traditional camping. First, RVs aren't really a thing back home. And second, the idea of "relaxing" in a tent in the middle of a mosquito-infested woods sounds like a survival challenge, not a vacation. As I mentioned, we don't know how to rest in nature; we only know how to find chores to do.

While I love a good day trip, when it comes to a one- or two-week holiday, I prefer being a tourist in a hotel where the only thing I have to "harvest" is the buffet. I am quite picky about food. I make every single meal from scratch at home, so when I'm on vacation, I want a complete strike from the kitchen. Moms need a break from the endless cycle of school lunches and work prep!

Sergii knows this well. He spends hours – no, weeks – researching hotels. He knows if he shows me a breakfast buffet that is just cereal and cold pancakes, the vacation is over before it starts. He hunts for the "Decent Breakfast Holy Grail": fresh veggies, fish and actual protein. And bless him, he always finds it.

Lately, I've been eyeing the "Cruise" life – a very popular Canadian pastime. The idea of an "all-inclusive" trip isn't new to Ukrainians, but being on the water for a week? That sounds intriguing. It's like a dacha that moves, someone else cooks the shashlik and, hopefully, there isn't a tomato plant in sight.

## Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH

St. Marys Public Library

Mark your calendars because the St. Marys Public Library is the place to be this March Break! Here is a taste of the family fun programming coming your way:

- Stuffy Storytime, Sleepover, and Scavenger Hunt: Mar. 17 (6:45-7:30 p.m.) - Bring your plush pal for storytime and a scavenger hunt, then leave them overnight for a sleepover
- Star Wars Party: Mar. 18 (3-4 p.m.) - A themed party with prizes, popcorn, and more
- Drop-In Day: Mar. 20 (10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.) - Drop-in during open hours for a craft, a giant colouring page, board games, and more
- Family Trivia: Mar. 21 (10:30 a.m. to

12 p.m.) - Compete with a team of 4 at trivia to win a prize

There programs are all free to attend and no registration is required. Care-giver/guardian supervision is required. Check out our Facebook page (facebook.com/StMarysPublicLibrary) for more info about these exciting offerings!

### Up This Week

- Fri., Feb. 27: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sat., Feb. 28: Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Mon., Mar. 2: Learn to Play Bridge (1-3 p.m.)
- Tues., Mar. 3: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wed., Mar. 4: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong (1-4 p.m.), Chocolate Bar BINGO\* (6-7 p.m.)
- Thurs., Mar. 5: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

\*Registration Required

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# HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Exhibition of Paintings, 1930

MARY SMITH

*Independent Columnist*

During the first weeks of winter in 1930, the local newspaper, the Journal Argus, carried stories and notices of events that were similar to many found in the St. Marys Independent today. A new warden had been elected for Perth County, some high scores were recorded at the St. Marys bowling lanes, and a local church group had held a successful Valentine Tea. WOSSAA basketball competition was coming up for St. Marys Collegiate athletes, and skaters were looking forward to a carnival at the old Wellington Street arena with prizes awarded for best fancy costumes.

This notice also appeared on the inside pages of the January 30, 1930, Journal Argus: "Exhibition of Paintings by Canada's Foremost Artists will be held in the Town Hall, Monday to Saturday, February 3rd to 8th. By the Rotary Club of St. Marys, in co-operation with the Ontario Society of Artists. The Public is cordially invited. Admission Free. Afternoon tea will be served by the Women's Institute during the Art Exhibit." An article on another page explained that the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA) was taking this exhibition to "various centres throughout Ontario" to give everyone, especially school children, the opportunity to view the work of current Canadian artists. The event would include special lectures for students and for the public – all free of charge.

OSA representatives would be bringing 81 pictures to St. Marys to hang in the town hall auditorium. The hanging committee of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts as well as the OAS had selected one or two paintings by 48 different artists. The newspaper article listed every artist and the titles of all 81 paintings. Some names are still familiar today. Five were members of the famous Group of Seven – Lauren Harris, A. Y. Jackson, Franz Johnston, Arthur Lismer, and J. E. H. MacDonald all had paintings in the travelling exhibition. Homer Watson, who was from nearby Doon, submitted his picture, "Environns of Kitchener." Two paintings were by George Agnew Reid, originally from Wingham: "The Quiet River" and "The Arrival of Champlain in Quebec." His wife, Mary Wrinch Reid, also had two pictures: "Roses in a Blue Bowl" and "Chickens."

What did the Rotary Club of St. Marys gain by sponsoring this exhibition? There were no fundraising benefits for this free admission event. But perhaps the Rotarians gained prestige through this act of community service. In 1930, people may have been more attuned to graphic arts than they are today, and more excited about having such an exhibition in their small Ontario town. In the time before television and the internet, advertis-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

**Northern Lake, 1923, by Lauren Harris, was included in an exhibition of art in the St. Marys town hall in February 1930. Many visitors to the exhibition thought the paintings by the Group of Seven were too impressionistic. Today, Harris's Northern Lake, 1923 can be seen in the famous McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Vaughan, Ontario.**

ers grabbed attention through pictures in newspapers and magazines, on billboards and posters in store windows. Many of the artists in the OSA exhibition would not have been able to feed themselves and their families if they hadn't also been commercial artists and many took pride in creating high-quality work.

Local school children received some instruction in art. It has always been included in the Ontario curriculum at the elementary level although individual teachers' ability to teach the subject may vary. Children in the 1930s had opportunities to showcase their art – and maybe win prizes – at the annual agricultural fairs. Students were also exposed to Canadian art through the illustrations in their schoolbooks. C. W. Jeffreys, one of the artists in the OSA exhibition, had been commissioned in the early 1900s by the Ontario government to illustrate standard elementary school textbooks. With stirring illustrations showing voyageurs in birch bark canoes and buffalo hunts on the Prairies, Jeffreys' textbook pictures influenced the way decades of Ontario children perceived Canada's history. C. W. Jeffreys' entry in the OAS exhibition was about early exploration: "Champlain on Georgian Bay."

St. Marys had been long familiar with art exhibitions. Some residents who considered themselves to be patrons of the arts, had organized an Art Loan Exhibition in the St. Marys town hall in 1898. (This event deserves its own column.) Local artists had won prizes displaying their art in nearby London. For example,

Rachel Amanda Morphy (1847-1927) had several paintings in exhibitions organized in the late 1890s by the Women's Art Club of London. Mary Moscrip (1848-1930) had achieved first place in an Art Loan Exhibition in London in 1887 and had also won her category several times at the Western Fair in the 1890s. Her exhibited work won more prizes at fairs as far away as Hamilton and Toronto.

In February 1929, the OSA had brought its first exhibition of Canadian artists to St. Marys. The OSA exhibition in 1930 was even more ambitious. The Society was bringing many more pieces of art and sending its president to give lectures about them. Frederick Henry Brigden (1871-1956) was a distinguished name in the Canadian art scene. He had been trained by his father, the senior Frederick Brigden, founder of the prominent Toronto Engraving Company. As well as working as head of this firm, the younger Fred Brigden was an accomplished landscape artist. His picture, "Dawn in the Valley," was part of the 1930 OSA exhibition.

To prepare for the event, the Rotary Club had formed a local art exhibition committee with Rotarian Will McIntyre in charge. On the weekend before the exhibition opened, several OSA members in Toronto packed the pictures into their cars and drove to St. Marys. The art committee Rotarians were waiting for them at the town hall and helped carry the pictures up the stairs to the auditorium level. The OSA members then hung all 81 pictures, gallery style, on the available wall space between the windows on the east

and west walls. When they were finished hammering and hanging, they returned to Toronto.

On Monday morning, Fred Brigden arrived in time for his first speech about the exhibition, delivered that afternoon to 250 students from the St. Marys Collegiate Institute. Brigden was an entertaining speaker. As he pointed out the highlights of the collection, he told stories about some of the artists he knew personally. J. W. (Jack) McLaren, an associate of the Group of Seven, had two pictures in the exhibit: "The Harbour, St. Simeon" and "Murray Bay." Many students would have recognized McLaren as a member of the famous Dumbells, the Canadian vaudeville troupe, originally formed to entertain soldiers on the front lines during World War I.

In the evening, as the Journal Argus reported, Fred Brigden spoke again to "a large audience of grown-ups, giving his audience one of the most interesting as well as instructive hour's entertainment they have had in a long time." The newspaper described Brigden's speech and reviewed the paintings in the exhibit. The unnamed reviewer (undoubtedly Lorne A. Eedy himself) was impressed by the "decorative quality" of the Still Life pictures and by the landscape painters "who try to reproduce nature as they see it and whose pictures are of the conventional type." He was less certain about "the impressionistic School of Seven whose leaders have been haunting the harsh rocks of the Northland of Canada and bringing back reproductions of what they feel when gazing on those stern landscapes."

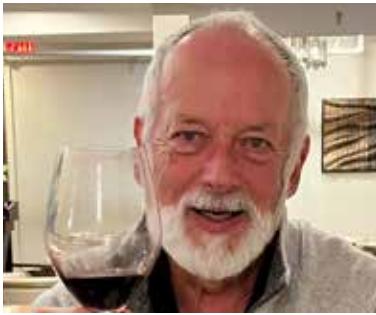
Eedy was particularly puzzled by "Northern Lake," Lauren Harris's exhibition picture. "Mr. Harris is a man of education, large means and great ability. He takes his art very seriously and his picture received a great deal of attention, although not much admiration." The reviewer did, however, faithfully report Fred Brigden's prediction that one day Lauren Harris would be recognized as one of Canada's greatest painters.

On Saturday evening, February 8, the exhibition was over. OSA members returned, packed it up and took it on to London where that city's Rotary Club was sponsoring a similar event. At the St. Marys Rotary Club's next meeting, all agreed that the art exhibition had been a great success, although no exact attendance figures were given. They did report that the Women's Institute had made \$57 serving afternoon teas. That's the 2026 equivalent of more than \$1000 – a substantial addition to their fund for community service. The Institute members probably enjoyed the event thoroughly, loved talking to the different visitors and sharing their own opinions about the pictures on the auditorium walls.

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# OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Art and imagination on display at the Clay and Glass Gallery



PAUL KNOWLES

*Independent Columnist*

Let's be honest: you may have never heard of the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. Or, if you have, you probably have never visited the place.

Well, I am here to suggest that you rectify that situation, immediately, because there are a large number of special things about the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery that truly make it worth a visit.

First, it's unique. Located near Uptown Waterloo, it is the only art gallery in the country that is exclusively dedicated to exhibiting and collecting contemporary Canadian glass, ceramic, enamel and stained glass works of art.

Second, the folks at the gallery are brilliant at staging exhibitions. If you are a museum goer who is just a bit tired of crammed display cases and claustrophobic exhibition rooms, you are going to love the Clay and Glass. The building, which opened in 1993, is the very definition of spacious. More about this later.

Third, the exhibitions are always fresh. Clay and Glass PR director William Hlowatzki told us that the exhibitions are changed up every season. Right now, there are four exhibitions

that will be on display for the next few months only.

Fourth, the gift shop offers a spectacular array of handcrafted glass and clay jewelry and other giftware made by Canadian artisans, many of them local to the southern Ontario region.

Fifth – and this may seem too good to be true – admission is free. Yes, anyone can enjoy the unique works in the Clay and Glass any time it is open – and it's open six days a week, closed only on Mondays.

I asked William how free admission could be possible, since clearly this is a professionally managed institution with staff, acquisition budgets and operating costs. He pointed to the list of donors – private people, corporations, foundations and government bodies – that keep this amazing institution afloat and moving ahead.

According to the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery's website, the museum owes its existence to Canadian ceramic artist Ruth Gowdy McKinley, a founding member of "Ceramics Canada." When she died in 1981, her colleagues in that organization began to envision an art gallery honouring her memory that would focus on works created in clay, glass and enamel. The plan quickly moved forward; ground was broken in 1989 and the new gallery opened in 1993. The building was designed by Patricia Patkau of Patkau Architects of Vancouver and was honoured with a Governor General's Award for design. What makes that an even more significant accomplishment is, as William told us, the Clay and Glass was Patkau's

first public building.

In parallel with the construction of the physical building was an endowment campaign led by the late Winifred Shantz and former board chair Ann Roberts, herself a ceramic artist of note and a professor in the University of Waterloo fine arts department.

Right now, there are four exhibitions on display at the Clay and Glass. The most extensive is the utterly captivating "Fabled Clay," featuring the work of four artists: Janet MacPherson of Hamilton, Lindsay Montgomery of Toronto, Amélie Proulx of Lévis, Que., and Annette ten Cate of Grey County. The shared focus of these wildly diverse works is "story telling." Visitors will be enthralled by the stories inherent in the works – and will also be drawn into creating their own stories as they contemplate ornate teapots embraced by demons; a bear in bunny slippers; or a beer-swilling, naked "Shepherdess."

Nicely displayed in a smaller gallery room is the exhibition, "Frogs' Return," by Melanie Barnett of Treaty 7 Territory in Medicine Hat, Alta – a series of complex, whimsical ceramic creations involving said amphibians.

"Weathered Rock," a multi-faceted, multi-media work by D'Andrea Bowie of Whitchurch-Highlands, Ont., occupies another exhibition area. All three of these exhibitions will continue through mid-May. The fourth current exhibit is "Material Syntax: 3D Printed Masonry Façade Systems," a display by University of Waterloo architecture students. It closes March 27.

The latter is just one example of



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

**The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery welcomes visitors, free of charge, six days a week.**

how the gallery interacts with the community. In 2025, the gallery hosted 478 workshop sessions attended by 14,514 people. That is twice the number that attended workshops in 2024. Through community outreach programs, the gallery also staged 65 workshop sessions through the Region of Waterloo, reaching 3,000 participants.

I'm writing this feature because we quickly realized that the Clay and Glass Gallery offers a variety of day-trip options. Would-be visitors can investigate workshops, offered at a reasonable fee (see the website for details); or they can simply visit the gallery at no charge and spend as much time as they would like exploring the imaginations of these creative artists.

And some added good news: the gallery, located at 25 Caro-

line St. N in Waterloo, is on the edge of Waterloo Park, a perfect place for strolling and picnicking (in warmer weather, of course), and is also a block away from Uptown Waterloo. If good food is part of your daytrip agenda, high-end restaurants like Solé and Proof; good pubs like Beertown and McCabe's Irish Pub; and many other dining options are minutes away.

So, after a highly entertaining visit, I happily recommend the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery as a centrepiece for an intriguing day out.

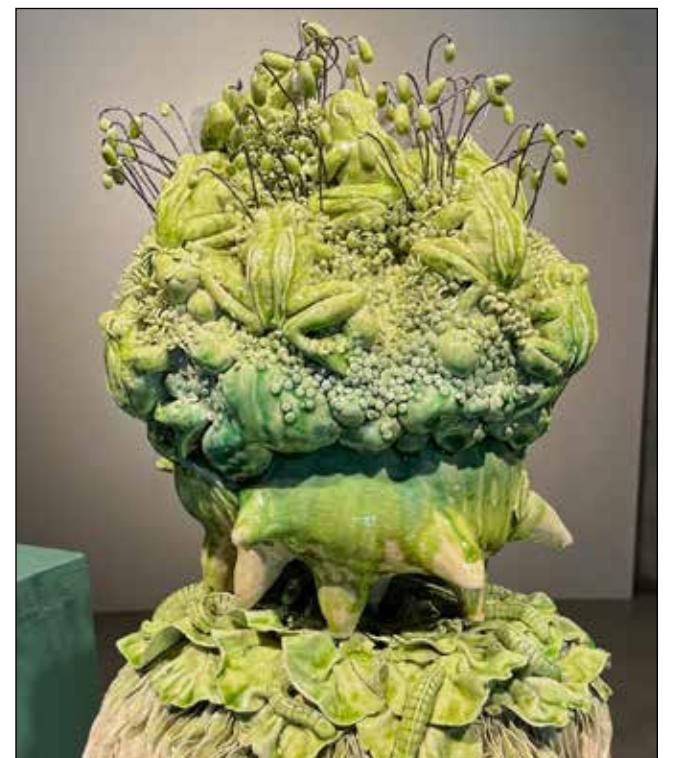
*Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and Past-President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email [pknowles@golden.net](mailto:pknowles@golden.net).*



"Hibernation Mode," 2025, by Annette ten Cate. ten Cate is one of four artists whose works form the "Fabled Clay" exhibition. The work facing the camera in the background is "Goat and cohort" by the same artist.



A view of the very spacious and welcoming exhibition area. In the foreground, "Fish Monk," 2025, by Janet MacPherson.



"When There Were No Frogs," 2025, by Melanie Barnett.

# EAT AT OUR HOUSE: High-protein meal prep



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

The following are easy to assemble, packed with nutrients and fridge-friendly meal ideas for both lunches and dinner that will last you all work or school week.

These will take the time out of guessing what to make, providing both satisfying and healthy meal options!

The trick to prepping jarred meals is to put the dressing at the bottom to prevent ingredients from getting soggy.

## Street corn pasta salad (Elote pasta salad)

Prep: 25 minutes; Serves: 4

### Sauce:

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp each garlic powder and cayenne pepper

### Pasta salad:

- 8 oz uncooked ditalini pasta
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 15-oz cans corn, drained well
- 2 15-oz cans butter beans, drained and rinsed
- 4 green onions sliced
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- 1/3 cup crumbled cotija or feta cheese
- Sprinkle of Tajin or chili-lime seasoning

### Method:

- Cook 8 oz pasta according to package instructions. Drain and transfer back to pot. Toss with 1 tsp olive oil. Let cool.
- Stir together sauce ingredients.
- Either toss everything together in a large bowl or portion

into four large meal-prep mason jars (32 oz/quart).

- Assemble as follows: add dressing to the bottom, layer beans, corn, pasta, green onions, cilantro, cheese and top with Tajin. Close lids and store for up to five days in the fridge. To serve; dump the contents of the jar into bowls and stir!

## Thai chicken mason jar salad with peanut dressing

Prep: 15 minutes; Serves: 4

### Dressing:

- ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce or tamari
- 1 tbsp honey or maple syrup
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 tsp siracha
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- 1 clove garlic, roughly chopped
- 1-2 tbsp water or coconut milk

### Salad:

- 2 cups shredded rotisserie

chicken (preferably just the white meat)

- 2 cups diced cucumber
- 2 cups sliced carrots
- 2 cups diced red and yellow bell peppers
- 1 cup edamame beans
- 6 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 4 tbsp chopped green onion
- 4 tbsp raw unsalted cashews

### Method:

- Assemble jars starting with dressing, ½ cup cucumber, ½ cup carrots, ½ cup bell peppers, ¼ cup edamame, ½ cup shredded romaine, 1 tbsp green onions, 1 tbsp cashews.

- Put on lid and store in fridge for up to five days.

## Dynamite shrimp sushi jars

Prep: 30 minutes; Serves: 4

- 1 lb cooked shrimp (or boil from raw)
- 1 cup sliced red cabbage
- 1 cup diced cucumber
- 1 cup carrot matchsticks
- 1 package seaweed salad

- 1 sheet nori cut into thin strips

- Sesame seeds to serve
- Siracha to serve
- 1 tbsp soy sauce or tamari to taste

### Sushi rice:

- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 cup cooked sushi rice (sticky rice)
- 1 tsp butter
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp rice wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp white sugar

### Method:

- Cook rice according to package directions, butter and salt in stovetop or rice cooker. When finished cooking, add rice vinegar and sugar. Mix and let cool.

- Assemble jars as follows: soy sauce, shrimp, cucumber, red cabbage, carrots, seaweed salad, sushi rice, nori strips, sesame seeds and siracha.

- Jars keep in fridge for up to five days.

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# Riddles

What is the richest nut?  
A cash-ew!

Why did the fruit salad skip its own wedding?  
It had a lot of can't-elope!

What kind of beer won't get you tipsy?  
Root beer!

What kind of poultry is always going to the bathroom?  
Chick peas!

Why did the citrus tree go to the hospital?  
Lemon-aid!

You cut me, slice me, dice me, and all the while, you cry. What am I?  
An onion!

What kind of apples do computers prefer?  
Macintosh!

What has many ears but cannot hear?  
Corn!

I'm a bird, a person, and a fruit. What am I?  
A Kiwi!

I'm the father of fruits. What am I?  
A papa-ya!

What vegetable always loses in every competition yet is a terrific rapper?  
Beets!

What vegetable can you use to tie your shoelace?  
A string bean!

# - Word Search -



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F S I G N E D R O U T E S C P Z R J E W  
A V A S S I S T A N C E I X D F H O H I  
M O E O M Z U T W E N T Y E I G H T H N  
I L D N W E X V Z D T D S Q N R R W A T  
L U T Y B O S P N X R J Y G B C R A D E  
Y N Z W L U Q V T I O D A R J H E L W R  
F T P M T P B L D A P W T S T S S K D R  
R E Y G S Y A Z N X P K B B A I T S T I  
I E R O Z D Z Q G L U A N E K R S P E F  
E R G A O R T I P X S J X A P U T X A I  
N F U N D R A I S E U E B M N O O U M C  
D O U T R E A C H W O R K E R N P D U A  
L C N Z E G S L F E B R U A R Y S D P L  
Y E B M M E X O A E O B J F V D P O B W  
L T H I M W V G T L S P S Q M X G N L E  
A O E G A L W V N Q I H Q C R S W A I B  
L V C H A L L E N G E H Y K Q E B T Z K  
H O M E L E S S N E S S U S G B R E J F  
Y V S O L T T U W O T B L Z Y C J O S O

- February
- Twenty eighth
- Winterrific
- Family friendly
- Walk
- Signed routes
- Rest stops
- Support
- Donate
- Volunteer
- Team up
- Challenge
- Fundraise
- Homelessness
- Assistance
- Outreach worker
- Nourish market



The **Riddle Kid**  
OF THE WEEK

What do you get when you hire a pig at an arena?



A hamboni driver!

**Russell Ward (7)**

Hey Kids... Every Riddle Kid that appears in the paper gets a FREE MILKSHAKE at the Sunset Diner!

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## PET OF THE WEEK



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### OG

Our Pet of the Week is a 17-year-old rescue cat named OG. In human years, that is equal to 84. OG enjoys his time laying in the sun, getting petted and hiding under the covers.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are that of their authors and do not reflect the opinions of the St. Marys Independent or Grant Haven Media.

## Coldest Night of the Year walk this Saturday!

*Dear St. Marys and area friends,*  
The Coldest Night of the Year walk returns to St. Marys this Saturday, Feb. 28, between 5 and 7 p.m. to raise funds for those who are struggling in our community.

Drivers are advised to be aware that there will be 100 extra walkers or more along the walk's route. Walkers will start at the PRC, walk down James Street to

Elgin, then turn onto Church Street to go through downtown St. Marys. After a tour around the Flats, walkers will return to the PRC along Water Street, past the museum and along Elizabeth to James Street.

If you see any big-hearted fundraisers out braving the cold, please feel free to honk your horn in encouragement or shout from your doorstep to celebrate these community-minded individuals. At turns along

the route, volunteers will be standing in the cold on street corners. Why not give them a "Woot-woot!" as well?

This walk raises funds for folks in St. Marys and area who are struggling with the high price of groceries by supporting the Nourish Market, an equal access food market which is held at the St. Marys United Church on the first and third Thursday of each month. It also supports the

St. Marys outreach worker, who connects needy individuals with important services.

Should you need more information about the route, wish to walk, volunteer or donate, please check out our website, [www.cnoy.org/stmarys](http://www.cnoy.org/stmarys). Thank you, St. Marys, for all your support!

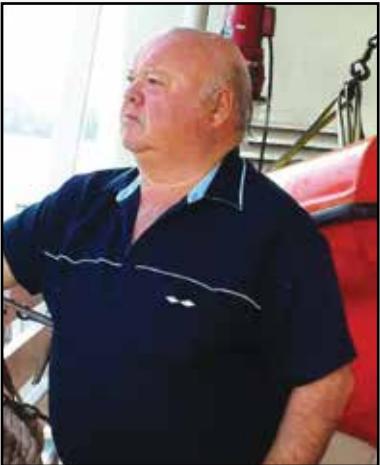
*Gwen Bradley, CNOY 2026 committee, St. Marys*

**SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TO US**  
CALL 519.284.0041 OR EMAIL [INFO@STMARYSINDEPENDENT.COM](mailto:INFO@STMARYSINDEPENDENT.COM)

### IN MEMORIAM

### HELP WANTED

*In Loving Memory*



**Dreaming out at the Lake**

**In loving memory of my wonderful husband  
Ken Annis. Gone too soon.  
Three years ago on February 22, 2023**

Many lonely heartaches  
Often a silent tear  
But always a beautiful memory  
Of one I loved so dear.  
To your resting place I visit  
And place your flowers there with care  
But no one knows the heartache  
When I walk away and leave you there.  
If tear drops could build a stairway  
And memories were a lane  
I would walk all the way to heaven  
And bring you home again.  
**It's so lonely without you.**  
*Love your wife Phyllis*

In loving memory of  
*Doris Webb*  
January 3, 1929  
February 25, 2023



Memories are always close.  
Gentle reminders bring them often.  
A simple smile or a kind word remind  
us that you are not truly gone.  
We miss you Angel Face  
**Lots of love always**  
**David and Judy**

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1	9		6	5			4	
5	3		4				9	2
7	6	4	2	9	3	1		
	4		8					9
	8	3	5		2		1	4
		1	3	4	9			8
				3	6	8	9	
		6					2	7
	7	9		2			5	6

Solutions on pg. 35

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# THE WEEK AHEAD

**SPONSORED BY: McDonald's St. Marys**  
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PRC & Friendship Centre events – See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5

Thorndale Library March events – See Page 27

St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 28

### FRIDAY, FEB 27

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- Thorndale Ag Society presents “A Murder of Scarecrows” (dinner & show) – 6 p.m. at Thorndale Community Centre, 265 Queen St, Thorndale, Call 519-461-0218, \$50
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Stratford Warriors at the PRC – 7:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, FEB 28

- Tri-county Mennonite Homes open house at 90 Greenwood Dr, Stratford – 12-4 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.
- Coldest Night of the Year walk – 5-7 p.m., Starts at the PRC
- Thorndale Ag Society presents “A Murder of Scarecrows” (dinner & show) – 6 p.m. at Thorndale Community Centre, 265 Queen St, Thorndale, Call 519-461-0218, \$50

- St. Marys Lincolns vs Listowel Cyclones at the PRC – 7:30 p.m., Alumni Night

### SUNDAY, MAR 1

- Legion bingo – Early bird play begins at 12:45 p.m.
- River Valley family fun tubing night – 5:30-8:30 p.m.

### MONDAY, MAR 2

- Thorndale Lions Club Easter bingo at Thorndale Lions Community Centre – 7 p.m.

### TUESDAY, MAR 3

- Royal Canadian Legion buddy check coffee – 10 a.m. to Noon
- Knit-A-Long event at Riverwalk Commons – 6:30-7:30 p.m., \$10
- St. Marys Legion cribbage – Starts 7 p.m. sharp

### WEDNESDAY, MAR 4

- St. Marys Ministerial Lenten lunch & devotion at St. Marys United Church – 12:15 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs St. Thomas Stars at Joe Thornton Community Centre – 7:30 p.m.

### THURSDAY, MAR 5

- A.N.A.F. sausage on a bun – 12-1:30 p.m.
- Nourish Market at St. Marys United Church – 2-4 p.m.
- Lincs Launch at the PRC – Joe's Diner beef dinner – 6-8 p.m., Meet the players – 6-7 p.m., Jukebox bingo 7:30-9:30 p.m., Tickets were available until Feb 24

## CORRECTIONS:

1. An error was printed in the story, “With membership declining, Lions aim to inspire a new generation of volunteers,” on page 13 of the Feb. 19 St. Marys Independent. While the story indicated the St. Marys Lions Club would be serving breakfast at McCully's Hill Farm on the last Sunday in March, the club will actually be serving breakfast there on March 22. We regret any confusion this may have caused.
2. Last week, in the cutline of a photo of the U13 A Boys St. Marys Rock, Nick Simons' name was accidentally missed. We apologize for the error.

## Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist

## Horsing around

### 25 years ago (2001)

This Saturday's night's Jr. B. Lincolns playoff game at the arena is “Scooter Night”. Elementary school students will be admitted for free and high school students can get in for \$2. Two scooters will be given away as door prizes.

The Bank of Canada's new \$10 bill haven't even had time to get wrinkled, but they may already be the target of counterfeiters. An apparent counterfeit \$10 was found in the daily receipts at a local business early last week.

### 50 years ago (1976)

St. Marys post office wicket clerks blossomed forth in their new jackets, white shirt, tie and nameplate combination last Monday morning. The move was announced recently by the Post Office as a morale builder.

On Junior Talent Hour on T.V. Sunday the following young people took part; Brad Richardson, Ken McKay, Doug Lamond, and Paul Droog, all from the St. Marys area. The boys played a guitar number. Kathy Lamond, also of the St. Marys area, performed a piano solo.

### 75 years ago (1951)

Mr. James Berry, who was the first St. Marys man to carry a white cane, makes his way about these winter days quite successfully despite total blindness. Each morning, storm or no storm, he takes a walk down Thomas Street. Last week he found the piles of snow a hazard in places, especially at street crossings.

A dozen tired P.U.C. men were looking for a bite to eat in the wee small hours of Monday morning after putting in many hours of heavy work moving the 15-ton blown out transformer from the St. George Street substation. Their hunger was appeased when Fred and Harry Lewis of the Lewis Café rolled out of bed, opened their kitchen, and cheerfully set up a fine lunch for all in a few minutes' time.

### 100 years ago (1926)

The farm of the late Jas. Blundell, who died in Stratford Hospital some time ago, was sold last week to Edward Dunseith of Water Street North. The farm is 50 acres in extent and is located just north of the C.N.R. Sarnia tracks near the Star Inn.

Reminiscent of a bygone age was the accident that befell James Weston on Saturday night when he suffered a severely lacerated head and was badly shaken up as a consequence of being knocked down and run over by a horse and cutter on Queen Street. Citizens are so used nowadays to hearing of motor accidents occurring at fifty or sixty miles an hour that it seems unbelievable that anyone could be injured by being knocked down by such a docile and slow-moving animal as a mere horse.

### QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Russia & Belarus
2. True
3. Golden Hawk
4. Sir Isaac Newton
5. Baron Pierre de Coubertin
6. The sartorius muscle
7. Animals
8. A bag of money, hen that lays golden eggs, & a magical harp
9. 1980
10. United States

### SUDOKU ANSWERS

1	9	2	6	5	8	7	4	3
5	3	8	4	1	7	9	6	2
7	6	4	2	9	3	1	8	5
2	4	7	8	6	1	5	3	9
9	8	3	5	7	2	6	1	4
6	5	1	3	4	9	2	7	8
4	2	5	7	3	6	8	9	1
3	1	6	9	8	5	4	2	7
8	7	9	1	2	4	3	5	6

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