

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1319

Thursday, June 25, 2026

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CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2026! (SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Pictured is the 2026 class of Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame inductees. From left to right are the children of Jim Baba, Melanie, Mitch and Jamie, Kate Psota, Stubby Clapp, Devon White, Paul Runge and Bill Stoneman.

Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame honours 2026 class

SPENCER SEYMOUR
Independent Sports Reporter

The eyes of the baseball world fell on St. Marys as the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (CBHF) hosted its annual induction weekend June 19-20.

The first day saw the Hall of Fame Celebrity Golf Classic at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club, won by the team of Jake Watt, Kevin Thompson, Dave Shepley and Curtis Gricken with a score of 12-under-60.

Those who played in the tournament then made their way to the hall of fame grounds for a dinner and banquet, with Mike Wilner, a Toronto Blue Jays writer and broadcaster, hosting discussions with the inductees.

This year's inductees included former Toronto Blue Jays centrefielder Devon White, as well as national team stalwarts Kate Psota and Stubby Clapp. Jim Baba was inducted posthumously with his family accepting the induction on Baba's behalf. Former Montreal Expos pitcher Bill Stoneman and umpire Paul Runge rounded out the 2026 class.

Hazel Mae received the 2025 Jack Graney Award, and the Randy Eklund Lifetime Volunteer Award was presented to Adam Stevens.

Geoff Seto, senior manager of youth baseball development for the Toronto Blue Jays, presented a cheque for \$120,000 to a delegation, including St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee and hall of fame director of operations Scott Crawford, to refurbish local baseball diamonds in St. Marys.

Read more about this year's hall of fame induction ceremony starting on page 24 of this week's Independent.

FlixBus officially launches service in St. Marys with ribbon-cutting ceremony

GALEN SIMMONS
Regional Editor

St. Marys residents now have a new way to travel across southwestern Ontario and beyond.

Town officials joined representatives from FlixBus and Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma on June 22 for a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the official launch of the intercity bus company's new flag service in St. Marys.

The service, approved by St. Marys council in May, connects the town to Stratford, Kitchener, Guelph, Toronto Pearson International Airport, Toronto Union Station and London through FlixBus' growing Canadian network. As a flag service, buses stop in St. Marys only when passengers have booked tickets in advance.

Mayor Al Strathdee called the launch an important milestone for the community.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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COMMUNITY

FlixBus officially launches service in St. Marys with ribbon-cutting ceremony



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Pictured from left, FlixBus director of public affairs Andrew Miller, Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma, St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee and a FlixBus driver cut the ribbon, heralding the arrival of flag bus service for the Town of St. Marys.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“It’s very exciting for the community because it allows for connectivity with other centres, actually, for appointments and people that need to visit relatives, all sorts of things,” Strathdee said. “It’s a really exciting development to try and connect all the options available. So we’re really glad that FlixBus is here.”

Strathdee said the flag-service model makes sense for St. Marys as the community works to build ridership.

“It makes sense because it’s an on-demand service and as we start out and grow the service and promote it more, hopefully it becomes a regular stop,” he said. “This is an excellent start for our community.”

FlixBus’ Canadian director of public affairs Andrew Miller said expanding service to communities like St. Marys aligns with the company’s goal of rebuilding intercity bus connections across Canada following the departure of Greyhound Canada.

“Our mission is to connect every community that we can with intercity bus service,” Miller said. “We want St. Marys to have the same connectivity as every other community.”

Miller credited Ritsma for helping

make the new stop a reality.

“We connected in Stratford, and he said, ‘You should really talk to my friend Mayor Strathdee in St. Marys,’” Miller said. “Martin made the connection, and we spoke to the mayor, and it was a match made in heaven.”

While the service currently operates on a flag-stop basis, Miller said stronger ridership could eventually lead to every bus stopping in St. Marys.

“We’ll watch the numbers,” he said. “The more people use it; at a certain point, we’ll say it makes sense to stop here every time.”

Ritsma, who advocated for the service after FlixBus established operations in Stratford earlier this year, said expanding transportation options benefits residents throughout the region.

“Our rural communities need opportunities to get on a bus and go to medical appointments, work, sporting events and other destinations,” Ritsma said. “As soon as we realized FlixBus was going to be a permanent fixture in Stratford, that connectivity to St. Marys was the natural next step.”

He added improved transportation links will also support tourism between the two neighbouring communities.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

The first FlixBus arrives in St. Marys at 7:55 a.m. June 22.

“A lot of individuals who come to Stratford will come to St. Marys for tourism and vice versa,” Ritsma said.

Initially, FlixBus will provide one round trip daily, operating six days a week excluding Tuesdays before expanding to daily service later this summer. Eastbound departures leave St. Marys at 7:55 a.m., while westbound buses arrive at 5:30 p.m. before continuing to London.

Miller noted that, through FlixBus’ extensive network, travellers boarding in St. Marys can access destinations across Canada, the United States and even Mexico through connecting routes.

“It’s really just a question of how quickly the residents of St. Marys adopt the service,” he said.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.flixbus.ca.



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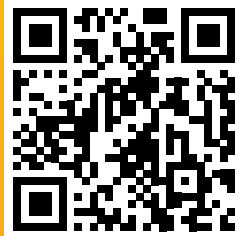
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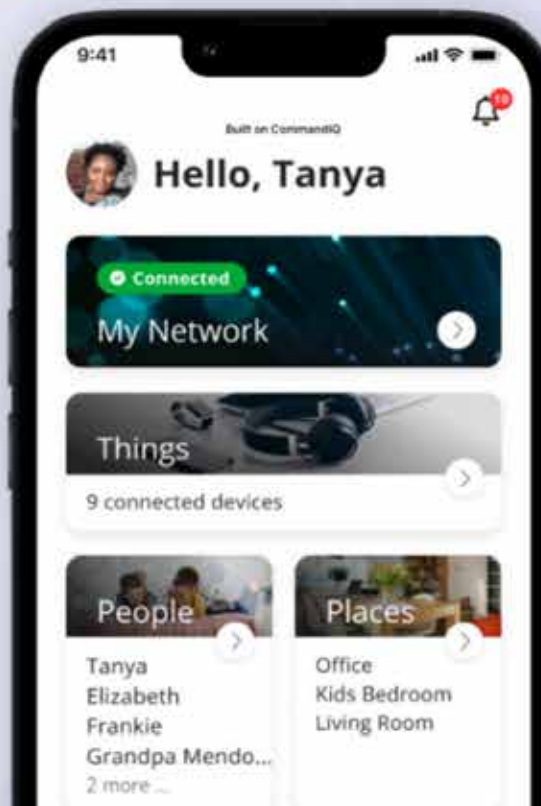


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EDITORIAL

Canada Day is about remembering what we have in common, not what tears us apart



GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

The smell of burgers wafting up from the grill. A cold plunge off a lakeside dock on a hot, summer day. The sound of fireworks going off after dark. Wide, unencumbered smiles on the faces of family, friends and neighbours.

The freedom to celebrate where you like, how you like and with the people you love most.

When I really think about Canada Day, about what that day off on July 1 has meant to me over the years, those are the memories that come flooding back. And I think those simple traditions – gathering with community, watching parades and fireworks displays, eating at picnics and backyard barbecues – is what Canada Day looks like for most Canadians.

Despite all the political arguments, economic uncertainty and social divisions we encounter every day, Canada Day offers a rare opportunity to pause and remember what we still share.

Most Canadians don't spend

Canada Day arguing politics. They spend it with family and friends. We don't all vote the same way, worship the same way, or agree on every issue, but we share communities, schools, arenas, parks and main streets.

Canada isn't perfect. No country is. But we remain one of the safest, freest and most prosperous nations in the world. We have universal health care, democratic institutions, freedom of speech, freedom of religion and peaceful transfers of power.

We can disagree fiercely and still live next door to one another.

Local Canada Day celebrations are reminders that community is built face-to-face, not on social media.

The parade organizers don't ask who you voted for. The volunteer serving pancakes doesn't care about your political stripe. The kids waving flags don't care about ideological divisions.

Small-town Canada Day celebrations are powered almost entirely by volunteers. That says something important about who we are. In communities like St. Marys and Perth South, people still step forward to coach teams, serve on committees, organize events, raise funds and help neighbours. Those are deeply Canadian values.

Canada's strength has always been its ability to bring people together from different backgrounds and ask them to build something collectively.

The Canadian flag belongs to everyone, regardless of political belief, background, ethnicity or where their family came from. Patriotism doesn't require believing Canada is perfect. It means believing it's worth celebrating and worth improving.

This year, as we gather around barbecues, watch fireworks over local parks, attend parades and spend time with those we care about, perhaps the most Canadian thing we can do is remember that we have far more in common than we sometimes think.

The communities we call home are proof of that every day. For one day at least, we can put aside the things that divide us and celebrate the country and communities that bring us together.

Bravo	Boo
<p>We have 2 Bravos this week</p> <p>1) Bravo to Alona Vasylieva for a year of fabulous articles in the Indy. I have learned lots from the stories but, most of all, I just really enjoy reading them. I'm so impressed by your writing. Putting out interesting stories week after week is a major accomplishment. Congratulations, Alona!</p> <p>2) What a delight to see the beautifully coordinated flowers on the bridge and about town, looking so lush this early in the season. Bravo!</p>	<p>We have no Boos this week</p>
<p><small>*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.</small></p>	

Quote of the Week

"You'll experience victory and defeat. You'll go four-for-four and zero-for-four. But maybe, just maybe, that little girl who was brave enough to keep showing up gets to stand up here on this stage as a Hall of Famer."

- 2026 Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame inductee Kate Psota during her induction speech to young girls starting out in baseball.

Overheard

AT THE COFFEE SHOP

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I hear the UK wants Mark Carney as their Prime Minister too.

This Messi guy appears to be like the Wayne Gretzky of soccer.

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 with the title "Overheard at The Coffee Shop", call 519.284.0041 or drop by the office to let us know!

Restoring small-town journalism, one community at a time!

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Thoughts OF THE WEEK

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Don't underestimate the value of rest. It builds you back like nothing else.

If you do not pick a day to relax, your body will pick it for you.

Trade your expectation with appreciation and your world will change.

Sometimes it takes a wrong turn to get you to the right place.

New Perth County tourism brochure includes new Flavour Map



(PHOTO COURTESY OF CLARA BOERSEN)

The new Explore Perth County brochure for 2026 includes the new Flavour Map, combining aspects like the Bakery Trail and the Farm Gate Map into a guide highlighting flavours of the region and other unique food experiences.

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Perth County's tourism guide has a new feature highlighting the region's flavours.

The newly launched Discover Perth County 2026 brochure now includes the Flavour Map, a fold-out gatefold that outlines the bakeries, farm gates, markets, self-serve farm stands, local food producers and craft-beverage stops. The new map is a combination of the tourism brochure, Bakery Trail and Farm Gate Map.

"It's easier for visitors to navigate, more cost-effective to produce and allows us to print and distribute more copies, ultimately putting Perth County's story into the hands of even more people. We believe this new format makes it easier than ever for residents and visitors alike to discover everything Perth County has to offer," Meredith Forget, county director of economic development and tourism, told the Independent.

The brochure also has a chart highlighting what is grown within Perth County and when the produce is in season. A variety of fruits and vegetables like strawberries, tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, potatoes, corn and raspberries will be in

season in July.

"By highlighting what's in season, we're also giving visitors new reasons to return and experience Perth County differently each time they visit," said Forget.

The Discover Perth County 2026 brochure also includes cycling trails, alpaca walking tours, goat socials, tubing, pick-your-own adventures like flower bouquets and berries, golf, bird watching, and more activities for all seasons.

"In the spring and summer, visitors can enjoy farm experiences, cycling routes, markets and outdoor adventures. Fall brings beautiful countryside drives and harvest experiences, while winter offers cozy culinary experiences, unique shopping, tubing and seasonal events," Forget said. "What truly sets Perth County apart is the authentic, welcoming atmosphere and the opportunity to slow down and experience our communities in a meaningful way."

The brochure can be picked up in-person at visitor centres, municipal offices, tourism hotspots and accommodations throughout Perth County. To view a digital copy of the brochure online, visit www.perthcounty.ca/discover.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



ELECTION NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

Nomination packages are available for pickup by appointment only during the construction of the Church St. stairs at Town Hall. Please call 519-284-2340 ext. 212 or email clerksoffice@town.stmarys.on.ca.

Municipal nomination forms must be filed in person (by appointment) at St. Marys Town Hall by Friday, August 21 at 2 PM. Nomination forms for school board candidates shall be filed with the respective municipalities.

More details: townofstmarys.com/elections

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Town is looking for volunteers for two exciting events:

- Triathlon (July 5)
- Stonetown Heritage Festival (July 25)

Flexible shifts available. Meet new people, give back and have fun!

Learn more: townofstmarys.com/volunteer



STONETOWN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

There's fun for everyone at the annual Stonetown Heritage Festival on Saturday, July 25! This free event celebrates the cultures, stories and histories that shape the past and present of St. Marys. The festival features family-friendly activities, heritage tours, art, vendor's and farmers' market, and live music and dance.

Learn more: discoverstmarys.ca



TOWN HALL STAIR RECONSTRUCTION

Town Hall's outdoor staircases are currently undergoing construction. Access to the Town Hall service desk and public washroom will be closed for approximately six weeks. Services usually offered at Town Hall will be provided online, by phone or at other municipal facilities.



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Pyramid Recreation Centre

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Senior of the Week



Our senior this week is Darlene Smith. Darlene celebrated her 87th birthday on June 3. She grew up in Medina and lives in Uniondale. She has five children, 20 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. She absolutely loves to read.

If you would like to nominate someone for Senior of the Week, contact us at 519.284.0041 or info@stmarysindependent.com.

Kinsmen Summerfest returns to St. Marys July 23-26

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

As the end of June rapidly approaches, anticipation is building for the premier events of the Stonetown Summer Series this July.

One of the summer's most exciting highlights will take place from July 23-26 when the St. Marys Heritage Festival and the Kinsmen Summerfest team up for an unforgettable joint weekend. While these two beloved events share the same weekend, they are funded and organized entirely independently.

To ensure this year's Summerfest is the most successful yet, the St. Marys Kinsmen Club is actively welcoming corporate sponsors and community partners. The Kinsmen Club is a proud, community-driven organization run entirely by passionate local volunteers. Unlike commercial festivals, 100 per cent of all Summerfest proceeds are reinvested directly back into the St. Marys community to support local initiatives, families and infrastructure.

Delivering their biggest musical festival to date, more than double last year's event. This year's event includes partnerships with multiple local food vendors to offer a wide variety of food options that will be available during the day at the midway and nightly at the concert events.

The increased size of this high-quality event presents growing challenges for the organization. The beloved midway, which serves as the heartbeat of Summerfest for local youth, faces unprecedented financial hurdles due to rising operating, transportation and safety costs. The Kinsmen are strictly dedicated to keeping ticket prices affordable for every family in the community, making the generosity of local sponsors more critical than ever to bridge this financial gap.

Organizers are thrilled to offer incredible entertainment and family fun at exceptional value this year. To help residents plan their weekend, the Kinsmen have released the schedule and pricing details for the midway and the highly anticipated musical acts.

There is no cost of admission for the midway and all-day passes for rides are now available to purchase. The cost is \$25 in advance and \$35 at the gate and can be purchased at www.stmaryskinsmen.com.

The Summerfest advance tickets are \$90 plus fees and can be purchased online only until July 13 and cover all three days of admission for the talented musical lineup.

By sponsoring Kinsmen Summerfest, local organizations directly fund community development while gaining premium visibility during one of the region's most highly attended weekends. The club sincerely appreciates all the help it receives, noting even a small contribution can make a profound difference in the club's ability to serve St. Marys.

Businesses looking to align their brand with this vital community initiative can choose from several tailored sponsorship tiers:

Flagship - \$5,000+

- Premier branding, top-tier event placement, and maximum community recognition.

Gold - \$2,500+

- High-visibility brand alignment across Summerfest promotional channels.

Silver - \$1,000+

- Prominent digital and on-site signage during the festival.

Bronze - \$500+

- Essential support acknowledging the business as a key community patron.

Community - Under \$500

- Vital contributions that directly offset operational costs for families.

Businesses and individuals ready to make an impact and showcase their commitment to St. Marys are encouraged to reach out. For midway passes and general inquiries, email stmaryskinsmenclub@gmail.com.

Financial contributions can be made via e-transfer to the same email address, online at stmaryskinsmen.com/donate, or by mailing a cheque payable to St. Marys Kinsmen Club, PO Box 154, St. Marys, ON, N4X 1A5.

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. How old is Canada turning this Canada Day?
2. What is the national animal of Canada?
3. Who was Canada's first prime minister?
4. What landform sits between British Columbia and Alberta?
5. Charlottetown is claimed to be "the birthplace of _____".
6. What are Canada's two official national sports?
7. The four divisions of the Canadian Corps fought together for the first time at what battle?
8. In what year was Nunavut established?
9. Who was the lead singer of the Tragically Hip?
10. Who ran across Canada to raise awareness for cancer?

This week's answers are found on pg. 39

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Stonetown Heritage Festival returns July 25

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Stonetown Heritage Festival returns on Saturday, July 25, inviting residents and visitors to savour a delicious celebration of local flavour in the heart of downtown St. Marys.

This year's event promises to offer festival goers a diverse lineup of food vendors, offering everything from sweet treats to savoury favourites and highlighting the community's vibrant culinary scene.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Queen Street and surrounding downtown blocks will be filled with the aromas and tastes of festival fare. The Kinsmen Club will be serving breakfast downtown from 8-11 a.m., offering a great way to start the day's festivities. A curated selection of food trucks will be on site, serving up crowd-pleasing eats throughout the day. Visitors can enjoy treats from Anne's Carmel Crisp, indulge in comfort food from Cluck Daddy's, cool off with refreshing options from Sunset Shack, or snack on freshly made delights from Crazee Kernels.

In addition to the food trucks, festival-goers can explore offerings from local food vendors set up downtown. Hillstone Restaurant will bring its signature flavours to the street, while The Strudel Lady will be there offering beloved hand-

made pastries.

The celebration continues throughout the downtown core, where many local restaurants will be open and welcoming guests during the festival. Visitors are encouraged to explore and support St. Marys' vibrant culinary businesses, including Gilly's, Perthstone Kitchen, Izzy's Place, Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters, The Flour Mill, Barista's, Towne & Country Cheese Shoppe, Skippy's Pizza, Pita Pit, Sukie Lee's, Four Happy, Naina's Kitchen and Green Haven Bakery. With such a wide variety of options, there is something to satisfy every craving, from quick bites and classic comfort food to unique dishes and fresh baked goods.

Beyond the food, the Stonetown Heritage Festival offers a full day of activity and community celebration. Guests can also enjoy the St. Marys Farmers' Market, located downtown for this Saturday only, running from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., where fresh local ingredients and artisanal products further highlight the region's agricultural roots.

The festival's inviting atmosphere and focus on local food and community connection make it a must-visit summer event that promises a memorable day filled with flavour.

For event details and updates, visit www.discoverstmarys.ca/events.

Free legal services for older adults expanding in Perth County

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Older adults in St. Marys, Perth South and surrounding area now have increased access to free legal information and services offered by the Huron Perth Community Legal Clinic (HPCLC) funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario (LFO).

Through this expanded initiative, eligible low-income seniors can receive legal help and education on issues that commonly affect older adults, including powers of attorney, income supports, age-related discrimination and legal rules for getting homocare. Caregivers and professionals who support older adults may also benefit from educational sessions offered through the program.


An upcoming information session about elder law is planned for Wednesday, July 8, at the Friends of the Library's Social Night from 6:30-8 p.m. at the St. Marys Public Library, with additional sessions and appointments anticipated later this summer.

In addition to one-on-one legal assistance, the clinic offers public presentations and information sessions on seniors' legal issues. The services are delivered by experienced staff lawyers and legal workers as part of a provincially funded seniors' legal program, designed to improve access to justice for older adults living on fixed or limited incomes.

Older adults, their caregivers and people who work with older adults can call the HPCLC at 1-866-867-1027 for more information.

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Brews and Food Fest brings Father's Day crowd to St. Marys



(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

Families enjoy live music at the Brews and Food Fest on Father's Day, Sunday, June 21. Pictured on the right is father Nic Yungblut relaxing on the grass with his family while watching The Plank Liners perform.



(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

Broken Rail Brewery owners and founders Ryan and Erin Leaman share refreshments with festival guest Dave Dunbar at the Brews and Food Fest.

JULIA PAUL

Independent Reporter

A hot, sunny Father's Day brought a strong crowd to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum on Sunday, June 21, as the Rotary Club of St. Marys hosted its sixth annual Brews and Food Fest.

The event, held at Fairway Wealth Management Field, featured craft beverages, food vendors, live music and a relaxed outdoor atmosphere for families and friends spending the afternoon together. Mark Oliver, past president of the Rotary Club of St. Marys and organizer of the event, said organizers were pleased with the turnout and the atmosphere throughout the day.

"We're really quite happy with it," Oliver said. "It's a beautiful day; nice to see a crowd enjoying themselves, great band, great lineup of brews."

The festival has become a Father's Day tradition in St. Marys, combining live entertainment, food and local and regional beverage vendors while raising money for Rotary-supported community projects. Oliver said attendance was up this year with a strong mix of returning guests and people attending the festival for the first time.

"I think so," Oliver said when asked if the festival had been another success. "Thanks to everybody in the community for supporting it."

Throughout the afternoon, guests spread out across the grounds to listen to music, sample drinks and enjoy food from the vendors. Families could be seen relaxing on the grass while others moved between booths, chatting with brewers

and trying new offerings.

For Broken Rail Brewery owners and founders Ryan and Erin Leaman, the event was a chance to connect with the local community while also meeting visitors from outside St. Marys. Ryan Leaman said this year's turnout was encouraging and noted that events like Brews and Food Fest help showcase the town while giving people a chance to discover Ontario craft breweries they may not have tried before.

"It's a lot better this year," Leaman said.



(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

Willibald Farm Distillery and Brewery representatives Sophie Furnet and Courtney Berseth serve guests during the Brews and Food Fest at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in St. Marys on Father's Day, Sunday, June 21.

"It's great to see it really pick up again."

Leaman said the craft beverage industry is known for its sense of collaboration, with breweries often supporting one another despite technically being competitors.

"It's one of those industries, probably one of the very few remaining, where your competitors are your best friends," Leaman said.

Broken Rail will also continue its community involvement later this summer with its Barley Run fundraiser in support

of Ronald McDonald House Charities, a cause close to the Leaman family.

Regional vendors also said the festival offered a welcoming setting and a good opportunity to reach new customers. Sophie Furnet and Courtney Berseth, who were representing Willibald Farm Distillery and Brewery in Ayr, said the St. Marys crowd was eager to try craft beverages and support small businesses.

"Everyone is really welcoming," Berseth said. "Everyone who comes out obviously enjoys craft beverages, so they're looking for something good and tasty."

Berseth said events like Brews and Food Fest are especially valuable for vendors from outside the immediate community because they introduce their products to people who may not have heard of them before. The Willibald booth saw steady traffic throughout the day, including repeat visitors returning for more samples, with popular choices including the honey gin fizz, lemon and grape.

"For people who haven't heard of us, it's a great opportunity," Berseth said.

Furnet said she enjoys the craft beverage industry because of its connection to small, local businesses.

"I love local businesses and I feel like the craft industry is made up of a bunch of small businesses," Furnet said.

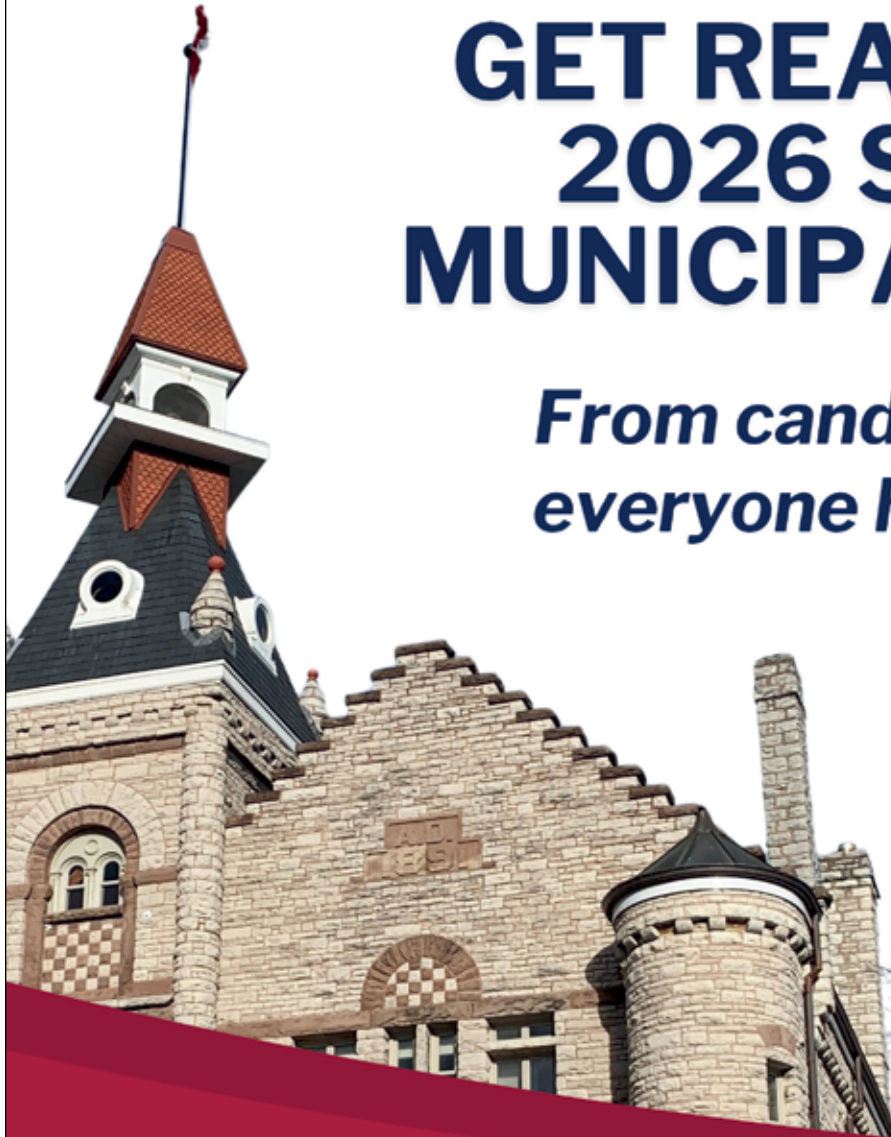
Oliver said the festival's success depends on the support of attendees, vendors, volunteers and the broader community. For Rotary, the event is about more than a summer afternoon out. Proceeds support local projects and help the club continue giving back in St. Marys.

"Thanks to everybody in the community for supporting it," Oliver said.

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June is ALS awareness month: Living with it and learning the facts

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

Since 1990, the month of June has been declared ALS awareness month.

ALS, which is also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, stands for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis where the part of the brain that sends signals to the nerves and muscles breaks down and stops sending messages on how they are to work, deteriorating those parts of the body until, eventually, the last muscles to be broken down are the ones that help with swallowing, breathing and talking.

There are two types of ALS. One is called Bulbar-Onset, which is faster moving and starts with the muscles that begin in the face, head and neck, and the other is called Limb-Onset that starts in the legs or arms and is more slower moving.

I sat down with Jane Nelson, a resident of St. Marys, to learn more about ALS, as she has been living with the disease for approximately two-and-a-half years. Nelson was diagnosed with the Limb-Onset type that is slow progressing.

The statistics for ALS are startling as there are only 4,000 people in all of Canada who have been diagnosed with ALS, with 1,400 of them in Ontario. It is not a disease that many know much about.

There is no rhyme or reason as to where it will start and where it will hit next. There is no cause as to why it starts and, right now, there is no cure.

Nelson first started to notice symptoms with easy tasks like holding a dish and noticing changes in her balance.

After a fall, Nelson was seeing a physiotherapist who happened to notice a different look to her hand and suggested she see her family doctor.

She was then referred to a neurologist in London at University Hospital and went through a wide variety of tests.

About 90 per cent of those diagnosed have no family history at all. It took about six months for an MRI, which eventually led to an ALS diagnosis for the St. Marys native.

Since she has been living with it, Nelson has regular visits with the neurologist team along with other specialist doctors who assess her current condition with the disease.

After a diagnosis, a patient can become a member of ALS Canada for research purposes and to benefit from the programs available like support and equipment through their loan program.

Though there is constant research being conducted, ALS Canada has been fighting tirelessly for more help. In 2024, a milestone was reached as the Ontario

Government committed \$13 million over three years to support the Ontario Provincial ALS program, ensuring Ontarians living with ALS have access to care, essential community services and equipment they need. This was a collaboration between ALS Canada, the patient care manager and director of ALS from Sunnyside Health Sciences Centre.

For ALS patients, when their brain is still sharp, but their body is not receiving the message, it is extremely hard.

Things that most of us take for granted daily are affecting Nelson's routine like hanging onto a utensil, washing a dish and taking a lid off a container. ALS is a very memory-oriented disease where certain motions need to be repeated by the brain, because muscles and body cannot connect.

Nelson meets regularly with the Ontario Health at Home care coordinator to assess her current condition and provide services needed. There are some webinars, support groups, a program at Stratford-Perth Rotary Hospice and other ways of navigating ALS patients needs.

In the month of June, there are many events that take place to help raise money for ALS like walks, runs, golf tournaments, bake sales, truck pull or an individual event meant to help raise funds for ALS research.

On May 23, a golf tournament was held at River Valley Golf Course for Nelson. Because she had worked there for 25 years and because of her love of golf, it was an easy place to have it. Mother nature didn't want the golf tournament to go on but the dinner and auction went on, and it was a great way to reconnect with old friends and family in support of Nelson and ALS Canada.

Sheila Dorsch, one of nine community leads of ALS Waterloo/Wellington, and a friend of Nelson's, was on hand to share some information about ALS and the importance of supporting those battling.

"The more people that understand ALS and appreciate what individuals and families are navigating, the more compassion



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Jane Nelson, who has been battling ALS for approximately two-and-a-half years, shared her story with the Independent in hopes of sharing knowledge and understanding of the disease during ALS awareness month.

and support and connection we create," Dorsch said. "Jane's strength and advocacy for herself, having to make difficult decisions, plan ahead and constantly consider what is in your own best interest is not easy but Jane approaches it with honesty, courage and grace."

One thing Nelson expressed to me during our visit was how lucky she feels to have such a great support system between family and friends.

In Nelson's thank-you letter, she wrote to everyone:

"You are the muscle and strength I need to keep going and face each day with hope and determination. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

To learn more about ALS or to donate, visit <https://als.ca>

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Walch family celebrates 50 years of growing strawberries



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Representing the fourth generation of strawberry pickers at Walch Farms Family Berries are, from left, Walter, Theresa, Maria, Lydia, Clara and Emmett Walch. The family farm south of Stratford is celebrating 50 years in the strawberry business.

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

Strawberry season has arrived at Walch Farms Family Berries, located just south of Stratford on Highway 119 in Perth County's Downie Township.

Visitors are encouraged to watch for the signs and welcoming flag that mark the entrance to the farm, where fresh strawberries are now available during one of the most anticipated harvest seasons of the year.

The Walch family grows seven different strawberry varieties, allowing the harvest season to last longer and providing

customers with fresh berries over an extended period.

Recent rainfall has also helped produce a particularly sweet crop this season.

This year marks a significant milestone for the family business as Walch Farms celebrates 50 years of growing strawberries.

According to Birgit Walch, the family's strawberry-growing roots began in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1975, where she and her husband, Augustin, operated a strawberry business alongside her parents.

The couple emigrated to Canada in the mid-1980s and settled in Downie Township, south of Stratford. After studying



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

From left are McKenzie Walch, Birgit Walch and Lisa Ropp. Lisa's young son, Noah, was sleeping nearby when the photo was taken.

the area's fertile soils, they believed the land would be ideal for growing strawberries.

As their family grew, so did the business. Birgit and Augustin Walch wanted their children to learn the value of hard work while earning money toward their education, leading the family to expand its strawberry acreage.

In 1993, the Walch family established strawberry patches on their farm along Highway 119, creating an ideal location to market their berries directly to local consumers.

Customers can choose to pick their own strawberries or purchase berries that have

already been harvested and are ready to enjoy.

In addition to the Stratford-area farm, the family also operates locations at 2255 Fisher-Hallman Rd. in Kitchener and 780 Fountain St. in Cambridge.

With six grandchildren and another on the way, Birgit Walch hopes the next generation will continue the family tradition as fourth-generation strawberry growers serving customers in Perth and Waterloo counties.

For information on picking conditions and berry availability, the Walch Farms strawberry hotline can be reached at 519-272-1423.

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Leave what you can, take what you need with LocalArt St. Marys Swap Box

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Creatives can either donate and/or take art supplies right in downtown St. Marys. The LocalArt St. Marys Swap Box, made by Jaci Henderson, will be available in front of Lyric Flowers on weekends, depending on the weather. The swap box offers free art supplies and visual art. Donations of art and art supplies of all kinds will be accepted but are not required for taking an item out of the box.

“There could be acrylic paint, there could be sticker packs, or sometimes people leave frames they’re not using or even old artwork so they might leave a painting and then someone could take that and just reuse it and create their own artwork with it,” Henderson said.

The swap box is an initiative coinciding with the LocalArt St. Marys window gallery that features visual art pieces by St. Marys and area artists and creators in the window display of Lyric Flowers on 123 Queen St. Henderson came up with the idea after receiving art supplies from other creators.

“A lot of people, sometimes they have

an overstock of craft items that they might get excited to buy and then they use it once, and then it sits,” she said. “So, a lot of people will give me their items that they don’t use anymore and then I try to rehome them for someone who could use it and then I got to thinking, ‘Why wouldn’t I just put it out into the community and then anyone can participate on their own?’”

Henderson enjoys the skill-sharing and waste-reduction aspects of the LocalArt Swap Box.

“It is a way for people to share resources and one that reduces waste and also allows someone to do something that they maybe weren’t able to go and purchase on their own, which is really neat and I like that there is an opportunity for people that are donating. Then they feel good about passing on the gift of creativity, so even if they’re not using it, they know it is going to someone who will use it versus just going to a store like it might just go to waste.”

Anyone looking to donate but cannot make it to downtown St. Marys can send a message to Henderson on Facebook.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF JACI HENDERSON)

Looking for art and crafts supplies? The LocalArt St. Marys Swap Box has items to take or donate at no cost like paints, sticker sheets, frames and even old artwork to re-purpose

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iFarm program teaches local students where their food comes from



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Maddie Baker explains crop production at the Grain Farmers of Perth County display. Students learned how crops such as corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, oats and edible beans are grown for both livestock feed and human consumption.

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

For three days each June, hundreds of grades three and four students from Stratford, St. Marys and across Perth County get a hands-on lesson about agriculture and food production through the annual iFarm education program at the Rotary Complex in Stratford.

The popular program brings together farmers, agricultural organizations and industry volunteers who spend months preparing educational displays and activities designed to help students better understand where their food comes from.

From dairy and beef cattle to pigs, chickens and grain crops, students have the opportunity to meet farmers, see animals up close and learn about the many



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Egg farmers Sally Van Straaten of Sebringville and Julie Wynette of Tavistock explain egg production to local grades three and four students during the iFarm education program at the Rotary Complex in Stratford. The pair discussed the different types of laying-hen housing systems and highlighted the nutritional benefits of eggs as part of a balanced diet.

steps involved in producing food.

Organizers say the program plays an important role in connecting young people with agriculture, particularly as fewer children have direct exposure to farming operations.

Throughout the event, students rotate through a series of interactive stations where local farmers and agricultural experts explain modern farming practices,

animal care, crop production and food safety.

The annual program continues to be one of the largest agricultural education events in Perth County and provides an opportunity for students to learn directly from the people who produce the food found on grocery store shelves and family dinner tables.

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A Victorian tea and luncheon for local residents



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

A Victorian tea luncheon took place at the Rotary Apartments Parkview West on Friday, June 12. Attendees wore formal attire, hand-crafted hats or fascinators and wrist corsages that were made by the guests. Everyone enjoyed the sandwiches, scones, and delightful treats catered by Izzy's place and of course a cup of tea. There was laughter, a few poignant tears and a lot of sharing. The two amazing servers were Anaya and Sierra, granddaughters of the late Sonja Larmer, a former resident. It was a beautiful memory-making afternoon.

Golden Oldies high school reunion postponed

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

The Golden Oldies Reunion committee has made the difficult decision to postpone this year's reunion and look ahead to a future event.

The reunion had been planned for Saturday, July 11, at the St. Marys Legion. After careful consideration, the committee felt attendance this year would not allow the event to achieve the experience and atmosphere participants have come to expect.

Feedback received by the committee also suggested that the reunions may be taking place too close together. As a result, the committee said postponing the event will allow more time to plan for a future reunion and encourage broader participation.

The committee remains committed to the Golden Oldies tradition and views this as a postponement rather than an ending. The goal is to bring graduates together at a future date when more classmates will have the opportunity to attend and reconnect.

The committee would like to thank everyone who registered, supported the event, shared information with classmates and expressed interest in attending.

The committee looks forward to welcoming everyone to a future Golden Oldies reunion.

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Volunteers wanted for St. Marys summer events

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys is inviting residents and community members to get involved this summer by volunteering at a series of exciting local events.

These opportunities offer a fun and rewarding way to give back, meet new people and help create memorable experiences for the community.

In a press release, the town said volunteering with the Town of St. Marys is a great way to contribute to the community while being part of vibrant and enjoyable events. Residents are encouraged to sign up and take part in making this summer a success. Volunteers are essential to the success of these events, and a variety of roles are available to suit different interests and availability.

The St. Marys Triathlon will be held on July 5, with flexible shifts available be-

tween 6:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Volunteers will assist with set up and clean up, help direct athletes and spectators and support water stations. A minimum of 15 volunteers are required.

The Stonetown Heritage Festival is scheduled for July 25, with flexible shifts from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Volunteer roles include set-up and clean-up support, Kids Zone activities, Vendor Village assistance and street patrol. A minimum of 15 volunteers are needed.

All volunteers must complete the Town of St. Marys volunteer onboarding process and attend a training session prior to participating.

To apply for any of these opportunities, visit townofstmarys.com/volunteer to fill out the volunteer registration application and begin the screening process.

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St. Marys council members reflect on Canada Day traditions, pride and community

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

From backyard barbecues and fireworks displays to parades and quiet weekends at the cottage, there is no shortage of ways Canadians celebrate this country on Canada Day.

As St. Marys prepares to celebrate Canada Day, members of town council are reflecting on what the holiday means to them, how they mark the occasion and what the community's annual celebrations say about the people who call St. Marys home.

With the current term of council set to conclude following the Oct. 26 municipal election, the Independent asked each member of council the same four questions about Canada Day. While their answers varied, common themes emerged: family, community, gratitude and pride in both Canada and St. Marys.

Mayor Al Strathdee

For Mayor Al Strathdee, Canada Day is about family, community traditions and honouring those who served the country.

Strathdee said he enjoys attending the Canada Day parade and celebrations at Cadzow Park, particularly the annual flag-raising ceremony led by a local veteran.

One memory stands out above the rest:

watching a 90-year-old veteran raise the Canadian flag during a heavy rainstorm and salute throughout the singing of "O Canada."

"His love of country and dedication to service was a thing that has always stuck with me," Strathdee said.

He described Canada Day as a time to reflect on how fortunate Canadians are to live in what he called "the best country in the world" and said communities should come together to honour Canada's history and achievements.

His Canada Day attire is simple: red clothing and a proudly displayed Maple Leaf.

Deputy mayor Brogan Aylward

Deputy mayor Brogan Aylward plans to spend Canada Day in St. Marys attending the parade, enjoying the festivities at Cadzow Park and gathering with family and friends for a barbecue.

Aylward said Canada Day celebrates the freedoms, opportunities and quality of life Canadians enjoy while also providing an opportunity to reflect on the country's history and future.

He said St. Marys' celebrations showcase the town's strong sense of civic pride and belonging.

"When residents volunteer their time, support local events and come together to celebrate, it shows a strong sense of civic

pride and belonging," Aylward said.

While he will wear some red and white, Aylward said civic pride is demonstrated by showing up, volunteering and supporting local organizations year-round.

Coun. Jim Craigmile

Coun. Jim Craigmile said Canada Day has taken on different meanings throughout his life.

As a child, the holiday marked the beginning of summer holidays. Later, it meant extra pay while working summer jobs and opportunities to golf with friends. As his family grew, Canada Day became increasingly centred on large family gatherings, often at Grand Bend, ending with fireworks over Lake Huron.

Those celebrations, he said, helped pass along Canadian traditions and history to younger generations.

Craigmile also praised St. Marys' annual parade and festivities, noting the large number of families who participate and thanking organizers for their efforts.

Coun. Fern Pridham

Coun. Fern Pridham said spending time outdoors is always part of her Canada Day plans, whether that means attending festivities at Cadzow Park, walking local trails or taking a day trip to a Lake Huron beach.

To her, Canada represents "safety, stability and caring."

Pridham said the sea of red and white worn by residents at the town's annual celebrations demonstrates both community spirit and national pride.

Coun. Rob Edney

For Coun. Rob Edney, Canada Day has become especially meaningful with one child currently serving in the military and another preparing to enlist.

Drawing on his experience performing as an entertainer at Canada Day celebrations across the country, Edney said every community has its own story, but all share common themes of opportunity, acceptance and respect.

He recalled memories ranging from Paul Henderson's iconic 1972 Summit



Series goal to the death of Terry Fox in 1981.

"Until then, superheroes had only existed in the pages of comic books," he said.

His Canada Day menu will feature foods from across Canada, including a Donair, a Caesar and a butter tart.

Coun. Marg Luna

Coun. Marg Luna said she usually celebrates Canada Day with her children and grandchildren while reflecting on what it means to be Canadian in today's world.

She believes St. Marys hosts one of the best Canada Day celebrations anywhere, pointing to the decorated downtown, Canadian flags and annual parade as signs of the community's pride.

Luna plans to wear her Canada Day T-shirt to mark the occasion.

Coun. Dave Lucas

Coun. Dave Lucas typically spends Canada Day at his northern Ontario cottage surrounded by family and friends.

Barbecues, campfires and time on the dock, he said, are quintessentially Canadian traditions.

Lucas views Canada Day as an opportunity to reflect on Canada's freedoms, opportunities and natural beauty.

He said communities across the country demonstrate tremendous pride through their celebrations and that those events help create positive connections among residents.

Lucas plans to fly the Canadian flag and participate in local festivities wherever he celebrates this year.

The St. Marys Independent wishes our members of council and all residents of St. Marys, Perth South and the surrounding area a very happy Canada Day, however you choose to celebrate.



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COMMUNITY EVENTS



St. Marys to host Canada Day celebrations at Cadzow Park

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

There's no better place to celebrate Canada on Wednesday, July 1, than Cadzow Park in St. Marys! Join the town for a festive gathering, rain or shine, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Start the day with the annual Canada Day parade. This year's parade route departs from the Pyramid Recreation Centre at 11 a.m., travels up James Street South, turns left onto Queen Street East to make its way downtown, then left on Wellington Street South and finally left onto Park Street, ending at Cadzow Park. The parade is free to enter; register a float by calling Don and Margaret at 519-284-1548. The deadline to register a float is June 26.

The official flag-raising and singing of the national anthem will take place at 12:30 p.m. at the Cadzow Park stage. Indigenous educator Patsy Anne Day will then lead a land welcoming ceremony to honour and acknowledge the Indigenous homelands.

Two musical acts will take the stage at Cadzow Park after the ceremony. Jesse Webber will kick things off at 1 p.m., followed by the indie-folk duo, York Street

Thought Process, at 2 p.m.

Activities for all ages will be offered throughout the afternoon, including an inflatable jumper, face painting, children's arts and crafts with EarlyON, activities with the St. Marys Public Library, and interactive demonstrations with Stonetown Karate.

Pack a swimsuit as the splash pad will be open all day. The St. Marys Museum will be open during the event with exhibits and children's crafts, offering a great space to cool down from the summer heat. Admission to the museum is free; donations are appreciated.

After working up an appetite, indulge in a delicious bite at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's fundraising barbecue. The Sunset Shack will also provide an exciting array of street food available for purchase. Additionally, attendees are welcome to enjoy a complimentary treat at the event, generously provided by Tremblett's Your Independent Grocer.

Canada Day at Cadzow Park will be a day to remember, filled with community spirit and national pride.

For more information on the event, visit www.discoverstmarys.ca/canadaday or call 519-284-2340 ext. 405.

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(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Last year's Canada Day Parade included a variety of entries and floats including local dignitaries, tractors, local businesses, bands, church groups and service clubs. The town hosted plenty of festive events afterwards at Cadzow Park with hands-on activities, barbecues, face painting, live music and children's inflatables. This year's Canada Day event is set to be just as fun, if not more so.



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St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

Beloved Blue Jay Devon White headlines 2026 class with plenty of laughs

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The positive, endearing persona that helped make fans of the Toronto Blue Jays fall in love with Devon White was on full display throughout the June 19-21 induction weekend as arguably the greatest centre fielder in franchise history took his place in the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame.

During the pre-induction media scrum, White joked about his feelings the morning of Induction Day.

“When I woke up this morning, I was like, ‘Man, am I late?’” White said with an infectious chuckle. “Because I had a good sleep. A really good sleep. I had a long day yesterday. But it’s an honour. I’m very privileged in so many ways to be honoured here.”

When asked what baseball has meant to his life, White said it was the connections he’s forged thanks to the game.

“I thought about that a while ago, and it’s the network and the friendships I’ve made,” said White. “The teammates you meet along the way. It’s been a whirlwind, and standing here today, thinking about those things, baseball has opened those doors for me to do and see so many things in my lifetime.”

One such connection came in the form of fellow beloved Blue Jays’ icon Lloyd Moseby, who helped White leave the audience in attendance in stitches on the first day of the weekend in St. Marys.

Following the golf tournament hosted by the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

2026 Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (CBHF) induction class headliner Devon White (left) laughs as Lloyd Moseby (right) cracks a joke during the banquet following the CBHF golf tournament as part of the hall’s induction weekend.

and Museum (CBHF) June 19, White was interviewed by Mike Wilner during a banquet held at the hall of fame grounds. The 2026 headliner was joined on stage by Moseby, who was in rare form alongside White, nicknamed “Devo,” tossing out plenty of good-natured ribbing of White as they talked about former Blue Jays sharing close bonds even if they hadn’t actually been on the team at the same time.

“We had a lot of fun,” Moseby said. “It’s something about the Blue Jay guys. I never played with Bobby (Alomar), but once we got together and did all that (Tournament 12) stuff, it’s like we were

connected. It’s like how people think I played with Devo; I didn’t want to play with Devo! I’ve had enough of Devo. But it was great being with Devo and traveling all across Canada.”

“(We’ve travelled together) from Edmonton to Newfoundland,” White added.

“No, from Newfoundland to Vancouver,” Moseby corrected to a chorus of laughs, including from White himself. “(Vancouver) is the end of it, dude. See, you don’t even know geography. I’m telling you, I don’t want to play with no damn Devo!”

A few moments after White said he didn’t have a written speech and instead

planned to speak from the heart during his induction ceremony, the beloved former Blue Jay refused a comparison to one of the all-time greats after Mike Wilner likened White being the Jays’ leadoff man to Willie Mays, before Moseby jumped in with a zinger that brought an uproarious laugh from the crowd.

“Well, first of all, don’t compare me to Willie Mays,” White said. “He’s at a different level.”

“And second of all,” Moseby interjected, “(White) doesn’t have a speech.”

“Absolutely right,” White said through laughter, with the interruption causing White to momentarily forget what he was going to say. “Look at this, I lost my train of thought.”

“You have no thought,” Moseby retorted.

Of course, on induction day, White did indeed have a thought – gratitude for an entire nation that embraced him as one of their own.

“This is a second home for me,” White said about Canada. “The fans, coaches and everyone on down, thank you for giving me this opportunity to get up here and to do the things I did well and play the game of baseball. That’s what I did, and it’s what I enjoyed.”

“When you win, that’s a big part of it. We were very successful when I played here, and the country is behind you. It’s like we’re watching in the World Cup right now; their country is behind each one of these teams. We had that for the five years I played here, and that’s why it’s so special.”

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CANADIAN BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

CLASS OF 2026

Stubby Clapp takes place in hall of fame with humility, big smile

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

There weren't too many moments during the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHF) induction festivities in St. Marys when there wasn't a big grin on Stubby Clapp's face.

Throughout the weekend, including during a press conference before the hall of fame induction ceremony, Clapp told the Independent how meaningful it was to be getting enshrined.

"I was thinking (when I woke up the morning of induction day), 'Wow, it's here. It's actually here.' It's an absolute honour (to be getting inducted). You just look at all these faces on the wall right here," Clapp said while standing in the room of plaques at the CBHF. "Being able to be considered alongside these people is a complete honour and completely humbling."

During his induction speech, Clapp recounted the early days of his love for baseball, going back to a recurring one-on-one game against his father.

"When I think about how we, and I say 'we' meaning everyone who's gotten me here, how did we get here? It started back in Remington Park, catching ground balls from my dad in the backyard. If I let the ball hit the fence behind me, that was a point for him, and if I was able to make a play, that was a point for me. That's how I learned to play defence."

However, according to Clapp, where he eventually wound up in baseball was not at all where he ever envisioned he would.

"As a kid growing up in Windsor, specifically Remington Park, baseball was simply just something I loved. I never imagined that one day I'd be standing here. I've had so many friends who have been inducted already, and to be standing next to them, and put up on the wall next to them, it's so special for me."

His pursuit of playing the game at the collegiate level truly began, according to Clapp, thanks to a chance encounter at a Windsor sports store.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Stubby Clapp wears a big smile as he talks to media during the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHF) June 20 induction ceremony.

"When I was 12, we're coming home from the hockey rink and my dad stopped at a sports shop to get his skates sharpened, and while we were there, the gentleman asked my dad if I would be interested in being a bat boy for a world championship coming up in Windsor," Clapp recalled. "So, my dad put my name in and we got the call a couple of weeks later that I was going to be the bat boy for the U.S.A. national team."

"That tournament did something for me. I watched those guys practice, I watched those guys play, I watched those guys work out and do their thing for about a week, and I watched those guys put those jerseys on every single day before the game, and at 12 years old, that's when my fire was lit, and by the end of that tournament, that

was when my fire was raging because I knew I wanted to be somebody who could wear their country's name across their chest.

"I didn't know what I was going to do. I had no idea it would be baseball, but I was going to do something to represent my country."

That fire burned brightly to the point when Clapp eventually suited up for Texas Tech University, where he still never considered the possibility of playing professionally, a notion that led to a funny encounter with one of his coaches had the induction ceremony laughing hysterically.

"We're in Lubbock getting ready for the regional tournament and I get a call from the coach who said, 'Hey, we need you to come to the office.' On the way to the office, I'm thinking, 'I kept my 3.0 grade point average, I didn't go out drinking last night, I didn't break a curfew, I think I've been a good teammate. Why are they calling me into the office?'"

"I get in there and he says, 'Sit down, we need to talk to you,' and I'm like, 'Oh boy,'" Clapp continued, feeling he was in deep trouble. "The head coach then asks me, 'If you get drafted, are you going to go?' I said, 'Pardon me?' He said, 'If you get drafted, we need to know if you're going to go.' I answered, 'Sir, I'm Canadian, I can't fight for your army.' I had no idea what the major league draft was. I had no idea; I was clueless. I was playing baseball because I loved it and because someone was paying for my education. If they were going to pay for my education, I was thinking, 'I'm going to be a doctor if they're going to pay for it.'"

Eventually, Clapp achieved his ultimate goal of representing his country, which he said was the most special moment of his career.

"There's nothing more special than representing Canada," Clapp said. "That was my childhood dream as a kid, to represent my country and to be able to do it as many times as I've been able to. I'm absolutely elated to do it and, to me, it's the epitome of being able to do something special."



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CANADIAN BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

CLASS OF 2026

Kate Psota recognized as trailblazer of women's game

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Kate Psota took her rightful place among the legends of baseball in Canada June 20 during the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) induction ceremony.

Psota had an incredible career representing Canada, developing into one of the best and longest-tenured players in the history of the women's national team. She won Baseball Canada's Ashley Stephenson Award, which is handed out annually to a women's team member to recognize their on-field accomplishments, team spirit and leadership, in 2008, followed by back-to-back Team MVP awards in 2009 and 2010.

During the banquet following the annual golf tournament as part of the hall of fame's induction weekend, Psota was interviewed by Mike Wilner and talked about a moment during the 2018 World Cup in which Team Canada won bronze, which she described as an important moment late in her career where she saw the fruits of her labour pay off.

"What comes to mind (about being inducted) is a lot of gratitude," said Psota. "When I started, I was only 18. I was the baby and they used to tell me that all the time, like, 'What do you know, you're just a kid?' But I think the way I played and the way I went about the game, I was more of a quiet leader.

"The whole full-circle moment for me was when we beat the Americans for bronze on their home turf, and we had a 16-year-old pitcher, Alli Schroeder, throwing to a 17-year-old catcher, Kaitlyn Ross, and I was sitting there thinking, 'This is it for me. I've seen everything

and I'm happy with where I left the game and where the program is at.'"

Psota elaborated on what that moment of seeing the future arrive meant to her during a media event before the induction ceremony.

"What it meant was that the program was in good hands moving forward," Psota said. "I think when we started this, we were all so new, and then we adopted that program and it became sort of synonymous with who we were as people. So, to see that moment, to see everything come full circle, was just very special."

During her speech, the reserved, thoughtful Psota spoke directly to young female athletes about following the path she has walked.

"I often get asked what advice I would give to young girls who are starting their journey, and my message is very simple: be brave. Be brave when you show up at your first practice and you don't know anybody, and maybe you're the only girl. Be brave when you go to your first tryout and you aren't sure if you're good enough to make the team. This game is very easy when everything goes your way and be brave when it doesn't, when it's hard – and trust me, it will be very hard sometimes. To quote a famous baseball movie, 'The hard is what makes it great.'

"Stick with it, stay determined and show up every day with a positive attitude, and all of a sudden, that first practice leads to new friends," Psota added. "You start to meet other girls playing too. You make your first REP team, then provincial team, then a newly formed women's national team. You get to travel the world with 19 other women who are just like you. You'll experience victory and defeat. You'll go four-for-four and zero-for-



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Kate Psota makes her way into the tent for the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) induction ceremony June 20.

four. But maybe, just maybe, that little girl who was brave enough to keep showing up gets to stand up here on this stage as a hall of famer."

Hazel Mae accepts 2025 Jack Graney Award

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

One of the most universally beloved figures in Canadian baseball broadcasting history, Hazel Mae, was recognized during the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) induction ceremony June 20 as the 2025 winner of the Jack Graney Award.

The award is presented annually by the hall of fame to a representative of the media who has made a significant contribution to the game of baseball in Canada through their life's work, or for a singular outstanding achievement.

In her acceptance speech, Mae described the moment she received word she was the 2025 Jack Graney Award recipient, as she realized she would be on the other side of the award after having presented it for several years as the induction ceremony's emcee.

"What an honour," Mae said to open her speech. "When Scott Crawford called me last fall with the Jack Graney Award news, I have to admit, it took me a minute to process what he was saying because I was usually introducing the Jack Graney Award as the host. Never could I have imagined one day being a recipient."

After beginning her career in Toronto sports media in

2001 as a morning anchor of Sportsnet Central, as well as hosting a weekly show about the Toronto Blue Jays called Jzone, Mae then spent four years in Boston, including roles as the anchor of the New England Sports Network's Sportsnet program and hosting The Ultimate Red Sox Show. Mae was also part of the broadcast team in 2004 covering the Red Sox snapping an 86-year World Series championship drought.

Mae became the first on-air talent hired by the MLB Network in 2008, hosting Quick Pitch and working on the Emmy Award-winning studio show, MLB Tonight. Mae was also a sideline reporter for Thursday Night Baseball, before, in 2011, returning home to Toronto, first to anchor Sportsnet Central at 6 p.m., followed by a shift four years later to becoming the in-game report for the Blue Jays, a role she still holds today, and has become synonymous with Mae.

When fans think of a Toronto Blue Jays broadcast, they think of Hazel Mae.

Mae credited the then-Sportsnet head with giving her several key breaks in her career, including making her the in-game reporter for the Blue Jays.

"When I returned home to Toronto, mostly because I was homesick, Scott Moore once again played a vital role," said Mae. "He moved me from the studio onto

the field covering the team I grew up cheering for, the Toronto Blue Jays. But even long before that, years ago, my journey officially began as a university campus radio station sports reporter, sitting in the last row of the Rogers Centre press box, thanks to longtime PR guru Howard Starkman. And it was Howie that granted credentials to our campus radio station with an audience that was so small but extremely loyal, mostly because the majority of our radio listeners were related to us."

Mae was emotional yet humorous talking about how special it was to receive the award just one day before Father's Day, as well as expressing gratitude to baseball fans across Canada.

"I'm thinking of my late father today," Mae said through tears. "It's so fitting that you're honouring me on Father's Day weekend. Dad would have thought it was such a cool thing I was here with Lloyd Moseby and Devon White. He would have thought it was so cool, but I know he's looking down on me and thinking, 'She did okay, and I hope she doesn't mess up the ending of her speech.' If this proud Canadian played even a small role in helping fans feel closer to the game we love and the moment that really matters, then I consider myself truly blessed."



Jim Baba's kids carry father's spirit, passion for baseball during induction

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Mitch, Jamie and Melanie Baba accepted the plaque on behalf of their late father, Jim Baba, during the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) induction ceremony June 20, and did so with a heartfelt and entertaining speech that succinctly and perfectly honoured their father, just one day before Father's Day.

Mitch Baba delivered the speech for the three kids of the longtime Baseball Canada executive director, calling it a massive honour to accept the induction on his father's behalf.

"I have to tell you, standing up here is one of the greatest honours of my life," Mitch Baba said. "My dad should be the one up here. I know he would have loved it, even though he never liked talking about himself. Knowing him, the speech would have ran 20 minutes over the allotted time, and he would have told detailed stories about every person he ever coached or played with in baseball. I'll try to do a better job of keeping it short."

The speech not only honoured his father with grace and humour, but also paid tribute to the trio's mother, who passed away two months after Jim Baba's passing in September of 2025.

"We lost our parents close together, and yet, here we are at a baseball diamond, which feels, honestly, exactly right," said Mitch Baba. "They were a team, those



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Mitch Baba delivers a speech while joined by sisters Melanie and Jamie during the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) induction ceremony. The adult children of Jim Baba accepted the hall of fame induction on their late father's behalf.

two, so far as spending many years working together at Baseball Canada. And if you knew them, you already know that my mom spent a good portion of her life sitting next to a man who had three screens going, with three different baseball games on all at once, and somehow managed to fall asleep to them every single time."

According to Mitch Baba, growing up as the child of Jim Baba was an honour in and of itself.

"I want to tell you something about what it's like to be Jim Baba's kid. When you're young, someone inevitably asks, 'What does your dad do for work?' Most people would say something like accoun-

tant, teacher, or plumber. Not me. I got to say my dad works for Baseball Canada, and how cool is that? My dad worked in baseball, not as a hobby, not on the weekends, but as his life's work. I couldn't have been prouder to be his son."

As mentioned before, Mitch Baba used humour to honour his father and paint a picture of a man who generously and enthusiastically gave his life to baseball, something that was a theme throughout his speech.

"My dad used to joke, and my mom used to remind him, that baseball was his first love, and family came second," Mitch Baba joked. "That's not true," he'd say, "but it's pretty close." The thing

is, we never felt like we came second. His love of baseball spilled over into everything he did. It was how he saw the world. Baseball, to him, was people. It was community. It was Saskatchewan towns, summer diamonds and sunflower seeds. It was kids getting their first taste of something that would change their whole lives. It was the fabric of his life, too, right up until the end.

Mitch Baba punctuated his speech by describing his father's romanticism for the game he loved.

"Dad once wrote about what the game meant to him, and he started the list with two words: lifelong friends. I think that says everything about him. I also found an old speech about how he described baseball. He said, 'Baseball isn't a sport about stats or salaries or highlight reels. It's about peanuts and popcorn and Cracker Jacks. It's sitting in a lawn chair with your wife watching your son's baseball game. It's eating a fudgecicle on the hottest day of the year and not caring about it dripping all over your hands because you're at the ballpark. And I can say, from personal experience, it's umpiring your son's game, calling him out at first base even though he was safe and then having to hear about it on the whole car ride home.'

"I'm still not over it, dad. That's what he built his career around, those feelings. My dad was always romantic about baseball."



Congratulations!

CANADIAN BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

CLASS OF 2026

Paul Runge's stories a highlight of induction weekend

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

There is usually one surprise every year at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) induction weekend. Someone who may not be the headliner, but who captures everyone's attention with their wit and storytelling.

This year, that was longtime umpire Paul Runge, who regaled attendees with countless stories from his decades-long career as a major league umpire.

During his induction speech, Runge recounted a story where, in 1974, the then-fresh-faced umpire was working a game and hit a bit of controversy when a ball cleared a chain-link fence, and he couldn't tell if it had hit the grass and bounced over the fence or if it had cleared the fence cleanly.

According to Runge, he made a gesture to the more experienced umpire, John McSherry, waving two fingers at McSherry, who asked for clarification on the call, only for Runge to repeat the same gesture to him.

"Two outfielders charged at me, thinking I had called it a homerun," Runge said. "So, I went to the other umpires – not John McSherry – Bruce Froemming at second base, and I said, 'Did you see where the ball went?' I asked the crew chief and he didn't see it either. So, I said, 'Here's what I'm going to do. The two guys running at me, they're not wrong.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Paul Runge captivates the audience with one of his many stories during his induction speech as part of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) June 20 induction ceremony.

They'll kill me if I don't change it. So, I'm going to make it two bases.' He said, 'Well, it's up to you, but you're in serious trouble if you're wrong.'

"Preston Gomez comes out and says, 'What the hell are you doing?' I told him,

'It's two bases.' He said, 'I know two bases, but how do you know it's two bases?' I said, 'Those two guys charging at me.'

Runge, just 24 hours previously, told a story during the post-golf tournament

banquet about an altercation with one of baseball's most iconic managers, Tommy Lasorda.

"It was at the end of the season between Los Angeles (Dodgers) and Houston (Astros), and there was a play in the eighth inning. The game is tied and a guy is stealing second, and I'm working second base. Billy Russell catches the ball, swings and misses the tag. Well, here comes (Tommy) Lasorda."

According to Runge, the legendary Dodgers' manager wound up with egg on his face, evoking a big laugh from those listening to the story intently at the banquet.

"It's funny; Lasorda comes out of the dugout," Runge said, mimicking Tommy Lasorda with wild flailing arms. "He asks me what happened there. I said, 'He missed the tag.' Lasorda says, 'Oh, he can't miss the tag, he had the ball.' I said, 'Ask Billy Russell.' Lasorda asks, 'Billy, did you tag him?' Billy says, 'Nope, I missed him.'

"Lasorda turns to me and says, 'Well, I'm going to stay out here a little bit longer because I have to stay and get upset at you,' continued Runge, once again mimicking the flailing arms of Lasorda. "I said, 'Okay Tommy, you stay, but when I turn around, you've got to turn around.'"

Runge said Lasorda agreed to the deal, all while continuing to gesticulate wildly with his arms.

Bill Stoneman impressed by Stonetown in first trip to home of CBHFM

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Bill Stoneman's first trip to St. Marys was an incredibly special one as the former Montreal Expos star pitcher was enshrined as Hall of Famer in the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) June 20 induction ceremony.

Speaking during a media scrum the morning of induction day, Stoneman told the Independent he appreciated the reception when he arrived in St. Marys a day early.

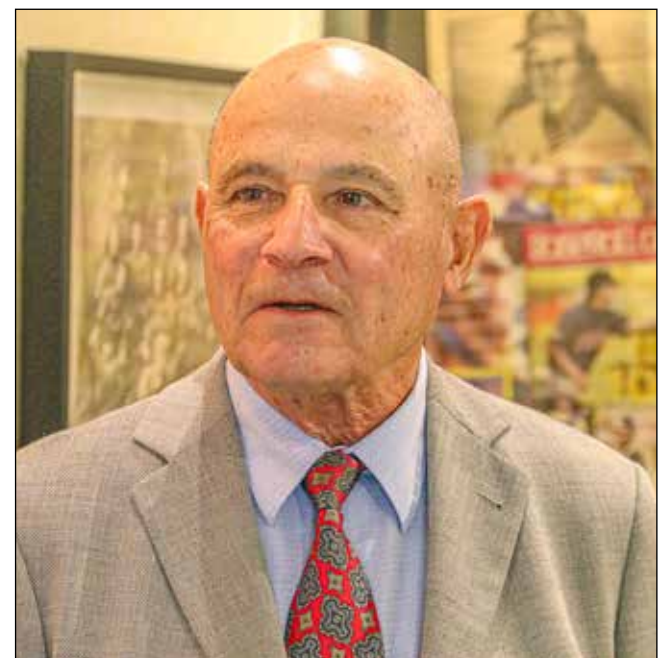
"I'm just looking forward to this," said Stoneman. "We had a dinner and some interviews here (June 19), and the day before, I drove out here on my own, and the museum was open, and I walked into the museum, and they recognized me and welcomed me in and gave me a tour of the place. It's neat to be at a place I'd never been to."

According to Stoneman, he was taken aback by the beauty of both the hall of fame and museum and St. Marys as a whole.

"I like small towns, and this is a small town," Stoneman said. "It looks historic. You've got some buildings here that are unbelievable, and I like that. And I like getting out here to the hall of fame and walking around in the different rooms in the museum and seeing some interesting things and pictures of a lot of guys that I know and a lot of guys that I wish I knew."

Stoneman also described what the game of baseball has meant to him.

"It's been my life. I was playing baseball as a kid, played in high school, then went to college, played at the University of Idaho and on a team my senior year, we almost made it back to Omaha for the College World Series. We were beaten by the University of Arizona by one run, and that got us in front of a lot of scouts. We never saw a lot of scouts up in Idaho, but it was the second year of the draft, and it convinced one of the scouts that they ought to draft me, so it got me a job professionally."



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Bill Stoneman speaks during a press event before the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum's (CBHFM) induction ceremony.

STK students capture medals at GMA Championships



Pictured on the left, from left to right, are sensei Jalyne Lorentz and Rakesh Rugmini. Pictured in the middle, from left, are Geoff Holdsworth and Morgan Houston. Pictured on the right is Jack Brocklebank of Thorndale. The five Stonetown Karate (STK) students combined to win nine medals at the GMA Championships, hosted June 6 in Kitchener. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

SPENCER SEYMOUR
Independent Sports Reporter

Five Stonetown Karate (STK) students representing St. Marys and Thorndale earned an impressive cache of medals at the GMA Championships June 6 in Kitchener.

Sensei Jeremy Lorentz told the Independent the tournament was another shining example of his students' mental and emotional fortitude.

"Their composure and respect they showed throughout the tournament really stood out," said Lorentz. "Tournaments can be challenging, especially for players who may not have had a lot of experience competing at these events, but our students embraced that challenge incredibly well."

Sensei Jalyne Lorentz, competing in the 18+ women's black belt division, won the gold medal in traditional forms. Jalyne Lorentz also added a pair of silver medals in the traditional forms challenge and creative weapons, as well as a bronze in traditional weapons.

Morgan Houston earned a gold in the 35+ women's

forms division and also picked up a silver in the weapons division.

On the men's side of the 35+ weapons bracket, Geoff Holdsworth secured a gold medal.

In the 11-12 girls and boys novice forms division, Rugmini Rakesh delivered a strong tournament showing, claiming a silver medal.

Representing Thorndale, Jack Brocklebank also had a great tournament effort, taking a bronze medal in the nine to 10 girls and boys novice forms division.

With Rakesh and Brocklebank especially, the tournament saw some new faces representing the St. Marys and Thorndale-based dojos and securing top-three results, which sensei Jeremy Lorentz called "incredibly rewarding and exciting" to see.

"It's incredibly rewarding to see new students stepping up and finding success while representing STK," Jeremy Lorentz said. "One of the most exciting things for us as an organization is watching the next wave of talent develop and make their mark. Rugmini and Jack's results are a real testament to the work they've been putting in

behind the scenes. Tournament success doesn't happen overnight; it comes from dedication, consistency and a willingness to keep improving."

The tournament, according to Jeremy Lorentz, also gave all of their students another chance to enjoy the fruits of their labour in their training regimens.

"For all our students, it wasn't just about earning strong results, it was about seeing the hard work they've put in over the last few weeks and months pay off in the ring, showing them the progress they have made. Moments like that are incredibly rewarding because they remind you that development isn't always linear, and sometimes a breakthrough tournament can provide a huge boost in confidence.

"More than anything, this event reinforced the culture we're trying to build at STK; a group that competes hard, supports one another and continues to grow together," Jeremy Lorentz continued. "Those are the moments that stay with you long after the final standings are announced."

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Solutions on pg. 39

Glover, Petrie, Shackletons win green jackets at Lincs golf tournament



(PAT PAYTON PHOTO)

Green jacket winners! The foursome of Brett Petrie, left, David Shackleton, Paul Shackleton and Mike Glover won the 2026 St. Marys Lincolns golf tournament with a sizzling score of 14-under-par June 20 at River Valley Golf and Country Club. The winning team had 10 birdies and two eagles during their stellar round. A full field of 36 teams took part in this year's Lincs' fundraiser.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The foursome of Mike Glover, Brett Petrie, David Shackleton and Paul Shackleton earned the green jackets as the winners of the annual golf tournament hosted by the St. Marys Lincolns at River Valley Golf and Country Club.

The winning group's strong performance included a pair of eagles and 10 birdies en route to a 14-under-par score to take the tournament's top spot. Team captain Mike Glover told the Independent the team hit their stride after a somewhat average start to their round.

"We started off slow with four pars, but then we went on a bit of a heater with a birdie or eagle on the next nine holes to put us in a pretty good spot," Glover said.

"It gives the group confidence for sure (when you get on such a heater). If one guy makes a mistake, there was no panic as it seemed one of us was going to hit the shot we needed. It frees up the swing a little and makes the game quite fun. A few cold ones perhaps settled us in after a slow start."

Glover cited clutch contributions from all four team members as helping lift the team to victory.

"Our putting was real solid; we hit three or four that we likely didn't have any business making but generally, those are the breaks you need. Paul (Shackleton)'s putting all day was fun to watch. Off the tee, we were able to get ourselves in pretty great shape on the par-fours and made it pretty easy to score on those.

"Brett (Petrie) had some unbelievable



(PAT PAYTON PHOTO)

This year, the St. Marys Lincolns' Alumni Recognition Trophy went to Jamie Hahn, second from left. The presentation was made June 20 following the Lincs' annual golf tournament. Hahn, who is currently the Lincolns' public address announcer, has been a member of the Lincs' organization for about 60 years. Posing for a photo with Hahn are fellow Alumni members Rick Fifield, left, Scott Graham and Brian Hughes, right.

shots," Glover continued. "On number one, we needed an eagle, and he put us in the middle of the fairway and then hit a five-iron and stuck it to a couple of feet for an easy putt. On two, we didn't have a great tee shot that left us with 30 or so feet, but Dave (Shackleton) drained that. Again, on nine, Brett came up big. He drove the green and then Paul (Shackleton) hit a ridiculous 45-plus foot putt for eagle."


Following the tournament, the Lincolns' Alumni Group Recognition Trophy was presented to Jamie Hahn. Currently, the public address announcer at the Lincolns' games, Hahn has served in a variety of different roles in his 60 years involved with the Lincolns.

It is the fourth year the Lincolns' Alumni Group has presented the award

to someone who has made a significant contribution to the Lincolns as a volunteer or off-ice member of the team. Past winners include Pat Payton, Rob Mossey and Mike Bannerman.

The team of Josh Becker, Peter Hughes, Mark Monteith and Mark Ross finished second in the tournament, scoring 12-under-par. Becker also won the men's closest to the pin prize, with Mary Jane Marcaccio winning the prize on the women's side.




The men's longest drive was won by Frasier Lewis, while Sandy Fifield had the women's longest drive. The winners of the putting contest were Ray Cousineau, Anna Doupe, Emmett Doupe and Jeff Doupe.



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Lincs add 'energy, scoring punch' with acquisition of Mikey Pope

SPENCER SEYMOUR
Independent Sports Reporter

With their forward group losing a significant amount of scoring prowess, the St. Marys Lincolns took a step towards replenishing their offensive attack with the acquisition of Mikey Pope from the Stoney Creek Generals of the Greater Ontario Hockey League's (GOHL) Eastern Conference.

The Generals' organization relocated following this past season, with the team formerly being the Caledon Bombers.

Lincolns' general manager Pat Powers told the Independent Pope, a Waterloo product who turns 17 years old in December, offers a much-needed scoring threat to the Lincolns' lineup.

"He's just a proven goal scorer in our league," said Powers. "He's a guy who brings tenacity, energy and a scoring touch. It's definitely going to be nice to have a younger guy who can create some offence instead of constantly relying on 20-year-olds. I think he's going to bring a lot of energy to our offence, which is something that we haven't really had since we lost (Luca) Spagnolo and



Pictured is Mikey Pope, the St. Marys Lincolns' newest acquisition after being dealt to the Lincs from the Stoney Creek Generals. Pope, who turns 17 in December, scored 25 goals and 44 points in 47 games last year as a 16-year-old rookie with the Caledon Bombers.

(Jaden) Lee."

Last year, Pope scored 25 goals and 44 points in 47 games with the Bombers. Powers added the offence Pope will pro-

vide is especially needed after the aging out of key offensive weapons Chase MacQueen-Spence, Lincoln Moore and Owen Voortman.

"We lost a lot of offence, obviously, with (Owen) Voortman, (Lincoln) Moore and (Chase) MacQueen-Spence," said Powers. "To get a proven scorer in our league was important. Mikey (Pope) obviously proved himself last year in this league and has confidence in his ability to score in this league, so I think that should definitely bring another element to our offence up front."

With the Lincolns playing a system that demands defensive responsibility, a high-octane scorer like Pope could, in theory, have some struggles. However, Powers stated he has confidence Pope has the skills necessary to fit the Lincolns' gameplan.

"He's a smart player," Powers said. "I don't think he was necessarily asked to play a lot of defence last year, so there might be a little bit of a learning curve for him. But he's a high-IQ player. He plays with pace and I think when you have those two things, you allow yourself to be able to play a 200-foot game. He can get on the forecheck, he can compete on the backcheck, he's very gritty, so I don't see there being any issues with him fitting in."

(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

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COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: The European mosaic part two – where Swiss Alps meet the Italian Sea

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

The transition from Switzerland to Italy is more than just crossing a border; it is a dramatic shift in energy, rhythm and lifestyle. As you descend from the pristine, quiet majesty of alpine passes and deep lakes, the air changes, the landscape opens up and a distinctly warm, spontaneous world embraces you.

Driving across the border immediately reveals an amusing contrast in road-trip philosophy between the two nations.

In Switzerland, the highway rest stops are models of efficiency, offering impeccably clean facilities – but always at a price. Finding yourself without the exact coins for the turnstile can quickly turn into a minor roadside crisis.

Crossing into Italy, however, brings a welcoming shift. Here, the highway rest areas are completely free of charge. It is a subtle but heartwarming difference: one country charges you for the absolute perfection of its infrastructure, while the other simply invites you in, reflecting the relaxed, generous hospitality that makes Italy so easy to love.

Once inside Italy, the cultural exploration truly begins, often starting with a quest to shake off typical tourist stereotypes. Many travelers arrive expecting pizza on every corner, but regional reality quickly corrects you – in Liguria, for instance, the absolute star is a slice of warm, olive-oil-scented focaccia. Then comes the art of timing. Italy follows its own strict culinary clock, and adjusting to the specific hours of Italian dining requires patience.

If you miss the lunch window, the kitchens close, forcing you to slow down and wait for dinner, just like the locals do.

But the rewards are unmatched. Espresso



(ALONA VASYLIEVA PHOTOS)

From Swiss alpine tolls to Italian coastal hospitality, a journey across borders reveals the unexpected cultural rhythms, financial realities and road-trip truths of Western Europe.

so and gelato are everywhere, serving as the heartbeat of daily life. The search for the perfect pistachio gelato – rich, slightly salty and genuinely nutty – becomes a daily ritual.

Another delightful surprise was Italy's refreshing philosophy on tipping. In an era when paying for a meal often comes with subtle social pressure or complicated mental math, the Italian approach is beautifully simple. Even in highly touristy areas, tipping is never treated as a mandatory obligation, nor is it automatically expected. Instead, hospitality here focuses entirely on the experience itself.

Every time I tried to leave a little extra, waiters, baristas and hotel staff seemed genuinely surprised, accepting it with modest, heartwarming gratitude rather than a sense of entitlement. It made the

entire dining experience feel incredibly genuine and stress-free.

Looking back at the journey, Switzerland and Italy feel absolutely different, yet both are magnificent in their own unique ways. Switzerland remains unbeatable in its natural beauty; the way it blends so many breathtaking wonders within such a tiny, concentrated territory is nothing short of miraculous. However, once the initial tourist awe settles, a practical reality becomes clear: you almost need to earn your living in Swiss francs to keep that admiration and price tolerance stable over time.

Italy, on the other hand, holds a distinct advantage simply because of the sea. The air feels lighter, the coastlines stretch out before you and navigating daily life in Euros brings a comforting ease.

To widen the lens just a bit, adding France to this comparison brings another layer of perspective. While France possesses undeniable cultural charm and romance, the overall environment on the ground often feels noticeably less pristine and a bit dirtier compared to the spotless, clockwork precision of Switzerland.

In the end, this European mosaic proves that you don't have to choose a single favourite. The absolute perfection of the Swiss Alps, the sun-drenched coastal freedom of Italy, and the gritty, historic character of France each offer a different answer to what makes a journey truly unforgettable. It is precisely in these sharp contrasts – and the unexpected moments between them – that the true magic of travel is found.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

The 2026 Summer Reading Program begins next week! Our coordinator, Grace, has built an entertaining and educational line-up of engaging in-person programs and prepared a Reading Challenge that will motivate kids of all ages to read all summer long.

All programs are free to attend! Unless otherwise stated, you must register for all programs on ActiveNet (tinyurl.com/SMPL-ActiveNet). Program registration opens the Friday before the week begins, which means that Week 1 registration opens tomorrow!

For more information and to pick up your Reading Challenge Passport, visit the Library. Sign-up for the Summer Program 2026 newsletter (tinyurl.com/SMPL-Newsletters) and follow the Library on social media to stay up to date with the latest news and announcements.

UP THIS WEEK

- Fri., June 26: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Sat., June 27: Dungeons & Dragons (10 a.m.)
- Mon., June 29: Picnic in the Park*^ (12-1 p.m.), Discovery Den* (3:15 – 4:30 p.m.), Learning for Life – Emergency Management with the Perth County Paramedics* (6-8 p.m.)
- Tues., June 30: Reading Help* (10:30 – 11:30 a.m.), Tuesday Book Club* (11 a.m.), Crafty Kids* (1:45 – 3 p.m.)
- Wed., Jul. 1: CLOSED - come see us at Cadzow Park!
- Thurs., Jul. 2: Mini Makers* (10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Fluency Fitness*^ (2-3 p.m.)

*Registration Required ^Held at Kin Park (109 James St. N)

Ask the Arborist

By Joel Hackett • 519.272.5742 • jtsquote@gmail.com

Joel Hackett is a certified Arborist residing in the St. Marys area. Currently, he spends most of the year running Joel's Tree Service. For contact call 519.272.5742 or email jtsquote@gmail.com



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We have a dead tree and we don't have the budget right now to remove it, but I am worried it's dangerous. It's kind of in an awkward spot, and the house is at risk. I don't know what kind of tree it is. How long can I leave it before it becomes dangerous?

Thanks, T

Dear T,

Due to the liability and risk to ourselves when removing a dead tree, we recommend doing so as

soon as possible.

Over the years, there have been a lot of accidents where the dead tree falls and injures someone who is attempting to remove it. There is also the risk of property damage.

The longer it is left, the higher the risk; if left long enough, the cost also increases, as you sometimes have to bring in specialized equipment like a crane. Unfortunately, it's just one of those things that has to be done; a stitch in time saves 9.

Sincerely, The Arborist

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Picture postcards

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

The gift shop at the St. Marys Museum has new postcards to sell. The cards show a contemporary view in full colour of the front entrance to the beautiful limestone building. The Friends of the Museum sponsors the gift shop and a few of the directors were skeptical about purchasing a stock of postcards. Would anyone buy them? Did anyone use postcards anymore? Museum staff have noted that, in fact, tourists do ask for postcards. They may mail them to friends or family, but more often they keep the cards as small, inexpensive souvenirs of places they have visited.

Collecting postcards is a decades-old hobby. Apparently, postcards rank third, after stamps and coins, as most popular of traditional collectible items. Serious postcard collectors call their activity “deltiology.” That term was coined by an American collector in the 1940s, based on the symbol for the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet, Delta, shaped like a small tablet. In other words, deltiology is the study of objects printed on a small-format object – a postcard! The internet is filled with advice for anyone who wants to get started collecting postcards – where to look for them, how to preserve them, and how to trade or sell them. Because there is such a diverse range of postcards, all sites advise would-be collectors to focus on a special interest – transportation, sports, patriotism, or a geographical area or feature, such as famous waterfalls or summer resorts.

Postcards of the greatest value to the St. Marys Museum are those that show historic views of our town’s buildings or streetscapes. They trace the stages in the community’s growth and development. Clothing styles, buggies, bicycles, early automobiles, signage on stores – if these details appear on the postcard, they provide historic information. There were some very successful Canadian postcard companies who produced these popular picture postcards in the early years of the 20th century. Lithographic postcards show these same scenes in colour and are very collectible, even though sometimes the colours are not true to the actual scene. Photographers at that time began to print their pictures on postcard paper. They were usually printed in small batches and, although the early ones were not in colour, these Real Photo Postcards (RPPCs) are prized by collectors.

Through the years, staff at the St. Marys Museum have learned the value of historic postcards, thanks to some serious collectors who have not only shared their treasures but also taken the time to explain what makes each card significant. The Museum has acquired a large inventory of postcards, kept in the archives, some from collections inherited after their owners died. The first came from Don Whetstone (1924-1994), a great supporter of the Museum. Don lived in London but had grown up in St. Marys. He and his wife, Lois, had many friends and relatives in this area and visited regularly. Don’s interest in postcards focused on several communities, including London and St. Marys. He was always happy to bring his St. Marys album to special events at the Museum and enjoyed sharing them with visitors. This album, now permanently in the archives, included postcards used as advertising by local businesses, such as dairy farms, grocery stores, and service stations. Since most of these businesses closed long ago, their postcards are a historic record.

Frank MacKay (1916-1998) and Elsie Bradshaw MacKay (1919-2007) collected postcards and just about everything else related to this area’s history. Their house on Queen Street West was crammed with treasures: antique clocks (all wound and keeping perfect time), oil lamps with colourful glass globes, souvenir china, me-



(PHOTO COURTESY OF REG NEAR POSTCARD COLLECTION, R. LORNE EEDY ARCHIVES, ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

This comic postcard, printed in 1909 by the Canadian Postcard Company, was collected by Reg Near as an example of a novelty card from that time period.

chanical toys, flatirons, butter paddles, woodworking tools, Victrolas, and many, many other items. Remarkably, they both knew exactly where everything was. They generously lent many artifacts to the St. Marys Museum for special exhibits. If asked for something specific, they could retrieve it immediately. When the first Heritage Fair was held in February 1997, the MacKays’ collection of old postcards and photographs was a prime attraction. Looking at these pictures was such an accessible way of learning about history!

The St. Marys Museum inherited 16 binders of MacKay postcards. While some show pictures of St. Marys and the surrounding area, others contain novelty postcards, also sought after by collectors. For example, one binder contains only leather postcards. Made from thin, pliable leather, these novelty cards had messages and pictures burned onto the surface with a pyrography pen. They were popular until about 1909 when they were banned from the mail because “leathers” tended to jam the postal service’s new sorting machines. Leather postcards are still available, but now when collectors exchange them by mail, they enclose them in regular envelopes.

The champion of local postcard collectors was Reg Near (1928-2012.) Reg lived all his life in St. Marys and was committed to the history of this community. He had a great memory and was a source of information for local history researchers. He worked for 35 years at the post office and knew the names of everyone in town who came there to collect their mail or to send letters. He was involved in many aspects of town life. He enjoyed tennis, curling, and was a keen lawn bowler. He served in every lay capacity at St. James Anglican Church and was a long-standing member of the Imperial Order of Odd Fellows. He played trombone in the town marching band and, after he retired, he was a regular volunteer at the Friendship Centre. He was also a founding member of the St. Marys Historical Society and served for many years on the St. Marys Museum Board.

His postcard collection reflected his many interests.

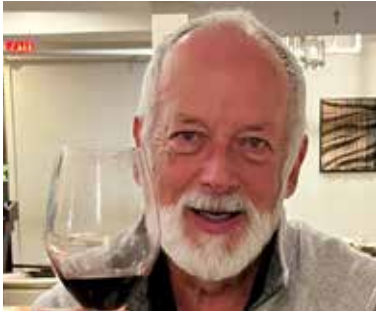
For instance, he had a great collection showing original post office buildings across Canada. These 19th and early 20th century buildings were often grand structures of stone or brick, even in small communities – so different from the bland buildings that replaced them in the 1950s. Reg began his career in the old limestone post office on Water Street (now Gilly’s) and ended it in the current building on Wellington Street. His collection of St. Marys postcards was comprehensive. He also collected postcards featuring nearby communities, such as Kirkton, Woodham, Lakeside, Uniondale, Motherwell, Fullarton, St. Pauls and Stratford. Reg owned postcards sent from Europe during World War One, including several photo postcards, sent home from France by his uncle, William Near, who was killed in action before that war ended.

Reg enjoyed talking to people about his postcards, pointing out subtle differences in the date and location stamps on the address side. He was invited each year to collectors’ events in St. Marys, Stratford and other locations to show as many of his albums as he could carry. He always had a crowd at his display table. He had a great sense of humour and liked to point out novelty cards that showed giant apples, pumpkins, potatoes, cobs of corn being loaded on wagons – all credited to the wonderful climate of the St. Marys area. The picture of the farmer cutting the sky-high field of wheat, shown with this week’s column, is from that series of novelty postcards.

Reg was enormously generous with his postcards, allowing the St. Marys Museum to copy any that they could use to illustrate exhibits or publications. When he died, he left his collection to the St. Marys Museum. This amazing donation totalled almost 5,000 postcards arranged by topic and placed in acid-free sleeves in 22 albums. These cards remain a wonderful resource for researchers. Many have been digitized by the Museum staff and can be found on the website www.images.ou-ontario.ca/stmarys/search

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.GRANTHAVEN.COM

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The plusses of a small-ship ocean cruise



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

I will admit we approached the trip with a bit of trepidation. We were invited to sail on the “Viking Sea,” one of Viking’s fleet of 15 ocean ships.

The trepidation had nothing to do with Viking, per se. We have done several river cruises with Viking and have nothing but the highest praise for those experiences. But river-cruise ships host fewer than 190 guests, while the newer, ocean-going ships carry just over 900 passengers.

So, was this significant increase in travellers going to have a negative impact on our experience?

What we found was the experience is quite different, but honestly, no less enjoyable. I had a lengthy conversation with the Viking Sea’s Hotel general manager, Bogdan Stefanescu. He knew that my previous Viking trips had all been on European river cruises, so he was curious; did I prefer river cruises or this Mediterranean ocean cruise?

My answer was, “Yes.”

I know that many of my readers will have experienced river cruising, on Viking or one of the other highly reputed river-cruise companies. But most may not

have tried the ocean-going option – it’s relatively new. So, here’s my take.

There are advantages to both options. River cruises usually find you moored right next to the town or city you are visiting, and you can easily walk into the town. On both river and ocean cruises, Viking offers an included excursion every day, as well as options for upgraded excursions. My feeling was we spent more time on coaches simply getting to the excursion destination on the ocean cruise. But the tours are almost always excellent.

The ocean ship is of a size that means it must dock in larger ports, and the view from your balcony is likely to be industrial docks or container yards.

River cruises are very personal. You’re up close and interacting with your destinations with your fellow passengers and with the Viking staff.

When it comes to the staff, that doesn’t change on the ocean ship. Incredibly, within a day of being on board, several staff members were able to call us by name when we encountered them. And the proportion of staff to passengers is amazing – the Viking Sea had 464 crew members serving 907 passengers, according to Stefanescu. His title, “hotel general manager,” may be slightly confusing, but he is actually responsible for everything except actually running the ship (that’s done by the captain), which means more than 400 of the staff members are in the hotel general manager’s reporting chain.

When we first saw the ship,

our initial reaction was, “That’s a big boat!” And yes, it is a lot larger than the longships on the river. But Stefanescu told me that if the Viking Sea and its sister ships were part of another cruise line, they would be designed to hold a lot more passengers. Viking deliberately designed the craft with an enormous amount of common space – the ship never felt crowded and there was plenty of space for quiet relaxation. Stefanescu told me, “The ship always feels comfortable.” I agreed.

The river cruise ships have one main lounge/bar where you will often find a pianist or other solo performer.

In contrast, on the Viking Sea, from late afternoon on, there were many wonderful options. One day, we enjoyed five different musical acts: a folk guitarist/singer entertaining al fresco diners on the rear deck; a string duet in the soaring atrium; a classical pianist; a brilliant ABBA tribute quartet plus band in the spacious Star Theatre; and the Viking Band, a six-person, kick-ass combo in the pub called Torshavn.

Dining options were similarly varied and always excellent. There were two “reservation only” restaurants – one an Italian eatery, the other a “Chef’s Table,” as well as a brilliant buffet restaurant, a more formal restaurant and some casual eating spots. And almost every day brought special options in the buffet – a mussel and lobster night, a paella night, a pasta night and so on.

Stefanescu knows his ship like the back of his hand. He’s been



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The Viking Sea, one of Viking’s fleet of 15 ocean-going ships.

part of Viking’s ocean-going program from the beginning.

“I was part of the launch of the first ever ocean ship, the Viking Star, in 2015,” he said.

In total, he’s spent 30 years at sea. He adds that he has been on the Viking Sea for the past 10 years. “She’s amazing,” is his perhaps biased assessment. Amazing, yes, but he won’t use the word “luxury” – although I might argue that would be justified. “The word is ‘comfort,’” he explained. “We never use the word ‘luxury.’”

And that comfort is built into the design of the ship, the attention paid to every detail and the unique elements like the thermal. But what stands out most is the astonishingly good service.

Not only do the 464 crew members consistently go out of their way for the good of their guests; they also consistently collaborate and support each other. No mean feat, considering the crew during our cruise came from 47 different countries.

Stefanescu noted that Viking does not make political statements or take political stands, but he did agree that such international cooperation may offer some reasons for hope in a fractured world.

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.



Pasta night in the World Café.



Folk guitarist Chanel performing for al fresco diners.



Beverage manager Vladan Krstic doing what he does best!

FROM THE GARDEN:

Gardens that inspire, with a touch of magic



NANCY ABRA

Independent Columnist



‘Live the Garden Life’ was a public campaign initiated by Gardens Canada in 2022 to educate and inspire Canadians about the vital impact gardens and gardening have on the quality of life at home, in communities and across Canada. It is also an informative campaign, showcasing Canada’s rich horticultural heritage and vibrant garden culture. Even though that was four years ago, I personally feel it is as relevant today as ever.

Gardeners live this theme every day in our floral displays we plant, vegetable beds we nurture and the quiet rituals of tending and watching things grow. But there is another way to live the garden life by stepping beyond our own backyards, and experiencing the gardens of our region. No weeding, no watering – just filling our soul with admiration, inspiration, and a bit of magic.

We live in one of the richest horticultural regions in North America. We do not have to travel far to discover a horticultural treasure. Day trips are perfect for a summer outing in small towns, big cities, hidden gems, and thematic gardens. Either with a couple of friends or family visiting from abroad, what better way to enjoy and discover unique gardens of this region.

Garden day trips are a way to recharge our horticulture soul - the pleasure of discovering floral design ideas we have never tried, the joy of wandering through gardens without a to-do list and experiencing the

magic of Mother Nature that we are too busy in our own gardens to enjoy.

The ‘small town’ gem displays their big personality through their public and private gardens. For instance, Stratford’s Shakespearean Garden, located near the heart of the town, is perfect for a leisurely stroll through, taking in the array of blooming colours, dedicate scents and the bees and butterflies on their mission for sweet nectar. The gardens by the theatre are outstanding with plant and bloom diversity. There are pockets of smaller gardens throughout Stratford and the streetscape of private gardens add to the charm and beauty of this town.

One of ‘Ontario’s most beautiful village,’ a quote from A.J. Casson of the Group of Seven, Elora boasts stunning botanical, community, and seasonal flower gardens. Top spots include the historic stone-walled Templin Gardens, the native pollinator sanctuary at the Elora Centre for the Arts, and the seasonal sunflower fields at The Fieldstone Barn. (<https://elorafergus.ca/steeped-in-stone/>)

Set along the bluffs and shoreline

of Lake Huron, Goderich’s gardens are part of a broader waterfront experience that blends horticulture, history, and those famously spectacular sunsets. “Lakeside Gardens” offered sweeping views, breathtaking sunsets and is highlighted as one of Goderich’s defining attractions which draw summer visitors.

To add to your summer adventures are the gardens of Grey Bruce, which are some of my favourites. There are over a dozen gardens that are open to the public throughout the season, from early summer to fall. They offer a diverse experience of trails through forested areas, nature reserves, botanical food gardens, wild-scaped pollinator gardens, and whimsical and magical horticultural treasures. (<https://www.ruralgardens.ca/>)

This summer, give yourself permission to explore. Step into a garden you did not plant, wander paths you have never walked, and let someone else do the work for a change. This summer be inspired, embrace innovative ideas, or simply renew the sense of wonder. That, too, is living the garden life.

Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist

Watt a nice playground

25 years ago (2001)

A lost dog was recently found two weeks later, 60 km from home. Holly, a 12-year-old pet, went missing from her family’s home in Kirkton on May 25 during a thunderstorm. On June 8, she turned up at a school in Ethel. Holly was treated to a roast beef dinner on her first night home.

The St. Marys Lincolns enjoyed one of their best seasons on the ice in several years this past winter, but more wins than losses don’t always guarantee a winning season at the bank. The 13 people attending Lincs’ annual general meeting and public forum last Thursday night learned that the Western Jr. B Hockey League club lost over \$28,000 this past season.

50 years ago (1976)

A group of juveniles from a London detention centre went fishing in the Harrington pond recently. Three managed to slip away from the supervisor and hide in the bushes. A few hours later, a damp, disheveled youth came to a business, saying that his two partners had stolen a vehicle and thrown him into swampy water before driving away. The police were called and the boy was returned to the detention centre. A week later, the Harrington resident who helped in the situation was pleased to receive a letter of sincere thanks from the boy’s father, who happens to have considerable status in Washington, D.C.

The gift of six lots in the west ward to the Town of St. Marys by Mr. Tom Watt for use of a playground was honoured last Sunday afternoon. Chairman Murray Mitchell unveiled a plaque, officially naming the area the Thomas Arthur Watt Playground.

75 years ago (1951)

The white line in the centre of the pavement over the crest of the Queen St. hill at the hydro station, East Ward, should be a great help with traffic safety. A similar strip would go well over the overhead bridge at the water tower. The latter strip should extend for at least a block on either side of the bridge.

The television aerial over the Toll Music & Electric Store has taken on more height in the past week or two and better reception is reported.

100 years ago (1926)

Rev. W.J. Walker, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, will take his holidays in July. Rev. W.J. Burnett will conduct services for both Presbyterian churches during that month. Mr. Walker and family will spend the month in his wife’s old hometown of Barrie.

In Western Europe, especially in France, there has been excessive rain during the last few weeks, and scientists have been trying to account for it. One theory is that the chief cause is the increasing activity of radio waves.



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Riddles

I say "honk honk" as I fly. I often make a V shape in the sky. What am I?
A Canada goose

I have a flat tail and build with wood. I'm Canada's animal and swim very good!
What am I?
A beaver

I am sweet and come from a tree. Pancakes love being covered with me! What am I?
Maple syrup

I wear a red uniform and ride a horse. I help represent Canada, of course! Who am I?
A Mountie

I am red, I am white, and I have a leaf. You'll find me on a flag—not underneath! What am I?
A maple leaf

I can shoot up into the sky and sparkle at night. On Canada Day I put on a colorful light show.
What am I?
Fireworks

I am the capital city of Canada. Many important buildings are found in me. What city am I?
Ottawa

- Word Search -



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- Karate demo
- Splash pad
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- Sunset Shack
- Tremblett's treats
- Museum exhibits



The **Riddle Kid**
OF THE WEEK

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Easton McClocklin (2)

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KEVIN

Our Pet of the Week is Kevin, a long-haired dachshund who celebrated his second birthday on April 27. Kevin lives in St. Marys with owners Nicola and Aaron Grudowski.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent



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Thorndale Country Mills host 4-H Beef & Dairy BBQ fundraiser

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

In a more than decade-long tradition, Thorndale Country Mills (TCM) hosted a barbecue lunch at their facility for the Thorndale 4-H Beef Club and the Thorndale Dairy Club last Friday, June 19.

TCM supplied the burgers, sausages, hotdogs and pop with Pat and Jane Elliott also contributing to the barbecue. Area residents and staff of many local businesses came out to purchase their lunch in support of these 4-H clubs, along with purchasing some baked goods and sweet treats as well from the 4-H members.

The Thorndale Beef Club, with 12 members, is led by Paula Chowen and Val Arnold. They have had four meetings so far this year covering nutrition, herd

health, judging and housing.

The Thorndale Dairy Club, with six members, is led by Andrew and Nicole Elliott, Will Johnson and Allana Wonnacott. Their upcoming June meeting will be on showmanship skills held jointly with the Ilderton Dairy Club.

Both the Thorndale Beef and Thorndale Dairy clubs are planning to tour the Elora Research Farm in August. Achievement days for both clubs take place at the Thorndale Fair in September.

The annual barbecue event is held not only to raise funds for both 4-H clubs' education, events and activities, but also to raise awareness in the community of Thorndale as well. And the crowds who came out to support these young people are greatly appreciated.



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

The 4-H Beef Club behind their baked goods table at the recent barbecue fundraiser in Thorndale. Pictured from left to right are Tessa Brennan, Emerson Brennan, Reghan Chowen, Molly Arnold and Jennie Murrell.

A grilling community experience with the Thorndale Lions Club

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Thorndale Lions Club hosts many community get-together events throughout the year.

Their community breakfasts, gaming night and bingos are always well attended. New to this roster of events is the Lions Club BBQ Steak Night held last Thursday evening at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre.

This event was based on a suggestion by a Lions member who had a previous experience with this type of barbecue, and it turned out to be a tremendous success, with 220 steaks sold.

With their ticket, people received a 12-ounce steak which they cooked themselves to their preference over charcoal grill. The Lions provided a baked potato, baked beans, coleslaw and a fresh bun to complete the barbecue steak dinner.

Proceeds from this event will go back to the community by supporting the medical centre, local parks, or other initiatives. There was a 50/50 draw that evening as well. Given the response, the Thorndale Lions will most likely add this event to next year's lineup of community get-together events.



(NORM JARY PHOTO)

The Thorndale Lions Club recently held its first Lions Club BBQ Steak Night at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre.

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HAVEN
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CLASSIFIED ADS

WANTED TO BUY

All collectibles including sports cards, beanie babies, Funko pops and stamps. Highest prices paid. Free appraisals. Are you downsizing or need an estate clean out? We can help. We are at the Pinery Market at Grand Bend every Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call or text Stan anytime 519-868-3814.

WANTED

I will pay cash for antiques and collectibles. Coca Cola, Pepsi or any pop company. Brewery items - Kuntz, Huether Labatts, etc. Old radios and gramophones, wristwatches, pocket watches, old fruit jars - Beaver Star, Bee Hive etc. Any old oil cans and signs - Red Indian, Supertest etc. Any small furniture. If you are moving or cleaning out stuff please contact me at 519-570-6920.

FOR SALE

Shade Trees; Maples, Oaks, Birch, Beech, Honey Locusts, Elms, Magnolia, Hydrangea Tree, Tulip Tree, Crab apples, Ivory Silk Lilac, Chanticleer Pear, Golden Weeping Willows and more. Apples, Pears, Peaches, Plums, Apricots, Nectarine, Blueberry, Haskap etc. Lots of healthy strong Spruce, Cedars and White Pine for your privacy hedges and windbreaks. Hundreds of flowering shrubs. Reg Hours: 7am- 6pm Mon-Sat at Martins Nursery c/o Emanuel Martin. 42661 Orangehill Rd., Wroxeter, ON

WANTED

\$ Cash Paid \$ for your RECORDS and LPs. Jazz, Blues, Rock, Pop, Folk, Soundtracks, and more. Selectively buying CDs, Cassettes, Turntables, and Stereo Equipment. For more information: Diamond Dogs Music 114 Ontario St. Stratford / 226-972-5750

JUNK REMOVAL

Junk Removal - Garbage, Basements, Yards, Dump Runs Call Mike 519-276-7766

FOR SALE

1 Coffee Table and 2 End Tables, wrought iron, wood and slate tops, a must see. Selling for one third of what we paid new. \$500 for the set. Phone 519-284-1087

BUY AND SELL

Coins, Paper Money, Numismatic collectables. Free Appraisals and information. Saturdays 8am to 12 noon @ Milt Dunnell Field St. Marys On. Other times by appointment only. Call 519-777-0142, email hamilton@quadro.net.

FOR RENT

2 bedroom apartment for rent with balcony, fridge and stove included. Laundry on site. \$1800.00/month plus utilities. Please message Jamie at 519-274-0205

FOR SALE

'96 Starcraft Hardtop Tent Trailer- 12/24, sleeps 6, 2 pullouts, 3 burner stove, sink, fridge, hydro and water hook up and more. \$2000. Please Call 519-349-2415

PETS FOR SALE

Siberian Huskies for sale. Home of Disney "Snow Dog." Over 60 years experience. Colour choices. Vaccinated. Micro-Chipped. Intelligent. Excellent temperament. Loveable companion pets. Boarding for all breeds. Pet supplies. OKIOK KENNEL, 35619 Salem Rd., Parkhill (near Mt. Carmel). 519-294-0494. No Texts.

FOR SALE

Mint condition Manhattan Smoothie Ladies Recumbent Bicycle. Light Green. Comes with helmet, bike rack, locks. \$400.00. Call 226-661-1222

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 159 years old
2. North American beaver
3. Sir John A. Macdonald
4. Rocky Mountains
5. Confederation
6. Lacrosse & hockey
7. Battle of Vimy Ridge
8. 1999
9. Gord Downie
10. Terry Fox

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

CELEBRATION

PLEASE JOIN US
**80th Birthday
 Celebration Open House
 to honour
 Al Lawson**

ST MARYS LEGION (66 CHURCH ST N.)
 SUNDAY, JUNE 28TH
 1-4PM



Well wishes only, please.
 All are welcome, as this is a drop-in event.
 An open mic will begin at 2:00 p.m.
 for anyone who would like to share a
 funny story, a fond memory, or a
 laugh they've enjoyed with Al
 (aka Laws, Sam or Harry)!

CELEBRATION



HAPPY 85TH
Birthday

FRED MARDLIN | JUNE 25TH
 Love from your family



Support the
 local businesses
 that keep your
 community and
 its newspapers
 thriving.



OBITUARY

Milam



Ron Milam passed away peacefully at St. Marys Memorial Hospital on June 19, 2026 at the age of 85.

Beloved husband of Margaret (nee Healey), married on December 12, 1980. Father of Jim Milam, and Waverly Healey-Campbell (Steve). Grandfather of Ryan, Paul,

Bionca, and Zachery. Brother of Verna Davis (Floyd, deceased), Robert (Lucy, both deceased) and brother-in-law of Bernadette Grift (Bill, deceased), Kathy Jadisckie (Arthur), Patricia Healey, Diane King (Brad), and Marie Anderson (deceased). Also remembered by nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents Albert and Ina Milam and parents-in-law Carmen and Catherine Healey.

Ron enjoyed his fishing and hunting. He worked with Oxford County operating the grader and then worked at Cooper Standard in Stratford for 25 years.

Family and friends are invited to the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, 47 Wellington St. S. St. Marys, on Wednesday, June 24, 2026 for visitation from 1 pm until the time of the Funeral Service at 2 pm. Burial following in St. Marys Cemetery. Reception at the funeral home. Memorial donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society or charity of choice.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

THE WEEK AHEAD



SPONSORED BY: McDonald's St. Marys
 752 Queen St. E., St. Marys
 Founding and Forever partner of Ronald McDonald House

PRC & Friendship Centre events - See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5

St. Marys Public Library events - See Page 22

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

- St. Marys Quarry and Super Splash open for the season
- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field - 8 a.m. to Noon, Lions Club breakfast
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

- Al Lawson 80th birthday celebration at St. Marys Legion - 1-4 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 30

- Royal Canadian Legion buddy check coffee - 10 a.m. to Noon

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1

- Embro Highland Games at Embro Zorra Community Centre - 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Canada Day parade - Departs the PRC at 11 a.m.
- Canada Day festivities at Cadzow Park - Flag raising and national anthem at 12:30 p.m.
- Musical entertainment - Jesse Webber 1 p.m., York Street Thought Process 2 p.m. Activities for all ages, St. Marys Museum exhibits, CBHOF BBQ, Sunset Shack, Tremblett's treats

THURSDAY, JULY 2

- Nourish Market at St. Marys United Church - 2-4 p.m.



VENDOR FEST 2026

SHOP LOCAL. DISCOVER SOMETHING SPECIAL.

Join us for a two-day community vendor market at Jacobs Liquidation featuring unique finds from local small businesses and makers.

Browse a variety of handmade goods, crochet creations, garden-inspired items, gifts, home finds, specialty products, and more.

JUNE 26-27, 2026 | **FRIDAY 10AM - 6PM**
SATURDAY 10AM - 4PM

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