

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1286

Thursday, October 30, 2025

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SCARETACULAR IN STONETOWN

(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Angela Reid (left, as Luigi) with Jeff Hiscock, Scottie Hiscock, Leni Hiscock, Taegan Hiscock and Navy Hiscock during Scaretacular St. Marys. Turn to page 2 for a story and more photos.

Council and staff review 2026 draft capital and operating budgets in record time

Proposed levy increase sits at just over four per cent after first budget meeting

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A decision earlier this year by Mayor Al Stratthdee not to use his provincially legislated Strong Mayor Powers to table his official draft 2026 budget for the Town of St. Marys until after staff proposed a draft budget and council had the chance to review it and make changes led to the most-efficient first budget meeting the town has seen for some time.

Council held its first 2026 budget meet-

ing Oct. 21 and, after just under five hours, staff had presented all 79 proposed capital projects for next year, a review of the holdover projects from this year and a line-by-line examination of each department's operational budget. By the end of the meeting, town CAO Brent Kittmer described the process that, prior to this year, often unfolded over several meetings across two to three months.

"Congratulations, council. That's the quickest in my 10 years that council's ever

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

St. Marys council approves downtown beautification plan during 2026 budget deliberations

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

During St. Marys council's first 2026 budget meeting on Oct. 21, councillors approved the first phase of a plan that will see further beautification of the town's downtown streetscape beginning next year.

Speaking to council amid capital project presentations, tourism and economic development manager Kelly Deeks-Johnson and public works director Jed Kelly described the proposed downtown beautification plan, a multi-year strategy to enhance the streetscape and public spaces in the downtown core and aimed at supporting a vibrant commercial environment and improving accessibility, walkability and visual appeal.

"This is a very comprehensive report giving some history of the works that have been done for our downtown, basically since 2016 ... and then also gives an indication of what we project we'll need to do over the next 10 years in regards to service improvements and infrastructure upgrades that we want to invest in, such as new planters, some new lighting, some new seating, while trying to balance the operational costs and service levels that we are currently doing.

"The recommended approach going forward is a phased implementation of our beautification projects, particularly in the downtown, with the flexibility to adjust based on budget and any grant funding coming in and overall community and BIA input."

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

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COMMUNITY

Scaretacular St. Marys filled with lots of trick-or-treaters, including out-of-towners



Carmen and Marisa Cubberley's costumes were inspired by the classic children's book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle.

EMILY STEWART
Independent Reporter

The streets of downtown St. Marys were flooded with trick-or-treaters dressed in their costume, just six days before Halloween.

Scaretacular St. Marys took over the town's core on Oct. 25, with participating local businesses handing out treats to eager trick-or-treaters. The Howl-

O-Ween Pet Parade and Costume Contest, sponsored by the local Pet Valu and Kristine Tanner: Real Estate Broker, followed the trick-or-treating. The St. Marys Museum also held cemetery walking tours.

"It's going excellent," said Megan Feeney, chair of the Downtown St. Marys BIA ahead of the Pet Parade. "I was so encouraged to hear people from neighbouring communities like Woodstock



The Hemstock Family enjoying early Halloween "shell-labratons" as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

and London have actually come to St. Marys to take part in this event. It just keeps getting bigger and bigger."

During the event, participating businesses told Feeney they ran out of treats and had to rush out to stock up on more candy.

"I'm really glad that a lot of them are getting exposed because we have so many great businesses here and so much to offer," she said.

In addition to tourism, the St. Marys Scaretacular was a way to give back to the community.

"We have so much support for all the retailers that it's nice for them to say thank you as well," Feeney said. "There is a lot of tourism, a lot of charm and a lot of things that we often overlook even when we're residents, so it's nice to really put a focus on what we have to offer right here at home as well."



Louie as Mickey Mouse.

7 Day Forecast

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Oct-29th

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Thursday
Oct-30th

Rain
8 OC
Feels like 5

Friday
Oct-31st

Cloudy showers
9 OC
Feels like 6

Saturday
Nov-1st

Sun & cloud
7 OC
Feels like 4

Sunday
Nov-2nd

Sun & cloud
7 OC
Feels like 5

Monday
Nov-3rd

Few showers
10 OC
Feels like 7

Tuesday
Nov-4th

Sun & cloud
9 OC
Feels like 6

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EDITORIAL

Go Blue Jays!

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

I love when the excitement of a Canadian Team brings people together. This has been what is happening with Blue Jays making it to the world series. Everywhere you look, there are jerseys, hats and t-shirts all in support. One of the comments I heard most after the last series was, “Good to see a Toronto team not lose a Game 7.” As a Leafs fan, I can relate. However, I can’t argue and, to be honest, it was a good feeling. I don’t think you actually need to be a huge sports fan to get caught up in the frenzy. It is fun and exciting.

The part that bothers me is the increase in the price of tickets. I get it. It’s a business, but I don’t like the fact that many people who are big fans and supported the team at their games all season cannot attend a game now unless they want to sell their firstborn.

I was at the game in September when they clinched the AL East title. When we purchased the tickets, we had no idea what that game was going to mean. The vibe was thunderous and, I’m not going to lie, I had to jump while high-fiving those around me when Alejandro Kirk hit his grand slam.

As I write this, I can’t predict the future and know what the series will be at when the paper is released, but I do know this current Blue Jays team has already brought lots of excitement to Canadians. They seem to work well together and have some fun, which is the recipe to great things like getting them to where they are now.

Though many of the Blue Jay players were just young or not born during Toronto’s last World Series, I, like many, remember where I was when Joe Carter got to run those bases. Wouldn’t it be fantastic to witness Springer or Vladdy, or any of them really, get to experience that history again?

No matter who wins, the sport has brought families, friends and fans all together to cheer for a great team. Once baseball is over, there is always the Leafs.

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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Go Jays!

When the clock strikes midnight on Halloween, it will be Christmas everywhere!

Have you heard something humorous around town that you think might be of interest to others? Either email them to us at info@stmarysindependent.com with the title "Overheard at The Coffee Shop", call 519-284-0041 or drop by the office to let us know!

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

St. Marys Independent

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Bravo	Boo
We have 6 Bravos this week. 1) Bravo to the Little Falls teachers, volunteers and students. They attended the Stratford Festival to see Annie. The teachers were very organized and the children were the best behaved of all the students attending from other cities. As a St. Marys volunteer at the theatre, you did us proud. 2) Bravo to Joel at the PRC. He is a friendly, polite person who works diligently to keep the PRC building clean, tidy and organized. Thank you Joel. 3) Bravo to nurse Kathy, who was working in triage this past Sunday. Thank you for being so kind, personable, and knowledgeable. You are definitely an asset to our local hospital. 4) Bravo to the families, and to the town for acknowledging and providing important recognition for the men and woman who have served our country with the display of the beautiful veteran banners on the lamp standards throughout the town. These are true heroes who have defended what is right and just to preserve freedom for all. 5) Bravo to the town businesses for the beautiful fall displays outside of their respective stores, the fall themes on their window fronts and the decorated lamp standards. It is lovely to see this beautification effort for our wonderful town. 6) Bravo to two great organizations in our community – the ANAF and Legion. Both are actively trying to recruit members and guests with new initiatives like bingo, sausage lunches, and still support the old favorites like meat draw evenings, dart and pool leagues, and live music. Please support one or both, everyone is welcome.	We have 2 Boos this week. 1) Boo to the high school students who run directly into oncoming traffic to cross James Street, and don't bother to press the crosswalk button for the flashing light signal. Another vehicle and I both slammed on our brakes to avoid hitting each of you . Pressing the button is not that difficult! Please use it. 2) Boo to the Boo section in the Independant newspaper. I was always taught as a child, If you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all! There is already so much negativity in the media today why do we need another platform for that. Keep it to yourself! Be kind!
*Please note all Boos and Bravos must be signed in order to be considered. Bravos and Boos are submitted by community members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the St. Marys Independent.	

Quote of the Week

“In discussion with The King, and my immediate and wider family, we have concluded the continued accusations about me distract from the work of His Majesty and the Royal Family. I have decided, as I always have, to put my duty to my family and country first. I will therefore no longer use my title or the honours which have been conferred upon me.”

- Prince Andrew on giving up his royal titles after more accusations of his connection to Jeffrey Epstein in a memoir *Nobody's Girl* recently released by Virginia Giuffre, a victim of sexual abuse and trafficking.

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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

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St. Marys Independent

Thoughts of the Week
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A boat doesn't go forward if each one is rowing their own way.

Tough times don't last but tough teams do.

It isn't the hours you put in but what you put in the hours.

Small steps in the right direction can turn out to be the biggest steps.

St. Marys Gives 2025

Won't You Be My Neighbour?



The St. Marys and Area Mobility Services along with the generosity of the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation have partnered with The Local Community Food Centre to provide transportation to The Nourish Market in St. Marys. The Nourish Market is an equal access food market held at St. Marys United Church the first and third Thursday of the month from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Fresh local fruit, veggies and meat is available at wholesale prices. A free shuttle service will be available to take people to The Nourish Market beginning Thursday, October 16th. A bus schedule is available from St. Marys and Area Mobility Services.

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2



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- Farmers' Market (indoor) - Sat. Nov. 8, 8am-12pm at the PRC
- FOL Social - Wed. Nov. 12 - 6:30-8pm - @ Library or Friendship Centre - TBD
- Management Committee Meeting - Thurs. Nov. 13 - 10am at the Library - We are looking for new volunteers! Interested? Come see what we do!

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COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

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Apply by November 30: townofstmarys.com/grants

WINTER PARKING PERMITS

Current permit holders: Don't forget to renew your parking permit by Oct 31, 2025! Downtown residents without overnight parking can apply for a permit—\$78.84 + HST, valid until Oct 31, 2026. Permits include a designated stall in a municipal lot.

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ST. MARYS CRAFT SHOW

November 15 | 9 AM - 3 PM

The Friendship Centre's annual Craft Show is back at the PRC! Shop from over 60 talented vendors featuring nearly 100 tables of handcrafted treasures — from home décor and jewelry to festive gifts and treats. It's the perfect place to start your holiday shopping while supporting local makers!

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2025 Induction Ceremony | Nov 1 | 2 PM

Join us as we showcase and celebrate the three selected 2025 inductees and their outstanding sports achievements in the community at the Pyramid Recreation Centre. 2025 inductees include Mike Craig, Rick Fifield and the St. Marys Junior B Lincolns (1962-1963)

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Senior of the Week



Our "young" senior of the week is Scott Graham.

Scott was born in Chatham and moved this way at just one year old. He grew up on a farm on the outskirts of St. Marys where they had chickens and Red Angus. He was at St. Lawrence University when he met the love of his life, Laurie, they have been married for 49 years. They have three children and four grandchildren. Scott still loves playing hockey. He coaches some, likes to golf and play pickleball. Throughout the years Scott has been involved in many groups in St. Marys like the Lincolns Alumni and the health-care foundation board.

If you would like to nominate someone for Senior of the Week, contact us at 519-284-0041 or info@stmarysindependent.com.

Advances in diagnosis bring new hope: Alzheimer Society Huron Perth to host Fall Dementia Education Night

JULIA PAUL

Independent Reporter

The Alzheimer Society Huron Perth is inviting the community to gather online for its annual Fall Dementia Education Night on Wed. Nov. 12 at 7 p.m.

The free virtual event, hosted on Zoom, will feature returning guest speaker Dr. Sharon Cohen, director of the Toronto Memory Program, presenting "What's New in Alzheimer's Diagnosis and Treatment."

"This year's theme, we're focusing on diagnosis partly because the speaker that we have, Dr. Sharon Cohen, is from the Toronto Memory Program – one of the leading research groups looking into advancements in diagnosis," said Jeanette Sears, the Alzheimer Society's public education coordinator. "Right now is a really exciting time in the area of diagnosis for Alzheimer's disease and dementias – all types of dementia. Everybody would absolutely love to find a cure. We will get there. In the meantime, we are hoping that improved diagnosis can lead to better treatment and improved research towards a cure."

Sears said diagnosis has traditionally relied on what doctors observe or what care partners describe, but new approaches could change that.

"What they're hoping is that we'll be able to use more solid biomarkers in the future," she said. "That will likely include blood tests, iris scans, or cheek swabs."

Christy Bannerman, another public education coordinator with the society, noted the Toronto Memory Program was approved this January to begin using blood testing for diagnosis.

"That was a really significant thing," she said. "A blood test is so much more simple. It can be done anywhere, and that makes testing so much more accessible."

For rural communities, this progress is especially important.

"If that testing is based on blood testing or cheek swabbing, that's really exciting for us," Bannerman added. "It might eliminate the very long waitlist to see a specialist and the intimidating drive to a larger centre. If we can do that in our local clinics, that's a real step forward."

Sears believes early diagnosis could also lead to better outcomes.

"If they can diagnose earlier in the disease process, that might affect treatment as well," she said. "If people are diagnosed earlier and get some of those newer medications earlier, it might change the progression of the disease."

Both coordinators said past Dementia Nights have left people feeling encouraged.

"We're working towards the day where we'd love to see a world where there's a cure to Alzheimer's and other dementias," Bannerman said. "Every time we hear from these prominent researchers, we learn a little bit more – it's almost within reach."

Registration for the Fall Dementia Education Night is free and open to everyone at www.bit.ly/Dementia-Night2025. For more details on programs and upcoming events, visit www.alzheimer.ca/huronperth.



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Weekend Quiz

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1. Which monster is said to transform during a full moon?
2. What is a group of witches called?
3. What year did It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown first air?
4. Which famous Halloween movie features the line "Do you like scary movies?"
5. Vincent Price provides the spooky monologue in which popular Halloween song?
6. What creature is known for being tall, thin, with a featureless white face, long arms, a black suit and is said to teleport?
7. What do zombies eat?
8. What does the Grim Reaper usually carry with him?
9. Camp Crystal Lake features in which horror movie?
10. "Who you gonna call?"

By Jake Grant

This week's answers are found on pg. 31

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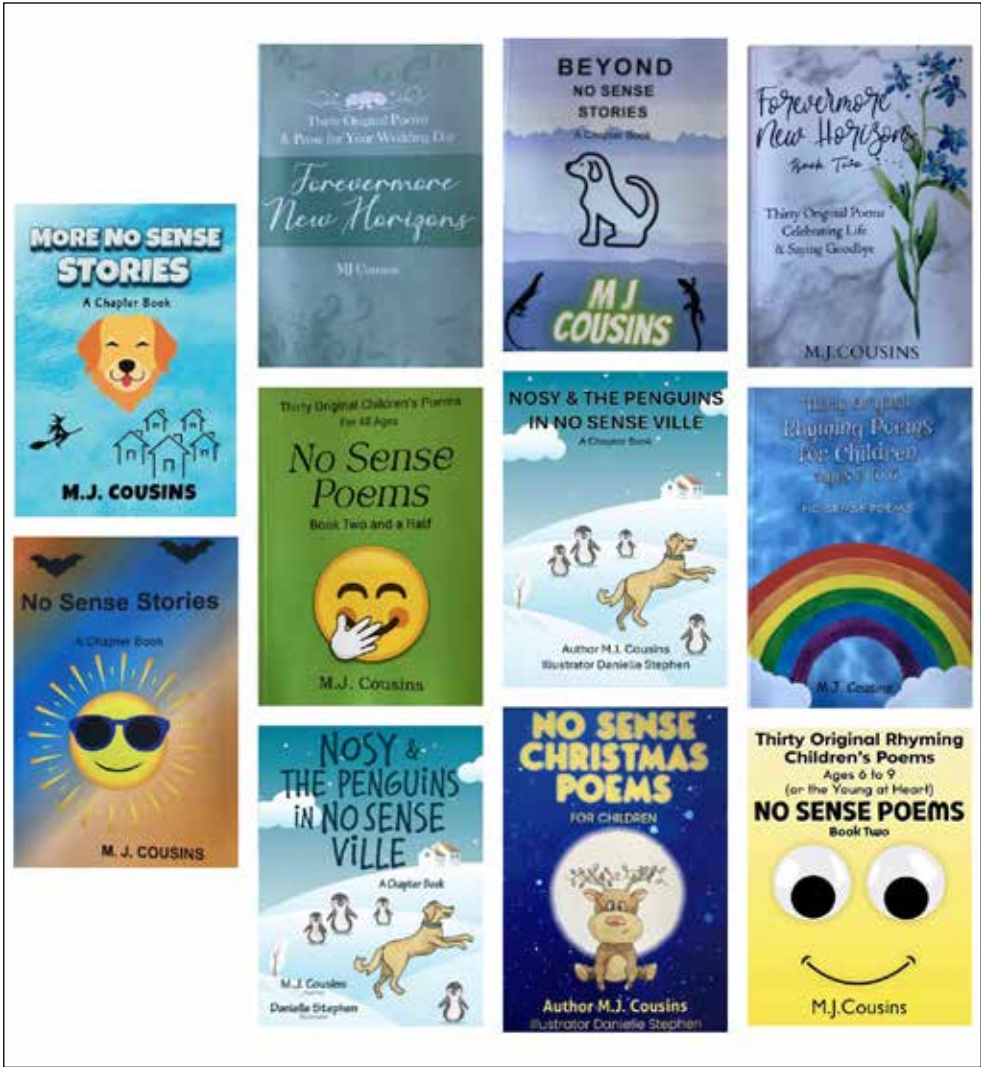
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Local author Jackie Cousins publishes a new children’s chapter book



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)
Jackie Cousins is a local author and wedding officiant who enjoys writing books that are mainly geared towards a younger audience. Here is a list of her books to date including her newest, *Nosy & the Penguins in No Sense Ville*.

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

Nosy & the Penguins in No Sense Ville is a new children’s chapter book recommended for kids aged six to 10 and published by local author and wedding officiant Jackie Cousins.

The book is about a magical dog named Nosy and his friends that must save their town from a blizzard and an invasion of penguins. The story focuses on friendship and believing in magic. The illustrator is the very talented Danielle Stephen, who is also from St. Marys.

Cousins has been writing for over three years. She started writing when she broke her right ankle and then again six months later when she broke her left. In total, she has written 11 books.

Two of the books she wrote are for adults, focused on wedding poems and celebration of life ceremonies. Cousins was an elementary school teacher, which led to the rest of her books being aimed towards children, featuring silly poems and geared towards primary students.

Stephen has done the illustrations for

all of Cousins’ chapter books.

“I write for fun and publish on my own,” Cousins said. “Any proceeds I make, I have donated to the local food bank, breast cancer foundation and Make A Wish Foundation.

She hopes to write one more in this series about the mysterious dog named Nosy. Her books are available on Amazon.

For more information on Cousins’ books, email jackiecousins56@gmail.com or visit mjcouinsauthor.com.

The following is an excerpt from *Nosy & the Penguins in No Sense Ville*.

“When he opened the chicken coop door, he was not at all prepared for what he saw. Candace was right when she said, ‘No chickens.’ Where there should have been chickens, penguins were roosting! Toby quickly shut the chicken coop door and staggered in shock back to the house. He was just about to enter when he saw one lone penguin in the yard. On one side of the penguin was a wild coyote ready to pounce on it. On the other side of the penguin was Nosy, the dog! Nosy growled menacingly and his eyes were staring down the coyote.”

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Council reviews 2026 draft capital and operating budgets

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

gone through the budget,” Kittmer said. “I think it’s a testament to the work of staff, the work of your treasurer and the very pragmatic way they put together the budget, and the continuous improvement mindset the organization has adopted. That’s why we’ve achieved \$200,000 in our operations added to the net positive, even while adding more staff and internalizing things. You have a very good staff here who understands how to operate the municipality very efficiently.”

At the beginning of the meeting, the draft budget was presented with a proposed levy increase of \$827,584, up 5.27 per cent to just over \$16.5 million from the roughly \$15.7-million 2025 budget. Factoring in an estimated \$200,000 in growth to the tax base this year from new businesses and homes, the actual impact on taxpayers was presented as a 3.94 per cent increase over what they paid this year.

According to the budget, that would equate to a \$164 increase to the property taxes paid for a median residential home plus an increase of \$5 to the annual cost of wheelie bin.

This year’s capital budget, which is funded through reserves, grants, donations and other sources, and does not have a direct impact on the levy, includes more than \$8.3 million in new spending.

Following the departure of former treasurer André Morin earlier this year, finance manager and deputy treasurer Spencer Steckley took the lead in drafting next year’s budget. Among the fac-

tors influencing the proposed tax-levy increase for next year, Steckley said the cost of staffing was the biggest with an additional \$498,925 included in the draft budget.

While cost-of-living increases, increases to benefits and wages, and new hires account for most of that cost, the planned return to a pre-2020 organizational structure wherein the corporate services department is divided into a finance department and a tourism and economic development department, and the decision to create a formal parks department to avoid a \$100,000 bill for turf services next year also drove the increase in staff costs.

To help reduce the impact of those additional staffing costs related to the finance and tourism-and-economic-development departments, \$35,000 was transferred to the budget from the levy stabilization reserve. Though the creation of a parks department would see additional staffing costs, overall, the budget will see a reduction by more than \$20,000 by internalizing turf services.

The levy increase is also being driven by increases in costs for services from external partners. An estimated \$189,867 has been added to next year’s draft budget to cover services provided to the town by organizations like the Upper Thames Conservation Authority, Stratford Social Services, Perth County Paramedic Services, Spruce Lodge and Huron Perth Public Health – the latter of which is the only external organization that has finalized its 2026 budget request at this point.

“Unique in this budget is this is the first year where policing is the largest external transfer,” Kittmer said. “Policing alone is a more significant increase than all other external transfers that we have to provide. It has a \$198,000 impact on your operating budget and a new, \$95,000-per-year-for-10-years cost on your capital budget. In effect, policing’s going up by almost \$300,000 this year, which has not happened since the days of the OPP.”

“Costs are escalating at a greater rate with a year-over-year budget increase sitting at 14 per cent,” Steckley said of the proposed increase to the town’s share of the next year’s Stratford Police Service operational budget. “Just note this figure still needs to be finalized.”

Additionally, the town will be paying \$144,665 in debt servicing related to the purchase of 90 Carling St. and the town has increased its proposed 2026 transfer to capital reserves by \$104,000 – approximately \$73,000 of which will go into a reserve for the future development of the intergenerational community hub at 14 Church St. N.

Mitigating those cost increases somewhat, staff managed to recoup more than \$214,000 in estimated tax-funded revenues and expenditures across many departments, and saved nearly \$98,000 by transferring administrative, IT, finance and human-resources costs to the town’s 100 per-cent rate-funded departments – water, wastewater and landfill.

While the proposed levy increase was 3.94 per cent inclusive of growth at the onset of the meeting, council approved two new staffing requests during the

first budget meeting – an engineering co-op student at a cost to the town of \$10,000 and a part-time library custodian at a cost next year of just over \$22,000. These extra costs bring the proposed levy increase up to 4.15 per cent, Steckley told councillors during the meeting.

With no major changes to the draft budget, Kittmer explained for council the next steps in the budget process under the new Strong Mayor Powers legislation. First, staff will update the draft budget, present it to the mayor and then Strathdee will table the mayor’s budget – in this case, the updated version of the budget presented to council Oct. 21 – for council amendments and vetoes.

“We’d like to have the mayor formally table it with council on Nov. 11 so that those statutory deadlines can kick in. Next meeting, I’ll present a report for council to consider shortening the amendment period to the budget from 30 down to 10 days so that when the mayor tables the budget on Nov. 11, you would have until Nov. 21 to make any formal amendments to the budget,” Kittmer told councillors.

“The mayor, I think, has 10 days after that to veto those, and then 15 after that for council’s override (of any vetoes with a two-thirds majority vote).”

Since council had the opportunity to make changes to the draft budget on Oct. 21, Kittmer said there is every expectation there won’t be a need for the veto/override process and the budget can be approved and adopted on Dec. 16.

St. Marys council approves downtown beautification plan

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

With a total of 18 projects planned from 2026 to 2034 – some of which will be implemented over several years – projects included in next year’s draft budget include:

- The purchase of four new downtown garbage receptacles at a cost of \$11,500 to replace the current receptacles, which have been deemed confusing because they appear to accept both garbage and recycling despite there being only one garbage bag in each receptacle. Additional receptacles, which would be a single container with a smaller opening marked for garbage, would be purchased in 2028 and 2029 for a total of 12 downtown, according to the beautification plan.

- The purchase of six, self-watering tree planters at a cost of \$7,000 so staff can test whether large trees in planters would work downtown. If successful, additional tree planters would be purchased in 2031 and 2034.

- The replacement of existing downtown planters with self-watering urns at a cost of \$30,000 split evenly between the town and BIA. The urns are intended to save money on annual watering costs and additional urns would be pur-

chased in 2029, 2030, 2031 and 2033 for a total of 60.

- Replacing the former hanging baskets with seasonal banners at an estimated cost of \$2,000 for the town plus \$3,000 contributed by the BIA. Banners would be purchased again every two years to replace the originals after they wear out.

In addition to the above projects, Deeks-Johnson said staff are looking to enhance the floral displays in the town’s planters by having them started in a greenhouse before being planted so they look more mature, and to partner with the BIA on seasonal displays and the purchase of new garbage receptacles next year.

Projects in this plan scheduled for future years include Millenium Park seating, seating at town hall and the library, the installation of a seating area with tables and a bike rack at the east side of Victoria Bridge, new garbage receptacles at town hall, the cenotaph and the library, colour spotlights at town hall, and bench-style seating at the southeast side of Victoria Bridge that look out over the falls, among others.

“This has come out of some conversations with the BIA about some needs and

things from a sustainability and beautification (standpoint),” Deeks-Johnson said. “We’ve been working with them for the past two years to kind of enhance that plan and make sure we’re working towards the same goals. So, we did embark on a kind of brief, what I will call, a guide with GSP Architects to create a bit of vision for how many planters we could foreseeably have downtown, some kind of direction on public art, as well as some options for seating, receptacles, etc. that the BIA has worked with us on, and that’s included in this report.”

“Really, coming from the GSP report and all the conversations we’ve had with the BIA, they’re definitely receptive to sustainability,” added Kelly. “We did remove the hanging baskets that were costing us upwards of \$26,000 (a year) with all the watering. They are receptive to those kinds of initiatives. At the last (BIA) meeting, they talked about the self-watering planters, so we’ll look to have those implemented in 2026. That would be a labour reduction; we don’t know by how much, but we assume, if it works, it would help us optimize the (annual watering) program. Everything you see (in this plan) works with trying

to create that streetscape while being mindful of the service level it’s going to cost to do it.”

Speaking to the plan as council’s representative on the St. Marys BIA board of directors, deputy mayor Brogan Aylward told councillors the 10-year plan would do a lot for beautification downtown.

“I’ll say that a lot of the stuff here in your 10-year plan is very good,” he said. “I think it captures a lot of the hopes and dreams ... of the (BIA’s) beautification committee and ... especially when it comes to the tree planters, I think that’s brilliant. That’s something I’ve heard about from many a business owner downtown; they reminisce on the old days when we had trees (downtown), so I commend staff for being flexible and looking to try something in that regard.”

In total, the plan includes roughly \$250,000 in proposed projects over the next decade, with roughly \$36,000 in project costs estimated for 2026.

“I think it’s good that we have a plan to work towards, and I think it’s certainly well thought out, so I’m certainly in favour of it,” Mayor Al Strathdee said.

The McEvoy family is collecting items for Samaritan's Purse

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

When Kaylee McEvoy and kids Paislee and Jett were at church on Sunday, they noticed people leaving with shoebox-size boxes.

A curious six-year-old Paislee wanted to know what they were for and learned about an organization called Samaritan's Purse. The McEvoy's learned that the programs provide shoeboxes for people to fill with small, needed items and gifts that get sent to children all around the world at Christmas time. The organization also arranges shipping of the boxes.

Once hearing this, both kids jumped in and told their mom they wanted to help. Kaylee McEvoy put it out on Facebook that they were looking for items and some generous people jumped onboard and dropped some off.

"I am so happy mommy! I want to make the less fortunate kids around the world happy on Christmas, so they know they are loved too," Paislee told her mom when she got home from school.

Jett also told his mom that he wants to make sure other little boys get to have fun and play with monster trucks on Christmas.

The family is collecting useful and fun items for children of all ages. Samaritan's Purse suggests including an exciting item like a small doll, stuffed animal, toy car, building blocks, LEGO, or a soccer ball with a pump. They also suggest personal-care items like toothbrushes, hairbrushes, bandages, or nail clippers/files.

Also of importance are school supplies like markers, pencils, crayons, rulers, pencil cases, calculators etc. Small clothing items that will fit in shoeboxes like socks, shirts, hats or gloves are also recommended. The only restrictions are no liquids, toothpaste and food items.

At first, each of the McEvoy kids were going to fill one box but they wanted to do more, bringing the family goal up to 10.

"My husband and I are trying to teach our kids how fortunate we are to live here in St. Marys and that not every child in the world has the same opportunities," Kaylee McEvoy said. "If we can do our part by buying and collecting a few small items to bring joy to others this holiday season, especially to children, that's something truly special."

The church needs the boxes returned by Nov. 16, but the McEvoy's are hoping for earlier, so they have time to organize the boxes. There is an option through the program to track the boxes online to see where they end up.

To donate items, reach out to the McEvoy's at kaylee.morris91@yahoo.com. Boxes can also be dropped off to the Independent Newspaper Office at 36 Water St. S, Monday to Friday from 8:30-4 p.m.

For more information, visit the Samaritan's Purse website and donate through there as well.

"Thank you to anyone who helps or donates. Every little bit of kindness makes a big difference. If we can be successful with this, we will make it an annual thing," Kaylee McEvoy said.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Paislee and Jett McEvoy show the Samaritan's Purse boxes they are looking to fill to send to children across the world for Christmas.

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To St. Marys With Love free community dinner returns to PRC Dec. 7

The fourth-annual event is expected to feed roughly 400 people

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

An annual holiday tradition that serves to foster community connection over a free, roast-beef dinner is returning to the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC) on Dec. 7.

Initially inspired by Simple Dreams Ministries' To Stratford With Love community dinner, To St. Marys With Love has morphed into a uniquely Stonetown event, giving residents a chance to connect with each other and with the many social and service clubs and organizations that make St. Marys what it is.

"It's a little different in that just the feeling of it is a very different feeling," said Rev. Gwen Ament, who co-organizes the event with former To Stratford With Love volunteer David Steward. "I've always felt that working collaboratively is very important. ... We sit at round tables and encourage lots of conversation across the table from one another. We really look at it as a way for people to get to know somebody else in the community. I've had families in tough times and they've brought their entire family out. It just feels like you're sitting around a nice table having a family dinner."

"All of our community groups – the Rotary, the Kinettes, the Kinsmen, the Lions, the Inner Wheel, the United Way, our volunteer firefighters – have all been involved as volunteers, and that's very different than To Stratford With Love.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF GWEN AMENT)

Pictured at last year's To St. Marys With Love dinner are Coun. Dave Lucas, Mayor Al Strathdee, organizer David Steward, Perth-Wellington MPP Mathew Rae, deputy mayor Brogan Alyward and John Nater, MP Perth-Wellington.

They have a different model ... but I just felt it was a way for our community minded groups to help build that sense of community."

Largely supported by a Town of St. Marys community grant each year, which covers the cost of the PRC rental, as well as by the St. Marys Presbyterian Church Legacy Fund, Quadro Communications and donations made at the event itself, To St. Marys With Love provides a free roast-beef dinner with all the fixings to roughly 400 people each year.

Now in its fourth year, the meal is coordinated and cooked by a team of vol-

unteers led by professional chef Nathan Brown, with some of the food served donated by local and other businesses. This year, the buns are being donated by Weston's, the vegetables are being donated by Stonetown Foodland, pop and water is being donated by Coca-Cola and Sunset Diner is providing horseradish and butter.

Even local elementary students get involved with the meal. This year, students from St. Marys' three local elementary school will be colouring place-mats on which dinner will be served. In past years, Ukrainian newcomers have also cooked plates of perogies to serve

as part of the dinner to show their appreciation for St. Marys and its residents.

Ament said the dinner is a perfect opportunity for those who may be new to town to meet new friends and neighbours, and for those who already live here to find new ways to give back, possibly by joining, contributing to or volunteering with one of the many community groups in attendance.

"It reaffirms that there is goodness in the world, and I think we all need that right now," Ament said. "I really would encourage people to come. Maybe there's a new neighbour who doesn't know everything about St. Marys and what's available. ... We have a lot to celebrate. I think we're very, very fortunate. We have a lot of services available (in St. Marys), but also a lot of people who help."

"... It's difficult these days for community groups to get people to sign on for things, but when you can actually see the work that they do, people will say, 'Hey, maybe a way I can contribute back to the community is I can join the Lions or I can join the Kinsmen or the Rotary.' The dinner has an all-around, good, positive effect."

Tickets are free but required and can be picked up at the library, the Friendship Centre, the Monday community dinners and The Sunset Diner beginning in the last week of October. Doors open at the PRC's Entrance D on Dec. 7 at 4:30 p.m. and dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m.



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St. Marys catches Blue Jays fever

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

It was so great to see the town getting swept up in Blue Jays fever.

Town employees John Hahn and Jed Kelly were the masterminds and worked with Forman Electric to get the Blue Jays sign put up on the town hall. Go Blue Jays!!

The home of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame is standing behind the Jays as they play in the World Series for the first time in 32 years against the L.A. Dodgers

The blue jay sign is part of the seasonal display at Milt Dunnell field. The letter D that surrounds the Blue Jays mascot, Ace, is in memory of Doug Hicks, who passed away in 2003 while playing softball at Milt Dunnell. Hicks was a big Blue Jays fan.

According to Kelly, the initial idea to light up the sign for the series came from Hahn, who heads up the town's outdoor parks operations.

"We tossed location ideas around then ultimately we decided to see if Forman Electric could make it work on the side of the town hall using the seasons-greeting mounts," Kelly said.

It didn't take much convincing to get Forman Electric on board. Forman added the animated "go!" and kept it a secret, making the sign look even more entertaining.

The town plans to keep the Blue Jays light going on the town hall until the series is finished and then staff will switch back to seasonal lighting.

Go Jays!



(CINDY BOAKES PHOTO)

Forman Electric helps raise the Blue Jays sign on town hall last Wednesday.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The sign looks great lit up at night as the town catches Blue Jays fever.

The Town of St. Marys *Remembers*

Join us in honouring our veterans by taking part in Remembrance Week events

Veterans' Decoration Day

Saturday, November 8, 9 AM - 12 PM

Families and friends of veterans interred at the St. Marys Cemetery are invited to place flags at veterans' graves.

Legion Ceremony & Parade

Sunday, November 9, 12:30 PM

The parade will march from the St. Marys Legion to the Town Hall cenotaph. A ceremony of remembrance will follow.

Remembrance Service

Tuesday, November 11, 10:45 AM

Mayor Strathdee will lead a ceremony at the cenotaph. The ceremony will be live-streamed on the Town's Facebook page. A Facebook account is not required to view.

St. Marys Museum Exhibit

Opening Tuesday, November 11

Visit the St. Marys Museum exhibit 'Between the Lines: Stories & Signals of World War I', that will be open during regular hours until November 2026.



For more information contact
519-284-2340, ext. 249
measton@town.stmarys.on.ca

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United Way Perth-Huron joins Ultimate Burger Battle

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

For the first time ever, United Way Perth-Huron will be participating in a tasty fundraiser that's sure to please burger enthusiasts.

United Way Perth-Huron's Ultimate Burger Battle kicks off Nov. 1 and will run for the full month. Participating local restaurants will create a new burger for the event and \$2 in proceeds from the sale of the burger creations will support local United Way programming.

Both Gilly's locations in Stratford and St. Marys, Demetre's Family Eatery, Bentley's, 53 North Restaurant, Foster's Inn, Romeo's Corner Café and Best Western Plus the Arden Park Hotel will be participating.

Bentley's will have their "gouda cause" burger made with Mountainoak gouda cheese, house-made bacon onion jam, truffle aioli and lettuce on a beef patty topped with a brioche bun. Gilly's cowboy burger comes with smoked cheddar, brisket, smoky barbecue sauce, onion tangles, lettuce, tomato, house-made sauce and pickles on a six-ounce beef patty.

Diners can scan a QR code in the restaurant to vote for their favourite burger. United Way Perth-Huron will then award the restaurants for people's choice burger and the most burgers sold.

"It's an invitation to make a new burger and then getting in a good spirit of fun and flavour to win," said Sonya Heyen, manager of resource development and



(PHOTO COURTESY OF SONYA HEYEN)

Gilly's will be serving the Cowboy Burger for the Ultimate Burger Battle.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF SONYA HEYEN)

Bentley's entry for the Ultimate Burger Battle, fittingly, is called the "gouda cause" burger.

communications with the United Way Perth-Huron.

The Ultimate Burger Battle began as an initiative by United Way Thunder Bay and has since expanded to other chapters such as Oxford, Middlesex-Elgin and now Perth-Huron.

"We're always in the business of fundraising and so if it worked for our neighbours and it sounds fun, we're into it,"

Heyen said.

Heyen added the event is a chance for Stratford's renowned hospitality scene to show their burger-making skills and creativity.

"Stratford is actually uniquely positioned with lots of world-class chefs and restaurants. Inviting them to have a little bit of competition, I think they're itching for that," she said.

Campaign chair and realtor John Wolfe was instrumental in getting the restaurants involved in the Ultimate Burger Battle.

The United Way Perth-Huron is still looking for more restaurants to be part of the Ultimate Burger Battle, and will be accepting requests to participate by email via sheyen@perthhuron.unitedway.ca until November.

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Screening of *YINTAH*: in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en land defenders

ELENA DUMITRU

Amnesty International, St. Marys London Stratford

The Amnesty International St. Marys London Stratford Area Group invites you to a special screening of *YINTAH*, a compelling documentary that takes us deep into the land the Wet'suwet'en call "Yin'tah" – a territory in northern B.C. they have governed under their own laws and customs for generations.

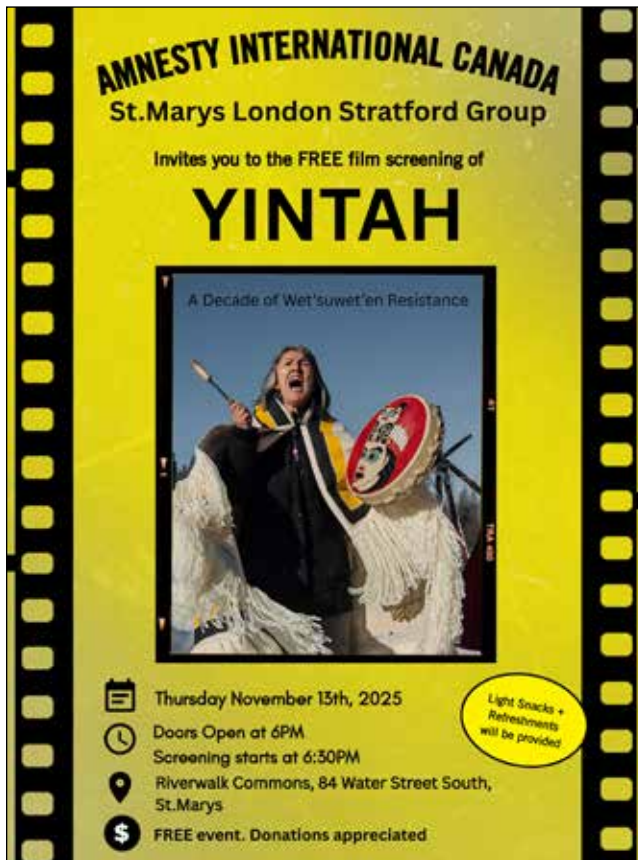
Amnesty International works to support human rights across many fronts – from racial justice and gender justice to Indigenous rights and environmental justice. The case of the Wet'suwet'en land defenders falls squarely at the intersection of these issues.

In December 2023, Amnesty International published a major report titled "Removed from our land for defending it: Criminalization, Intimidation and Harassment of Wet'suwet'en Land Defenders." The report documents years of violence, harassment, surveillance and criminalization of Wet'suwet'en land defenders. The Wet'suwet'en Nation has never surrendered rights to their territories and maintains that their Hereditary Chiefs, under their law (Anuc niwh'it'en), have the authority to govern access to their lands.

Yet the 670-kilometre-long Coastal GasLink Pipeline Ltd. (CGL) pipeline, owned by multiple interests including TC Energy, cuts through Wet'suwet'en territories and proceeds without their free, prior and informed consent. Amnesty International's report documents how large-scale RCMP raids (with helicopters, dogs and armed units) occurred on Wet'suwet'en territory, resulting in arrests, intimidation and what defenders described as attempts to push them off their land.

As one Wet'suwet'en defender and woman land-defender said:

"The reason we're here, why we're fighting so hard



for our rights, our land, our water, our animals ... the way we live our life is off the land, and they're destroying it all."

The organization has highlighted that land defenders were arbitrarily arrested, surveilled, intimidated, and sometimes subjected to disproportionate police raids involving the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Amnesty International has called on both the Canadian federal government and the government of British Columbia to drop criminal contempt charges against Wet'suwet'en land defenders who are simply defending their territories.

The documentary, *Yintah*, gives lived experience and human faces to these issues. It reminds us that the questions of development, energy and extraction are not abstract – they are rooted in the lives and territories of Indigenous peoples defending their home and future.

Why you should attend

- Witness a powerful story of land-defence, community and Indigenous resilience.
- Understand how human rights, Indigenous sovereignty and climate justice converge in real time.
- Engage with a movement of solidarity: learn how organizations like Amnesty International Canada are working alongside defenders, and how you can show support.
- Reflect on your own role: attending the screening, discussing the film afterwards and possibly taking action to amplify the voices of those on the front lines.

Screening details

Date and time: Thursday, Nov. 13. Doors open at 6 p.m. for light refreshments. Screening starts at 6:30 p.m.

Venue: Riverwalk Commons, 84 Water St. S, St. Marys

Admission: Free event. Donations appreciated.

Special segment: Following the film, we will hold a brief discussion and share how you can learn more about the issues and take action.

We hope you will join us for this important event. Let's come together, witness their story and commit to standing in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en land defenders.



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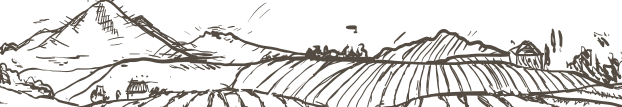
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Stratford-Perth Archives invites residents to discover more about veteran ancestors

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Independent Reporter

Stratford-Perth Archives is inviting the public to attend an upcoming speaker session with author and historian Eric Edwards, who will discuss how to use service records to learn more about First World War veterans.

The presentation is set for Tuesday, Nov. 11, from 2-4 p.m. at the Stratford-Perth Archives, 4273 Line 34.

Those interested in learning more about their heritage and connecting with veteran ancestors are encouraged to attend. The session aims to make the archives approachable and accessible for anyone curious about local history.

Edwards wants to help people feel more comfortable searching through archival material and will share how he's learned to navigate historical records to uncover connections to his own family and others.

His presentation will provide a grounding in how to read and gain valuable information from a First World War Canadian soldier's service file. He will also provide worksheets to help attendees navigate files more effectively.

"It's going to be more of a technical overview of how to navigate service files," he said. "When you open up a service file, they can be anywhere from 15 to 200 pages, and they're not in any logical order, so this can be confusing."

Edwards will also tell the story of how he used the service records of a Stratford man who once lived in

the home where he now resides. Through his research, he learned that Dave McDonald lived in the house from 1922 until his death in 1968. McDonald, he noted, was an "average man" who served in the war.

"He went about his business after serving in the war, got wounded twice, got in trouble — actually pretty significant trouble," said Edwards. "He raised a family, had children and contributed to Canada's social, political and economic fabric."

Drawing on examples from the service record, the presentation will help attendees better understand the types of information that can be found in these fasci-

nating documents.

The session will offer helpful insights into what can be discovered and used as a springboard for further research into the people who served Canada during this sweeping world conflict.

To learn more about Edwards and his research, visit his blog and Facebook group about the 18th Battalion at 18thbattalioncefblog.com

Registration for the event is free. Email archives@perthcounty.ca or call 519-271-0531 ext. 259 to register. The deadline to register is Tuesday, Nov. 4, at 4 p.m.

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STRATFORD NISSAN



St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

DCVI junior girls win three straight games as playoffs approach

TURNER ROTH

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI Junior Girls Basketball team won three games in a row with the playoffs right around the corner, and in doing so, secured third place in the Huron-Perth standings.

DCVI's first of two games on Oct. 20 was against Central Huron, with an impressive offensive display leading the junior girls to a 31-10 victory. Morgan Reid led the Salukis with 13 points, while Lily Hollestelle-Black put up six and Chloe Phillips chipped in four.

Coach Tim O'Connor praised the team's performance in the offensive zone.

"I'm pretty happy with the attack we had offensively," O'Connor told the Independent. "We want them to attack the ball. We have good shooters. They're a young team, but as they get more confident, they're looking for their shots. The only way you become shooters is by shooting and getting the confidence to try to attack the basket and try to take those shots."

Fellow coach Jack Taylor added his thoughts on the team's hunger to generate more offence.

"I'm starting to notice them look at the net and building that confidence in wanting to score and attack the basket," Taylor said. "At the start of the season, they were catching the ball and looking to pass immediately. Now, we're seeing them looking for their chance to shoot and drive to the hole, which is awesome to see that progression."

Later that same day, the Salukis played St. Annes in a gritty game highlighted by strong St. Marys defence. The Salukis held St. Annes to four points or under in three out of the four quarters. The game finished 32-16 for DCVI, with the top scorers of the game for St. Marys being Hollestelle-Black with nine, Reid at seven and Phillips, Raegan Stacey and Addy Jones with four each.

O'Connor praised the Salukis' defensive effort for being key to the win.

"Defensively, we were very solid. Our defence tends to keep us in the game until eventually, we manage to hit a few shots, and I think this was one of those games. As kids are learning, they need the ball in their hands, and if we miss a lot of shots sometimes, that's okay because I'm happy they are taking those shots, and over the course of the day and the season as a whole, the misses get better and their shooting decision making gets better."

Taylor was also happy with the team's defensive showing, noting if the team can get better at limiting secondary opportunities, it will enhance their already strong work on the defensive side of the ball.

"I'm really happy with how the defence is looking. I think we want to see the girls stopping second-chance opportunities a little bit more. I think that's where a lot of the points we allow come from. If we can eliminate some of those offensive rebounds, we will do really well because our on-ball defence is phenomenal."

Arguably, their most important game of the season came on Oct. 22 when the Salukis faced Listowel in a pivotal contest that decided who would finish third place in their conference.

St. Marys found themselves trailing by three late in



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Raegan Stacey takes a shot during one of the St. Marys DCVI Junior Girls Basketball team's two games on Oct. 20. Stacey made a clutch three-pointer on Oct. 22 to force overtime, where the Salukis defeated Listowel by one point to secure third in the Huron-Perth standings.

the game, and after calling a timeout, Stacey came up with a clutch shot to tie the game and send it into overtime.

"I wasn't sure if we were going to get it tied up," O'Connor said. "We had a timeout and called a play, but it didn't develop, and Listowel surrounded one of our girls, who then dribbled into some traffic. Luckily, she was able to kick it out, and they started to swing the ball around until it got to Raegan (Stacey), and she isn't the biggest three-point shooter, but she hit the beauty of a shot. It was a great moment for her and for our whole team."

In overtime, despite squandering a three-point lead, the Salukis fought back and squeaked out a narrow, one-point victory over Listowel, winning 33-32 to clinch third in the standings.

Hollestelle-Black and Reid led the team once again, each scoring nine points, while Phillips posted eight and Melody Weber recorded four.

Once again, O'Connor cited the team's defence as a big factor in the win.

"Listowel frustrated our offence, but I think the answer for us getting through that was our defence. Defence gets you through those challenges. Our wheelhouse is winning games, scoring somewhere in the 30-point range and we will have success in the playoffs if we can keep the total scoring down. We can score a little bit off of turnovers and frustrate the other team,



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Morgan Reid takes the ball to the basket during one of the St. Marys DCVI Junior Girls Basketball team's two games on Oct. 20. Reid led the team in points against Central Huron with 13, before scoring seven against St. Annes and nine against Listowel on Oct. 22.

but our defence is what keeps us in games.

"Our defence keeps us in the game even when our shots aren't falling on the offence. We will have more success in the playoffs if we can keep the total scoring down. Good defence is always around for us, we are able to score off turnovers and fast breaks, and maybe frustrate the other team."

The Salukis played their first playoff game Oct. 29 after the Independent's press time. Going into the post-season, O'Connor said he was optimistic about their upcoming playoff chances.

"It's a very competitive league this year. I honestly think any one of six or seven teams could take it, so I think the playoffs are going to be a lot of fun. We've been in a lot of tight, low-scoring games. We've won a few and we've lost a few, but those experiences can help you in the tight moments. If we are able to put together a few wins, we won't be blowing anybody out. We'll need a little poise, patience and the belief that we can fight through it."

"This group has been a lot of fun to work with," O'Connor continued. "They battle and they work hard. They're a great group of kids. They've given us the best they can give this season. We want to win it all. We think we have a chance, and even if we don't win, we know we tried our best and battled to the end."

DCVI senior boys volleyball team grinds out pair of wins

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Although it wasn't pretty, the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys Volleyball team found a way to pick up a pair of victories over Central Huron and South Huron on Oct. 23, cementing their place in the top four of the Huron-Perth standings.

Head coach Steve Chateauvert said, while there was room for improvement, it was a big positive seeing the Salukis secure a top-four spot in their conference.

"Getting two wins, we should finish in a decent spot in the standings," Chateauvert told the Independent. "We also want to progress and get better, and I hope we're able to do better at executing that the next time we're on the court. We need to just play and practice with more intensity. We had a couple of good practices recently, so I want that to continue, and then have it translate into our games a little bit more."

In their first game of the day, DCVI's senior boys took on their counterparts from South Huron and swept the game in two straight sets by scores of 25-22 and 25-15.

Chateauvert admitted, while it wasn't the best performance, the team's skill level helped them find a way to win.

"They're good enough to win games even if our execution isn't quite at its absolute best," said Chateauvert. "They have a lot of ability that can get them through against opponents that maybe don't have the same skill level, but when we get into the playoffs, we need to get to another level of energy, intensity and

readiness."

The Salukis' second match of the day pitted them against Central Huron, and they once again took the game in back-to-back sets, winning 25-21 and 25-16.

Again, the team's showing wasn't perfect in the head coach's eyes, partially due to trying players at different positions. However, with the playoffs on the horizon, Chateauvert is hopeful the flaws displayed would lead to growth as the toughest games of the season approach.

"We tried a bit of a different lineup in the second set. As a result, guys were playing positions that they don't normally play, and that contributes to that sense of being a little unsure, but it was good to get guys into different spots and test our adaptability. At the end of the day, you can always be ready, you can always go after the ball and you can always try to get better, and hopefully, our growing pains in that match will help us do a better job next time."

The Salukis have one game left before the post-season begins, and they will finish either third or fourth in the league. Chateauvert reflected on the season and the team's growth, noting the senior boys have the ability to deliver the type of play needed to have a successful playoff run.

"We have gotten more consistent," Chateauvert said. "Our serving has definitely improved over the course of the season. We've had some really good moments where we executed really well in some of our earlier tournament games and against some more competitive teams, and we just need to keep putting all of those things together."



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Parker Levy leaps up and spikes the ball over the net during one of the St. Marys DCVI Senior Boys Volleyball team's two wins on Oct. 23. The Salukis defeated Central Huron and South Huron, winning both games in straight sets.

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Lincs split back-to-back; Kalp, Elzinga take starring roles

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Sometimes, the story writes itself.

On Oct. 24, with the St. Marys Lincolns wearing special pink jerseys as part of their annual Pink in the Rink night in honour of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Owen Kalp, who has a very personal connection to the affliction through his mother, was the star of the show.

Kalp, known for his excellent shut-down game, put up a six-point game that included a hat-trick, an outburst that had the entire team over the moon.

"Kalper Makar," captain Chase MacQueen-Spence called Kalp after the game, referring to the Colorado Avalanche star defender Cale Makar.

"Owen Kalp is him," added Lincoln Moore.

"I have no idea (what he ate for breakfast that day)," said a blown-away Jacob Montesi, Kalp's defence partner, "but I'm definitely going to his place for some tomorrow."

After the game, wearing a bright pink suit, even Kalp was stunned by the game he'd just had.

"I'm speechless," Kalp said with an ear-to-ear grin. "I think this being Pink in the Rink played a big part in my game tonight. It was for my mom, for sure. I told myself when I woke up that I'd have a good game for her and just try not to think too much and just play. I'm glad it worked."

Kalp described what having the game of his life on a night that was so personal to him meant.

"It means everything to me," Kalp told the Independent. "I'm just super thankful. This affects a lot of people in dif-



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Owen Kalp (left) and Blake Elzinga (right) celebrate Kalp's hat-trick goal on Oct. 24 in the St. Marys Lincolns' 10-2 win over the Strathroy Rockets. Kalp and Elzinga combined for five goals and 12 points in the game, with Kalp being the star of the show on a very personal night for Kalp and his family, with the game being the Lincolns' annual Pink in the Rink night.

ferent ways, and this night means a lot to many people, so it's awesome that the Lincolns can show the support."

Kalp's stellar night, according to head coach Jeff Bradley, resonated with everyone in the organization.

"I'm thrilled for Owen (Kalp) to have that kind of night because it really couldn't have happened to a better kid," said Bradley. "Sometimes, it seems too good to be just a coincidence. Owen means a lot to our team, and we know that night means a lot to him and his family. He's proud to play in that game and represent his mom, and a lot of players on our team are playing for his mom

as well."

There was no indication of the eventual lopsided result in the first period, a scoreless frame in which neither team played well. Just 27 seconds into the middle stanza, Jake Ritson broke the ice for Strathroy, and just under four minutes later, former Lincoln Zander Kechego made it 2-0 for the Rockets.

Cue the Rockets' parade to the penalty box; enter Kalp for his first of the night on the powerplay.

The Rockets gave the Lincolns three more powerplays in the period, with David Heath and Ryan Hodgkinson scoring on two.

Bradley praised Heath, who had a breakout night with four assists along with his goal.

"It's always an adjustment for young players coming into a league where you're playing against kids who are two, three, four years older than you. It's been a bit of an adjustment for David, but he's a real hockey player, and he's looking to get better all the time. For him to get rewarded the way he did, it speaks to his hard work."

Kalp added his second goal later in the second, before a penalty-filled third resulted in the Lincolns scoring six to take a 10-2 win. Two goals by Blake Elzinga helped the Walkerton native put up a six-point game.

"We are a better team when Blake (Elzinga) is playing well," Bradley said. "Sometimes you just need a night like that to get on a roll, and that's what we're hoping to see out of Blake moving forward. I think six points a night is a little unrealistic, but confidence can be built off of nights like that, and we're hoping it does that for Blake."

MacQueen-Spence also scored twice in the third, including a highlight reel goal in which he deked Rockets' netminder Mason Costa out of the crease and had Strathroy defenders sprawled on the ice, all while the Lincolns' captain easily slid the puck into an open net.

MacQueen-Spence recounted his incredible move to pot his first of two goals in the final 20 minutes.

"I probably shouldn't have been out there since we were short-handed, but (Owen) Voortman found me in the slot there, I screamed pretty loud, and he made a nice little sauce pass. I looked up and the goalie was coming out, playing

CONTINUED TO PAGE 19

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Lincs split back-to-back; Kalp, Elzinga take starring roles

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

me pretty high, so I held onto it a little long, went backhand to forehand, and then ended up having a tap-in."

Nats squeak out opportunistic 3-2 win over Lincs

Despite a better all-around performance 24 hours later, the Lincolns couldn't generate enough offence to keep their winning streak alive as the London Nationals held on for a 3-2 victory.

"Honestly, I felt better about that game than I did on Friday," Bradley said. "Unfortunately, we couldn't capitalize on enough of our opportunities, but we out-chanced them, we outshot them and I thought we outplayed them. We had a couple of big mistakes and London was able to capitalize, but for the most part, we took care of the puck, our physicality was awesome and we had more chances by far."

The teams traded goals in the opening period, heading into the first intermission tied at two apiece. Alexandre Campeau opened the scoring for the Nationals, with Elzinga countering for

the Lincolns less than a minute and a half later. Just 24 seconds after, however, Aiden McDonald put London back ahead by one. With under two minutes left in the period, Hodgkinson ripped a shot past Nationals' goalie Dante Bertolin to tie it up.

A second-period goal by Eddie Hickson held up as the game-winner, with the Lincolns unable to bury on their one and only chance with the powerplay.

Elzinga delivered an even stronger showing than in his six-point effort the night before, and along with the hyper-tenacious Declan Ready, was one of the Lincolns' best players against the Nationals.

"Blake (Elzinga) and Declan (Ready) were really good for us. Those two specifically brought a really important element to our game. Their work ethic was great. They were winning battles. They were just relentless in the offensive zone. They didn't do anything difficult, he didn't turn pucks over and he used his body and his speed, and was a real problem for London."



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Chase MacQueen-Spence tucks the puck into an open net after a highlight reel deke drew Strathroy Rockets' goaltender Mason Costa way out of his crease during the St. Marys Lincolns' 10-2 victory on Oct. 24.

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STRATFORD NISSAN



DCVI junior boys fight back to defeat South Huron

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

They may not have started perfectly, but the St. Marys DCVI Junior Boys Volleyball team roared back to win the second and third sets of their match against South Huron on Oct. 23.

After starting a bit slow in the first set, which the Salukis dropped 25-14, DCVI's junior boys completely took the game over in the second set, scoring the first 18 points of the set before ultimately winning 25-9.

Head coach Rachel Hendriksen mentioned the serving of Jacob Savile as key to getting the white-hot 18-point lead to start the set, with the entire team's resiliency guiding them the rest of the way.

"Obviously, the first 18 points were mostly thanks to Jacob's (Savile) incredible serves," Hendriksen said. But I think it was the idea of, 'Okay, we need to rally back.' They didn't get down on themselves. They felt they had to come back, they did a better job supporting one another and there was more cohesiveness than in the first set."

South Huron fought back in the third set, resulting in a nail-biting conclusion, ultimately going in St. Marys' favour with a 26-24 decision. Hendriksen noted the team got major contributions in the third set from further down their bench.

"Honestly, I think a lot of those players played like they had something to prove," said Hendriksen. "Those were the guys who don't always get as much playing time, and they were definitely up for the challenge. They had to step up and work together, and they were really focused on playing true volleyball. We weren't just throwing the ball back over. We were trying our best to pass-set-hit and use everyone on the court."



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Braydon Wheeler, the team's expert libero, drops to a knee to keep the ball in play during the St. Marys DCVI junior boys volleyball team's three-set win over South Huron on Oct. 23.

Hendriksen further described some of the team's strong individual efforts, of which there was no shortage.

"Jacob (Savile) serving 18 in a row over the net was amazing and a huge part of winning that second set," Hendriksen told the Independent. "His serving ability and his confidence have grown incredibly, and his awareness on the court and his leadership are amazing."

"Our libero, Brayden (Wheeler), definitely takes

charge in that back row. He's a really consistent passer and really reliable back there. Even after the game, the referee said to me, 'I love your libero, he really knows what he's doing.' Evan (Wolfkamp) had some good swings, and our setter, Dominic (Marzali), gives us great sets and great leadership."

Coming into the season, there was very little volleyball experience amongst the junior boys, but Hendriksen credited the team for their outstanding growth from the start of the year to now.

"Overall, you can definitely see the improvement they've made. Individually, each of them has come a really long way. A lot of them have only been playing volleyball for the past two months, so to learn the technique, the positioning and how to work as a team as well as they have, it's evident they have been working really hard."

"Their awareness of the game of volleyball really stands out," Hendriksen continued. "We've gotten a lot better at understanding where to be on the court to help each other out and how to communicate out there. And probably the biggest thing is their confidence. It's great to see how much their confidence has grown."

The Salukis' final game of the regular season is on Oct. 30 in Mitchell, with the winner taking third in the Huron-Perth standings. Hendriksen said she hopes the team enjoys however many playoff games they end up competing in.

"I want to just go as far as we can and do our best," Hendriksen said. "I really want the boys to continue having fun playing volleyball. That's the most important thing in high school volleyball is that they're enjoying it. They are a really nice group of kids and a fun group, so I want them to have fun, and the way they can have fun is playing their best and making it as far as we can."



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MINOR SPORTS

SCRAPBOOK



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
Addy Blake fires the puck from along the wall during the St. Marys Landscaping U11 B Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
Savy M. pushes the puck through the offensive zone during this past Sunday's Masterfeeds U11 C Girls St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Theo Shute snaps a quick shot from the slot during the Tremblett's Independent Grocer U11 LL Boys Red St. Marys Rock game this past Monday.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
Ryder Boemer loads up for a shot from the faceoff circle during this past Sunday's U13 B Boys St. Marys Rock game.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
Lauren Masselis rockets a long-range shot during the Cascades U13 BB Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Sophia Adcock passes the puck through centre ice during this past Sunday's FUN3 St. Marys Snipers (Hibbert) game.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER:

The season of thanks – embracing St. Marys’ outdoor blessings and indoor connections

ALONA VASYLIEVA
Independent Columnist

What an absolute joy it has been to experience this year’s autumn in Canada! The season has presented us with impressively warm and pleasant days, truly a delightful surprise that has allowed us to postpone the transition to winter wear just a little longer.

It was, quite rightly, a top priority for many of us to relish these final, sunny moments before the inevitable chill takes hold. And boy, did this gorgeous weather deliver! It gave us a fantastic opportunity to keep up with our outdoor activities and sports.

For my son, Alex, and his friends, this meant getting to enjoy a much longer season of tennis lessons – a little project spearheaded by my wonderful Ukrainian friend, Ira Ivchenko. Ira, who had just welcomed her second baby over the summer, was absolutely thrilled to stay active. Her dedication to staying active and involved is truly inspiring.

I must confess, I often maintain a healthy skepticism when it comes to consistently participating in outdoor sports, as one is so often at the mercy of the weather. Maintaining consistency can be challenging when lessons are missed due to rain or cold.

Every weekend morning, the children were ready to practice, and thanks to the season’s kindness, they didn’t miss a single lesson.

Ira reflected on her experience with such heartfelt warmth.

“This tennis season was special for me – full of experience and genuine emotions. Volunteering and working with the children was a real pleasure because seeing them develop and achieve their small victories is the greatest reward.”

This work is a remarkable contribution to the community. While Ira is considering involving more children over time, she is approaching this expansion with thoughtful care.

“Right now, I’m a little hesitant about taking on more children next season,” she explained, “because it’s important for me to pay individual attention to each student. I want everyone to have the opportunity to get maximum support and development.”

Frankly, teaching and keeping young children motivated and engaged for extended periods is a significant challenge. It requires a special, personalized approach for every child. Teachers, in my mind, are truly superheroes for their ability to master this feat.



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALONA VASYLIEVA)

Bringing the joy of the game to the next generation: Ira Ivchenko launched her volunteer tennis coaching program this summer to give young players a strong start.

Therefore, our heartfelt gratitude goes out to Ira for giving these children the chance to learn and play tennis. We recognize that maintaining life’s balance and emotional equilibrium with a new baby is a tremendous task, and her dedication is deeply appreciated.

The tennis courts themselves are always a hive of activity – lessons, tournaments and gatherings create a vibrant atmosphere. Despite their proximity to the road, being surrounded by the river on one side and a quarry on the other gives the area a uniquely peaceful and blissful feeling.

As the weather inevitably changes, we must prepare to switch to indoor activities. However, this shift certainly does not mean a lack of options for both children and adults.

We are so fortunate to have the Ukrainian school for kids, which runs every Sunday at the Presbyterian Church. Our sincere thanks go to the minister of the church, Jeff Lackie, our lead volunteer, V.J. Knutson, all sponsors and every volunteer who helped make this school happen. We are delighted that more children from the area have joined this year. It is profoundly important to maintain our language and remain con-

nected to our Ukrainian culture.

Stepping into the indoor season simply means having an extra plan to keep our children engaged – whether that involves our Netflix and Disney subscriptions, new board games, or exploring local workshops and events. St. Marys always offers something wonderful; a quick check of local happenings is all that is required.

When my family and I first arrived in Canada, I was initially surprised to learn that schoolchildren here don’t have a fall break. But regular PA Days throughout the year really help to break things up. My son, Alex, absolutely loves going to the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC) on those days.

Speaking of the PRC, it truly is a wonderful facility for staying active and entertained, especially during the winter months. I’ve been trying to register Alex for swimming lessons, but unfortunately, the aquatic centre renovations are still underway.”

In closing, let us cross our fingers and hope that this splendid, perfect fall does not necessitate a “payback” from the universe in the form of a long, cold and endless winter.

Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH
St. Marys Public Library

Join us at the Library this week for some Halloween activities! We have Poke a Pumpkin where you can get a fun Library TIP (and/or a treat), and Spooky Pumpkin Golf where you can test your mini-putting skills and win prizes. Bring a friend for some friendly competition!

This Week’s Recommendation

A mischief of farmyard mice have arranged some spectacular costumes for their dance beneath the Ghost Moon. Unfortunately, a horde of creepy critters destroy and steal the costumes before the mice have a chance to have their party. Is all lost? Not if white mouse’s positive words can move

the mice to make the best of a stinky situation. The melodic prose of Jane Yolen’s writing coupled with Laurel Molk’s charming illustrations make “Beneath the Ghost Moon” an inspired, slightly spooky classic. Find it in on the seasonal shelves with the Halloween books in the children’s section.

Up This Week

Fri., Oct. 31: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sat., Nov. 1: Dungeons and Dragons (10 a.m.)
Mon., Nov. 3: Euchre Mondays (10:30 a.m.), Learn to Play Bridge (1-3 p.m.)
Tues., Nov. 4: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Wed., Nov. 5: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.)
Thurs., Nov. 6: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
*Registration Required

Ask the Arborist

By Joel Hackett | 519 272 5742 | jtsquote@gmail.com



Dear Arborist,

Whats the best way to protect my freshly planted trees from deer? Fool proof way?

Thanks, Jason

Dear Jason,

The only fool proof method is to build a cage around the tree. This cage could be wire or wood but has to be far enough out from the tree to keep the

deer from placing their heads through. Additionally, the cage needs to be at least 6 ft tall.

Sincerely,

The Arborist

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

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Margaret Ann Austin Hutton, part two

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

When Annie Hutton, age 22, married Charles Stockman Rumsey, a man twice her age, a widower, and the father of young son, it meant some changes and challenges in her life. The only daughter of Theodore Hutton, a prosperous St. Mary merchant, Annie was an only child until she was ten years old. In 1870, her brother, Frederick, was born. By joining the Rumsey household, she was exchanging a life with a 12-year-old brother to a new home with Reginald Rumsey, her seven-year-old stepson.

Sarah Hutton, Annie's mother, had been raised in a Presbyterian household and after she married and moved to St. Marys, she and Theodore attended the Presbyterian Church on Widder Street. The other Huttons – Theodore's parents and brothers – all attended St. James Anglican Church across town at the corner of Elgin and Church Streets. Charles Rumsey and his family also attended St. James. He was an active member, serving as warden and church treasurer for many years. The first Sunday that the new Mrs. Rumsey walked into the church on the arm of her husband, there would have been discreet glances of recognition and approval from her uncles and cousins, all seated in their private box pews near the front of the sanctuary.

Annie had lived with her family in a spacious apartment on Water Street South, overlooking the Thames River. Charles Rumsey owned the three-storey brick building that still stands on the southwest corner of Queen and Wellington Streets. The bank he managed was on the ground floor while the upper floors were his family's residence. The main rooms had high, vaulted ceilings, large windows and elaborate trim. There was access to the flat roof, edged with a wrought-iron railing, offering wonderful views of St. Marys in all directions. Rumsey's first wife, Katherine, had lived in this apartment for just two years before she died in 1877. Although Rumsey employed a housekeeper to care for his little boy, by 1882 these must have been very much gentleman's rooms, needing a homemaker's touch.

Annie Hutton Rumsey was young and may have been tentative at first but before long, she found her stride as the wife of a significant man in their community. St. James Church, through most of the 1880s, was undergoing major renovations. The original simple rectangular church with its gable roof was transformed into the lovely church that stands today with steep pitched roof, buttresses, a gothic tower and entrance porch. Rumsey, as church treasurer, would have been very involved in all required to finance the renovation project. Annie joined the important women's groups like the Chancel Guild and the Women's Auxiliary. She embraced the Anglican Church's rituals and pageantry. While we don't know whether she ever rolled up her sleeves and helped with



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ST. MARYS MUSEUM DIGITAL COLLECTION OF HISTORIC IMAGES)

A small, faded photograph is the only one in the St. Marys Museum's collection showing Annie as an adult. At the entrance to Westover, ca 1918, Annie is kneeling, front left, wearing long black beads. Mina McKay is standing to the left beside her. Dr. Bryan is at the right in the back row. Dr. McKay, Mina's husband, is back row centre. The others in the photograph are friends and relatives.

church suppers, she was in the position to make material contributions. Through the years, she donated a lovely Carrera marble baptismal font and the large, stained-glass windows that surround the altar.

In 1898, Annie's father, Theodore Hutton, died at the age of 68, leaving a considerable legacy. As well as \$160,000 in savings, as a private banker he also held the mortgages on a long list of properties. Surprisingly, for a man of business, he left no will. But his son-in-law, C. S. Rumsey, helped administer the estate. Theodore's widow, Sarah, was well provided for and the remaining assets were divided between Theodore's two children, Annie and Frederick. Annie inherited several commercial properties in downtown St. Marys. She proved to be a competent businesswoman – after all, she was a Hutton – and undertook to manage these properties independent of her husband. In 1904, when the town was looking for a site for the new public library, she offered two possible locations, one on Water Street South and the other on Wellington Street North. Note that she offered to sell them, not donate them, to the town. Town council ultimately decided to build the library on Church Street beside the town hall.

Meanwhile, young Reginald Rumsey, having finished his secondary education at Upper Canada College, began his own suc-

cessful banking career. At age 19, he joined the Canadian Bank of Commerce with his initial posting as a clerk in nearby Seaford. He was single and happy to be sent to distant locations. Through the 1890s, he served the bank in several Ontario towns, then Louisiana, New York City, and Dawson City, Yukon Territory. Reginald's career took him to other posts in the Canadian west and finally to Winnipeg where he became a prominent banker and citizen of that city.

In April 1900, Charles and Annie Rumsey set out on their own adventures – a four-month trip to Europe, visiting Gibraltar, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and on to France to see the Paris Exhibition. They stopped in England before returning to Canada. Annie Rumsey discovered she loved travelling and buying elaborate souvenirs. She shipped home statuary, furniture, and ceramics to adorn the Traders Bank apartment. At home, she also attended estate sales, with a special eye for antique furniture.

Charles Rumsey had always enjoyed sports and innovation. The St. Marys Museum's historic image collection has a photograph of him skating in Montreal in 1870, and another, taken in 1884, showing off his penny-farthing bicycle at the intersection of Queen and Water Streets. In 1899, he was president of the newly

formed St. Marys Tennis Club. He owned the first automobile in St. Marys, buying it in Detroit. He had every reason to look forward to an active retirement. But he died in March 1904, age 65. Annie, now 43 years old, was a widow. Annie left the Traders Bank apartment, now the residence of the new bank manager, and acquired her largest treasure. She bought the lovely brick house at the southeast corner of Wellington and Jones Street. Master mason John Elliott had built 47 Wellington as his family home. But Elliott died in 1903, and Annie bought it from his widow in 1906. She moved in, bringing the furnishings she had acquired over the years to fill this lovely new set of rooms.

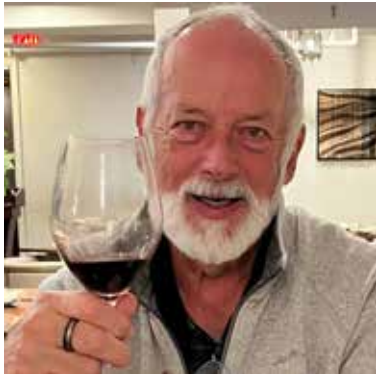
Annie Rumsey was not a retiring widow. She continued to manage her properties and to contribute to her church. She became involved in the work of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE.) She organized and was the first Regent of the Rumsey Chapter in St. Marys and was later made a life member of the provincial order. She continued to travel. Her cousin, Mina Coleman, had married a former St. Marys physician, William McKay. He had a practice in New York, but they spent their summers at Westover Park in St. Marys. Annie enjoyed visiting their New York home. There she met another physician, a bachelor, Dr. John Conger Bryan, who was about to retire. Annie and Dr. Bryan were married on March 23, 1918, in Trenton, New Jersey. This week's photograph was taken at the front entrance to Westover when the Bryans returned to St. Marys and Annie introduced her American husband to her friends and relatives.

With Dr. Bryan, Annie enjoyed more years of travel. They toured the Mediterranean in 1922, a trip that included the first of their several visits to the Holy Land. Annie also kept buying treasures, filling her home at 47 Wellington Street South. When her cousin, Mina McKay died in 1937 and the contents of Westover were sold at auction, Annie sat in the front row, bidding for many items. She was notable for continuing to wear long, old-fashioned dresses and for the clutch of keys at her waist, worn wherever she went. These were keys to every room in her house, all locked to protect her treasures.

The last years of her life were difficult. Dr. Bryan was ill. Annie looked after him as long as she could, but he was admitted as a chronic patient in Stratford in 1945 and died there in 1947, age 87. Margaret Ann Austin Hutton died at her home on Christmas Eve, 1948, in her 89th year. It was almost exactly a century since her grandparents, her father, and her uncles, the ambitious Hutton brothers, had arrived in St. Marys from England. Her brother, Fred, now a retired merchant living in London, was named informant on her death certificate. Annie's treasures were dispersed, some at auction, some to relatives, and her grand house on Wellington Street South passed into other hands.

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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Surviving the scam epidemic



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

Make no mistake: I love travelling in Europe. Just in the past year and a half, we have visited France, Spain, Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. We hugely enjoyed our time in all of the above, and plan to return to Europe soon.

But there is one thing we consistently encounter there that never seems to come up on visits to Canadian cities. Again, in the past year or so, we have spent time in Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Saint John, Saint John's, Sherbrooke, Halifax and all points between, and here's what we never saw: a sign saying "Pickpockets are active in this area."

I'm not saying Canadian communities are crime-free, or that there are no scams happening here, but on-the-street tourist scams seem to be almost epidemic in some European cities.

Believe me, I am not saying don't go, but I do suggest caution, common sense and a certain amount of preparation.

And just so you know, this stuff really happens. For instance:

We were in Paris a couple of weeks ago, strolling in front of the Opera House. A woman was

approaching us on the crowded street when she suddenly reached down, picked up what appeared to be a man's gold wedding ring and immediately offered it to us. "This," she said in very passable English, "is your lucky day."

We looked confused because we were!

"I cannot keep this," she said, "because my religion forbids me to wear jewelry. So please allow me to give it to you, with my blessing."

We voiced our objections, but she placed the ring in my hand and began to walk away. We looked at each other, bemused to say the least. Then she returned. "Perhaps you could buy me a coca cola or something as a thank you," she said.

I cottoned on. "No, we don't want the ring." She became adamant. I bent down to put the ring back on the sidewalk; she intercepted my hand. I dropped the ring into her palm, and as she protested, we turned and walked away.

In immediate hindsight, we realized this had been some kind of scam, though I had never heard of this particular ploy.

Turns out, as a travel writer, I probably should have. According to my internet search, "The lost gold ring scam is one of the oldest and most famous tourist scams in Paris. Trusting tourists are the best mark for this deception." The internet description was a virtually word-for-word script of our experience. It predicted the scammer would have asked for more money in return for a completely worthless ring, and might have made quite a scene if we resisted.

Ah, so after all my travels, I

qualified for the "trusting tourist best mark" award. Only slightly embarrassing! But at least we escaped unscathed.

More through luck than sense, we also avoided some scammers in Spain a few months ago. These were again women, this time insisting that we accept a sprig of rosemary as a gift. Turns out, according to our Spanish guides, if you take it, they will demand payment and it can become a highly embarrassing scene.

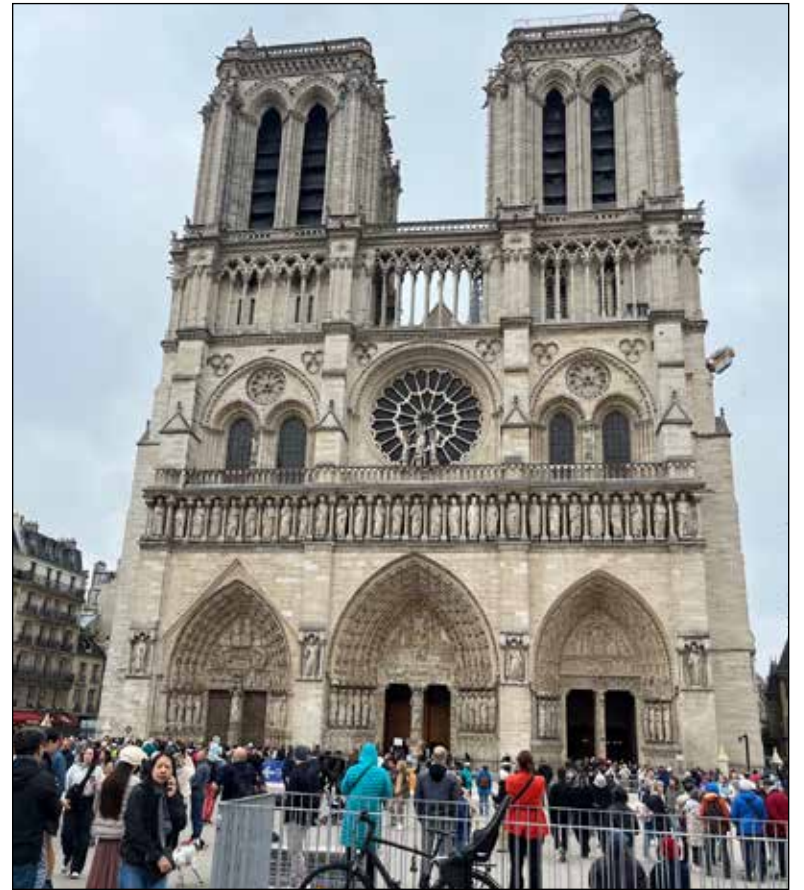
It was even somewhat embarrassing when we declined because they were quite rude in their response.

In some cases, there is a secondary purpose to these approaches – the women with the rings or the rosemary may be distracting you so their accomplices can work their pickpocket magic.

Warnings against pickpockets are everywhere, even in the most holy sites – like Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, a church where, because of incredible crowds, pickpockets can find their own version of paradise.

One fairly recent scam involves young people carrying survey clipboards. They are working for the tourism board, they say, and would like to ask you a few questions. Heck, doesn't everyone love to offer our opinion? The problem is either an accomplice is lifting your wallet while your attention is on the survey person or, in the case of the really experienced crook, she is actually opening your purse directly under the survey clipboard. We have seen these folks in action, too, though we were never directly approached to take a "survey."

The advice from our guides is simple, though not foolproof.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

The Opera House in Paris – the site of the "gold ring" scam that almost convinced the author.

Don't carry excess cash or passports on you. Leave them in your hotel safe. Men should have their wallets in a front pocket. Women should keep their handbags closed and zipped up. Don't wear your best jewelry in public. Don't hang a bag on the back of a chair in a café. And so on.

Personally, I would suggest if you are travelling as a couple or a group, one should take the pictures while others keep a close eye – better still, hand – on any valuables.

Again, this is not a knock on travelling to Europe. We love it –

the art, the food, the architecture, the history, the people, the scenery, the whole deal. I come home educated, entertained, refreshed, invigorated and, I think, a better citizen of our complicated world. You can, too. Just keep one hand on your valuables, and don't accept unwarranted gifts!

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.

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EAT AT OUR HOUSE: Haunted recipes, perfect for Halloween



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

Halloween is approaching quickly. Regardless of the weather, here are some comforting and quick meals to provide the family with energy for the haul!

You'll notice a common theme in both recipes are seasonal sage and pumpkin, which invoke the flavours of fall.

Pumpkin mac & cheese

A savoury classic with a fall twist even the kids will love.

Serves 4-6; Prep: 15 minutes; Total: 45 minutes

¼ cup plus 2 tbsp unsalted butter

3 cloves garlic, grated and divided

½ cup panko breadcrumbs
2 tsp kosher salt, divided, plus more for pasta water

¾ tsp ground black pepper, divided

¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

1 lb dry cavatappi pasta

6 sage leaves

½ medium yellow onion, grated

2 tbsp all-purpose flour

1 tsp ground mustard

¼ tsp ground nutmeg

¼ tsp cayenne pepper

2 cups milk

1 can (15 oz) pumpkin puree

8 oz fontina cheese, shredded
8 oz smoked gouda, shredded
*Can substitute fontina for monterey jack or munster. Gouda can be replaced with cheddar or gruyere.

Method:

-In a small non-stick skillet, melt 2 tbsp butter over medium heat. Add 1 grated garlic clove and cook 30 seconds until fragrant. Stir in panko breadcrumbs, ½ tsp salt, ¼ tsp pepper and toast stirring until golden brown; about 2 minutes.

-Remove mixture to a small bowl and set aside. Stir in parmesan.

-In a large pot over medium-high heat, bring salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook until just al dente, 5-6 minutes. Drain pasta reserving ½ cup of pasta water.

-In the same pot over medium heat, melt the remaining ¼ cup butter. Stir in sage leaves. Cook until sage is slightly fried and butter is deeply golden. Remove sage leaves to paper-towel lined plate and add onion, cooking until soft 3-4 minutes. Add remaining grated garlic cloves and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Whisk in flour, mustard, nutmeg, cayenne, the remaining 1 ½ tsp salt and ½ tsp pepper. Cook until raw flour smell disappears, 3-4 minutes. Gradually whisk in milk until smooth. Whisk in pumpkin puree and cook until very thick, 5 minutes.

-Remove pot from heat and gradually add in grated cheeses, whisking until melted. Taste for salt.

-Fold in drained noodles, adding pasta water 1 tbsp at a time

until sauce coats the noodles.

-Serve hot sprinkled with toasted breadcrumbs and crumbled sage.

Autumn naan pizzas

Serves: 4; Prep: 15 minutes; Total: 30 minutes

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided

¾ cup thinly sliced shallots

8 oz mild or spicy ground sausage

4 naan breads

1 cup canned pumpkin puree

A few pinches dried oregano

4-5 oz grated fontina cheese

2/3 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese

2-3 tbsp fresh sage leaves

A drizzle of hot honey or balsamic for garnish

Method:

-Preheat oven to 425°

-Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add shallots and cook until softened, 4-5 minutes. Crumble sausage into pan and cook until browned 6-7 minutes.

-Arrange naan breads on a large, rimmed baking sheet. Spoon pumpkin puree evenly over each bread and sprinkle with a little dried oregano.

-Sprinkle fontina cheese evenly over each bread, followed by sausage and shallot mixture. Spoon small dollops of ricotta cheese overtop.

-Place sage leaves in a small bowl and drizzle remaining 1 tbsp olive oil, rubbing all leaves. Scatter over each naan pizza.

-Transfer pan to oven and bake for 15 minutes until pizzas are golden and crisp. Drizzle each pizza with hot honey



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

This pumpkin mac & cheese is perfect fuel for the little ones before trick or treating.

or balsamic and garnish with cracked black pepper.

Monster Rice Krispies treats

A twist on tried-and-true Rice Krispie squares. I brown the butter before adding the dry ingredients and add a tsp of Mexican vanilla. There is a taste difference!

3 tbsp unsalted butter

5 ½ cups mini marshmallows

1 tsp Mexican vanilla or whatever is on hand

6 cups Rice Krispies cereal or puffed rice

1 (12 oz) package orange candy melts

1 (12 oz) package green candy melts

Small candy googly eyes

Method:

-Lightly coat 9-by-13-inch

pan with cooking spray or butter. Melt butter in a large saucepan over low heat, stirring frequently until turns a golden brown and develops a nutty aroma. Add marshmallows, stirring until completely melted. Add vanilla.

-Remove from heat and add cereal, stirring until well-coated. Transfer to prepared pan and press with buttered spatula to smooth. Cool completely and cut into 12 rectangles.

-Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Melt candy melts according to package directions in separate bowls. Dip one end of each treat into melts, letting excess drip off. Place on prepared baking sheet, add googly eyes. Let set before serving. Store covered, at room temperature up to 3 days.

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Riddles

What do you call a bear with no teeth?
A gummy bear!

I'm full of keys but can't open a door. What am I?
A piano.

What gets wetter the more it dries?
A towel.

I'm tall when I'm young and short when I'm old. What am I?
A candle.

Why did the cookie go to the doctor?
It felt crumbly.

What has four wheels and flies?
A garbage truck.

I'm not alive, but I grow; I don't have lungs, but I need air. What am I?
Fire.

Why did the math book look sad?
It had too many problems.

I follow you all day but vanish at night. What am I?
Your shadow.

What kind of room has no doors or windows?
A mushroom.

What has a head and a tail but no body?
A coin.

Why can't your nose be 12 inches long?
Because then it would be a foot!

- Word Search -



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HALLOWEEN

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

Ghosts
Goblins
Haunted house
Candy
Trick or Treat
Pranks
Witch
Spooky
Tombstone
Vampire
Zombie
Costumes
Jackolantern
Skeleton
Dracula
All Hallows Day



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK

What letter of the alphabet has the most water?



The C!

Cyrus Rock (2)

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

St. Marys Veterinary Clinic is pleased to be the sponsor of the

PET OF THE WEEK



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Halloween Pet Safety: Keep candy—especially chocolate or xylitol—well out of reach. Choose comfy, nonrestrictive costumes. During trick-or-treat traffic, keep pets in a quiet, secure room.



BELLA

Our Pet of the Week is Bella who is ready to greet trick or treaters on Halloween. Brian and Tammy Harris rescued two-year-old Bella from SCARR a year ago. She is full of love, loves to play ball and snuggle.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent



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Fellowship feast: Church supper draws a huge crowd

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Church suppers have a special way of bringing the community together. They offer a chance to share a meal with neighbours, connect with new residents and celebrate the spirit of togetherness that defines the Thorndale area.

These gatherings also play a vital role in supporting local churches.

On Tuesday, Oct. 21, the Thorndale United Church hosted its annual Beef Supper, selling an impressive 875 tickets. Held at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre, the event welcomed both dine-in guests and busy families who opted for takeout.

Yvonne Elliott, a member of the supper's organizing committee, expressed heartfelt gratitude.

"Many thanks to the community and beyond for supporting us," she said. "We also greatly appreciate our church members, local residents and student volunteers who all contributed to the success of our church supper."



Area residents attended the annual beef supper at Thorndale United Church on Oct. 21.

(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Thorndale Optimist Club continues to support area youth

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Fueled by hope and a positive vision, the Thorndale Optimist Club is dedicated to inspiring and empowering youth to be their very best.

Since its founding in 1969, the club has been a vibrant force in supporting young people across Thorndale and the surrounding community. Over the years, the club has hosted an annual bike rodeo and the community's Easter Egg Hunt, which is well attended.

Through their food booth at the Thorndale ballpark during the summer and at the Thorndale Fall Fair, they earn funds to donate to area youth sports, to the local food bank, Ronald McDonald House, help fill the West Nissouri School pantry with wholesome foods, the school's Grade 8 class trip and other youth programs.

At their October dinner meeting

at the Thorndale Family Restaurant, the Thorndale Optimist Club formally welcomed new members with the official assistance of the mid-western Ontario district governor Bill Adams. As well at this meeting, Adams inducted Melanie Sorsenson as the club's new president for 2025-2026 with the passing of the gavel from Bill Tipping.

"Bill has led our Optimist Club for many years," Sorensen said, "and we are grateful for his dedicated service and leadership over the years. I am excited to take on the president's role, lead the club and build on new ideas that are in the works. We are always looking for new members who want to get involved in our community and who are passionate about helping our young citizens grow strong and happy."

"Please feel free to call or text me, Melanie, if you have any questions at 519-857-7795."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left are new Thorndale Optimist Club members Deane and Kailen Mulcahy, Thorndale Optimist 2025-2026 president Melanie Sorensen, new members Jill Marshall and Patti Kemp, and Optimist Michael Fernando.

OBITUARY

Schmidt



Lorianne Louise Schmidt - *In every stitch she made, a bit of her heart remains.*

April 29, 1938 – October 22, 2025

After a life filled with love, Lorianne passed away peacefully on Wednesday, October 22nd, at Kingsway Lodge in St. Marys. While dementia dimmed her final years, she is now at peace, and her light continues to shine in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

Lorianne Schmidt (nee Fuller) was born in the Stratford General Hospital on April 29th, 1938, only 5 days after the man who would become her beloved husband of 65 years, Robert (Bob) Schmidt (deceased April 4th, 2025). She spent her childhood on her family farm in Downie Township, her adult years on the Schmidt family century farm in Ellice Township and retired to St. Marys where they designed and built their dream house on the hill.

Together, Bob and Lorianne raised four daughters: Nancy (Chris Buck), Heather (Jamie Horne), and Kim (Mark McKay). She was predeceased in 1970 by their infant son, and in 2022, by their eldest daughter, Kathryn (Kathy McPhail). She was also predeceased by her younger brother, Allan Fuller.

A proud and loving grandmother to Jon McPhail (Krysten), Dan Buck (Celyne), Julie Wiffen (Brady), Jamie Buck (Brooklynn), Jenna Hazen (Mike), Emma Coughlin (Braiden), Andy McKay (Corrina), Justin McKay (Courtney), Ashley McKay (Connor), Mike Buck (Meghan), and Mathew Buck (Stephanie); and great-grandchildren, Maxwell, Eliana (Matthew and Stephanie), Lawson, Ledger (Mike and Meghan), Raelynn (Dan and Celyne); Noah, Jake, Theo (Jon and Krysten); Leo, Scottie (Julie and Brady); Blake (Jenna and Mike), Adelaide (Justin and Courtney), Brodie (Andy and Corrina), and Noa (Emma and Braiden).

Lorianne spent her life in dedication to the family farm and the community. She was a born leader – first as a teacher, and then joyfully volunteering her time in the service of others. For many years, she led 4-H groups and held many positions with the Kuhryville and Provincial Women’s Institutes. She was also a faithful member of St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ellice Township (Moserville), and the ELW.

She found great joy in sewing and quilting – her quilts, baby blankets, wall hangings and coasters are in the homes of many families and friends.

Like Bob, she was an avid collector – snowmen figurines came home from many trips and became part of her special collection.

Winters were spent in Arizona with Bob, where she was the Treasurer of the Desert Sun community for years, taught sewing and quilting, and enjoyed time with dear friends.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the incredible staff at Kingsway Lodge in St. Marys where Mom spent her last 2 years.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Kingsway Lodge (Activity Fund) or to the Rotary Hospice Stratford Perth in her memory.

A private family service will be held to celebrate her life. www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com

IN MEMORIAM

Riddell

*The memories never fade
The very finest*



Dr. Robert Lyle (Sam) Riddell D.C.
January 12, 1916 - October 28, 2009
Missed by Bethany and St. Marys

IN MEMORIAM

Bieber

Wilfred Roy Bieber - Oct 27, 1995
**In loving memory of our Father,
Grandfather, Brother and friend.**
Cherished in our memories for 30 years.
You may not be with us, we can’t believe it’s been 30 years.

Where you held our hands and helped us with our fears.

The memories of you and your laughter we hold dearly in our heart.

Like you playing the piano by the street light or taking a car apart.

You always put your family first with our mother by your side.

I hope you are up in heaven fishing, hunting with your loving bride.

You were a hard working man with calloused hands but had a heart of gold.

You always put others first, you would never leave them out in the cold.

Now we hold the hands of our children and see some of you in them.

Looking at the lessons you have taught us and knowing where it all stems.

You may not be with us, we can’t believe it’s been 30 years.

The love and kindness that you have showed us, we will always hold so dear.



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IN MEMORIAM

Peaker

Tom Peaker - October 28th, 2020



Our lives go on without you
But nothing is the same,
We have to hide our heartaches
When someone speaks your name.
Sad are the hearts that love you
Silent the tears that fall,
Living our hearts without you
Is the hardest part of all.
You did so many things for us
Your heart was kind and true,
And when we needed to talk to someone
We could always count on you.
The special years will not return
When we were all together,
But with the love within our hearts
You will walk with us forever.
**Lovingly remembered and dearly missed by,
Marilyn, Tate, Krystal, Brody, Jonathan and families.**

OPEN HOUSE



50th Anniversary Open House
DAVE & CAROL MILLER

The family of Dave & Carol Miller invite you to help celebrate their 50th anniversary

Nov. 8, 2025 from 2 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Purple Hill Music Hall
20903 Purple Hill Road, Thorndale

Please no gifts, your presence is the greatest present of all

Town hosting Municipal Hazardous and Special Product Event on Nov. 1

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys is hosting its next Municipal Hazardous and Special Product Disposal Day on Saturday, Nov. 1.

The event will run from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Municipal Operations Centre (MOC) located at 408 James St. S (enter off South Service Road). It is open to residents of St. Marys and Perth South.

Items that will be accepted at the disposal event include:

- Acids, aerosol cans, antifreeze
- Bases, batteries, bleach
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), fluorescent tubes
- Fertilizers, fuels, garden and pool chemicals

- Household cleaners, motor oil, paints, pesticides
 - Propane tanks/cylinders, solvents, stains, Varsol
- All materials must be sealed and in their original containers with labels. Materials should be transported in the rear of vehicles (trunk, truck bed, etc.) and contained in rigid containers for safe transport and unloading. Vehicles with materials in the back or front seat will be redirected to a separate area of the parking lot where they can be moved to the trunk or tailgate. Residents are asked to remain in their vehicles at all times as materials will be unloaded by trained staff.

Please note that the MHSW depot that was located at the St. Marys Landfill has now been closed, and MHSW material will no longer be received at the landfill.

For more information about waste disposal services in St. Marys, visit townofstmarys.com/MHSW.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Thank you for supporting the Stitch Market

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary and the Rotary Club of St. Marys, we sincerely thank the community for supporting The Stitch Market. We are beyond grateful to the many donors who gave fabrics, yarns, notions, books, sewing machines and anything to do with stitching!

We received six truckloads and numerous individual drop-offs. Over 300 shoppers benefitted from your kindness, allowing us to raise well over \$8,000 in total.

Thanks are extended to the St. Marys Independent for promoting the event and we are especially grate-

ful to Hyggeligt Fabrics who promoted, received and stored donations until ready for pickup, and the St. Marys United Church, who allowed us to store the mounds of donations until we were ready to sort.

Finally, a huge thank you to the many volunteers from the Auxiliary, the Rotary Club and the community who came forward to collect, sort and arrange the mind-boggling selection of donations!

Sincerely,
Diane O'Shea, Rotary Club of St. Marys
Janis Fread, St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist

Stacey's song (has got it going on)

25 years ago (2000)

Police are investigating three incidents that happened overnight on October 22. The change machine at the car wash on Queen Street West was tampered with, but no theft occurred, and damage is minimal. A Pontiac car parked overnight on Water Street had three tires slashed, with damage estimated at \$300. Someone also threw a beer bottle through the DCVI cafeteria window, causing \$500 in damage.

Stacey Wheal will be performing live on October 27 on London's CFPL television station. Stacey will perform three numbers from her CD "Bluebird". The album has been receiving airplay on CBC and several other radio stations for the past several months.

50 years ago (1975)

The winning ticket for the purebred heifer calf was drawn at the Western Hereford Association banquet in Palmerston on Friday night. The winner was Mrs. Norm Moffatt of Rogers Ave, St. Marys.

A group of over 20 area secondary school history teachers visited the St. Marys Collegiate on Friday, as a tour of the community was planned for them. Veteran St. Marysite L.W. (Curly) Wilson served as a very capable guide on the tour. A luncheon at the Sir Joe Restaurant was also enjoyed.

75 years ago (1950)

William Somerville is wearing a patch over his right eye this week, the result of an accident on the weekend when a knot from a stick of wood he was chopping with an axe flew upwards, striking his eyeglasses, breaking the lens, and cutting his eyeball.

A photographer from a Toronto daily newspaper got the surprise of his photographic career on Saturday evening last while taking flash photos of the new St. Marys Memorial Hospital. Just as the Toronto "snapper" was all lined up to take what he thought was a particularly fine human interest shot, another photographer arrived and over his shoulder as it were, snapped the scene before him. The words that followed are not being reproduced here.

100 years ago (1925)

St. Marys manufacturers and storekeepers have decided not to observe the half holiday this Thursday afternoon in accordance with the recommendation of the Government of Ottawa. Employees will however be allowed the customary opportunity to cast their votes.

A regular scourge of auto accessory thieving appears to be afflicting Downie Township. Recently a young man driving his car over the detour on the Provincial highway east of St. Marys had the misfortune to crash into the ditch. While he was at a neighbouring farm telephoning for help, some unprincipled scoundrels carried off the tires, headlight lenses and other removable gear from his car.

CELEBRATION

Georgina's 90th birthday OPEN HOUSE

Georgina McGregor and family would like to invite friends and family to drop in to the open house to celebrate Georgina's 90th birthday

**SUNDAY NOVEMBER 9TH
FROM 1 PM TO 4 PM**

Kingsway Lodge 310 Queens St E., St. Marys
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		5	7				2	
			4	2		6		

Solutions on pg. 31

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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. A werewolf

2. A coven

3. 1966

4. Scream

5. Michael Jackson's "Thriller"

6. Slenderman

7. Brains

8. Scythe

9. Friday the 13th

10. Ghostbusters!

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THE WEEK AHEAD

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

St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 22

Friday, Oct 31

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Chatham Maroons at the PRC – 7:30 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. Halloween party – 8 p.m., Prize for best costume

Saturday, Nov 1

- Municipal hazardous & special product disposal day at the MOC – 8 a.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field – 8 a.m. to Noon, Final outdoor market
- SMCP presents “Hilda's Yard” at the Town Hall theatre – 2 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Komoka Kings at Komoka Wellness Centre – 7:15 p.m.

Sunday, Nov 2

- Legion bingo – Doors open 11:30 a.m., Play 1-4 p.m.
- SMCP presents “Hilda's Yard” at the Town Hall theatre – 2 p.m.

Monday, Nov 3

- Community dinner at St. Marys United Church – 5 p.m., Sponsored by town council

Tuesday, Nov 4

- Royal Canadian Legion buddy check coffee – 10 a.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Legion cribbage – Starts 7 p.m. sharp

Thursday, Nov 6

- Happy Valley walk-in flu vaccine clinic at the PRC – 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. sausage on a bun lunch – 12-1:30 p.m.
- Nourish market at St. Marys United Church – 2-4 p.m.

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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



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