

# St. Marys Independent

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## New outdoor-adventure store opens on Church Street South



### AVONTUUR OPENS IN ST. MARYS

Kyle Sietzema shows some of his inventory at his new outdoor-lifestyle business located at 11 Church St. S.

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

## “Every audience is a different animal”: Comedian Brent Butt talks upcoming show in St. Marys

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As he looks ahead to his June 7 show in support of the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation and the St. Marys Memorial Hospital, Canadian comedy icon Brent Butt says fans who know him from his hit CTV show, *Corner Gas*, will see a whole new side of the

comic from small-town Saskatchewan.

Speaking with the Independent, Butt says his character from *Corner Gas*, Brent Leroy, is a version of himself had he decided not to leave his hometown of Tisdale, Sask., to pursue a career in comedy. While he says the comedy in *Corner Gas* is more about the show's characters than it is about where it's

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

“Avontuur” is the Dutch word for Adventure and now the name of the new store in town located at 11 Church St. S.

Owner Kyle Sietzema started his outdoor-lifestyle shop online in 2020 with inventory to promote an adventurous lifestyle with items for golf, pickleball, camping and outdoor gear, outdoor games and, most recently, apparel. Sietzema has a history in sales, marketing and logistics and has used those skills building his current business.

Due to the rise in shipping costs, Sietzema decided to open his own brick-and-mortar shop and chose St. Marys because of the beauty of the town.

Right now, the hours of the new store are Thursday 12-5 p.m., Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 12-5 p.m. with hopes of extending those in the near future.

Sietzema is trying to focus mostly on Canadian brands with product from Halifax, Vancouver, Quebec, Toronto and some beautiful homemade blankets from Victoria, B.C.

“The community has been very receptive and supportive,” Sietzema said. “The foot traffic is growing every weekend, and we are very happy to be part of such a warm and welcoming town.”

Sietzema, along with his partner, Laura Biggs, have lived in St. Marys for four years. Biggs is an artist and designed the business logo from Sietzema's own truck and trailer. The pair are outdoor adventurers and love the town. Biggs even recently joined the town's beautification committee.

Avontuur is currently offering an opening sale of 20 per cent off leading up to an official grand opening. The business can be found on Instagram and Facebook, and is a great addition to our town.

Go check them out and get some ideas to get outside, get active, look and feel great.



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# COMMUNITY

## Council to consider zone-change request for fifth building with nine more residential units at former West Ward School property

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The owners of a 23-unit residential complex at 121 Ontario St. S, once the location of the West Ward School early learning centre, are seeking a zoning amendment that, if approved by council, would allow them to construct a fifth building on the property, adding nine additional residential units.

During the May 13 St. Marys council meeting, the town hosted a statutory public meeting giving members of the public and council a chance to learn about the proposal for an additional multi-residential building on the property, ask questions and voice any concerns. As it stands, the 0.9-hectare property is zoned for a maximum of 23 residential units. The requested zone change would increase that maximum to 32.

“It has been our pleasure to be the custodians of the West Ward School and to be able to convert it to something that continues to live and serve our community,” said Melanie Murphy who, along with Rick Murphy, purchased the property with its existing school building from the town in 2017 before building three additional multi-resi-

dential buildings on the property one year later. “When we did this original development, the back playground – so the original playground for the daycare – was intended as a green space because we weren’t thinking about it, to be quite honest. It wasn’t a part of what made sense; it wasn’t what our vision was at the time.

“We have, since that point, realized the potential of that area at the back of the property and feel this could continue to add value to the town’s housing stock. It’s a great use of the existing residential land; it’s infill as you can get – we’re using land that’s already purposed as multi-residential. ... We wish to continue to move forward on that journey and be kind neighbours ... to the whole neighbourhood.”

As referred to by Melanie Murphy, the proposed loss of the former playground and current accessible amenity space for residents on the property was previously brought forward as a concern with the Murphys’ plan to construct a fifth multi-residential building. Listening to that concern, the Murphys have since proposed a new, central-amenity space with seating to the south side of the former early learning centre building.

Other concerns with the proposed

zone change include the potential for increased traffic along Ontario Street South, a lack of onsite parking – the proposal includes 15 additional parking spaces for residents – and the potential loss of on-street parking along Ontario Street South in 2027, when that road is slated for reconstruction.

“We don’t know the details of that design review (for Ontario Street South), but in any road reconstruction and design, everything is looked at,” said town planner Mark Stone. “Right now, as I understand it, the town’s bylaw allows for parking on one side of the street. There’s no direction from public-works staff that should be changed, but they are going to look at the actual engineered design of that roadway. Of course, on-street parking will also be examined. There’s no intent to change that situation at this time.”

While street parking may be affected during the road reconstruction, Stone said in his report the town would work with residents to mitigate the impacts of that lack of street parking during those times.

Another concern brought forward as part of the public meeting was the potential impact the construction of a proposed laneway along the north line of

the property would have on trees and vegetation at 89 Ontario St. S, a property designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

According to Stone, the Murphys have submitted a cultural-heritage impact assessment to identify any potential impacts on the cultural heritage values and attributes of the adjacent property. As part of the assessment, a number of mitigation measures have been proposed, including:

- maintaining the hedgerow screen of trees and vegetation and, where some removal of vegetation is necessary, removing the lower bushes or vegetation while leaving the mature trees;
- building a solid-wood fence along the property line to enhance privacy;
- replacing removed vegetation with a new, lower-growing hedge;
- ensuring excavation for the laneway is as shallow as possible to minimize damage to the roots of the mature trees; and
- grading for the laneway in ways that minimize damage to the trees.

Following the public meeting, council asked staff to bring back a report on the zone-change application for final consideration at a future council meeting.



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Feels Like 9	Feels Like 7	Feels Like 6	Feels Like 10	Feels Like 14	Feels Like 17	Feels Like 17

# Justin and Jayme Lamoureux take over St. Marys Canadian Tire

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

A change has taken place at our local Canadian Tire store.

Previous associate dealers Angie and Matt Miskuski have moved on to the Paris Ontario location, opening a spot for new dealers to take over. Justin and Jayme Lamoureux, the store's new dealers, recently made the move to St. Marys. Justin Lamoureux is a third-generation Canadian Tire dealer with many other family members involved. He worked at the Garden Centre during school and then became store manager.

Jayme Lamoureux met her future husband at the Dundas store after high school. She went to school for urban planning and he attended Sheridan College and Ryerson University.

When they discussed their future, they decided to go the Canadian Tire route together. Their first store was in Dundas and then they moved on to Stouffville. After that, they decided to head west where they worked at the Drayton Valley Alta., store and then spent three years in Terrace, B.C.

Justin Lamoureux applied to become an owner, got accepted and, after training for a year, they ended up in

Drumheller, Alta. The opportunity to come back to Ontario, closer to friends and family, became available with the chance to run the Exeter location.

The Lamoureuxs, who currently reside in Exeter with their two children, are running both the Exeter and St. Marys stores. It is a good fit as the two stores can share inventory. Already within the first five days of starting in St. Marys, they were already able to do six inventory transfers between the two stores.

The pair believe they have a great team in St. Marys and are not planning on any changes, only to build on what has been working.

Everyone has been very welcoming and they are looking forward to checking out more of the town. They have already investigated some shops and love having the store close to downtown, allowing for more foot traffic.

"We are very appreciative for the chance to be a part of the community, and I don't ever want them to feel like they can't come and ask for something," Justin Lamoureux said. "If there is anything that they see that needs changed or improved, we are all ears and happy to help. We are big supporters of small towns and we don't take that lightly."



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Jayme and Justin Lamoureux are happy to be in St. Marys and said the team at Canadian Tire has been very welcoming.



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# EDITORIAL

## Fixing my poorly maintained body

GALEN SIMMONS  
*Editor*

As it turns out, sitting hunched over at a desk for six to eight hours a day does bad things to a person's body.

I've always known I had bad posture; I've hunched, I've slouched, I've sat in ways that would make anyone over the age of 40 wince – and now, I'm paying the price for it.

Recently, I began experiencing hip, shoulder and hand pain. The shoulder pain started a few years ago and would get worse if I slept on it wrong or I did something stupid at the gym – always without stretching.

The hip and hand pain, however, was a more recent development. After my fiancé, Julia, and I moved into our new home back in January, I found the excessive moving and building of furniture, coupled with shovelling all that snow this winter, left me feeling way older than I should.

It got to the point where Julia, who had been seeing both an osteopath and a physiotherapist for her own hip pain prior to her breaking her leg on moving day (that's a story for another day), recommended I also start seeing an osteopath and physiotherapist. At the time, I couldn't conceive what either could do to help me, so I did nothing – the thing I'm best at.

Eventually, Julia must have gotten tired of hearing me complain (remember, she was dealing with a badly broken leg at the time), so she took the initiative and booked appointments for me, first with her osteo and then a few months later with her physio.

As I soon came to learn, Julia was right (as she always is) and my visits to both have been eye-opening and helpful.

Osteopathy and physiotherapy are distinct yet complementary approaches to treating musculoskeletal conditions and promoting overall physical health. Osteopathy takes a holistic view of the body, focusing on the interrelationship between the body's structure and function. Osteopaths use manual techniques such as stretching, massage and joint manipulation to improve circulation, mobility and alignment.

To me, it seemed almost like magic. My

osteopath, Lindsay at Form Osteopathy in Stratford, uses gentle stretching with minimal pressure to realign my hunched shoulders and off-kilter hips, and to help alleviate the pinch points in my forearms and hands. My first session was so gentle and non-invasive, I had a hard time believing she had done anything at all until a few days later when I realized I had gotten out of bed without any pain. Since then, my hand pain has all but disappeared and my other pains have become more manageable.

Physiotherapy, on the other hand, emphasizes the rehabilitation of movement and function through evidence-based exercises, manual therapy and modalities like ultrasound or electrical stimulation. While osteopathy often addresses underlying structural imbalances, physiotherapy focuses more on restoring strength, flexibility and functional movement.

I only just began seeing Nicole at Flex Physio in Stratford, but already I'm noticing a difference. Within just the first two minutes of meeting me, Nicole said she could tell I'd been working at a computer nearly every day for the past decade and she quickly identified the muscles in my hips and shoulders that needed to be stretched and strengthened.

Apparently, my body presents as much older than my driver's licence would have you believe. At 33, that was the wakeup call I needed, so when Nicole gave me a list of 18 stretches I should be doing daily, I jumped into them head, shoulders and hips first. While I must admit those daily stretches are a routine I've fallen out of now and again, I certainly notice the difference in pain between when I'm doing those stretches and when I'm not.

I guess what I'm trying to say is if you're like me and you've simply gotten used to daily aches and pain after years treating your body like a slinky – letting it rest in whatever way gravity dictates – there is still hope for a life free of aches and pains.

All it requires is an open mind, a supportive person in your life and a willingness to take strides towards improving your overall health and wellness.

Bravo	Boo
<p>We have 1 Bravo this week.</p> <p>1) Bravo to the donors, patrons and volunteers at the recent Friends of the Library Book Sale held at the Lind Sportsplex. Your kindness, generosity and affection for our St. Marys Public Library is very much appreciated. We had over 750 guests from far and wide and raised over \$7,500 in support of our public library. Many thanks also to the Town of St. Marys and the St. Marys Curling Club for the use of their facility</p>	<p>We have no Boos this week.</p>
<p><small>*Please note all Boos and Bravos must be signed in order to be considered.</small></p>	<p><small>Bravos and Boos are submitted by community members and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the St. Marys Independent.</small></p>

Quote of the Week

*"I don't think the moment is too big for them. We went into Game 6 in Ottawa and won that series, won a Game 6 (in Florida) to make it a Game 7. To me, it's all between the ears, it's a mindset. There are obviously things we have to look at and talk about as an organization."*

**- Coach of the Toronto Maple Leafs, Craig Berube, on the big loss of Game 7 in the second round of the playoffs.**

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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When I die, I want the Leafs as my pallbearers so they can let me down one last time!

Down to one Canadian team. Jumping on the Oiler bandwagon.

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](mailto:info@stmarysindependent.com) with the title "Overheard at The Coffee Shop", call 519-284-0041 or drop by the office to let us know!

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**The St. Marys Independent**  
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# Smile Cookie campaign a sweet success for the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

St. Marys Healthcare Foundation communications coordinator Bernice De Decker, St. Marys Tim Hortons assistant manager Shari McHardy and health-care foundation board member Linda McFadyen give the thumbs up after another successful Smile Cookie campaign.

## BERNICE DE DECKER

St. Marys Healthcare Foundation

The St. Marys Healthcare Foundation is ecstatic to announce this year's Smile Cookie campaign has raised an impressive \$19,763.96 in support of new ultrasound probe units for the medical imaging department at St. Marys Memorial Hospital.

This marks the fifth consecutive year the foundation has been chosen as the

Smile Cookie charity. Since 2020, the campaign has raised over \$95,000, funding essential hospital equipment made possible by the generosity of our community!

A heartfelt thanks goes out to all cookie purchasers, volunteers, students and local businesses who made this year's success possible. A special shoutout to Shari and Paul and the entire team at Tim Hortons for their continued support.

## STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news  
from the Town of St. Marys



### LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN SURVEY

Help plan for the future!

The St. Marys Public Library Board is actively gathering feedback on its Strategic Plan, seeking insights from individuals. Their aim is to identify areas of focus to help meet the needs of the community.

[www.townofstmarys.com/librarystratplan](http://www.townofstmarys.com/librarystratplan)

### SPRING WATER FLUSHING

April 28 - May 23

If you experience discolouration during the spring flushing, run cold water and avoid doing laundry until it runs clear.

For a detailed schedule and map:  
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### ST. MARYS NOURISH MARKET

St. Marys United Church (85 Church St. S)

The St. Marys Nourish Equal Access Food Market takes place on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month from 2 - 4 PM offering fresh local fruit, vegetables and meat available at wholesale prices.

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### LEAF AND YARD WASTE COLLECTION

Leaf and yard waste collection has begun. Remember to have yard waste to the curb by 7 AM on collection days and place yard waste in kraft-style bags or reusable containers. Full schedule, map and details can be found on our website.

[townofstmarys.com/yardwaste](http://townofstmarys.com/yardwaste)



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### Senior of the Week



Our seniors of the week are Clair and Mary Brandt who are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on May 24. Clair and Mary were married in St. Marys, purchased their home in Kirkton and still reside there 50 years later. They have three children and seven grandchildren. Congratulations Clair and Mary!

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

## Weekend Quiz

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1. Where do waffles originate from?
2. What does "UEFA" stand for in the Men's UEFA Champions League soccer?
3. True or False. Peanut butter was invented in Canada.
4. What is the largest lake in Africa?
5. How many days are in a leap year?
6. What plant produces tequila?
7. Who was the second Prime Minister of Canada?
8. What NHL player holds the most points in a single regular season as a Toronto Maple Leaf?
9. What Disney princess kisses a frog?
10. What kind of bird is The Ugly Duckling?

By Jake Grant

This week's answers are found on pg. 27

# Celebrating 100 years of Rotary in St. Marys



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ROTARY CLUB OF ST. MARYS)

Members of the Rotary Club of St. Marys joined St. Marys council for a flag-raising May 20 in honour of 100 years of Rotary in St. Marys.



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### McCully's Annual Summer Camp

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# Celebrate the change in seasons with the St. Marys Museum



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

The St. Marys Museum is celebrating the beginning of summer hours with a Summer Open House Sunday, June 1 from 12-4 p.m.

## ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The St. Marys Museum (177 Church St. S) is celebrating the change in seasons and the start of summer weekend hours with its Summer Open House on Sunday, June 1 from 12-4 p.m.

This event highlights the seasonal exhibits on display at the museum and includes a range of activities that will appeal to visitors of all ages.

The museum has several new exhibits on display covering a range of topics, from local photographers, medical instruments and animals. The museum's partnership exhibit with the Rotary Club of St. Marys, "Service Above Self: 100 Years of Rotary in St. Marys," will officially open on Sunday, June 1.

"We're thrilled to be able to display photographs and artifacts from the Ro-

tary Club of St. Marys," said St. Marys Museum assistant curator Emily Taylor in a press release. "This is a way to celebrate the long history of this organization and explore how Rotary initiatives have impacted the wider community."

During the Summer Open House, visitors can participate in a scavenger hunt to explore the new objects on display at the museum. Other activities include hands-on toys in the discovery school room and button-making in the archives. Light refreshments will also be served.

Everyone is welcome to attend the Summer Open House and admission is free. Summer hours at the Museum are Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and 12-4 p.m. on weekends.

For more information, call the St. Marys Museum at 519-284-3556 or email [museum@town.stmarys.on.ca](mailto:museum@town.stmarys.on.ca).

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# “Every audience is a different animal”: Comedian Brent Butt talks upcoming show in St. Marys

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

set, in Dog River, his standup comedy is a different beast altogether and a craft he's been honing since long before the people and places of the fictional Saskatchewan town were ever conceived.

“The tv show is a scripted thing, it's an ensemble cast, there's a lot of people involved, and standup is very much a solo effort. It's sort of the difference between a team sport and being a marathon runner,” he said. “Standup is my background. I started standup in 1988, so I've been at it a long time. I think I'd been doing standup 15 years before I got the opportunity to do Corner Gas, so standup was always my thing. Even during hiatus on Corner Gas and later hiccups, whenever we were on a break between seasons, I would be on the road doing standup.

“So, it's always been my thing and it's still my favourite thing to do.”

Having performed for audiences in small towns and big cities from coast to coast and beyond over the past 37 years, Butt has developed a vast repertoire of observational and incidental comedic bits he can deliver on stage. Rather than rely on character-driven stories like those in both Corner Gas and Corner Gas Animated, Butt picks and chooses which bits he will deliver by taking the temperature of the room he's playing and deciding on the spot that's going to hit home the hardest for his audience.

“It's much-smaller, incidental bits of comedy all strung together and not really tied to each other very much. ... I usually know how I'm going to start. I make a conscious decision about, ‘Okay, I'm going to do these bits to start with,’ but then it sort of develops based on how people are responding to that stuff. Then, based on how people are responding, I start pulling from the old tickle trunk full of material because I have a grab bag of material I've developed over the 37 years of me doing this, and you just start reaching into your brain and you start pulling out stuff you think will work.

“One of the things I really like about standup and keeps it fresh all these years later is that you really



(PHOTO COURTESY OF BRENT BUTT)

Canadian comedy icon Brent Butt is set to headline the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation's Built For Tomorrow Gala at the Pyramid Recreation Centre June 7.

don't know what each crowd is going to respond to.”

While Butt takes pride in his ability to read and interact with a crowd, he said there is no rhyme or reason to how a crowd will react or what bits audience members will relate to at any given show. He says he's played shows for huge crowds in large cities that felt intimate, and he's performed for smaller audiences in rural and remote towns that felt somewhat distant.

“Each audience is so different from any other audience that geography doesn't play into it. It's almost like

if I were to do two shows in St. Marys on the same night, an early show and a late show, those two crowds could be so hugely different from each other. I feel like you could never say, ‘This is what crowds are like in the Maritimes, this is what crowds are like in big cities, this is what crowds are like on an island on the West Coast.’ You just kind of can't do that.

“Any time you get a few-hundred individuals clumped together, it automatically creates a brand-new animal that's never existed before. Each one is a completely unique experience.”

The St. Marys Healthcare Foundation is celebrating after having raised \$3 million in support of the now completed upgrades to the St. Marys Memorial Hospital's east and west wings. Having grown up in rural Saskatchewan, Butt says he understands the importance of helping to raise funds in support of smaller, rural hospitals, which can often be lifelines for people who don't have regular access to hospitals in larger, urban centres.

“I'm all for it. It's incredibly important to have a resource like that within reach so you're not driving 90 minutes or two hours to get somebody somewhere if they're in need of care,” Butt said. “It seems like less and less, small communities are having that access, so I'm all for doing whatever I can do to help this cause out.”

Tickets for the Built For Tomorrow Gala at the Pyramid Recreation Centre June 7 are available until May 29 or until they sell out. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [Trellis.org/2025gala](http://Trellis.org/2025gala).

The gala will be a night of celebration as the healthcare foundation reflects on the renovation and completion of the east and west wings. This year's theme is futuristic elegance, so think chrome sparkle, LED lights, silver and starry-night vibes. Enjoy appetizers and a three-course meal by Steel Grill.

Along with Butt's standup routine, the evening's entertainment will also include music by the Randy Satchell Band. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

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# Hodgins grateful for town’s support of Alaska to Alaska fundraiser

EMILY STEWART  
*Independent Reporter*

Greg Hodgins, owner of Brows Exhaust and Manufacturing, is preparing to give his beloved dog, Alaska, a road trip to her namesake, Alaska.

He always wanted to take his seven-year-old huskie-border collie mix to Alaska from the time she was adopted through the Ottawa Humane Society.

“With her name being Alaska, it’d be fun to take her on a road trip to Alaska one day,” Hodgins said.

He considered doing the trip with Alaska when he lived in Edmonton, as it’s halfway between St. Marys and Alaska, but it didn’t happen. Alaska was diagnosed with lymphoma just before Christmas 2024, so now Hodgins will drive with her to Alaska in his 1973 Chevy Caprice truck in July. The round trip will span 15,000 kilometres.

A week after the cancer diagnosis, Hodgins started taking Alaska to the Ontario Vet College in Guelph every Friday for the first three months to receive chemotherapy. Alaska now receives treatment every other Friday.

“She obviously spends a lot of time in the vehicle anyway; she’s always down for an adventure,” he said.

Brows Exhaust and Manufacturing is selling t-shirts, hoodies and crew-neck

sweaters to cover the cost of the Alaska to Alaska trip. Hodgins said the St. Marys community has been supportive, from his friends to Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters for putting up a poster about the journey.

“It’s nice that we’ve been getting some recognition and some people talking about it and getting Alaska some extra love that she deserves,” he said.

Hodgins also spoke highly of the St. Marys Vet Clinic for their support in both medical care and with the fundraiser.

“The staff at the vet clinic have been phenomenal with providing care and also supporting. I think they bought 20-something different articles of clothing from just the vet clinic itself, so they’ve been phenomenal,” he said.

In addition to the trip, Hodgins is spending as much time with Alaska as possible.

“I try to include her with everything that I do. I bring Alaska and her sister, Xena, my two dogs, with me to work all the time and she’s always with us,” Hodgins said.

Alaska to Alaska merchandise can be ordered online by visiting [www.brows-manufacturing.ca/alaska](http://www.brows-manufacturing.ca/alaska). Hodgins will post about the journey with Alaska to Alaska on his Instagram @brows\_exhaust.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF GREG HODGINS)

Greg Hodgins always wanted to bring his dog, Alaska, to Alaska and will be going in July amid Alaska’s cancer battle. He’s selling clothing to cover the cost of the trip.

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# PC Connect Rural Route provided more than 20,000 rides throughout Perth County before transit service ended

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Between November 2020 and March 31, 2025, PC Connect's rural-route bus service provided a total 20,018 rides to residents and visitors throughout Perth County.

At Perth County council's May 15 meeting, county economic development officer Justin Dias presented the final report for the PC Connect Rural Route which, prior to March 31, provided transit for riders between rural communities in Perth County including Stratford, Mitchell, Monkton, Atwood, Listowel, Newton, Milverton, Brunner and Gadshill.

The service was ended this year after a funding agreement through the province's Community Transportation program ended and county council deemed the cost to operate the service – an estimated \$225,103 to extend the service until the end of this year and potentially as much as \$1.3 million over the next five years – was too high. Since November 2020, the county received a total of nearly \$2.5 million in funding through the Community Transportation program.

"This is just an information report for council to correspond with our project

closeout," Dias said. "We've submitted all of our final reports to the province on the deliverables for the rural-route program, so this report ... does contain some final information on ridership numbers, funding information, as well as outlines the transfer of administrative responsibilities that Perth County was responsible for to the City of Stratford, which is carrying on as the lead for (PC Connect's intercommunity transit) project.

"Finally, it just outlines how, as part of our project-management best practices, we've got some lessons learned and that ridership data we've generated over the last few years, we'll make that available to our partners, other transportation providers and those looking to fill transportation gaps."

According to Dias' report to council, of the 20,018 rides provided through the rural-route program, 16,794 of them were for adults, 378 were for children or youth, 953 were for students and 1,893 were for seniors. Year by year, the service grew from 429 rides in 2020-2021 to 1,694 rides in 2021-2022 (295 per cent), to 3,690 rides in 2022-2023 (118 per cent), to 6,135 rides in 2023-2024 (66.3 per cent) and, finally, to 8,070 rides in 2024-2025 (31.5 per cent) before the service ended in

March.

Following council's direction to discontinue the bus service at its Dec. 5, 2024, meeting, county staff began the administrative winddown and public notification of the PC Connect Rural Route discontinuation with the last day of service scheduled for March 31, 2025. Public notification included a variety of activities including a news release, social-media notifications, direct outreach to community partners, notification to riders through the Blaise Transit App, posted signs at affected bus stops, signs on buses and responding to media inquiries.

Presentations and updates were also provided at various meetings of local business improvement areas (BIAs), business associations, economic-development committees and chambers of commerce, among other community and stakeholder meetings. A prominent banner continues to appear on the Perth County homepage and all PC Connect information related to the remaining routes is now available on the City of Stratford website.

A redirect landing page remains live on the Perth County webpage and automatic redirects are in place for any existing PC Connect links including those found in route maps, QR codes,

postcards and other advertisements. These redirects will remain in place over the short-term to ensure riders can continue to find information on remaining PC Connect routes.

County staff continue to stay involved in the Southwest Community Transit (SCT) association to remain engaged in regional-transportation discussions as well as provide PC Connect ridership data to community transportation partners looking to fill transportation gaps.

The PC Connect Rural Route pilot was primarily funded through \$2,467,464 in Community Transportation grant funding and \$130,333 in fare revenue. The county's total contribution to operate the service over the pilot-project period through to March 31 was \$73,960.

PC Connect Routes 1, 2 and 3 offering service between Stratford, St. Marys, London, Kitchener-Waterloo and North Perth remain in operation, however the City of Stratford, Town of St. Marys and Municipality of North Perth are actively seeking ways to make that bus service more cost efficient and sustainable beyond the end of provincial Community Transit funding.

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# Stratford Police Service marks Police Week 2025



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

Members of the Stratford Police Service and community partners marked Police Week 2025, May 11-17, under the theme, “Committed to Serve Together.” The week featured community events in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South including coffee chats, fraud-prevention talks and a community barbecue, all aimed at strengthening partnerships and promoting safety. Pictured with Const. Darren Fischer, community resource and media relations officer, is Symone Wood, 13, Clara Longston, 13, and Annie Thompson, 13, who took a few minutes to speak to Fischer during the Stratford coffee chat earlier this month.

# Spring is in full bloom



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Anyone driving up James Street North will see this beautiful saucer magnolia at the home of Fred and Ann Pedley. The full-sun tree is approximately 70 years old and was planted in the mid '50s by previous owners Albert and Jean Grant.



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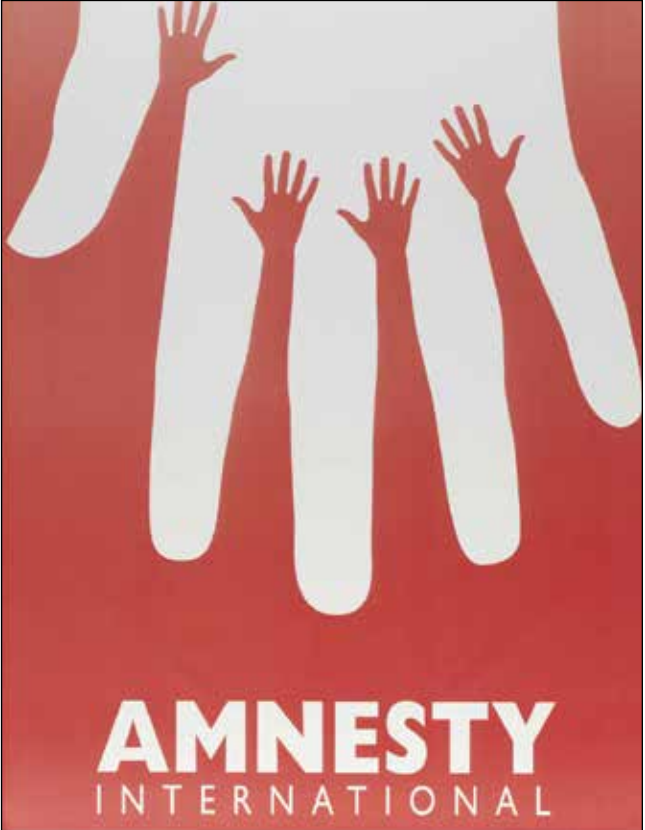


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# Posters of protest, messages of hope: Amnesty International turns 64



(PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ST. MARYS, LONDON AND STRATFORD GROUP)

Historic Amnesty International posters like these are being displayed at the St. Marys Public Library and local businesses around town to mark Amnesty International's 64th anniversary.

ELENA DUMITRU  
*Amnesty International St. Marys, London, Stratford Group*

It was in May of 1961 that a British lawyer, Peter Benenson, read about two Portuguese students imprisoned for raising a toast to freedom. Outraged, he published an article in The Observer titled “The Forgotten Prisoners.” He invited readers to write letters of support for six individuals jailed unjustly around the world. That simple act of solidarity sparked the birth of Amnesty International, now the largest grassroots human-rights organization in the world, with millions of members in over 150 countries.

This month, the Amnesty International group in St. Marys is proud to honour this legacy with a visual exhibit, a collection of Amnesty posters from across the decades, displayed in local shops and the St. Marys Public Library. Though just a glimpse into the orga-

nization’s vast, creative history, these posters offer powerful insight into global human-rights struggles and moments of hope. From stark black-and-white appeals to vivid, contemporary designs, they reflect the enduring spirit of solidarity and resistance that defines Amnesty’s work, then and now.

For me, this exhibit is deeply personal. I grew up in Romania during a time when freedom of expression was not just discouraged, but punished. Censorship, fear and isolation were everyday realities for those who dared to question authority. And so, it moves me profoundly to know that one of the very first prisoners Amnesty campaigned for in 1961 was a Romanian poet and philosopher, Constantin Noica, arrested for his writings and ideas. That campaign, launched with just pen, paper and determination, became part of a ripple that eventually reached my own life. It reminds me that people across the world cared, even

when we couldn’t see them or thank them. That matters.

What also stands out to me is that Amnesty International has always understood the power of art as a force for change. Posters, illustrations, music, theatre and even sculpture have been central to its campaigns. Art opens the door that facts alone cannot always unlock; it can bypass fear, awaken empathy and speak directly to the human spirit. A single image can stir outrage, hope, or resolve in a way statistics never could. These posters, then, are not just visual records, they are instruments of resistance, compassion and transformation.

This exhibit invites our community to reflect not only on past injustices but on the continued relevance of human-rights work today. In a world where freedom is too often under threat – from journalists imprisoned for their reporting to peaceful protesters silenced by violence – we need voices of conscience more than

ever. And we need the arts to help carry those voices further, louder and deeper into the public heart.

We warmly thank the St. Marys Public Library and the local businesses who are generously hosting the posters: Lyr-ic Flowers, MacPherson’s Barber Shop, Naina’s Indian Kitchen Bar and Grill, Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters, Sun Rayz St.Marys, Troyer’s Spices and Zenfire Pottery. Their support allows these messages to be part of our daily lives – unexpected encounters that may inspire a thought, a conversation, or even an action.

Let this be more than a retrospective. Let it be a reminder that art can spark change, that empathy crosses borders and that the smallest gesture – like writing a letter or hanging a poster – can echo across time and space, lighting the way toward a more just world.



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# Tuer-Hodes Family Awards presentation recognizes staff dedication, compassion and innovation at HPHA

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Independent Reporter

The Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (HPHA) hosted the Tuer-Hodes Family Awards presentation on May 16 in the June Blanch Lobby at Stratford General Hospital.

The annual event, made possible through the continued support of Donnalene and the entire Tuer-Hodes family, honours individuals whose dedication, compassion and innovation have made a lasting impact on patient care. The awards reflect HPHA's core commitment to people, partnerships and performance, and celebrate the organization's ongoing pursuit of exceptional patient experiences.

Patricia (Trish) Harper received the Nursing Recognition Award for exceptional care, which honours a nurse who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to patient care, innovation in practice and leadership within the nursing profession.

Harper was recognized for her leadership, patient advocacy and commitment to high-quality care. Since stepping into a leadership role, she has empowered her team, improved care processes and fostered a collaborative work environment.



(AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE PHOTO)

**Winners of the Tuer-Hodes Family Awards are joined by members of the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance at the presentation ceremony on May 18.**

"She stepped into leadership with a hands-on, supportive approach that's made a real difference," said Lynanne Mason, vice-president of partnerships, transformation and chief nursing executive. "Her advocacy and kindness, her commitment to her colleagues and community reflect the very best in nursing leadership."

Thelaisa Costa received the Interprofessional Practice Recognition Award for exceptional care, which celebrates a health-disciplines team member who leads through collaboration, advocacy and engagement across teams.

"Thelaisa is known for her problem-solving skills, calm demeanour and commitment to innovation," said

Jacqui Tam, director of patient care. "She ensures lab and diagnostic tools work flawlessly across all of the HPHA sites and provides hands-on support to nursing, IT and clinical teams alike."

In her role supporting lab systems and clinical teams, Costa is known for her thoughtful approach and dedication to innovation, helping ensure safe, reliable and efficient care behind the scenes.

The newly introduced Support Services Impact Award — which recognizes a team member whose work, though not patient-facing, significantly supports positive outcomes and quality care — was awarded posthumously to Claire Trachsel.

Ruixu Wang, director of finance and decision support, and Daniel Moutte, director of health information and IT, presented the award to Trachsel's sister, who accepted it on her behalf.

Trachsel is remembered as a "beloved team member."

"Claire's dedication, reliability and warmth had a lasting impact on those who worked with her," said Wang. "Her work helped create a smoother and more compassionate experience for patients, caregivers and colleagues alike."

Her family was present at the ceremony to accept the award and honour her memory.

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# Huron-Perth Crime Stoppers seeking new board members from Perth County

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

Huron-Perth Crime Stoppers is putting out a call for volunteer board members, particularly from Perth County, to help support its mission of promoting public safety through anonymous crime reporting.

Wayne Somers, chair of the organization, says there's never been a better time to get involved.

"As we've seen across various media outlets, many residents want to reduce and resolve crime in their communities. Crime Stoppers offers a hands-on way to make that happen," Somers said.

Crime Stoppers is a non-profit, community-based program that operates through a partnership between the public, media and police. Members of the public can call or submit tips anonymously, helping solve crimes and improve community safety.

The program is also guided by a volunteer board of directors, which meets monthly to plan fundraising events and vote on rewards for successful tips.

Since its founding in 1988, Huron-Perth Crime Stoppers has:

- Received nearly 15,000 tips
- Contributed to 1,400 arrests and nearly 2,900 charges
- Helped seize more than 1,000 weapons
- Recovered over \$3.7 million in property and cash
- Taken more than \$17.5 million worth of drugs off the streets
- Paid out nearly \$134,000 in rewards to tipsters

"We're looking for committed individuals who care about their community's safety and want to help the program grow," Somers said. "If you see something, say something."

Those interested in becoming a board member or volunteer can contact Huron-Perth Crime Stoppers by emailing [hpcrimestoppers@gmail.com](mailto:hpcrimestoppers@gmail.com). Applicants should include their name and contact information. The organization will follow up directly by phone.

To report a tip anonymously, call 1-800-222-TIPS or visit [www.P3tips.com](http://www.P3tips.com).



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Crime Stoppers posters like these are a familiar sight across communities in Perth County, encouraging residents to speak up and play a role in crime prevention.

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# Reading, writing and simply getting started

AMANDA MODARAGAMAGE

Independent Reporter

In *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, Stephen King wrote that “books are a uniquely portable magic,” and I couldn’t agree more. I’m a self-proclaimed fantasy fiction nerd and historical-fiction enthusiast. I read at least 30 books a year – and that’s while juggling motherhood, a full-time job and staying healthy as I near 40 years old.

My 30 or so novels a year pale in comparison to King’s 70 or 80. He famously wrote, “I’m a slow reader, but I usually get through 70 or 80 books a year, most fiction. I don’t read in order to study the craft; I read because I like to read.”

I’ll admit, though, I’m not King’s biggest fan when it comes to his novels. I’ve genuinely tried to fall in love with his work. I even searched for titles featuring female protagonists, thinking that might help me connect. But nothing seemed to stick. I’ve read *Carrie* (of

course), 11/22/63, *Fairy Tale* and a few others I can’t quite remember – probably because they didn’t resonate with me.

King was, however, one of the first reasons I picked up a pen and started writing. His book, *On Writing*, is one I’ve read at least five times and return to often, especially when I stumble or lose my sense of direction.

My first read-through of *On Writing* was back in 2017. At the time, I hadn’t even intended to become a writer, though I’d always wanted to be one. I didn’t know where to start, but I knew that if I read often, practiced writing and studied how the pros, like King, honed their craft, I might eventually find my way.

King is blunt about the importance of putting pen to paper. In his book, he says, “Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration; the rest of us just get up and go to work.” That line hit me. If I was going to become a writer someday, the

time to start was now.

Another quote I have highlighted and refer back to often is, “If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot.”

Is it really that simple? I think so. In our country, from kindergarten, we’re taught to read and write – the fundamental skills of storytelling. Creativity and the thought process come with time, but it all starts with pen to paper, so we all have those essential skills to become writers.

Once I got started, the ideas came more easily. I found myself writing everything from poetry to short stories to news articles – many of which you read weekly. I wasn’t perfect when I began. I just did what King advised; I started.

To this day, I still struggle to call myself a writer. I don’t have a formal education in writing, though the sheer number of courses, workshops and books I’ve consumed might add up to a master’s degree. I always thought I

needed to “make it” in some grand way before I could call myself a writer, but I’m still not sure what that even means.

Yet here I am, writing every single day and building a career out of reading and writing (lucky me). Someday, I hope to finish one of the many manuscripts I’ve started. I plan to share my poetry with others eventually. But for now, I’m happy to be writing in my little corner of the world; bringing stories and events across the region to life through my words.

As King wrote, “The real importance of reading is that it creates an ease and intimacy with the process of writing. ... It also offers you a constantly growing knowledge of what has been done and what hasn’t, what is trite and what is fresh, what works and what lies there dying (or dead) on the page.”

Here’s to reading, writing and simply getting started.

## Friendship Centre and EarlyON hosting intergenerational music experience

Erick Traplin concert on Friday, June 6, at 10 a.m.

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys Friendship Centre and the EarlyON Centre are teaming up to create an intergenerational music experience.

At 10 a.m. on Friday, June 6, children’s

entertainer Erick Traplin will take the Pyramid Recreation Centre stage for a morning of music, dancing and toe-tapping fun for all ages! The doors to Entrance D will open at 9:30 a.m. for attendees to grab a seat. The event is free and open to all residents.

“We are excited to bring the commu-

nity together for this intergenerational music event,” said senior services program coordinator Sarah Jones in a press release. “The goal of this collaboration is to create lasting connections and fun memories through the universal language of music. This is a great way for families to spend a PA Day!”

Pre-registration for the event is required on a first-come, first-serve basis through ActiveNet ([www.townofstmarys.com/activenet](http://www.townofstmarys.com/activenet)) or by calling the St. Marys Friendship Centre (519-284-3272). Families who are part of the EarlyON Centre are asked to pre-register through their KEyON accounts.

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# St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

## Six St. Marys athletes compete at OVA Championships

SPENCER SEYMOUR

*Independent Sports Reporter*

Six St. Marys athletes competed at the Ontario Volleyball Association (OVA) Championships this past April, four of whom helped their respective teams win gold medals.

Two of the gold medalists from St. Marys included Marin Chateauvert and Katie Namink, who helped the U17 Stratford Stingers win the D2 bracket's top prize.

Both Chateauvert and Namink emphasized how important the group's cohesiveness and mental fortitude were in their gold-medal victory.

"In my opinion, the thing that played the biggest role in our success is how much we love each other as a team and how well we get along," Chateauvert said. "We all support each other and push each other to be better. We had many players suffer injuries and a lot of our players had to play positions they weren't used to, and I think it brought us together."

"One of the biggest challenges that the team has overcome this season is being able to control our reactions to mistakes on the court," Namink added. "At the OVA Championships, everyone showed how to keep a positive mindset and have confidence in their skills after making mistakes. I believe this is what led us to victory, and seeing how happy my coach and teammates were when we achieved the game-winning point is something I will never forget."

In the U17 D4-T1 competition, Gracy Schlotzhauer of St. Marys also helped her Stratford Stingers squad capture the gold medal. Schlotzhauer's team battled hard to earn an impressive 8-1 record at the provincial championship, leading to the team finishing first.

Parker Levy's U16 London Volleyball Club (LVC) Fire squad earned the top prize in the D2-T2 group April 20-22. Levy credited his team for turning in a strong effort throughout the tournament.

"Our team won gold by pushing past our limits and being that one step ahead of the other team all tournament long," Levy told the Independent. "The experience was great. There were lots of great people, great players and coaches, and there were some seven-foot-tall giants on other teams, so it was just an amazing competition that really pushed us to be at our best."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

On the left is Parker Levy. On the right are Marin Chateauvert and Katie Namink. All three St. Marys athletes won gold medals at the OVA Championships this past April. Gracy Schlotzhauer of St. Marys also helped her team win gold at the provincial championship, while Charlotte Johnson and Lena Thompson's teams each finished fourth in their respective divisions.

Lena Thompson, a member of the U15 Stratford Stingers A, and Charlotte Johnson of the U15 Stratford Stingers B, each finished fourth in their respective divisions April 24-26.

Johnson described her takeaway from the experience of competing on the provincial stage.

"The main vision for my team was taking what we learned from practice and tournaments all year and coming together and playing to our full potential," Johnson said. "I felt that we played the best volleyball we did all year and came together as a team. Personally, I tried to play out of my comfort zone and really challenge myself, and my coach believing in me when

I struggled allowed me to do that."

Thompson, meanwhile, described a quarter-final, come-from-behind win as a core memory from the provincial tournament.

"My favourite memory was in the quarter finals of the tournament," said Thompson. "We lost our first set and were down in the second, and we came back and won. Seeing my whole team come together and each person wanting to come back from our loss equally as much as the person beside them, and coming out with the win. It was amazing to see what our team can do when we're all so passionate and determined to win."

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# Ella Gracey continuing hockey career at University of Guelph

TURNER ROTH

*Independent Sports Reporter*

St. Marys native Ella Gracey earned a scholarship to continue her hockey career at the University of Guelph.

Gracey, who starts her education in September 2026, told the Independent she is excited about the opportunity both on and off the ice, as she already has her sights set on one of the university's highly reputable programs.

"I hope to study human kinetics," said Gracey. "I chose this program because I'm passionate about health sciences. I believe it will complement my athletic career and provide me with the skills I need for life after hockey. Guelph's reputation for offering strong academic programs in human kinetics is another reason I'm excited to be a part of this university."

Gracey's hockey journey began at the age of five when she first suited up for the St. Marys Flames before becoming a goaltender for the St. Marys Rock the following year. Gracey went on to play single-A and double-A for the Stratford Aces before signing for the London Junior Devilettes this past season. Gracey will begin her final minor-hockey season this fall with the Devilettes.

Gracey always knew she wanted to play for U of G. She was able to pick out a number of things that stood out to her about Guelph, including the team's coaching and player development.

"I was very excited to hear from Katie (Mora), the head coach, knowing I've wanted to play for Guelph for a long time. But I was careful not to get ahead of myself and think it was a sure thing. Considering I was in contact with other schools, I was never sure when a mutual interest or opportunity would become a certainty.

"As soon as I got to meet the coaches in person, I knew immediately those were the coaches I would want to play for," continued Gracey. "They were super welcoming and extremely proud of the program they are responsible for. The University of Guelph's commitment to developing student athletes both on and off the ice really stood out to me."

Although this is a big step in her hockey career, she has even bigger aspirations for the years to come.

"I hope to grow both as an athlete and an individual," Gracey said. "I want to push myself on the ice to compete at the highest level and help the team achieve success. I would love to eventually make it to the PWHL (Professional Women's Hockey League).

"I'm very honoured and excited to further my education and hockey career at the University of Guelph starting in September of 2026. Until you sign with a university, you are wondering if the last year of minor hockey will be your last year of competitive hockey, but thankfully, it won't be my last."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured is St. Marys native Ella Gracey signing her commitment to the University of Guelph for the 2026-2027 year, where she will continue her hockey career and hopes to study human kinetics.

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STRATFORD NISSAN



## COLUMNS

## UKRAINIAN CORNER: Walking the streets of Kamianets-Podilskyi

TETIANA DIDKOVSKA

Independent Columnist

Kamianets-Podilskyi, perched dramatically on a crooked peninsula carved by the Smotrych River, is often called the “city of seven cultures.” For more than 600 years, Ukrainians, Armenians, Poles, Lithuanians, Turks, Russians and Jews lived, prayed, traded and sometimes fought within its stone walls, leaving behind temples, houses and anecdotes that mingle like spices in a market. Nowhere else on the wide Podilian plain will you find such a dense collection of disparate belfries and memories.

Begin with the Old Castle. Although local guides love to credit Kievan Rus, historians agree that the mighty Prince Koriatovych rebuilt the stronghold in the 14th century to guard the isthmus into the town. Twelve towers – names like Pope’s, Lanckoroński and Commander’s – still rise above the canyon. You can scramble up their wooden stairs, duck into arrow slits, or simply lean on a battlement and watch clouds drift over the deep green ribbon of the Smotrych. Inside, exhibitions explain how Lithuanian, Polish and Ottoman engineers kept perfecting the fort until gunpowder thundered its final salute.

Across the drawbridge stretches the winding street of the Old Town. It is barely a kilometre long, yet every façade seems to belong to a different country and different culture. The gilded cupola of Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral (once a mosque, complete with its surviving minaret) glitters beside the striped Armenian well, while a wooden synagogue door creaks opposite a Baroque Jesuit college. Pick any alley and you will smell bread, kebab and caraway wafting together.

At the central market square stands the Town Hall, first raised in the 1370s when Magdeburg Law granted Kamianets self government. Subsequent masons grafted Renaissance floral sgraffito and exuberant Baroque volutes onto its sober Gothic bones, so today, the belfry looks like a stack of mismatched musi-



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

**The Old Castle. 2: The drawbridge leading into Old Town. 3: Town Hall. 4: The Trinitarian Church of St. Josaphat.**

cal instruments. A 19th century clock imported from Prague still tolls the hour. Climb the tower for a bird’s eye view, or descend to the dungeon museum where civic judges once interrogated thieves beneath flick-

ering torches.

To the north, the Novoplanivskyi Bridge vaults 38 metres above the canyon, its iron trusses catching sunset like a burning comb. Locals swear the best photograph of the fortress is taken from its midpoint, but some visitors disagree. Below, daredevils challenge themselves on zip lines strung across the ravine, while calmer souls rent kayaks and drift between sheer dolomite cliffs streaked with beautiful moss.

Baroque grace returns at the Trinitarian Church of St. Josaphat, painted in delicate apricot and cream. Built by the Order of the Holy Trinity, whose monks ransomed Christian captives from Ottoman prisons, the church honours their most celebrated beneficiary, Miguel de Cervantes. A plaque near the nave reminds you that without those monks’ 500 escudos, Don Quixote might never have tilted at windmills.

Kamianets prides itself on transforming history into spectacle. Every spring, the fortress courts thundering horses and clashing steel during the Terra Heroica medieval festival, when embankments erupt with tents, braziers and the ring of steel on steel. May mornings set hot air balloons drifting above the canyon, scattering confetti shadows on the amazing river. Summer nights glow with jazz concerts on Dominican Square; autumns bring pottery fairs where masters will let you spin your own jug beneath the castle’s lanterns.

So, Kamianets-Podilskyi is an amazing and creative tourist city. Here you will find entertainment for every taste. You can walk along the streets, enjoy incredible views, visit the museums, learn the history of the city and participate in extreme sports. Whether you crave adrenaline or simple vistas, Kamianets Podilskyi delivers, wrapping every visitor in the layered melody of its seven cultures and urging you to return for the next verse. Pack a camera, comfortable shoes and an open heart because this city rewards curiosity at every corner.

To be continued ...

## Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH

St. Marys Public Library

Canva is a great resource for making eye-catching posters, crafting professional presentations, and creating high-quality content for social media. Get a taste of all these features and more with our “Canva for Beginners” program on May 30 at 10:30 a.m. Create a Canva account beforehand then bring your laptop to the Library to engage in hands-on learning. “Canva for Beginners” is free to attend and no registration is required.

## This Week’s Recommendation

With a fresh box of crayons to pull from, nothing can stop Big Cat from becoming a world-famous artist. All is going to plan until the creative kitty discovers that only a stub of red crayon remains in the box. While determined to create a masterpiece with the tool at hand, Big Cat becomes limited by the pressure to create something perfect. Can Little Cat’s unique outlook on life rescue

Big Cat from a serious case of creative block? Read “The Crayon Stub”, the charming picture book by Marcus Cutler, to find out!

## Up This Week

Fri., May 23: Fun with Watercolour (1-3 p.m.)

Sat., May 24: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Mon., May 26: Euchre Mondays (10:30 a.m.), Learn to Play Bridge\* (1-3 p.m.), Trivia Night at Gilly’s Pub\*~ (7 p.m.)

Tues., May 27: Tuesday Book Club\* (11 a.m.)

Wed., May 28: EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.), Scrabble (6-8 p.m.), Make and Take: Colour Block Art\* (7 p.m.)

Thurs., May 29: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

\*Registration Required/Reservation Recommended

~Held at Gilly’s Pubhouse (17 Water St. S, St. Marys)

When social media blocks your access to the news, turn to your local newspaper.

# HISTORIC ST. MARYS: The St. Marys Market in 1904

MARY SMITH

*Independent Columnist*

At the end of March 1904, St. Marys town council announced that the new Carnegie-funded free public library would be built on property just north of the town hall. The lot faced Church Street and was the northwest corner of the market square. Because these grounds were municipally owned, the town was spared the cost of purchasing a lot for the new library. It seemed a very practical result of the site committee's search for a suitable location. However, contemporary records show that there was considerable opposition.

When we think of a market in St. Marys today, it's the Farmers' Market, held from May to October at Milt Dunnell Field beside the Thames River. The market provides a pleasant and productive way for many local and area people to begin their Saturday mornings, buying fresh fruit, vegetables, baking, frozen meats, flowers and even wine for the week ahead. Although some of the stalls get very busy at the height of the summer, the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, with people taking time to chat as they walk from stall to stall.

In 1904, St. Marys residents would have had a different set of associations when they thought of the market. At that time, it was a year-round daily market, and it was noisy, dusty, and inevitably smelly. The market had been firmly established in St. Marys since 1859 when a dual-purpose town hall/market building was placed on the northeast corner of Queen and Church Streets. The market building was a utilitarian, two-storey, frame structure with a belfry in the centre of a gable-end roof. For its town hall function, it had municipal offices and a public auditorium on the upper floor. The ground floor was used for market purposes. It contained market stalls, rented out annually to the highest bidders, mostly to butchers and dealers in hides. These vendors had their frequently odoriferous stalls just below the chambers where town council thrashed out the affairs of the municipality. In addition to the town hall/market building itself, the square included a small building for the market clerk's office, the town's official weigh scales, cattle yards, a livery stable and a salt shed.

In St. Marys and other Ontario communities, 19th century markets were the heart of local agricultural commerce, a meeting place for town and country. They were active every business day, buying and selling hay by the ton, field crops by the bushel, and flour by the hundredweight. Live cattle, hogs, and poultry were offered for sale, along with such animal by-products as tallow, hides, and wool. Butter and eggs as well as seasonal fruit and vegetables were also market staples. The markets strove to be competitive for both sellers and buyers. All local newspapers carried regular market re-



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

**A postcard view, ca 1910, of two beautiful town buildings, the Public Library and the Town Hall. It is hard today to understand why at first there was opposition to building the library on this site.**

ports that included comparative prices for basic commodities in nearby communities. In this area, these included Stratford, St. Marys, Mitchell, London and Woodstock.

The market clerk was a municipal employee. At the beginning of every year, council awarded that position to their choice of bidders. A bylaw laid out the rules and regulations for the market and it was the clerk's responsibility to see that these were enforced. The first market bylaw in 1859 stipulated that the St. Marys market must be open every day of the year except Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday. From May 1 to November 1, the clerk was to open the market at 5 a.m. It opened at 7 a.m. for the rest of the year. The market closed at 2 p.m. every day except Saturday when it was open until 9:00 in the evening as were most downtown St. Marys businesses. On Saturday evening, many farm families came into town to shop.

The clerk collected vendor fees and rents from the stall holders. He was responsible for keeping the grounds clean, overseeing the weighing of livestock and wagonloads of hay, straw, and grain, and for measuring the cordage and quality of firewood. He also collected fines from vendors who broke the rules. Soon after the market began, the town created a market and police committee. This committee of council inspected the weigh scales and the weights and measures used by market vendors. For instance, standards for the weight and size of a loaf of bread were set by the market committee. The market was the only area in the town where meat, poultry, eggs, butter, cheese, fresh fish, vegetables, fruit, lumber,

shingles, fuel, lime, and live animals could be sold by occasional vendors. In other words, no door-to-door peddling was allowed.

As the years passed, the market regulations were modified to adapt to the changing community. By the 1890s, the opening time had been moved to 7 a.m. between May 1 and December 1 and to 8 a.m. from December 2 to April 30. More holidays, including May 24 and July 1, were observed. The original town hall and market building was destroyed by fire in September 1890 and was replaced by the much more splendid, turreted municipal building we have today. There was no accommodation for any market functions within its fine limestone walls. The northeast corner of Queen and Church Streets was still the market square, but the market now took place to the north and to the east of the new building, discreetly behind the town hall's façade. The market's noises and smells were still just outside the municipal offices and that's what people were used to. There was no suggestion after the 1890 fire that the new town hall should be built in another location. The market square was where it belonged.

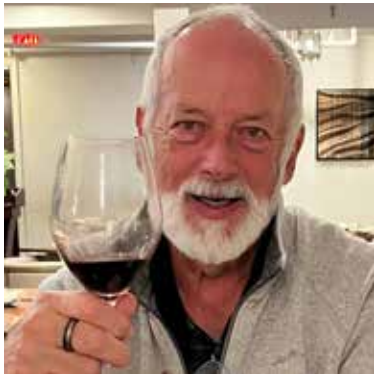
But a library was different. It was seen as a place for quiet reading and study. How could these contemplative activities take place with "hogs squealing and cattle bawling" just outside the windows? This was one councillor's argument against locating the Carnegie library beside the town hall. And although he lost the vote, many residents agreed with him. The Stratford Beacon reported that the choice of that site had filled the minds of the citizens of St. Marys with "intense discontent

and general dissatisfaction." That may have been an exaggeration but there was organized opposition. At the April 11, 1904, meeting, council received a petition with about 100 names of merchants and property owners asking them to reconsider and locate the library on either Wellington or Water Streets near the town centre. A motion to rescind the market location was defeated.

Opponents of the market location then appealed their case directly to James Bertram at the Carnegie Foundation. A St. Marys resident named James Baxter suggested that the Foundation withhold the grant for at least a year "as the present council will never be re-elected again." These letters of complaint are preserved in the Carnegie archives. One from Charles Whelihan (whose own property along Water Street had been rejected) stated: "As a citizen of this town, I ask you to consider well whether you are doing this town an injustice or not. The market site will almost be hidden from view from our principal street, the East side will face a livery stable, the North side, our town weigh scales and cattle yards, and at the West side a hotel across the street, and the South side the rear of our town hall." Another letter warned that legal proceedings "have been instituted to quash the whole thing."

There is no record that James Bertram responded to any of these letters. He and St. Marys town council probably just set them aside. And although there is no longer a daily market beside the town hall, the Carnegie library did get built in that location, and it is still very much there today!

# OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: An unexpected artistic discovery



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

Our first port of call was Kingston's waterfront. I was part of a group of four travel journalists who were invited by VisitKingston to, well, visit Kingston earlier this month. Our hosts had put together an unusual itinerary in that we were not visiting the Kingston Penitentiary, Old Fort Henry, or any site connected to the Tragically Hip. The focus of this visit was the water and our starting point was the rejuvenated Great Lakes Museum.

Let's be honest, the big attraction at the waterfront museum is the restored and beautifully outfitted Great Lakes passenger steamer, the Keewatin, which became the star of the museum last year, opening to visitors in 2024 and re-opening this month for the 2025 season.

So sensibly, I should be writing about the Keewatin. And I promise I will, and soon, but our tour of the Great Lakes Museum took us through a unique art exhibit that captured my attention and inspired me to do some research into the life and work of a Canadian artist named Grant MacDonald.

The MacDonald exhibit is housed in one of the museum's historic buildings that were once the Kingston dry dock. The works of art here are all

sketched portraits of Canadian sailors during World War II, and they are fascinating.

MacDonald, who was born in Montreal in 1909 and grew up in Cambridge, Ont., was an official war artist appointed by the Royal Canadian Navy during the second World War. Following the war, MacDonald moved to Kingston where he lived until his death in 1987.

What caught my eye as I wandered around the exhibition of 25 sketches was the vitality of the works. MacDonald had captured his subjects' personalities, in some cases highlighting their senses of humour.

The works are mostly black-and-white pencil sketches, but they come alive, nonetheless.

A biographical panel about MacDonald, part of the exhibit, includes a quote from vice admiral G.C. Jones, chief of the naval staff.

MacDonald's sailors "are typical of the Navy as a whole; and they are shown doing the things they do ordinarily ... in a manner that has made it possible to show with admirable insight the hearts and souls of the men who so valiantly helped fight and win the battle of the Atlantic."

The men, yes, but the exhibition does include a couple of sketches depicting enlisted women. The works on display are a fraction of the 300 portraits that are part of the collection held by the museum.

MacDonald is certainly not the only Canadian artist commissioned as official war artists by the Canadian Armed Forces. Group of Seven member Fred Varley had the same responsibility, as did many others. But MacDonald held a unique duty; he was asked to produce portraits showing the everyday life of the enlisted men and women.

His art may lack the drama of battlefield conflict, but it captures the reality of what enlisted life was like for his subjects – often with a humorous twist. He might be seen as the artistic equivalent of iconic Canadian newspaper columnist Gregory Clark, who also found a way to make wartime experiences personal, authentic and often humorous.

MacDonald has been described as "one of Canada's most successful portrait painters," and since he earned his living as a painter for four decades following the war, that seems to be true. On the other hand, tastes among art lovers change over the years and today, I discovered you can buy a MacDonald in an online art auction for under \$200, which seems a shame. The same is true of wonderful landscapes by an amazing Waterloo Region artist, Matthew Kousal, who passed away in 1990. But I digress.

Despite the whimsy evident in some of MacDonald's portraits, he was a serious artist. As a high school student at Galt Collegiate Institute, he was chief illustrator for the school newspaper. In his late teens, he studied under eccentric Waterloo Region artist Carl Ahrens. He then pursued art study in New York City and London, England. He contributed illustrations to many major Canadian newspapers and magazines, and illustrated books. He also taught art courses at Queen's University and at the University of Montreal.

And MacDonald became closely connected with Canada's theatre scene; he illustrated the book *Renown at Stratford: A record of the Shakespeare Festival in Canada*, written by Robertson Davies and the Fes-



(PHOTOS BY PAUL KNOWLES)

The Great Lakes Museum is housed in historic naval buildings on the Kingston waterfront.



"The Gash Wagon," showing WRENS during their probationary period, collecting garbage. Pictured are, from left, probationary WRENS G.E. Webster, M.H. Struthers, M.L. Bean and M.R. Anglin.

tival's first artistic director, Tyrone Guthrie.

MacDonald's life as an artist is intriguing in its own right, and I would frankly like to know more about this under-the-radar man, but here, I am focusing specifically on the MacDonald exhibit at the Great Lakes Museum. Yes, there is much more to see at this site, including the Keewatin, and a good selection of memorabilia, artifacts, model ships, original

dry-dock equipment and art by other artists, but when you go, be sure to take enough time to explore the fascinating works by Canadian wartime artist Grant MacDonald.

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



Self-portrait of Grant MacDonald during his stint as a Canadian war artist.



"The Bos'n's Pipe," a sketch of ordinary seaman W.D. Taylor.



"Battleship Grey": an unidentified crewman painting a Canadian battleship.

# FROM THE GARDEN: Under walnut trees



NANCY ABRA

Independent Columnist

Gardeners encounter a variety of challenges including diseases, pests, wildlife, severe weather conditions, and competition between plants. These factors can significantly impact plant growth and development as well as defy our horticultural practices. It seems my gardening methods are tested every year. But what is a consent challenge are the large black walnut trees on our property line.

The black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) releases a chemical called juglone, which impacts many species of plants. This chemical is present throughout the entire tree, including its roots, leaves and the nuts, making it difficult for certain plant species to thrive near them. Leaf litter and the nuts on the ground leach the chemical into the soil. The toxic

zone is not just under the tree canopy as it can extend 15 to 20 metres from the trunk, pass its dripline, depending on the size of the black walnut tree. Other trees that also produce juglone but with lower concentration include butternut, English walnut, and hickories.

There are also other plants that produce chemicals to prevent nearby plants from growing, a phenomenon called allelopathy. This term describes the interaction among plant species whereby one species generates a substance that impedes the development of nearby species. The production of juglone by certain trees exemplifies a defensive mechanism aimed at ensuring the tree's survival amidst competition and improving its reproductive success.

Beyond the chemical warfare, walnut trees also cast deep shade which limits the amount of sunlight that reaches the ground and reduces photosynthesis for plants below. Their expansive root systems aggressively absorb nutrients and water, making competition fierce. The canopy also intercepts rainfall, preventing moisture from adequately reaching the soil.

The golden rule of garden-



ing is 'the right plant for the right space'. I have challenged this rule for many decades especially when dealing with my neighbour's massive century old black walnuts. I have experimented with a variety of plant species – perennials, annuals, shrubs, fruits, herbs, and vegetables. I am always trying to push my boundaries but in the end the walnuts win. Overall, I have earned valuable knowledge.

Perennials such as primrose,

hosta, phlox, sedum, depending on amount of light available, will tolerate black walnuts. Shrubs such as gooseberries, most dogwoods, forsythia, and hydrangea can grow within the walnut's canopy. Native woodland plants, shrubs and trees also can tolerate the walnut's juglone. In respect to annuals, fruits and vegetables, this list is limited, except for beans, beets, grapes, black raspberries, and zinnias. For a full list of plants that tolerate black walnuts,

check out <https://www.ontario.ca/page/walnut-toxicity>.

To achieve successful gardening near black walnuts, consider these general guidelines. Grow vegetables and herbs in raised beds, clean up walnut leaf litter and nuts in the fall and avoid using wood chips containing walnut bark, wood, nut hulls and leaves to mulch gardens.

Source: <https://thamesriver.on.ca/watershed-health/native-species/walnut-toxicity/>



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Solutions on page 27

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# Riddles

- What is the richest nut?  
A cash-ew!

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

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

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

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

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

What kind of apples do computers prefer?  
Macintosh!

What has many ears but cannot hear?  
Corn!

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

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

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

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

# - Word Search -



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- Sunday
- Milt Dunnell Field
- St. Marys
- World of water
- Hands on
- Activities
- Games
- Interactive
- Fishing friendly
- Awe inspiring
- Birds of prey
- Exhibits
- Upper Thames



The **Riddle Kid**  
OF THE WEEK



Eloise Hemstock (1.5)

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

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## PET OF THE WEEK



**WELCOME WARM WEATHER!** Never leave pets unattended in a vehicle, even for a few minutes, as temperatures inside can rise quickly and become life-threatening. Ensure pets have access to fresh water and shade, and limit strenuous outdoor activity, especially during the hottest part of the day.



### BELLA

Our Pet of the Week is Bella, a one-year-old shih tzu. She loves cuddling in bed with her Momma and enjoys Texas beef ribs, carrots, lettuce, and sometimes plain pasta. She also loves going out when it's not raining and racing around the backyard. Bella is loved by her shih tzu older sister, Liah and a huge kitty, Willow.



# Thorndale News

A section within the  
St. Marys Independent

## Earning volunteer hours in support of local businesses

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

As it is a mandate that each student earn 40 volunteer hours before they can graduate high school, Kirk Hallman of Thorndale and his friend, Bennett Thomas of Dorchester, believe their volunteerism should make a difference in the community.

These Lord Dorchester Grade 11 students brainstormed different ideas over the winter months and produced a unique idea for the community of Thorndale. They proposed their project to the directors of I Love Thorndale (ILT) for a Thorndale Community Catalogue to promote the local businesses that are the supporters of ILT.

Hallman and Thomas connected with

the ILT businesses for their information and profile, organized the structure and layout of the catalogue, and did all the leg work, including hand-delivering these catalogues to the houses in Thorndale. There was no expense to the 29 businesses listed as ILT supported this marketing initiative and covered all the costs including the printing of the 1,000 catalogues.

“This community catalogue will centralize and promote local businesses to harness the idea of being ‘stronger together.’” Hallman said.

With this project, Hallman and Bennett collectively earned over 400 volunteer hours as they worked long and hard to make a difference in the community of Thorndale.



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Kirk Hallman of Thorndale and Bennett Thomas of Dorchester.

## A unique visitor at the Thorndale & Area Horticultural Society's meeting



(LIZ IGLESIAS PHOTO)

Brian Salt of Salthaven Rehabilitation and Education Centre in Strathroy brought a great horned owl with him for his presentation at the May 14 Thorndale & Area Horticultural Society meeting.

LIZ IGLESIAS

Thorndale & Area Horticultural Society

On Wednesday, May 14, we had a wonderful presentation by Brian Salt from Salthaven Rehabilitation and Education Centre.

It has been his life's work to help rehabilitate injured and abandoned wildlife. The centre is situated in Strathroy, Ont., and they can get up to 150 phone calls a day. The great horned owl, which Brian

brought with him, was absolutely stunning.

Also, thanks to everyone who came out to support our plant sale on May 10. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, June 11, starting at 6:30 p.m. It is our annual spring Potluck Dinner, so please bring a dish to share and your own plates and cutlery.

There will also be a presentation at 7:30 p.m. by Steve Elkerton on “How to get the Best out of your Roses.”

## A budding entrepreneur in Thorndale



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Colton Porter, age 6 of Thorndale, took advantage of an unseasonably hot day last week to set up a lemonade stand at 160 King St., Thorndale. His mother, Christine Porter, said he was excited to get up early that morning to make his sign before he went to school. For any business, it's location that matters, and young Colton had area residents lining up for a glass of his refreshing lemonade. Entrepreneurs come in all ages and sizes in Thorndale.

## OBITUARY

### Harris



Wray Oliver Harris, age 77, of Stratford passed away peacefully at Rotary Hospice, Stratford on May 15, 2025. Born in London, son of the late Donald and Berneice Harris.

Wray is survived by his wife of 56 years Shirley (Moses). Loving father of Chad Harris (Rhonda Hewer) and Tanya

Harris. Grandfather of Willow. Brother to Neil Harris. Brother-in-law Sandy Moses (Linda Holmes), Willie Moses (Sandy McDonnell), John Moses (Dianne). Also survived by several nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by his father-in-law and mother-in-law Bill and Marg Moses.

Wray worked at Domtar (Cascades) for 40 years until his retirement in 2003.

Family and friends are invited to celebrate Wray's life in the Reception Centre of the W.G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron Street, Stratford on Sunday, May 25, from 2-4 p.m. Interment at Prospect Hill Cemetery. Memorial donations in Wray's memory may be made to Rotary Hospice, Stratford. [www.wgyoungfuneral-home.com](http://www.wgyoungfuneral-home.com)

## St. Marys Independent 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 18

### Friday, May 23

- Royal Canadian Legion “hot dogs and more” lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.

### Saturday, May 24

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field – 8 a.m. to Noon
- Multi-family garage sale on Cherry Hill Rd – 8 a.m. to Noon
- Dragon boat challenge at Wildwood Conservation Area – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Fill the Truck Food Drive at Foodland – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. All proceeds go to the St. Marys Library
- Clair & Mary Brandt's 50th anniversary open house at St. James Hall – 1-4 p.m.
- Motherwell Women's Institute 75th Anniversary at Thames Valley Clubhouse, 30 Ann St – 2-4 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.

### Sunday, May 25

- Perth Children's Water Festival at Milt Dunnell Field – 1-4 p.m.
- Don Phillips 90th birthday celebration at Thorndale Community Centre – 2:30-4 p.m.
- Exeter Order of the Eastern Star BBQ chicken dinner at Exeter Masonic Hall – take out only. Advance tickets only – Call 519-235-1588 or 519-236-4134, Pick up time 4-6 p.m.

### Tuesday, May 27

- Royal Canadian Legion Buddy Check coffee at the Legion – 10 am to Noon

## OBITUARY

### Waghorn



It is with heavy hearts and great sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Benjamin Douglas Waghorn in his 57th year.

Ben is survived by his best friend and true love Lynn Curtis, and daughters Jocelyn & Karissa Waghorn, Krista and

Jake Van Nes (Djordy, Theo, Jaynie, and Jolene), Katie and Mike Farrington (Easton) and Maggie Curtis. Lovingly remembered by his mother Marilyn Waghorn and Al Cameron (Scott & Kiley Cameron and Jen & Roger MacMillan) and sister Cindy Waghorn and family. Ben will be dearly missed by Don & Marie Brubacher along with a loving extended family.

Pre-deceased by his father, Douglas Waghorn (1988).

Ben found an early passion in Mechanical Engineering and Law, allowing him to share his wealth of knowledge for over 30 years. He generously volunteered throughout his community with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and coaching minor sports teams. He also held the position of Board Member with Tradition for many years. Ben loved cheering on his daughters as they played baseball and performed in dance recitals. Recently, he enjoyed travelling to the East and West Coasts to adventure with Jocelyn and Karissa.

Ben had a deep love for travel and taking in every sunset while walking the beach. He could often be found diving into a new book. He was never too busy to stop to share a story and a laugh, to offer advice, or just to sit and listen. Ben was always kind, caring, and able to lift the spirit of any room with his contagious smile.

Visitation will take place on Wednesday May 21st from 2-4pm and 6-8pm at the W.G. Young Funeral Home, 430 Huron Street, Stratford. Funeral to follow on Thursday May 22nd at 11:00 am at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Stratford General Hospital. [www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com](http://www.wgyoungfuneralhome.com)

## THANK YOU

### Darling

Thank You to Daryl Rae and Marg Watt for their support and help through the years, to Barry N, Ross, Kevin Edwards, Hank Tybick and Jim Dickenson. We met many kind caring medical personnel on our journey. The Huron Perth day out program is wonderful. Remembering Dr. Komoroski and Wildwood Care Centre as well. Carol, Judy and Lily, the lunch at Brown's School was lovely. Donald would have enjoyed the visit . Thank you to Hasketts for their final farewell to Donald.

Joyce and Family

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# 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.

## How we can help St. Marys attract more tourists in the summer

St. Marys is a treasure and, as such, is already a tourist attraction with its largely extant built heritage, quarry, Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, parks and river, picturesque dam area, and activities for youth and seniors. May I also mention the idyllic library, museum, golf course and Station Gallery.

Downtown businesses are excellent, in the goods they carry and services offered. If the Town of St. Marys wishes to attract more people during the prime tourist season – summer – I suggest more tourist advertising be put in their budget. In the 1980s, there was a lot of press stating the need for more tourist investment and a beautiful monument was designed to honour the “Stonemen of Stonetown” to be built with gardens in the parks system, as people travel throughout the world to see significant historic monuments. One project such as this would put St. Marys on the map, so to speak, and the spinoff would be immediate, with more need

to house, feed and entertain visitors to St. Marys.

Start with one grand idea if you want a bigger tourist designation. The downside is, however, the winter months, and most small tourist towns partially close down for the long winter unless there has also been built a ski hill, for instance, or other winter activities that are major and pricey to build, maintain and staff. Local prices also skyrocket for housing, food and goods, as these are brought into an area for thousands of tourists only during the summer months. In other words, the needs and costs of a tourist designation could have a negative impact as far as affordability on the local population.

The question should be asked, “What are the benefits to this special place called St. Marys and its resident population, by the building of an official tourist industry?”

*Susan Murar, St. Marys*

## LOOKING BACK



BY AMY CUBBERLEY

### New tennis courts

**25 years ago (2000)**

The Town of St. Marys has purchased a 16.3-acre parcel of land on James Street South at a cost of \$299,900. The property, zoned industrial, is across from the Meadowridge subdivision and was owned by Ian Sparling. Clerk-Administrator Ken Story said just how the land would be utilized has not yet been determined.

John Harlton, who has been executive director at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum for the past two years, has been searching for just the right person to succeed him for the past few months. Harlton feels he had found the ideal candidate, who will be named in the next few weeks.

**50 years ago (1975)**

The Stonetown rumour mill has been grinding overtime lately regarding the water in the swim quarry not being ready for the season opening on May 31. P.A.R.Q. doesn't seem worried as the river overflow mud is expected to join the layer of silt on the quarry bottom by that time.

A sign marking the site of the future Grace Community Church building has been erected on Queen Street East, opposite the Ontario Hydro property.

A first certain sign of summer arrived last week as the Weir fountain was turned on for the season.

**75 years ago (1950)**

Several swimmers found the waters of the quarry quite comfortable on May 24th.

Reg Doupe has donated a spaniel pup to the Lions Club draw which takes place on Saturday night.

Two large pots of snake plant cactus are blooming in the window of the Lewis Café. Fred Lewis tells us it is years since he bought these plants and this is the first time they have bloomed. Some of the species have grown for 15 years without a blossom. The perfume from these flowers is very sweet.

**100 years ago (1925)**

It looks as though an open car will soon be a thing of the past. Local dealers have sold about ten closed cars to one open model this year.

The Canadian Pacific Railway will operate a Toronto-Sudbury sleeper car on the Trans-Canada Limited which resumes service for the 1952 season commencing May 17, leaving Toronto daily at 11pm. This train arrived in Sudbury at 6:45am but passengers may occupy their cars until 8:30am. Returning to Toronto, the sleeper will leave Sudbury daily at 10:10pm.

Harold Elliott, son of Wm. Elliott, East Ward, had a narrow escape on Saturday night. He was driving his car west on main street when the machine got out of control and crashed into a hedge near the Starr Inn. The driver escaped with a bad shaking up, but the car was wrecked.

The new tennis courts are practically complete. The top-stone surface has been rolled in place and the wire netting has been hung on the tall posts around the courts.

The bowling season will officially start in St. Marys on May 25th when the President and Vice-President's teams will battle for supremacy.

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Foodland, St. Marys

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**Time:** 10 AM - 3 PM

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All collectibles including sports cards, beanie babies, Funko pops and stamps. Highest prices paid. Free appraisals.Are you downsizing or need an estate clean out? We can help. Call or text Stan anytime 519-868-3814.

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

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Hundreds of shade trees, fruit trees, apples, pears, peaches, plums, sweet and sour cherries, apricots, nectarines, blueberries, haskapp grapes, raspberries, elderberries etc. Lots of spruce, pine, cedars for windbreak and privacy hedges. Sizes 1-8 ft. in containers ready to go. Flowering shrubs and much more. Mon-Sat 7:00am to 6:00pm. Martin's Nursery, 42661 Orangehill Rd Wroxeter, ON N0G 2X0 (1 Conc. North of Wroexeter on Belmore Line)

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

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Community Liaison Committee

The next Community Liaison Committee Meeting will be held on **Friday, June 13th at 10am** at the St. Marys Municipal Operations Center. Members of the public who wish to observe are welcome to attend.

Residents who wish to speak in front of the Committee may submit a detailed request in writing at least 3 days prior to the meeting in writing to the Committee. The request will be considered by the Committee and approved prior to the meeting. Please submit all requests, questions, and concerns for the meeting to kara.pelissero@vcimentos.com by **Wednesday, June 11**

MULTI FAMILY  
GARAGE SALE

**Saturday May 24 from 8:00-12:00**  
Cherry Hill Road., between Hwy 7 and Gregory Drive

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1. Ancient Greece
- 2. Union of European Football Associations
- 3. True
- 4. Lake Victoria
- 5. 366
- 6. Blue agave plant
- 7. Alexander Mackenzie
- 8. Doug Gilmour (92-93)
- 9. Tiana
- 10. A Swan

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CORRECTION:

In the story titled Measles Outbreak Grows Across Hu-ron-Perth: Over 1,400 Cases Reported, please note that in paragraph four, the term “immunized” should have read “un-immunized.” The corrected sentence is as follows: “The outbreak has now been deemed stable but concerning, with 76.4 percent of cases affecting infants, children, and adolescents, and 87 percent of cases being unimmunized. Klassen said this number is expected to be much higher, as Public Health Ontario predicts several cases are not being appropriately reported to public health.”

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