

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1312

Thursday, May 7, 2026

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LINCOLNS COME UP SHORT OF SUTHERLAND CUP
Oliver Lacko fires a shorthanded goal past goaltender Aidan Hill during Game 5 of the Sutherland Cup Final. For full story, see page 22.
(TR SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

Election rules, early voting and tabulators set for St. Marys' first open mayor's race in 12 years

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

With St. Marys heading into its first open mayoral race in more than a decade this October, council has passed a pair of bylaws aimed at keeping the municipality running smoothly during the election period while also legislating how votes are cast and counted locally.

At its April 28 meeting, council received two reports from town clerk Jenna McCartney outlining key rules under the Municipal Elections Act and the Municipal Act, including when a council becomes "lame duck," as well as how votes will be tabulated using optical scanning equipment.

One of the more significant pieces for council is the concept of a lame duck period – a restricted window late in the election cycle when the sitting council's powers are limited.

"A lame duck council is a target you may or may not reach at two points during the election," McCartney told council. "What would happen if council reaches a lame duck period; there are restricted acts that council would no longer have the authority to make."

In St. Marys, there are two potential triggers for a lame duck council. The first occurs earlier in the nomination period if enough incumbents choose not to run again.

"In order for lame duck council to exist, we would need less than 75 per cent of this seated council to return in the next term," McCartney

CONTINUED TO PAGE 3

Rotary Club of St. Marys hosts third community shredding event

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

The Rotary Club of St. Marys held its third annual Shred-It event on Saturday at the St. Marys DCVI parking lot.

The cost was \$15 per banker's box of documents for the shredder and the funds raised will go towards Rotarian projects for the community.

The Shred-It truck came from London and was onsite from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or until the truck was full. The organized system had the volunteers helping dump the documents into bins. The bins were then dumped into the shredder on the truck, giving people the op-

tion to watch their paperwork be destroyed.

This year, the club had 259 bankers' boxes of documents shredded – a combined weight of over 7,770 pounds, which is an increase by 37 per cent over last year's shredding event.

The Rotary Club wishes to thank the community for its support and the Avon Maitland District School Board and DCVI for letting them hold the event on their property.

For the Saturday event, cars started arriving as early as 8:30 a.m.

The club also wishes to thank the 17 volunteers who contributed a total of almost 60 volunteer hours towards this successful project. For photos, see page 8.

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COMMUNITY

Fresh Idea Collective hosts sold-out female entrepreneurship event

AMANDA NELSON

Independent Reporter

Kerry Ramsay, founder of Fresh Idea Collective, hosted another sold-out event April 27 at the St. Marys Golf and Country Club.

The Business LeadHERship Summit brought together leaders and business owners from across Ontario to learn, connect and discuss their business goals. Keynote speaker Cheryl Himburg spoke about the importance of vision and the courage to imagine what's possible before the path is fully clear.

"Vision takes shape when you have the courage to imagine what's possible, even before all the steps are mapped out," she said. "When we stop believing that what we've done so far is the ceiling of what we can accomplish, this is how we start to claim our lives."

Himburg also shared that a recent stroke earlier this year will not stop her from pursuing her goals and continuing to grow.

"I'm a glass-ceiling breaker," she said. "When we take an idea that feels impossible and start to ask how we can break that ceiling, we begin to take action, and all of a sudden it becomes possible."

She emphasized the importance of aligning vision with personal values, noting that when the two are connected, actions and goals become clearer.

Second speaker Aileen Edwards of AME Consulting discussed executive presence, highlighting that confidence is something that must be practised consistently to build momentum.



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Karis Mapp of CTV News speaks with Shaw's Ice Cream co-owners Kristine Hayes and Kelly Heleniak during the Business LeadHERship Summit in St. Marys.

She explained that hesitation and self-doubt can be perceived by others, while confidence and clarity can inspire trust.

"People benefit from your hesitation – don't let them," she said. "Lead clearly, lead with presence, lead believing you are ready, no matter what."

Edwards also spoke about her experiences as a Black woman in leadership and the importance of believing in oneself before feeling fully ready.

"As women, we need to know how to

and Kelly Heleniak, two of the three sisters behind Shaw's Ice Cream.

Originally from Tillsonburg, three of six sisters purchased the brand when it was close to shutting down. Having grown up working at their family's business, Dad's Ice Cream Shop, they decided while still in college to buy Shaw's and revive it.

Despite early challenges, the brand has since expanded and is now available in stores across Canada, known for its unique and seasonal flavours.

"We had to wear a lot of hats, but growing up balancing being moms, wives and our own lives, we learned the importance of having the right people in our corner," said Heleniak.

The pair also discussed adapting their leadership styles to support their team of more than 100 employees, emphasizing the importance of recognizing individual strengths and challenges.

Throughout the day, attendees had opportunities to connect with other entrepreneurs and take part in discussions on leadership, business challenges and work-life balance. Participants travelled from across Ontario, including as far as Ottawa.

The event highlighted the continued growth and impact of female-led businesses in local communities and beyond.

For more information on future events, visit freshideacollective.com.

enter rooms with intention," she said. "If you don't trust yourself in the room, people can feel that. Confidence is not volume – it's a decision.

"Being seen is not ego, it's stewardship. You can't build a brand by being invisible."

The final segment featured CTV News reporter Karis Mapp, who interviewed Tillsonburg entrepreneurs Kristine Hayes



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Wednesday May-6th	Thursday May-7th	Friday May-8th	Saturday May-9th	Sunday May-10th	Monday May-11th	Tuesday May-12th
Sun & cloud 11 OC Feels like 9	Sun & cloud 10 OC Feels like 7	Cloudy showers 11 OC Feels like 9	Potential storms 16 OC Feels like 15	Light rain 13 OC Feels like 11	Mainly sunny 10 OC Feels like 8	Sun & cloud 12 OC Feels like 10

Election rules, early voting and tabulators set for St. Marys' first open mayor's race in 12 years

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

said. "When I take 75 per cent of seven (council members), I'm at about 5.25. ... So, if there are six or more incumbents of council that are acclaimed after our Aug. 21 nomination day, there will be no lame duck. If six or more of you have chosen to run in the election and there is not enough other candidates to cause a vote, then there will be no lame duck.

"If two or more members decide not to run in the next term of council, there will be a lame duck period as of the end of day Aug. 21."

Similarly, if at least six council members put their names forward to run in the election, there would not be a lame duck period beginning Aug. 21, regardless of how many non-incumbent candidates are running, because it would not be certain whether three-quarters of council would be returning in the new term.

The second trigger for a lame duck council comes after election day, depending on the results. If the clerk identifies that less than 75 per cent of the current council has not been re-elected, a lame-duck period would commence on Oct. 27, the day after the election, and run until the new council is sworn in on Nov. 15.

During that time, council is restricted from making certain major decisions under Section 275 of the Municipal Act. Those limitations include things like ap-

pointing or removing senior staff, making significant hiring changes, selling any real property worth more than \$50,000, or approving major new expenditures and projects that exceed \$50,000.

"If you have already provided approval in your municipal budget for 2026 – if you've already approved those items – council can go forward with the decision of awarding them," McCartney said. "But if an emergency comes up and you are presented with a project and that expense is in excess of \$50,000, you are not able to make that decision."

To address that, council passed a bylaw delegating limited authority to the town's chief administrative officer during any restricted period, ensuring day-to-day operations and time-sensitive decisions can continue without interruption.

The move is a common safeguard in Ontario municipalities, allowing staff to maintain continuity while respecting the intent of the legislation – to prevent outgoing councils from making major decisions that bind an incoming council.

The timing of this year's election adds another layer of interest locally.

With Mayor Al Strathdee not seeking re-election, staff are forecasting higher voter turnout than usual – the first time in 12 years the mayor's chair will be contested.

"We've never held so many advance

election days, and I've based my decision on this because, for the last 12 years – more specifically, for the last two elections – there has not been a mayoral race," McCartney said. "There will be a mayoral race this fall and often, the stats show when there is such a race, the number of people that come out to the polls to vote increases significantly."

According to McCartney, in the 2022 St. Marys municipal election, just 24.9 per cent of eligible voters cast a ballot – well below the provincial average of 32 per cent. This time around, she expects more voters.

In response, the town is expanding advance voting opportunities to give residents more chances to cast a ballot ahead of election day.

Advance polls are scheduled to run from Oct. 7 to Oct. 10 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, offering four consecutive days of early voting – a move aimed at reducing lineups and improving accessibility.

Additional voting opportunities will also be provided for residents in institutions and retirement homes, including Wildwood Care Centre and Kingsway Lodge in St. Marys, as required under the Municipal Elections Act, ensuring those who may have difficulty travelling to polling stations can still participate.

On election day itself, voters will again

use optical scan vote tabulators – a system St. Marys has relied on since 2014.

Under the system, voters mark a paper ballot by hand, selecting their preferred candidates for municipal council and school board trustee races. They then place the ballot into a secrecy envelope and feed it into the tabulator.

The tabulator pulls the ballot from the envelope, scans the marks and casts the ballot in the secured system. Rather than counting votes immediately, the machines securely store the results throughout the early voting period and election day. Once polls close at 8 p.m. on election day, the clerk can print the official results directly from the system – a process McCartney said could take between 30 and 45 minutes.

The technology is designed to improve both accuracy and efficiency, ensuring valid votes are counted, invalid ballots are flagged and final results can be produced quickly after polls close.

Council formally approved the use of the optical scanning equipment through a bylaw, as required under provincial legislation, ahead of the May 1 deadline.

The system also simplifies the handling of multiple ballots, including the four separate school board trustee races, which the clerk must report to other municipalities for final tallying.

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COMMUNITY

How to have a difficult conversation with someone you love

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Though I've been putting it off for a while now, it has recently become quite clear that the time is fast approaching to have a difficult conversation with someone I love.

It's a conversation that plays out in homes across the country and around the world when the health and wellness of an aging family member reaches the point where it is no longer safe for them to live independently, and their level of care needs to increase – whether that's homecare or a move to an assisted-living facility.

How do we have that conversation when this particular family member has made it clear they have no intention of relinquishing their independence, even a little bit, despite our mounting concerns over their ability to manage their medications, keep appointments, cook and clean for themselves, manage their finances, and get regular sleep.

After looking into this topic in some depth and discussing it amongst ourselves, I'd like to share a few helpful tips I've come across that may or may not work for others in the same position.

First, it's important to start with curiosity, not conclusions or demands (a mistake I've made in the past). It can be helpful to lead with questions instead of decisions.

"How are you managing day to day?"

"What's getting harder than it used to be?"

"Are there things you wish were easier?"

Framing it this way can demonstrate a level of respect and offer your loved one an opportunity to lay out the problems they're experiencing instead of you making assumptions about their health and quality of life.

And remember to listen to what they say. They may not say outright what they're struggling with – perhaps downplaying falls, forgetfulness and loneliness – but hesitation, subject changes and making light of something with a joke can be indi-

cators of those struggles.

There will come a time in the conversation when you have to lay out your concerns. It's important to do so gently while avoiding vague worries. Be specific without being accusatory.

"I've noticed you've had a couple of falls lately."

"I'm worried about you keeping up with meals."

"It seems like getting to appointments has been harder."

At this point, frame the issues as a shared problem to solve. It isn't about taking something away; it's about finding a way to make life safer, easier and more connected.

"What would help?"

"What would feel comfortable?"

"What matters most to you?"

Remember to acknowledge the loss of independence. Home isn't just a place; it's identity, routine and memory. Lay out the wide spectrum of options, from in-home supports for meals, cleaning and person-

al care to assisted living or nursing-home care if medical needs are more demanding. Once the best option is agreed on, involve your loved one in the search for the best possible place to call home in an environment where all their needs can be met.

As we've learned, this conversation likely won't take place all at once. It will happen in bits and pieces over weeks or months. Expect hesitation and even resistance. If it helps, bring someone from outside the family like a trusted doctor, homecare worker or close friend into the conversation to help reinforce your concerns in a way that feels less emotional or confrontational.

At the end of the day, the focus of the conversation should be on quality of life, not just safety. Safety is often the trigger for these conversations, but quality of life is what sustains the decision.

Less stress. More social connection. Better access to care.

Those are the outcomes to keep returning to.

Bravo

We have 5 Bravos this week.

- 1) Bravo to the St. Marys Community Players for their production of *Boeing, Boeing*. The cast and extensive crew obviously put in a lot of hard work to stage this very entertaining play.
- 2) Bravo to the dads and moms who sacrifice their Sunday mornings to bring their small kids to the Pyramid Centre for swimming lessons. Good for them.
- 3) Bravo to the kind arena person that returned my change to me after I forgot to pick it up after purchasing two drinks with a \$100 bill at the Rural Urban Night held by the Rotary Club. Small town living is the best.
- 4) Sincere appreciation and thanks to the town employees for the beautiful manicure at our local cemetery.
- 5) Bravo to the very kind person who returned my purse to the St. Marys Foodland. I had left it in the shopping cart, and headed home. Thank you!

Boo

We have 1 Boo this week.

- 1) Boo to the people that use Sparling Bush as their outdoor toilet. It's disgusting. STOP IT!!

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

Quote of the Week

"This past season is special in many ways. Obviously, the atmosphere of the Game 7 win over Stratford will be felt for years to come, but there are some broader takeaways. The personal journeys of the players and their families who are graduating, or how this game can be common ground when there is something bigger than hockey at play off the ice. The ultimate goal still remains, but St. Marys won't forget the building blocks laid by all involved this season."

- Brandon Boyd, President of the St. Marys Lincolns, on their incredible 2025-26 season that included their second trip to the Sutherland Cup Final in three years.

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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

St. Marys Independent

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A brave man acknowledges the strength in others.

Overheard

AT THE COFFEE SHOP

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Mother's Day is for feeling appreciated. The other 364 days are for trying to keep your cool.

Congratulations to the Lincolns on a great season!

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

Stratford Police Service to mark Police Week 2026

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Stratford Police Service (SPS) has announced several public activities to be held throughout Police Week 2026 aimed at creating connections with community members throughout Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South.

National Police Week in Canada takes place from May 10-16. With this year's theme being, "Committed to Serve Together," the SPS is acknowledging the crucial partnership between members of the police service and the organizations and community members they serve. In a press release, the police service said this collaboration is imperative to effective crime-prevention and public-safety initiatives and ensures a safer and more welcoming community for all.

With a kick-off event on Saturday, May 9, and community events running throughout the entire week, finishing off with the third annual Free Community BBQ, SPS says it wants to provide a variety of activities to the public that promote positive partnerships between the police and community, as well as create

POLICE WEEK 2026 "Committed to Serve Together"



Saturday, May 9th - Kick-Off Event
Optimist Club Bike Rodeo and Annual Bike
 Location - Avondale United Church
 Bike Sale - 9:00 - 11:30
 Bike Rodeo - 10:00 - 12:00

Monday, May 11th
Coffee with a Cop - Stratford
 Location - Market Square - Livery Yard if poor weather
 Time - 11:00 - 1:00

Colouring With the Cops
 Location - Stratford Mall
 Time: 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 12th
Coffee with a Cop - St Marys
 Location - Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters
 Time - 11:00 - 1:00

Wednesday, May 13th
Law Enforcement Torch Run (Special Olympics)
 Location - Stratford Police HQ along Erie Street

awareness on important crime prevention initiatives.

See the above poster for details on all scheduled events.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



ELECTION NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

Nomination packages are available at St. Marys Town Hall during office hours (8:30 AM to 4:30 PM). Municipal nomination forms must be filed in person at St. Marys Town Hall by Friday, August 21 at 2 PM. Nominations forms for school board candidates shall be filed with the respective municipalities. Questions about the nomination process can be directed to the Clerk's Office (clerksoffice@town.stmarys.on.ca) or by phone to 519-284-2340 ext. 212.

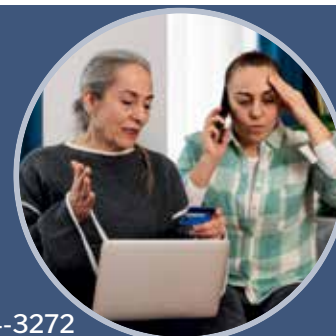
More details: townofstmarys.com/elections

LEARN TO SPOT THE SCAMS

May 13 | 6 - 8 PM | Friendship Centre

Join us for a FREE Fraud Prevention Talk and learn how to recognize and avoid common scams that impact our community. Hosted by the Stratford Police Service, this informative session will share real-world examples and practical tips to help you protect yourself and others from fraud.

Register: townofstmarys.com/activenet or 519-284-3272



Friends of the Library (FOL)



Spring Book Sale

Lind Sportsplex - the Quarry
425 Water St. S St. Marys, ON

Wed. May 6 - Fri. May 8 - 10 am - 6 pm

Sat. May 9 - 10am - 4 pm
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Items for sale by donation

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SPRING BOOK SALE

May 6 - 9 | Lind Sportsplex

The Friends of the St. Marys Public Library are hosting their bi-annual book sale. Browse books, puzzles, DVDs and more. Items are for sale by donation. Hours include May 6 - May 8, 10 AM to 6 PM and May 9, 10 AM - 4 PM.

www.stmarysfol.ca



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

May 3 - 9, 2026

Residents of St. Marys are encouraged to be ready before an emergency happens. This year's theme, Be Prepared. Know Your Risks, is a reminder that understanding the risks in our community is the first step in protecting yourself, your family, and your home. Being prepared makes a difference. Start the conversation at home, learn the risks in your area, and take small steps now to be ready when it matters most.



SHOWER PROGRAM Pyramid Recreation Centre

This program provides free showers to those in need. Showers are private, secure and accessible for individuals of all abilities.

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communications@town.stmarys.on.ca



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Senior of the Week



Our Senior of the Week is Darlene Edwards. Darlene was born at Victoria Hospital, London in 1951 and lived in St. Marys until the age of four. Darlene spent the greater part of her life in Exeter with husband Wayne for 43 years and nine years ago, she returned to St. Marys to be closer to family. Darlene has three children and nine grandchildren. She recently moved to Fairhill and often visits Tim's in the afternoon for a sip and a chat.

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

Outdoor staircase reconstruction to begin at St. Marys town hall

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The outdoor staircases at St. Marys town hall will be undergoing reconstruction starting the week of May 11.

This project will involve removing both staircases and rebuilding the structures with a concrete base and a stone veneer matching the existing stone. The town will reuse the stone treads and risers along with the railing cap stones and brass railings on the new stairs. Heat cables will also be installed under the stair treads and in the surrounding sidewalk panels. These heat cables will reduce, if not eliminate the need for salt and sand in the winter months, which will extend the life of the stairs.

The project will be completed in two phases beginning with the Church Street staircase. While the Church Street staircase is being reconstructed, the public will not be able to access the town hall service desk or use the public washroom located directly outside.

A barrier of fencing will be in place for the safety of pedestrians and to clearly mark construction areas. It is anticipated the work on the Church Street staircase will last approximately six weeks.

Services usually offered at town hall will be provided online, by phone or at other municipal facilities during the closure, as noted below.

- General inquiries: Call 519-284-2340, email clerksoffice@town.stmarys.on.ca, or visit the municipal operations centre (408 James St. S) during business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. except for statutory holidays)
- Stratford Police Service: Call 519-271-4141 for non-emergencies; call 911 for emergencies
- Community outreach worker: Call 519-284-2340 ext. 631
- Council and mayor nominations: Appointment is



required to file nomination. Call 519-284-2340 ext. 212 or email clerksoffice@town.stmarys.on.ca

- Tax payments: visit the municipal operations centre (408 James St. S) during business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. except for statutory holidays)

- Licensing, bylaw enforcement and council correspondence: Call 519-284-2340, email clerksoffice@town.stmarys.on.ca, or use the drop box located at the town hall Queen Street entrance

- Tourism inquiries: Call 519-284-2340 ext. 272, email events@town.stmarys.on.ca or visit the St. Marys Public Library (15 Church St. N), St. Marys Museum (177 Church St. S) or downtown businesses for tourism materials

- Public washrooms: Mobile public washrooms are available across the street starting on Friday, May 15. An accessible washroom is available.

Once the Church Street outdoor stair reconstruction is complete, phase two of the project will commence, which includes the reconstruction of the town hall Queen Street outdoor stairs. Further details regarding the second phase of the project and any impacted services will be communicated at a later date.

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. What term describes a period of temporary economic decline?
2. What planet in our solar system has a longer day than it does a year?
3. How many minutes in a professional football/soccer match?
4. What city is known as the eternal city?
5. What company is the largest self driving taxi fleet in the world?
6. What land mammal has the strongest bite force?
7. What is the largest internal organ in the human body?
8. How many Stanley Cups do the Montreal Canadiens have?
9. Who carved Pinocchio?
10. What is a microscopic bear called?

This week's answers are found on pg. 39



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Canada is a free book gifting program devoted to inspiring a love of reading in the hearts of children everywhere.



To learn more or to register a child visit our website.
stmarysimaginationlibrary.com

SCIENCE HILL Country Club

MEN & WOMENS LEAGUES STARTING SOON!

Men play anytime on
WEDNESDAYS
STARTING MAY 20TH

Women play anytime on
THURSDAYS
STARTING MAY 21ST

Register at shleagues@sciencehillcountryclub.com

2108 Road 137, St. Marys, Ontario
info@sciencehillcountryclub.com | sciencehillcountryclub.com

519.284.3621

St. Marys to host second annual Spring Cemetery Decoration Day

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

As spring returns to St. Marys, the community is invited once again to come together to care for and celebrate one of the town's most meaningful green spaces, the St. Marys Cemetery at 150 Cain St.

The second annual Spring Cemetery Decoration Day, held in partnership with Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, will take place on Saturday, May 16, from 9 a.m. to noon. The morning offers an opportunity for families and community members to clear winter debris, plant flowers, decorate graves for the season and enjoy time together on the 50-acre cemetery grounds.

"This event is about remembrance, but it is also about connection," said Andrew Hodges, owner of Hodges Funeral Home, in a press release issued by the town. "Bringing people together in a shared act of care helps honour loved ones while strengthening our sense of community."

The morning will begin at 9 a.m. with words of remembrance, offering a reflective and inclusive start to the day. Coffee



and water will be available in the chapel throughout the morning.

"Families are welcome to tend to graves at any time during the year, but Decoration Day allows us to provide extra support," said St. Marys public works director Jed Kelly in the press release. "With waste containers, water access and staff on hand, we hope to make spring cleanup easier and more welcoming."

Tourism and cemetery information will be available in the chapel during the event, along with self-guided cemetery walking-tour brochures from the St. Marys Museum.

In the event of rain, the event will be rescheduled to Saturday, May 23.

For more information, contact Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home at 519-284-2820.

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Rotary Club of St. Marys hosts third community shredding event



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Volunteer exchange students June Aja Gomez from Spain, Claudia Suarez Cueto from Spain and Samir Zogbi from Argentina all signed up to help people rid themselves of unwanted documents.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Rotarians Peter McCash and Linda Schuyler were just two of the volunteers that helped make this a well-run project for the club.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The smooth system ends with the documents being shredded in the Shred-It truck.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Student volunteers help empty some boxes into bins that will then go directly to the truck for shredding.

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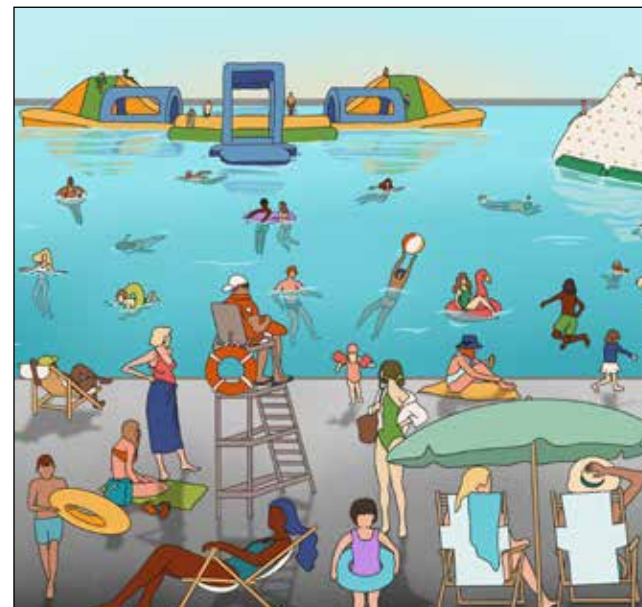
Second phase of downtown utility box art wraps approved by St. Marys council



(DESIGN BY LIZ EMIRZIAN)



(DESIGN BY HEATHER POECHMAN)



(DESIGN BY HEATHER POECHMAN)

The “Insects and Flowers” design for utility box art wraps in downtown St. Marys.

The “Seasons of St. Marys” design for utility box art wraps in downtown St. Marys.

The “At the Quarry” design for utility box art wraps in downtown St. Marys.

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

A second round of public art is coming to downtown St. Marys after council approved designs for the next phase of the BIA-led utility box art-wrap project.

At its April 28 meeting, council gave the green light to a new set of designs that will be installed on four additional utility boxes along Queen Street, building on the success of the project’s first phase last year.

“Last year, there were four boxes wrapped in the downtown, and the town and the BIA have received lots of positive feedback,” town director of culture, tourism and engagement Amy Cubberley told council. “So, they are looking to wrap an additional four boxes this year.”

The initiative, led by the St. Marys Business Improvement Area (BIA), was initially launched in 2025 with a \$10,000 investment to wrap four utility boxes in the downtown core. From the outset, the BIA planned to expand the project in phases, depending on community response and available funding.

Following a strong reception to last year’s installations, the project is moving ahead with a second phase using the same two artists selected through the original call for submissions, Liz Emirzian and Heather Poechman, helping maintain consistency in style and theme across the downtown.

As with the first phase, the new designs were reviewed by the BIA board, staff and the town’s heritage and culture advisory committee before being brought to council for approval, in keeping with the municipality’s public art and monuments policy. The advisory committee supported the designs earlier this year, clearing the way for council’s final decision.

This year’s artwork continues to draw on local themes, with designs highlighting the St. Marys Quarry and four seasons in St. Marys created by Poechman, as well as a creative approach to native insects and flowers found throughout the community created by Emirzian. Early feedback on draft concepts led to refinements, including adjustments to better reflect local features and enhance the overall visual impact.

Four additional utility boxes have been selected for wrapping this year, all located along Queen Street in high-visibility areas where the project can have the greatest impact. The selected boxes are situated on the north side of Queen Street between Church and Wellington streets, the north side between Wellington and Water streets, and near the northwest corner of Queen and Water streets.

There are 11 utility boxes in the downtown core in total. With four completed in 2025 and four more planned for 2026, the project is now more than halfway toward its long-term goal of wrapping all boxes in the area.

“I want to commend both the BIA and heritage committee for getting this going,” said deputy mayor Brogan Aylward, who also sits as council’s representative on the BIA board. “I think we’ve long wanted some more public art downtown and certainly, that’s what we’re getting. “ ... I think it’s great. I’ve gotten a lot of positive comments and I’m happy to see more.”

Though council unanimously approved the designs as presented, Coun. Marg Luna noted the absence of any imagery depicting St. Marys’ annual Winter Lights display in Milt Dunnell Field in the design themed around the four seasons in St. Marys.

In response, Cubberley told council the artists had freedom to create designs that represent the culture, heritage and natural aspects of St. Marys. Though Cubberley said she could take that design back to Poechman for further revisions, council opted to approve all designs as presented.

The wraps are expected to last at least a decade with minimal maintenance. The project aligns with the town’s broader strategic priorities around downtown revitalization, adding colour and visual interest to high-traffic areas while improving the appearance of otherwise utilitarian infrastructure.

Installation is expected to take place in May so the artwork is in place ahead of the busy summer tourism season.



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Scott Woods bringing Fiddle Country benefit concerts to St. Marys, Mount Brydges

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Canadian fiddling champion Scott Woods is bringing his latest show, Fiddle Country, to St. Marys and Mount Brydges this month, with both concerts supporting local causes.

Woods and his band will perform at St. Marys United Church May 21 from 7-9 p.m., with proceeds supporting Camp Bimini, a children's Christian camp in Perth South. The following night, May 22, the band will perform at Caradoc Community Centre in Mount Brydges, with proceeds supporting St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Strathroy.

For Woods, raising money for local organizations has become central to life on the road.

"Almost all of our shows as we go across the country are fundraisers for churches and charities and service clubs," Woods said.

Woods said he began raising money for local causes in 2004 after the death of his father. While touring with Memories of Don Messer's Jubilee, Woods and his mother, who was also part of the show, began discussing ways to support mission work.

"If it was me, I'd probably just play a show and raise funds for a group that are better suited to do that," Woods recalled telling his mother at the time.

From there, the family decided to bring the whole band together for a benefit concert. What began as a handful of shows quickly grew, with Woods performing dozens and eventually more than 100 fundraising concerts a year.

"It's kind of an important thing for us to be able to give back," he said. "That's one thing that dad always said

too, 'You're given this talent, you've got to share it and do what you can to help the community.'"

The Fiddle Country show combines classic country, bluegrass, western swing, country gospel and Canadian old-time fiddling. Woods said the program includes a strong Canadiana flavour, with songs connected to artists such as Hank Snow, Dick Damron and Rita MacNeil.

"There's a little bit of something for everyone," Woods said. "You don't have to be a country-music fan or a fiddle-music fan. We're going to try and keep you entertained for two hours straight."

The show features Woods on fiddle and vocals, his sister, Kendra Woods Norris, on piano, fiddle and vocals, Leo Stock on drums, fiddle, step dancing and vocals, and Steve Piticco on guitar and vocals.

Audiences can expect fiddle tunes, country songs, step dancing, humour, costume changes and Woods' signature trick fiddling.

"We kind of keep it lighthearted for the most part," Woods said. "Our shows are all pretty grassroots. We're pretty laid back and I tell a bunch of corny jokes."

Tickets for both shows are \$49.50, tax included, and can be purchased by calling the Scott Woods Band office at 1-855-726-8896 or online through the band's website at scottwoods.ca.

For the St. Marys show, tickets are also available, cash only, at Barista's, 14 Water St. S., and Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters, 145 Queen St. E., or by calling Susan at 519-440-2908.

For the Mount Brydges show, tickets are available, cash only, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 152 Albert St., Strathroy. Doors open one hour before show-time, and seating is first come, first served.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT WOODS)

Canadian fiddling champion Scott Woods and his band are bringing their Fiddle Country show to St. Marys and Mount Brydges May 21 and 22.



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Over 1,000 meals were served at the 28th annual Firefighter's Breakfast



People started lining up early for the highly anticipated morning meal.

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

A very popular event took place on Sunday, May 3, at the firehall on James Street.

The St. Marys Fire Department held its annual Firefighter's Breakfast. Hungry patrons started lining up at 7:45 a.m. The breakfast has been held annually for 28

years.

The Firefighter's Breakfast is a fun morning to meet up with family and friends, and visit with the volunteer firefighters. The kids in attendance had the opportunity to sit in fire trucks and get their hands on some colouring pages and fire hats and, of course, meet Sparky the fire dog.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Ellie Mckinney, decked out in her firefighter gear, was having fun checking out one of the fire trucks at Sunday's Firefighter's Breakfast.

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Chaplain Jeff Sager was on hand selling fire permits. The money raised from this popular event goes towards Muscular Dystrophy Canada and back into the community.

A project of this size requires many hands. Current firefighters, students and some retired firefighters all stepped up to help feed the large crowd. It was a very

early start for setup and the effort is greatly appreciated by the community.

There were 1,000 residents served on Sunday.

"On behalf of the St. Marys Firefighters Association, we would like to thank our sponsors and our supporters for another successful breakfast," deputy fire chief Ryan Taylor said.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Retired volunteer firefighters Rick Martin and Mark McEwan helped on grill duty.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Cole Rae was all smiles having breakfast with his family.

St. Marys outdoor Farmers Market starts the new season



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

A family affair. From left, mom Rhonda DeLong, daughter Abbey Thistle, granddaughter Ashlynn Stewardson and daughter Meagan Stewardson took a walk in the sunshine to check out the first day of the market.

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

The first outdoor St. Marys Farmer's Market of the season was held on Saturday at Milt Dunnell Field from 8 a.m. to

noon.

Though it was chilly, the sun was shining and many people were down checking out the many vendors who were set up and ready to go for the summer.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Winnie Lee-Warne and Emma Borgijink were selling girl guide cookies for the 1st St. Marys Sparks and Embers at the first outdoor farmer's market of the season Sunday.

From Forest Hill Orchards to CT Cutie Handcrafted Station, there was a variety of interesting items for purchase.

"The market is open every Saturday morning until Oct. 31 at Milt Dunnell

field," farmer's market board chair Ann Slater said. "There will be more produce and more vendors as the season progresses as well as some special events later in the season."

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UTRCA Contributes 855.76 hectares to Canada's 30x30 Project in partnership with Ontario Nature

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), in collaboration with Ontario Nature, has announced its contribution of 855.76 hectares of natural areas and provincially significant swampland towards Canada's target of protecting and conserving 30 per cent of our lands and waters by 2030, known commonly as the 30x30 target.

In a press release, the UTRCA said the partnership with Ontario Nature facilitated an assessment of UTRCA lands, determining that 16 properties will be registered under the Protected Areas designation in the Canadian Protected and Conserved Areas Database. This marks a significant step towards halting and reversing biodiversity loss in the Upper Thames River watershed.

Notable areas include Harrington Conservation Area (CA), Dorchester CA and Embro CA. Each of these areas consist of mixed woodland and coniferous plantations centred around a small dam and pond.

"Protecting these lands through long-term conservation measures supports habitat for species at risk, reduces the impacts of flood events and provides recreational opportunities" said UTRCA land management coordinator Brandon Williamson in a press release.

The full list of properties includes W.L Dickson Arboretum; Beachville Tract; Cade Tract; Dorchester CA; Dorchester Mill Pond; Downey Tract; Embro CA; Fish Creek CA; Gads Hill North and South; Golspie Swamp; Harrington CA; Ivey Tract; Kintore Swamp; Lowthian Flats; Shakespeare CA; and Westminster (Dingman).



(PHOTO COURTESY OF UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY)

A photo of the Harrington Conservation Area, just a 15-minute drive from St. Marys and one of many conservation authority properties to be protected as part of Canada's 30x30 Project.

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Rain date: Saturday, May 23.

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Little Lemon Dress experiences busy first season with weddings, proms and other formals on the way

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Brooke Schmidt can ensure that special-occasion dress for a wedding day, prom, graduation, or other formal has the finishing touches it needs to become that dream dress.

Schmidt's new business, Little Lemon Dress, specializes in women's formal and bridal wear alterations out of her home studio. She graduated from Seneca College's fashion arts program in Toronto in 2015 and previously worked as a seamstress for a bridal shop before starting her own business.

After losing her job and moving into a new home in October, Schmidt's husband converted their additional entrance into a sewing studio.

Though Schmidt is working on dress alterations every day, she says each job is unique.

"I love it because every dress is so different and you

really have to think and use your brain; what you're going to do, how you're going to alter it because everything is so different, so if you do one thing, it could affect something else you have to do," she said. "The goal is you always want it to look like you never touched the dress."

Schmidt has been getting lots of business so far and is looking for more clients.

"I have a pretty busy first season, which I'm very excited about. I was hoping to get a few more prom girls but they're trickling in," she said. "Prom is more like a last-minute thing. They get their dress and they're all excited and they're like, 'Oh, it actually doesn't fit me that well,' so I am actually getting a few more proms come in."

Anyone looking to have their formal wear altered can send an email to littlelemondress@gmail.com. Follow Schmidt's journey on Instagram via [@thelittlelemondress](https://www.instagram.com/thelittlelemondress).



(PHOTO COURTESY OF BROOKE SCHMIDT)

Brooke Schmidt's new business, Little Lemon Dress, has a busy first season. Schmidt provides alterations for bridal and formal dresses.

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St. Marys Poetry Circle hosts National Poetry Month events at Riverwalk Commons



The Coyote Nature School Poetry Showcase.

(GORD BARNETT PHOTO)

SYLVIA BOSGRA

St. Marys Poetry Circle

This year's national theme for Poetry Month was "Land and Sea", as chosen by the League of Canadian Poets in conjunction with Native Women in the Arts.

On April 11, the St. Marys Poetry Circle showcased the art and poetry by the

children of the Coyote Nature School, led by teacher Kendra Martin and poet Sharon Sinclair from the poetry circle. The children's poems were displayed afterwards in store windows for everyone in town to appreciate.

On April 14, we presented an insightful and thought-provoking interactive talk by Dr. Heather Meakin called "Playing at



(ROB ANDERSON PHOTO)

"The Song My Paddle Sings." Pictured are St. Marys Poetry Circle members, from left: Elaine Penalagan, Paul Stevens, Rosemary Radcliffe, Alizon Sharun, Dan Welcher, Sylvia Bosgra, Britton Theurer, Karen Ballard, Brian Collinson, Sharon Sinclair and Joanne Stryker.

the shoreline: In the lap of poetry."

On April 22, we gave a performance of the poetry of Pauline Johnson Tekahionwake, "The Song My Paddle Sings," with original music compositions by St. Marys composers Dan Welcher and Britton Theurer, and a live viola performance by Glenna Theurer. Indigenous advisor Patsy Ann Day provided welcome and

closing addresses.

Big thanks to our tireless leader and organizer extraordinaire, Alizon Sharun, as well to all who participated, and to all our volunteers (too many to name, but you know who you are) who make our events so successful!

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What's new with the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

JANIS FREAD

St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

The super sales team at the Sip & Shop decided to model a few of the creatively embellished jean jackets that were on sale Sunday! There are still a few embellished jackets available at the hospital Boutique, open Monday to Friday from noon to 4 p.m.

The draw for the Auxiliary's spring raffle was done on Sunday with the first-prize quilt going to Colleen Smith, the second-prize \$100 gas card going to Joyce Mulholland and the third-prize \$50 gift card for Petals and Foliage going to John Fox.

It's finished! The beautifully refurbished gazebo on the hospital grounds now has permanent bench seating and enclosed pot lights to welcome visitors in the

evening. These additions, combined with a new roof and siding make the project complete. Once the volunteers of the St. Marys Horticultural Society work their magic with the window boxes and gardens, it will be an oasis for both patients and staff.

To promote everything to do with books, the Auxiliary will be at the Friends of St. Marys Public Library's Spring Book Sale, selling book sleeves, wheelchair book totes and walker book totes. Auxiliary members will be at the sale on Wednesday, May 6, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.




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



(PHOTO COURTESY OF JANIS FREAD)

The Sip & Shop sale team models a few creatively embellished jean jackets. Pictured from left are Joanne Pickering, Irene Wortley, Joanne McIntosh, Vivian Reid and Joyce Mulholland.

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Contributed Article

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St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

Resilient, gutsy Lincolns fall to Redhawks in Sutherland Cup Final

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Feelings can be messy, especially when they are so diametrically opposite and are being felt all at the same time.

How could the St. Marys Lincolns and their fans not feel such bitter disappointment when Kyler Morgan deflected the puck into the net seven minutes and 19 seconds into overtime of Game 5 to give the Cambridge Redhawks their first-ever Sutherland Cup?

Yet, at the very same moment, how could the St. Marys Lincolns and their fans not feel such immense pride in the run they went on, proving themselves as arguably the premier organization and the most resilient team in the entire Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL)?

It's certainly not easy to succinctly summarize how the Lincolns and their fans feel right now, however, one thing is for certain; the Lincolns have nothing to be ashamed of.

Remember, losing doesn't always make a loser. In a series as close as this Sutherland Cup Final was, and as strong as both teams played, no matter who emerged victorious, both proved they were made of the rare stuff that champions are made of.

To prove that, just look at Game 3.

The Lincolns found themselves in a 2-0 series hole against a team that only lost five games all season, that hadn't lost since Jan. 24, that had won 24 straight games, including each of their first 14 playoff games, and that hadn't lost on home ice since Jan. 10.

Any other team might have folded in those circumstances.

But not these Lincolns. These Lincolns just didn't know how to quit.

And because of that, they did what no visiting team had done since Jan. 10; win at the Galt Arena Gardens. They did what no team had done these playoffs; push a series against the regular-season champions beyond four games. They did what no team had done since Jan. 24; defeat the Redhawks.

Jack Clarke ended a 14-game goal drought, jamming home the first goal of the game just 16 seconds in. Head coach Jeff Bradley noted the importance of scoring first, as the team that scored first in every game of the Sutherland Cup Final emerged victorious.

"It was huge getting the first goal," Bradley told the Independent. "You saw how important it was throughout the whole series. Whether we kept that lead or not, knowing that we could push them back on their heels was really important for us."

Tyler Graham tied the game less than three minutes later, but before the first period was done, Ethan Weir scored the first and only powerplay goal of the series to put St. Marys ahead 2-1.

A goal just 93 seconds into the second by Sam Savery, followed by Graham's second of the night, put Cambridge ahead 3-2. However, Owen Voortman ended a three-game goal drought to tie the game at three apiece midway through the second.

While the Lincolns continue to play well, it started to feel like the Redhawks were slowly building momentum in the third. Shift by shift, they found more offensive opportunities. So, when they got a powerplay with more than half of the third already done, it felt like Cambridge might be just moments away from finding a goal that would secure them a 3-0 series stranglehold.



(TR SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

The St. Marys Lincolns watch heartbroken as the Cambridge Redhawks celebrate their 4-3 overtime win May 2 in Game 5 to win the Sutherland Cup. It was the second Sutherland Cup Finals appearance in three years for the Lincolns.

Two perfect defensive stick plays by Devun Colebrook later, and the feisty first-year forward was away on a shorthanded breakaway, deking out the eventual playoff MVP, Aidan Hill, to pot what went on to be the winning goal of Game 3.

Just two minutes and two seconds later, fresh out of the penalty box, Lincoln Moore finished off a tic-tac-toe passing play from Voortman and Oliver Lacko to give the Lincolns the 5-3 win.

From scoring the first goal to scoring on the powerplay to several players snapping goal droughts, Bradley said it felt like the Lincolns were turning the momentum in the series in their favour.

"I just thought that there were all these things happening, these signs happening, and I just felt that this was going to be ours," Bradley said. "I felt like we'd been getting closer in Game 2, and in Game 3, we won, so it just felt like the tide was changing a little bit."

Bradley added the win revitalized the team's belief in their ability to fight back in the series.

"Throughout the series, the games have been so tight," said Bradley. "They could have gone either way. For us to finally get one to go our way, it was nice, obviously, and it just gave us more hope that maybe we had figured these guys out. That maybe we were going to replicate what we did in the Stratford series."

The series remained incredibly tight in Game 4 with the Lincolns and Redhawks in a stalemate on May 1. A point shot by Nathan Gaitens was tipped by Callan Newton for the only goal of the game, with Hill backstopping the Redhawks to a 1-0 win and a 3-1 series lead.

Just 24 hours later, the Lincolns were back in Cambridge with their season on the line in Game 5, and despite a strong start to the game by St. Marys, the ever-opportunistic Redhawks continued to capitalize on their chances when they got them, getting goals from Graham and Alexander Forrest to take a 2-0 lead into the first intermission.

When asked about his feelings after the opening 20 minutes, Bradley admitted to feeling nervous about his

team's chances, given the fact they had only scored three goals or more in one game of the Sutherland Cup Final prior to Game 5.

"They ended up putting the puck in the back of our net twice, and with the amount of goal scoring we had put up this series, I wasn't sure what was going to happen. But as the game went on, it was a quick reminder of what this group was about. And then being able to tie it up twice, especially in dramatic fashion in the third, it just made me believe again. It was incredibly impressive."

And this is where the borderline-freaky parallels to two years ago began.

In the 2024 Sutherland Cup Final, against a powerhouse regular-season champion, the Listowel Cyclones went up 2-0 in the first period. However, in the second period, the Lincolns clawed back and tied the game at two apiece.

Flash forward to the second period in Cambridge, and history continued to repeat itself.

First, it was Blake Elzinga, firing home his first goal of the series to cut the Redhawks' lead to one three minutes and 18 seconds into the second stanza. Then, exactly six minutes later, Oliver Lacko ripped a shot past Aidan Hill for a shorthanded tally to tie the game at two apiece.

"We've got to keep pushing," Bradley said, describing the feeling on the bench once it was tied 2-2. "We've got to keep pushing and doing what got us here, and that was the thing we had talked about, even going into overtime. We talked about pulling the defencemen back and going into contain mode, and I said, 'No, we got back into this because we've been going forward; let's play our game and see what happens.' I don't think it cost us, but I didn't think sitting back was a good idea."

Much like two years ago, the game was tied at two apiece heading into the third, and the two sides trading goals in quick succession resulted in the game heading into overtime tied at three apiece. However, this year, it was far more dramatic.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 23

Resilient, gutsy Lincolns fall to Redhawks in Sutherland Cup Final



(MCGINNY PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

Callum McAuley leaps against the glass in celebration after scoring a heroic, game-tying goal in Game 5 of the Sutherland Cup Final May 2 against the Cambridge Redhawks with 18.3 seconds left in the third period.



(MCGINNY PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

Jacob Montesi helps goaltender Colby Booth-Housego prevent a goal during Game 5 of the Sutherland Cup Final between the St. Marys Lincolns and Cambridge Redhawks.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

The back-and-forth third period was scoreless until, with just one minute and 15 seconds left, Cameron Fries buried a go-ahead goal that was seemingly poised to turn him into a Cambridge hero.

The Lincolns were on the precipice of the end. Just 75 seconds separated the Lincolns from elimination.

But if you've followed these Lincolns, you know one thing – if there is time left, no matter how little, they have a chance.

A frenetic closing sequence of the third commenced, and a successful clear out of their zone appeared to all but seal it for Cambridge. They were going to win 3-2. They were going to win in regulation. They were going to be champions.

That was, until, with 18.3 left on the clock, Callum McAuley scored his first goal of the finals, tying the game at 3-3 and ultimately sending the game into overtime.

"It's funny because we were in their

end, and then when it finally got cleared out, I thought it was over," Bradley said. "And then when we got back in the zone, I saw (Callum) McAuley creeping around the net, and then (Devun) Colebrook kicked it over there again. You're trying to never be surprised by this group, but they did it again. They just did it again."

Unfortunately for the Lincolns, they ran out of miracles in the extra frame, with Kyler Morgan batting a bouncing puck past Colby Booth-Housego, who was spectacular in the Lincolns' net since returning to the crease midway through the Western Conference Final, to give Cambridge the 4-3 win and the Sutherland Cup.

Bradley encapsulated the mixed feelings many Lincolns' fans felt in the aftermath of such an incredible season and playoff run ending in such a bitter-tasting defeat.

"Honestly, it was a great run. I think winning the conference the way we won

the conference this year, and how difficult the conference was, it somewhat feels like we've accomplished something, and I've accomplished something I've never accomplished before. But realistic, Jeff tells me it's just a conference championship, and it's not the Sutherland Cup. We don't get a ring for it.

"It was special for sure," Bradley continued. "We made some amazing memories and had some amazing experiences that I've never experienced before. I'm getting choked up thinking about it, to be honest with you. It felt like it was more special than the rest, but we didn't achieve our main goal, unfortunately. Winning against Stratford was probably the highest high I've felt, and losing in Game 5 was probably the lowest low I've felt."

But why was this such a bitter pill for Lincolns' fans to swallow? Remember, it's not like the Lincolns made it this far and then flamed out in catastrophic fash-

ion. Every game was tight. Every game could have gone either way with one or two bounces. Every game was played on a razor's edge. The Lincolns themselves played some incredible hockey.

No, it wasn't as heartbreaking as it was because they let us down. Strangely, it was as heartbreaking as it was because they did just the opposite. They did everything they possibly could, played as gutsy a series as they could muster and showed more resilience than any team could ever dream of.

They made an entire town believe. They proved they were worth believing in. They were the team worth playing in the town worth living in.

Plain and simply, these Lincolns just didn't know how to quit. They couldn't help but make St. Marys proud of their never-say-die resilience. Giving up wasn't in their DNA. They did not go quietly into that good night.



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DCVI juniors, seniors compete at WOSSAA badminton

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Members of the senior and junior badminton teams at St. Marys DCVI qualified competed at WOSSAA, with the seniors' competition taking place on April 23 and the juniors playing April 28.

Donovan McGregor and Charlotte Richardson, playing as a mixed doubles team, represented DCVI at the seniors' championship and showed resilience, composure and grit in their hard-fought three matches. They posted a record of one win and two losses. Marin Chateauvert also qualified for WOSSAA but was unable to attend the event.

According to seniors' coach Graham Rae, their record didn't reflect how hard-fought their games were.

"They lost their first game, won their second game and lost their third game,

but both of their losses were really close games," Rae said. "They were really tight. Their second game, Donovan (McGregor) felt it was the best game he's ever played. He felt like he was hitting great shots and they won quite handily, so that was a big positive for them."

Rae added McGregor and Richardson have turned into an incredible duo on the court.

"It's fantastic to see them compete at WOSSAA," Rae said. "They have such good chemistry together. The two of them both play well as a team. They both feed off each other really well, so seeing them get there and being so competitive in Huron-Perth to qualify for WOSSAA was great to see."

"I think they're both really comfortable with each other. They played in juniors together as well, so having the history of playing together is a huge part of it.

They're also both just extremely nice and good people. They support each other, they help each other, they communicate well with each other and they're both good players, and all of that makes them so good together."

DCVI then had four students turn in strong efforts at the juniors' event, with coach Chris Marcou very happy with his group's results.

"It was great to have four players qualify for WOSSAA, and it was even better to see all of them play well," Marcou told the Independent. "Getting a win at WOSSAA is quite an accomplishment, and all four of our junior players were able to get wins."

Joey Binning and Lauren Pfaff teamed up in the girls' doubles division and finished in the top 10. Evan Wolfkamp played his best badminton of the year, winning a match and pushing the even-

tual champion in a close contest to also finish in the top 10. In the girls' singles bracket, Lena Thomson played outstanding badminton, winning three matches on her way to a fifth-place finish.

Marcou described each of the junior competitors' skills that led them to their strong WOSSAA results.

"In the doubles play, Lauren (Pfaff) and Joey (Binning) both have great power and are very good at picking their spots to put the birdie away. And on the singles side, Lena (Thompson) and Evan (Wolfkamp) do a great job of dictating play and moving their opponent around the court.

"They have all improved their court awareness and positioning," Marcou continued. "They have also all improved at hitting the birdie down with power and putting it in great locations. Overall, our WOSSAA results were a great way to cap off a fantastic season."

DCVI senior girls scores first victory of soccer season

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI senior girls soccer team picked up their first win of the Huron-Perth season April 28, defeating Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) 2-0.

According to coach Richard Farmer, the victory came as the Salukis showed improvement in their positional play.

"This was our fourth game, and the girls are starting to move the ball around better and play better positionally," said Farmer. "In the first two games of the season, they had trouble staying in their positions, and I was still learning where their best positions were. Charlotte (Richardson) and Marin (Chateauvert) are remarkably strong soccer players, and SDSS allowed those two to control the tempo of the game. It is fitting that they each scored in the win."

As noted, Charlotte Richardson and Marin Chateauvert scored for the Salukis, who, along with the squad's centre backs, Adrianna Hollestelle-Black and Bronwyn

Hawkins, were standouts in the game.

"Charlotte (Richardson) and Marin (Chateauvert) are incredible players and work really well together," Farmer said. "They are the X-factor for this team. However, I have to single out my centre back pairing of Adriana (Hollestelle-Black) and Bronwyn (Hawkins) as they helped shut down any offensive threats and helped us towards two clean sheets."

Farmer further detailed the improvement he saw from their first day, which saw the Salukis drop back-to-back games against F.E. Madill and Goderich, to their second day, when they played Central Huron to a scoreless draw before shutting out SDSS.

"The big focus for me was and still is positioning," Farmer said. "When on the ball, the girls are trying to do too much. I have been working on a stronger passing game. It's a process, but they showed much improvement on the second day, earning a tie against Central Huron and a win against SDSS. That win has given them hope. We are hoping for a top-four finish and WOSSAA berth, and this win kept that possibility alive."

DCVI senior boys soccer team win in soccer season opener

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys DCVI senior boys soccer team won their first game of the season April 21 with a 2-1 victory over F.E. Madill.

Coach Richard Farmer credited the group for withstanding a late, game-tying goal and finding a last-second winner.

"We were up 1-0 for a long stretch of the game, but gave up a goal late," said Farmer. "What impressed me was that the boys continued to fight and never gave up. It was the last kick of the game that gave us the win. Hunter (Pickel) scored off a loose ball from a corner kick. It was a great goal. The ref blew the whistle right after. Since Madill is a single-A team, this was a big one for us."

Miles Clinton scored the first goal of the game for

St. Marys before Hunter Pickel's heroic game-winner. Farmer also cited the presence of one of the team's key veterans as helping propel the Salukis to victory.

"Luke Binning has really impressed me with his leadership on the field and his never-give-up attitude," Farmer said. "That has been apparent in all of the games so far."

Farmer added the win was more impressive due to the team facing adversity in their lack of outdoor practice time prior to the start of the season.

"It was tough because we hadn't been on a proper field before the first game," said Farmer. "In fact, we had only been outside twice coming into the game. I wanted the boys to understand their positions and play the 4-3-3 formation. We have a bunch of boys who play on different club teams and some boys who don't play at all, so this was a big ask."



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1975-76 Lincs celebrate title with 50th anniversary luncheon



(PAT PAYTON PHOTO)

Tom Bailey, left, Glenn Coghlin and Brian Dundas reminisce about old times during the 1975-76 Lincolns' 50th anniversary luncheon at Gilly's restaurant. In front is centre Bob Summers. The team held the reunion 50 years to the day (April 27, 1976) they won the Sutherland Cup title in Collingwood.



(PAT PAYTON PHOTO)

1975-76 Lincs' captain Paul Vanderspank, left, and linemate Brian Dundas announce that the former All-Ontario champs will again hold a team reunion on the same date (April 27) next year. In front is Rick Bradford, who served on the executive that season. The 1975-76 Lincolns won all five of their playoff series on the road that memorable season.



(PAT PAYTON PHOTO)

Members of the 1975-76 St. Marys Lincolns posed for a group photo at the team's 50th anniversary luncheon Monday, April 27 at Gilly's. From left, front row: Bob Summers, Rick Bradford, club president Gerry Teahen, captain Paul Vanderspank, GM Mike Brogden, Roy Ready and Bob Binning. Middle row: Brian Lindsay, Perry Stover, Bob Marr, Terry Warboys, trainer Doug Thirkettle, Gerry Seguin and Brian Dundas. Back row: Dennis Thorpe, Alan Gates, Gord Yuill, Dave Rowse, Dave Stacey, Glenn Coghlin and Tom Bailey.



(PAT PAYTON PHOTO)

The 1975-76 St. Marys Lincolns captured the Sutherland Cup on April 27, 1976 in Collingwood, defeating the Blues four games to two, with one game tied. The team held a 50th anniversary luncheon at Gilly's restaurant last Monday -- 50 years to the day they won the provincial title. Almost every player returned for the reunion. The '75-76 Lincs were coached by the late Barry Hearn.

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St. Marys Storm grateful for incredible community support this season

JENSEN DUNDAS

Contributed Article

The St. Marys Storm Senior C women's hockey team would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the amazing local businesses and community members who supported us throughout this past season. We are incredibly fortunate to receive generous sponsorship from a number of local businesses, helping to offset team fees and fund the purchase of new jerseys.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the following sponsors for their support this season:

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- The Dundas Team Re/Max A-B Realty Ltd.

Your support means more than just financial assistance – it helps keep women's hockey strong and accessible in our community and allows us to continue doing what we love while representing St. Marys with pride.

From all of us on the Storm, thank you for being part of our team and for helping make our season a success. We are proud to be part of such a generous and supportive community.

If you're a woman aged 18 or older and thinking about continuing your hockey journey after minor hockey, we'd love to hear from you! You can find us on Instagram (@stmarysstorm-hockey) or Facebook (St. Marys Storm Senior C Women's Hockey Team), email us at stmstorm-wht@gmail.com, or text Jensen at 519-301-1794 to learn more about joining our team.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

St. Marys Storm Senior C women's hockey team thanks the community and its local sponsors for a successful season.

Brockman places fifth at provincial bowling tourney



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Rory Brockman, pictured, captured fifth place in Ontario on May 2 when she competed at the Mid-Winter Blues Teen Tour provincial round in Oshawa. Brockman bowled 166 points over her average over five games and placed fifth in the province.



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Thank you to the following local businesses and organizations for your support to St. Marys Basketball:

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MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Owen Barker blasts the puck towards the net during a Tremblett's Independent Grocer U11 LL Boys Red St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Dean Feeny unleashes a snap shot during a St. Marys Building Centre U12 A Boys St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Jessica Zwambag rips a wrist shot on target during a Cascades U13 BB Girls St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Abby Russell releases a shot off the rush during a Hubbard Pharmacy U18 B Girls St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Elizabeth Robinson stares down an incoming shot during a Synterra FUN3 St. Marys Snipers (Vergeer) game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Abilene Votary skates the ring towards the net during a Cascades-St. Marys Kinsmen U14 R St. Marys Snipers game.

Spring arrives early in B.C.'s Fraser Valley

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

While farmers in southern Ontario are still waiting for consistent warm weather, spring is already in full swing in British Columbia's Fraser River Valley.

Photos taken in early May show fields well underway, with many dairy farmers already cutting and harvesting their first crop of hay. With family in the region, a spring visit offers a glimpse into a growing season that is several weeks ahead of what is typical in Ontario.

The Fraser Valley experienced no snow this past winter, though rainfall was plentiful. As a result, flowers and shrubs were in full bloom by early May – a sight Ontario residents can expect later in the season.

Once the first cut of hay is complete, farmers begin spreading both liquid and dry manure before moving on to corn planting, much of it destined for silage and sweet corn production, often grown under plastic.

Haylage in the region is made up primarily of rye grasses, and thanks to consistent moisture, up to five cuttings per season are common in areas such as Chilliwack and Abbotsford, where fertile farmland is framed by surrounding mountains.

Farmers in the area report land prices ranging between \$70,000 and \$80,000 per acre.

The Fraser Valley supplies much of British Columbia with milk and dairy products, as well as eggs and broiler chickens. Unlike Perth, Waterloo and Oxford counties, however, hog production is limited. Instead, the region is home to a large number of berry farms producing raspberries, blueberries and strawberries, earning it a reputation as Canada's berry capital.

Located about 30 minutes north of the U.S. border, the region shares agricultural similarities with neighbouring Washington state. Travelling along the border highway, farmland stretches on both sides, with border patrols a visible presence along the route.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

A dairy farmer near Chilliwack harvests hay in warm, sunny conditions for a herd of approximately 800 milking cows. Dairy operations in British Columbia tend to be larger than those in central Canada but operate under the same supply management system.

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COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: The summer-camp paradox – why waiting was my best (and worst) idea

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

The school year is currently staring us down from the finish line which, in “parent language,” means one thing: The Hunger Games of summer scheduling has begun.

Usually, I am a “February professional.” When the local registration portals open in the dead of winter, I am there at 6:59 a.m., finger hovering over the mouse ready to click “Book” before the coffee even hits my system. But this year, I went rogue.

Maybe it was the winter. This past winter wasn’t just a season; it was a decade-long saga of shovelling and ice-scraping. My brain is currently 40 per-cent slush and 60 per-cent vitamin D deficiency. In my frozen state, I decided to give myself “time to search for options.” In retrospect, this was both irrational and irresponsible, but I wanted a summer that didn’t feel like “School: The Sequel.”

My search led me to the world of overnight camps. Alex and his friend have officially entered the “Let’s go away for a week” phase of childhood. It turns out, there is a very interesting economic phenomenon occurring in the Ontario wilderness.

I found several camps where the weekly tuition is higher than the cost of flying to Mexico for seven days. I did the math. For the price of one week in a wooden cabin with a roommate named “Larry the Leech,” I could be at an all-inclusive in Cancun with a towel folded like a swan on my bed. At camp, “all-inclusive” means unlimited bug juice and a communal shower. In Mexico, it means a swim-up taco bar.

Even looking at local day camps, there’s the logistical puzzle of the “half day.”



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Navigating the chaos of summer planning with a mix of local pride, entrepreneurial kids and the hope of a very special family reunion on the horizon.

I don’t mind a half-day camp here and there, but without a round-trip bus option, a three-hour camp turns the parent into a full-time chauffeur. Unless you want to buy a second car just for the months of July and August, the “bus option” is the unsung hero of summer. A round-trip bus isn’t just transportation, it’s a mental-health service for parents.

In my ideal summer world, we would also have official swimming lessons at the St. Marys Quarry. While that remains a dream rather than a reality, the Quarry still serves as our local “character-building” centre. There is something fundamentally Canadian about jumping into that beautiful, freezing water. It’s a rite of passage. If you can survive a plunge in the Quarry on a breezy July morning without turning blue, you are officially prepared for a Canadian winter. It’s not

a formal lesson, but it’s certainly a trial by ice.

Beyond the camps and the commutes, there is a bigger hope on the horizon. The Canadian government has been discussing a plan to grant tourist, visa-free access for Ukrainians. While it isn’t set in stone yet, we are keeping our fingers crossed.

If this goes through, it would be the ultimate summer upgrade. It would mean Ukrainian grandparents could finally come visit their children and grandkids in Canada. No fancy overnight camp can compete with “Grandparent Camp” – the one where the schedule is dictated by stories, homecooked meals and the kind of love that doesn’t require a registration fee.

To fund these dreams, Alex is considering bringing back his lemonade stand.

At \$1 a cup, he needs to serve roughly 1,500 thirsty neighbors to cover the cost of a high-end Muskoka retreat. If you see us on the sidewalk, please buy a glass.

Thankfully, Plan A for his development is already locked in. It is a true privilege for St. Marys to host the Eddie McKenna Training Academy for a week of soccer camp this July. Having a coach of that calibre directly on our home turf means Alex gets world-class training without the Highway 7 commute.

We are also gearing up for the upcoming tennis season, and there is a collective sigh of relief among parents to see Ira returning to the courts. Our wonderful Ukrainian coach did such an incredible job with the kids last year; she has a way of making a complex sport feel like a game while actually teaching them the discipline of a proper backhand.

For Alex and his friends, having that continuity is huge. It’s another example of how the “St. Marys Summer” is anchored by people who truly care about the kids’ growth, and it’s one more reason why my late-start planning actually feels like it’s landing exactly where it needs to be.

In the end, my delay in booking actually led us to the right place. We’re aiming for a season that feels special – a mix of high-level soccer, icy Quarry plunges and, hopefully, a very special family reunion.

I may have missed the February rush, but I think we’ve found the perfect balance because while a Mexican beach sounds lovely, watching your kid nail a perfect top-corner shot or hug a grandparent they haven’t seen in years is so much more rewarding.

That’s a summer you can’t put a price tag on.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

The 2025 Friends of the Library Spring Book Sale is in full swing! Head to the Lind Sportplex (the Quarry) between now and Saturday to browse an extensive collection of used books, CDs, DVDs, and more, all available by donation. From current bestsellers to hidden gems from yesteryear, you never know what you’ll find. And the best part? Every dollar directly supports Library services, programs, and equipment. Bravo to all the FOL volunteers for their hard work in always making these twice-annual book sales such huge successes.

UP THIS WEEK

- Fri., May 8: FOL Book Sale^ (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)
 - Sat., May 9: FOL Book Sale^ (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), Drop-In Mother’s Day Craft (10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.)
 - Mon., May 11: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
 - Tues., May 12: Write of Way (6:30 p.m.)
 - Wed., May 13: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong~ (1-4 p.m.), FOL Social (6:30-8 p.m.)
 - Thurs., May 14: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- ^Held at the Lind Sportplex (the Quarry) – 425 Water St. S.
~Held at the Friendship Centre, Meeting Room A – 317 James St. S.

Ask the Arborist

By Joel Hackett • 519.272.5742 • jtsquote@gmail.com

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



Dear Arborist,

I have a raccoon, not just one raccoon, a whole family of raccoons living in my tree. They go up, they go down, they go in, they go out. They are making a giant mess, and I think they are killing my tree.

It has hollows everywhere, and it is dying at the very top. Sometimes there are dead, broken branches at the bottom. I am almost certain the raccoon is throwing them down.

Also, inside the hollows, there is fur all over.

What do I do?

Thanks, Amos

Dear Amos,

That sounds very frustrating. I also had a family of raccoons living in my barn; thankfully, I managed to persuade them to find better accommodations.

Once the raccoon family moves on, you can fill the hollows with spray foam, then cover the hollows with a hard resin, adding a wire mesh tacked to the tree as a final measure.

If, after addressing the tree situation, the raccoons are still an issue, a live trap is recommended to rehome the animals. However, if the tree is dying at the tips and full of hollows, it might be a good idea to have it assessed for safety. It sounds like your tree may be at risk of falling with that many hollows.

Sincerely, The Arborist

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Farm Work Force – We Lend A Hand

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

In the early years of World War II, the European continent was overrun by Hitler's army, and Britain was in a desperate battle for survival. Under attack both by sea and by air, the nation was facing severe food shortages and turned to its allies for help. In Canada, farmers were urged to step up production. Canada's own armed forces had to be fed, of course, but even more supplies were needed to relieve the critical food shortages faced by the British people. Throughout the years of the war, the federal and provincial governments developed strategies to encourage civilians to help with farm work if they were able – to lend a hand!

The government-sponsored advertisement shown with this week's column, appeared in the St. Marys Journal Argus on May 13, 1943. The message is from unseen servicemen who urge, "Get out on the Farm! We Can't Fight If We Don't Eat!" The main illustration shows a young man and woman in work clothes striding forward, the man with a pitchfork, the woman with a basket filled with apples. Another line of text states, "Ontario Farmers Need Your Help to Produce Food for Victory!" Three small blocks of illustrations on the side show the farm tasks that these young people might do – pick fruit, load hay, feed poultry. A further important message is delivered in small type, "Young men and young women from Ontario high schools and collegiates are making one of the greatest contributions of all to the Allied War Effort by serving as Farm Cadets and Farmerettes." The aim was to recruit more students for farm work. It stressed the need for food but also stated that a summer spent working on a farm "will do your health a world of good and extend your knowledge." It explained where to write for full information about "housing, supervision, rates of pay, hours of work, etc."

The badge for Farm Service Force workers is in the bottom right corner of the advertisement. It has the Ontario coat of arms in the centre above the motto, "We Lend A Hand." Every member of the Farm Service Force was given this circular badge to sew on their "uniform," usually only regular working overalls. When they were sent as strangers to a farming community, the badge helped identify them as newcomers who might, at first, need a helping hand themselves. As well as Farm Cadets and Farmerettes, the Ontario Farm Service Force had three "brigades" for adults. The Farm Commando Brigade was for men and women from cities and towns who could offer evenings or weekends to help local farmers. The Holiday Service Brigade was for those who could spend their summer holidays working on a farm. Women age 20 and older could join the Women's Land Brigade to work on poultry, dairy, or mixed farms for six-month periods.

These adult brigades were not as fully enrolled as the Farm Cadet and Farmerette programs. Many adults made their own arrangements with relatives on farms to lend a hand during the busy haying and harvesting seasons. In the St. Marys area, the need for extra farm help was just as critical as elsewhere. However, area farmers had a local solution. With the approval of township councils, an organization, the Save-the-Crop Club, was formed. L. P. Whaley was the secretary, working to register farmers who needed help while town folk registered their availability. The Save-the-Crop Club coordinated the placements. At a meeting of St. Marys town council in early May 1943, councillors discussed supporting the Save-the-Crop Club in the upcoming year. Mayor David White stated, "A lot of good work was done (in the previous year) not only by those who had registered under the Save-the-Crop Club but also by many who went off in the evenings and stooked for the farmers." The mayor also praised



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS MUSEUM'S COLLECTION OF HISTORIC IMAGES, R. LORNE EEDY ARCHIVES)

This government sponsored advertisement appeared in the St. Marys Journal Argus in May 1943. It urged young people to get out to Ontario farms to help with food production during World War II.

the teenage girls who had picked berries and fruit in local orchards. Council agreed to continue support in 1943.

An added incentive to join Farm Cadets and Farmerettes was a chance to get out of classes a few weeks before the end of the school year in June. Students with good academic standing who agreed to work on a farm in one of these programs were exempted from writing their final exams. Some boys and girls from the St. Marys Collegiate may have joined government-sponsored programs but there were also local options. Many schoolgirls found work after school and during holidays at Maxwells Limited, the foundry on James Street South. Maxwells had been awarded Department of Defence contracts to manufacture hand grenades. With many of their male workers in the armed forces, Maxwells employed women and girls on the production lines until the end of the war. Young boys, still too young to enlist, who wanted to work on farms would have had little trouble finding an area farmer to employ them. Or they could work for other local businesses, such as retail or construction.


These young helpers from St. Marys would have gone home and slept in their own beds at night. The Farm Cadets were usually billeted at the farms where they were assigned to work for the summer. The Farmerettes, however, were taken in groups by bus to central locations called camps. There were several camps in the Niagara and Thedford areas, two parts of the province where there was a great need for workers to grow and harvest seasonal produce. The Farmerettes lived communally, sleeping in temporary dormitories in barns, shed, tents and Quonset huts. They ate breakfast and supper together and made their own

lunches to take to work. The girls were paid 25¢ cents an hour and paid \$4.50 weekly for their food and accommodation.

Although the work was exhausting and often tedious, the Farmerettes did have fun. Sometimes there were scheduled activities, such as dances. They had campfires, singsongs, and games. There were occasional trips on a day off to the beach or to a nearby city, although that could be expensive. They also enjoyed the company of new friends. Above all, there was the satisfaction of knowing that they were performing vital wartime work to help Canada and her Allies win the war.

Among the 40,000 young women who were members of the Ontario Farm Service Force, there was one with a strong St. Marys connection. In the June 12, 2025 issue, Peter Rice, well-known in this area for his amazing stained-glass sculptures, wrote a beautiful tribute to his mother for the St. Marys Independent. Adelaide "Dale" Rice had died, age 100, just a few weeks previously. Dale had spent two summers during World War II, as a Farmerette, working on farms in Fenwick, near St. Catharines. In 1999, when she was 75, she wrote an account of her experiences there. Her reminiscences were among the stories used by Bonnie Sitter for the documentary film about the Farmerettes, We Lend A Hand.

Peter Rice's heart-felt article was one factor in the St. Marys Museum's decision to bring this film to St. Marys. Another motivation was to honour these remarkable young women and their contributions to our country at a perilous time in our history. Generous local and area sponsors have supported the Museum's project. There will be a screening for students at the Pyramid Centre in the afternoon, Thursday, May 21. Then the film will be shown to the general public on Thursday evening, at 7 p.m. Tickets for the evening screening, at \$20, must be purchased in advance and a few are still available at the St. Marys Museum, the Hitching Post and the Friendship Centre. Peter Rice has seen the film at least four times. He will be there to see it again on May 21. And you should be there too!



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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Great art in Paris – not in the Louvre



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

There is no question that the Louvre in Paris, France, is one of the world's greatest repositories of art. This iconic destination has managed to get into the news a couple of times in recent months, more for the art pieces they were losing than for the art they have.

I have visited the Louvre and done the ridiculous tourist jog past hundreds of pieces of priceless art to gaze over the heads of hundreds of other tourists, all gawping at a small painting called the Mona Lisa. So, this time in Paris, though we strolled around the grounds of the Louvre, we gave the interior a miss, and opted to visit two other art galleries also situated along the Seine River.

We were not sorry in the least that we made that choice.

Our initial stop on our very first afternoon in Paris was the Musée d'Orsay. The museum holds the largest collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art anywhere in the world – and yes, much more than in the Louvre.

If you don't happen to be an art expert, here's a quick Knowles' note. Impressionism was an art movement that began in Paris in the late 1800s and continued for several decades. Key figures included Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro and Paul Cézanne. Post-Impressionism was an ar-

tistic movement in direct and almost immediate response to Impressionism. It too had its roots in France and included such well-known artists as Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin.

While the Impressionists painted natural scenes with a whimsical, misty perspective, the Post-Impressionists moved slightly more toward the abstract, in my less-than-expert opinion. Let's be clear about that.

There is a Canadian connection here in that the members of the Group of Seven were profoundly influenced by both these movements.

So, the work of these famous artists, most but not all French, was what we wanted to see when we entered the elegant former railway station that is now the Musée d'Orsay. Our wishes were granted, one hundred-fold.

If you love art, or you simply want to experience great art to see if you like it, this is the place to be.

We strolled through the galleries, replete with works by all the artists mentioned above, and many, many more.

And not only did we see paintings by these talented creators, but we also saw many of their very best pieces like "Water Lily Pond" and "Blue Water Lilies" by Claude Monet, and "Dance at the Moulin de la Galette" by Renoir.

The museum is a relatively new attraction in Paris, considering the millennia-long history of this "City of Light." Conversion from its original purpose as a railway station to an outstanding art gallery was completed only by 1986, when the works of art (2,000 or so paintings and about 600 sculptures) were installed.

Today there are over 3,000 works at the museum, and they are seen by more than three

million visitors each year. That sounds like a lot, but the Louvre sees three times that many and has instigated higher pricing and other measures to actually discourage visitors!

The Musée d'Orsay is located on the Left Bank of the Seine, about a 15-minute walk from the Louvre, which is on the Right Bank. It's a lovely stroll, as it is to the Orangerie, also on the Right Bank but only a 10-minute walk from the Musée d'Orsay.

The Orangerie is also home to significant Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, and other important pieces as well. The building itself (like the Musée d'Orsay) was never intended to be an art gallery – it was built in 1852 by Napoleon III as winter storage for the citrus trees that were placed in the Tuileries Gardens in the warmer months, thus the name "Orangerie."

The gardens, by the way, stretch from the Orangerie to the grounds of the Louvre – in my opinion, one of the most pleasant walks anywhere.

Horticulture gave way to art in 1921 when the Orangerie was designated as a place where then-living artists could display their work. The good news is Claude Monet was very much alive and productive at that time and, in the end, two amazing, oval rooms were created to house Monet's extensive murals known as "Nymphéas" or, yet again, "Water Lilies."

Visiting those rooms is a unique experience, even for the most veteran art connoisseur. You are literally surrounded by the art, drawn into the tranquility of Monet's water gardens.

In 1966, the era represented by the Orangerie collection was expanded by several decades, as the Jean Walter and Paul Guillaume Collection of modern art was donated to the museum and



The exterior of the Musée d'Orsay with its unique rhinoceros sculpture by Henri Alfred Jacquemart.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

"Water Lily Pond," one of several great paintings by Claude Monet in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

is now displayed on the lower floor. That gives visitors the opportunity to get up close and personal with paintings by famous artists like Pablo Picasso and Chaïm Soutine. Full disclosure; Soutine's rather tortured "Portrait of a Man" has become one of my favourite pieces of art. I don't know what this says about my personal taste.

There is no question; Paris is the place to go to see great art,

but if works by Monet or Van Gogh are your favourites, skip the Louvre and spend your time at these other two amazing galleries.

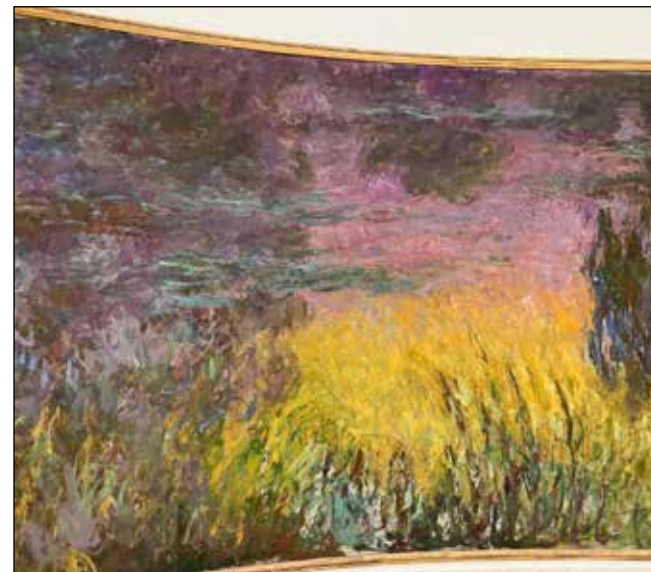
Paul Knowles is an author and travel writer, and past president of the Travel Media Association of Canada. To contact Paul about travel, his books, or speaking engagements, email pknowles@golden.net.



Renoir's iconic "Dance at the Moulin de la Galette."



Pablo Picasso's "Femme au tambourin" at the Orangerie.



A detail from one of the rooms of Water Lilies at the Orangerie.

EAT AT OUR HOUSE: Mother's Day



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

Mother's Day often focuses on fresh and light springtime flavours that offer the simplistic elegance we associate with these precious life-bearers.

Whether a brunch, afternoon tea or supper, there are plethora ideas that can compliment the uniqueness of your own celebration. Set your table with fresh flowers and create some of the following eclectic dishes to pamper Mom.

Italian chopped salad with grilled garlic baguettes

Serves: 4; Prep: 30 minutes; Cook 10 minutes; Total : 30 minutes

Easy and super flavourful, this makes for a lovely dinner, snack or party appetizer.

Garlic bread ingredients:

- 2 small baguettes
- 4-6 cloves garlic bread
- 6 tbsp olive oil

Chopped salad ingredients:

- 1/2 head iceberg lettuce

- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 oz salami of choice, chopped
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup sliced radicchio
- 1/2 cup mild banana peppers
- 1/4 cup chopped roasted red peppers
- 4 oz fresh mozzarella pearls
- 2 oz smoked provolone cheese, diced

Zesty vinaigrette ingredients:

- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp honey
- 1/2 dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp fresh ground pepper
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Method:

* Note: You can use roasted garlic or confit garlic for this recipe.

• Mash the garlic into olive oil with a fork; you can make this step more posh by adding dried or fresh herbs.

• Combine lettuce, onion, chickpeas, salami, tomatoes, radicchio, peppers and cheese to a large bowl.

• In a measuring cup, whisk all dressing ingredients except olive oil. Stream in olive oil while mixing until emulsified.

• Drizzle 1-2 tbsp of dressing

over salad and toss well. Refrigerate 15-20 minutes or use right away.

• Heat grill to highest setting. Using a kitchen brush, spread the garlic oil over sliced baguettes. Once grill is hot, place baguette cut side down on grill for 2-3 minutes until toasted and golden brown.

• I like to cut my baguettes into individual pieces, then serve marinated salad on warm garlic bread. Add more dressing. You could also add mom's favourite olives to this and complete with freshly grated parmesan and some fresh basil leaves for added touch.

Queen (king) crab appetizers

Prep: 10 minutes; Cook: 20 minutes; Serves: 12

Ingredients:

- 2 packages biscuit dough
- 1 package cream cheese, softened
- 1 can crab meat, drained
- 2 tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 tbsp thinly sliced green onion
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp pink paprika

Method:

• Heat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease 12 tartlet pans.

• Divide rolls in half and press into prepared tartlet pans.

• In a large bowl, combine cream cheese, crab, mayonnaise, parmesan and cheddar cheese, Worcestershire sauce and green onions.

• Spoon 1 tsp into tarts and garnish with paprika

Dubai chocolate brownies

Prep: 15 minutes; Total: 1 hour; Serves: 16

These have been the dessert craze of the year. Why not treat your fashionable mom to the most exotic sweet treat? Kataifi is a pastry that looks like vermicelli but with the texture of phyllo dough. Commonly used in Middle Eastern countries, it typically comes frozen in nests. It can be ordered off Amazon. These will keep airtight in the fridge for up to five days.

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 1 box brownie mix, I use Ghirardelli, plus ingredients called for on the box
- 6 tbsp unsalted butter
- 10 oz kataifi, chopped into 1/2-inch pieces (about 5 cups)
- 3 tbsp tahini
- 1 and a 1/2 cups pistachio cream, from 2 jars
- 2 cups milk chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

Method:

• Arrange rack in the centre of oven; preheat to 325°F. Spray a 9x9-inch baking dish with cooking spray, then line with parch-

ment, leaving an overhang on two sides.

• In a large bowl, prepare brownie mix according to instructions and transfer to prepared baking dish; smooth.

• Bake brownies until toothpick inserted in middle comes out with a few crumbs, 35-40 minutes. Let cool.

• In a large skillet over medium-low heat, melt butter. Add kataifi and cook, stirring often and reducing heat to medium-low if kataifi darkens too quickly, until deep golden colour, 15-18 minutes. Remove from heat.

• Fold in tahini and 1 1/2 cups plus 2 tbsp pistachio cream. Let cool while brownies are baking and cooling. Spread kataifi mixture over cooled brownies.

• Place chocolate in a medium, heat-proof bowl. In a medium pot over medium heat, heat cream until it begins to gently bubble around edges of pan, pour over chocolate, let sit 2 minutes, then whisk until melted and smooth.

• Pour ganache over kataifi mixture. Using a spoon, drizzle remaining pistachio cream over ganache. Using a toothpick, create swirls throughout, trying not to disturb kataifi mixture. Sprinkle with pistachios.

• Using parchment paper overhang, lift out brownies and transfer to a cutting board. Cut into squares.

Happy Mother's Day!

RURAL REFRESH: Cortisol and clutter; spring clean for mental wellbeing



JACLYN TURPIN

Independent Columnist

Spring is here, summer is on route and garage sales are around the corner. What better time to declutter, donate and improve our mental health!

It is no surprise our environment can impact our mental health, but there seems to be more focus on this topic in recent research and publications, which makes a lot of sense, living in a consumer driven society, where everywhere we turn we are met with sales, new styles and increasingly convenient ways of acquiring stuff (think credit cards and delivery

services).

I live rurally, where pizza was only ever delivered with a ridiculous fee, and now multiple times a day, delivery services are driving around with all kinds of packages. Our accumulation of stuff is so easily at our fingertips and the accompanying overwhelm and increased cortisol can happen quickly.

Minimizing the clutter in our lives allows us to very practically reduce stress. Of course not all of your stress will be avoided or taken away, but there is research to state that reducing the amount of "stuff" in your life can decrease experiences of stress, depression and fatigue which, as you know, can impact your sleep, eating, energy, relationships – you get it.

Though it can feel like a daunting task to get started with decluttering, it is something that almost immediately provides gratification. You go through a closet or cupboard, fill a bag or box and can immediately see the phys-

ical benefits. I'm talking clearer shelves, more storage space, easier spaces to clean, etc. Then, you take that "get rid of" pile and donate it, pass it onto a friend in need or make a couple bucks having a garage sale.

It doesn't have to be a complete overhaul. The main thing is to start. From there, your dopamine will be boosted (the "feel-good" hormone responsible for motivation and experiences of pleasure).

Here are some ways you might choose to get started.

1. Try keeping a written list with some areas in your home that you want to tackle and start checking them off (half of the joy is being able to check things off of a list). Start with a smaller, focused area: kitchen cupboards, bathroom vanity, kid's outdoor toys, baking cupboard, etc. Or heck, start with one drawer or one shelf.

2. When you receive a delivery or a new item, use the box or bag it came in and fill it up with things to go out. Or try thinking

of swaps; you bought two new sweaters, than at least two have to go.

3. Put on some music ('90s country always seems to really be a great motivator for me, but you pick your tune) with a timer for even 10 minutes and organize a spot and make a pile to go (or fill your box or bags).

4. Think of a dollar amount for the items if you plan to sell them online or at a garage sale. It's amazing what the thought of swapping out a casserole dish you never use for a loonie can do.

5. Pick a theme and start there: kitchen items, clothes, garden pots and accessories, kids dress-up clothes, etc.

I know that getting rid of "clutter" can sometimes be very difficult. We hold onto items for many reasons – grief, guilt, anxiety, security and more. Sometimes it can help to pass items along to a specific family or individuals in need. Knowing where the items are going can bring comfort.

Have lots of compassion and start slow. Try starting with items that hold less value. Keep a memory box with items that are meaningful.

Be aware of your mindset before you start, especially if you are going through the belongings of someone who you're grieving. It can be helpful to do it with someone else who knew them. They may be able to support and help make choices with you.

Decluttering can take time, mental energy and compassion. However, once we get at it, organizing and keeping our consumption and clutter down is just one of the ways our mental health may be reflected in our surroundings.

Jaclyn Turpin is a social worker and owner at Rural Refresh, a counselling agency serving St. Marys and area. She supports adults through grief and transitions and is an advocate and ally for caregivers and those who are bereaved.

Riddles

What kind of foods are the most fun at parties?
Fungi!

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

First, you throw away my outside and cook the inside.
Then you eat my outside and throw away the inside.
What am I?
Corn on the cob!

Why did the citrus tree go to the doctor?
To get lemon-aid!

What's orange and green on top and sounds like a
parrot?
A carrot!

What is a tree's favorite drink?
Root beer!

What starts with the letter "t", is filled with "t" and
ends with "t"?
A teapot!

What is the wealthiest nut?
A cash-ew!

What is a vampire's favorite fruit?
A blood orange!

What has to be broken before you can use it?
An egg!

What food has no beginning, middle, or end?
A doughnut!

- Word Search -



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HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

V Z T D M B N X N X I U V I I I Q C J G
H O C W B D I C C Z W Z I U E K K O E T
Z R G L L F F H A W Z L X D Z O F M W V
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Mother
Appreciation
Comfort
Protective
Nurture
Love
Guidance
Forgiving
Devoted
Tender
Flowers
Chocolate
Perfume
Jewelry
Hugs
Laughter



The **Riddle Kid**
OF THE WEEK

What has legs but
doesn't walk?



A table!

Jillian Davies (9)

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

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

PET OF THE WEEK



DID YOU KNOW? Puddles can sometimes carry leptospirosis (lepto)? It's a serious illness pets can pick up from contaminated water. Keep an eye out for: tiredness, vomiting, or extra thirst.

Help protect your pet: Skip standing water and stay up to date on vaccines

A quick check with your vet can make all the difference. Stay safe and keep those tails wagging!



WINNIE

Our pet of the week is Winnie. She is a Great Pyrenees/Collie Shepherd cross. Winnie is nine weeks old and lives with her Hunte family. She is a big teddy bear and very chilled. Like all puppies she loves to dig, check out the plants and play with her toys.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent



**Celebrating 20 Years
of Country Music
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SUNDAY, MAY 24TH

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1PM GATES | 2PM SHOW

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Featuring:

- Tim Woodcock and Friends
- Cheryl Lescom, Jayne Laidlaw, Jude Coyle
- Ian Andrews and Band

TICKETS \$35/PERSON

Canada Reads 2026 winner formerly from the Thorndale area

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

An author formerly from the Thorndale area is being celebrated through a national literary competition.

Canada Reads is an annual battle of the books competition organized by the CBC annually since 2002 to promote Canadian literature. Five Canadian celebrity panelists each champion a book written by a Canadian author chosen from a short list, debating their choice over the course of four days in April before a winner is chosen and their work is touted as essential reading for all Canadians.

Over the years, books of various genres have been shortlisted and debated, exposing us to interesting reads and talented Canadian authors.

The Canada Reads winner for 2026 is *The Cure for Drowning* by Loghan Paylor, brilliantly written in the vivid voices of the two protagonists, Kit and Rebekah. This novel is a powerful work of historical fiction set in

southern Ontario and spans over two decades from 1931 to 1953. Paylor's magnificent writing weaves together various themes of emotional truth, love and identity.

Paylor grew up on a hobby farm in the Thorndale area with two sisters and proud parents Reed Needles and Clare Mitchell. They attended Plover Mills Public School and high school in London. Later, Paylor went to the University of British Columbia (UBC), achieving a master's in creative writing. Paylor now resides in Abbotsford, B.C., and is an adjunct professor at UBC in creative writing.

"Canada Reads was a life-changing experience. I feel immense gratitude for this win," Paylor said. "Tegan Quin was an incredible champion, and her passion for books and reading really shone through during the discussions and debates. This is really a dream come true for me.

"Winning Canada Reads, especially in a year when the theme is building bridges, is especially meaningful to me. We're at a place right now, politically and socially,



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Author Loghan Paylor, who grew up in the Thorndale area, is pictured here debuting their 2026 Canada Reads competition winning book, *The Cure for Drowning*, in March.

where there are a lot of forces trying to divide us and keep people apart. So, knowing that my book has gotten people together and furthered understanding and empathy is just incredible."

The landscape of small village life is changing in Thorndale

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Thorndale is growing. The landscape of what was once a small village is changing, evolving with its growth with new developments to meet the needs of the community.

At the southeast corner of Nissouri Road and Middlesex County Road 28 (King Street within Thorndale), site-plan approval and building permits were issued by the Municipality of Thames Centre to the property owner for a gas bar with a convenience store and a carwash. Construction began last month.

East of that corner on the property at 105 King St., construction of a small strip mall

started last September.

"The property is zoned GC2-6, which refers to a General Commercial 2 zone with a site-specific exception that permits additional uses such as a gas bar, professional office and a drive-through facility," said Thames Centre senior planner Lindsay Nooren.

"Any business locating within the plaza must comply with the municipality's zoning bylaw, which outlines all the permitted uses (such as retail) within each zone. However, the municipality does not regulate or approve specific tenants, and as such, we are unable to confirm which individual businesses may occupy the space."



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Ongoing construction at the west end of Thorndale.

What's on at Thorndale Library in May!

MIDDLESEX COUNTY LIBRARY STAFF

Contributed Article

There's plenty to see and do at the Thorndale Library this May.

For young families

- Thorndale Storytime: (Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.) Join us for stories, songs, rhymes and fun!

- Early ON Play & Learn: (Fridays, 9-11 a.m.) Free drop-in program for families

with children zero to six years old.

- Early ON Click & Connect: (Friday May 22, 9-11 a.m.) Middlesex EarlyON offers quarterly Check & Connect drop-in clinics during regularly scheduled Play & Learn programs.

For school aged and youth

- Show & Tell: (Wednesday, May 13, 6-7 p.m.) Relive Kindergarten joy with a show and tell performance! Show us your favourite stuffed animal. Tell us a wild,

zany story that happened to you last summer. We want to see and hear you! Ages seven to 17.

- Catch the Sun! PA Day: (Friday, May 29, 12-1 p.m.) Register to create your own colourful suncatcher to hang in your window. For ages seven to 17.

Quick Picks

- Park Day-Use Vehicle Passes: Included in the collection at the Thorndale Library is the Quick Pick section with park

day-use vehicle passes for both the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority, available on a first-come, first-served basis and borrowed for a seven-day period by anyone with a valid Middlesex County library card.

For more information or to register for library programming, call 519-461-1150 or email thorndalestaff@middlesex.ca.

OBITUARY

Bannon



Tom Bannon, formerly of St. Marys, passed away at Southbridge Goderich on April 25, 2026, recently celebrating his 85th birthday and in his 48th year of sobriety.

Predeceased by his wife Pat (2019). He is survived by his children, daughter Patti-Jo (Dave), children Jake, Nick

(Emily), Mike (Stephanie), son Rob (Jane), children Travis (Julia), Clayton (Jennifer), daughter Kimberley Vey, children Rebecca, Felicia, Brandi, Travis, Aimee (Dylan), daughter Christine Kramer (Alle), children Alexis, Eric, Kalen, and great-grandchildren: Vera, Lyla, Nora, Ellie, Winnie, Rebel, Adelaide, Cole, Rain, Nash, Gracelynn, Lilly, Dean.

Tom will also be remembered by extended family members and friends. Tom worked many years at the St. Marys Cement Plant. His body has been donated to science through Western University, London, Ont. A Celebration of Life will take place at the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, 47 Wellington St. S. St. Marys, on Friday, May 8, 2026 from 2 – 4 pm. Memorial donations may be Lupus Canada.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Nesbit



Gladys (Reid) Nesbit of Seaforth, formerly of St Marys and long-time resident of Kirkton passed away peacefully at the Seaforth Community Hospital to be with her Lord and Saviour on May 1, 2026 at the age of 91.

Reunited with her beloved husband, the late David Nesbit

(August 8, 2025). Loving mother of Phyllis (Ross) Chisholm and Russell (Lori) Nesbit. Proud grandma of Jennifer, Brett (Tanya), Nicole (Simon), Rachel (Andrew), Melissa (Jacob), Scott and Evan. Special Great Grandma to Briar. Dear sister of Evelyn Bradley and sister-in-law of Alice (Robert) Moore, Mary (Ron) Buchanan, John (Ann) Nesbit and Robert (Kim) Nesbit. Predeceased by her brother Russell and sisters Marion Robb and Isla McGuire and brothers-in-law Lovell McGuire and James Bradley, John Buchanan and sister-in law Anne Buchanan. Gladys will be fondly remembered by many nieces and nephews and extended family members and friends.

Gladys was raised on Maple Lea Dairy Farm near Reid's Corners in Bruce County. Her parents, Lorne and Olive Reid instilled the values of hard work, respect, kindness and integrity that guided Gladys and her siblings throughout their lives. Gladys began her professional working career as a registered nurses assistant, working in the Wingham and St Marys Hospitals.

Later Gladys and David together would be the proud owners of Nesbit Electric where her organizational and managerial skills would ensure the smooth day to day operations of the business. Gladys was a woman of deep faith, who loved her family wholeheartedly and gave selflessly and generously of herself to others.

A special thank your to both Dr Lauren Hayward and Dr Sarah Donaldson, as well as the nursing staff at Seaforth Community and St Marys Memorial Hospital for the care and compassion shown to Gladys. A heart felt thank you to the staff and community of Maplewood Manor Seaforth for making her feel right at home during her short time there. And to the close knit community of the Church Street Apartments in St Marys, your kindness, thoughtfulness, love and care shown to Gladys is greatly appreciated and did not go unnoticed. We are forever grateful.

Family and friends are invited to the Kirkton Woodham Community Centre, 70497 Rd 164, Kirkton, on Thursday, May 7th, 2026 for visiting from noon until the time of the Funeral Service at 1 pm. Burial in Kirkton Union Cemetery. Reception to follow at the Kirkton Woodham Community Centre. Memorial donations can be made to the Seaforth Community Hospital Foundation or the St Marys Healthcare Foundation.

Online condolences at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Fulcher



Surrounded by her loving family, Betty Fulcher nee Richardson, passed away at her home, on April 29, 2026, after a long battle with cancer at the age of "39."

Born in 1938, the fourth child of what would become 10 siblings. Betty was predeceased by her parents Jim and Clara

Richardson, her husband Bob, her daughter Marie (Dami), her brothers Bill, John, Jim and Dennis, her sisters-in-laws Sarah, Ev, and Audrey. She is survived by her sons Darron (Diana) and Jeff, grandchildren Julianne, James, Zeb and Tom, greatgrandchildren Emma, Makenna and Kinley. She is also survived by brothers Dave (June), Doug (Audrey), Don (Janis), Vic (Sharon) and Danny (Judi) She is also survived by her sister-in-law Doris who has been a godsend in the past few years helping while her health was failing.

Betty was very athletic, excelling at curling and golf. She was an active member and board member of the St. Marys Golf and Country Club. Spent many a Friday evening curling in the mixed league where she met many friends that she was close with till the end. She was also well known for swinging a broom at her 9 brothers.

With her husband Bob she spent many weekends at the various team sports that her son Jeff and daughter Marie were participating in. Every winter she would spend a week or 2 in the Caribbean.

Later in life she would visit her son Darron in the country he was living in at the time. In her youth she was a promising actress in the St. Marys drama club. Later she was a Regent in the IODE a member of the Rebekah Lodge.

A Guild at the St. James Anglican Church and a business owner in St. Marys operating the Town Talk Boutique. The family of the late Betty Fulcher would like to thank Dr. and the staff at Kingsway Nursing Home for all their assistance in her care. A special thank you to Andrew Hodges for his professionalism and service. Above all we would like to thank Doris Richardson for being the best angel sent to guide us through this.

The Memorial Service took place at St. James Anglican Church in St. Marys on May 3, 2026. Interment in St. Marys Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

THANK YOU

Aitken

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks for the outpouring of support received following the passing of our son, and brother, Matthew.

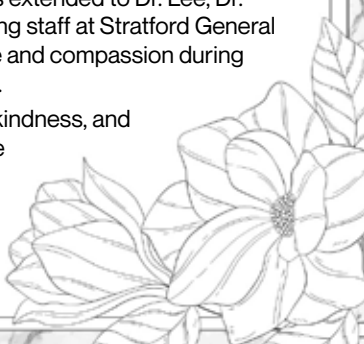
To the many friends and neighbours who have visited, brought food, sent flowers, and made donations; your acts of kindness are sincerely appreciated. The loving concern you've shown through cards of condolence, email and texts messages, or shared on the tribute wall has meant so much. We appreciated the stories and memories shared by family, friends, and community.

Hearing from Matt's friends how much they valued his kindness has been meaningful. The memorial donations made to CMHA, the St. Marys Hospital Foundation, and the Jays Care Foundation are a touching tribute that will benefit others in need.

A sincere thank you is extended to Dr. Lee, Dr. Haffner and the nursing staff at Stratford General Hospital for their care and compassion during Matthew's final hours.

Your understanding, kindness, and support will always be remembered.

Ron, Wendy and Lindsay Aitken



CELEBRATION

Hocking

A Celebration of Life for Shelly Hocking
January 20, 1966 - December 25, 2025

will be held on Saturday May 9, 2026 from 1 - 3 pm. at the St. Marys Friendship Centre, 317 James St. S., St. Marys.



Shelly Hocking, of RR #2 Tavistock, passed away peacefully on December 25, 2025 in her 60th year, at the Rotary Hospice Stratford. Shelly is survived by her husband of 40 years, Kenneth, three children, five grandchildren, one brother, two sisters-in-law. She was predeceased by her parents and a brother Doug and father and mother-in-law Gordon and Doris Hocking.

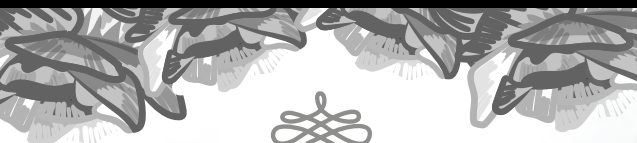
THANK YOU

Wick

Big thank you to everyone who came to our 65th anniversary party and Fred's 90th birthday.

You made our day special.

Fred & Edna Wick



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



OBITUARY

Warner



We mourn the loss of a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother Freda Mary Warner (nee Newton) after a brief illness she passed away in her sleep April 29, 2026 at Stratford General Hospital.

She is survived by her husband of 60 years Charles Alan Warner, her brother John

Newton, her daughters Dawn (Christopher), Kim (Joe), and granddaughters Kaitlyn, Alexis, Aryanna, and Abbygayle. A thank you to both Dr. Komorowski and Dr. Donaldson as well as the nurses at St. Marys Memorial and Stratford General hospitals.

Memorial donations can be made to Kingsway Life Care Foundation. The family appreciates all the love and support. Cremation will take place. As per her request there will be no funeral service.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Pollington

POLLINGTON, Dianne Frances

August 25th, 1966 – April 22nd, 2026

It is with heavy hearts we announce the peaceful passing of Dianne surrounded by the love of her family at the age of 59. She is reunited with her parents Frances and Lawrence Pollington of Pollington Farms in Thorndale.

She will be lovingly remembered by her children; Elizabeth, Jeffrey, and William, and her step-children; Angela, Nathan, and Ricky. She will also be missed by her long time friend, Deb. Deeply missed by her soul dog, Dexter as well as her cousins and extended family and friends.

Dianne will be remembered as a loving mom to her beloved children. Dianne had a plethora of interests, but she especially enjoyed tarot readings, collecting healing crystals and collective healing. She loved music, making wreaths, walking barefoot everywhere, and was a farm girl through and through.

Dianne's life will be celebrated at Faith Tabernacle Church at a later date to be announced. Online condolences and donations to the London Humane Society or Canadian Cancer Society in Dianne's honour may be made at forestlawnmemorial.ca

Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist

Lincs win All Ontario

25 years ago (2001)

The municipal budget for 2001 will be announced next week. Will St. Marys' own Paul Martin, aka Coun. Kerry Campbell, don a new pair of shoes to present the facts and figures? And will Mayor Jamie Hahn be tagged "Mr. Zero" for holding the line on a budget increase for a ninth straight year? Stay tuned!

A major crisis in the lack of medical doctors will prevail in the next five years if no new practitioners can be attracted to town, said Coun. Eugene Dufor at last week's council meeting. Coun. Marg Luna thinks the crisis is already here, citing a personal experience of having to wait six weeks for a doctor's appointment. Coun. Dufour was raising the issue in support of the construction of a Wellness Centre at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital this fall.

50 years ago (1976)

The popularity of canoeing is growing steadily along local waterways. It is not unusual to see a half dozen canoes on the creek or river during good periods of weather this not so balmy spring.

The St. Marys Lincolns All-Ontario Championship trophy is now on display in the Ray Bennett store window along with other trophies and pictures of the highly successful Junior B team.

75 years ago (1951)

Cpl. Frank Taylor of the St. Marys OPP detachment received a phone call from George Dann of the 8th Concession, Blanshard, stating that the large block of concrete from the Weir drinking fountain was lodged in his car's bumper and he had driven it to his farm unnoticed. Police say a number of youths had apparently loaded the car with the heavy block while the car was parked near the intersection of Queen and Wellington. They also say that the horseplay which has been happening at this corner lately will henceforth receive police attention and some youths who make a nuisance of themselves are going to get a rude awakening in the future.

100 years ago (1926)

Miss M. Grace Switzer of Kirkton, now Principal of Beeton Public School, visited Washington, D.C. and New York during Easter Week. A party consisting mostly of teachers, under the personal supervision of Dr. James L. Huges, left Toronto on Good Friday, traveling by train.

On Tuesday while engaged about the house, Mrs. J.W. Stockdale had the misfortune to overbalance and fall from a balcony outside the second story of her home. She sustained a painful shaking up but no bones were broken. She is making progress towards recovery.

IN MEMORIAM

Harris

In Loving Memory of
Garnet Harris

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Love Deb, Helen, Dan, Mary, Phil and Families

London Orchid Society

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

Solutions on pg. 39



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Plant Auction and Spring Flower Show



TUESDAY, MAY 12TH AT 7:00 PM

ST. MARYS LEGION HALL

Bring Any Perennials You Wish To Donate
(or other gardening items)
to Support the St. Marys Horticultural Society

*If possible, please indicate the name of the plant and if it likes sun or shade
Items may be dropped off after 6:30 p.m.*

*Membership not Required to Attend
Refreshments provided by St. Marys Tim Hortons*

Bring A Friend To This Popular Event!!

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Recession
2. Venus
3. 90mins
4. Rome
5. Waymo
6. Hippopotamus
7. Liver
8. 24
9. Geppetto
10. Tardigrade or water bear

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

An error was printed in the story, "Optimist Club of Downie has had a busy few weeks," on page 16 of the April 30 edition of the St. Marys Independent. While the article indicated it was written by Dan Welcher, it was actually written by Manny Peutz. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

THE WEEK AHEAD



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

St. Marys Public Library events - See Page 30

Thorndale Library May events - See Page 35

FRIDAY, MAY 8

- Friends of the Library spring book sale at the Lind Sportsplex - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- Pop-up market at Riverwalk Commons - Noon to 8 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.
- SMCP presents "Boeing Boeing" at the Town Hall theatre - 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 9

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field - 8 a.m. to Noon
- Parks Lawn Bowling Club open house at Milt Dunnell Field - 9 a.m. to Noon
- Optimist Club bike sale at Avondale United Church, Stratford - 9-11:30 a.m.
- Optimist Club bike rodeo at Avondale United Church, Stratford - 10 a.m. to Noon
- Friends of the Library spring book sale at the Lind Sportsplex - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Pop-up market at Riverwalk Commons - 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Shelly Hocking celebration of life at the Friendship Centre - 1-3 p.m.
- SMCP presents the closing performance of "Boeing Boeing" at the Town Hall theatre - 2 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. pickerel fish fry - 5-7 p.m., \$25/plate

SUNDAY, MAY 10

- Mother's Day

MONDAY, MAY 11

- Police Week 2026 Coffee with a Cop at Market Square, Stratford - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Police Week 2026 Colouring with the Cops at Stratford Mall - 5-8 p.m.
- Parks Lawn Bowling Club open house at Milt Dunnell Field - 6:30-8:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, MAY 12

- Royal Canadian Legion buddy check coffee - 10 a.m. to Noon
- Police Week 2026 Coffee with a Cop at Snapping Turtle Coffee Roasters, St. Marys - 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- St. Marys Horticultural Society plant auction & spring flower show at the Legion hall - 7 p.m.
- St. Marys Legion cribbage - Starts 7 p.m. sharp

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

- Law enforcement torch run at Stratford Police HQ along Erie Street, Stratford
- Parks Lawn Bowling Club "learn to bowl" at Milt Dunnell Field - 6:30 p.m.
- Friends of the Library social at the library - 6:30-8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 14

- A.N.A.F. sausage on a bun - 12-1:30 p.m.

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