SPECIAL REMEMBRANCE SECTION PAGE 14

HODKINSON SETS TWO RECORDS PAGE 27

St. Marys Independent

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WITH GREAT COSTUMES COME GREAT CANDY (EMILY STEWART PHOTO)
Aiden and Colton as Spider-Man and Darth Vader during the St. Marys Downtown Business Association's annual trick-or-treating event Oct. 31. See more photos on page 10.

Giving Tuesday St. Marys celebrates 10 years of generosity with return of 'Won't You Be My Neighbour' campaign

GALEN SIMMONS
Regional Editor

For the past decade, St. Marys residents, businesses and community organizations have come together each December to demonstrate just how much can be accomplished when neighbours look out for one another.

As Giving Tuesday St. Marys prepares to celebrate its 10th consecutive year Dec. 1, the local organizing committee is once again encouraging residents to embrace the spirit of generosity through its Won't You Be My Neighbour campaign, whether by donating money, volunteering their time or simply lending a helping hand. Committee member Julie Docker-Johnson said the milestone is particularly meaningful considering the community continued participating throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Ten consecutive years, even through COVID, we were part of it," Docker-Johnson

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

PC Connect riders fear losing access to medical care, loved ones as St. Marys prepares to withdraw from service

GALEN SIMMONS
Regional Editor

For three St. Marys residents who rely on public transportation to access medical appointments, shop for necessities and care for loved ones, the town's decision to withdraw from PC Connect at the end of the year is about much more than dollars and cents.

It's about their independence, their health and, in some cases, their ability to remain in the community they call home.

Rhonda Knost, Karen Wood and Nathan Hodgson are among those worried about what comes next after St. Marys council voted Oct. 13 to end its participation in the regional bus service effective Dec. 31. While council directed staff to investigate a potential local transportation subsidy, the three residents say that does little to address their immediate need for affordable, accessible transportation to Stratford and London.

For Hodgson, who moved to St. Marys approximately 14 months ago, the stakes are particularly high. Diagnosed with a heart condition in April, Hodgson requires ongoing monitoring and medical appointments in Stratford and London as he awaits heart surgery.

"It's a matter of life and death," Hodgson said. "I have to go to London and Stratford. How am I going to get there?"

Without PC Connect, Hodgson estimates a round-trip taxi ride to Stratford could cost approximately $120, an expense he cannot afford

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

STONETOWN KARATE STK Karate - Cardio Kickboxing
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COMMUNITY

Giving Tuesday St. Marys celebrates 10 years of generosity with return of 'Won't You Be My Neighbour' campaign

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

said.

The Won't You Be My Neighbour theme was introduced following the pandemic to help rebuild connections between neighbours, particularly as new residents moved into St. Marys. Since then, the campaign has inspired everything from charitable fundraising initiatives to neighbourhood projects that bring residents together around shared causes.

Last year, for example, residents of one neighbourhood came together to care for a stray cat before organizing a fundraiser and collecting supplies for Feline Friends, a local animal rescue organization.

The campaign has also grown considerably.

According to Docker-Johnson, approximately 70 businesses, organizations, neighbourhoods and individuals organized Giving Tuesday initiatives last year, collecting thousands of pounds of food, Christmas gifts and financial donations for local causes.

However, she emphasized that giving back doesn't have to involve money or elaborate fundraising activities.

"It's not a make-work project for anybody," she said. "Yes, there is some work involved. However, what you get back is way more than any of the work that you put in."

This year, the committee has reached out to organizations that benefited from previous campaigns to identify their specific needs, making it easier for residents to find meaningful ways to contribute.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Julie Docker-Johnson and the Giving Tuesday St. Marys committee are encouraging locals to share their acts of generosity leading up to the 10th annual Giving Tuesday in St. Marys on Dec. 1. Those who share their acts of giving by Nov. 17 will have their good deeds displayed in the "Caught You Giving" window at Meridian Credit Union in downtown St. Marys and in the St. Marys Independent to help inspire others to give.

Examples include collecting supplies for the library's food pantry, purchasing gift cards for outreach workers to distribute to those in need or volunteering expertise and time to community initiatives such as the Community Commons capital campaign.

The committee is also continuing last year's Caught You Giving initiative, which recognizes individuals, businesses and organizations already making a difference throughout the year. Docker-Johnson said sharing those stories helps inspire others who may want to volunteer or contribute but aren't sure where to begin.

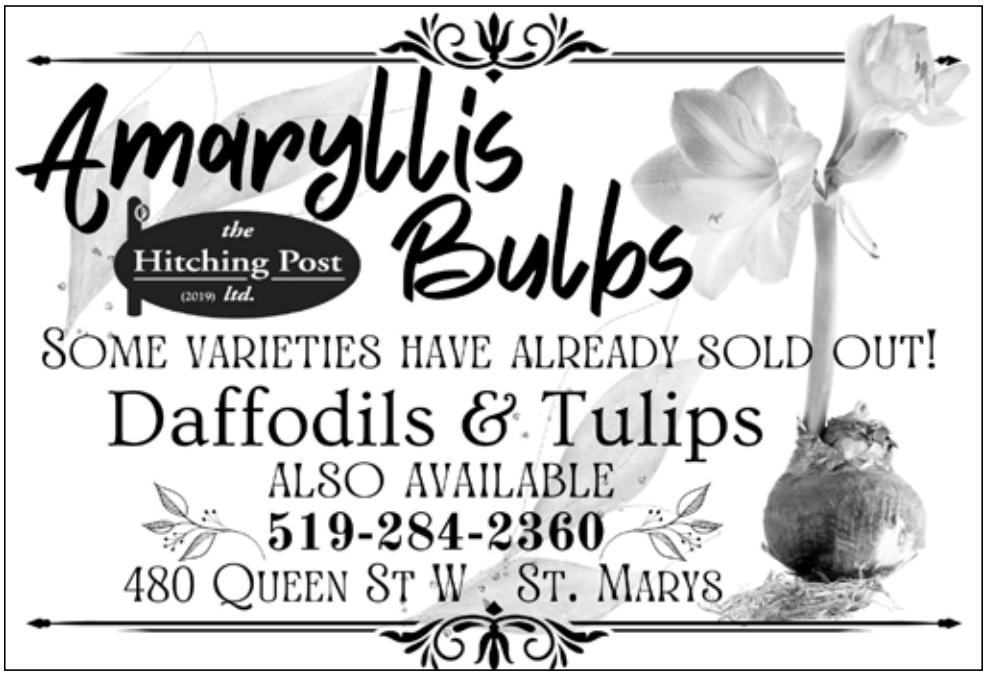
"Sometimes there's people who would love to help, but they don't know how and nobody's ever asked them," she said.

The committee hopes residents will share their planned Giving Tuesday activities, as well as acts of generosity already taking place, so they can be recognized and promoted throughout the community.

After all, Docker-Johnson said, Giving Tuesday is about much more than a single day of charitable giving. It's about strengthening connections, welcoming newcomers and helping people discover the many opportunities to make a difference in St. Marys.

Residents, businesses, service clubs, schools and community organizations are encouraged to submit their Giving Tuesday initiatives and stories of generosity to Docker-Johnson by Nov. 17 at jdocker-johnson@gmail.com. Residents can also email Docker-Johnson for ideas around how to give as part of this year's campaign.

For more information, visit the St. Marys Giving Tuesday Facebook page.



7 Day Forecast

Sponsored by: the Hitching Post (2019) ltd. / The Hitching Post / SHUR-GAIN

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Nov-4th	Nov-5th	Nov-6th	Nov-7th	Nov-8th	Nov-9th	Nov-10th
Showers	Mainly cloudy	Cloudy showers	Potential showers	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny
19°C	15°C	13°C	11°C	10°C	11°C	13°C
Feels like 22	Feels like 13	Feels like 12	Feels like 9	Feels like 8	Feels like 9	Feels like 11

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5 year - 4.46	5 year - 4.40	5 year - 4.40

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COMMUNITY

Rotary Invites the community to become part of its next chapter

ROTARY CLUB OF ST. MARYS

Contributed Article

For more than 100 years, the Rotary Club of St. Marys has been making a difference in the community. Now, through a new initiative called Rotary Partners, the club is inviting individuals and families to become part of that continuing story.

Community impact is the story of Rotary in action. Some of that work is highly visible, while much of it happens quietly through projects, programs and service, the benefits of which continue long after the work itself is complete.

In 1926, Rotary presented Cadzow Park, including a children's swimming pool, to the Town of St. Marys. Generations of families enjoyed the park, and when the original pool reached the end of its life, Rotary worked with the town to create the Rotary Splash Pad, which opened in 2018.

In the early 1980s, Rotary members helped lead the development of Parkview, providing an opportunity for seniors to remain in their community. Today, Parkview continues to provide homes for 64 seniors.

Rotary's commitment to young people extends well beyond St. Marys. Since 1972, the club's Youth Exchange program has welcomed students from around the world while providing local students with opportunities to experience life in other countries.

Education is a cornerstone of youth development in Africa. The Rotary Club of St. Marys' work with Mugoiri Secondary School in Kenya has helped provide essential facilities, computers and educational opportunities, while also supporting the creation of a vocational school in Uganda.

These are just a few examples of what can happen when people work together to identify needs and create opportunities.

Building on a tradition of working together

Working together has always been at the heart of Rotary. Throughout its history, the club has worked alongside individuals, families, businesses, volunteers and community organizations to strengthen St. Marys and make a positive difference beyond its borders.

The new Community Partners program builds on that tradition by providing individuals and families with a way to support Rotary's work throughout the year.

Community Partners make an annual financial contribution, helping Rotary respond to community needs, support young people, strengthen local initiatives and continue projects that create lasting community impact.

Five suggested Partner levels begin at $25 annually, making participation accessible to people throughout the community. Partners receive recognition according to their chosen level, and eligible charitable contributions receive official tax receipts.

But Community Partners is about more than a financial contribution. It is about belonging to a growing network of people who believe that working together can make a lasting difference.

Become part of the story

Community impact doesn't happen by chance. It happens because people care about their community and choose to become involved.

The Rotary Club of St. Marys invites individuals and families to learn more about Community Partners and the opportunities to participate.

Information about the program, Partner levels and recognition opportunities is available at rotarystmarys.ca.

Questions are welcome through the website or by email at partners@rotarystmarys.ca.

Together, we can do more.

Bravo

We have 4 Bravos this week

1) Bravo to the downtown businesses who treated the kids on Halloween day. The costumes, the kids, the parents and even the dogs, what a sight. Also, Bravo to the drivers who were so patient and driving so slowly and carefully during this event. Hey! Only in St. Marys, right?

2) Bravo to Krystal Leppington, Cheryl Smith & volunteer team for organizing an amazing Pumpkin Walk at South Perth Centennial Public School last Thursday evening. Walking through the arboretum's path lined with glowing jack-o-lanterns was magical.

3) Bravo to the St. Marys Horticultural Society's Garden volunteers for all of your hard work this season to make our six gardens around town beautiful - the Legion garden, St. Marys Museum garden, Hospital Gazebo garden, Peace garden, mini-Pollinator garden along walkway & Centennial Park garden.

4) Bravo to the parent volunteers with multiple children in sports who work on their own time and pay out of pocket to help the community raise confident young people. It's not an easy thing to balance and can at times be thankless.

Boo

We have 1 Boo this week

1) Boo to the young couple who saw fit on Nov. 2 to go into the United Church and enjoy supper while leaving their poor, defenceless, beige puppy all alone and tied to a tree on the North Side of Church with a Tim Horton's cup of water. Your dog was distressed and scared and barking, disturbing the neighbourhood, all while you two filled your bellies. Shame on you!

**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

"Growing up in St. Marys, I never imagined I'd have the privilege of serving as mayor. I'm grateful for the trust people placed in me, and I'll work hard to earn it every day. Whether we've known each other for years or haven't met yet, I want you to feel comfortable stopping me for a conversation. That's where good local government starts."

- Brogan Aylward on being newly elected as incoming mayor for St. Marys

Overheard AT THE COFFEE SHOP

Sponsored by: Tim Hortons

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Shorts weather in November is so weird. Should we be worried?

You know you're a hockey mom when you have memorized the routes to every Tim Horton's!

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

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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

St. Marys Independent

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Thoughts OF THE WEEK

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Start the day with one kind thought and let the day grow from there.

Difficult roads often lead to beautiful destinations.

No matter how hard today was, tomorrow is a new day to start over.

Don't burn bridges. You never know when you need to walk over that river again.

St. Marys Giving Tuesday 10th Anniversary

CAUGHT YOU GIVING! "WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOUR"

St. Marys Giving Tuesday 2026

Won't You Be My Neighbour?

Need Help Planning Your Giving Tuesday Initiative?

How are your plans for St. Marys Giving Tuesday coming along? We are only a month away! When planning here are a few organizations that would appreciate your support:

St. Marys DCVI Grade 7 and 8 Library – is in need funds to purchase more books for their collection. The project offers benefits beyond simply purchasing new resources. It provides students with a voice in shaping their learning environment, encourages them to explore literature that reflects their interests and identities and helps ensure that the library collection remains relevant, engaging, and responsive to the needs of adolescent readers. The students will be choosing the books. For more information on how you can help or to make a donation towards this project please **email – petra.goetz@ed.amdsb.ca**

K9 Safe Space – is a registered non-profit dog rescue, founded in St. Marys. They are a foster-based rescue organization with a focus on taking in dogs surrendered from Ontario commercial breeding organizations/puppy mills. Their biggest expense (by far!) is Veterinary care. Financial donations to put towards surgeries, vaccinations and other veterinary needs for their rescue dogs is a tremendous help. They are also always searching for local foster homes, temporary safe homes for the dogs to go while they wait to find their forever families. For more information on how you can help or to make a donation please **email – k9safespace@gmail.com**

United Way Perth-Huron – supports 12 programs that helped 2,840 people in St. Marys last year, this includes the Nourish Market, Shelterlink Youth Services, Emily Murphy Centre, St. Marys Outreach Worker, 211 and more. As an organization they aim to do the fundraising so these organizations can focus on supporting the vulnerable populations they work with. With 20% of homes experiencing food insecurity, 60% of Canadians saying they face financial stress and 40% of people one missed paycheque away from serious problems, the United Way accepts donations to help fund their supportive partners and actively work to improve food and housing insecurity. For more information on how you can help or to make a donation please **email – info@perthhuron.unitedway.ca**

If you need help planning your Giving Tuesday initiative please **email jdockerjohnson@gmail.com**, we have loads of ideas. Please be sure you let us know your plans so we can **"Catch You Giving"** and share the good!

Thank you for participating, it matters!
Better Together,
The St. Marys Giving Tuesday Committee

GIVING TUESDAY DEC 1 2026

ST. MARYS GivingTuesday GIVES

For more info contact jdockerjohnson@gmail.com
Follow us on Facebook & Instagram – St. Marys Giving Tuesday

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

November 2026

Farmers' Market: indoor market at the PRC
Sat. Nov. 7th - 8am - noon

FOL Social: second floor of the library
Wed. Nov. 11th - 6:30 - 8 pm
Library pantry donations are appreciated

Management Committee Meeting:
second floor of the library
Wed. Nov. 18th - 6 pm - 8 pm

FOL
Friends of the Marys Public Library

FriendsOfStMarysPublicLibrary@gmail.com
our website StMarysFOL.ca
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GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys





ST. MARYS CRAFT SHOW

November 21 | 9 AM - 3PM

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

Questions? (519) 284-3272

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Residents can hop on board and travel to Stratford, Kitchener, Toronto Pearson Airport and Union Station, and London. This is a comfortable, flexible way to stay connected – whether you're commuting, visiting family, or planning your next trip.

Learn more: townofstmarys.com/flixbus





COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

We can help your community project grow! The Community Grant Program applications are live. This program provides funding for programs, projects, activities and events that enrich the community and advance Council's strategic goals. Applications close November 30th

townofstmarys.com/grants

SPORTS WALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY

November 7 | 2PM | Pyramid Recreation Centre

Town of St. Marys is hosting the third annual Sports Wall of Fame induction ceremony. This event will be held at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (317 James St. S) and will recognize the 2026 class of inductees.

Learn more: townofstmarys.com/sportswall





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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Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Bob Cousins. Bob will be celebrating his 95th birthday on Nov. 8. He is a lifelong resident of St.Marys, living and raising his family along with his wife Dale, on Jones Street East. He has a joke or a story for every occasion, and was known to provide the entertainment by playing his guitar and harmonica, and by singing country songs. Bob is a big Jays and Leafs fan, and can tell you their stats upon request. He worked many different jobs, his final one being the deputy clerk treasurer and tax collector for the Town of St. Marys from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. Bob has five children, 12 grandchildren, and 13 great grandchildren, and is living his best life on the third floor at Kingsway Lodge.

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

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. What are the two birthstones for November?
2. What is the more common name for the Fibonacci sequence?
3. What is the color of liquid oxygen?
4. What is the largest power plant in Canada?
5. In what year did Korea split?
6. What is a popular 1990's slang for very short cutoff jeans?
7. What is a full moon in November called?
8. What kind of stone is the Taj Mahal made of?
9. What are the small bones that make up a backbone called?
10. What continent is Andorra in?

This week's answers are found on pg. 39

A Christmas Inn, Maine author Aaron Kyte thankful for support ahead of library's Local Author Talk

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

The St. Marys Public Library will host a Local Author Talk event to ask *A Christmas Inn, Maine* author Aaron Kyte about his debut novel.

The library will host the discussion on Nov. 26 at the Friendship Centre's multipurpose room on Nov. 26 starting at 7 p.m. Attendees will have a chance to learn more about the book, the inspiration behind it, the writing process and what's next for the author.

"The library's been really supportive. They brought in some copies of my book, and I've been in their new book newsletter email. It's been so nice," Kyte said. "It's going to be a fun chance to talk about the book and have a cozy winter gathering later in November."

A Christmas Inn, Maine is a queer holiday romance about a former book editor who tries to strengthen his family's struggling inn, and the contractor he meets. The book was just released this October, and already, Kyte is getting lots of positive feedback and reviews, photos from his friends of his book on the Indigo bestseller's shelves in stores and books being sent as far as Japan.

"For me, holiday season doesn't really kick in until November and even later on in November, so the fact that there are people already engaging with the book and feeling kind enough to share the feedback with me is already pretty exciting," he said.

Kyte and his partner moved to St. Marys five years ago and have felt tremendous support from the community.

"We've gotten pretty involved; I belong to a bunch of book clubs. I've taken pottery classes. I've done lots of different activities and engagements around the town and it's really cool to see how people show up for each other," said Kyte. "Not just me, but it's nice to be part of community where people know what's going on with you, and know your name, and know you and care enough to step out of their normal routines and support."

The St. Marys Public Library's Local Author Talks inform residents about authors in the area and bring the community together around books.

"It's a great connector among our residents and we've had the fortune of a lot of really good authors come over the years," said Sarah Andrews, CEO of the St. Marys Public Library. "It's exciting and fun to listen to authors speak about their writing craft and the characters they create and how these books come together, which gives them a front seat to the creative process but also it exposes them to new authors."

The Local Author Talk is free to those 16 and older. Registration is online via https://tinyurl.com/localauthor-aaronkyte.





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GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, Nov. 1-7: Protect your family from the silent killer

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys Fire Department is recognizing Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, Nov. 1-7, by encouraging residents to take steps to protect themselves and their families from carbon monoxide (CO), an invisible, odourless and tasteless gas that can cause serious illness or death within minutes.

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels such as natural gas, propane, oil, wood, or charcoal burn incompletely. Common household sources include furnaces, fireplaces, water heaters, fuel-burning stoves, attached garages and portable generators.

"Carbon monoxide is often called the silent killer because you can't see it, smell it, or taste it," said St. Marys Fire Chief Phil West in a press release. "The good news is that simple steps, such as installing and maintaining working carbon monoxide alarms and having fuel-burning appliances inspected annually, can help protect your family from this preventable hazard."

Ontario law requires carbon monoxide alarms in homes that contain a fuel-burning appliance, fireplace, attached garage, or direct heat from a fuel-burning appliance. Alarms must be installed outside sleeping areas and on every storey of the home where required. Property owners and landlords are responsible for ensuring alarms are installed and maintained in good working order.

The St. Marys Fire Department encourages residents to:

- Test carbon monoxide alarms monthly.
- Replace alarm batteries at least once a year, or when the low-battery warning sounds.
- Replace carbon monoxide alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions, typically every five to 10 years.
- Have fuel-burning appliances, vents and chimneys inspected annually by a qualified technician.
- Keep outdoor vents clear of snow, ice, leaves, nests, and other debris.
- Never use BBQs, camp stoves, propane heaters, or generators indoors, including in garages.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure can include headaches, dizziness, nausea and flu-like symptoms. If a carbon monoxide alarm sounds, everyone should move outside to fresh air immediately and call 911.

For more information about carbon monoxide safety, visit the town's website at townofstmarys.com/CO add the town's Facebook page (@st.marys.ontario), or contact Chris St. Clair, fire prevention officer, at 519-284-2340 ext. 301.

Town reminds residents to keep collected leaves off roadways

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys is reminding residents that raking, depositing or piling leaves on the roadway is prohibited under the town's traffic and parking bylaw.

Leaf piles can slow street-sweeping operations and make it more difficult for town crews to efficiently clean local streets. Residents who place leaves or other yard waste on the roadway may be subject to fines and may also be responsible for costs associated with removing the material.

Residents are asked to keep leaves on their property until they can be properly disposed of. The town provides several convenient options:

- **Curbside collection:** Leaves must be placed in kraft-style brown paper yard waste bags or reusable containers weighing less than 22 kilograms and placed at the curb by 7 a.m. on scheduled collection days. Loose leaves placed on the street or boulevard will not be collected.
- **Municipal Operations Centre:** Leaf and yard waste can be dropped off year-round, free of charge, at 408 James St. S. The depot is open seven days a week from dawn to dusk.
- **St. Marys Landfill:** Leaf and yard waste can also be dropped off year-round, free of charge.

Keeping leaves off the roadway helps town crews complete street sweeping more efficiently and keeps local streets clear.

For collection dates, disposal requirements and more information, visit townofstmarys.com/yardwaste.



PC Connect riders fear losing access to medical care, loved ones as St. Marys prepares to withdraw from service

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

on a regular basis.

"You can't afford it, you can't go," he said, explaining that he fears missing necessary medical appointments.

Hodgson said access to PC Connect was among the reasons he felt comfortable moving to St. Marys in the first place.

"It's a beautiful town," he said. "So now it's like you're left kind of high and dry. Where do I go from here?"

For Wood, the loss of transportation threatens both her ability to volunteer at Stratford's Emily Murphy Centre and regularly visit her mother, who lives with dementia at Spruce Lodge.

"My mom is also at Spruce Lodge; very dependent on me," Wood said. "She has dementia, doesn't know who I am, but recognizes my face sometimes."

Wood provides her mother with clothing and other necessities, making regular visits essential.

"Now, is she going to die alone because I can't get there?" she asked.

Wood, who uses a mobility scooter, said conventional taxis are not a practical alternative because they cannot necessarily accommodate her equipment. She also worries about the affordability and accessibility of FlixBus, which recently began serving St. Marys.

Even if she could use FlixBus, Wood estimates the cost of visiting her mother once a week could reach $200 a month.

"I understand if the town can't afford it," she said. "But there's no reason why they can't find something to substitute, to help cover the loss instead of just leaving us high and dry."

Wood is now exploring relocating to Stratford, where she would have greater access to public transit, shopping and medical care.

Knost faces similar challenges. Although she has only used PC Connect twice, she said that is largely because of ongoing problems with the bus's wheelchair lift, which she alleges has prevented her from boarding with her scooter.

"I would use it more, but it's not accessible for me and I can't walk," she said.

Knost said she has repeatedly raised concerns about accessibility with the service provider without a satisfactory resolution. She also questioned whether St. Marys and Area Mobility Service could realistically fill the gap, describing experiences in which she was charged for the time between being dropped off and picked up from medical appointments.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Rhonda Knost, Karen Wood and Nathan Hodgson, each of whom rely on public transit to get to and from Stratford and London for medical appointments, shopping and to care for family, are speaking out after St. Marys council opted to withdraw the town from the PC Connect regional transit program, leaving them with few, if any, affordable and accessible transit options.

On one occasion, she said a trip to Stratford General Hospital resulted in a bill exceeding $80 because she was unable to arrange an earlier pickup.

Amber Miners, manager of St. Marys and Area Mobility Service, said the organization provides specialized, door-to-door transportation tailored to individual mobility needs, with medical trips billed at a subsidized per-kilometre rate.

However, she explained that wait-time charges may apply when a vehicle and paid driver must remain available during an appointment.

"Without reviewing the specific details of an individual's booking, I can say that out-of-town trips are not always as simple as a pickup and drop-off," Miners said.

She said transportation arrangements and costs are discussed with clients when bookings are made, and the organization works to keep fees affordable despite limited resources.

While the service has operated since 1992, Miners stressed it was never designed or funded to replace regional public transit.

"Transportation needs are not one-size-fits-all," she said, noting public transit, specialized transportation and volunteer programs serve different populations.

Meanwhile, FlixBus says its existing St. Marys service could provide some alternatives for residents travelling to Stratford and London.

According to a Flix North America spokesperson, coaches are equipped with wheelchair lifts and securement spaces, and passengers can reserve accessible seating when booking. Residents travelling with mobility scooters are encouraged to contact customer service to confirm whether their equipment can be accommodated.

Beginning Dec. 7, FlixBus will add a second daily departure in each direction, with service operating seven days a week.

Eastbound buses will leave St. Marys at 7:55 a.m. and 2:55 p.m., connecting passengers to Stratford, Kitchener, Guelph and Toronto. Westbound departures to London will leave at 11:20 a.m. and 5:15 p.m.

Fares to Stratford start at approximately $6, though passengers must book at least two hours in advance because St. Marys is an on-demand stop.

However, the spokesperson acknowledged FlixBus is an intercity service and cannot provide a dedicated local shuttle between St. Marys and Stratford.

St. Marys contributed approximately $150,000 to PC Connect this year. Between Jan. 1 and Sept. 29, the service recorded 818 pickups and 843 drop-offs in town.

Council had the option of using remaining municipal reserves to extend service until March 31, 2027, while awaiting a decision on provincial funding, but ultimately chose to withdraw.

One community organization is already proposing a potential Band-Aid solution.

Dr. Geza Wordofa, executive director of the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron, said the organization is prepared to coordinate volunteer drivers to help newcomers and vulnerable residents access medical appointments, groceries and essential services.

The association is seeking municipal support through gas cards, transportation vouchers or access to community vehicles.

"Transportation is about health, independence and staying connected. By working together, we can help ensure no one in our community is left isolated," Wordofa said.

He noted St. Marys' growing population, including newcomers and residents relocating from larger centres, makes transportation an increasingly important issue.

The association is encouraging residents interested in transportation assistance to call 888-308-6274.

For Wood, Knost and Hodgson, any solution must be affordable, accessible and practical.

The residents suggested a smaller service offering one or two daily return trips between St. Marys and Stratford could meet many of their needs.

Wood said even paying $15 for a return trip would be manageable compared to the alternatives.

"It doesn't need to be three times a day," she said.

For Knost, the solution must also accommodate mobility scooters without charging passengers for hours spent attending appointments.

"I don't mind if they pick you up at nine o'clock and don't come back and get you until three," she said. "That's fine. I can fill the time. Just don't charge me for it."

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New exhibit opens at Station Gallery featuring the Art of Nancy Calder



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Artist Nancy Calder took a moment for a photo at the opening of her exhibit, running now at the Station Gallery until Dec. 12.



Viewers at the opening took their time taking in each painting. (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)



Calder's art is based on everyday objects used to create memories. (WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

On Saturday, a new exhibit featuring works by Stratford's Nancy Calder opened at the Station Gallery and will run until Dec. 12.

Calder is an award-winning realist artist. She started her art studies with figure drawing classes and progressed from graphite and charcoal drawings to oil paint. Calder, who attended Toronto's Academy of Realist Art, graduated in 2013 and then stayed on for two years at the school as their first female instructor.

She then left to pursue painting as her full-time career and in 2017, Calder moved to Stratford. Her paintings are based on everyday objects used to create memories. For example, a vintage hat can be placed in such a way where it takes on renewed significance of the past. With use of oil paints, Calder brilliantly captures texture and surface variations of ordinary items.

Calder has also included a touch of humour in her art, like the painting that is named "Bella Keeper of the Butter Tarts."

Her works are influenced by Caravaggio, Vermeer and Rembrandt.

Taking approximately two years to complete the 10 pieces in her exhibit, Calder often will paint items at actual scale and begins each one through a preliminary drawing and successive layers of oil paint.

Every art enthusiast will take away something different when viewing Calder's captivating paintings. Calder's collection can also be viewed on the Station Gallery website at www.stmarysstationgallery.ca.

Station Gallery hours are Wednesday to Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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St. Marys haunted by trick-or-treaters on Halloween



Hazel as a bumblebee. (EMILY STEWART PHOTO)



Emma and Kate Atkins as princesses. (EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

The streets of downtown St. Marys were bustling with businesses owners, staff, pets, and trick-or-treaters of all ages dressed in a variety of costumes on Halloween.

The St. Marys Downtown Business Association held its annual trick-or-treating event several hours before door-to-door trick or treating began.

"They put in a lot of effort to make sure that all the stores are welcoming for all the kids," said Kelly Deeks-Johnson, tourism and events manager for the town of St. Marys. "It's a really nice way to introduce families to downtown and some of the shops and services we have available, and meet our local merchants."

Deeks-Johnson was impressed with the turnout for this year's Halloween event.

"The turnout this year has been stellar and my conversations with some of the businesses is that they ran out of candy fairly early as a surprise, but I think that maybe has to do with the fact that we're having some beautiful weather today," she said.

The annual Howl-O-Ween Pet Parade and Costume contest, sponsored by Pet Valu, was also held outside of St. Marys Town Hall. The event was started so downtown St. Marys could be promoted as a pet-friendly area.

"Pet Valu has supported the event for the last three years and they bring lots of great treats for the pets and do a lot to help us make this happen," Deeks-Johnson said. "It's a fun event for everybody to come down and dress up their pets, and some of them get dressed up with their pets, which is even better."



Oliver dressed in his finest royalty. (EMILY STEWART PHOTO)



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Hannah, Winnie, Jessica, Rosie the dog and Glenn Lee-Warne had a mish-mash of costumes – an angel, a devil, milk and cookies, and a banana.

Tree of Angels returning in memory of Cohen Frayne

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

What started out as a way to honour Cohen Frayne's memory has turned into an annual tradition that brings out the kindness and generosity of our community.

For the 13th year, the Tree of Angels will once again be on display in the lobby of St. Marys Memorial Hospital this holiday season. On Nov. 12, the tree will be put up and locals can drop off donations of new, unwrapped gifts.

Donations can include any new, unused items such as toys, clothing, electronics, gift cards, personal care items and other thoughtful gifts. The first delivery date to the Salvation Army for donated items will be Dec. 11 as the Salvation Army will be preparing to distribute for Christmas the following week.

However, the Fraynes will continue collecting donations right through until Christmas with final delivery to the Salvation Army closer to Christmas Day.

"Knowing that Cohen's memory continues to inspire others to give back to our community means so much to our family," Colleen Frayne said.

The difference a donation can make for local families can be life changing and can make a big impact, especially at this time of year. Every donation is greatly appreciated.





(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Harlan Frayne and parents Colleen and Scott Frayne share pictures of the Tree of Angels throughout the last 13 years in memory of son and brother Cohen Frayne.

DCVI holds annual Post-Secondary Pathway Fair



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Ethan Henderson and mom Becky Henderson met with Jessica Chateauvert, Avon Maitland District School Board (AMDSB) Pathways coordinator and Specialist High Skills Major board lead, to discuss options for an apprenticeship.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Aubrey Cousineau, Emma Hodkinson, Regan Jones and Holly Black were busy collecting information from a variety of schools to learn about post-secondary school options at St. Marys DCVI's Post-Secondary Pathway Fair.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Ashlyn Stewardson and mom Meagan Stewardson get some information from the Queen's University representative.

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On Tuesday, Oct. 27, St Marys DCVI held its annual Post-Secondary Pathway Fair, providing information to help students transition to university, college, apprenticeships, or into the workplace after high school.

The very popular event consists of two information sessions; one for the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) and one to provide information on how to apply to colleges and universities. They also provide information regarding special dates for applying, support resources, financial aid, campus life and what the next steps are.

The Post-Secondary Pathway Fair was held in the large gym with 29 booths set up from a variety of colleges and universities as well as the Naval Reserve, Leads Employment Services, the Centre for Education and Learning and OYAP. Attending this year were the following;

- Brock University
- Ontario Tech University
- University of Windsor
- TTG
- OYAP/SHSM
- University of Guelph
- University Humber
- Lambton College
- Georgian College
- Perth County Economic Development
- Leads Employment Services
- Centre for Education & Learning
- Fanshawe College
- Carleton University
- University of Waterloo
- Centennial College
- University of Toronto
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- Conestoga College
- Lakehead University
- Niagara College
- Queen's University
- Fleming College
- Naval Reserve
- York University
- Trent University
- King's University
- Huron University
- Sault College

Principal Petra Goetz said she is a strong believer in the Pathways program.

"Events like this empower students to ask questions, make connections and begin planning confidently for life after high school. I am incredibly proud of the time and effort our student-services staff and community partners have invested in making this event a reality," Goetz said.

"Now in its third year, the Post-Secondary Pathway Fair has become an invaluable resource for our students, helping them explore opportunities and make informed decisions about their future. The continued growth and success of this event reflects our shared commitment to supporting every student's pathway to success."

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South Perth Centennial holds annual Pumpkin Walk

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On Thursday, Oct. 29, students and teachers from South Perth Centennial School welcomed family, friends and the public to the school where they shared their pumpkin-carving and decorating skills at their annual Pumpkin Walk.

Guests to the event were given a ballot on arrival that they use to vote on their favourite carving. Categories are split by grades and into either decorated pumpkins for the younger grades and carved pumpkins for the older grades. The painted and decorated pumpkins were on tables in the school, while the carved pumpkins were lit and placed along the trail in the school's arboretum.

There were also many draw prizes available to win, snacks and drinks, games for the kids and Halloween music to add to the ambience of the night.

The winners of the night are as follows:

• Category A Pumpkins - decorated in kindergarten: **Hudson Stephen**



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Sullivan Shute had a fun night with his family looking at all of the creative pumpkin carvings.

• Category B Pumpkins - carved Grade 1: **Brooke Nairn**

• Category C Pumpkins - decorated Grade 2&3: **Brooklyn Stephen**

• Category D Pumpkins - carved Grade 3&4: **Vivian Carradine**

• Category E Pumpkins - carved Grade 5&6: **Theo Shute**

• Category F Pumpkins - carved Grade 7&8: **Kassy Van Erk**

• Category G Pumpkins - Home Entry: **Eva Robinson, Grade 3**

Organizers of the event would like to thank the following sponsors:

• Mike and Lianne Wilson
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• The Quarry's Edge
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• Canadian Tire
• Jacobs Liquidation
• St. Marys McDonalds
• St. Marys Foodland
• New Orleans Pizza
• River Valley Tube Sliding



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The pumpkin-lined trail was so festive and full of creative carvings that made it a challenge to pick a winner.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Kevin Barber, Mya Grose, Jessica Carlberg and Shauna Barber took part in the Pumpkin Walk and checked out the carvings by all the talented students.





Holy Name of Mary Church to host musical fundraiser

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On Saturday, Nov. 14, starting at 7:30 p.m., John and Michelle Vallance will be sharing their musical talents at a fundraiser being held at the Holy Name of Mary Church, which is located at the corner of Peel and Widder streets in St. Marys.

The money raised from this concert will go towards the construction on the steps of the church that needed to be replaced for safety reasons.

The music that will be played is from Shakespeare's England and was popular throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. It spans the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras and some of the songs on the program were used in between scenes of Shakespeare's plays.

Michelle Vallance will be sharing her vocal and harpsichord talents and John Vallance will be playing the harpsichord and recorders, which were integral to music from that era.

The Vallances, who met when they were teaching music in Windsor, have both been involved with music for many years. Michelle Vallance taught music at Holy Name of Mary School for roughly 12 years. She is still teaching piano, singing and helps high school students achieve their music credits. The Vallances direct the St. Augustine Schola Cantorum chamber choir at the church and John Vallance taught a community-based recorder group.

The couple fell in love with St. Marys for its old, beautiful churches and buildings, and eventually chose to move to St. Marys after they retired.

The concert will last approximately two hours. Admission is by a free-will offering collected at the door.

The original goal for the stair project was to raise $25,000. More than half has been raised and paid off.

The Vallances, who have been directing music at the Catholic Church for four years, look forward to welcoming everyone for a lovely evening of rich, historic music that will transport their audience back in time with its interwoven warmth and regalness.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

John and Michelle Vallance are looking forward to performing at Holy Name of Mary Church in St. Marys on Nov. 14. The musical duo will be sharing their talents to raise funds for the church's stairs that needed to be replaced.

A portion of proceeds from annual fashion show donated to Salvation Army Foodbank

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On Sept. 10, Bargain Beautique and Maple Lane Park held their annual fashion show.

The show has been going for eight years. Cathy Rae of Bargain Beautique was invited by Annette Sharp at Maple Lane to do a show when Rae first began her clothing business. She also invited residents of the Maple Lane Park retirement community as well as members of the public to participate.

The fashion show takes place in the hall at Maple Lane Park. There are usually five or six models and door prizes for those in attendance.

"Every year, I have made a donation back to the park based on sales after the event, but this year, we decided to do a donation to the (Salvation Army) food bank and Sharp matched it. We each donated $300," Rae said.

Bargain Beautique's next fashion show is taking place at Happy Hills Retirement Centre on Sunday, Nov. 15, at 2 p.m. and it is open to the public.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Cathy Rae from Bargain Beautique and Annette Sharp from Maple Lane Park donate proceeds from their annual fashion show to Raelyn Marshall, family services worker from the Salvation Army.

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2026

Remembrance Day · LEST WE FORGET

Rannoch Cenotaph rededicated 80 years after Second World War soldiers added to memorial

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Eighty years after the names of six Blanshard Township men who lost their lives during the Second World War were added to the Rannoch Cenotaph, members of the community gathered once again to honour their sacrifice and ensure their stories are remembered by future generations.

The Township of Perth South hosted a special rededication ceremony at the cenotaph Oct. 25, commemorating the 80th anniversary of a welcome-home and memorial service held July 7, 1946, when the names of six fallen soldiers were unveiled alongside those who died during the First World War and South African War.

The ceremony included prayers, the laying of wreaths, a reading of In Flanders Fields by Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae and a tribute from Perth-Wellington MP John Nater, who reflected on the history of the memorial and the lives behind the names engraved upon it.

"Today, it is our duty to remember those names," Nater said. "And more than that, remember that each of these names was a real person; a young man from this community who would never grow old, who never returned home to his parents, who never saw his children grow up, who never returned to farm the fertile fields of Blanshard."

The Rannoch Cenotaph was originally constructed in 1921 after Blanshard Township council passed a bylaw authorizing a memorial to those who died during the First World War.

Built by the Hayes Brothers Company of St. Marys, the cenotaph features a lone soldier standing at attention above the names of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The monument was formally unveiled July 9, 1922, and later expanded to recognize six local men killed during the Second World War: Gordon W. Barnett, Norman Evans, Alvin Heard, Albert Martin, Gordon McKay and Clarence Stevens.

Nater spoke about several of the soldiers commemorated on the monument, including William Hannaberry, who enlisted shortly after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Hannaberry, who grew up on a nearby farm, was killed in France June 15, 1915, before reaching his 20th birthday. His body was never recovered, and his name is among those inscribed on the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.

Nater also highlighted the service of Second World War soldiers Gordon McKay, a Royal Canadian Air Force member who disappeared during a mission between England and Italy, and Albert Martin, a member of the Perth Regiment who died during the Allied breakthrough of the Gothic Line in Italy Sept. 1, 1944.

Seven of the soldiers commemorated on the Rannoch Cenotaph have no known graves, Nater said, making the monument particularly important as a permanent place where their sacrifices can be remembered.

"For these seven, this cenotaph takes on added importance, for it is here their names will be forever remembered," he said.

Among those attending Sunday's ceremony were representatives of all three

CONTINUED TO PAGE 15



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

The Township of Perth South hosted a special rededication ceremony at the Ranonch Cenotaph Oct. 25, commemorating the 80th anniversary of a welcome-home and memorial service held July 7, 1946, when the names of six fallen soldiers were unveiled alongside those who died during the First World War and South African War. Pictured, military re-enactors stood at attention around the cenotaph during the ceremony.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Members of the Colour Party from the St. Marys Legion Branch 236 stand with their flags during the ceremony.



Rannoch Cenotaph rededicated 80 years after Second World War soldiers added to memorial

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

levels of government, including Nater, Rae, Perth County Warden Dean Trentowsky and Perth South Mayor Sue Orr.

Each laid a wreath at the memorial, while Hannah Seebach laid a wreath on behalf of the families of the fallen.

Nater credited Orr with initiating the anniversary commemoration and thanked the Perth Regiment Veterans Branch 236 of the Royal Canadian Legion, St. Marys Museum and Stratford-Perth Archives for their support.

The ceremony also provided an opportunity to recognize efforts to preserve the cenotaph's history for future generations.

A new historical plaque, expected to be installed before Remembrance Day, will explain the memorial's origins, its construction and the subsequent addition of the Second World War soldiers' names.

The plaque will also feature a QR code directing visitors to additional historical information, helping ensure the stories behind the names remain accessible as generations pass.

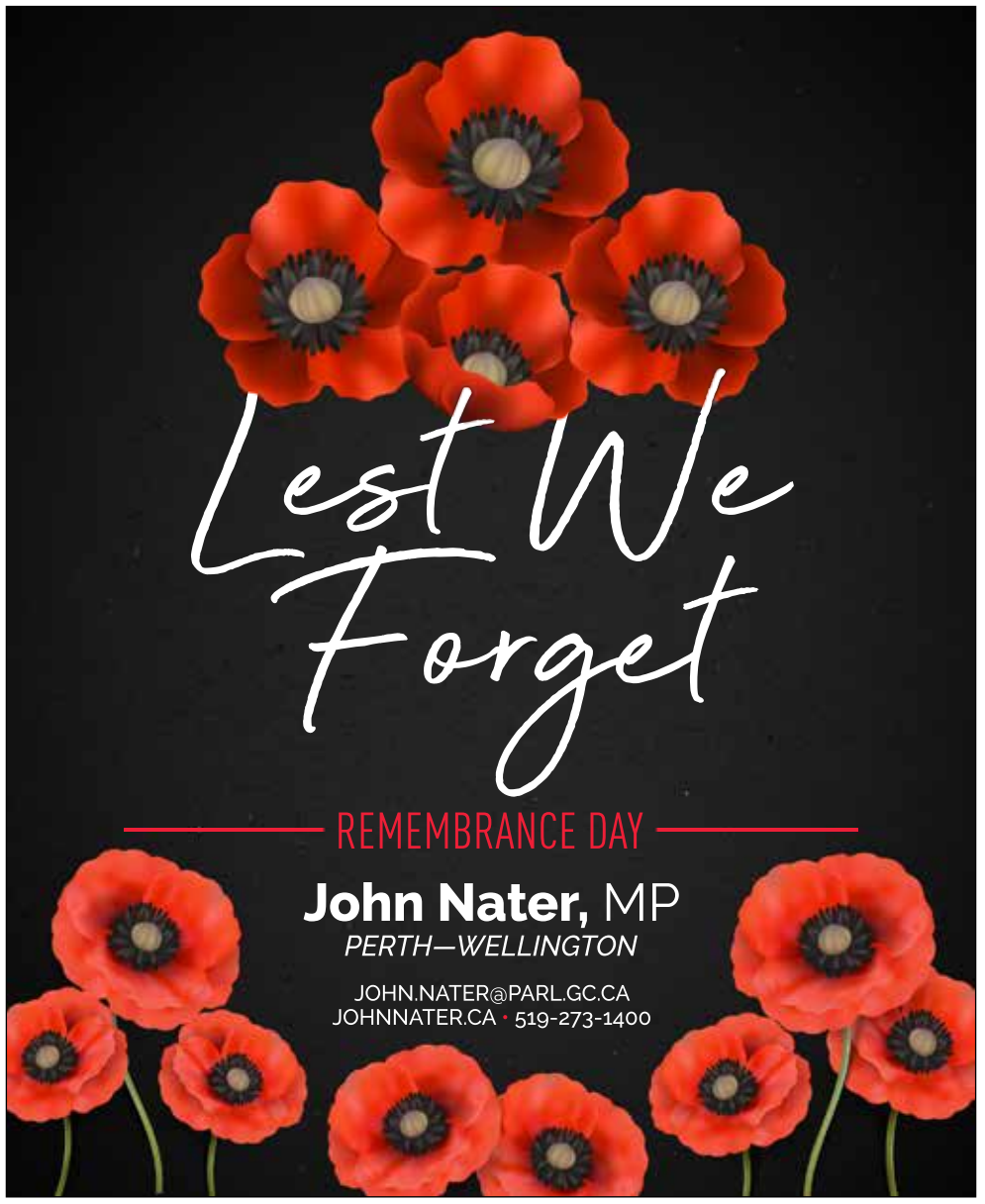
In concluding his tribute, Nater reminded those gathered that while the soldiers commemorated on the monument have long since passed, their memory lives on through the continued efforts of the community.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater reflects on the history of the cenotaph and the names of the people inscribed on it.

"The soldiers listed here are long since gone from this world, but they remain," he said. "They remain, and they always shall, because we will remember them."







2026

Remembrance Day · LEST WE FORGET

Royal Canadian Legion celebrates veterans with massive Toronto mural

Personal stories of fallen soldiers highlight this year's Remembrance Day

LEE GRIFFI

Independent Reporter

The Royal Canadian Legion has unveiled four uniquely designed murals, each of which tells the story of a fallen Canadian service member.

The featured mural tells the story of Allan "Scotty" Davidson who, at just 22 years old, was the captain of the Toronto Blueshirts, the team that would become the Toronto Maple Leafs. In 1914, he led his team to that city's first Stanley Cup. Five months after that victory, he left his team, his career and his home behind to become one of the first professional hockey players to volunteer for the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Serving in France and Belgium, accounts describe acts of remarkable bravery, including rescuing wounded officers and fighting on the front lines.

L-Cpl. Davidson was killed in action on June 16, 1915, when a shell exploded near him in the trenches. Another mural honours him and the more than 120,000 Canadians who gave their lives in service to our country, whose names and stories should never be forgotten.

The mural was unveiled on Oct. 24, the first day of the Poppy Campaign. It stands 23 feet tall and 13 feet wide, and Davidson was chosen because of his connection to Toronto and the fact it was going to be located inside Union Station.

"He and others, their faces and their stories represent all Canadians who have died in the line of duty," said Nujma Bond, the Legion's national communications manager. "It encourages people to think about that, to remember all of them, connect a little more deeply with their personal stories and realize, just like you and I, they had lives and hopes and passions."

The mural is made of about 5,000 sticky notes and on those notes are messages from Canadians across the country speaking about their gratitude for veterans.

"There are also memories people have of family members who served. They are all very personal messages and those are what compose that huge mural. It's quite amazing to see it in person but you can get a good sense of it online in the photos at www.legion.ca."

Bond said Canadians will be fascinated to read about the stories behind the people in the three other murals.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

A new mural unveiled recently at Union Station in Toronto features L-Cpl. Allan "Scotty" Davidson who, at just 22 years old, was the captain of the Toronto Blueshirts, the team that would become the Toronto Maple Leafs. In 1914, he led his team to that city's first Stanley Cup. Five months after that victory, he left his team, his career and his home behind to become one of the first professional hockey players to volunteer for the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Serving in France and Belgium, accounts describe acts of remarkable bravery, including rescuing wounded officers and fighting on the front lines.

"It puts a face to the name and helps us tell the story of remembrance itself, why we do this and why it is so important. It all leads back to the freedom we have in Canada today and the ability to live our lives as we wish."

In addition to local poppy campaigns, the Royal Canadian Legion launched its official Amazon.ca storefront on Oct. 25, 2024. The storefront offers lapel poppies, available for donations of $2, $5, $10 or $20, red neon window poppies, "We Remember" lawn signs and other official Remembrance merchandise.

One hundred per cent of the money raised through poppy donations goes directly to the Legion's Poppy Trust Fund to support veterans and their families. More than 20,000 lapel poppies were distributed through Amazon in 2024, and total sales surpassed $200,000.

New this year is the ability to tap to donate to the campaign with a debit card, credit card or digital wallet via tap-on-phone. Legion volunteers from participating branches can use their own compatible smartphones to collect contactless donations.

"This is very exciting. It allows the region to increase its reach and as these methods expand across the country and more branches take part, it means a Legion volunteer who has an app on their phone can potentially collect donations anywhere they are; not just at their branch, but maybe at the grocery store where someone is looking to donate."

Bond said society is becoming more cashless, though there is no plan to eliminate the poppy cash boxes located across the country. There are also about 2,000 tap to donate boxes available in some areas.

The Legion's inaugural year of rolling out the new technology is supported by BMO.

"For a century, the poppy has carried a profound promise; that the sacrifice of Canada's Veterans will never be forgotten," said Mike Bonner, the head of Canadian personal and business banking distribution for BMO.

"BMO is honoured to stand with The Royal Canadian Legion in keeping that promise. Having recently had the privilege of addressing delegates in Winnipeg at the Legion's 50th Dominion Convention in celebration of their 100th anniversary, I remain humbled by how much those in uniform have done and continue to do in service to Canada."

The Legion continues to offer free memberships,

CONTINUED TO PAGE 17





2026

Remembrance Day · LEST WE FORGET

Other murals honouring veterans to be unveiled

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

something Bond said has resulted in a huge increase.

"We have seen well over 100,000 people join this year. We were already seeing an increase over the past few years and we are really excited. With new members come new ideas, new energy and we are able to harness that and allow people to use their skillsets and put them to use at the local level."

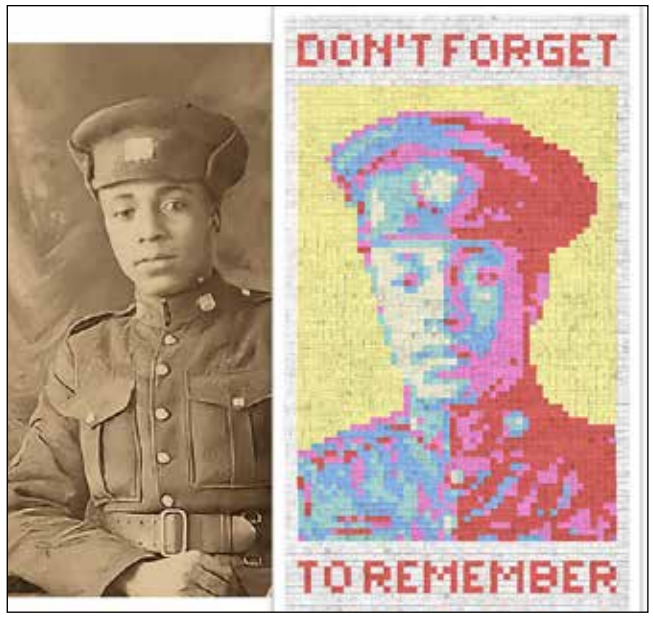
She added there are now over 300,000 members across the country.

"It really tells us that Canadians are very supportive of the Legion's mission and they want to be a part of it. They are supportive of our veterans, our families and they see the Legion as a community hub and community supporter. It bodes well for the future."



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Alexina Dussault (1882-1918), nursing sister, Canadian Army Medical Corps. Alexina Dussault served as a nursing sister during the First World War, caring for the sick and wounded. On June 27, 1918, she was aboard the Canadian hospital ship Llandovery Castle when it was torpedoed by a German submarine. She was one of 14 nursing sisters who lost their lives that night. She was 36 years old.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

John Mansfield (1876-1918), private, No. 2 Construction Battalion. John Mansfield was born in Dartmouth, N.S., and enlisted in 1916. He served with No. 2 Construction Battalion in France, supporting the Canadian war effort during the First World War. In January 1918, he became seriously ill while serving overseas and died on Jan. 14 at the age of 42.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Frederick Lee (1895-1917), private, 47th Battalion. Born in Kamloops, B.C., Frederick Lee was the son of Wong See Lee, originally from Canton, China. He enlisted in 1916 and served with the 47th Battalion during the First World War. On Aug. 21, 1917, Frederick was killed in action during the Battle of Hill 70 in France. He was just 21 years old.

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2026

Remembrance Day · LEST WE FORGET

St. Marys Legion celebrates 100 years of remembrance and community service

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

In July of this year, the Royal Canadian Legion marked its 100th anniversary. Whether readers are involved with the Legion in some way or not, it is an organization that has affected us all at some point in time.

How, you ask? Well, the fact that we live freely in this country is thanks, in large part, to the veterans who fought for us.

In honour of the 100-year milestone, an online memorial for veterans in our community has been created thanks to Niki Sumpter, who has spent countless hours making sure their stories are remembered.

The memorial honours those whose names are listed on the cenotaph, war plaques and banners purchased by their families. Each veteran's biography was developed using publicly available information from historical records, military service records, newspaper archives and memorial databases.

Sumpter said the goal is to ensure every name is recognized with care, accuracy and respect. While the majority of the biographies have been completed, some pages are still being researched.

Sumpter was recently interviewed by CKNX about her work on the website.

"Richard Holt, he created a book, and it had a bunch of the stories of the servicemen on our cenotaph," she said. "So, I expanded on that and I took all of those stories, I researched them a little deeper and we added that to the website.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The original St. Marys Legion building was damaged by fire in 1974 and rebuilt into the facility that stands today.

"A lot of the stories linked back to people with banners, so every person who has either their name on the cenotaph, a war plaque or on one of the banners has their own unique webpage that links to their story."

Though these veterans' stories are being shared, Sumpter hopes to include more personal memories. Family members, friends and others who knew the veterans are encouraged to contribute short stories, memories, messages or photos to their biographies.

You can view Sumpter's work at https://rcl236stmarys.ca/perth-regiment-service-men/.

For edits or additions, contact rcl236@gmail.com or Sumpterse@gmail.com.

A look back at the St. Marys Legion

The history of the St. Marys Legion began shortly after the First World War, when a group of local veterans came together to form an organization known as the Great War Veterans' Association.

In 1921, the organization became known as the British Empire Service League.

Fast forward to 1932 when the members regrouped under the name, Canadian Legion. The club's charter was dated April 23, 1932, and its first banquet was held April 29 when 100 veterans sat down to dine.

The club continued to grow, and by Oct. 17, 1932, plans were underway for its first Poppy Day.

In those days, meetings were held at the Hutton Block on Water Street.

By the early 1950s, the Legion was outgrowing its location and a committee was formed to investigate building a permanent home. The committee consisted of Jim Heinbuck, Lou Lavalle and comrades Murphy, Marshall and Harstone.

The group found a suitable location at the corner of Church Street North and Station Street. The lot and building were

CONTINUED TO PAGE 19





2026

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St. Marys Legion celebrates 100 years of remembrance

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purchased for $7,000 on April 7, 1954.

At the time, the building had only a dirt floor. Legion members and others from the community stepped up to help prepare the building for use.

Two committees were formed to oversee the work.

House committee:

- George Glover, chairman
- Jim Heinbuck
- Lyle Thompson
- Bunk Noble
- Harold Quinn
- Earl Leslie
- Lorne Lince
- Vic Noble
- Bill Osgerby

Building committee:

- William Callcott, chairman
- Grant Oliver
- Don Reid
- Jack Reid
- Art Pringle
- Dave Eeley
- Harvey Ball
- Pete Woodruff

In April 1960, the Canadian Legion finally received its liquor licence, and members felt they could relax and enjoy their new home.

Throughout the 1960s, bingo games continued, along with dances every Saturday night. Members not only enjoyed socializing but also worked hard to support organizations throughout the community.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Legion sponsored baseball and hockey teams and donated $2,000 to the arena, along with many other contributions.

The Legion also served as an important gathering place for Second World War and Korean War veterans. It hosted social gatherings, remembrance ceremonies at the cenotaph and other events that brought veterans together while raising money for the St. Marys community.

Legion darts began in 1969.

Among the many organizations supported by the Legion during those years were War Memorial Children's Hospital, Girl Guides of St. Marys, St. John Ambulance, the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, Canadian Red Cross, Canadian Heart Fund, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, St. Marys Figure Skating Club, Perth County Tuberculosis Society, Muscular Dystrophy Association and St. Marys Boy Scouts.

Around this time, the Blue Douglas kilts of the Perth Regiment became available, and the Legion's colour party decided to adopt them as part of its uniform.

The kilts were purchased by Hap Day and donated to the colour party. They were worn during all parades in 1970.

In 1973, the colour party began carrying rifles during parades, depending on the number of participating members, and its name was changed to the colour guard.

That July, St. Marys held its first Warriors' Day parade, an annual tradition that continued until 1995, when it became increasingly difficult to find enough members to march.

In 1974, the Legion building was heavily damaged by fire, requiring a major rebuild. In July 2024, a plaque was unveiled to honour the past members who helped rebuild the facility.

Over the years, the Legion has remained active throughout the community, supporting local causes through fundraising activities, including bingo games and March break mini-putt.

The following are some of its most popular campaigns and activities.

Poppy campaign

The poppy was first adopted in Canada as a symbol of remembrance in 1921 by the Great War Veterans' Association.

For many years, the Royal Canadian Legion's national poppy campaign began on the last Friday of October.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 20



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Winners of the 2025 National Youth Remembrance Contest are recognized by St. Marys Royal Canadian Legion Branch 236.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Approximately 250 banners honouring past and present members of Canada's military are displayed throughout St. Marys this year.





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St. Marys Legion celebrates 100 years of remembrance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

This year, the Legion adopted Oct. 24 as a fixed annual start date.

The poppy serves as a visual reminder of those who sacrificed so much so we can enjoy our freedom today.

Money raised through the campaign goes into a dedicated poppy fund, which is used to support veterans.

In 2025, Lynn Leslie and Deb Hutton presented the idea of a crocheted and knitted poppy project for St. Marys.

It didn't take long for community members to get on board, resulting in beautiful handmade poppies displayed on bridges, at town hall and at the Legion.

The colourful displays have returned this year, offering another way for residents to show their appreciation for those who served.

Banner campaign

Looking around St. Marys at this time of year, it's hard to miss the banners honouring past and present veterans.

Many proud families have purchased banners featuring photographs, names and military units of their loved ones.

The banner program began in St. Marys in 2020, with approximately 50 banners purchased. By 2025, that number had grown to 220 with even more displayed around town this year.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Crocheted and knitted poppies are once again on display throughout St. Marys as part of a community remembrance initiative that began in 2025.

The banners are produced locally by Gerber Graphics, and the Legion begins accepting orders each March. The cost is a one-time fee of $200.

Seeing the faces and names of those who have served, and those who continue to serve, is a meaningful way to inspire remembrance and recognize people who have put their country first.

Remembrance Day parade

Every year, on the Sunday before Remembrance Day, St. Marys Legion Branch 236 holds its annual parade, marching from the Legion to the cenotaph.

This year's parade will take place Sunday, Nov. 8, beginning at 12:30 p.m., followed by a service at the cenotaph at 1 p.m.

On Wednesday, Nov. 11, the Town of St. Marys will hold its annual Remembrance Day service at the cenotaph, beginning at 11 a.m.

A veterans' dinner will also be held at the Legion that evening at 6 p.m. The dinner is open to the public, with tickets costing $25.

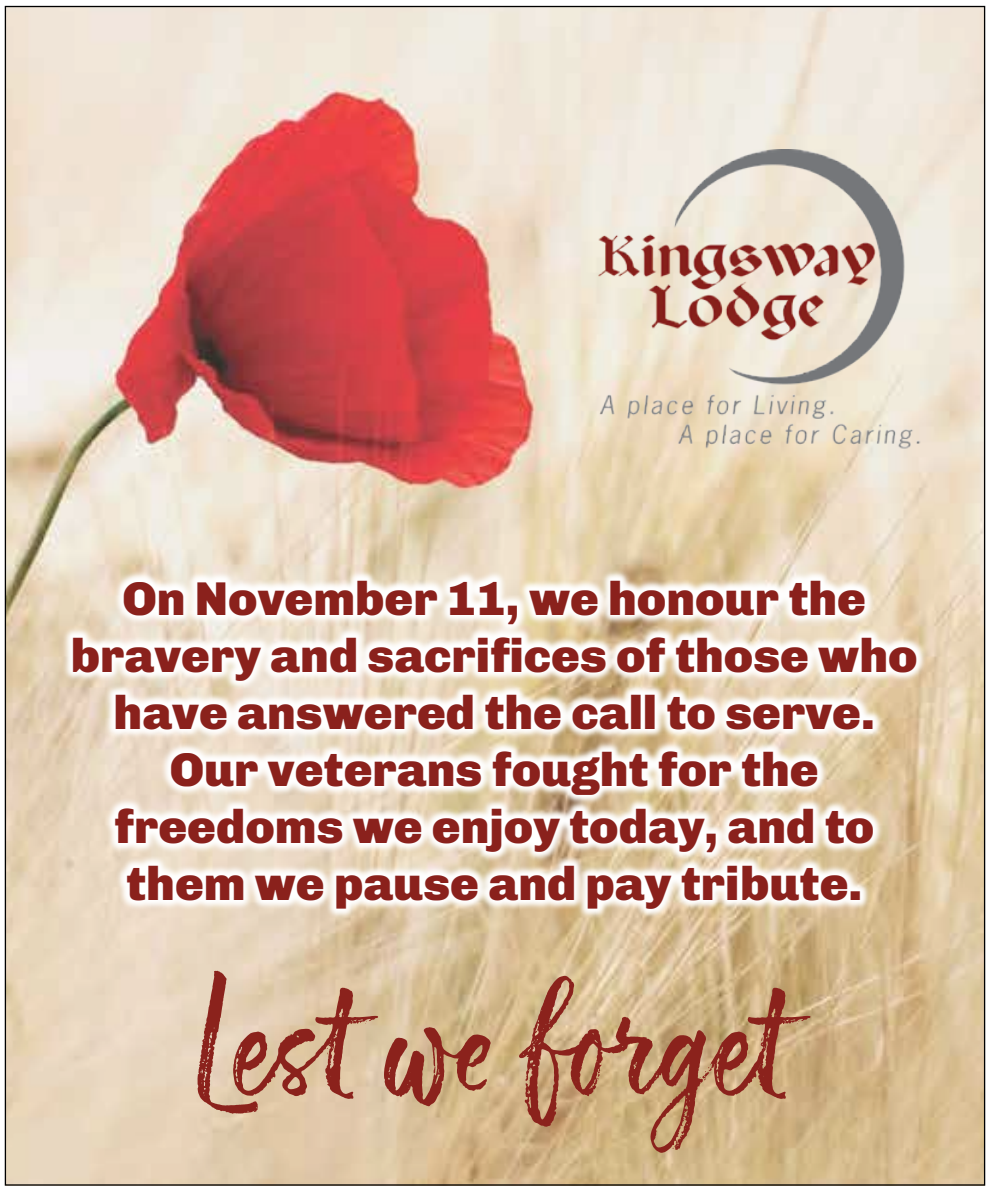
National Youth Remembrance Contest

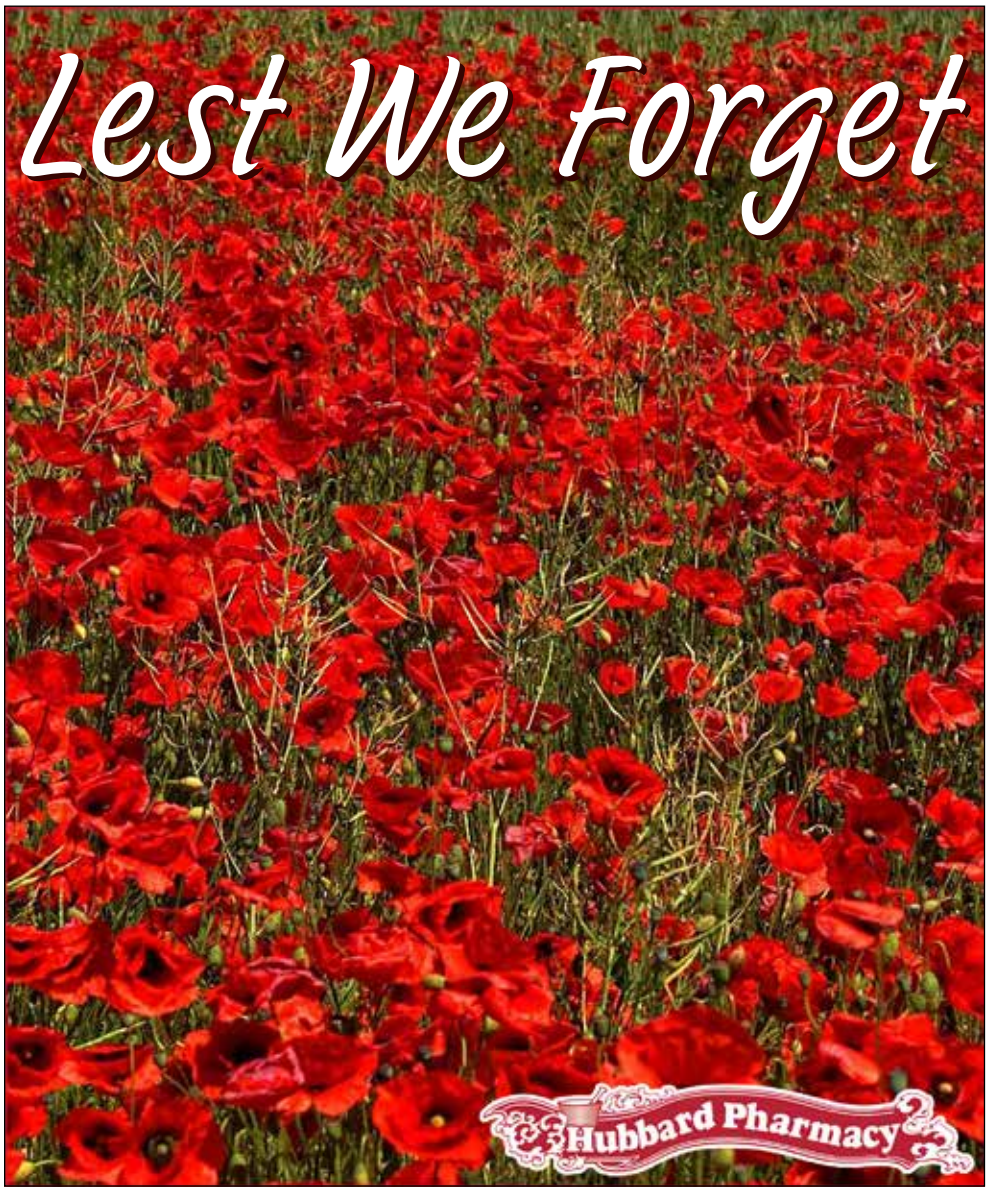
Each year, schools across the country have an opportunity to honour Canada's veterans through the Royal Canadian Legion's National Youth Remembrance Contest.

Students can participate by submitting artwork, poems, essays or videos expressing what remembrance means to them.

The contest includes multiple levels of competition, with successful entries advancing through the various stages, potentially reaching the provincial level.

The program is another important way the Legion encourages younger generations to learn about Canada's military history, recognize the sacrifices made by veterans and carry the tradition of remembrance forward.





Lest We Forget



ONE OF THE MOST MEMORABLE events of World War II... The Battle of Britain...the battle for air supremacy over England... and if lost, the invasion of England. Although commonly outnumbered 10 to 1 in individual battles, the RAF and RCAF, with air crews from Britain, Poland, New Zealand, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, South Africa, Australia, France, Ireland, United States, Jamaica and Palestine defeated the enemy and turned the tide of the Second World War.





Each year, on Remembrance Day a wreath is placed at the Cenotaph in St. Marys to honour the Battle of Britain Pilots.

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2026

Remembrance Day · LEST WE FORGET

ANAF Unit 265 St. Marys invites locals to come check them out

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

One of the gems we are honoured to have in our town is the Army, Navy & Air Force (ANAF) Unit 265, located at 23 Wellington St.

The organization, which was founded in 1840, is the oldest service charter in Canada. It is a non-profit Canadian, ex-service veterans' organization with memberships that includes members of the military, RCMP, police, relatives or any other interested people.

The club holds many fundraising events and is encouraging the public to come check it out. With changing times and fundraising efforts becoming more difficult, our local clubs need our community more than ever.

The club works hard to fundraise with donations going to Parkwood Veterans Hospital along with local hospitals, minor sports including hockey, ringette and baseball, families in need, local food drives and several other community charities.

The ANAF holds a meat draw every Friday at 6 p.m. Some other events locals may be familiar with are the Bavarian Beer Gardens on Stonetown Heritage weekend that features local musicians, a chicken-dinner fundraiser, the Bob Lince golf tournament and their fall pickerel fish fry.

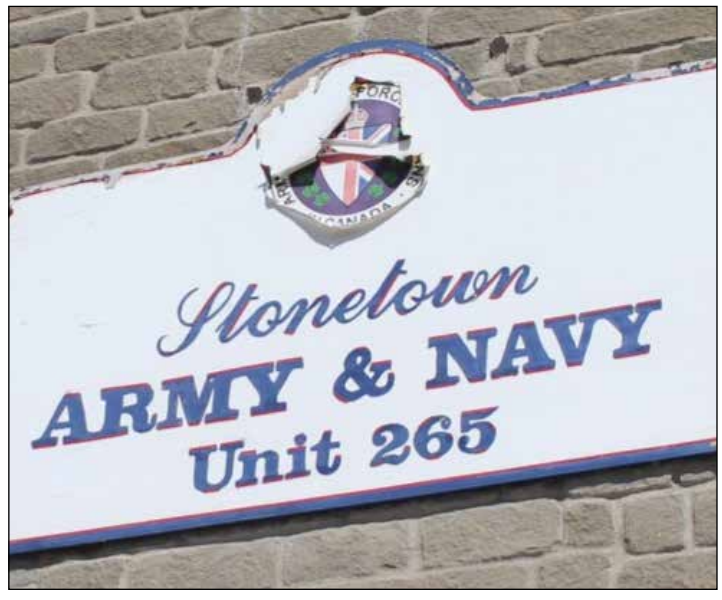
They not only fundraise but like to enjoy fellowship as well and offer activities like cards, darts and pool, which are open to everyone.

The ANAF also sells sausage on a bun from 12-1 p.m. on Thursdays.

Trying out new places and meeting new people can help self esteem, combat feelings of loneliness, make long-lasting memories and there may even be some fun to be had, too.

For more information on ANAF Unit 265 events, call 519-284-4390 or email anaf265.stmarys@gmail.com.

Hours of operation are Monday to Thursday 12-5 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 12 p.m. to close depending on scheduled events, and Sunday from 12-5 p.m.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

St. Marys Army & Navy Unit 265 is located at 23 Wellington St. N.



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On Remembrance Day, we honour those who served, remember those who sacrificed, and thank those who continue to serve.

Lest We Forget



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

Veterans' Decoration Day
Saturday, November 7, 9 AM - 12 PM

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

Legion Ceremony & Parade
Sunday, November 8, 12:30 PM

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

Remembrance Service
Wednesday, November 11, 10:45 AM

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

St. Marys Museum Exhibit
Opening Wednesday, November 11

Visit the St. Marys Museum exhibit 'Service on the Sea: St. Marys and the Royal Canadian Navy" that will be open during regular hours until November 2027.



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ART SHOWS

Saturday, November 14 - 10am to 5pm
Sunday, November 15 - 10am to 3pm

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Just off Highway 7. 10 minutes from St. Marys and 30 minutes from London

For more information visit www.kimatlin.com or follow Kim on Instagram @ kimatlin.
For more questions kim@kimatlin.com 416-706-5447

ART CLASS AT RIVER VALLEY

Sunday, November 15 - 10am to 3pm

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- Good quality brushes, small, medium and large
- Acrylic Paints (suggestions)
- Ultramarine, French, Phthalo, or Cerulean Blue
- Cadmium, Pyrrole, or Napthol Red Light
- Titanium White and Black
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St. Marys, Ontario

St. Marys Independent SPORTS

U12 A Boys win Owen Sound Regional Silver Stick

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The McKinley Hatchery U12 A Boys St. Marys Rock won the championship banner at the Oct. 23-25 Regional Silver Stick tournament in Owen Sound. Pictured in the first row is Ryan Pickel. In the second row, from left to right, are Nico Thompson, Myles Avey, Bode Keller, Lincoln Jennings, Everett Crummer and Warren Atwell. In the third row, from left, are Cameron Smith, Rhett Parkinson, Ashton Ropp, Kyle Johnson, Jack Anderson, Kai Sherwood, Harlan Atwell and Logan Masselis. In the fourth row, from left, are Mike Johnson, Jaden Ropp, Mark Jennings, Scott Crummer and Mitch Watt.

The McKinley Hatchery U12 A Boys St. Marys Rock captured the championship banner at the Regional Silver Stick tournament Oct. 23-25 in Owen Sound.

Head coach Mike Johnson said the team set winning the Regional Silver Stick as a major goal for their 2026-2027 season.

"This was another huge step for the kids," Johnson said. "We set this tournament as one of our big goals for the season and built up for it. We had some keys that we wanted to try to reach as far as our team structure and systematic evolution with these kids, and they really have been absorbing it and utilizing it, and it paid off on the weekend. It was really exciting to see."

According to Johnson, he saw his team display a greater understanding of the team's systems and structures.

"They really are starting to understand why it's important to work together and some little simple structures and how important that can be in your success offensively and defensively," Johnson said. "It's rewarding to see them apply that and get some results from it and understand what it does for them."

The Rock finished tied with the New Hamburg Huskies for first in their pool, with identical 2-1-0 records in the round-robin, while St. Marys finished ahead of the Huskies after winning the head-to-head matchup in the first game of the round-robin.

Johnson noted the win over New Hamburg and their second round-robin victory over the Bruce Grey Bulls were meaningful to the team for different reasons.

"Ryan (Pickel) was the best goalie in the tournament again, and we don't win without him. We had the best defence core in the tournament. They were huge. In the first game against New Hamburg, they really did a great job," Johnson said.

"New Hamburg plays a lot of dump-and-chase, and they put a lot of pressure on defencemen, and our boys didn't get frazzled at all. They just went back and kept making the plays we wanted them to and responded to the physicality nicely. In our second game, Nico (Thompson) had a career game, scoring four goals. Everything just went right for him that game. It was fun to watch."

While Johnson emphasized how valuable every player on his lineup card was, two skaters delivered career-highlight-level performances throughout the weekend – Logan Masselis and Everett Crummer.

"I thought Logan, for the last week and a half, has been playing some of the best hockey I've seen him play in a couple of years," said Johnson. "He's showing some confidence and some understanding. He's taken a big step. Everett had a really big game in the semi-final and scored a couple of goals. He's shown some confidence too.

"It's hard to put individual names down when your whole team plays well and competes so hard, but those are some kids that did things on the weekend that were a little above and beyond what you normally expect out of them, despite the fact they're great hockey players. They had those little moments of bright light shining on them, which was fun to see."

In Masselis, Johnson saw a much more patient puck-mover on the back end, which the bench boss said reflected the rest of the team's rearguards as well.

"Logan is starting to get a lot of patience with the puck. He gets his head up and looks to make plays, which is what we challenge him to do. We don't want our defence just throwing the puck away when they're under pressure. He's really getting confidence in his gap control and his angling, and he's really doing a good job of separating other players from the puck. Really, they all are. All five of those defencemen, Jack (Anderson), Warren (Atwell), Myles (Avey), Kai (Sherwood) and Logan, are big parts of why we're so successful. They're the cornerstone of what we do out there, and if they don't make great plays, then our forwards don't have the puck to make their plays."

Crummer, meanwhile, was deservedly rewarded for his tenacious style of play.

"Everett is your prototypical, hard-working, fast-skating hockey player," Johnson said. "He's a dog on a bone out there, and he was just relentless that game. His first goal came after we won a face-off. He got a quick shot on net, then beat two defenders for a rebound and banged it in with them looking at each other like, 'Where did he come from?' That dogged determination is the key to his game, and I would hate to play against a kid that forechecks that hard. You think you've got him beat and he's in your back pocket again before you know it."

Crummer's two goals, scored just 18 seconds apart in the final minute-and-a-half of the first period, led St. Marys past the West Coast Whitecaps in the semi-finals. Kyle Johnson assisted on both of Crummer's goals, with Cameron Smith also picking up a helper.

Kyle Johnson added a goal of his own later in the game, and Masselis and Rhett Parkinson also scored for the Rock. Parkinson and Thompson also registered an assist.

Mike Johnson called the win in the semis "a great effort from start to finish."

"That was probably one of the most complete team efforts I've seen this team have. We were playing a team that had a couple of players who were dangerous that we knew we had to pay attention to, and the kids all bought into understanding that and how to play against them. We knew what that team was going to throw at us as far as an approach with a forecheck and the way they like to attack, and the kids bought into the way to counter it, and we really controlled the game."

The Rock came up against a familiar foe in the gold-medal game; the Huskies of New Hamburg. However, Pickel turned in a shutout bid in a 3-0 victory for St. Marys to claim the tournament's top prize.

Parkinson opened the scoring with a goal a little over two minutes into the game, assisted by Thompson and Warren Atwell. Kyle Johnson scored an unassisted tally midway through the second, before Harlan Atwell, assisted by Jack Anderson, iced the game in the third to give the Rock a three-goal lead.

Mike Johnson said the team was well prepared for their finals opponent.

"Getting the shutout came down to just understanding what they were going to throw at us and preparing the kids for it. We had just played them the week before the tournament too, so the kids were quite familiar with what they were going to bring and who was going to bring what from New Hamburg. They matched the energy, they matched the physicality, and then, at that point, we're talented top to bottom, and we're hard to play against. We have three lines that can score, five defencemen that can all move the puck and the best goalie in the league. When they're committed to doing it together, they just control the game from start to finish."

The head coach added the win should give the team even more confidence as they look to go on a deeper post-season run at winter's end.

"I hope it just continues to reassure them that they're a good hockey team," said Mike Johnson. "They can play hockey the way it needs to be played to win when it matters. I think we learned a hard lesson in the playoffs last year. We got off that a little bit, and we got upset earlier than we wanted to, so I think winning these big games and starting to really play hockey the way the big boys do is important, and they're starting to understand and see it all come together."

Hodkinson sets two records as Lincs win 12th straight

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Lincolns just continue racking up wins, with their latest coming Oct. 30 over the Elmira Sugar Kings, defeating their 2026 second-round playoff opponent 6-1.

While the performance had significant warts, head coach Jeff Bradley was pleased with how his team began and ended the game.

"I liked many parts of our game," Bradley said. "In the first period, aside from one mistake that ended up causing us to take a penalty, I thought it was a pretty flawless first period. The second, though, I thought after we got on our five-on-three, once it was over, I thought we lost focus completely, and that caused us not to execute properly, it caused us to be in the wrong spots and it caused disarray with our puck management. But, in the third, I thought we righted the ship."

As has been the case for many of the Lincolns' 12 consecutive victories, the first period was the Lincolns' best, with St. Marys outshooting Elmira 18-5 and leading 2-0. Over their 12-game winning streak, the Lincolns have outshot their opponents 203-57 and outscored their opposition 32-3.

Lincs' captain Ryan Hodkinson called the team's first periods a massive part of their success over the last 12 games.

"I think the group doesn't quit," said Hodkinson. "We've seen it multiple times. We all have a good period and we come out flying. Things like our starts have been big, and that really starts with our preparation. Jeff (Bradley) is amazing at getting us prepared from a team standpoint, knowing our systems, knowing their systems, things like that, and the guys all really want to win, and I think we're really showing that."

Owen Miniotas snapped a five-game goal drought and four-game point drought with the Lincs' second goal of the opening period, but Owen Bruining's goal just 92 seconds into the game made history for the Lincolns thanks to an assist by Hodkinson.

With the assist, Hodkinson reached 114 career assists, which broke Chase MacQueen-Spence's Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL) era record for most career assists by a Lincoln, set just last season. The assist also gave Hodkinson 15 straight games with an assist, the longest assist streak in the GOHL era by a Lincoln, surpassing the previous record of 14 straight games set by Jaden Lee in 2024-2025.

Hodkinson described what adding his name to the record books for his hometown club means to him.

"It's pretty surreal," said Hodkinson. "Obviously, it's pretty special being able to do it in your hometown, and to beat Jaden (Lee) and Chase's (MacQueen-Spence) records, it's pretty cool, especially being able to play with them. Seeing them do it and how amazing hockey players they are on the ice, and what makes it more special is how awesome they are off the ice. They are two very gentlemanly guys, and it's just pretty special."

According to Hodkinson, he didn't let himself think about setting records before they happened.

"You don't really want to think about it before it happens," Hodkinson said. "I think that's where your play starts to decrease, so just not thinking about it and going out and playing the game, and I was just fortunate that it could happen in the first shift."

Hodkinson also added a powerplay goal in the third, and just two days later, Hodkinson was named as the GOHL Player of the Month for October after scoring nine goals and 15 assists in nine games in the second month of the season.

Arguably the biggest reason the Lincolns staved off a surging Sugar Kings squad in the second was the play of first-year goaltender Kobe Nadalin who made 10 of his 18 saves in the game during the middle frame.

"We were really fortunate to have Kobe playing the way he was in net," said Bradley. "That could have turned pretty bad for us in the second, so what Kobe did was both important and impressive. Being a young goaltender, we've tried to make sure he's comfortable with the starts he's gotten, and he's wanted bigger tests, and we thought Elmira at home, while they've been playing really well, was going to be a big test for him, and I thought he passed with flying colours."

Nadalin left the game after Elmira's only goal of the contest and didn't return due to a severe cramp in his leg that made it impossible for Nadalin to put any weight on his leg and caused the 17-year-old netminder to walk with a heavy limp after the game. Thankfully, however, there were no pulled muscles or broken bones.

With Nadalin leaving the game, Brogan Colquhoun stepped in to backstop the Lincolns for the final 11 minutes and 34 seconds, making four saves and staring down an Elmira powerplay.

Bradley credited Colquhoun for stepping into the game seamlessly, calling it the "expectation" that anyone be ready to go on the ice at any given moment.

"It's expected from both guys at all times. Obviously, the plan is never to pull a goalie or have a goalie replace another, but we ask all 20 of our players to be focused and ready to go at all times, and that includes the goalie that's not playing at the time. It was good to see, but it's also expected."

Despite the team's imperfect play, Callum McAuley scored the lone goal of the second period, giving the Lincs a 3-0 lead heading into the third. McAuley added two more goals in the final 20 minutes and had two assists in the game for a five-point night.

McAuley, alongside fellow assistant captain Ethan Weir, were both standouts to the bench boss.

"Callum (McAuley) is just playing out of his mind right now," Bradley said. "It's just a continuation of what he's been doing lately. He's been playing some great hockey, and we're really, really happy with how he's playing.

"Ethan (Weir) is known as an offensive guy, but to see his leadership and defensive prowess stand out, it's really nice to see him evolve into that type of player because we need him to do all of that. He wants to be a big part of this team, and he knows defending is a huge part of that, so he knows that it's something he needs to have for his repertoire. He's turned into a really mature player and a veteran on this team, and we need him to lead by example, and he's doing that for us."

Bradley also heaped praise on Chase McDougall who, along with his usual strong defensive play, forechecking tenacity and physicality, partook in a highlight-reel fight with Sugar Kings' forward Colton Sinclair, with the two battering each other with dozens of right hands.

"Chase (McDougall) was huge for us, not only for his play but for stepping up and taking that fight when they were starting to run around a little bit. We lead our conference in fighting majors, and it shows that we're not going to get pushed around. Typically, when teams are winning, there's going to be some frustration shown on the other side and some liberties taken, and I think that's what happened.

"Chase said, 'That's not happening to our guys,' " Bradley continued. "We know how tough Chase is, and it's obviously not something we want him doing on a consistent basis because we want him playing hockey, but sometimes, you have to do that, and he did an amazing job."

With a big slate of games approaching, including two against the Chatham Maroons, one against the Listowel Cyclones and one against the Stratford Warriors, the Lincolns' head coach wants to see his squad deliver some of their best hockey of the season to date.

"I think we're continuing on what we've been doing. That stretch with Chatham, Listowel and Stratford, that's the next big thing we've got circled is that four-game stretch where we're playing the top teams in our conference. We're excited for that challenge, and I think we'll really know what we are when we're beyond that," Bradley said.

"If you look at Stratford and Listowel, we're now going to play against the two best-coached teams in the league, so our skill and what we do as a team may not be good enough. We have to have our minds right and be focused so that we can adjust if and when we need to. I think that's going to be important too."

Early Bird Draw Winner:
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(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Callum McAuley tucks home a beautiful breakaway goal by goaltender Colin Ellsworth during the St. Marys Lincolns' 6-1 win over the Elmira Sugar Kings Oct. 30. McAuley recorded a hat-trick as part of a five-point night.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Chase McDougall fights Colton Sinclair during the St. Marys Lincolns' 6-1 win Oct. 30 against the Elmira Sugar Kings. The two forwards battered each other with dozens of punches during a prolonged third-period fight.

DCVI's Bender, Seshima, Steffler qualify for OFSAA with top-four finishes

Junior boys repeat as WOSSAA champions



(MARK DEWAN PHOTOS)

Pictured from left to right are Charlie Bender, Chisa Seshima and Quinton Steffler during the WOSSAA Cross-Country Championship Oct. 29. Bender finished second in the senior boys' race. Seshima placed third in the senior girls' event. Steffler captured fourth in the para division. All three qualified for OFSAA with their top-four finishes.



(MARK DEWAN PHOTOS)

Pictured are Hayden Barker (#523), Volker Fraser (#522), Andrew Seebach (#521) and Will Richardson (#520), the four members of the St. Marys DCVI junior boys squad that emerged on top overall at the Oct. 29 WOSSAA Cross-Country Championship and qualified to go to OFSAA Nov. 9 in Sudbury.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

Seven St. Marys DCVI students punched their ticket to the OFSAA Cross-Country Championship, taking place Nov. 9 in Sudbury, with strong results at the regional WOSSAA event Oct. 29 in Strathroy.

On the team side, the junior boys headlined DCVI's results, with Volker Fraser, Will Richardson, Andrew Seebach and Hayden Barker combining to finish as the top-ranked team in the junior boys division. Fraser and Richardson crossed the finish line one after the other in ninth and 10th place, with Seebach and Barker following suit, taking 18th and 19th.

It was the second straight year DCVI's junior boys earned the WOSSAA title.

"It's a huge accomplishment for them," said DCVI cross-country coach Marcel Scheele. "I think they knew going in that this race was going to be a little bit tighter than last year. Even though it's the same team, they just had a little bit more range on the other grade nines, so this year meant probably a lot more just to be trying to go back-to-back and have a challenger threaten them this year for that top spot."

Scheele detailed the junior boys' winning formula.

"The race plan was to take the first lap, be controlled, save our breath and make sure we can get to work in that second half," said Scheele. "I told them, 'For the first lap, just take it easy, let the race start the way it will, and people will start coming back to us.' That's exactly how they ran it. They listened well and executed perfectly."

According to Scheele, the difficult feat of going back-to-back at WOSSAA was thanks to how well the junior boys work together.

"You don't see it too often where teams are winning multiple years in a row, but I think we just need to keep our heads up and look forward to OFSAA and see what we can do there. Last year, we finished fourth, and we definitely want to see if we can get in that same position or maybe find ourselves on the podium if we all have a good day.

"I think they just run well together," Scheele continued. "They keep each other motivated during the race where they can all see each other, so I always try to encourage them to get up with each other and work hard with each other."

Individually, Charlie Bender finished second in the senior boys bracket, while Chisa Seshima placed third in the senior girls division, and Quinton Steffler took fourth in the para category, all of whom qualified for OFSAA based on their results.

Seshima had one of the day's more exciting moments for DCVI supporters, emerging from a forested part of the racetrack much farther ahead than when she entered.

"We definitely knew Chisa had the opportunity to move on, but we weren't really sure where she would land during the race," said Scheele. "She started out more controlled and kept some energy in the reserve for a bit. Just under three kilometres into the race, she was going into the woods between the 10th and 15th position, and when she came out, she was in fourth, and that totally caught me off guard."

Scheele added the strong WOSSAA result came after steady growth by Seshima this season.

"She's just so consistent with her racing," Scheele said. "Every race she seems to just progress and progress and get more comfortable in the race setting. I think for her, it's racing smart and not letting the nerves get to her too much and using those nerves as energy and letting the race unfold slowly. It's a long race for those seniors, so there's lots of time to go wrong or to go right, and thankfully, in her case, it went right."

For Bender, Scheele credited the veteran runner for embodying one of the most important intangibles a cross-country racer can have.

"Charlie has had a lot of good seasons stacked on top of each other. Last year, as a Grade 11, he stepped up for the team and raced well. I think, with another year under his belt of training, injury-free, and that big word we keep coming back to – consistency – I think with all those things coming together, he's comfortable out there. He's worked really hard and makes it look easy in these first few rounds of qualifying."

In Steffler's case, Scheele described the OFSAA-bound para runner as an "ironman" for DCVI's cross-country squad this year.

"Quinton had another great race. He has been consistent all season. He is a bit of an ironman as he didn't miss any races this season. He doesn't miss a practice, he doesn't miss a race, he's always out there and he's always pushing himself. He wants to work hard and he definitely shows that every day. I would have to attribute his success to his consistency, his willingness to come out every day."

Scheele also praised the entire cross-country team from St. Marys for their team spirit.

"We have a really solid team this year. It's a very encouraging team that lifts everyone up throughout the year. Everyone has definitely gotten closer and cheers everyone on. When Chisa was in that last race, I was just getting everyone all fired up, and everyone was running around the course. Our team chemistry just shows us how strong and deep a team we are."



Forman Electric completes light upgrade at CBHFM's King Field



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Beginning Oct. 29 and wrapping up Nov. 2, a crew from Forman Electric completed a light replacement at King Field at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (CBHFM). The new energy-efficient LED lights will provide "a better playing experience" for local ball players, said CBHFM director of operations Scott Crawford. The funding for the upgrade came from the Jays Care Foundation's Field of Dreams program.





(WENDY LAMOND PHOTOS)

The crew from Forman Electric took down the old halogen lights from the posts around King Field on the first day of the project, before replacing them over the next two days with the new energy-efficient LED lights.

SPENCER SEYMOUR
Independent Sports Reporter

King Field at the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (CBHFM) received an infrastructure upgrade, which was started Oct. 29 and finished Nov. 2, in the form of new and improved light fixtures.

A crew from Forman Electric completed the installation at the hall of fame grounds. The project included replacing the old halogen lights with new energy-efficient LED lights, with Scott Crawford, the CBHFM's director of operations, describing the lighting upgrade as a big win for local baseball players.

"The Hall of Fame was able to secure the funding from the Jays Care Foundation for the light replacement," said Crawford. "This will allow for a better playing experience for all the St. Marys kids and adults who fill the ballfields every evening all season long and provide a better playing experience because they are brighter, newer and instantly bright, therefore not needing to wait for them to fully turn on."

As noted, the funding for the light upgrade came from the Jays Care Foundation's Field of Dreams initiative, with the original announcement of the funding being made June 7 earlier this year.

King Field in St. Marys was one of 22 ballparks across the country to receive a total of $2.6 million as part of the Field of Dreams program, which helps to build, enhance, or refurbish baseball diamonds in communities throughout Canada. The 2026 Field of Dreams investment was the largest since the program's inception, which has invested more than $24 million since it was created in 2000.

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St. Marys Bowling Lanes turns into haunted house on Halloween









(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The St. Marys Bowling Lanes hosted a haunted night of fun on Halloween, welcoming trick-or-treaters, handing out candy, and celebrating with costume-clad bowlers and visitors of all ages Oct. 31.

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Directions: Go west through Orangeville on Hwy 9 to County Rd 16 (Veterans Way at Greenwood Cemetery), turn north 5 miles to farm on East side. OR From Shelburne go east on Hwy 89 for 2 miles to Mono-Amaranth Townline, turn south & go 5 miles to farm on East side.Townline, turn south & go 5 miles to farm on East side.

Cattle: (79)Heifers: (18) Char, (17) Blk Simm, (33) Angus, (11) Red -1st time calvers, bred Angus & Limo, vacc. **(18) X-bred Heifers** - bred Black Angus, vacc. **(17) Angus Heifers** - bred Black Angus. **(10) Blk Angus cows** - all bred Black Angus, vacc. **(8) Charolais Cows** - bred Charolais, vacc. **(3) Mixed Cows** - with calf at side, vacc.
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MINOR SPORTS SCRAPBOOK



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Russell Ward sends the puck on target during the Downie Optimist Club U9 LL Boys Blue St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Hudson Terpstra blasts a big shot from the point during last Thursday's McKinley Hatchery U13 B Boys St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Elliot Cociu scores on a penalty shot during the McKinley Hatchery U13 LL Boys Blue St. Marys Rock game last Saturday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Rowan Pickel sends a shot flying off the rush during this past Sunday's U18 LL Boys St. Marys Rock game.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Addie Dundas snipes the ring on goal during the McKinley Hatchery FUN3 St. Marys Snipers (Vergeer) game last Saturday.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Korie King releases a shot on net during last Saturday's Frayne Custom Cabinets-Hubbard Pharmacy U12 C St. Marys Snipers game.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: The art of starting over – Ira Ivchenko's inspiring St. Marys journey

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

Sometimes, newcomers arriving in Canada seem to have similar experiences on the surface – starting over, facing new challenges and building a foundation. But when you get to know the people behind these journeys, every path turns out to be entirely unique. I always feel a genuine sense of joy watching fellow Ukrainians navigate immigration and turn tough moments into personal triumphs.

The reason I want to share my friend's experience today is because it shows what sheer determination looks like, and how much a welcoming town like ours truly matters.

Today, the spotlight is on Ira Ivchenko. Many of you might actually know her family already through her husband, Val, who runs Legend tattoo studio in downtown St. Marys. Over the past couple of years, Val has built a fantastic reputation in our town, becoming widely known for his extraordinary artistic detail and custom ink work. But behind every strong family is a story of shared strength, and today I want to introduce you to Ira's own remarkable journey.

If you ask her what matters most in travel, she won't talk about cheap flights or fancy resort packages. She'll tell you it's having someone dependable to rely on when something goes wrong.

Back in Ukraine, she worked in tourism for years. Her main focus was always looking out for her clients. When flights were canceled mid-trip, luggage went missing, or unexpected problems popped up overseas, she was the first person people called. Long after standard office hours, she stayed at her desk fixing schedules and making sure families made it home safely. For her, travel was never about just pushing buttons on a computer screen – it was about genuinely taking care of people.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Home in St. Marys: Ira Ivchenko alongside her husband, Val (owner of Legend tattoo studio), and their two children.

When she arrived in Canada, her travel career had to take a backseat for a while. To support her family and build a solid financial foundation, she took a physically demanding job on a factory floor. It was exhausting work, but she did it with pride, resilience and dedication.

During this busy time, her family also welcomed their second baby right here in Canada. Yet, even with a newborn, a bustling household and factory fatigue, her active nature and desire to give back never slowed down.

In Ukraine, alongside her travel background, she was deeply involved in tennis. Wanting to connect with our local community, she stepped up as a volunteer coach over the summer, teaching youth tennis lessons to local kids on our courts. Watching her passion was a wonderful reminder of how much heart she brings to everything she does.

Between raising two kids, coaching tennis and adjusting to life in a new country, her days were packed. Yet she decided it was the right moment to step back toward her main profession and study Canadian travel law.

In Ontario, anyone selling travel must be certified by the Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO). The system protects consumers, but the study guides are full of complex legal terms, liability rules and strict regulations.

Studying Canadian laws in a second language while caring for a baby late at night was no easy task. But she spent two intense weeks studying, building her English vocabulary and passed the rigorous TICO exam on her very first attempt.

For her, stepping into the Canadian travel industry has been a fascinating experience, especially comparing it to how things operate back in Ukraine. It isn't just about learning new licensing rules and strict government regulations. What excites her most is discovering the different travel habits and favourite getaway destinations of Canadian tourists.

She also notes that travelers in Canada enjoy an exceptional level of legal protection. With clear safety protocols and compensation structures in place for unexpected disruptions, clients can explore the world with real peace of mind.

With her license in hand, her next step was learning how the local market works. And this is where the magic of a small town like St. Marys comes in. Here, no meeting is ever truly random, and everyone seems connected in the most unexpected ways.

She ended up having a chat with Stewart Grant, who owns Stonetown Travel and publishes this newspaper. That single conversation showed how close-knit our community is. Stewart offered practical advice, explained how travel agencies operate locally and warmly encouraged her path forward.

"In a big city, you're often just another resume in an inbox," she said. "Here in St. Marys, people are genuinely connected. A simple conversation over coffee gave me clear direction."

While she continues working through the lengthy paperwork for Permanent Residence, she refuses to put her life or goals on pause. Armed with her TICO certification, years of international experience and a genuine passion for hospitality, she is excited to begin this new chapter right here in our town.

Her story is a sweet reflection of what makes St. Marys so special – a place where hard work, community warmth and new beginnings naturally come together.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Are you a teen who loves animals and/or crafting? Then the Pompom Animals Teen Craft is perfect for you! Learn how to create cute animals out of yarn in a fun and inclusive space ideal for kids aged 10-16. Night one of this free program is Monday, November 9, and the second is Monday, November 23. Attend one night or both (we recommend coming to both if you're interested in making multiple fluffy friends!). Register for the night(s) you wish to attend here: tinyurl.com/PomPom-Teen-Craft

Up This Week

- Fri., Nov. 6: PA Fun Day (10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.), Kids Chocolate Bar BINGO* (1-2 p.m.)
- Sat., Nov. 7: Pet Safety with DogoDen*~ (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.)
- Mon., Nov. 9: Beginners Mahjong (10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.), Teen Craft (6-8 p.m.)*
- Tues., Nov. 10: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Wed., Nov. 11: Digital Literacy – Session 3* (5-7 p.m.), FOL Social (6:30-8 p.m.)
- Thurs., Nov. 12: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

***Registration Required ~Held in the Friendship Centre Multipurpose Room (317 James St. S)**

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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

Don't sacrifice laughter and fun for history at East Ward Park

East Ward Park holds a deep historical significance as it was the burial ground for members of the United, Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican congregations, with some graves dating back to 1885.

Now, the Bereavement Authority of Ontario plans to replace the children's playground and baseball diamond with grass at a cost upwards of $450,000. While walking will still be allowed, all children's play will be prohibited.

This change risks losing a space that has brought joy to our community since the 1960s. Is this an investment we truly want, when it may take away the laughter of our children? Let's not accept this; let's raise our voices and stop this unnecessary cost and hurt.

Heather McKenzie, St. Marys

EAT AT OUR HOUSE: Low-sodium weeknight dinner menu



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

As many know, I am on a low-sodium renal diet. A common misconception is what I eat lacks flavour with limited salt and seasonings.

Quite the contrary, you can enjoy your favourite foods while maintaining healthy food choices. The following two recipes are on my list of favourite comfort foods you don't have to sacrifice.

The dessert may not be renal friendly, but what else are we going to do with all the leftover Halloween candy?

Happy November.

Low-sodium Texas-style chili

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 1lb lean ground beef
- 1 large onion
- 1 can tomato sauce, unsalted if possible
- 1 cup low-sodium beef broth
- 1 cup water
- 1 can green chili pepper, chopped (can be found in Mexican section)
- 1 orange or red bell pepper, chopped
- 2 tbsp chilli powder (I like Troyer's Spices' salt-free blend)
- 1 tbsp garlic powder or granulated garlic
- 1/4 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1/4 tsp Cajun seasoning

Method:

- In a large pot, cook beef over medium heat until browned.
- Stir in onion and cook until soft.
- Stir in tomato sauce, 1 cup broth, 1 cup water, green chilis, bell pepper and spices.
- Bring to a boil then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for at least 1 hour. The longer it goes, the more the flavours develop. Add salt to taste.
- Serve with cornbread recipe below, tortilla chips, rice, garlic bread, etc. Optional to add shredded cheese and sour cream.

Easy low-sodium cornbread

Prep: 7 minutes; Cook: 23 minutes; Total: 30 minutes; Serves: 12

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour, not self-rising
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 3/4 tsp baking soda
- 2/3 cup brown sugar, packed.

This recipe makes a sweeter cornbread but you can decrease brown sugar to 1/2 cup.

- 2 eggs beat until frothy
- 1/2 cup cooking oil: veg, canola or avocado
- 1 cup minus 1 tbsp milk
- 1 tbsp white vinegar

Method:

- Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray baking dish with cooking spray or unsalted butter.
- Prepare the milk and vinegar mixture so the milk can sour while other ingredients are being prepared. Add 1 tbsp vinegar to a measuring cup and add milk to reach 1 cup. Set aside.
- Mix first 4 dry ingredients in a medium sized mixing bowl and whisk until well blended,
- Add oil, well beaten eggs and buttermilk to dry ingredients.
- Mix until just blended with a spatula. Batter may be slightly lumpy.
- Pour/spread the batter into a greased baking dish. Bake in preheated oven for 22-26 minutes just until cornbread is a light golden-brown colour and toothpick comes out clean. Don't overbake! The cornbread may appear loose in the middle but as long as toothpick comes out clean it is baked enough.

Halloween candy cookie bars

Leftover Halloween candy? Look no further.

Prep: 15 minutes; Cook: 30 minutes; Total: 45 minutes; Serves: 16

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg + 1 large egg yolk, room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup chopped candy bars (whichever you prefer)

Method:

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8x8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper on all sides.
- In a large mixing bowl, whisk melted butter, brown sugar until combined. Whisk in egg, egg yolk and vanilla until combined.
- Add flour, baking powder and salt. Using a silicone spatula, whisk until no streaks of flour remain. Gently fold in chopped up Halloween candy, mixing only until combined.
- Scrape batter into prepared pan, spreading to edges.
- Bake until edges are set and blondies are golden brown. 25-30 minutes. They will continue to bake as they cool in pan.
- Place pan in cooling rack and allow bars to cool completely before slicing into 9 bars or 16 smaller ones.



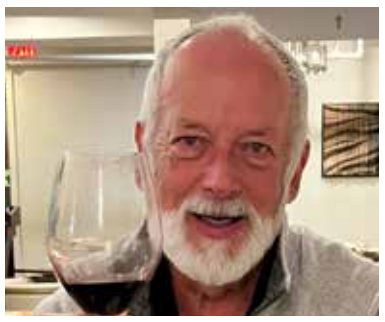
(LAUREN EEDY PHOTO)

You don't have to sacrifice flavour when cutting down on salt. Try this low-sodium Texas-style chilli as an example.





OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Grenada's ever-changing Underwater Sculpture Park



PAUL KNOWLES
Independent Columnist

There is a conundrum that faces travel journalists: should we constantly visit new destinations, or is it okay to return to those we love? Well, obviously, it's ideal when we – and therefore, our readers – discover somewhere new. And that's usually the goal, and I usually manage to accomplish it.

But there are some places so special that they almost demand our revisited attention. And the Underwater Sculpture Park at the Caribbean island of Grenada is one of those.

I first experienced the sculpture park in 2023. I had the great good fortune to be on the spot as many new sculptures were added to the attraction. And I was able to spend a lot of time with the primary sculptor who has produced the amazing works – Jason deCaires Taylor.

So, when I got the invitation to return to Grenada and pay another visit to the underwater attraction, I was delighted.

Here's the back story. Taylor, a very talented artist, is also an experienced scuba diver. He came to Grenada in 2004 planning to open a dive shop. That didn't happen.

But something much more significant did take place. He became aware of a bay on Grenada's west coast where all the underwater life had been decimated by a hurricane. To the artist in Taylor, this was an easel begging to be filled.

So he did. In 2006, the first sculptures were lowered into the bay. Life-sized or larger, they were intended to attract the attention of divers – including, of course, tourists – and also to serve as artificial reefs that might encourage the regrowth and return of coral and other marine life.

The project grew – both expanding and successfully fostering oceanic growth – eventually including over 40 sculptures by a number of different artists.

Then came 2023 when the park nearly doubled in size, with 31 sculptures added – again, most by Taylor – to bring the total to 75. The new sculptures included "Coral Carnival" – many large statues representing figures from Grenada's folk culture. The entire installation has been named one of the 25 wonders of the world by National Geographic. And I was blessed to be on hand as the works were lowered into the sea, and then to be able to don my snorkel and swim among them.

Taylor never sees his works as finished products. He loves the fact that as they remain in their aquatic setting, they inevitably change. Some of the changes to the earlier works involved the erosion of some features, but Taylor and his artistic colleagues have constantly improved their materials – always aware of causing no environmental damage – so today, the changes involve natural additions. Coral and sea plants grow on the sculptures, changing their appearance, often in dramatic ways.

And I got to see this up close and personal on my return visit this year. I don't dive, but I do love to snorkel, and the works in the Underwater Sculpture Park are in water sufficiently shallow that snorkelers can get a very good look at each one without diving. Taylor says the sculptures are all at depths of no more than eight metres.

During this 2026 trip, I and a few travel-journalist colleagues went out on a tour with folks from Eco Dive, a dive shop deeply committed to environmental protection and education. Led by a well-informed guide, we snorkeled around the Molinere Beauséjour Marine Protected Area (the official name of the bay) to see every one of the 75 works.

And yes, time and salt water have certainly collaborated with the original artists to bring continual change to the sculptures. The most exciting changes reflect the success this project has had in turning static pieces of art into living, artificial reefs. In my opinion, the pieces are continually becoming more beautiful, more interesting and more compelling.

Taylor was also asked to create and place an underwater sculpture off the shore of another island – Carriacou – which is officially part of Grenada. Carriacou was slammed by Hurricane Beryl in 2024, but is well on the way to recovery, and a visit – by small plane or ferry – can be a fascinating part of your visit to Grenada.

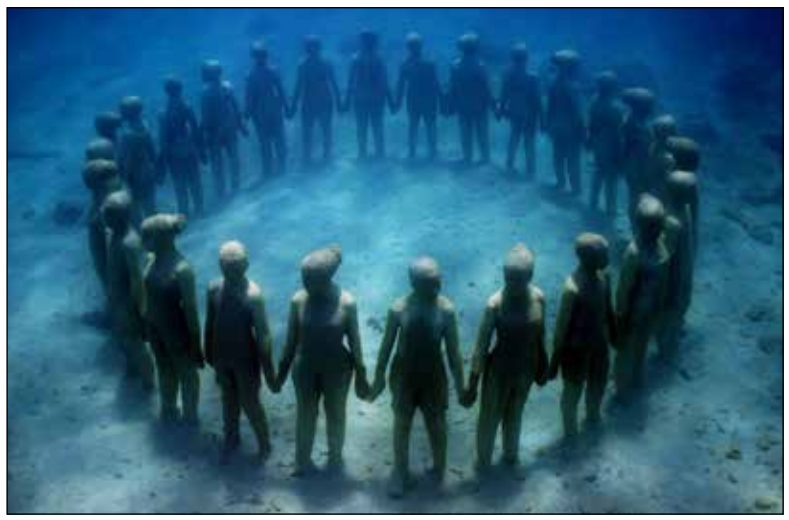
From time to time, I get asked for my opinion about travel destinations. Especially now, when many Canadians are avoiding travel to the U.S., people wonder about warm-weather holidays including in the Caribbean.

I have not visited every Caribbean island, but having sampled quite a few, I can easily say that my favourites are the Windward Islands – those in the eastern Caribbean, including Dominica, Barbados, Grenada and their neighbours.

They are all great spots for a cold-weather escape. But Grenada is undoubtedly special for a number of reasons – warm hospitality, superb beaches (especially Grand Anse), terrific food, unique culture, fascinating history (where else will you find a child's playground sharing a park with the hulks of abandoned Russian war planes?).

But first on my list of great Grenadian treasures is the ever-changing Underwater Sculpture Park. Grab your snorkel and go!

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.



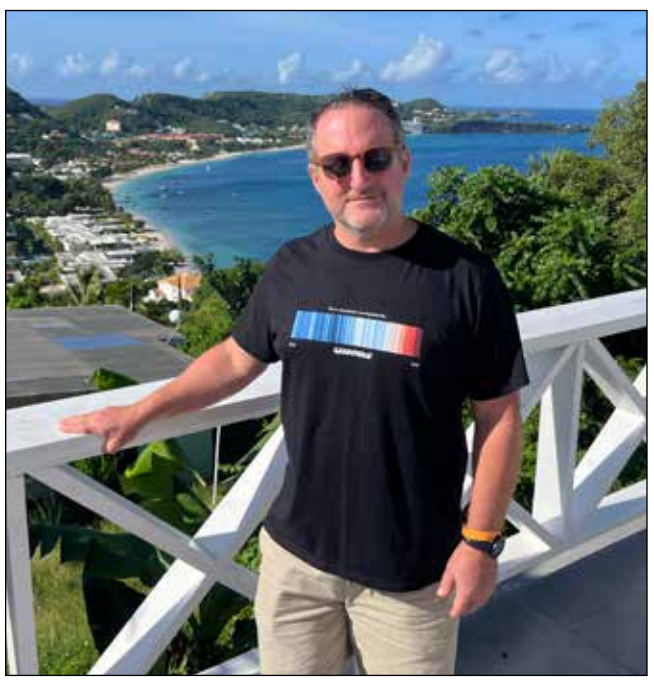
(PHOTO COURTESY OF PURE GRENADA)

Vicissitudes by Jason deCaires Taylor is one of the early works in the Underwater Sculpture Garden, clearly visible to snorkelers as well as divers.



(JASON DECAIRES TAYLOR PHOTO)

Part of the new "A World Adrift" installation in the waters off Carriacou.



The artist, Jason deCaires Taylor. (PAUL KNOWLES PHOTO)



(JASON DECAIRES TAYLOR PHOTO)

The author was an on-the-spot spectator for the installation of 31 new sculptures in 2023.



(JASON DECAIRES TAYLOR PHOTO)

Coral and other sea life constantly changes the appearance of the sculptures, as the installation succeeds as an artificial reef.

Thorndale News

A section within the St. Marys Independent





Walking the Camino: A journey of perseverance and discovery

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Sometimes, when we challenge ourselves, no matter what the feat is, it can be an amazing experience, allowing us to learn more about ourselves and the world around us.

Recently, Connie Bontje and Valerie Jary of Thorndale returned from their Camino de Santigo walk, the world-famous and historic pilgrimage route that leads to the shrine of Saint Jamines in Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain. Bontje and Jary chose the Portuguese route starting from Porta, Portugal, approximately 260 kilometres in length.

Carrying backpacks with all their clothing and necessities, along with sleeping bags, rain gear and extra shoes, weighing in at 6.8 kilograms in total, Bontje and Jary walked between 20 and 28 kilometres each day. They started out at 6:30 a.m. and walked until early afternoon each day, when they arrived at their accommodations for the night – either small hotels or hostels.

When they started out in Porto, they were given a pilgrim passport in which they collected stamps along the route. These stamps became very important in earning their official Compostela certificate upon completion of the walking route. At the start of their journey, they were also given a large white scallop shell to hang on their backpacks, signifying that they were walking the Camino de Santiago.

Besides the challenge of the daily trek through small historic villages, varied terrain, lush woodlands and rolling farmland, Bontje said the experience was wonderful.

"We were immersed in the culture of the area. Once we finished for the day and got to our accommodation, we would do any washing we had, clean ourselves up and explore the village we were staying in. It was a wonderful experience, especially meeting people from all over the world who were also on this walk. Sometimes we would meet the same people two or three times along the way," she said.

"A few days in our walk, I developed blisters on my heal and had to go to urgent care," Jary added. "That was upsetting and painful, and the worst part about my walk. I thought I would have to quit and go home. But after a day of rest and a well-bandaged foot, I continued only at a slower pace than Connie and we would meet up every afternoon at our agreed-upon stop. I learned and proved to myself I can do anything, even with blisters. We actually walked 300 kilometres and we're so proud of what we did."

When asked about their most memorable experience, both Bontje and Jary agreed.

"Every day had special moments, happy accidents or incidents that made us smile, absorbing local culture and interacting with people along our route," Bontje said.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Thorndale's Connie Bontje and Valerie Jary at the end of their 300-kilometre Camino de Santigo walk in front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain.

What's happening at the Thorndale Library in November

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Whether you're looking to get creative, find your next favourite book, honour Canada's veterans or get a head start on holiday decorating, the Thorndale Library has something for everyone this November.

Along with its regular programming for young children, families and youth, the library is offering several special events and activities for residents of all ages.

• **Valentines for Vets:** Nov. 3-14. Children and adults are encouraged to make special cards for veterans in recognition and appreciation of their service. Cards can be handed in to Thorndale Library staff, who will forward them for distribution to veterans across Canada.

• **The Art of Hanging Out:** Wednesday, Nov. 4, 4:30-5:30 p.m. School-aged children and youth ages seven to 17 are invited to spend time with friends, get creative and challenge their crafting skills. It's a chance to hang out, try something new and enjoy an afternoon of creativity at the library.

• **November Book Sale:** Saturday, Nov. 14, to Saturday, Nov. 21, during regular library hours. Come to the library and pick up a book or even a bag full! Find some good reads while supporting library programming. Books are available by donation.

• **Vintage Book Ornament:** Tuesday, Nov. 17, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Get into the holiday spirit with this creative decoration program. Using pages from an old book, participants will craft a snowflake ornament that brings an old-fashioned touch to their holiday decor. Registration required.

• **Winter Driving Refresher:** Tuesday, Dec. 8, 10:30 a.m. Seniors concerned about winter driving are invited to join Kristy from the Ministry of Transportation for a refresher on driving safely during the winter months. The presentation will cover seasonal rules of the road and what to keep in your vehicle in case of an emergency.

For more information or to register for programs, visit the Thorndale Library in person or online at library.middlesex.ca, call 519-461-1150 or email thorndale_staff@middlesex.ca.

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Riddles

What has 13 hearts, but no lungs, feet or bellybuttons?
A deck of cards.

What five-letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
Short.

I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. I have nobody, but I come alive with the wind. What am I?
An echo.

What is always in front of you but can never be seen?
The future.

What starts with a 'P', ends with an 'E', and has thousands of letters?
A post office

Give me a drink, and I will die. Feed me, and I'll get bigger. What am I?
A fire.

What breaks as soon as you say its name?
Silence

What's one thing that tastes better than it smells?
Your tongue.

What word begins with E and ends with E, but only has one letter?
Envelope.

I have no wings, but I can fly. I have no eyes, but I can cry. What am I?
A cloud.

- Word Search -

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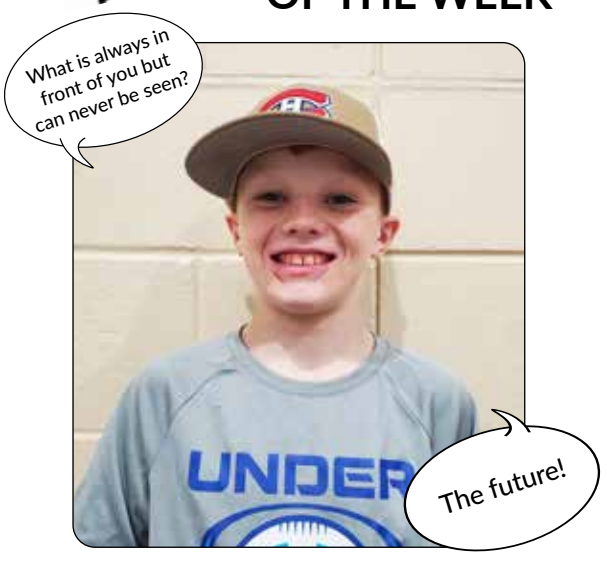
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FlyDubai attack
Messi retires
Roller coasters
Starlink
Alberta vote
Russian asset
French riots
CFB Wainwright
BC Election
Milwaukee Brewers

The SUNSET DINER

The **Riddle Kid** Presents
OF THE WEEK



Levi Garniss (10)

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

On Remembrance Day, we honour the courage and sacrifice of those who served and remember the important role animals have played alongside them throughout history.

Take a moment to reflect, remember, and cherish the companionship our pets bring to our lives.

STELLA

Our Pet of the Week is Stella, a nine-week-old Golden Retriever (90%) Labrador (10%) mix. Stella is adjusting well with her new family, the McEwans. Recently Stella has learned to sit. She loves her treat ball and loves meeting new friends.



OBITUARY

Mowat



Susan Glennie Mowat died peacefully on October 13, 2026 at the Stratford General Hospital. She was 79 years of ago.

Susan was predeceased by her father, George Henderson Mowat, and her mother, Helen MacGregor Glennie; she was also predeceased by her sister Barbara Morton. She is survived by her nephew David Crowder, her niece, Cheryl Lavigne, seven first cousins and a number of other younger relatives.

Susan grew up in Thornhill, Ontario. She then moved to Toronto where she worked at Montreal Trust for some years. During her time in Toronto she enjoyed a trip to England and Holland with a friend.

She was very close to her cousin, Hugh Mowat, and when Hugh and his family moved to St. Marys, Susan moved too. During her time in St. Marys, she joined the Salvation Army; she proudly participated in the Sunday services and volunteered at the Salvation Army food bank and thrift shop. She enjoyed the companionship of the friends she made there. When her involvement with the Salvation Army ended, she joined several smaller religious communities and looked forward to hearing the Sunday messages each week.

The family would like to extend their heart felt thanks to Diana and Cal Drury who became friends of Susan's and supported her during the final years of her life. When Susan moved from St. Marys to Seaforth and then to Tavistock, Diana and Cal kept in touch with her, visiting her on a regular basis and helping her manage her affairs. Susan, too, was very appreciative of all that Diana and Cal did for her.

At Susan's request there will not be any funeral, her ashes will be buried in St. Marys Cemetery.

OBITUARY

Pickel



Murray Pickel passed away on Oct. 31, 2026, aged 71 years. A much loved husband of Suzanne Seiler and amazing father of David (Kelsey) and Jeff(Renee). He adored his grandchildren, Hannah, Mathew, Kylie and Bree. Murray was the eldest son of Lois and Harold Pickel. Brother of Donna, Jean (Paul) McRoberts, Charles (Diane), Ron (Kelly), and Anne (Steve) Mills. He was loved by many nieces and nephews.

Murray grew up in a farming family in Wellburn. A life long passion for hockey, Murray played for the St Marys Lincolns, racking up a few goals and even more penalties. Murray received a scholarship to play hockey at Western Michigan University. He played four years and earned an honours business degree. Murray remained a proud Bronco throughout his life.

After graduation Murray worked diligently for 40 plus years in agricultural chemical industry. Murray had many successful business ventures and spent time as a township councillor. Murray always maintained his love for farming and continued to farm with his brothers Ron and Charles and nephew Jack.

Sadly, Murray developed Parkinson's disease, and has spent the last year and a half living at Kingsway Lodge in St. Marys, receiving excellent care.

A celebration of life, will be held at the River Valley Golf Club, 4725 Line 1, St Marys, on Sunday November 8 from 1 - 4pm. Donations to any of the following would be greatly appreciated: St. Marys Healthcare Foundation, Browns United Church, or Kingsway Life Care.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Shrubsole



Robert George Shrubsole passed away peacefully, surrounded by those he loved most, with family by his side, at St. Marys Memorial Hospital on November 1, 2026 at the age of 78 years.

He shared 56 wonderful years of marriage with his beloved wife Norma (nee Currah). He was a devoted family man who took immense pride in his three children Rob (Tracie), Steve (Bridget) and Teresa Hunter (Kyle) and later, his grandchildren Sophie, Emily, Sullivan, Campbell, Ryerson, Jordan and Georgia, who were his pride and joy. He is also remembered by his sister Glenna Hall (Will). He was predeceased by his parents, Roy and Laura Shrubsole, sisters Gail Snyder and Jane Potter and brother Roy Shrubsole.

Some of George's happiest moments were spent on the sidelines cheering for his grandchildren and watching them play sports. He was also a lifelong Toronto Maple Leafs fan, always supporting his favourite team. When he wasn't spending time with family or watching hockey, he could often be found outside, taking great pride in caring for his lawn.

Cremation has taken place. A private family graveside service will be held at a later date. As expressions of sympathy, donations to St. Marys Healthcare Foundation or a charity of one's choice would be appreciated by the family.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

Sudoku

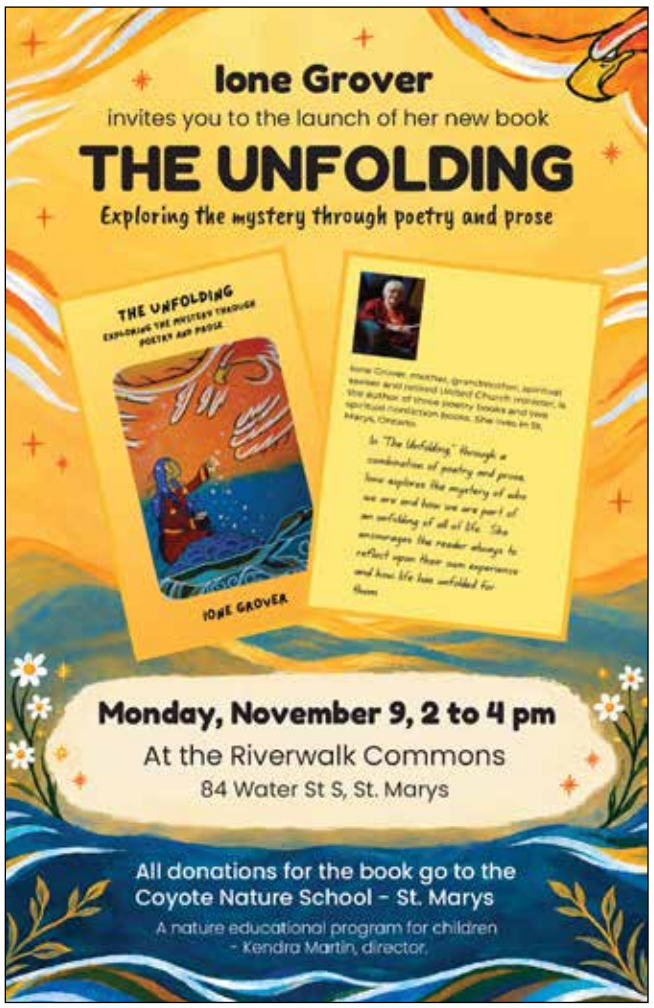
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WANTED TO BUY

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

WANTED

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

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

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FOR SALE

Air Conditioner 5000 BTU, Double Bed, Leather Sofa & Chair, Matching End Tables, Desk for young adult, Antique Dresser & Library Table (1920's era). If interested, please call 519-271-5583 or leave a message

CELEBRATION



Guess Who's 75?

Happy Birthday Bev!

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THE WEEK AHEAD

SPONSORED BY: McDonald's St. Marys
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PRC & Friendship Centre events – See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5
St. Marys Public Library events – See Page 32
Thorndale Library November events – See Page 35

FRIDAY, NOV 6
- Royal Agricultural Winter Fair begins – Nov 6 to Nov 15
- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- SMCP presents "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" at the Town Hall theatre – 7:30 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Chatham Maroons at the PRC – 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOV 7
- St. Marys Farmers Market at the PRC – 8 a.m. to Noon
- Veterans' Decoration Day at the St. Marys Cemetery – 9 a.m. to Noon
- A.N.A.F. dart league – 12:45 p.m.
- SMCP presents "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" at the Town Hall theatre – 2 p.m.
- Sports Wall of Fame induction ceremony at the PRC – 2 p.m.
- First Baptist Church presents the Magisterra Soloists – 3 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOV 8
- Royal Canadian Legion parade from the Legion to the Town Hall cenotaph – 12:30 p.m. A ceremony of remembrance will follow.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Listowel Cyclones at Steve Kerr Memorial Complex – 2 p.m.

MONDAY, NOV 9
- Ione Grover new book launch of "The Unfolding" at Riverwalk Commons – 2-4 p.m.

TUESDAY, NOV 10
- St. Marys Legion Buddy Check coffee at the Legion – 10 a.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Legion cribbage – 7 p.m. sharp

WEDNESDAY, NOV 11
- Remembrance Service at the Town Hall cenotaph – 10:45 a.m.
- St. Marys Museum exhibit "Service on the Sea: St. Marys and the Royal Canadian Navy" opens
- Tavistock Men's Club Sauerkraut & Pork Chop Dinner at Tavistock Memorial Hall – 4-7 p.m. Pick up only, $30 – Call 519-655-3573 for tickets
- Friends of the Library social at the library – 6:30-8 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOV 12
- A.N.A.F. sausage on a bun – 12-1:30 p.m.
- A.N.A.F. dart league – 6:45 p.m.

Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY
Independent Columnist

Volunteer of the year

25 years ago (2001)

An enlarged St. Marys Museum and better public accessibility are the cornerstones for a proposed upgrade, estimated at $300,000. Museum Curator Mary Smith outlined the project to Council at last Tuesday's meeting. She then received Council's support to proceed with an application for grant funding to Heritage Canada under its Cultural Spaces Canada program.

Sheila Greason's name has been added to a long list of citizens who have given their time and energy to help make their community a better place. Sheila Greason was selected as St. Marys' 2001 Volunteer of the Year on October 25. The retired school teacher's list of community activities is amazing.

50 years ago (1976)

St. Marys Firefighters had a couple of runs over the weekend. The first call came at 5:30 p.m. Friday when residents in the east ward became concerned after youngsters set fire to a leaf pile. The second came at 3:00 a.m. on Monday when the sprinkler alarm tripped off at Allied Farm Equipment, James Street South. No fire was discovered by firefighters at Allied.

Dr. Jim Loucks announced at the Monday night meeting of the St. Marys Planning Board that he would not accept reappointment to that body as a result of his decision to be a candidate for the Perth County Board of Education in the upcoming December election.

75 years ago (1951)

His Science Hill neighbours did a real service for Harry Hawkins last week when they pitched in and harvested 28 acres of corn for him. Harry is recovering from a recent operation.

Art Fort is still wondering who the good Samaritan was who changed a flat tire on his car on Sunday during the pouring rain. Mr. and Mrs. Fort were on their way with their family to church when the tire blew. They left the car on the street and proceeded on foot. With church over, they went back expecting to have to change the tire, but lo and behold, someone had beaten them to it.

100 years ago (1926)

Water lying on Wellington Street south has been causing complaints to come in from some citizens, who claim their cellars are partially filled by this. Town Council has approached a property owner on Water Street to allow a drain to run due west through their property but was met with refusal.

Robert Furness returned on Saturday from a two-week visit with his daughter in Michigan, and other friends in the Sarnia and Port Huron area. He made special enquiry to wages across the border and found that jobs over there were no better than they were here and wages were not so good in many cases. One plant in Michigan laid off 200 men and the works will be shut down until the new year.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1.Topaz and Citrine
2.The Golden Ratio
3.Blue
4.Bruce Nuclear Generating Station
5.1945
6.Daisy dukes
7.The Beaver Moon
8.Marble
9.Vertebrae
10.Europe

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

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