

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1325

Thursday, August 6, 2026

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ENJOYING THE SUN AFTER THE RAIN

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

After a rainy Sunday, many took to the water and the Grand Trunk Trail for civic holiday Monday on what turned out to be a beautiful day.

New bird-viewing platform to highlight threatened species along Grand Trunk Trail

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Birdwatchers using the Grand Trunk Trail will soon have a new place to observe threatened grassland birds thanks to a partnership between the Town of St. Marys, the Rotary Club of St. Marys, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority and a local farmer committed to protecting their habitat.

At its July 21 meeting, St. Marys council unanimously approved construction of a bird-viewing platform on the west leg of

the Grand Trunk Trail overlooking fields at Thames Vista Farm, where threatened bobolinks and eastern meadowlarks return each year to nest. The project has been in the works since it was first proposed to the town's green advisory committee in late 2023.

Director of public works Jed Kelly told council the project came together through the efforts of Thames Vista Farm's Derek Ruthig, whose farming practices encourage the birds to nest in fields adjacent to the trail.

"Mr. Ruthig's engaged in a farming practice

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

St. Marys quarry nominated as one of Ontario's top outdoor attractions

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

St. Marys is taking on some of Ontario's biggest tourism destinations after its iconic swimming quarry was nominated for Attractions Ontario's annual Ontario's Choice Awards.

The town's East Quarry has been entered in the Top Outdoor Attraction category, where it will compete for votes alongside major destinations such as the Toronto Zoo, African Lion Safari and other attractions from across the province.

Kelly Deeks-Johnson, the Town of St. Marys' tourism and events manager, said she submits nominations each year to help showcase what the community has to offer.

"We have some pretty cool things to offer here," Deeks-Johnson said. "Not that I want to say they're untapped because I feel the quarry is very busy, but I do feel that we have a lot to offer that maybe people haven't explored yet."

The Ontario's Choice Awards are determined entirely by public voting and recognize attractions across a range of categories, including museums, festivals, tours and outdoor destinations.

Deeks-Johnson said earning recognition among some of the province's best-known attractions would be a significant accomplishment for the community.

"If we were to be labelled as a top attraction amongst those like the Toronto Zoo or Canada's Wonderland, I think that would be pretty special – pretty spectacular really," she said.

Even if the quarry doesn't take top honours, Deeks-Johnson said simply appearing on the ballot raises St. Marys' profile among people exploring Ontario destinations.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

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MLS

COMMUNITY

St. Marys quarry nominated as one of Ontario’s top outdoor attractions

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

“I always aim to get our name in there because I think we have some pretty great assets to celebrate,” she said. “Even just an honourable mention or a nod to what we have to offer shows our pride in what we have.”

She added the awards website also serves as a tourism showcase, exposing visitors to attractions they may never have considered before.

“People go in to vote and they see these other spots. It’s just another spot for people to see us,” Deeks-Johnson said.

The East Quarry, a former limestone quarry transformed into one of Ontario’s most unique outdoor swimming destinations, draws thousands of visitors each summer and has become one of St. Marys’ signature tourism attractions.

Deeks-Johnson said increased recognition through the Ontario’s Choice Awards

could translate into more visitors discovering the quarry and spending time in the community, benefiting local businesses, restaurants and accommodations.

Voting is open online through Attractions Ontario’s Ontario’s Choice Awards at attractionsontario.ca/top-outdoor-attraction/. Residents can cast a vote by selecting the St. Marys Quarry in the Top Outdoor Attraction category. Deeks-Johnson said the process takes only a few moments and does not require an account.

“We’ll do another push for it again on social media,” she said, noting the town had already promoted the quarry’s nomination. “It’s quite simple. I voted.”

Other local outdoor attractions nominated in this competition include Terra Nova Spa in Oxford County and Udderly Ridiculous Farm Life in Blandford-Blenheim.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

The Town of St. Marys has nominated its swimming quarry as a top outdoor attraction in Attractions Ontario's annual Ontario's Choice Awards.

New bird-viewing platform to highlight threatened species along Grand Trunk Trail

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

where his fields are kind of preferable for bird nesting,” Kelly said. “It would kind of highlight his efforts and then give other people opportunities to view it from our trail network.”

According to Kelly’s report, Ruthig delays cutting his hay, sacrificing potential crop yield to provide nesting habitat for bobolinks, a threatened species in Ontario that was also named the Ontario Field Ornithologists’ 2024 Bird of the Year.

The project will include a raised viewing platform accessed by a stone-dust pathway, a culvert crossing and a switch-back ramp leading up the embankment. Interpretive signage designed by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority will educate visitors about the birds and their habitat.

Deputy mayor Brogan Aylward praised the proposal as an example of the kind of community partnership council has long

hoped to encourage.

“This is exactly the kind of project that we typically have looked for as council,” Aylward said. “We have a gentleman with skin in the game who’s willing to show off a unique feature about his property and the threatened birds. And then he’s already gone and talked to a service club to get skin in the game and they have already pledged \$5,000.”

Coun. Fern Pridham asked what farming practices make the property attractive to nesting birds.

Kelly explained Ruthig uses a delayed hay harvest, reducing the number of cuts each season to avoid disturbing nesting birds.

“He’s probably taking a hit in that he’s not getting as much hay,” Kelly said. “It’s a very generous and a very nice thing to be able to do.”

The Rotary Club of St. Marys has committed \$5,000 for construction materials,

while the town will contribute project management, culvert installation, site preparation and other in-kind services through existing public works operating budgets. The completed platform will become a town-owned asset with an expected service life of about 20 years.

Staff say the platform will complement recent investments in the Grand Trunk Trail while creating a new destination for birdwatchers, environmental education and nature-based tourism.

7 Day Forecast

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Wednesday Aug-5th	Thursday Aug-6th	Friday Aug-7th	Saturday Aug-8th	Sunday Aug-9th	Monday Aug-10th	Tuesday Aug-11th
Mainly sunny	Potential storms	Potential storms	Mainly sunny	Potential storms	Potential storms	Potential showers
29 °C	26 °C	27 °C	28 °C	28 °C	27 °C	25 °C
Feels like 35	Feels like 34	Feels like 35	Feels like 36	Feels like 34	Feels like 34	Feels like 31

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EDITORIAL

Grant Haven Media adds Eastern division with weekly newspaper serving Cobourg and Port Hope

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

Things start simply with an idea, and thanks to the outreach from a Cobourg citizen, we have just launched a weekly newspaper serving the communities of Cobourg and Port Hope. It's called the West Northumberland Independent and it is our 13th print publication.

One day, I received an email from Brenda Ferris that read as follows: "I have been reading the Goderich Sun as I attended high school there. The newspaper is quite informative. I am now living in Cobourg. Would you consider establishing a newspaper here? Let me know how we could do this in our town. We are sorely lacking in a good newspaper!"

Cobourg and Port Hope are in the western portion of the vast Northumberland County that sits east of Oshawa and Clarington and west of Quinte West and Belleville. From St. Marys, it's about 3 and a half hours away depending on traffic.

These communities had lost their local papers in the same way that St. Marys lost the Journal-Argus – not due to a lack of interest in local news, but rather by decisions made by the media conglomerates.

During my visits this year to the region, I found the interest in a new publication was overwhelming. In meeting with people, including the mayors of both Cobourg (population 22,000) and Port Hope (population 18,000), I always brought a copy of the 32-

page St. Marys Independent and told the story of how our relatively small community supports our paper for the benefit of all. It was quickly apparent that there was a true need for a print newspaper in this area east of Toronto.

For the core of our team, we hired two full-time local reporters and a full-time sales representative, all well-seasoned from their previous careers in print journalism. The first issue came out last week and exceeded all expectations in terms of community response and week-one advertising support.

Among the many messages we received on Facebook or email last week were those from neighbouring communities like Brighton to the east and Bowmanville to the west, asking "are there



(ROBERT PICARD PHOTO)

Cobourg resident Brenda Ferris and Grant Haven Media publisher Stewart Grant posed on Friday, July 31 with a carload of the first edition of the West Northumberland Independent

plans for any other newspapers in the area?" founder Frank Doyle used to say, "Something to think about."

As St. Marys Independent

Bravo

We have 2 Bravos this week

- 1) Bravo to the St Marys Memorial Hospital. Over the past four months, I have visited twice weekly a family member in the west wing. The entire staff of nurses, support workers, dietary workers, janitorial staff, administration, etc., need to be commended for their patience and professional care of their patients. Thank you!
- 2) Bravo to Hearn's Ice Cream for sourcing superior cardboard, so when the ice cream cake is mistakenly left in the car on a summer day, it doesn't leak all over the car! (Also another bravo for rushing through with the replacement cake!)

Boo

We have no Boos this week

*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

"Lincoln is a resilient community, but resilience alone cannot shoulder the burden of increasingly frequent and unprecedented climate events. We need our provincial and federal partners to stand with us, not only in responding to today's emergency, but in investing in the long-term infrastructure solutions that communities across Niagara need."

- Lincoln Mayor Sandra Easton said after the Niagara area was put under a state of emergency from major flooding resulting from over 170 millimetres of rain in 24 hours after two previous storms.

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St. Marys Independent

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what does and doesn't
matter.

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emotional need is to
feel appreciated.

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have to make sense to
anyone else.

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chapter of your life if
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Overheard

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They got Skubal too?
The LA Dodgers are
destroying baseball.

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!

Kinette of the Year award presented



(PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. MARYS KINETTE CLUB)

St. Marys Kinette Club president Joanna Campbell presented its Kinette of the Year award to Sandie Vanderschot at the club's year-end meeting June 24.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

FOL Summer Social: at **Cadzow Park**
 Aug 12th, 2026 - **5:30 pm - 7 pm**
 before Melodies at the Museum

Movies-in-the-Park: at Cadzow Park
 Friday, August 14th - Dusk

Farmers' Market: The Flats
 Aug 22nd 8am-noon

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STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news
from the Town of St. Marys



ELECTION NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

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

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

More details: townofstmarys.com/elections

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Apply: townofstmarys.com/burnpermit

WEST QUARRY REOPENED

Council recently approved an updated Quarry By-law to allow for the use of human-powered watercraft, such as canoes, kayaks and paddleboards, as well as fishing between dawn and dusk from April 1 – November 30. Swimming remains prohibited.

Learn more: townofstmarys.com/westquarry



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Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Mary Brandt who celebrates her 85th birthday on Aug. 5, 2026. Mary was born in Gemert in the Netherlands and came to Canada in 1951 with her parents and six siblings. She lived in the St. Marys area until 1975 when she married Clair and moved to Kirkton. Mary's hobbies include horticulture, gardening, crocheting and spending time with her three children and seven grandchildren of whom she is very proud. Happy Birthday, Mary!

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

Popular Indigenous arts and cultural learning series returns with three additional workshops

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

Following an enthusiastic response and strong community interest, Kaswentha Two Row has announced three additional Indigenous arts and cultural learning workshops led by Christin Dennis, a knowledge carrier from Aamjiwnaang First Nation (Chippewas of Sarnia First Nation), also known by his traditional name, Gzhi-iquot (Fast Moving Cloud).

Hosted at The Gathering Place at The Falstaff Family Centre and made possible through funding support from United Way Perth-Huron, the additional sessions will provide more community members with the opportunity to experience the same engaging, hands-on workshops that were so well received earlier this summer.

The three new workshops will take place from 6-9 p.m. on:

- Wednesday, Aug. 19 — Dream Catcher Making Workshop
- Wednesday, Aug. 26 — Bone Choker Workshop
- Wednesday, Sept. 2 — Painting Workshop

Dennis is a member of Kaswentha Two Row Now, a Stratford-area collective of Indigenous educators, local businesses, health agencies, social service organizations and community members committed to advancing learning, understanding and reconciliation.

An accomplished visual artist, Dennis describes his work as a reflection on contemporary Indigenous culture and the enduring importance of traditional teachings.

"My art reflects our current era in Aboriginal culture, focusing on the sweat lodge and carrying on the traditions of old into the contemporary world," Dennis said in a press release. "I tell the story of our heritage and the importance of preserving traditional values. I use mixed media with photography as a visual demonstration of the blending of traditional images with 21st-century tech-



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Kaswentha Two Row Now Knowledge Carrier Christin Dennis joins participants in displaying their completed works during the July 15 Indigenous painting workshop at The Gathering Place at The Falstaff Family Centre.

nology. By understanding and embracing our ancestral past, we can use those teachings to preserve a way of life, document its core values and build a vision for our future."

Each workshop is designed to foster learning, creativity, and cultural understanding while giving participants the opportunity to learn directly from a First Nations knowledge carrier and artist in a welcoming, hands-on environment.

Advance registration is required, and participation is limited to 20 people per workshop.

For registration information and event details, visit <https://tinyurl.com/towrownow>.

Location:

The Gathering Place
Falstaff Family Centre (lower level)
35 Waterloo St. N, Stratford

WEEKEND QUIZ

By Jake Grant

1. Who played Allie Hamilton in The Notebook (2004)?
2. Two lines that never intersect are said to be what?
3. What year was WestJet founded?
4. What crop was known as maize?
5. Heidelberg is a city in what country?
6. Name the big three parent grocery companies in Canada?
7. What sensory organ do starfish have at the end of each arm?
8. How many musical families are there in a standard orchestra?
9. What is Africa's oldest continuous democracy?
10. What kind of fruit juice is used to mix a Tom Collins?

This week's answers are found on pg. 27



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St. Marys invests \$120,000 to turn road waste into reusable construction material

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

St. Marys council has approved \$120,000 in additional capital funding to recycle stockpiled asphalt and concrete into reusable construction material, a move staff say will save money, improve operations and reduce the municipality's environmental footprint.

At its July 21 meeting, council approved amending the 2026 capital plan by moving forward a project originally scheduled for 2027. The funding includes \$80,000 from the town's road reserve and \$40,000 from the water reserve to process waste asphalt and concrete into certified Granular A material for future municipal construction projects.

Director of public works Jed Kelly told council the town periodically grinds waste asphalt and concrete stockpiled at the municipal operations centre into aggregate used for road, sidewalk and other infrastructure projects.

"In a nutshell, we basically take all that waste material that we receive and we process it into a gravel," Kelly said. "We get the A gravel tested, so it is a certified gravel. We can produce it for about 30 per cent of what it costs to mine virgin material and get it on site."

According to Kelly's report, recycling the material costs roughly 60 per cent less than purchasing new aggregate from a pit while also reducing hauling distances and keeping construction material out of landfills.

Though the town has enough processed Granular A to meet its immediate construction needs, Kelly said the stockpile of unprocessed concrete and asphalt has reached capacity following major projects, including the West Quarry rehabilitation and Ontario Street South recon-



struction.

If the material is not processed this fall, he said it will begin encroaching on the operations centre's seasonal snow-storage area.

"We'd like to move ahead, crush it this fall and then have the area clear for snow in the winter," Kelly said.

Coun. Jim Craigmile supported advancing the project by a year, noting more material will be generated as work continues on Ontario Street.

Kelly agreed.

"I don't think we envisioned the amount of concrete that we took out of the old quarry project," he said. "We'll have a lot more coming in when Ontario Street gets processed."

Kelly also emphasized the environmental benefits of the program, describing it as an example of sustainable infrastructure management.

"It is kind of a green program," he said. "You talk about green lenses; it's something that we can recycle indefinitely. It provides a short haul route for the contractor, so you're not burning all kinds of diesel taking it to another site and then bringing it back on site."

"It doesn't really sound that green, but in my opinion, it's pretty green."

Staff expect the recycled aggregate will continue to support municipal infrastructure projects while restoring capacity at the operations yard before winter snow-storage operations begin.

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Former councillor Don Van Galen enters St. Marys mayoral race

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Former St. Marys councillor and retired financial advisor Don Van Galen is seeking to become the town's next mayor, saying his decades of municipal experience and community involvement have prepared him to lead St. Marys through its first term under Ontario's strong mayor powers.

Van Galen, who retired from Sun Life last year after a career as a financial advisor, said the timing is right to return to municipal politics now that he can devote himself full time to the role.

"I believe I have the experience and skills residents are looking for in their next mayor," Van Galen said. "For me it is the culmination of a lifetime of public service and business experience that will serve the town well for the next four years."

He said the next term of council will be unique because it will be the first full term in St. Marys to operate under the province's strong mayor legislation, which grants the head of council greater authority over budgets, staffing and organizational changes.

"Experience and trust is essential with this greater responsibility," Van Galen said.

Over 18 years on council, Van Galen said he served alongside three mayors, six chief administrative officers and five different councils while helping oversee 18 municipal budgets, countless bylaws and major development projects. He also spent roughly three decades as a member



(PHOTO COURTESY OF DON VAN GALEN)

Former town councillor and retired financial advisor Don Van Galen has thrown his hat in the race for St. Marys mayor in the Oct. 26 municipal election.

and chair of the town's planning advisory committee.

He said those experiences, along with years spent working directly with residents as a financial advisor, have given him an understanding of the community's priorities.

"The last 20 years sitting down with my clients at their kitchen table, I have learned what people find is important," he said.

Among the issues he believes will require council's attention is the future of 14 Church St. N., which the town purchased and plans to redevelop.

Van Galen said the municipality needs a clear financial and business plan before

investing further in the property.

"We don't want to build a white elephant," he said, adding the project should create new services and revenue opportunities rather than simply relocating existing municipal services into a more expensive building.

He also pointed to the proposed redevelopment of Wildwood Care Centre as another significant issue, saying the project will provide needed long-term-care capacity while requiring careful consideration of its impact on neighbouring properties.

Looking more broadly, Van Galen said St. Marys must continue attracting new residents and businesses by maintaining

competitive taxes and fees, investing in recreation and municipal services, creating opportunities for young people and marketing the town's quality of life.

He said he would also like to see St. Marys once again participate in Communities in Bloom.

"It's not just an opportunity to compete," Van Galen said. "It provides real focus on enhancing community strengths, building a better town and showing our best to the rest of Ontario and Canada."

If elected, Van Galen said he would use strong mayor powers cautiously. While he intends to review the town's organizational structure at the beginning of the new term, he said he wants council involved in the process and plans to return to a more traditional budget process.

"I know the previous council did not appreciate the use of the strong mayor powers in the budgeting process, so I will be looking for a more traditional process," he said.

Van Galen said his campaign will focus on door-to-door canvassing, public appearances, regular communication with residents and traditional media. If elected, he said he plans to hold regular office hours and make himself readily available to residents.

"It's about leadership and public service," he said. "No mayor can succeed without a motivation to serve, and no one wants to follow a leader who doesn't demonstrate that you have their interests at heart."

To connect with Van Galen during or after his campaign, email don.van.galen@gmail.com.

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Neighbouring farmers honour Bob Ready with tractor tribute



(DAVID MOUNTAIN PHOTO)

Bob Ready's prized Ford tractor, featuring its distinctive, red-painted engine and frame, reflected both his love of farming and his well-known political loyalties.

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

Dozens of tractors lined the roads of Perth South Township last week as local farmers gathered to pay tribute to one of their own.

Family, friends and neighbours honoured the life of longtime cash-crop and egg producer Robert "Bob" Ready during

his funeral service at Avonbank United Church and committal at the neighbouring Avonbank Cemetery.

A familiar face in the local farming community, Ready was well known throughout the area, not only for his dedication to agriculture but also for the friendships he built over a lifetime on the farm. He was a regular host of Friday afternoon gatherings in the Ready Acres shop, where



(DAVID MOUNTAIN PHOTO)

Farmers from across the neighbourhood gathered with their tractors to celebrate the life and legacy of Robert "Bob" Ready.

neighbours often met to share stories and conversation.

To recognize his lifelong passion for farming, neighbours arrived at the church and cemetery aboard tractors of every make, model and colour, creating a fitting tribute for a man who spent his life working the land.

The tractor procession reflected the respect Ready earned throughout the

farming community and served as a final salute from friends and neighbours who shared his love of agriculture.

Ready leaves behind a family that will carry on his agricultural legacy, as well as a community that will remember his contributions to farming and the friendships he cultivated over the years.



(DAVID MOUNTAIN PHOTO)

A procession of tractors made its way to Avonbank Cemetery as local farmers honoured the memory of Robert "Bob" Ready in a tribute befitting a lifelong farmer.



(DAVID MOUNTAIN PHOTO)

Avonbank United Church was the site of the funeral service for longtime Perth South farmer Robert "Bob" Ready.

TriCounty Foodgrains Group to host Music Night and Silent Auction

TRICOUNTY FOODGRAINS GROUP

Contributed Article

The TriCounty Foodgrains Group is a member of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and exists to help end food insecurity in our world.

Every year, members from First Baptist Church, East Nissouri Union Church and St. Marys Presbyterian grow chem-

ical-free crops to sell at the Farmers market to raise money for the cause. This year, we are growing squash, beets, potatoes and onions, and they will be available for purchase at the St. Marys Farmers Market.

All proceeds are matched at a ratio of four to one by the Canadian government, which means if locals buy a squash from us for \$4, \$20 will go toward ending

hunger in our world.

In addition to growing crops, we are hosting a Music Night featuring Steph Martin on Sept. 19 at 7 p.m. at First Baptist Church in St. Marys. Admission will be by donation and there will be a silent auction to help raise even more funds. The TriCounty group would like to thank the many generous folks in our community who have donated land,

seeds and/or silent auction items this year. Together, we can help end global hunger.

For more information about the TriCounty group, contact Bob Pickel at 519-461-1400 or stop by and see us at the St. Marys Farmers Market this summer or fall.

Perth County farmers reel in memorable day on Lake Ontario



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Enjoying another successful annual Lake Ontario fishing trip are, from left, Scott Dolson, Dave Standeaven, Dave Wideman (back), Hans Weber, Hans Pfister, Steve Dolson (back), Gary West and Geoff McMullen. Weber landed the largest Chinook salmon of the day, weighing nearly 28 pounds.

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

A group of Perth County farmers traded tractors for fishing rods last week, enjoying another successful day on Lake Ontario as part of a tradition that has spanned more than four decades.

The annual charter trip departed from Port Credit before sunrise, with eight farmers from across Perth County joining the captain and first mate for a day of Chinook salmon fishing.

The tradition began more than 40 years ago when dairy farmers Dave Wideman

of the Atwood area and Glen Standeaven, north of St. Marys, decided farmers deserved a day away from the demands of the farm each July to relax, catch up with friends and enjoy some fishing.

With an early 6 a.m. start, the group headed into the deeper waters of Lake Ontario in search of salmon.

As the old saying goes, “An average day of fishing is always better than a great day of work.”

The fish were biting early as the charter reached warmer water where baitfish were plentiful. The first Chinook salmon

tipped the scales at about eight pounds before another, weighing more than 18 pounds, was landed shortly afterward.

By the end of the morning, seven impressive Chinook salmon filled the boat’s cooler.

First-time Lake Ontario angler Hans Weber, owner of Stonetown Artisan Cheese near Rannoch, battled the largest fish of the day for more than 20 minutes before landing a Chinook salmon weighing nearly 28 pounds.

The catch was officially weighed as part of an ongoing salmon derby and finished

11th overall for the week, earning Weber a \$200 cash prize and a \$300 gift certificate from Custom Fishing Solutions.

Weber may call it beginner’s luck, but the rest of the group knew it also took patience, determination and plenty of strength to land such an impressive fish.

Another first-time Lake Ontario angler, Holstein breeder Geoff McMullen, also enjoyed success, reeling in a Chinook salmon weighing about 25 pounds.

The outing once again proved that experience isn’t everything when it comes to salmon fishing.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Holstein breeder Geoff McMullen displays the approximately 25-pound Chinook salmon he caught during his first Lake Ontario fishing trip. Fellow first-time angler Hans Weber also landed one of the day’s biggest fish, proving beginners can enjoy plenty of success on the water.

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Grand River Dinner Cruises offers a relaxing summer getaway

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

For anyone looking to enjoy a relaxing summer day trip, the Grand River Dinner Cruises in Caledonia offer a scenic combination of sightseeing, dining and live entertainment.

Recently, four couples from Perth County, including St. Marys, Avonton, Mitchell and Shakespeare, enjoyed a lunch cruise along the Grand River, discovering more about the region's history while taking in the natural beauty of one of Ontario's most significant waterways.

Located about an hour's drive from Perth County, Grand River Dinner Cruises has been owned and operated by the Albin family since 1978. The company operates from Big Creek, which flows into the Grand River, with cruises travelling between Caledonia and the village of Onondaga. The Six Nations of the Grand River territory borders the south side of the river along portions of the route.

The Grand River stretches approximately 300 kilometres from Dundalk to Port Maitland, where it empties into Lake Erie. Cruises operate from late May through early October.

Passengers enjoy a leisurely two-and-a-half-hour lunch or dinner cruise, complete with live entertainment and views of the river's scenic landscape.

The Grand River watershed is home to approximately one million people and includes 39 municipalities and two First Nations territories. Its four major tributaries are the Conestogo, Eramosa, Nith and Speed rivers, while the river itself is home to 82 species of fish.

For those looking to unwind, enjoy a quality meal and experience one of south-western Ontario's most picturesque waterways, the Grand River Dinner Cruises offer an enjoyable day away close to home.

For more information, call 1-800-847-3321 or visit grandrivercruises.ca.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

Before boarding the cruise, passengers were entertained by the high-energy sounds of the Blazing Fiddles, whose lively fiddle music, backed by electric bass and piano, set the tone for an enjoyable day on the Grand River.

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Isabella Mills ventures into heptathlons as track and field journey continues

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

St. Marys native Isabella Mills put together another strong track and field season that included her competing for the first time in arduous heptathlon events.

Mills' season began June 28 at the New Balance Canadian Track and Field League (CTFL) meet where she earned second place in the long jump competition, as well as a third-place finish in the 100-metre hurdles.

Mills called the Ottawa competition an exciting experience, noting how it was different from what she was used to.

"It was really cool because you were able to be put in different teams, so you weren't competing with your club," Mills told the Independent. "You're competing with totally new people. And it's also not under the Athletics Ontario organization. It's underneath CTFL, which is also just a totally new experience because that's what professional track and field is in Canada."

Mills added there was a grander overall experience outside of the events making up the meet.

"We got a lot more gear, and there were a lot more things to do at the track, aside from just competing," said Mills. "They wanted you to talk to your team and meet new people. It was really cool. I really liked it. I liked to be able to talk to new people and get new relationships and see how everyone else is doing."

On July 11, Mills represented District C at the Ontario Legion Provincial Championships in Sudbury, where she competed in her first heptathlon and placed third.

The U18 girls' heptathlon is a combined track and field event that tests an athlete's speed, strength, jumping ability, throwing ability, endurance and versatility. It consists of seven events contested over two days, with athletes earning points in each event based on their performance. The athlete with the highest total points at the end of all seven events is the winner.

Though she didn't quite have the results she wanted, Mills said it was more valuable as a learning experience.

"It was my first heptathlon, which, obviously, was really new," Mills said. "I've never done something like that. Obviously, I picked up that it's a lot more challenging and you're doing a lot more than what I'm used to. The first one was definitely an experience. It definitely didn't go the way I wanted it to go, but I just had to get the first one out of the way."

Mills explained the biggest takeaway she had from her first heptathlon was the need to have a short memory.

"It's a lot different because you can't just get all upset over one event because, in 20 minutes, you're doing the next one, so you have to move on with it. You can't just be upset if you don't perform the way you wanted to in a certain event because you're doing something else pretty soon, and it's all just really for points. You don't really care about places or anything like that. You just want to get the points."

Having gotten a taste for the rigours of a heptathlon, Mills then set her sights on the Ontario Outdoor Track



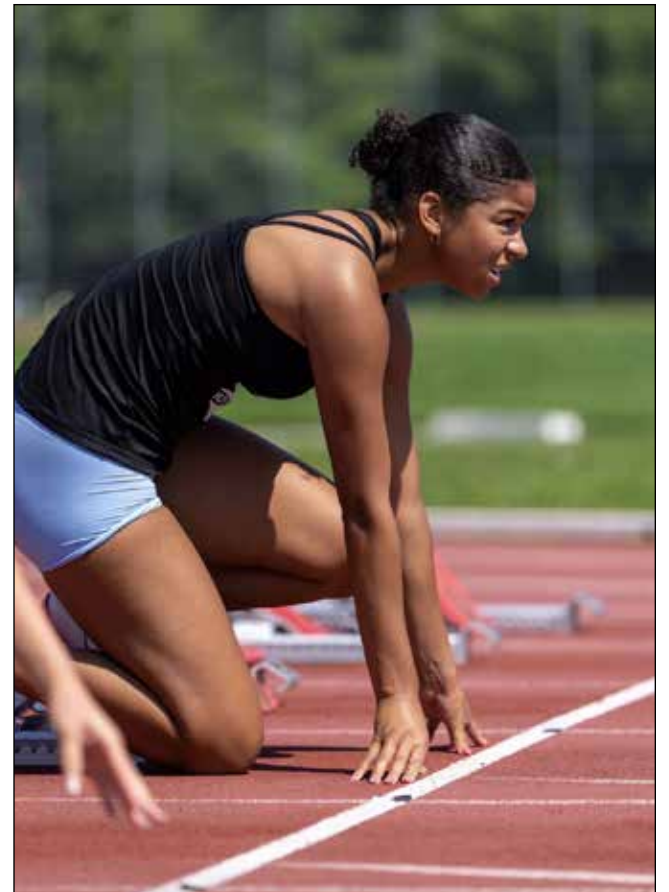
(CHRISTINA BOSCARATO PHOTO)

Isabella Mills, pictured, won silver in the long jump and bronze in the 100-metre hurdles event at the New Balance Canadian Track and Field League (CTFL) meet June 28 in Ottawa. Mills also continued to progress as a high-level track and field athlete this summer, appearing in two heptathlon events, in which she finished top three in both competitions.

and Field Championship, hosted July 24-26 in St. Catharines, where she once again competed in the heptathlon.

Though difficult, Mills said she welcomed the challenge the heptathlon offered.

"I really enjoyed doing the heptathlon," Mills said. "I like staying busy at the track and not waiting three hours until my next race or something like that. I like how you're always looking forward to something new every single time. I like how you're not just doing one event for the whole day."



(PHOTO COURTESY OF CANADIAN TRACK AND FIELD LEAGUE)

Isabella Mills prepares to take off during the 100-metre hurdles event at the New Balance Canadian Track and Field League (CTFL) meet in Ottawa June 28.

Mills finished with the silver medal in her second heptathlon and, while having areas in which she still wants to improve, felt a lot better about her most recent heptathlon performance.

"I think I was just a lot more ready for it," said Mills. "I think I was more prepared for it and going into it because I knew more what to expect. Obviously, there was still like a lot of room for improvement, but I think it's just going to get better in the future because I'm just so new to it, and I think that, over time, I've compared the first one and the second one, there was already such a huge improvement because I started to realize what it is going into it."

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Lincolns offer post-AGM organizational update

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

With just a few weeks until beginning their exhibition schedule and a little over a month away from their home opener, the St. Marys Lincolns are putting the finishing touches on their off-season.

The Lincolns will play four pre-season games beginning Aug. 28 when they host Stratford, followed by a home game against Komoka Aug. 30. St. Marys then visits Stratford Sept. 4 and Komoka Sept. 5.

- Friday, Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m. - Lincolns vs Warriors
- Sunday, Aug. 30, 2:30 p.m. - Lincolns vs Kings
- Friday, Sept. 4, 7:30 p.m. - Lincolns @ Warriors
- Saturday, Sept. 5, 7:15 p.m. - Lincolns @ Kings

The second tier of early bird season pass pricing will be available at both home exhibition games and at a pre-season event to be announced later this month. The prices will go up after the home opener.

The Lincolns' home opener will be Sept. 11 when the Lincolns host a rematch of the 2026 Western Conference final against the Stratford Warriors. The Western Conference Championship banner will be unveiled before the game.

There are still a number of sponsorship options available, in addition to ad space in the annual Lines program. Options include broadcast sponsor, meal sponsor options, Lines launch title sponsor, amongst others. Contact sponsorship@lincs.ca for more info.

The Lincs are seeking volunteers interested in operating the clock for home games, horn operators and anyone interested in contributing to a post-game meal preparation throughout the year. Please contact



gameday@lincs.ca for more info.

At the Lincs' annual general meeting June 17, the Lincolns elected their 2026-2027 executive and board of directors. The executive includes Brandon Boyd as president, Pete Frehner as vice president, Stewart Grant as treasurer, Spencer Seymour as secretary and Bill Lowe and past president.

Returning board members include Barb Boscarato, Chris Collins, Geoff Goldsack, David Grant, Dawn Leslie, Melanie Lowe, Shari Ann McHardy, Rob Mossey, Dan Murrell, Christine Palmer, Mike Rock and Kara Stevens. New members elected to the board include Brian Dundas, Mike Morning and Justin Smibert.

Becker shoots hole in one at River Valley



(PHOTO COURTESY OF RIVER VALLEY GOLF COURSE)

Pictured is 14-year-old Ben Becker with his ball after shooting a hole in one at River Valley Golf Course July 26. Becker's ace came on hole 14.

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St. Marys Tennis Club hosts Midsummer Mixer Tournament



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured in the front row, from left to right, are Sidney Clark and Levi McCauley. In the back row, from left, are Brad Everett, Christina Boscarato, Phil Dellio, Florin Zamfirescu, Jocelyn Rooyackers, Marilyn Leasa, Peter Rice, Josh McNeight, Roger Batch, and Steph Dotzert. The St. Marys Social Tennis Club held its Mid-Season Mixer tournament Aug. 1. This singles tournament saw players accumulating points in doubles matches. The resounding winner was Levi McCauley, who had a perfect 4-0 record. Roger Batch was runner-up, and Marilyn Leasa placed third. Special thank you to tournament official John Stevens for keeping score. The club's next event is its Favacho Fall Classic doubles tournament on Saturday, Sept. 12. Non-members are welcome to register as a team or as a single player to be paired up. For more details about the tournament or our club nights, email the club at stmaryssocialtennisclub@gmail.com.

St. Marys Minor Soccer completes successful first annual summer food drive



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured are members of the U9 and U18 girls St. Marys Storm teams, who spearheaded the first annual summer food drive put on by St. Marys Minor Soccer. The collection took place over the last few weeks and the donations were taken to the local food bank Aug. 4, where 412 pounds were donated.

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MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Mason Krauskopf blasts the ball into play with a hit during the U9 WOBA Red St. Marys Rockies game this past Monday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Aurora Darling releases a pitch towards the plate during last Wednesday's U11 HPFL Red St. Marys Rockies game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Jack Becker cracks a hit towards the outfield during the U11 HL Red St. Marys Rockies game last Thursday.



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Owen Dittmer registers a hit during one of this past Monday's Red Rock Construction U18 OBA Blue St. Marys Rockies games.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Cory Vansteelandt kicks the ball up the field during the U13 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm game this past Monday.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Jack Brockman steps into a heavy kick in the midfield during last Wednesday's U15 Boys Tier Three St. Marys Storm game.

B-Brew, Bringin' the Heat, Resting Pitch Face, Free Agents, Comets sit atop Ladies Slo Pitch standings



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTOS)
Pictured on the left is Felicity Vernooy of Resting Pitch Face, throwing to first base for an out Aug. 3. On the right, Theresa Sweep earns a hit for the Mad Batters during the same game.

ST. MARYS WOMEN'S SLO PITCH LEAGUE STANDINGS
(as of Aug. 4h) (W-L-T)

1. B-Brew (12-1-0)	8. Snappers (5-6-0)
2. Bringin' the Heat (11-1-1)	9. Wannabees (5-6-0)
3. Resting Pitch Face (10-2-0)	10. Exterminators (4-9-0)
4. Free Agents (9-2-0)	11. Wombats (4-9-0)
5. Comets (8-4-1)	12. Field of Queens (3-9-0)
6. Mad Batters (6-7-0)	13. Basic Pitches (2-11-0)
7. Shenanigals (6-7-0)	14. Pitches (0-11-0)

ST. MARYS MEN'S SLO PITCH LEAGUE STANDINGS
(as of Aug. 4h) (W-L-T)

'A' Division

1. Flyers (14-2)
2. Diamondbacks (12-6)
3. Macindrivers (12-7)
4. Merchants (11-5)
5. LA Batts (11-8)
6. Tribe (10-5-2)
7. Royals (9-9)
8. Isotopes (7-11)

'B' Division

1. Bomberadoes (15-3)
2. Jets (13-4)
3. Bears (11-6-1)
4. Sox (7-11)
5. Rangers (6-10-1)
6. Autobots (5-14)
7. Thunder (4-13-2)
8. LSD (3-17)
9. Pats (0-19)



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Solutions on pg. 27

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Town of St. Marys

NOTICE OF OPEN HOUSE



TOWN OF ST. MARYS ZONING BY-LAW REVIEW

PURPOSE AND EFFECT OF PROPOSED ZONING BY LAW: The Town of St. Marys is undertaking a review of its Zoning By-law to align with its new Official Plan. St. Marys' updated Official Plan was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) in October 2024.

The Zoning By-law is a legal document outlining the set of regulations that determine how a piece of land can be used and developed. The Zoning By-law regulates the use of land and buildings; the location and setbacks of buildings and structures; the types of buildings permitted; lot sizes; heights; parking requirements; and performance standards such as landscaping requirements.

An Open House will be held to provide residents, business owners, and members of the community with the opportunity to give input, ask questions, and submit ideas and feedback for consideration. A formal public meeting will be held following the Open House, at a date to be determined, prior to the adoption of the Zoning By-law Amendment.

A key map has not been provided, as the Zoning By-law Amendment applies to the entire Town of St. Marys.

DATE & TIME: The Open House will be held on Wednesday, August 12, 2026 between 2:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M.

NPG Planning Solutions Inc. will be presenting proposed changes to the Town's Zoning By-law at 3:00 P.M and 7:00 P.M. If you are unable to attend the presentation materials will be made available at your request by contacting the undersigned.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND MATERIALS: Additional information including a Background Reports and Technical Briefs are available to the public for inspection at the Open House noted above, on the project webpage townofstmarys.com/home-property-roads/zoning-by-law/, or contact the under Contact Information below via an appointment to review the documents.

LOCATION: The Open House will be held in the following location: Municipal Operations Centre, 408 James St. S

CONTACT INFORMATION:

To find out more about the project and follow along, or if you wish to be notified of the decision of the Town of St. Marys on the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment, you must make a written request to:

Grant Brouwer
Director of Building & Planning
Town of St. Marys
408 James Street South, St. Marys, Ontario, N4X 1B6
Phone: 519-284-2340 ext. 215
Email: gbrouwer@town.stmarys.on.ca

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of St. Marys to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of St. Marys before the by-law is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting, or make written submissions to St. Marys before the by-law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to do so.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: The grandparent contract – how Ukraine and Canada do summer break

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

Ask any child what their favourite word is, and they'll likely tell you, "summer." But depending on which side of the ocean you grew up on, those summer-break months feel entirely different.

Coming from Ukraine to Canada, one of the first differences I noticed was the simple arithmetic of the school calendar. In Canada, summer break spans July and August – a solid, well-deserved eight weeks. In Ukraine, summer is a three-month marathon: June, July and August.

On paper, three months of freedom sounds like a dream for kids, but for working parents it's an organizational puzzle. Yet, the way Ukrainian and Canadian families solve this puzzle reveals a fascinating cultural contrast – especially when it comes to the role of grandparents, retirement and how we spend our days off.

In Ukraine, a mother rarely stresses about missing the opening window to register her child for a summer camp, nor does she rejoice at the temporary relief from packing school lunches. Why? Because the default Ukrainian summer plan is an unspoken, deeply rooted cultural agreement – the kids go to the grandparents in the countryside. Especially now, amidst the harsh realities of war, sending children to rural areas or smaller towns isn't just a tradition, it's a practical way to keep them safe while parents continue working in the cities.

In Ukraine, people often take this arrangement for granted, but looking at it through a Canadian lens, I've learned to appreciate a very different approach.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Why Canadian trailers confuse Ukrainian grandparents and how two different cultures navigate child care, retirement and outdoor life.

Here in Canada, asking grandparents to babysit, even for a single day, is typically requested well in advance. There is a deep respect for a grandparent's personal schedule, their hobbies and their retirement plans.

Of course, the rising cost of living in both countries means that not everyone can afford to fully retire at retirement age. But for those who do – or for those balancing part-time work – the approach to senior life couldn't be more different.

Canadian retirees, as a rule, lead vibrant, active lives. Retirement is seen as a well-earned chapter for personal exploration: they travel, dedicate time to lifelong hobbies, volunteer in the community, or join local clubs. Because their schedules are often packed with these active pursuits, they aren't available to act as full-time, summer-long daycare providers.

In Ukraine, the reality for older generations takes a different form. Many retirees cannot rely solely on standard pensions, but instead of joining the tra-

ditional workforce, they turn to the land. They plant extensive vegetable gardens, keep chickens, or tend to a family cow. It isn't a commercial farm – it's a way to feed the extended family, with any extra milk or produce sold at local, open-air farmers' markets.

Because of this, Ukrainian grandparents don't "babysit" in the modern sense. They don't plan structured activities for the kids. Instead, grandchildren are simply integrated into rural life. They roam free, swim in local ponds, pick strawberries straight from the garden, help fetch

milk and learn by observing the daily rhythm of homesteading. In a way, they gain independence surrounded by nature while helping out.

This brings me to Canada's undisputed summer tradition: camping.

From provincial parks to full RV trailers, Canadians love packing up their lives to pitch a tent or park a camper in the wilderness. Whenever I try to explain Canadian trailer culture or wilderness camping to the older generation back in Ukraine, they look at me with genuine confusion. Their reaction is always the same: "Wait, why would I pack a bag to sleep in a small box in the woods? I already live in a house, I have a garden to grow my food and a pond down the road to swim in!"

To them, living close to nature isn't a weekend hobby you pack for; it's just daily life. But to Canadians, camping is that essential, intentional escape to unplug, hit the road and reconnect with nature.

Whether your summer memories are made sitting around a Canadian campfire eating s'mores or picking berries in a Ukrainian garden while keeping an eye on the family cow, the heart of summer remains the same. It's about slowing down, creating memories across generations and giving our kids a taste of freedom before the September bell rings again.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Tomorrow's Funday Friday event will be held at the fire station! Between 11 a.m. and 12 p.m., participants will meet the firefighters who help keep our community safe. They will also tour the station, learn about fire safety, explore a fire truck, and learn about life as a firefighter. You don't want to miss this exciting behind-the-scenes experience with local heroes.

To attend this program, pre-register on ActiveNet: tinyurl.com/SMPL-ActiveNet. Please note that participants under the age of 7 must be accompanied by a caregiver who is at least 12 years old.

UP THIS WEEK

- Fri., Aug. 7: **Funday Friday – Meet the Firefighters*** (11 a.m. to 12 p.m.)
- Sat., Aug. 8: Edith's Storytime Adventures (10 a.m.)
- Mon., Aug. 10: **Picnic in the Park**** (12-1 p.m.), **Discovery Den*** (3:15 – 4:30 p.m.)
- Tues., Aug. 11: **Reading Help*** (10:30 – 11:30 a.m.), **Crafty Kids*** (1:45 – 3 p.m.)
- Wed., Aug. 12: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30 – 10:30 a.m.), **Picnic in the Park**** (12-1 p.m.), Mahjong~ (1-4 p.m.), **Imagination Station** (2-4 p.m.), **Reading Help*** (2:30 – 3:30 p.m.), **Teen Program*** (6-7 p.m.)
- Thurs., Aug. 13: **Mini Makers*** (10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.), **Fluency Fitness**** (2-3 p.m.)

*Registration Required

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

*Held at the Fire Station (172 James St. S)

-Held at the St. Marys United Church (85 Church St.)

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HISTORIC ST. MARYS: The fair and Lex Wilson

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

In the 1920s, Ontario agriculture was in transition, and farmers were facing serious challenges. Increased mechanization was replacing the old, traditional ways. Wheat prices had dropped – a commodity that had been in high demand during the war – and farmers were experiencing the economic consequences. Young people were leaving the farm for city jobs with regular hours and fixed wages. Many country folks were convinced that senior levels of government had no real interest in rural matters. These factors made it all the more important for agricultural fairs to flourish, to provide a bridge between rural and urban life.

However, the annual fair in St. Marys was struggling. The minutes of the South Perth Agricultural Society meetings indicate that the fair directors were constantly trying to find ways to raise money. The town of St. Marys gave the society an annual grant; directors were delegated to approach township councils for additional support. The amount of the annual government grant was partly determined by the number of fee-paying members of each agricultural society. Therefore, the South Perth Agricultural Society held special events to recruit new members. One year, they raffled a Jersey heifer – each new member received a ticket. They held fundraising ball tournaments and community dances, but year after year, the biggest deterrent to successful fair days was torrential autumn rain.

After a particularly discouraging fair in 1929, the Society was forced to admit it could no longer continue in the same way. In a very difficult meeting, the directors voted 11-2 in favour of selling the Society's most valuable asset, the fairgrounds on Queen Street West. On December 16, 1929, the South Perth Agricultural Society sold the agricultural grounds to Alexis (Lex) George Wilson for \$5,000 on the condition that each autumn they could rent the property for \$1 for two weeks to hold the fair. In addition, Lex Wilson was to construct a building for the Society to use during fair days. With this sale, the Society paid off its debts and were able to keep the fair going.

The Agricultural Society made this agreement with a young man who, at the age of 29, was something of a celebrity in St. Marys. Alexis George Wilson was born on February 11, 1900, in London, Ontario, the son of Elizabeth Rellinger Wilson and William Wilson, a well-known horseman in that city. His sister, Beulah, was born in 1901. When Alexis was two years old, the family moved to Toronto where his father continued to work with thoroughbred horses. Elizabeth died when her son was 14 years old. By that time, young Lex, a natural rider, was already racing horses trained by his father – first as a flat track jockey and, as he grew older, as an amateur steeplechase rider or “jump jockey.” He won his first race in Juarez, Mexico, when he was still in his teens. He then returned to Canada where he finished his education, taking



(PHOTO COURTESY OF R. LORNE EEDY ARCHIVES, ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

Muriel Sheldon took this photograph of the covered racetrack on the old fairgrounds in 1996. The thoroughbred horses were long gone and the building would soon be demolished to make way for a residential development.

some business courses.

Steeplechase was a sport for wealthy horse owners. One of these was Alfred Selby Rogers (1874-1953), the son of a prosperous coal merchant, Elias Rogers. After a private school education, Alfred started his career as a clerk in his father's business. In 1912, he purchased the company from his father. His fuel company also sold cement and Rogers invested in cement production. When the St. Marys Cement Company was established in St. Marys, Rogers was one of the company directors. While John Grieve Lind, another director and works manager, oversaw operations in St. Marys, Rogers was in charge of sales. Rogers' base was the company's Toronto office, but he did pay regular visits to St. Marys. Rogers was a well-known horseman and owned a thoroughbred stable. He became involved in steeplechase racing and one of his riders was young Lex Wilson.

Alfred Rogers took a special interest in this young man. In 1920, a position was found for him in the office of the St. Marys Cement Company. According to the 1921 census, 21-year-old Alexis Wilson, a stenographer, was one of several young bachelors boarding at the Royal Edward Hotel on Queen Street, St. Marys. Another boarder was Alfred Rogers Junior, age 20. He was also employed at the cement plant as a mechanic. Lex Wilson's hours at St. Marys Cement were flexible enough that he was able to keep riding in steeplechase races. He continued to ride horses owned by the Rogers stable and, as his reputation grew, he became a favourite rider for the John Scripps Sweeney and Walter O. Briggs stables in Michigan.

Riding winning horses was lucrative and Lex Wilson looked for a house to buy. In 1926, he purchased 12-acre Ardmore Park from the estate of local merchant, John Walsh. On September 2, 1926, he married Helen Mills, the daughter of William and Kay Mills. The Mills had moved to St. Marys in 1911 when William Mills became an accountant for Maxwells Ltd. This popular family were members of St. James Anglican Church and keen participants in church concerts and amateur

theatricals. In 1912, when she was ten years old, Helen had played the lead role in a production of Alice in Wonderland on the Opera House stage. At her wedding, Helen was attended by her younger sister, Kathleen. The groom's best man was John Scripps Sweeney Junior, son of Detroit newspaper magnate and thoroughbred horse owner.

After working for St. Marys Cement for ten years, Lex Wilson began his own business ventures. He bought the fairgrounds in December 1929 to develop a horse training facility. He also bought a garage near the Wellington Street Bridge and opened a car dealership, Wilson Motors. By late 1934, he had sold the garage to Harry Dobson to concentrate on his work with horses. In February 1934, the Journal Argus published a profile of A. G. (Lex) Wilson in the newspaper's regular column, “People We Meet.” The column lists some of his successes as a steeplechase racer. They included winning major events in Maryland, Illinois, Michigan and New York, the races usually described as “a three-mile run over timber for gentleman riders.” The biggest thrill had been in the most famous of all steeplechase races, the Grand National in Aintree, England. In 1932, Lex Wilson on

an American horse, Sea Soldier, finished that challenging course in eighth place among 36 starters.

For the agricultural fall fair in 1930, Lex Wilson rented two large tents for the exhibitors because he had turned the old Crystal Palace into stables and had not yet built the promised new exhibition building. But by 1931, he had built a covered, quarter-mile training track on the grounds, the first of its kind in Canada. During the fair, the covered track was transformed into an exhibition building. Fairgoers entered and walked clockwise past exhibits of fruits and vegetables, preserves, knitting and sewing, school entries, crafts, fine art, field crops, poultry, sheep, pigs, dairy and beef cattle. They could catch a glimpse through open doors of the judges and livestock in the judging ring, the open area enclosed by the circular covered track. After fairgoers had gone completely around and seen all the exhibits, they left the building to sit in the grandstand and watch the horses or go to the midway and spend their money.

For the next four decades, Lex Wilson's thoroughbred training facility was the home of St. Marys' annual fall fair. When he stopped riding, Lex built his reputation as a trainer. He spent a great deal of time in Lexington, Kentucky, and Arlington Park, Illinois, where the horses he trained won races for their wealthy owners. But his career ended abruptly on January 12, 1962. Lex Wilson died, just a month before his 62nd birthday, from complications following a hip operation. While the thoroughbred training facility on Queen Street West had been Lex's pride and joy, once the horses and grooms were gone, as far as Helen Wilson, his widow, was concerned, it was just a large property to dispose of as soon as possible. She negotiated a new contract with the Agricultural Society. To keep using the grounds for the annual fair, the new lease required a \$3,000 annual fee. The Society was also now responsible for taxes and maintenance. These were difficult terms to meet and then, in September 1968, nature struck the most devastating blow of all!

The history of the fair will conclude next week.

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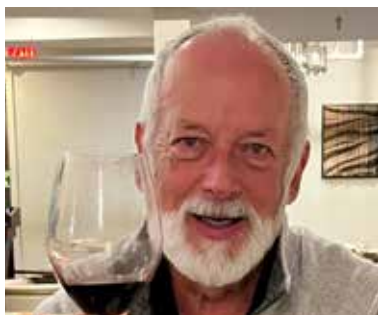


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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Discovering Greek civilization in Italy



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

Let's be honest. It is not unexpected when, during your travels in Italy, you stumble upon yet another Roman ruin. After all, this is the country whose capital is Rome, and most of whose most famous sites are remnants of the Roman Empire. The Colosseum is just one of thousands of buildings left us by the Romans.

What you might not expect is to find a lot of physical evidence of Greek civilization here in Italy. Especially in the south of Italy, in Calabria and Sicily, Greek civilization was the dominant culture in the centuries before the ascendancy of Rome.

And today, visitors will find a number of destinations in Calabria offering ample evidence of the centuries when this part of Italy was known as Magna Graecia. And even today, there are remote villages high in the hills of Calabria where a variety of Greek – called Calabrian Greek or Griko – is the common language in daily use.

So, it is not surprising there has been a concerted effort here to protect the remaining evidence of that period, which started in the eighth century B.C. and last-

ed for about five centuries.

Our time in Calabria saw us visiting several of the sites connected to Magna Graecia. Chief among them is the National Museum and Archeological Park of Locri. Locri is a town on the eastern or Ionian coast of Calabria. The name Locri dates back to the Greek era; the town was founded by Greek newcomers about 680 B.C., and a century later, had a population of 40,000. The good news is the modern town of Locri is located slightly north of the Greek era settlement, which means a wealth of archaeological ruins are still there to be found.

And today, a modern museum – and an archaeological site – can tell visitors almost all they would want to know about those ancient times. The archaeological ruins are exactly that – ruined. Like many sites that were abandoned for centuries, most of the walls of the temples and other buildings are missing.

Well, they are not precisely missing because everyone knows where they are. In the 19th century, a lot of the stone blocks were plundered and used in building projects elsewhere in the area. There are plenty of Locri buildings that have a touch of Greek history in their foundations and walls.

But what remains is fascinating – clear remains of a Greek temple and associated buildings, including the impressive carved base of one enormous column.

The site has some helpful interpretive plaques, but the thoroughly modern museum, opened in 2022, offers a treasure trove of information. One of the most in-

triguing features of the still-being-discovered site is the temple of Persephone. It is apparent that a very significant cult devoted to Persephone, Queen of the Underworld, flourished here, and a complex ritual involving brides-to-be was carried out here.

In the museum, visitors can see hundreds of artifacts from the Greek era, including many bits of evidence of the Persephone cult.

What you can't see here are two sculptures that are two of the most important finds in Locri. They are life-size statues of mythological heroes Castor and Pollux. They were the twin sons of the Greek goddess Leda, but oddly, Pollux was considered divine while Castor was mortal. That's because Zeus was the father of Pollux, but a human, King Tyndareus, fathered Castor.

At any rate, both were venerated at Locri, but modern-day powers that be decided to move these important sculptures to another – and frankly, pretty darn impressive – museum, the National Museum in Reggio Calabria. That city is an hour and a half away on Calabria's west or Tyrrhenian Sea coast.

And there is no doubt that Reggio's museum is also a must see for anyone exploring Calabria's Greek connections.

But let me suggest that after you have sated your intellectual hunger with all this historical knowledge, you give a thought to your physical appetites. Especially (this won't surprise regular readers) for wine because a wine-making tradition that dates back to Magna Graecia is alive



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Ruins of a Greek temple and other buildings in Locri, dating from the eighth century B.C.

and delicious in modern-day Calabria. We were introduced to this unique wine by winemaker and vineyard owner Flavio Latella.

His small winery – 3.2 hectares of vines, all harvested by hand – produces 20,000 to 25,000 bottles annually. And in pride of place is his award-winning Greco di Bianco wine, a dessert beverage made from grapes grown on vines that may date back millennia. Wine makers have been reproducing the same variety of plants using slips to create new vines for time immemorial.

The wine is made using the "passito" method in which the grapes are dried before they are made into wine. During our Se-

nior Discovery Tours visit to the winery, we enjoyed a tasting – which included sampling some unique, homemade pastries as well as the excellent wine.

One warning: Greco di Bianco has a minimum alcohol content of 17 per cent, which is significantly higher than most wines we buy here in Canada. However, you can't actually buy this unique wine in Canada, so you'll just have to go to Calabria and drop in on Flavio.

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.



Exhibits in the Locri Museum tell of ancient rituals, including wedding rites connected to the goddess Persephone.



A head of the Greek god, Zeus, at the Reggio Museum.



Winemaker Flavio Latella with his award-winning Greco di Bianco wine.

FROM THE GARDEN: Resilience



NANCY ABRA

Independent Columnist

While my own energy and endurance easily wilts under the hot summer sun, I am impressed that certain plants in my garden seem to gather strength. It is as if early August is their moment to gleam. Their resilience is a quiet reminder that endurance does not always look like force. Sometimes it is adaptation, conservation of energy, or simply knowing when to bloom.

Much of the resilience in my hot, summer garden comes from specialized physical traits. Plants with fuzzy or silver-coloured leaves have fine hairs or a dusty grey-green coating that reflects harsh sunlight and traps moisture. Perennials such as Russian Sage (*Perovskia*

atriplicifolia) and Lamb's Ears (*Stachys byzantina*) are true heat lovers, thriving in dry, poor soil. Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) are "tough as nails" in my garden with their feathery foliage and dense, flat-topped flower heads that handle heat, drought, and dry soil with ease. Pollinators adore them and they add a welcome splash of colour to the summer garden.

The cheerful blooms of Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) are classic favourites, thriving in heat and humidity. They bloom heavily in full to part sun, even near the canopy of my black walnut trees. Excellent for naturalizing, they support a wide range of pollinators and bring that unmistakable golden glow to my garden in August.

Sedums, with their thick succulent foliage, are built for drought and seem almost untouched by summer heat. Their late-season blooms draw bees and butterflies in abundance. These plants are ideal for hot, dry spots, maintaining a sturdy upright form while others droop and struggle.

Native grasses such as switchgrass, little bluestem, and prairie

dropseed are elegant summer champions, standing tall even in scorching sun. And bee balm (*Monarda*) thrives in the heat and humidity of our Ontario summers, adding a burst of colour just when we need it most.

Then there are the other summer heroes in my garden — the annuals. My favourites are zinnias, the sturdiest annuals you can grow. They thrive in heat, bloom nonstop, and offer a joyful range of heights and colours. My zinnia patch is a magnet for bees and butterflies as they sip nectar from the bright, abundant blooms.

In the vegetable garden, the heat-proof champions are the compact, colourful marigolds. They thrive in blazing sun, add cheerful colour, and provide natural pest control, improve soil health and attract pollinators. Another powerhouse annual is lantana. Butterflies love its sweet nectar, and its drought tolerance and heat resilience bring a colourful energy to containers and summer borders.

As I find reasons to avoid weeding and other garden chores on hot days, seeking refuge in the cool shade of my beloved



tulip tree or retreating indoors to the air conditioning, I admire the remarkable endurance of my garden's midsummer champions. Human resilience can be

strong in the face of difficulty, but the plants in my garden remain Mother Nature's awe-inspiring summer heroes.

RURAL REFRESH: Managing mental health and technology



JACLYN TURPIN

Independent Columnist

Research tells us that day-to-day stress and anxiety is at a stark increase compared to what it was years ago. The data shows people have more pressures and demands on them. While this is true for both young and older

people, this stress is especially evident in young to middle-aged adults.

Our comparison to peers is at an all-time high. We see what others have, are doing and buying, heck, even what they are unwrapping. That's only part of the comparison though. It's seeing bodies online that are curated by artificial intelligence (AI) or retouched to the point of being unrecognizable. It's a false standard of body image. It's pressures and influences at our fingertips.

Fingertips that hold our job duties, our means of communication, our remotes, our camera, our timers — what else? Years ago, the internet wasn't used in

the same way it is today. Emails were sent and research was done, but most of that was attached to a computer that was bulky and stationary, not something that rested in your pocket, dinging with each new notification. For the vast majority of our population, there is very little rest time, no end of shift, no disconnect.

There are some ways to loosen the grip. Choose what works for you and what is achievable. We all have different relationships and ties with technology.

Start by reflecting on what it is you are consuming. What is drawing your attention on social media or on your phone? Are there apps you could delete or accounts you can unfollow?

Keep in mind that social media is a highlight reel. Last month, I posted a few fun pictures of the month in review. A couple hours later, I waited in emerge with my daughter with a double ear infection. Of course that part didn't make it into the highlights but it sure put a damper on our month. There are always stories behind the scenes.

Set a timer to put your phone down before you go to bed, or better yet, leave it in a different room. Pull out the old-fashioned alarm clock and let that be your wake-up call. Most phones also have the ability to set daily limits on the amount of time you spend on social media or other apps.

Silence your notifications. Instead of being tempted by the dings of an alert, only pick up your phone and check it when you choose, instead of as soon as you hear the ring. Turn off your phone for an hour every day. Choose a time that you want to be unreachable. Let your phone reset while you do the same!

Technology brings lots of convenience, safety features and connection. It brings ongoing changes and lasting impacts. Is it helping or hindering? That part is up to you.

Jaclyn Turpin, Rural Refresh Counselling. Supporting St. Marys and area, and virtually across Ontario.

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Riddles

What is the richest nut?
A cash-ew!

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

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

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

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

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

What kind of apples do computers prefer?
Macintosh!

What has many ears but cannot hear?
Corn!

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

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

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

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

- Word Search -



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JULY 2026 NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

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W E S T J E T T A L K S W O R L D C U P
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- World Cup
- Spain victory
- Ontario wildfires
- Air quality
- Tariff threats
- Lindsey Graham
- McConnell Mystery
- The Odyssey
- Andy Burnham
- NATO Summit
- Gordie Howe bridge
- Commonwealth Games
- WestJet talks



The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK



Braxton Baker (5)

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



Summer BBQs are fun, but keep pets safe! Hot grills, open flames, and tasty but unsafe foods can pose serious risks. Keep pets at a safe distance from the cooking area, avoid feeding harmful scraps, and provide fresh water and shade. *Happy grilling, happy pets!*



AGATHA

Our Pet of the Week is Agatha, who is a one-year-old Cockalier (mix of Cocker Spaniel and King Charles Cavalier). She loves playing with her brother Watson and snuggling up with her Everett family in St. Marys.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent



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Thorndale ward still without a candidate for municipal election

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

For the first time in recent history, the largest ward in the Municipality of Thames Centre, Ward 1, does not have a candidate who has submitted their nomination for the upcoming municipal election this October.

Ward 1, which is the northern portion of Thames Centre, from Highway 7 to the southern boundary of the Thames River, includes many hamlets and the fast-growing village of Thorndale, with its active community groups, new families and ongoing infrastructure needs.

A Ward 1 councillor directly influences road and park improvements, helps to shape development decisions and community safety initiatives. With no candidate who has come forward at this point, residents of Ward 1 face the possibility of no local voice in council chambers, though temporarily, this fall.

Longtime residents often dominate past lists of candidates in municipal politics, but the empty slate for Ward 1 is an invitation for new and younger residents, people who may have never considered public office and community volunteers ready to scale up their impact and involvement. The commitment to run for

public office is normally the main hesitation for would be politicians. With council and committee meetings, and public engagement, there is the balance of public service with work and family.

The closing date for nominations for council positions is Friday, Aug. 21 at 2 p.m. So far, there are candidates for mayor, two for deputy mayor, Ward 2 and Ward 3. If no one files their nomination for Ward 1, the Thames Centre clerk can extend the closing date to Wednesday, Aug. 26 at 2 p.m. If the seat is vacant after the Oct. 26 municipal election, council cannot leave Ward 1 without representation. Under the Municipal Elections Act, the

new council must fill the vacancy within 60 days, either by appointing someone to the role or by calling a byelection.

As the date for the close of nominations draws close, this is simply a pause before someone steps forward. It is, however, a reminder that democracy depends not only on voters, but on residents willing to throw their hat into the ring and serve their community.

For more information on candidate and filing a nomination for the upcoming municipal election, visit www.thamescentre.on.ca/council-and-administration/2026-municipal-election/.

Good Neighbour Project 2026

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Good Neighbour Project in the Thorndale area is part of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a Christian-based charitable organization that facilitates the collection and distribution of cash, grain and other agricultural commodities to the world's hungry through its member agencies.

In 2026, the Good Neighbour Project marks its 32nd year. Its committee includes 15 local farmers, residents and representatives from eight area churches, including two in London and Glenbrook Presbyterian in Mississauga. This year, wheat was grown on

17 acres east of Thorndale through a share-crop arrangement with the Stubgens family. Committee chair John Elliott reported that the crop yielded an excellent 114.9 bushels per acre and was sold to Elliott Grain Fieldcrest Commodities.

Proceeds from the crop along with donations will be sent to Canadian Foodgrains Bank in Winnipeg and matched four to one by the Canadian federal government.

As in the past, the committee has organized a Pork barbecue and corn roast on Aug. 16 at Brown's United Church, west of Highway 19 on Plover Mills Road, with entertainment by John Uren and Chris Yates at 5:30 p.m.

and supper at 6 p.m. Everyone is invited. There is no admission charge, but people are asked to bring a salad or dessert to share along with bringing their own dishes and a lawn chair. There will also be a donation jar for contributions for this Good Neighbour Project with receipts given for their donations.



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Pictured from left are Good Neighbour Project committee member Bill Barnard, owner of Pondview Farms, Ken Judge who supplied the combining, combine operator Dwayne Crane and Good Neighbour committee members John Elliott, Glenn Baskerville and George Wonnacott.



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THANK YOU

Shute

Heartfelt thanks to everyone for all the meaningful condolences, cards, telephone calls, visits, food and flowers that I received in memory of the passing of my sister Jean Mills.

Helen Shute

CELEBRATION

COME JOIN US TO CELEBRATE



Mary Brandt's
85th Birthday Open House

AUG | SAT 8th | 2026

FROM 1 - 5 PM

St. James Hall, 45 Thames Rd. St. Marys
Snacks and Refreshments
Your presence is your present

OBITUARY

Hathaway

With profound sadness, we announce that Maria Hathaway passed away peacefully at Kingsway Care Centre on July 29th, 2026, just three weeks after celebrating her 101st birthday with her loving family.

Maria was predeceased by her beloved husband, Charles (Elmer) Hathaway (1963); her brother, Alphonse Sobry (1944); her sisters, Lucy Sobry (2022) and Julienne Sobry (2023); her son, Florimond Hathaway (2025); and her daughter, Sonja Larmer (2026).

She is survived by her youngest sister, Lizette (93 years old), and her grandsons, Chris, Darren (Rano), Shawn (Caroline), and Justin. She is also cherished by her great-grandchildren, Anaya, Zach, Sierra, Eva, Annalisa, and Aribella, as well as numerous nieces and nephews in her native country of Belgium.

Maria came to Canada as a war bride from Turnhout, Belgium, after marrying Charles(Elmer) Hathaway in 1945 following the Second World War. The couple settled in Melbourne, Ontario, where they owned and operated a service station, a mechanical repair shop, and a restaurant. Following Charles's passing in 1963, Maria moved to St. Marys. There, she successfully operated a residential nursing home for many years, volunteered faithfully delivering meals for "Meals on Wheels," and later opened the Hathaway Bed and Breakfast, where she welcomed guests until her retirement at the age of 85.

Maria was predeceased by the dear friends who first drew her to St. Marys: Millie Middleton, Agnes Debrabandere, Peggy Bell, Hy and Juanita Gregory, and Gerald and Norma Paul. She was also predeceased by her dear companion of many years, Maurice Robson.

Maria spent her entire life caring for others, and that deep care was beautifully returned to her during her final years. The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to the staff at Kingsway Care Centre in St. Marys for their excellent, compassionate care and for ensuring her absolute comfort.

IN MEMORIAM

Ball

Matthew Walter James
December 17, 1979 – August 6, 2004



In loving memory of our precious Matthew who left us 22 years ago on August 6, 2004

In life we loved you dearly, in death we love you still,
In our hearts you hold special place, that no one else can fill.

It broke our hearts to lose you, but you did not go alone,
Part of us went with you, the day you were called home.

You are always loved, forever missed and never forgotten. Mom and dad, your son Justin, sister Lisa and family, brother Murray and family.

IN MEMORIAM

Nairn

In loving memory of a special husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather, who left us suddenly, August 3rd, 2005.

This month comes with deep regret,
It brings back a day we can't forget.

They say memories are golden, well maybe that is true,

But we never wanted memories, we only wanted you by our side.

Deeply missed and always loved

Your wife Marilyn, sons Jamie & Gwen, Dave & Sandy and your grandchildren Shawn, Jenna & Alaina, Tyler, Ann Marie, Emerson, Dominic & Brooklynn

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OBITUARY

Luther



Betty Florene Luther (nee Gray) passed peacefully at Cedarcroft Place Retirement Residence on July 27, 2026 in her 93rd year.

Betty was born in Fort Frances on December 16, 1933, and her family moved to Thunder Bay (Port Arthur) when she was a young girl. It was here at the age of 9 where she met Laverne Michael Luther (predeceased) who would become the love of her life. They were married for 70 years, building a love filled life together and proudly raising five children; Cathee Edwards (Geoff), Martin (Edie), Paul (Sandi), Douglas (predeceased) and Cheryl Simmons (Doug).

She is dearly loved by her grandchildren Kim (Mike), Thomas (Lauren), Annie (Tom), Daniel (Megan), Alex (Thamiraa), Caitlin (Jeff), Taylor, Connor (Michelle), Graydon (Ashley) as well as her eight great-grandchildren. Memories of Betty will be cherished by her sister Lorna (Bill), brother Wilfred (Jackie) and her many nieces and nephews. Betty was predeceased by sisters Hazel (Bob) and June (Jack).

Betty attended PACI High School where she excelled in athletics and academics. She was an accomplished pianist who achieved her Grade 10 level examinations. Post graduation, she attended the Nursing Program at the Port Arthur General Hospital and subsequently enjoyed a long successful career in Obstetrics with her last number of years as Nurse Manager at Woodstock General Hospital.

In her spare time, she was an avid bridge player and a member of the Order of the Eastern Star. Betty will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved her. The family would like to extend their sincerest gratitude to Better Ways for Seniors Ltd. and Cedarcroft Place Retirement Residence for their excellent care and compassion over the years.

A private family service will be held at a later date. Betty will be laid to rest at the National Military Cemetery (Beechwood) in Ottawa with her beloved husband Laverne. If you so wish, in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or the Salvation Army.

Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

OBITUARY

Hopkins, Ronald George



In Loving Memory of Ronald George Hopkins

Having been called to the Grand Lodge Above, it is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Ronald George Hopkins on Sunday, July 26, 2026 in London, Ontario in his 88th year.

To those who knew him, Ron will be remembered as a man whose smile came easily; whose hands were always busy creating, building, or fixing something; and whose greatest happiness was found in family, faithful companions, quiet hobbies, and the open road.

Ron lived a life defined by hard work, integrity, and quiet determination. He built a long and respected career as an electrician and was a proud member of IBEW Local 120 (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers).

His craftsmanship, strong work ethic, and willingness to help others earned him the respect of his colleagues and friends throughout his career.

Beyond his work, Ron found joy in many simple pleasures. He had a lifelong fascination with trains and took great pride in the HO-scale model railway he built in the basement of his home. He enjoyed spending countless hours expanding and maintaining the layout, creating a miniature world that reflected his patience and attention to detail.

Ron also loved gardening and was rarely happier than when tending his yard and gardens. An avid reader, he always had a novel close at hand and appreciated the quiet escape that a good story could provide.

One of Ron's greatest pleasures was driving. He loved long road trips and possessed an extraordinary memory for roads and highways. Years after travelling somewhere, he could still recall the route, every turn, and the landmarks along the way. Whether exploring familiar countryside or heading off on a new adventure, Ron simply enjoyed being behind the wheel.

A special place in Ron's heart was Lighthouse Cove, just north of Bayfield, where he kept a trailer for many years. Time spent at the lake brought him peace and happiness. It was a place where he enjoyed relaxing, spending time outdoors, and creating lasting memories with family and friends.

Animals held a special place in his heart throughout his life. He cherished his beloved poodles, Missy and Suzette, and later his husky, Natasha, each of whom brought him years of loyal companionship.

Ron was deeply committed to Freemasonry, following in the footsteps of his father. In 1978, he was initiated into Kilwinning Lodge No. 64 in London, the same lodge where his father, Norman Hopkins, had been a proud member since 1956. Ron later became a member of St. James Lodge in St. Marys, Tudor Lodge in Mitchell and, in 2000, had the honour of serving as Worshipful Master of Kilwinning Lodge No. 64, a role he held with great pride and dedication. Freemasonry provided Ron with lifelong friendships and an opportunity to live by the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth; values that were evident throughout his life.

Life brought Ron both great love and profound loss. He was predeceased by his second wife, Carol Sheehan, who passed away from cancer in 1988. During their years together, Ron lovingly helped raise Carol's sons, Dave Sheehan and Mike Sheehan, embracing them as part of his family.

In retirement, Ron found another creative outlet through his beloved partner, Jean Wanless, a gifted artist and tole painter. Ron handcrafted hundreds of wooden characters and decorative pieces while Jean transformed them into beautiful works of art with her painting. Together they travelled to craft shows throughout Southwestern Ontario, sharing not only their creations, but also their laughter and friendship with so many people they met along the way. Their partnership reflected the perfect blend of Ron's craftsmanship and Jean's artistry. Jean predeceased Ron, but the memories of their years together remained close to his heart.

Ron was predeceased by his parents, Norman Hopkins and Edna Hopkins (née Booth). He is survived by his first wife, Kathleen Davison, and lovingly remembered by his son, Trevor Hopkins; his granddaughter, Emery Hopkins, and her fiancé, Liam McDonagh; his sister, Beverly Bisette; his niece, Tamara Blaney and her husband, Kevin; and his nephew, Jeff Beacham and his wife, Karen.

Ron will be remembered as a man of quiet strength, unwavering integrity, and dependable character. He believed in doing things properly, taking pride in his work, and living with honesty and humility. Yet those who knew him best will remember his warm smile, his playful spirit, and his ability to find joy in the little things. Whether tending his garden, reading a good novel, watching his model trains wind through their miniature world, relaxing at Lighthouse Cove, spending time with his beloved dogs, or heading out on another drive down a familiar road, Ron appreciated life's simple pleasures and shared that appreciation with those around him.

His legacy lives on in the family he loved, the friendships he cherished, and the example he set through a life of service, kindness, and quiet generosity. He taught those around him the value of hard work, craftsmanship, loyalty, and finding happiness in the simple moments. Though he will be deeply missed, his smile, gentle humour, and playful nature will forever remain in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to know and love him.

Until we meet again in the Grand Lodge Above, may the Great Architect of the Universe keep you in His eternal care.

In keeping with Ron's wishes, cremation has taken place. The family invites guests to attend a Masonic Service held under the auspices of Kilwinning Lodge No. 64 at Westview Funeral Home and Cremation Centre, 709 Wonderland Road North, London, on Wednesday, August 5, 2026, beginning at 1:00 p.m., followed by a memorial service in the funeral home's chapel. Interment to take place at Woodland Cemetery.

For online condolences, please visit www.westviewfuneralchapel.com.



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10. Lemon

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8	9	7	6	2	5	4	3	1
2	6	3	7	1	4	8	9	5
4	1	5	9	8	3	2	7	6
7	8	6	2	9	1	3	5	4
5	2	4	3	7	6	9	1	8
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PRC & Friendship Centre events - See the Stonetown Crier on Page 5

St. Marys Public Library events - See Page 26

FRIDAY, AUG 7

- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, AUG 8

- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field - 8 a.m. to Noon, The Whites are serving breakfast

- Harrington new bridge celebration - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- Mary Brandt's 85th birthday open house at St. James Hall, St. Marys - 1-5 p.m.

- Exeter Ram Rodeo at South Huron Rec Centre, Exeter - 2-9 p.m., Ram Rodeo at 4 p.m.

- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, AUG 9

- Exeter Ram Rodeo at South Huron Rec Centre, Exeter - Gates open 11 a.m., Ram Rodeo at 1 p.m.

- St. Marys Legion bingo - Doors open 11:30 a.m., Early bird 12:45 p.m., Game time 1-4 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUG 12

- Town of St. Marys zoning by-law open house at the MOC - 2-8 p.m.

- NPG Planning Solutions will make a presentation on proposed changes at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

- Friends of the Library summer social at Cadzow Park - 5:30-7 p.m.

- Melodies at the Museum at Cadzow Park - 7-8 p.m., Jazzmatics

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Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist

1927 Firemen's Convention

25 years ago (2001)

The Trout Creek watershed report card shows the water course flowing through St. Marys receiving barely a passing grade. This is mainly attributed to increasing coliform bacteria levels and the negative effect of dams at Wildwood and St. Marys on water quality.

The annual Seniors' picnic at Slater's Farm will be held on August 15 at 5:30 p.m. Come out for corn on the cob, picnic salads, and great entertainment. Cost is \$6 and you can get tickets by calling the Friendship Centre.

50 years ago (1976)

A number of local groups have been taking advantage of evening tours arranged by the St. Marys Cement Co. to view the new plant now approaching the completion stage in the cement company south quarry along Water Street.

The annual chicken barbeque at Brown's United Church, East Nissouri, repeated the great success it has enjoyed the past 25 years as a crowd of around 900 attended last Thursday evening. No doubt the quantity and quality of home-made pies has a large bearing on the continued popularity of this Brown's Corners event.

75 years ago (1951)

The barn on Dr. G.A Schiedel's property, Jones Street, West Ward, has been vastly improved in recent months and, with its new paint job, is now quite a handsome structure.

Art Somers feels very lonely these days. No, it is not the lonesomeness for human companionship that is the trouble. Art's yearly colony of purple martins have left for the south, three weeks ahead of regular schedule.

100 years ago (1926)

Miss Ethel Hodge of Science Hill was successful in passing the recent mid-summer examination, London Conservatory of Music, with 91 marks, first class honors. She is a pupil of Miss Edith Kirkby.

A telegraph received by Mayor J.R. Stankey on Saturday from Mr. William Moyes dated Brampton, states "St. Marys secures Firemen's Convention and Demonstration for 1927". It was welcome news to St. Marys people, marking as it did the successful culmination of a two years' effort to land this important convention for the Stone Town.

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