

St. Marys Independent

36 Water St. S., St. Marys ON | 519.284.0041 | info@stmarys-independent.com | www.granthaven.com

Issue #1310

Thursday, April 23, 2026

FREE

Black's Financial Services Inc. Call us for details
INSURANCE • INVESTMENTS • FINANCIAL CONSULTING 519.284.1340

TERM	GIC	GIC INSURED	ARE YOU TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE TFSA?
1 year	3.55	*All rates subject to change without notice*	1 YR 3.16 - 3 YR 3.60 - 5 YR 3.76
3 years	3.90		
5 years	3.95		

FOR MORE PRODUCTS AND FINANCIAL ADVICE CALL US TODAY!

AROUND THE WORLD WITH STONETOWN TRAVEL

150 Queen St E, St. Marys, ON N4X 1B4
519-284-2332 agent@stonetowntravel.com
TICO#5003192

JOIN US ON ONE OF OUR GROUP TRIPS

 TROPICAL COSTA RICA JAN. 25 - FEB. 2, 2027	 SHAMROCK ROYAL IRELAND JUNE 25 - JULY 10, 2027	 CROATIA, SLOVENIA & THE ADRIATIC COAST SEPTEMBER 11-22, 2027
---	---	---

www.stonetowntravel.com

RIVER VALLEY

GOLF COURSE OPENING!
THIS SATURDAY, APRIL 25

RIVER VALLEY GOLF LEAGUES
begin the first week of May.

- * Tuesday - Mixed
- * Wednesday - Ladies
- * Thursday - Mens

All levels of play welcome!

CALL US FOR INQUIRIES AT
519.225.2329
WWW.RIVERVALLEYGOLFANDTUBE.COM



BRIDGING THE RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE FOR 100 YEARS (GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)
Rotary Club of St. Marys Paul Harris Fellow Len Hawkins, one of the evening's primary organizers, embodied the rural spirit with his pitchfork and University of Guelph jacket at the 100th Rural Urban Night dinner at the Pyramid Recreation Centre April 16.

Rotary Club of St. Marys celebrates 100th Rural Urban Night

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

The Rotary Club of St. Marys marked a major milestone April 16, hosting its 100th Rural Urban Night at the Pyramid Recreation Centre, an event that brought together residents from across St. Marys and the surrounding Perth County to celebrate agriculture, community connections and a century of change.

This year's theme, From Pitchforks to GPS – A Century of Change for Rural Urban Communities, highlighted both the history and evolution of farming while reinforcing the importance of maintaining strong ties between rural producers and urban residents.

Opening the evening, emcee and Rotarian Leslie Edney said Rural Urban Night has long served as an opportunity to recognize the connections between agriculture and everyday life.

"Whether you come from the farm, a small town, or the big city, this evening is about celebrating the connections that bring us together and the important role agriculture plays in all our lives," she said. "From the food on our tables to the livelihoods that sustain our communities, farming is a powerful reminder that we are all connected no matter where we come from."

Rotary Club of St. Marys president Ed Parkinson said reaching the 100-year mark is a significant accomplishment and credited the continued support of community members and local businesses for the event's longevity.

"We are in our 100th year, and it is really quite hard to believe we are here," Parkinson said.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

ADULT PROGRAMS

STK
Karate • Cardio Kickboxing

- ✓ GET FIT & STRONG
- ✓ STRESS RELIEF
- ✓ SELF-DEFENSE SKILLS
- ✓ COMMUNITY & FUN
- ✓ MENTAL FOCUS

START YOUR JOURNEY TODAY
FITNESS, CONFIDENCE, AND EMPOWERMENT AWAIT!

ADULT KARATE & ADULT CARDIO-KICKBOXING

START TODAY
WWW.STONETOWNKARATE.CA
CALL/TEXT: 519-284-0614

Hilda's Yard rakes in five WODL nominations for SMCP

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

St. Marys Community Players' (SMCP) take on Norm Foster's *Hilda's Yard* has earned five Western Ontario Drama League (WODL) nominations.

The SMCP production, staged last fall, received nominations for outstanding production of a Canadian play, outstanding production out-of-festival, outstanding production

out-of-festival preshow, intermission and musical selections for Vanni Azzano, outstanding performance in a major role for Edie Pedersen as Hilda Fluck, and outstanding performance in a supporting role for Derek Roberts as Beverly Woytowich.

"We are so pleased by this. It was an incredible production for the entire company of SMCP. Everyone felt committed," said Greg George, marketing and communications for

CONTINUED TO PAGE 12

COLDWELL BANKER
HOMEFIELD LEGACY REALTY
ST. MARYS, BROKERAGE

9-165 Egan Avenue N. St. Marys
Price ~~\$539,900~~ **\$509,900** | MLS X12700760

Construction is complete on this Move-In Ready 2 Bed, 2 Bath Condo with a Deck! Get the keys to your brand-new life. This stunning 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom vacant land condo and is poised to become your perfect modern retreat. The kitchen is well equipped with modern cabinetry, and ample quartz counter space. Retreat to two generously sized bedrooms, including a primary suite with its own ensuite bathroom, featuring double sinks. The un-finished basement is ready for your imagination. Stay comfortable year-round with central air conditioning.

Contact Chris Lang, Salesperson - chrislang@rogers.com

COMMUNITY

Child hospitalized after ingesting THC gummy found at Pyramid Recreation Centre

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

A 10-year-old boy was taken to hospital last week after ingesting a cannabis edible he found on the floor at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC) in St. Marys.

According to a Stratford Police Service media release, police were contacted April 13 after the child became ill following attendance at an after-school program at the PRC.

Police say video surveillance confirmed the youth found what appeared to be a gummy candy on the floor inside the entrance to the recreation centre and consumed it. The child later became ill, parents were contacted and the youth was taken to hospital for treatment, where THC was confirmed to be present in the child's blood. The child was later released into the care of family.

Stratford Police community resource officer Const. Aaron Mounfield said the incident highlights the importance of safely storing and handling cannabis edibles, particularly those that resemble common candy products.

"The Stratford police service encourages everyone to treat cannabis (THC)

edibles like medication," Mounfield said. "THC gummies can look and taste like regular candy, and they should be treated with the same level of caution as prescription medication."

Because edible cannabis products are legal for adults, Mounfield said some users may overlook the potential risks they pose if not stored properly or brought into public spaces.

"Just because they are legal does not mean risk-free," he said. "THC gummies require responsible storage, awareness and prevention to help protect children, families and others in the community."

Mounfield added cannabis edibles should remain in their original sealed packaging and should not be transported loosely in bags or pockets where they could be dropped or mistaken for regular candy.

"It is strongly recommended that THC gummies be kept and consumed at home, and not brought to or consumed in public places, to reduce the risk of incidents like the one that unfortunately occurred," he said.

Police also encourage parents to speak with children about the importance of not consuming unknown items.

Town of St. Marys director of community services Stephanie Ische said municipal staff assisted police as needed following the incident and were relieved the child recovered.

"Our staff are always ready to support the police whenever incidents arise, and above all, we are grateful that the child involved is safe and well," Ische said in a statement on behalf of the town.

Ische said the town does not have any new protocols in place as a result of the incident, noting situations involving children picking up items from the ground are difficult to prevent entirely in a large public facility.

Police say the incident serves as a reminder that while cannabis is legal for adults over the age of 19, edible products can closely resemble popular candy and pose a risk to children and other vulnerable individuals if not handled responsibly.

According to Huron-Perth Public Health, cannabis products, particularly edibles such as gummies or chocolates, can pose a serious risk to children. These products are often brightly coloured and look very similar to candy, making them especially appealing and easy for children to mistake as something safe to eat.

Because children have smaller bodies and developing brains, even a small

amount of cannabis can cause serious symptoms, such as extreme drowsiness, confusion, vomiting, anxiety, or difficulty breathing.

There are several important steps parents and caregivers can take to help keep children safe:

- Store cannabis products locked and out of sight, similar to medications or household chemicals.

- Keep cannabis in its original, child-resistant packaging and clearly separated from food or candy.

- Avoid consuming cannabis in front of children and never leave products unattended.

- Speak with children about not eating or tasting items they find on the ground or are offered by others, even if they look like candy.

Anyone who thinks a child in their care has consumed cannabis should call the poison control centre at 1-844 POISON-X (1-844-764-7669) for help. If the child loses consciousness or has difficulty breathing, call 911.

For more information, including guidance on prevention and what to do if a child is exposed to cannabis, visit Parachute Canada's cannabis safety resource at: <https://parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/poisoning/cannabis/>.

RELIABLE FUEL & PROPANE DELIVERY 24/7



Quality products and great service at a fair price.

219 Lorne Ave. E.
Stratford, ON N5A 6S4
519-272-0090

6976 Wellington Rd 7
Alma, ON N0B1A0
519-513-4514

165 Avenue Rd
Cambridge, ON N1R 7Z1
519-622-3720



STONETOWN FINANCIAL SERVICES

Unit 1, 60 Water Street South
St. Marys, ON | 519.284.4448

GIC	RRSPs	TFSA's
1 year - 3.61	1 year - 3.60	1 year - 3.60
3 year - 3.95	3 year - 3.90	3 year - 3.90
5 year - 4.00	5 year - 4.00	5 year - 4.00

*Rates subject to change without notice *Minimum may apply

7 Day Forecast

Sponsored by:  

Wednesday Apr-22nd	Thursday Apr-23rd	Friday Apr-24th	Saturday Apr-25th	Sunday Apr-26th	Monday Apr-27th	Tuesday Apr-28th
Mainly sunny 20 °C Feels like 20	Mainly sunny 20 °C Feels like 20	Sun & cloud 16 °C Feels like 15	Cloudy showers 11 °C Feels like 9	Sun & cloud 15 °C Feels like 15	Sun & cloud 18 °C Feels like 17	Cloudy showers 13 °C Feels like 12

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO REVIEWS - CALL TODAY

PROVIDING SOLUTIONS TO MEET YOUR ESTATE, FINANCIAL & RETIREMENT NEEDS!



Jeff Swan
BRE, CFP



Greg Swan
Investment Representative



Cheryl Campbell, CFP
Life Insurance Specialist

jeffswan@stonetownfinancial.com

Melanie B.'s

FLORAL ACCENTS, GIFTS, HOME AND GARDEN DECOR

SPRING SHOW & SALE

WEDNESDAYS TO SATURDAYS

MAY 6TH - 16TH

10 AM TILL 6PM

CEMETERY SADDLE SPECIAL \$55.00

📞 519-393-6978

4176 ROAD 135 - NORTH OF THE 📍

🌐 WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MELANIEBFLORALDESIGNS OPP STATION IN SEBRINGVILLE

QUADRO

Ask About Our
Managed Wi-Fi
Solutions!



Feel Protected, When they are Connected.

WWW.QUADRO.NET | 1-800-265-4983

EDITORIAL

Where would we be without volunteers?

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

In the course of our everyday lives, between work and family, it can be easy to forget how fortunate we are to live in the communities we call home. Unlike many places in the world, most of us have everything we need to live happy, healthy and productive lives.

But why is that? Have you ever stopped to think about how a community provides for its residents? Sure, local government does its part in keeping critical services running, and the business community ensures we have access to the products and services we need (or think we need), but what about everything else – all those little things that, together, create the quality of life we have come to expect?

The answer to that question is, undoubtedly, volunteers; the people who give their time and energy to improve their communities and provide for friends,

neighbours and total strangers without a second thought or the expectation of compensation.

And the evidence is everywhere.

I stepped outside the other day and noticed the trash that had piled up over the winter around the municipal drain down the street and in the playground just around the corner had all been cleaned up. Volunteers did that.

I then had to drive to the hospital for an appointment. Though I'm not great with directions – especially when I'm indoors – a woman with a wonderfully reassuring smile helped me figure out where I was going. And when I got there, a kind man pointed me in the direction of the reception desk, where I was able to check in. They were volunteers.

As I was driving home, I noticed new trees had been planted along the roadside, not only bringing some added natural beauty to my drive but potentially protecting drivers from the reduced visi-

bility of blowing snow in the winter once they're fully grown. Volunteers did that.

I passed a school along the way and saw local farmers delivering fresh eggs and milk for the school's breakfast program – a program that ensures all students have the best start to their days, regardless of what's going on at home. Those farmers weren't being paid for their time or their product. They are volunteers. They do it for the good of the community.

That evening, I stopped at a local church to enjoy a community meal. Together with people from all walks of life – some of whom only get this single opportunity each week to break bread with others in the community – we ate, we talked and we laughed, enjoying each other's company and the wonderful meal cooked and served by volunteers, and paid for with donations.

After dinner, I enjoyed a concert in the park. The music, played by a community concert band, was the perfect cap to my

day, and I didn't have to lift a finger or pay a cent to sit and listen to it. The musicians and everyone who set up the concert and cleared the park afterward were volunteers.

Now, think for a moment what it would be like if we lived in a community where everyone just looked after themselves and their families, where people didn't feel the need to give back to the place they call home in whatever way they could.

The theme for National Volunteer Week this year, April 19-25, is "ignite volunteerism." To me, that's a call to action. Let's recognize all the wonderful things volunteers do that benefit our communities, share their stories far and wide and lead by example. Let's keep that spirit of volunteerism alive and well this week and every week by giving back to our communities and not asking anything in return.

Bravo

We have 1 Bravo this week.

1) Bravo to the many businesses that are exhibiting beautiful quilts in their windows in honour of the Piecemakers Show. Absolutely delightful!

Boo

We 1 have Boo this week.

1) There is a little nice church just outside St. Marys in the country, but somebody lets his dog misuse the area around it, gross. Have some respect.

*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

"I heard loud and clear from the people that this was not the time to purchase a plane. I also understand the scrutiny. There's no one in this country who's scrutinized more than I am."

- Doug Ford on the backlash of the province as the government tries to sell the \$28.9 million jet

**GRANT
HAVEN
MEDIA**

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

St. Marys Independent

Publisher

Stewart Grant • stew@granthaven.com

Regional Editor

Galen Simmons • galen@granthaven.com

Graphic Design / Sales Inquiries

Tyler Carruthers • info@stmarys-independent.com

Business Development

Heather Dunbar • heather@granthaven.com

Billing Administrator

Cindy Boakes • boakescindy1576@gmail.com

Administrative Assistant

Wendy Lamond • wendylamond74@gmail.com

Contributors

June Grant, Spencer Seymour, Emily Stewart, Jake Grant, Mary Smith, Nancy Abra, Lauren Eedy, Paul Knowles, Amy Cubberley, Laura McAsh, Alona Vasylieva, Nancy Bickell

36 Water St. St. Marys, ON, PO Box 2310 N4X 1A2

info@stmarys-independent.com | 519.284.0041 | granthaven.com



Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



SPONSORED BY:



395 Queen Street West,
St. Marys, ON 519.284.2566

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time, they just have the heart.

No act of kindness, no matter how small is ever wasted.

One of life's most important questions, what are you doing for others?

Someone else is happy with less than you have.

Overheard

AT THE COFFEE SHOP

Sponsored by: *Tim Hortons.*

201 Queen St. E, St. Marys, ON 519.284.4555

There is no "I" in team but there is a "U" in volunteer!

Was Doug Ford honestly surprised that there was backlash over his new plane?

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

Ontario-Thomas-Jones street reconstruction update

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys has begun road reconstruction along sections of Ontario, Thomas and Jones streets on April 20.

The affected roads are limited to local traffic only.

Affected areas include:

- Thomas Street from Jones Street to Queen Street
- Ontario Street to Jones Street
- Jones Street between Ontario Street and Thomas Street

The work will begin with temporary watermain installation and initial removals the week of April 20 and is scheduled for completion on Aug. 30.

The contractor (291 Construction) is starting on Thomas Street, then moving up to Ontario Street and will finish with work on the Jones Street segment. The contractor will ensure that driveways are accessible at the beginning and end of each day, maintaining a hardpack single lane of gravel for vehicle travel and hardpack gravel for access of pedestrian traffic.

Non-local residents should detour and avoid the area as through traffic will not be possible during the workday.

Currently, these road segments are high priority for reconstruction following the



town's 10-year capital plan, based on known surface conditions and required underground repairs/upgrades.

The scope of work includes the full reconstruction of both asphalt and concrete roadway sections to address existing wear and extend the lifespan of these important corridors.

In addition to road surface upgrades, the project will involve the replacement of watermains to enhance system reliability and reduce the risk of future service disruptions.

Isolated sanitary sewer repairs and targeted storm system repairs will be completed to improve drainage and environmental performance.

The project also features the installation of new sidewalks, as well as new curbs and gutters to improve accessibility, pedestrian safety and stormwater management along these routes.

STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

April 19 - 25, 2026

Volunteers are the heart of St. Marys. Your generosity, commitment, and community spirit make our town a better place to live, work, and connect. On behalf of Town Council and staff, thank you for everything you do - this week and all year long!

FIREFIIGHTERS' BREAKFAST

May 3 | 8 Am - 12 PM | Fire Hall

Bring the family to meet local firefighters, tour the Fire Hall, and check out fire trucks and rescue equipment. Sparky the Fire Dog will be there too! \$10 per adult, \$5 per child (ages 5-12), children under the age of 5 eat free. Please park in the DCVI lot.



SPORTS WALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS

Do you know someone who has made a significant contribution to sports in our community? Nominations are now OPEN for the 2026 Sports Wall of Fame! The nomination period is open until April 30 for the following categories: Individuals, Teams and Builder.

Learn more: townofstmarys.com/sportswall



SPRING FLUSHING

Our spring water flushing program starts on April 27 and will continue until May 22.

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

View a full map & details: townofstmarys.com/flushing



SHOWER PROGRAM

Pyramid Recreation Centre

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

Visit Guest Services or call 519-284-2160



Contact us

519-284-2340
communications@town.stmarys.on.ca



The St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary

Sip & Shop

St. Marys Friendship Centre
317 James St. S St. Marys

Sunday May 3, 2026
1:00-4:00

Shop the *Spring* Collection of Ladies Garments & Accessories from The Boutique.

We will be joined by 'Tisket a Tasket' Vintage Treasures.



Refreshments Offered By St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary to enjoy while you shop!



All Proceeds To St. Marys Memorial Hospital

ACTION HEALTH CARE
SALES • SERVICE • RENTALS

566 Queen St. E. • 519.284.4348

Senior of the Week



Our senior of the week is Fred Wick who turned 90 years young on April 15. Fred is from Monkton, Ont. and will be happily married for 65 years to Edna on May 6. They have three children and two granddaughters. Fred is retired from Hutton Transport where he worked for 37 years. He enjoys playing cards and watching the Toronto Blue Jays and Toronto Maple Leafs.

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

WEEKEND QUIZ
By Jake Grant

1. What is the dot over the letter "i" called?
2. What is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea?
3. Which country has won the most World Cups?
4. What pizza flavour was famously invented in Canada?
5. What was the original name of the search engine "Google"?
6. Where is the strongest human muscle located?
7. What is the only food that can never go bad?
8. What is the only mammal capable of true flight?
9. What was the first toy advertised on television?
10. True or false - The color orange is named after the fruit.

This week's answers are found on pg. 39

Musicians wanted to volunteer at Pride Family Festival and Movie in the Park



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Jesse Weber performing at the St. Marys Pride Family Fun Day on June 9, 2024. The upcoming Pride Family Festival and Movie in the Park, run by the St. Marys Public Library and Friends of the Library, will need musicians performing at the event on June 5.

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

The St. Marys Public Library is looking for bands and solo musicians to perform at an event celebrating and embracing inclusion.

The library, in partnership with the Friends of the St. Marys Public Library (FOL), will host the Pride Family Festival and Movie in the Park on June 5 in Cadzow Park starting at 6 p.m. The event will feature outdoor games, temporary tattoos, karaoke and snacks before the movie screening later on. The library is looking for musicians to volunteer their time to perform live music during the evening.

"We're excited to invite anyone in the community who is in a band or a solo singer or plays the guitar or an instrument and wants to perform for the crowd. It'll be fun," said Sarah Andrews, CEO of the St. Marys Public

Library. "It's just a community event that anyone's welcome to participate, but it's a family-inclusive event so we're really focused on performers and people who want to be part of the community and be LGBT positive."

FOL will also be looking for volunteers to serve the snacks, including free popcorn, to the guests. Anyone looking to volunteer with FOL can send an email to FriendsOfStMarysPublicLibrary@gmail.com.

Andrews also invites those attending the event to just be present and ensure the environment is a welcoming and accepting place for everyone in St. Marys, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

"It's just a fun night for families and individuals, especially teens, to feel welcome to be present and to be themselves," she said.

Anyone looking to perform at the Pride Family Festival and Movie in the Park can send an email to library-info@stmaryspubliclibrary.ca.

St. Marys Community Players Presents

Marc Camoletti's
Comedic Farce

BOEING BOEING

Translated by Beverley Cross and Francis Evans
Directed by Ralph Small

Lead Production Sponsor
THE WESTOVER INN
HOTEL • RESTAURANT • EVENTS

TICKETS:
www.stmaryscommunityplayers.ca
Troyer's Spices 110 Queen St. E. (226) 661-8777

April 23 to May 9 | Town Hall Theatre
Parental Guidance Suggested 13+

Piecemakers Quilt Show returns to St. Marys this weekend

Stitching together tradition and creativity



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Local St. Marys quilters (from left) Wendy Anderson, Joan Robinson and Darlene Roger recently won national awards at the 2025 Quilt Canada National Juried Show in Toronto. Their award-winning quilts will be on display at the 2026 Piecemakers Quilt Show, running April 23-25 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in St. Marys.

LYNNE GODKIN

Contributed Article

Quilting enthusiasts, art lovers and community members alike should make plans for this weekend as the Huron Perth and Stonetowne Quilt Guilds present the highly anticipated Piecemakers Quilt Show taking place over three days from April 23-25 at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in St. Marys.

Established in 1994, the show celebrates the timeless art of quilting while showcasing the innovation and passion of today's quiltmakers. The upcoming show promises to bring together a stunning array of traditional patterns, modern designs and everything in between with over 300 quilts and other quilted items crafted by our Quilt Guild members ranging from hand-stitched heirlooms to contemporary textile art.

There's something magical about seeing hundreds of hours of work stitched into a single quilt and each piece tells a story about the maker, the fabric and the tradition it carries forward. Visitors can expect to see a wide variety of styles, including patchwork, appliqué, paper piec-

ing, plus national award-winning quilts from the recent Canadian National Juried Show at Quilt Canada 2025 in Toronto. The Guild members are an accomplished group with exceptional talent.

In addition to the quilt exhibit, the show will include a Merchant's Mall, a Boutique and a luncheon/tearoom. Come for the day and take some time to explore the beautiful town of St. Marys. In addition to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, St. Marys boasts beautiful walking and hiking trails that take in the lovely rural landscape, as well as a vibrant main street where one might also spot some heirloom quilts in downtown store windows.

Whether a seasoned quilter, a beginner, or simply curious, this show is a wonderful opportunity to be inspired. Organizers hope people walk away not just with admiration, but with ideas and a deeper appreciation for the craft.

The event is being held Thursday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, April 24, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Pyramid Recreation Centre at 317 James St. S, St. Marys. The cost is \$10 admission, with cash only accepted.

SOURCE FLOORING GET IT DONE 3 DAY SALE THIS FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY!

VINYL
GLUE DOWN VINYL **99¢** FROM /SQFT
LUXURY VINYL PLANKS **\$1.29** FROM /SQFT
12" X 24" VINYL TILES **\$1.99** FROM /SQFT



LAMINATE
MODERN LAMINATE **99¢** FROM /SQFT
12MM THICK LAMINATE **\$1.99** FROM /SQFT
WATERPROOF LAMINATE **\$2.99** FROM /SQFT



HARDWOOD
CLICK ENG. HARDWOOD **\$1.99** FROM /SQFT
WHITE OAK HARDWOOD **\$3.99** FROM /SQFT
WHITE OAK HARDWOOD **\$5.99** FROM /SQFT



FLOOR TILE
13" X 13" PORCELAIN **99¢** FROM /SQFT
12" X 24" PORCELAIN **99¢** FROM /SQFT
24" X 24" FLOOR TILE **\$1.99** FROM /SQFT



7'X10' AREA RUGS **\$1.99** STARTING FROM
100'S TO CHOOSE FROM!
SOURCE FLOORING
SHOP ONLINE 24/7
SOURCEFLOORING.COM

1362 VICTORIA STREET NORTH KITCHENER
MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-8PM SATURDAY 9AM-6PM SUNDAY 10AM-5PM

St. Marys Independent
SCAN TO READ THE ONLINE PAPER
www.granthaven.com

Rotary Club of St. Marys celebrates 100th Rural Urban Night



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Rotarians and guests from St. Marys and the surrounding Perth County gathered for the Rotary Club of St. Marys' 100th Rural Urban Night dinner April 16.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

"We simply represent you. We're going to take your money and we'll give it to people who need it."

Parkinson also highlighted the importance of encouraging new members to join service organizations like Rotary to ensure the work continues for future generations. Funds raised through the annual dinner support Rotary initiatives locally and internationally.

The evening featured historical performances by Carol Robinson-Todd and Terry Todd, who presented monologues

set in 1926 – 100 years ago – that reflected on early farm life and rural traditions.

Keynote speakers Doug and Devin Johnston of Maplevue Farms in North Perth then spoke about the evolution of agricultural practices on their fifth-generation dairy farm, describing how technology has transformed the industry over the past century.

Their presentation explored the shift from manual labour to precision agriculture, illustrating how innovations such as robotics, GPS technology and improved herd management tools are helping mod-



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

St. Marys Coun. Rob Edney and Rotarian and emcee Leslie Edney – husband and wife – played up both sides of the rural-urban theme with Rob Edney dressed to the nines and Leslie Edney taking a more casual approach to her evening attire.

ern farms operate more efficiently while maintaining a focus on animal care and sustainability.

Despite the many changes in farming over the past century, the Johnstons emphasized the heart of agriculture remains much the same – good people, strong communities and a shared commitment to producing food responsibly.

Centrepieces placed on each table, designed as baskets of food, were donated following the event to the Salvation Army food bank, reinforcing the event's emphasis on community support and

food security.

As attendees gathered to share a meal of bone-in ham, chicken in mushroom sauce and a wide variety of cakes and pies for dessert prepared by Huron Shores Catering, organizers emphasized Rural Urban Night remains rooted in the same purpose it served when first held in 1926 – bringing people together ahead of the spring planting season to strengthen connections between neighbours.

One hundred years later, that goal remains unchanged, even as the tools used on farms continue to evolve.

WATER STREET DENTISTRY

(226) 661-0192

60 Water Street South, St. Marys

Accepting New Smiles!

www.waterstreetdentistry.ca
waterstreetdentistry@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook

www.samshomehardware.com

Home hardware

HOME BUILDING CENTER HOURS:

MONDAY TO FRIDAY - 7 AM TO 5:30 PM
SATURDAY - 8 AM TO 4 PM
SUNDAY - 10 AM TO 3 PM

925 Queen Street E., St. Marys, ON • N4X 1A6
Phone: 519.284.3380 • smbc@homehardware.ca

SCIENCE HILL Country Club

ANOTHER YEAR BEGINS!

OPENING APRIL 6TH

Restaurant opens April 6th and we will be putting golfers out weather permitting day by day starting April 6th.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW SPRING MENU!

Spring Restaurant Hours:
Starting April 6th
open from 11am - 6pm
*soft open until patio weather arrives

519.284.3621

SCAN ME

The Quarry's Edge blends sweet treats, creativity and a family legacy

STEWART GRANT

Publisher

A new business in St. Marys is bringing more than just ice cream and treats to the community – it's delivering a sense of fun, creativity and heartfelt purpose.

Located at 12 Water St. N, The Quarry's Edge is owned and operated by John and Lisa Bourgon, a couple who recently made the move from Kitchener in search of a quieter, small-town lifestyle. After years of running a busy shop and working full time as a project manager respectively, the pair decided it was time for a change.

"We love it here," said Lisa. "It's a great community. The winter was a bit long, but we're really enjoying small-town life."

Their journey to opening The Quarry's Edge, however, is rooted in something much deeper than a career change. The shop was inspired by the memory of their daughter, Sara, who passed away suddenly at the age of 26 after a brief and aggressive illness.

"She had a way with people – especially children," said John. "Kids were just drawn to her. We wanted to carry that forward, to bring joy into the community the way she did."

That spirit is evident throughout the shop, which aims to be a welcoming, upbeat space for people of all ages. From its retro-inspired décor to its playful menu, The Quarry's Edge is designed to spark smiles and create memorable experiences.

At the heart of the business are its unique and colourful treats. One of the most popular offerings is the "dirty soda," a customizable drink made by combining a soda base – such as Sprite, Coke, or root beer – with flavour infusions and topped with cream or cold foam.

"It's called 'dirty' because when you stir it, it blends together and gives that look," Lisa said. "They're really refreshing, especially on a hot day."

Customers can also opt to turn their drink into a float by swapping ice for ice cream. Flavour combinations like Blue Breeze featuring blue raspberry, coconut, and Sprite have already become local favourites, with some young customers returning nearly every day.

Another standout item is the ice cream slider, a creation the couple developed themselves. Served on a sweet brioche bun and topped with syrups and whipped cream, the dessert offers a surprising twist.

"It almost tastes like a burger, but sweet," John said. "It's not what you expect, but people really enjoy it."

Beyond the menu, The Quarry's Edge offers a range of toys, games and themed "surprise boxes" tailored for



(STEWART GRANT PHOTO)

Lisa and John Bourgon are owners of The Quarry's Edge, located at 12 Water St. N.

different ages and occasions. These curated boxes can be purchased for birthdays, holidays, or simply as a fun treat.

Looking ahead, the owners are preparing to launch one of their most creative concepts yet – interactive scavenger hunts. Participants will purchase a themed box filled with clues, maps and artifacts that guide them through a local adventure. Successful participants can advance through levels and earn prizes along the way.

"It's all about creating experiences," John said. "We want people to have fun, explore and engage with the community."

The shop also features a dedicated space for future workshops, which the couple plans to introduce in stages as the business grows.

Affordability has been another key focus. With rising



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Dirty sodas are among the popular treats available at The Quarry's Edge.

costs affecting many families, Lisa and John Bourgon have made a conscious effort to keep prices accessible, offering items like single-scoop ice cream for \$3 and two scoops for \$5.

"We want everyone to be able to come in and enjoy something," Lisa said.

Customers who buy a soda or a treat from The Quarry's Edge will have the opportunity to fill a loyalty card that will earn them one free treat once the card is filled.

The Quarry's Edge is currently open from 12-8 p.m. six days a week (closed Mondays), with plans to expand hours as the weather warms. Customers can also connect with the business through its website (www.thequarrysedge.ca), by social media ([thequarrysedge](https://www.facebook.com/thequarrysedge) on Facebook), or by email (thequarrysedge@gmail.com).



- ✂ Full automotive repair services
- ✂ Diagnostics • Safeties
- ✂ Alignments • Tire Sales
- ✂ Honest and Friendly Service

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

Booking a few weeks ahead for appts

402 Queen Street W., St. Marys, ON
Hours: Monday-Thursday 8-5:30, Friday 8-5
Ph: 519.284.1302 • info@harrisgreigauto.com





Your locally owned and family run Pharmacy

- Pharmacist Consultations
- Chronic Disease Management
- Medication Reviews
- Immunization and Injection Services
- Compliance Packaging
- Free Delivery



155 QUEEN STREET EAST, ST. MARYS ON | PHONE: 519 284 1380

PharmaChoice

VISIT US ON:   

GO Train service returning to Stratford this summer with permanent year-round expansion



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Ontario Transportation Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria announces the GO Train expansion to Stratford alongside Stratford Mayor Martin Ritsma (left) and deputy mayor Harjinder Nijjar (right), among other local politicians and dignitaries.

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

After more than two years without GO Train service, Stratford will once again be connected directly to Toronto by rail beginning July 6, this time with what provincial and local officials say will be a permanent, year-round expansion of service.

The announcement was made April 17 at the Stratford train station, where Mayor Martin Ritsma and members of Stratford city council were joined by Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae, Ontario Transportation Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria and Metrolinx president and CEO Michael Lindsay. According to the province, the expanded service will include one daily round trip between Stratford and Toronto on the Kitchener GO line.

Standing at the station with a big smile on his face Friday morning, Ritsma called the announcement the result of years of advocacy and collaboration among the city, Metrolinx, VIA Rail, CN Rail and the province.

"These things don't happen without great conversation, great delegations and great collaboration," Ritsma said. "I think about the impact of what we're doing here today ... for individuals that work here in Stratford and then commute to Toronto, to the GTA. I think about the students that come to Stratford for education and go beyond Stratford for education. I think about our tourists."

On weekdays, the service is intended primarily for commuters and students, with a morning train from Stratford to Union Station and a return trip in the afternoon. Weekend service will be geared more toward tourism, with a morning train from Union Station to Stratford and a return train to Toronto in the evening. Stops along the route will include Kitchener, Guelph, Acton, Georgetown and

Brampton.

Ritsma said the return of GO service is particularly important in a city that already functions as a transportation hub through Stratford Transit, PC Connect, FlixBus and VIA Rail.

"I also think about our environment. Our job is to reduce greenhouse gases, and this is a way to do it," he said. "Also reducing the congestion on our roads, especially our 400 series (highways)."

The service marks the return of a rail connection Stratford lost in October 2023, when the previous GO Train trial between London and Toronto came to an end after Metrolinx, CN Rail and VIA Rail did not renew the agreement that allowed the service to operate on existing rail infrastructure. At the time, many



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

For the first time since 2023, a GO Train was back at the Stratford train station April 17, signaling its permanent return with daily round-trip service to and from Stratford beginning July 6.



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae celebrates the return of GO Train service in Stratford.

Stratford residents expressed frustration at losing what some called an affordable transportation lifeline to Toronto, particularly compared to the higher cost of VIA Rail.

One of the biggest questions surrounding Friday's announcement was how this expansion will differ from the last GO service, which saw concerns about low ridership and limited scheduling. Asked directly about that history during the press conference, Sarkaria acknowledged there are always variables when introducing service to a new or returning market, but said the province sees Stratford as part of a broader integrated network.

"This is a really important first step," Sarkaria said. "This is a commitment from our team at GO Transit and Metrolinx to

ensure that we have a presence here, that we can continue to build towards increasing ridership."

Lindsay added the weekday schedule will initially resemble the old commuter-focused model, but Metrolinx is projecting more than 16,000 riders a year from the Stratford station alone and expects that number to grow.

"The initial service profile on weekdays will absolutely be for commuters and, therefore, it's going to look a little bit like it did last time," Lindsay said. "The train's going to leave here at 6:15 a.m. ... and it's going to get you into Union Station before 9 a.m. You're going to leave (Toronto) around 5 p.m. in rush hour and (it will) get you back here sort of around 7:30 p.m."

"We will continuously evaluate what ridership looks like and take customer feedback as to how that's going, but for what it's worth, we're projecting more than 16,000 riders a year here at this station, and ... I see nothing but an upside in that number."

Unlike the previous GO trial, officials stressed this service is permanent and will run seven days a week.

"We're bringing the GO train service back to Stratford, and it's permanent," Rae said.

Rae said the renewed service will benefit not only Stratford residents but also people throughout Perth County and St. Marys who can connect into the station through other local transportation options.

The announcement is part of a wider push to expand transit access across Ontario, including along the Kitchener corridor. The province says the Stratford service forms part of Ontario's broader \$70-billion transit expansion and follows the recent launch of weekend GO Train service between Toronto and Kitchener.

Last call for early bird tickets as Brews and Food Fest returns on Father's Day

JULIA PAUL

Independent Reporter

The Rotary Club of St. Marys will host the sixth annual Brews and Food Fest on Sunday, June 21, bringing craft beverages, gourmet food and live music back to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

The event runs from noon to 6 p.m. at Fairway Wealth Management Field and takes place the day after the hall of fame's induction ceremony – a timing that has helped shape the festival since it began in 2019.

"This is the sixth annual running of it. It's a chance for people to enjoy craft beverages and gourmet food and live music on Father's Day with family and friends while supporting a good cause," said event chair Mark Oliver.

Organizers are planning for up to 12 Ontario-based beverage vendors and five food trucks, with a mix of returning favourites and new participants. Offerings will include craft beer, cider, wine and spirits alongside a variety of food options ranging from international cuisine to festival staples.

In response to growing demand, the festival is also expanding its beverage offerings this year.

"Over the past few years, we've been getting a lot of requests about whether there will be anything non-alcoholic there," Oliver said. "So new this year, we are going to have a booth with non-alcoholic craft beverages."

Live entertainment will be provided by The Plank Liners, a Woodstock-based



(JULIA PAUL PHOTO)

Broken Rail Brewing Co. serves attendees during the 2024 Brews and Food Fest in St. Marys. The brewery is set to return as a featured vendor at this year's Father's Day event.

band expected to appeal to the event's audience. Music remains a central part of the festival's atmosphere while allowing space for attendees to socialize and enjoy the setting.

"The overall focus is still a craft beer festival, but there is something there for everyone, even if you don't like beer," Oliver said.

Proceeds from the event will support Rotary initiatives, with funds helping fulfill the club's multi-year commitment to All Wheels Park on James Street, along with other local projects.

Attendance has stabilized in recent years following a surge in 2022, with organizers aiming to grow the event while maintaining a comfortable experience.

"We're happy anytime we get to 500 and beyond," Oliver said.

Tickets are currently on sale, with early bird pricing available until April 30. General admission tickets are \$26 until that date and will increase to \$30 starting May 1, with a further increase expected closer to the event.

VIP tickets are available for \$35 until April 30 and will rise to \$40 on May 1. VIP admission includes entry one hour early and same-day access to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

Organizers encourage early purchases, as advance sales help determine attendance capacity due to a limited supply of custom glassware ordered ahead of the event.

"We really do our best to reward people who buy early so that we can make projections and order our glassware appropriately," Oliver said.

The festival's location reflects a long-standing connection between Rotary and the hall of fame.

"It was just a natural fit for Rotary to hold the event there, given our long history with the Baseball Hall of Fame," Oliver said.

Organizers say the event continues to offer a mix of entertainment, local flavour and community support.

"Come on out, support a good cause and enjoy some craft beverages and gourmet food and live music on Father's Day with family and friends," Oliver said. "How can you go wrong?"

Tickets and additional event details are available online at rotarystmarys.ca/events/brews-food-fest-2026.

McCully's Hill Farm

Preserve of the Month
10% OFF Relish

WE HAVE AVAILABLE!
Breaded Pork Schnitzel, Smoked Beef Brisket, Pulled Pork, and Marinated Butterfly Pork Chops

McCully's Hill Farm Summer Day Camp

McCully's camp will run the following weeks this summer:
July 13-17 | July 27-31 | August 24-28

For registration forms or more information please stop by the store or visit our website at www.mccullys.ca

Store Hours in April
Friday and Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
4074 Perth Line #9, St. Marys, ON • www.mccullys.ca • 519.284.2564

ST MARYS optometry

YOUR LOCAL EYE CARE TEAM – RIGHT HERE IN ST. MARYS

At St. Marys Optometry, we're proud to serve the people of our town and surrounding area. From first eye exams to updates for your glasses, our friendly team is here to make every visit welcoming and personal.

Whether you're a new patient or it's been a while since your last visit, we'd love to see you. Book an appointment and experience eye care that's local, caring, and easy.

Book online at www.stmarysoptometry.ca
or call us at **519.284.4144** • 766 Queen St E, St Marys ON.

COMMUNITY CARE – IT'S WHAT WE BELIEVE IN.

Hilda's Yard rakes in five WODL nominations for SMCP

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

SMCP. "It was a great show both with the company but also, the audience loved it. They were, I would say, the perfect demographic for the show about a family in the 1950s."

SMCP's production of Hilda's Yard is also one of the few in the community theatre group's history that has cast members outside of St. Marys who performed, including Roberts of north London, Edie Pedersen from just outside of Lucan, and Alex Pedersen of Strathroy.

"We were extremely happy to be extending our reach beyond St. Marys itself; so very happy to be extending the St. Marys Community Players brand across south-western Ontario," George said.

He also said there's more interest in SMCP from the wider community with an increase of local businesses within 50 kilometres of St. Marys looking to advertise. The next SMCP production, Boeing Boeing, is already 80 per-cent sold out with opening night on April 23.

"We are so grateful for our audience, which seems to be growing. The last three productions have seen significant support from our audiences," George said.

The WODL Awards will run on the weekend of May 14-17.

More information about SMCP and its upcoming shows can be found online by visiting www.stmary-communityplayers.ca.

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

ADVERTISE LOCAL

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

Canada

Spring water flushing scheduled for April 27 to May 22

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys will be performing spring water main and hydrant flushing from April 27 to May 22, 2026.

Flushing schedule:

- April 27 to May 1, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., area west of the Thames River
- May 4 to 8, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., area south of Trout Creek and east of James Street
- May 10, 6 p.m. to 12 a.m., Queen Street East (downtown core)

- May 11 to 15, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., area south of Trout Creek from the Thames River to James Street, including James Street South

- May 19 to 22, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., area north of Trout Creek and east of the Thames River

Potential service disruptions

Residents in these areas may observe some water discoloration during flushing. If discoloration is observed, run cold water until it becomes clear. If the water does not run clear after five minutes, turn off the tap and wait 30 minutes before trying again. Refrain from doing laundry until any discoloration has cleared.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF TOWN OF ST. MARYS)

A map of the Town of St. Marys' spring watermain and hydrant flushing schedule.

ROTARY CLUB OF ST. MARYS
PROUDLY PRESENTS
100th ANNUAL RURAL URBAN NIGHT

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

GOLD
 VP VETERINARY PURCHASING

SILVER
 SHUR-GAIN, trouw nutrition, RBC, Waghorn, Stephens, Sipos & Poulton Law Professional Corporation, Hubbard Pharmacy, ANU-PROSPECT

BRONZE
 Independent, Wellbarn Agromart, DELMAR FOODS, QUADRO

Rotary Club of St. Marys

TOWN OF ST. MARYS
Water Flushing Program

The Town of St. Marys will be flushing all water mains and hydrants between April 27 and May 22, 2026.

Date(s)	Times	Locations
April 27 - May 1	7 AM - 5 PM	Area west of the Thames River
May 4 - 8	7 AM - 5 PM	Area south of Trout Creek and east of James St.
May 10	6 PM - 12 AM	Queen St. E (Downtown Core)
May 11 - 15	7 AM - 5 PM	Area south of Trout Creek from the Thames River to James St., including James St. S
May 19 - 22	7 AM - 5 PM	Area north of Trout Creek and east of the Thames River

POTENTIAL SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

Your water may be discoloured as naturally-occurring minerals are disturbed during flushing. If you experience discoloration, run cold water until it becomes clear. Avoid doing laundry until the discoloration has cleared. If your water does not run clear after five minutes, turn off the tap and wait 30 minutes before trying again.

Contact: 519-284-2340, ext. 209 or Ontario Clean Water Agency: 519-318-3406

Council approves zoning amendment to allow residential unit in vacant commercial space

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

St. Marys council has approved a zoning bylaw amendment that will allow a vacant, ground-floor commercial unit at 446 Queen St. W. to be converted into a residential dwelling unit, removing the requirement for a commercial use in the building.

Council approved the amendment at its April 14 meeting following a recommendation from town planning staff and the town's planning advisory committee, who indicated the change would provide additional housing flexibility while maintaining the option for future commercial use.

"It is located at the southeast corner of Queen Street West and Pelissier (Street)," town planner Mark Stone said during a public meeting held April 14, prior to council's decision. "Back in

2024, the town issued site-plan approval to begin construction of a three-storey building, which is on the property, with one commercial unit and 11 apartment units, and ... 22 onsite parking spaces ... along with two access points.

"... The zoning application here before you tonight is pretty straightforward. It's to permit the single, vacant commercial unit ... to be used for residential purposes instead of commercial."

According to Stone's report, the amendment applies to the C4-1 (special commercial) zoning on the property and would permit the currently vacant commercial space to be used as a residential unit while retaining existing commercial permissions should market conditions change in the future.

Planning staff noted the commercial unit has remained vacant for more than a year despite being marketed for lease.

"The uptake on the rental units was

very positive, however the one commercial unit at grade, which has been constructed to commercial requirements under the Ontario Building Code, has remained vacant since constructed," said Caroline Baker of Baker Planning Group on behalf of the building's owner, a numbered Ontario Inc. business with an address in Stratford.

"The owners did retain a real estate agent to try and lease the space, but they certainly had some challenges in filling it. ... With some of the vacancies elsewhere in town, there was sufficient commercial space and there wasn't really that high demand. The second piece is they did have some interest from commercial businesses, but those businesses were determined to not be the most suitable to be in the same building as residential uses."

Since the unit was built to commercial standards, Baker said it is fully accessi-

ble with barrier-free access and has more parking than is required by the town, and the space can be converted back to commercial use in the future with minimal alterations if market demand changes.

The proposed amendment replaces a zoning provision that previously permitted residential units only in the upper or rear portion of a commercial building, allowing the ground-floor space to also be used as a dwelling unit.

Planning staff indicated the conversion represents a form of residential intensification that makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and services while contributing to the town's housing supply.

"It's a pretty straightforward application, I think, and council certainly understands the need for housing," said Mayor Al Strathdee before council approved the requested zone change.

Answer the call.

Volunteer with Ontario Corps.

Sign up at ontario.ca/OntarioCorps

Paid for by the Government of Ontario



Ontario

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.GRANTHAVEN.COM

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 19-25

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

20
26



Volunteer
Bénévoles
Canada

VOLUNTEER.CA/NVW
#NVW2026



Volunteers continue to strengthen St. Marys, Perth South and communities across Perth County

GALEN SIMMONS

Regional Editor

Volunteers play a vital role in sustaining the programs, services and community spirit that define St. Marys, Perth South and communities across Perth County.

From local service clubs and recreation programs to arts, culture and social supports, countless amenities residents rely on are made possible through the dedication of volunteers who give their time and energy to help others.

As part of National Volunteer Week, running April 19-25 across Canada, the St. Marys Independent and other Grant Haven Media newspapers are highlighting the importance of volunteerism and the people who make a difference in their communities. This year's theme, Ignite Volunteerism, encourages residents to reflect on the value volunteers bring to daily life and consider how communities can inspire more people to get involved.

Local political leaders say volunteers are essential to maintaining the strong sense of connection that defines rural communities. Several of them shared their thoughts on the importance of volunteers to our communities. Here's what they had to say.

St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee

"Volunteers are the lifeblood of our community. We are very grateful for their commitment to making St. Marys the special place that it is. Their selfless acts mean that the quality of life in our community is improved for so many people."

Perth South Mayor Sue Orr

"Volunteers are the heartbeat of the Township of Perth South, quietly shaping

the strength and spirit of its communities. Across the township, dedicated residents give their time to ensure local spaces and programs continue to thrive.

"In Kirkton-Woodham, a committed group of volunteers keeps the Community Centre – truly the hub of the community – active and well-used. In addition, the pool committee brings families together through events like Family Fun Day and ongoing fundraising efforts that enhance the pool experience. Other groups in Kirkton-Woodham such as the Horticultural Society, Optimist Club and Agricultural Society, also contribute countless hours of volunteer time toward community betterment.

"In Sebringville, the athletic association organizes lively bingo nights and maintains a strong schedule of ball tournaments, creating opportunities for connection and recreation. Meanwhile, the Downie Optimist Club, celebrating 50 years this year, remains focused on youth, delivering meaningful activities for the next generation.

"In St. Paul's, volunteers sustain a vibrant soccer program that keeps young people active and engaged.

"Perth South remains committed to supporting these initiatives – but it is volunteers who are truly the glue that holds the community together."

Perth County Warden Dean Trentowsky

"How can we as a community encourage more people to step up and give back? The short answer is by storytelling. Specifically, the telling of the 'good news' stories of others who have volunteered in the

past, and by telling the 'good news' stories about those who have been the beneficiaries of volunteer actions.

"The act of storytelling helps to reveal the shared experience of how volunteer efforts can have such a tremendously positive and energetic impact in our daily lives. People are social by nature and are driven by a wide range of emotions. By telling and sharing the 'good news' stories that arise from volunteer work, this can be the encouragement that stirs enough emotions which ignites an 'ah-ha!' moment within the readers of such stories.

"This combined thoughts-and-feelings process would, in turn, motivate and inspire the readers of these stories to step up and contribute as a volunteer within their neighbourhood and community.

"Volunteers and volunteer organizations are so crucial because they fill a local need or a void that simply cannot be fulfilled otherwise through a larger, centralized government or some similar corporately structured organization. Volunteers and volunteer organizations provide a personal touch and a personal connection in ways that cannot always be found via the typically transactional forms of various government or corporate driven services.

"Volunteers don't carry judgements or an expectation of some sort of return back to them. Instead, they serve with gratitude and with a selfless desire to serve for the benefit of others in their community."

Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae

"Volunteers make our communities stronger every day. Their time and dedication keep local organizations running and support the people who need it most.

During National Volunteer Week, I encourage everyone to thank a volunteer and consider getting involved in your community."

Perth-Wellington MP John Nater

"Happy National Volunteer Week!

"We are truly fortunate to have so many wonderful volunteers making our communities stronger here in Perth-Wellington.

"Volunteers are everywhere. Whether they are organizing fundraising and community events; advocating for resources to assist those experiencing poverty or homelessness; supporting arts and culture; upholding our faith communities; or coaching our children, the programs, activities and celebrations we value would not be possible without the countless contributions of volunteers.

"To each of them I offer a simple but heartfelt message: thank you. Your generosity and commitment have not gone unnoticed.

"This year's National Volunteer Week theme, 'Ignite Volunteerism,' is particularly meaningful. As challenges grow and times become more difficult, the selfless work of volunteers is more important than ever. Even small acts of kindness can spark something powerful and help build communities that are warm, inclusive and resilient."

Throughout National Volunteer Week, we at Grant Haven Media invite our readers to continue reading and sharing the stories of the people and organizations whose contributions help make our local communities stronger.



Across St. Marys & Area, many people support United Way and our partners through volunteerism. Their contributions help essential services operate, community events thrive and neighbours to receive assistance in times of need. Each act of volunteering helps ignite something larger, so thank you!



United Way
Perth-Huron



THANK YOU!

Happy National Volunteer Week!



The Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance extends a heartfelt thanks to our amazing volunteers for their generous gifts of time, commitment and service.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.GRANTHAVEN.COM



St. Marys Kinette member Terri Iredale receives prestigious life membership



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The St. Marys Kinettes planned the life membership ceremony for club member Terri Iredale to recognize her commitment and the effort she has shown towards Kin for many years.

St. Marys Kinette life and charter member Phyllis Spearin congratulates newest life member Terri Iredale and welcomes her to the club.

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

A member of the Kinette Club of St. Marys was honoured with the prestigious life membership at a special ceremony April 19, right at the start of National Volunteer Week.

Terri Iredale, who has belonged to the St. Marys club since 1998, was recognized on Sunday at a surprise ceremony by her family, friends, Kin peers and the Kin Association. A life membership award is presented to someone who has shown exceptional service, dedication and commitment to the club and is the highest honour that the Kin Association can bestow on someone. It is given to a person who has made a significant contribution to their community and goes above and beyond for the greater good of Kin.

“You are a role model in every sense of the word,” Kin national president Patrick Bowers said. “You lead by example, you listen with intention, you support others with general care and you have helped countless members grow in confidence and ability, and you have strengthened every team, committee and every club you have touched. This life membership is not just a recognition of what you have done, it is a recognition of who you are.”

Bowers presented a life membership plaque to Iredale, governor Tracy Spalding presented Iredale with her life membership badge and her life membership

pin was presented to her by her daughter, Sidney, and grandson, Bentley.

Organizers of the event were Nancy Riddell, Sandie Vanderschot, Sherri Barber, Kim Anderka and Joanna Campbell. The Kinettes started planning the program back in February because they all strongly believed the award was truly merited.

“As Chairperson of the life membership committee, it was truly an honour to help present Terri Iredale with her life membership on Sunday,” said Riddell, the committee chair. “Terri is an exceptionally dedicated Kinette who has given so much of herself at every level of the Kin organization. Celebrating her service and commitment was a very special moment for all of us.”

The program included messages from various zone representatives, Kin members Iredale has worked with over the years, close friends and local dignitaries. Regardless of who was speaking, the message about Iredale was the same; everyone expressed the award was very well deserved.

Iredale’s Kin resume is chock full of roles within the club, and at the district and national level. She is a very respected role model and those who spoke said she was a helpful, leading force in the overall strength and growth of Kin members, helping them become better versions of themselves.

Iredale has received many accolades

throughout her Kin career. She has served as club president at least three times, she’s been recognized through the town’s the Strong As Stone volunteer recognition program, she is a bulletin award winner, she served as deputy governor at the district level as well as district risk manager, treasurer and vice governor. At the national level, Iredale held the national risk management role, national education role, and she served as national vice president, national president and past president.

The amount of respect that she has

earned was evident in the attendance at her life membership ceremony, as well as in the many congratulatory messages she received from all over.

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for putting on today, showing up today and supporting me today,” Iredale said at the end of the ceremony. “It is important in today’s world that we have people that still want to give back to our community and both the St. Marys Kinsmen and Kinettes are devoted to our community and continue to grow, and that is extremely important.”

National Volunteer Week



April 19th - April 25th, 2026



LIANNE ROOD MP
Member of Parliament
Middlesex-London

liannerood.ca
liannerood@parl.gc.ca

Thank you volunteers for all the work you do to make Middlesex-London thrive!

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 19-25 2026
GRANT HAVEN MEDIA



Volunteer Bénévoles Canada

VOLUNTEER.CA/NVW #NVW2026



The St. Marys Healthcare Foundation – a legacy of supporting access to quality local health care

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

From the day the first piece of sod was turned on April 12, 1949, to its official opening on Nov. 2, 1950, to current day operations, the community of St. Marys has been a strong force in supporting our local hospital.

That support is because the people in this town know how lucky we are to have such an amazing hospital with incredible staff. This goes back to the early days of raising money for construction and fighting to keep the hospital from closing in 1996 with letters of protests and rallies supporting campaigns for upgrades, renovations and equipment.

A hospital is one of the many deciding factors that is taken into consideration when folks are looking for somewhere to settle down, and having a place to go that is close when needed is not something to be taken for granted.

“The story of St. Marys Memorial Hospital is really the story of this community,” chair of the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation Amanda McCurdy said. “For decades, residents have come together to protect, strengthen and invest in local health care – from the earliest days of fundraising to moments when the hospital’s future was uncertain, and through to the improvements we see today. The foundation exists because this community believes in having excellent care close to home, and that collective commitment continues to drive everything we do for the hospital and the wellness centre, now and into the future.”

Many see the pictures in the paper of board members receiving cheques from various groups and events, but what exactly does the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation do? It is a group of volunteers that strongly believe in our hospital and community with a mission to inspire locals to invest in health care.

In 1992, the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Foundation was created and has been instrumental in raising funds for the hospital since its inception. However, in 2019, the organization was rebranded as the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation showing it is focused on community-based care that goes beyond the hospital. Its members support other local wellness initiatives as well as the Traditional Mutual Centre for Wellness, which was completed in 2003 and is one of the most visited buildings in our town.

In 2018, ground was broken on a \$2.9-million, 7,433 square foot expansion of the Tradition Mutual Centre for Wellness with funds raised through The Someone I Know campaign. The addition to the original building became a model for primary care, providing the town and surrounding area access to a range of support services, including family counselling, a dietician and a pharmacist, and now houses LifeLabs, a provider of laboratory diagnostic services.

Many have volunteered their time on the health-care foundation board knowing the importance of our hospital and wellness centre. The members who join are asked to commit to three-year, six-year or nine-year terms. This keeps the board fresh on rotation. It gives them lots of time to learn but also offers stability with opportunities for new perspectives.

The current board consists of chair Amanda McCurdy, vice chair Erin Reynolds, past chair Cindy Bilyea, Brian De Groot, Mike Brine, Brandon Boyd, Wendy La-



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

The St. Marys Memorial Hospital, located on Queen Street West and opened in 1950, has had many upgrades and changes over the years and continues to give wonderful care to the residents of the Town of St. Marys and surrounding areas.

mond, Wayne Barber, Pam Zabel, Mark Kennedy, Linda McFadyen, Scott Graham and staff members including finance coordinator Nancy Johnsson and communications and fundraising coordinator Bernice De Decker.

Within the foundation, there are also subcommittees that focus on specific areas. They include:

- The fundraising committee that focuses on fundrais-

CONTINUED TO PAGE 17



National Volunteer Week
April 19-25, 2026



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 19-25

2026



Volunteer
Bénévoles
Canada

VOLUNTEER.CA/NVW
#NVW2026

26



The St. Marys Healthcare Foundation – a legacy of supporting access to quality local health care

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

ing efforts to meet financial goals;

- The finance committee that monitors the organization's finances;
- The legacy and planned giving committee, which focuses on long-term sustainability through planned donations;
- The nominating and governance committee, which makes sure the board has the right mix of skills to help benefit the foundation; and
- The strategic planning committee, which helps to guide the foundation in the direction that aligns with its mission.

The foundation has been working hard and has reached many milestones over the past few years thanks to the strong community support. As shown in the newspaper and on social media, the most recent success is the raising of \$650,000 in under a year for the new state-of-the-art X-ray machine at the hospital, allowing technicians to carry on with top level care.

The foundation also achieved its \$3-million goal for the “Here For You Today, Building For Tomorrow” campaign, which involved major renovations to the hospital’s east and west wings. Key upgrades included modernized patient rooms, improved mechanical systems, enhanced safety features and barrier-free washrooms.

“The foundation will continue to raise funds for our community’s health-care



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

This sign is located in the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation office at the hospital. The foundation actively raises funds to invest in our local health care.

initiatives, including supporting both the hospital and wellness centre needs,” foundation vice chair Erin Reynolds said.

The foundation is always looking ahead to the future. Members remain in constant contact with Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance staff about what is needed and how to prioritize those needs. They also work closely with Dr. Jon Schiedel, the doctor representative for the wellness centre, and with Janis Fread, who represents the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

Past chair Cindy Bilyea, who has been with the foundation for eight years, spoke about what she will miss once her term is

over.

“I will miss all the people, whether it be the volunteer directors I have had the privilege of working with, the good, caring people, the other foundations, or the HPHA staff. I will miss the wonderful donor stories I could tell you that blew my mind. I have enjoyed seeing the growth of the foundation in the last eight years. Visiting the service clubs, municipalities and individuals that were so generous and welcoming have been wonderful experiences.”

Bilyea also said the Building for Tomorrow campaign was great to be a part

of with many more events on the horizon.

Upcoming foundation events include:

- Tim Hortons Smile Cookie Campaign the week of April 27 to May 3. The funds raised from this year’s sale will go toward a new trauma light for the emergency department at St. Marys Memorial Hospital.
- A Community Breakfast at Milt Dunnell Field Saturday, May 30, from 8 a.m. to noon by donation.
- The very popular 33rd annual golf tournament is taking place on Thursday, Aug. 20, at River Valley Golf Course. Registration is open and there are also opportunities for sponsorship at trellis.org/2026golf

- The Hospital Gala is held every other year and has had some impressive Canadian guest speakers like Clara Hughes and Brent Butt. The next gala will be held in 2027 with the theme being, “Night in Paris.” Keep an eye on the newspaper and on social media for more information closer to the date.

For more information on the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation or to donate, visit www.stmaryshealthcare.foundation.

The foundation also has their own office inside the hospital just off reception. Feel free to pop in or call 519-284-1332 ext. 3450.

Area residents can support the foundation by becoming a monthly donor and by supporting the foundation’s 50/50 draw.

Stonetown Summer Series: Celebrate heritage, community and culture in St. Marys

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys is gearing up for an exciting lineup of events with the Stonetown Summer Series coming this June and July!

This series of events will feature the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame Induction Day (June 20), Rotary Brews and Food Fest (June 21), St. Marys Commemorative Canada Day (July 1), Stonetown Triathlon (July 5), Learn to Lawn Bowl (July 11), Movies in the Park (July 17), Army and Navy Air Force Club

Bavarian Gardens (July 10 and 11), Lions Club Car Show (July 18), St. Marys Farmers Market (every Saturday) and the grand-finale of Stonetown Heritage Festival (July 25) and Kinsmen Summerfest (July 23-26).

Staying true to tradition, the Stonetown Heritage Festival (July 25) will host a free event downtown that celebrates the cultures, stories and histories shaping both the past and present of St. Marys. The festival offers family-friendly activities, food trucks, art, vendors, live music, magic and plenty of fun.

But that’s not all – the excitement con-

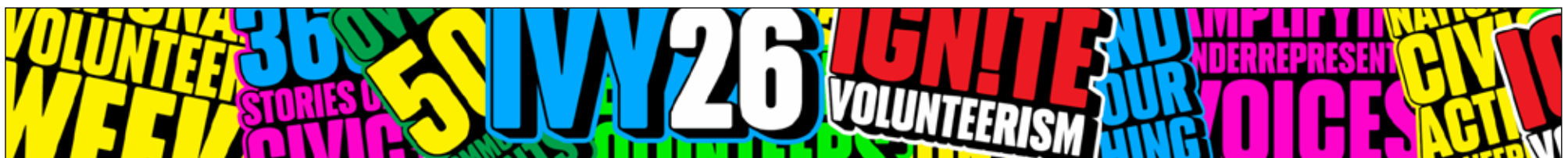
tinues beyond downtown. The Town of St. Marys is joining forces with the St. Marys Kinsmen for Summerfest. Prepare for the midway at Milt Dunnell Field and an unforgettable evening filled with live music from an incredible list of performers. For more details and ticket information, visit www.stmaryskinsmen.com.

“We are excited to try something a little different this year and partner with the St. Marys Kinsmen for a fun and unforgettable day”, said manager of tourism and economic development Kelly Deeks-Johnson in a press release. “It is

important that we continue with beloved traditions while also bringing new and exciting things to the table for everyone to enjoy.”

Be sure to visit www.discoverstmarys.ca/events for the full festival schedule and lineup of Summer Series events as activities are still being added.

Sponsorship and event volunteers are crucial to the success of this event. Interested individuals and businesses can contact Deeks-Johnson at 519-284-2340 ext. 272 or kdeeks@town.stmarys.on.ca for more information on how to contribute.



**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER
WEEK APRIL 19-25** **2026**
GRANT HAVEN MEDIA



VOLUNTEER.CA/NVW
#NVW2026



**IGNITE
CIVIL ACTION
VOLUNTEERISM**

Service Club Information Night held at Pyramid Recreation Centre

WENDY LAMOND

Independent Reporter

On Wednesday, April 8, members of local service clubs, community groups and event organizers met at the Pyramid Recreation Centre (PRC) for an information session put on by the town.

Representatives were there from the Downie Optimist Club, the Kinsmen Club of St. Marys, the Kinette Club of St. Marys, the St. Marys Horticultural Society, the Rotary Club of St. Marys, the Army and Navy Air Force Club (ANAF) St. Marys, the St. Marys Royal Canadian Legion, the St. James Men's Club, the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation, the Downtown St. Marys BIA, St. Marys Friends of the Library and the St. Marys Inner Wheel Club.

The purpose of this annual information night is to strengthen relations and to encourage open communication between town employees and members of the community who volunteer their time regardless of what organization they are affiliated with. It is meant to be a chance to share updates and discuss topics that are beneficial to the community. It is also a good time to share upcoming projects and events.

St. Marys Mayor Al Strathdee welcomed the group, and each guest introduced themselves and shared what organization they were representing. The town's tourism and events coordinator, Morgan Easton, shared a few dates for upcoming events this year including the Stonetown Summer Series taking place July 23-26, the Halloween costume and pet parade, contest and trick or treating together with the BIA on Saturday, Oct. 25, and the Winter Lights Market on Dec. 4 and 5.

Easton also discussed the town's Special Events Planning Guide that provides information on application requirements, checklists and key contact information when starting to plan.

"These resources will ensure that the events are safe, well organized and enjoyable for everyone," Easton said.

Town public works coordinator Thomas Redman discussed the importance of the application process for sidewalk and road closures during events as the town is responsible for ensuring the right of ways are kept in good shape. He also showed how to log in and access the application process.

The town uses the provincewide Municipal511 to post road closures as it is a common tool used by first responders to keep up to date on restrictions and closures.

More information is better when planning or applying for events.

St. Marys CAO Brent Kittmer spoke about some possible upgrades around town, including Milt Dunnell Field where lighting around the ring road is being considered. There is also talk of a refreshed, more inviting entrance sign, replacement of the current pavilion, better access to the river for fishing, new washrooms and upgrades to the playground.

This summer, there will be approximately six minor-ball tournaments taking place at Milt Dunnell Field, bringing lots of visitors to that area.

St. Marys Public Library CEO Sarah Andrews discussed the 14 Church Street project and updated those present on fundraising efforts in support of the town-owned building. The building will provide some space for library programs. It has been 40 years since any space has been added for the library and with the growing number of participants enjoying the programs, more is needed. The space at 14 Church will be multi-purpose for art, culture, service clubs and more.

"You will see us doing things in the community over the next few years that engages all age groups, and all sectors of our community to feel that it is their project," Andrews said about fundraising for the 14 Church project.

Including grant funding, the goal of a three-year fundraising campaign for 14 Church is to raise \$1 million. The ad-hoc fundraising committee has already raised \$200,000 and will be looking for more community support.

Kittmer also discussed dates for the upcoming election this year. It will look a little different than past years as the town will be voting on a new mayor. The nomination period runs from May 1 to Aug 21. There will be advance polls open from Oct. 7-10. Election Day will be held on Oct. 26 with the polls closing by 8 p.m. The new council will take their oath of office on Nov. 15.

Strathdee shared with the group that the town is now responsible for the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum outdoor maintenance and has expanded the parks department, allowing for more flexibility for events.

The town representatives also explained how service clubs can apply for community grants to help cover event costs.

One shared concern among all service clubs currently is the fact it is harder to find volunteers.

There was a suggestion to create a shared social media page to help attract new members, high school students looking for community hours and to provide information about all local service clubs and organizations in one place.

The evening ended with a thank-you to



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Members of a variety of service clubs and groups met for a town information night where they learned about application processes, fundraising opportunities and some updates from the town.

the clubs for their volunteer time by tourism and economic development manager Kelly Deeks-Johnson. She also shared that Easton has accepted a new position in a different organization, and the town

is in the midst of filling that role.

"Join me in wishing Morgan all the best. She's been a real asset for us, and we are certainly going to miss her," said Deeks-Johnson.



**NATIONAL
VOLUNTEER
WEEK**

**Thank You,
Volunteers**

**ACTION
HEALTHCARE**
SALES • SERVICE • RENTALS

With heartfelt gratitude for your
time, care, and compassion.
You make a meaningful difference in
our community every day.

566 Queen St. E. St Marys, ON
Phone: 519-284-4348
Toll Free: 1-866-222-4843



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK APRIL 19-25 **2026** **GRANT HAVEN MEDIA** **Volunteer Bénévoles Canada** **VOLUNTEER.CA/NVW #NVW2026** **26** **INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER YEAR 2026** **ACT UP! CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE VOLUNTEERISM**

Volunteers brave the rain to plant trees between Stratford and Harmony



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Volunteers gather along Perth Road 112 on April 18 before heading out in the rain to plant more than 190 trees as part of a Rotary Club of Stratford initiative.

Natasha Widmer (left) and her mom, Malak Sidky, stand beside one of the trees they planted during the Rotary Club of Stratford tree planting event along Road 112 on April 18.

AMANDA NELSON

Independent Reporter

Despite rain and grey skies, more than 40 volunteers gathered along Perth Road 112, on the border between Perth South and Oxford County, April 18 for a tree planting event led by the Rotary Club of Stratford, turning what could have been a dreary morning into a meaningful show of community action.

By early morning, volunteers were already at work, carefully planting bare-root trees along the stretch of road between Stratford and Harmony. In total, more than 120 trees were planted by hand – each one dug into place, secured with a stake, mulched, protected with a tree guard and watered before the group moved on to the next.

“We planted 123 trees, five varieties of

native trees,” said volunteer leader Doug Thompson. “It was a slug fest because of the conditions and the rain, but we got it done, and I think everybody was pretty proud of their effort.”

The event is part of a broader effort to increase tree cover in Perth County, where forested land currently sits at just nine per cent – well below the roughly 30 per cent recommended by Environment and Climate Change Canada to support healthy ecosystems and biodiversity.

Among the volunteers were 15 students from Nancy Campbell Academy, who took part as part of their World Citizenship course. The program blends environmental research with community service, encouraging students to engage directly with the world around them.

For student Colosteer Owenyass, the experience was about more than just

planting trees.

“Planting trees helps the ecosystem,” she said. “I think we are all human and can help with healing the environment, help with global warming. We’re just human beings, and we have spiritual qualities and the responsibility and ability to help the environment become better for our children and the future.”

Teacher Shabnam Tashakour said opportunities like this allow students to connect their learning to real-world impact while fostering a deeper sense of environmental awareness and responsibility.

The initiative is supported by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authori-

ty and Perth County public works, which provides funding and resources for projects that strengthen environmental resilience across the region.

Tree planting and forest stewardship play a key role in protecting local ecosystems, improving biodiversity and supporting the long-term health of agricultural land.

While the planting itself wrapped up in a single morning, the work doesn’t end there. The Rotary Club and Perth County will continue to monitor and care for the trees over the next two to three years to help ensure they take root and thrive.

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA **St. Marys Independent**

BE IN THE KNOW!
Get the Latest Edition
Delivered Straight to
Your Inbox!

granthaven.com/st-marys-independent

THANK YOU
 to all our volunteers for your dedication to our communities!

MATTHEW RAE
 MPP – Perth-Wellington

519-272-0660 • 1-800-461-9701
 Matthew.Rae@pc.ola.org
 MatthewRae.ca

Shred-it and forget it: Rotary's Community Shredding Event returns May 2

JULIA PAUL

Independent Reporter

As cases of identity theft and fraud continue to rise across Canada, residents of St. Marys will once again have an opportunity to securely dispose of their confidential paper documents at the upcoming Community Shredding Event hosted by the Rotary Club of St. Marys.

Now in its third year, the event is set to take place on Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the west parking lot of St. Marys DCVI – or until the onsite shredding truck provided by Shred-It reaches capacity. Attendees can watch their documents being securely shredded on the spot. There is no limit to the number of boxes of documents residents can bring.

Rotarian Mark Oliver said the idea came after the club learned that other Rotary Clubs in Ontario were organizing similar events with strong community interest.

"In 2024, we launched our first shredding event in St. Marys," Oliver said. "It gives people and businesses an opportunity to spring clean and securely shred un-

wanted, confidential paper documents."

The club has partnered with Shred-It again this year, ensuring all paper documents will be professionally destroyed onsite. Participants are asked to stack their confidential paper documents loosely in cardboard boxes, such as bankers' boxes. Staples, small paper clips and elastic bands do not need to be removed prior to drop-off. Wire-coil bound documents must have the wire coil removed first. Participants will be asked to take their boxes with them once they're emptied.

According to Oliver, many residents find themselves with piles of paper documents that require secure shredding after tax season.

"Confidential paper documents of all kinds are acceptable," he said, though he noted certain items are not permitted. These include batteries, large metal objects, electronic devices, hard drives, hanging file folders, ink cartridges and toners, cardboard tubes and syringes.

The importance of secure document disposal is underscored by recent statistics.

"The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre re-

Rotary



ported almost 38,000 cases of identity theft and fraud in 2025 with over 23,000 victims," Oliver said. "Shredding unwanted, confidential paper documents is an important step everyone can take to protect themselves."

There is a fee of \$15 per bankers' box or equivalent, payable by cash, cheque, debit or credit card. A bankers' box typically measures 12 by 12 by 18 inches and weighs more than 30 pounds when full of paper. Oliver emphasized the value being offered, noting that retail shredding services usually cost a minimum of \$1 per pound.

Proceeds from the event will support the Rotary Club's ongoing financial commitment to the All Wheels Park on James Street, a community feature that promotes

outdoor recreation in St. Marys.

"Protecting the environment is one of Rotary's areas of focus," Oliver added, pointing out that the shredded paper is not wasted. Once processed, the shredded paper is baled and sold as sorted office paper to recycling facilities. There, it is pulped, screened for impurities and ink, and eventually repurposed into new paper products.

"The event runs, rain or shine, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or until the shredding truck fills, whichever happens first," Oliver said. "Arrive early to avoid disappointment."

The Rotary Club invites the St. Marys community to show up, pitch in and help make this year's shred a smashing success.

Canadian Fiddle Champion
SCOTT WOODS
Fiddle Country

Featuring multi-talented band

ST MARYS
May 21 @ 7 pm
St. Marys United Church
Proceeds support Camp Bimini

MOUNT BRYDGES
May 22 @ 7 pm
Caradoc Community Centre
Proceeds support St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Strathroy

For tickets, call 1-855-726-8896 or visit www.scottwoods.ca

Take Mom to a play. She took you everywhere.

Sisters of '78 | By Kristen Da Silva
Dry Streak | By Leeann Minogue
Curveball: The Fast-Pitch Ladies from the Factory Floor
By Kelly McIntosh, Andy Pogson, Stacy Smith, and Severn Thompson, with original songs by Dayna Manning
Off-Island Odyssey | Written and performed by Justin Shaw
The Last Mayor of Rusty River | By David Scott and Gil Garratt, with original music by John Powers

Order tickets online or call the Box Office 1.877.862.5984
blythfestival.com

BLYTH FESTIVAL
original canadian theatre.

Artwork by Beth Kates

St. Marys firefighters fire up the grill for annual community breakfast on May 3

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The St. Marys Fire Department is once again preparing the grill for their highly anticipated annual firefighters' breakfast, taking place on Sunday, May 3, at the Fire Hall (172 James St. S) from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Parking will be available in the DCVI lot and the cost is \$10 per adult, \$5 per child aged five to 12, and children under

five eat free. The breakfast menu will include pancakes, sausage, bacon, scrambled and fried eggs, toast, juice, and coffee.

Traditionally held the weekend before Mother's Day, the firefighters' breakfast is a cherished community event and an important fundraiser for the department, with proceeds supporting Muscular Dystrophy initiatives.

"This breakfast is something the community looks forward to each year," said

St. Marys Fire Chief Phil West in a press release. "It's a chance for residents to come together, enjoy a great meal and support an important cause, all while engaging with the firefighters who serve their community."

The breakfast coincides with Emergency Preparedness Week, running May 3-9 with this year's theme, "Be Prepared. Know Your Risks." The St. Marys Fire Department encourages residents to understand the risks in their area and to

develop an emergency plan that includes preparation for events such as fires, floods, or other natural disasters. Families are reminded to review these plans regularly and ensure everyone knows how to respond in an emergency.

Those attending the breakfast will have the opportunity to meet firefighters, explore the firehall and view fire trucks and rescue equipment. Sparky the Fire Dog will also be in attendance, making it a fun and educational experience for all.

St. Marys Friendship Centre closed for walk-in traffic and onsite programming April 22-24

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The St. Marys Friendship Centre will be closed for walk-in traffic and onsite programming Wednesday, April 22 to Friday, April 24 during the Peachmakers

Quilt Show, the Town of St. Marys said in a press release.

During this time, the Friendship Centre can be reached by email at friends@town.stmarys.on.ca and phone at 519-284-3272.

Please note the St. Marys Mobility

Services will be closed to walk-in traffic. Services will be by appointment only from April 22 to April 24. For assistance during this period, please call 519-284-4010 for inquiries or payment arrangements, or email mobility@town.stmarys.on.ca for support. Transporta-

tion rides can still be booked through EasyRide at 519-272-9875.

The town thanked residents for understanding during this temporary service disruption.

THE NISSAN
HEAD 2 HEAD
EVENT

2026 NISSAN ROGUE PLATINUM AWD



0%

FINANCING FOR
60 MONTHS O.A.C.

COMPARE. SEE FOR YOURSELF.



Stratford NISSAN

STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thurs. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00
PARTS AND SERVICE: Mon.-Sat. 8:00-5:00. FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, OUR SERVICE DEPT IS NOW OPEN ON SATURDAYS

2001 Ontario Street, Stratford ON
519.273.3119
www.stratfordnissan.com

STRATFORD NISSAN



FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES IN THE ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

CALL 519.284.0041 OR EMAIL INFO@STMARYSINDEPENDENT.COM

Stratford police report rise in traffic enforcement, welcome new constable

AMANDA NELSON

Independent Reporter

At the April 15 Stratford police services board meeting, Stratford police reported an increase in proactive traffic enforcement last month, with 312 of the top five traffic tickets issued.

That's up from 277 in February and 155 in January.

"Speaking specifically about some key highlights regarding traffic enforcement, the top five categories of the tickets that we're issuing in our area in March were speeding, driving while under suspension, careless driving, failing to surrender driver's licence and no valid permits," said acting deputy chief Jason Clarke.

Across Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South, police responded to 2,134 calls for service and laid 768 charges. Stratford accounted for 1,743 calls, followed by 209 in St. Marys and 182 in Perth South.

Notable Stratford statistics included 90 mental health-related calls, four overdose calls and 38 domestic incidents.

The community resource unit remained active throughout the month, attending training sessions and community events across the region.

Year-to-date projections show a 2.6 per cent increase in calls for service and a 10.1 per cent increase in charges compared to 2025.

"March reflected a strong level of operational activity across all service areas," said Clarke. "We continued emphasis on proactive traffic en-

forcement, response to community safety concerns and visible community engagement."

During the meeting, board chair Martin Ritsma raised concerns about an increase in complaints involving drivers passing stopped school buses with stop arms extended.

Clarke said members of the public are encouraged to report as much detail as possible when submitting complaints.

"To anybody in the community, if you are able to capture a driver's licence, then that will at least direct us to the owner of the vehicle to investigate," he said. "Date, time and place, or even a description of the vehicle is also helpful."

At the same meeting, Const. Andrew Maguire was introduced as the newest member of the Stratford Police Service. A Stratford resident, Maguire attended local schools, played minor sports in the community and went on to study at Georgian College.

He spent eight years working at Source for Sports and three years at Nicholson Concrete before joining police as a special constable in June 2025. He became a police constable in December 2025, graduated from police college in March and is now assigned to D Platoon.

Ritsma welcomed Maguire, noting his strong local roots.

"It's not surprising that he's here in front of us today – a great student, a great athlete and will be a great addition to the service," he said. "We're so pleased to have another local individual; it's wonderful to see our youth hometown."



(AMANDA NELSON PHOTO)

Stratford Police Service board chair Martin Ritsma congratulates and shakes hands with new Const. Andrew Maguire during the March police board meeting, welcoming him to the service after his recent graduation from police college.



LUCKHARDT
LANDWORKS

FOR ALL YOUR SITEWORK NEEDS

- Excavating/Grading
- Retaining Walls
- Concrete Breaking
- Servicing
- Septic Systems
- Trucking
- Hydroseeding



Bryn Luckhardt
519-272-3408 • bryn@luckhardtlandworks.com
www.luckhardtlandworks.com
St. Marys, Ontario

Creek View Acres
Nursery & Orchard



NOW OPEN DAILY: 10am to 6pm
Fruit Trees • Berry Bushes • Grape Vines
Also professionally grown trees, shrubs, and perennials!
400 Johnson Road, Brantford (County)
519-448-4688 • creekviewacresbrant.ca • gardenalacarte.ca

75 trees planted at South Perth Centennial PS



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

Thanks to funding from the Perth County Stewardship Program, South Perth Centennial Public School planted 75 native hardwood trees and 30 shrubs on April 17 to enhance and naturalize the school yard. Vanni Azzano from Upper Thames River Conservation Authority worked with the Grade 5/6 class, teaching proper planting techniques. The class then helped guide the rest of the school, with every student taking part in the morning planting.

ST. MARYS DENTISTRY
 520 WATER ST, S. P.O. BOX 1650 | ST. MARYS, ON N4X 1B9 | 519-284-2660
 Dr. Michael Nixon, Dr. Karl Weselan and Dr. Reem Amayem

ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS!

We offer early morning appointment times, and have later appointment times three days per week.

520 Water St. S., St. Marys, Ontario N4X 1B9
 Ph: 519-284-2660 | www.stmarysdentalclinic.com

[f](#) [i](#) [in](#)

Are You A Newcomer To The St. Marys Area?

The friends of the library has a FREE welcome package for you to pick up at the library!

- Recreation Info
- Gifts + MORE
- Local Services
- Health & Wellness
- Maps
- Coupons

St. Marys Public Library, 15 Church St.
 519-284-3346

ST. MARYS FARMERS' MARKET

Our outdoor markets begin Saturday, May 2!

Let's welcome another season of delicious local food!

Milt Dunnell Field | 1 Veterans Circle
 Saturdays 8 a.m. to noon

[f](#) [i](#) [in](#)

[farmersmarketofstmarys](#)
[estmarysfarmersmarket](#)

SHERWIN LAW LAWYER & MEDIATOR

&

MCDONALD, SIMON, STEWART & REIDY LLP

STRONGER TOGETHER

MARK E. SIMON
 M.B.A., J.D.

Mark focuses his practice primarily in Business, Estates, and Real Estate law, and Appeals. With an MBA specialized in accounting and experience in finance and tax, he provides efficient solutions for clients, buying or starting a new business, creating a succession plan, buying, selling, or expanding real estate holdings.

- ✓ Business Law
- ✓ Wills & Estates
- ✓ Real Estate Law
- ✓ Family Law
- ✓ Appeals
- ✓ Civil Litigation
- ✓ Mediation (ADR)
- ✓ Criminal Law

SERVING ST. MARYS FOR **30 YEARS**

Mark is AVAILABLE FOR APPOINTMENTS at the Sherwin Law Office
 72 Wellington St. S, St. Marys

SHERWIN LAW OFFICE
519.284.0898

info@sherwinlaw.ca
www.sherwinlaw.ca

Legion

Branch 236, St. Marys

Proudly supporting veterans, families, and our community

WEEKLY AND MONTHLY EVENTS

- SATURDAY MEAT DRAWS**
 Enjoy an evening of drinks and friends and try your lucky at quality meat prizes!
- FRIDAY HOT DOG LUNCH**
 Drop in for a delicious hot dog at the Legion bar - affordable and tasty!
- TUESDAY BUDDY CHECK**
 Free coffee, friendly conversation, and looking out for one another!
- BINGO FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH**
 Fun, prizes, and a great social afternoon!

FOR MORE INFORMATION
 visit www.rcl236stmarys.ca

FOR YOUR NEXT GATHERING

HALL RENTALS

- 1600 sq. ft. banquet hall
- Capacity of 200 people
- Tables and chairs provided

FLEXIBLE SPACE **AFFORDABLE RATES**

BAR HOURS:
 Monday CLOSED
 Tuesday 3-5 pm
 Wednesday 3-5 pm
 Thursday 3-5 pm
 Friday 12-5 pm
 Saturday 12-7 pm
 Sunday CLOSED

66 Church Street, N., St. Marys, ON | 519.284.2267

SCAN ME

Perth County farm groups share priorities at spring forum with MP, MPP

GARY WEST

Independent Reporter

The Perth County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA) held its annual spring forum in Mitchell, bringing together local farm commodity groups with Perth-Wellington MP John Nater and MPP Matthew Rae to discuss key issues affecting the agricultural sector.

All PCFA directors volunteer their time, and the annual forum provides an opportunity for commodity representatives to share priorities directly with federal and provincial officials.

Participating organizations included milk producers, egg farmers, beef producers, sheep farmers, chicken producers, pork producers and grain farmers, along with a presentation of the PCFA's own brief.

Each commodity group provided an overview of its sector and outlined current challenges and opportunities affecting local producers.

Newly elected PCFA president Julie McIntosh

said the meeting fostered collaboration across a wide range of agricultural sectors.

"It was a fantastic day for the commodity organizations and many diverse types of farmers coming together in one room," McIntosh said.

She noted the groups found common ground despite representing different commodities.

"They had more in common than different and had great discussions with MP John Nater and MPP Matthew Rae, as well as municipal representatives who were also in attendance," she said.

Common concerns raised during the forum included trade, rural infrastructure, processing capacity and the availability of labour.

McIntosh emphasized the importance of continued dialogue among farm groups and government representatives.

"By working together and keeping this conversation going, we can hopefully drive solutions in the future for farmers and the safe, local food they continue to produce 365 days a year," she said.



(GARY WEST PHOTO)

PCFA president Julie McIntosh thanks Perth-Wellington MP John Nater (left) and Perth-Wellington MPP Matthew Rae for listening to concerns raised by farm organizations during the recent Spring Forum meeting in Mitchell.

Start spring off right—with incredible deals on high-quality pre-owned vehicles at Stratford Nissan

<p>2017 Nissan Qashqai SV MOONROOF</p>  <p>AWD</p> <p>\$13,999 OR \$202 B/W</p> <p>MILEAGE - 112,017 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2020 Nissan Kicks SR</p>  <p>PRICE DROP</p> <p>FWD</p> <p>\$16,999 OR \$159 B/W</p> <p>MILEAGE - 154,993 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2023 Volkswagen Jetta TRENDLINE</p>  <p>PRICE DROP</p> <p>FWD</p> <p>iQ GREAT PRICE</p> <p>\$20,999 OR \$151 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 66,907 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2021 Toyota Corolla LE</p>  <p>PRICE DROP</p> <p>FWD</p> <p>\$21,999 OR \$178 B/W</p> <p>MILEAGE - 110,695 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2025 Nissan Sentra S PLUS</p>  <p>FWD</p> <p>iQ GREAT PRICE</p> <p>\$22,999 OR \$165 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 15,651 KM +HST & IC</p>
<p>2023 Volkswagen Tiguan TRENDLINE</p>  <p>AWD</p> <p>iQ GREAT PRICE</p> <p>\$24,495 OR \$176 B/W</p> <p>MILEAGE - 90,849 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2023 Nissan Rogue SV MOONROOF</p>  <p>AWD</p> <p>\$24,999 OR \$180 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 59,082 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2025 Toyota Corolla SE</p>  <p>PRICE DROP</p> <p>FWD</p> <p>iQ GREAT PRICE</p> <p>\$29,999 OR \$215 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 16,111 KM +HST & IC</p>		
<p>2023 Mazda CX-50 PREFERRED PLUS</p>  <p>PRICE DROP</p> <p>AWD</p> <p>iQ GREAT PRICE</p> <p>\$30,999 OR \$223 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 47,263 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2022 Mazda CX-9 GRAND TOURING</p>  <p>AWD</p> <p>\$34,999 OR \$283 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 80,870 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2021 Tesla Model 3</p>  <p>PRICE DROP</p> <p>AWD</p> <p>\$34,999 OR \$283 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 44,985 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2025 Toyota Corolla Cross LE</p>  <p>AWD</p> <p>\$35,299 OR \$254 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 14,702 KM +HST & IC</p>	<p>2025 Toyota Prius PHEV PRIME SE</p>  <p>FWD</p> <p>\$38,495 OR \$276 B/W</p> <p>LOW KMS - 14,854 KM +HST & IC</p>

*While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, we are not responsible for any errors and omissions. Please see your dealer for current pricing. Plus tax and licensing. Bi-weekly payments are based on an interest rate of 7.99% O.A.C. Some terms and conditions may apply.

Find Your Perfect Match: Pre-Owned Cars for Every Taste and Budget!

BAD CREDIT... NO PROBLEM All Credit Approved with \$0 Down

T&C APPLY, O.A.C.



STORE HOURS SALES: Mon.-Thu. 9:00-8:00; Fri.-Sat. 9:00-6:00 PARTS & SERVICE: Mon.-Sat. 8:00-5:00

Our Service Department is Now Open on Saturdays

2001 Ontario Street, Stratford ON
519.273.3119
www.stratfordnissan.com

STRATFORD NISSAN



Thames River Clean Up rescheduled due to elevated water levels



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The 27th annual Thames River Clean Up was postponed last week due to rainy weather and rising water levels.

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

As a result of rainy weather last week, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) rescheduled the Thames River Clean Up to Saturday, April 25.

According to the conservation authority, rescheduling the event was intended to help ensure the safety of participants and enable a more effective cleanup once water levels recede.

The public is strongly advised to stay away from all watercourses and flooded areas. Stream banks may be slippery and unstable, and the water is very cold and fast-moving, the UTRCA advised in a press release issued last week. Never at-

tempt to drive through flooded areas and remember to keep children and pets away from waterways.

Volunteers who have registered for the cleanup are encouraged to check in with their local site coordinators regarding the new date, as some locations may opt to reschedule for a different day based on local conditions.

The UTRCA said it will continue to monitor conditions closely and operate flood control reservoirs, including Fanshawe, Wildwood and Pittock conservation areas, to help reduce downstream flooding.

For more information about the Thames River Clean Up or to confirm local event details, contact Todd Sleeper at td.sleeper@hotmail.com or call 519-275-1351.

Your yard is missing something...

- free range chickens?
- fresh mulch?
- lawn touch ups?
- healthy trees?
- vegetable garden? **We've got you covered!**

480 Queen St W, St. Marys 519-284-2360

COSTA RICA
GROUP TOUR
January 24 - February 2, 2027

INFORMATION PRESENTATION
Join us to learn about our upcoming adventure through Costa Rica's most breathtaking locations

May 27, 2026 | 2pm
Wilmot Recreation Centre,
Wayne Roth Meeting Room

May 27, 2026 | 6:30pm
Pyramid Recreation Centre,
End Zone

Call to RSVP
519-284-2332 (St. Marys) or
226-333-9939 (New Hamburg)
Or
Email stew@stonetowntravel.com

GREENHEAD
TREE CARE

EXPERT TREE CARE SERVICES

OUR SERVICES

- Custom tree pruning • Hazardous tree removal
- Cabling and bracing • Stump grinding
- Emergency & storm response

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFIED
INSURED FREE ESTIMATES

Contact us at (226)-993-1912 or email info@greenheadtreecare.ca

St. Marys Independent **SPORTS**

Lincolns force Game 7 in thrilling West Final against Stratford



(CHARIS MUHTAR PHOTO)

Chase MacQueen-Spence dekes out goaltender Gage Hurst to score a goal during the St. Marys Lincolns' 6-1 win over the Stratford Warriors in Game 3 of the Western Conference Final April 14.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The most highly anticipated playoff series in the Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL) since the realignment in 2024 lived up to the hype, with the Lincolns fighting back from 2-0 and 3-2 series deficits to force a seventh and deciding game.

Game 7 took place April 21 after the Independent's press time.

After going down 2-0 in the series, the Lincolns got into the win column in Game 3, beating the Stratford Warriors 6-1 April 14. The Lincolns went a perfect three-for-three on both the powerplay and penalty kill, while Colby Booth-Housego made 35 saves, and six different goal scorers found the back of the net.

Head coach Jeff Bradley told the Independent there was plenty about their Game 3 effort to be happy with.

"I think that game was what we needed," said Bradley. "We had good special teams, good goaltending and some consistency throughout the lineup, so we were pretty happy with that. We continued to progress in the second and third periods and get better in terms of our puck management, puck support, F3 backchecking responsibilities, winning battles and our faceoffs."

According to Bradley, the stronger play they began in Game 3 continued into Game 4, when the Lincolns defeated Stratford 3-2 in overtime.

"I liked how we kept getting better," Bradley said of the seven periods in games three and four. "All of those elements were something we addressed pre-game and did some video, and I thought it paid dividends in Game 3, and then I

thought we progressed in Game 4 as well. We were close to pucks. That allowed us to get out of our zone and negate their forecheck a little bit. I thought that helped for sure.

"Winning battles (is the key to breaking through Stratford). We've got to win battles. It's us and them, year after year, who give up the least amount of goals, and when they play tight to you, you've got to win those one-on-one battles, and I thought we did a good job of that in games three and four."

Booth-Housego was excellent once again, making 48 saves, while Owen Kalp scored the overtime winner.

The Lincolns did a better job defending the Warriors in games three and four, only allowing three goals in the back-to-back games, which Bradley noted simply came down to better execution of their game-plan.

"I don't think it's difficult to defend (the Warriors), and we play a similar style, but when they execute a little bit better than we do, then we're going to have trouble with that," Bradley said. "They are right on you at all times. I think they generated a lot of momentum off getting that first goal, so we needed to turn that around, and I thought we did and got rewarded for it."

The team was spearheaded by strong play by two lines in particular, including the line of Ryan Hodkinson, Blake Elzinga and Lincoln Moore, who have been the Lincolns' best line in the Western Conference Final through all six games, as well as the trio of Owen Voortman, Jack Clarke and Devun Colebrook, who have been tasked with starting each period they've been together for.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Lincoln Moore buries a goal on a breakaway against Stratford Warriors' netminder Noah Bender in Game 5 of the Western Conference Final April 19. Moore entered Game 7 April 21 with goals in four straight games.

"They win their battles and make good decisions with the puck," Bradley said of Elzinga, Hodkinson and Moore. "They're good defensively and they're always focused and trying to out-compete the opponent. That's why they have success. I think (the Voortman, Clarke and Colebrook line) is a good mix of offence, defence, physicality and intelligence. I think the way they compete is great, and that makes them good at starting periods for us. Those six have really led the charge (in games three, four and five)."

Hodkinson, Elzinga and Moore have combined for 12 goals and 27 points in the first six games of the series. Going into Game 7, Hodkinson had points in 11 straight games and in 14 of his last 15, while Moore had scored at least once in his previous four games and had points in eight of his last nine.

And while that line continued their strong play in Game 5, the rest of the lineup didn't deliver the performance they needed, leading the Warriors to a 4-3 overtime victory that put Stratford ahead 3-2 in the series, with Bradley stating they can't only have one line going if they're going to have success.

"We gave up three leads," Bradley said. "We didn't have enough guys pulling in the same direction. We typically aren't a one-line team, and when we're forced to do that, we're not going to be successful. We lost an overtime game. It was a tight game, so it's not terrible, but we need to bounce back."

And bounce back is exactly what the Lincolns did in Game 6.

Though tightly contested, a much stronger, teamwide effort lifted the Lincolns to a 6-3 victory, with two of their goals com-

ing as empty netters late in the game.

"It just came down to being willing to compete every chance we got," Bradley said. "It felt like everybody who was dressed competed (in Game 6), so I'm really happy with the effort top to bottom. We had a much better effort one through 20. We've never been a one-line team, and we can't be a one-line team. Everybody did what they needed to do."

According to the head coach, the desperation to live to fight another day was visible amongst the players.

"We played as desperate as you can. You see it in their faces before they go on the ice when you talk to them for the last time, and they were ready to compete. They knew that was their last chance, and they treated it like that. It's the same thing in Game 7. You're facing the end of your career, and the end of your season, and you've got to see how much these kids want to continue to play hockey."

Certainly not a one-line game this time around, the Lincolns got significant contributions from everyone, with Bradley noting two lines in particular stepped up in big ways at both ends of the ice.

"The (Callum) McCauley, (Chase) MacQueen-Spence and (Declan) Ready line really contributed. Those three together, I think they did a really good job together. You've got a bit of grit in Declan, who really does the right thing pretty much all the time. Chase is a super veteran, and he's really changed his game from purely offensive to just being a great 200-foot player for us, and then McCauley is very fast and very skilled, and you saw on the (Jacob) Montesi goal, that combination of those three guys sets up some really good plays.

U13 BB Girls capture silver at provincials

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The Cascades U13 BB Girls St. Marys Rock brought home a silver medal and a finalists' banner from the Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA) Provincial Championships April 10-12.

Head coach Jamie Matheson credited his squad with turning in some of their best hockey of the season.

"From a coaching standpoint, what stood out most was how the girls elevated their level of play when it mattered most," said Matheson. "Our message all weekend was to bring the will and trust the process, and the results would take care of themselves. The group fully bought in, playing for each other and for the logo on the front of the jersey, which was especially evident through a demanding round-robin, and carried us all the way into the final."

Matheson added the season surpassed what they had set out to do thanks to a strong blend of abilities between the returning core and the rookie additions.

"This season was honestly unbelievable," said Matheson. "Going into it, we didn't really know what to expect. As a coaching group, we knew we had a talented core of secondyear players returning, girls who already had the skill and work ethic. When we added the firstyear players we did, we believed we had a group that could skate, compete and outwork any team in Ontario."

That strong team unity was forged over the course of a year, during which the team, according to Matheson, continued to find more self-confidence.

"The biggest challenge early wasn't ability, it was belief. We had to convince the girls just how good they could be and help them understand that they belonged at the top of this level. Once that confidence started to grow, everything changed and you could see it game in and game out. They bought into the process completely, pushed themselves every day and raised their standard as a group. What they accomplished this season went far beyond our expectations. They exceeded



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The Cascades U13 BB Girls St. Marys Rock took the silver medal at the OWHA Provincial Championships April 10-12. Pictured in the first row, from left to right, are Alex Harlton and Jaynie Johnston. In the second row, from left, are Cassie Adams, Amelia Falkiner, Charlotte Jeffreys, Emily Chateauvert, Evelyn McAllister and Addison Hudson. In the third row, from left, are Camille Crummer, Lauren Masselis, coach-trainer Eve Greig, Kylie Blake, Jaelyn Seok, Charlotte Heinbuck, Sam Matheson and Jessica Zwambag. In the back row, from left, are coach Ian Johnston, coach Dave Blake, head coach Jamie Matheson and coach Tyler Dingman. Not pictured is Kathleen Heinbuck.

them by a mile, and as a coaching staff, we can't thank these girls or their parents enough for a great season."

To make it to the championship game and ultimately come away with the silver, the Rock picked up a 3-1 win over the London Devillettes in the semis.

"The semi-final was a rematch from the week before, when we faced London at the (Western Ontario Girls Hockey League) Day of Champions, so we knew they were coming in hungry for redemption. The girls brought an unbelievable amount of will and heart, playing for each other shift after shift. It was a true heavyweight battle between the number one team in Ontario and the number four team, and our group rose to the moment when it mattered most."

St. Marys opened the scoring in the first period when Cassie Adams buried a

beautiful rebound, with assists from Kylie Blake and Jessica Zwambag, to give the Rock an early 1-0 lead. The girls carried that advantage into the second period thanks to relentless forechecking pressure from the forwards and strong defensive play in their own end by Emily Chateauvert, Sam Matheson, Camille Crummer and Alex Harlton. Centres Jaynie Johnston, Kylie Blake and Jaelyn Seock took care of the draws and pushed the other teams hard all weekend.

The team's secondyear players, including Adams, Crummer, Lauren Masselis, Charlotte Heinbuck, Charlotte Jeffreys and Evelyn McAllister, were huge in keeping everyone positive and confident, no matter the score.

The bench boss also praised the team's netminders, Jeffreys and McAllister, for their stellar efforts in between the pipes.

"Goaltending was a huge part of our success as well," said Jamie Matheson. "Charlotte (Jeffreys) and Evelyn (McAllister) saved their best hockey for the most important weekend of the season, coming up with big saves at key moments throughout the tournament. Whether it was round-robin play, the quarter finals, or the semi-finals, both were calm, confident and tremendous when we needed them most. They gave our group belief every game."

Early in the second, Harlton sparked the offence with a strong rush into the London zone, dishing the puck out front to Amellia Falkiner, who calmly tapped it home to make it a 2-0 game. London pushed back hard and, refusing to go away after losing to St. Marys the previous weekend, finally broke through with just 41 seconds left in the second to cut the lead to 2-1.

In the third period, Crummer delivered what may have been one of the biggest rushes of the season, powering the puck up ice and finishing the play herself to restore the twogoal cushion and make it 3-1. Between the pipes, McAllister was outstanding, turning aside wave after wave of pressure and playing one of her strongest games of the year to help St. Marys through the Devillettes and into the finals.

Though they didn't come away with the top prize in the finals, Jamie Matheson explained how the silver medal was a massive accolade for the Rock.

"Taking silver at provincials meant everything to this group. It validated the commitment they made back in September when they took on the challenge of moving up to the BB level. They worked through adversity, including broken collarbones, a dislocated thumb and a fractured wrist at the worst time of the year, but they trusted each other and grew together as a team and grew into a family.

"This proved they belonged at that level," Jamie Matheson continued. "For the girls, it was a moment to feel proud of how far they've come, not just for the result, but for the work ethic, resilience and belief they showed all year."

Lincolns force Game 7 in thrilling West Final against Stratford

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

"I also thought the (Oliver) Lacko, (Chase) McDougall and (Ethan) Weir line contributing on the scoresheet was really important for them and very helpful for us," Bradley added. "They were really responsible, and it was a case where good defence led to good offence. That line stepped up, and we got some really good minutes out of them."

Once again, the Lincolns got great goaltending from Booth-Housego, who Bradley said has been vital in the team fighting back from trailing in the series multiple times.

"It's good for him, and we're obviously happy for him. He came back to avenge last season. I know that's been on his mind, and he gets an opportunity to do so. We're not here without Colby (Booth-Housego), and I'm happy he gets another chance at this with us."

Supporting Booth-Housego was much stronger defensive play by St. Marys, as well as increased physical presence in Game 6 from Game 5.

"I thought our gaps were really good," said Bradley. "I thought, for the most part, we shut plays down pretty quick and then we did a really good job in those lit-

tle battles along the boards. Our physicality was great. That's a part of our identity, and we need that to put teams on their heels a little bit, and we did a really good job of that, especially early."

Goals by James MacGregor and Jacob Montesi gave the Lincolns a 2-1 lead at the end of one period. After a scoreless second, the two teams traded goals, with Hodgkinson firing home his 11th of the playoffs before Oliver Lacko deflected home his first goal of the post-season. Moore and Voortman each added empty net tallies to seal the 6-3 win.

After both the disappointing loss in

Game 5 and the stronger showing in Game 6, Bradley emphasized compete level and winning battles as being key to deciding the winner of the Joe Thornton Trophy.

"Stratford doesn't give us much time with the puck, and there's not much space out there, so we've got to compete," Bradley said. "They're really good in transition, so we've got to make sure, on any change of possession, that we're turning over the other way, whatever way the puck is going to go. We've just got to be on our toes, and every shift is going to count in Game 7."

PPA hosts annual dinner



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

The Playoff Payoff Association (PPA), a playoff fantasy hockey group with a 50-year history, hosted its annual dinner recently. Pictured above, in the front row from left to right, are Scott Furtney, Bob Davis, Steve Graham, Doug Newton and Rob Staffen. In the back row, from left, are Glenn Coghlin, Paul Marcaccio, Paul Carter, Richard Kennedy, Lou Pagotto, Jeff Craig-mile, Tom Robson and Kevin Ellis. Not pictured was Warren Wilson. Pictured below, Doug Newton, the 2024 Harold Snepts Award winner, presents the award to 2025 and 50th-anniversary winner Steve Graham, who won for the first time.



St. Marys bowlers compete at Regional Bowler of the Year tournament



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Asher Gregory, Nathan McKeen, Ivy Kittmer, and Erin Slaney. The four St. Marys YBC bowlers competed at the Regional Bowler of the Year tournament at Victoria Bowl in Kitchener. The tournament was a three-game, pins-over-average format. Kittmer won gold in the Girls Pee wee division with 85 points over average. Gregory placed third in the Boys Bantam division with 36 points over average. Slaney received a silver medal in the Junior Girls division with 57 points over average. McKeen won gold with 78 points over average. The St. Marys Bowling Lanes also said a special thanks to coaches Michelle McKeen, Mike Gregory, Melissa Kittmer, and Helen Brockman, and to the Downie Optimists for their continuing support of St. Marys' bowlers.

2025 Grand Prize Winner, Colette Begg "Undercover"



PAINT ONTARIO

ART COMPETITION, EXHIBITION & SALE

May 2-17

Grand Bend Legion, Community Hall

Revealing the Unexpected



PaintOntario.com

Come to our Juried Show & Sale with Over 200 Paintings & Sculptures. Live Artist Demonstrations & Special Events. Daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Fridays to 7 p.m. Family Weekend: May 9-10

THE GROOMER

Grooming Service & Pet Sitting Available



— WELLINGTON STREET —
GUEST HOUSE



A modern and charming guest house for the perfect getaway - book your stay today!

wellingtonstreetgh.wixsite.com/mysite
wellingtonstreetguesthouse@gmail.com

255 Wellington St. S., St. Marys • 519.284.0036

MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Quinn Stewart scores a breakaway goal during a Dunny's Source For Sports U10 A Boys St. Marys Rock game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Jonathan Muhtar releases a shot on target during an Easy Lift Doors U13 LL Boys Blue St. Marys Rock game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Simon Bailey passes the puck from behind the net during a Frayne's Custom Cabinets U14 A Boys St. Marys Rock game earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Simon Greig blasts a shot from the point during a St. Marys Legion U18 B Boys St. Marys Rock game earlier this season



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Jordyn Rasenberg plays the ring through centre ice during a Hubbard's Pharmacy-Frayne's Custom Cabinets U12 B St. Marys Snipers earlier this season.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)

Brenna Bearss drives towards the net during a Cascades-St. Marys Kinsmen U14 R St. Marys Snipers game earlier this season.

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: The colour of behaviour – what’s really fueling our kids

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

I am not a doctor, a scientist, or a nutritionist. However, over the last five years, I’ve become something of a “food detective.” Moving from Ukraine to Canada transformed my morning routine into a high-stakes investigation, squinting at ingredient lists in supermarket aisles as if I’m trying to crack a secret code.

This time, I want to compare three distinct approaches to nutrition: my home country of Ukraine, my current home in Canada and a third perspective from Sweden. Each country has its own “nutritional personality,” and while no system is perfect, the differences tell a fascinating story about how we protect our children’s potential.

In Ukraine, I always believed that the “Big Bad Wolf” of childhood health was simply sugar. But in Canada, I discovered a much more colourful landscape. It is a curious fact of global trade that a snack produced for the European Union and the exact same brand produced for Canada can have remarkably different recipes.

Sometimes, as parents, we struggle to distinguish between a child’s true personality and a reaction to what they’ve consumed. Is my child naturally “spirited,” or is he experiencing a chemical peak? When I see the vibrant, neon-colored snacks marketed to children, I realize that as parents, we carry a unique burden: the responsibility to filter out what other countries regulate at the source.

My suspicions are rooted in scientific research. A landmark study at the University of Southampton identified a direct link between a specific group of artificial dyes and increased hyperactivity in children.

In the EU and Sweden, if a product contains dyes like Red 40 or Yellow 5, it must carry a warning label: “May have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children.” In Canada, our regulatory approach emphasizes individual choice, often grouping these chemicals under the simple term, “colour.” While Canada’s system relies on parents to make informed decisions, the European model operates on the “Precautionary Principle” – if there is a potential risk to a child’s focus, the ingredient is often discouraged before it even reaches the shelf.

Sweden offers a compelling contrast. Their system is designed to make the healthy choice the easiest choice, not just in schools, but in every grocery store. Since the



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Comparing the nutritional cultures of Canada, Ukraine and Sweden to find out what’s really inside our kids’ lunch boxes and how it affects their brains.

‘80s, Sweden has used the “Keyhole” symbol to help shoppers instantly identify products with less salt, less sugar and more fiber.

From grades one to nine, school lunch is free, hot and served buffet-style. It’s a “classroom for life” where children learn to build balanced plates from an extensive salad bar.

My childhood memories are filled with the scent of warm rice, fish and cabbage served in a communal dining room. Today, Ukraine is undergoing a sophisticated nutritional revolution. Led by First Lady Olena Zelenska and chef Ievgen Klopotenko, the national menu now prioritizes “brain fuel” – replacing heavy starches with spices like turmeric and complex grains like lentils, strictly limiting salt and sugar to support mental productivity.

One of the most striking Canadian differences appears

as children grow. In elementary school, children carry their parents’ nutritional wisdom in a lunch box. But in High School, the system grants students a level of freedom that would make a medieval king jealous.

Unlike the structured cafeteria culture in many European or Ukrainian schools, many Canadian high schools witness a daily “Great Migration” at noon. Suddenly, hundreds of teenagers discover the “Combo Culture” at the nearest local pizza joint. It’s a rite of passage: the legendary slice of pepperoni and a fizzy drink. It is the ultimate test of every nutritional lecture we’ve ever given them at home. Of course, as a parent, you have to admire their efficiency – they’ve managed to find the fastest-burning fuel known to man. It’s quite an ambitious choice for a brain that is expected to conquer quadratic equations for the rest of the afternoon, but hey, that’s part of the Canadian high school adventure!

As a newcomer, I was deeply moved by the collective care shown in our nut-free schools. It is not just about rules; it’s a beautiful reflection of the Canadian heart – the instinctive way the entire community stands together to protect a single vulnerable child. This level of empathy and shared responsibility is something I’ve come to admire deeply.

However, my son Alex provided me with a mystery. In Ukraine, he ate peanuts with no issues. In Canada, he developed a reaction. I’ve begun to wonder if the culprit is the peanut itself or the specific stabilizers and preservatives used in local nut butters. It highlights a recurring theme; in our highly processed world, it’s often the “extras” in our food that cause the most complications.

We often talk about “it taking a village” to raise a child, but that village looks different everywhere. In Sweden, the village is the government setting strict standards. In Ukraine, the village is a traditional hot meal and a national reform. In Canada, the village is a community that fiercely protects its children from acute risks but leaves the chemical “detective work” to the parents.

Perhaps the goal isn’t to find one perfect country, but to take the best from each: the safety of Canada, the purity of Sweden and the warmth of Ukraine. Until our grocery aisles catch up, I’ll keep my magnifying glass ready because when we feed our children, we aren’t just filling stomachs, we are fueling the thinkers, creators and leaders of tomorrow.

Straight From The Shelves

By Laura McAsh, St. Marys Public Library

Are your little ones looking for something fun and easy to make with/for their mother for Mother’s Day? Stop by the Library on Saturday, May 9 between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to make a thumbprint heart wooden keychain, the perfect sweet and simple gift for the mother-figure(s) in their life. This program is free to attend and all ages are welcome. No registration is required.

UP THIS WEEK

- Fri., Apr. 24: P.A. Fun Day (10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
 - Sat., Apr. 25: Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Mon., Apr. 27: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
 - Tues., Apr. 28: Tuesday Book Club* (11 a.m.)
 - Wed., Apr. 29: EarlyON Play & Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong (1-4 p.m.)
 - Thurs., Apr. 30: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- *Registration Required

Ask the Arborist

By Joel Hackett • 519.272.5742 • jtsquote@gmail.com

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

Dear Arborist,

My neighbour has a big dead tree, he thinks its fine to leave it. It’s been dead for an few years, its over my fence and I am concerned.

What should I do? He also says its an animal habitat.

Thanks, Erin

Dear Erin,

Dead trees in residential areas should always

be removed as soon as possible. Within 2 to 5 years a dead tree becomes very hazardous and will eventually fall. The animals will survive without it.

We recommend removing dead trees as soon as possible, as it is dangerous to remove them. The longer a tree is dead the more dangerous it becomes.

Sincerely, The Arborist

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: 108 Robinson Street

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

The property history researchers at the St. Marys Museum are currently finishing a report for Larry and Catherine Pfaff's cottage at 108 Robinson Street in the west ward. The house has had a sequence of owners and some of them had tenants, but records show that its history is reasonably straightforward. Homeowners requesting reports from the Museum are asked to provide background facts that they already know, such as names of previous owners. The Pfaffs' information was substantial – three pages of text. This has been a great advantage to the researchers, providing many entry points to explore this historic property.

To find the record of the chain of ownership, researchers begin with the land registry abstract showing transactions relating to the property, available via the Ontario government website, OnLand. The property description needed to search for the abstract is found on the upper right corner of the municipal tax notice. Usually, the properties are then located by searching for the street within the town. For Robinson Street, however, this doesn't work. Beginning with early surveys, the section north of Queen Street West, along both sides of Robinson Street stretching west to the east side of Ingersoll Street, was divided into large blocks, lettered from A to Q. The house at 108 Robinson Street is legally described as Lots 13 and 14 in Block L on the north side of Queen Street West.

When the Canada Company first surveyed Blanshard Township in 1839, a site was identified for a future town in the valley where Trout Creek flows into the Thames River. In 1839, the Canada Company transferred a large portion of land in the core of St. Marys to the Ingersoll family from nearby Oxford County. Thomas and James Ingersoll arrived in St. Marys in the 1840s to prepare the village for settlement by building a sawmill and a grist mill. James Ingersoll never lived in St. Marys. Although he was a frequent visitor, he remained in Woodstock and was eventually appointed Oxford County Registrar. James Ingersoll's property was east of the Thames River, extending into the north and south wards. Thomas and



(PHOTO COURTESY LARRY AND CATHERINE PFAFF)

This attractive home in the west ward of St. Marys was built in 1870, modeled on plans published in the Canada Farmer for "A Small Gothic Cottage."

his family did stay and lived in the new settlement. They owned a large acreage on the west side of the Thames. Thomas built a stone house on the banks of the river, 105 Queen Street West, but died a few years later in 1847. His property was inherited by his son, Justus, including the lots in Block L.

At first, only the Ingersoll lots near Victoria Bridge were developed. A series of houses and industrial buildings began to line both sides of Queen Street up the hill and westward. On the north side of Queen, the lots remained undeveloped longer. However, through the 1850s and 1860s, as St. Marys grew and the population increased, Justus Ingersoll began selling these lots off. Some were purchased as investments and resold at a profit. Finally in 1868, John Henry Clark, an Irish-born farmer, acquired Lots 13 and 14 for \$70. He intended to live on this property and chose a site for his house overlooking the river. By the 1871 census, the house was built, and Clark, age 40, was living there with his wife, Eliza, age 43. Also in their household were their 14-year-old twin sons, Robert John and James Cornelius, ten-year-old Edward Alfred, four-year-old Thomas William, and year-old Eliza. In addition to Lots 13 and 14 on Robinson Street, Clark's purchase in 1868 included 12 lots, numbered from 5 to 16 in Block K, west of his house. They comprised the northern half of the block bounded by Ontario, Widder, and William Streets.

John Henry Clark is a bit of a mystery.

Because both his first name and surname are common ones, he has been difficult to trace through the usual records. It's complicated because sometimes the surname is shown as "Clarke" rather than "Clark," doubling the possibilities. According to the 1861 census, he and his family were living in a frame house on a farm in Blanshard Township. This census also states that he and Eliza were married in 1849. If this is correct, he would have been 18 and Eliza 21 at the time of their marriage. It is possible that the Clarks waited eight years before having their first children, their twin boys. What is more likely in those days was that one or two children had died before 1861. The family must have been relatively prosperous because they employed a servant. A few years following the 1861 census, they were able to purchase property in town.

J. H. Clark also had the resources to construct a beautifully designed house. He and his builder looked to the Canada Farmer, a journal, launched in Toronto on January 15, 1864, intended for farm families. Published twice a month, it contained practical advice on all aspects of rural life, showing ways to be successful in the business of farming. It aimed to bring all sorts of useful information to the countryside and to raise standards in animal husbandry and crop production. Some editions also contained plans and elevations for attractive, functional country houses. Larry Pfaff, an authority on heritage architecture, points out that

Clark's new house followed the model, published in the Canada Farmer in 1864, called "A Small Gothic Cottage."

The floor plan is efficient: a central hall, the main rooms placed equally to the left and to the right with a kitchen wing at the back. The façade has two windows placed symmetrically, one on either side of the entrance. The Canada Farmer estimated that if the builder used brick, the cottage could be built for under \$1,000. Building with wood rather than brick would be cheaper. Clark modified this plan somewhat. He had it built without the kitchen wing – one was added in 1878 by a subsequent owner. Pfaff also points out that the windows are also larger than those found in most Ontario cottages, harking back to the Georgian period. Clark may have been thinking of this building style in 1870, but with a marvellous view of the river, why wouldn't he have wanted the windows as large as possible!

In the 1871 census, although he lived in town, Clark still gave his occupation as farmer. He may have still owned property in Blanshard Township. But he could also have operated a small farm on the additional property he owned to the west of his home. He built a two-storey carriage house behind his house with a small stable, complete with hay mow. As well as a horse, he may have kept a cow and a few other animals. The two-foot-thick walls of the carriage house were built with rubblestone from the bed of the Thames River. This property sounds idyllic but, for reasons that have been lost in history, in 1873, J. H. Clark put it up for sale. An advertisement in the St. Marys Argus describes the property as a five-room cottage with a two-storey, stone carriage house and adjoining stable, and an orchard with fruit trees on the lot to the north.

A great deal of research effort has been put into trying to discover what happened to the Clark family after they sold Lots 13 and 14 in Block K. A couple possible marriage records for their offspring have been located, but the subsequent history of John Henry and Eliza Clark has not yet been found. However, their jewel of a cottage with its stone barn remains at 108 Robinson Street, St. Marys. After the Clarks left, the story of this property was far from over. To be continued.



A.N.A.F. UNIT 265
23 WELLINGTON ST. N.
519.284.4390

Sunday Funday Darts
Sunday April 26th | 12:45pm

Sausage on a Bun

Every Thursday from 12 pm to 1:30 pm \$5.00 each

MEAT DRAW FRIDAYS AT 6PM

 **Franklin E. Hinz**



Maximize Your Return
Conservative Advice for Intelligent Decisions

196 Ontario St., Stratford, ON
519.273.1633 • franklinehinz.com



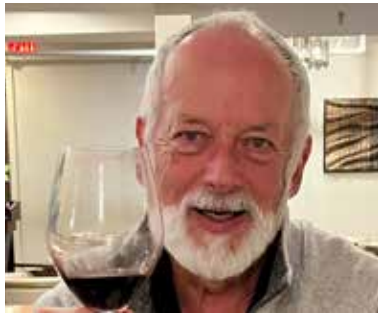
FOR HALL RENTALS
CALL 519.271.5343

April 12 - Bill & Ruthann Flack, St. Marys	\$50.00
April 13 - Dan Scheerer, Dublin	\$50.00
April 14 - Michele Polley, Ilderton	\$50.00
April 15 - Cindy Booth, Stratford	\$50.00
April 16 - Diane Elston, St. Marys	\$50.00
April 17 - Shannon & Wendell Archer, Stratford	\$50.00
April 18 - Paul Warwick, Woodham	\$200.00

FRASER ASPHALT
PAVING INC

FREE QUOTES 519-271-5690
www.fraserpaving.ca

OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: The mystery and wonder of Mount Etna



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

The sky was blue and the clouds white, though they did not obscure our view of Mount Etna as we began the coach trip from Messina to the slopes of this active volcano. And this was all just as well because by the time we were well on our way to the highest point of our trip, the clouds and mist were rolling in, and when we reached our final destination, the most prominent feature was fog.

But that was okay. The thing about Mount Etna is it's unique and mysterious – the only active volcano on the island of Sicily, and one of three active volcanos in the Isole Eolie chain of islands that stretches north from Sicily. Those volcanic islands include two others that are still active – Stomboli, the easily identified triangle that can be seen from the western shores of Calabria, and Volcanu (the volcano from which the name, “volcano,” derives).

But Mount Etna is the big guy. In fact, it's Europe's largest and most active volcano, ejecting huge amounts of lava every year.

But, say the experts, this Etna is carefully monitored by scientists, so it is safe to visit when “they” say so. And since “they” said so, and we had the chance to go to Mount Etna during our Senior Discovery Tours visit to Calabria, we were in.

The main reason a visit to Mount Etna is considered safe was explained to us by our Sicilian guide. Volcanos fall into two categories – explosive and effusive. Effusive volcanos tend to erupt often or continually, but in more moderate fashion, “moderate” being a relative term. Mount Etna is an effusive volcano.

So, we joined the early morning queue to board our coach in Siderno, on the east coast of Calabria, and took the one-hour-plus trip across the toe of Italy to reach Villa San Giovanni, the port for the ferry to Sicily.

The ferry ride across the Straits of Messina is brief, perhaps 20 minutes, but there is nonetheless something magical about sailing toward the legendary island of Sicily for the first time.

We docked in Messina and began the hour-and-a-half ride south to the slopes of Mount Etna.

Mount Etna is 3,400 metres high. We went just over halfway up, to the 1,800-metre level, stopping on route in Zafferana Etnea for scrumptious pastries and espresso. The guide said this was to help us to acclimatize to the altitude, but I suspect it has more to do with the passion all Italians have for pastries and coffee.

Back on the coach, we continued the climb, passing through fascinating layers of topography and plant life. Before long, the predominant feature of the landscape was lava – many hectares of lava flow border the roadway up Etna. It's a stark, dark landscape, though hardy plants begin to grow not long after the lava has cooled. In fact, as lava breaks down, it becomes one of the most nutrient-rich soils anywhere.

And as we rose higher, the tem-

perature plunged, and snow appeared. By the time we reached the top, snow covered almost everything. People were skiing and snowshoeing.

The lava fields and the views of the mountain were increasingly obscured by cloud as we climbed toward our 1,800-metre destination. And when we reached the parking lot, visibility was a few dozen metres.

But we persisted because we had disembarked at the site of five craters, and were still able to view some of them. As the mist swirled, the views opened briefly and then were again shrouded in fog. As I said, the entire adventure had a certain air of mystery.

Visitors can go higher than 1,800 meters – there are cable cars and specially outfitted vehicles that head further up, as far as 2,900 metres, the highest point anyone is allowed to go. But all the literature says, “Go with a guide,” and there are factual accounts of foolhardy folk who ignored this advice, and died in an eruption of lava.

While at maximum height, we were invited to dine (Italy, right? Amazing food, right?). The restaurant is La Cantoniera, and it, too, has a Mount Etna story. During a dramatically large eruption in 1983, the original La Cantoniera was consumed and buried by lava flow. Today, the restaurant where we dined is built on top of the lava that contains the remnants of the former building.

And in the main floor dining room, there is a video screen showing that story, as well as wildly dramatic videos of previous Etna eruptions. It tends to inspire visitors to check the view out the windows every few minutes as you dine, just in case.

Our lunch at La Cantoniera,



Our clear view of Mount Etna before the clouds obscured the scene.



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

La Cantoniera, a restaurant built atop the lava flow that destroyed its predecessor.

by the way, was a lavish buffet spread with all the great Italian – and specifically Sicilian – tastes. Sausages, pasta, gnocchi, bruschetta, sundry mushrooms, eggplant, bacon, cheese, wine by the bottle and then, of course, pastries – all the pastries.

So, did we get a perfect, close-up view of Mount Etna? No, but we did experience the mystery

and the wonder of finding ourselves on the slopes of Europe's largest active volcano. And did I mention the pastries?

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.



A lava field on Mount Etna.



A brief moment when the sun broke through to illuminate a peak.

EAT AT OUR HOUSE: Rainy day dishes



LAUREN EEDY

Independent Columnist

Spring can be unpredictable when it comes to meal planning.

Are we sent a day that's nice enough to grill outside, or are we turning on the oven and making something for those damp days that require a little more comfort?

I personally enjoy getting out of the hearty meal fixation we see in the winter months and gearing more toward light meals packed with flavour. Here are some recipes that appeal to that sentiment.

Mango salsa chicken

Yields: 4-6; Prep: 15 minutes; Total time: 35 minutes

A simple, one-pot recipe the whole family will enjoy.

Ingredients:

- 6 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup long grain white rice
- 1 jar mango salsa

- Seasoned black beans for serving
- Sliced avocado, chopped cilantro for topping

Method:

• Season the chicken on both sides with salt and pepper (*I use significantly less salt than recipes call for due to a low-sodium diet; under 1,000 milligrams per day. Feel free to do the same.)

• Heat the olive oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken and sear until golden brown, 2-3 minutes per side. Remove chicken to a plate.

• Add the rice, 1 1/2 cups of water and 1 cup of the mango salsa to the skillet, stir and bring to a boil.

• Nestle the chicken on top of the rice, reduce to simmer, cover and cook until chicken is cooked through and the rice is tender, 17-20 minutes.

• Serve chicken and rice with black beans. Top with remaining mango salsa, sliced avocado and cilantro.

Coconut curry shrimp

Yields: 6; Prep: 5 minutes; Cook: 15 minutes; Total: 20 minutes

A flavourful meal that is sure to become part of the weekly rotation.

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 1/2 lbs jumbo shrimp, peeled

and deveined

- 1 medium onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp yellow curry powder
- 1 can coconut milk
- 2 tbsp honey, plus more to taste
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 lime, juiced
- 12 basil leaves, chopped plus more for serving
- Hot sauce (optional)
- Cooked basmati rice to serve.

Method:

• In a large skillet (I used non-stick), heat the butter over medium-high heat. Add the shrimp and cook for 2-3 minutes, turning them over halfway through, until fully cooked. Remove to a plate and set aside.

• Add the onion and garlic to the skillet and stir to cook for 2 minutes. Sprinkle the curry powder over the onions and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, for another couple of minutes.

• Reduce the heat to medium-low and pour in the coconut milk, stirring to combine. Add the honey, salt and lime juice, and allow the sauce to cook until bubbling gently.

• Add the shrimp to the sauce, tossing to coat, and allow it to simmer until slightly thickened, 2-3 minutes. Taste the sauce and add more salt, lime juice,



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

These rhubarb dream bars are a great way to take advantage of the widely available seasonable edible that grow locally in abundance.

or honey if you like. Stir in the basil and add hot sauce if you want a little kick.

• Serve the shrimp and sauce over the rice, topping with more basil.

Rhubarb dream bars

Yields: 16; Prep: 20 minutes; Total Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

With vibrant rhubarb just starting to appear seasonally, take advantage of this portable bar recipe that's perfect for spring or summer.

Ingredients:

Crust

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, room temperature

Filling

- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar

- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 cup diced rhubarb

Method:

• Reheat oven to 350°F. Line the bottom of a 8x8-inch pan with parchment, bringing it up the sides so it's easy to remove squares after baking. Mix the crust ingredients in a food processor and then press into prepared pan.

• Bake for 15 minutes; the crust will remain pale in colour.

• While crust is baking, mix together eggs, sugar, flour, salt and whisk well, about 1 minute but no longer. Stir in rhubarb. Pour onto hot crust and continue to bake for 40-45 minutes.

• Let the bars cool and remove with the parchment paper. Cut into squares and enjoy

SAVE MONEY THIS YEAR ON TAX PREPARATION

with friendly, professional service

Average tax prep price \$75 + HST

- price can vary based on complexity
- discounts for multiple family members
- includes free tax return delivery in St. Marys

Contact Stewart Grant
Text 519-868-1290 or email stew@granthaven.com

Andrew L. Hodges

FUNERAL HOME

Helping you design affordable and personal services including:

- burial
- cremation
- donation to science
- celebrations of life
- open houses
- religious services

DID YOU KNOW

You can begin pre-arranging your funeral by scanning this QR code or visiting www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca and clicking on "Resources" then "pre-arrange online" to complete a basic information form.

47 Wellington St. S., St. Marys
519-284-2820 | www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca

Sudoku

Sponsored by:

SHACKLETON'S
Real Estate & Auction Co. shackletons.com

FERN PRIDHAM - Real Estate Broker
519.274.2885
fernpridham@gmail.com

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

Solutions on pg. 39

Riddles

How many months have 28 days?
All of them.

I have many teeth, but I can't bite. What am I?
A comb.

There's only one word in the dictionary that's spelled wrong. What is it?
The word "wrong"

What has a thumb and four fingers, but is not a hand?
A glove.

What kind of band never makes music?
A rubber band.

What can fill a room but takes up no space?
Light.

What two things can you never eat for breakfast?
Lunch and dinner.

What kind of lion never roars?
A dandelion.

What has a thousand needles but cannot sew?
A porcupine.

How do you catch a school of fish?
With a bookworm.

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

What is the wealthiest nut?
A cash-ew.

- Word Search -



SPONSORED BY:

Adult Learning Programs of Perth, Upstairs at the St. Marys Public Library
(700 Church Street North, St. Marys, ON) | Phone: 519.284.4408 | Cell: 226.374.8231
alearning@town.stmarys.on.ca | www.adultlearningperth.ca | Facebook: @AdultLearningProgramsofPerth

TAX SEASON

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

- Income
- Deductions
- Exemption
- Deadline
- Tax credits
- Remuneration
- Canada pension
- Employment income
- Investments
- Capital gain
- Child care benefit
- Donations
- Tuition
- RRSP
- Refund



The **Riddle Kid**
OF THE WEEK



Gavin Davies (4)

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



TIPS FOR YOUR ANIMAL HEADING INTO SPRING

Watch for wildlife. Spring means wildlife is more active and waking up. With the beginning of mating season, it means soon litters will start being born. Be vigilant on your walks and do your best to avoid disturbing wildlife.



THEO

Our Pet of the Week is Theo, a four-month-old Maine coon kitten who is already six pounds. He enjoys watching squirrels and birds out the window and exploring everything he can find his way on. Theo is owned by Tyler Carruthers of Grant Haven Media.



Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent



**Celebrating 20 Years
of Country Music
Purple Hill Country Opry**

Fish Fry/Dance
SAT., APRIL 25 AT 5 P.M.
519-461-0538
20903 Purple Hill Road, Thorndale, ON

PHONE
ANNA
NOW



SUNDAY, MAY 3 - 2PM
ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL
with "Canadian Country Show Band"

Visit our website
www.purplehillcountrymusicall.ca



Featuring:

- Singer Jacki Putman "The Pride of N.S."
- Five-Champion Fiddlers
- Two Canadian Stepdance Champions
- Canadian & US Fiddle Champion
- Shane Cook -

\$60/PERSON INCLUDES ROAST BEEF & CHICKEN DINNER

Thorndale service groups receive Thames Centre community grants



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Thorndale Agricultural Society president Patrick Duffin accepts grant funding from Thames Centre Mayor Sharron McMillian.

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The Thames Centre Community Partnership Grants are awarded to school groups, non-profits and local service groups for special projects that provide a benefit to their community.

At a Thames Centre council meeting

earlier this month in Thorndale, three local groups were awarded grants to assist them with their projects.

The grant awarded to the Thorndale Agricultural Society will be used to install gates into the fencing to allow better flow of people into the fairgrounds during the Thorndale Fall Fair. The rest of the funds will be used to purchase



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Thorndale Lions members John Ross, Joe Elliott and Alan Payne accept their grant funding from Thames Centre Mayor Sharron McMillian.

more sound and lighting equipment to replace what was lost in the 2022 community centre fire.

The Thorndale and Area Horticultural Society will use their grant funding to purchase two heritage signs for the Memorial Rose Garden and Ralph's Garden on King Street that match the Lions signage in Thorndale, while the balance

will help cover plants and materials for the public gardens the society maintains in Thorndale.

With the grant money the Thorndale Lions Club received, members will remodel and upgrade the reception area at the Thorndale Medical Centre.

Thorndale: built with a vision, thrives because of volunteers

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Thorndale was established with a dream when the railroad arrived in the 1850s, then built with bricks, mortar and determination – but it thrives today because of the community's dedicated volunteers.

April is designated in Canada as a time to recognize the millions of volunteers across the country who contribute their time, skills and compassion to strengthen their communities. This year's theme for National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, is "Ignite Volunteerism", a call to spark pas-

sion, connect communities and celebrate the diverse ways people give back.

Thorndale's service clubs, the Thorndale Lions and Thorndale Optimist clubs, are the backbone of this community. They support area betterment projects, local schools and minor sports, and their dedication shines through in the events they host and the area activities they take part in.

The Thorndale Agricultural Society and the Thorndale and Area Horticultural Society are equally committed to enriching the area. Whether through the Thorndale Dinner Theatre, the Thorndale Fall Fair,

or the beautiful floral displays in our public gardens and along King Street, their tireless efforts leave a lasting impact. Mount Olivet Lodge Masons and Thorndale's churches also play a vital role, addressing community needs and participating in local events and initiatives.

Other community groups, including the Thames Centre Choir, Thames Valley Model Railroad and the Good Neighbour Project enhance Thorndale and beyond with their talent, dedication and generosity.

As someone who has witnessed the spirit of this community for many years,

I am continually inspired by the generosity and determination of our volunteers. Let us salute the devoted members of our clubs and organizations who give their energy, countless hours, talent and compassion to support Thorndale and its residents. Their contributions strengthen the fabric of our community every day.

Thorndale was built by visionaries, but it is sustained by volunteers – the quiet, steady force that keeps our community thriving. For more information on community groups in the area, visit www.ilovethorndale.ca.

HELP WANTED



Hiring Deputy Clerk

The Deputy Clerk will play a key role in supporting the administrative, policy, and procedural functions of the Township of Perth South. Under the direction of the Clerk, the role will support the administration of Council, and Committee meetings, assist in developing and implementing the Municipality's Records Management system, and lead the administration of Municipal licensing and permitting.

Duties:

- Attend Council meetings and provide technical support for live streaming.
- Support the Clerk with completion of statutory requirements for licensing and permitting.
- Provide administrative support and act as backup administrative support for Council, and Committee meetings, including preparation of agendas and minutes and drafting reports.
- Support the development and implementation of a Municipal Records Management System.
- Provide communications support through various municipal platforms including the Township website, social media, and the Township engagement platform.
- Provide support for organizing and executing public relations, special events, and meetings.
- Support the Clerk with policy research and development as needed.
- Assist the Clerk with the delivery of municipal elections.
- Provide backup customer service support to the front counter as needed.
- Perform such additional duties as assigned.
- Acts as Clerk, in the absence of the same or as required, performing statutory duties.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Post-secondary education (College Diploma or University Degree) with a major in Business Administration, Political Science, Communications, or related programs.
- 2-3 years of related experience in a municipal or public sector setting. A combination of education and experience may be considered.
- Excellent verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills. Ability to deal with difficult and emotionally charged situations while maintaining a high degree of customer service at all times. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrated political acuity, tact and diplomacy skills and the ability to handle confidential matters with discretion.
- Intermediate computer skills in Microsoft Office Suite.
- Project management skills, with the ability to meet tight deadlines.

Salary:

The salary range is \$68,747 to \$85,934 (2026 rates) based on a 35-hour work week and a comprehensive benefit package.

Accommodations:

The Township of Perth South is an equal opportunity employer. The Township of Perth South will attempt to provide reasonable accommodation for known disability for an applicant or employee if requested.

How to Apply:

Applications must be received no later than Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. and sent to the attention of the Clerk at lscott@perthsouth.ca. We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Graham Farms Ltd.

Graham Farms Ltd. is looking to hire a part time general farm labourer.

The job will consist of egg gathering, general labour, barn cleaning and barn checks. Farm experience is preferred but not mandatory.

Mainly weekday work with some weekend work required.

Contact us at graholmfarmsltd@gmail.com for more information.

HIRING HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR (SEASONAL POSITION)

Reports To: Terminal Manager
The Agromart Group Terminal, Belton, ON

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Operate heavy equipment- forklift, tractor, loader with top tip bucket, trackmobile railcar mover to name a few
- To handle, store and distribute products for the Agromart Partner's retail businesses- fertilizer and other crop-input products
- Responsible for the safe and efficient operation of all equipment required to operate the terminal storage facilities
- Follow safe operating procedures and participate in the Environmental Health and Safety Programs
- Must be able to work outdoors in all conditions, work flexible hours during weekdays and weekends, including overtime
- Light repairs on various pieces of equipment
- Work with customers, truckers, and employees in a courteous and professional manner
- General help around the facility and other duties as required
- Training will be provided
- Competitive hourly wage provided
- Some working at heights required
- Responsible for general maintenance of mobile and stationary machinery

KNOWLEDGE & SKILL REQUIREMENTS:

- Valid G license
- Good communication skills
- Good computer skills to operate scale systems
- Works well within a small team as well as work independently
- Experience with conveying equipment and heavy machinery
- Strong communication skills

This position is a seasonal part time role within the Agromart Group, position to start immediately. Apply to: operation.belton@sollio.ag



Hiring Equipment Operator

The Township of Perth South Public Works Department is seeking a qualified Equipment Operator. Reporting to the Operations Manager, applicants will be experienced with the ability to operate and maintain various pieces of equipment, such as road graders, wheel loaders and tandem dump trucks. The candidate will also be required to complete roadside maintenance activities including, trees, signage, potholes, and debris clean up.

Applicants should have road maintenance and construction knowledge, experience in equipment operation and maintenance and a valid "DZ" license. This position is subject to weekend and winter scheduling and some emergency call-out.

The 2026 salary range for this position is **\$27.63 - \$33.67 per hour** based on a 40-hour work week.

The Township of Perth South offers excellent benefits and a competitive compensation package. For a detailed job description of this position, please visit www.perthsouth.ca

We thank all candidates for their interest, however, only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

Interested candidates are invited to submit a detailed resume expressing their interest to the undersigned clearly marked as "Equipment Operator" by **Monday May 4, 2026.**

Ken Bettles, Director of Public Works

Township of Perth South

3191 Road 122

St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0

E-mail - kbettles@perthsouth.ca

Information gathered is under the authority of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and shall only be used for candidate selection purposes.



EXPERIENCED LICENSED ELECTRICIAN

- Residential - Commercial - Agricultural - Industrial
- Competent in troubleshooting various electrical issues
- Clean driving record

We are in search for a competent energetic electrician with a positive attitude. Candidates applying should be eager to deliver a customer-focused service, willing to learn and adapt to grow within our organization, goal oriented, team player, effective interpersonal skills, dependable and organized. Experience in estimating would be an asset.

We are a family run business where you are part of a team, not just a number.

We offer competitive wages, benefits and a pension plan.

Please submit your resume to andyf@formanelectric.com.

St. Marys Independent

NEED TO HIRE?

Run your help wanted ad here for as low as \$35

Call 519-284-0041 or email us at info@stmarysindependent.com



OBITUARY

Paterson



After a long, and meaningful life in the service of God, and mankind, the one and only, Noel B. Paterson has earned his wings and joined his heavenly father. With little suffering, he left us April 14 2026, at the age of 94. He leaves behind his wife of 62 years, Sheila Jane Paterson nee (Mack), his daughter

Shannon Jane Paterson, his grandchildren, Ryan Paterson, Regan Pauli, and Jessica Pauli. Seven great-grandchildren, Ashton, Carter, Berkley, Mack, Marcus, Oliver, and his newest, Sullivan. He also leaves behind a niece, Cristel, and two nephews, Randy Mack, Wes Paterson, and their families. Born in Kitchener to Marie and Robert Paterson in 1931 he arrived alongside his twin brother Neil Paterson (Diana). Ever the jokester, he and his brother grew up in Montreal, enjoying all the things that most boys do. Playing, and watching any sport was a favorite, which he continued to both watch and take part in till the end. Faithfully attending yoga classes twice a week. A nice cold ale on a hot day, or some curling on a cold day. He loved his family, had a taste for adventure, and a thirst for knowledge. Noel worked several jobs in Montreal, and Ontario before being called to ministry. This calling led Noel to attend Huron College, where he earned his BTH in Theology.

As a student, Noel spent time in the Yukon, and Peace River, of which he had very fond memories. He returned to Ontario where on a blind date, he met, and married the love of his life, Sheila Jane Mack. Noel's first appointment by the bishop was in western Canada. The couple spent several years there. They arrived home from western Canada to Ontario with a welcome addition to the family, their daughter Shannon. There were a few more appointments in Ontario. Eventually laying roots in London. Noel, Sheila and Shannon settled here, and Noel flourished. They made many lifelong friendships here. A move to St. Marys wound down Noel's career and they returned to London. In retirement Noel was just as busy, volunteering for many organizations, learning new things, and receiving many awards for his service. They traveled, took on new challenges, made friends, and enjoyed family.

Noel was involved in many organizations over the years in an effort to make the world a better place, which he certainly did. He will be remembered always with love, admiration, and a chuckle. We will all miss him deeply; his steadfast faith was an inspiration to all who knew him. Alleluia Christ is Risen!

A Visitation will take place on Tuesday, April 28 from 2:00-4:00pm & 6:00-8:00pm at Forest Lawn Funeral Home, 1997 Dundas St E. The service will be held on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at the Church of the Ascension, 2060 Dundas St, London, with interment at Forest Lawn Cemetery. For online condolences or donations to Animal Aide, please visit www.forestlawnmemorial.ca

IN MEMORIAM

Heard

In loving memory of our Dad
Raymond John Heard

June 17, 1930- April 26, 1976
who passed away fifty years ago this week

and

In loving memory of our Mom
Florence Elizabeth Heard

October 23, 1934- February 21, 2026
who joined him this year

With thanks for the many acts of kindness shown to us at the time of Mom's passing.
Wendy, Joan and John and families

Looking Back



AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist

Flush away crime

25 years ago (2001)

In the year since Motherwell area resident Todd Sleeper helped spearhead the first clean-up operation to span the entire Thames River, the watershed has secured a spot on a prestigious list of Canada's Heritage Rivers. This year's clean-up will be held on Saturday, April 21 and Sleeper is confident that it will grow from last year's beginnings.

"Help flush away crime". That's the new sign people will now read on the door of portable toilets over most of southwestern Ontario, thanks to the Crime Stoppers Program and Johnson's Sanitation Service Ltd. The corporate partnership was formed earlier this year. Due to a surge in vandalism to portable toilets in St. Marys in 1999, town officials asked their local OPP and Crime Stoppers for help.

50 years ago (1976)

Local swim enthusiasts could hardly be blamed for fence hopping and using the quarry waters over the past warm Easter weekend. It must have been one of the earliest swims for many of those taking the dip.

St. Marys canoe racers won a number of awards as the annual Bunny Bundle race was held on Good Friday. John Hotson and Arnold Pearson captured the men's open class and the Robert Doak Memorial Trophy. Mr. and Mrs. Len Pearson were the top winners in the mixed event.

75 years ago (1951)


The St. Marys Lions Club, who will operate the St. Marys Golf Club again this summer, are making plans for getting the course in shape for play in the near future.

A new system for grading eggs is to be commenced shortly in Canada. The grades will be as follows: Grade A large size, Grade A medium size, Grade A small size, Grade B, Grade C and Cracks. The Pullet grade has been eliminated, and the egg producer will thus benefit by getting more Grade A medium size. The latter is also required to weigh one ounce less per dozen than formerly.

100 years ago (1926)

J.H.W. McRoberts, Public School Inspector for Muskoka, dropped dead suddenly on Tuesday. He was a native of London Township, a former teacher in London Collegiate, and was well known in St. Marys.

With the highways fit for motor traffic again this past week, one of the signs of real Spring is the appearance of outside motor salesmen in the town. We are fortunate in being provided with abundant garage services and with dealers for a number of makes of cars in St. Marys and we do not need to go outside to get a good selection or a square deal. It is a good rule for all who get their living here to patronize our fellow citizens who are paying property taxes to help keep our good town on the map.



MARTIN THOMAS BALL
MARCH 10, 1981 – APRIL 19, 2020

In loving memory of our precious Martin who left us suddenly 6 years ago, on April 19, 2020.

In life we loved you dearly
In death we love you still,
In our hearts you hold a 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.

Always loved.. forever missed.. and never forgotten
Mom and Dad, sister Lisa and family, brother Murray and family, your daughter Abbigale and your fiancée Amber

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Leigh Anne Youse



1968-2021

Listen to the wind & think of me, for in your heart I'll always be.

Loved and missed,
The Bell, Youse & Quinn families

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY SOMEONE ELSE'S DRINKING?

Al-Anon Family Groups could help YOU!
Call for time and place

1-800-706-9833 or App Available

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Call 519-284-0041 or email info@stmarysindependent.com to inquire about our directory

BARBER



MACPHERSON'S BARBERSHOP
EST. 2000

YOUR ST. MARYS ON BARBERSHOP

108 QUEEN ST. E.
macphersonsbarbershop.ca
226-661-0222

FIND US AND BOOK ONLINE @   

EAVESTROUGH



SURE SEAL EAVESTROUGH

519.701.8838
suresealeavestrough@gmail.com

Seamless Eavestrough
Steel and Aluminum
Gutter Guard • Heavy Built
Fascia • Soffit • Trim Bending & More

WES BENNET • ST. MARYS ON

CLEANING

NOW OFFERING  **LAUNDRY Services**

Spotless Cleaning Plus
St. Marys and Surrounding Area

Sheila LeBlanc
519-630-2665
spotless@writeit.com
spotlesscleaningplus.wixsite.com/clean

PLUMBING



CUBBERLEY
Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning

ST. MARYS
519-349-2420

Service from our Family to Yours since 1979

INSURANCE



SIG
St Marys Insurance Group Inc

Offering Insurance Services for:

PERSONAL, COMMERCIAL,
FARM, RESIDENTIAL, BUSINESS,
TRANSPORTATION & MORE!
Give us a call today!

199 Elgin St E • St. Marys ON • 519-284-1900
inquiries@stmarysinsurance.ca

HEAT / COOL

Celebrating **20+ YEARS** in business


FORMAN ELECTRIC LTD.

GAS WORK • HEAT PUMPS •
DUCTLESS SPLITS • AIR CONDITIONERS •
HOT WATER HEATERS • FURNACES

Work with someone
you know you can trust!

519.284.0833
St. Marys

BRIDAL / FORMAL



women's bridal and formal
dress alterations

- Brides • Bridesmaids
- Mums • Flower girls
- Prom girls

For all inquiries please email: littlelemondress@gmail.com

REAL ESTATE



LUCIE STEPHENS
SALES REPRESENTATIVE

519-703-0333

RE/MAX |  REALTY LTD
BROKERAGE

SOLD!

PEAK



PEAK
each brokerage independently owned & operated

SELECT REALTY INC., BROKERAGE

163 Queen St. E.
Downtown St. Marys
519-284-4646
peakselectrealty@gmail.com



Home & Company
REAL ESTATE CORP. BROKERAGE

Toni McLean Sales Representative

519-274-1120 Direct
245 Downie St, Stratford, N5A 1X5
tmclean@homeandcompany.ca

Proud St. Marys resident!

LANDSCAPING

Linda Vandermolen

Landscape Artist

519.276.7712

- Weeding
- Mulching
- Leaf Raking
- Transplant small plants

MUSIC



Rob Eshley's
The World's Coolest
Music Store

226-688-8385
worldscoolest@hotmail.ca

HOME CARE



Cricket Care
Where your at home care comes first
Personalized Home Care

Providing specialized care for:
Stoma - Cancer - Diabetes - Neurological Disorders
Epilepsy - Spinal Injury

In addition to every day care

Call 519-301-7791 (PSW1)
www.cricket-care.com
Serving St. Marys and Area since 2022

SEAMSTRESS

Stonetown Alterations
Professional Seamstress
Ingrid Voermans

www.stonetownalterations.ca | stonetownalterations@gmail.com

519-703-2007

TAKE OUT FOOD



KIPPY'S PIZZA

Mon CLOSED
Tues to Thurs 11-9
Fri and Sat 11-10
Sun 3-8

519-284-1864

118 QUEEN STREET, ST. MARYS

WATER TREATING



medinasoft
A FULL LINE WATER TREATMENT COMPANY

SALES SERVICE RENTALS


Call Dave for more info
at 519.349.2040




SENIORS

Better Ways For Seniors Ltd.

519.868.3021

 **Don Ewert**

don@betterwaysforseniors.com
www.BetterWaysForSeniors.com

 BetterWaysForSeniors

CONSTRUCTION



MCC CONTRACTORS LTD.
519-349-2256
ST. MARYS

485 James St S, St Marys
Email: mcc@quadro.net
Ph: 519-349-2256

General Contracting • Design-Build (A-CAD)
Renovations • Additions • Doors & Windows & More!

DISPOSAL

Robson Scrap Metal

Open 8 to 4:30
Monday - Friday

519.284.2800



206-211 Carling St., St. Marys

TREE SERVICE

JOEL'S TREE SERVICE

519-272-5742
www.joelstreeservice.com



Trimming, Removals, Stumps, Fertilizing

PAINTING

Painting and Handyman
in and around St. Marys

Call Alex at 519-636-5874
for more information



ELECTRICAL

Celebrating **20+ YEARS** in business

FORMAN ELECTRIC LTD.

RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
AGRICULTURAL • INDUSTRIAL

BACK-UP GENERATOR SYSTEMS

Work with someone
you know you can trust!

519.284.0833
St. Marys



STONETOWN ELECTRIC

RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL,
INDUSTRIAL & AGRICULTURAL

YOUR LOCAL, FULL SERVICE ELECTRICAL
CONTRACTING COMPANY.

Contact Us Today or Visit Us Online 
519-301-8411 • stonetownelectric.ca



Hughes
ELECTRICAL SOLUTIONS

GREAT SERVICE
QUALITY WORKMANSHIP
EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

Full Service Electrical Solutions
226-921-1739
info@hugheselectricalsolutions.com
ECRA/ESA# 7016671



St. Marys Independent

BE IN THE KNOW! Get the Latest Edition
Delivered Straight to Your Inbox!

granthaven.com/st-marys-independent

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR HOUSE IS

Keep your dollars in Canada to support local businesses and strengthen communities.

CLASSIFIED ADS

WANTED TO BUY

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

WANTED

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

FOR SALE

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

CLEANING / PAINTING

House cleaning and painting available. Call or text Jacque at 519-274-5761

LAWN CUTTING

Local Lawn Cutting - Prefer larger lawns. Insured, reliable service, fair prices. Call 519-933-8636

LAWN ROLLING / AERATING

Local Lawn Rolling & Aerating - reliable service, fair prices. Call 519-933-8636

JUNK REMOVAL

Junk Removal - Garbage, Basements, Yards, Dump Runs Call Mike 519-276-7766

WANTED

Looking for student Gr. 5/6 (11-13 year old), yard work, cleaning garage, odd jobs. Parents can meet with me, \$10/hr cash to start and prove yourself, must be on time and want to work. Email frjkras@live.ca

WANTED

Looking for an older man or woman to live in our small but attractive apartment in exchange for light barn chores and some gardening. We live halfway between Lucan and St. Marys on # 7 Highway / Spring Farm. Email mary.annbrown46@gmail.com

RUN YOUR CLASSIFIED HERE FOR JUST \$10 PER WEEK

Call 519.284.0041 or email us at info@stmarysindependent.com

GARAGE SALE!

Saturday, April 25 at 8:00 am
97 King St S, St Marys

Household, Automotive, Marine and Trucking Items
New Fishing Tackle, Rods, Reels, Spinners, Poppers,
Crankbaits, Jerkbait and Ploppers
Starting from 3 for \$5 - Cash Only

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. A tittle
2. Sicily
3. Brazil
4. Hawaiian (ham and pineapple)
5. Backrub
6. The jaw
7. Honey
8. A bat
9. Mr. Potato Head
10. True

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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



Pop-up with a purpose
Curated Curiosities

POP-UP MARKET
May 8th 12:00 - 8:00pm
May 9th 10:30 - 6:00pm

Riverwalk Commons
84 Water Street St Mary

J.A.R. Collectibles
Jean Alice Rowcliffe AND "Formerly the Glass Shoppe" Stratford

A melange of gently loved clothing (some designer pieces) jewelry, accessories, antiques...including Royal household collection and antiques. Gifts for Mother's Day!

Donation to Make A Wish after the sale.

LOCAL MATTERS.




Remember that time when **Amazon** sponsored your church fundraiser?



Remember when **Facebook** bought a case of Girl Guide cookies to support your daughter?



Remember when **Google** provided free pizza to your child's soccer team when they won the championship?

Neither do we!

Local businesses live here. They play here. They invest here. They need our support, now more than ever.

News Media Canada
Medias d'Info Canada

CANADA'S NEWS MEDIA
CHAMPION
OF THE TRUTH.

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

ADVERTISE LOCAL

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

Canada

THE WEEK AHEAD



SPONSORED BY: McDonald's St. Marys
752 Queen St. E., St. Marys
Founding and Forever partner of Ronald McDonald House

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

St. Marys Public Library events - See Page 30

FRIDAY, APR 24

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- Piecemakers 2026 quilt show at the PRC - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., \$10 admission (cash only)
- A.N.A.F. meat draw - 6 p.m.
- SMCP presents opening night of "Boeing Boeing" at the Town Hall theatre - 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, APR 25

- Garage sale at 97 King Street S - 8 a.m., Cash only
- Thames River Clean Up, meet at Milt Dunnell Field - 9 a.m., BBQ at noon for participants
- Piecemakers 2026 quilt show at the PRC - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., \$10 admission (cash only)
- SMCP presents "Boeing Boeing" at the Town Hall theatre - 2 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw - 5 p.m.
- St. Marys Legion steak BBQ - 6 p.m., Tickets \$30, Purchase in advance
- Purple Hill Country Opry fish fry, "Fiddler on the Porch" and dance - 5 p.m., \$35 per person

SUNDAY, APR 26

- Thorndale Lions Club community breakfast at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre - 8:30-11:30 a.m., Adults \$15, Kids 6-10 \$5, Kids 5 and under Free
- A.N.A.F. Sunday Funday Darts - 12:45 p.m.
- SMCP presents "Boeing Boeing" at the Town Hall theatre - 2 p.m.

TUESDAY, APR 28

- Royal Canadian Legion buddy check coffee - 10 a.m. to Noon

- St. Marys Legion cribbage - Starts 7 p.m. sharp

THURSDAY, APR 30

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

Local News Lives Here

There was a time when small-town newspapers told the stories that mattered most: the people, the milestones, the challenges, and the triumphs of the community.

At Grant Haven Media, we're proud to carry on that tradition. Our newspapers are built around truly local content. Written for the community, about the community, by the community.

From council decisions to community events, local businesses to local achievements, we believe every town deserves a strong, independent voice.

Restoring Small-Town Journalism,
One Community at a Time.



Our plan to protect Ontario is speeding up approvals for mines

As Canada stares down economic uncertainty, we're ready with a plan to protect Ontario. We're building mines to unlock the critical minerals the world needs.

That's how we protect Ontario.



ontario.ca/ProtectOntario
Paid for by the Government of Ontario

