

St. Marys Independent

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Issue #1283

Thursday, October 9, 2025

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Thanks to Home Suite Home, St. Marys youth able to rent first home



A SOLUTION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)
Paige Noel, a 20-year-old St. Marys native, holds the key to her new affordable tiny home, courtesy of Home Suite Home, a Perth County based non-profit.

Local Community Food Centre announces transportation pilot for Nourish Equal Access Market

A bus service provided by St. Marys and Area Mobility Service will launch for marketgoers on Oct. 16

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As of Oct. 16, more St. Marys residents will be able to purchase fresh, local and affordable food from the twice-monthly Nourish Equal Access Market than ever before

thanks to the launch of a new transportation pilot in partnership with St. Marys and Area Mobility Service.

Thanks to grant funding from the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation, the Local Community Food Centre has partnered with

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

CONNOR LUCZKA

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With rental prices continuing to skyrocket, Paige Noel, a 20-year-old St. Marys native, was doubtful she would be able to stay in or near the town in which she grew up.

Now, thanks to Home Suite Home and the wider community, Noel is doubtful no more.

On Oct. 3, Noel picked up the keys to her brand-new tiny home from Vicky Devocht, executive director of Home Suite Home. The plot of land is 10 by 10 metres and the whole building is six by six, complete with a kitchenette, living room, bedroom and full bathroom – and a porch sitting area to boot.

As Noel said, it was a surreal moment.

“I could never imagine having a place like this for myself,” Noel said. “I could never do it on my own and I’m so grateful for everybody who’s put the work in to make this happen for me. ... I’m so happy that I get to stay in St Marys. ... A lot of people end up going to these bigger places, but even in bigger places, it doesn’t make it more affordable. Finding affordable housing like this is – it’s hard.”

Noel’s new home is the first tiny home built by the non-profit Home Suite Home. Construction finished just a little more than a year after the organization had announced its intention to build affordable tiny homes for the community across Perth County.

“The community stepped up,” Devocht said at the key-handing ceremony. “From day one, we said, ‘Let’s rally the community.’ ... And that’s what got the ball rolling so quickly. We were able to do this (in) just a little over a year.”

Devocht explained the reason this home was the first to be built was simple. The family that owned the property, Noel’s family, was the first to reach out.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 2

COLDWELL BANKER

Heidi James

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COMMUNITY

Thanks to Home Suite Home, St. Marys youth able to rent first home

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

The family explained their situation, which involves multiple families living under one roof and not enough bedrooms to house everyone. It was so cramped that Noel's mother was sleeping on the couch, having given up her bedroom for her family. Devocht said once they heard of the predicament, that Noel was working but still couldn't afford the high cost of an apartment, they knew it was a project Home Suite Home should get involved in.

They leveraged partnerships with various organizations, contractors and advisors such as Teahen Construction Ltd., Hive Design Co., Zelinka Priamo Ltd., Project Tiny Hope and the Ontario Building Officials Association, to permit and build the home, creating a 10-year lease agreement from the property owners for only a dollar. They rent the home to Noel for only \$500 a month, which recoups some of the cost it takes to keep the home.

"This isn't feasible without the community," Devocht said. "For example, it costs a lot for insurance. You think it's a tiny home and you wouldn't have to pay all this insurance, but you do. We don't make that much money, but, you know, it's helping somebody else. We feel through our fundraising initiatives and the community stepping up, doing

monthly donations, all that, it's working."

Devocht, along with general manager Jeff Murton, thanked their collaborators for making the home a reality.

"It's not about Jeff and I, really," Devocht said. "We are the facilitators of this all, yes, but it's the community. ... Home Suite Home is the community."

Noel's situation is not unlike other young people in the region and abroad. Brogan Aylward, the deputy mayor of St. Marys, is also in his 20s. He told those gathered for the key-handing ceremony the Town of St. Marys has worked with the province to make sure the housing crisis is being properly addressed locally, which means making it easier for creative solutions like tiny homes. He also highlighted that he is in the same boat as many of his peers.

"I'm the deputy mayor out of my mom's basement," Aylward said before addressing the tiny home he stood in front of. "I think it's a fantastic thing. ... I can't wait to see more of this in the future."

Devocht advised the community to visit Home Suite Home's website at home-suitehome.org for more information and for updates on upcoming projects. She noted that its next project will be an "agri-village" of four tiny homes on a rural property in the county. Construction is expected to start in the spring of 2026.



(CONNOR LUCZKA PHOTO)

Vicky Devocht and Jeff Murton of Home Suite Home stand in front of the newly built tiny home. The two thanked their collaborators, saying the organization rests upon the shoulders of the community.

The Stitch Market

Sale of donated fabrics, yarns & notions

St Marys United Church, 85 Church St S, St Marys, Ontario

October 24, 6pm - 8pm, October 25, 10am - 1pm



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- Wed. Oct 22, 10am - noon

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St. Marys Hospital Gift Shop, 267 Queen St. W

- Mon. to Fri., noon to 4pm

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St. Marys Lions Club looks to recruit younger members as average age rises

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

The St. Marys Lions Club is a familiar presence in the town but volunteers like Dawn Reynen are warning the club's future depends on bringing in new members to carry forward its community projects.

The St. Marys Lions Club is looking for new recruits to carry on its legacy as its membership ages. Without fresh faces stepping in, there are concerns the service club could eventually fade away.

"There is no pressure for someone to join; they can change their mind if they feel it's not a fit for them. We require an applicant to attend at least three meetings before the club considers approval for membership," said Reynen, a member of the St. Marys Lion Club.

"It's a mutual process. Once accepted, there are membership dues to be paid on an annual basis. A person not only becomes a member of their local club chapter, but also a Lions International member."

Reynen says Lions International is the largest global service club sitting at a current 1.38-million Lions members globally, with a goal to reach 1.5 million. Currently, the local St. Marys Club has 13 active members.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Become a member of the St. Marys Lions Club, supporting local events and initiatives throughout the year.

"If people join, they will be able to give back to the community and make it a better place for everyone. There's lots of learning opportunities as well, such as participating in international conventions," said Reynen.

"We don't push people to attend everything; they can attend when they

can. We're not really strict. People have lives and we understand. We do need as much help as possible to put on the bigger events."

Most of the St. Marys Lions Club's 2025 projects followed traditions from past years. In February, members volunteered with the Friendship Centre's

Meals on Wheels program, and, in March, sold Lions Easter bunnies and served breakfast at McCully Hill's maple syrup bush tour.

April saw the Lions host a community dinner at St. Marys United Church, while May brought the annual Toll Bridge fundraiser and vision screening for Grade 1 students at four area schools.

"Someone who's interested in joining has to be very interested in community service and possess good moral character, and people also have to be at least 18 years of age," said Reynen.

"There's a lot of fellowship with the lions, we have a lot of fun at the meetings. There are jokes and we have an auction at the end of a meeting. Someone will bring a gift and it will get auctioned off to raise funds for our community projects."

The first Lions Club established outside the U.S. was in Canada. The Lions Club in Windsor received its charter in 1920, with the St. Marys Lions Club officially chartered on Jan. 23, 1940.

For more information, visit www.lionsclubs.org or visit the St. Marys Lions Club website at e-clubhouse.org/sites/stmaryson/.

Those interested in becoming a member can also call 519-284-4479.

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EDITORIAL

Happy Thanksgiving, St. Marys!

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

Ah, Thanksgiving. Such a fun time with family and friends, amazing food, drinks. Don't forget about the annual watching of the famous WKRP clip of the falling turkeys by reporter Les Nessman.

Many families will sit around the table and say what they are thankful for. Some kids will roll their eyes; some older adults, misty eyed, will reflect on past years and the love of family. You will likely eat way too much, maybe go for a family walk, play some cards, watch sports on TV and start talking about Christmas.

More than ever, with the way the world is right now, maybe take a few extra minutes and really think about what you appreciate. Maybe say two things you are thankful for instead of rushing through to get to the food, though we all know that can be a challenge because it always smells so good.

The word is grateful. It can mean many things to different people. It could

be grateful for friends, grateful for family, grateful for health, grateful for food, grateful for that next paycheque. It doesn't matter what it means, but it is important to have something to be grateful for. It is hope and appreciation all mixed into one emotion.

Thanksgiving is a time that we express what we are blessed to have in our lives; it has the word thanks right in the name.

So, when you do go around the table and say what you are most grateful for, just remember that many people do not have that table to sit around, they don't have the food that you are going to eat or the people that you get to hug and share it with. That thought alone should make you more grateful than anything. If you don't do this tradition, what better time to start.

But also enjoy the time, have some laughs and make the best of a day that celebrates our pilgrimage and successful harvest because we all have lots to be thankful for.

When are turkeys the most grateful? The day after Thanksgiving.

Overheard at the Coffee Shop

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Finally October, My cobwebs and dust are now Halloween decorations!

Congrats to Spencer Seymour who will be calling an OHL game this week.

Have you heard something humorous around town that you think might be of interest to others? Either email them to us at info@stmarysindependent.com with the title "Overheard at The Coffee Shop", call 519-284-0041 or drop by the office to let us know!

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA



St. Marys Independent

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Bravo	Boo
We have 4 Bravos this week. 1) Bravo to the town and the volunteers for putting up the Legion Veteran banners! 2) Bravo to Max Muir and his family and volunteers for organizing the 4th Annual Car and Truck Show at Browns School house on Sept. 27. Also a BIG bravo to Lenny and Jim Conn and their volunteers for organizing food and drink for the show. Donations and the profits from the food and drink totalled \$1,380 that is being donated to Sakura House Hospice in memory of Bill (Crow) McKay. 3) Bravo to all the town businesses that have taken the time, energy and expense to clean, paint, add new signage and make their shops fresh and presentable this year. It makes me want to explore them and shop. 4) Bravo to Andrea and Andrew Hodges who reconnected me with a dear friend from Strathroy whom I had lost contact with since moving to St. Marys. My friend knew that my husband had passed away so had contacted Hodges Funeral Home. The Hodges took the time to contact me. Their kindness made my day.	We have 1 Boo this week. 1) Boo (again) to the owners of dogs who allow their animals to bark outside - sometimes for hours. As well as being cruel to your pet, there is also a town bylaw that prohibits this.
*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

"They're my people. They're the reason I'm here right now. I couldn't love them more. Mom, Dad, Cole, Chase - you're at college - I love you guys!"

- An emotional Trey Yesavage to his family after breaking a post season Toronto Blue Jays record striking out 11 players in five innings.

GRANT HAVEN MEDIA

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

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St. Marys Independent

Thoughts of the Week

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Fall Scrapathon held at Friendship Centre



(NANCY BICKELL PHOTO)

On Saturday, Sept. 27, the Friendship Centre held its Fall Scrapathon fundraiser. The day consisted of scrapbooking, great giveaways, a silent auction, a continental breakfast, lunch and dinner. The funds raised support St. Marys senior services. A wonderful day was enjoyed by all. Many thanks to all the volunteers who donated their time to make this day a huge success. Pictured in the back row from left are Sue Kittmer, Charlane Russel, Anita Landon, Donna Goldstraw, Laura Good and Lynda King. In the front row from left are Fay Telfer, Jane Cousineau, Annie McLellan, Ruth Robinson, Kendra McLellan, Colleen Bryant and Joan Doupe. The next Scrapathon will be held on April 11, 2026.

St. Marys Gives 2025

Won't You Be My Neighbour?

Petals and Foliage located at 1729 Perth Road 139 has kicked off their Giving Tuesday initiative while the weather is beautiful! Sales from their Farm Stand will be donated to the Salvation Army to go towards needed baby items. The Farm Stand is stocked Monday through Saturday with plants that are perfect for your home! Bring some green inside and raise some green for our community! "Won't You Be My Neighbour"....

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GIVING TUESDAY

DEC 2

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STONETOWN CRIER

The latest municipal news from the Town of St. Marys

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

October 5 - 11, 2025

Charge into Fire Safety™: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home. "Everyday devices in our homes, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, e-cigarettes, headphones, power tools, lawn equipment and toys, often rely on lithium-ion batteries. Almost anything that can be recharged uses this type of battery. If they are damaged or handled improperly, these batteries can overheat and may cause a fire or even explode," says St. Marys Fire Chief, Phil West.

RECREATION FAIR

October 17 | 5 - 7 PM | PRC

This event will feature booths and interactive demos from local sports groups, wellness centres, and senior programs to promote community engagement and healthy living. It's a free, drop-in event open to all.

townofstmarys.com/recreationfair

FALL FLUSHING

October 6 - 31, 2025

Fall water main and hydrant flushing will occur from October 6 – 31. You may observe some water discolouration during flushing. If you experience discolouration, run cold water until it becomes clear. If your water does not run clear after five minutes, turn off the tap and wait 30 minutes before trying again. You should refrain from doing laundry until any discolouration has cleared.

townofstmarys.com/flushing

FIRE OPEN HOUSE

Oct 11 | 10 AM - 2 PM

Come and stop by the St. Marys Fire Hall for; station tours, equipment demos, vehicle extraction demo (11 AM), inflatable fire safety house, fire prevention displays, Stratford Police and Perth County Paramedics, food trucks and Sparky the Fire Dog!

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Seniors of the Week



Our seniors of the week are Lucille and Reg McCurdy.

The couple just celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on Sept. 24. Lucille was born at Beth Haven Hospital in St. Marys and grew up on the family farm in Blanshard Township. She went to school in Kirkton and then DCVI. Reg was born at home in Blanshard Township and attended school in Woodham and then DCVI as well. They have two sons, two daughters-in-law and six grandchildren. They both enjoy working in their garden and flower beds and spending time with their family.

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

Sweet treats for a good cause!



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Leni and Scotti Hiscock were all smiles at their apple and cookie stand on Sunday, Oct. 5. They raised \$315 to be donated to the Town of St. Marys EarlyON Program. The program is free for kids from zero to six years old and provides play-based and interactive programs.

Weekend Quiz

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1. Where was Marco Polo born?
2. What is the name of Taylor Swift's newest album?
3. What is the maximum number of bitcoins that can exist?
4. How many US voting members of congress are there?
5. Who directed Casablanca(1942)?
6. Who is the Greek God of food?
7. What brightly colored monkey is the world's largest?
8. On what island was Jurassic Park located?
9. The Amazon river dolphins are what colour?
10. How many years did the "Great Plague of Milan" last?

By Jake Grant

This week's answers are found on pg. 35

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Volunteers combine community craft sale with local and global outreach efforts



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Members of the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary continue their longstanding tradition of fundraising and community support through events like the Stitch Market. Pictured are Diane O'Shea, treasurer of The Rotary Club of St. Marys, and Janis Fread, president of the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

Community members are invited to browse, buy and support the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary at The Stitch Market, where all items are by donation and proceeds will help fund hospital equipment and international projects.

The St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary and The Rotary Club of St. Marys have partnered to bring The Stitch Market to the community. The market will sell donated fabrics, notions and yarn to raise money for the hospital. The event will take place on Oct. 24 from 6-8 p.m. and Oct. 25 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The market will be facilitated by volunteers from both service clubs and will take place at the St. Marys United Church at 85 Church St. S.

"This is kind of a neat collaboration with the Memorial Hospital Auxiliary; because of the aging of service club members, there was an encouragement of collaborative ventures in St. Marys," said Diane O'Shea, treasurer for The Rotary Club of St. Marys. "This is a really good opportunity, but it also fulfills some areas like saving stuff from landfills."

The Rotary initiative to collaborate on this event was inspired by Threads of Hope, which showcases the struggles of grandmothers in Africa raising children affected by AIDS. Proceeds from the initiative were directed to support those grandmothers.

Currently, The Rotary Club of St. Marys is continuing the action of global aid through a new project in Kenya. Next

month, 14 Rotarians from St. Marys will travel to the region to help build washrooms and expand classrooms at a local school.

"In our Auxiliary, we are always raising funds; that's our mandate and the foundation raises large amounts of money for capital projects with the hospital," said Janis Fread, president at the St. Marys Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

"What we are hoping to contribute towards from the stitch market is to fund a wound vac machine for the hospital. When somebody has an open wound, the machine draws out fluid and reduces the infection. We are also funding to finish the refurbishment of the gazebo outside of the hospital."

People interested in donating can drop off items to be used in the market at the St. Marys United Church on Oct. 18, as well as at Hyggeligh Fabrics and the hospital gift shop from Monday to Friday between Oct. 1 and 18.

Fread joined the Auxiliary because she sees the hospital as a vital part of the community and wants to support it in any way possible. Many members have been involved for years, which helps sustain the group's ongoing fundraising efforts and contributions to the hospital's gift shop.

"One of the reasons why I became a Rotarian was to have opportunities to serve the community and my background is in home economics, so food and textiles have been a part of my life," said O'Shea. "I love the idea of repurposing as well as the whole environmental thrust is something that's really important; there's a great deal of satisfaction."

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Local Community Food Centre announces transportation pilot for Nourish Equal Access Market



(PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIE DOCKER-JOHNSON)

Representatives from the Local Community Food Centre, St. Marys and Area Mobility Service and the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation celebrate the upcoming launch of a new pilot program that will provide busing to and from the twice-monthly Nourish Equal Access Market at St. Marys United Church.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

St. Marys and Area Mobility service on a six-month pilot program that will see the town’s mobility bus drive town residents to and from the market at St. Marys United Church, which runs from 2-4 p.m. on the first and third Thursday of every month.

“The nourish market has been going

for quite a few years,” said Julie Docker-Johnson, a St. Marys resident and community connector with the Local Community Food Centre based in Stratford. “... Since I’m from St. Marys, I know the people (who go to the market) and I thought, ‘You know what, there’s a lot of people that I know that aren’t here and don’t have vehicles.’ Then, the more

we thought about it, we realized there’s a big barrier preventing people from being able to get there because, in the beauty of St. Marys, you’ve got to go up a hill (to get to the market).

“... Then, once you’ve gone to the market and you have your groceries, you have to go down a hill.”

While visiting local apartment and

seniors buildings in town through the Lunch with the Local outreach program, Docker-Johnson learned from residents that they know about the market, but have no way to get there. And while St. Marys and Area Mobility Services can bring clients to and from the market, it is a paid service and clients must book

CONTINUED TO PAGE 9



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Pick-Up Trip:		
Town Hall	1:45	1:45
329 Jones Street West	1:48	1:54
270 Queen Street West	1:55	2:01
30 Ann Street	2:04	2:10
Community Centre		
Nourish Market	2:15	2:25
Return Trip:		
Nourish Market		3:22
Town Hall	3:23	3:29
30 Ann Street	3:31	3:37
Community Centre		
270 Queen Street West	3:38	3:44
329 Jones Street West	3:45	3:51
Nourish Market	3:55	4:02

EAST SIDE SCHEDULE

Stop Location:	Arrives	Departs
Pick-Up Trip:		
5 Southvale Road	2:35	2:35
50 Stoneridge Blvd	2:38	2:44
728 Queen Street E	2:50	2:56
275 Water Street S	3:01	3:07
Town Hall	3:09	3:15
Nourish Market	3:16	3:22
Return Trip:		
Nourish Market		4:02
5 Southvale Road	4:06	4:12
50 Stoneridge Blvd	4:13	4:19
728 Queen Street E	4:24	4:30
275 Water Street S	4:36	4:42
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(IMAGE COURTESY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRE)

The bus schedule for the Nourish Equal Access Market shuttlebus.



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Local Community Food Centre announces transportation pilot for Nourish Equal Access Market

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

transportation in advance. The mobility bus is also intended to serve an older age demographic and people with mobility issues.

So, Docker-Johnson reached out to the mobility service to discuss the possibility of launching a transportation program open to everyone and the idea grew from there.

"I reached out to see if there was some way this could work, to have a bus route, basically, where it goes to a bunch of pick-up points (at the west end of town), drops off at the nourish market, then goes to other pickup points (at the east end), drops them off at the market, picks up the first group and takes them home, and then do it all again," Docker-Johnson said. "... So, we made kind of a route and then (mobility services staff) figured out how much it would cost to have a driver and a bus for that amount of time."

One of the mobility service's drivers, Tina Crossfield, stepped forward as the driver for the market shuttlebus after having previously driven mobility service clients to and from the market. Docker-Johnson said that experience gave her an appreciation for how important the market is to people from all walks of life, providing access to af-

fordable food, the opportunity to learn cooking skills and an opportunity to socialize.

Crossfield then lent her expertise as a driver by helping to develop and refine the proposed route, ensuring as many people as possible can access the service, and suggesting a volunteer be stationed on the bus to help residents on and off, especially when they're carrying heavy bags of groceries.

With those details in place, Docker-Johnson took the proposed six-month pilot project to the St. Marys Healthcare Foundation in hopes of getting some grant funding. The health-care foundation's board of directors saw the value in giving more people access to fresh, healthy and affordable food, and approved the grant request.

"The foundation is excited to contribute \$3,150 toward this six-month pilot," health-care foundation communication and fundraising coordinator Bernice De Decker said. "Ensuring everyone in our community has access to fresh, healthy food aligns perfectly with our mission to support the overall health and wellbeing of St. Marys. We're proud to help bring this important initiative launching Oct. 16."

As of Oct. 16, the nourish market shuttlebus will be available to anyone

who needs a ride to and from the market during regular operating hours. The bus route and schedule will be posted throughout town and Docker-Johnson said the town's community outreach worker is sharing information about the program with the people she serves so they know it's available.

"This is just making something the town and the people of St. Marys think

is important more accessible," she said. "When we do the Coldest Night of the Year walk in the winter, the nourish market and outreach worker are where the St. Marys money goes to, so we know the community knows the value of the market."

"Now, we can make it accessible to everybody in the community."

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Successful Sample Fest kicks off Towne and Country Cheese Shoppe's fifth anniversary celebrations

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Staff at Towne and Country Cheese Shoppe enjoyed a busy and successful Sample Fest on Oct. 4.

Kicking off its fifth business anniversary, Towne and Country Cheese Shoppe at 117 Queen St. E held a Sample Fest for its customers. Anyone coming in had a chance to try a variety of cheeses, dips and hot meals such as macaroni and cheese, shepherd's pie, pepperoni pizza and beef pot pie.

"People have been buying lots of the product that we make, which is our whole goal," said owner Jenn Stacey.

The present owners of the Towne and Country Cheese Shoppe opened its doors in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, it carries more than 100 different kinds of cheese, as well as regionally and globally made products. Stacey is thrilled her cheese shop and deli is celebrating five years in business.

"It's exciting because they say throughout the industry that after five years, life gets good so let's wait and see, but the first five years has been great," Stacey

said. "It's been a rollercoaster, but it's been a good ride."

Stacey added she's had to think outside the box for her business over the years, such as adding bottles of wine to cheese baskets.

"That's the joy of being an independent is we can explore whatever avenues we want," she said.

There will be some more initiatives and specials announced between Thanksgiving and Christmas, including some Stacey hopes to announce before the Downtown Merchants Open House from Nov. 21-23. After Thanksgiving, a lot of her time will be spent on the highly in-demand advent calendars.

"That's a big project. That's one we do every year, but I've had people asking me since August if we're doing it again," she said. "I've been getting emails and phone calls and 'Are you doing the advent calendar again this year,' even though I've been working on it since May, believe it or not, ordering the cheeses and everything."

More information about Towne and Country Cheese Shoppe can be found online by visiting thecheeseshoppe.ca.



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Jenn Stacey, owner of Towne and Country Cheese Shoppe, gave customers an opportunity to try plethora samples from cheeses to snacks to hot meals during Sample Fest on Oct. 4.

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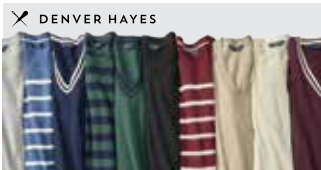


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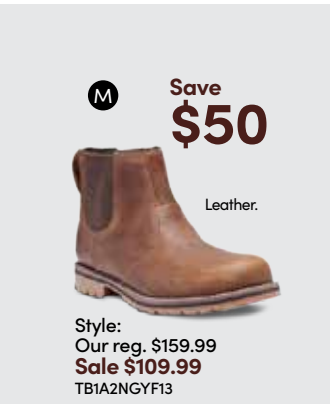
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St. Marys library board commits to fundraising for 14 Church St. N. revitalization

Library board strikes ad-hoc committee to participate in community capital campaign

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With plenty to gain from a revitalized 14 Church St. N for library patrons and staff, the St. Marys library board has committed to supporting a community capital campaign that could help raise the \$4 million needed to transform the former Mercury Theatre building into a multi-generational community hub.

At the library board's Oct. 2 meeting, members voted to establish an ad-hoc committee that would act as a liaison between the library board and a capital campaign team comprising members of the community and other stakeholders in this project.

"(The fundraising oversight ad-hoc committee) will probably consist of members who will actually be part of the overall capital campaign committee that is going to plan and approve the fundraising process," library CEO

Sarah Andrews said. "Their role on this ad-hoc committee is to keep the library board aware of what's happening and to bring to the library board anything that requires the library board to provide input, but it's not the fundraising committee itself.

"This is sort of the first step, I think, to having a bit of a membership that's going to then roll over and become part of a larger committee."

With space for current and enhanced library programming included in the designs for 14 Church St. N approved by council as part of an overall masterplan for the building's revitalization back in August, the library board, as well as the library's key fundraising group, Friends of the Library, are key stakeholders in this project.

To help shape a capital campaign to support the project and drum up support from the community, Andrews recommended the ad-hoc committee comprise

library board members, Friends of the Library representatives and town liaisons to craft an approach to fundraising for future growth opportunities for the library across the road at 14 Church St. N.

Library board chair Cole Atlin and members Barb Tuer, Colin Coburg, Sylvain Robichaud and Carol Robinson Todd were recommended for the ad-hoc committee, and Andrews said she would serve as staff support, providing information and guidance when needed.

Both of the board's council representatives, deputy mayor Brogan Aylward and Coun. Fern Pridham, opted not to put their names forward as members of this ad-hoc committee to avoid any kind of perception that St. Marys council is involved in planning or orchestrating the community fundraising effort.

"(The capital campaign team will) get input from staff and this (ad-hoc) committee as to what we envision (a

fundraising goal) to be – what does the library need, what do the spaces that we're going to use primarily across the street ... cost," Andrews said. "There's a cost per square foot and then we can factor in what equipment we'll need and what furniture we'll need, but those will be conversations at the capital campaign tables, I would imagine.

"We'll be informing them, and they will start to formulate the asks."

The library board's input through its ad-hoc committee will be just one piece of the puzzle as other stakeholder groups provide information on their needs and costs for 14 Church St. N. The capital campaign team will host its first official meeting at the St. Marys Public Library on Nov. 27 at 6:30 p.m. All community members interested in shaping the capital fundraising campaign are welcome to attend.

Application period now open for St. Marys Community Grant program

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT

Staff Contribution

The Town of St. Marys is encouraging local charitable, non-profit and volunteer organizations, sports groups, and service clubs to apply for Community Grant funding to support projects, events, or initiatives that benefit the St. Marys community.

Eligible applicants may receive up to \$5,000 in cash or \$2,000 in in-kind support. Community-grant-funded initiatives are open to the general public and

need to align with one or more pillars of the town's strategic plan: culture and recreation, balanced growth, economic development, or housing.

Past grant recipients have included the Kinsmen Club of St. Marys, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Teddy Bear Reunion, Giving Tuesday, the St. Marys Farmers' Market Association, the St. Marys Imagination Library, the St. Marys Horticultural Society and many others.

Interested applicants should review the

town's community grant policy and application form at www.townofstmarys.com/grants.

Applicants must be St. Marys based or provide services to the St. Marys community. External applicants will only be considered if they can clearly show that any funding received will have a direct, positive impact on St. Marys. All applicants are required to demonstrate financial need and proof that other funding sources have been considered.

The deadline to apply is Nov. 30.

Funding decisions will be made in early 2026 following the 2026 budget process. Community grant funds will be allocated based on local needs, strategic priorities and available budget. Previous grant recipients must submit all required documentation for their 2025 grants to be eligible for a 2026 grant.

Questions and/or completed applications should be directed to finance manager/deputy treasurer Spencer Steckley at 519-284-2340 ext. 238 or ssteckley@town.stmarys.on.ca.

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Local Salvation Army hosts Thanksgiving Food Drive at Foodland and Your Independent Grocer

EMILY STEWART

Independent Reporter

Residents who were grocery shopping on a beautiful, sunny Saturday were also giving back to the community.

The Salvation Army Stratford-St. Marys chapter was collecting food and monetary donations for their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive at the Foodland and Your Independent Grocer in St. Marys on Oct. 4.

"It's going alright considering that it's beautiful out and everyone's got things to do. We're still getting lots of support either through cash or the food," said Jennifer Morris, the local Salvation Army's community services manager.

The local Salvation Army serves about 70 families a month.

"All the food that is donated here in St. Marys stays in St. Marys," Morris said. "It supports the local families that are

finding it a little difficult to put all the food on the table right now."

Morris was grateful for all the donations that had come in so far that day.

"We appreciate every bit of support we get from the community," she said.

The St. Marys Firefighters Association was also helping out with the food drive for the first time at Foodland.

"We always like to get us out in the community to show our involvement in the community," said firefighter Mike McKone.

The Salvation Army Stratford-St. Marys will hold its Christmas Food Drive and Toy Drive later this year. Morris encourages anyone who is unable to donate items or money, but would like to support the cause, to volunteer.

For more information, call 519-284-2760 or email st.marys@salvationarmy.ca.



(EMILY STEWART PHOTO)

Raelyn Marshall, Jennifer Morris, Owen Wrigley and Mike McKone at Foodland for the Salvation Army's Thanksgiving Food Drive on Oct. 4.

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Multicultural Association of Perth Huron collecting sleeping bags and blankets for area homeless



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

The Multicultural Association of Perth Huron recently announced it will be collecting and distributing sleeping bags and blankets to unhoused residents of Stratford and St. Marys this winter. Pictured from left are association volunteer Jama Salat, co-op student Emre Koch, executive director Geza Wordofa, volunteer Mohammad Zoba, Stratford Police Chief Greg Skinner and volunteer Hira Dhariwal.

GALEN SIMMONS

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Multicultural Association of Perth Huron (MAPH) recently announced it has begun collecting sleeping bags, blankets and financial donations to help keep unhoused residents of Stratford and St. Marys warm over the winter in lieu of a permanent homeless shelter.

Following an unsuccessful bid by MAPH executive director and Stratford city Coun. Geza Wordofa to have the

City of Stratford establish a permanent homeless shelter for men either at the Stratford Rotary Complex or another location in the city, Wordofa announced on Oct. 3 that the multicultural association and its volunteers – many of whom are newcomers – would be making this small effort to support those at their most vulnerable as the weather turns colder.

“As a small first step, the multicultural association has started handing out blankets and sleeping bags,” Wordofa said. “This is only a stop-gap measure, but it



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Stratford Police Service Chief Greg Skinner speaks about the complexity of the issues driving homelessness in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth South at a press conference hosted by the Multicultural Association of Perth Huron Oct. 3.

is a start. The city is doing a wonderful job – (social) services, the housing department – and that’s very necessary. A homeless shelter would be a place to go to sleep. ... This is a human right because they have a right to live.”

Wordofa was joined for the Oct. 3 announcement at the association’s Stratford office in the Falstaff Family Centre by several of his volunteers, some of whom told local media they felt compelled to assist MAPH with its efforts to support local homeless after the com-

munity helped them resettle in Stratford and the surrounding area when they first arrived in Canada.

“They need help with food, with money, with sleeping bags, clothes,” said Mohammad Zoba, who immigrated to Canada with his family as refugees from Syria. “ ... The community helped us with everything when we came (to Canada). When I came, the church group sponsored us. After one year of help, I have my business now, my son is going

CONTINUED TO PAGE 15

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Multicultural Association of Perth Huron collecting sleeping bags and blankets for area homeless

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

to college to be a mechanic, my other son wants to start a design business. I love Canada. That's why I give back."

"I'm 16 years old right now; when I was about a year-and-a-half, my parents came to Canada to start a new life," added Emre Koch, a Stratford District Secondary School co-op student working with MAPH who immigrated to Canada with his family from Turkey. "I was taken in by my aunt to live with her, so without her, I would have been homeless for a little while until my parents could get on their feet. I just want to say it's a really awful thing, a really bad thing. People will sometimes judge them for no reason, but no one really knows what is going on with them. ... I think it would be good just to help out in whatever way you can, even if it's just a couple dollars. Obviously, with the sleeping bags, that would be nice too. Just give whatever you can; show appreciation for these people."

Stratford Police Chief Greg Skinner was also in attendance for the multicultural association's announcement, speaking at length about the complexity involved in addressing each of the barriers a person might be facing in securing and retaining permanent housing. Whether those barriers are mental health, addictions or difficulty finding



(GALEN SIMMONS PHOTO)

Multicultural Association of Perth Huron executive director and Stratford city Coun. Geza Wordofa announced the multicultural association will be collecting and distributing sleeping bags and blankets to unhoused residents of Stratford and St. Marys this winter.

stable employment, he said the Stratford Police Service's role is not to arrest those experiencing homelessness locally, but to support the local social-services agencies that work every day to help the community's most vulnerable.

"We have to find solutions for people to be housed long term, not just on an

emergency basis," Skinner said. "... I recognize that the politicians and social services and Canadian Mental Health Association are making their best efforts to do what they can, and we're coming together to work as a team, but these are very complex issues and, as a result, they are going to take a lot of time and

effort and resources to be able to find the solutions that help the most people who are the most vulnerable.

"So, I applaud what this group is doing. People come to this country and they want to have new beginnings, they want to be safe and secure, they want to be able to provide for themselves and their families, they want to be able to start a new life, and those are all good things. You've got great examples here today of people who are doing that, and I am proud to be part of a country that embraces people from other countries ... to come here and start again, to be able to contribute to Canada and become Canadian."

Wordofa said MAPH will distribute sleeping bags and blankets as needed, either based on requests made directly to MAPH by calling 1-888-308-6274 or emailing info@maph.ca, or through those agencies that work on the front-lines of the housing crisis like the Stratford Police Service, Stratford social services and other local service providers.

To support this initiative, MAPH is accepting monetary donations in the form of e-transfer, cheque, or bank draft, as well as donations of new sleeping bags and blankets. To arrange a donation, email info@maph.ca. Those who donate will be eligible for a charitable tax receipt.

Happy Thanksgiving!



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ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

The pages of Dan Needles' *Finding Larkspur* come to life in St. Marys this month as The Satin Ribbon Showcase invites the community to show off their artisan skills, culminating in a library exhibit ahead of an author talk on Oct. 25.

Inspired by the Perth County Reads title of the year, *Finding Larkspur* by Dan Needles, the St. Marys Public Library presents The Satin Ribbon Showcase where artisans of all ages and skill levels show off their handmade creations, including sewing, arts and crafts, preserves, baked goods and more.

"It's competitive but it's mostly for exercise and creativity; it's all about the community coming together and participating as one," said Caroline Rabideau, library services coordinator. "The ribbons will be showcased at the library in a creative way, there will be little prizes and this is an all-ages event."

The Satin Ribbon Showcase is welcoming submissions from artisans of all ages and skill levels, with a variety of categories designed to inspire creativity.

For the youngest participants, preschoolers aged zero to five can submit beaded bracelets, farm-themed colouring pages, leaf rubbings, or pinecone animals. Youth aged six to nine are encouraged to try their hand at beaded necklaces, bookmarks, LEGO barns,



(ALEX HUNT PHOTO)

The Satin Ribbon Showcase will make its debut at the St. Marys Public Library. Pictured is Caroline Rabideau, library services coordinator at the St. Marys Public Library.

painted rocks, or Rice Krispie creations.

"I'm looking forward to seeing all the works and finding out what people are contributing to the event. I'm looking forward to seeing all the levels of creativity within the different categories," said Rabideau. "We give participants

some criteria and guidelines to follow but they can make a craft however they want. This is an opportunity for them to showcase their talent."

Teens between 10 and 15 have the opportunity to showcase beaded necklaces, bird feeders, clay sculptures,

wearable knit items, or baked cookies. Teens and adults 16 and older can enter more advanced projects, including beaded earrings, embroidery, quilt squares, small paintings, 3D crocheted animals, as well as baked goods such as cookies, cornbread, fruit preserves, fruit tarts and muffins.

Judges will evaluate entries based on the level of artistic execution and how well contestants interpret the novel, *Finding Larkspur*. Creativity and passion are among the most important criteria, with awards going to those who demonstrate exceptional skill and originality. As a new contest, organizers are eager to see this year's submissions and are already looking ahead to improvements for future editions.

"We are a small town and we don't have our own fall fair, so this is kind of like a smaller scale. Dan (Needles) will be giving a talk about the book that he wrote," said Rabideau. "It's all about community. People will be connecting with the book through the event, and we will be doing our own fall fair."

Entries can be dropped off at the library on Oct. 14 and 15. The submissions will be on display upstairs on Oct. 17 and 18, where visitors can view all entries and see which creations have been awarded a Satin Ribbon.

Needles himself will host his author's talk at 15 Church St. N on Oct. 25. at 2 p.m.



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St. Marys Independent SPORTS

Inconsistency leads Lincs to split back-to-back interconference games



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

Blake Elzinga backhands home a shorthanded goal in the St. Marys Lincolns' 4-2 win over the Caledon Bombers on Oct. 3, his first goal of the season.

SPENCER SEYMOUR

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Lincolns have showed they can play some elite hockey, on par with any team in the Greater Ontario Hockey League (GOHL). However, they haven't yet displayed the consistency that separates the good teams and the great teams, and perhaps no two games summarize that missing consistency than their most recent back-to-back interconference games.

On Oct. 2, the Lincolns cratered in the second period when they visited the St. Catharines Falcons, ultimately losing 4-1. Head coach Jeff Bradley told the Independent his team's inability to convert on their opportunities ended up biting the team in a big way.

"I actually liked our first period quite a bit," said Bradley. "I thought they were opportunistic when we weren't. We had plenty of scoring chances and good opportunities, but we just didn't capitalize. And then, when you're down 2-0 in the second, you're one goal away from the game being very close to ending, and unfortunately, that's what happened. I thought we showed some good effort in the third, and we showed we weren't quitting, so I appreciated our effort in the third, but we can't have a period like the second and expect to win."

Despite the bench boss being satisfied with how his team performed in the first 20 minutes, the Lincolns found themselves down by two goals at the end of one period, with Calvin Petrovsky and Treyson Dewar scoring for St. Catharines.

Just over two-and-a-half minutes into the second, Liam Fisher found the back of the net for the Falcons. Fisher's goal

was the only goal of the period, thanks largely to the efforts of goaltender Brogan Colquhoun, who single-handedly prevented the game from becoming a total rout as St. Catharines dominated the Lincolns for the entire period.

According to Bradley, the Lincolns didn't play with the same desire as the Falcons.

"It's hard to pinpoint exactly what went wrong, but I think it just came down to the fact that the other team came out wanting it more than we did," Bradley said. "When you're playing a good team that wants it more than you do, and when you spot a really good team two goals, you're not going to win."

In the third, with the lineup blender getting put to use by the Lincolns, St. Marys played their best hockey of the night, outshooting the Falcons 14-4 in the final frame. They got on the board with a goal from Ethan Weir with three minutes and 31 seconds left on the clock, but approximately a minute later, Sam Lockyer iced the game with an empty netter.

Blake Elzinga and Devun Colebrook earned the assists on Weir's goal. Colebrook, along with Chase McDougall, were among the players who Bradley said earned more playing time when the coaching staff reconfigured the line combinations.

"We're just trying to reward guys with ice time based on their play," Bradley said. "So, you saw guys like Devun (Colebrook) and Chase (McDougall) get some extra ice time and move up in our lineup, and they earned those opportunities."

Lincs bounce back against struggling Bombers

One night after their disappointing



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)

St. Marys Lincolns' goalie Vaughn Barr as he speaks to 519 Sports following his first career GOHL win on Oct. 3, a 4-2 victory against the Caledon Bombers.

trip to St. Catharines, the Lincolns returned home and doubled up the fledgling Caledon Bombers by a score of 4-2.

Bradley noted he was happy with the team's overall compete level.

"I felt like we played hard, and it doesn't matter who we play; we want to have the mindset of going out and playing hard. When you do that, a lot of good things happen. I thought we played very well and it would have been nice to score a couple more goals, but I don't think we gave them much chance to win."

With exactly two minutes left in the opening period, Jacob Montesi one-timed home a pass from Ryan Hodgkinson to open the scoring. Declan Ready also earned an assist.

Just 23 seconds into the second stanza, a setup pass by Voortman was slammed into the Bombers' net by a heavy one-time blast by Hodgkinson, his first goal since rejoining the Lincs. Less than two-and-a-half minutes later, Colebrook made it three straight games with a point when he buried his second goal of the year. Once again, Colebrook was a highlight for the Lincolns' head coach.

"Devun (Colebrook) was really good," Bradley said. "He just keeps getting in our good books and earning more opportunities and ice time. He's had a slow and steady progression through this first part of the season. He competes really hard, he's physical and he's shown he has some skill as well."

Micah Kraayenbrink stopped the bleeding for the Bombers with 23 seconds left in the second, but just over two minutes into the third, Elzinga scored on a shorthanded breakaway for his first goal of the year. A little over a minute later, Jason Kovalev potted a

shorthanded tally for Caledon, but the Bombers never got any closer, with the Lincolns hanging on for a 4-2 victory.

Hometown 16-year-old netminder Vaughn Barr picked up his first GOHL win in the game, with Bradley mentioning Barr's first career victory was a source of much-needed positivity.

"It's the first of many for Vaughn (Barr), and we're obviously happy for him," said Bradley. "Hopefully, he can carry that on and build on it. He's given us some great minutes and it's nice to see him finally get rewarded. When we're not winning as many games as we'd like, you get starved for something to cheer for, and seeing a young, local kid get that moment was great for him and great for the whole team."

With three games in four days coming up for the Lincolns, including a trip to LaSalle on Oct. 8 followed by back-to-back games against London on Oct. 10 followed by a visit to Strathroy on Oct. 11, Bradley wants to see the team's compete level find some consistency, and as a result, find more offence.

"It would just be nice to start scoring some more goals," Bradley said. "The work ethic is there, but we've got to start putting the puck in the net. It's obviously a tough thing to do, and I think we're doing a lot of good things to put us in a position to score. I think we're putting up a lot of shots and getting a lot of good opportunities, but we just have to find a way to start capitalizing on our chances. We've got three tough games to look forward to and we just want to make sure we're competing every night as hard as we can. Hopefully, in doing that, we start putting some pucks into the net."

DCVI golf team wins Huron-Perth tournament

TURNER ROTH

Independent Sports Reporter

Strong scores by four senior boys helped the DCVI golf team secure the Huron-Perth championship.

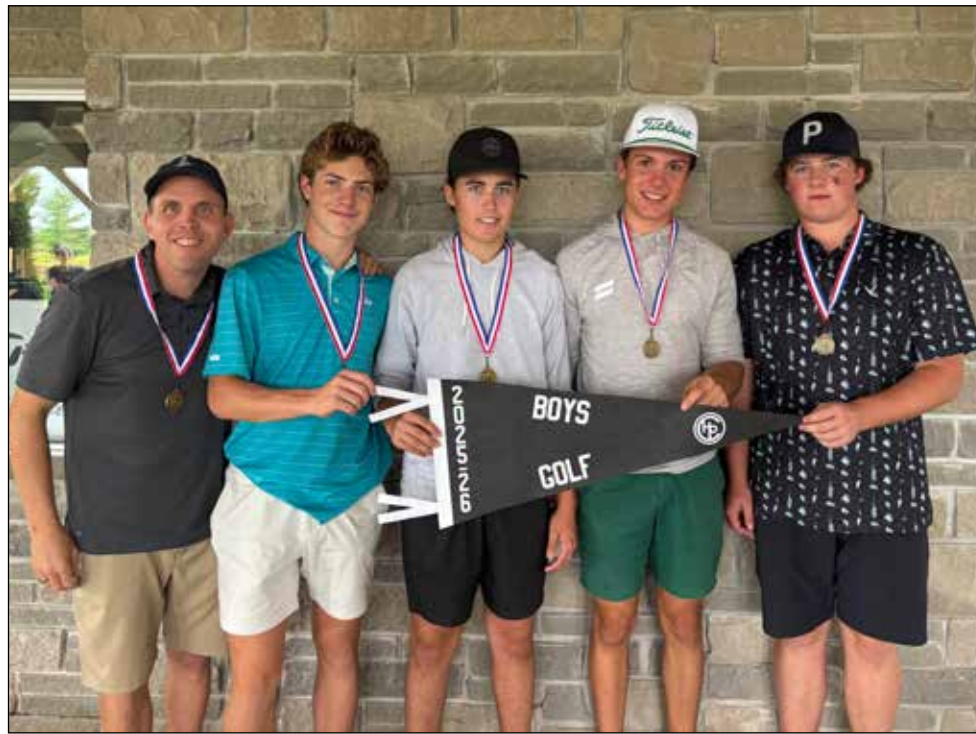
They battled through adverse weather conditions, with one of them earning a spot at OFSAA. DCVI golf coach Chris Marcou said the level of success for his golfers was uncommon.

"All four players played at the top of their game," Marcou said. "The key to winning Huron-Perth is to have at least three golfers post a good score, and we did that. The fact that we had four low scores was very impressive. It's very rare to have all four players post such low scores. I think they all played smart and made limited mistakes on the course."

Nathan Wolfkamp led the Salukis with a score of 72. Wolfkamp said his play from the tees led to his great result.

"I was hitting my driver fantastic, fairway after fairway and green after green," said Wolfkamp. "The only thing holding me back was my putting, but I still ended up with five birdies."

Both Simon Greig and Donovan McGregor posted scores of 77, and both had key holes they cited from the tournament.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right are Chris Marcou, Myles Clinton, Simon Greig, Nathan Wolfkamp and Donovan McGregor. Clinton, Greig, McGregor and Wolfkamp were part of the Huron-Perth Championship-winning St. Marys DCVI golf team, coached by Marcou.

nament.

"After not being able to hit any balls before the round, I didn't know what to

expect," Greig said. "But after my approach shot on hole five that I hit the pin with, I knew the round was going to

be a special one."

"I hit a par three on hole number two," McGregor told the Independent. "I also hit a seven iron off the tee to inside 10 feet and ended up putting for birdie."

Clinton rounded out a great showing from the team, with an 82 score, and noted he was faring well on the tees and on the green.

"I was putting very well and driving very well," Clinton proclaimed. "I made a Birdie on hole 12. I drove it into the fairway bunker, had a six-iron shot short of the green. I used my sand wedge to get over a bunker, and then I had a tap-in from three feet with my putter."

With the combination of the four strong results, the Salukis would have won without the best of their four scores.

"The Huron-Perth championship is decided using each team's three best scores from their four players. We had such a well-rounded showing that we would have won the championship using any three of our four scores. Although Nathan's fantastic round of even par 72 was very impressive, the team would have still won the tournament without his score," Marcou said.

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U18 A Boys win gold at Rock Preseason Showdown

TURNER ROTH

Independent Sports Reporter

The St. Marys Cement U18 A Boys St. Marys Rock triumphed at the Rock Preseason Showdown Sept. 26-28.

The Rock started off their season strong with three wins and one loss in round-robin play, as they posted the most goals by any team in the tournament with an impressive 19 goals in four games. Assistant coach Kyle Spence credited the team's preparation as key to their early success.

"We were excited to get back on the ice playing games, as we had three weeks of practice before we could play a game as a team together," said Spence. "It got us ready to go and it helped build up the excitement amongst the guys, and we felt ready to go."

In the semi-final, the Rock faced the Strathroy Junior Jets. It didn't start well for the hometown team, as Strathroy took an early two-goal lead after the first period.

Spence praised the group's ability to get their minds back in the game.

"We were able to bounce back after a rough first period using our speed and skill," Spence said. "We were relentless, with the determination and the will to win, we just never let back. They just went back to doing the little things, the simple things, they kept it easy and put it all together to come back."

With renewed determination, the Rock scored five unanswered goals in the second period and every time the horn sounded, it was a different name. On the powerplay, Ethan Jarmuth started the run of goals, and two minutes later, Evan Pym tied it up at two apiece. A goal by Evan Ballantyne secured the lead for St. Marys, followed by goals by Jared Ballantyne and Nic Brintnell, leading the Rock to take a 5-2 win and advance on to the finals.

The finals were a much lower-scoring affair as the Rock played its toughest opponent yet in the New Hamburg Junior Firebirds. The two teams had the exact same record going into the final game.

"They played well from start to finish against New



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

The St. Marys Cement U18 A Boys St. Marys Rock won the gold medal at the Rock Preseason Showdown Sept. 26-28. Pictured sitting in the front, from left to right, are Luke Binning and Reid Taylor. In the kneeling row, from left, are trainer Eric Burford, Koltan McAllister, Zach Larmer, Simon Taylor, Jared Ballantyne, Ethan Henderson, Finn Wright and Ethan Jarmuth. In the standing row, from left, are trainer Mason Boonstra, assistant coach Lucas Spence, Eli Rovillos, Ben Ewing, Hayden Wright, Nic Brintnell, Sam Johnson, Evan Ballantyne, Evan Pym, Danny Switzer, head coach Gord Cookson and assistant coach Kyle Spence.

Hamburg," Spence told the Independent. "I think we just played solid and buried our chances when we got them. We didn't have a whole lot, but when chances came about, we put them in the back of the net."

The game started off with an Evan Ballantyne goal late in the first period, and as the game started with a Ballantyne goal, it also finished with one. New Ham-

burg tied it up on a powerplay halfway through the third period, but two minutes later, Jared Ballantyne scored on a man advantage for St. Marys, giving them a crucial one-goal lead. They hung on to it for the rest of the game, winning 2-1 over the Firebirds and claiming the tournament's top prize.

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MINOR SPORTS **SCRAPBOOK**



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
Everett Douglas kicks the puck out with a pad save during the U10 A Boys St. Marys Rock game last Wednesday.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
Cohen Hammond releases a shot from the point during last Saturday's U13 LL Boys Red St. Marys Rock game.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
Evan Wolfkamp scores a wrap-around goal during the U15 A Boys St. Marys Rock game last Wednesday.



(TURNER ROTH PHOTO)
Alex Peachey launches the puck from the blueline during last Saturday's U15 LL Boys St. Marys Rock game.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Olivia Davis rips a wrist shot from the faceoff dot during the U15 B Girls St. Marys Rock game this past Sunday.



(SPENCER SEYMOUR PHOTO)
Jordyn Schellenberger loads up a quick shot on goal during this past Sunday's U14 A St. Marys Snipers game.

South Perth Centennial School to host second-annual Pumpkin Walk



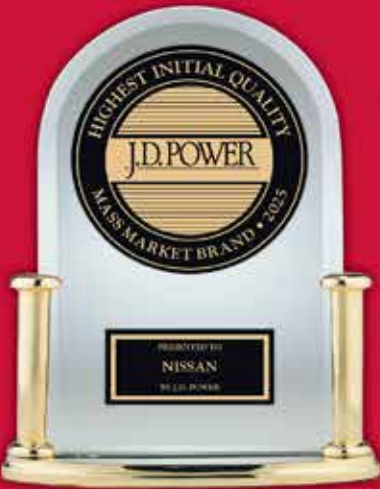
Last year’s Pumpkin Walk at South Perth Centennial School was a big success with a lot of creative pumpkin designs. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS)

WENDY LAMOND
Independent Reporter

On Oct. 29, the students of South Perth Centennial School are inviting the community to join them at the school as they showcase their pumpkin-carving skills. Every year, the students take part in carving or some other Halloween activity.

Because they did such a great job of this, members of the parent council thought it would be a great idea to show the hard work put into this and, last year, started a Pumpkin Walk for the community. Last year, there was nearly 200 pumpkins, a snack booth and some outdoor games. Families can stroll through the arboretum and vote for their favourite carv-

ings. There are several categories, with one being a home carving so all ages and community members can participate. “We had amazing support from the families and businesses in the area, providing items for prizes, and snacks to sell at the event,” said parent council representative Krystal Leppington. There was a great turnout last year with prizes for the top three in each class and also a door prize. The event will go from 6-8 p.m. and is open to the public for a small admission fee. Students, with the support of their families and teachers, look forward to sharing their creative carving skills with the public.



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STRATFORD NISSAN



Halloween decorations creeping up all over St. Marys



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Halloween is alive and well on Glass Street West. There was even a sign that says, Take a Picture, I dare you. I took my chances



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

On Maxwell Street, as in past years, you will find a huge Frankenstein, many pumpkins and skeletons galore.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

On Water Street North you will find skeletons climbing a rock wall and some that didn't quite make it.



(WENDY LAMOND PHOTO)

Be sure to check out this home on Jones Street East especially at night. Many of these ghouls have a scare factor that include movement, flashing eyes and heads that spin around.

Holiday hours for town facilities – Thanksgiving (Oct. 13)

ST. MARYS INDEPENDENT
Staff Contribution

The following hours will be in effect for Town of St. Marys facilities for the Thanksgiving holiday (Monday, Oct. 13).
Closed:
- Administrative offices (town hall and

municipal operations centre)
- Adult Learning
- Before and After School Program
- Child Care Centre
- EarlyON Centre
- Fire station
- Friendship Centre
- Landfill
- Library

- Mobility services offices (Rides must be booked by 3 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 9)
- Museum and archives
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Funding needed to bolster art education at St. Marys Station Gallery

ALEX HUNT

Independent Reporter

St. Marys Station Gallery is calling on the community for support as it expands its art education programs, seeking funding to hire instructors and make its growing activities more sustainable.

“I need funding specifically to help fund what’s going on here for a couple of reasons, and one of them being so I can hire a couple of instructors instead of me doing all the instruction, which is currently happening, so I can focus on some other things,” said Duncan MacDonald, curator/director at St. Marys Station Gallery.

“Right now, I’m running everything here including the gallery curating, directing, teaching and planning. I really enjoy it but there’s a need for fundraising so I can get some people in here and pay them to help out with the operations.”

MacDonald said the gallery’s education programs are highly specialized, and delivering them effectively requires the right instructors. MacDonald added he has ideas for a few qualified candidates but needs funding to bring them on board. In June, he reached out to the Rotary Club of St. Marys for support in exploring naming rights, a donation model in which an organization’s name is attached to the program in recognition of their contribution.

“The gallery does have sponsors that help us out, but we are just needing to bolster things right now. I’ve been searching around and did a bunch of grant writ-

ing and funding institutions in the past,” said MacDonald. “We need to find a way to work with the town to implement a way that people can donate and get tax receipts from them.”

“This place has changed a lot since I showed up; the amount of activity that happens here is like three or four times more than it was two or three months ago.”

MacDonald led programming on his own all throughout the summer for younger children in the mornings, older youth in the afternoons, and sometimes adults in the evenings on top of curating exhibitions. To make the operation more sustainable, he is focusing on securing funding that would provide additional support and reduce reliance solely on volunteers.

MacDonald adds that he’s looking for additional volunteers to support the gallery. Those interested can contact the gallery directly, and prior experience is not required, as he provides coaching and guidance.

Volunteers who enjoy engaging with the community and visitors are particularly valued, whether it’s to help with greeting guests, discussing the artwork, or assisting during gallery events and meetings.

“If you’re in the arts, you’re having to work creatively and also in instantly indifferent ways, but at the same time, I’m doing a bunch of work that’s not really getting paid for,” said MacDonald.

“I think a lot of arts organizations work in a way that’s not sustainable, but they make it work. It’s just a matter of getting paid for the work. That’s the thing that we need to focus on.”



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

It was a busy summer at St. Marys Station Gallery as curator Duncan Macdonald led art programs and gallery exhibitions.

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Thorndale News

A section within the
St. Marys Independent



Thorndale community in mourning after teen dies in collision

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

The DeClark family of Thorndale is mourning the heartbreaking loss of Gavin DeClark, a 17-year-old whose life was tragically cut short in a collision on Medway Road Sept. 29.

Emergency crews responded shortly after 1 p.m. to the crash site between Adelaide Street North and Richmond Street, just east of Medway High School in Arva. Middlesex OPP reported an SUV traveling eastbound crossed the centre line and collided with a westbound grain truck. The driver of the truck sustained minor injuries and was treated at the scene.

Gavin DeClark, a beloved son of Blake and Lynndsay DeClark, big brother to sister Chyler, friends to many and student at Medway High School, lived in Thorndale with his family. According to his obituary, he was known for his kind heart and caring nature, and he always put others before himself. He had a great sense of humour and found joy in fishing, reading, listening to music and playing video games with his friends. He brought warmth and compassion to every life he touched.

In the days following his death, the outpouring of love for Gavin DeClark from the Thorndale and Medway High School communities has been overwhelming. Hundreds gathered on the football field at Medway High School for a candlelight vigil to honour his memory.

Friends, classmates, the school community and neighbours stood shoulder to shoulder, holding candles and sharing stories that painted a vivid picture of a young man who made the world brighter simply by being in it.

Through his tears, Gavin DeClark's father, Blake DeClark, addressed the crowd with grace and gratitude, thanking everyone for their support. He encouraged them to support each in their grief and to keep his son's spirit alive by remembering the joy he brought into their lives.

"Remember him so he will not be forgotten," Blake DeClark said.

As the community continues to grapple with the loss, Gavin DeClark's legacy lives on in the laughter he shared, the kindness he showed and the love he inspired. Thorndale stands united with the DeClark family in grief and in love.



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Seventeen-year-old Gavin DeClark of Thorndale was killed in a collision near Medway High School in Arva on Sept. 29.

Thames Centre Fire Department hosts recruitment open house in Thorndale

NANCY ABRA

Independent Reporter

Over two dozen interested candidates attended the Thames Centre recruitment open house held at the Thorndale fire station recently.

There were several demonstration stations set up with the various tools and equipment typically used by the firefighters such as their personal protective equipment (PPE), the fire department drone, hydraulic auto extrication equipment, forcible entry tools, medical equipment, hoses and nozzles, among

others.

This event also gave applicants a chance to talk with the firefighters to gain an insight into their jobs.

Afterwards, everyone assembled in the Thorndale station training room for a half-hour presentation on the recruitment process and the finer details about being a volunteer firefighter in Thames Centre.

Thames Centre Fire Chief Nick Dorken reported that he and the district chiefs will have some excellent candidates to choose from this year.



(NANCY ABRA PHOTO)

Pictured at right, the Thames Centre Fire Department recently hosted a recruitment open house at the Thorndale station.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT GRANTHAVEN.COM

COLUMNS

UKRAINIAN CORNER: The silent language of coffee – how rituals unite and recipes divide

ALONA VASYLIEVA

Independent Columnist

Coffee. It's more than a drink, it's a universal symbol of warmth, connection and comfort.

This silent language is spoken in cozy cafés across continents. As a Ukrainian newly immersed in Canada's dynamic coffee culture, I'm captivated by how much we share in our love for the brew, and yet, how different our traditions are. The ritual of meeting friends at a café is a beautiful constant, cherished internationally. But step into a Canadian coffee shop versus a Ukrainian one, and you'll instantly see that the coffees we adore are often worlds apart!

When I first arrived in Canada, I thought I was hallucinating. I ordered a "regular" coffee, and they handed me something that looked less like a cup and more like a small, insulated bucket. I genuinely wondered if it came with a tiny oar. I suspect Canadian coffee sizes are measured in metric litres, then immediately doubled.

But wait, there's more! This impressive volume is then promptly filled with what appears to be half an Arctic glacier. Iced coffee, even when it's snowing outside, is a distinctly North American phenomenon. We're talking maximum caffeine payload delivered at just above the freezing point – a true commitment to the cold-brew cause.

Now, let's talk ingredients. Back home, my coffee order is simple: maybe a dash of milk, no sugar. It's about the pure, unadulterated essence of the bean.

Then, I came here. When I see a coffee-based beverage on a Canadian menu that requires more than three ingredients, I don't order it; I salute it. These drinks are architectural marvels, often involving enough heavy cream, flavoured syrups and exotic sprinkles to qualify as a small dessert, or perhaps a balanced lunch.

Take, for instance, the pumpkin-spice latte. I initially liked the idea of trying a fall festive drink, but when I found out that one cup can contain 50 grams of sugar, I was impressed, to say the least. That's 12 spoons of sugar! I still can't believe it. A huge sugar spike hits you in the middle of that cup, inevitably leaving you low in energy for the rest of



(CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Beyond the size and sugar shock, an immigrant reflects on how different coffee rituals – from family-run shops to the radical act of slowing down – reveal the heart of two distinct cultures.

your day. Our Ukrainian approach tends to be simpler, letting the pure coffee flavour shine through, perhaps enhanced by milk foam.

Ah, the "to-go" cup. For a time in Ukraine, grabbing your coffee in a branded cup with a jaunty little straw was the height of cosmopolitan chic – a tangible piece of North American cool.

And while the convenience is undeniable, I've had a revelation: This "on-the-go" philosophy has seeped into our very souls, creating a generation of people who feel a pang of guilt if they are only doing one thing at a time. Sitting quietly in a café to just enjoy a hot drink? That's for people who aren't productive enough!

My friends, my previous belief that my superhuman ability to check emails, eat breakfast and watch a documentary simultaneously was my ultimate superpower? It was a lie. I was just very busy being bad at three things at once. Now, I'm learning the radical, blissful act of enjoying one thing, like a coffee, without the nagging urge to check my phone. Try it; it's terrifyingly relaxing.

In Ukraine, a coffee shop often morphs. By day, it's a caffeine hub; by night, it's a cozy spot for a glass of wine

or a light dinner. It's a business chameleon. So, my Ukrainian friends and I were genuinely baffled by the great Canadian mystery: Why do so many coffee shops close in the mid-afternoon? Do Canadians simply lose the ability to need coffee after 4 p.m.? Is there a national curfew for cream and sugar?

The answer, it seems, is a sensible, cold-blooded financial one: hourly wages. In the cold light of Canadian economics, it simply doesn't pay to keep the lights on and the staff paid if the post-lunch rush is nonexistent. It's a pragmatic approach, even if it leaves us foreigners clutching our empty mugs after 5 p.m., wondering where to get our espresso fix.

However, the economic reality doesn't diminish the genuine warmth found in the local spots.

I absolutely love the family-run coffee shops I've discovered since arriving in Canada!

As a newcomer, you quickly notice that these places have such a special, cozy vibe. It's not just a business; it genuinely feels like you're being welcomed into someone's home for a visit. That warmth and personal touch is something I really appreciate – it's very

comforting and helps you feel settled.

However, the longer you spend here, the more you realize how incredibly hard it must be to run one, especially with multiple generations involved. On the one hand, it's amazing they're working so hard for their family, and they don't have the stress of constantly hiring new staff. You see the pride in their work every day.

But I've learned this setup often comes with a major, hidden challenge: money. While the business may be busy, the family members usually don't have a specific, reliable paycheck every month. Everything goes back into the shop first. It must be so frustrating not to be able to plan your life or your expenses with any certainty. It makes me admire them even more – that commitment to their family and the shop is a huge sacrifice.

Now let's talk about coffee beans. In Canada, it seems the deeper the roast, the better. It's an appreciation for the bold, the dark, the "I could practically chew this" flavour. Ukrainians, on the other hand, often prefer the lighter, more nuanced notes of a medium or light roast. I even noticed one brand we used to love back home – a light roast there – labeled "dark roast" here. It appears the beans have been "Canadianized" for the market!

Finally, I must apologize to the decaffeinated drinkers of the world. I used to be a skeptic. "What is the point?" I'd scoff, nursing my espresso. But alas, the years, or perhaps the sheer volume of Canadian-sized coffees, have made my nervous system a delicate thing. I now get an unexpected anxiety jolt from regular coffee.

I tried switching to tea. It didn't work. I missed the ritual, the aroma, the flavour. Then I realized, I love the flavour, not the buzz. Thanks to modern methods that remove the caffeine before the beans are roasted, I can have my rich, delicious, guilt-free coffee experience without feeling like I need to reorganize my entire apartment at 9 p.m.

So, while we may differ on size, temperature and when we decide to call it a day, the love for that magical, unifying bean remains. Canadians and Ukrainians, two great peoples, united in the glorious, complicated and sometimes bucket-sized world of coffee.

Straight from the Shelves

LAURA MCASH

St. Marys Public Library

Enter to win a free lunch at Gilly's Pub with author Dan Needles! Submit a paper ballot in the Library or fill out the online submission form found here: perthcountylibraries.ca/pcr2025. Entrants must be a resident of Perth Coun-

ty. One contest entry per person. Only the 5 lucky winners will be contacted. Good luck!

Speaking of Perth County Reads, the Satin Ribbon Showcase is next week! Drop off your submissions on Tuesday/Wednesday. Return for the showcase itself on Friday and Saturday to admire all the entries and see if any of your

creations have earned a ribbon of excellence!

Up This Week

Fri., Oct. 10: Open 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sat., Oct. 11: Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Mon., Oct. 13: CLOSED
Tues., Oct. 14: Satin Ribbon Showcase Submission Drop Off (10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.), Write of Way (6:30-7:30 p.m.)

Wed., Oct. 15: Satin Ribbon Showcase Submission Drop Off (10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.), EarlyON Play and Read (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Mahjong! (1-4 p.m.), Books & Brews*^ (8 p.m.)

Thurs., Oct. 16: Open 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

*Registration Required

^Broken Rail Brewing (480 Glass St.)

HISTORIC ST. MARYS: Barns in St. Marys

MARY SMITH

Independent Columnist

Last week's column described an Ontario house at 151 Wellington Street South. Set farther back than the houses on either side of it, it is certainly one of the oldest houses on that block. But the eyes of many passers-by will be drawn to the building behind it – an old, two-storey barn. It actually sits on the lot to the north (147 Wellington) but may have belonged to the house at 151 many years ago when the two lots were joined with one owner. Although the structure is tilting somewhat to the south, it is still a handsome building with dark green barn doors set into limestone walls on the lower level. The barn board on the second level has been left to age a natural grey. It is a challenge to determine the age of the barn, but it was probably there several decades before the house at 147 Wellington Street was built. It is an excellent example of the small barns that can still be found within the older sections of the town.

These barns would have been a much more common part of the St. Marys landscape at the turn of the last century. Those who could afford to drive a buggy needed a stable for their horse and a place to keep feed and equipment. If their town property was spacious enough, it included a small barn. Some professions required transportation to be readily available. Doctors, for example, were often called out to emergencies in the country. Dr. David Harrison lived at 51 Church Street South on a lot that extended a full block eastward to Peel Street. There was ample room for a small stable on this large property. When cars replaced horses, subsequent owners changed the stable into a garage.

At 143 Water Street South, there is a beautifully preserved barn that passers-by can just see from the sidewalk, set among trees at the back of the property. It was a stable for Dr. William Gibb who practiced veterinary medicine in St. Marys from 1868 to 1904. The barn held his horse and buggy and a sleigh for winter travel. The small building close to the street at the northwest corner of this same property was originally the veterinarian's consulting office.

Also in the south ward, along the Riverview Walkway, is another attractive two-storey barn that backs right onto Thames Avenue. It belongs to the house at 198 Water Street South, once



(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ST. MARYS MUSEUM)

This well-maintained barn on Jones Street East is an example of a number of buildings, once used as stables, that can be found in the older parts of St. Marys.

owned by a family that had moved into St. Marys from the country. Sometimes such families did not leave the farm completely behind. A small barn might be a stable, perhaps have room for some chickens as well as space for storage. This particular lot is very deep and would certainly have had space for a large vegetable garden. Farm folks continued to be as self-sufficient as possible, even after they had moved to town.

Another remarkably well-maintained small barn can be found in the east ward at 309 Jones Street East, near the corner of St. George Street. As the photograph with this week's column shows, the barn is directly south of Kingsway Lodge - the three-storey building can be seen in the background. When Sidney Fraleigh built Fairhill, the red brick mansion, in 1886 for his family home, he placed it on property that he owned stretching a full block from its frontage on Queen Street to the north side of Jones Street East. The insurance map of 1922 shows just two buildings on that large lot – the large Fraleigh house at the north end and to the south, right up to the edge of the lot, the frame barn that still stands there today. This barn may be as old as the house itself, dating from the 1880s. It was probably modified from a stable to a garage sometime in the 1920s. Certainly, that's how it is used by its current owners whose home, just to the west, is on property severed from the original large lot belonging to the Fraleighs.

Of course, not every property had space for a barn and not everyone could afford to keep a horse. But if a horse

and buggy were needed for a special trip, these could be hired from livery stables located near the centre of town. There are several photographs on Picture St. Marys, the St. Marys Museum's on-line collection of digitized images, that show livery businesses. These were frequently located close to a hotel where the owners could provide travellers with transportation around the area. There are remnants of the stables that were once associated with the Windsor Hotel near the St. Marys Bowling Lanes. The Windsor Hotel stood on Queen Street across from the town hall. It was badly damaged by fire in 1963 and demolished in 1965. The stables behind it were left standing.

The best-known barn is, perhaps, the beautiful limestone structure that can be seen set back from the west side of the street behind the Garnett House at 18 Church Street North. This large barn was built to accommodate the horses that belonged to travellers staying at the Garnett House hotel, now an apartment building. According to the 1922 insurance map, the parking garages on the north side of this area once made up a long driveshed, open to the south. For farmers driving in from the country to shop, for a small fee the driveshed would have provided temporary shelter for their horses.

Readers of the Independent who enjoy driving or strolling around St. Marys will know of more small barns within town limits as well as the half dozen mentioned in this week's column. They all contribute in small but interesting

ways to the story of our town.

NOTE: Last week's column about the 1870s house on Wellington Street South ended by stating that after the first owner, James Johnston, left St. Marys in 1879, there was no record of what happened to him and his family. That statement is incorrect. Determined researcher Ken Telfer has traced the Johnston family's whereabouts through the next several decades. James and his wife, Ellen, and their four young sons moved to Aylmer in Elgin County where James worked for a carriage manufacturer. Ellen also found work in a cannery, probably Dominion Cannery, an enormous plant in Aylmer that began production in 1879.

Census records sometimes reveal unexpected details. In 1901, James Johnston had been admitted, one of several hundred patients, to the "Asylum for the Insane" in east London, Ontario. Ellen was still in Aylmer and working in the laboratory at the cannery. Her sons had left home and she was living alone. In June 1907, James Johnston died in the asylum in his 74th year but his funeral was held from his home in Aylmer. His obituary indicated that he had been well thought of in the community where he lived before his illness – he was "highly esteemed by all who knew him."

Ellen survived him by 26 years. When she died in June 1933, age 95, her obituary described her as Aylmer's oldest citizen. During her five decades in Aylmer, she had been very active in the Methodist (later United) Church and had led a busy life into her 90s. In a sad incident, she was predeceased by her youngest son, Frederick William, who had been a tailor in Sarnia. He died in 1919, indirectly a victim of the Spanish influenza. According to newspaper reports, he had been visiting his mother in Aylmer during Christmas week. He returned to Sarnia just before the New Year but developed severe influenza. Late on January 2, he got out of bed, delirious with fever. He left his house and walked in his dressing gown two blocks to a favourite swimming place in the St. Clair River. He apparently dove into the frigid waters. When he was found to be missing, a search began immediately but his body wasn't recovered until early the following morning. When Ellen died 14 years later, her other three sons, all living in the United States, came home to their mother's funeral.

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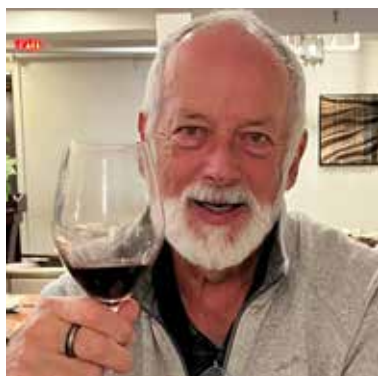
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OH, THE PLACES WE'LL GO: Taste sensations in the south of Spain



PAUL KNOWLES

Independent Columnist

I came home from Spain determined to replicate at least two of the amazing taste treats we had enjoyed there: paella and sangria. I didn't know what I was setting myself up for.

It goes well beyond paella and sangria; the south of Spain is a cornucopia of flavours, and we had the chance to sample many of them. The sundry small dishes, both hot and cold, served as tapas, either as appetizers or gathered on a larger plate to make up a delicious meal; the fruit and vegetables, especially the citrus fruit; the fresh fish of all kinds; meats, cheeses and olives, olives, olives.

And, of course, wine, especially the very good, very cheap Rioja wine.

But let's start with paella. Paella is a very common Spanish rice dish. You start with rice and add stuff. Okay, perhaps the recipe is a bit more complicated than that, as ably demonstrated by the chef in Torremolinos who gave us a lesson in making paella.

First point – this ain't any ordinary rice. This is round rice, or bomba rice.

In our particular case, the chef must have had some of

his budget left over from the previous fiscal year, because he splurged. The ingredients of this particular paella included astonishingly big (and, it turned out, over-the-top delicious) prawns that cost 200 euros, just for this paella. He then added two other kinds of shrimp, mussels, clams, three or four kinds of fish, calamari, onions, red peppers, garlic, saffron – probably more expensive than the prawns – olive oil (of course) and broth, each added at just the right time.

And then – this is one of the tricks of paella – it sits and simmers in the shallow frying pan for a long time without burning.

It was amazing.

And then the sangria. I have always enjoyed sangria, or at least I thought I did, but what I have enjoyed here has been a concoction of red wine, some kind of juice and chopped fruit. Our Spanish hosts would use this to water grape vines, maybe.

Our young, jovial sangria mentors broke out bottle after bottle, in the end producing utterly delicious and significantly powerful sangria. They use red wine, of course – Rioja, in fact, specifically Anciano Old Oak Tempranillo – Fanta orange, of all things, and then the alcoholic dynamite: generous, 10-second pours of Triple Sec, another of Sweet Vermouth, and perhaps a bit longer pour of a Spanish liqueur called Licor 43. Add four spoons of sugar for each jug and sundry fruits – we had apple, oranges and perhaps some other unidentified species. All we knew, after generous tastings, was that this was sangria to die for and our home-grown, simple recipes

would never again suffice!

We brought these recipes home with us, but one highlight of the trip – a lunchtime repast served in the home of Maria, our Spanish hostess – brought us no new recipes.

That doesn't mean we didn't want them, but friendly, jolly, lovely Maria absolutely refused to share her secrets with us. The meal began with a board of cold meats, cheeses, bread, olives and a salad. Second course, an egg soup. The main included pork and scalloped potatoes. Dessert, we called Custard de Maria, because it was wonderful and unidentifiable. And Maria was no help – just as she wasn't when we asked for the recipe for her amazing cookies, served with coffee.

By the time she had smiled and refused to divulge secrets through several courses, we gave up and enjoyed the post-meal liqueur, a homemade tasty treat made from locally grown quinces. To get to Maria's dining room, we had climbed long, cobbled streets in a downpour. We all agreed it was more than worth the effort.

The adventures in cuisine never stopped. We sampled about every citrus fruit known to humanity at the Finca Juanito orchard. We wandered through a market in Ojen stocked with every kind of fresh fruit and vegetable. We tasted olive oil at the Mon Dron Co-op. There are 350 million olive trees in the country. In fact, Spain exports olive oil to, of all places, Italy. And at the Hotel-Restaurant Balcón de los Montes, we started the day with churros, a fried dough pastry which may not sound too exciting, but when coupled with coffee well laced



(PAUL KNOWLES PHOTOS)

Our chef in Torremolinos with spectacular paella.

with brandy, are a great treat. Or it may have been the brandy.

As I said, I came home determined to create some of these great tastes in my own kitchen. I started with paella and quickly discovered that virtually no grocery store in this area sells round rice – many, many, many other kinds of rice, but no bomba round rice.

I even made several excursions to stores where the internet affirmed the presence of round rice. Nope.

Finally, I found it in a little Portuguese grocery store

in Kitchener. I launched the experiment. I did not buy million-dollar prawns, but that didn't seem to matter, because my paella worked, much to my surprise – and that of my partner.

But for the real stuff, skip my kitchen and go straight to Spain.

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.



Churros served with coffee and brandy.



Carolina, our exuberant sangria mentor.

FROM THE GARDEN: The science and splendour of autumn



NANCY ABRA

Independent Columnist

Experiencing the different seasons, we are conscious of the rhythm of Mother Nature. From spring's renewal and the growth and vitality of summer comes a transition to cooler temperatures, shorter days and vibrate tree colour. As autumn settles in, our landscapes transform into a tapestry of crimson, amber, oranges and yellows.

But what causes this annual colourful spectacle and why does it vary from year to year?

Leaves are food factories for trees. Inside each leaf are disk-like structures within their cells called chloroplasts, which use sunlight to turn water and carbon dioxide into sugar and oxygen - a process known as photosynthesis. These sugars are converted into food for the tree. Chloroplasts contain chlorophyll, an important tree pig-

ment which gives leaves their green colour. As autumn takes hold, the vibrant hues are a result of trees preparing for the winter. The chlorophyll loses its edge, becoming dormant as the sunlight hours shrink and the temperatures cool down. Since the leaves are no longer able to produce food for the tree, they break down chlorophyll and distinct colour pigments surface. These pigments emerge in leaf cells to protect chlorophyll from damage. The sugars are stored in the twigs for next spring when leaves emerge again. <https://treecanada.ca/article/why-do-leaves-change-colour/>

The carotenoids pigment produce the yellow and orange fall colours in trees such as birches, aspens, cottonwoods, oaks, walnuts, and elms. The anthocyanins pigment is responsible for the brilliant reds and purples especially in sugar maples as well as red oaks, dogwood, and sumac. Tannins produce rich browns and copper fall colours in trees such as oaks, hickory, and some fruit trees. These pigments are always present in the tree's leaves but only become visible once chlorophyll retreats in the autumn.

The brilliance of the autumn foliage depends heavily on the



weather conditions. In sunny days there is a boost of sugar production in the leaves, enhancing the red pigments. The fall, cooler nights slow the breakdown of sugars, allowing the anthocyanins (red pigments) to accumulate. Moderate moisture in late summer prevents early leaf drop due to drought stress. Years with extreme heat or dry spells like we

experienced this summer and September can dull leaf colours or cause leaves to fall prematurely.

Although the autumn colour change happens in deciduous trees it also occurs in a deciduous conifer. This unique native tree is the American larch, also known as tamarack (*Larix laricina*), that turns a distinctive bright yellow in the fall before

it sheds its needles. While the larch is found throughout Ontario, it is particularly abundant in the boreal forest region, preferring swamps and wet, organic soils.

Whether you admire autumn colours in your garden or across the landscape in the region, Mother Nature creates a stunning display.

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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 -



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The Riddle Kid OF THE WEEK



Leni Hiscock (5)

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

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

PET OF THE WEEK



October 8th is Pet Obesity Awareness Day -Maintaining a balanced diet and proper weight is crucial for your pet's overall health and happiness. Keep your furry friends healthy with regular vet visits, weigh-ins, exercise, and balanced diets. Order through our myVETstore and take advantage of promos for extra savings.
Shop: myVETstore.ca/stmarysvetclinic



GHOST

Our Pet of the Week is Ghost who is a four-year-old Brittany. Ghost loves to go to the dog park where he can visit his friends and chase the morning train. He is the beloved pet of Ross Driedger and Hazel Hewitt.



Coyote Nature School hosts St. Marys Poetry Circle



(GORD BARNETT PHOTO)

Members of the St. Marys Poetry Circle gather by the homestead. Pictured from left are Sylvia Bosgra, Rob Anderson, Beverly Blair, Jane Loucks, Sharon Sinclair, Alizon Sharun, Kate Orland Bere, Mary Maika, Dan Welcher and Joanne Stryker.

KENDRA MARTIN, COYOTE NATURE SCHOOL

Contributed Article

The St Marys Poetry Circle recently joined together at Stoneridge Farm for their annual fall poetry workshop to inspire their creativity and wonder.

This gathering of poets made some joyful memories and connected with treasured childhood moments of enjoying the time to be curious, and the freedom of wandering in nature. Besides some fun, poetic experiences, time was spent interacting with the chickens and

the horses.

This beautiful location is home to Coyote Nature School, which the Poetry Circle has joined with in the past to bring the music of poems to the heart and page for young children.

Finding out about opportunities for community members and groups to sponsor families financially to attend Coyote Nature School was received with enthusiasm.

"I am thankful that there are committed people like Kendra Martin and places like her school that are aware of



(GORD BARNETT PHOTO)

The St. Marys Poetry Circle conducted its fall workshop at Stoneridge Farm recently. Pictured from top left are Joanne Stryker, Kate Orland Bere, Elaine Penalagan, Dan Welcher, Jane Loucks, Sharon Sinclair and Mary Maika.

the necessity of connecting children to nature," said poetry circle member Beverly Blair. "I am grateful they are working for us all as the future truly is in the hands of the generation to come."

St Marys and Harrington are locations where this unique nature school happens every day of the week. Area residents are invited to support the participation

of local children at the school through a donation towards the critical work of reconnecting children with the natural world.

Visit the Coyote Nature School website sponsorship section or contact Martin at coyotenatureschool@gmail.com for more information.



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OBITUARY

Galloway



Daniel Garnet Galloway, age 63 of Arcola, Sask., passed away Tuesday night, September 23, 2025, at the Arcola Health Centre after a courageous battle with cancer. Born in Exeter, Ontario on June 17, 1962, Dan impacted the lives of those around him with his work ethic, generosity, loyalty and unwavering love for his family.

Dan's memory will be forever cherished by his wife of 42 years, Monika; son Robert (Jocelyn) and granddaughters: Olive and Maeve; son Joey (Adrianna) and granddaughter Zaydee. Also left with a lifetime of memories are Dan's parents: Bob & Ruth Galloway; siblings: Debbie (Larry) Nesbitt and their children: Amanda, Kelly, Mark and Jaden; Kim (Ken) Nutt and their children: Kenny, Kevin, Kris and Katrina; Jeff (Shirley) Galloway and their children: Olivia and Matt; Jodi (Mike) Hillman and their children: Lakin, Grace and Bowen, and their families; in-laws: Frankie (Yoyen) Szeder and their children: Samantha, Frankie Jr. and Mikey; Stefan (Sherry) Szeder and John (Lindsay) Szeder and their children: Carson, Brady, Parker, Ashlyn, Preston and Ella, and their families.

A celebration of Dan's life will be held on Saturday, October 11, 2025, at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in St. Mary's, Ontario. The family will receive friends from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. with the reading of eulogy and time of reflection at 2 p.m.

A second celebration of Dan's life will be held on Saturday, November 15, 2025, at the Prairie Place in Arcola, Saskatchewan. The family will receive friends from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. with the reading of eulogy and time of reflection at 2 p.m.

Hall Funeral Services in Estevan is caring for Dan's family - Dustin Hall, Funeral Director.

OBITUARY

Dempsey



It is with great sadness we announce the passing of William John Dempsey on September 30, 2025. A much loved and devoted husband of Ida Lynn Stankie, who predeceased him in 2024. Also predeceased by his sister Margaret Dempsey in 2021. Survived by sisters Jane Whittemore (Eric), Barbara Currie (Colin) and Mary Dempsey (Bob Millar). Also survived by nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews and cousins. Bill was born in St. Marys, the son of Anna Edna Laing and John Hamilton Dempsey.

Bill will be remembered for his kindness, compassion and generosity to his family and friends. Bill spent his early years training Cubans and Haitians in the 1960s. He spent most of his working life at Western University, much of the time as a lead hand in the paint shop.

He did extensive work with CUPE 2361. In retirement Bill and Lynn planted thousands of trees in the 23 1/2 acre field which once belonged to the Laing family, which he proudly called "The Hill Field." It was a gift to nature, a "place of peace" and a "state of mind." Cremation has taken place.

A Memorial Open House will be held at the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, 47 Wellington St. S. St. Marys, on Oct. 16, 2025 from 2 - 4 pm. As expression of sympathy, donations to the charity of one's choice would be appreciated. Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

Forever In Our Hearts

OBITUARY

MacPherson



Joan MacPherson passed away peacefully at St. Marys Memorial Hospital on Oct. 3, 2025 in her 92nd year.

Beloved wife of Richard "Dick" MacPherson, married 74 years. Mother of David MacPherson (Sandy), George MacPherson, Brenda Neufeld (Brad). Grandmother of Jay

(Angela), Corey, Mike, Sam, Max, Josh (Jazmin), Andrew (Candice), Barbie, Sarah, and also survived by 9 great-grandchildren. Joan will also be remembered by nieces, nephews and extended family members and friends.

Joan was born in Edmundston N.B. and had many fond memories of attending Convent School in Newcastle. In 1951 at 17 years of age she married her Fredericton High School sweetheart Dick, moved to Ottawa, children quickly followed. She was always resourceful, decorating from whatever she could find, painting with oils and selling them at art studios. Joan has always shared her passions with others whether leading youth activities at her church, putting on drama presentations, taking groups camping or hiking and always included her family.

Joan's interest in "community living" inspired a group to move here, to a property on Thomas St. they called Westover. MacPherson Craft Store was born out of her desire to have a place for people to meet in a little store she called "The Common Place." Even working the crazy hours of the M&M variety store, Joan always found time to walk and talk with people she met. Thank you for all your Joan stories so far and please don't hesitate to tell us more.

A Memorial Open House will take place at the WESTOVER INN, 300 Thomas St, St. Marys, on Oct. 17, 2025 from 1 to 5 pm with Words of Remembrance at 3 pm. Memorial donations may be made to the Perth-Huron VON Day Program. Online tributes at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

IN MEMORIAM

Sterkenburg



In loving memory of Debra Ann Sterkenburg
June 2, 1961 - October 10, 2022

Remembering Debra Ann Sterkenburg, our beloved wife, mother, and Omie, who passed away three years ago. Your love, laughter, and kindness live on in all of us.

Love always,
Barry; Darryl, Whitney, Rowyn & Sutton; Brittany,
Brett, Myla, Hudson & Blair

IN MEMORIAM

Copeland



In loving memory of Glenn Copeland
December 15, 1929 - October 12, 2024

Friendship is a treasure chest
of golden memories,
Where two hearts share the riches
And understanding holds the key,
And if each heart deposits
Lovely thoughts and actions here,
The treasure grows more valuable
With each passing year.

Thanks for a great life Glenn!
Dearly missed and never forgotten
Verla & Family

OBITUARY

Scheuermann



Lois Marie Scheuermann, of Wallaceburg and formerly of St. Marys, passed away on Oct. 5, 2025 at the age of 77. Beloved wife of Jack, married 60 years. Mother of Steven (deceased, 1992), Kevin (Cathy), Karen (Paul) and Marjorie Preszcator (Greg). Grandmother of Cory (Melody), Daniel (Noelle),

Justin, Sonya (Cory), Taiyler (Cody) and Mackenzie (Riley) and Great-grandmother of Layla, Nadia, Ashton, Carter, Axel, Joshua, Ayson, Hayden, Jaxon, Gibson, and Landon. Predeceased by her parents Wallace and Ruth Burnett, brother John Burnett and sister Dalphine Richardson. Family and friends are invited to the Andrew L. Hodges Funeral Home, 47 Wellington St. S. St. Marys on Friday, Oct 10, 2025 for visiting from 1pm until the time of the Funeral Service at 2 pm. Burial in St. Marys Cemetery. A reception will follow at the St. Marys Legion, 66 Church St. N. St. Marys. Memorial donations may be made to the Salvation Army. Online tribute at www.hodgesfuneralhome.ca.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

An alternative to fixing up the former Mercury Theatre building

There have been a lot of negative comments about the town going ahead and purchasing the old Mercury Theatre building with very little public input.

No matter how you look at it or feel about it, it is like the Pyramid Recreation Centre; we are stuck with it now.

With no choice in the matter other than to pay higher taxes to pay for it, I would like to suggest an alternative to the powers that be.

Follow Habitat for Humanity’s example.

There are more than enough skilled individuals who would be more than happy to donate their time and energy in renovating an historical building; ask for volunteers!

Instead of hiring workers at \$1,000 a day, ask for help among the community – maybe even put up a plaque naming your helpers who made it possible?

The turnout may surprise you.

Dave Lotte, St. Marys

THANK YOU

Hardeman

We would like to express our sincere and heartfelt gratitude for the love and support extended to our family in memory of Brian.

A kind thank you to our friends, family and community for all the kind words, beautiful flowers, delicious food, cards, visits, generous donations and for everyone who attended the celebration.

A special thank you to Dr. Far, Dr. Berta, and Dr. Gatfield, and all the nurses that took such exceptional care of Brian in his last few days.

We would like to thank Nancy Knowles, Young Seu, Bob Heywood and Cliff Thomson for giving Brian a proper sendoff, we couldn't have asked for better.

To Black Creek Flower Farm and Luckhart Funeral Home, thank you for your care with our family and for going above and beyond our expectations.

Helen, Laura, Linda, Heather and Hilary

IN MEMORIAM

In Memory

IRENE RICHARDSON

*A mother’s love, a bond so rare,
It lifts, it heals, it’s always there.
Through every moment, good or grim,
Her love is a light that never dims.*

Lovingly remembered by her family

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Solutions on pg. 35

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Looking Back

AMY CUBBERLEY

Independent Columnist



A Spill at Prospect Hill

25 years ago (2000)

A former high school science teacher has declared he'll be a candidate in the November municipal election. Bruce Symons, 60, was a science teacher from 1963-1998. Symons has a long history of volunteer commitment, including with St. Marys Minor Hockey, Baseball, Soccer, Ringette, Kinsmen, Lincolns, and the CarMar Games.

Eight out of ten stores in Perth County are refusing to sell cigarettes to minors. This summer, test shoppers were hired by Health Canada to see if tobacco vendors were complying with the Tobacco Control Act. Most retailers are doing their part, but compliance with sale of tobacco laws needs to be around 90% to really make a difference in youth smoking rates.

50 years ago (1975)

The Sarnia Gazette picks the St. Marys Jr. B Lincolns for a second-place finish in the Western Jr. B League this season. Naturally, the Gazette picks Sarnia Bees to come in on top with Petroli-a, Glencoe, Windsor, Belle River, and Strathroy finishing in that order.

The Board of Works has been having problems of late due to people putting leaves on the curb-side for the sweeper pick up. Plain leaves are no problem but the presence in some leaf piles of large rocks, limbs, etc. has created havoc with the intestines of the sweeper and perhaps some sweat on the brow of the machine operator. It is realized that the rocks and so forth are among the leaves unintentionally, but it would be appreciated by the Board of Works personnel if leaf piles at the curb side were checked by property owners or tenants to avoid this nuisance.

75 years ago (1950)

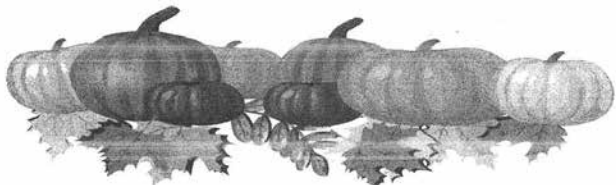
A special detachment of guards was on duty at the Fairgrounds over Tuesday night to protect the goods on display. They included George Aldis, Barry Nairn, Lloyd McLean and Gordon Evans.

Nearly fifty bicycles were fitted with fluorescent tape at the Town Hall on Saturday morning. Safety Committee Chairman George Thompson of the Rotary Club was in charge of the event. Tape is to be sent out to rural schools in the near future.

100 years ago (1925)

Darkness and rain spoiled the fair this year. The second day was marred by a steady down-pour, commencing at 2:00 just when the school parade was scheduled and ending at 5:00 when nearly everyone had gone home. Fortunately, the exhibition hall held the best and largest display in the history of the South Perth Agricultural Society.

The driver of a small coupe had a rather exciting experience while descending the northern slope of Prospect Hill on Sunday. The loose gravel on the roadway caused his car to skid and the vehicle slewed round and crashed broadside into the protective fence, breaking one of the rear wheels and otherwise damaging the car.



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4101 line 26 Downie, Perth South: Nov. 19, 25 by 4:00pm, Deposit \$50,000.00. Tenders are conditional on the severance of the residential portion to the sole satisfaction of the Seller(s).
To be Retained:(+or-135 Ac) (MTE Severance Sketch)
Workable Ac: (+or-128.5 Workable Ac) tiled 30ft.
Call Tom Daum Realtor® Maps & Tender Packages.
519 301 9150 - TomDaumRealtor@gmail.com

COIN SHOW

Stratford 62th Annual Coin Show - on Sunday October 19th 2025 from 9:00 am to 3 pm at the Best Western Arden Park Hotel 552 Ontario St. Stratford. Admission \$3.00 (under 16 free). 65th Anniversary Cake Celebration at 2 pm.

HELP WANTED



Township of Perth South
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 2025 salary range for this position is **\$27.19 – \$33.99 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 **Wednesday October 15th 2025**.

Ken Bettles, Director of Public Works
Township of Perth South
3191 Road 122, St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0
Email - 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.

SUDOKU ANSWERS

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

CORRECTION:

An error was printed in the story, "Preserving the Thorndale Train Station's legacy," on page 25 of the Oct. 2 edition of the St. Marys Independent. While the story indicated the train station was being relocated back to Thorndale, it was actually only moving 2.8 kilomtres down the road near Thamesford. We regret any confu-sion this may have caused.

St. Marys Independent
THE WEEK AHEAD

SPONSORED BY: **McDonald's St. Marys**
752 Queen St E
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 26

Friday, Oct 10

- Royal Canadian Legion hot dog lunch at Noon
- A.N.A.F. meat draw – 6 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs London Nationals at the PRC – 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Oct 11

- Yard sale at 35 Ontario St N – 8 a.m. to ??
- St. Marys Farmers Market at Milt Dunnell Field – 8 a.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Hospital Auxiliary bake sale at Queen & Water St – 9 a.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Fire Department open house event – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- North Nissouri Women Thanksgiving bazaar at North Nissouri Church – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Royal Canadian Legion meat draw – 5 p.m.
- St. Marys Lincolns vs Strathroy Rockets at West Middlesex M.C. – 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct 14

- Royal Canadian Legion buddy check coffee – 10 a.m. to Noon
- St. Marys Legion cribbage – Starts 7 p.m. sharp

Wednesday, Oct 15

- Rotary Club of St. Marys 100th anniversary dinner at St. Marys Golf Club – 5-10 p.m., Tickets \$100

Thursday, Oct 16

- Nourish Market at the St. Marys United Church – 2-4 p.m.
- SMCP preview of Hilda's Yard at the Town Hall theatre – 7:30 p.m.

HUGE YARD SALE
Saturday, October 11th
from 8:00 to ??
35 Ontario St. N., St. Marys
Everything must go. Appliances, kitchen utensils, antiques, air conditioners, furniture, household items, you name it, we got it. Come one , come all.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Venice, Italy	6. Demeter
2. The Life of a Show Girl	7. The mandrill
3. 21 million	8. Isla Nublar, Costa Rica
4. 535 voting members	9. Pink
5. Michael Curtiz	10. Three

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Sun. 12-4

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